

# Roman Catholic Church of the Diocese of Baton Rouge

## ***Code of Ethics and Behavior for Adults who Minister with Minors in the Diocese of Baton Rouge***

### ***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.

### **Roman Catholic Church of the Diocese of Baton Rouge**

1. All personnel (clergy, lay employees, independent contractors, and volunteers) who are deemed to be subject to the child protection policies of the diocese shall adhere to this promulgated *Code of Ethics and Behavior for Adults who Minister with Minors in the Diocese of Baton Rouge* which they have agreed to in writing.
2. Personnel (clergy, lay employees, independent contractors, and volunteers) shall notify the pastor, principal or agency director immediately when this *Code of Ethics and Behavior for Adults who Minister with Minors in the Diocese of Baton Rouge* has not been followed.
3. *This Code of Ethics and Behavior for Adults who Minister with Minors in the Diocese of Baton Rouge* shall be published on the diocesan website and printed copies shall be made available to the faithful at every parish, school and agency of the Roman Catholic Church of the Diocese of Baton Rouge upon request.

### **Code of Conduct for Interactions with Children and Youth**

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* as a condition of my providing services to the minors of our Parish, School and Diocese.

### **In my ministry interactions with minors (face to face and via technology) I shall:**

- Treat** everyone with respect, patience, integrity, courtesy, dignity and consideration.
- Avoid** situations that do not allow for public visibility and accessibility, where I am isolated with minors (i.e., avoiding the development of outside *private* relationships with minors, and the *initiation* of private communications with minors outside of approved ministry activities).
- Safeguard** my use of technology so as to avoid private/isolated communications with minors, the sharing of personal information regarding minors, and the public identification of minors that does not conform to the technology policies and procedures of my parish, school, or agency where I am in ministry with minors.
- Follow** all guidelines for communications with minors set forth by the parish, school or diocesan agency for which I am working or volunteering.
- Refrain** from giving or accepting expensive gifts to/from minors or their parents without prior written approval from the pastor, principal, or agency director.
- Report suspected** child abuse in accordance with Louisiana state laws and the *Process for Reporting the Alleged Abuse of a Minor* of the Roman Catholic Church of the Diocese of Baton Rouge.
- Cooperate** fully in any investigation of abuse of minors.
- Conduct** myself in a manner that is consistent with the discipline, norms, and teachings of the Catholic Church.
- Shall** provide a professional work environment that is free from harassment.

**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* as a condition of my providing services to the minors of our Parish, School and Diocese.

**In my ministry interactions with minors (face to face and via technology) I shall 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.
- Strike**, spank, shake, or slap minors.
- Humiliate**, ridicule, threaten, or degrade minor.
- Use** any discipline that frightens or humiliates a minor or a group of minors.
- Make** any type of statement about a minor's body type, shape, build, and looks.
- Make** any type of statement that degrades or puts down in way any other adult, minor, or group of people. *This includes, but is not limited to: any type of racial joke or slur or degrading comment about any race, person, or group of people.*
- Touch** a minor in a sexual or other inappropriate manner.
- Plan** or conduct any type of youth-oriented event in the name of the Diocese, other than those that are approved, planned, and conducted by my church and/or school ministry team.
- Share** with a minor anything about my own sexual history or any other past or present experience that crosses the boundary between public and private. (Catechists who are responsible for teaching Catholic sexual morality must be certified through the diocesan human sexuality course.)
- Share** a room with (i.e., stay overnight in the same room with) a minor or group of minors during any type of event.
- Allow** a minor or group of minors to stay overnight in my own home unless the reason for such is that of a shared friendship between my child and another adult's child.
- Take** improper advantage of a counseling and/or authoritative relationship for my own benefit.
- Manufacture**, possess, or distribute child pornography.
- View** movies or other similar materials containing inappropriate content with and/or in the presence of minors.
- Listen** to music that is degrading of any person, race, or of one's sexuality, with or in the presence of minors.
- Contribute** to the delinquency of a minor or group of minors in accordance with the laws of the state of Louisiana.
- Enter** into any type of private communication with a minor that is not within the scope of my ministry, or any communication that would undermine the parent-child relationship, or serve to foster an inappropriate relationship with a minor.
- Request** confidentiality of a minor(s).\* (See section on Communications and Confidentiality).
- Promise** confidentiality to a minor(s).
- Abuse** or neglect a minor or an adult to comply with the laws of the State of Louisiana.

**Appropriate Physical Contact while Working with Minors**

**I understand that the following forms of physical contact are appropriate when working with minors:**

- Handshakes** and "High Fives."
- Brief** hugs (when initiated by a minor).
- Hand** holding (during group prayer).
- Contact** that is a component of an acceptable group activity (such as an icebreaker, group prayer service, or sporting activity).

**Inappropriate Physical Contact and Not Allowed while Working with Minors**

**I understand that the following forms of physical contact are not allowed when working with Minors:**

- Kissing and prolonged embraces.
- Any type of massage.
- Showering or bathing with a minor.
- Allowing a minor to sit on one's shoulders or lap.
- Fondling, petting, or any type of genital contact.
- Leaning against a minor (when seated or standing).

