SAFE ENVIRONMENT COORDINATOR MANUAL

March 2021

Diocese of Kansas City–St. Joseph

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INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The purpose of this manual is to assist safe environment coordinators (SECs) in understanding and implementing the safe environment policies and procedures of our diocese. SECs serve a very important role in parishes and schools. SECs are responsible to ensure the local implementation of safe environment policies and procedures designed to help keep children, youth, and vulnerable adults safe. Each SEC works in partnership with the Office of Child and Youth Protection of the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph.

Materials referenced in this manual may be found in the "Child and Youth Protection" section of the diocesan website, https://kcsjcatholic.org or by simply entering the OCYP domain name of kcsjocyp.org. Some materials are in a password-protected area. If you do not have the password needed to access this special area, please contact Sherry Huffman, Safe Environment Program Coordinator, at 816-714-2394 or by email at huffman@diocesekcsj.org. You may also contact her regarding issues that may not be addressed in this manual.

The *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*

The *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* is a comprehensive set of procedures originally established by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) in 2002 to address allegations of child sexual abuse by Catholic clergy. This landmark document was revised in 2005, 2011, and in 2018. A complete copy of the *Charter* may be accessed at www.usccb.org.

The *Charter* outlines the USCCB's expectations for each diocese including:
- The creation of a safe environment for children, youth, and vulnerable adults
- Healing and reconciliation for victims and survivors
- Prompt and effective responses to allegations of abuse
- Cooperation with civil authorities
- The disciplining of offenders and
- The prevention of abuse.

The Office of Child and Youth Protection (OCYP) was created in 2011 to address the expectations of the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* in the Diocese of Kansas City–St. Joseph. Each year, the diocese participates in an audit to assess our compliance with these expectations. Every third year, this audit is performed on-site with randomly selected visits to diocesan parishes and schools.

OFFICE OF CHILD AND YOUTH PROTECTION

The Office of Child and Youth Protection (OCYP) is located on the second floor of The Chancery, 20 West 9th Street, Kansas City, Missouri and is under the direction of Carrie Cooper.

Personnel and Contact Information

Carrie Cooper, OCYP Director	816-714-2380	cooper@diocesekcsj.org
Sherry Huffman, Safe Environment Program Coordinator	816-714-2394	huffman@diocesekcsj.org
Victim Assistance Coordinator	816-392-0011	victimadvocate@diocesekcsj.org
Sarah Larson, Administrative Assistant	816-714-2384	larson@diocesekcsj.org
Joe Crayon, Independent Ombudsman	816-812-2500	crayon@ombudsmankcsj.org

The OCYP consists of three primary functions: (1) Investigations and Action (2) Victim Services and the (3) Safe Environment Program. SECs are expected to have a working knowledge of the OCYP, its three areas of responsibility, and all associated safety policies. The following lists key information about each of these three functions of the OCYP.

Investigations and Action – Joe Crayon, Independent Ombudsman

The diocese is committed to protecting children, youth, and vulnerable adults by immediately reporting criminal behavior to civil authorities. A consistent protocol is used to investigate allegations of sexual abuse and boundary violations. An Independent Ombudsman contracts with the diocese to handle investigations involving diocesan employees, volunteers, and clerics. While not an employee of the diocese, this individual works closely with the OCYP.

Our diocesan reporting policy is as follows:

To protect the children and youth of our diocese, you must report suspected abuse or neglect to:
1. The Missouri Child Abuse Hotline 1-800-392-3738 if the victim is under 18 years of age.
2. Local law enforcement or 911 if you believe a child is in immediate danger.
3. The Ombudsman – 816-812-2500 if the report involves a diocesan employee, cleric, or volunteer.

When you report abuse, concerns about signs of grooming, or boundary violations to the Ombudsman, a full and swift investigation is conducted with the results presented to the Independent Review Board (IRB). The IRB is chartered to advise the Bishop in all matters pertaining to the sexual abuse of minors and vulnerable adults in the diocese.

To report suspicions of abuse or neglect of a vulnerable adult, call the Missouri Adult Abuse and Neglect Hotline at 1-800-392-02010.

Victim Services – Victim Assistance Coordinator

The first obligation of our Church in responding to the sexual abuse of minors and vulnerable adults by members of the Church is to provide healing and reconciliation. We provide care and compassion to survivors of abuse and to their families.

The Victim Assistance Coordinator provides care to victims and their families as they travel through the journey of healing. Counseling and other community outreach services are coordinated to address the needs of those who have suffered and have been harmed in our diocese.

Safe Environment Program – Sherry Huffman, Safe Environment Program Coordinator

We are responsible to create and maintain a safe environment for our children, youth, and vulnerable adults. This involves training and education and compliance with adult screening requirements.

Our safe environment training programs help children, youth, and adults learn how to prevent sexual abuse through education, awareness, and life skills. We work with parishes and schools to implement this important safety training using diocesan-approved curricula. Online adult continuing education is also assigned and required of certain adults based on individual roles within the diocese.

Our safe environment program requires a commitment to our diocesan code of conduct policy, *Ethics and Integrity in Ministry* (EIM) *Code of Conduct Policy,* and compliance with all screening requirements. Multi-jurisdictional criminal and child abuse record background checks every five years are an important piece of the screening of all employees and of all diocesan volunteers involved with children, youth, and vulnerable adults. Adult compliance with training and screening requirements is documented within the VIRTUS database and monitored locally by SECs.

SAFE ENVIRONMENT COORDINATOR
POSITION DESCRIPTION

Title:	Safe Environment Coordinator
Division:	Office of Child and Youth Protection Diocese of Kansas City – St. Joseph
Reports to:	Parish Pastor/School Principal Safe Environment Program Coordinator

Position Summary

The Safe Environment Coordinator (SEC) works in partnership with the Office of Child and Youth Protection (OCYP) for the Diocese of Kansas City – St. Joseph. This position is designated by the Pastor to coordinate the implementation of parish and/or school compliance requirements designed to keep minors and vulnerable adults safe at their location(s). This requires a thorough understanding of safe environment policies and procedures and the associated expectations for recordkeeping and reporting to document compliance. The SEC communicates the importance of a safe environment and models behaviors that support the *Promise to Protect, Pledge to Heal.*

Essential Duties

1. Maintain a working familiarity with the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People,* first approved in 2002 by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), as it relates to safe environment programs.

2. Maintain a working knowledge of the three primary functions of the OCYP: (1) Safe Environment Program, (2) Victim Services, and (3) Investigations and Action.

