

Catholic Diocese of Spokane

Agreement for Youth Volunteers working with Minors* Protection of Children and Youth

Annually each Student Worker/Youth Volunteer in grade 7 and up, who are working with minors* in parishes, programs and organizations of the Diocese will acknowledge in writing that he/she has received and read the following Code of Conduct, and by doing so, agrees to abide by the agreement.

Our children are the most important gifts God has entrusted to us. These children depend on the community at large to keep them protected and safe. As a student Worker/Youth Volunteer I have a role and responsibility in promoting a healthy and safe environment for children as well as for my peers and the adults of our community.

I pledge in word and example that as a volunteer **I will:**

- Treat everyone with respect, patience, integrity, courtesy, and dignity.
- Avoid situations where I am alone with children and/or youth at Church activities.
- Use positive reinforcement rather than criticism, competition or comparison when working with children and/or youth.
- Refuse to accept expensive gifts from children and/or youth.
- Cooperate fully in an investigation of abuse of children and/or youth.

As a volunteer **I will not:**

- Smoke or use tobacco products in the presence of children and/or youth.
- Bring a weapon, including but not limited to: guns or knives of all kinds including pocket knives, in the proximity of the children and/or youth while volunteering.
- Use, possess or be under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs or legal drugs that impair my judgment or mental acuity at any time while volunteering.
- Engage in any behaviors with minors that can be misconstrued as sexual in nature, and thus the behaviors that are to be avoided, include but are not limited to:
 - ♦ Inappropriate or lengthy embraces*
 - ♦ Kissing
 - ♦ Touching bottoms, chests, legs or genital areas
 - ♦ Spanking, striking, shaking or slapping
 - ♦ Showing affection while in an isolated location
 - ♦ Wrestling or tickling
 - ♦ Piggy-back rides
 - ♦ Massages including but not limited to: back rubs, neck massage etc.
- Make comments that relate to physical or body development.
- Humiliate, ridicule, bully or degrade anyone.
- Discuss or use vocabulary, recordings, films, games, computer software, internet sites or any other form of interaction or entertainment that I would not use comfortably in the presence of parents.
- Single out persons, especially children, for special attention or personal gifts.
- Touch a child/youth or have them touch me in an inappropriate manner
- Use any discipline that frightens or humiliates children and or/youth.
- Use profanity in the presence of children and/or youth.

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*When dealing with a child who inadvertently misplaces their hands on me, I will deal with this gently by taking their hands and moving them to a more appropriate spot or just gently hold them while I kneel down to the child's level and continue the discussion at eye level. If a child initiates physical contact, such as a hug, I will limit the response and provide an alternative positive contact such as giving the child a "high five".

I agree to participate in all training as requested by my supervisor, principal, pastor/or parish administrator. I understand that any action inconsistent with the Code of Conduct or failure to take action mandated by this Code of Conduct may result in my removal as a volunteer with children and/or youth.

Name of Parish: _____

Youth Volunteer Printed Name: _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____

Parent signature: _____

Note to Parish or School: Please keep this signed form in your files. This information may be reviewed during parish visits by the Safe Environment Coordinator/VAC or the USCCB auditors. Thank you.