



## **Safe Environment Training for Children 2025-2026 Requirements PK-12 Faith Formation Programs and Catholic Schools**

### **Key Points**

1. The *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* requires dioceses to provide education and training for children, youth, parents, ministers, educators, volunteers, and others about ways to make and maintain a safe environment for children and young people.
2. Teaching children about boundaries and safe touches is not sex education. There are many safety issues we teach children: bike safety, water safety, fire prevention, driver's training, etc. Personal safety programs should have age-appropriate lessons that give children the skills they need to protect themselves without frightening them. Keeping children unaware of the dangers around them does not keep them safe. Predators count on children not knowing what to do.
3. Once training takes place, each location documents this fact, including dates, numbers of children and youth trained, absent, and refused training by levels/grades.
4. While all children are to be offered the Archdiocesan safe environment training, a parent/guardian can refuse to allow their child(ren) to participate in the training. However, this must be done on a case-by-case basis, and certain conditions must be met. See item "D" below.

### **Implementation Requirements**

- A. Each school-age K-12 Faith Formation/Catholic School program is to review and use the *Safe Environment Training for Children* curriculum for the Archdiocese of Dubuque. This is part of the ongoing commitment to create and maintain a safe environment for our children, to protect them from sexual abuse, and to instruct them in the integrity of their persons and bodies, all in accordance with Catholic teachings.
- B. Administrators should review the curriculum with those catechists and teachers who will be teaching the curriculum. While lesson plans, as well as slide presentations, are available, catechists/teachers may utilize these plans as they deem necessary. The curriculum can generally be taught in 10-15 minutes for Grades K-6 and slightly longer for middle and high school sessions and, ordinarily, should NOT take an entire class period. It is strongly recommended that the presentations for all levels/grades take place on the same date.
- C. The expectation is for this curriculum to be presented **every year** to every student enrolled in any Catholic School or Faith Formation Program, including school year programs, summer programs, Family Faith Formation Programs, Youth Ministry Programs, Home-School Programs, or any other such program. If a Sacramental Preparation Program includes students that are not already "counted" in the Catholic School or the Faith Formation Program, this curriculum should also be presented to them. This curriculum is to be presented every year, preferably as early in the year as possible. This accomplishes the following objectives:
  1. By presenting the curriculum to every student every year, we are doing our utmost to ensure that children in the Archdiocese of Dubuque receive training and that we are, indeed, providing a safe environment for these children.

2. The Archdiocese completes an annual audit for the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). This audit verifies compliance **for all students in Grades K-12** that are currently enrolled in archdiocesan schools and religious education classes. Therefore, presenting the curriculum to everyone every year fulfills this compliance expectation.
- D. Parents/guardians are to be provided with the required notification letter concerning the timeline of when the training will be offered; the content/curriculum of the training; information outlining the opportunity to review the content/curriculum materials; and a copy of the Parent/Guardian Safe Environment Training Refusal Form.
1. Archdiocesan training must be offered annually to every student enrolled in any of the Catholic School or Faith Formation Program (see letter “C” above for more information. Parents are to be notified of when the training will take place, information about the curriculum, including the option for them to review the curriculum, and that they have the option to “opt out.”
  2. In order to “opt out,” the parent must specifically state in writing: (1) that safe environment training was offered to their child, (2) that they refused to allow their child to participate in this training, and (3) that they will offer safe environment training for their children utilizing the materials provided and complete a separate form confirming that this has taken place. The signed forms refusing training for their child as well as the form stating that the parent(s) provided the training are to be maintained (by the parish) to ensure full accountability concerning the safe environment training of every child. It is important to verify that any opt-out forms received accurately recorded the intention of the parent.
  3. The parent/guardian letter is posted in a Word format as well as a PDF and needs to be customized to include the date sent, dates of training, levels/grades receiving training, due date for any signed *Parent/Guardian Safe Environment Training Refusal Form*, and how parents/guardians can view the materials. The letter needs to be printed/sent on parish/cluster/school letterhead. It is available in both English and Spanish. You can find those materials in the Shared Drives>Protection of Children>Safe Environment Training for Children Materials> Protection of Children>Safe Environment Training for Children Parent Forms folder or to go there directly, click [here](#).
  4. The *Parent/Guardian Safe Environment Training Refusal Form* is not to be changed. The refusal form is to be sent with the parent/guardian letter and should be printed on the reverse side of the parent/guardian letter (or otherwise attached).
  5. This document must be maintained in the archdiocese (at the parish) to ensure full accountability with the charter.
- E. Once training takes place, each location documents that fact through the *CMG Connect* platform. Instructions for how to report Safe Environment Training for Children are available in the Shared Drives>Protection of Children>Safe Environment Training for Children Materials folder or to go there directly, click [here](#). Locations are asked to document the training as soon as possible after it takes place.
- F. Any signed parent/guardian Parent/Guardian Safe Environment Training Refusal Form as well as the form confirming that the parent(s) have presented the training to their child(ren) need to be kept on file at the local site for as long as the child(ren) is/are enrolled in the K-12 Faith Formation/Catholic School program. Any refusals (those in which a parent has not documented that they have presented the training) must be documented through the CMG Connect platform. Refusals that have an accompanying form stating that the curriculum has been presented by the parents may be recorded as training on the CMG Connect platform.