

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS OFFICE OF YOUTH PROTECTION



# SAFE ENVIRONMENT PROGRAM INFORMATION GUIDE (REV. 2018)



## Knights of Columbus Keep Children Safe!

**BROTHER KNIGHTS WORK TOGETHER TO PROTECT CHILDREN AND  
STAY VIGILANT FOR ANY SIGNS OF ABUSE.**

Office of Youth Protection: [oyp@kofc.org](mailto:oyp@kofc.org) 203-752-4558 • Member Helpline: [youthleader@kofc.org](mailto:youthleader@kofc.org) 203-800-4940  
855-845-3502 (fax)

**1-844-KOFC-SAFE (1-844-563-2723)**

## KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS OFFICE OF YOUTH PROTECTION



### **REPORTING SUSPECTED ABUSE**

When we receive information showing credible allegations of sexual misconduct against one of our members, his membership is suspended and he is removed from our organization. Nearly all allegations of sexual misconduct we receive are unrelated to membership in the Knights of Columbus and arise out of other circumstances in the member's life, such as employment situations, family situations, or within some youth serving program or church ministry. These allegations can vary, from a report of a boundary violation to an arrest, charge, or conviction of a sex or child related crime, or being listed on a sex offender registry.

All credible allegations of sexual misconduct against a member directly arising out of his membership in the Knights of Columbus and/or in connection with a program or activity sponsored by the Knights of Columbus should be reported by following this protocol:

- 1. REPORT SUSPECTED ABUSE TO LAW ENFORCEMENT**
- 2. NOTIFY LOCAL DIOCESE OF SUSPECTED ABUSE**
- 3. NOTIFY KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS OF SUSPECTED ABUSE AT **1-844-KOFC-SAFE (1-844-563-2723)****

### **NOTIFICATION OF UNRELATED SEXUAL MISCONDUCT**

Sexual misconduct unrelated to membership in the Knights of Columbus and arising out of other circumstances in the member's life, such as employment situations, family situations, or within some youth serving program or church ministry should be reported to law enforcement and the local diocese.

A state or local council officer or a District Deputy should **notify** the Office of Youth Protection at [oyp@kofc.org](mailto:oyp@kofc.org) as soon as possible when he becomes aware that a member has been:

- 1. CHARGED WITH OR FOUND GUILTY BY A COURT OF ANY OFFENCE INVOLVING CHILDREN;**
- 2. CHARGED WITH OR FOUND GUILTY BY A COURT OF ANY SEX-RELATED OFFENSE; OR**
- 3. SUED IN COURT FOR ANY WRONGFUL CONDUCT AGAINST CHILDREN OR FOR A SEX-RELATED OFFENSE.**

To the extent there is a need for suspension or other action, it will be handled by the Board of Directors, through the Office of Youth Protection and the Office of the Supreme Secretary.

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# KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS OFFICE OF YOUTH PROTECTION



## COMPLIANCE WITH ARCH/DIOCESAN SAFE ENVIRONMENT REQUIREMENTS

### MEMBERS ARE PARISHIONERS FIRST, KNIGHTS SECOND

The first requirement of our safe environment program is for our members to be aware of, and compliant with, arch/diocesan safe environment requirements applicable to members' volunteer activities on parish property. When members volunteer at an activity sponsored by the Knights of Columbus on parish property, they are parish volunteers. Just like any other parish volunteers, Knights volunteering on parish property must comply with all safe environment requirements applicable to parish volunteers in their arch/diocese.

As a best practice, grand knights and financial secretaries of parish based councils should work together to:

1. Make a list of all members who serve as volunteers on parish property in the name of the Knights of Columbus. This list shall be referred to as the "ELIGIBLE MEMBER VOLUNTEER LIST."
2. Ask each member on the list whether he has already completed the arch/diocesan safe environment training and background screening.
3. If the member volunteer has already completed such training, then the **date of the completion** of the diocesan training should be placed next to the member's name.
4. If the member volunteer has NOT completed the arch/diocesan safe environment requirements, **the member volunteer must complete those requirements as soon as possible to maintain his eligibility to continue to volunteer on parish property.**
5. The grand knight should be prepared to provide the ELIGIBLE MEMBER VOLUNTEER LIST to the parish priest, the parish safe environment liaison, and to the arch/diocesan safe environment coordinator upon request.
6. The ELIGIBLE MEMBER VOLUNTEER LIST should be continually updated with new member volunteers who decide to become eligible to volunteer on parish property. The grand knight should be sure to always provide the **updated** ELIGIBLE MEMBER VOLUNTEER LIST to the parish priest, the parish safe environment liaison, and to the arch/diocesan safe environment coordinator upon request.
7. The grand knight should confirm the names on the ELIGIBLE MEMBER VOLUNTEER LIST regularly at business meetings throughout the fraternal year.

