



# DIOCESE OF FRESNO CODE OF CONDUCT



## SAFE ENVIRONMENT PROGRAM

*The Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*, adopted by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops requires:

- All clergy, employees and volunteers, who work/interact with children, shall consent to a background evaluation which shall be conducted by the Diocesan Department of Human Resources. Failure on the part of an employee or volunteer to submit to a background evaluation or failure to pass the background evaluation shall result in the immediate dismissal/termination of the employee or volunteer.
- Participation in the safe environment training, *Creating Safe Environments for Our Children and Ourselves*, or online training at an approved website, or viewing *KidSafety of America* video training program.
- Acceptance of the Diocese of Fresno *Code of Conduct*.

Parishes and schools shall maintain a record of compliance of all three mandatory elements. These records shall be maintained in a confidential location. For assistance regarding the confidential and safe keeping of these records, please consult the Diocesan Department of Human Resources.

## CODE OF CONDUCT

The Diocese of Fresno developed the following Code of Conduct for all clergy, employees, and volunteers who have contact with minors in the Diocese of Fresno and requires each person to acknowledge receipt of the document, understand the document, and comply with the document by signing and dating this Code of Conduct.

For the purpose of this document, the term **child, youth or minor** is defined as a person under the age of 18. A **vulnerable adult** is defined as an adult who experiences physical, emotional, intellectual, or psychological impairment.

### Professional Ethical Obligations

#### 1. Ministerial Role

- a) Will work collaboratively with all those engaged in ministry.
- b) Will faithfully represent the teachings of the Catholic Church with integrity in word and action.
- c) Are competent and receive ongoing education and training commensurate with their role(s) and responsibilities.

#### 2. Inclusion

- a) Will recognize the dignity of each person.
- b) Will serve all people without regard to gender, creed, national origin, age, marital status, socio-economic status, or political beliefs.
- c) Will ensure that all persons with disabilities are considered for reasonable accommodations.

#### 3. Accountability

- a) Priests are accountable to the Bishop of the Diocese of Fresno or the person he designates; all others are accountable to the pastor, principal, or other duly appointed representative under the authority of the Bishop of the Diocese of Fresno.
- b) Will exercise responsible stewardship of resources while holding themselves to the highest

- standards of integrity regarding the fiscal matters placed in their trust.
- c) Are responsible for supporting each other. This support must include a proper response to inappropriate behaviors concerning children, youth, or vulnerable adults.

#### **4. Confidentiality**

- a) Will respect confidentiality when appropriate except in a Mandated Reporting situation such as disclosures of abuse, threats of suicide, or in response to acts of violence to self, others, or property.
- b) Will adhere to civil law concerning the reporting of neglect or abuse, or whenever physical harm could come to children, youth, or vulnerable adults.
- c) Will support the rights and roles of parents, guardians, and caretakers while ministering to the needs and concerns of children, youth, or vulnerable adults.

#### **5. Conduct**

- a) Shall sustain respectful relationships with all those they serve, avoiding sexual harassment and other forms of unlawful discrimination/harassment, and other abuses of authority or power.
- b) Will maintain appropriate professional boundaries with colleagues. Romantic or sexual relationships between an adult and a child, or a youth, or a vulnerable adult are inappropriate and unethical regardless of who initiates the contact.
- c) Must model healthy and positive behaviors with all children, youth, or vulnerable adults.
- d) Procuring, providing, or using alcohol and/or controlled substances for, or with children, youth, or vulnerable adults is prohibited.

#### **6. Referrals and Intervention**

- a) Should be aware of the signs of physical, sexual, and psychological abuse and neglect.
- b) Should be aware of their limitations and make appropriate counseling referrals.
- c) Should adhere to civil and ecclesial law, policy, and procedure for reporting child, youth, or vulnerable adult abuse, suspected abuse, or neglect.

#### **7. Parish/School/Diocesan Policies and Guidelines**

- a) Should be aware of and comply with all applicable parish/school, organizational and/or diocesan policies and guidelines with special attention to competency, sexual misconduct, safety, transportation, and parental permission.

