



# Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown

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## **MEDIA ADVISORY**

### *Diocese to Sponsor Safe Environment Training*

(HOLLIDAYSBURG, PA) – As part of its ongoing commitment to the safety and protection of young people, the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown Office of Children and Youth Protection will sponsor a series of Safe Environment Training Sessions for volunteers and diocesan employees throughout the diocese. Each workshop will include Youth Protection Awareness and Mandated Reporting Training.

All who work or volunteer in the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown – at the parish, school, or diocesan level – are required to undergo training in both Youth Protection Awareness and Mandated Reporting every five years.

The Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown utilizes the Virtus Youth Training Platform ‘Protecting God’s Children®’ that allows participants to become aware of the signs of child sexual abuse, the methods and means by which offenders commit abuse, and five easy steps one can use to prevent child sexual abuse.

The diocesan director of Children and Youth Protection participated in the “Train the Trainer” program sponsored by the Pennsylvania Family Support Alliance (PFSA) and is a certified trainer of “Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse.”

The advantage of having an on-site organizational trainer allows frequent training opportunities and ongoing support to prepare staff and volunteers throughout the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown to be knowledgeable, proficient, and confident with reporting suspected child abuse. PFSA is the only approved entity in Pennsylvania able to offer “Train the Trainer.”

The Pennsylvania Family Support Alliance provides education, support, and training programs throughout Pennsylvania, envisioning all children to grow and thrive free from abuse and neglect.

The Mandated Reporting Training is approved by the Departments of Human Services, Education, and State and is eligible for Act 48 credits and meets the requirements for required training under Act 126 and Act 31.

All workshops will be held from 8:30 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. The dates and locations of the sessions are as follows:

- Johnstown sessions will be on Wednesday, August 8 and Saturday, September 22, 2018, at the Saint Patrick School Building, 625 Park Avenue, Johnstown.
- Blair County sessions will be on Thursday, August 9, 2018, and Saturday, September 8, 2018, at the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown Administration Center (Building A), 927 South Logan Boulevard, Hollidaysburg.
- Additional sessions within the diocese include Saturday, October 13, 2018, at the Family Life Office, 5379 Portage Street, Lilly and Saturday, October 20, 2018, at the Saint Peter Parish Annex Building, 433 West Church Street, Somerset.

To register for an upcoming session, please visit [www.virtusonline.org](http://www.virtusonline.org), select Altoona-Johnstown Diocese as “your organization.” Individuals may also register through the Diocesan Office of Children and Youth Protection, Cindy O’Connor, director, at [coconnor@dioceseaj.org](mailto:coconnor@dioceseaj.org) or (814) 695-5579, ext. 2621.

Trainings are also available on-line. For more information, please visit the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown website at [www.dioceseaj.org/youth-protection](http://www.dioceseaj.org/youth-protection).