



DIOCESE OF GARY CODE OF CONDUCT

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Diocese of Gary Guidelines for a Safe Environment for Our Youth

These guidelines support the Diocese of Gary Safe Environment Plan viz., the policy regarding *"Sexual Misconduct Toward Minors and Others at Risk."* The guidelines describe actions and/or responses that are rooted in sound, appropriate, approved practices.

Youth are identified as those who have not graduated from high school nor have reached their 18th birthday.

EXPECTATIONS

Adult Supervisors and Clergy

- Conduct themselves in a manner that reflects the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church in mind and deed.
- Are in compliance with the Diocese of Gary Safe Environment requirements this includes young adults 18-21 years of age.
- Are 21 years of age or older; young adults 18-21 may be allowed to serve in a supervisory role provided that they are accompanied by at least one adult 21 years of age or older who is Virtus trained.
- Have authorized criminal background and reference checks.
- Are aware of state laws regarding mandated reporting of abusive or inappropriate behaviors toward youth.
- Report incidences or suspicions of abusive and/or inappropriate behaviors toward youth to immediate superiors and/or appropriate authorities.
- Submit a "Diocese of Gary Adult Driver Information Form" as needed, to the appropriate authority; provide appropriate license and insurance information.

SUPERVISION

Adult Supervisors and Clergy

- Ensure that a "Release Form" is completed by parent/guardian when activities are held away from the parish/school; a health form is submitted before allowing youth to participate in on-going athletic events.
- Provide for an adequate number of adults at all youth events; a recommended ratio of adult leaders to youth is 1:7; with the ratio not to exceed 1:10.
- Secure additional adults for any event involving youth in high risk or overnight settings; secure male and female chaperones when both sexes of youth are present.
- Never schedule activities that conflict with curfew laws governing minors.
- Closely monitor facilities, church services and other environments when youth are present; never give youth keys to any church/school facilities,



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- Never administer medication of any kind to youth without written parent/guardian permission.
- Never use any form of physical discipline.
- Release youth only to the custodial parent, guardian, or other adult designated by parent.
- Use a "buddy system" when events are held away from church/school property, e.g., never permit a child to leave the group or cross a road alone while in custodial care.

BEHAVIORAL

Adult Supervisors and Clergy

- Never engage in topics, humor, vocabulary, recordings, films, games, or the use of technology that could not be used comfortably in the presence of parent/guardian.
- Always hold one-on-one meetings with youth in areas that are visible and accessible, if such an area is not available the door to the meeting room is left open and another staff member is notified.
- Never drive alone with a youth or meet with a youth alone in a residence, hotel, locker or rest rooms, a dressing facility or in any other closed or isolated area.
- Never share a bed with youth; no adult should share a sleeping room with youth unless they are a direct family member.
- Never take unaccompanied youth on a trip, e.g., to a cottage, without other adults present.
- Never purchase or share alcohol, drugs, cigarettes, videos or pornographic reading materials that are inappropriate with youth.
- Never be in possession of or drink alcohol while supervising minors or participating in a youth event.
- Take care to avoid initiating hugs; if a youth initiates physical contact, a limited response is appropriate.

TECHNOLOGY, SOCIAL MEDIA, AND NETWORKING

Registration Technologies and Securing Private Information

Adult Supervisors and Clergy

- Ensure that no sensitive personal information- particularly financial information (credit card and/or checking account numbers) and secure identifiers (social security number)- is ever transmitted through email or web pages.
- Handle all financial transactions” in real time” that is, on a commerce website that can process credit card transactions online, assuring that no financial data need be communicated to the parish/organization.
- Do not create forms using technology that is beyond the technical competence of the webmaster or staff person responsible for registration forms; contact a technology/web solution provider for assistance.

Websites/Social Media

Adult Supervisors and Clergy

- Are informed of terms of use, age restrictions and privacy options and controls for any site prior to establishing a ministry presence.



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- Always inform parents that a social networking site is being used as a standard part of the ministry.
- Establish separate sites and pages for personal and professional/ministerial use; the official organizational logo or standard images appear on the organization's official site to identify it as such.
- Be vigilant that on personal or networking sites you represent yourself as a minister of the Catholic Church in all interactions that may be viewed publicly.
- Allow at least two other adults, who function in an official parish, school and/or organizational capacity, full administrative access to the account/sites; provide them with email alerts of page updates and activity.
- Never advertise or make personal pages and/or information accessible to youth.
- Always avoid anything that might cause scandal to your ministry; never mention inappropriate use of alcohol, advocacy of inappropriate music/movies, inappropriate language, inappropriate dress or the expression of opinions that are contrary to the teaching of the Catholic Church.
- Never initiate a "friend request"
- Never "tag" or identify, by name, youth in photographs; it is recommended that the "no tagging" option be set on the original social networking site.
- Never post personal photographs or information of parish, school, or organization staff or volunteers; this includes family pictures, social events, home phone numbers and addresses, personal email accounts, etc.