3. Oversee the Pre-K through Adult safe environment training requirements and ensure compliance with all expectations for the delivery of the diocesan-approved safety curriculum.

4. Monitor and ensure that diocesan employees and volunteers are compliant with safe environment policies and procedures as defined in the *Ethics and Integrity in Ministry* (EIM) *Code of Conduct Policy* and *Safe Environment Program Policies and Procedures*. At a minimum, this includes a commitment to the EIM, background checks every 5 years, and compliance with *Protecting God's Children for Adults®* (PGC) training requirements.

5. Maintain a list of employees and volunteers and track compliance with background checks, commitment to the EIM, PGC training, monthly VIRTUS® bulletins, and any other training or policy requirements outlined by the OCYP.

6. Work regularly with the VIRTUS® database to ensure accurate recordkeeping, to monitor compliance, and to assist employees and volunteers with questions or issues related to its use.

7. Submit the required audit information to the OCYP by the designated deadlines of June 1 and October 1 each year using the most current OCYP forms. Children's safety program audit information is due June 1 for parish, school, and/or early childhood programs. Employee and volunteer audit information is due October 1.

8. Work with the local pastor and/or school principal to address any safety or compliance issues. This may include assistance in the creation and enforcement of safety plans.

9. Oversee safe environment communication, including the dissemination of information to leaders and those serving minors. This includes the publication of announcements and other materials received from the OCYP in appropriate parish/school publications, electronic and/or print.

10. Ensure the diocesan *Report Abuse* posters are maintained in high traffic areas in parishes and schools and that the appropriate parish bulletin language is included as prescribed by the OCYP.

11. Understand the requirements for the mandatory reporting of suspected child abuse and follow the established procedures of the diocese. This includes knowing whom to contact if there is disclosure from an adult victim of abuse.

12. Communicate with the OCYP regarding ideas to strengthen programs and the need for resources, guidance, or assistance.

13. Respect the confidential nature of employee and volunteer files and the sensitivity of issues associated with the position.

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

- Dedication to the mission of the protection of children and vulnerable adults
- Strong communication skills (verbal and written)
- Ability to model the behaviors set forth in the EIM
- Effective organizational and leadership skills
- Strong interpersonal skills
- Ability to handle records and sensitive issues with confidentiality, empathy, and compassion
- Computer skills sufficient to communicate effectively via email and to work with the VIRTUS® database and other web-based diocesan materials

Basic Expectations

- Successful completion of a *Protecting God's Children for Adults*® workshop and any other OCYP-required safe environment training programs,
- Participation in diocesan updates for SEC's
- Active VIRTUS® account with documentation of commitment to the *Ethics and Integrity in Ministry* (EIM) *Code of Conduct Policy* and successful passing of a background check every five years

Special Note:

The Safe Environment Coordinator (SEC) carries the ultimate responsibility for compliance for all sites affiliated with a parish, such as an elementary school, or ECC. The SEC may choose to delegate certain tasks to others at those parish-affiliated locations, with the understanding that the SEC maintains final responsibility.

The OCYP recommends that the SEC discuss what will work best at their location(s) by visiting with the Pastor, Principal, ECC Director, and others in key parish and/or school positions.

Effective 11/5/20
Supersedes 7/11/19

SAFE ENVIRONMENT TRAINING

SECs provide oversight of the safe environment training for children, youth, and adults. Your role includes ensuring that the most current diocesan-approved curriculum is being utilized for each age group and that all safe environment training requirements are met.

Adults

The diocesan-approved curriculum for adults is *Protecting God's Children for Adults* (VIRTUS). The *Protecting God's Children for Adults* training program was updated to Version 3.0 in the fall of 2014 and then later to Version 3.5. Version 4.0 is currently under development by VIRTUS. It was expected in 2020 but was delayed due to COVID-19.

Note: Live *Protecting God's Children for Adults* (PGC) workshops were suspended in March 2020 due to COVID-19. The workshops will resume when it is safe to do so. While the live training suspension is in place, those required to take this training are instead assigned two online training modules in VIRTUS: (1) *Protecting God's Children Online Awareness Session 3.0* and (2) *Mandated Reporters: Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse.* Each module takes approximately 50-60 minutes to complete and both must be completed to meet the training requirement. New VIRTUS users will have the two training modules automatically assigned to them by VIRTUS. For those that had a VIRTUS account prior to the pandemic but never attended a live workshop, please contact the OCYP to manually assign the two modules to them for completion.

Children/Youth

For Pre-K through Grade 12, the diocesan-approved curriculum is *Circle of Grace* (Archdiocese of Omaha) – 2018 Revised Edition. The curriculum is updated by the vendor every five years. All children/youth are required to be trained every year if they are in diocesan schools, Parish School of Religion classes, or involved in sacramental preparation.

ADULT SAFE ENVIRONMENT TRAINING REQUIREMENTS:

Employees
> All employees of the diocese are required to attend a *Protecting God's Children for Adults* (PGC) workshop. Employees must attend the workshop **within 30 days of hire** if they are school employees, Directors of Religious Education (or similar roles), or Youth Ministers. All other employees must attend the workshop **within 60 days of hire.** (These same training deadlines apply during the suspension of live workshops.)

Volunteers
> All volunteers that will be supervising minors or vulnerable adults, or that will be in contact with children, are required to attend a *Protecting God's Children for Adults* (PGC) workshop **within 60 days of beginning service**. (This same training deadline applies during the suspension of live workshops.)

> All adults are welcome and encouraged to attend a PGC workshop. Those that have attended in the past are also welcome to attend again as a refresher.

Religious Communities
> Please refer to the policy, "Safe Environment Training Requirements for Religious Communities" in the "Policies" area of the diocesan website section of "Child and Youth Protection" for these safe environment training requirements. The policy addresses the requirements for members of religious communities who at any time work with, or minister among, those under 18 years of age (i.e., minors).

Scheduling PGC Workshops:

Most sites schedule 1 to 3 adult workshops each year. It is important for you to know if you have trained PGC facilitators at your parish/school, and if so, the names of those persons. If you do not have your own local facilitators and do not know of any other facilitators, you may contact the OCYP for assistance in locating facilitators to help you.

SECs work with facilitators to determine the best dates/times/locations for PGC workshops. The facilitators then enter the workshop data for you into VIRTUS so attendees may pre-register prior to the workshop. Pre-registration is strongly recommended.

