

Protecting Our Children



What is in Place in Our Diocese to Protect Children?

An Advisory Board for the Protection of Children and Young People.

Specific Standards and a Code of Ethical Conduct.

An Accountability and duty to report
Mandated reporting requirements.

The Office of Education and Compliance
Conducts an immediate preliminary investigation of the facts and circumstances of a complaint.

The Office of Outreach and Prevention
Offers a Pastoral Response to victims of abuse.

To participate in programs with children and youth, you are required to fulfill the screening procedures for diocesan personnel and volunteers

Reference checks

Criminal background checks - conducted once every three years (Office of Education and Compliance)

Safe environment training – conducted once every three years (Office of Outreach and Prevention)

Refer to the Diocesan Child Protection and Outreach Policy at:

www.dioceseofprovidence.org

Diocesan Guidelines for the Prevention of Child Abuse

• *How am I to behave around Children and Youth?*

- Be a positive Catholic Christian role model.
- Establish and maintain clear boundaries.
- Use discretion concerning settings.
- Use discretion concerning physical contact.
- Be self-aware and use prudent behavior.

Important Do's and Don'ts in Protecting our Children

Catholic parishes, schools, and agencies will maintain an environment that is free from all forms of intimidation and harassment: physical, verbal, written, psychological, social, and electronic.

Catholic parishes, schools, and agencies will employ disciplinary practices that respect the dignity of each child. It is not acceptable to strike, shake or slap a child.

Adults will not provide a gift to an individual young person without prior approval from the administrator of the program or parent/guardian.

Adults will meet with an individual young person in an open and public area.

CODE OF ETHICAL CONDUCT

Adults will not be alone with a young person in a residence, sleeping facility, locker room, rest room, dressing facility or other closed room or isolated area.

Adults will not provide alcohol, controlled substances or pornographic materials to young people at any time.

Adults will not use or be under the influence of alcohol or controlled substances while participating in a youth activity. Adults or minors who are under the influence of alcohol or controlled substances are not permitted to participate in youth events.

No alcoholic beverages will be accessible or served during events which are designed specifically for children and/or youth.

CODE OF ETHICAL CONDUCT

... and remember these as well

Adults will not drive alone with a young person without explicit parental or guardian consent.

Adults will report abuse or inappropriate activities involving a minor to appropriate personnel immediately.

Adults will cooperate fully with Diocesan and/or law enforcement personnel in any investigation of abuse of children and/or youth.

CODE OF ETHICAL CONDUCT

If you are a Priest, Deacon, or someone else who is credentialed to serve as a pastoral counselor and spiritual director with children and youth, these are important standards of conduct:

Paragraphs numbers refer to section in the Diocese of Providence ***Child Protection Policy***.

- **2.2.1** "will not be involved beyond their competence in counseling situations and will refer clients to other professionals when appropriate."
- **2.2.2** "will avoid situations that might present a conflict of interest and carefully consider the possible consequences prior to entering into a counseling arrangement with someone with whom they have a pre-existing relationship (i.e. employee, professional colleague, friend, or other pre-existing relationship)."

PASTORAL STANDARDS and CODE OF CONDUCT

2.2.3 "will not audiotape or videotape sessions for training purposes without the explicit informed consent of the individual client or their guardian."

2.2.4 "will never engage in sexual intimacies with the individuals they counsel. This includes consensual and nonconsensual contact, forced physical contact, and inappropriate sexual comments."

2.2.5 "will not engage in sexual intimacies with those who are close to the client (i.e. relatives or friends of the client) when there is a risk of exploitation or potential harm to the client. The pastoral minister needs to be fully aware of the potential for exploitation or harm that exists in such intimate relationships."

2.2.6 "will assume the full burden of responsibility for establishing and maintaining clear, appropriate boundaries in all counseling and counseling-related activities."

PASTORAL STANDARDS and CODE OF CONDUCT

Other important standards to observe...

2.2.7 "will be aware that physical contact (i.e. touching, hugging) with those in counseling can be misconstrued and should only occur when it is nonsexual and otherwise appropriate and always with the best interest of the client in mind."

2.2.8 "will conduct sessions with clients in appropriate settings and at appropriate times. No sessions will be held at places or times that would tend to cause confusion about the nature of the relationship for the client."

2.2.9 "will be involved in ongoing formation and Development in order to remain up-to-date with Professional competencies."

Refer to Diocesan Policy Section 2.3 regarding Confidentiality



PASTORAL STANDARDS and CODE OF CONDUCT

Review:

As a Diocesan employee or volunteer you need to have a:

1. A current Background Criminal Investigation Check and renewal once every **three** years.
2. Safe Environment Training and participate in a renewal once every **three** years.
3. Sexual Misconduct Extract Form submitted to the Program coordinator.



Standards of Conduct