

**ARCHDIOCESE OF SANTA FE**

**PROTECTION OF CHILDREN  
AND YOUTH**

**Guidelines for Implementation  
2024-2025**

**From the  
Office of the  
Safe Environment Coordinator  
Archdiocese of Santa Fe  
4000 St. Joseph Place NW  
Albuquerque, NM 87120  
831-8144**

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Safe Environment and Victims Assistance Coordinator  
[aklimka@asfnm.org](mailto:aklimka@asfnm.org)**

## PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH

In compliance with Archdiocesan Policy and USCCB Directives

### Guidelines for 2024-2025 Implementation of Children and Youth Protection in the Archdiocese of Santa Fe

Each Catholic School, Parish Religious Education and Youth Program for children ages 5 through 18 will follow these guidelines for implementation of the Protection of Children and Youth program. The School Principal, Catechetical Leader and/or Youth Ministry Leader will oversee the following:

1. **Training for Adults:**

- Ensure that **every adult** both paid and volunteer has attended the Virtus Training for Adults: Protecting God's Children and completed a background check.
  - + A list is sent to each parish every year with names of those from your parish who have already participated in the Virtus Training for Adults. On the list, the column "Training" is the one that indicates the date the training was completed. The column "Background" indicates the date the background was completed
- Provide Teacher training for catechists, teachers, and youth ministers **who will be presenting** the Circle of Grace Program.

2. **Youth Protection Training:** Ensure that all adults both paid and volunteer who will be teaching religious education classes to children and youth in any parish or school activity have completed the required training. This training ensures the diocese that all adults have been given information on what materials and resources to use to teach the self protection classes.

3. **Children and Youth Sessions:** Schedule the Circle of Grace sessions for teaching children and youth how to be safe, protect themselves, and communicate any potential danger. **A session is mandatory to each group of children and youth each year.**

- The Circle of Grace program is the only program that will be used and must be presented every year. The classes need to be presented at the beginning of the religious ed year, complete the report form and *return to Annette Klimka, no later than November 4, 2024*

4. **Approved Resources:** the Archdiocese of Santa Fe uses the Circle of Grace Program

5. **Parents:** Inform parents of the date when the sessions will be offered for children and youth, and give them the opportunity to preview the material that will be used.

- Parents always have the option not to send their children to that class without being penalized.
- If parents choose not to let a child attend the session, please collect a signed form or note indicating that they do not want their child to participate. These forms must be kept and sent to the Catholic Center along with the Teaching Report 2024-2025.
- In the event parents do not want their children to attend the session and do not turn in a note to that effect, please keep a list of those children and send it to the Pastoral Center along with the Teaching Report 2024-2025.
- A sample letter to parents is on a following page. **The letter also includes a note for parents to return who do not want their children to participate.**

6. **Teaching Report 2024-2025 Form:** Complete the "Circle of Grace Teaching Report 2024-2025" form when the sessions with children/youth are completed.

- All of the information on the form must be completed for each grade/group of children and youth.

- Return the completed form to the Safe Environment Coordinator at the Catholic Center as soon as possible
- Forms may be mailed, emailed or hand-delivered to Annette Klimka [aklimka@asfnm.org](mailto:aklimka@asfnm.org)

**SUMMARY:**

Send the following **as soon as classes are completed** to:

Annette Klimka  
Victim Assistance and Safe Environment Coordinator  
4000 St. Joseph Place NW  
Albuquerque, NM 87120

- Any Parent refusal forms or notes from parents indicating that they did not want their child to participate in the sessions.
- The Teaching Report 2024-2025 Form with all the information completed.
- Pastor of the parish and school must sign and date the form.

## **PROVIDING A SAFE ENVIRONMENT FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH**

### **Archdiocese of Santa Fe Requirements**

In the effort to provide a safe environment for all children and young people in our care, the Archdiocese of Santa Fe policy requires the following:

1. **VIRTUS TRAINING FOR ADULTS – Protecting God’s Children** explains signs and symptoms of child abuse, how to respond to a disclosure of child abuse, sexual abuse and ways of detecting it, responding to it and preventing it; describes standards of conduct and New Mexico law and Archdiocesan policies and procedures for reporting suspected abuse.

#### **Who must attend this workshop?**

According to Archdiocesan policy, the Virtus Training is **required for all** employees and volunteers.

Workshops are scheduled by the Safe Environment Coordinator’s office. The schedule is published on the Archdiocese website [www.asfnm.org](http://www.asfnm.org).

2. **BACKGROUND CHECKS** are completed by the Safe Environment Office to insure that all those who may have contact with children or youth at the parish or school have had no criminal complaints filed against them alleging sexual abuse or harassment.

#### **Who must submit information for a background check?**

**\*All employees and volunteers** are **required** to submit their personal information needed for a background check. If the Safe Environment Office needs additional information about an employee or volunteer for the background check, they will contact the parish and request the information. Please cooperate and provide the needed information. For more information, contact Annette Klimka at 831-8144.

