

Diocese of Baton Rouge



Code of Ethics and Behavior

for Adults who Minister with Minors in the Diocese of Baton Rouge

“While priestly commitment to the virtue of chastity and gift of celibacy is well known, there will be clear and well-publicized diocesan/eparchial standards of ministerial behavior and appropriate boundaries for clergy and any other church personnel in positions of trust who have regular contact with children and young people.”

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People (Revised Edition)
Article VI

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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A LETTER FROM BISHOP MUENCH

My Dear Friends in Christ:

“Whoever receives this child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me. For the one who is least among all of you is the one who is the greatest.” (Luke 9:48)

Ministry with children and adolescents is a sacred privilege and, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, has historically been a source of growth and conversion in the lives of young people throughout the Diocese of Baton Rouge. Catechists, educators, youth ministers, scouting leaders, coaches, clergy, religious, and many other adults have continually responded to God’s call of serving the youth of our diocese in profound and lasting ways. At a time in our nation’s history when young people are in great need of examples of faith and character, many adults have risen again and again to this challenge. It is out of our church’s desire to serve young people and within the context of the many needs facing young people, society, and the church today that we, as a diocese, promulgate this *Code of Ethics and Behavior*. I would like to take this opportunity to offer my thanks to the members of our Diocesan Committee for Child Protection, who, under the leadership of Fr. John Carville, have developed this document. The pages that follow here represent almost a year of hard and dedicated work.

In ministry with minors we are all on a journey, with the young people entrusted to our care and with one another as adults. To make this journey is indeed one of the most sacred privileges given to us by God. Such an opportunity is both life-giving and challenging. Our motivation should be based in the reality that we are all, as Saint Paul describes, on a journey toward a common destination: happiness, good health, and fulfillment in this life and eternal life with God in the next. His words remind us of the responsibility that is ours as we walk together. *“So we are always courageous,”* he writes, *“although we know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, for we walk by faith, not by sight.”* (2 Cor. 5:6-7) An awareness of the significance of this journey and the urgency that accompanies it is something that we, as adults, are called to embrace.

Our Holy Father Pope John Paul II described the nature of our role in relationship with young people simply and succinctly when he offered his address at the annual World Youth Day celebration in Manila in 1995. He said, *“as Jesus with the disciples on the road to Emmaus, so too the Church must become today the traveling companion of young people.”* (Pope John Paul II, *Youth: Sent to Proclaim True Liberation*. World Youth Day 1995, Philippines.)

In 1997 the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops offered an invitation to us as adults to broaden our understanding of our role in the lives of children and adolescents, in the document, entitled, *Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry*. The words of our Bishops are applicable for any setting in which we, as Church, attend to the basic needs of young people, as they identified these 3 goals of this ministry:

1. To empower young people to live as disciples of Jesus Christ in the world today.

2. To draw young people to responsible participation in the life, mission, and work of the faith community.
3. To foster the personal and spiritual growth of each young person.

“To accomplish these goals,” the Bishops wrote, “it will take the people and resources of the entire Church.” (*Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry*, 1997, p.2)

More specific to this document, the Bishops have made clear the Church’s commitment to child protection and safe environment, stating: “Let there be no doubt or confusion on anyone’s part: for us, your bishops, our obligation to protect children and young people and to prevent sexual abuse flows from the mission and example given to us by Jesus Christ himself, in whose name we serve.” (*Charter for the Protection of Our Children* Preamble, © 2002. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.)

It is with gratitude to God and great hope and optimism that I promulgate this *Code of Ethics and Behavior for Adults who Minister with Minors*, toward the end of helping all adults in the Diocese of Baton Rouge to be the most effective, Christlike examples possible for the children and young people to whom we minister and to assist in providing the safest environments possible for this ministry. May God continue to bless the young people of our diocese and the countless adults who minister with them.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Robert W. Muench, D.D.

