

Diocese of Fall River
CODE OF CONDUCT – June 2015

Our children are the most precious gifts God has entrusted to our care. As a priest, deacon, religious, employee, or volunteer of the Catholic Church (hereafter known as diocesan personnel), I acknowledge that all individuals shall be treated with respect, courtesy, dignity, patience, loyalty and integrity. I promise to strictly follow rules in this Code of Conduct as a condition of my providing services to the children, youth or adults who habitually lack the use of reason, in the Diocese of Fall River.

1. Diocesan personnel shall conduct themselves in a manner that is consistent with the discipline, norms, and teachings of the Catholic Church. This includes, but is not limited to, **refraining** from engaging in the following behaviors:
 - abuse of any type, (physical, sexual, emotional, psychological, or exploitative) of minors or adults who habitually lack the use of reason;
 - possession or distribution of child pornography (see #4);
 - possession of pornographic material while engaged in Diocesan duties or present at Diocesan events;
 - procurement or participation in the procurement of abortion, or committing homicide or euthanasia;
 - physical assault/fighting;
 - theft, fraud, or any type of misappropriation or misuse of Church funds or property; and
 - any conduct which is illegal under the laws of our country, state or local government.
2. Professionals in a supervisory or leadership capacity should be mindful of their responsibilities to the individuals they serve, and at no time shall the supervisor/leader role be used to coerce an individual to engage in any sexual, illegal or other inappropriate behavior. This includes refraining from grooming a minor for sexual interaction after s/he is of the age of consent.
3. As professionals, Diocesan personnel must always provide a safe environment, which ensures that all personal boundaries will be respected and not be violated. Diocesan personnel shall never touch an individual in a sexual or other inappropriate manner while engaged in Diocesan work or ministry, nor shall Diocesan personnel commit any illegal offense against another person at any time. It is illegal to sexually or physically abuse another individual.
4. At no time is it acceptable for any diocesan personnel to be in possession of child pornography and/or distributing child pornography (per M.G.L. c.272 s29B and s29C). Any diocesan personnel known to be in possession of such material and/or distributing the same shall be reported immediately to the proper authorities and shall be subject to an inquiry and possible disciplinary actions according to the *Diocesan Abuse Prevention Policies & Procedures* (2013).
5. All Diocesan personnel are required to observe appropriate protocols and boundaries when utilizing technology as part of their Diocesan work or ministry. Under NO circumstances should Diocesan personnel share, transmit, post or respond to sexual, illegal or inappropriate materials via any form of technology. Anyone receiving unsolicited sexual or inappropriate materials shall report the incident to the appropriate personnel immediately.
6. Situations in which an individual is alone with an unrelated minor are to be avoided. If a one-to-one meeting with an unrelated minor (or adult who habitually lacks the use of reason) must occur, it should be held in a public or visible area within a building, such as an office with an

interior window or an office with the door open. Under no circumstances is a minor or an adult who habitually lacks the use of reason to be removed or transported away from parish or school property alone.

7. No one, other than a law enforcement officer responding to an emergency/crime, is allowed to carry or be in the possession of a weapon while working with a minor. This includes those who have a permit to carry any type of weapon. The term "weapons" shall be as defined by Commonwealth Law as found in the M.G.L. c.140, c.269, and c.276.
8. It is understood that alcohol and tobacco products are regulated and defined by age limits as established by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. All Diocesan personnel are expected to enforce these regulations and never purchase or provide alcohol or tobacco products for those who are underage.
9. Illegal drugs/controlled substances shall never be distributed to or purchased for minors who are in the care of any Diocesan personnel.
10. Prescription drugs shall never be distributed to a person whose name is not on the prescription.
11. No individual will be under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, or be abusing prescription drugs while engaged in professional or volunteer activities or while representing the Diocese of Fall River.
12. As professionals, it is inappropriate to give expensive gifts to (or receive expensive gifts from) minors who receive services from us. While it is difficult to define the term "expensive," for this purpose it is defined as a gift not to exceed \$50.00.
13. Always report any suspected abuse to the Office for Child Protection of Catholic Social Services at 508-997-7337 and other appropriate designated staff.
14. If anyone appears to be in imminent risk of harm, such as severe illness, kidnapping or life-threatening physical or sexual trauma, a call to 9-1-1 should be made immediately. As soon as possible, Diocesan authorities, including the Office for Child Protection, shall also be notified.

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- I understand that as a priest, deacon, religious, employee, volunteer working with children, youth and/or adults who habitually lack the use of reason, an investigative background check will be made on me.
 - I understand that failure to follow **any** rule in the Code of Conduct will result in an inquiry and possible corrective/disciplinary actions from the Diocese, up to and including termination of employment or the inability to volunteer in the Diocese.
 - I understand that if I am unclear about any Diocesan expectations of me, it is my responsibility to get clarification before taking action.

Applicant SIGNATURE

Date

Applicant PRINTED NAME

Parish/School/Site Name

Town of Parish/School/Site