**Safe Environment Tips and Reminders**

**August 2021**

* **THE FOUR AREAS OF COMPLIANCE** [conditions of employment or volunteering] are:

The Three Essential Day-One of Employment or Volunteering Requirements:

(Note: Participants should register online to complete the requirements—they may use the newly created login information to return to add/change the VIRTUS session at a later date.)

1. Have appropriate background check(s) before beginning employment or volunteering.

2. Sign Forms A and B of the diocesan sexual misconduct policy (Receive Code of Conduct).

3. Attend a VIRTUS training session.

The fourth area of compliance—ongoing training

4. Complete online training as assigned. (See the information below.)

* **BACKGROUND CHECKS –** a Social Security number is necessary as the background check company matches the name with the social security number for verification of identity.

**NATIONAL**

All employees and all volunteers are required to have a national background check.

If the individual is paid, he/she is an employee, regardless of the paid position. You will want to be sure they know if they will need the Motor Vehicle Check and the Credit Check (working with money/budgets).

**BCA**

The following need to have a Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension [BCA] background check in addition to the national background check:

All Employees of a Catholic school

Employees of a parish connected with a Catholic school (Parish where students attend Mass)

All Catholic school coaches, including school extra-curricular athletic and academic,

paid or volunteer

All parish and all Catholic school custodians having facility access, (not lawn

mowers or cemetery- only care)

Note: Catholic school teachers and coaches need a new BCA if individual changes

schools within the diocese and previous one is over 12 months old (MN

State Statute)

If an individual has been inactive, and the account is reactivated, that individual needs to meet the current safe environment background check requirements as well as any previously assigned and uncompleted online training including current period training.

* **MINORS**

Minors may not supervise other minors in any ministry at any time. They are encouraged to participate in the life of the church and their ministry is most appreciated; however, they need to be directly supervised at all times by a fully safe environment compliant adult.

Minors who are employees are required to have a BCA background check [provides juvenile records], sign Forms A&B, and if they are age 16 or over attend VIRTUS training. These are conditions of

employment. This is completed through the online registration process. They are assigned employee continuing online quarterly training.

You may choose to ask minors who are volunteering to fill out the Minor Code of Conduct and the parish or school can keep that on file.

* **FORMS A and B - from the May 6, 2019 Sexual Misconduct Policy of the Diocese of New Ulm; Administration; Diocesan 13**

Each employee and all volunteers over the age of 18 are required to acknowledge the Policy and Code of Conduct online from the 2019 sexual misconduct policy. They should print Form B and return to the parish or school.

*Form A* – Individual acknowledges receipt of the policy. – This is done electronically, as of July 2016, through online registration – the parish/school will no longer be keeping paper copies.

*Form B* – Individual indicates if they have ever had an allegation or complaint against them pertaining to abuse, harassment, or exploitation. If YES, notify the diocese. The references on this form are for use by the primary location.

* **VIRTUS 3 HOUR TRAINING SESSION – required to attend one time only**

Each employee and all volunteers who have unsupervised contact with minors are required to attend a three hour VIRTUS training session prior to beginning employment or volunteering. Anyone over the age of 16, whether active at the present time or not, may attend a VIRTUS training session. All are asked to pre-register for the session on the Internet through the [www.dnu.org/safeenvironment](http://www.dnu.org/safeenvironment) Web page Red Button link.

* **60 DAY GRACE PERIOD - VIRTUS 3 HOUR TRAINING SESSION**

If there is a serious reason that prevents attendance prior to employment or volunteering, a grace period of 60 days is allowed, but this only pertains to long-term ministries lasting a school or catechetical year. All short-term ministries, such as field trip chaperones, Vacation Bible School volunteers, or specific youth ministry event volunteers, must complete VIRTUS training prior to beginning to volunteer.

* **VIRTUS CONTINUING ONLINE TRAINING**

Online training is posted by VIRTUS to user accounts according to the individual’s role:

**Pastors and Local Safe Environment Coordinators** – monthly (To be completed within 30 days)

**Employees** – quarterly (Assigned quarterly training is to be completed within 30 days.)

*Instructions for Employees:*

To access quarterly online training, please visit [www.virtusonline.org](http://www.virtusonline.org)

Once you have logged in, the quarterly trainings due will appear in the Current Training block on the home page. Click on the assigned TRAINING.

**Volunteers** – annually [posted to VIRTUS accounts in late August/early Sept. each year] and is to be completed within 30 days of posting

*Instructions for Volunteers:*

\* To access annual online training, please visit [www.virtusonline.org](http://www.virtusonline.org)

\* Enter your User ID and password [both are case and space sensitive], then login.