Adults may attend any PGC workshop in the diocese unless the session is noted to be closed or specified for a certain group of participants. Walk-ins are accepted, but we highly encourage pre-registration in VIRTUS for these workshops. Individuals attending workshops without pre-registration, should create their VIRTUS accounts asap following their workshop attendance. If no account is created, the diocese has no way of giving credit or documenting an individual's completion of their training.

Special Note about PGC: The PGC training is designed to be an adult training. Those under the age of 18 must have written permission from a parent/guardian to attend an adult workshop. The form to use to secure this permission is located within "Forms" under the "Child and Youth Protection" section of the diocesan website. Under no circumstances, should youth under age 16 attend PGC workshops.

PGC Facilitators:

PGC facilitation is a volunteer ministry for the diocese. If you have individuals at your parish/school that are interested in becoming trained PGC facilitators, please ask them to contact the OCYP. Facilitator candidates are required to complete an application form, provide three references, and attend a train-the-facilitator workshop. New facilitator trainings are held every 1-2 years based on need. New facilitator training was scheduled for July 2020 but cancelled due to COVID-19.

Monthly Training Bulletins

Ongoing adult training is available in VIRTUS. Those required to read monthly bulletins include the following:
- Priests and Seminarians
- Deacons and Diaconate Candidates
- Members of Religious Communities who work with, or minister among minors, including youth ministry and public worship
- SECs
- Directors of Religious Education (DREs)
- Directors of Youth Ministry (DYMs)
- Employees or Volunteers that Supervise Children's Programs
- Directors of programs with minors
- Principals/ECC Directors
- School Personnel and Caregivers
- VIRTUS® *Protecting God's Children for Adults®* Facilitators
- Members of the Independent Review Board (IRB)
- OCYP personnel
- Independent Ombudsman
- Additional personnel/volunteers as specified by pastors/school principals
- Additional personnel that have been given "view only" access in VIRTUS

Best practice is to monitor compliance with reading monthly bulletins at least quarterly to ensure compliance and to facilitate follow-up with anyone out of compliance. If someone is required to read monthly training bulletins for continuing education, they will also be assigned to complete re-certification modules in their VIRTUS accounts.

Re-Certification Modules

Re-certification modules are assigned by VIRTUS to those required to read monthly training bulletins. The four training modules (with the approximate times to complete them) are:

Virtus® Protecting God's Children® Re-certification Training for Adults (40 minutes)
Virtus® Protecting God's Children® Re-certification Training for Adults-2nd Edition (15 minutes)
Virtus® Protecting God's Children® Re-certification Training for Adults-3rd Edition (13 minutes)
Virtus® Protecting God's Children® Re-certification Training for Adults-4th Edition (23 minutes).

Re-certification modules are assigned by VIRTUS in one of two ways:

1. For new accounts with the requirement to read bulletins, and for those that have just taken PGC, the first module will be assigned one year from PGC training and then one more module on each of the following three years after that.
2. If someone has an existing account and was trained in PGC previously, and they are now given the added requirement to read monthly training bulletins, the VIRTUS system tries to "catch them up" and assigns all the modules at about the same time.

CHILD/YOUTH SAFE ENVIRONMENT TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

The prevention of child sexual abuse requires more than adult education, awareness, and training. Programs for children and 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 and youth to recognize and report potentially dangerous persons and situations.

The child and youth programming 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.* Each Pre-K through 12th grader is expected to receive the most current diocesan-approved safe environment training annually. The approved safety curriculum for children/youth is *Circle of Grace* from the Archdiocese of Omaha (2018 Revised Edition).

The most current *Circle of Grace* curriculum (lesson plans and activities) may be found on the diocesan website section of "Child and Youth Protection" that is for "Safe Environment Coordinators." On the left side of the page is a little bit larger blue box (SEC Resources…). Click on this box to access the password-protected materials. If you need the password, please contact the OCYP. The materials are in English and Spanish. They also include parental information in Vietnamese.

Note: The list below summarizes the options available for providing the *Circle of Grace* curriculum during COVID-19. The best option is always #1 listed below (if it is possible) and #4 is only to be used when no other option is available.

1. Live, in-person *Circle of Grace* instruction
2. Virtual *Circle of Grace* instruction (live and NOT pre-recorded)
3. A one-time gathering for families. Parents receive education and children/youth receive *Circle of Grace* instruction
4. Parent teaching packets to be taught at home

VERY IMPORTANT - If parent packets are used for instruction due to COVID-19, a parent signature MUST be obtained to attest that the instruction was completed!!!! This is documented on the form titled, "Circle of Grace – Parent Form COVID-19 – August 2020," located in the "Forms" section of kcsjocyp.org. You **must** have this documentation for USCCB audit purposes. These forms should be kept at your parish/school and used for completing the June 1 audit forms that summarize your training efforts for our office. Please be sure to keep these forms so there will be proof for auditors.

Other safety-related training is highly encouraged throughout the year, but not required by the OCYP. Training topics may include such things as cyberbullying, dating violence, human trafficking, and internet safety. If you need assistance in locating supplemental safety training resources, please contact the OCYP. For your convenience, you may also go to "Resources" under the "Child and Youth Protection" section of the diocesan website.

Parent Information Letters

A parent information letter is available for your use. This letter may be located by going to the "Forms" area under the "Child and Youth Protection" section of the diocesan website. The letter is also in the password-protected area for SECs with the lesson plans. These letters are used to introduce parents to the *Circle of Grace* curriculum that will be taught to their children/youth.

Opt-Out Procedures and Forms for Children and Youth Programs

Parents are recognized and supported as the primary teachers of their children. An "opt-out" option and procedure is available for parents not wishing their child(ren) to participate in safe environment training.

If a parent does not wish his/her child(ren) to participate in *Circle of Grace,* a signed opt-out form is required. Parents are encouraged to review the training materials before making this important decision. A record of the parent's written documentation should be maintained at the parish or school to ensure full accountability. These parents should be provided copies of the age-appropriate lessons. The *Opt-Out form for Pre-K through Grade 12* may be located within "Forms" under the "Child and Youth Protection" section of the diocesan website.

The total number of opt-outs each year is reported on the appropriate audit form as discussed further in the "Compliance" section of this manual.

COMPLIANCE

ADULTS

SECs are responsible for the management and oversight of employee and volunteer compliance with all safe environment program requirements at the parishes and schools of the diocese. Your local records are very important to ensuring the diocese's overall compliance with the *Charter.* The diocese's success in passing the USCCB audit is dependent on your local recordkeeping.

