

Safe Environment FAQ

1. Who has to take Protecting God's Children™ (PGC)?

- All paid diocesan, parish and school staff and any clergy temporarily assigned to the Diocese of Columbus regardless of their level of contact with children and youth
- All volunteers in a program or ministry for children and youth regardless of their level of contact with children and youth (examples: Catholic school, PSR program, etc.)
- Volunteers for other parish programs or ministries who have been delegated care, custody, or control of children and youth (example: choir director, sacristan)

2. How do I Volunteer?

- Complete a Volunteer Application Form and Code of Conduct and submit to Bethany Cook, Safe Environment Coordinator, at the parish, school or online at bcook@saintmichael-cd.org.
- You can find information about upcoming Protecting God's Children courses at the Columbus Diocese website at: columbuscatholic.org/safe.
- Create your volunteer profile and register to attend a PGC training course as soon as you choose to volunteer. You can register at the VIRTUS website, www.virtusonline.org.
 - You will be directed to also create an account with Fastrax/Selection.com which is an online background check tool that will check background information on a quarterly basis with the results being sent directly to the Safe Environment Office with the Diocese of Columbus.
- Schedule a Background Check:
 - Electronic WebCheck locations are listed by county on the Attorney General's website at: <https://www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov/Business/Services-for-Business/WebCheck/Webcheck-Community-Listing>
 - You can also go to any [Fast Fingerprints](#) location for a quick turnaround. Please be sure to schedule your appointment online first and bring your ID and form of payment. When you schedule your appointment, select "I do not have a code," Select Ohio BCI/FBI, select your background check type (BCI, FBI or BCI/FBI if you have lived in Ohio for less than 5 years), enter the corresponding code, and have your results sent directly to Regina Quinn, 197 E. Gay Street Columbus, OH 43215.
 - Volunteers & parish employees, greater than 5 year resident– BCI ONLY (2151.86)
 - Volunteers & Parish employees, less than 5 year resident– BOTH, BCI & FBI (2151.86)
 - School employee (licensed) – BCI & FBI FOR NEW OR FBI ONLY FOR RENEWAL (3319.291)
 - School employee (non-licensed) – BCI & FBI (3319.39B1)
 - Official/referee – BCI ONLY (2151.86)

3. Why do I have to get a background check?

The purpose of conducting criminal background investigations is to prevent those with specific criminal backgrounds from gaining access to our children and the vulnerable. (Examples: assault, domestic violence, corruption of a minor, sexual crimes, etc.)

4. How often should I get a BCI/FBI Background Check?

As a volunteer you are required to obtain a background check before you start volunteering. If you have lived in Ohio continuously for more than five (5) years, you only need the state level (BCI) report. If you have lived in Ohio less than five (5) years, you will need both the FBI report and the BCI report. You do not have to renew your background report as long as you continue to volunteer, with no more than an 18 month break in volunteer service.

5. Can I use the same background check I got from my job for my parish?

No, for the safety of our children, we require that a new background check be conducted before staff/volunteers begin working with children on behalf of the church. The exception is if the background check is less than one (1) year old; in that case, you can request that the BCI/FBI send another original report to your parish/school. BCI and FBI policies prohibit us from sharing reports with our locations, whether we are sending or receiving the reports.

6. What if my background check reflects an offense from my past?

While there are serious offenses that would absolutely prevent someone from volunteering with children, not everyone with an offense is precluded from volunteering. These are handled confidentially on a case-by-case basis.

7. What information should I take when getting fingerprinted?

1. A valid Ohio driver's license or Ohio photo ID
2. Address of Catholic Diocese of Columbus; 197 East Gay Street, Columbus, Ohio 43215
3. Reason: Responsible for care, custody, control of children **ORC 2151.86**
4. Payment

8. Is there a cost to take the Protecting God's Children Class?

No, there is no charge to attend the class. All workbook materials and handouts are provided by the host parish or school. Participants should bring a pen.

9. What if I changed parishes, how do I know it is ok to volunteer at my new parish?

If you changed parishes, your new parish should be able to confirm your compliance with Diocesan safe environment policies by checking your account in the VIRTUS database. If they have any questions, they should contact the Safe Environment Program at the Diocese of Columbus. If you were not an active volunteer (service within 18 months of your background check) you will have to get a new background check.

10. I took the Boy Scouts of American program, do I need to take Protecting God's Children?

Yes

11. Is childcare available at the class?

No, and children are not permitted to attend. Participants who bring children will be asked to leave and reschedule for another session.