

Guidelines for holding a LIVE VIRTUS training session during COVID-19
Office for Protection of Children & Youth
Diocese of Cleveland

Due to the Coronavirus pandemic, we are at a new and unprecedented place in offering VIRTUS training sessions. Be advised that we are reviewing the options of offering training sessions in a virtual format. But the Diocese of Cleveland has always believed in the value of live training and the dialogue that ensues after the viewing of the videos on child sexual abuse effects and prevention, so we also want to still be able to offer live training sessions—in a safe format. Thus, we prepared the following guidelines if scheduling a live VIRTUS session.

- The location must be cleaned and sanitized before and after the training session. This includes the entrance and exit, the presentation room, restroom facilities and any other area a participant may come into contact with.
- Entry and exit doors are to be adequately designated and monitored.
- Entry and exit doors should be propped open during entry and exiting.
- Hand sanitizer should be available at the entrance and in the room where the training is being held. Masks should be made available as well.
- The location being used for the training must be able to allow for the 6 feet of social distancing for all participants. No more than 20 participants in attendance, unless you have sufficient space to spread out a larger group. Recommended keeping sessions small.
- All participants must register online. No walk-in participants.
- The doors will be opened 15 minutes prior to the start of the training session.
- All registrants should do a symptom and temperature check before attending a VIRTUS training session. They should not attend if they have any symptoms, feel ill, or are in the high-risk category and do not feel safe attending.
- It is strongly recommended that Ohioans wear cloth face coverings to cover their nose and mouth when at this training session. A cloth face covering may prevent the spread of virus from the wearer to others, which is especially important if someone is infected but does not have symptoms. Masks do not replace the need for social distancing, frequent hand cleaning and other everyday preventive actions. They should **never be used** on children younger than 2, anyone with breathing problems, or anyone who cannot easily remove them on their own. Do not use medical masks, which must be reserved for healthcare workers and other first responders.

- When arriving for the training session the participant is required to maintain 6 feet of social distancing when entering the building and meeting space.
- There will be no Sign-In sheet on a table such that people have to queue up close to one another and touch a common document. Instead, the facilitator will take roll call as people enter the room or any time prior to beginning the session in order to confirm attendance.
- The participant workbooks will be emailed to the participants in advance of the training session. It is the individual participant's responsibility to print the workbook and bring to the session. No handouts will be provided at the training session. The participant workbook is then to be taken home by each participant. If participants forget or do not have the technology to print the workbook, it is not a problem. The workbook is simply an aid to discussion points. The Facilitator will go over the general questions during the live training session from the master manual for facilitators.
- While parishes hosting training sessions in the past often have offered hospitality such as coffee, cookies, etc.-- due to the virus, no food will be offered at these training sessions.
- If Facilitators wish to keep a session small and include only their local parish staff and volunteers, this has been acceptable at any time, but is especially understandable during these extraordinary times. In that case, make a notation in the Notes section, when scheduling the session online, that the session is restricted to internal personnel only. If you are unsure how to do this, reach out to Sharon Minson at sminson@dioceseofcleveland.org for instructions and assistance.
- Facilitators still must send the Sign-In sheet to the diocesan Office for Protection of Children & Youth shortly after the training session so that the attendance can be tracked and the accounts can be activated as well.
- Regularly check for updates on the [diocesan](#) website, your county health department website, the [CDC](#) website, and the [Ohio Department of Health](#) website.
- Please continue to pray for all of those affected by this pandemic. Pope Francis composed a special [Prayer to Mary](#) for this very purpose.

We understand that this is a very difficult time for everyone. Please be assured of our prayers for you and your parish communities as we move forward. Know that we are grateful for all that you do to help keep our kids safe and our parishes/schools compliant with our policies.

If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to reach out to Sharon Minson in Office for Protection of Children & Youth, sminson@dioceseofcleveland.org.