



Diocese of Grand Island

Code of Conduct

For Adults Working with Children and Youth

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.**

Diocese of Grand Island Child Protection Policy

- 8.1 All personnel and youth volunteers will be expected to adhere to a standard code of conduct which they have agreed to in writing.
- 8.2 Personnel shall document incidents when the code of conduct has not been followed.

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 children and youth, I promise to strictly follow the rules and guidelines in this Code of Conduct as a condition of my providing services to the children and youth of our Parish, School and Diocese.

In my interactions with children and youth (face to face and via technology) I will:

- Treat everyone with respect, loyalty, patience, integrity, courtesy, dignity, and consideration.
- Avoid situations where I am alone with children and / or youth (i.e., avoiding isolation at Church activities, the development of outside personal relationships, and the initiation of personal communications with children and youth).
- Safeguard my use of technology so as to avoid personal / isolated communications with children / youth, the sharing of personal information regarding children / youth, and the public identification of children / youth.
- Use positive reinforcement rather than criticism or comparison when working with children and / or youth.
- Refrain from giving or accepting expensive gifts to / from children and youth or their parents without prior written approval from the pastor or administrator.
- Report suspected abuse (including in person abuse and online solicitation, harassment or distribution of inappropriate materials) to the pastor, administrator, or appropriate supervisor and civil authorities.

I understand that failure to report suspected abuse to civil authorities is, according to the law, a misdemeanor.

- Cooperate fully in any investigation of abuse of children and/or youth.

In my interactions with children and youth (face to face and via technology) I will NOT:

- Smoke or use tobacco products in the presence of children and / or youth.
- Use, possess, or be under the influence of alcohol at any time while working with children and youth.
- 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 children and / or youth.
- Humiliate, ridicule, threaten, or degrade children and / or youth.
- Touch a child and / or youth in a sexual or other inappropriate manner.
- Engage in sexually suggestive or explicit conversation with children and youth.
- Use any discipline that frightens or humiliates children and/or youth.
- Use profanity in the presence of children and / or youth.

I understand that as an adult working with children and / or youth, I am subject to a thorough background check including criminal history. I understand that any action inconsistent with this Code of Conduct or failure to take action mandated by this Code of Conduct may result in my removal as a volunteer or employee working with children and / or youth.

Diocese of Grand Island

Guidelines for Interactions between Adults and Youth through Technology

The development of technology over the past several years has opened new lines and forms of communication. Social networking, email, texting, twittering, blogging and many other means of communication can connect people at any time anywhere in the world. As we move forward with technology, it is important that adults recognize their role in keeping young people safe. Following are some basic guidelines that can be utilized by leaders in parishes, schools and diocesan programs to form policies and procedures that make clear how adults can safely interact with young people using technology

General Technology Safe Environment Guidelines

- 1) **Treat communication through technology the same as you would communication in face-to-face interactions**, avoid language that might be misinterpreted / misconstrued. This is especially important with online communications as there is no immediate feedback and no context (facial expression, body language, etc.) to assist understanding.
- 2) **Use the Safe Environment Principle of “Safety in Numbers,”** being sure to include three or more people in emails, texts or any communication between adults and youth.
- 3) **Remember— online communications are not private.** When you put information in to the virtual world you have no control over who it is sent to or how long it is kept.
Therefore, scrutinize your online communications with the same degree of attention you would give to a media interview or legal testimony.
- 4) **Do not post video, photographs, or personal information of youth without careful consideration and parental consent.**
- 5) **Make sure parents are aware of how you are using technology to communicate with their child and include parents in communication.** Make sure virtual conversations are public and that anything said or talked about would be said face to face with parents present.
- 6) **Befriending someone under the age of 19 on Facebook or other social networking sites is inappropriate.** Instead, create a fanpage or blog that you can tell youth and parents to check for all important information regarding activities and events. Be sure to have more than one administrator on a fan page or other group page that is able to edit or remove content.
- 7) **Report suspected abuse.** CyberTipline – <http://www.cybertipline.com>
Nebraska State Patrol – (308)385-6000