# CIRCLE OF GRACE REPORT FORM

## 2024-2025

Date \_\_\_\_\_ School / Parish \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_

### Circle One

Director of Religious Ed.   Director Youth Ministry   Catechetical Leader   School Administrator

**Data: Please enter the number of children/youth who are enrolled in the program for each grade.**

K \_\_\_\_\_ 1<sup>st</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ 2<sup>nd</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ 3<sup>rd</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ 4<sup>th</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ 5<sup>th</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ 6<sup>th</sup> \_\_\_\_\_

7<sup>th</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ 8<sup>th</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ 9<sup>th</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ 10<sup>th</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ 11<sup>th</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ 12<sup>th</sup> \_\_\_\_\_

Number of children/youth who did not participate in program per parents' request \_\_\_\_\_

**Attach a copy of the written documentation of the parents' request.**

- A student does not have to complete all the sessions to be counted as completing the program

### DRE'S/CL/Principal

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Pastor's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Letter to Parents

Please adapt this letter as needed for the local situation. Print on Parish or School letterhead and distribute to all parents before presenting the program on Protection of Children and Youth to the children or young people.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Parents,

We are writing to inform you about a special class we will be teaching as part of your child’s regular religious education in the upcoming weeks. This class aims to teach children how to be safe, protect themselves, and communicate any potential danger.

In the Church’s desire to help you keep your children safe, the Archdiocese requires that all children and young people participating in religious education in any parish or Catholic school in the Archdiocese, receive instruction in protecting themselves and communicating potential danger to a parent or other responsible adult.

The document titled *Promise to Protect, Pledge to Heal, Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*, written by the Catholic Bishops of the United States, contains the following instruction: Dioceses will establish safe environment programs that will “provide education and training for children, youth, parents, ministers, educators, and others about ways to make and maintain a safe environment for children.” The Archdiocese of Santa Fe, in order to comply with this instruction, has mandated that programs to educate children on how to be safe, protect themselves, and communicate any potential danger, be offered annually to children of all grades in Catholic schools and parish religious education and youth programs.

This instruction will take place during the regular religious education class time during the week of \_\_\_\_\_. The materials that will be used for this instruction will be available for you to see in the parish or school office. (or There will be an opportunity for parents to view the materials that will be used for this instruction at a parent meeting on \_\_\_\_\_. This meeting will also include some ideas for parents to help them keep their children safe and talk effectively with them about abuse.)

If, for any reason, you do not want your child/children to participate in this class, please sign the form below and return it to the Office. We will honor your request.

If you have questions or any other concerns, please contact \_\_\_\_\_ at this number \_\_\_\_\_ during regular office hours.

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_

My child \_\_\_\_\_ may NOT participate in the session for learning how to stay safe and protect himself/herself from potential abuse.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent or Legal Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

# EJEMPLO

## Carta para los Padres de Familia

Por favor adapte esta carta a las necesidades de la situación local. Imprima en papel con la insignia de la Parroquia o Escuela y distribuya a los padres de familia antes de presentar el programa de Protección para los Niños y Jóvenes a los niños o a los jóvenes.

### Fecha

Estimados Padres de Familia:

Le escribimos para informarle acerca de una clase especial que se enseñará como parte de la educación religiosa regular de su hijo/a durante las próximas semanas. Esta clase pretende enseñar a los niños y jóvenes a estar seguros, a protegerse a sí mismos y a comunicar cualquier peligro potencial.

En el deseo de la Iglesia de mantener a sus hijos a salvo, la Arquidiócesis requiere que todos los niños y jóvenes que participen en la educación religiosa en cualquier parroquia o escuela Católica en la Arquidiócesis, reciban instrucción sobre cómo protegerse a sí mismos y comunicar cualquier peligro potencial a sus padres o a otro adulto responsable.

La Arquidiócesis de Santa Fe, para poder cumplir con el documento, *Promesa de Proteger, Garantía de Sanar, Estatutos para la Protección de Niños y Jóvenes* escrito por los Obispos Católicos Americanos, ha ordenado que se lleven a cabo programas anuales para niños en todos los grados de las escuelas Católicas, en los programas parroquiales de educación religiosa y en los programas para jóvenes, para educarlos sobre cómo estar a salvo, protegerse a sí mismos y sobre cómo comunicar cualquier peligro potencial.

Esta instrucción se llevará a cabo durante las clases regulares de educación religiosa durante la semana de \_\_\_\_\_. Los materiales que se utilizarán para ésta instrucción estarán disponibles para que ustedes puedan revisarlos en la parroquia o en la oficina. (o Habrá una oportunidad para que los padres revisen los materiales que se utilizarán para esta instrucción durante una reunión en \_\_\_\_\_)

Si ustedes no quieren que sus hijos participen en esta instrucción, favor de llenar la forma debajo de esta carta y regresarla a la oficina.

Si ustedes tienen alguna pregunta o inquietud, por favor póngase en contacto con \_\_\_\_\_ al número de teléfono \_\_\_\_\_ durante las horas regulares de oficina.

Sinceramente,

\_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\*

NO doy permiso de que mi hijo/hija \_\_\_\_\_ participe en la clase sobre cómo protegerse a sí mismo y comunicar cualquier peligro potencial a un adulto responsable.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Firma del Padres de Familia o Guardiana Legal

\_\_\_\_\_  
Fecha