

SAFE ENVIRONMENT PROGRAM POLICIES AND PROCEDURES



DIOCESE OF KANSAS CITY – ST. JOSEPH

† James V. Johnston, Jr.

Approved by: Most Reverend James V. Johnston, Jr., DD, JCL

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OFFICE OF CHILD AND YOUTH PROTECTION SAFE ENVIRONMENT PROGRAM POLICY AND PROCEDURES

POLICY

The Diocese of Kansas City – St. Joseph (the Diocese) is committed to providing a safe environment in which every individual is valued and honored as created in the image and likeness of God. As persons of faith and members of the community of the Diocese, we are called to live our lives in a manner consistent with the values, morals, and ethics of the Catholic faith. Accordingly, the Diocese is committed to the prevention, reporting, and addressing of sexual abuse. **The abuse of minors or vulnerable persons is not acceptable and will not be tolerated.** All personnel working, volunteering, or ministering in the schools, parishes, and agencies of the Diocese are expected to support this Policy and comply with the Procedures developed for its implementation.

TRANSPARENCY

The Diocese is dedicated to maintaining open and transparent standards of appropriate ministerial behavior for clerics and all other Diocesan personnel and volunteers. As with the *Ethics and Integrity in Ministry (EIM) Code of Conduct Policy*, this *Safe Environment Program Policy* is communicated throughout the Diocese. It is also made available on the Diocesan website in the “Policies” portion of the Office of Child and Youth Protection (OCYP) section at kcsjocyp.org.

SAFE ENVIRONMENT PROGRAM OVERSIGHT

The Safe Environment Program of the Diocese exists to ensure the protection of children, youth, and vulnerable adults, as required by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* (Articles 6, 12, 13) and *Essential Norms* (2, 11). The Safe Environment Program provides a framework for the Diocese to cooperate with parents, civil authorities, educators, and community organizations to ensure a safe environment for children, youth, and vulnerable adults.

The Safe Environment Program has components for children, youth, adults, employees, volunteers, clerics, religious, seminarians, and vendors/contractors doing business with Diocesan schools, parishes, and agencies. The Program is administered by the Office of Child and Youth Protection (OCYP). Local Safe Environment Coordinators (SECs) are designated at all parish and school locations to assist the OCYP in ensuring the local implementation of safe environment program requirements. Any exceptions to this policy must be approved by the Office of Child and Youth Protection.

SAFE ENVIRONMENT COMPLIANCE FOR ADULTS

All safe environment requirements for adults hired subsequent to August 1, 2022 must be completed prior to the start of employment or volunteer ministry and are documented in an online VIRTUS® account. It is the responsibility of each adult to ensure the accuracy of the data in his/her VIRTUS® account. The safe environment requirements for adults include:

- An active VIRTUS® account in the Diocese of Kansas City – St. Joseph
- Completion of a VIRTUS® *Protecting God's Children for Adults* workshop
- Completion of Missouri Child Abuse and Neglect Mandated Reporter training (protectmokids.com)
- Reading/commitment to *Ethics and Integrity in Ministry (EIM) Code of Conduct Policy*
- Providing consent to a criminal background screening with service contingent upon screening results
- Continuing safe environment education through monthly online training bulletins and/or annual online Missouri Child Abuse and Neglect Mandated Reporter training based on an individual's role/position. (See "Continuing Education" section)

In addition to these requirements, all adults must comply with the *Digital, Online, and Social Media Communication Policy* which provides specific policy guidance and principles for those serving youth in the Diocese and for interacting with other adults through social media. This policy is available in the "Policies" portion of the OCYP section of the Diocesan website.

TRAINING AND SCREENING REQUIREMENTS

Employees

All employees of the Diocese have two initial safe environment training requirements:

- 1) VIRTUS® *Protecting God's Children for Adults* (PGC) workshop and
- 2) Missouri Child Abuse and Neglect Mandated Reporter training

All employees are required to have attended a VIRTUS® *Protecting God's Children for Adults version* (PGC) workshop within five years prior to the start of their employment. Additionally, every five years, an online *Protecting God's Children for Adults* refresher course must be completed in the VIRTUS® database.

All employees are required to complete the state of Missouri Child Abuse and Neglect Mandated Reporter training online. Each user must present their certificate of completion to their supervisor or Safe Environment Coordinator (SEC). Additionally, each user must annually acknowledge their responsibilities as a mandated reporter. Commitment is made electronically in an individual's VIRTUS® account. Every five years, an online refresher of the state of Missouri Child Abuse and Neglect Mandated Reporter training must be completed and the certificate presented to the supervisor or SEC.

