



DIOCESE OF SPRINGFIELD – CAPE GIRARDEAU CODE OF CONDUCT FOR CLERGY, EMPLOYEES, AND ADULT VOLUNTEERS WORKING WITH MINORS

To foster and maintain an atmosphere of trust and safety in its ministry to minors, the Diocese of Springfield – Cape Girardeau has established a *Code of Conduct for Clergy, Employees and Adult Volunteers Working with Minors*. The Diocese expects all Church personnel, which includes all parish and school employees and volunteers who regularly work with minors, to maintain high standards of professional, ministerial and moral behavior.

A. Reporting Violations

Any suspected or known abuse of a minor must first be immediately reported to the Missouri Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline 800-392-3738 or 844-CAN-TELL; or for suspected or known abuse of vulnerable or eligible adults, the Missouri Adult Abuse and Neglect Hotline 800-392-0210, and may also be reported to law enforcement agencies. All Church personnel are required to report violations of *The Code of Conduct for Clergy, Employees and Adult Volunteers Working with Minors* to the Chancellor at 417-866-0841 or treidy@dioscg.org, the Victim Assistance Coordinator: Judy St. John, LPC, NCC at 573-587-3139 or vac1@dioscg.org; or, the Director of Child and Youth Protection, William Holtmeyer, Jr., MS, NCC, LPC, CEAP at billholtmeyer@dioscg.org or 417-866-0841.

Concerns may be discussed with your supervisor, a Victim Assistance Coordinator, the Office of Child and Youth Protection, or the Chancellor. Violations and Concerns may also be reported using the TIPS reporting system.

Failure to Report is a Class A Misdemeanor for a person who is required under the law to report.
Filing a False Report is also a Class A Misdemeanor.

B. Definitions

1. A minor is defined as anyone under the age of 18. For the purposes of this document, the term “minors” includes high school students age 18 or older and eligible adults who are considered uniquely vulnerable, and are unable to protect their own interests or adequately perform or obtain services necessary to meet their essential human needs due to physical or mental disabilities.
2. Physical abuse is non-accidental injury intentionally inflicted on a minor.
3. Sexual misconduct or abuse is any contact of a sexual nature that occurs between a minor and an adult, but also includes enticement, exploitation or other violations involving minors as defined in the Revised Statutes of Missouri {RSMO} and further described in the *Safe Environment Procedures of the Diocese of Springfield – Cape Girardeau*. Abuse of minors is contrary to the teachings of the Church and is never permissible. Church personnel have a responsibility to actively protect minors from all forms of abuse.
4. Church personnel are defined as any persons, lay, religious or clergy, who are employed by or who volunteer for a diocesan institution, parish or school.
5. Mandatory Reporters: In general, when any person, which includes but is not limited to teachers, principals, other school officials, ministers, day care center workers, childcare workers or social workers, in addition to healthcare personnel, nurses, physicians, mental health professionals, and any other person with the responsibility for the care of children or vulnerable or eligible adults has reasonable cause to suspect that an individual has been or may be subjected to abuse or neglect or observes them being subjected to conditions or circumstances which would reasonably result in abuse or neglect, that person shall immediately report or cause a report to be made to the Child or Adult Abuse and Neglect Hotlines.

C. General Guidelines

The following guidelines are intended to assist employees and volunteers in making decisions about interactions with minors in sponsored and affiliated programs. They are not designed or intended to address the interactions within families. For clarification of any guideline or any inquiry about behaviors not addressed here, the supervisor or local safe environment coordinator should be contacted, or in the case of clergy, the Diocesan Office. These guidelines do not supersede state or federal laws.

1. Ministry to minors within the Church is at the service of the parents who have the first responsibility to care for and educate their children. Therefore, activities with minors are to be conducted with the explicit knowledge and consent of parents or legal guardians.
2. Church personnel are responsible for releasing minors in their care only to parents, legal guardians, or other persons designated by parents or legal guardians at the close of services or activities. In the event that Church personnel are uncertain of the propriety of releasing a minor, they are to immediately locate or contact their supervisor before releasing the child.
3. While working with minors, Church personnel are prohibited from the use, or being under the influence of alcohol, any illegal drugs, or impaired by prescription medications. They are also prohibited from furnishing alcohol or illegal drugs to minors or permitting minors to use such in their presence.
4. The use of tobacco products while working with minors is prohibited, as well as furnishing tobacco products to minors.
5. Church personnel are prohibited from possessing weapons of any type at any time when working with minors.
6. Church personnel are prohibited from accessing, possessing, showing, sending or receiving sexually explicit materials, images, or pornography, or knowingly allowing minors to view similar materials or pornography.

