Diocese Code of Conduct

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR SCHOOL WORKERS

DIOCESE OF SANTA ROSA CODE OF CONDUCT FOR DIOCESAN PERSONNEL IN MINISTRY OR IN PASTORAL COUNSELING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

MINISTRY WITH MINORS

1. Minors are to be considered as restricted individuals. That is, they are not independent. Wherever they are and whatever they do must be with the explicit knowledge and consent of their parents or guardians. They are not adults and are not permitted unfettered decisions.

2. Clergy, religious, employed personnel and volunteers are to avoid all situations which place them in a position to be alone with a minor in the rectory, school or in a closed room except for a priest when hearing confessions in the confessional.

3. In meeting and pastoral counseling involving a minor, excluding the Sacrament of Penance (Confession/Reconciliation), the presence or proximity of another adult is encouraged. However, where the presence of another adult is unusual or not practical (piano lessons, disciplinary meeting with an administrator, etc.)
   • another adult should know the meeting is to take place
   • the meeting place is accessible, not secluded, well lit with clear lines of sight into the room
   • the door must be open unless there is a clear window in the door of the meeting place

4. An unaccompanied minor is allowed only in the professional section of the rectory or parish center, but never in the living quarters.

5. Minors, age 16 and over, are permitted to work in the rectory, parish residence, school or parish facility, if two adults (over 21 years old) are present. Minors under age 16 are not to be hired to work in any capacity for a parish, school or diocese.

6. All adult participants in ministry with minors must comply with all diocesan safe environment policies. Clearance should be verified by the Safe Environment Coordinator

for the parish/school/agency of the diocese.

7. At least two adults over the age of 21 (and one the same sex as the participants) must be present when a group of minors engage in organized events or sports activities.
   Note: A young adult between the ages of 18 and 21 is not permitted to supervise minors; however, under the supervision of an adult over the age of 21 he or she can participate in a supervisory capacity.

8. Clergy, religious, employed personnel and volunteers must avoid being the only adult in a bathroom, shower room, locker room, or other dressing areas whenever minors are using such facilities.

9. Youth trips of any kind must have a minimum of two adult chaperones, at least one of whom should be of the same sex as the young people. Larger groups must have at least one adult chaperone for every eight to ten minors.

10. While on trips or program activities, the adults as well as the minors may not use alcohol or controlled substances, and anyone under the influence of such substances cannot participate.

11. While on youth trips, clergy, religious, employed personnel and volunteers are never to stay alone overnight in the same motel/hotel room with a minor or minors. One adult alone is not to engage in an overnight trip with a minor or minors.

12. The sacristy door is always to be open whenever minors are present within the sacristy.

13. Comments of a sexual nature are not to be made to any minor except in response to specific classroom or otherwise legitimate questions from a minor.

14. Topics or vocabulary, such as profanity, cursing, or vulgar humor, which could not comfortably be used in the presence of parish/school administrators, parents/guardians, or another adult, are not to be used in the presence of a minor/minors.

15. Clergy, religious, employed personnel and volunteers are absolutely prohibited from serving or supplying alcohol, tobacco products, controlled substances or pornographic or other inappropriate reading materials to minors.

16. Audiovisual, music (including its lyrics), internet, and print resources must be screened prior to use to ensure their appropriateness for the participants. It is not appropriate to use an “R”-rated movie without explicit written parent permission. Movies with a stronger

designation are forbidden.

17. Careful boundaries concerning physical contact with minors must be observed at all times and should only occur under public circumstances. Prudent discretion and respect must be shown before touching another person in any way.

18. Clergy, religious, employed personnel and volunteers must refrain from giving regular and/or expensive gifts to children and young people without prior approval from the parents or guardian and the pastor or administrator.

19. It is never appropriate to require children and young people to keep "secrets" from their parents, police, etc. under threat of physical harm, "punishment by God", or any other threat.

20. The use of social media or electronic communication (for example Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, texting, emails etc.) should comply with all applicable state laws and follow appropriate boundaries. Any communication with minors via social media should be with the express permission of parents or guardians and pertain strictly to those things related to ministry.

21. No pictures of, or personal information about minors may be posted on the internet without the express written permission of their parents or guardians.

22. Should an emergency situation arise that involves a minor, appropriate authorities are to be contacted.

PASTORAL COUNSELING WITH MINORS

1. Pastoral Counseling must take place only in the professional portion of a rectory or parish facility, never in the living quarters.

2. Offices or classrooms used for pastoral counseling must have a window in the door, or the door must be open during the counseling session.

3. Unless the subject matter precludes their presence and/or knowledge, parents or guardians of minors should be made aware of the counseling session.

4. If counseling is expected to extend beyond one session with a minor, evaluation of the situation should be made with the parents or guardians.

5. Clergy, religious, employed personnel and volunteers are responsible to recognize any personal/physical attraction to or from a minor. In such a situation the minor should be immediately referred to another qualified adult or licensed profession.

6. The Sacrament of Penance (Confession/Reconciliation) must be celebrated in the confessional or reconciliation chapel or at the designated station during a penance service.

7. Clear violations of the Code of Conduct with minors outlined herein, must be reported **immediately** to the appropriate parish, school, civil and diocesan (Director for the Protection of Children and Young People) authorities, in accordance with civil law and this diocesan policy.