


1




CREATING AND MAINTAINING A SAFE ENVIRONMENT FOR CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

Review and Revision

- ✓ Policy first established after the 2002 Charter of the USCCB to address the scandal of child sex abuse committed by clergy and others
- ✓ Each individual is a child of God; the ADOM is committed to the safety and well-being of its children and vulnerable adults
- ✓ The ADOM implements procedures to minimize risk as well as build and foster a culture that creates a safe environment
- ✓ The ADOM does not tolerate abuse or neglect of anyone
- ✓ It will comply with civil and canon (church) law
- ✓ It will promote healing for those who have been harmed
- ✓ It will provide education, training and guidance
- ✓ It will work to prevent abuse of minors or vulnerable adults with justice and mercy towards all.


2



CREATING AND MAINTAINING A SAFE ENVIRONMENT FOR CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

- ✓ Based on the 2018 revision of the USCCB's Charter, initially published in 2002
- ✓ Clarifies role of Safe Environment Director and comprehensive responsibility of Archdiocesan Contact Person
- ✓ **Biggest change:** roles of volunteers and corresponding Safe Environment requirements based on role's unsupervised access to children or vulnerable adults
- ✓ Confirms that if an employee or volunteer has more than one service role, the Safe Environment requirements of the more stringent are always required
- ✓ Creates a separate policy to categorize and assign SE requirements for volunteer roles (Excel tool to assist this task and to be used for audit purposes)
- ✓ Requires that Virtus initial training be completed ON OR BEFORE first day of employment or volunteer service

3



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Review and Revision

- ✓ Consistent with the requirements of the Charter, the ADOM will continue publication of its policy on the web, the phone number for Victim Assistance, the phone number for reporting allegations and will document this publication. *Parishes are requested to post policy on parish web site and to post the poster with phone number of Victim Assistance and phone number of Safe Environment Director*


In order to maintain priestly faculties within the ADOM:

- ✓ **Priests providing assistance in parishes (supply priests) with faculties for 3 months or longer MUST be fingerprinted, complete initial VIRTUS training and each month, complete the VIRTUS bulletin**
- ✓ **Assigned priests in any archdiocesan entity MUST be fingerprinted, complete initial VIRTUS training and each month, complete the VIRTUS bulletin**

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- ✓ **All lay employees and all assigned permanent deacons MUST be fingerprinted, complete initial VIRTUS training and each month, complete the VIRTUS bulletin**

4




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- ✓ Retired INCARDINATED PRIESTS no longer need to read bulletins once they retire. Some, because of health reasons who no longer are active in a parish, may have the fingerprinting requirement waived. *(applies ONLY to ADOM's own priests)*
 - Incardinated = ordained for the Archdiocese of Miami, or formally accepted by the ADOM as a priest of Miami
 - Extern = ordained for any other arch/diocese in the world
 - Religious = ordained as a member of a religious Order (Jesuit, Carmelite, Passionist, etc)

- ✓ Permanent deacons, when retired, are no longer have faculties and are not required to fulfill SE requirements
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- ✓ Clarification that church personnel may provide transportation for unaccompanied children ONLY with written consent of parent, provided to school/parish PRIOR to time of transportation


5



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- ✓ Policy includes a list of “behaviors that raise serious concerns.” To this was added “excessive involvement with children, etc” as this could be, or lead to, grooming children to be vulnerable to abuse
- ✓ Continues to direct clergy, employees and volunteers regarding the mandatory reporting requirement to Department of Children and Families (DCF), by phone 1-800-962-2873 or via the web, as well as contact the ADOM Safe Environment Director at (305) 215-6635
- ✓ Safe Environment Director provides the reporter with a form for written report of allegation
- ✓ Reporting to FL Department of Education (DOE) may be required
- ✓ Contact information for reporting an allegation against any bishop or archbishop is included
- ✓ Chancellor for Administration is responsible for the Safe Environment program; questions about the implementation of the Policy should be directed to the Chancellor for Administration
- ✓ Policy includes a list of disqualifying offenses; this list has been updated.

