

# Diocese of Brooklyn

## Code of Pastoral Conduct

### For Volunteers

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Our children are the most important gifts God has entrusted to us. As a volunteer, I promise to strictly follow the rules and guidelines in this Volunteer's Code of Pastoral Conduct as a condition of my providing services to our Diocese, parishes or affiliated agencies.

I understand that any action that I take in violation of this Code may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from my volunteer position. I agree to sign the hard copy Acknowledgment Form or the electronic acknowledgment, and, if signed in hard copy, return the Acknowledgment Form to the designated office, before providing services.

#### **As a volunteer, I will:**

- Treat everyone, including clergy<sup>1</sup>, parents and other adults, and minors<sup>2</sup> with respect, loyalty, patience, courtesy, and dignity.
- Represent the teachings of the Catholic Church with integrity in word and action.
- Work collaboratively with the clergy, other supervisors and associates in ministry.
- Avoid situations where I am alone with minors in connection with any volunteer activities within the Diocese or with whom I have become acquainted through such activities.
- Maintain appropriate boundaries in my relationships with minors.
- Participate in training sessions required by the Diocese, parish or agency to foster a safe environment and to prevent the sexual abuse of minors.
- Use positive reinforcement rather than criticism, competition, or comparison when working with minors.
- Refuse to accept expensive gifts from minors or their parents without prior written approval from the pastor or administrator.
- Report any instance when I encounter a minor in an inappropriate area on Diocesan property.

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<sup>1</sup> The term "clergy," as used herein, is understood to be coextensive with bishops, deacons, Diocesan priests, and Order priests, who serve within the territory of the Diocese of Brooklyn.

<sup>2</sup> A minor is defined as any person who is not yet eighteen years of age, or one who habitually lacks the use of reason, in compliance with the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*.

- Immediately report suspected abuse or improper conduct to the pastor, administrator, or appropriate supervisor and to appropriate authorities as required by law.
- Cooperate fully in any investigation of abuse of minors.
- Ensure that allegations regarding sexual misconduct or abuse of a minor are reported to the Diocese's toll-free Reporting Line at 1-888-634-4499 or via the online form available at <https://dioceseofbrooklyn.org/protecting-children/report-sexual-abuse/>, either by the complainant or by myself.

**As a volunteer, I will not:**

- Engage in any covert or overt sexual behaviors with any person with whom I work.
- Touch a minor in a sexual or other inappropriate manner, including striking, spanking, shaking, or slapping a minor
- Humiliate, ridicule, threaten, or degrade minors.
- Use any discipline that frightens or humiliates minors.
- Interact with minors through e-mail, social network sites, or other electronic communications except for delivering information about a bona fide parish program.
- Possess, distribute, or acquire pornography in any form.
- View pornographic materials on any Diocesan property, or show to or share with minors pornographic materials, or assist minors in accessing pornography.
- Use parish, school, or any agency computers or other electronic communications to participate in chat rooms or social network sites except for bona-fide parish or agency purposes.
- Photograph minors or post said photographs without the explicit verifiable consent of the parents or legal guardians.
- Use or be under the influence of alcohol or drugs when working with minors.
- Provide alcohol or drugs to minors.
- Use profanity or any other inappropriate language when working with minors.
- Take minors on a trip without either parental consent or other adults being present.
- Give extravagant gifts to minors and/or inappropriate gifts that reveal favoritism towards a single or small group of minors.
- Deny or hinder the Diocese's ability to inspect, review, and access all matters on any systems maintained or provided by the Diocese, including email and computer systems.