

**Code of Conduct**

Adults who work with young people or vulnerable adults through the Diocese of Buffalo or any of its parishes or schools have the legal, moral, and religious responsibility to perform their duties in a way that educates and assists – and does not harm -- the young people and vulnerable adults with whom they work. In keeping with that obligation, the Diocese of Buffalo has established the following Code of Conduct for all who minister to young people or vulnerable adults in the parishes of the Diocese, teach young people in the schools of the Diocese, coach young people on sports teams connected with the Diocese or any of its parishes or schools, or in any other way work with young people or vulnerable adults through the Diocese of Buffalo. For purposes of this policy, the term “young people” or “young person” means anyone under the age of 18, and the term “vulnerable adult” means a person who is impaired by reason of mental illness, mental deficiency, physical illness, or disability to the extent that he or she lacks sufficient understanding or capacity to make or communicate responsible decisions concerning his or her person or to manage his or her affairs effectively.

**As one of the priests and religious, teachers and coaches, employees and /or volunteers, who work with children and young adults in or through the Diocese of Buffalo, I solemnly pledge that:**

- 1) I will to the best of my ability, perform my work in a manner consistent with the mission of the Catholic Church and the Diocese of Buffalo;
- 2) I will always remember that I am not a peer of the young people with whom I work and I will perform my duties accordingly;
- 3) I will maintain appropriate physical and emotional boundaries from the young people and vulnerable adults with whom I work;
- 4) I will avoid situations where I am alone with a young person at Church activities;
- 5) I will refrain from any and all physical conduct, conversations and other communications with young people or vulnerable adults that have a sexual purpose or result;
- 6) I will not touch a young person and/or vulnerable adult in a sexual or other inappropriate manner;
- 7) If I learn of an allegation of abuse or if I suspect abuse, I will report that allegation or suspicion to the Victim Assistance Coordinator (716-895-3010) and to the appropriate district attorney's office;
- 8) I will cooperate fully in any investigation of abuse of young people and/or vulnerable adults;
- 9) I will treat everyone with respect, loyalty, patience, integrity, courtesy, dignity, and consideration;
- 10) I will use positive reinforcement rather than criticism, competition, or comparison when working with young people and/or vulnerable adults;
- 11) I will neither accept expensive gifts from young people and/or vulnerable adults nor give expensive gifts to them without prior written approval from the parents or guardians and from the pastor or administrator;
- 12) I will not smoke or use tobacco products in the presence of young people;
- 13) I will not use, possess, or be under the influence of alcohol while working with young people;
- 14) I will not use, possess, or be under the influence of illegal drugs at anytime;
- 15) I will not pose any health risk to young people and/or vulnerable adults (i.e., no fevers or other contagious situations);
- 16) I will not strike, spank, shake, or slap young people and/or vulnerable adults;
- 17) I will not humiliate, ridicule, threaten, or degrade young people and/or vulnerable adults;
- 18) I will not use any discipline that frightens or humiliates young people and/or vulnerable adults;
- 19) I will not use profanity in the presence of young people and/or vulnerable adults;
- 20) I will not acquire, possess, or distribute a pornographic image of a young person, nor will I show a pornographic image of an adult to a young person.

***I understand that this code is to be applied fairly and equitably on a case by case basis.***

**I understand that whenever I am working with children and/or youth, as a volunteer or employee, I am subject to a thorough background check including criminal history.**

**I further understand that this criminal background check will be conducted prior to beginning my employment/assignment and thereafter at such times and frequencies as determined by the agency, department, and/or organization by which I am employed and/or to which I am assigned.**

**I understand that criminal background and character reference information may be requested from public and private sources.**

**I understand that any action inconsistent with this Code of Conduct, or actions inconsistent with Diocesan policies for the protection of children and young adults, or failure to take action mandated by this Code of Conduct may result in removal from my position.**

**I also understand that this code of conduct does not abrogate or replace any other obligations that I have under any applicable law, guideline, policy or regulation.**

**I hereby authorize, without reservation, any law enforcement agency, institution, information service bureau, school, employer, reference, or insurance company contacted by the Diocese of Buffalo or its agent to furnish the information described herein. I hereby release the employer and agents and all persons, agencies, and entities providing information or reports about me from any liability arising out of the requests for or release of any of the information or reports herein.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date