6




CREATING AND MAINTAINING A SAFE ENVIRONMENT FOR CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

Review and Revision

- ✓ What are the safe environment requirements that are mandated for all clergy and employees of the Archdiocese of Miami?
 - ✓ FINGERPRINTS every five (5) years to produce a background screening; monitoring (24/7) by FDLE if arrested
- ✓ Initial on-line VIRTUS training, approximately 90 minutes to complete, mandated before beginning service
- ✓ Reading and responding to questions on VIRTUS monthly educational bulletins; all on-line
- ✓ Requirements for VOLUNTEERS depends on the role of the volunteer and its unsupervised access to children or vulnerable adults

7



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Review and Revision

If duties are assigned to any volunteer that include the care or supervision of children or vulnerable adults, the volunteer is then classified as a *Covered Volunteer* and the requirements for *Covered Volunteer* as defined in this policy, including fingerprinting and background screening and VIRTUS training, are required, as defined in this policy.


All Covered Volunteers must fulfill the safe environment requirements as outlined in this policy (which includes background screening and initial Virtus, but not necessarily Virtus bulletins).

Covered Volunteer
One whose duties include care or contact with children or vulnerable adults.

Fingerprinting and background screened are required, along with the Virtus initial training. However, compliance with reading the monthly Virtus bulletins depending on whether the individual regularly has unsupervised contact with children or vulnerable adults.

Covered Volunteer: shall mean any unpaid person who is engaged in or involved in any Archdiocesan institution or parish activity and who is entrusted with the care or supervision of children or vulnerable adults.

8



CREATING AND MAINTAINING A SAFE ENVIRONMENT FOR CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

Review and Revision

SAFE ENVIRONMENT REQUIREMENTS FOR VOLUNTEER ROLES

POLICY
 Recognizing that each individual is created by God, the Archdiocese of Miami is committed to the safety and well-being of its children and vulnerable adults and implements procedures to minimize risk as well as build and foster a culture that creates a safe environment.
 This summary table is intended to better assist the parishes and schools with understanding when a particular individual is subject to background screening and/or VIRTUS training pursuant to the Safe Environment Policy. This may be used as an internal reference.
 Any questions about the Safe Environment Policy or this summary table should be directed to the Chancellor for Administration. *If an employee or volunteer falls within two of the below categories, they must satisfy the more stringent screening requirements.*

Church Personnel	Fingerprint Background Screening	Initial Virtus Training Course	Virtus Monthly Bulletins/Modules
All Clergy, assigned or with faculties	Yes	Yes	Yes
All Employees	Yes	Yes	Yes
School Volunteers	Yes	Yes	Yes
Director or leader of any school ministries	Yes	Yes	Yes
Classroom representative or room parent; volunteer who regularly tutors "one on one" with a child even in classroom setting	Yes	Yes	Yes
Other school volunteers who are entrusted with the care or supervision of minors (<i>which includes coaches</i>)	Yes	Yes	Yes
To chaperone a field trip	Yes	Yes	No
Other General school volunteer without unsupervised contact with children	Yes	Yes	No
Parish and school advisory roles including School Advisory Board, High	Yes	Yes	No


Volunteer roles

What are the Safe Environment requirements of various volunteer roles?

Depends on their unsupervised access to children or vulnerable adults!

Address questions to the Chancellor for Administration

9



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Review and Revision


Separate Policy outlines the safe environment requirements for VOLUNTEERS depending on their volunteer role:

For example....

FINGERPRINTING + INITIAL VIRTUS + VIRTUS MONTHLY BULLETINS

- All lay employees, all assigned priests, supply priests with faculties of 3 months or more, all assigned permanent deacons
- All volunteers who are **leaders** of any parish or school ministry
- Volunteers who regularly tutor "one on one" with a child even in classroom setting with others present
- Chaperone on school field trips, day trips or overnight
- Volunteer for youth ministry
- Catechist teaching religious education class
- Scout troop leader
- Volunteer children's choir director
- Vendor providing direct service to children (counseling, substitute teachers, after-school care givers)

10



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For example....

