

# **DIOCESE OF JOLIET STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOR TO SAFEGUARD AGAINST CHILD ABUSE**

Revised 2014

In accordance with the *USCCB Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* (Article 6) and Diocese of Joliet's *Policy Regarding the Sexual Abuse of Minors* (revised 2013), these *Standards of Behavior* have been developed to foster and maintain an atmosphere of trust and safety for minors participating in various programs within the diocese. All personnel, be they employees or volunteers who staff these programs, are expected to maintain high standards of professional, ministerial and moral behavior, and are expected to comply with these Standards.

## **A. Definitions**

- A minor is defined as anyone under the age of 18.
- A vulnerable adult is one who habitually lacks the use of reason (Canon 99) or who, because of mental or physical disability is incapable of protecting himself/herself from sexual abuse.
- Physical abuse is non-accidental injury that is intentionally inflicted upon a minor or vulnerable adult.
- Sexual abuse is any conduct with a minor or vulnerable adult which is either unlawful and/or contrary to the moral teaching of the Church, which is engaged in by an adult employee/volunteer of the Diocese of Joliet or a parish/school/agency. It also includes acquisition, possession, or distribution of pornographic images for the purposes of sexual gratification, by whatever means or the use of whatever technology.
- An employee is a person who is compensated for services to a diocesan agency, parish or school.
- A volunteer is a person who functions without compensation in any role within a diocesan agency, parish or school.

## **B. Standards**

The following Standards are intended to assist Church personnel in making decisions about interactions with minors and vulnerable adults in Church sponsored and affiliated programs. They do not supersede state law or State of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services requirements, nor are these guidelines intended to be all inclusive.

### Responsible Professional Conduct

1. Ministry to minors respects the rights of parents to educate and form 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 never to leave minors unattended during a class, session, event, etc.
3. 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 contact the parent or legal guardian of the minor.
4. Church personnel are prohibited from the use, possession or being under the influence of alcohol or any illegal substance while working with minors. They are also prohibited from furnishing alcohol or illegal substances to minors or permitting minors to use such in their presence.
5. Church personnel may provide transportation in accordance with the Diocese of Joliet Transportation Policy.
6. Church personnel are prohibited from using physical discipline for the 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

### Physical Proximity and Modesty

1. Church personnel are never to be nude in the presence of minors. Rare exception may be made when necessary for specifically designated medical personnel.
2. Minors are never to be nude in the presence of Church personnel. The appropriate supervision of locker-rooms may be the exception.
3. Changing and showering facilities for adults are to be separate from those for minors.
4. When officially approved overnight stays are necessary, an adult should never share a bed, sleeping bag or cot with a minor. An adult is not to spend the night in the presence of a lone minor, unless it is his/her own child.
5. Houses used as residences for priests and religious are exclusively for their use. Minors should not be allowed in the private quarters of those residences. With the exception of occasional visits from family members, minors are not permitted to be overnight guests in the residences of priests or religious.
6. Counseling areas should have transparent windows or open doors. Care should be made to have another adult in the general vicinity during counseling sessions.
7. Adults should never meet with minors on a one-to-one basis in secluded areas or closed rooms.

### Physical Contact

Appropriate affection between Church personnel and minors is important for a child's development. It is a positive part of Church life and ministry and should be given in public but not in isolated or secluded areas.

1. The following forms of affection, whether initiated by a minor or adult, are regarded as examples of appropriate contact:
  - Side hugs
  - Shoulder to shoulder hugs
  - Pats on the upper back
  - Handshakes
  - "High-fives" and hand slapping
  - Arms around shoulders
  - Holding hands while walking with small children
  - Sitting beside small children
  - Kneeling or bending to receive hugs from small children
  - Holding hands during prayer
  - Pats on the head when culturally appropriate
  - Reciprocation of appropriate gestures initiated by a minor
2. The following forms of affection, whether initiated by a minor or an adult, are regarded as examples of inappropriate contact:
  - Lengthy embraces
  - Full frontal hugs
  - Kisses
  - Holding minors of school age on the lap
  - Touching buttocks, chest or genital area
  - Touching the knees or legs of minors
  - Tickling
  - Wrestling and/or roughhousing
  - Piggyback rides
  - Any type of massage
  - Any form of unwanted attention

## Communication

1. Verbal communication with minors is to be appropriate.
2. Church personnel are prohibited from engaging in any sexually oriented conversations or the telling of jokes with sexual content. However, it is permissible in an educational setting to discuss issues of human sexuality. These classes will convey the Church's views on the topics. If minors have other questions not answered or addressed by individual teachers, they should be referred to their parents or guardians. Church personnel are not permitted to discuss their own sexual activities with minors.
3. Church personnel are prohibited from possessing any sexually oriented or morally inappropriate materials (magazines, cards, videos, films, clothing, etc.) or accessing similar materials through electronic or other technological means in the presence of minors.
4. Church personnel are prohibited from using technology to interact with minors on issues related to sexuality, including but not limited to sexually related conversations, and viewing and/or distributing sexually motivated materials, and inappropriate expressions of affection.
5. Church personnel should remind minors that all communication sent digitally (texting, email, social network sites, posts, notes, etc.) is not confidential and may be reposted to others.
6. Church personnel's electronic interactions are reserved for professional and/or, ministry related purposes.
7. Laws regarding mandated reporting of suspected abuse/neglect/exploitation of minors and vulnerable adults equally apply to the virtual worlds-as they do to the physical world.

## 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 are:

1. Presenting gifts to a minor that would not ordinarily be given to an entire group of children, excluding awards, etc.
2. Allowing a minor to drive automobiles of Church personnel even though another adult may be present
3. Singling out a particular child for special dinners, events, trips or outings

The *Standards of Behavior to Safeguard Against Child Abuse* is to be given to all diocesan and parish employees, as well as to all parents and parishioners whose children attend parochial schools or attend Religious Education programs. The document is posted on the diocesan website: [www.dioceseofjoliet.org](http://www.dioceseofjoliet.org)

Members of the clergy, religious, employees and all volunteers who work with minors will be required to receive in-service education that addresses their role in protecting minors.

Minors who serve 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.

**CAUTION:** Anyone who has reason to believe that a minor is being physically or sexually abused should make a report to Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS). Mandated reporters must report to DCFS at 1-800-252-2873 (1-800-25ABUSE)