



DIOCESE OF FALL RIVER

CHANCERY OFFICE

OFFICE OF SAFE ENVIRONMENT

Diocesan Policy for Protecting the Faithful Frequently Asked Questions

- **What does Essential Three mean?**
 - The Essential Three refers to three components: Criminal Background Check, Safe Environment training and Code of Conduct. Most people acknowledge their Code of Conduct when they complete the online safe environment training.

- **I'm just a...(lector, eucharistic minister, food pantry volunteer etc.) and I don't work directly with children or youth. Must I complete the Essential Three?**
 - Yes. The Essential Three is required for ALL who minister, work or volunteer in the Diocese regardless of whether their position is directly connected to children and youth.

- **It is hard enough to find volunteers, why would the Diocese make people do all this work?**
 - We recognize that volunteers are already giving freely of their time. The goal of the Essential Three is not to make people jump through hoops but rather to create a culture of safety and child protection throughout the Diocese. The more people who are screened, trained, and have agreed to a code of conduct, the more assurance we can have that ALL the faithful are in a safe environment in every parish, school, and Diocesan facility. We know that many of our volunteers are parents, grandparents, aunts, and uncles. Even if their volunteer work does not directly involve children and youth, the training can help them be aware of signs that raise concern about the safety and well-being of the young people in their lives.

- **If this is because of the clergy abuse crisis, why must lay volunteers and employees do this?**
 - This is not just about clergy abuse. The clergy abuse scandal led the Church to make significant changes. One positive outcome is that it has helped raise awareness of the devastating impact of child sexual abuse throughout our world. Research suggests that 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 6 boys will be sexually abused before they reach 18. With these troubling statistics in mind, we want everyone to know what to watch for and how to respond if they see behaviors that raise concern. We want our parishes and schools to be full of trusted adults who can assist a child if needed.

If you have any questions about the Essential Three and/or the ***Diocesan Policy for Protecting the Faithful***, please contact the Office of Safe Environment at 508-675-1311 x6511.