

## **Notification of Child Protection Policy, OPCYP Compliance Requirements and Mandatory Training**

As part of our ongoing efforts to ensure the safety of all children in the Diocese and to carry out the mandates set forth by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' Charter for the Protection of Children/Young People, this notification features the diocesan Policy on the Protection of Children/Young People and Prevention of Sexual Misconduct and/or Child Abuse (Policy) and information on how this Policy relates to your role as a member of our diocesan family. The Policy is primarily a formal statement recognizing that all children have the right to be safe and protected from harm in any and all Church environments.

Diocesan policy requires that all adult personnel be fully compliant with the requirements of the Office for the Protection of Children/Young People (OPCYP) before beginning a work or youth related ministry. "Personnel" includes every priest, deacon, religious sister or brother, seminarian and adult employee of the Diocese (regardless of the individual's contact with children), in addition to all adult volunteers (with substantial contact with children).

For all adult personnel, full compliance is a condition of employment and ministry and includes the completion of the **electronic OPCYP application**, clearance of the background checks, and the attendance to the initial and ongoing safe-environment training. It is important to note that there are slight differences between the background check requirements for employees versus volunteers with substantial contact with children. More information regarding the specific differences and instructions to complete the electronic application may be obtained from the liaison that has been established at your parish or school, which is your immediate contact with regards to compliance questions.

New and returning volunteers will need to receive the OPCYP instructions from the liaison. Once the application is completed (20-25 minutes) and the documents signed through DocuSign, it will automatically be sent to the parish liaison to review and approve the application/paperwork. Remember, for the utmost protection of children and the protection of the reputations and integrity of the various ministries and volunteers, individuals that have not been cleared by the OPCYP may not conduct any diocesan work or volunteer-related activities until they are fully compliant.

In addition to the background check and paperwork requirements of compliance, there is also a training component for all personnel to complete within 45 days of the initiation of employment or volunteer activities, which is measured from the date their application is approved by the liaison. The initial 4-hour safe-environment training for adults in the Arlington Diocese is fulfilled through attending the **VIRTUS Protecting God's Children** program. All participants must pre-register online at [www.virtus.org](http://www.virtus.org) (a complete schedule is available on the website) with their full legal names. Attendance to the initial 4-hour training is only required once. Individuals will receive multiple notifications leading up to the 45-day deadline to attend the training. A single 10-day extension will be given at the 45-day mark and after the extension has expired the individual and liaison will receive a termination notice regarding their employment or volunteer service. Please assist OPCYP to ensure this does not take place. It is the responsibility of ministry heads to ensure their volunteers are compliant.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the OPCYP:



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## Protecting God's Children

**VIRTUS:** Protecting God's Children for Adult training seminars are 4-hour training sessions where employees, volunteers and other responsible adults in the community can learn how to identify sexual abuse, how to report it when it is seen, and what they can do as members of the community to ensure that it is eradicated.

Sessions are held throughout the year at parishes and schools throughout the diocese and are free of charge to all participants. If you are interested in attending and can't find a session that meets your needs for time or location, please contact your parish liaison to request a new session be scheduled.

Attendance at a seminar is required for all employees of the diocese and all volunteers with substantial contact with children, but all adults are welcome to attend. No children may attend and in almost all cases childcare will not be provided. For additional information, contact the parish where the session will be held, or check the session's notes.

### Frequently Asked Questions About Training

#### Which adults must attend training?

According to the Policy on the Protection of Children/Young People and the Prevention of Sexual Misconduct and/or Child Abuse, all employees of the Catholic Diocese of Arlington--all direct employees of any parish, diocesan school or diocesan office--regardless of contact with children must attend safe environment training. Additionally, any volunteer with ministry with substantial contact with children must attend safe environment training. However, training attendance alone is not sufficient for compliance with the policy.

#### Where and when can I attend a VIRTUS Training session?

Employees and volunteers with substantial contact with children have 45 days from the start of their ministry to attend a training seminar. All other members of the community are welcome and encouraged to attend a training. Dates and times of currently scheduled sessions are available for view and registration at the [VIRTUS Online](#) page. If there are no sessions that meet your scheduling needs, consider checking with [your liaison](#) to see if one could be scheduled at your parish or school.

#### Is Safe Environment Training Effective?

The VIRTUS: Protecting God's Children program instructs and allows individuals to provide a safe environment for children and other vulnerable populations by making it clear that abuse is not tolerated and providing tools to responsible adults to know how to respond to abusive situations and eliminate them from occurring in the first place. This reduces the rate of abusive incidents and decreases their severity when they do occur.

#### Can I become a VIRTUS Facilitator?

The Office of the Protection of Children/Young People periodically conducts training for new Facilitators. If you are interested in taking on this demanding but fulfilling role, please contact our office for additional details.



## Protecting God's Children

VIRTUS Training is an educational program on preventing, recognizing and reporting child abuse and sexual misconduct.

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Sessions are held throughout the year at parishes and schools throughout the diocese and are free of charge to all participants. All participants must pre-register online at [www.virtus.org](http://www.virtus.org) (a complete schedule is available on the website) with their full legal names. If you are interested in attending and can't find a session that meets your needs for time or location, please contact your parish liaison to request a new session be scheduled.

Attendance at a seminar is required for **all employees** of the diocese and **all volunteers with substantial contact with children**, but all adults are welcome to attend. No children may attend and in almost all cases childcare will not be provided.

## Registration Instructions

1. All participants are required to pre-register online with their full legal names. If you do not have Internet access and cannot temporarily gain Internet access via school, university, library, work, home or other means, please register with your Facilitator or your coordinator.

Go to <http://www.virtus.org>

On the left-hand side of the page, click the link labeled "Registration."

2. Choose the name of your organization from the pull-down menu by clicking the downward arrow and highlighting your organization. Once your organization is selected, click "Select."
3. Create a user ID and a password you can easily remember. This is necessary for all participants. This establishes your account within your Diocese and the VIRTUS Program. If your preferred user ID is already taken, please choose another user ID. We recommend the use of your email address as the user ID. Click "Continue" to proceed.

## Registration Instructions continued

4. Provide the information requested on the following page. Several fields are required, such as name, address, phone number and email address. Click "Continue" to proceed.
5. Select the PRIMARY location where you work, volunteer or worship. You will select: **Sacred Heart Academy**. Click "Continue" to proceed.
6. Your current list of locations is displayed. If you need to add an additional location, choose YES. Otherwise, choose NO.
7. Select the role(s) that you serve within your organization. Please check all roles that apply. Additionally, if you have a title within your diocese, enter it in the box, i.e., **Teacher, General Volunteer**, etc.
8. Answer three YES/NO questions and then click "Continue".
9. If you have already attended a *Protecting God's Children* Session, click YES, otherwise click NO.
10. If you chose NO during the previous step, you will be presented with a list of all upcoming sessions within your organization. When you find the session you would like to attend, click the circle next to the title.

If you chose YES during the previous step, skip this step.

11. If you chose YES, you will be presented with a list of all sessions that have been held within your organization. Choose the session you attended by clicking the downward arrow and highlighting the session, and then click "Complete Registration".
12. You will see a message on your screen confirming that you have completed the registration process. If you correctly entered your email address during the process, you will receive an email confirming your information. If you have additional questions about the registration process, please contact the VIRTUS Help Desk at 1-888-847-8870.