D. Physical Contact

The Diocese of Springfield – Cape Girardeau has implemented a physical contact policy that will promote a positive, nurturing, safe environment for children and youth ministries while protecting both children and Church personnel from misunderstandings. The following guidelines are to be carefully followed by all Church personnel working with children and in youth programs.

1. Church personnel are prohibited from using physical discipline in any way for behavior management of minors. This prohibition includes spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, or any other physical force as retaliation or correction for inappropriate behavior by minors.
2. Appropriate affection between Church personnel and minors is important for a child's development and a positive part of Church life and ministry. The following forms of affection are generally regarded as appropriate examples for most Church sponsored and affiliated programs:
 - Side hugs, arms around shoulders.
 - Shoulder to shoulder hugs.
 - Pats on the shoulder or back.
 - Handshakes, "high-fives" and hand-slapping.
 - Verbal praise.
 - Touching hands, faces, shoulders or arms of minors.
 - Holding hands while walking with small children.
 - Pats on the head when culturally appropriate.

3. Some forms of physical affection have been used to initiate inappropriate contact with minors. Examples of inappropriate affection that are not to be used in Church sponsored and affiliated programs include but are not limited to the following:

- Inappropriate or lengthy embraces.
- Kisses on the lips or mouth.
- Holding minors over five years old on the lap.
- Touching (patting, grabbing, pinching, or rubbing) of knees, legs, buttocks, breasts, chests, genital areas, or the clothing surrounding these areas (except when assisting with toileting).
- Showing affection while in isolated areas of a building such as bedrooms, closets, staff-only areas, other private rooms, in a vehicle, or any location that a minor and adult may be isolated away from others.
- Sleeping in a room alone with a minor or sharing a bed with an unrelated minor.
- Tickling, wrestling and/or rough-housing, piggyback rides.
- Any type of massage given by a minor to an adult, or massage given by an adult to a minor.

4. Comments that relate to physique or body development. No form of affection, even if generally regarded as appropriate, is to be used when a minor expresses discomfort, verbally or non-verbally, with the affection.

D. Undue Attention

Certain conduct has been used by adults to develop inappropriate relationships with minors. Activities include singling out minors or showing them unusual attention. Some examples of this behavior prohibited for Church personnel include but are not limited to the following:

- Presenting gifts to a particular child (relatives excluded).
- Allowing a minor to drive automobiles of Church personnel even though another adult may be present.
- Singling out a particular child for special dinners, events, trips, or outings.
- Having unofficial or repeated private or other personally intimate conversations through text messaging, emailing, or contact through social media.

F. Screening

Without exception, all applicants for Church positions working with minors will be required to complete the following:

- A Background Disclosure and Authorization to conduct a criminal background check.
- Applicants will also be annually required to read and sign the *Code of Conduct for Clergy, Employees and Adult Volunteers Working with Minors* and *Background Questionnaire*.

G. Education and Training

1. All Church personnel are required to annually review and agree to comply with the *Code of Conduct for Clergy, Employees and Adult Volunteers Working with Minors*.
2. Members of the clergy, religious, employees, and all volunteers who work with minors will be required to attend the VIRTUS Program, *Protecting God's Children*®. Clergy, employees, and volunteer catechetical leaders are required to read monthly VIRTUS training bulletins. Volunteers may be required to read training bulletins throughout the year as directed or provided by their supervisor.
3. Minors who work as employees or volunteers will be informed that they have a right to a safe working environment and a right to disclose behavior not in accord with these standards. They are required to read and sign the *Code of Conduct for Minors Volunteering or Working with Younger Children*.

H. Program Supervision

1. Parents are always welcome to observe and encouraged to be a part of any and all services and programs in which their children are involved in the Diocese of Springfield – Cape Girardeau. Those parents who desire to participate or have ongoing contact in their child's activities will be required to complete the volunteer application process.
2. Programs for minors are to be sponsored by two or more adults.
3. Employees and volunteers under the age of 21 must work under the direction of a supervisor age 25 or older.
4. Church personnel responsible for supervision of activities in parishes and schools must be aware of all programs for minors that are sponsored by a parish or school or institution. A list of these programs is to be maintained and include purpose, activities, sponsors or coordinators, meeting times and locations. Leaders are to examine these programs and decide whether there is adequate supervision. A list of employees and volunteers is to be kept and updated annually.

