



## DIOCESE OF CROOKSTON CODE OF CONDUCT FOR YOUTH EMPLOYEES

ISSUED: August 18, 2020

### Code of Conduct for Youth Employees

You are about to begin what could become a lifelong commitment to ministering in the Church. It is a privilege to help carry on the mission of Jesus—a mission no one takes lightly. As a minor, it is important that you understand and follow certain rules and guidelines, both for your own protection and for the protection of those to whom you minister. The Church takes the issue of misconduct very seriously. Any instance of misconduct will be evaluated carefully, and you are urged to report misconduct that you see to your adult supervisor. Likewise, your own conduct must be beyond question. You have been entrusted with a responsible position and are expected to “Let your light so shine before all, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven” (Matt 5:16).

To ensure the safety of children, youth, and vulnerable adults in the Diocese of Crookston, all minors who wish to be employed at a parish and/or Catholic school and their parents/guardians must review and sign the Diocese of Crookston’s Code of Conduct for Youth Employees. In addition to the Code of Conduct (Code), youth will also be required to fulfill the requirements of supplying two written references and safe environment training.

Please note that for the purposes of this Code the words “minor” and “youth” are used interchangeably and describe a person who has not reached the age of 18. The words “vulnerable adults” denotes persons with physical, mental, or emotional conditions that render them unable to defend or protect themselves.

This Code applies to youth conduct as it relates to interacting with minors or vulnerable adults on behalf of the Church. While not all employment positions will directly involve ministry to minors or vulnerable adults, there always remains the possibility of interaction with these individuals while employed by a Diocese of Crookston entity (parish or school).

While working as a youth employee, **I will:**

- Protect and guide children and other youth (minors) and vulnerable adults entrusted to my care at all times.
- Treat everyone with patience, courtesy, respect, and dignity.
- Be positive, supportive, and caring in my speech and interactions with minors and vulnerable adults.
- Use positive words and encouragement to change behavior and encourage others to do likewise.
- Maintain appropriate physical and emotional boundaries with others, especially minors and vulnerable adults.



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- Examples of permissible physical contact include:
  - Brief side hugs or an arm around the shoulder.
  - Brief pat on the shoulder/upper back.
  - Hand-shakes or “high fives”.
  - Holding hands during prayer.
  - Holding hands while walking with young children or those unsteady.
  - Brief touching of hand, head, shoulder, or arm.
- Always be in the presence of an adult when interacting with minors or vulnerable adults. This means that an adult should be nearby to see and hear what I am doing and help me if I need assistance.
- Promptly report to my supervisor any inappropriate or bullying behavior.
- Promptly report suspected abuse to my supervisor or if it involves my supervisor, report the incident to the next person in a supervisory role, such as a principal or pastor.
- Cooperate fully in any investigation of abuse.
- Observe confidentiality when describing my work experiences to protect the identity of those whom I serve.
- Dress appropriately, consistent with my role and assigned activities, including not wearing any clothing with offensive or profane messages or pictures.

While working as a youth employee, I **will not**:

- Use or possess tobacco products.
- Use, possess, or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs at any time.
- Be under the influence of prescribed drugs that impair my judgment.
- Use or allow profanity in the presence of minors or vulnerable adults.
- Verbally or physically abuse or threaten anyone.
- Tolerate inappropriate or bullying behavior.
- Provide or allow sexually explicit, violent, disrespectful, or otherwise inappropriate communication, music, recordings, films, games, website, computer software, mobile device application, or other content to be used.
- Touch a minor or vulnerable adult in an overly affectionate or inappropriate manner.
- Privately communicate (electronically or through any other communication form) with an unrelated minor more than two years younger than myself or an unrelated vulnerable adult whom I serve when not working or volunteering.
- Accept gifts from or give gifts to minors or vulnerable adults without approval from my supervisor.



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#### **Acknowledgment and Consent**

We, the undersigned, have read and understand the Diocese of Crookston's Code of Conduct for Youth Employees (Code) and will honor these rules.

I further understand and agree that I am subject to periodic background evaluations (two written references while under 18 years of age and a background check within two weeks of turning 18) and am required to participate in yearly Diocesan Safe Environment trainings.

I also understand that I may face consequences of discipline, up to and including termination of my employment for violations of the Code. We, the undersigned, understand and agree that the parent/guardian will be notified at the time of any infraction requiring dismissal from work at the parish or school where the undersigned youth is employed.

Name of Youth (print): \_\_\_\_\_

School/Parish and City: \_\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Youth: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\*The originals are mailed to the Diocese of Crookston; Safe Environment Office, PO Box 610, Crookston, MN 56716 and a copy should be kept in the employee's file at the parish/school.