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Training Requirements

All Church Personnel¹ are required to complete Safe Environment training as outlined in the *Policy for the Prevention of & Response to Sexual Abuse, Sexual Misconduct & Sexual Harassment*.

New Church Personnel

All new Church Personnel are required to complete the *Protecting God's Children* course within 90 days of beginning service.

Returning Church Personnel

All returning Church Personnel who have completed the *Protecting God's Children* course or the *Called to Protect for Ministries* course must complete a Safe Environment refresher course every three years.

This training must be completed by May 31st of that year. 

Parishes and Schools

Each parish and school **must** offer the *Protecting God's Children* course to their parish or school community so that every new employee and volunteer that meets the criteria has the opportunity to take the course at your location.

The course must be offered before May 31st every year. 

¹ Church Personnel is defined as clergy, employees and volunteers with ongoing unsupervised contact with minors & vulnerable adults.

Protecting God's Children Facilitators

Each parish, school and agency of the Archdiocese of Seattle, should have at least one certified *Protecting God's Children* facilitator available. A *Protecting God's Children* facilitator will assist you in meeting the Safe Environment training requirements for your employees, volunteers, and students.

All trainers must obtain an endorsement from the Pastor, Priest Administrator, Pastoral Coordinator or Principal who must also sign the application. Clergy who wish to become trainers must obtain prior approval from Archbishop Sartain.

Approved trainers will participate in a one-day *Train the Facilitator* certification that will prepare them to lead a *Protecting God's Children* course training in parishes, schools or other archdiocesan agencies. After attending the *Train the Facilitator* certification class, they will be prepared to facilitate a *Protecting God's Children* course.

No particular educational background is needed to be a facilitator. Successful facilitators may include clergy, religious, employees, volunteers or parishioners. Teachers, counselors, caseworkers or health care professionals also make great trainers.

Qualities of a Successful Safe Environment *Protecting God's Children*:

- Comfortable speaking and presenting in public
- Level headed under stress
- Emotionally and psychologically stable
- Compassionate
- Reasonably objective about sexual abuse
- Comfortable discussing sexual issues
- Able to maintain confidentiality
- Motivated to participate in the program
- Current in Safe Environment training
- Willing to attend training updates

If your parish/school does NOT have a certified facilitator on-site:

Notify the SEP Office if you want to schedule a *Protecting God's Children* course but do not have a facilitator. The SEP Office will attempt to locate a facilitator available to facilitate a class at the date and time requested.

When a facilitator who is willing to host a class for your location is identified, you will communicate with the facilitator all of the logistics. You should speak with the facilitator at least one week in advance for final confirmation.

Training Program Descriptions

Protecting God's Children

This three-hour training is designed to teach participants how to recognize the signs of abuse; how to respond to suspected abuse; and how to keep our ministries, programs, and schools safe. Required for clergy, employees, and volunteers with ongoing unsupervised contact with minors and vulnerable adults. Recommended for all volunteers. Training is facilitated by a certified facilitator of the Archdiocese of Seattle.

ONLINE REFRESHER COURSES

An online abuse prevention training required every three years as a follow-up to the *Protecting God's Children* course. The online renewal will coincide with your background check renewal date (which is also required every three years).

Scheduling a Class

The *Protecting God's Children* course can be scheduled by any Safe Environment Coordinator or certified facilitator. There can be no closed or private classes unless cleared by the Safe Environment Office.

You must coordinate the logistics with the facilitator and advertise the course in appropriate manners.

The *Protecting God's Children* course must be registered into Virtus. You cannot hold a class that has not been registered.

Classes entered into Virtus allows all participants to register.


To register a *Protecting God's Children* course on Virtus:

1. Sign into Virtus with your username and password
2. Navigate to the *Awareness Session* tab and press on "Session Listing"
3. Click on "Add a new session"
4. Enter all required information, including:
 - Training Title (Protecting God's Children)
 - Language
 - Location
 - Start date
 - Start Time
 - Number of days (always list one)
 - Maximum size of class
 - Length (always list three hours)
 - Facilitator name
 - Contact Name
 - Contact Number
5. Use this space as a means to communicate important notes to participants such as the location address, or if the class will be in a certain part of the school building, etc.
6. Click "Add Session"

Registering for Classes

Encourage employees and volunteers required to take *Protecting God's Children* to register for it online. By registering online in advance, they will set-up a participant profile for themselves and reduce the amount of data entry required by the parish or school.

To register online:

1. On any computer with internet access, go to: <https://www.virtusonline.org>
2. Click "Registration" 
3. Select "View a list of Sessions"
4. Select the Archdiocese of Seattle as the location
5. A list of the classes will be chronologically listed
6. Click on "Start Registration"

Participants may update their profile at any time through by logging onto Virtus with the username and password they create.

Please be intentional about what name you register under. This is the name you will use to login to the system to take future renewal courses.

Hosting a Successful Protecting God's Children Course

1. Schedule ahead and give sufficient notice.

- A minimum of two weeks of advertisement is recommended
- Advertise the course well and send-out reminders
- Make use of the weekly bulletin, parish or school newsletter, calendar of events on websites, etc.

