

## Diocese of Kansas City - St. Joseph

### Code of Conduct for Volunteers Who Work With Children and Youth In Catholic Schools and Early Childhood Centers

Our children are the most important gifts God has entrusted to us.

As a volunteer in a Catholic school or early childhood center, I promise to strictly follow the rules and guidelines in this Code of Conduct:

#### **I WILL:**

- Treat everyone with respect, loyalty, patience, integrity, courtesy, dignity and consideration.
- Avoid situations where I am alone with children and/or youth. If there is no other adult present, I will always interact in an area where I can be viewed by others as I work with children or youth. If I ever need to drive a young person home at night, I will have another adult go with me or I will try to arrange for the parent(s) to come after him or her.
- Arrange meeting space so that I am a comfortable distance from any child or youth with whom I am working or interacting.
- Use positive reinforcement rather than criticism, sarcasm, harassment, competition, or comparison when working with children and/or youth.
- Follow our diocesan policy on sexual harassment with regard to children, youth or adults.
- Refuse to accept expensive gifts from children and/or youth or their parents without approval from the administrator.
- Refrain from giving expensive gifts to children and/or youth without approval from the administrator.
- Immediately report suspected abuse to the principal or director and the Missouri Division of Family Services (1.800.392.3738). I understand that failure to report suspected abuse to civil authorities is, according to the law, a misdemeanor. The Diocesan School Office is notified by the principal or director.
- Be aware that young people can easily become infatuated with a caring adult. If I sense that this is happening, I will not encourage it. I will make my administrator aware of it and find ways to give the young person appropriate support and maintain appropriate boundaries.
- Take care in my speaking, writing, and actions to be professional but supportive and caring.
- Follow all policies and procedures regarding field trips i.e. notification of parents, permission forms, number of chaperones needed, drivers, etc.
- Avoid being the only adult in a bathroom, shower room, locker room or other dressing areas whenever minors are using such facilities. If I need to monitor the area or deal with discipline, I will take care to leave the door ajar or to call for another teacher or volunteer to assist.
- Use a team approach in handling emergency situations.

#### **I WILL NOT:**

- Smoke or use tobacco products in the presence of the children and/or youth.
- Serve or supply alcohol or any controlled substance to minors.
- Use, serve, possess, or be under the influence of alcohol at any time while fulfilling my obligations as a professional educator or volunteer.
- Use, possess, or be under the influence of illegal drugs at any time.
- Pose any health risk to children and/or youth (i.e. no fevers or other contagious situations).
- Strike, spank, shake, or slap any child or youth.
- Humiliate, ridicule, threaten, or degrade any child or youth.
- Touch a child or youth in a sexual or other inappropriate manner that might be misconstrued by the child, the youth or others.
- Use any discipline that frightens or humiliates a child or youth.
- Use profanity or vulgar humor in the presence of a child or youth.
- Make comments of a sexual nature except in response to specific classroom or otherwise legitimate questions from a minor.
- Place myself in a situation where my interaction with a minor cannot be witnessed.
- Go on vacation or overnights with any minor other than my own child(ren). I will never share a bed with a minor. Nor will I share a room with children or youth unless another adult is present. In rare, emergency situations, when accommodation is necessary for the health and well-being of the youth, I will take extraordinary care to protect all parties from the appearance of impropriety and from all risk of harm.