

**BEHAVIOR STANDARDS**

Please **check each box** signifying that you have read, understand and will adhere to each Behavioral Standard.

- Clergy, seminarians, deacon aspirants or candidates, paid personnel and volunteers are to act as role models of proper Catholic values and must not engage in unethical or immoral conduct (or that which gives the appearance of such).
- Any interpersonal conduct that is prohibited by civil law is likewise forbidden under diocesan policy. As a prime example, any verbal or nonverbal sexual behavior between a minister and a child or young person is inappropriate and forbidden. Further, illicit use of electronic media, whether via internet, email, chat rooms, social networks, phone conversations, text messaging, photos, videos or any other access, is prohibited.
- Any suspicion of sexual abuse must be reported as required by state law and diocesan policy. Any knowledge or reasonable suspicion of any minister having an inappropriate relationship with a child or young person must be reported promptly to that person's supervisor, who must then discuss this concern with the minister.
- Two Safe Environment trained adults or one Safe Environment trained adult and two trained teens must be present at all children's and/or youth religious education programs, classes and activities, and must remain until all children/youth have left the premises. This requirement includes all *jovenes* (Spanish youth) ministries that include adolescents. All planning meetings/ interactions with a teen assistant/helper must take place in public or in the presence of another adult or teen. All Catholic school events and activities outside of a regular classroom setting require the presence of two adults or one adult and at least two teens. Going out/Dating between a minister and a child or young person is not allowed.
- When initiating physical contact, discretion must be used. Any display of affection should be made in a public setting in front of other group members and should respect the wishes of the other person.
- One-to-one counseling between a minister and those he/she ministers to should always occur in a public place where they can be observed by others—never alone in a car or a private place.
- Driving alone with a child and/or youth is to be avoided at all times unless extraordinary circumstances require immediate and prudent action. In such situations, special care should be taken, including all of the following:
  - ✓ Contact parents and document the outcome of the call.
  - ✓ Do not sit close to one another in the car.
  - ✓ Do not come into physical contact with each other.
  - ✓ Do not stop the car to talk.
  - ✓ If you must stop, turn on the inside light of the car.
  - ✓ Avoid physical contact (hugs and kisses) when saying goodbye.
  - ✓ Be aware of the time you depart and arrive and make a record of those times.
- If a minister experiences a recurring romantic or sexual attraction for someone they are ministering to, the minister is required to discuss the situation with their supervisor or spiritual director for guidance.
- Any sexual gestures or overtures made to a minister, from those he/she ministers to, should be reported to his/her supervisor who will then meet with those involved to discuss the incident.
- All observed Code of Conduct violations must be reported to the supervisor and documented.

Any Clergy, Religious or Lay Minister  
who cannot maintain these Behavior Standards  
cannot serve in the Diocese.

**DISPLAYS OF AFFECTION**

**Appropriate**

- Asking permission before touching
- Side hugs (with adults)
- Brief shoulder to shoulder hugs
- Pats on the shoulder or back
- Handshakes
- "High-fives" and hand slapping
- Verbal praise
- Touching hands, faces, shoulders and arms
- Arms around shoulders
- Holding hands during prayer or when a person is upset
- Holding hands while walking with small children
- Sitting close to small children
- Kneeling or bending down for hugs with a small child

**Inappropriate**

- Any form of unwanted affection
- Full frontal hugs or "bear hugs"
- Touching bottoms, chests or genital areas
- Massages
- Patting others on the thigh, knee or leg
- Tickling or wrestling
- Touching or hugging from behind
- Games involving inappropriate touching
- Kisses on the mouth
- Special gift giving to/from a certain person

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**Violations of the *Code of Conduct & Behavior Standards for All Clergy, Religious and Lay Ministers* are grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.** All Clergy, Religious and Lay Ministers of the Diocese of Fort Worth are to sign the *Code of Conduct Agreement Form*. Failure to agree in writing with this Code of Conduct is also grounds for disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

**Code of Conduct Acknowledgement**

I understand that violations of the *Code of Conduct & Behavior Standards for All Clergy, Religious and Lay Ministers* (“*Code of Conduct*”) as outlined, are grounds for disciplinary action, up to, and including dismissal. I further understand that I am required to sign this Acknowledgement if I wish to serve in the Diocese of Fort Worth. Therefore, having read and understood the *Code of Conduct*, I hereby agree to uphold those requirements and standards in all ministries in which I serve.

Signature	Date	Email
Printed Name	Home Phone	Cell Phone
Home Address	City, State, Zip	
Church where you are registered	City where your church is located	
Primary position or ministry and city	Other ministries in which you are involved	

\* Recognizing that many people are involved in more than one ministry, sometimes in more than one location, please name your “primary” location and position or ministry. For clergy and religious, the primary entity is the Diocese, and this form should be submitted to the Safe Environment Department at the Catholic Center. For lay employees, the primary location is the place of your employment. All others should identify their primary ministry and location and submit this form to the Safe Environment Coordinator at that location.