

Ethics and Integrity for Church Personnel
Frequently Asked Questions
(clarification of terms are located near the end of the list)

Where can I find out about training?

Training sessions are generally listed on the calendar of events for Ethics and Integrity on the Diocesan website.

Who can do training?

* Awareness training is done at the local level by someone who has their ACS without restrictions (someone who can have supervisory responsibility).

* Basic or Re-Certification Training is done by one of the people specially appointed by the Bishop and specially trained.

No additional Trainers are being sought or approved at this time. The existing trainers will travel and are glad to honor the commitment they made to the Diocese. If you are having trouble securing a trainer, please contact frvaverek@stmaryslgv.org or zavila@dioceseoftyler.org

What is an ACS?

The Acceptance Certificate for Service in the Diocese of Tyler is issued to those who have attended training, committed to the Code of Ethics for Church Personnel and successfully completed the background check.

Does everyone who ministers with minors and vulnerable adults need to have a background check?

Yes, the Bishop's of the United States committed in the Charter that all employees and any volunteers who minister with minors in the name of the Church must have the background check.

How long do new employees or new volunteers who get their ACS?

Generally they need to get it immediately. For specifics see the Procedure for Compliance of New Church Personnel.

How can we find out who in our parish has an ACS (Acceptance Certificate for Service)?

Each parish has a user I.D. to access the eAppsDB on the diocesan website.

If someone has attended training in another diocese, do they need to be retrained?

Yes, to receive the ACS for the Diocese of Tyler, everyone must attend our training, commit to the Code of Ethics, and complete the background check.

If a person has been through training with Scouts, do they still have to go through Ethics and Integrity training for the Diocese of Tyler?

Yes, if the scouting is part of the ministry of the Catholic Church. (If the Scout troop is sponsored by the parish, or a Catholic organization (like the Knights of Columbus, or a Catholic School) or if the group is meeting on church property and would be considered a church group. Our Diocesan policy is broader than the Scouting training, and the Diocese needs to issue an ACS for anyone ministering in the name of the Church.

Do we have to cancel programs if volunteers ACS have not been approved yet?

It is expected that all programs in the Diocese of Tyler are in full compliance with the Ethics and Integrity policy and guidelines. If it is necessary to do rescheduling of planned events or some adjustments of programs (such as combining CCD classes) to ensure that there is a safe environment for our young people, the Pastor should be informed immediately. It is important that the Pastor and the person responsible for any program affected communicate with parish families in a positive manner that the Bishops in the United States have taken seriously their responsibility to create a safe environment for our young people and the parish/institution is sorry for any inconvenience.

The person responsible for a program that involves minors is to ensure that only persons with their ACS come into contact with minors. The training and procedures for ACS have been in place since June 1, 2003.

Do ALL volunteers have to commit to the Code of Ethics?

NO: "Only volunteers who could reasonably be expected to come into direct contact with minors or vulnerable adults while engaged in volunteer work in connection with the Diocese, its parishes, schools or other agencies." (EI II A 10)

What is involved in the background check?

For those living in Texas for the last 5 years, generally only a check through the State of Texas will be conducted. For those who have moved from another state, appropriate checks will be made in that jurisdiction. If a person has recently arrived from a foreign country, this will be handled on a case by case basis, generally by obtaining testimony from character witnesses.

Who will see the results of the background check?

Mr. Jim Smith in the Business Office receives the reports. If there are concerns about the result of the background check (such as a frequency of speeding tickets) it is reviewed by the Judicial Vicar, Msgr. Strickland, and the Promoter of Justice, Rev. Vaverek.

There will be periodic updating of the background check in 3-5 years. New employees will only have to have one background check for the Diocese of Tyler, and the Acceptance Certificate for Service will clear the prospective employee for hire.

What about the fee for the background check?

The fee is \$10.00. If paying this is a problem, please ask your pastor or principal. Financial need will not preclude someone from volunteer work in the Diocese.

Can you clarify the terms that are used in connection with this policy?

Here are some commonly used terms and their definitions:

Acceptance Certificate for Service: Issued by the Diocese of Tyler to those who have 1) attended appropriate Training (either Basic or Awareness), 2) committed to the Code of Ethics, and 3) passed the background check. The ACS is listed on website so that it is kept up to date. It reflects only that the person has met the minimum requirements to be permitted for employment or ministry under our Ethics and Integrity policy. The Pastor/Principal is responsible to see that the person is suitable for the particular service they will undertake and properly trained. The website for ACS indicates if the person can have supervisory responsibility for minors and if there are any restrictions placed upon them.

Supervisory responsibility: By "supervisory responsibility" we mean an adult who is "in charge" of a minor or a group of minors in carrying out their ministry. Note that in ministry it is generally required there be 2 trained adults in charge of any minor or group of minors. Recognizing there are some adults who truly rarely are "in charge".

A volunteer with a "non-supervisory" Acceptance Certificate for Service, can only be responsible for an individual or a group provided: 1) They will have responsibility for a small group (less than 7 minors), for a short duration of time (less than 2 hours), only once or twice a year; or 2) They will serve as a driver to or from an event, and they are over 25 and will serve as a driver for transporting minors on a few occasions, provided the drivers travel together (the drivers remain in visible sight of each other).

Church Personnel: Priests, Deacons, Religious assigned to pastoral ministry in the Diocese of Tyler, those in formation for priestly or diaconal ministry, and all employees (full time, part time, or stipended) and volunteers who can be reasonably expected to come into direct contact with minors or vulnerable adults while engaged in volunteer work in connection with the Diocese of Tyler, its parishes, schools or other agencies. (See EI IIA for more precise listing.)

Training: Training is required before a person commits to the Code of Ethics and authorizes a background check.

Basic Training: Required for all employees (full time, part time, or stipended) and for volunteers who in carrying out their ministry have supervisory responsibility for minors or vulnerable adults. Basic Training is 3 hours long and must be facilitated by a Certified Trainer.

Re-Certification Training: After the initial 3 year period the person has to go thru re-certification with additional training with a re-commitment to the Code of Ethics and a new background check.

Awareness Training: Required for all volunteers who do not have supervisory responsibility for minors, but who are reasonably expected to come into direct contact with minors or vulnerable adults while engaged in volunteer work for the Church. Awareness Training is an approximately 30 minute video and must be facilitated by someone who has completed Basic Training.