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IndyDio Safe Church FAQ Sheet

Below is a list of frequently asked questions regarding the IndyDio Safe Church policies, online training courses, Praesidium website navigation, and the newly integrated background check system. Use the links below to access the specific topic for which you need assistance.

[Diocese of Indianapolis Safe Church Policies](#)

[Safe Church, Safe Communities Online Training and Coursework](#)

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If you have any additional questions that are not answered here, please contact **Kelly Nickson** at nickson@indydio.org about any of the following:

- Praesidium log-in and course assignment questions
- Parish administrator training
- Praesidium website troubleshooting
- Background check ordering and access
- Reporting Questions
- Policy interpretation and implementation
- Background Check reviews and adjudication

Diocese of Indianapolis Safe Church Policies

1. *Where can I find the most recent version of the IndyDio Safe Church policies?*

An updated version of the Diocesan Safe Church policies can be found on the IndyDio Safe Church webpage (<http://www.indydio.org/safechurch/>).

2. *When were these policies implemented and what changes have been made recently?*

The Episcopal Church (TEC) created new model policies for its Safe Church initiative in 2017. The Diocese of Indianapolis used the TEC model policies to create a local Diocesan Safe Church policy in 2019. A revised version was developed in the summer of 2022 to include information about the new 'Safe Church, Safe Communities' courses that were released by TEC earlier that same year. The 2022 revised set of policies was approved by Executive Council in July of 2022, after which the new Safe Church coursework replaced the previously used Safeguarding curriculum. Since 2022, other smaller edits have been brought to Executive Council and approved – the most recent version of the policies is uploaded to the [Safe Church webpage](#).

3. *I am my parish's Safe Church administrator - how do I use the Safe Church Policies in this role?*

Parish Safe Church administrators are asked to use the Safe Church policies as guiding resource for gatherings that occur on their property or in their name. Administrators should pay particular attention to policies that apply to their regular worship and building use and have an awareness of where to find policies that apply to less frequent events (e.g., traveling with youth). Administrators should also use the table in Appendix A as a resource for determining who needs to take Safe Church coursework, which courses need to be assigned to specific roles, and which parishioners will need to complete criminal, motor vehicle, or credit screenings.

4. *I suspect abuse, neglect, or exploitation in my parish – how do I report and respond to this concern?*

Section VIII of the policy provides details for how to respond to concerns about abuse, neglect, and exploitation. Indiana is a mandatory reporting state for both children and endangered adults, so anyone who suspects abuse, neglect, or exploitation must report to the state agency. Section VIII provides more information about who to contact within a facility or program; it also calls for your parish to provide local resources for anyone concerned about circumstances that may violate Safe Church policies.

5. *Who serves as the Diocesan Intake Officer and what do they do?*

[The Rev. Frank Impicciche](#) serves as the Diocesan Intake Officer. He receives reports of suspected violations of Safe Church policy by a member of the clergy.

Safe Church, Safe Communities Online Training and Coursework

1. *What is Safe Church, Safe Communities coursework and why is it important?*

Safe Church, Safe Communities coursework is the series of courses developed and released by The Episcopal Church (TEC) in 2022 to replace the previous Safeguarding curriculum. The courses educate both lay and clergy best practices in how to prevent abuse, how to recognize signs of abuse, and how to report suspected abuse or other policy violations. By providing leaders with this training, our diocese can minimize the likelihood of abuse, neglect, and exploitation within our parishes and provide safe spaces for worship and community.

2. *How many Safe Church courses are there and how long do they take to complete?*

The Episcopal Church (TEC) has created eight Safe Church, Safe Communities courses: four universal courses and four role-specific courses. Two more Safe Church courses are in development at this time - one universal course (Reporting) and one role-specific course (Anti-Harassment). The release dates of the final two courses are not known at this time. In the meantime, our diocese has designated replacement courses that can be used in lieu of the two courses that are still in development; these are 'Duty to Report: Mandated Reporter' and 'Safeguarding God's People: Preventing Sexual Harassment'. Each course takes 20-25 minutes average, though completion time will vary for each learner.

3. *Who is required to complete Safe Church coursework?*

Safe Church coursework must be completed clergy and lay leaders whose roles involve governance, financial decision-making and/or responsibilities, access to children, youth, and vulnerable adults, or roles that require supervision of others or pastoral care. A list of common parish roles that require Safe Church training can be found in the table in Appendix A of the Safe Church policies.