I. Dissemination

The *Code of Conduct for Clergy, Employees and Adult Volunteers Working with Minors* will be given annually to all Clergy and Religious, Diocesan, Parish, and School employees, as well as any adult volunteers who regularly work with children, to review, sign, and submit to the local Parish or School Safe Environment Volunteer Coordinator or sent to the Diocesan Office of Child and Youth Protection.

J. Agreements

I will:

- Immediately report any suspected or known child abuse or sexual misconduct to the **Missouri Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline 800-392-3738** or **844-CAN-TELL**; for any suspected or known abuse of eligible or vulnerable adult, to the **MO Adult Abuse and Neglect Hotline 800-392-0210**.
- Inform the Chancellor, Director of Child and Youth Protection, or Victim Assistance Coordinators of any concerns or violations of the Code of Conduct or Safe Environment Procedures.
- Adhere to the Code of Conduct, Safe Environment Procedures, and other Policies of the Diocese.
- Comply with the Guidelines for the Use of Technology, Email and Social Media.
- Comply with the Safe Student Policy Addressing Harassment, Discrimination, and Sexual Violence.
- Remain in compliance with the required training and education of volunteers, personnel and clergy.
- Treat everyone with respect, patience, integrity, courtesy, dignity, and consideration.
- Use positive reinforcement rather than criticism when working with children and/or youth.

I will not:

- Verbally threaten or physically strike, spank, shake, or slap minors.
- Possess weapons of any sort while in the presence of minors.
- Touch a minor in a sexual or other inappropriate manner.
- Use tobacco products in the presence of minors.
- Use, possess, and be under the influence of/impaired by alcohol at any time while in presence of minors.
- Use, possess, or be under the influence of illegal drugs or be impaired by prescription medication at any time while in the presence of minors.
- Use obscene, indecent, or sexually-explicit language in the presence of minors.
- Possess, show, or send obscene, indecent or explicit sexual materials/images to or in presence of minors.
- Be isolated and alone with a minor at Parish, School or Diocesan activities where minors are present.
- Sleep in a room alone with a minor or share a bed with an unrelated minor.
- Give gifts to or accept gifts from children without approval from parent and pastor or administrator.
- Use electronic devices (phones, computers, etc.) for personal use while working with minors, except in an emergency.

BACKGROUND QUESTIONNAIRE CONCERNING SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

- 1. Have you ever sexually abused a minor? Yes No
- 2. Have you ever been convicted of a crime of sexual abuse, physical abuse, sexual harassment, exploitation, or endangering the welfare of a child? Yes No
- 3. Has any allegation or civil or criminal complaint ever been made against you relating to sexual misconduct, sexual abuse, sexual harassment, exploitation, physical abuse, or endangering the welfare of a child?
 Yes No
- 4. Have you ever terminated your employment or had your employment terminated for reasons relating to allegations of sexual misconduct, sexual abuse or physical abuse by you, or relating to civil or criminal complaints for sexual misconduct, or sexual or physical abuse, or endangering the welfare of a child against you? Yes No
- 5. Have you ever received any medical treatment, physical or psychological, for reasons involving your physical or sexual abuse of others? Yes No

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I certify that the facts contained in this Questionnaire are true and complete to the best of my knowledge and understand that falsified statements shall be grounds for dismissal. I authorize investigation of all statements contained herein and release all parties from all liability for any damage that may result from furnishing same to you.

REPORTING VIOLATIONS

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COMMITMENT TO ETHICAL CONDUCT

I acknowledge that I have read and understand the Code of Conduct and promise to faithfully follow the rules and guidelines in the *Diocese of Springfield – Cape Girardeau Code of Conduct for Clergy, Employees and Adult Volunteers working with Minors* as a condition of my employment or volunteer work. I understand that any action inconsistent with the *Code* or any failure to take action mandated by the *Code* may result in dismissal. I further understand that, as a condition of employment or volunteering, I may be required to participate in ongoing training and education.

Name of parish, school or institution: _____

Position: _____

Preferred email: _____

Print Name: _____

Phone No.: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Your supervisor is to give you a copy of this Code of Conduct to keep for future reference.