



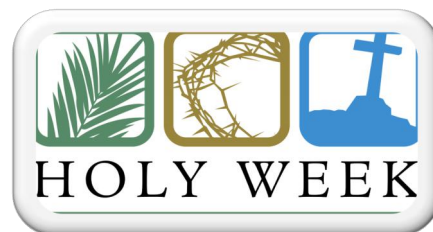
Archdiocese of Seattle

SAFE ENVIRONMENT PROGRAM

Protecting the Young and Vulnerable

SEP Newsletter ~ April 2023

Holy Week is here already! Let us pray during this most sacred time that we continue to create safe environments for those who are vulnerable, protecting them and helping them lead lives of virtue and love.



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[For more information or questions please email sep@seattlearch.org](mailto:sep@seattlearch.org) or call 206-274-3188



Annual Compliance Verification Forms

All Parishes and Schools are required to complete an annual Compliance Verification Form.

- ◆ The forms have been revised this year so please read carefully.
 - **Verification Forms** *Blank form provided with this email.*
- ◆ Please run a Master Report and Background Check Report for your location(s) to ensure compliance.
 - **Master Report** *Instructions provided with this email. Will help you ensure that all employees and volunteers are up to date and compliant with SEP requirements.*
 - **Background Check Report** *Instructions provided with this email. Will help you clean up any background check errors.*
- ◆ Be sure to follow up with a signature from pastor (for parish forms) or principal (for school forms). Email completed/signed forms to sep@seattlearch.org. PLEASE DO NOT MAIL.

VERIFICATION FORMS DUE May 31st!!

Teaching Safety for Schools & Faith Formation/Youth Ministry

New Children's Safety Program coming this Fall!!

School teachers and principals have asked for a new Teaching Safety Program and we heard you!

A task force of six members (principals & vice principal) from primary and secondary schools around the Archdiocese researched options and settled on an excellent program from the Archdiocese of Omaha. We will begin using the program this October.

- **Circle of Grace Program** Grades K through 12
- **Schools** Lessons required annually in October and March as usual. Virtual training will be provided for those teaching the lessons. Great resources will be available too!
- **Parish Faith Formation** Lessons required annually in March as usual. Virtual training will be provided in November for those teaching the lessons. Great resources will be available too!

WATCH FOR MORE INFORMATION COMING SOON!!



New Employees - Managing SEP Requirements

All new hires are required to complete the Safe Environment requirements as part of their employment. Non-compliance can result in termination of employment. Some gentle reminders:

- ◆ All adult employees must create a profile in Virtus if they do not already have one. *Please always search Virtus active and inactive users to avoid creating a duplicate profile.*
- ◆ Existing user? Check that the requirements are current. If not, have the new hire update as needed.
- ◆ New user? Provide the Instructions for Creating a Virtus Profile (click here). This is a great help for new users!
- ◆ Remind all new employees of the requirements for Safe Environment:
 - **Completed Criminal Background Check** Due: on or before first day of work.
 - **Read and Sign the Safe Environment Policies** Due: on or before first day of work.
 - **Complete *Protecting God's Children* Class** Due: Within 30 days of hire.
- ◆ Monitor compliance and follow up promptly if requirements are not completed promptly.
- ◆ Background checks and ongoing training renewed every three years.

Virtus Clean-Up *Please help me to get Virtus profiles as accurate as we can!*

Our Virtus database needs a lot of clean-up. One major area is in roles and locations.

Update Roles & Locations: please update roles and locations regularly as needed. Inactivate old information; add new information.

EDUCATOR is only used for covenanted Catholic School teachers, whether full time or part time. Please make changes for a user who is not a Catholic School teacher. "Educator" implies that the user is employed by the Catholic School.

EMPLOYEE(Parish/Parochial) is used for all parish or school hired staff other than Educators. EXAMPLE: school teaching aide, school custodian, school librarian (unless a covenanted teacher), office assistant, parish faith formation director, maintenance staff, parish musician, administrative staff, etc.

Substitute teachers are hired and managed through the Office of Catholic Schools sub-pool and should not be listed at the school location. If a teacher is *hired locally by the school* as a substitute teacher (not part of OCS sub pool) then the employee is considered an Educator for that location if contracted, or an Employee for that location if not contracted.

Clergy, Seminarians, Candidates for Ordination are managed through the Office of Vicar for Clergy. Please add the OVC location if it is not already in the clergy's profile.

VOLUNTEER is used for all non-employee users at a parish location. **PARENT VOLUNTEER** indicates that the user is volunteering at the parish school. It may be that a person volunteers in both the parish and the school, in which case there would be an entry for each, with the Primary Role noted appropriately. **FAITH FORMATION/ YOUTH MINISTRY VOLUNTEER** indicates any volunteer working in FF/YM regardless of their job.



SEP Policy Procedures - Clarification of some Important Procedures

There has been a lot of confusion and misconception historically about roles and how to determine if a person is subject to the Safe Environment requirements. Please *see the attached guidelines* to help assist you in deciding the best course of action for a given role.

- **Parish Apostolates** Liturgical and non-liturgical roles
- **Non-Archdiocesan Organizations/Private Groups** Non-profits, community groups, private parties, etc.
- **Independent Contractors & Vendors** Electricians, plumbers, custodians, vendors, etc.
- **Minors** Minors working with younger children as volunteers or employees
- **Flagged Background Checks** BGCs returned with criminal history

Remember, these are guidelines and there are always exceptions. Please don't hesitate to contact SEP for further assistance when needed!

Miscellaneous Information

- ♦ **Do you have a new SEP local coordinator??** Please notify the SEP office at the Archdiocese so the new coordinator gets on the contacts list for communications and is offered training.
- ♦ **Virtual coordinator training** is available as refresher training too, if you'd like to bolster your expertise of the system! While this training is optional it provides the opportunity to ask questions and receive database/policy training. We can also share best practices in managing your location's Safe Environment program. Training takes about 2 1/2 hours. Please contact sep@seattlearch.org to schedule a session.
- ♦ **ParishStaq - for Parishes:** local coordinators are now getting notifications from Virtus for all new users. Please review the new profile for accuracy of information and clean-up as needed especially the roles and locations field. Once your parish has transitioned to using ParishStaq you will need to sync all new user Virtus profiles. *See instructions provided with this email.*
- ♦ **Virtus - Instructions** for users or local coordinators: Instructions for creating a new profile in Virtus, renewing a background check, creating various reports, etc. are available in English and Spanish. Eventually they will be on the website, but for now, if you need these please email sep@seattlearch.org and I will send you the PDFs.

For further questions, please email sep@seattlearch.org or call 206-274-3188.



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*You guys are the best! Thank
you for all you do to help make
our Safe Environment Program
one of the best in the US!*