4. *Who assigns/manages Safe Church coursework?*

Each parish should have at least one designated Safe Church administrator who is responsible for assigning Safe Church coursework, ordering background checks, and ensuring that their parish is following the Safe Church policies. Contact Kelly Nickson at nickson@indydio.org to find out your parish's Safe Church administrator(s) if you don't know.

5. *How do I take my required coursework and which courses do I need to take?*

The Safe Church, Safe Communities courses can be accessed and completed online on the Praesidium Academy website (www.praesidiumacademy.com). The courses you need to take will depend on your role within your parish. You can use the table in Appendix A of the Safe Church policy or ask your Safe Church administrator to determine your required course list. If

you do not have an account on Praesidium Academy, one will need to be created for you; reach out to your parish's Safe Church administrator for assistance.

6. *How often does Safe Church coursework need to be renewed/retaken?*

Safe Church coursework is considered 'current' for three years after course completion. At that time, learners will need to renew their coursework. It is important to note that if a learner takes on a new leadership position within the three years after completing their coursework, they may need to take additional courses, depending on the requirements of their new role.

7. *I have taken Safeguarding coursework in the past – is that the same thing as Safe Church?*

The Safeguarding curriculum was the coursework assigned by Indy Dio until July of 2022. While the Safeguarding courses covered similar material to the new Safe Church courses, the courses do not align exactly with one another and the material has been updated and/or rearranged within the new courses. That said, those who completed the Safeguarding coursework within the past three years are still considered certified, and they will only need to take the new courses when the previous ones expire. Starting in the fall of 2022, Safeguarding courses have gradually been removed from the Praesidium Academy website.

8. *I have taken training in the past, but I don't remember when – how do I know if I need to renew my training?*

If you have taken training in the past, you should have an online learner account through Praesidium Academy. If you log-on to your account, you can click the 'Transcript' option in the top right corner to find a list of courses that you have taken, as well as their completion dates.

If you no longer have access to your online account or can't remember how to log-in, contact your parish's Safe Church administrator; your administrator will have access to your transcript and can look up your most recent course completion dates.

Praesidium Website Log-In and Navigation

1. What is Praesidium Academy and how is it used?

Praesidium Academy (www.praesidiumacademy.org) is the website used by the Diocese of Indianapolis for Safe Church coursework and background checks. Typically, parish Safe Church administrators will create a Praesidium learner account for those who need to either complete training or run a background check; the learner can then access their account and complete their Safe Church requirements online. Praesidium Academy also serves as a database in which previous training records and background check results (as of February 2023) are stored and managed.

2. I used to have an account for Safeguarding classes, but it wasn't on Praesidium. Do I still have an account or will I need a new one?

In 2021, the Diocese of Indianapolis changed its online learning platform to Praesidium Academy. If you had an account via a different website, it may or may not have been transferred. Praesidium Academy automatically transferred accounts that were either created or active as of 2016; if your account was inactive between 2016 and 2021 and you did not log-in during the 2021 platform transition, your account may have been deleted. Contact your parish's Safe Church administrator if you think you may need a new account.

3. How do I get a new account on the Praesidium website?

Contact your parish's Safe Church administrator to have a new account created. You will need to provide your administrator with a personal email address that will act as your username. Please know that if you share your email address with a significant other and you are both lay leaders that need to take training, one of you will need to create a new email address in order to create a Praesidium account. Contact your parish's Safe Church administrator or Kelly Nickson (nickson@indydio.org) for assistance with creating a new email address.

4. How do I log-in to my Praesidium account?

If you already have a Praesidium account, you can go to [the Praesidium log-in page](#) and use your email address and password to log-in.

If a brand-new account has been created for you, an automatic email will be delivered to your inbox; within the email message, you will receive directions for how to complete your initial log-in and create your own password. From that point forward, you will be able to log-in using your email address and the password that you created. If you do not have a welcome email in your inbox, please contact your parish's Safe Church administrator.

5. *How do I reset the password on my account?*

To reset your Praesidium password, you can click the 'Forgot your password?' link on the bottom of [Praesidium's log-in page](#). This will prompt you for your email address and allow you to reset the password on your account. Passwords can also be changed manually by Safe Church administrators, so reach out to your parish's Safe Church administrator if you need help.