FINGERPRINTING + INITIAL VIRTUS + ~~VIRTUS MONTHLY BULLETINS~~

- General school volunteer without unsupervised contact with children
- Parish and School advisory board roles, Parish Pastoral Council, Parish Finance Council, School Advisory Board, High School Board of Directors, Home and School, etc
- Ushers in church or Volunteers in parish or school responsible for handling or accessing cash or electronic payments
- Eucharistic minister, visiting at home or hospital
- Volunteers in organizations that provide events specifically for children but do not have unsupervised contact with children
- General volunteer in religious education without unsupervised contact with children
- Volunteers for parish carnivals

If an employee or volunteer has more than one service role, the Safe Environment requirements of the more stringent are always required

11



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For example....

FINGERPRINTING + INITIAL VIRTUS + ~~VIRTUS MONTHLY BULLETINS~~

- Eucharistic Minister or lector, serving only at Mass
- Volunteers for prison ministry (the prison system requires fingerprints)
- Sacristan, without unsupervised access to children
- Cantor, adult choir member
- Participant of adult-only ministry such as marriage preparation
- Attending a school presentation, musical, pageant, etc.
- Parent attending general school or classroom event
- Vendors/contractors without direct contact with children
- Presenters at career day or other school event and repair persons, as long as they are accompanied by Church Personnel who are fully screen/trained

If an employee or volunteer has more than one service role, the Safe Environment requirements of the more stringent are always required

12



CREATING AND MAINTAINING A SAFE ENVIRONMENT FOR CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

Review and Revision

In an effort to guard the safety of Vulnerable Persons under the care of the Archdiocese, all Church Personnel, ages 18 and older, will be required to submit a completed Criminal Background Check Form as well as a complete set of fingerprints so as to facilitate a criminal background investigation. Eligibility for employment, volunteer work, or ministry will be contingent and conditioned upon a satisfactory background investigation. This background investigation will be updated every five (5) years. This policy applies even if an individual has been cleared through an FBI or FDLE check conducted by their employer or another entity.


Volunteers under the age of 18 are not allowed to have unsupervised access to children, youth or vulnerable adults. This includes youth ministers, coaches, mentors, scout leaders, babysitters, etc. These individuals who may assist with children, youth and vulnerable adults must be immediately supervised by a volunteer or employee who has been VIRTUS trained, has maintained compliance with VIRTUS bulletins, has successfully completed a Level 2 Background Check and has signed a Pledge to Promote Safe Environment.

Minor Volunteers serving in summer camp programs
Because church and school volunteers under the age of 18 are not allowed to have unsupervised access to children, youth or vulnerable adults, normally they are not VIRTUS trained or screened for criminal history. However, in 2015 the Florida Department of Children and Families required minors working or volunteering in summer camps to pass a background check (fingerprinting) and it is now included as part of the Safe Environment Policy.

Summer camp minor volunteers are the exception and must be fingerprinted as required by FL DCF.

MINOR volunteers are not screened because they are not allowed to have UNSUPERVISED contact with children, youth or vulnerable adults. They may assist – but must always be supervised by employee (in schools) or employee or volunteer (in other settings) who is fully screened and trained including bulletins.

13



CREATING AND MAINTAINING A SAFE ENVIRONMENT FOR CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

Stay in compliance...

Renewing Fingerprints/Background Screening/bulletins

We are reminding priests and deacons to update their prints with an e-mail reminder 3 months before expiration.

Lay employees and volunteers need to be reminded when their prints are expiring... which means a regular review of compliance.


*Are you the safe environment coordinator or responsible administrator?
Your help is needed!*

A Master List can be run from VIRTUS that provides a roster of employees or volunteers, along with the elements of compliance

- 1. Fingerprints,**
- 2. Initial VIRTUS training,**
- 3. VIRTUS monthly bulletins**

Remember 1, 2, and 3 for all clergy & employees

14



CREATING AND MAINTAINING A SAFE ENVIRONMENT FOR CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

Review and Revision

FOCUS AND TRAINING ON AUDITING COMPLIANCE WITH SAFE ENVIRONMENT REQUIREMENTS FOR VOLUNTEERS.