**Communications and Confidentiality with Minors in Ministry**

**Private communication with a minor is defined as any type and form of communication that takes place apart from an appropriate and approved ministry setting. Therefore, adults in ministry with minors shall not enter into any type of private communication with a minor that is not within the scope of their ministry, or any communication that would undermine the parent-child relationship or serve to foster an inappropriate relationship with a minor.**

**Types of Communications (Verbal/Written) Working with Minors:**

It is normal for an adult in ministry to enter into a spontaneous conversation with a minor. However, adults shall consider that some issues, even if shared spontaneously in open conversation, must be brought to the attention of a minor's parents.

Adults in ministry with minors shall follow all communications/technology guidelines and policies established by their parish, school or diocesan agency.

Adults in ministry with minors are obligated to read thoroughly any written communication that the adult receives from a minor. If it is appropriate to ask a minor to make journal entries as a part of the religious education process, then adults are also obligated to read and take seriously such entries and to respond to them in keeping with the standards stated in this Code of Ethics and Behavior, particularly if the information shared is that of the alleged abuse of that minor or if the information leads the adult to suspect that a minor is at risk of harming him or herself or others.

Confidentiality in ministry with minors has an appropriate place. However, no communication between adults and the minors to whom they minister is protected by privilege (i.e. **such as that which exists between a priest and penitent in sacramental confession**, a lawyer and client, or a doctor and patient.) Adults will, therefore, commit themselves to a specific standard regarding communications with minors.

\*In settings such as small groups during a retreat, an adult small group leader may encourage the group to keep what is shared in the group confidential, unless a member of the group shares information that leads the adult to suspect that a minor is at risk of harming him or herself or others. Such information shall not be kept confidential. In cases of alleged or suspected abuse, diocesan personnel shall follow the *Process for Reporting the Alleged Abuse of a Minor*.

**Diocesan Requirements/Certification to Work in Ministry with Minors**

**I understand and agree that I shall complete the following requirements prior to working in ministry with minors:**

- Criminal Background Check (to comply with state and federal laws).
- Promulgated diocesan training on Recognizing and Reporting Abuse.
- Read and Sign the *Code of Ethics and Behavior for Adults who Minister with Minors in the Diocese of Baton Rouge*.
- Complete the appropriate diocesan EAPPS application.

## THE DIOCESE OF BATON ROUGE

### Process for Reporting the Alleged Abuse of a Minor

When the  
Accused is...

Clergy (Priest,  
Deacon, Religious  
Brother or Sister,  
or Seminarian)

- STEP 1: Mandated Reporter calls local Police or Sheriff's Department
- STEP 2: Mandated Reporter alerts Diocesan Victim Assistance Coordinator via the 24-Hour VAC Hotline
- STEP 3: Victim Assistance Coordinator alerts the appropriate Diocesan Chancery Official

Employee of the  
Diocese,  
Volunteer in  
Ministry, or  
Other person

- STEP 1: Mandated Reporter makes report to appropriate Civil Authority (Abuse within the home: Call Department of Children and Family Services; Abuse Outside of the home: Call local Police or Sheriff's Department)
- STEP 2: Mandated Reporter alerts their immediate supervisor
- STEP 3: Supervisor alerts appropriate Department Head and the Director, Office of Child and Youth Protection
- STEP 4: If abuse is sexual in nature, call the Diocesan Victim Assistance Coordinator via the 24-Hour Victim Assistance Hotline if accused is a Diocesan Employee or Volunteer

Licensed  
Daycare  
Staff

- STEP 1: Mandated Reporter makes report to Department of Children and Family Services
- STEP 2: Mandated Reporter alerts their immediate supervisor
- STEP 3: Supervisor alerts appropriate Department Head and the Director, Office of Child and Youth Protection
- Step 4: If abuse is sexual in nature, call the Diocesan Victim Assistance Coordinator via the 24-Hour Victim Assistance Hotline

Diocesan 24-Hour Victim  
Assistance Hotline  
(225) 242-0250

Diocesan Office of Child and  
Youth Protection  
(225) 242-0202

Diocesan Human Resources  
Department  
(225) 387-0561

Diocesan Catholic Schools  
Office  
(225) 336-8735

Louisiana Department of  
Children and Family Services  
State-Wide 24-Hour Hotline  
855-452-5437

**Acknowledgement of Receipt and Review of the Code of Ethics and Behavior for Adults  
who Minister with Minors in the Diocese of Baton Rouge and the Process for Reporting  
the Alleged Abuse of a Minor**

By signing this page, I acknowledge that I have received and thoroughly read the attached *Code of Ethics and Behavior for Adults who Minister with Minors in the Diocese of Baton Rouge*. I formally pledge to adhere to and conduct myself and my ministerial responsibilities according to all of the standards contained herein.

I accept responsibility for compliance with these policies as stated herein and the responsibility to refer any questions to my immediate supervisor or the Diocesan Child Protection Officer for further clarification. I further understand that the Diocese of Baton Rouge reserves the right to change, modify, and/or revise any of the policies contained herein at any time.

Diocesan Child Protection Officer:

Amy J. Cordon

P.O. Box 2028

Baton Rouge, LA 70821-2028

(225) 242-0202

[childprotection@diobr.org](mailto:childprotection@diobr.org)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee/Volunteer Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date Signed

Please PRINT below this Employee/Volunteer's Full Name:

\_\_\_\_\_

This statement is to be returned and placed in the personnel or volunteer file.