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MEMORANDUM

TO: Pastors, Principals, and Directors of Affiliated Organizations
Parish Armatus Administrators
Certified Trainers

FROM: Very Rev. John Gomez, Promoter of Justice

DATE: June 19, 2019

SUBJ: ACS Procedures Effective July 1, 2019

Dear Fathers and Friends,

We are pleased to announce that our new safe environment training program under the direction of Praesidium is ready to launch. Although there are several new elements, there are many similarities with our current training program. The enclosed summary offers an overview of how this process will work. We have already discussed and presented most of this material.

Thank you for your patience in this process. There will certainly still be questions and things to fine-tune as we continue to work with Praesidium, but we are pleased to be moving forward.

GENERAL

As with the previous program, an **Acceptance Certificate for Service (ACS)** is required of all Church personnel - clergy, religious, seminarians, paid employees, and volunteers engaged in ministry with minors and vulnerable adults. The ACS is granted after completing the required background check and training; commitment to the Code of Ethics and Integrity for Conduct of Church Personnel is also required.

TRAINING

Before service begins and every three years thereafter, Church personnel will take **Foundational Training**. This consists of an on-line training component and an in-person session in which Church personnel will view Praesidium's CASE video and participate in a facilitated discussion.

During years two and three, Church personnel will complete **Ongoing Education** in the form of on-line components designed to build upon the Foundational Training.

BACKGROUND CHECKS

A **background check with Praesidium is required before service begins and every three years thereafter**. The cost of the background check is \$16 in most cases. The cost of the background checks will be billed to the parish/institution. As in the past, this cost can either be

paid by the parish or the Church personnel. If the Church personnel is asked to pay, they should give the money to the Parish Armatus Administrator (parish safe environment contact).

TIMELINE

1. As of November 1, 2019, all Church personnel must have an unexpired ACS (either through the new process or an unexpired ACS from the former process).
2. All Church personnel **whose current ACS has already expired or will expire before October 31, 2019** are required to get a new ACS by November 1, 2019. Those whose current ACS expires after November 1, 2019 can get their new ACS now or any time prior to the expiration date of their current ACS.
3. Effective July 1, 2019, all **new Church personnel** are required to obtain an ACS through the new process.

PROCEDURE FOR OBTAINING AN ACS

1. The Parish Armatus Administrator enters the name, address, e-mail address, position, and other required information for the Church personnel into Praesidium's Armatus portal. If the Parish Armatus Administrator encounters any difficulties, they may contact the Armatus support team.
2. Once entered by the Parish Armatus Administrator, the Church personnel will receive two e-mails:
 - a. An e-mail with instructions on how to complete the background check. If the Church personnel encounters any difficulties, they can call the Armatus support line.
 - b. An e-mail with instructions on how to complete the on-line training component.
3. When the on-line training component is successfully completed, the Parish Armatus Administrator will direct the Church personnel to the next available in-person Foundational Training session. At the in-person Foundational Training session, the Church personnel must agree to and sign the Code of Ethics and Integrity for Conduct of Church Personnel.
4. When the Church personnel completes the in-person foundational training session and commits to the Code of Conduct, the Chancery will process the completion and the Church personnel will be notified that they have been awarded an ACS.
5. Employment or ministry may only begin once this is completed.

Exception for Special Circumstances

In special circumstances when employment or ministry needs to begin immediately, service may begin when the Church personnel has completed the **background check, on-line training component** of the Foundational Training, and **signed the Code of Conduct**. The Church personnel must attend an in-person Foundational Training session within 90 days.

The pastor must approve these special circumstances on a case-by-case basis. It is the responsibility of the pastor and the Parish Armatus Administrator to ensure the Church personnel completes the in-person Foundational Training session within the 90 days.

SCHEDUELING IN-PERSON FOUNDATIONAL TRAINING

Pastors who wish to schedule an in-person Foundational Training session in their parishes should do the following, in coordination with their Parish Armatus Administrator:

1. Contact one of the Certified Trainers on the approved list on the website to schedule a date and location.
2. Notify the dean and the other parishes in your deanery to encourage them to use this opportunity for training. Notify Maria Flores at the Chancery (mflores@dioceseoftyler.org) so that the training can be added to the diocesan calendar.
3. Provide pre-registration, hospitality, and set up of facility (video/projection equipment), and handouts (copies of Code of Conduct) as explained by the trainer.
4. Ensure all attendees sign-in on the registration sheet and sign the Code of Conduct. Ensure the Certified Trainer receives the registration sheet and signed Codes of Conduct at the end of the session so that they can be forwarded to the Chancery.
5. Stipend the trainer \$50 plus \$.58/mile traveled if the trainer must travel outside their city of residence.

The in-person Foundational Training session takes approximately 2.5 hours.

POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

Updated and revised Guidelines for the Conduct of Church Personnel have been approved by Bishop Strickland and are available on the diocesan web site. You are expected to carefully review this document. The changes are effective as of July 1, 2019, for an *ad experimentum* period of one year. During that time, the Promoter of Justice is authorized to make editorial clarifications and changes as needed.

NOTES

1. An e-mail address is now required to obtain an ACS. If a Church personnel does not have an e-mail address, free services like Google, Yahoo, or Outlook.com are available. We

realize this is a change, and may even be a small burden for some, but it is necessary in order for us to have a modern and efficient system for our safe environment program.

2. There is no longer an “Awareness Training” component. All Church personnel must obtain an ACS according to policy. This is to ensure that Church personnel are more broadly trained and can give better service in the name of the Church.
3. When entering new Church personnel into the portal, the Parish Armatus Administrator will assign a “position” to each person. This position determines the on-line components to which the Church personnel will be directed. The positions are:
 - a. CLERGY - Priests, deacons, seminarians.
 - b. SCHOOLS - Catholic school employees.
 - c. CATECHISTS - Parish catechists and faith formation volunteers.
 - d. CAMP/RETREAT - The Pines Catholic Camp, Casa Betañia, etc.
 - e. GENERAL – Parish/diocesan staff and all other volunteers.