Sample letters have been developed by the OCYP to help you explain safe environment program requirements to adults. Copies of these letters may be customized for your location(s). They are found by going to "Forms" under the "Child and Youth Protection" section of the diocesan website.

The VIRTUS database is viewed as the official record of compliance for adults. Management of adult compliance includes the following.

Employees
- Maintaining an accurate list of all current employees
- Ensuring that all employees have completed the *Protecting God's Children for Adults* training by the established deadlines explained in the "Safe Environment Training" section of this manual
- Ensuring all employees have read and acknowledged their commitment to the diocesan code of conduct policy, *Ethics and Integrity in Ministry* (EIM) *Code of Conduct Policy* as documented in VIRTUS
- Ensuring all employees have an employee background check (BGC) completed every 5 years
- Ensuring that all employees required to read monthly bulletins and/or complete re-certification modules in VIRTUS are current with these bulletins and modules. Best practice is to run quarterly compliance reports in VIRTUS to monitor compliance and to facilitate follow-up with those out of compliance.
- Ensuring that all employees understand the importance of keeping their VIRTUS account profile information current (i.e., emails, roles) and stay in compliance with all safe environment requirements

Volunteers
- Maintaining a current list of all volunteers having contact with children
- Ensuring that all volunteers supervising minors or vulnerable adults, or having contact with children, have completed the *Protecting God's Children for Adults* training within 60 days of beginning service
- Ensuring all volunteers have read and acknowledged their commitment to the diocesan code of conduct policy, *Ethics and Integrity in Ministry* (EIM) *Code of Conduct Policy*.
- Ensuring all volunteers in contact with children have a volunteer background check (BGC) completed every 5 years - Carefully screen all adult volunteers prior to any service with minors.
- Ensuring that all volunteers required to read monthly bulletins and/or complete re-certification modules in VIRTUS are current with these bulletins and modules. Best practice is to run quarterly compliance reports in VIRTUS to monitor compliance and to facilitate follow-up with those out of compliance.
- Ensuring that all volunteers having contact with children understand the importance of keeping their VIRTUS account profile information current (i.e., emails, roles) and stay in compliance with all safe environment requirements

Please Note These Specific Circumstances:
(1) If an adult has a VIRTUS account as a volunteer and is being considered for hire as an employee of the diocese, an employee BGC must be done. The volunteer BGC does NOT meet requirements for employment.
(2) Adults desiring to be potential substitute teachers for diocesan schools must meet all three of our safe environment requirements (PGC, EIM, employee BGC every 5 years) before working as a substitute teacher.

(3) Volunteers that are new to the parish/school may be asked to complete an additional screening tool prior to being placed in service – the Volunteer Application form located in the "Forms" area of the Office of Child and Youth Protection section of the diocesan website.

(4) Minors that are employees or minors that are volunteers working with other minors have specific safe environment requirements based on their age and role. Please refer to page 5 of "Safe Environment Program Policies and Procedures" for details. This policy can be found by going to the "Policies" area of the Office of Child and Youth Protection section of the diocesan website.

Vendors/Contractors

The "Safe Environment Program Policies and Procedures" policy in the "Policies" area of the Office of Child and Youth Protection section of the diocesan website addresses all safe environment requirements for vendors/contractors. SECs should refer to pages 7-9 for instruction on these requirements. The requirements vary based on the type of vendor/contractor, the amount of supervision the vendor/contractor is given, and the amount of potential contact with minors.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH

SECs are responsible to track and record compliance related to the annual safe environment training of children and youth. The numbers of children and youth trained in diocesan-approved safe environment programs must be documented and reported to the OCYP every year. Your local records are very important for the diocese to have a successful USCCB audit. Please maintain a folder at your school/parish with your training documentation year after year. It is important that you can show how you collected the data you report to the OCYP annually.

Management of child/youth compliance includes the following:

- Ensuring that all Pre-K through 12th grade children/youth receive the most current diocesan-approved safety training every year
- Maintaining a folder with your training documentation year after year so you can show how you collected the data you report to the OCYP
- Tracking the number of Pre-K through 12th grade children trained in *Circle of Grace* each year
- Tracking the number of "opt-outs" to the approved child/youth safety training each year
- Ensuring you have signed forms from those parents wishing to "opt out" of diocesan-approved safety training programs for children/youth and have provided them with age-appropriate lesson plans for use at home
- Reporting training data to the OCYP on the current audit forms by June 1 each year
- Ensuring you have signed parental forms if parent packets were used during COVID-19.

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

The diocesan code of conduct is outlined in the *Ethics and Integrity in Ministry* (EIM) *Code of Conduct Policy*. SECs must be familiar with the contents of the EIM, as well as the safe environment policies discussed in this manual. A complete copy of the EIM may be found under "Policies" in the "Child and Youth Protection" section of the diocesan website.

Please refer to "Safe Environment Program Policies and Procedures" for information regarding EIM requirements for minors that are volunteers and/or employees located in the "Policies" area of the "Child and Youth Protection" section of the diocesan website.

Copies of the EIM for minors and for vendor/contractors are located in the "Forms" area of the "Child and Youth Protection" section of the diocesan website. If you are unsure which type of EIM to use, please contact the OCYP for assistance.

BACKGROUND CHECKS

The process to run background checks (BGCs) is integrated with VIRTUS. VIRTUS account users enter data and provide their consent for a BGC to be completed. Employment Screening Resources (ESR) is our vendor for BGCs. The ESR customer service line is 1-888-999-4474. This number may be given to those with questions or issues when completing their BGCs. Additional information on ESR and BGCs within VIRTUS is located in the VIRTUS "how to" section of this manual.

Please remember that If an adult has a VIRTUS account as a volunteer and is being considered for hire as an employee of the diocese, an employee BGC must be done. The volunteer BGC does NOT meet requirements for employment.

BGCs are only required for employees and volunteers that are 18 years of age or older.

COMPLIANCE AUDITS AND REPORTS

The OCYP collects audit information from SECs twice a year for all parishes and schools. This information is then compiled and submitted by the OCYP to the USCCB annually.

SECs are asked to use the most current OCYP audit forms from the web for submission of the following information by these two designated deadlines. These audit forms are located under "Forms" within the "Child and Youth Protection" section of the diocesan website.

