

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 3-hour “live” session
- B. Reading monthly VIRTUS bulletins via online VIRTUS account
- C. Complete re-certification modules, as assigned

Sexual Abuse Awareness Training for 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; click on [First-Time Registrant](#); and, select the Diocese of Alexandria from the drop-down menu. Then, complete all requested information, choosing the desired session date from the current schedule of upcoming sessions.

Ongoing-Training (Continuing Education) Requirements

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 minors are required to read a monthly “bulletin” (article) as long as they are actively working with minors. The bulletins are accessed through the registration account the participant sets up to attend a “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 8th 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; however, if an email is not received, the bulletin is still added to the user’s account.

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

If an employee or volunteer has no computer and/or internet access, he/she must be provided with "hard copies" by the church/school at which they work/volunteer. The church/school office must keep the diocesan safe environment office informed of the bulletins these participants complete.

Five (5) years after one attends a "live" session, there will be a VIRTUS Re-Certification video module, entitled *Keeping the Promise Alive 3.0*, to complete. (It also serves as a refresher.) This went into effect April 4, 2018; and, is required as part of the ongoing-training requirement.

The video module does not replace the reading of the [monthly] VIRTUS bulletins. A new bulletin will continue to be added to all accounts by the 8th of every month.

Completion of the module takes about 30 minutes and it is *interactive*. It begins with a question; then, a video. Afterward, there will be several more questions with videos. The user must choose an answer in order to proceed.

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