



**DIOCESE OF JOLIET**  
**STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOR**  
**FOR THOSE WORKING WITH MINORS AND VULNERABLE ADULTS**  
**(REVISED JULY 15, 2021)**

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 and Vulnerable Adults* (revised July 15, 2021), these *Standards of Behavior* have been developed to foster and maintain an atmosphere of trust and safety for minors and vulnerable adults participating in various programs within the diocese. All personnel, be they clergy, seminarians, diaconal candidates, religious, 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 a person under the age of 18.
- A **vulnerable adult** is 18 years of age or older 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.
- **Church personnel** includes clergy, seminarians, diaconal candidates, religious, employees and volunteers.
- **Physical abuse** is non-accidental injury that is intentionally inflicted upon a minor or vulnerable adult.
- **Sexual abuse** is any conduct perpetuated upon a minor or vulnerable adult which is either unlawful and/or contrary to the moral teaching of the Church, which is engaged in by a cleric, seminarian, diaconal candidate, religious, or adult employee/volunteer of the Diocese or a parish. It also includes acquisition, possession, or distribution of pornographic images of minors for the purposes of sexual gratification, by whatever means or the use of whatever technology.
- A **cleric (or clergy)** is a male person who is an ordained deacon, priest, or bishop.
- A **seminarian** is a male student who is studying at a seminary in order to become a priest.
- A **diaconal candidate** is a male student who is studying to be a permanent deacon.
- A **religious** is a person who is a member of an institute of consecrated life or a society of apostolic life. A "Religious" is distinguished from a "Diocesan priest," who is incardinated into a diocese.
- 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 (DCFS) requirements, nor are these guidelines intended to be all inclusive.

### Responsible Professional Conduct

1. Ministry to minors and vulnerable adults respects the rights of parents/legal guardians to educate and form their children. Therefore, activities with minors and vulnerable adults are to be conducted with the explicit knowledge and consent of parents or legal guardians.
2. Church personnel are never to leave minors or vulnerable adults unattended during a class, session, event, etc.
3. Church personnel are responsible for releasing minors and vulnerable adults 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 or vulnerable adult, they are to contact the parent or legal guardian of the minor or vulnerable adult.
4. Church personnel are prohibited from the use, possession or being under the influence of alcohol, non-medicinal cannabis, or any illegal substance while working with minors and vulnerable adults. They are also prohibited from furnishing alcohol, non-medicinal cannabis, or illegal substances to minors or vulnerable adults or permitting minors or vulnerable adults to use such in their presence.
5. Church personnel may provide transportation in accordance with the Diocese of Joliet Transportation Policy (see attached).
6. Church personnel are prohibited from using physical discipline for the behavior management of minors or vulnerable adults. This prohibition includes spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting or any other physical force as retaliation or correction for inappropriate behavior by minors or vulnerable adults.
7. Church personnel are prohibited from acquiring, possessing, or distributing child pornography.

### Physical Proximity and Modesty

1. Church personnel are never to be nude in the presence of minors or vulnerable adults.
2. Minors and vulnerable adults 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 and vulnerable adults, if and when possible.
4. When officially approved overnight stays are necessary, an adult should never share a bed, sleeping bag or cot with a minor or vulnerable adult. An adult is not to spend the night in the presence of a lone minor or vulnerable adult, unless it is the adult's own child.
5. Houses used as residences for priests and religious are exclusively for their use. Minors and vulnerable adults should not be allowed in the private quarters of those residences.

With the exception of occasional visits from family members, minors and vulnerable adults 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 or vulnerable adults on a one-to-one basis in secluded areas or closed rooms.
8. Adults should never be in a vehicle on a one-to-one basis with a minor or vulnerable adult unless it is the adult's own child(ren).

### Physical Contact

Appropriate affection between Church personnel and minors and/or vulnerable adults is important for a child's and a vulnerable adult'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, vulnerable adult, 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 or vulnerable adult

2. The following forms of affection, whether initiated by a minor, vulnerable adult, 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 or vulnerable adults
- Tickling
- Wrestling and/or roughhousing
- Piggyback rides
- Any type of massage
- Any form of unwanted attention

## Communication

1. Verbal communication with minors and vulnerable adults 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 or vulnerable adults have other questions not answered or addressed by individual teachers, they should be referred to their parents or legal guardians. Church personnel are not permitted to discuss their own sexual activities with minors or vulnerable adults.
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 or vulnerable adults.
4. Church personnel are prohibited from using technology to interact with minors or vulnerable adults 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 and vulnerable adults 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 world as they do to the physical world.

## Undue Attention

Certain conduct has been used by adults to develop inappropriate relationships with minors and vulnerable adults. Activities include singling out minors or vulnerable adults or showing them unusual attention. Some examples of this behavior prohibited for Church personnel are:

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

The *Standards of Behavior for Those Working with Minors or Vulnerable Adults* 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 under the Office of Child and Youth Protection: [www.dioceseofjoliet.org](http://www.dioceseofjoliet.org)

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

Minors or vulnerable adults 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 abused or neglected should make a report to the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS). Mandated reporters must report to DCFS. To report non-life threatening and non-emergency incidents of abuse or neglect of a child, a report may be made to DCFS through its Online Reporting System:

<https://dcfsonlinereporting.dcf.illinois.gov/>. If you believe the abuse or neglect you are reporting requires immediate action, you MUST call the DCFS hotline at 800-25ABUSE (800-252-2873) to make your report.