



# Honor Thy Children

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

## SAFE ENVIRONMENT (REFRESHER) TRAINING NOW AVAILABLE

This month Archbishop Kurtz announced the Archdiocese of Louisville will require anyone working regularly with children refresh their Safe Environment Training every five years.

**While a member's initial training will still require an individual to attend the in person training,**

the Archdiocese of Louisville has partnered up with Catholic Mutual Group to offer an online **refresher only** training.

Over the last 20 years the USCCB's Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People has guided our work in responding to cases of childhood sexual abuse by those who serve the church.

Part of the charter is conducting background checks on all employees and volunteers who have regular contact with children or youth.

To date just over 50,600 background checks have been completed. A few years ago, we improved the policy by requiring background checks to be renewed every five years. We have been encouraged

during our national annual audit to implement an update for our Safe Environment Training Program, and we agreed that this is wise counsel. The current policy is that



all employees and volunteers who have regular contact with minors must attend a workshop offered by the Archdiocese. The Archdiocese has been recognized for offering in-person workshops provided every month for many years. This policy will be updated in January 2022 to require all active employees and volunteers to attend a "refresher" training program every five years.

**Again, new employees and volunteers are still required to attend an in-person workshop.**

However, we are pleased to be able to offer an online alternative for those who wish to meet the required **refresher** training, using a program

produced by Catholic Mutual.

Staff and volunteers can still attend any one of the available workshops, or larger parishes or schools may wish to schedule an in-service event at your location.

Please see your parish/school safe environment coordinator for a instructions on completing the online course.

Once logged in, members will find the video entitled "Safe Haven - It's Up To You" in three segments.

After watching the videos and answering the questions, participants will receive a completion certificate. Each parish/school Safe Environment Coordinator and the Archdiocese of Louisville's Safe Environment Coordinator will be able to see who has completed the training. The local coordinator will then update the parish database based upon this information. Should you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to Scott Fitzgerald, Coordinator of Safe Environment services at (502) 471-2132 or [sfitzgerald@archlou.org](mailto:sfitzgerald@archlou.org).

### Archdiocese of Louisville

November 2021

### If you need support or someone to talk to:

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

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

See your Safe Environment Coordinator today to verify your compliance!



**BE SURE TO TURN IN ANY TRAINING COMPLETION CERTIFICATES IMMEDIATELY TO YOUR PARISH/SCHOOL SAFE ENVIRONMENT COORDINATOR**

**FAILURE TO DO SO MAY RESULT IN YOUR TRAINING NOT BEING PROPERLY RECORDED**

# "HOLIDAY HUGS" AND WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

The holiday season is always a time for wishing others goodwill and peace. A hug is often a familiar gesture for many adults but when it comes to kids, that's a different story.

The holiday season is a perfect time to talk to your kids about personal boundaries.

As we know kids are like snowflakes, no two are exactly the same and children have different personalities.

Chances are we've seen a child squirming to get out of a hug while some love to hug everyone they see.

It's important to remember that kids have a choice about their bodies and how to use them. This reinforces they can say no to

authority figures, older youth and anyone who makes them feel uncomfortable.

So what should you do if you have a family members or friends that may not understand such boundaries?

What would you do if you heard

things like "Come give your aunt a hug" or "Give your favorite grandpa a kiss?"

As a trusted adult, you can step in politely and let friends and family know that your

child will decide how they'd like to show affection. Something like "Thanks dad, but the kids actually prefer high-fives instead". This works in many ways by showing your kids you support that but also showing other adults you reinforce their boundaries.



## STAYING ALERT DURING HOLIDAY GATHERINGS

*As we mentioned, the holidays are a time for getting together with family and friends. Unfortunately there are times when as adults get distracted. Below are some helpful tips to better protect our kids from abuse during the holiday season and throughout the year.*

**Talk to your child.** Discuss boundaries with your child. Teach them that their body is their own and no one has a right to touch their body or take pictures of them without permission. Let them know it's okay to say no to unwanted hugs, kisses, or other affection. Tell them to talk to you or another Safe Adult if anyone crosses their personal boundaries. The key is to communicate regularly about abuse and safety.

**Limit alone time.** 80% of sexual abuse occurs in one child - one adult situations. If you limit the opportunity, you will better protect your child. If you do need to leave your child alone with someone, let the person with them know you may pop in to check on them. Keeping those times "observable and interruptible" is the safer way to manage alone time. This goes for alone time with other youth also, as 30% of all child sexual abuse is perpetrated by other youth.

