

Protect and Heal Training *Expectations for Minors*

The Diocese of La Crosse requires all children and youth enrolled in a parish school or religious education program, including sacramental preparation, to have the opportunity to participate in age-appropriate, abuse recognition and resistance training annually.

Each parish with a religious education program and each Catholic school has been given a copy of the Protect and Heal Religious Education Lesson Plans. Please refer to this curriculum for the content of the safe environment training.

Notifications to Parents

Parents and guardians have the right to refuse to allow their children to participate in safe environment training and must be notified at least two weeks before the scheduled training.

It is important to note that in the absence of a signed declination from parents or guardian, the child will participate in the scheduled safe environment training.

Age-Appropriate Training

The Protect and Heal Religious Education Curriculum has been designed to be both age and developmentally appropriate. It is understood that some parishes need to combine grade levels within their religious education program. In a multi-level classroom, it is acceptable to choose from the grade level lessons – being certain to alternate between the lessons to assure that the children receive all the information.

Frequency of Training

Safe environment training should be made available to all children and youth enrolled in parish schools and religious education programs including sacramental preparation at least once each year.

Parent Resource Packet

When a child does not participate in Safe Environment training for any reason, a Parent Resource Packet should be provided to the parents or guardians. A letter should accompany the packet asking parents/guardians to review the materials and to discuss the material with their child(ren). All absent children must be trained or have a declination letter signed by their parent.

Use of Public-School Training

Many public schools offer abuse recognition and resistance training that include valuable information. However, these sessions do not include Catholic values and may even foster some that are contrary to Catholic teaching. For this reason, the Diocese of La Crosse does not accept public school training as Charter training.

Deadline for Reports of Trained Minors

All Safe Environment training for children and youth must be reported to the Diocese of Superior **no later than March 1 of each year.**

Definition of a Trained Minor

Only those minors who participate in a grade-appropriate training presented at the parish or school are considered trained. When lessons are sent home a child is considered trained only if the parish receives a signed/dated completion form.

Submitting Data for the Training of Minors

Parishes and schools are to collect their data and complete the Annual Safe Environment Report and submit it to the Diocese of La Crosse by the **March 1 deadline**.

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The following information needs to be collected to accurately report the training of minors:

- Date of training,
- Name of person presenting the training for each grade,
- Total number of children enrolled in each grade level,
- Total number of children in each grade level who participated in the training, including those who have a signed/dated completion form from parent or guardian.
- Total number of children whose parents refused to allow the child to participate in the training “Opt-outs,”

A signed parent refusal must be on file at the parish for each opt-out.