

DIOCESE OF COVINGTON
November 5, 2010

Dear Pastor, Principal, Administrator,

Attached please find minutes from a meeting of the safe environment presenters and coordinators. At that meeting we discussed keeping the safe environment program manageable. You can review details of our discussion in the attachment but I would like to highlight changes that will go into effect over the next two months and that need to be widely and frequently publicized in bulletins and newsletters. I ask your assistance with the publicity.

An unreasonable amount of time is spent putting people into suspension and taking them out of suspension and putting them into suspension... you get the idea. In all my previous bulletin announcements, I have asked people to prepare for the next season, i.e., "spring sports", "summer festivals", "another school year". I have always asked people to complete the Virtus process at least a quarter before the volunteering begins. In keeping with that message, we will unsuspend people for a period of about three weeks during which they choose whether or not to volunteer during the coming three months. After the three week "open" period, we place people into suspension who have chosen not to read their bulletins and thus not to volunteer. We do not take them out of suspension until the next "open" period. I have attached a calendar so you can see the timeframe. Since this is the first year, I'm sure there will be some changes as we move through the year.

The second issue relates to bulletins and modules. People on a module schedule don't remember to read their modules any better than people on a bulletin schedule. Therefore, we are changing everyone back to monthly bulletins with NO modules, not even the yearly recertification module. You can then put a note in your bulletin every month with the date that a bulletin is posted and the due date for completion. This supports those who say they are not receiving their courtesy reminders via email. It makes the compliance reports easier for you, your DRE, head coach, scout leader, etc. to read.

Attached please find:
Minutes of Meeting with Coordinators and Presenters
Bulletins Announcements
Schedule of "open periods" and "suspensions."

Safe Environment Changes

November 5, 2010

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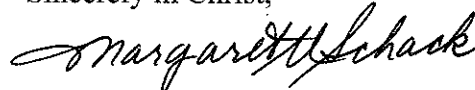
Emails will go multiple times to each individual online in Virtus explaining the changes, but it is important to publicize these changes in your bulletins and newsletters over the coming months so no one feels blindsided.

There is concern that this will make it harder to get volunteers. You cannot use a volunteer anyway if the person is non compliant. Streamlining the process allows you to send more focused and thus clearer messages to support your volunteers' compliance. That is the goal.

I am aware that there will always be exceptions and emergency situations. We will continue to deal with them as they arise. Employees will need to be dealt with month by month rather than quarterly. The goal is to have more time to address those needs by keeping the majority on a set schedule.

Thank you for your support in this matter and for all you do. Please don't hesitate to call me for clarifications.

Sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Margaret M. Schack". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Margaret M. Schack
Chancellor

Meeting Notes
Safe Environment Presenters and Coordinators
Curia, Diocese of Covington
October 26, 2010

Pat Neal from the Virtus national office in Tulsa, Oklahoma was present to hear concerns and suggestions.

Zachary Hinger from St. Patrick Church in Taylor Mill was welcomed as a new presenter. Thank you to Deacon Steve Durkee who trained Zach.

Time was given for comments about the Virtus live session DVD. It was suggested that the ponytail man be deleted from the next revision.

Background Checks

We have just passed the busiest time of the year in Frankfort which runs July through October. Not only that but when Frankfort changed to a database, they downsized from 60 people to 8 people processing background checks. Steve Kopyay sends background checks to Frankfort regularly, as often as once per week.

If you think you have waited too long for a check, be sure to check the “sent” items in your email to verify that your list was sent and opened by Steve. Also check the Virtus account. We do not sit on Acceptance Forms so the date when the Acceptance Form was entered is very close to the date when the background check was submitted to Frankfort. Both the “sent” on your email and the date of the acceptance form entry will tell you as much as Steve or Anita could tell you in a phone call.

LexisNexis is for emergency background checks. Please do not “publicize” the Lexis Nexis. It is the pastor or principal’s decision whether a case merits the “emergency” check. You will still need to do an AOC and/or FBI check. Please do not tell people that they can buy a Lexis Nexis check.

Check your accounts. Anyone with a background check on file dated 2005, 2004, 2003, or earlier needs to be rechecked before December 31, 2010. The FBI checks that need to be repeated after 5 years are a different matter. Steve Kopyay will control this process since we are only allowed to submit a limited number of fingerprints at a time. Be sure to let Steve know how many FBI checks you need done and ask him for a timeframe for getting yours done.

Acceptance Forms

They are entered immediately upon receipt. If you check an account and do not see that your sent form was entered, most probably one of two things has happened. One, your fax did not go through, so try again please. Two, the person has not yet opened an account so there is no place to enter the form. You will need to resend the form to the Chancery when the person registers online.

Be sure to use Acceptance Forms dated “rvsd10/2008” since this form contains the needed information for entry into the database. There will be a new version in January 2011. It was requested that the wording on the Acceptance Form be changed to reflect that the pastor, principal, head coach, DRE, etc, reviewed the Policies and Procedures for Addressing Sexual Misconduct with the applicant BUT did not necessarily hand the person a copy but rather referred them to the online copy.

