



— Diocese of —
Lafayette



“A Safe Environment for the Protection of Children and Young People”

As part of the ongoing mission of the safety of our children here in the Diocese of Lafayette, the following information is provided to demonstrate how to access the online recertification training—Protecting God’s Children Online Awareness Training. Only those individuals who have completed INITIAL training are eligible for this recertification.

Important Reminder: Please review the Diocesan Code of Professional Conduct and Reporting Procedures. These documents are located under the “My Diocese” tab.

Steps to access the Protecting God’s Children Online Awareness Training:

1. Go to www.virtus.org.
2. Click on the “Registration” link highlighted in yellow.
3. Select “Begin the registration process.”
4. Select your organization from the dropdown list – Lafayette, LA (diocese).
5. Create a username and password (using your email address as your username may assure no duplication).
6. Please provide the required contact information.
7. Select your organization from the dropdown list – parish/school location. (Please indicate all that apply.)
8. Select your primary role within the diocese. Please note, if you are a paid teacher, please select Educator.
9. Go to VIRTUS Online, and enter your username and password.
10. Once logged in, you will click on the green circle or the words, Protecting Gods Children to begin your online training.

Thank you for registering to take the VIRTUS Protecting God’s Children Online Awareness Training. This recertification module will take approximately one hour. If you have to close your session before you’ve finished, the session will resume where you left off when you log back into the site.

When you are logged into Virtus, you have the ability to change your account information by clicking on “Update My Account”.

For further assistance, please go to www.virtus.org and click on “Help”, then click on “VIRTUS Online Help Desk” to send a message to Virtus, or you can call 888-847-8870. You can also contact the Safe Environment Coordinator at your local church parish or school.



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As part of the ongoing mission of the safety of our children here in the Diocese of Lafayette, the following information is provided to demonstrate how to access the online recertification training – Protecting God’s Children Online Awareness Training.


SECOND TIME ONLINE USERS ONLY: Only those individuals who have completed initial training and have completed a Virtus online recertification are eligible for this second online recertification.

Important Reminder: Please review the Diocesan Code of Professional Conduct and Reporting Procedures. These documents are located under the “My Diocese” tab.

Steps to access the Protecting God’s Children Online Awareness Training:

1. Go to www.virtus.org.
2. Enter the User ID and password you used for last year’s online certification and click “Login”.
3. Virtus will then prompt you to a screen that shows “Online Training Courses” and the option to choose “Protecting God’s Children Online Awareness Session.” This will take you to the online training session. Please allow 45 minutes to an hour to complete.

Online Training Courses

 **Protecting God’s Children® Online Awareness Session**
Assigned: 03/14/2012
Due: 04/01/2012

 Past due

 Due date approaching

 Assigned

When you are logged into Virtus, you have the ability to change your account information by clicking on “Update My Account”.

For further assistance, please go to www.virtus.org and click on “Help”, then click on “VIRTUS Online Help Desk” to send a message to Virtus, or you can call 888-847-8870. You can also contact the Safe Environment Coordinator at your local church parish or school.

Diocese of Lafayette
DIOCESAN POLICIES

Safe Environment

INTRODUCTION: The Church celebrates and promotes the value, worth, dignity and life of every child and seeks to foster a safe environment for all children, especially those entrusted to Her care. The abuse of minors is not acceptable and will not be tolerated. All clergy and those in clerical formation, religious and those in consecrated life, employees and volunteers who supervise or work with children (*hereafter referred to as eligible adults*) are subjects of this policy.

IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICY:

Mandated:

A. Programs and Procedures

1. The Office of Safe Environment of the Diocese of Lafayette has programs and procedures to insure a safe environment for all children.
2. A Victim Assistance Coordinator, designated by the Bishop, shall respond promptly to any allegation where there is reason to believe that sexual abuse of a minor has occurred by any cleric.
3. The Diocese of Lafayette has a Code of Conduct for eligible adults.
4. The Diocese of Lafayette has a program of screening and evaluation techniques to determine the fitness of candidates for ordination.
5. Letters of suitability and testimonial letters must be provided by bishops and superiors of those clerics who wish to practice temporary ministry in the Diocese of Lafayette. It is the responsibility of the pastor to provide copies of letters for priests to the Chancellor of the Diocese and letters for Deacons and Religious Brothers and Sisters to the Office of the Permanent Diaconate.
6. Any eligible adult who has actual knowledge of, or who has reasonable cause to suspect that an incident of child abuse has occurred (unless to do so would violate the priest/penitent relationship of the Sacrament of Reconciliation), must follow all applicable civil laws for reporting such instances and then shall immediately report to the diocesan authorities.
7. The Diocese of Lafayette shall follow all applicable Louisiana civil laws for reporting to public authorities when allegations and/or suspicions of sexual abuse of a person who is a minor are made against any eligible adult.
8. A diocesan review board shall function as the Bishop's confidential consultative body in matters of sexual abuse of a minor.