Please Note: being a member of the Knights of Columbus does not constitute volunteer activity. Membership in the Knights of Columbus does not require volunteer activity on parish property. Council business meetings are not a parish or church ministry. Council meetings on parish property are limited to Catholic men over the age of 18.

#### KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS/DIOCESAN SAFE ENVIRONMENT PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Knights of Columbus Activity	Diocesan Requirements	Knights of Columbus Requirements
Membership	n/a	n/a
Council Meetings	n/a	n/a
Church Ministries & Parish Ministries	✓	n/a
KofC Youth Activities on Parish Property	✓	✓
KofC Youth Activities off Parish Property	n/a	✓

All questions about compliance with diocesan safe environment/youth protection requirements should be referred to Brian Gedicks, Director, Office of Youth Protection, [oyp@kofc.org](mailto:oyp@kofc.org)

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## KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS OFFICE OF YOUTH PROTECTION



### COMPLIANCE WITH DIOCESAN SAFE ENVIRONMENT POLICIES: KEY POINTS

#### MEMBERS ARE PARISHIONERS FIRST, KNIGHTS SECOND

- Knights of Columbus is a fraternal benefit society that operates through a network of subordinate councils that meets on parish property with the permission of the local bishop and pastor.
- Knights of Columbus does not teach, sanctify, or govern in the name of the Church and is not a Church ministry.
- Volunteer service on parish property is encouraged, but not required, for membership in the Knights of Columbus.
- Completion of diocesan safe environment program requirements is not necessary for membership in the Knights of Columbus, although it may be necessary for members to volunteer on parish property.
- Knights volunteering in church or parish ministries (ushering, youth ministry, etc.) serve in those ministries as parishioners, and give witness as brother Knights.
- Members of the Knights of Columbus must remain informed of, and compliant with, the same diocesan/parish safe environment requirements *applicable* to all other parish volunteers for those activities conducted *in the name of the Knights of Columbus* on diocesan/parish property.
- Knights volunteering in youth activities sponsored by the Knights of Columbus on parish property serve as both Knights and parishioners and are fully subject to diocesan safe environment requirements applicable to parish volunteers working with minor children.
- Knights volunteering in NON-youth activities sponsored by the Knights of Columbus on parish property serve as both Knights and parishioners and are fully subject to the same diocesan safe environment requirements applicable to parish volunteers on parish property.
- Dues paying members choosing not to volunteer on parish property remain members in good standing.
- Council rosters contain proprietary and confidential member information and may not be shared with third parties, including with parishes and dioceses, without express authorization.

## KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS OFFICE OF YOUTH PROTECTION



### KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS SAFE ENVIRONMENT PROGRAM (SEP)

Our Safe Environment Program safeguards children and other vulnerable persons, assures members and their families that we maintain a safe environment for all those whom we serve, protects members from awkward situations, misunderstandings and appearances of impropriety, builds trust with arch/dioceses and parishes, and protects the good name of the Knights of Columbus. Our program is operated in conjunction with our strategic partner in youth protection and safe environments – PRAESIDIUM, Inc. Praesidium specializes in providing safe environment training to help prevent sexual abuse in organizations that serve youth and vulnerable adults. For more information, go to [www.praesidiuminc.com](http://www.praesidiuminc.com)

Under Faith in Action, members serving in the key leadership positions listed below are **required** to complete three training modules designed to teach members about abuse prevention best practices, either online or via workbook self-study guides. Members serving in the following leadership roles must make sure that all Knights of Columbus safe environment policies and procedures are followed at activities sponsored by the Knights of Columbus:

Roles	Training	Background Check	ARMATUS Administration
<b>State Council</b>			
State Deputy	✓		✓
State Advocate	✓		✓
State Program Director	✓		✓
State Youth Director	✓	✓	✓
State Family Director	✓	✓	✓
State Community Director	✓	✓	✓
State Squire Chairman	✓	✓	✓
<b>Subordinate Council</b>			
Grand Knight	✓		✓
Faithful Navigator	✓		
Program Director	✓		✓
Family Director	✓	✓	
Community Director	✓	✓	
Chief Counselor	✓	✓	
Adult Counselor	✓	✓	

Additionally, state youth directors, state family directors, state community directors, state squire chairmen (*if any*), council family directors, community directors, as well as all chief and adult counselors, must provide consent for a background check. Members serving in roles that require a background check may fulfill this requirement by giving consent to the Knights of Columbus to obtain and pay for it on their behalf through its partner *Praesidium*. As shown, some roles also have access to Praesidium’s ARMATUS Administration dashboard to monitor member compliance within their council or jurisdiction. If members in certain roles are not compliant within thirty (30) days of notification, they are subject to removal from those roles.

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## State Council Compliance Checklist

- State Deputy** – training; compliance dashboard access
- State Advocate** – training; compliance dashboard access
- State Program Director** – training; compliance dashboard access
- State Youth Director** – training; background check; compliance dashboard access
- State Family Director** – training; background check; compliance dashboard access
- State Community Director** – training; background check; compliance dashboard access
- State Squire Chairman** – training; background check; compliance dashboard access

## Council Compliance Checklist

(without Columbian Squire Circle)

- Grand Knight** – training; compliance dashboard access
- Program Director** – training; compliance dashboard access
- Family Director** – training; background check
- Community Director** – training; background check

## Council Compliance Checklist

(with Columbian Squire Circle)

- Grand Knight** – training; compliance dashboard access
- Program Director** – training; compliance dashboard access
- Family Director** – training; background check
- Community Director** – training; background check
- Chief Squire Counselor** – training; background check
- Adult Squire Counselor(s)** – training; background check


## KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS OFFICE OF YOUTH PROTECTION



### ARMATUS ADMINISTRATION/COMPLIANCE DASHBOARD

The following roles also have access to Praesidium's ARMATUS Administration dashboard to monitor member compliance within their jurisdiction or their council: *state deputy, state advocate, state program director, state youth director, state family director, state community director, state squire chairman, grand knights, and program directors.*

To use the Armatus Administration dashboard, members serving in these designated roles may simply LOG ON to Praesidium Armatus using their user name and password. They may then scroll to the bottom of the page and they will see the Armatus Administration link:

 <p><b>Armatus Administration</b></p>	<p>The Administrative Module compiles data about users. It records which member has successfully completed which module(s) by which date. Your access to administrative functions and data is determined by your position. State Deputies, State Squire Chairmen, and State Advocates may only view the data for their jurisdiction, and a Grand Knight may only view the data for his council.</p> <p>Click <a href="#">here</a> for an Administrative Module tutorial.</p>
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Please note the link to a tutorial on how to use the dashboard: [Click here for an Administrative Module tutorial.](#)

### SAFE ENVIRONMENT COMPLIANCE TROUBLESHOOTING

- It is critical that councils submit their Form 185, Form 365, and Form 468 in order for members in designated roles to be invited to take safe environment training and provide authorization for background checks.
- Member email addresses from the Form 185, the Form 365, the Form 468, and Member Management are used to invite members serving in designated roles to take safe environment training and provide authorization for background checks.
- If a council has not submitted these forms, members serving in designated roles will not receive their email invitations from Praesidium, and your council will not be compliant with the Knights of Columbus Safe Environment Program.
- **IMPORTANT** – members outside the United States receive background check authorization packets via regular mail, not via an email from Praesidium.
- Members in designated roles should look for email notifications from Praesidium (not from Knights of Columbus) in their inbox or spam folder.
- If members in these roles do not receive an email from Praesidium by September 1st, the council has not yet updated its rosters to indicate members' new role assignments.
- The training and background check authorization must be completed within **thirty (30) days** of notification.
- Knights of Columbus covers all costs associated with these requirements.
- **Effective July 1 2018, Safe Environment Training and Background Checks are required every three years**

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**KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS KEEP CHILDREN SAFE!**

