



Diocese of Grand Island

Code of Conduct

For Adults Working with Minors

USCCB Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People

ARTICLE 12. Dioceses/eparchies are to maintain “safe environment” programs which the diocesan/eparchial bishop deems to be in accord with Catholic moral principles. They are to be conducted cooperatively with parents, civil authorities, educators, and community organizations to provide education and training for children, youth, parents, ministers, educators, volunteers, and others about ways to make and maintain a safe environment for children and young people. **Dioceses/eparchies are to make clear to clergy and all members of the community the standards of conduct for clergy and other persons in positions of trust with regard to children.**

Diocese of Grand Island Child Protection Policy

8.1 All personnel and youth volunteers will be expected to adhere to a standard code of conduct which they have agreed to in writing.

8.2 Personnel shall document incidents when the code of conduct has not been followed.

Definitions

1.2 Minor—Under Nebraska Law, a person not yet 19 years of age. Under the 1983 Code of Canon Law, a person not yet 18 years of age. As defined by the Essential Norms 2011, a person under 18 years of age or an adult who habitually lacks the use of reason.

Code of Conduct for Interactions with Minors

Our children are the most important gifts God has entrusted to us. As an adult working with minors, I promise to strictly follow the rules and guidelines in this Code of Conduct as a condition of my providing services to the minors of our Parish, School and Diocese.

In my interactions with minors (face to face and via technology) I will:

- Treat everyone with respect, loyalty, patience, integrity, courtesy, dignity, and consideration.
- Avoid situations where I am alone with minors (i.e., avoiding isolation at Church activities, the development of outside personal relationships, and the initiation of personal communications with children and youth).
- Safeguard my use of technology so as to avoid personal / isolated communications with children / youth, the sharing of personal information regarding children / youth, and the public identification of children / youth.
- Use positive reinforcement rather than criticism or comparison when working with minors.
- Refrain from giving or accepting expensive gifts to / from minors or their parents without prior written approval from the pastor or administrator.
- Report suspected abuse (including in person abuse and online solicitation, harassment or distribution of inappropriate materials) to the pastor, administrator, or appropriate supervisor and civil authorities.

I understand that failure to report suspected abuse to civil authorities is, according to the law, a misdemeanor.

- Cooperate fully in any investigation of abuse of minors.

In my interactions with minors (face to face and via technology) I will NOT:

- Smoke or use tobacco products in the presence of minors.
- Use, possess, or be under the influence of alcohol at any time while working with minors.
- Use, possess, or be under the influence of illegal drugs at any time.
- Pose any health risk to minors (i.e., no fevers or other contagious situations).
- Strike, spank, shake, or slap minors.
- Humiliate, ridicule, threaten, or degrade minors.
- Touch a minor in a sexual or other inappropriate manner.
- Engage in sexually suggestive or explicit conversation with minors.
- Use any discipline that frightens or humiliates minors.
- Use profanity in the presence of minors.
- Produce, acquire, possess, or distribute pornographic images.

I understand that as an adult working with minors, I am subject to a thorough background check including criminal history. I understand that any action inconsistent with this Code of Conduct or failure to take action mandated by this Code of Conduct may result in my removal as a volunteer or employee working with minors.

Diocese of Grand Island

Guidelines for Interactions between Adults and Minors through Technology

The development of technology over the past several years has opened new lines and forms of communication. Social networking, email, texting, twittering, blogging and many other means of communication can connect people at any time anywhere in the world. As we move forward with technology, it is important that adults recognize their role in keeping young people safe. Following are some basic guidelines that can be utilized by leaders in parishes, schools and diocesan programs to form policies and procedures that make clear how adults can safely interact with minors using technology

General Technology Safe Environment Guidelines

- 1) **Treat communication through technology the same as you would communication in face-to-face interactions**, avoid language that might be misinterpreted / misconstrued. This is especially important with online communications as there is no immediate feedback and no context (facial expression, body language, etc.) to assist understanding.
- 2) **Use the Safe Environment Principle of “Safety in Numbers,”** being sure to include three or more people in emails, texts or any communication between adults and minors.
- 3) **Remember— online communications are not private.** When you put information in to the virtual world you have no control over who it is sent to or how long it is kept. **Therefore, scrutinize your online communications with the same degree of attention you would give to a media interview or legal testimony.**
- 4) **Do not post video, photographs, or personal information of minors without careful consideration and parental consent.**
- 5) **Make sure parents / guardians are aware of how you are using technology to communicate with their child and include parents in communication.** Make sure virtual conversations are public and that anything said or talked about would be said face to face with parents present.
- 6) **Befriending a minor on Facebook or other social networking sites is inappropriate.** Instead, create a fan page or blog that you can tell youth and parents to check for all important information regarding activities and events. Be sure to have more than one administrator on a fan page or other group page that is able to edit or remove content.
- 7) **Be informed of and follow Nebraska Laws related to interactions between adults and minors and use of technology.** The Child Pornography Prevention Act (28-1463), Enticement by Electronic Communication Device (28-833), and Child Abuse Reporting Laws (28-711) are of particular importance.
- 7) **Report suspected abuse.** CyberTipline – <http://www.cybertipline.com>
Nebraska State Patrol – (308)385-6000