



# ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI PARISH SAFE ENVIRONMENT PROGRAM FAQs

## WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE “IN COMPLIANCE”?

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For a parish, school, or agency to be “in compliance” it must consistently enforce the Safe Environment Policy with these guidelines:

**ADULTS** (18 years or older and out of high school) who work or volunteer with or near minors or vulnerable adults must do the following:

- Attend a “Protecting God’s Children” training
- Agree to undergo a background screening that evaluates any history related to criminal charges as well as child abuse and neglect; agree to the background screening being updated every even numbered year
- Agree to undergo an additional background screening if you have resided out of state in the past five years or currently reside out of state
- Provide a hard copy or electronic signature agreeing to the Ethical Code of Conduct for Clergy, Employees, and Volunteers Working With Minors

**MINORS** (Younger than 18 or 18 and still in high school) who volunteer or work with or near minors - e.g. scorekeepers, umpires, service work, etc) and their parent or guardian must complete the “Archdiocese of St. Louis Code of Ethical Conduct for Minors Volunteering or Working with Younger Children.”

**CONTRACTED WORKERS** (Those working for a group contracted to provide specific services – e.g. food service, after school care, etc) must complete the “Code of Ethical Conduct for Third Party Contractors.” Their employer is responsible for running their background screening.

## I DO NOT WORK WITH CHILDREN. WHY DO I NEED TO ATTEND PROTECTING GOD’S CHILDREN?

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People of ALL ages are God’s Children. While the program was originally designed to create awareness and prevent child sexual abuse, the 5-step plan **APPLIES TO OTHER VULNERABLE GROUPS AND SITUATIONS AS WELL**. By building awareness and creating universal procedures for those volunteering in any type of sensitive situation – e.g. with youth, with vulnerable adults, with money or items of value, etc. – an organization provides safeguards for members and other resources. Those organizations that are diligent about following the policy are less likely to be targeted by those who choose to take advantage of sensitive situations for their own purpose.

## HOW OFTEN ARE BACKGROUND CHECKS RUN?

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Background checks are run routinely each even year, unless someone is a new volunteer.



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## DOES IT COST THE PARISH OR INDIVIDUAL MONEY EACH TIME THE BACKGROUND CHECK IS RUN?

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The only cost involved is for the initial registration in the Family Care Safety Registry. Once that is in place, background checks are run at no additional charge. If someone registered through another parish, there is no additional cost for St. Francis.

## IF I WORK WITH YOUTH WHO WORK WITH OTHER YOUTH, HOW DO I KNOW WHETHER THEY NEED TO SIGN THE CODE FOR MINORS WORKING WITH YOUNGER CHILDREN? AS LONG AS THEY'RE THE SAME AGE IS IT OK NOT TO HAVE THE CODE SIGNED?

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The spirit of the policy focuses on the role of the youth rather than the age. If the youth is **VOLUNTEERING OR WORKING** in some capacity (score keeper, assisting another Troop, etc) they should have a Code on file. If the youth is only a **PARTICIPANT** along with other youth of the same or different age, they need not.

## I'M IN CHARGE OF THE SCHOOL PICNIC (OR ANOTHER LARGE PARISH EVENT). DO I HAVE TO HAVE ALL OF MY VOLUNTEERS AND WORKERS IN COMPLIANCE?

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Fundraising and/or family events where children attend but remain in the care and control of their parents or guardians are considered "family events" and the parish, school, or agency is not the primary caretaker for the children in attendance. **IT MAY BE NECESSARY, HOWEVER TO REQUIRE CERTAIN WORKERS OR VOLUNTEERS TO BE IN COMPLIANCE SUCH AS AN ADULT SUPERVISING SERVICE HOURS FOR STUDENTS WHO ARE DROPPED OFF BY PARENTS OR "SANTA" WHO WOULD HAVE DIRECT CONTACT WITH MANY CHILDREN. PLEASE CONTACT THE SAFETY COORDINATOR TO DETERMINE IF THAT IS NECESSARY.**

## HOW DO I FIND A PROTECTING GOD'S CHILDREN CLASS?

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Go to [www.archstl.org](http://www.archstl.org) (Archdiocese website) and click the "Protecting God's Children" tab.



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## WHAT IF I TOOK PROTECTING GOD'S CHILDREN AT ANOTHER PARISH?

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If the parish is in the Archdiocese of St. Louis, tell the Safety Coordinator where and approximately when you took the course so he or she can find you in the database. Be sure to mention other names (such as maiden names) that you may be listed under in the database. If you took the course outside of the St. Louis Archdiocese, you'll need to call The Office of Child & Youth Protection at 314-792-7271.

## I ALREADY TOOK YOUTH PROTECTION CLASS THROUGH ANOTHER ORGANIZATION. DO I HAVE TO TAKE PROTECTING GOD'S CHILDREN ALSO?

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Yes, to work or volunteer in an organization or ministry associated with the Archdiocese of St. Louis you must fulfill the requirements of their policy, including taking the Protecting God's Children class, even if you've completed another youth protection program or course.

## I ATTENDED PROTECTING GOD'S CHILDREN YEARS AGO. SHOULD I ATTEND AGAIN?

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At this time, volunteers or workers are only required to attend once; however, the program has been updated during its existence, especially as new technologies have been developed. A refresher is not required but encouraged.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT THE SAFETY COORDINATOR.