



Honor Thy Children

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

Creating a Culture of Safety: What Every Parent, Volunteer, and Staff Member Needs to Know

Archdiocese of Louisville

Jun/July
(Summer Break Edition)
2025

Summer sure did fly by, didn't it? As we turn the corner into a new school year and gear up for parish and school

After that initial in-person training, a refresher is required every five years, either through an in-person session or, for

due to weather, trainer availability, or unforeseen circumstances, so it's always best to be prepared ahead of time.



In addition to training, a satisfactory Archdiocese of Louisville background check must be on file and updated every five years. Anyone without a current background check or training on record is considered non-compliant. We also encourage you to reach out to your school or parish Safe Environment Coordinator to verify that you—and those working with your children—are Safe Environment compliant. It's one of the simplest and most effective ways to ensure everyone is doing their part to protect our youth. Your time, attention, and care make a lasting difference. Thank you for being a vital part of our Church's commitment to a culture of safety and trust.

activities, now is the time to make sure we're ready to do what matters most when keeping our children safe.

In the Archdiocese of Louisville, anyone who works with children, whether as a volunteer, coach, catechist, teacher, or staff member etc., must attend an in-person Safe Environment Training. This training is required before beginning any role involving children and only needs to be completed once, but it must be your first step.

those eligible, an online option. Please note: the online refresher is only available to those who have already completed the in-person training. For more information on accessing the online option, contact your parish or school Safe Environment Coordinator. There's no registration required for in-person training, just show up! Please don't wait to attend a session, even if you're not currently active in a role that requires it. Training can be canceled

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!

**A COMPLETE LIST OF TRAININGS CAN ALWAYS BE FOUND AT
WWW.ARCHLOU.ORG/SAFE**

SCHOOL-BASED TRAINING

In addition to the training required for all adults, the Archdiocese of Louisville remains deeply committed to educating and empowering the children in our Catholic schools to protect themselves from abuse.

As part of this commitment, every elementary school in the Archdiocese of Louisville is required to implement the *Childhelp Speak Up Be Safe* curriculum. The *Childhelp Speak Up Be Safe* program is the only evidence-based primary prevention curriculum of its kind for students in Pre-K through 12th grade. This curriculum equips children with age-appropriate knowledge and

strategies to recognize, prevent, and interrupt various forms of abuse—physical, emotional, and sexual—as well as neglect, bullying, and online dangers.

This strengths-based



curriculum is designed to build awareness, teach resistance strategies, and encourage students to identify and speak up to trusted adults in their lives. Through interactive lessons, students learn to recognize unsafe situations, develop self-protection skills, and

create a network of safe adults and peers.

By involving families and offering additional resources, *Speak Up Be Safe* helps foster a supportive community where children feel empowered and never alone.

And if a child is ever unable to reach a trusted adult immediately, help is always available 24/7 through the Childhelp National Hotline:

Call or text: 1-800-422-4453

Together, we can ensure our children are informed, supported, and safe.



GRADE LEVEL BASED CURRICULUMS

Pre K-2

A primary focus for the earliest age groups is emphasizing that adults are responsible for keeping children safe. Students learn basic concepts of personal safety and how to identify safe adults in their lives

Grade 3-5

Lessons underscore adult responsibility for child safety. Children, equipped with key safety rules, actively contribute to their safety. They identify safe adults, recognize potential risks, and practice safety rules.

Grade 6-8

Adults remain responsible for child safety, yet lessons recognize students' increasing responsibilities and privileges. Students learn to recognize potential risks and practice resistance strategies until they can talk to a safe adult.

Grade 9-12

Lessons highlight teens' growing independence, focusing on ways to recognize unhealthy relationships and unsafe situations. Students learn to prevent abuse, seek help, and broaden their understanding of abusive behavior. Identifying safe adults and peers reinforces a strong safety network.

UPCOMING SAFE ENVIRONMENT TRAININGS

Back to school trainings are underway! These important training sessions are designed to promote a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment for all—this training, along with an Archdiocese of Louisville-issued background check, is mandatory for anyone working with children. Even if you think you will be working with children in the future, but are unsure, you're strongly encouraged to take advantage of these upcoming sessions.