**Be alert.** Often adults see indicators of abuse, but disregard the signs because the possible perpetrator is someone they know and trust. The sad reality is, that is exactly who we need to be watching. 90% of sexual abuse occurs by someone the child knows and trusts. No one is exempt, not even the closest, most beloved family member.

## UPCOMING TRAININGS

*There are plenty of training opportunities coming up please see below.*

*No one under 16 will be admitted to the training. This includes infants.*

*If you think you will be working regularly with children please make plans to attend a training at your earliest opportunity.*

*You don't want to miss out on an opportunity to serve because you haven't completed the Safe Environment Training Course.*

**12.2.21**

**St. Albert The Great**

**12.15.21**

**St. Gabriel**

**1.17.22**

**Incarnation**

**1.26.22**

**St. Albert the Great**

*Our current spring training schedule is in discussion. As soon as dates/locations are finalized the below website will be updated.*

*A complete list of trainings can always be found at*

[www.archlou.org/safe](http://www.archlou.org/safe)

*Be sure to bookmark this site for updates and/or cancellations as we enter inclement weather season and the website is the primary avenue for communicating changes to the training schedule.*



# UNDERSTANDING THE DYNAMICS OF CHILD ABUSE

Child sexual abuse is the misuse of power through sexual means. Child sexual abuse generally involves a trusted adult (neighbors, parents, step-parents, aunts, uncles, teachers, priests, deacons, and coaches) who is in a relationship of power to the child and uses that position to manipulate children in order to satisfy the adult's own sexual needs. Abusers manipulate situations to create an atmosphere where sexualized contact can occur, such as opportunities to be alone with the child. They then work to gradually reduce the child's inhibitions to sexualized touch, while simultaneously working to strengthen the child's trust. As the sexualized interaction between the adult and child becomes increasingly normalized, the abuser pushes for more and more sexually gratifying interaction. The child is confused about the sexual

violations because the adult abuser is someone that is in a position of trust, and others tend to hold him or her in high regard. Furthermore, children are often told not to disobey or disrespect adults, especially those who are in positions of care.

The evolving sexually abusive relationship is maintained due to the power that the adult has in the relationship with the child. That power is utilized in making threats that ensure the child's secrecy. Secrecy, then, is the key to keeping sexual abuse private. The child is afraid to talk about what is going on to others, in part for fear that the threats will be carried out.

To help understand grooming we must realize, adults who sexually abuse children seek out vulnerable children - children that are easier to manipulate relative to other children. This means targeting children with whom they have ready access, as well as those who

are left alone by adult caregivers and/or possess low self-esteem. 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. If you have any questions or concerns surrounding questionable behavior please feel free to reach out to Martine Siegel, Archdiocese of Louisville Victim Assistance Coordinator 502.636.1044 or via email (msiegel@archlou.org)



## MONTHLY SAFE ENVIRONMENT TIP

The holiday break is a perfect time to check your safe environment compliance. I've had many conversations with people at trainings who made the comment they were grabbed at the last minute to volunteer and needed to get compliant.

Remember, you don't have to "currently" be in a position of working regularly with children to attend a training. If you think you may be called to serve after the holidays feel free to attend one of the two scheduled trainings in December.

If you've already attended an "in person training" and it's been five or more years you can also take advantage of our "on line" option discussed on page one of this newsletter.

Remember this option is only available to those who already attended an IN PERSON training.

Reach out today and check your compliance with your school/parish safe environment coordinator.

If you don't know who that is or have questions on compliance or safe environment in general feel free to contact:

**Scott Fitzgerald**  
Archdiocese of Louisville  
Coordinator of  
Safe Environment Services  
sfitzgerald@archlou.org  
502.471.2132





**Archdiocese of Louisville  
Office of Safe Environment**

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Maloney Center  
1200 South Shelby Street  
Louisville, KY 40220

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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](mailto:victimassistance@archlou.org) or the Pastoral Center at 502/585-3291.

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.

It's important to remember year round, but more so over the holiday break, by law in Kentucky all who know or suspect that a child (under age 18) is being abused are required by statute to report such abuse to the statewide hotline at 1-877-KYSAFE1 (1-877-597-2331) or to the county in which the abuse has taken place.

**WHEN REPORTING...**

- It's better to err on the side of over-reporting than under-reporting
- Never make a promise to the child
- Your report is kept confidential
- Persons acting upon reasonable cause are immune from liability



**CHFS**

KENTUCKY  
*Cabinet for Health and  
Family Services*