> **June 1** – Compliance information on children and youth safety training programs in parishes, schools, and early childhood programs
> **October 1** – Compliance information on employees and volunteers

USCCB Audits

Every three years, the diocese is audited on site by an independent national firm. During these on-site audits, diocesan locations are randomly selected to be reviewed. Local processes and files are reviewed during these on-site audits and compared with the information submitted by the OCYP each year. If your location is selected for one of these audits, you will be asked to participate in it.

To prepare for a successful on-site audit, please refer to the "Onsite Audit Checklist 2020" in the "Forms" area of the "Child and Youth Protection" section of the diocesan website. This checklist will assist you in maintaining an ongoing state of compliance and audit readiness. A mock survey by OCYP personnel may also be scheduled to help you prepare.

Random Audits by OCYP

Random audits of parishes, schools, and early childhood centers (ECCs) are conducted by OCYP personnel to assess ongoing compliance with diocesan safe environment policies and procedures. The audits also help the OCYP determine if additional support or training may be beneficial for you.

If your location is selected for one of these random audits, you will be notified by email. The email will be directed to your pastor and it will also include the principal, ECC director, and SEC. Specific instructions will be provided on what is required and by when.

During COVID-19, OCYP audits have been conducted remotely. When it is safe to do so, SECs can expect that these audits may be done remotely and/or in-person on site. Once the audit findings have been reviewed by the OCYP, an Executive Summary of the findings is provided. Follow-up action may be required if non-compliance is identified.

SAFETY PLANS

Safety Plans are developed to address special situations such as registered sex offenders or serious boundary violations. SECs are notified of the need for these plans and are asked to assist in their development. SECs are expected to help support the parish and/or school implementation of safety plans.

It is important that you are familiar with the following policy dealing with permanent and temporary safety plans: "Safety Plan Policy for Parishes, Early Child Care Centers, Elementary and High Schools." This policy is located in the "Policies" section of the "Child and Youth Protection" portion of the diocesan website.

If you become aware of a registered sex offender without a safety plan at your parish or school, please contact the OCYP to initiate the plan's development. If you become aware of someone at your parish or school that is under investigation by civil authorities for suspicion of sexual abuse of a child, youth, or vulnerable adult, please contact the OCYP to initiate the plan's development.

The Missouri State Highway Patrol maintains an online sex offender registry that can be accessed by anyone. Simply google "Missouri State Highway Patrol" and then click on the link for the "Sex Offender Registry." Once you are on the site, you may search by an actual name or you may enter your parish and/or school address and identify the registered sex offenders that reside near your location(s).

VISITING PRIESTS

Visiting priests must have a letter of suitability from their home diocese or order. The letter of suitability is handled through the Chancellor's office at The Chancery and not at the parish level. If your parish receives a letter, it should be directed to the Chancellor's office.

IMPORTANT POLICIES

SECs should be familiar with each of these policies. The most current version of them will be found in the "Policies" section under the "Child and Youth Protection" area of the diocesan website.

- Safe Environment Program Policies and Procedures
- Digital, Online, and Social Media Communications with Youth Policy
- *Ethics and Integrity in Ministry* (EIM) *Code of Conduct Policy*
- Policy for Response to Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors and Vulnerable Adults
- Policy on Temporary Ministry of 30 Days or More
- Safe Environment Training Requirements for Religious Communities
- Safety Plan Policy for Parishes, Early Child Care Centers, Elementary and High Schools

The VIRTUS® database is used as the official record of compliance with safe environment program requirements.

What is VIRTUS®?	VIRTUS is the brand name for the programs created by The National Catholic Risk Retention Group, Inc. The VIRTUS office is located in Tulsa, Oklahoma.
What does the word "virtus" mean?	The word "virtus" is a Latin word for excellence.
How do I access or contact VIRTUS?	www.virtus.org 1-888-847-8870 (Monday through Friday, 8 am to 5 pm)
How does the Diocese use VIRTUS?	VIRTUS is used in several ways: 1. Pre-registration for live training: *Protecting God's Children®* (PGC) *for Adults* and documentation of training completion 2. Ongoing safety education through monthly training bulletins and online re-certification modules and other assigned training modules 3. Database to track PGC attendance, completion of *Ethics and Integrity in Ministry* (EIM) *Code of Conduct Policy*, and online consent for background checks (BGC) 4. Database allowing us to monitor compliance with safe environment requirements
What functions am I able to perform in VIRTUS as the SEC?	The special "Administration" tab at the top of your account page allows you access for many additional functions that the basic user does not have. Some of these key functions include: 1. Searching the entire diocese for active and inactive users 2. Viewing and editing user accounts associated with your location(s) for compliance with PGC training, completion of the EIM, a current BGC, and completion of online training assignments 3. Running customized reports for your location(s) to monitor compliance 4. Assisting users that have forgotten how to access their accounts, those that need to update their accounts, and those having questions related to their accounts 5. Viewing a list of all live training sessions for the diocese 6. Viewing a list of users pre-registered for PGC workshops in the diocese 7. Accessing printable bulletin archive
What functions does the OCYP perform for me?	Some of the functions that the OCYP performs include: 1. Transfer employees or volunteers to or from our diocese 2. Activate or de-activate user accounts 3. Extend an alert date through ESR for BGC completion 4. Change bulletin start dates for users 5. Change locations and roles for users 6. Assist with a large variety of situations as identified by others
How does a new employee or volunteer pre-register for a PGC workshop?	Pre-registration for PGC must be done online by doing the following: 1. Go to www.virtus.org and click on "First-Time Registrant" on the left. 2. Click on the green arrow for "Begin the registration process." 3. Click on the down arrow to find Kansas City-St. Joseph, highlight it, and hit "select." 4. Follow the instructions to create your User ID and Password and continue the registration process.