6. *There are a lot of courses listed when I log in – do I have to take all of these?*

No, you don't! Every learner account is provided with the entire Praesidium course catalogue. You only need to complete the courses that have been assigned to you by your parish's Safe Church administrator (typically between 5 and 10 courses). If you haven't been assigned your required courses, reach out to your administrator. It is also important to be aware that some courses appear more than once because they are offered in several languages: ENG for English, ES for Spanish, and FR for French.

7. *Where can I find a transcript of the courses I have taken?*

A transcript of your courses can be found in the menu at the top right corner of your learner screen; this will provide a list of courses you have taken, as well as the date on which each was completed. Your parish Safe Church administrator also has access to your transcript and can assist you if you are unable to find it.

8. *I was told that a background check was ordered for me and I need to provide additional information – where do I go on the website to do this?*

If a background check has been ordered for you, you will need to log-in to your Praesidium account to input your information and provide a digital signature that you agree to have the background check run. To access this, you will look under the 'My Learning' tab, which is located just below the picture of Bishop Jennifer. If you don't see a background check listed under the 'My Learning' tab, reach out to your Safe Church administrator for help.

9. *Does my parish's Safe Church administrator get notified when I complete my courses?*

Although your parish's Safe Church administrator can access your transcripts and see which courses you have completed, there is no alert system that will tell them you have completed your courses or background check. It is recommended that learners notify their parish's Safe Church administrator via email when they have completed their training so that the administrator is up-to-date on your certification status.

10. If my parish offers in-person Safe Church training, do I still need an account on the Praesidium website?

Yes, in-person Safe Church training records are entered into Praesidium's online database, so learners will still need a Praesidium account even if they only take their courses in-person.

11. I am a new Safe Church administrator and I need training for how to use the website and coordinate Safe Church work for my parishioners – what resources are available?

Some resources and training videos are available on the Safe Church webpage at <http://www.indydio.org/safechurch>. In addition, any future group administrator training sessions will be advertised on that page. If you would like one-on-one training or do not see an upcoming group session, please reach out to Kelly Nickson at nickson@indydio.org to schedule a Zoom training with her.

Praesidium Background Checks

1. *When did the Diocese of Indianapolis begin performing background checks on Praesidium, and why did they switch from the previous system?*

As of February 1, 2023, the Diocese of Indianapolis began ordering background checks through Praesidium's website via integrated accounts (integrated meaning that the accounts can be used for both screening and training). The previous system for ordering background checks involved the exchange of personal information with the diocesan office through which all orders were placed; the Praesidium screening system allows for background checks to be ordered by the parish themselves and filled out directly by the person being screened so that no personal information related to the background check is being stored by the parish or diocese. Invoicing through Praesidium is done directly to the parishes, too, thus streamlining the process by removing the diocesan office as a middle step.

2. *What does my parish need to do in order to begin ordering background checks on the Praesidium website?*

In order for a parish to order background checks on Praesidium, they must have a completed [Praesidium Parish Screening Contract](#) and at least one designated Safe Church administrator at their parish who will be responsible for ordering and managing the background checks locally.

3. *Who has the ability to make background check orders at my parish?*

Safe Church administrators are able to place background check orders on behalf of their parishes. If you need the name(s) of your Safe Church administrator(s), please contact Kelly Nickson at nickson@indydio.org.

4. *How do I know who at my parish needs a background check on file?*

In the Diocesan Safe Church Policies (which can be found at <http://www.indydio.org/safechurch>), the table in Appendix A lists common parish roles and the Safe Church screening and training requirements for each. The 'Background Check' column will indicate if someone's role in the church necessitates a background screening. Other types of screening include MVR (motor vehicle record) for those who will drive on behalf of the parish and credit checks for those who manage parish finances.

5. *As an administrator, how do I place a background check order through the Praesidium website?*

To place a background check on Praesidium, Safe Church administrators must first ensure that the person being screened has a Praesidium account. Once that has been confirmed or created, the administrator will go to the 'Advanced Admin Portal' page and click on 'Manage Background

Checks'. The next screen will show a blue button that says 'Order Manual Background Check'; after clicking this, Praesidium will ask for the email address of the person being screened and will ask you to choose a package from the dropdown menu. Click the blue 'Order background check' to finalize the order.

