

SAFE ENVIRONMENT POLICY

Diocese of Fort Worth

INTRODUCTION

The Safe Environment Program of the Diocese of Fort Worth provides services designed to prevent abuse of children and young people through the diocesan Human Resources Department. The Safe Environment Program provides education, screening, and training to ensure safety for children, youth, families, and communities of the diocese.

MISSION

The mission of the Safe Environment Program is to maintain the safety of children, youth, families, and communities in all parishes, schools, missions, and apostolates of the Diocese of Fort Worth. This mission is grounded in the person of Jesus Christ, revealing the love of God for all creation.

The mission of the Safe Environment Program reflects the commitment to Catholic teaching, namely that all human life, at every age, is to be respected, nurtured, and protected. The teachings of the Church call for action on the part of Catholics to safeguard the life, health, and faith of all people.

SAFE ENVIRONMENT PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

All Clergy, Religious Men and Women, Employees and Volunteers of the Diocese of Fort Worth are required to fulfill all mandatory steps **PRIOR TO THE START OF SERVICE**. Note: Employment or Volunteer Service in the Diocese of Fort Worth will not begin until **ALL** of the following steps are completed:

- I. Application for Employment or Volunteer Application for Ministry – Individuals seeking employment in the diocese are required to complete an Application for Employment, including the names and contact information of references, who will be contacted. Individuals seeking to volunteer in the diocese are required to complete and submit a Volunteer Application for Ministry, including the names and contact information of three references, who will be contacted.
- II. Criminal Background Check – All individuals seeking employment or seeking to volunteer in the diocese will sign an “Authorization for Release of Information” and must receive an acceptable Criminal Background Check result before a Letter of Hire or clearance for volunteer service can begin.
- III. Safe Environment Training – All individuals seeking employment or to volunteer in the diocese will attend the live, initial Safe Environment Training session, “Keeping Children Safe” before employment or volunteer service can begin.
- IV. Code of Conduct Agreement Form – All individuals seeking employment or to volunteer in the diocese will participate in a review of the Diocesan Code of Conduct and sign the Code of Conduct Agreement Form.

**THE MANDATE OF THE U.S. BISHOPS' DOCUMENT,
*CHARTER FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE***

The mandate of the Safe Environment Program originates in the document of the United States Bishops' *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*, first published in 2002, promulgated by Pope John Paul II in 2005, made particular law in the United States in 2006, and recently revised in 2011.

The *Charter* is a directive for all arch/bishops in the U.S. and a guide for establishing safe environment programs; screening all clergy, employees, parents, volunteers, children and youth; and responding to allegations of abuse. In addition, the *Charter* provides for the screening and education of seminarians, orientation of new and foreign clergy to the diocese, and evaluation of each diocese regarding effective implementation of the *Charter*.

To fulfill the requirements of the Safe Environment Program, contact the Safe Environment Coordinator at your parish or Catholic School. For additional information, contact Katherine Listi, the diocesan Director of Safe Environment at 817-945-9340.

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