	5. During registration, it is possible to view a current listing of available classes. (During COVID-19, live workshops are replaced with two online training modules.) It is important to note that if a new employee or volunteer is registering for the first time as a new VIRTUS account user, online registration will include these 3 steps. 1. Completion of the EIM 2. Selection of a PGC workshop date (unless workshops are suspended) 3. Online consent and entering data for a background screening. Special note: OCYP created sample letters for new employees and new volunteers that are available for you to use or customize and use for your location(s) to explain this process. These forms are found under "Forms" in the "Child and Youth Protection" section of the diocese's website.
If an employee or volunteer has previously attended a PGC workshop and has a VIRTUS account, how do they complete their EIM?	Those having previously attended a PGC workshop do <u>not</u> need to register for a new VIRTUS account. To complete their EIM, they should do the following: 1. Log in to their existing account at <u>www.virtus.org</u>. 2. Find the "Required Documents" box which will be in red. 3. Click on the red link, "You are missing a required document" and complete the module. 4. Please allow approximately 10 minutes for completion.
If an employee or volunteer has previously attended a PGC workshop and has a VIRTUS account, how do they give consent for an updated background check?	Those that have previously attended a PGC workshop do <u>not</u> need to register for a new VIRTUS account. To provide consent for a current BGC, they should do the following **using a laptop or PC:** 1. Log in to their existing account at <u>www.virtus.org</u>. 2. Find the "Background Checks" box which will be in red. 3. Click on the red link, "You are missing a background check." 4. Please allow approximately 5-10 minutes to complete the online consent and enter the data into the secure database of ESR, the screening company used by the diocese.
How do PGC participants print their certificates?	After participants have completed the PGC training, <u>and</u> their accounts have been approved by the diocese, they will receive an email. They may then log back into their account and print their training certificate. To print a certificate at any time, users should: 1. Log in to their account at <u>www.virtus.org</u>. 2. Find the "Training History" box and click on the certificate icon in the box. 3. The certificate can then be printed by clicking on the little box that is found on the right side of the documented training.
How do I locate a VIRTUS user's account to assist them or to check for compliance?	To easily find an individual, do the following: 1. Log in to your account at <u>www.virtus.org</u>. 2. Click on the "Administration" tab at the top of the page. 3. On the left side of the page, locate the "System Administration" section. 4. Click on "User Search" in the "System Administration" section. 5. Type the name of the individual in the box and click

	on the "Go" box. You can search for users by typing only their last name, only their first name, parts of their name, or by email. 6. Locate the correct person from the entry or entries that show and click on their last name. This will bring up their general information. 7. To check compliance with PGC training, click on their "Training" tab. If they have completed the training, it will show under "Training Records." 8. To check compliance with the EIM, click on their "Required Documents" tab. If they have acknowledged the EIM, it will be documented here. 9. To check compliance with the BGC, click on their "Background Check" tab. Special note: Currently, one signed EIM documented in VIRTUS meets the requirements of the OCYP.
What can I do to help someone that has forgotten their password or has trouble logging in to his/her account?	There are several ways to help them. First, you could: 1. Go into their VIRTUS account. 2. Verify with them that the email address is still current. 3. If no email address is listed, ask them for their email address and add that to their account and click on the "save and review" button at the bottom of the screen to ensure your changes were successfully entered and saved. 4. Click on the "Email account info" box to the right of their email address. This will send them a system-generated email to help them get back into their account. Second, it is also possible to have the user go to www.virtus.org and click on the red link, "Need login information." This will guide the user to reset his/her password and/or recover their user id. It is also possible for you to change the password of the users at your location(s). Simply click on the box with their password, delete the digits in the box, and then enter the preferred new password for the user. Be sure to click on the "save and review" button at the bottom of the screen. If the user continues to experience problems, refer them to the VIRTUS help desk number of 1-888-847-8870.

What can I do to help someone that is having difficulty with the BGC process?	To help them, follow these steps:
	1. Go into their VIRTUS account.
	2. Click on the "Background Check" tab at the top of their page.
	3. Several options may appear on their page:
	   a. If there is an entry stating that their next required BGC is due on a date listed in the future or there is no next required BGC date and they do not show a current BGC in VIRTUS, click on the "Set Date" button at the bottom of the page. This will re-set the due date to today's date so that they can complete the BGC.
	   b. If there is an entry on their page that shows the BGC as "pending," the BGC is in progress with ESR so nothing further needs to be done.

	c. If there is an entry on their page that shows the BGC as "incomplete" or "initiated," the user did not go through the entire process required to provide consent. In those cases, they should be encouraged to finish ASAP. If the user tells you that they received an email alert from ESR and they did not complete the BGC by the deadline listed in the email, contact OCYP to request that we extend the alert date for the user. Once OCYP has done this, the user will get a new email alert from ESR and will then be able to complete their BGC by following the instructions in the ESR email. The email will come from ESR or esrcare@esrcheck.com. Please note that you or any user may contact ESR's customer service line for assistance. Special Note: If the user has a volunteer BGC that has not yet expired and now needs to complete an employee BGC, click on the "Set Date" button at the bottom of the page. This will re-set the due date to today's date
How do we contact ESR for assistance with BGC issues?	Employment Screening Resources (ESR) provides support for those experiencing technical difficulty by contacting them at 1-888-999-4474 or at clientsupport@esrcheck.com. They are available Monday through Friday from 8 am to 7 pm.
How do I know when a BGC has been completed and the employee or volunteer is cleared for service?	1. Go into their VIRTUS account. 2. Click on the "Background Check" tab at the top of their page. 3. If there is an entry on this page and it shows "Yes" in the "Complete" field, the BGC has been finished by ESR.
How will I know if there is a BGC with concerns for our parish and/or school?	ESR will "flag" any results with concerns. Flagged accounts are reviewed by OCYP. If there is a concern with any BGC for your location, OCYP will contact you and/or your Parish Pastor/School Principal to discuss the findings and determine the most appropriate plan of action.
What should be done with the copies of the past BGC's run prior to using ESR in VIRTUS?	These files are highly confidential and should be kept under lock and key. Any BGC's run over 5 years ago are no longer valid and do not meet current safe environment requirements. The BGC's that are over 7 years old may be shredded. Please be sure to confidentially destroy them through shredding. They should not be disposed of as you would regular trash.
What should be done if I find an employee or a volunteer with duplicate accounts in VIRTUS?	In these situations, please determine which account should remain in VIRTUS. When you have that information, email Sherry Huffman at huffman@diocesekcsj.org to request she merge the accounts for you.
What is the "View background check criteria for your organization" link?	You may click on this link to view the different BGC types that are available to us in our diocese. Responses to questions asked while entering the data for a BGC trigger the specific type of BGC to be conducted for each user.
How do I know when it is time for me or other users to read a monthly training bulletin?	You will be notified by email when a new training bulletin has been posted to your account to read. It is important that your email address stays current in VIRTUS® so you receive these notices and read your bulletins as they get posted. New bulletins are normally posted in the first 10 days of each month.
How do I access my unread bulletins?	To find your bulletins: 1. Log into your account at www.virtus.org. 2. Find the box titled "Training Bulletins."

