

THE STANDARD CODE OF CONDUCT¹

Our Children are the most precious gifts entrusted to our care. We acknowledge that all individuals shall be treated with respect, courtesy, dignity, patience and integrity.

I will:

1. Assume the full burden of responsibility for setting and maintaining clear and appropriate physical and emotional boundaries with minors².
2. Show prudent discretion in the expressions of affirmation used with minors. This includes refusing expensive gifts from minors and refraining from giving expensive gifts to minors. The following are examples of appropriate forms of affirmation with minors.

Hugs	Arms around the shoulders
Pats on the shoulder or back	Holding hands while walking with small
Handshakes	Sitting beside small children
“High-fives” and hand-slapping	Kneeling or bending down for hugs with small
Verbal praise	Holding hands during prayer
Touching hands, faces, shoulders and arms of minors	Pats on the head when culturally appropriate

3. Refrain from forms of touch such as tickling, wrestling or massaging, which could be construed as sexual with minors.
4. Assure that a meeting space with a minor or vulnerable adult has visual access. If this is not possible, make sure that another adult is present.
5. Avoid driving alone with minors. In an emergency, request the presence of another adult.
6. Not consume alcohol products, use tobacco products or profanity nor be under the influence of prescribed drugs that impair judgment, illegal drugs or alcohol when engaged in working with minors.
7. Not share a bedroom with minors when there is no other adult supervision present in the room.
8. Never provide minors with alcohol, drugs or with videos, reading or graphic materials that are inappropriately sexual in nature.
9. Not access or possess child pornography
10. Never initiate sexual behavior with a minor and will refuse it even when the other invites it. I will report to my supervisor any sexual behavior initiated by a minor.
11. Read and abide by the Diocesan policy for reporting allegations of sexual abuse.³

This code of conduct does not abrogate or replace any other obligations that I have under any applicable law, guideline, policy or regulation. Name: _____ Date _____

(Please Circle One) Clergy Employee Volunteer

Signature: _____

Name and location of school/parish/agency: _____

¹ All clergy, employees, and volunteers of the Albany Diocese are required to sign and follow this Code of Conduct when they are working with minors. The signed code of conduct will be kept on file.

² This includes children and youth under the age of 18 and adults who habitually lack the use of reason. ³ See [“How to Report Sexual Abuse.”](#)

How to Report Sexual Abuse

Victims of Sexual Abuse

The Diocese of Albany urges all victims to report any instance of sexual abuse against a minor by a member of the clergy, its employees or volunteers, to the local police or to the office of the appropriate District Attorney. ([Contact information for DAs](#))

Adults Reporting Past Abuse.

Adults who wish to report allegations of childhood abuse to the diocese should contact the diocesan Assistance Coordinator (Ms. Theresa Rodrigues at 518-453-6646; e-mail: assistance.coordinator@rcda.org). The Assistance Coordinator will respond to you within 24-48 hours. All allegations of abuse of minors received by the Assistance Coordinator will be reported to the office of the appropriate District Attorney. Copies of reports will also be sent to the Bishop, the diocesan attorney and the diocesan Review Board members. **Reports received will not be screened for credibility.**

The Diocese of Albany is committed to full cooperation with the civil authorities in the reporting and investigation of such allegations. If the diocese receives notification from the DA's office that it will not investigate an allegation of sexual abuse that was submitted, or that it is unable to take any action, the diocese will then follow its own protocol for processing an allegation of sexual abuse.

Employees Reporting Abuse:

1. **Where the victim is a current minor.**

a) **Allegations against parish/school staff/volunteers.**

The parish leader/ school principal should immediately report all allegations received of sexual abuse against clergy, employees or volunteers to the **local police and to the diocesan attorney Michael Costello Esq. (# 518-463-1177)** **The person receiving the report will not screen such reports for credibility.**

The diocesan attorney will inform the appropriate DA **within 24 hours**. If the diocesan attorney cannot be reached, please call the Assistance Coordinator at 518-453-6646.

b) **Allegations against parish or school leaders.**

If an allegation is received against the parish leader or school principal, **the person receiving the report will not screen such reports for credibility.**

The diocesan attorney Michael Costello Esq. should be notified as soon as the report is received and he in turn will immediately notify the local police *and the appropriate DA's office* **within 24 hours**. If the diocesan attorney cannot be reached, please call the Assistance Coordinator at 518-453-6646

Copies of any report made to the police or DA should be sent to the Assistance Coordinator who will inform the Bishop, the diocesan attorney and the diocesan Review Board members. The School Superintendent will be informed of all reports received against school personnel.

c) **Allegations against the child's family.**

Allegations received by school or parish staff that a child/youth has been harmed or is at risk of being harmed by a parent/guardian or other person legally responsible for his or her care.(e.g. any adults living in the home) should be reported to the Child Abuse Central Register.

Mandated reporters call: 1-800-635-1522

Parish staff who are not mandated reporters: 1-800 -342-3720

If a child is in immediate danger call 911 or the local police.

For further information please visit: <http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us/ohrd/ccg/>

2. Where the victim is an adult.

Parish, school staff and other diocesan personnel receiving such reports from adults who were abused as minors, should notify the Assistance Coordinator Theresa Rodrigues (Phone # 518-453-6646) within one business day. **Such reports received will not be screened for credibility** The person receiving the complaint should remind the victim of his/her right to report the allegation directly to the office of the district attorney where the alleged abuse occurred. All allegations of abuse of minors received by the Assistance Coordinator will be reported to the office of the appropriate District Attorney, with copies sent the diocesan attorney and the Review Board members.

The School Superintendent will be informed of all reports received against school personnel.