SECTION 1

1. ONGOING FORMATION AND PUBLICATION

(*Adult Formation and Publication of this Code of Ethics and Behavior*)

Value Statement- formation and training for adults who enter into ministry for the first time and ongoing formation for those already in ministry is a priority for the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

- A. **Annual Formation Workshop-** it will be the policy in the Diocese of Baton Rouge that all employees and volunteers who are new to ministry with minors (in any capacity) will, prior to their entrance into that ministry, attended a formation and information workshop for the purpose of discussing this Code of Ethics and Behavior and, after reading this Code of Ethics and Behavior, will sign the Verification Form, on page 19.
- B. **Additional Training-** along with the annual formation workshop described above, those working with minors shall have additional training appropriate to their level of responsibility.
- C. **Publication of this Code-** this Code of Ethics and Behavior will be published annually throughout the Diocese of Baton Rouge to diocesan institutions and the public at-large, along with a letter from our bishop, by way of diocesan media and other appropriate forms of communication. Along with this Code of Ethics and Behavior, the Diocesan Policy Regarding the Reporting of Child Abuse, as well as the poster describing this process, and the diocesan document, entitled, Protecting Our Children: Understanding and Preventing Child Sexual Abuse, will be published to diocesan institutions and kept in plain view for all staff members and all associated with that institution to see.

SECTION 2

2. ETHICS AND BEHAVIOR

(In Ministry with Minors in the Diocese of Baton Rouge)

Value Statement- all adults who minister with minors in the Diocese of Baton Rouge are called to embrace a code of ethics and behavior that is in keeping with the Gospel and the values of our Catholic faith.

A. This *Code of Ethics and Behavior* makes the distinction between *ethics* and *behavior*. While the two are directly linked with one another, it is important to discuss a distinction between one's *image and understanding* of ministry with minors and one's actual *behavior*.

A.1 *Ethics in Ministry with Minors* refers to, but is not be limited to, the following:

A.1.2 One's image of self as an adult in relationship with children and young people

A.1.3 One's motivation for seeking involvement in ministry with minors

A.1.4 One's understanding of honesty and integrity in relationships with other adults

A.1.5 One's commitment to a healthy and mature style of ministry with minors

A.2 *Behavior in Ministry with Minors* is defined as the style of ministry and relating with minors within (and beyond) the context of that ministry. Examples of areas to be considered when reflecting on one's own behavior and that of other adults for whom one may have supervision, would include but not be limited to the following:

A.2.1 One's awareness of what is appropriate and inappropriate in ministry with minors

A.2.2 One's awareness of the situations and contexts in which they place themselves

A.2.3 One's language and depth of personal sharing with minors

A.2.4 One's behavior in ministerial, social, or recreational settings

A.2.5 One's behavior (as an adult) toward other adults involved in a child's life

These are just a few examples of some of the general areas of behavior in ministry with minors. These, along with other areas, will be discussed in further detail in **Section 9** of this *Code of Ethics and Behavior*.

SECTION 3

3. ADULTS WHO MINISTER WITH MINORS IN THE DIOCESE OF BATON ROUGE

(Adults to whom this Code applies):

Value Statement- every role fulfilled by an adult in ministry with minors is to be guided by the precepts of this Code of Ethics and Behavior, given that every role has as its ultimate goal the spiritual welfare and formation of our children.

A. This Code of Ethics and Behavior and all of the policies and procedures connected with it applies to *any adult who serves in ministry with minors on a regular basis, in any role*, in the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

A.1 *An adult* is defined as *a person who is 18 years of age or older*.

A.2 *Personnel* are defined as adults who minister with minors, whether as employees or volunteers.

A.3 This Code of Ethics and Behavior applies to *all Church Parish and Catholic School environments and personnel*, whether employed or volunteer.

B. Adults who serve in any of the following (or similar) roles are required to read and abide by all of the standards of this Code of Ethics and Behavior:

B.1 In the Parish Setting:

B.1.2 Directors of Religious Education

B.1.3 All Catechists and Youth Ministry Personnel

B.1.4 All Youth House Personnel

B.1.5 Vacation Bible School Personnel

B.1.6 Altar Server Coordinators and Personnel

B.1.7 Youth Music Ministry Coordinators and Personnel

B.1.8 Any Personnel Having Access to Files Pertaining to Minors

B.1.9 All Clergy, Religious, and Seminarians Affiliated with the Diocese of Baton Rouge

B.1.10 All Youth Retreat Ministry Personnel

B.1.11 Any Adult Sponsor *Provided by the Parish* for Any Sacrament of Initiation

B.1.12 If there is any question as to whether or not this Code of Ethics and Behavior applies to a particular role in a parish, the *Parish Contact Person is instructed to contact the Diocesan Child Protection Officer* for further clarification.

