



ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE OF NORTH AMERICA

Youth Protection Policy: Frequently Asked Questions

- **What must we do to ensure we are in compliance with the Youth Protection Policy?**

Certification of Compliance forms must be submitted by the Senior Pastor with his end-of-year assessments. The [Certification of Compliance](#) will be included in the end-of-year assessment packet. The Certification includes ensuring your parish has met all five required elements:

1. Our parish has insurance which includes parish liability for sexual misconduct
2. Our parish holds accurate, up-to-date youth registration records of youth who participate in this ministry year's Sunday Church School and Youth Programs.
3. Our Parish has ensured that all required individuals have signed an Acknowledgement of having received and read the Youth Protection Policy.
4. Our parish has ensured that all required individuals have been background screened through the Archdiocese's Sterling Volunteers Platform.
5. Our parish has ensured that all required individuals have completed youth safety training through the Archdiocese's Sterling Volunteers Platform.

This [infographic](#) outlines the steps for completing each of these pieces.

- **Do we need to do all these things by the end of the 2024 calendar year?**

The short answer is *no*. We understand it will take a while to complete all 5 required elements (see above) for compliance. Though we expect you to be working towards compliance as soon as possible, parishes will not be required to submit Certification of Compliance forms until the end of the 2025 calendar year.

- **Where/how do we access the background checks and youth safety training video?**

Registration for the background check and access to the safety training video are both found on the Archdiocese's Sterling Volunteers platform. If you are a person who needs to complete the background check and safety training, you should receive an email invitation to the site, generated by your designated Youth Protection Coordinator. Additionally, you can access the site directly at <https://www.ncsrisk.org/antiochian>



ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE OF NORTH AMERICA

- **What is the cost for the screening? Who covers the cost?**

The standard cost for US residents is \$29 per person. The cost in Canada is \$35.

Payment is made directly through the Archdiocese's Sterling Volunteers platform upon registering. Additional screenings (Lifescan in California) which might be required by your state or province will cost extra and be done on your own.

The Archdiocese does not cover the cost of background checks. Parishes or camps should arrange payment or reimbursement details ahead of time with their respective staff and volunteers.

- **Under the new Archdiocesan Youth Protection Policy, who needs to receive a background check and youth safety training?**

The following people within your parish or camp are required to complete *both* the background check and the youth safety training every three (3) years:

- All staff and volunteer Youth Workers.
- Ordained clergy: bishops, priests, and deacons.
- Subdeacons, readers, and adult altar servers.
- Parish Council Members.
- Parish employees.
- Anyone with keys (or electronic access) to parish facilities.
- All other adults, including contractors, who will have more than incidental contact with minors in connection with the parish's ministries or programs.

- **Who qualifies as a Youth Worker?**

Youth Workers are designated as all individuals, whether staff or volunteer, who work with youth in the parish on more than an occasional or incidental basis. This includes, but is not limited to all Youth Program leaders and regular volunteers, Sunday Church School directors and teachers, youth advisors/mentors, Vacation Bible School teachers, nursery workers, sports team coaches, language teachers, etc. When in doubt, err on the side of requiring someone to abide by the Youth Protection Policy.

- **What exactly does the background check entail?**

The standard background check is a nationwide sexual offender search.



ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE OF NORTH AMERICA

- **Our state/province requires fingerprint checks in addition to background checks. Will the Sterling Volunteers site include this?**

No. Fingerprint checks are not conducted through Sterling Volunteers and are the responsibility of the parish or camp.

- **What does the Archdiocese's Sterling Volunteers youth safety training entail?**

The year one training is a 90 minute video that walks viewers through proven best practice standards for the prevention of child sexual abuse and other wrongdoing by employees, volunteers, and others who interact with children within the environment. It includes periodic assessments throughout the video. The training is developed by VIRTUS and is customized specifically for the Antiochian Archdiocese.