Note: Some positions/roles may require annual or additional state of Missouri **Mandated Reporter Child Abuse and Neglect** training including online acknowledgement in VIRTUS®. Check with your supervisor to understand the specific requirements for your position.

Volunteers

All volunteers that will be supervising minors or vulnerable adults or will be in contact with children/youth, have two initial safe environment training requirements:

- 1) VIRTUS® *Protecting God's Children for Adults* (PGC) workshop and
- 2) Missouri Child Abuse and Neglect Mandated Reporter training

All volunteers that will be supervising minors or vulnerable adults, or will be in contact with children/youth, are required to attend a **VIRTUS® *Protecting God's Children for Adults* (PGC) workshop** within five years prior to beginning service. Additionally, every five years, an online *Protecting God's Children for Adults* refresher course must be completed in the VIRTUS® database.

All volunteers that will be supervising minors or vulnerable adults, or will be in contact with children/youth, are required to complete the state of **Missouri Child Abuse and Neglect Mandated Reporter training** online. Each user must present their certificate of completion to their ministry supervisor or Safe Environment Coordinator (SEC). Additionally, each user must annually acknowledge their responsibilities as a mandated reporter. Commitment is made electronically in an individual's VIRTUS® account. Every five years, an online refresher of the state of Missouri Child Abuse and Neglect Mandated Reporter training must be completed and the certificate presented to the ministry supervisor or SEC.

TRAINING CURRICULUM

The Diocese provides child sexual abuse education for adults through the **VIRTUS® *Protecting God's Children for Adults* (PGC) curriculum**. The primary goals of this training are to increase awareness about child sexual abuse and prevent future abuse. Certified VIRTUS® facilitators lead the workshops with the use of videos and group discussion. Participants learn the warning signs of abuse, the methods used by offenders to commit abuse, steps to prevent child sexual abuse, and important ways to respond to suspicions of abuse. Diocesan policies and procedures and Missouri state law on reporting abuse are also addressed. Workshops are available in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese.

The state of Missouri partners with Missouri KidsFirst to offer Missouri's free online **Child Abuse and Neglect Mandated Reporter Training**. This training was developed by the task force on the prevention of sexual abuse of children with the goal to provide education to mandated reporters to be empowered in their responsibility to protect children. The training is divided into the four lessons:

1. Legal Requirements of the Mandated Reporter
2. Child Abuse/Neglect Defined and Indicators of Child Abuse/Neglect
3. Plan for Responding to Suspicions Child Abuse/Neglect
4. Effectively Reporting

Missouri's Mandated Reporting law ([Missouri Mandated Reporter Law](#)) states that mandatory reporters shall, upon finding the reasonable cause, **directly and immediately** report suspected child abuse or neglect. No supervisor or administrator may impede or inhibit any reporting.

Upon completion of the online Mandated Reporter Training module, each user must present their certificate of completion to their supervisor or SEC. Additionally, each user must acknowledge their responsibilities as a mandated reporter online in their VIRTUS® account.

CONTINUING EDUCATION

The following positions/roles must fulfill continuing education requirements. All those listed below must read and acknowledge monthly online **training bulletins in VIRTUS®**. Some positions/roles such as School and ECC personnel and/or Directors of programs for children and youth may require annual state of Missouri **Mandated Reporter Child Abuse and Neglect** training including online acknowledgement of their responsibilities as a mandated reporter in VIRTUS®. Check with your supervisor to understand the specific requirements for your position.

- Clerics
- Seminarians and Religious
- Members of Religious Communities who work with, or minister among minors, including youth ministry and public worship
- Safe Environment Coordinators (SECs)
- Directors of Religious Education (DREs)
- Directors of Youth Ministry (DYMs)
- Employees or Volunteers Supervising Children’s Programs
- Directors of Programs with Minors
- School or ECC Personnel
- VIRTUS® *Protecting God’s Children for Adults* Workshop Facilitators
- Members of the Independent Review Board (IRB)
- OCYP Personnel
- Independent Ombudsman
- Additional Personnel/Volunteers as Specified by Pastors/School Principals

To meet compliance when completing the online state of **Missouri Mandated Reporter Child Abuse and Neglect** training, each individual must present the certificate of completion to their supervisor and acknowledge their responsibilities as a mandated reporter electronically in their VIRTUS® online account.

