

**Diocese of San Diego****POLICY ON SAFE ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMS**

Every parish and Catholic school in the Diocese of San Diego must implement a safe environment program to ensure that its children and young people who worship, study or participate in its activities can do so in the safest and most secure setting possible.

- I. A safe environment program includes the screening and training of the following, who also must acknowledge in writing that they understand and will abide by the *Diocesan Code of Ethical Standards for Church Ministers*:
  - A. All priests and deacons engaged in ministry and candidates for ordination.
  - B. All diocesan, parish and Catholic school employees and independent contractors.
  - C. All volunteers whose work involves regular contact with children and young people.

**NOTE:** Individuals without a valid social security number may volunteer their services in any of the various parish adult ministries. Those unable to complete a background screening because they lack a valid social security number may not volunteer in ministries that involve youth unless arrangements can be made to work alongside a staff member or another volunteer who has cleared his/her background screening and completed all other Safe Environment requirements.

- II. A safe environment program also includes the ongoing training of children and young people with age appropriate education pertaining to their personal safety and with direction as to when they should seek assistance from a trusted adult.
  - A. Catholic schools and programs of religious education in the Diocese of San Diego will cooperate with parents to provide this education to their children on a yearly basis.
  - B. Teachers and catechists will introduce their students to safe-environment education in age appropriate ways from kindergarten through high school. Parents will be provided materials to assist them in carrying out this education process.