	3. If you have unread bulletins it will show in this box so just click on the link to complete them. 4. If you are current on your training bulletins, the box will say, "You are current on your training bulletins."
How does the SEC check training bulletin reading compliance?	One way to do this is to: 1. Log in to your account at www.virtus.org. 2. Click on the "Administration" tab at the top of the page. 3. Locate the "Reports" section on the left side. 4. Click on "Training Reports." 5. Select the "Training bulletin reports." 6. Use the down arrow to select your location(s). 7. Click on the "Continue" box at the bottom of the page. 8. Select either the "Run report to screen" box or the "Run report to Excel" box at the bottom of the page. You may also check training bulletin compliance by running your Master Report.
How do I add the requirement to read monthly training bulletins?	To add the requirement: 1. Find the yellow section of the user's account. 2. Click on the down arrow in the "Continuing Training" section and select "Required to complete continuing training using VIRTUS Online: monthly bulletins." 3. Next, under "Communication Options," be sure there is a check mark for "Receive training bulletin reminders via email." 4. Click on the "Save and Review" box at the bottom of the page to ensure your changes were made. 5. If the user has had an account without bulletins in the past, contact OCYP to change the start date of the bulletins so he/she does not have to complete lots of past bulletins.
How do I delete the requirement to read monthly training bulletins?	To delete the requirement: 1. Find the yellow section of the user's account. 2. Click on the down arrow in the "Continuing Training" section and select "Not required to complete continuing training." 3. Click on the "Save and Review" box at the bottom of the page to ensure your changes were made.
How do I monitor compliance with PGC training, EIM, and BGC's for my location(s)?	A very helpful report to monitor compliance in all 3 areas at the same time is the Master Report. A new Master Report (2021) is available. There are 2 ways to run the new Master Report (2021). The first way is as follows: 1. Log in to your account at www.virtus.org. 2. Click on the "Administration" tab at the top of the page. 3. Under "Quick Links," click on "New Master Report (2021)" at the bottom of the list. The second way is as follows: 1. Log in to your account at www.virtus.org. 2. Click on the "Administration" tab at the top of the page. 3. Locate the "Reports" section on the left side. 4. Click on "Compliance Reports."

	5. Select "Master Report (2021)" at the bottom of the list provided.
	6. Use the down arrow to select your location(s).
	7. Click on the fields you would like to display.
	8. Select either the "Run report to screen" box or the "Run report to Excel" box at the bottom of the page.
	Special note: Detailed, step-by-step instructions for running the Master Report are found in the SEC's password-protected section of the "Child and Youth Protection" area of the diocesan website.
How do I add or delete or edit a location or role for an employee or a volunteer?	These changes can be made by the employee or volunteer if their account has already been approved by the diocese. To make these changes, instruct the employee or volunteer to:
	1. Log in to their account at www.virtus.org.
	2. Locate the box titled "My Info."
	3. Click on the icon in the box and make the necessary changes.
	4. Click on the "Save changes" button at the bottom of the page.
	Local administrators affiliated with the employee or volunteer's account may update this information as well. To update roles/locations, be certain that your location is listed as primary. If it is not, contact the OCYP for assistance.
	If the primary location is not visible in the dropdown box, first add a role and location. Click on the "+Add Role and Location" and select the appropriate role, location, and start date if known. If unknown, just put today's date and click on "Save."
	To edit, click on the role or location highlighted in blue. You can "Save with history" or "Save without history" if it was an incorrect entry.
	If you wish to view inactive roles/locations, click on the "Show inactive" box. To inactivate a role/location and save the history, click on the red circle and update the date and click on "Set." If the role was a known incorrect entry, click on "Remove this role without saving history."
	Important Note: Ending or deleting all roles for a VIRTUS user does not inactivate the account. Contact the OCYP office for in-activations.
How do I move an employee or volunteer from one location in the diocese to another location in the diocese?	This change is made by the OCYP. Please email your request to us at ocyp@diocesekcsj.org.
How do I transfer an employee or volunteer from another diocese to our diocese or vice versa?	These transfers are made by VIRTUS through a request that comes from OCYP. Please email your transfer requests for changes to/from our diocese to ocyp@diocesekcsj.org.
	To ensure VIRTUS has adequate information to complete your transfer request, please provide as much of the following as possible:
	1. Name
	2. User id

	3. Email associated with VIRTUS account 4. Current email if different than email in #3 above 5. Where/When took PGC 6. Role in the receiving parish/school
Why do some employees and volunteers have online re-certification training modules assigned to them?	Employees or volunteers that are required to read the monthly training bulletins will receive notice from VIRTUS to complete online re-certification modules. There are 4 of them. Re-certification modules are assigned by VIRTUS in one of two ways: 1. For new accounts with the requirement to read bulletins, and for those that have just taken PGC, the first module will be assigned one year from PGC training and then one more module on each of the following three years after that. 2. If someone has an existing account and was trained in PGC previously, and they are now given the added requirement to read monthly bulletins, the VIRTUS system tries to "catch them up" and assigns all of the modules at about the same time. These online re-certification modules take from 13-40 minutes to complete. The first module is the longest. You can refer to the "Safe Environment Training" section of this manual for more detail.
May employees or volunteers use smart phones, iPads, or other types of tablets to work with their VIRTUS accounts?	The OCYP has learned that some functions, such as consenting for BGC's, do not work properly with smart phones, iPads, and other types of tablets. If a user is experiencing technical problems, it may be due to using a smart phone or tablet rather than a desktop or laptop computer.
How do I re-activate or de-activate an account in VIRTUS?	This process is handled by the OCYP. Please email your request to us at ocyp@diocesekcsj.org.

COMMUNICATION

SECs oversee safe environment communication for their parishes/schools, including the dissemination of information to leaders and those serving minors. The OCYP communicates information, policy and/or procedural changes, and other important notices to SECs with the expectation that it will be shared locally with the appropriate persons.

The type of information that the OCYP may ask SECs to share includes announcements, flyers, notices, requests for items to be included in parish/school publications and websites, and the like. This includes electronic and print information. As partners with the OCYP, SECs serve as a critical link for important safe environment program information.

Non-Monetary Commitments from 2008 Settlement and 2013-14 Arbitration Proceedings

Posting *Report Abuse* posters and including specific parish bulletin language in every parish bulletin are requirements of these commitments. SECs are required to ensure that the posters and parish bulletins are in compliance with the non-monetary commitments. We must continue to honor these commitments.