ETHICS AND INTEGRITY IN MINISTRY (EIM) CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY

All personnel must read and acknowledge commitment to the *Ethics and Integrity in Ministry (EIM) Code of Conduct Policy* prior to the start of employment or volunteer ministry. Commitment is made electronically in an individual’s VIRTUS® account. For those under age 16, please refer to the “Volunteers or Employees Under Age 16” portion of this Policy for documentation requirements. A copy of the EIM is available on the Diocesan website in the “Policies” portion of the OCYP section.

BACKGROUND SCREENING

The Diocese contracts with an independent professional screening company to conduct background screenings of Diocesan personnel. Screenings are conducted for criminal history and sex offender registration. Employees responsible to manage cash or financial accounts for the Chancery, a parish, or a Diocesan school also have a credit check conducted.

All personnel must consent to screening prior to commencement of service and every five years with service contingent upon screening results. Additional requirements may be found in the Diocesan Administrative Manual, the Employee Handbook, the Catholic Schools Office Manual, or Service Area Manuals. Employees and volunteers are responsible for understanding the specific requirements set forth in the Service Area program in which they are participating.

Additional screening procedures such as reference checks and face-to-face interviews are required of candidates for employment as they advance through the interview process. Volunteers may also be subject to reference checks and face-to-face interviews, especially when the volunteers are unknown to those at the Diocesan entity. Personnel previously employed by one Diocesan entity and commencing new employment with another entity in the Diocese must update their VIRTUS® accounts to reflect all relevant changes.

Current or Past Diocesan Volunteer Applies for Employment

When a current or past volunteer becomes a candidate for employment with the Diocese, the previous background check completed as a volunteer does **not** meet the Diocesan requirement for employment. These individuals must complete a new employee background check as a prerequisite for employment, with service contingent on screening results.

Questionable/Unfavorable Screening Results

Screening results are kept strictly confidential and are reviewed thoroughly to determine suitability for service. Some background screening results may disqualify a person from serving with minors and/or vulnerable adults, such as a certain felonies or recent misdemeanors. In these situations, the Diocese initiates an adverse action and the individual is notified by email. He/she is then given the opportunity to dispute the screening results and/or provide additional information that may impact the hiring decision.

SAFE ENVIRONMENT COMPLIANCE FOR MINORS

SAFE ENVIRONMENT TRAINING FOR MINORS

The prevention of child sexual abuse requires more than adult education, awareness, and training. Programs for children/youth teach important life skills to protect them and to help give them the ability to distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate behavior. These programs help equip children/youth to recognize and report potentially dangerous persons and situations (*Charter*, Article 12; *Essential Norms*, 11).

The safety training for children/youth provided by the Diocese is consistent with the teachings of the Catholic Church and the requirements set forth in the USCCB *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*. Students in Diocesan schools, parish school of religion, and sacramental preparation are required by the Diocese to receive age-appropriate safety training annually. The approved curriculum for minors from Pre-K through Grade 12 is *Circle of Grace* from the Archdiocese of Omaha. Other safety-related training is encouraged throughout the year but is not required by this Policy.

Opt-Out Procedures

Parents are recognized and supported as the primary teachers of their children. If a parent does not wish his/her child(ren) to participate in *Circle of Grace*, a signed opt-out form is required. The *Opt-Out Form for Pre-K through Grade 12* is included in the Appendix of this Policy. It is also located in the “Forms” portion of the OCYP section of the Diocesan website. Copies of the signed form are maintained at the parish/school.

Parents are encouraged to review the training materials before making this important decision. Parishes/schools should offer to provide parents with copies of the age-appropriate lessons for their review and/or for their use at home.

COMPLIANCE FOR MINORS AS VOLUNTEERS OR EMPLOYEES

The opportunity for youth to serve in a volunteer capacity or as an employee within a parish or Diocesan school is an important part of Catholic formation and education. It serves as the foundation for the beginning of a life of Catholic stewardship. Youth volunteer examples include but are not limited to: Confirmation students

earning service hours; high school students tutoring younger children; A+ programs; assisting at summer sport camps for diocesan high schools; volunteering for retreats; for summer camps such as Camp Savio; and minors helping with Vacation Bible School (VBS) or Children's Liturgy of the Word.

Minors volunteering in programs serving other minors shall never be allowed to supervise minors. These volunteers must be directly supervised by two Safe Environment compliant adults who have completed all adult safe environment program requirements.

