



# Safe Environment Current Practices

*in the Diocese of Sacramento*



**BACKGROUND CHECKS:** All clergy, employees and volunteers are required to complete a Live Scan fingerprinting background check. Volunteers are cleared through the Department of Justice. Clergy and employees are cleared through the Department of Justice and FBI. In addition, all clergy who have served internationally are cleared through the respective countries.



**SAFE ENVIRONMENT TRAINING (ADULTS) – SAFE HAVEN:** In addition to background checks, all clergy, employees and volunteers are required to complete a child abuse recognition and reporting program. The training is completed through *Safe Haven* and has to be renewed every 3 years. *Safe Haven* is a 3 part video series, which identifies real-life abuse and neglect situations that volunteers and employees may encounter. The training addresses important topics such as pornography, grooming techniques, social media interaction, and boundary violations. The training also covers the different types of abuse and neglect. In addition, the training requires acknowledgement of the following policies: *Code of Pastoral Conduct*, *Sexual Misconduct Policy*, and *Guidelines for Adults Working with Youth*



**SAFE ENVIRONMENT TRAINING (YOUTHS) – CIRCLE OF GRACE:** *Circle of Grace* is the designated training program for children enrolled in faith formation and diocesan schools. *Circle of Grace* is taught each year with lessons unique to each grade level. *Circle of Grace* serves the dual purpose of educating and informing youth about the value of positive relationships with God and others. Through the *Circle of Grace* program, adults assist children and youth to recognize that each of us lives within a *Circle of Grace* that holds our very essence in body, mind, heart, and soul. Through the Circle of Grace program, children and youth are taught to identify and maintain appropriate physical, emotional, and spiritual boundaries; recognize when boundary violations are about to occur; and demonstrate how to take action when boundaries are threatened or violated.



**ANNUAL AUDIT:** Each year, the Diocese of Sacramento is audited by an outside agency for safe environment compliance. Every 3 years, the diocese participates in an on-site audit. Compliance is based upon inquiry, observation and review of specifically requested documentation. Every year, the Diocese of Sacramento has been found to be in compliance with the outline of the Charter and the auditors. For the most current National audit results, click on the following link:  
<http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/child-and-youth-protection/upload/2017-Report.pdf>



**HOW TO FILE A FORMAL COMPLAINT:** If anyone has witnessed, or has reason to believe, or might suspect, there is or has been abuse involving clergy, employees or volunteers at any of the diocese's Catholic schools, parish religious education programs or other church-related events, those suspicions or allegations are to be reported first to civil authorities (law enforcement, child protective services, or adult protective services) and then to the Diocese of Sacramento via the toll-free line at 866-777-9133. Reports can be made in English and Spanish.



**VICTIM ASSISTANCE COORDINATOR:** The Diocese of Sacramento provides a pastoral care coordinator to assist persons who have suffered sexual abuse by members of the Catholic clergy and other Catholic Church workers. The Pastoral Care Coordinator arranges for their professional counseling. A toll-free number is made available to the public on the diocesan website and in the Catholic Herald Magazine to report abuse. Reports can be taken in English and Spanish at 866-777-9133.



**INDEPENDENT REVIEW BOARD:** Since 2002, an Independent Review Board has been in place to advise the Bishop of Sacramento in his assessment of allegations of sexual abuse of minors and in his determination of a cleric's suitability for ministry. In addition, the IRB regularly reviews the Diocese's policies and procedures for dealing with sexual abuse of minors.



**SEMINARIAN FORMATION:** All Seminarians receive full background checks and safe environment training. They are psychologically screened and evaluated throughout their training and education.



**SAFE ENVIRONMENT CONTACTS:** Each parish and diocesan school has a safe environment contact. This individual serves as a liaison between their site and the Safe Environment Department. They are responsible for managing compliance requirements for their parish or school.