



DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES

Child & Youth Protection

Code of Conduct Guidelines

For personnel working with Children & Youth

The Diocese of Lake Charles uses the following Code of Conduct Guidelines as it relates to working with children and youth. This is in addition to policy 704 “Code of Professional Conduct for all who have contact with minors” found in the Diocese of Lake Charles *Handbook of Policies and Guidelines*.

Proper Conduct with Minors

All personnel, as defined in diocesan policy 704, who work with minors need to complete the *Diocesan Safe Environment Training Program* annually.

All adults who work with minors should:

- Maintain an open and trustworthy relationship between themselves and the minors with whom they are working.
- Be vigilant and ever aware of their own and others’ vulnerabilities.
- Never work alone with minors in a closed, private setting, other the case of the reception of the Sacrament of Penance and a professional spiritual direction session.
- Use a team approach when managing and implementing youth activities. A minimum of two “Safe Environment Certified” adults should be present during these activities. *Note: The DOLC Office of Youth Ministry strongly recommends an adult to teen ratio of 1 to 6 at any youth activity or event.*
- Limit any physical contact with youth, which can be easily misconstrued.
- Physical touch of minors should be **Public, Appropriate** and **Non-Sexual**.
 - Examples of healthy, appropriate touch include:
 - Brief pat on shoulder or back.
 - Shoulder hugs.
 - Hand-shakes, high-fives and hand slapping.
 - Helping a young child tie their shoes.
 - Bandaging a child’s cut or bruise.
 - Arms around shoulders.
 - Holding hands while walking with small children.
 - Kneeling or bending down for hugs with small children.
 - Holding hands during prayer.

- Examples of inappropriate touching of children with a ministerial relationship includes:
 - Lingering caresses or embraces.
 - Kissing on the mouth.
 - Touching buttocks, chest, or genital areas.
 - Rubbing one's body against a child.
 - Showing affection in isolated areas.
 - Sleeping in bed with a minor.
 - Excessive tickling or wrestling.
 - Piggyback rides.
 - Any massage given by a minor to an adult or by an adult to a minor.
 - Any touch that is meant for sexual gratification.

- At all times, personnel shall refrain from:
 - The illegal possession of drugs and/or alcohol.
 - The use of alcohol when working with youth.
 - Sharing overnight accommodations with young people, with the exception of family members including, but not limited to, accommodations in any church owned facility, or rectory, private residence, hotel, or any other place where there is no other adult supervision.
 - In emergency situations, where accommodation is necessary for the health and well-being of the youth, extraordinary care should be taken to protect all parties concerned from the appearance of impropriety and from risk of all harm.

Sexual Conduct & Harassment of a Minor

Personnel:

- Must not exploit the trust placed in them by the minors as well as the entire faith community for any sexual gain or intimacy.
- Must behave in a professional manner at all times.
- Who provide pastoral counseling or spiritual direction services must avoid developing inappropriate intimate relationships with minors.
- Must know and follow the content of the child abuse regulations and reporting requirements of the State of Louisiana. Mandates can be found in diocesan policy 704 in the Diocese of Lake Charles *Handbook of Policies and Guidelines*.
- Any person who has actual knowledge of or who has reasonable cause to suspect an incident of abuse of a minor must follow all applicable laws for reporting such instances. More info on how to report and mandatory reporting can be found in policy and appendix 704 in the Diocese of Lake Charles *Handbook of Policies and Guidelines*.

- Must not engage in physical, psychological, written, or verbal harassment of minors.
- Allegations of harassment should be reported to:
 - * The Pastor of the parish.
 - * The Principal of the school.
 - * The Vicar General of the diocese.

Catholic Mutual Youth Manual

For further guidelines, The Diocese of Lake Charles also uses “Catholic Mutual Youth Ministry Manual” provided by our diocesan insurance company, Catholic Mutual Group which covers:

- transportation
- chaperones and volunteers
- communicating with parents
- camping guidelines
- youth trips involving overnight stay
- distribution of medicine
- mission work trips and service projects

Forms and Standards included are:

- Volunteer driver forms
- Unacceptable driver information
- Driver acknowledgement form
- Chaperone Guidelines and Behavior Standards
- Adult Liability Waiver
- Incident Report
- Parent/Guardian Consent Form and Liability Waiver
- Code of Conduct
- Networking Security Policy and Usage
- Photograph and Video Consent Form