



## **Safe Environment & Standards of Conduct Policy**

In accordance with Article 12 of the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People

**“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.”**

This Policy mandates that all priests, deacons, seminarians, religious, employees, volunteers and third party vendors who during the course of their work or volunteer activity at any Diocesan entity, have direct, consistent and regular contact with minors<sup>1</sup> must attend a VIRTUS, Protecting God’s Children for Adults Awareness session **WITHIN 90 DAYS OF ONSET OF VOLUNTEERISM OR EMPLOYMENT**. This applies even to those who have one isolated contact with minors if that contact involves an overnight activity.

Each diocesan entity has the authority to expand the criteria for who must attend an Awareness session for their individual location.

All elementary, secondary and religious education programs are required to implement the VIRTUS, Teaching Touching Safety Program or utilize the RCL Family Life Series for all students. Each year, lessons are taught appropriate to the child’s grade level. Parents are to be notified prior to the training and they may speak with the principal or catechetical leader if they have concerns.

### **CODES OF CONDUCT**

All employees and volunteers are required to receive, read and sign a code of conduct, which they will be held too uphold during the course of their employment or volunteerism.

- The signed code of conduct will remain in effect for the duration of their ministry.
- If the volunteer/employee should leave their ministry or position, a new code of conduct must be signed upon their return.

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<sup>1</sup> Please refer to the Policy of Background checks for examples of who required