2. Plan for Comfort.

- Make sure that there are enough chairs at the course<sup>[L]
[SEP]</sup>
- Make sure that the temperature in the room is agreeable
- Check to ensure that all attendees can see and hear the videos<sup>[L]
[SEP]</sup>

3. Ensure all class logistics are addressed.^{[L] [SEP]}

- Have Sign-in sheets printed prior to facilitating the class
- Have extra Registration Forms printed
- Have Post-registration instructions available
- Have handouts printed
- Have pens available for participants<sup>[L]
[SEP]</sup>
- Make sure the video equipment is working. The course requires a DVD player or a projector with a laptop. Equipment must also have sufficient audio so participants can clearly hear video.
- **Remind everyone to sign-in!**
- Snacks and beverages are recommended

If possible, set-up a computer (with internet access) at the registration/sign-in desk. When people who have not registered for the class arrive, you can have them do so right there.

After the Course

Confirming Attendance

The attendance of all participants needs to be confirmed in the Virtus database immediately. If attendance is not confirmed, participants do not receive credit for the class. **Coordinator and Facilitators are no longer responsible for this.**

The Safe Environment Office will confirm attendance. In order for our offices to do this, you must send in the roster promptly after the course has finished to:

ATTN: Safe Environment Office
710 9th Avenue
Seattle, WA 98104

- Facilitators **MUST** enforce that all participants sign-in on the class roster. Failure to do so will result in the participant not receiving a certificate of attendance.
- Any participants who did not register online, must also fill out the sign-in and manually fill in any missing information.
- All sign-ins must be sent to the Safe Environment Office for archiving.

You should coordinate with the facilitator to ensure that these measures have been taken and that the roster has been sent off to the SEP Office.

If a Participant Does Not Sign-In

If a participant cannot prove attendance, he/she does not receive credit for the course. This is why it is imperative that facilitators instruct attendees to sign in.

- If a participant fails to sign-in on the roster at the training, they must complete a "Proof of Attendance Form." This form must be signed by a witness and a supervisor. You can find this form under the Coordinators Toolkit webpage under the "forms" tab.
- After the form is completed and returned, the local Coordinator will need to send the form to the SEP Office so that the participant will be given credit for their attendance.

Church Personnel with Developmental Disabilities

Many of our parishes provide employment opportunities to members of the community with developmental disabilities. As an employee of the Archdiocese of Seattle, they must complete the *Protecting God's Children* course and their online refresher every three years. However, depending on their level of comprehension, the adult *Protecting God's Children* course may be overwhelming.

In cases where an employee or volunteer is not capable of attending a public *Protecting God's Children* course due to a developmental disability, have someone sit down with them individually to discuss the material. This should be facilitated by someone who understands the individual and has a good grasp of what the individual can or cannot understand so the information can be adapted to their level of comprehension. This can be done by a supervisor, family member, Person-to-Person Assistant, or caseworker.

Depending on the ability of the individual to understand the material, the facilitator can talk through the *Protecting God's Children* handouts or talk to the individual about protecting themselves and where to go to get help.

After they have completed their one-on-one training, the Coordinator must give them credit in Virtus.

Contact the Safe Environment Program for information or guidance.

It is important to remember that these individuals are also considered Vulnerable Adults. Not only do we want them to be watchful of warning signs of abuse in the community, we also want them to understand how to keep themselves safe.

Online Refresher Courses

The online refresher is only required every three years.

There are several online courses used to fulfill the requirement to complete annual Safe Environment training. These courses will provide refresher training for all Church Personnel who have completed *Protecting God's Children* within the previous year and can be completed at any computer with Internet access.

Church Personnel must have completed the *Protecting God's Children* course before being granted access to any of the Online Refresher Courses. Church Personnel should be reminded that online refresher courses coincide with the background check renewals (they are only required every three years).

Exceptions for Completing Safe Environment Training

Training from another Diocese

If a member of your community has completed the *Protecting God's Children* course in another (arch)diocese, he/she will receive credit for that class if they provide a Certificate of Completion, or some other proof of attendance. If they do not have a Certificate of Completion or some other proof of attendance, they are welcome to contact their former parish, school, or diocesan Safe Environment office to obtain verification. You can also call Virtus and have their records transferred into the Archdiocese of Seattle Virtus database.

If they cannot provide any verification of attendance or Virtus cannot verify that the participant ever took the course, they will need to complete the *Protecting God's Children* course here.

We cannot honor any other diocesan safe environment trainings. Only *Protecting God's Children* will be accepted in the Archdiocese of Seattle at this time.

No credit can be given for Refresher Courses completed in another diocese or Independent Organization.

Other Abuse Prevention Training

We are very fortunate in the Archdiocese of Seattle that we have many counselors, teachers, and nurses with prior abuse prevention training. However, unless they have completed *Protecting God's Children* here or in another diocese (and can provide verification), we cannot waive the requirement. This is for several reasons.

- Firstly, the training requirement is defined in the *Policy for the Prevention of & Response to Sexual Abuse, Sexual Misconduct & Sexual Harassment*, which was promulgated by Archbishop Brunett in October 2007. We have a legal responsibility to follow this policy.
- Secondly, any training received outside of the Archdiocese of Seattle will not include policies and procedures implemented in the archdiocese in terms of facility, programs, and reporting. We want all Church Personnel adhering to the same standards so that we can clearly identify when someone is behaving outside of those standards inappropriately.
- Thirdly, the overall philosophy of the Safe Environment Program is to unite all employees and applicable volunteers in order to work toward the prevention of abuse. It is important that all Church Personnel complete the same training and are familiar with the same language and training principles included the material.