6. *There are a lot of background check packages available – how do I know which package to assign to a parishioner?*

Background check packages can be sorted into three main categories: clergy packages, premium packages, and standard packages. The clergy package is recommended for clergy who are new to the diocese, as well as for executive staff members. Premium packages should be used for those who have high access to children, youth, or vulnerable adults; those who work with teenagers are strongly recommended to have a social media check, as well. Standard packages should be used for those in roles with low access to children, youth, and vulnerable adults. [Click here for a helpful infographic about the package options.](#)

7. *I am an administrator that just ordered a background check, but I don't see it on the 'Manage Background Checks' page or in my reports – did I do something wrong?*

Unless you accidentally pressed the 'Cancel' button instead of the 'Submit' button, you likely haven't done anything wrong. If you have just created a new Praesidium learner account for the person that you are screening, their background check order will not immediately appear on the 'Manage Background Checks' page. It should appear within 24 to 48 hours after you have placed the order. Although their screening order may not be visible to you as the administrator, the learner will have immediate access to it under their 'My Learning' tab, where they will enter their personal information and agree to the terms of the screening.

8. *How much do the background checks cost, and who pays for them?*

Detailed pricing information for all background check packages can be found on [the first page of the Praesidium parish contract](#). Clergy background screenings are managed and purchased by diocesan staff; other screenings for parish staff and lay leaders are the financial responsibility of the parish.

9. *What does MVR stand for?*

MVR stands for Motor Vehicle Record. This is an optional add-on to the Praesidium screening packages. This is intended only for staff or lay leaders who will be responsible for driving on behalf of the parish.

10. *What does 'address to crim' mean?*

The Clergy package and Premium package include 'address to crim' as one of their features. This means that the screening will automatically pull records from any counties of residence

over the past seven years. This feature indicates that a background screening will be more thorough, but it also may incur additional third party fees and a \$10 *a la carte* rate for each additional set of county records that are pulled.

11. How long are background checks considered valid/current?

Background checks that meet criteria are considered valid or current for three years after the completion date. At that time, a new screening will need to be conducted if the person is still holding in a position that requires one. Praesidium will automatically order a new background check three years after one has been completed for a parishioner; to avoid being charged for background checks on accounts where they are no longer needed, it is recommended that Safe Church administrators conduct regular audits on their parish's user list.

12. Some of my parishioners need a credit check – where can I do that?

The Diocese of Indianapolis does not have credit check capabilities through Praesidium's website. Parish leaders who are required to have a credit check can use a free website such as [Credit Karma](#) to pull a TransUnion or Equifax credit report. This can be submitted to the parish Safe Church administrator who will review it for any red flags or areas of concern.

13. How do I know if a background check has been ordered for me, and where do I go to complete it?

To access and fill out the personal information for your background check, you will need to log-in to your Praesidium Academy account and scroll down to your 'My Learning' tab. You should see your background check listed there; pressing on the blue 'Start' button to the right will allow you to access it.

If you are expecting a background check to be ordered for you but you do not see one listed under your 'My Learning' tab, then you will want to communicate with your parish's Safe Church administrator. Please contact Kelly Nickson at nickson@indydio.org if you need the name(s) of your Safe Church administrator(s).

14. How do I know that my background check is complete?

When your background check is complete, it will appear on your learning transcript (along with your Safe Church courses). The transcript will show what date the background check was completed.

If anything from your background check requires review, it will be sent to our diocesan adjudicator, Jen Phelps. She will work with your Safe Church administrator(s) or priests to review any areas that have been flagged and make a final determination of the status of the background check. If your background check is conditionally accepted or does not meet criteria, you will be notified by either your Safe Church administrator or Jen Phelps.

15. Do Safe Church administrators get the full background check report?

Parish Safe Church administrators will not receive a full background check report upon its completion. Full reports can be accessed by the adjudicator (Jen Phelps) and diocesan administrator (Kelly Nickson); those who have been screened may contact either of them or Praesidium directly if they wish to request the full report for their own files.

16. Who is the adjudicator and what do they do?

The adjudicator for the Diocese of Indianapolis is Jen Phelps. In this role, she is responsible for reviewing background checks that have flagged areas that need further inspection, and she will work with the Safe Church administrator(s) of the parish to reach a final conclusion about the screening. Jen will then change the final status of the background check on Praesidium to one of the following: Meets Criteria, Conditional, or Does Not Meet Criteria.