**ALL MEMBERS ARE**

**ENCOURAGED TO COMPLETE**

**KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS SAFE ENVIRONMENT TRAINING**

**BY VISITING**

**[WWW.KOFC.ORG/SAFE](http://WWW.KOFC.ORG/SAFE)**

**AND PRESSING THE BLUE “FOR ALL OTHER MEMBERS” BUTTON**

**REGISTRATION CODE: KOFCSAFE**

**PRAESIDIUM'S ARMATUS®**  
Safe Environment Program Training  
**START ►**

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## KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS OFFICE OF YOUTH PROTECTION



# KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS YOUTH ACTIVITY POLICY

- All youth activities sponsored by the Knights of Columbus shall require the presence of at least one member, typically the council's Family Director and/or Community Director, who has been background checked and trained through the Knights of Columbus Safe Environment Program.

### **A KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS "YOUTH ACTIVITY" IS AN ACTIVITY WHOSE PRINCIPAL SUBJECTS ARE MINOR CHILDREN (BASKETBALL FREE THROW, "COATS FOR KIDS," ETC.)**

- It is the policy of the Knights of Columbus that all council Family Directors and Community Directors are required to be background checked and trained in accordance with the Knights of Columbus Safe Environment Program. The Order expects at least one of these directors to be present at all youth activities sponsored by the council.
- The Grand Knight of the council sponsoring the youth activity, who is required to complete Knights of Columbus safe environment training, should be in attendance as well.
- Council Family / Community Directors and/or other members of the council who have been background checked and trained through the Knights of Columbus Safe Environment Program shall, in conjunction with their Grand Knight, ensure that all Knights of Columbus Safe Environment policies and procedures are followed at all youth activities sponsored by the Knights of Columbus.
- In the event that a council's Family Director and Community Director are both unable to attend a youth activity any other member of the council who has been background checked and trained through the Knights of Columbus Safe Environment Program must be in attendance.
- If there are no available background checked and trained members of the council, every effort should be made to have a qualified Family Director or Community Director from a near-by council to be in attendance. If there are no such qualified members of a near-by council available, then the State Youth Director, State Family Director, and/or State Community Director should be asked to attend, if at all possible.
- The key point of the policy is that someone who is both trained and screened through the Knights of Columbus Safe Environment Program must be present on site during a council youth activity to provide general oversight of the activity and to ensure that all applicable Knights of Columbus safe environment policies and procedures are followed.
- If no qualified member (trained and background checked through the Knights of Columbus Safe Environment Program) is available to attend the council sponsored youth activity (an activity whose principal subjects are minor children), then the activity should be re-scheduled to a time when the council Youth Director will be able to attend for the full duration of the council's youth activity.

## KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS OFFICE OF YOUTH PROTECTION



# YOUTH ACTIVITY VOLUNTEER SAFE ENVIRONMENT MEETING

[FOR MEETING WITH MEMBER VOLUNTEERS PRIOR TO YOUTH ACTIVITY]

1. Before all Youth Activities, the Family Director and/or Community Director, along with the Grand Knight, shall call a short meeting of all volunteers participating in the youth activity sponsored by the council.
2. All volunteers participating in the youth activity sponsored by the council shall be provided with copies of the *Knights of Columbus Safe Environment Policy Quick Reference Guide*.
3. The Grand Knight, assisted by the Family Director and/or the Community Director shall review the policies described in the *Quick Reference Guide* during the youth activity sponsored by the council. Specifically, all participating members shall review:
  - a. the reporting procedure at the top of the page;
  - b. the General Policies section on page one; and
  - c. the Monitoring Restrooms section on page two.
4. Volunteers should keep their copy of the *Quick Reference Guide* with them so that they can refer to the guide as needed during the youth activity.

# KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS OFFICE OF YOUTH PROTECTION



## SAFE ENVIRONMENT POLICY QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

(EXCERPTED FROM SAFE ENVIRONMENT GUIDE FOR GRAND KNIGHTS AND FAITHFUL NAVIGATORS AT [WWW.KOFC.ORG/SAFE](http://WWW.KOFC.ORG/SAFE))

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### REPORTING SUSPECTED ABUSE WITHIN KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS PROGRAMS

1. REPORT SUSPECTED ABUSE TO **LAW ENFORCEMENT**
2. NOTIFY **LOCAL DIOCESE** OF SUSPECTED ABUSE
3. NOTIFY **KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS** OF SUSPECTED ABUSE AT **1-844-KOFC-SAFE (1-844-563-2723)**

