



**St. Patrick
Catholic Church**

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www.stpatrickmchenry.org

Diocesan Safe Environment Program 2017

Frequently Asked Questions

- You are welcome to pick up a hard copy of the complete “Diocesan Safe Guidelines” information packet in the Church, **at the narthex** – look for a **black box** labeled “**Safe Environment Program for Volunteers.**” All information is also available online at our website <https://www.stpatrickmchenry.org/safe-environment-program>
- The signed forms and Virtus Certificate can be returned to the parish in person during office hours, by mail, fax, attached to an email (scanned) **or dropped off at the narthex in the church** in a **black box** labeled “**Safe Environment Program for Volunteers**” or hand them to your Ministry Leader at a meeting.

1. **My ministry is not directly involved with children/youth: I don't perform any volunteer work around young people – do I still need to be in compliance?** Yes, please. Our bishop/the Diocese requests that all parish volunteers, regardless of direct involvement with children or youth, comply with this mandate.

...As Fr. Godwin puts it: Who would not want to help keep our children safe?

For example, anyone using our restroom facilities in Muldoon Hall during Masses could easily run into a child/youth there, conceivably witnessing something suspicious that would need reporting, and this Diocesan mandate does a very good job at instructing people how to respond in the event of witnessing possible misconduct. The Diocese holds **parish volunteers** into a higher standard, which is why **all are required to comply, regardless of the type of Ministry work they do**. It is a great educational tool and we hope you won't mind taking a little time to learn more about how to keep our children safe. When you are done, you will probably be glad you participated in it. We appreciate your cooperation. Thank you.

2. **I completed the Diocesan Safe Environment Program before. Do I need to submit everything again?**

- **Step A:** If you have signed all the paperwork (6 forms) within 2017, **you do not need** to submit it again. The Diocesan Safe Guidelines have been recently updated, so if you signed them before Christmas 2016, please comply again. Thank you*
- **Step B:** If you have completed the *Virtus Online* training and submitted the certificate to the parish **you do not need to do it again**. Simply contact parishioner Katie Leggett to let her know at safe@stpatrickmchenry.org

If you are a current catechist/aid at St. Pat's, our **Religious Ed department already has your paperwork on file, you do not need to submit it again.*

3. **I am unable to open the links on your website, can you send me the files?** Yes. Please send us an email to safe@stpatrickmchenry.org so that we may reply with all files attached, or call us at (815) 385-0025 with an email address, so that we may send everything to you.

4. **I don't have a printer – can you send me the paperwork in the mail?** Yes,
 - **For step A:** please call or email us with your mailing address (please let us know if you need a packet with all the files, or just the 6 forms you need to sign). Thank you*
 - **For step B:** please contact parishioner Katie Leggett at safe@stpatrickmchenry.org for assistance printing the *Virtus Online* certificate.

**If you think you may come to Mass over the weekend, feel free to pick up a complete packet of information in the Church, at the narthex – look for a black box labeled “Safe Environment Program for Volunteers.”*

5. **How do I complete step B of the process if I don't have a computer?** Parishioners are welcome to use the volunteer's desk computer at the parish center during business hours so that they may complete step B. Please call Shelly at the front desk (815) 385-0025 to make an appointment. Thank you.

6. **I am an employee with the Diocese of Rockford through Montini Catholic School** (or another organization) **and have already completed both steps, A and B, there - do I need to submit it again?** Probably not. Please contact parishioner Katie Leggett at safe@stpatrickmchenry.org and let her know what organization to follow up with, so that she may contact them and ask for copies of your signed paperwork for our parish files.

7. **I do volunteer work at St. Patrick Church but I am a member of another parish: Do I need to submit the paperwork here and also at my parish?** Probably not. Your parish is supposed to keep copies of your paperwork and report to the Diocese that you are in compliance. If you only volunteer at St. Pat's and the parish you are registered at has not contacted you for this, please contact Katie Leggett at safe@stpatrickmchenry.org and let her know. Thank you.

8. **Where can I find more information about the Diocesan Safe Environment program?** Please follow this link to the Diocese of Rockford's website for in-depth information and compliance process: <http://www.rockforddiocese.org/protecting-gods-children/>

9. **I have other questions not listed here, how may I find assistance?** Please contact parishioner Katie Leggett at safe@stpatrickmchenry.org or if you don't have email, please call her at **901-481-7257**. Thank you.

10. **Is this something that will need to be done on an annual basis?** We don't think so. We believe it will have to be repeated whenever the Diocese makes revisions to the documentation, as has been the case in the past. Step B of the process, the *Protecting God's Children* Virtus online training has never been required to be repeated. So far, once certified, you are certified.