Report Abuse Posters

SECs are to ensure that the most current diocesan *Report Abuse* posters are maintained in high traffic areas in parishes and schools. Posters are available for parishes and school-specific posters are available for schools and early childhood centers. The school-specific posters have your school name on them. If you need a new electronic or paper copy, please contact the OCYP.

Parish Bulletins

The following language is to appear in weekly parish bulletins <u>exactly</u> as shown below:

> The Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph is committed to combatting sexual abuse in the Church. If you are a victim of sexual abuse, or if you *observe or suspect* sexual abuse:
>
> 1. Call the Missouri Child Abuse Hotline at 1.800.392.3738 (if the victim is currently under the age of 18), and
> 2. Contact your local law enforcement agency or call 911, and
> 3. After reporting to these civil and law enforcement authorities, report suspected *sexual abuse of a minor or vulnerable adult* to the Diocesan Ombudsman, Joe Crayon, at 816.812.2500 or crayon@ombudsmankcsj.org if the abuse involves a priest, deacon, employee or volunteer of the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph.
>
> The Diocese has a sincere commitment to providing care and healing resources to victims of sexual abuse and their families. Please contact the Victim Advocate, at 816.392.0011 or victimadvocate@diocesekcsj.org for more information.

Special Note about Staff Listings in Parish Bulletins

If your parish bulletin includes a staff listing with OCYP personnel listed, be very sure it reflects the correct name and contact information for our current Victim Advocate and for Joe Crayon, Ombudsman.

Social Media and Electronic Communications

Social media and electronic communications are addressed in "Digital, Online, and Social Media Communications with Youth" policy. A copy of this policy may be found within "Policies" of the "Child and Youth Protection" section of the diocesan website. Please familiarize yourself with this policy.

MANDATORY REPORTING

SECs are expected to understand the requirements for the mandatory reporting of suspected child abuse and neglect and follow the established procedures of the diocese. This includes knowing whom to contact if there is disclosure from an adult victim of abuse.

Policy for Response to Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors and Vulnerable Adults

Section III of this policy addresses how to respond to allegations of sexual abuse of minors and vulnerable adults. A copy of this policy may be found under "Policies" of the "Child and Youth Protection" section of the diocesan website.

This policy includes information on:
- Civil reporting requirements
- Precautionary suspension from ministry
- Precautionary suspension from service
- The role of the Diocesan Independent Review Board (IRB).

Mandated Reporters

Missouri State Law identifies mandated reporters by profession and mandated reporters by situation.

Mandated reporters by profession include such persons as priests, deacons, teachers, counselors, law enforcement personnel, and doctors. This means that these individuals carry the responsibility of being a mandated reporter 24/7 – anytime and anywhere.

Mandated reporters by situation refer to persons that have the care and custody of children. This includes such persons as coaches and volunteers. Their responsibility as mandated reporters is dictated by the situation. While they have the care and custody of minors, they are mandated to report their suspicions.

Under Missouri law, the responsibility of a mandated reporter cannot be delegated to another person. It is a *personal responsibility*. If you have reasonable cause to suspect (not conclusive proof), you are mandated to report. No supervisor or administrator may impede or inhibit this reporting.

The law provides immunity from civil or criminal liability regardless of the outcome of the investigation/family assessment. In other words, you cannot be sued for making a report in good faith. However, failure to report is a Class A misdemeanor.

The Missouri Department of Social Services, Children's Division, now allows mandated reporters to report suspicions of abuse and neglect online in **non-emergency** situations. After creating an online account, you can report these non-emergency situations on their website.

Even if we are not mandated reporters by law, we are all moral and ethical reporters. We have a moral and ethical obligation to report suspicions of abuse and neglect. This includes the reporting of peer-on-peer sexual abuse.

Diocesan Reporting Policy

SECs must thoroughly understand the Diocesan Reporting Policy for addressing suspicions of child abuse and/or neglect. You may need to make a report, or you may need to explain these requirements to others.

The Diocesan Reporting Policy is as follow:

When you **suspect** child abuse and/or neglect:
1. Call the Missouri Child Abuse Hotline 1-800-392-3738.
2. Call Local Law Enforcement or 911 if you believe a child is in immediate danger.
3. Call Joe Crayon, Ombudsman, 816-812-2500, if the report involves a diocesan employee, cleric, or volunteer.

We define immediate danger as any of the following:
1. A threat of imminent harm or violence to the child
2. The perpetrator of abuse lives in the same home as the child
3. A child has an injury requiring immediate medical attention
4. A child is contemplating self-harm, suicide, or harming another person.

We expect you to make your report as soon as possible, but at least within 24 hours. It is also very important that all concerns about signs of grooming or boundary violations be shared with the Ombudsman.

We strongly encourage all individuals to follow their instincts about situations. The protection of children is our number one priority. It is always best to err on the side of protecting children by reporting. If you see something, say something.

The Office of Child and Youth Protection is available to assist you and others in sorting through situations that may seem unclear to you. If you need guidance on reviewing a situation, or if you need assistance in making a hotline call, please contact us as soon as possible.

Vulnerable Adults

Suspicions of abuse or neglect of a vulnerable adult should be reported to the Missouri Adult Abuse and Neglect Hotline at 1-800-392-0210. Reports are investigated by the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS).

If the report involves a diocesan employee, cleric, or volunteer and is *sexual* in nature, your report should also be made to the Ombudsman, Joe Crayon, at 816-812-2500.

If the report involves a diocesan employee, cleric, or volunteer and is *non-sexual* in nature, your report should also be made to the Vicar General of the diocese, Father Charles Rowe.

VICTIM SERVICES

SECs are encouraged to become familiar with the services that are available for those affected by sexual abuse by members of the Church. You may serve as a resource person to guide others to these services.

The *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* addresses the obligation of the Church for healing and reconciliation with victims/survivors of sexual abuse. Article 1 of the *Charter* calls us to reach out to victims/survivors and their families, whether the abuse by a member of the Church was recent or occurred many years ago. This outreach may include the provision of counseling, spiritual assistance, support groups, healing services, and other social services.

The Victim Assistance Coordinator's role is to provide care and compassion to survivors of abuse and their families as they travel through the journey of healing. The Victim Assistance Coordinator (VAC) makes referrals and coordinates treatment to address the unique needs of each survivor and his/her family members. The VAC is also responsible to implement community outreach services to those who have suffered as a result of abuse by members of the Church.

When victims or family members choose to share their personal experience of abuse, we make every effort to honor and respect their rights and support them with care and compassion.