



Safe Environment Program. Any adult who works or volunteers in a position interacting with the youth of St. Matthew Catholic Community must comply with Safe Environment requirements. Safe Environment is a United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) and Archdiocese of Omaha-mandated program that provides background checks on and training of adults who work or volunteer with youth in Catholic schools and parishes. The program's objective is to ensure safe interactions between adults and youth.

Coordination. Each adult who works or volunteers in an activity (ex. field trip, club meeting, catechists, sports, scouts, classroom/lunchroom assistant, etc.) with youth must be confirmed as having been Safe Environment certified prior to the activity. Each activity will have a point of contact (POC) who will submit the names of staff/volunteers who will be involved in the activity. We ask that this list be submitted at list one week prior to the activity. The activity POC will submit the list to either the Safe Environment Coordinator or the St. Matthew school Principal. After checking the database, the Coordinator or Principal will then provide the activity POC with approval or any feedback on the proposed list.

Initial Training. There are two levels of Safe Environment training, Initial and Recertification. If not already having done so, all new staff and volunteers must take the Initial Safe Environment training and background screening. This is a two-hour face-to-face training. At times, the training is held at St. Matthew's and will be announced in the church bulletin. However, staff/volunteers may also take Initial Training at another location and these locations can be found on the Archdiocese of Omaha's website (www.ArchOmaha.org) under the "Ministries" tab. Once completed, the certification is valid for five years. Please be advised that the initial screening and training certification process can take up to four weeks from the training date, so please start the process early as you must be certified prior to the activity involving youth.

Recertification Training. Each Safe Environment certified participant must be recertified every five years. Once you're in the Archdiocese database, i.e. after taking the Initial training or Recertification Training online, you should receive an email 60 days prior to expiration of your current certification notifying you that your certification will expire in 60 days. The training for Recertification takes about seventy-five minutes to complete and is done online. Additionally, your background check will be updated. You can find the training at the ArchOmaha website under the "Ministries" tab. If you don't complete the Recertification prior to its expiration, you cannot work with the youth. If you don't accomplish the Recertification training within a brief grace period, you must retake the Initial training (two hours, face-to-face) training again. Recertification is also valid for five years after completion.

Questions? The St. Matthew's Catholic Community thanks you for your generosity in helping the community's ministry to our youth. The Safe Environment program is a valuable tool to helping ensure the safety of the youth and adults in this ministry. If you have any questions or feedback, please contact the St. Matthew's Safe Environment Coordinator at 402 292-7928.