



# SAFE ENVIRONMENT & STANDARDS OF CONDUCT POLICY



In accordance with Article 12 of the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People

**“Dioceses/eparchies are to maintain “safe environment” programs which the diocesan/eparchial bishop deems to be in accord with Catholic moral principles. They are to be conducted cooperatively with parents, civil authorities, educators, and community organizations to provide education and training for minors, parents, ministers, employees, volunteers, and others about the ways to sustain and foster a safe environment for minors. Dioceses/eparchies are to make clear to clergy and all members of the community the standards of conduct for clergy and other persons with regard to minors.”**

## INITIAL TRAINING

This Policy mandates that all priests, deacons, seminarians, religious, employees, volunteers and third-party vendors who during the course of their work or volunteer activity at any Diocesan entity, have direct, consistent and regular contact with minors<sup>1</sup> and/or vulnerable persons **must attend or complete an online training course** of VIRTUS, Protecting God’s Children for Adults. This training must be completed **PRIOR TO THE ONSET OF VOLUNTEERISM OR EMPLOYMENT**. This applies even to those who have one isolated contact with minors if that contact involves an overnight activity.

## RE-TRAINING

All individuals must re-certify their training every four years. This would include all individuals that have been previously identified by their location as having to be in compliance with this policy. They must already have completed the initial training program before they are eligible to pre-register for the retraining/refresher course.

All individuals will need to attend an in-person session or complete an online training module. VIRTUS - Protecting God’s Children Awareness Session or A Plan to Protect Session or the prescribed online module.

So, for clarification of who needs to attend, please follow the listing below:

Initial training year	Re-training year
2020 or earlier	2024
2021	2025
2022	2026
2023	2027

<sup>1</sup> Please refer to the Policy of Background checks for examples of who is required.

Each diocesan entity has the authority to expand the criteria for who must attend an Awareness session for their individual location.

All elementary and religious education programs are required to implement the RCL Family Life Series or the Growing with God, Loyola Press Curriculum for all K-8 students.

All high schools are required to implement the Teen Lures Prevention Program.

Parishes & Schools are also required to notify parents/guardians about the training and provide them with an overview of the program. Parent/guardians are encouraged to speak with the principal or Catechetical leader if they have concerns.

## **CODE OF CONDUCT**

In accordance with Article 6 of the charter for the Protection of Children and Young People

**“There are to be clear and well publicized diocesan/eparchial standards of ministerial behavior and appropriate boundaries for clergy and for any other paid personnel and volunteers of the Church with regard to their contact with minors.”**

All employees and volunteers are required to read, acknowledge and electronically sign a code of conduct, which they will be held to uphold during the course of their employment or volunteerism. The Code of Conduct is available through the individual’s VIRTUS account.

- The signed code of conduct will remain in effect for the duration of their ministry.
- If the volunteer/employee should leave their ministry or position, a new code of conduct must be signed upon their return.

## **WHO DO THESE POLICIES APPLY TO:**

If you are required to be compliant with the Criminal Background Check Policy – you are also required to have a signed Code of Conduct on file and to attend a VIRTUS, Protecting God’s Children Awareness Session and all re-certification training, as needed.