



CATHOLIC DIOCESE
OF YOUNGSTOWN

MEMORANDUM

TO: Directors of Religious Education
Coordinators of Religious Education
Parish Ministers

FROM: Reverend Monsignor John A. Zuraw, Chancellor

RE: Policy for the Protection of Minors and Young People

DATE: August 28, 2018

I am writing to remind you that on September 27, 2016 the Diocese of Youngstown implemented the VIRTUS Program as its only platform for Safe Environment Training. This internationally known and well respected program specializes in assisting dioceses throughout the world in creating safe environments for minors. Since the fall of 2016 several hundred employees and volunteers have participated in the VIRTUS Program which helps to recognize and prevent child sexual abuse.

In the fall of 2017 the diocese underwent an onsite audit which strongly suggested that:

1. Those individuals who were trained under the previous program entitled "Treasured Gifts from God" are retrained under VIRTUS. Therefore by April 1, 2020, all clergy, employees and volunteers who have not been trained under the **VIRTUS Program MUST be trained in VIRTUS.**
2. The schools within the Diocese of Youngstown renew criminal background checks (FBI/BCI) on all educators every five years. However, background checks (FBI/BCI) for employees, clergy and volunteers are often not renewed. **Therefore by April 1, 2020, all clergy, employees and volunteers who have not renewed their background checks (FBI/BCI) in the last five years MUST do so.** Renewing background checks (FBI/BCI) ensure that the Diocese has the most up to date information on those working with minors.
3. The Diocese currently relies on school/parish Compliance Officers to ensure that all safe environment programs are being administered correctly. **In the spring of 2020, parishes and schools will be audited to ensure that all records are up to date.** Records must include VIRTUS Certificate of Completion, background checks (FBI/BCI), the signed authorization and verification form along with the acknowledgement form that the employee, clergy or volunteer have received and read the Child Protection Policy of the Diocese of Youngstown.

Thank you.