

Appendix XII

Safe Environment Training (SET)- Implementation

Catholic Diocese of Gallup

Managing the environment in which our children and vulnerable adults live and play requires constant vigilance and continued learning. The Office of Safe Environment of the Gallup Diocese is responsible to assist the Bishop and the Catholic community to maintain diligence in our task of protecting minors from harm. It will exercise this duty by maintaining a spectrum of education resources about safe environments for minors. Changes will be made in what is offered as new threats are identified and improved teaching products become available. The Bishop maintains approving authority for all programs. The following guidance is the current standard for SET until further notice:

1: Foundation Safe Environment Training (SET) for Adults

- A. *VIRTUS – Protecting Gods Children* is the standard foundational training for adults of the Diocese of Gallup. This three-hour workshop is led by a trained facilitator who will validate the training.
- B. Exceptions may be made to accept the credentials of visiting or transferring clergy, lay ministers or volunteers. Credit for foundational training programs in SET will be considered if properly documented and sent directly from the prior diocese, properly certified through the Chancellor’s office. The sending diocese must be in compliance with the USCCB Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People to the satisfaction of the Bishop.
- C. The foundation training document for SET, either *VIRTUS* or an alternative, must be certified by the Office of Safe Environment, otherwise it is not valid.
- D. Exceptions may be made to take the foundation training online in lieu of the three-hour live workshop. This will be on a case by case basis for those who, for valid reasons, cannot attend a live workshop. This training must be approved by the Safe Environment Office.

2. On-going Education (Renewal) for Adults

Several alternatives will be made available for continuing education about the safe environment for minors. We hope to accommodate some differences in learning styles and in some cases limited access to electronic media.

- A. The preferred continuing education is conducted via the Internet through the *VIRTUS* Online program.
 - This consists of monthly Training Bulletins delivered to the Email address of the participants. Each instructional publication addresses a different aspect of protecting children. There are questions at the end of each publication to complete the training.
 - To satisfy the requirement to be current in SET the participant must complete all published training bulletins for the training year up through May 30th. Otherwise, on **June 30th they will become delinquent and no longer eligible to participate in ministry.**

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- B. The second alternative for ongoing SET is VIRTUS - Keeping the Promise.
 - This is an instructional program available on the Internet. It is a review and update educational session with videos and interactive questions. Its focuses on refreshing the information presented in the original VIRTUS program plus updates on current threats to minors.
 - Only those who choose this method of renewal will be assigned this training session. Individuals choosing to use this form of education must notify the Office of Safe Environment (phone, letter, or email)
 - This training must be accomplished each year prior to June 30th. Otherwise the person is no longer eligible for ministry.
- C. The third alternative is to repeat another session of the foundation SET training. (Currently VIRTUS-Protecting God's Children)
 - This training may be done any time during the usual SET year but must be accomplished each year prior to June 30th. Otherwise the person is no longer eligible for ministry.

3. Certification of Code of Ethics for Adults

- A. The Diocese of Gallup Code of Ethics must be reviewed and signed by all new adults entering work or ministry in the diocese who are required to have SET.
- B. Clerics and employees of the diocese (those reporting directly to the Chancery) must sign this document annually. This process offers the opportunity to review the critical policies of the diocese, particularly those most pertinent to the ministry of each person. This document will reflect periodic changes as the various policies of the diocese are updated.
- C. Supervisors may elect to have employees and volunteers sign a new Code of Ethics document if changes occur in policies that need to be acknowledged.

4. Minors enrolled in Catholic Schools and/or Diocesan Religious Education Programs will be offered age appropriate Safe Environment Training during each academic year.

- A. These programs must be approved by the Bishop upon recommendation by the Office of Safe Environment and the Superintendent of Schools.
- B. The goal will be to complete the training early in the school year if possible.
- C. The training sessions must be announced to the parents with the opportunity to opt-in or opt-out of the education. The individual school and/or program must maintain documentation of completion of training and letters documenting parents' approval or declination of training.
- D. The parents who "opt-out" of the SET for their children should be offered materials on safe environment for children so they may instruct their own children. If a parent refuses to sign the "opt-out" letter, then the supervisor or designee must write a memorandum to be placed in the files.

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- E. The current approved programs for the Religious Education at the parish level include two options:
1. *Teaching Touching Safety*. This program by VIRTUS has age-appropriate versions from kindergarten through 12th grades.
 2. *Protect Yourself Rules*. This program funded by the Barbara Sinatra Children's Center Foundation has age-appropriate instruction materials from kindergarten through 8th grade. (High school students will need to be taught from the *VIRTUS Teaching Touching Safety program*.)
- F. The program for the diocesan schools is the curriculum from RCL Benziger entitled *Family Life*.

5. Documentation:

- A. The Office of Safe Environment will track the performance of all adult personnel that engage the SET process. This includes the documentation of the foundation training event and on-going education. Regular reports will be issued to the parishes, school and other major components for the use of supervisors.
1. One-hundred percent registration on the VIRTUS website is expected. This will be accomplished by all those who take the VIRTUS foundation training. Registration information will be given to participants in order for them to get registered and complete ongoing training.
 2. All participants must let their supervisor know how they plan to complete ongoing training. If a participant indicates the choice to repeat the foundation course annually, the Safe Environment Office must be notified. This will allow the Safe Environment office to generate accurate reports.
- B. Responsibility to secure and maintain a current valid training status is a shared responsibility to include the offices of diocese, all subordinate parts and the individual minister, employee or teacher. However, it is the particular duty of the pastor, administrator, principal, or any other leader in charge of a program for minors that no one is allowed access to minors who is not properly trained and supervised.
- C. At the parish and program level it is essential that documentation files exist and are properly checked and updated as necessary. These files will have other required documents as specified elsewhere in this and other policies.
1. For adults individual files must be kept for each adult employee or volunteer. For proper SET documentation these personnel files must at a minimum include:
 - Documentation of foundational SET education
 - Validation of any on-going SET education
 - A signed copy of the Code of Ethics
 2. For minors the documentation is usually kept by classes, or by volunteer group but may be filed individually at the option of the supervisor. These files must include:
 - Documentation of SET education events for the academic year (July 1- June 30)
 - Consent letters for SET (or Opt-out letters) for each minor in the class/group
 - Memoranda documenting refusal of parent to sign for SET (if applicable)