- **Our state requires sexual misconduct training. Is that the same as the youth safety training?**

No, sexual misconduct training is an additional training which is not included in the youth safety training. For those individuals who might be required by their state/province or insurance to complete this additional training, we are able to offer sexual misconduct training through the Archdiocese's Sterling Volunteers site for a small additional fee. Individuals can choose to do this training through the Archdiocese's Sterling Volunteers platform or through another means and then send proof of completion to their state/province or insurance. We know that Sterling Volunteers' sexual misconduct training meets the requirements for Illinois and the City of Chicago. If you need to confirm its compliance for another state/province or insurance requirement, reach out to HR and we will check.

Additionally, if your state or province has additional specific training requirements, please ask us and we will check to see if Sterling Volunteers has training that will comply.

- **Does the Sterling Volunteers background check and youth safety training meet the requirements of our parish insurance?**

It is your parish's responsibility to confirm with your insurance carrier that the Archdiocese Youth Protection Policy, Sterling Volunteers background checks, and youth safety training will meet the needs of your parish's insurance requirements.



ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE OF NORTH AMERICA

- **If our parish uses another background check or youth safety training organization, can that count as being in compliance with the Youth Protection Policy?**

No. All Archdiocesan background checks and youth safety training must be completed through the Archdiocese's Sterling Volunteers platform. Though you may have already used another background check or safety training organization for the 2024 calendar year, we expect all parishes to use the Sterling Volunteers platform for the 2025 calendar year, which is when the first Certification of Compliance is due. Visit the [Archdiocesan Youth Policy Protection page](#) in order to access both the Sterling Volunteers youth safety training video and background checks.

- **If individuals have already completed background checks through their other professional positions, can that information transfer into the Archdiocese' Sterling Volunteers platform?**

As a general rule no, unfortunately we do not yet have a mechanism to collect and verify background checks individuals have completed through their professional positions. However, individuals who have completed background checks or training through Sterling Volunteers will already be in the database, as long as they log in with the same credentials.

- **If someone works for both a parish and an Archdiocesan camp, which should they select on the Sterling Volunteers site? Do they have to do it twice?**

One of the benefits of working with Sterling Volunteers is that there is reciprocity for background checks completed within the platform, meaning a background check completed for a parish can also be submitted as a background check for a camp. When registering on the Archdiocese's Sterling Volunteers platform, individuals who work across camps and parishes should select each category that applies to them.

- **How will we know when someone has successfully completed their background check and safety training?**

When an individual completes their background check and safety training, they will receive a Certificate of Completion. They should print or forward that Certificate to the Youth Protection Coordinator who will use it to confirm completion. The HR Department will also receive periodic reports from Sterling.



ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE OF NORTH AMERICA

- **How will we know if someone has not passed the background check? Who will be notified? What is the protocol?**

The Department of Human Resources will receive notification when an individual has not passed a background check. The Head Priest will receive notification from the Department of Human Resources with required next steps.

- **How often do background checks and youth safety training need to be renewed?**

Background checks and youth safety training must be completed every three (3) years.

- **How will we know when someone needs to renew their screenings?**

Parishes should keep records of the background checks and safety training in the [Youth Protection Policy Background Check/Safety Training List](#). To aid you in your record keeping, we have also created a Youth Workers Registration Form ([e-version .pdf](#) or [printable version](#)) which includes a place for you to note screening renewal dates. It is the responsibility of your Youth Protection Coordinator to maintain these up-to-date and accurate records each year.

- **Whom do we reach out to if we have further questions?**

For support logging in or navigating the Archdiocese's Sterling Volunteers platform, email youthprotection@antiochian.org or call the Sterling Volunteers help number at 1-855-326-1860.

For questions regarding the youth safety training, email antiochian@virtus.org or call the VIRTUS help phone number 1-888-847-8870.

For questions regarding the Youth Protection Policy itself, reach out to your Youth Protection Coordinator or clergy.

Clergy and Youth Protection Coordinators in need of further support should reach out to youthprotection@antiochian.org.

- **Can parishes set up a payment plan with Sterling Volunteers?**

Yes. Please contact Mary Mendoza at MaryMelissa.Mendoza@fadv.com for more information.