9. Diocesan policy provides that for even a single act of sexual abuse of a minor, the offending cleric or person in formation will be permanently removed from ministry, not excluding dismissal from the clerical state, if the case so warrants.

B. Parish and Catholic School Requirements

1. Pastors/Principals/Administrators are responsible for ensuring that all eligible adults under their authority are given a copy of this policy.
2. All Eligible Adults shall:
 - a. Undergo required background screening, including a criminal history check (fingerprint check for catholic school employees) and reference checks.
 - b. Participate in an initial safe environment education session prior to working with minors. Each year thereafter, those adults shall be required to participate in a continuing education session. If an individual has five continuous years of no continuing education, he/she will be required to recertify through initial training.
3. All diocesan-sponsored educational programs (catholic schools and parish programs) are required to provide age-appropriate safe environment education for all students annually.
4. All diocesan-sponsored education programs (catholic schools and parish programs) are required to offer safe environment education sessions for parents annually.
5. All parishes and schools of the Diocese of Lafayette shall have a Safe Environment Coordinator, however it is ultimately the Pastor/School Chancellor's responsibility to ensure that the diocesan safe environment program is implemented and adhered to.

C. Charter Requirements

1. The Diocese of Lafayette cooperates to the fullest extent with the National Office of Child and Youth Protection.
2. The Diocese of Lafayette fully cooperates and is in compliance with the U.S. Bishops' policies regarding the transfer of any priest or deacon and cooperation with religious communities.
3. The Diocese of Lafayette shall not enter into any confidentiality agreements in cases of sexual abuse where the victim is a minor, except for grave and substantial reasons brought forward by the victim or the parent or guardian of a victim who is still a minor, and which reasons shall be clearly noted in the text of the agreement.

D. Enforcement

Failure to comply with any of the provisions of the Safe Environment Policy will be grounds for discipline, up to and including termination or removal from position. The Diocese of Lafayette reserves the right to make changes to this policy at any time, at its sole discretion, and interpret and administer the policy in light of changing circumstances and events.

APPROVED: + Michael Jarrell

DATE: July 30, 2013

DIOCESE OF LAFAYETTE

CODE OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

PREAMBLE

This Code of Professional Conduct applies to all clergy and those in clerical formation, religious and those in consecrated life, employees and volunteers who supervise or work with children (hereafter referred to as *eligible adults*).

GENERAL APPLICATION:

1. *Eligible adults* shall be responsible for adherence to this Code of Professional Conduct.
2. *Eligible adults* who violate or disregard this Code of Professional Conduct will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.
3. This Code of Professional Conduct is to be used in conjunction with ALL other employment-related guidelines and policies.
4. *Eligible adults* shall sign an acknowledgement of receipt of this Code of Professional Conduct, a copy of which shall be placed in the individual's permanent personnel file.

SPECIFIC CONDUCT WITH YOUTH:

1. *Eligible adults* shall maintain an open and trustworthy relationship with youth and strive to provide a safe place for youth.
2. *Eligible adults* shall not use or possess alcohol and/or illicit drugs while working with youth.
3. *Eligible adults* should be aware of the potential impropriety, and even the appearance of impropriety, when working alone with any youth. *Eligible adults* shall use a team approach in managing youth activities.
4. *Eligible adults* shall establish and maintain clear, appropriate, and professional boundaries when working with youth.
5. Clergy shall not share overnight accommodations with youth in any church-owned facility, private residence, hotel room, or any other place.
6. Employees and volunteers, in conjunction with church-related activities, shall not share overnight accommodations alone with youth including, but not limited to, accommodations in any church-owned facility, private residence, hotel room, or any other place. In an emergency situation, when accommodation is necessary for the health and well-being of youth, and the above prohibition cannot be avoided, extraordinary care shall be taken to protect all parties from the risk of harm and even the appearance of impropriety.
7. *Eligible adults* shall exercise discretion in having any physical contact with youth.

