

**DIOCESE OF KANSAS CITY-ST. JOSEPH**

**Safe Environment Training Requirements for Religious Communities\***

**Introduction:**

The Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph is committed to providing a safe environment for all children and youth. As particular law promulgated by Bishop Johnston on June 16, 2017, the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph mandates specific safe environment training requirements for members of religious communities (i.e., all Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life) who at any time work with, or minister among, those under 18 years of age

(i.e., minors), including youth ministry and public worship. This ensures that all within the diocesan territory having contact with minors meet the same safe environment training standards and receive the same program updates. In conjunction with these training expectations, periodic background checks paid by the Diocese and a commitment to *Ethics and Integrity in Ministry* (EIM) *Code of Conduct Policy* are required.

**Purpose:**

The purpose of this policy is to outline the safe environment training requirements for members of religious communities having contact with minors in the parishes and schools located within the boundaries of the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph. This policy addresses: (a) initial training requirements, (b) ongoing education requirements, and (c) the documentation methods of compliance with these requirements.

**A. Initial Safe Environment Training**

The Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph requires VIRTUS® *Protecting God’s Children for Adults* “live” training as the initial safe environment training for compliance with the diocesan safe environment program. Diocesan personnel must be able to verify the training as recorded in an active VIRTUS® account.

If a member of a religious community has an active VIRTUS® account in another diocese or eparchy, the account should be transferred to the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph. Assistance with this transfer is available by contacting the Office of Child and Youth Protection.

**B. Ongoing Safe Environment Education**

The Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph requires the completion of: (1) monthly training bulletins and (2) periodic recertification modules (both in VIRTUS®) for ongoing safe environment education. As with diocesan priests, it is the responsibility of each religious to maintain a current email address in VIRTUS® to ensure ongoing education requirements are distributed appropriately and timely. Assistance with updates to VIRTUS® accounts is available by contacting the Office of Child and Youth Protection.

1. Monthly Training Bulletins

These brief monthly online articles are assigned by VIRTUS®. Each religious should log into VIRTUS® monthly to read the article and meet this diocesan ongoing education requirement; generally, VIRTUS® transmits a reminder each month – but lack of an email reminder does not excuse lack of fulfilling requirement. Each training bulletin takes approximately 5 minutes to complete.

1. Recertification Modules

Periodic recertification modules are assigned by VIRTUS® to those required to read monthly training bulletins. The Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph utilizes four re-certification modules. The modules, with approximate completion times, are:

1. 1st edition – 40 minutes
2. 2nd edition – 15 minutes
3. 3rd edition – 13 minutes
4. 4th edition – 23 minutes

Recertification modules are assigned based on each individual’s VIRTUS® account approval date. Most users will receive their recertification modules annually, over a four year period. In some situations, more than one module may be assigned at the same time. This is dependent on an individual religious’ account approval date in relationship to the date monthly training bulletins were first assigned.

**C. Documentation of Compliance**

VIRTUS® accounts are the mechanism for the documentation of compliance with all safe environment program requirements for the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph: safe environment training; background checks; *Ethics and Integrity in Ministry* (EIM) *Code of Conduct Policy*. It is the responsibility of each religious to create and maintain an active VIRTUS® account when ministering within the Diocese. Diocesan personnel regularly review accounts to assess the ongoing level of compliance with the Bishop’s policy of creating and maintaining as safe an environment as possible. When a religious remains out of compliance with safe environment requirements, religious superiors will be asked to assist and intervene.

\*Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life

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