All were reminded that it is the responsibility of the pastor, principal, DRE, head coach, scout leader, etc. to control access, not the presenter of the Virtus live session. Therefore, all paperwork is done at the primary location.

User ID and Password

When people call you saying they forgot their entry information, remind them to click on “Forgot Password? Click Here” on the front page of www.virtus.org.

Substitute Teachers

You already have access to the whole database as “read only.” You already have access to those who name your location on their account. You now have a third option. You have access to a “substitute teacher” file. Directions for accessing this file will be on your revised “yellow” directions list in the January mailing. The primary location is still responsible for the person’s paperwork. The substitute teacher names will not mix into your location file unless your location is listed on the individual account.

Proposed Changes

The issue at hand is keeping the database manageable.

There are 12,000 names in the database. We are spending an overwhelming amount of time putting people into suspension and taking them out of suspension. The reports are getting longer and longer which makes them harder to interpret. People are outgrowing the bulletins since they just guess three times to get the answer. Having bulletins and modules makes it more confusing for the users as well as for the reports.

We are proposing the following.

1. Do away with quarterly and recertification modules. Use only bulletins. Change the bulletin structure to resemble the module so people are required to think a bit about the answer. Everyone will have one bulletin per month. Newsletters will publish the date the bulletin goes online and the deadline for completing the bulletin each month. Everyone will be on the same schedule. The national office will remove the unread bulletins from quarterly module accounts. All others must complete their posted bulletins.
2. Change the way we deal with suspensions. In the past my bulletins announcements have always referred to “next school term”, “spring sports season,” or “summer festival time.” Yet some people think they can “sign up” and go on a field trip next month or even next week. I have always worked in terms of bringing people on board for next quarter and not next month. I propose we maintain the “next quarter” schedule by making the following changes.

Unsuspend EVERYONE in December and tell them through emails and bulletin announcements that they have three weeks to read all their material online. During the fourth week in December

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we put all those into suspension who are not compliant. They will NOT volunteer during January, February or March.

Unsuspend EVERYONE in April and tell them through emails and bulletin announcements that they have three weeks to catch up. During the fourth week in April we put all non compliant accounts into suspension. They may not volunteer during May, June or July.

Unsuspend EVERYONE in August and tell them through emails and bulletin announcements that they have three weeks to read all their material online. During the fourth week in August put all non compliant accounts into suspension. They may not volunteer during September, October or November.

Every month we will still put non compliant people INTO suspension, but no one comes out until the "unsuspended" month. There will always be exceptions, but the exceptions will be employees and others whose services are required. We will still deal with them as needed. Plus you will have more time to deal with them so they won't get so far behind and create a problem in the first place.

If anyone has a better idea, I need to hear it now because we need to publicize to be ready for the change in January 2011. If anyone has an idea to improve the effectiveness of the database, let me know!

Thank you for all you do. You are making a difference.

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Steve Koplyay
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November 3, 2010
Parishes/Schools/Institutions
Bulletin Announcements

Virtus Bulletins (put in newsletters during November 2010)

In 2002 the Bishops of the United States committed to creating safe environments in each church location. A safe environment is created when adults know the warning signs of abuse, control access, monitor all programs, remain aware and communicate concerns. Adults are asked to add this commitment to the already long list of generous service provided to the church community through volunteering. Children are trained to speak up and tell but there needs to be an adult there to tell. You are asked to be part of creating a safe environment through volunteering. Your services are greatly appreciated.

Changes in Virtus (Put in newsletters during November 2010)

Two changes will go into effect on January 1, 2011 to simplify the safe environment program in the Diocese. 1. You will read only bulletins. You will not receive quarterly modules or recertification modules. 2. Suspensions will automatically be dropped in December, April and August. You will not need to call the Chancery. This applies only to persons who are not volunteering during the previous quarter. So if you wish to volunteer during the next quarter, reading your bulletins will alert the parish or school that you are available to volunteer.

Virtus Email Address (put in newsletter during November 2010)

You will be receiving information via email regarding changes in the Virtus program. Please check online to make sure your email address is correct. On December 1, all accounts currently in suspension will be unsuspending. Please catch up by December 26.

Virtus Bulletins (put in newsletters during December 2010)

Thank you to all those who make our parish/school vibrant through generous volunteering and thus by being a member of Virtus. Please review your compliance for volunteering during January, February and March of 2011. Please check that you have completed all posted Virtus bulletins by December 26, 2010. The post date for your December bulletin is December 5.

Virtus Bulletins (put in newsletters during December 2010)

Beginning in January you will not see modules on your Virtus account. We will all change to monthly bulletins. This newsletter will remind you about dates on which the bulletins are posted and their due dates.

Virtus Bulletins (put in newsletters toward the end of December 2010)

December 26, 2010 is your due date for completion of Virtus bulletins.

Schedule for Virtus beginning December 2010 and going forward.

	Bulletins Posted	Suspension Monthly	Suspension Release	Suspension Quarterly
January	2	None		
February	6	1		
March	6	None		
April	3	None	1	26
May	1	31		
June	5	None		
July	3	5		
August	7	None	1	22
September	4	6		
October	2	None		
November	6	1		
December	4	None	1	22

People have 30 days to complete posted bulletin.