



Honor Thy Children

Archdiocese of Louisville continuing education for the awareness and prevention of child abuse

Why Safe Environment Training Matters: Understanding Our Commitment to Child Safety

The Archdiocese of Louisville is committed to ensuring that every child and young person who worships, studies, or participates in church-sponsored activities can do so in the safest and most secure environment possible. In support of this commitment, all employees and volunteers who have contact with children or youth under the age of 18 are required to complete Safe Environment Training through a live workshop setting.

This training was established following the 2002 Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, which called all U.S. dioceses to strengthen child protection efforts and provide education on the prevention and reporting of child sexual abuse. The training equips participants to recognize warning signs of abuse, understand grooming behaviors and disclosure

patterns, respond appropriately to concerns, and become familiar with Archdiocesan policies, Codes of Conduct, and Kentucky's mandatory reporting laws.

Safe Environment Training is important because child sexual abuse is a widespread issue affecting every segment of society. Studies show that approximately 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 6 boys experience sexual abuse before adulthood, and nearly 80% of abused children are harmed by a parent, relative, or someone they know and trust. As one of the largest youth-serving communities in the country, the Church recognizes both the responsibility and the opportunity to educate adults to better protect children.

The Archdiocese continues to hold these trainings in person because live instruction allows for

meaningful interaction, discussion, and support. Since the program began in 2003, more than 61,000 individuals have participated in Safe Environment Training throughout the Archdiocese. Participants often share personal experiences, ask questions, and gain the confidence to recognize and report abuse. In some cases, the training has directly empowered individuals to report ongoing abuse and seek help for children and families in need.

Beyond the Church setting, this education helps adults recognize signs of abuse in schools, sports programs, neighborhoods, and within families. Through awareness, education, and accountability, Safe Environment Training plays a vital role in creating safer communities and protecting the dignity and well-being of every child.

Archdiocese of
Louisville

May
2026

If you need support or someone to talk to:

- ☺ Prevent Child Abuse Kentucky or Indiana:
800.CHILDREN/
800.422.4453
www.pcaky.org
www.pcaain.org
- ☺ Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline
800.4.A.CHILD
800.422.4453
www.childhelp.org

Are You Safe Environment Compliant?

Are you working regularly with children?

If so you must have attended an Archdiocese of Louisville Safe Environment Training.

Has it been 5 years since your initial in person training? You must complete your 5 year refresher training

You must also have a satisfactory background check not older than 5 years.

See your Safe Environment Coordinator today to verify your compliance!

visit www.archou.org/safe for an always updated list of scheduled trainings

It is strongly advised members do not wait until the last minute to attend a workshop as trainings are subject to postponement at anytime due to weather, facilities etc.

Safe Environment COMPLIANCE

...it's simple math

*Unsure of your status?
See your parish/school Safe
Environment Coordinator
today and ensure you're
up-to-date!*

Initial attendance at
an Archdiocese of
Louisville
in-person training

+

Archdiocese of
Louisville issued
background check not
older than five years

+

5 year refresher
training either online
or in person

=

**Safe Environment
Compliant**



IMPORTANT NOTE:
You can NOT complete the online
refresher without first attending
an initial in-person training.

Side Note

There are several trainings scheduled through the month of August with more to follow beyond that. Even if you think you might be asked to serve in a capacity that requires safe environment compliance, it's best not to wait and attend a scheduled training soon!

DID YOU KNOW?

It's your responsibility to ensure that all social media utilized in ministry with minors is approved and monitored by the appropriate administrator (pastor, principal, director).

You must also ensure that parents are informed about all social media communication utilized by the group/ ministry in question.

This is just one of many items found within the Archdiocese's Code of Conduct for church personnel discussed at the required mandatory initial in-person Safe Environment training.



Have you shared with your kids how to make a *SPLASH* this summer?

S
P
L
A
S
H

Swimsuits cover private parts, which we call by their correct names.

Private parts are only to be touched or seen by trusted grown-ups helping to keep your body clean and healthy with your permission.

Listen to lessons from trusted grown-ups about your safety.

Always tell a trusted grown-up if someone asks to see or shows you private parts.

Secrets and surprises are different. No one should ask you to keep a secret forever.

Hugs and kisses are your choice; remember that your body belongs to you and you can say "No".



face it
A MOVEMENT TO END CHILD ABUSE

Founded By

Kosair
for Kids

The Archdiocese of Louisville, partners with the "face it" movement funded by Kosair for Kids, works tirelessly to fight child abuse and provides these helpful tips to keep your kids safe this summer while away from school.

