

Diocese of Springfield, MA

Code of Conduct for Church Personnel

Clergy, Religious Brothers/Sisters,
Employees and Volunteers

Revised June 2017

Introduction

All personnel (clergy, lay employees, volunteers, and other entities) who are deemed to be subject to the child protection policies of the Diocese shall adhere to this promulgated *Code of Conduct for Church Personnel*, which they have agreed to in writing.

Personnel (clergy, lay employees, volunteers, and other entities) shall notify the "Responsible Administrator" (the pastor, principal, supervisor, or agency director) immediately if this *Code of Conduct for Church Personnel* has not been followed.

This *Code of Conduct for Church Personnel* shall be published on the Diocesan website and provided to all personnel who are deemed to be subject to the child protection policies of the Diocese. Printed copies shall be made available to the faithful at every parish, school, and agency of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Springfield upon request.

Interactions with Children and Youth

Our children are the most important gifts God has entrusted to us. As an adult working with minors, I pledge to follow the rules and guidelines in this *Code* as a condition of my providing services to the minors of our Parishes, Schools and Diocese.

In my ministry interactions with minors (face-to-face and via technology) I SHALL:

- Treat everyone with respect, patience, integrity, courtesy, dignity, and consideration.
- Conduct myself in a manner that is consistent with the discipline, norms, and teachings of the Catholic Church.
- Provide a professional work environment that is free from harassment.
- Avoid situations that do not allow for public visibility and accessibility (i.e., avoid the development of outside private relationships with minors and the initiation of private communications with minors outside of approved ministry activities).
- Safeguard my use of technology so as to avoid private/isolated communications with minors, the sharing of personal information regarding minors, and the public identification of minors that does not conform to the technology policies and procedures of my parish, school, or agency where I am in ministry with minors.
- Follow all guidelines for communications with minors set forth by the parish, school, or diocesan agency for which I am working or volunteering.
- Follow Diocesan requirements about photographing and/or publishing images of youth involved in parish, school, and ministry.
- Refrain from giving significant gifts or granting special privileges or opportunities to specific minors.
- Report suspected child abuse in accordance with Massachusetts state laws and the *Process for Reporting the Alleged Abuse of a Minor of the Diocese of Springfield*.
- Cooperate fully in any investigation of abuse of minors.

In my ministry interactions with minors (face-to-face and via technology) I SHALL NOT:

- Smoke or use tobacco products in the presence of minors.
- Use, possess, or be under the influence of alcohol or at any time while working with minors.
- Use, possess, or be under the influence of illegal drugs, or misuse intoxicants or controlled substances, while in contact with minors.
- Strike, spank, shake, or slap minors.
- Humiliate, ridicule, or threaten minors.
- Use any discipline that frightens or humiliates a minor or a group of minors.
- Make any type of statement that degrades or puts down any other adult, minor, or group of people. This includes, but is not limited to any type of racial or sexual joke or slur or degrading comment about any race, person, or group of people.
- Touch a minor in a sexual or other inappropriate manner.
- Plan or conduct any type of youth-oriented event other than those that are approved, planned, and conducted by my church, school, or ministry team.
- Share with a minor anything about my own sexual history or any other experience that crosses the boundary between “public” and “private.”
- Take improper advantage of a counseling and/or authoritative relationship for my own benefit.
- Manufacture, possess, or distribute child pornography.
- View materials containing inappropriate content with and/or in the presence of minors.
- Contribute to the delinquency of a minor or group of minors in accordance with the laws of the state of Massachusetts.
- Enter into any type of private communication with a minor that is not within the scope of my ministry, or any communication that would undermine the parent-child relationship, or serve to foster an inappropriate relationship with a minor.

Appropriate Physical Contact While Working with Minors

I understand that the following forms of physical contact are appropriate when working with minors:

- Handshakes, “fist-bump” greetings and “high fives.”
- Brief hugs and “side hugs” (when initiated by a minor).
- Hand-holding (during group prayer or to provide safety to young children).
- Contact that is a component of an acceptable group activity (such as an icebreaker, group prayer service, or sporting activity).

Inappropriate Physical Contact and Not Allowed while Working with Minors

I understand that the following forms of physical contact are not allowed when working with minors:

- Kissing.
- Close or prolonged embraces.
- Any type of massage.
- Touching or tousling a minor's hair.
- Showering or bathing with a minor.
- Allowing a minor to sit on one's shoulders or lap.
- Fondling or any type of genital contact.
- Piggy-back rides, tickling, wrestling, or physical horseplay.
- Any type of physical punishment such as slapping, spanking, or striking a minor.

Communications and Confidentiality with Minors in Ministry

Private communication with a minor is defined as any type and form of communication that takes place apart from an appropriate and approved ministry setting. Therefore, adults in ministry with minors shall not enter into any type of private communication with a minor that is not within the scope of their ministry, or any communication that would undermine the parent-child relationship or serve to foster an inappropriate relationship with a minor.

Diocesan Certification to Work in Ministry with Minors

I understand and agree that I shall complete the following requirements prior to working in ministry with minors:

- Criminal Offender Records Information (CORI)
- Approved Diocesan Safe Environment training
- Awareness of and commitment to the *Code of Conduct for Church Personnel*.

Name _____

Signature _____

Date _____