



ARCHDIOCESE FOR THE MILITARY SERVICES, USA
OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

Timothy P. Broglio
by the Grace of God and the Favor of the Apostolic See
Archbishop for the Military Services, USA, issues the following

DECREE

Policy for Safe Environment Training

The pastoral care of the Christian faithful of the Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA, committed to me by the Holy Father, includes ensuring the safety of children and young persons.

After consultation with the Archdiocesan Review Board, established in accord with Norm 4 of the Essential Norms for Diocesan/Eparchial Policies Dealing with Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Priests and Deacons, and the Presbyteral Council, I hereby promulgate the attached Policy for Safe Environment Training for the Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA. This policy is effective immediately.

Given this 7th day of January in the Year of Our Lord two thousand twenty in the Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA.

(The Most Reverend) Timothy P. Broglio, J.C.D.
Archbishop for the Military Services, USA

(The Reverend) Robert Cannon, J.C.L.
Chancellor



Policy for Safe Environment Training

Promulgated 7 January 2020

Memorial of St. Raymond of Penyafort

The Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA ("Archdiocese" or "AMS") is committed to providing a safe environment that honors every individual as created in the image and likeness of God. This Archdiocese is dedicated to upholding a culture of safety and the protection of all of God's children from abuse.

Article 1. The Purpose of Safe Environment Training

The purpose of safe environment training is to continue a culture of prevention and safety within the AMS and to educate and inform about safety protocols and practices. Relationships are the foundation of ministry within the Catholic Church. Defining healthy boundaries and policies to maintain safe environments are not meant to undermine the importance of personal contact or the ministerial role in any way. Rather, they are meant to assist all people within the Archdiocese to minister in ways that safeguard minors, the well-being of the community, and the integrity of the Catholic Church.

Article 2. Applicability of this Policy to Clerics, Lay Employees, and Catechists

A. Clerics

This Policy recognizes that the AMS is a unique ecclesiastical circumscription with global responsibility for the sacramental and spiritual care of Catholics and their families in the United States Armed Forces, Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Centers, and United States government civilians stationed outside the United States. All military chaplains, civilian priests working for the United States government either as employees or contractors, and most deacons are not incardinated within the AMS but remain incardinated in a diocese/eparchy or religious community.

In light of this circumstance, this Policy shall apply in coordination with safe environment training requirements of the ecclesiastical superior who has primary canonical responsibility for the cleric. Additionally, the AMS recognizes that endorsed clerics must comply with safe environment training required by the Department of Defense or the Department of Veterans Affairs.

B. AMS Lay Employees or Volunteers who work with Minors

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Any AMS lay employee or volunteer who works with minors must comply with this Policy. AMS volunteers are individuals who support AMS-sponsored programs such as the AMS family retreat or the AMS's World Youth Day delegation.

Note: As outlined in paragraph C below, AMS certified catechists are not AMS volunteers.

C. AMS Certified Catechists

The AMS provides catechist certification training for people who teach religious education. As part of that training, the AMS requires certified catechists to complete safe environment training because it is an important facet of religious education in the Church.

However, individuals who teach religious education on military installations are not supervised by this Archdiocese but are at all times statutory volunteers of the United States government.¹ AMS catechist certification training includes safe environment training as a best practice, but the certification does not constitute a representation that the individual's background has been investigated or that the individual is fit to work with youth. Catechist certification is an ecclesiastical requirement only.

Any individual who volunteers with youth at a military installation must comply with training and background checks required by the US government. The AMS does not have the authority to oversee safe environment/child and youth protection training on military installations. This is the responsibility of the installation chaplain or installation commander.²

Article 3. Safe Environment Training Requirements

All individuals subject to this policy shall be aware of signs of child abuse and abide by civil statutes and written Archdiocesan policies if they suspect or observe abuse.

A. Methods of Safe Environment Training

Given the unique ecclesiastical circumstances of this Archdiocese, the AMS will accept the following safe environment training programs.

- 1. VIRTUS Training.** The AMS subscribes to Virtus and has made this training available free of charge to AMS clerics, employees, volunteers, and certified catechists. Any individual subject to this Policy may satisfy the initial safe environment training requirement by completing the Virtus course "Protecting God's Children" and may complete renewal training with the Virtus Course "Keeping the Promise Alive." In lieu of Virtus training, AMS certified catechists may satisfy this training requirement by

¹ Statutory volunteers of the United States government are defined at 29 C.F.R. §553.101(a)-(d).

² See ex. AR 165-1, Ch. 2, para 2-1.g (stating, *inter alia*, that volunteers whose duties require working with children will complete all background checks and training necessary in order to be approved to work with children in accordance with DOD and Army policy). See AR 165-1, Ch. 3, para. 3-1.b(9) ("Chaplains will manage the establishment and operation of . . . chapel volunteer training).

completing the Boy Scouts of America's child and youth protection training.

- 2. Safe Environments Training from the Diocese/Eparchy or Religious Community of Incardination.** For AMS clerics not incardinated within this Archdiocese, the AMS will accept as evidence of safe environment training Virtus courses as described in paragraph A.1. above. The AMS will also accept certification from any program approved by the cleric's diocese/eparchy or religious community of incardination provided that the diocese/eparchy or religious community is compliant with the US Conference of Catholic Bishops' annual Child and Youth Protection Audit.

B. Initial Certification and Re-Certification.

Individuals subject to this Policy shall complete safe environment training upon entering into employment or volunteer service in the AMS or give evidence of its completion within the last three years. Individuals subject to this Policy shall renew their safe environment training with the AMS or their diocese/eparchy or religious community every three years. Renewal training shall be completed by 30 June every third year.

Article 4. Screening and Background Checks

A. Priests or Deacons Endorsed to Serve within the AMS and Employed or Contracted by the US Government.

Clerics endorsed by the AMS to serve as military chaplains or civilian employees or contractors of the US government are incardinated in other dioceses or religious communities. Therefore, in accordance with Article 13 of the Charter for the Protection of Youth and Young People ("Charter"), this Archdiocese relies on the written attestation of suitability for ministry from the bishop or religious superior of the diocese/eparchy or religious community of incardination so long as that entity is compliant with the Charter.

For priests and deacons applying for the AMS ecclesiastical endorsement and coming from dioceses or religious communities not subject to the Charter, these clerics must undergo a criminal background check at their own expense before receiving the AMS endorsement. Similarly, if a diocese/eparchy or religious community in the United States is non-compliant with the Charter, the AMS reserves the right to require the applying cleric to undergo criminal background screening at his own expense before granting the endorsement.

Clerics serving within the Department of Defense or the Department of Veterans Affairs must undergo government background or security clearance investigations. Given that these clerics are not incardinated within the AMS and undergo screening by their employer, the US government, the AMS does not perform additional background checks on these clerics.

B. Priests or Deacons Employed by or Incardinated in the AMS

Priests who are employed by the AMS, and deacons who are either employed by the AMS or incardinated in the AMS, shall undergo criminal background screening upon entering into ministry with the AMS and shall undergo renewed background screening every five years. The background screening renewal shall be completed by 30 June every fifth year.

C. Lay Employees who Work with Minors

Lay employees who work with minors shall undergo criminal background screening upon beginning their employment with the AMS and renewal screening every five years, to be completed by 30 June.