### GENERAL POLICIES

- A Knights of Columbus "youth activity" is an activity whose principal subjects are minor children, e.g., Columbian Squires, Basketball Free Throw, etc.
- All youth activities sponsored by the Knights of Columbus shall require the presence of at least one member, typically the council's Family Director and/or Community Director, who has been background checked and trained through the Knights of Columbus Safe Environment Program.
- Grand Knights/Family Directors/Community Directors/members should never supervise youth participants alone. At least two youth leaders/members should be present at every council youth program and/or activity at all times.
- Grand Knights/Family Directors/Community Directors/members, when counseling a youth participant, should always be in the same room as others or visible to others.
- Grand Knights/Family Directors/Community Directors/members should not give gifts to youth participants without approval from their Grand Knight, as well as notification of the parent(s).
- Grand Knights/Family Directors/Community Directors/members, should always be aware of other adults present at Knights of Columbus youth programs and they must be alert for signs of possible misconduct.
- Grand Knights/Family Directors/Community Directors/members, should notify their grand knight and/or call the Knights of Columbus at 1-844-KOFC-SAFE when they recognize a policy violation or other possible misconduct that may impact child safety.
- Grand Knights/Family Directors/Community Directors/members, should make all youth programs and activities open to parents and guardians.
- **Grand Knights/Family Directors/Community Directors/members should NOT initiate, encourage or engage in one-on-one contact with youth participants outside of authorized Knights of Columbus youth programs and activities.**

### POLICIES FOR YOUTH LEADER/MEMBER-PARTICIPANT INTERACTION

Appropriate Physical Interactions	Inappropriate Physical Interactions	Appropriate Verbal Interactions	Inappropriate Verbal Interactions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Side Hugs</li> <li>- Shoulder-to-shoulder or "temple" hugs</li> <li>- Pats on the shoulder or back</li> <li>- Handshakes</li> <li>- High-fives and hand slapping</li> <li>- Verbal praise</li> <li>- Pats on the head when culturally appropriate</li> <li>- Touching hands, shoulders and arms</li> <li>- Arms around shoulders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Full-frontal hugs</li> <li>- Kisses</li> <li>- Showing affection in isolated area</li> <li>- Lap sitting</li> <li>- Wrestling</li> <li>- Piggyback rides</li> <li>- Tickling</li> <li>- Any type of massage given by or to a youth</li> <li>- Any form of affection that is unwanted by the youth or staff or volunteer</li> <li>- Compliments relating to physique or body development</li> <li>- Touching bottom, chest or genital areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Positive reinforcement</li> <li>- Appropriate jokes</li> <li>- Encouragement</li> <li>- Praise</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Name-calling</li> <li>- Discussing sexual encounters or in any way involving youths in the personal problems or issues of staff and volunteers</li> <li>- Secrets</li> <li>- Cursing</li> <li>- Off-color or sexual jokes</li> <li>- Shaming</li> <li>- Belittling</li> <li>- Derogatory remarks</li> <li>- Harsh language that may frighten, threaten or humiliate youths</li> <li>- Derogatory remarks about the youth or his/her family</li> </ul>

### POLICIES FOR TRAVEL AND OVERNIGHT PROGRAMS

- Off-site and overnight activities are generally discouraged. However, any such event sponsored by the Knights of Columbus must be expressly pre-approved by a grand knight and the parents.
- Grand Knights/Family Directors/Community Directors/members should ensure that all overnight youth programs and activities open to parents and guardians.
- Grand Knights/Family Directors/Community Directors/members, other than the youth participant's parent or guardian, should not share a sleeping area with a youth participant.
- Grand Knights/Family Directors/Community Directors/members should always protect their own privacy while showering, dressing, sleeping, and toileting.
- Grand Knights/Family Directors/Community Directors/members should always respect youth participants' privacy while showering, dressing, sleeping and toileting.
- Grand Knights/Family Directors/Community Directors/members should not enter rest room, dressing or sleeping facilities when in use by youth participants, except in cases of a dire safety or health concern.
- Grand Knights/Family Directors/Community Directors/members should enforce curfews with a room check conducted by two youth leaders/members/parents, both male and both female, as appropriate.
- Grand Knights/Family Directors/Community Directors/members should not allow youth participants to have members of the opposite sex, except a parent, in their sleeping area at any time.