(If you do not remember your Password – click on “Need login Information” and you can reset your password)

\* The assigned training will appear on the page in the Current Training box – click on the training name.

\* After reading the first screen, you will be asked to answer a question.

\* Proceed through information.

\* Question re-appears; review the answer, with option to change your answer.

Once question is answered correctly, the following message will appear:

Congratulations! You have now completed the Annual Volunteer Safe Environment Online Training for the year.

\* Click to close the window and exit the training screen. \* Click the word Logout.

Individuals receive an automated VIRTUS email when the training is posted to their accounts, and are to complete the training within 30 days. A few of these emails are blocked by SPAM filters. If individuals are using any software or tools within their email program to filter SPAM, ask them to allow messages from [system@virtusonline.net](mailto:system@virtusonline.net).

A valid email address is required for individuals to receive email reminders regarding continuing online training. Please do not report a parish or other person’s email address for the individual’s account, unless the individual does not have an email address of their own.

It is the responsibility of the Local Safe Environment Coordinator to remind/encourage/ ensure compliance.If the individual does not comply within the specified 30 days, the diocesan offices will assist by sending an additional reminder to or make contact with the individuals. If individuals do not respond to the additional reminders, the diocese will contact the Local Safe Environment Coordinator. Email notices will be sent from the diocesan safe environment office to the Local Safe Environment Coordinator. If accounts continue to be unresponsive, the LSE will again be contacted by email with copies to the Pastor. We appreciate whatever you can do to assist in keeping email addresses current and individuals in compliance. By the end of the compliance year (June of each year) all accounts must be compliant so timely master report account review is critical and is to be done by the Local Safe Environment Coordinator. The diocese sends out non-compliance emails throughout the year.

It is not an option for VIRTUS continuing online training to be completed by printing out the training and mailing the document to employees and/or volunteers to read. All VIRTUS training must be done online. If the employee or volunteer does not have internet access in their home, they may access the Internet at their public library, parish, or school.

Local Safe Environment Coordinators are able to send an individual their VIRTUS User ID and Password via an email message. Go to the Administration Tab, then to an individual VIRTUS User’s account, and click on the *Email Account Info* box located next to the individual’s email address. This email will provide the User ID and if they don’t remember their password they can click on “Need Login Information” to reset it. It will not provide any instructions on how to complete the online training. You would need to send a separate email to the individual with the instructions for an employee or volunteer.

* **MUST BE ACTIVE ON VIRTUS TO BE ACTIVE in PROGRAMS**

Only those individuals who appear as “active” on your VIRTUS master report, and remain compliant with safe environment requirements, may be active employees or volunteers.

If an individual is no longer active in any capacity, please inform the diocese so the account can be marked inactive. If the individual changes status [for example from an employee to a volunteer] please inform us, as the requirement for online training is different for employee or volunteer status.

Do not designate an individual as inactive because they have not completed a safe environment requirement, and then keep them in active ministry.

* **COMPLETE LIST OF VIRTUS SESSIONS -** for Local Safe Environment Coordinators:

• Log on to VIRTUS.

• Go to the Administration Tab.

• Click on Live Training [left side green column].

• Click on Schedule Training Sessions.

• View Current Training Scheduled.

* **TO HOST A VIRTUS TRAINING SESSION**

1. Contact the Diocesan Safe Environment Office to schedule a date (wubel@dnu.org).

2. The Diocesan Safe Environment Office will contact a facilitator.

3. The date will be posted on the VIRTUS Web site.

4. Please do not host a training session without notifying the Diocesan Safe Environment Office.

The hosting site provides ample seating for participants, a registration table, a podium, equipment to show the DVD during the presentation, a sound system [if needed], and a beverage and snack for participants. The parish is responsible for paying the hosting site $100.00 for the facilitator fee, plus any mileage incurred, after the session takes place.

* **VIRTUS MASTER REPORT**

Local Safe Environment Coordinators are expected to periodically print a VIRTUS Master Report to review the report for any individuals that should be changed as to active/inactive or as to their role. The LSEC may also review the non compliance areas of employees and volunteers within the parish/school—pending and “Activity Watch” accounts will be noted. The Local Safe Environment Coordinators may and should regularly view or print a current Master Report for their particular location. The diocesan office will not send out any more reports this year—the LSEC is responsible for reviewing quarterly.

• Log on to VIRTUS as you would to complete online training.