Email and Text/Instant Messaging Adult Supervisors and Clergy

- Always inform parents/guardians of the use of email or instant messaging for communication purposes with minors as a standard part of youth ministry.
- Always maintain separate email accounts for personal/professional communication.
- Use the parish, school, or organizational email account when communicating parish, school, or organizational business never a home or personal account.
- Ensure that all communications are professional and that these are being rendered on behalf of the parish, school, or organization.
- Use email and instant messaging only in matters that deal with one's professional relationship or in matters related to the ministry/activity.
- Remember that there is no such thing as a private email/instant message.
- Observe the same boundaries used in oral/personal communication when communicating via email/text messages,
- Avoid overstepping the boundaries of adult/youth relationships; avoid communication that might be construed as having sexual overtones; never reply to any such email; make and keep a copy of any such inappropriate communication and notify a supervisor if necessary.
- Avoid engaging in any postings/communications that could be misconstrued or misinterpreted remembering that email, text messages and instant messages can be logged, archived, and forwarded to other parties.



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- Always double check messages to see if a reader might read something into it that is not intended or if the message might be misinterpreted or misunderstood.
- Remember that communications are organizational in nature, may be viewed by the organization at any time and may be subject to legal action.
- Avoid sending a message in haste or when emotions are involved.
- Establish clear guidelines/parameters with regard to times of communication between adults and youth; predetermine a time when it is too late to take a professional call, except in the case of serious urgency.

BLOGGING & GROUP MESSAGING APPLICATIONS

Adult Supervisors and Clergy

- Ensure that all professional/ministerial settings, posted information, opinions, references and resources are in compliance with the teachings of the Catholic Church and are being rendered on behalf of the parish, school or organization.
- Inform parents/guardians of the use of blogging/group messaging with minors as a standard part of youth ministry.
- Utilize blogs/group messaging to promote upcoming events or programs and for the purpose of evangelization providing resources and information within ministry settings
- Ensure that if youth are to engage in blogging/group messaging as part of an officially sanctioned activity, the activity is monitored by at least two adults, no youth is identified by name or personal information and inappropriate blogs/messages are removed.
- Separate personal/professional communications; do not use blogs/messages to conduct or promote outside business and/or personal activities; never make information regarding personal blogs available to youth.
- Never divulge the name or any personal information regarding those being ministered to.

ONLINE VIDEO, CHAT ROOMS, SKYPE, AND "FACE TIME"

Adult Supervisors and Clergy

- Always inform- parents/guardians of the use of such communication with minors as a standard part of youth ministry.
- Remember that when presenting personal opinions and engaging in chats/discussions, others may assume these opinions represent the teachings/values of the Catholic Church.
- Use streaming video only for education, communication, and promotional purposes.
- Never use live streaming, one-on-one video, or other communication technologies that lead to, support, or encourage an exclusive minor-adult relationship.
- Take extreme care to protect the privacy of youth when posting videos online; such videos may be utilized only to showcase/advertise ministry-related events and activities.

PHOTOGRAPHIC IMAGES OF YOUTH UNDER THE AGE OF 13

Adult Supervisors and Clergy

- Always obtain written permission from the parent/guardian to use any photographic images for publicity/marketing such as brochures, newsletters, or web sites.
- Never include the youth's name or contact information in photos that are published

PHOTOGRAPHIC IMAGES OF YOUTH BETWEEN THE AGES OF 13 AND 18



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- Always obtain written permission from the parents/guardians to use any identifiable photographic images for publicity/marketing such as brochures, fliers, web sites.
- Always obtain written permission when using youth in a planned project, e.g., using youth as "models" and the photographic linages are identifiable.
- Always obtain written permission from parents/guardians for any type of video that show youth doing work or in discussion; this video is considered an "education record."
 - The safest photographic images of youth over 13 used for publicity/ marketing are unidentifiable images, i.e., those images taken at a distance, from the side, from the top or of a large group activity.

FOR CLERGY

- Always notify parent/guardian of scheduled one-on-one pastoral care of youth.
- Always schedule session at times and locations that allow for security and accountability.
- Always limit the length and number of sessions; make professional referrals appropriately.
- Never allow individual youth to socialize in the rectory; ensure other priests or adults are present.
- Never allow youth into the sleeping areas of the rectory; only the families of priests and seminarians may be overnight guests in the rectory.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS AND PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS

Adult Supervisors and Clergy

CONTACT WITH YOUTH THAT IS PERMISSIBLE

Verbal praise	Hugs initiated by youth	Holding hands with small children
Pats on the shoulders	Blessings on the head	
Pats on the back	Holding hands during prayer	

CONTACT WITH YOUTH THAT IS NEVER PERMISSIBLE

Verbal abuse/sexual innuendo	Inappropriate/lengthy embraces
Touching knees or legs	Tickling
Piggyback rides	Holding children over age four on the lap
Wrestling	Any type of massage given by an adult to a minor
Kissing	Any form of unwanted affection/physical contact