Background screenings are not required for anyone under age 18.

Volunteers or Employees Age 16-17

Requirements include:

1. An active VIRTUS® account in the Diocese which documents requirements 2 and 3 below
2. Commitment to the *Code of Ethical Conduct for Minors Volunteering or Working with Younger Children* with required written parental consent – (see form in Appendix).
3. Completion of VIRTUS® *Protecting God's Children for Adults* training with required written consent form from parent/guardian – (see form in Appendix)

Volunteers or Employees Under Age 16

Requirements include:

1. Parent/guardian signs the *Commitment to Ethical Conduct for Minors Volunteering or Working with Younger Children* - (see form in Appendix)
2. Program director or supervising adults will discuss expectations and appropriate behavior at commencement of service and provide oversight.

SAFE ENVIRONMENT COMPLIANCE ON DIOCESAN DAY TRIPS AND ACTIVITIES WITH OVERNIGHTS

Parishes, schools, or Diocesan offices sponsoring day trips or longer activities that may include overnights are required to follow these policies. This includes events such as field trips, camps, retreats, sporting events, and service events with students/youth.

- Two or more safe environment compliant adults must be present for all events involving students/youth.
- All chaperones must be 21 years of age or older and in compliance with all safe environment requirements.

Chaperone Ratios

- For day trips, the ratio of chaperones to students/youth is 1 adult for every 10 minors.
- For activities lasting more than 12 hours, the ratio of chaperones to students/youth is 1 adult for every 5 minors.

Overnights

For overnights, these additional policies apply:

- Boys and girls must be assigned separate rooms, preferably with similar-age groups.

- Chaperones must stay in rooms separate from the students/youth.
- Parents and students/youth who are their children may share a room. No other combination of relatives is allowed (e.g., uncle/nephew, grandmother/granddaughter, etc.)
- No unrelated minor may share a room with an adult.
- High school seniors who are 18 years old may share a room with their peers. However, this exception ends with graduation.
- Chaperones should monitor rooms until everyone is asleep. Supervision may be necessary throughout the night.

SAFE ENVIRONMENT COMPLIANCE FOR PARISH AND SCHOOL FAMILY EVENTS

Many parishes and schools host annual fundraising and/or family events where children attend but remain in the care and control of their parents/guardians. Examples of such events include, but are not limited to, parish picnics, fish fries, breakfasts with Santa. These events are considered family events and the parish or school is not the primary caretaker of the children in attendance.

There are also situations requiring certain adults to be compliant with all safe environment requirements. Examples of these events include individuals supervising service hours for students who are dropped off by their parents or the adult serving as “Santa” because of the direct contact with many children.

Safe environment requirements during different types of parish/school events are determined by considering best practices to ensure the event is safe for children/youth to attend. It is possible this can be accomplished in a variety of ways without requiring all volunteers to be compliant. The OCYP is available to discuss and provide guidance on specific situations.

SAFE ENVIRONMENT COMPLIANCE FOR OUTSIDE ORGANIZATIONS

DIOCESAN OR PARISH-SPONSORED GROUPS

All parish or school-sponsored groups must be administered by adults fully compliant with the Diocese’s safe environment requirements outlined in this Policy. Examples of parish or school-sponsored groups include, but are not limited to:

- Scouts
- Youth groups
- Confirmation Classes
- Catechesis of the Good Shepherd
- Parish School of Religion (PSR)
- Christian Formation Programs (CFP)

Parish affiliated groups for adults that sponsor events for minors, or allow minors to volunteer with their groups, must ensure that the adults involved in those events are in compliance with the Diocese’s safe environment requirements of this Policy. Some examples include, but are not limited to:

- Knights of Columbus
- Ladies’ Auxiliary groups

The OCYP is available to discuss and provide guidance on specific situations.

GROUPS NOT AFFILIATED WITH DIOCESE OR PARISH

Parishes and schools may enter into agreements with outside affiliates who wish to utilize space at their locations. Some examples include, but are not limited to:

- Seasonal sports camps
- Sports recreation leagues
- Home school groups
- Support groups
- Private parties
- Scouts (NOT sponsored/chartered through the school or parish location)
- Nonprofit organizations

Safe environment compliance requirements must be discussed, agreed upon, and documented prior to entering into any agreement with an outside affiliate, non-Diocesan program, or private group. The Diocese’s Director of Risk Management should be notified when a private group is utilizing space on a regular basis on any Diocesan property. The OCYP is available to discuss and provide guidance on compliance for specific situations.