All trainings begin promptly at 630p (unless otherwise noted) and **children under 16 will not be admitted given the content discussion.**

8.4.25
Flaget Center

8.7.25
St. Joseph (Bardstown)

8.11.25
St. Aloysius
(Pewee Valley)

9.8.25
St. Bernard School

9.18.25
St. Margaret Mary

9.22.25
Flaget Center

10.6.25
St. James (E-Town)

Trainings are subject to postponement due to weather, etc. It's best not to wait if you think you will be serving in your parish or school.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTION

One of the unique strengths of our in-person Safe Environment Training sessions is the opportunity for real-time dialogue. Our presenters—both experienced mental health professionals—stay after each session to answer questions, provide clarity, and offer support on the sensitive and important topic of child abuse prevention. A question we hear often is:

"As a parent, I'm already the best protector of my child. Why do I need this training?"

It's a thoughtful and valid question—and one that opens the door to meaningful conversation. Below, we take a closer look at why Safe Environment Training is essential not just for volunteers and staff, but for *all* caring adults in our Catholic community.

- This training emerged from the reforms of 2002 contained in the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*, which sought to address the clergy sexual abuse crisis. No child should ever be abused, especially by someone whose task it is to nurture that child's faith. In addition to many other reforms, the *Charter* very wisely called all U.S. dioceses to provide education and training on the issue of childhood sexual abuse for persons of all ages.
- Sexual abuse happens in all segments of society, and 80% of all abused children were abused by parents or other family members.
- Because we do live training in the Archdiocese, we can interact with thousands of individuals. After the training, we have people lining up to tell their stories. At one session, we were told of the arrest of a father who had been abusing his children because one of his adult children attended a safe environment training and felt empowered to report. Others talk to us about their abuse as children. They tell us how the class helped them to recognize that they need help, and we can refer them to the assistance they need. Many attendees who come in with skeptical expressions and crossed arms leave with heartfelt thanks for all they learned.
- This training also helps adults who may not have experienced abuse in their own lives recognize the signs of abuse in children they may encounter, whether that abuse happens in the context of the Church, a sports program, or a neighborhood. Many adults are not fully aware of their responsibility to report. In this training, they learn of the mandated reporting laws for all adults in Kentucky to report child abuse, and they learn how to do it.
- The education and empowerment that result from this kind of training, as well as the education provided to children and youth, are one way that we can help to bring about systemic change to combat sexual abuse in our community.

*Martine Seigel is a trainer and the Archdiocese of Louisville's Victim Assistance Coordinator. She is available to discuss abuse and answer any questions you may have.
(502) 636.1044 or mseigel@archlou.org*

Do's & Don'ts

Our **Code of Conduct** outlines basic expectations to help employees and volunteers use sound judgment and uphold the highest standards in their ministry with youth. These are just a few of the items at hand and are to ministry- or employment-related settings and are not intended to limit appropriate interactions within one's own family.

Avoid being alone with a minor in a residence, rectory, sleeping facility, locker room, rest room, dressing facility, or other closed rooms.

Avoid driving alone in a vehicle with a young person.

Never use alcohol when engaged in ministering to minor.

Release young people only to parents or guardians, unless the parent or guardian has provided permission allowing release to another adult.

Refrain from giving inappropriate or expensive gifts to young people.

Never take an overnight trip alone with a minor.

Ensure that all activities (extracurricular, catechetical, youth ministry, scouting, athletics, etc.) for which I am responsible have been approved in advance by the appropriate administrator.

Archdiocese of Louisville
Office of Safe Environment

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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.

WHEN TO REPORT

All adults who have any reason to suspect child abuse are legally required to contact Child Protective Services (CPS) and make a report. This is a mandatory reporting law that obligates all adults to make a report within 24 hours of learning about possible abuse.

In reporting abuse of children and adults, keep in mind the following:

- It is better to err on the side of over-reporting than under-reporting.
- The Protection Acts provide that privileged relationships are not grounds for excluding evidence except in two situations. Neither psychiatrist-patient privilege nor the husband-wife privilege shall be grounds for excluding evidence regarding abuse, neglect, or exploitation. Only lawyer-client privilege and clergy-penitent privilege are excluded [KRS 209.060, KRS 620.050(2)].
- Persons acting upon reasonable cause in the reporting of known or suspected adult/child abuse, neglect, or exploitation are immune from civil and criminal liability. This immunity exists with respect to the reporting, the investigation, and any judicial proceedings resulting from the report [KRS 209.050, KRS 620.050(1)].
- The source of a report of abuse, neglect or exploitation is kept confidential unless it is ordered released by a court order [KRS 209.140].

The report to CPS should include the following information, if known:

- Name and address of the child, or of any person responsible for the child's care
- Nature and extent of the suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation, including any evidence of previous abuse, neglect, or exploitation.
- Identity of the perpetrator.
- Name and address of the reporter (optional).
- Where the child can be found and any information you have about the location of the suspected abuser.