• Go to the Administration Tab

• Under Quick Links

• Choose New Master Report (2021)

• Choose your location from the pull down menu

Leave the next sections blank, until you see:

User Fields to Display

• Select the following options:

• Profile

• Compliance Fields you may want to Display—typically you will only need to review:

• Annual Volunteer Safe Environment Online Training

• Protecting God’s Children for Adults – Employee quarterly online trainings for the current year

Q2 is posted in July, Q3 is posted in October Q4 is posted in January, Q1 is posted in April

[Background Checks: We will notify you if these are needed—there are many variations.]

Under Display Options

• Display the Date for Compliance Items

Then Run Report to Screen – you can view or print the form

Other report options are also available and a LSEC may experiment with the reporting functions to find the ones most helpful for them. The training report can be scrolled through in a timely fashion to determine past-due online training or the names of people that are in the VIRTUS database but have not yet completed the Live Training Session.

Reading the columns on the VIRTUS Master Report pertaining to background checks can be confusing so we do not recommend you print them off. Various background check companies have been used by the Diocese of New Ulm. We will let you know if the individual needs a background. If you are accustomed to doing this and want to continue, feel free to do so:

**MINNESOTA BUREAU OF CRIMINAL APPREHENSION - BCA**

Pre-August 2007 – Processed on all Pastoral Leaders and employees

2007-Present – Processed on all Pastoral Leaders, Catholic school teachers, employees whose location is connected with a Catholic school, all coaches whether paid or volunteer, and all maintenance personnel.

**MIND YOUR BUSINESS – MYB**

2003-2007 – Processed on all Volunteers

Volunteers may have an MYB background check in the VIRTUS database, a USIS background check, or an ISP background check. They may have had more than one type, and are not required to have all three. ISP = most current background check.

**USIS COMMERCIAL SERVICES [HireRight]**

August 2007-January 2011 – Processed on all new Employees and Volunteers

**INTEGRATED SCREENING PARTNERS - ISP**

January 2011- present – Processed on all new Employees and Volunteers

**CREDIT CHECK**

Processed only on individuals who handle money for a parish or school.

**MOTOR VEHICLE CHECK**

Processed only on individuals who transport minors for a parish or school sponsored event.

Periodically the diocesan Safe Environment Office may print a VIRTUS Master Report and send that out to the parish or school. The form is highlighted [if needed], indicating any safe environment requirements which have not been met. We hope to be able to end or, at the very least, limit this practice.

* **LIST OF CATECHISTS**

Catechist rosters should be reviewed with the DRE/YM to assure all are registered within VIRTUS. Catechist rosters within your verification of active/registered accounts is due at the date designated. The information requested is: 1) each catechist’s name and (2) and the grade level they will teach. Report all grade levels. If all catechist names are not available by the due date, send in the catechist names as they are available. All Catechists will show up on the Master Report for the Parish at which they are a catechist. If the person is an employee, they will show up for that location too, should it be different.

* **CHILDREN’S TRAINING**

Opt Out forms are filled out and signed by the parent/guardian and are turned in to the parish/school before your training in the fall. After that training, Opt Out forms are not to be provided to parents/guardians.

Lessons for the current year are to be taught in October or early November this year, in one session. Go to the Educator Tab to access the lessons for the appropriate grade level. A reporting spreadsheet, Opt Out form, and Absent form was emailed to Local Safe Environment Coordinators, Principals, and Directors of Religious Education in mid-August. The deadline to return the forms to the Safe Environment Office is in early November of each year. Make-up sessions are to be held for those absent by a designated date in early February of each year.

The introductory DVD – *Teaching Safety* – *Empowering God’s Children Program* has age appropriate segments. The entire DVD is not shown to the age group.

For home schooled students, only the children in sacramental preparation [First Holy Communion and Confirmation] are to be counted on the religious education roster. Parents do not opt these children out of VIRTUS training, and you do not count them as absent. As for opted out students, parents of home schooled students are to be provided with the VIRTUS lesson plans each year so they can train their child at home.

For reporting religious education statistics to the diocese, count only those children who are registered for religious education classes, and not all children of the parish who could be at an age to potentially attend religious education.

* **CONTACTING VIRTUS**

Please contact the diocesan Safe Environment Office with any questions or needed changes. We ask that VIRTUS be contacted directly only for log in information.

If you have any questions,

please call the Safe Environment Office at 507-233-5308

or email [skalow@dnu.org](mailto:skalow@dnu.org)

**Thank you for all you do for giving the youth a Safe Faith-filled Environment!**