HARASSMENT:

1. *Eligible adults* shall not engage in any form of physical, sexual, psychological, written and/or oral harassment of any individual and shall not tolerate any such conduct by any other Church personnel.
2. *Eligible adults* shall maintain a professional work environment that is free from any and all forms of physical, sexual, psychological, written, and/or oral intimidation or harassment.

3. This prohibition against harassment encompasses a broad range of physical, sexual, psychological, written, and/or oral behavior including without limitation: physical or mental abuse; racial insults; derogatory ethnic slurs; unwelcome sexual advances or touching; sexual comments or sexual jokes; display of offensive materials; or requests for sexual activity or behavior of any kind for any reason.
4. *Eligible adults* shall take every report or allegation of harassment seriously and shall follow all diocesan Safe Environment reporting procedures.

STANDARDS OF CONDUCT FOR COUNSELORS AND COUNSELING SESSIONS:

1. Counselors shall respect the rights, and seek to advance the welfare, of each person being counseled.
2. Counselors shall establish and maintain clear, appropriate, and professional boundaries in all counseling relationships.
3. Counselors shall carefully consider the possible consequences before entering into a counseling relationship with a person with whom the counselor has a pre-existing relationship, i.e., employee, colleague, friend.
4. Counselors shall conduct counseling sessions in appropriate settings and at appropriate times. This prohibits counseling in the private living quarters of the counselor.
5. Counselors shall not engage in any form of sexual intimacy with the person being counseled. This prohibition includes, without limitation, consensual, sexual contact and inappropriate sexual language or innuendo.
6. Counselors shall not engage in any form of sexual intimacy with any individual who is related by blood or marriage to or who is a close friend of the person being counseled. This prohibition includes, without limitation, consensual, sexual contact and inappropriate sexual language or innuendo.
7. Counselors shall not audiotape or videotape any counseling session without the written consent of both the adult being counseled or the parent or guardian of the youth being counseled, and the supervisor of the counselor. Any recording shall be subject to all applicable confidentiality standards.
8. Counselors shall not continue to provide counseling under circumstances or particular issues that exceed the limit of their competence and shall make appropriate referrals for the person being counseled.
9. Counselors should avoid even non-sexual physical contact such as touching, hugging, or holding the person being counseled.

CONFIDENTIALITY OF COUNSELING SESSIONS:

1. Counselors shall maintain all information disclosed during the course of counseling, advising, or spiritual direction in the strictest confidence possible. This Code of Professional Conduct, as applied to counselors, is separate from, and independent of, the confidentiality involving a confession or information received by a priest in Sacramental Confession. The sacramental seal is inviolable; therefore, it is absolutely forbidden for a confessor to betray in any way a penitent in words or in any manner and for any reason. (canon 933) A confessor is prohibited completely from using knowledge acquired from confession to the detriment of the penitent even when any danger of revelation is excluded. A priest may not use in any manner for external governance the knowledge about sins which he has received in confession at any time. (canon 984)
2. In the ordinary case, provision must be made for the possibility of anonymous confession as well as for penitents who wish to confess face-to-face. (USCCB *Complimentary Norm, canon 964*) However, a priest may choose to hear confessions in a

confessional with a fixed grille. (Authentic Interpretation of canon 964§2 by the Pontifical Council for the Interpretation of Legislative Texts, 7 July 1998 (AAS90 [1998] 711).

3. Counselors may disclose certain information if there is clear and imminent danger to the person being counseled or to others. In such event, the person being counseled should be informed of the necessity of making the required disclosure and of the potential consequences. The disclosure should be limited to the information necessary to protect the affected person(s) from harm.
4. Counselors should discuss with each person being counseled, as a part of the initial counseling, the nature of the counseling relationship, and the issues of confidentiality, including the above-stated limitations.
5. Counselors may use the knowledge gained from prior and/or ongoing counseling sessions in teaching, writing, public speaking, and/or homilies, only after precautionary and effective measures have been exercised to safeguard the identity of any person or persons.
6. The confidentiality of counseling sessions is limited by the mandatory state law reporting requirements. In the event that otherwise confidential information is necessarily disclosed, counselors should advise the person being counseled that the disclosure will be made.

