

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. Children and young people are minors and a minor is defined as anyone below the age of 18 years. A person who habitually lacks the use of reason is considered equivalent to a minor.

- 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, and those who lead a parish or school group or organization.
- 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.