Remember, all employees and all clergy, assigned or serving in the parish with faculties with 3 months of longer must fulfill all requirements (chancery can confirm length of faculties):

1. fingerprints every five years to maintain background screening,
2. Complete the initial Virtus training (now on-line, about 90 minutes) BEFORE beginning employment, assignment,
3. Read bulletins every month (compliant if no more than 1 bulletin is pending)

Volunteers' safe environment requirements are defined by role. Refer to ADOM Policy: Safe Environment Requirements for Volunteer Roles (Feb 2025)

Audit Tool "matches" the structure of this policy
Refer any questions to Sister Elizabeth (eworley@theadom.org)

15



CREATING AND MAINTAINING A SAFE ENVIRONMENT FOR CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

Review and Revision

Separate Policy outlines the safe environment requirements for VOLUNTEERS depending on their volunteer role.


Obtain list of names/DOB/SS of all parish or school volunteers from the ministry leaders in parish and school). Enter the names/DOB/SS (copy and paste from the ELECTRONIC DATA provided by the ministry leader where the volunteer serves or type in the name/DOB/SS into the section of the audit tool that matches the ROLE of the volunteer as per the policy.

Verify compliance (requirements in HEADER for each section) as per the policy/audit tool based on the ROLE and then determine compliance for each individual according to requirements of the ROLE.

Direct the volunteer and/or the ministry leader where the volunteer serves to quickly get compliance or CEASE using the volunteer.

If volunteer has multiple roles, the MOST STRINGENT REQUIREMENTS PREVAIL FOR THE VOLUNTEER.

16



CREATING AND MAINTAINING A SAFE ENVIRONMENT FOR CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS


Message for Ministry Leaders

You received a file titled MESSAGE for Ministry Leaders. This is an email prepared for you to send to the parish DRE, the chair of the Parish Council, the Chair of the Finance Council, Chair of the School Advisory Board, the School Principal – or anyone in parish or school who oversees and is responsible for supervision of VOLUNTEERS.

They will need to provide information to you electronically – so you can copy and paste into the audit tool and determine if the individuals are in compliance with the requirements based on their volunteer role.

Remember, if a volunteer has more than one role, the requirement that are the most stringent are the ones to use for that individual when auditing.

17



CREATING AND MAINTAINING A SAFE ENVIRONMENT FOR CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

Message for Ministry Leaders

Look for assistance from the various ministry leaders to maintain a list of ACTIVE volunteers

Use the Audit tool to list the ACTIVE VOLUNTEERS into the various categories (ROLES) in order to determine the requirements for each ROLE, and to determine the compliance of the volunteer.


Some active volunteers DO NOT NEED ANY SAFE ENVIRONMENT REQUIREMENTS.

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18




CREATING AND MAINTAINING A SAFE ENVIRONMENT FOR CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS *Homework for May and June*

We are hoping you will be gathering a list of ACTIVE VOLUNTEERS. The Virtus Master list will be a source of information – but the list coming from those who supervise volunteers will be better positioned to identify who remains as **active volunteers**.

Some active volunteers DO NOT NEED ANY SAFE ENVIRONMENT REQUIREMENTS. These folks should be deactivated in Virtus database AND fingerprint database.

Remember – this year we had the extra work to identify volunteers on the list but who were no longer active. Volunteers are included on the list only if they are active And other former volunteers, now inactive, will be deactivated in VIRTUS.

19



CREATING AND MAINTAINING A SAFE ENVIRONMENT FOR CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS *A Review and Revision*

Some active volunteers DO NOT NEED ANY SAFE ENVIRONMENT REQUIREMENTS. These folks should be deactivated in Virtus database AND fingerprint database.

If an employee or volunteer has more than one service role, the Safe Environment requirements of the more stringent are always required.

Role of the Volunteer and the unsupervised access to children or vulnerable adults the ROLE provides will determine what SAFE ENVIRONMENT requirements apply.


What would you expect for one who handles money?

What would you expect for one whose role has the adult alone with children or supervising children?

What would you expect for the leader of a ministry; or the chair of a board?

What would you expect for an adult who provides ministry to adults?

20



CREATING AND MAINTAINING A SAFE ENVIRONMENT FOR CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS *A Review and Revision*

AUDIT TOOL
demonstration

21

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS



Thank you!

22