Should you have any questions regarding child abuse over the summer break, Archdiocese of Louisville Victim Assistance Coordinator Martine Siegel is available anytime to assist

502.636.1044 or via (email) msiegel@archlou.org

Upcoming Trainings

Check www.archlou.org/safe for the most up-to-date schedule.

All trainings begin at 630 p.m. unless otherwise noted

5.30.26
St. Edward
(SPANISH SPEAKING ONLY)
(School Cafeteria)
(9:30 AM)

6.3.26
Sacred Heart Ursuline
Arts Center
(6:00 PM)

6.8.26
St. Margaret Mary
(Church)

6.15.26
St. Gabriel (Church)

6.24.26
Flaget (Gym)

7.20.26
St. Aloysius-Pewee
Valley (Gym)

7.27.26
Flaget (Gym)

8.10.26
Flaget (Gym)

8.17.26
St. Joseph (Bardstown)

8.24.26
St. Bernard (Gym)

8.31.26
St. Patrick



**Archdiocese of Louisville
Office of Safe Environment**

Martine Bacci Siegel, MSN, RN, CNS
Maloney Center
1200 South Shelby Street
Louisville, KY 40220

Phone: 502.636.1044
Fax: 502.634.3381
E-mail: msiegel@archlou.org

No child or adult should ever experience abuse by anyone, especially a church minister. We all have the right to be treated with dignity and to expect our church to reflect the goodness of God in all of its dealings.

We hope that this information is helpful to all in our communities who are working to prevent and respond to childhood sexual abuse. Please let us know if you need further assistance or information by calling or emailing our victim assistance coordinator, Ms. Martine Siegel, at 502/636-1044; victimassistance@archlou.org

We must heed God's call to care for the most vulnerable among us and to continue our efforts toward wholeness and health in dealing with sexual abuse.

UNDERSTANDING GROOMING & HOW CHILDREN ARE AFFECTED BY SEXUAL ABUSE

Abusers gain a child's cooperation through manipulation, threats, and bribery. The initial stages of abuse involve subtle, seemingly innocent actions that prey upon a child's lack of knowledge and maturity to violate normal boundaries. This process of manipulating children to become increasingly comfortable with the violations of their boundaries is termed "grooming." Grooming begins with indirect violations that are difficult to identify as preludes to sexual abuse. Such things as tickling a child, hugging a child, or patting the child's backside may not be abusive, but could serve as the beginning of the grooming process. For the adult abuser, these interactions are sexually charged. Children, having no

experience with the notion of "sexually charged" experiences, are unable to put words to what is happening. They only know that something is a "little weird." This awkward experience is called an "uh-oh" feeling and is often described in safe-touch programs for children. The "uh-oh" feeling is confusing because of the trust that the child feels for the adult. Children also tend to discount their own "uh-oh" feelings because the abuser uses minimization to justify his or her violations. As the grooming process evolves, sexually violating behaviors become seemingly normal so that each progressive, intrusive step is experienced as only a slight violation of the previously established boundary.

Children are individuals, and each is affected differently by abuse. Several people could have the trauma of sexual abuse occur in their lives, but each individual will respond and react in varying ways according to his or her personality, family of origin, support systems, gender, age at the time of the abuse, and many other variables too numerous to list. Other factors that impact the magnitude of the damage include duration of abuse, level of intrusiveness/violation of the abuse, type and severity of threats used to maintain secrecy, relationship to the abuser, the number of perpetrators, and age at the time of disclosure, as well as reactions to disclosure. It is never appropriate to try to predict how a child may be affected by sexual abuse. What someone may deem "mild" sexual abuse may traumatize a child the rest of his or her life. Another child that suffered from what others may describe as "severe" abuse, may, with proper care, heal and live a healthy and productive life. The effects of abuse are unpredictable, and all individuals need support and compassion as they find their unique paths to healing. In general:

- ◆ The younger the age of the child at the onset and the longer the duration of the sexual abuse, the more severe are the effects of sexual abuse.
- ◆ The closer the relationship of the child to the abuser, the larger the impact on the child.
- ◆ Negative and non-supportive reactions from persons to whom children disclose (disbelief, denial, making excuses) cause negative effects on how the children respond as well as on their healing process.