

October 6, 2017

Parish and School Administrators,

Safe Environment training for children and youth is an important part of our parish and school programs. We must train ALL children, Pre-K – Grade 12, every year. We want them to know they are created in the image of God and that adults in our Church are here to protect them. We cannot tell them often enough that everyone is to respect their own bodies and the bodies of other people.

Please provide Safe Environment training for children and youth in parish/school programs in either October or November. I am including the link for the Safe Environment page so you can use the programs for children, http://www.arch-no.org/safe_environment. Attached is a pdf of a hand for you to use with young children to identify trusted adults. Encourage parents to have their children actually make the contact to let their children tell the trusted adults they know they can call them if they ever need them.

I am also attaching the power point for grades 7 – 12. **When you train grades 9-12, please keep a list of the students who participate. If they attend your training in the classroom setting, then they do not have to attend the adult training when they volunteer for summer camps.**

If you use any training materials from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, <http://www.missingkids.com/Safety>, Netsmartz, <https://www.netsmartz.org/Resources>, or another resource, please note this on your Administrator Report Form on Austin Computing Solutions.

When completing the Administrator Report Form, please make sure that the total number of children/youth matches the total numbers that you have turned in to either the Office of Catholic Schools or the Office of Religious Education. We have to account for all registered in our parish/school programs.

Adults, both employees and volunteers, receive Safe Environment training and a criminal background check prior to working with minors and every three years as long as they continue with your parish/school programs with minors. On the Administrator Report Form, you have to account for ALL employees and volunteers and indicate whether or not they have been trained and screened within the past three years.

I will be coming to the parishes and schools this year for your Safe Environment Audits. When I visit, it is important for me to have a scheduled time with your pastor, principal, Austin Computing administrator, staff or volunteer who supervises the SE training for minors, and anyone else you would like to invite.

Please use the attached form for **Safe Environment Organization Adult Volunteer List 2017-2018** (if you are using another list, please let me know) for me to easily see your volunteers in various organizations. ALL volunteers on these lists must be in compliance on Austin Computing Solutions.

ALL employees in parishes who have on-going, unsupervised contact with minors or are attending an over-night event must be in compliance on Austin Computing.

Any adult receiving a paycheck from a Catholic School must be in compliance on Austin Computing in addition to the required fingerprinting for the state of Louisiana.

It is important for us to re-commit ourselves each year to the protection of our children/youth in the Archdiocese of New Orleans. As we work together, I offer you my assistance and my constant prayer in thanksgiving for you and for the protection of your children/youth.

In Christ,

Sr. Mary Ellen Wheelahan, O.Carm.

