



Safe Environment Program Guidance



Purpose: To implement the [Diocese of LaCrosse Safe Environment processes and Protect and Heal program](#) with local processes and resources.

A Prayer for Healing and Reconciliation

Almighty and most loving God, through your Son,
your compassion brought healing to many.

We ask for your healing once more
for all who have been profoundly wounded by abuse,
especially those who have been hurt by your ministers.

In your goodness,
we ask for the grace
to be a source of healing
to all who have been abused
and to be ever vigilant
in protecting all your people.

Grant, we pray,
our prayers for healing and forgiveness,
for we ask them through your Son,
Christ our Lord. Amen

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- I. Training and Education.** MACS Safe Environment training provides a process and resources that seek to prevent abuse from taking place in our school community and assist in protection and healing for victim-survivors when necessary.

Important: [Diocese of La Crosse Training Requirements and Materials](#)

- A. Students:** All MACS Students grades K-12 are provided with developmentally appropriate Safe Environment training on an annual basis, subject to parental opt-out notice. ([Parent Letter K-5](#))

1. Student Training Matrix

Grade Levels	Trainer(s)	Format
Grades K-5	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• School Counselor (may collaborate with homeroom teachers)• Principal	Part of Guidance Curriculum
Grades 6-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• School Counselor - Lead• Chaplain• Religion Teachers	Annual Presentations to middle and high school by September 30 of each year (assembly with small group breakouts) Throughout the year, focus on virtues in classes, MACK Time, and Care & Share

2. Reference Materials/resources for student training:

- a) All grades: [Diocese of La Crosse Protect and Heal Religious Education Lesson Plans](#)
- b) Supplemental/Optional Resources
- (1) [Diocese of Green Bay Lesson Plans](#)
- (2) Materials/curriculum Grades [3-5 lesson](#)

(3) [Fight Child Abuse](#)

(4) [Zero Abuse Project](#)

B. Staff and Volunteers: All MACS staff members and volunteers are provided with Safe Environment training on an annual basis.

1. Staff and Volunteer Training Matrix

Target	Trainer	Format
Staff (including Coaches)	Diocese of La Crosse and MACS Safe Environment Coordinators	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Annual In-Person Presentation• Annual Verification paperwork
Volunteers	Diocese of La Crosse and MACS Safe Environment Coordinators	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Annual In-Person Presentation (encouraged) OR online training• Annual Verification paperwork

2. Training materials/resources are readily available through a [designated MACS webpage](#) that is linked directly from the homepage of the MACS website.

C. Parents: All MACS parents/guardians shall be provided an option to receive Safe Environment training on an annual basis. (Note that parent volunteers are required to receive annual training.) The training is made available to them virtually on the MACS webpage and/or by attending the annual presentation for staff or volunteers.

II. Reporting. MACS community members are encouraged to report incidents of concern. Options for reporting include law enforcement, the Diocese of La Crosse, and reports to MACS administration. A helpful reporting tool for incidents of concern is [Speak Up Speak Out Wisconsin](#), which can also be used to report various concerns and threats against the safety of members of the school community.

A. Definitions:

1. Alleged victim/target/injured party. A person who is believed to have been abused, traumatized, or otherwise injured by another person or persons. A victim who is removed from an abusive situation and in the process of healing may be considered a survivor or a victim-survivor.
2. Alleged policy violator/offender. A person who is believed to have abused, traumatized, or otherwise injured another person or persons. This may also include a person who is believed to have violated a Safe Environment policy or engaged in other inappropriate behavior.
3. Incident. An occurrence or occurrences which includes one or more of the following categories: (1) suspicion or allegation of abuse; (2) Safe Environment policy or guideline violation; and/or (3) other inappropriate behavior by a MACS employee/volunteer/other.

B. When an incident is in progress: In case of emergency, call 911

immediately. If an incident is witnessed or reported as in progress, the most important objective is to remove the alleged victim from the situation as soon as possible. Stopping any suspected abuse/trauma is the first priority. All MACS community members are empowered to peacefully intervene and put a stop to ongoing incidents. If intervention is not safe or plausible, the person is empowered to go to a trusted adult for assistance. Never hesitate to contact law enforcement if necessary to stop an incident that is in progress. After the immediate threat is neutralized, the formal reporting process should take place as soon as possible thereafter.

C. When an incident is in the past: If an incident is in the past, whether it just happened or happened years ago, the most important objective is supporting the alleged victim/survivor on a path of healing (compassion). A secondary objective is helping to ensure an effective investigation and due process to the alleged offender (justice).

D. Reporting Options. Reporting is encouraged through one or more means. If you need assistance regarding reporting options, you may contact the Safe Environment Coordinator, a school counselor, or other trusted adult.

1. Law Enforcement. Anyone may make a report to law enforcement at any time and is encouraged to do so in cases of suspected abuse or neglect. Mandated Child Abuse and Neglect Reporters are required by law to report child abuse and/or neglect to a county or law enforcement: [Wisconsin Department of Children and Families Mandated Reporters Information and Resources](#)
2. Diocese of La Crosse. Anyone wishing to make a report of an allegation of sexual abuse against a church representative should use the reporting process provided here: [Diocese of La Crosse Reporting Process/Form](#)
3. [Speak Up Speak Out Wisconsin](#): Students, parents, school staff, or any community members can [submit a school safety concern or threat via a website](#), mobile phone application, or toll-free number. Resource center staff work around-the-clock to respond to tips and to deploy a response locally by communicating directly with school administrators, law enforcement, and counselors.

III. Support. MACS encourages and participates in processes to connect victim-survivors, students, and staff with resources to promote healing.

A. Victim-Survivor Support

1. [Diocesan Victim Assistance Coordinator information](#)
2. In addition to referral to Diocesan victim assistance, MACS will work to make resources available to victim-survivors including local spiritual support through the clergy, if appropriate, and connecting victim-survivors to mental health supports such as support groups and individual counseling options.
3. All MACS community members are encouraged to educate themselves in trauma-informed and sensitive practices and to follow practices which help support victim-survivors in healing from their trauma. Resources include:
 - a) Local clergy and lay leadership at our Catholic parishes seek to provide pastoral support and fellowship.
 - b) The [Archdiocese of Minneapolis-St. Paul](#) provides events, resources, and information about support groups to promote healing from the trauma of abuse.

B. Students and Staff Support

1. Students experiencing the effects of trauma are encouraged to seek support from our school counselors at grades K-12. School counselors are trained to identify unresolved trauma and make appropriate referrals.
2. The MACS mental health recovery task force will coordinate support for students and staff who may have experienced trauma, whether direct or indirect, including trauma caused by abuse committed by clergy or other church representatives.
3. MACS provides additional employee and student mental health services through a contract with an outside provider. See MACS website for current information and to access services.