

Roman Catholic Diocese of Paterson

Safe Environment Training

for

Religious Education Students

Policy Mandate

In 2002, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) issued the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* (“Charter”). Article 12 of the *Charter* provides as follows:

Dioceses/eparchies will establish “safe environment” programs. They will cooperate with parents, civil authorities, educators, and community organizations to provide education and training for children, youth, parents, ministers, educators, and others about ways to make and maintain a safe environment for children.

Dioceses/eparchies will make clear to clergy and to all members of the community the standards of conduct for clergy and other persons in positions of trust with regard to sexual abuse.

This policy sets forth the procedures to be followed in the Diocese of Paterson with regard to implementing safe environment training programs for all students in all Roman Catholic Diocese of Paterson Religious Education Programs.

Applicability of this Policy

1. Safe environment training will be made available to all children in Parish Religious Education programs and similar catechetical programs.
2. Parents of children enrolled in religious education programs or other programs will have regular opportunities to attend safe environment training. Parents will also be informed in writing and/or through special training sessions of the safe environment training program material presented to their children. All parents will have the opportunity to request their child(ren) not participate in Safe Environment Training.

Safe Environment Training:

Training programs for children and young people will include age appropriate material pertaining to personal safety. This includes information about improper touching and relationships. Children are not expected to be fully knowledgeable about child abuse or

of the laws governing care of children, but they need to know when they should seek assistance from a trusted adult.

The Diocese utilizes the Virtus “Teaching Touching Safety” program for children in the Parish Religious Education Programs. The material consists of lessons that are grade/age appropriate. The training will be presented by Directors/Coordinators of Religious Education and catechists.

Each parish will present one 45 minute lesson to two (2) grades in the Religious Education Program. The Diocesan Religious Education Programs will teach 1st and 4th graders each year.

Administration of the Safe Environment Training

The Office of Child Protection, in consultation with the Director of Catechesis, will be responsible for choosing safety training programs/lessons for religious education students or making changes to any student safety programs.

The Diocesan Child Protection Office will record training information into the Child Protection Database for use with USCCB annual Child Protection Audits.

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