Parents of minors participating in such programs should be made aware of the difference between a parish or school-sponsored ministry where compliance is mandated and an outside affiliate where compliance may be waived. Parents are encouraged to make every effort to ensure that they are placing their children in the care of safe adults. Questions regarding child protection policies and practices should be directed to the administrator of the private group. If any concerns related to child protection arise between a parent and the private group, the Pastor or School Principal should be immediately notified. Depending on the level of concerns, the contract should be reviewed and may potentially be terminated.

SAFE ENVIRONMENT COMPLIANCE FOR VENDORS/CONTRACTORS

The Diocese utilizes vendors/contractors to share goods, services, and skills. Because a core value of the Diocese is to provide a safe and secure environment for all parishioners, employees, volunteers, students, teachers, and any others on our Diocesan premises or property, vendors/contractors must adhere to certain requirements. The requirements are based on the type of vendor/contractor and the type or length of services provided.

The following table outlines the requirements of different types of vendors/contractors. Further guidance is available by contacting the OCYP.

| Vendor/Contractor Types | Examples | Safe Environment Requirements |
|--|---|--------------------------------------|
| Delivery people or sales reps; Never alone with minors; Only in specific designated areas for deliveries or sales meetings | Food/drink providers, FedEx, UPS, Vending machine delivery or service, sales representatives of various companies | None |
| Those working inside Diocesan buildings under a | Electricians, plumbers, pest control, HVAC or other | None |

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| staff person's full and active supervision | skilled maintenance, organ or piano tuners | |
| Those working outside of Diocesan buildings; No <u>unsupervised</u> contact with minors | Lawn care, snow removal, roofing repair | None |
| Extracurricular classes for minors held off Diocesan premises with minors transported to and from Diocesan property by outside entity | Off-campus STEAM classes | None |
| Those working inside Diocesan buildings that may have occasional contact with minors | Custodial or cleaning staff, Food service/cafeteria staff, Telecommunications personnel (tech support), Special event staff | Vendor/Contractor Form |
| Those providing services or instructing classes with minors <u>and</u> teacher is <u>always</u> with the class | APEX, ECC Spanish classes | Vendor/Contractor Form |
| Student Teachers | Student teachers fulfilling college requirements to become certified teachers | All safe environment program requirements: Active VIRTUS® account in our Diocese with documentation of PGC, EIM, BGC and MR |
| Those completing Student Observation <u>and</u> teacher is always with the class | College or high school students observing for school credit | All safe environment program requirements: Active VIRTUS® account in our Diocese with documentation of PGC, EIM, BGC and MR |
| Those providing specialized services or instruction to minors in Diocesan buildings | Private Speech pathologists or therapists, private psychologists, Young Rembrandts, Bricks 4 Kidz, Chess Club, Mad Science, Art instructors, Dance instructors, Before and After-Care Programs, Tutors | All safe environment program requirements: Active VIRTUS® account in our Diocese with documentation of PGC, BGC, EIM and MR |
| Public school employees providing specialized education services or instruction to minors in Diocesan buildings | Title I teachers, EANS funded educators, other public school employees | Confirmation of licensed status with the State of Missouri to verify completion of a background check and mandated reporter training. Execution of Vendor/Contractor Form acknowledging Diocesan code of conduct. |

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| Extracurricular sports with minors (does NOT include sports referees) | Sports professionals that are <u>not</u> Diocesan employees or volunteers – instructors, coaches, athletic trainers | All safe environment program requirements: Active VIRTUS® account in our Diocese with documentation of PGC, EIM, BGC and MR. |
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PGC = *Protecting God’s Children for Adults* workshop
EIM = *Ethics and Integrity in Ministry* (EIM) *Code of Conduct Policy*
BGC = Background Check Every 5 Years
MR = Missouri Child Abuse and Neglect Mandated Reporter training

VENDOR/CONTRACTOR FORM

We require the completion of “Vendor/Contractor Form” by all vendors, contractors, and subcontractors having occasional contact with minors on our property as indicated in the table above. The Form is available in the “Forms” portion of the OCYP section of the Diocesan website. It is also provided in the Appendix of this Policy.

MONITORING SAFE ENVIRONMENT COMPLIANCE

The Diocese employs several methods to monitor and ensure compliance with the Safe Environment Program.

