

## REQUIREMENTS FOR ADULTS TO WORK WITH CHILDREN:

### 1. Background check

Appropriate methods of evaluation shall be conducted on all clergy, church and school personnel, employed and volunteer, who have regular contact with minors.

- A. Must be conducted – and the results received – before working or volunteering with children.
- B. A 5-year re-background check is required every five years, as long as one remains active in their position.

### 2. Sexual Abuse Awareness Training

- A. Attendance at a “live” session
- B. Reading monthly VIRTUS bulletins
- C. Re-Certification modules, as assigned

## TRAINING - Adults

ARTICLE 12 of the *Charter*: “Dioceses/eparchies are to maintain “safe environment” programs which the diocesan/eparchial bishop deems to be in accord with Catholic moral principles. They are to be conducted cooperatively with parents, civil authorities, educators, and community organizations to provide education and training for children, youth, parents, ministers, educators, volunteers, and others about ways to make and maintain a safe environment for children and young people. Dioceses/eparchies are to make clear to clergy and all members of the community the standards of conduct for clergy and other persons in positions of trust with regard to children.”

In the Diocese of Alexandria, adults must attend an initial “live” sexual abuse awareness training session, called VIRTUS Protecting God’s Children, which are held throughout the diocese by trained facilitators. This is a special 3-hour training that teaches adults in the Catholic community to create safer environments and become part of the solution to prevent child sexual abuse. This training is required for all clergy, religious, employees, and volunteers who regularly work with children.

The training provides adults with awareness of the issues surrounding child sexual abuse and some important steps that we can all take for the protection of children. Attendees learn about the warning signs of potential sex offenders and unsafe situations that could place a child or a vulnerable adult at risk for abuse. At the session adults learn how to respond if they should suspect abuse and how to make a report in the State of Louisiana and in the Diocese of Alexandria. Participants are provided with a copy of the Diocese of Alexandria’s *Code of Pastoral Conduct*. They also are provided with the diocesan website whereby they may view/download our [Diocesan Policy for the Protection of Minors](#).

*How to register for a VIRTUS training session:* Go to [www.virtus.org](http://www.virtus.org); click on First-Time Registrant; and, select the Diocese of Alexandria from the drop-down menu. Then, complete all requested information, choosing the date from the current schedule of upcoming sessions.

### Ongoing-Training (Continuing Education)

Ongoing-training on sexual abuse prevention is critical for maintaining safe environments into the future. After attending the “live” VIRTUS session, clergy, religious, employees and volunteers who work with children are required to read a monthly “bulletin” (like an article) as long as they are actively working with children. The bulletins are accessed through the registration account the participant set up prior to attending the “live” session. At the end of each bulletin, a multiple-choice question is asked, whereby the participant answers, which is to help ensure that the information provided in the bulletin is acknowledged and understood. Each bulletin covers a different topic. The VIRTUS “system” records that the bulletin has been completed. A new bulletin is added to every account by the 8<sup>th</sup> of each month. A notification email from VIRTUS is sent to everyone with a valid email address, indicating that a new bulletin has been assigned to their online account.

Participants should make every effort to read their bulletin as soon as possible after receiving notification from VIRTUS that it has been added to their online account.

After one year, participants will receive a Re-Certification Module, which is to be completed via their online account. A year after that, a second re-certification module will be assigned for completion (*directions* for access to bulletins and both re-certification

modules may be downloaded from the list of documents in this section (see right-side of screen). Modules take 10-20 minutes to complete. They contain several short scenarios to read, with a question at the end of each.

Those without internet access must be provided with "hard copies" by the church/school at which they work/volunteer. The church/school office shall keep the diocesan safe environment office informed of the bulletins/modules these participants complete.

For more information on ongoing-training, please contact the Office of Safe environment at 318-445-6424 x 213 or [pdelrie@diocesealex.org](mailto:pdelrie@diocesealex.org).