



Safe Environment Quick Guide

Archdiocese of Seattle



Virtus® Safe Environment Database: All adult Church personnel* are required to create a Virtus® profile for maintaining Safe Environment records including background checks, policy acknowledgment sign-off and training history. The profile becomes their Safe Environment record for any location they serve at in the Archdiocese. **Be sure to include Safe Environment and Virtus when onboarding all new employees.**



Background Checks: All Church personnel* are required to successfully undergo a criminal background check conducted by the Archdiocese at the time of hire or the start of volunteer engagement if they have not completed one within the past 3 years. Background checks are renewed every three years while in active service. (See the protocol for background checks on minors [here](#).)



Safe Environment Training (adults): All adult Church personnel* entering into service for the Archdiocese are required to complete initial Safe Environment training within 30 days of hire or volunteer engagement if they have not completed it in the past. Adult Church personnel* must then complete refresher training every three years while in active service.



Safe Environment Training (youth): All Archdiocesan parishes and schools are required to offer children's teaching safety annually to grades Kindergarten through Tenth. **Circle of Grace®** curriculum is consistent with the values and catechism of the Church; is age-appropriate; is comfortable for instructors to present; and addresses potential parental concerns. The curriculum focuses on teaching children and youth how to identify and maintain appropriate physical, emotional, spiritual and sexual boundaries, recognize boundary violations, and take action when boundaries are threatened or violated.



Safe Environment Policy Documents (adults): All adult Church personnel* entering into service for the Archdiocese are required to acknowledge that they have received and read the three Safe Environment policies if they have not done so in the past. (See the protocol for Code of Conduct for Minors [here](#).)



Compliance Management: Parish and school local Safe Environment coordinators (LSECs) are expected to manage Safe Environment compliance monthly at a minimum by running a [Master Report](#) for their location(s) to ensure that all active employees and volunteers are fully certified with their Safe Environment requirements. All employees, and all volunteers working with children or vulnerable adults, must stay up to date with all three Safe Environment requirements as long as they are in active service in the Church. Volunteers handling money must stay current with their background check as long as they are in active service.



Compliance Verification/Archdiocesan Audit: All Archdiocesan locations must complete an annual Compliance Verification form attesting that the parish, school or chancery department is fully compliant with Safe Environment policy requirements. Archdiocese of Seattle is audited annually by an outside agency to assess our compliance with the USCCB *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*. Every three years, the Archdiocese participates in an on-site audit. Compliance is based upon inquiry, observation and review of specifically requested documentation, including compliance reports and verification from Archdiocesan parishes and schools. Data are included in an [annual report of national audit results](#) which is made available to the public.



Safe Environment Contacts: Each parish and school has a local Safe Environment coordinator (LSEC). This individual serves as support for location employees and volunteers and is the liaison between the location and the Archdiocesan Safe Environment Program office. The Archdiocesan Safe Environment Coordinator may be reached at 206-274-3188.



Reporting Abuse/Victim Assistance: If anyone has witnessed or suspects that there is or has been abuse involving clergy, employees or volunteers at any of the Archdiocesan schools or parishes those suspicions or allegations are to be reported first to civil authorities (local law enforcement and child protective services/adult protective services) and then to the Archdiocese of Seattle. In addition, the Victim Assistance Coordinator is available to assist persons who have suffered sexual abuse by a member of the Church. For reports or victim assistance please use the toll-free Helpline at 1-800-446-7762.

***Church personnel** include all clergy (priests/deacons), all candidates for ordination (seminarians and candidates for the permanent diaconate), all religious (men and women), all paid employees (see separate protocol for employees under age 18), and all volunteers who have contact with minors or vulnerable adults in their volunteer capacity.