REPORTING STANDARDS:

1. *Eligible adults* shall hold one another accountable for maintaining the highest ethical, moral, and professional standards.
2. *Eligible adults* shall take seriously every allegation or report of unethical behavior and/or professional misconduct.
3. In the event that the allegation or report involves any form of abuse, or the substantial risk of danger to the health or welfare of any youth, then *eligible adults* shall follow all diocesan Safe Environment reporting procedures.

ADMINISTRATION:

1. Personnel and other administrative decisions made by *eligible adults* shall meet civil and canon law obligations, reflect Catholic social teachings, and adhere to the standards of this Code of Professional Conduct.
2. *Eligible adults* shall not use their positions to exercise unreasonable or inappropriate power and authority or take advantage of anyone to further their personal, religious, political, or business interest.
3. *Eligible adults* shall reasonably avoid situations which place other interests above professional or volunteer goals. They shall avoid the appearance of the same.
4. *Eligible adults* shall inform all affected parties including without limitation their supervisor, when a real or potential conflict of interest exists.

WELL-BEING OF ALL ELIGIBLE ADULTS:

1. *Eligible adults* should be aware of warning signs that indicate potential problems with their own spiritual, physical, mental, and/or emotional health.
2. *Eligible adults* should seek help immediately whenever they notice behavioral or emotional warning signs in their own professional and/or personal lives.
3. *Eligible adults* should cooperate with and support one another.

COMMUNICATION STANDARDS:

1. *Eligible adults* should be open to, and accessible to one another, and to all parishioners.
2. *Eligible adults* shall address and seek to resolve all matters promptly, efficiently, and fairly, and with utmost discretion.
3. *Eligible adults* shall adhere to the diocesan Social Media Policy.

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

INTRODUCTION: The Diocese of Lafayette and its affiliates recognize that, with the increasing prevalence of the Internet in the world today, clergy, employees, and volunteers will use the Internet to conduct ministry, educate, and communicate with the faithful, associates and friends. Social media in particular, provides various ways for individuals to interact and has changed the way we communicate and share information. The Diocese encourages pastors, principals, and administrators to support the use of social media and give clergy, employees, and volunteers the necessary training and tools to interact safely and responsibly online. Those using social media must be aware that certain comments and information can misrepresent the positions and activities of the Church, Diocese of Lafayette, and its affiliates. Clergy, employees, and volunteers are required to adhere to the following policy regarding social media for evangelization, education, and personal use, including but not limited to:

social networks, text/instant messaging, websites and blogs.

Social Media- Diocese of Lafayette and Affiliates

1. The Diocese supports the use of social media tools as a means to conduct ministry and education. Social media is a powerful tool; therefore, sites affiliated with diocesan institutions (parishes, schools, offices, etc.) may not be used for: 1) conducting outside business 2) defaming the character of any individual or institution 3) misrepresenting the positions or activities of the Diocese of Lafayette or its affiliates 4) divulging any personal information, particularly about minors that would jeopardize their safety or well-being in any way. Supervisors who approve individuals to create a website are responsible for monitoring the website.

Social Media-Personal Use

2. The Diocese of Lafayette and its affiliates recognize clergy, employees, and volunteers may create personal websites, blogs and social media identities (pseudonym, alias or handle i.e. @thegospeltruth) as a medium of self-expression, i.e. not a direct extension of church ministry or work. However, clergy, employees, and volunteers must recognize that anything published on a personal website is effectively available to the public. Any information that misrepresents the positions and activities of the Church, the Diocese of Lafayette and its affiliates is prohibited. Personal sites used for diocesan work, ministry, or education are subject to monitoring by their supervisor or designees. Reference should be made to pertinent canon law (see especially canons 220, 666, 747, 761, 779, 804, 822, 1063, and 1369), state and federal law, the professional code of conduct, employee policies, and contracts. Clergy, employees, and volunteers who are identifiable as affiliated with the Diocese of Lafayette are required to put the following notice in a reasonably prominent place on their personal website:

“The opinions expressed here are those of [name of person] alone. This site operates independently and is not associated with the Diocese of Lafayette or [name of parish/school].”

