

## **Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston \* Volunteer's Code of Conduct**

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As a community of faith we are committed to safeguard our children and youth, the most important gifts God has entrusted to us. The following rules and regulations reflect that commitment and are a condition of volunteer ministry.

\_\_\_\_\_ (Name of Parish, School or Facility)

\_\_\_\_\_ (City)

### **As a volunteer, I will:**

- Safeguard children and youth entrusted to my care at all times.
- Treat everyone with respect, loyalty, patience, integrity, courtesy, dignity, and consideration.
- Avoid situations where I am alone with a child or youth at church/school activities.
- Use positive reinforcement rather than criticism, competition, or comparison when working with children or youth.
- Refuse to accept expensive gifts from children or youth or their parents without prior written approval from the pastor or administrator.
- Refrain from giving inappropriate, personal gifts to children or youth.
- Report suspected abuse or neglect to *Child Protective Services* (800.252.5400) or local police department. I understand that failure to report suspected child abuse is a violation of Texas law.
- Cooperate fully in any investigation of abuse or neglect of children and/or youth.

### **As a volunteer, I will not:**

- Espouse any view contrary to the teachings of the Catholic Church during my volunteer ministry.
- Smoke or use tobacco products on parish property and/or in the presence of children or youth.
- Use, possess, or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs at any time while volunteering.
- Spank, shake, or slap children, youth or any person.
- Humiliate, ridicule, threaten or degrade children, youth or any person.
- Strike or touch a child, youth or any person in a sexual or other inappropriate manner.
- Engage in any conduct that frightens or humiliates children, youth or any person.
- Commit an illegal or immoral act in the presence of children and/or youth.
- Use profanity in the presence of children and/or youth.
- Sexually harass any person, e.g., requests for sexual favors, sexually explicit statements, etc.

As a volunteer, I promise to strictly follow the rules and guidelines in this Code of Conduct. I understand that as a volunteer working with children and/or youth, I am subject to a thorough background check including criminal history. I agree to notify the Archdiocesan VIRTUS Coordinator within 30 days if I have been charged with, convicted of, granted deferred adjudication or plead nolo contendere to any felony or any misdemeanor involving moral turpitude. 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.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Volunteer's Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Ministry/Activity in which I volunteer

\_\_\_\_\_  
Volunteer's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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## VOLUNTEER ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I have received a copy of the Parish Volunteer Emergency Procedures and Safety Practices. I have read, understood and agreed to abide by those procedures.

I understand that I am to report accidents or injuries immediately to the Parish Pastor.

I understand that I am required by law to report known or suspected instances of child abuse or neglect, including sexual abuse, and that not doing so is considered a crime. Call the **24-hour Child Abuse Hotline (1-800-252-5400)**, or **local law enforcement agency**, and then as a courtesy, notify the Parish pastor.

I understand the policy of the Parish is to cooperate with the authorities in the investigation of suspected child abuse. I, as a volunteer, agree to cooperate with the investigation as requested.

I understand that if I use my automobile, my personal insurance is my coverage. (Reimbursement for fuel is a decision of the parish.)

I understand the policy of the Parish is to refer all inquiries from the media or press to the Parish Pastor.

I have read and understood all the above statements and I agree to abide by them.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Volunteer Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parish Pastor Signature

Youth Ministry is relational by nature. Young people need to feel accepted, liked, affirmed, involved, and included. Forming relationships, in other words, is more important than programs. It is important for the Coordinator of Youth Ministry and all adult volunteers to develop positive relationships with the youth. This can be achieved by being genuinely interested in him/her and the activities in which he/she is involved.