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# KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS OFFICE OF YOUTH PROTECTION



## POLICIES FOR MONITORING RESTROOMS

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- Grand Knights/Family Directors/Community Directors/members should be aware that most incidents of youth-to-youth abuse occur in restrooms, and they should conduct frequent restroom checks.
- Grand Knights/Family Directors/Community Directors/members should scan restrooms before allowing youth to enter.
- Grand Knights/Family Directors/Community Directors/members should never allow fewer than three youth participants to travel to a restroom facility together.
- Grand Knights/Family Directors/Community Directors/members should allow only as many youth as there are restroom stalls to use the restroom at the same time.
- Grand Knights/Family Directors/Community Directors/members should avoid sending youth of different ages into restrooms at the same time.
- Grand Knights/Family Directors/Community Directors/members should remain within earshot of restrooms while in use by youth.
- Youth leaders/members should require youth to ask permission before using a single-stall restroom or restroom out of earshot of the group.
- Grand Knights/Family Directors/Community Directors/members should not use restrooms at the same time as youth.**

## POLICIES FOR MONITORING FREE TIME

- Grand Knights/Family Directors/Community Directors/members should require youth to remain within their line of sight.
- At least two Grand Knights/Family Directors/Community Directors/members should supervise youth at all times.
- Grand Knights/Family Directors/Community Directors/members should conduct periodic check-ins and sweeps of entire activity area.

## POLICIES FOR SOCIAL MEDIA AND THE INTERNET

- Grand Knights/Family Directors/Community Directors/members should only communicate via email or home (not cell) phone with youth participants.
- Grand Knights/Family Directors/Community Directors/members should limit all communication with youth participants to **Knights of Columbus youth programs-related topics**.
- Grand Knights/Family Directors/Community Directors/members should copy parents or guardians on all email and phone communications with youth participants.
- Grand Knights/Family Directors/Community Directors/members should never encourage youth participants to contact them via text message or on any other social media platform.
- Grand Knights/Family Directors/Community Directors/members should never send inappropriate, vulgar or pornographic texts or material to youth.**

## POLICIES FOR PREVENTING YOUTH-TO-YOUTH ABUSE

- Grand Knights/Family Directors/Community Directors/members should always supervise youth in order to mitigate risk of youth-to-youth abuse.
- Grand Knights/Family Directors/Community Directors/members should not leave an older youth alone and in charge of younger youth.
- Grand Knights/Family Directors/Community Directors/members should strictly prohibit hazing inside or outside of youth programs and activities.
- Youth leaders/members should strictly prohibit bullying, including but not limited to, derogatory name calling, singling out one youth for different treatment, ridicule or humiliation.
- Grand Knights/Family Directors/Community Directors/members should strictly prohibit games such as "Truth or Dare."
- Grand Knights/Family Directors/Community Directors/members should consistently document and report all instances of bullying, hazing, inappropriate sexualized behavior and suspected abuse between youth.

## POLICIES FOR OUTSIDE CONTACT WITH YOUTH PARTICIPANTS

- Many cases of organizational abuse occur off-site and outside of regularly scheduled activities.
- This contact outside of regularly scheduled activities may put everyone at increased risk.
- KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS STRONGLY RECOMMENDS THAT YOUTH LEADERS DO NOT HAVE OUTSIDE CONTACT WITH YOUTH PARTICIPANTS.**
- However, if off-site contacts are **unavoidable**, Knights of Columbus has determined that the following forms of outside contact are appropriate and inappropriate:

Appropriate Outside Contact	Inappropriate Outside Contact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Taking groups of youths on an outing</li> <li>- Attending sporting activities with groups of youths</li> <li>- Attending functions at a youth's home with parents present</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Taking one youth on an outing without the parent's written permission</li> <li>- Visiting one youth in the youth's home without a parent present</li> <li>- Entertaining one youth in the home of staff or volunteers</li> <li>- A lone youth spending the night with staff or volunteers</li> </ul>

## KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS OFFICE OF YOUTH PROTECTION



# CIRCLE OF HONOR AND STAR COUNCIL AWARDS

## SAFE ENVIRONMENT REQUIREMENT

### FRATERNAL YEAR 2018-2019

To be eligible for the *Circle of Honor*, or Pinnacle Award in the United States and Canada, state councils must be fully compliant with applicable safe environment requirements. This means that the state deputy and state advocate must complete the Praesidium safe environment training. Additionally, the state program director, the state youth director, the state family director, and the state community director, and the state squire chairman, must complete both the training and a background check.