#### **Behavior Standards**

1. Any verbal or nonverbal sexual behavior with any child, youth, or vulnerable adult is inappropriate and forbidden.
2. All reasonable suspicions of child sexual abuse must be reported as required by state law and diocesan policy. This includes contacting law enforcement. If the suspected abuser involves clergy, employee or a volunteer within the Diocese of Fresno, a report must also be made to the Vicar General at (559) 488-7400 and the Victim Assistance Coordinator at (559) 493-2882 or (559) 250-9851.
3. All observed violations of this Code of Conduct must be reported and documented.
4. Dating any child, youth, or vulnerable adult is forbidden.
5. Discretion must be used in dealing with all, especially regarding physical contact. Any overt display of affection should be made in a public setting in front of others and should respect the wishes of the other person.
6. If a child, youth, or vulnerable adult makes sexual gestures or overtures to you, it should be reported to your supervisor so that discussion of this behavior can be held with the child, youth, or vulnerable adult.

7. The “Buddy System” should be used whenever possible, especially when children, youth, or vulnerable adults are involved. Two adults or one adult and one teen are required in all religious education programs, classes and activities. This includes all activities for children and all youth ministry events and activities. Please note, that an adult must always be certain that all interaction/planning meetings with a teen assistant/helper must take place in public or in the presence of another adult or teen. Teens helpers must always be supervised by an adult that meets all Safe Environment requirements.
8. One-to-one communication with a child, youth, or vulnerable adult should occur in a public setting.
9. Driving alone with a child, youth, or vulnerable adult should be avoided at all times. Under unique circumstances a driver may provide transportation with parental consent and with communication with their immediate supervisor.
10. Two adults should be present until all children/youth have left the premises.
11. Never swear or use foul or abusive language in the presence of those you serve in ministry.
12. Never speak graphically about sexual activities, including your own, and do not allow others to do so.
13. Never show pornographic materials to those you serve in ministry.
14. Never use your role to degrade, ridicule, or threaten another person.
15. Never give children, youth, or vulnerable adults tobacco, alcohol, or unauthorized drugs.
16. Never allow children, youth, or vulnerable adults to become sexual with one another during ministry activities.
17. Never invite or host children, youth, or vulnerable adults in your home unless another adult is present.
18. Never spank, shake, slap or physically punish children, youth or vulnerable adults.
19. Never use, or be under the influence of alcohol at any time while ministering to children, youth, or vulnerable adults.
20. Never use, possess, or be under the influence of illegal drugs at any time.
21. Never wrestle with or tickle a child, youth, or vulnerable adult.
22. All behavior standards also apply to electronic media, including internet access, social/media networks such as E-mail, chat rooms, and phone conversations.
23. Communication via electronic communication devices (cell phone, internet, or social network sites) to a child, youth or vulnerable adult should be “one- to- many” rather than “one-to- one.” When a volunteer responds to a personal message, copy your message to your immediate supervisor. Private social networks accounts may not be utilized to connect with children, youth or vulnerable adults within the boundaries of your service.

**Unacceptable behaviors:**

- Meeting alone with a child, youth or vulnerable adult in isolated places, or meeting in homes without adults present.
- Showing favoritism.
- Physical contact that can be misinterpreted.
- Commenting on others’ bodies.
- Sexually provocative or revealing attire.
- Being nude in front of children, youth, or vulnerable adults.
- Sleeping in bed with children, youth, or vulnerable adults.

**Warning signs in relationships between adults and children, youth, or vulnerable adults:**

- Spending extra time grooming yourself when you know you’re going to see a certain person.

- Finding ways or reasons to be alone with a certain person.
- Keeping aspects of your relationship with a person secret from others (such as how often you talk on the phone or see each other alone).
- Giving and receiving special gifts from a certain person.
- Sharing personal information or seeking help with personal problems from a certain child, youth, or vulnerable adult.

**Inappropriate displays of Affection in Ministry:**

- Any form of unwanted affection.
- Touching bottoms, chests, or genital areas.
- Massages.
- Tickling or wrestling.
- Games involving inappropriate touching.
- Compliments that relate to physique or body development.
- Showing affection in isolated areas such as bedrooms, closets, restricted areas, bathrooms and other private rooms.
- Kisses on the mouth
- Lying down or sleeping beside others.
- Patting others on the thigh, knee or leg.
- Touching or hugging from behind.

Remember your responsibilities include reporting any concerns about others serving in your ministry to your supervisor, pastor or principal.

**(Retain this Code of Conduct for Future Reference.)**

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**SUBMIT THIS PAGE TO YOUR PARISH, SCHOOL OR ORGANIZATION.**



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## **Signature Page**

**Any Violation of this Code by a member of the clergy, employee or volunteer involving a minor or vulnerable adult shall result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.**

**I have read and I understand the Diocese of Fresno's Code of Conduct for clergy, employees and volunteers) and I commit to uphold this code in my area of service.**

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Print Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parish or School Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Location:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_