Protection of Minors

3. Clergy, employees, and volunteers are prohibited from posting or distributing personal, identifiable information, including photos and/or videos, of any minor without verifiable consent of a parent or guardian. Personal identifiable information includes full name, photos, home address, email address, telephone number or any information that would allow someone to identify or contact a minor. Verifiable consent will take the form of a signed release/permission form from a parent/guardian. Ministry, educational, and personal websites may involve the use of a username and password to access all or portions of the site. In the event that clergy, employees, or volunteers, subject to approval by the Diocese of Lafayette or its affiliates, gives a minor access to a website that is not otherwise openly accessible to the public, that same access must also be provided to the minor's parent/legal guardian. Social media at times involves the interaction between adults and minors, therefore, two (2) Safe Environment certified adults must have unrestricted access to monitor these types of communication, and at least one (1) of the two (2) adults must be employed by the institution (diocesan office, parish, school etc.).

Confidential and Proprietary Information

4. Clergy, employees, and volunteers are prohibited from disclosing information that is understood to be private property or privileged according to the norms of canon law, state and federal law, diocesan policy, the professional code of conduct and contractual obligations.

Trademarks and Logos

5. Personal use of trademarks and logos that are protected intellectual property of the Diocese of Lafayette and its affiliates is prohibited.

Inappropriate Material

6. It is prohibited to post immoral and otherwise inappropriate material via social media. Inappropriate material includes but is not limited to: obscene, harassing, offensive, derogatory, defamatory, or sexually explicit comments, links, or images/video. Reference should be made to pertinent canon law (see especially canons 220, 666, 747, 761, 779, 804, 822, 1063, and 1369), state and federal law, the professional code of conduct, employee policies, and contracts.

Enforcement

7. Failure to comply with any of the provisions of the Social Media Policy will be grounds for discipline, up to and including termination or removal from position. The Diocese of Lafayette and its affiliates reserve the right to make changes to this policy at any time, at its sole discretion, and interpret and administer the policy in light of changing circumstances and events. The Diocese of Lafayette gratefully acknowledges the generosity of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Archdiocese of Cincinnati and the Diocese of Dallas, in granting the use of its social media policies and guidelines as a resource in the development of this policy.

Approved + Michael J. Farrell Date February 22, 2013

WHAT TO DO IF YOU SUSPECT ABUSE (Reporting Procedures)

You must follow all applicable civil laws for reporting instances of suspected abuse. As a diocesan employee/volunteer, you must also report to your immediate supervisor and your Pastor/Principal/Administrator. It is then your responsibility to make a report to Department of Children & Family Services/law enforcement.

Within 5 days of oral report, mandatory reporters are required to complete the following form and submit to Department of Children & Family Services.

- *Department of Children and Family Services: Written Report Form for Mandated Reporters of Child Abuse/Neglect*

Also, if suspected perpetrator and/ or abuse is related to a diocesan/church/school program, a report must also be made to the diocesan Victim Assistance Coordinator, Mr. Joseph Pisano, Jr., 337-298-2987 as well as to the Chancellor, Maureen Fontenot

HOW TO REPORT ABUSE

What To Do If You Suspect Child Abuse or Neglect:



Call 855-4LA-KIDS (855-452-5437)

for anyone in the state to call and report child abuse or neglect.

One number, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to speak to a trained child welfare worker to report possible abuse and neglect.

Information Needed for Report

If known, provide:

- Name, address, age, sex, and race of child
- Nature, extent and cause of child's injuries or endangered condition including any previously known or suspected abuse to the child or to the child's siblings
- Name and address of child's parent or caretaker
- Child's family composition
- Names and ages of all other members of the child's household
- Account of how this child came to the reporter's attention
- Any explanation of the cause of the child's injury or condition offered by the child, caretaker or

any other person

- Any other information which the reporter believes might be important
- The report shall also name the person or persons who are thought to have caused or contributed to the child's condition, if known, and the report shall contain the name of such person if he is named by the child.

Remember:

- Your report is a request for an investigation, not an accusation.
- Information you share is confidential.
- You should report EACH incident of suspected abuse.