To be eligible for the *Star Council*, *Double Star* or *Triple Star* awards in the United States and Canada, councils must be fully compliant with applicable safe environment requirements. This means that the grand knight and program director must complete the safe environment training. Additionally, the council family director and community director must complete both the safe environment training and background check. If the council sponsors a Columbian Squire Circle, all circle counselors must complete the training and background checks.

Questions regarding this award policy should be directed to the Fraternal Mission Department at 203-752-4270 or [fraternalmission@kofc.org](mailto:fraternalmission@kofc.org)

Questions regarding safe environment program compliance of state or local Knights of Columbus councils may be directed to the Office of Youth Protection at 203-800-4940 or [youthleader@kofc.org](mailto:youthleader@kofc.org)

[www.kofc.org/safe](http://www.kofc.org/safe)



## SUSPENSION OF NON-COMPLIANT SQUIRE CIRCLES

Columbian Squire Circles with **non-compliant** counselors shall be permanently dissolved by the Board if such circles' counselors fail to comply with all Knights of Columbus Safe Environment Program requirements within **15 days from the date of written notice of such permanent dissolution.**

A **non-compliant** counselor is one who has failed to complete *Praesidium* online training and provide his consent to a background check within **45 days** of initial notice of such requirements from the Office of Youth Protection.

## KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS OFFICE OF YOUTH PROTECTION



# SAFE ENVIRONMENT PROGRAM FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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### **MUST MEMBERS OF THE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS COMPLY WITH APPLICABLE DIOCESAN SAFE ENVIRONMENT REQUIREMENTS TO VOLUNTEER ON PARISH OR DIOCESAN PROPERTY?**

**YES. *Members of the Knights of Columbus must remain informed of, and compliant with, diocesan and parish safe environment requirements applicable to council activities on diocesan and parish property.***

- All prospective and new members of the Knights of Columbus are strongly encouraged to take an active role in the life of their parish and their council.
- Prospective and new members should also be promptly advised of any applicable parish/diocese safe environment policy requirements necessary to be eligible to volunteer on parish property, regardless of whether they do so in the name of the Church, the parish, or the Knights of Columbus.

### **MUST A CATHOLIC MAN COMPLETE DIOCESAN SAFE ENVIRONMENT REQUIREMENTS TO BE ELIGIBLE TO BECOME A MEMBER OF THE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS?**

**NO. *Completion of diocesan safe environment program requirements is not necessary for membership in the Knights of Columbus, although it may be necessary for members to volunteer on parish property.***

- Completion of diocesan/parish safe environment requirements is not necessary for *membership* in the Knights of Columbus, although in some cases it may be necessary for members to be eligible to *volunteer* on parish property.
- Pursuant to Section 246 of the Laws of the Knights of Columbus, subordinate councils may not establish new membership requirements, such as compliance with diocesan safe environments requirements, beyond those prescribed by Section 101 of the Laws of the Knights of Columbus.

### **IS THE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS A CHURCH MINISTRY?**

**NO. *Knights of Columbus is a fraternal benefit society that operates through a network of subordinate councils that meets on parish property with the permission of the local bishop and pastor.***

- Knights of Columbus is a fraternal benefit society that is recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as a tax exempt entity under Title 26, United States Code, Section 501(c)(8).
- It operates through a system of subordinate councils, along with regional, national, and international convocations, to raise up, support and encourage a fraternity whose members are practicing Catholics and, through common worship, charitable works, meetings, and rites of initiation, to form its members in Catholic faith and virtue.
- Its subordinate councils meet and frequently sponsor activities and events on parish property, with the permission of the pastor or the bishop.