- Those found in violation of Diocesan safe environment compliance and/or renewal requirements may be suspended from ministry or employment until such requirements are met.
- The Diocese participates in annual United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) audits, including an on-site visit from auditors hired by the USCCB every three years. The OCYP and the independent auditors hired by the USCCB audit parishes and schools to ensure compliance with the *Charter* and *Essential Norms*. This includes checking for adherence to all Diocesan policies and procedures associated with the protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- The Independent Review Board (IRB) for the Diocese serves as a confidential consultative board to the Bishop. The IRB is comprised of persons with expertise in the field of child protection. One of its duties is to regularly review Diocesan policies and procedures and give advice on all aspects of the safe environment program (*Charter*, Article 2).
- The Safe Environment Program Council works with the OCYP to recommend procedures that help ensure a high-quality safe environment program across the Diocese. The Council provides guidance in the development of best practices for the safe environment program. It is comprised of experienced SECs and VIRTUS® Facilitators with a passion for the continual improvement of the safe environment program.
- The Diocese monitors compliance with safe environment requirements through the ongoing review of VIRTUS® records by local SECs and designated Chancery staff members.
- The OCYP requires all parishes and Diocesan schools to submit USCCB audit compliance forms twice a year.

- OCYP staff members conduct parish/school visits and utilize an audit checklist to review and monitor all essential elements of compliance. Paper audits may also be conducted utilizing VIRTUS® Master Reports and other safe environment program documentation.

SAFE ENVIRONMENT PROGRAM POLICY AND PROCEDURES

DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions apply:

Adult: An employee or volunteer who is over the age of 18. All adults working or volunteering with children must be fully compliant with diocesan safe environment requirements prior to service.

Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People: A foundational document created in 2002 by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) to address the issue of sexual abuse in the Church through healing and reconciliation, appropriate responses to allegations, and preventative education

Child/Youth: See Minors

Clerics:

- a. Clerics incardinated in the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph including the bishop, priests and deacons of the Diocese
- b. Clerics who are members or superiors of religious institutes or in other forms of consecrated life, and who are assigned to pastoral work in the Diocese or who are otherwise engaged in the care of souls, the public exercise of divine worship, and other works of the apostolate, operating in the Diocese and/or the parishes, schools or Catholic agencies in the Diocese
- c. Clerics of other jurisdictions who are assigned to pastoral work in this Diocese, whether seeking incardination within the Diocese or not
- d. Clerics who are otherwise legitimately residing within the territory of the Diocese, including retired clerics and those engaged in part-time or supply ministry
- e. For the purposes of this Policy, all candidates in formation for the permanent diaconate

Note: In addition to the provisions of these policies, the priests and deacons are also bound by the *Essential Norms*, particular law promulgated alongside the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* (cf. Dallas Charter, originated 2002).

Contractors: See Vendors

Essential Norms: Binding canon law (particular USA church laws) to execute the values of the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*

Minor or Child/Youth: Anyone who has not reached the age of 18 or who is considered by law to be the equivalent of a minor

Personnel: Includes all clerics; seminarians; religious; Diocesan, parish, and school employees; and volunteers working or volunteering on a regular or part-time basis within any organization designated as a Diocesan entity

Safe Environment Coordinator (SEC): An individual appointed at a parish or school location to serve as an extension of the Office of Child and Youth Protection with responsibility to coordinate the implementation of safe environment policies and procedures at their site

Seminarians and Religious:

- a. All seminarians sponsored and legitimately enrolled in the seminary formation process of the Diocese
- b. Members of religious institutes, societies of apostolic life and secular orders and movements engaged in the care of souls, the public exercise of divine worship, and other works of the apostolate, operating in the Diocese and/or the parishes, schools, or Catholic agencies in the Diocese

Service Area: Leadership and oversight structure for programs or ministries within the Diocese of Kansas City – St. Joseph

Vendors/Contractors: Those who contract or sub-contract their services to the Diocese and/or the parishes, schools, or other Catholic agencies in the Diocese

Vulnerable Adult: Any adult who has reached age 18 who would be considered uniquely susceptible to abuse because of “a state of infirmity, physical or mental deficiency, or deprivation of personal liberty which, in fact, even occasionally, limits their ability to understand or to want to otherwise resist the offense,” including any person forced, “by violence or threat or through abuse of authority, to perform or submit to sexual acts.”
(m.p., *Vos estis lux mundi*, 2019)

SAFE ENVIRONMENT PROGRAM POLICY AND PROCEDURES

APPENDIX



DIOCESE OF KANSAS CITY–ST. JOSEPH

PARENTAL PERMISSION FORM FOR THOSE UNDER AGE 18 TO ATTEND VIRTUS® *PROTECTING GOD’S CHILDREN FOR ADULTS*

The Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph appreciates your service in our parishes and schools. All employees and all volunteers involved in programs with minors are required to attend a *Protecting God’s Children for Adults* workshop. This workshop is an awareness and prevention program dealing with child sexual abuse. You are required to pre-register for one of the workshops provided in the diocese at www.virtus.org and attend it prior to the start of your service.

