



## Archdiocesan Safe Environment Policy and Requirements

(For Those Pastorally Ministering to Vulnerable Adults)

### Essential Adult Requirements\*:

#### 1. Background Checks

- Background checks are mandatory for **all priests, deacons and candidates for ordination as well as all chancery, parish and school employees, and parish trustees.**
- Background checks for **all volunteers having regular or unsupervised contact with vulnerable adults** are mandated.

(Please see [www.archspm.org/sections/opcy/background-checks](http://www.archspm.org/sections/opcy/background-checks) for more information.)

#### 2. Attendance at a Training Session supportive of the type of pastoral ministry being done

**(Please Note: All priests, deacons and candidates for ordination as well as all chancery, parish and school employees** are required to attend a VIRTUS: *Protecting God's Children for Adults* Awareness Session. VIRTUS is a foundational awareness program within the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis and it is highly recommended that all parishioners and parish volunteers be invited to attend.)

##### **Additionally:**

- For Eucharistic Ministers to the Homebound, parish-generated orientation/training sessions may be used, as approved by the Pastor or Canonically-approved Administrator.
- For Pastoral Ministers (employees or volunteers) who are more actively involved in ministries to vulnerable adults, it is highly recommended that each parish or combination of parishes arrange for a person in their region to become a trainer using the Association of Pastoral Ministers' *Ministry to Vulnerable Adults*, and subsequently offer this training as an orientation to their pastoral ministry ministers. (More information is available at <http://www.apmspm.org/> for more information.)
- Other formal training programs that support the ministry may be used with approval of the Pastor or Canonically-approved Administrator.
- VIRTUS: *Protecting God's Children for Adults* Awareness Session should be attended by all pastoral ministers visiting homes where minors will be present. VIRTUS may also be used with all volunteers having regular or unsupervised contact with vulnerable adults. VIRTUS has a number of resources available on their website that specifically address challenges related to the pastoral ministry with vulnerable adults. (Please see <http://www.archspm.org/sections/opcy/virtus/> for more information.)

#### 3. Codes of Conduct

- All priests, deacons and candidates for ordination as well as chancery, parish and school employees must read and sign the Code of Pastoral Conduct.
- All volunteers having regular or unsupervised contact with vulnerable adults must read and sign the Volunteer's Code of Conduct form.

(Please see [www.archspm.org/sections/opcy/code-conduct/](http://www.archspm.org/sections/opcy/code-conduct/) for more information.)

\*Record-keeping for priests, deacons, candidates for ordination and chancery staff is the responsibility of archdiocesan chancery staff. Record-keeping for parish and school employees and volunteers is the responsibility of every local parish and school. Office for the Protection of Children and Youth (OPCY) staff members will assist parish leaders, as needed, to develop tracking systems.

### Other Essential Considerations:

- Each vulnerable adult and their involved family members need to become familiar with two ministers from the parish. One may be the primary visitor; however, a second person needs to be familiar to the person and his/her family by phone, email and/or by partnering with the primary visitor.
- A procedure needs to be established whereby the pastoral minister visiting on behalf of the parish, has a system for leaving a card/written note with the visitor's contact information and date of visit, along with the parish's bulletin in order for family members to know when their vulnerable family member was visited.

Inquiries may be addressed to:

Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis,  
Office for the Protection of Children and Youth

(Phone) 651.290.1622 or 651.291.4501 (Email) [opcy@archspm.org](mailto:opcy@archspm.org)

## Definitions of Vulnerable Adults

### 1. VIRTUS.

The term “vulnerable adult” can apply to a person with a physical, mental, or emotional condition or an illness that renders them unable to defend themselves, protect themselves, or get help for themselves when injured or emotionally abused. Depending on individual circumstances, the term can also apply to the general elderly population. It is important to remember, however, that at times we can all be considered vulnerable and it is thereby important to treat all individuals with respect and dignity.

### 2. Minnesota Department of Human Services: Adult Protection Program

“Who is a Vulnerable Adult?”

A *Categorical* “vulnerable adult” (is) any person, 18 years of age and older, who is a resident or patient of a facility such as a hospital, group home, nursing home, day service facility, day activity center, adult foster care home, or a person who receives services from and agency licensed/certified by MDHS or MDH, such as a home care agency or personal care service.

A *Functional* “vulnerable adult” also includes a person, regardless of where they live or what type of services they receive, who possesses a physical or mental infirmity or other physical, mental or emotional dysfunction that impairs the individual’s ability to provide adequately for their own care without assistance **AND** because of the dysfunction or infirmity and the need for care or services, the individual has an impaired ability to protect themselves from maltreatment.

### 3. Association of Pastoral Ministers, St. Paul and Minneapolis, Minnesota.

A vulnerable adult is any person 18 years or older who:

- Is a resident or inpatient of a health care facility or
- Receives services from a licensed home care provider or a person or organization that provides personal care assistance under the state’s medical assistance program
- MN Statute 626.557/626.5571/626.5572

A person is considered vulnerable if he or she is:

- Unable or unlikely to report maltreatment of him or herself:
  - Because of a physical or mental infirmity or
  - Other physical, mental, or emotional dysfunction that impairs a person’s ability to provide adequately for his or her own care without assistance

Pastorally, a vulnerable adult includes:

- Those seeking counsel and/or guidance
- Those seeking ministerial services
- Those grieving a loss
- Those in times of transition
- Those who give their trust to someone ministering to them in the name of the Church

### 4. On USCCB website: “Prevention and Mitigation of Abuse of Vulnerable Adults” (pdf)

Vulnerable adults can apply to people with physical, mental, or emotional conditions or an illness that renders them unable to defend themselves, protect themselves, or get help for themselves when injured or emotionally abused. The term applies as well to the elderly whose various circumstances make them vulnerable to those who might cause them harm.

[Please Note]

The *Charter* includes one group of vulnerable adults within the *Charter*, itself. “For purposes of the *Charter*, the offense of sexual abuse of a minor will be understood in accord with the provisions of *Sacramentorum sanctitatis tutela* (SST), article 6, which reads:

- §1. The more grave delicts against morals which are reserved to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith are: the delict against the sixth commandment of the Decalogue committed by a cleric with a minor below the age of eighteen years; in this case, a person who habitually lacks the use of reason is to be considered equivalent to a minor.