Office of Youth Protection: [oyp@kofc.org](mailto:oyp@kofc.org) 203-752-4558 • Member Helpline: [youthleader@kofc.org](mailto:youthleader@kofc.org) 203-800-4940  
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**1-844-KOFC-SAFE (1-844-563-2723)**

# KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS OFFICE OF YOUTH PROTECTION



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS CONTINUED

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**MAY COUNCIL ROSTERS BE SHARED WITH THIRD PARTIES, INCLUDING PARISHES AND DIOCESES, WITHOUT FIRST OBTAINING PRIOR AUTHORIZATION?**

**NO. Council rosters contain confidential and proprietary member information and may not be shared with third parties without authorization, including with parishes and dioceses.**

- It is the longstanding policy of the Knights of Columbus that council rosters, which contain confidential and proprietary member information, are the exclusive property of the Knights of Columbus and may not be disclosed to third parties without prior authorization.
- **The Knights of Columbus will not share personal information related to membership application or service as a youth leader with nonaffiliated third parties unless authorized by law or when there is an indication of a threat to public safety.**

**MUST MEMBERS VOLUNTEER ON PARISH PROPERTY TO MAINTAIN THEIR MEMBERSHIP IN THE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS?**

**NO. Volunteer service on parish property is encouraged, but not required, for membership in the Knights of Columbus.**

- Whether to serve as a volunteer on parish property is a personal decision to be made by each member individually.
- Members who choose to volunteer in the work of the parish, including programs and activities sponsored by the Knights of Columbus on parish property, must complete *applicable* diocesan safe environment requirements.
- However, such volunteer service on parish property is not a membership requirement of the Knights of Columbus.

**DO KNIGHTS WHO VOLUNTEER IN CHURCH AND PARISH MINISTRIES (E.G., USHERS, EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF THE EUCHARIST, LECTORS, ETC.) DO SO AS KNIGHTS OR AS PARISHIONERS?**

**PARISHIONERS. Knights volunteering in church or parish ministries serve in those ministries as parishioners first and witness to their Faith as members of the Knights of Columbus second.**

- Service in church and parish ministries (e.g., ushers, extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist, lectors, etc.) is performed by parishioners.
- Knights of Columbus encourages its members to witness to their Faith by volunteering in church and parish ministries.
- Knights who volunteer in *church or parish ministries* do so as parishioners.
- *Therefore, Knights serving in church or parish ministries are subject to diocesan requirements specific to those ministries.*

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# KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS OFFICE OF YOUTH PROTECTION



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS CONTINUED

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**IF I HAVE ALREADY TAKEN ANOTHER ORGANIZATION'S YOUTH PROTECTION TRAINING AND BACKGROUND CHECK, DO I HAVE COMPLETE THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS SAFE ENVIRONMENT PROGRAM?**

**YES.** The Knights of Columbus does not rely on other organizations to fulfil its responsibility for protecting children and other vulnerable persons

- The Knights of Columbus is responsible for ensuring that its members know Knights of Columbus Safe Environment/Youth Protection Policies and Procedures.
- Knights of Columbus conducts and maintains its own original background checks on those members serving in youth leader roles.
- Knights of Columbus is not allowed to access confidential, privileged, and otherwise legally protected files and records of other organizations.
- Knights of Columbus protects and preserves each member's record of completion to protect the member and the Order.

**ARE MEMBERS WHO PAY THEIR DUES, BUT CHOOSE NOT TO VOLUNTEER ON PARISH PROPERTY, MEMBERS IN GOOD STANDING WITH THE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS?**

**YES.** *Dues paying members choosing not to volunteer on parish property remain members in good standing.*

- A member who declines to submit to diocesan/parish safe environment requirements remains a member in good standing, although he may be prohibited from volunteering on parish property.
- Such members remain eligible to volunteer in programs, activities, and events sponsored by the Knights of Columbus that **do not** take place on parish property.

**DO MEMBERS WHO SERVE IN YOUTH ACTIVITIES SPONSORED BY THE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS DO SO AS KNIGHTS OR PARISHIONERS OR BOTH?**

***Knights volunteering in Knights of Columbus youth activities on parish property serve as both Knights and parishioners.***

- Knights who volunteer in *youth activities* sponsored by the Knights of Columbus on parish property do so as both Knights and parishioners.
- *Therefore, members volunteering in these youth activities are subject to both diocesan requirements **and** Knights of Columbus Safe Environment Program requirements.*
- Knights who volunteer in **non-youth activities** sponsored by the Knights of Columbus on parish property *may* be subject to *applicable* diocesan requirements.

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