Because you are under the age of 18, we recommend that you attend the workshop with a parent/guardian due to its sensitive content. Should your parent/guardian decide that the content is appropriate for you to attend without them, they must sign the form below to acknowledge their permission.

This form must be completed and given to your workshop facilitator when you arrive to attend your *Protecting God’s Children for Adults* workshop.

PERMISSION FORM

I hereby grant permission for my child, _____, to attend the *Protecting God’s Children for Adults* workshop on _____ (Date)

at _____.
(Name of Parish or School)

I attest that my child has not been accused and/or investigated for sexual, emotional or physical abuse of another minor. I understand that the Diocese of Kansas City – St. Joseph recommends that I attend this session with my child; however, I have decided to give my child permission to attend the workshop without me.

Parent/Guardian’s Printed Name

Parent/Guardian’s Signature

Date

Updated August 2022



Diocese of Kansas City ~ St. Joseph

Code of Ethical Conduct for Minors Volunteering or Working with Younger Children

You are about to begin what could be a lifelong commitment to working or volunteering within the Catholic Church. It is a privilege to help carry on the mission of Jesus Christ, one that no one takes lightly. It is important you follow certain rules and guidelines, both for your protection and for the protection of those to whom you minister. The Church takes the issue of misconduct very seriously. Any instance of your misconduct will be evaluated carefully, and you are directed to report any instances of misconduct that you suspect to the adult in charge.

General Conduct for Volunteers or Workers Who Are Minors

Conduct that is permissible – the following forms of affection are customarily regarded as appropriate:

- verbal praise
- handshakes
- high-fives or knuckle bumps
- pats on the shoulder or back
- side hugs
- holding hands while walking with small children
- sitting beside small children
- kneeling or bending down for hugs with small children
- holding hands during prayer
- holding younger minors should only be “as needed” (e.g., for comfort) or at the invitation of the parent

Conduct that is not permissible – in order to maintain the safest possible environment for minors, the following are examples of affection that are **not** to be used:

- inappropriate or lengthy embraces
- kisses
- touching private areas of any child’s body
- showing affection in isolated areas such as bedrooms, closets, staff-only areas or other private rooms
- wrestling with minors
- Humor that ridicules or degrades a person or class of people
- piggyback rides
- any type of massage
- any form of unwanted affection
- Humor with sexual innuendo or content
- comments about a child’s body or their development

The Diocese of Kansas City- St. Joseph is grateful for the service you provide. Whenever you have questions or whenever you are uncertain about what is required, ask the adults with whom you work.



Diocese of Kansas City ~ St. Joseph

Commitment to Code of Ethical Conduct for Minors Volunteering or Working with Younger Children

I promise to follow faithfully the rules and guidelines in the *Diocese of Kansas City- St. Joseph Code of Ethical Conduct for Minors Volunteering or Working with Younger Children*.

I understand that I may be removed from my position of working with children if I don't follow this code.

I further understand that I may be required to participate in education and training provided by the school or parish I attend.

Printed Name of Minor Volunteer or Worker _____

Address _____

Telephone Number(s) _____

Signature of Minor Volunteer or Worker

Today's Date _____ Minor Volunteer/Worker's Date of Birth _____

(High School Students Only) Expected High School Graduation Month and Year _____

We are the parents/legal guardians of _____ ("Minor"). We have received and support the *Diocese of Kansas City- St. Joseph Code of Ethical Conduct for Minors Volunteering or Working with Younger Children* and we have reviewed it with our child.

We understand that the Diocese has a responsibility to provide a safe environment for all its young people and we know of nothing in our child's background that would make him/her unsuitable to work with minor age children. We attest that my child has not been accused and/or investigated for sexual, emotional or physical abuse of another minor.

Printed Name of Parent/Legal Guardian

Signature of Parent/Legal Guardian

Date

This signed Commitment to Code of Ethical Conduct Form shall be kept in employee personnel files at the agency/parish/school or in a general volunteer file at the agency/parish/school.

Please return this completed form to the Safe Environment Coordinator (SEC) at the location where you are an employee or volunteer.



**DIOCESE OF KANSAS CITY – ST. JOSEPH
SAFE ENVIRONMENT OPT-OUT FORM**

The Diocese of Kansas City – St. Joseph is committed to providing a safe environment for our children and youth. Our safe environment training programs educate and empower children and young people by providing them with essential knowledge and skills. Important life skills are taught to help protect them, give them the ability to distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate behavior, and recognize and report potentially unsafe persons and situations.

These safety programs are consistent with the teachings of the Catholic Church and the requirements set forth in the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*.

For Pre-K through Grade 12, the diocesan curriculum is *Circle of Grace* from the Archdiocese of Omaha.

I do not give permission for my child _____
(Printed Name of Child)

to attend the safe environment training that is part of the approved safety curriculum of the

Diocese of Kansas City – St. Joseph at _____.
(Printed Name of Parish or School)

I have received a safety lesson that I can use for discussion at home with my child/youth.

Printed Name of Parent/Guardian

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Date



DIOCESE OF KANSAS CITY-ST. JOSEPH VENDOR/CONTRACTOR FORM

The Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph appreciates your willingness to share your goods, services, and skills with us. A core value of the Diocese is to provide a safe and secure environment for all parishioners, employees, volunteers, students, teachers, and any others on our diocesan premises or property. We require the completion of this form by all vendors, contractors, and subcontractors having occasional contact with minors on our property.

Name of Company _____

Type of Organization (Corporation, Partnership, Limited Liability Company)

Company Address (Street, City, State, Zip)

Owner Name _____ Owner Telephone _____

Owner Email _____

Name of Person Completing Form (If Not Owner) _____

Position/Title of Person Completing Form _____

Address, Telephone, Email (If Different Than Owner)

Which parish(es) or school(s) or Diocesan Institution(s) will the company be serving? Provide name(s) and location(s).

What services will the company be performing?

CERTIFICATION – Please read each statement and *initial* on the line to the left.

_____ I certify that all of our employees have completed a background clearance check and none of them are either awaiting trial or have ever been convicted or have ever admitted in open court or pursuant to a plea agreement to having committed any type of a violent crime against a person or a sexual offense requiring them to be placed on the sexual offender registry either in Missouri or in any other state.

_____ I certify that no employee of the Company or any of its contractors or subcontractors has been adjudicated to be or is a registered sex offender.

_____ I certify that all employees will observe the rules and regulations of the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph while on the property of any parish, school or Diocesan place of business, and that all employees will conduct themselves in a professional manner and will exhibit the respect and good behavior that is required in the presence of children and in sacred places.

_____ I certify that that all statements and information contained in this compliance form are true and I understand that any misrepresentation or omission is cause for rejection of the Company’s permission to be on the property of the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph, and that any misrepresentation or omission is cause for the termination and /or cancellation of any contract with said place of business.

_____ I certify that all employees will abide by the Code of Conduct as explained below, while understanding that this Code is not exhaustive in the variety of situations mentioned.

Employees of Vendor/Contractor will:

- Conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times.
- Treat everyone with respect, loyalty, patience, integrity, courtesy, dignity, and consideration.
- Avoid any contact with minors at all times unless specifically hired to conduct a program involving minors.
- Never be alone in a private location with children and/or youth.
- Never accompany a minor into restrooms without another adult present.
- Refrain from giving gifts to children and/or youth without prior written approval from the parents or guardian and the pastor or administrator.
- Report suspected abuse to The Missouri Child Abuse Hotline at 1.800.392.3738. Failure of a mandatory reporter subject to 210.115 RSMo to report suspected abuse to civil authorities is a misdemeanor.

Employees of Vendor/Contractor will not:

- Smoke or use tobacco products in the presence of children and/or youth on diocesan property.
- Use, possess, or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs while working on the diocesan property.
- Use profanity in the presence of children and/or youth on diocesan property.
- Pose any health risk to children and/or youth (i.e., no fevers or other contagious situations).
- Touch a child and/or youth in a sexual or other inappropriate manner.

Printed Name of Company Representative or Vendor: _____

Signature of Company Representative or Vendor: _____

Date of Signature: _____