B.2 In the Catholic School Setting:

B.2.1 All Catholic School Employees

B.2.2 All Catholic School Coaches (Employed and Volunteer)

B.2.3 All Other Catholic School Volunteers

SECTION 4

4. PARISH AND SCHOOL CONTACT PERSONS

(for *Every Parish and Catholic School* in the Diocese of Baton Rouge)

Value Statement- collaboration and communication between parishes, schools, and all institutions affiliated with the Diocese of Baton Rouge is essential in fulfilling effective ministry with minors.

A. Every parish and Catholic school in the Diocese of Baton Rouge is required to appoint one adult as a ***Parish or School Contact Person***.

A.1 The Parish or School Contact Person ***must be someone other than*** clergy (priest or deacon) or school principal.

A.2 The name of the Parish or School Contact Person must be on file with the Diocesan Child Protection Officer.

A.3 Any change of personnel in this role must be reported to the Diocesan Child Protection Officer immediately.

A.4 The role of the Parish or School Contact Person is as follows:

A.4.1 To coordinate the implementation of the Criminal Background Investigation Process, as required by the State of Louisiana and the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

A.4.2 To coordinate the establishment and maintenance of all child protection records, in accordance with diocesan policy.

A.4.5 **Verification of Compliance:** the Parish or School Contact Person must be able, at any time, to verify in written form that their parish or school is in complete compliance with all child protection policies connected with A.4.1 and A.4.2 above.

SECTION 5

5. ADULT EMPLOYMENT AND RECOMMENDATION

(for Catholic Schools and Parishes in the Diocese of Baton Rouge):

Value Statement- the invitation and acceptance of adults into a relationship with the Diocese of Baton Rouge as personnel shall be done in a manner that is both professional and in keeping with the norms of the Diocese of Baton Rouge and the laws of the State of Louisiana.

A. APPLICATION FOR EMPLOYMENT OR VOLUNTEER SERVICE IN A CATHOLIC SCHOOL (in Every Diocesan School):

A.1 ***Adults applying for employment in a Catholic school*** must complete the standard application process, as outlined in the Diocesan Catholic Schools Administrative Manual. (See the Diocesan Catholic Schools Administrative Manual).

A.2 ***Adults applying for service in a Catholic school as a volunteer*** are to refer to the Volunteer Packet of information that accompanies this Code of Ethics and Behavior to determine the type of application process, if any, that will need to be completed. The extent of the application process and the forms to be completed are determined by the level and type of service that they will perform.

B. APPLICATION FOR EMPLOYMENT OR VOLUNTEER SERVICE IN A PARISH (in Every Parish in the Diocese of Baton Rouge):

B.1 ***Adults applying for employment in a parish*** must complete the standard application process, as outlined in the Volunteer Packet of Information that accompanies this Code of Ethics and Behavior.

B.2 ***Adults applying for service in a parish as a volunteer*** are to refer to the Volunteer Packet of Information that accompanies this Code of Ethics and Behavior to determine the type of application process, if any, that will need to be completed. The extent of the application process and the forms to be completed are determined by the level and type of service that they will perform.

B. CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECKS AND FINGERPRINTING
(for Adults in *Parish and School Employment* or *Volunteer Ministry*):

Adults who apply for employment or volunteer ministry with minors in any parish or diocesan school must complete the standard process of a *Criminal Background Investigation (and Fingerprinting in the case of schools)*, as prescribed by the State of Louisiana and the Diocese of Baton Rouge and outlined in the *Volunteer Packet of Information* that accompanies this *Code of Ethics and Behavior*.

B.1 *Criminal Background Checks and Fingerprinting by Another Institution*:

- B.1.1** Criminal Background Investigation files may be transferred within the institution of the Diocese of Baton Rouge. However, these files will not be accepted from an institution not affiliated with the Diocese of Baton Rouge. **Exceptions to this have to be explicitly approved by the Diocesan Child Protection Officer.**

SECTION 6

6. THE REPORTING OF THE ALLEGED ABUSE OF A MINOR:

(applies to any adult serving in ministry with minors in the Diocese of Baton Rouge)

Value Statement- the protection of minors entrusted to our care, creating and maintaining a safe environment for them in ministry, and our support for them when they have been taken advantage of in any way is our highest priority and will be fulfilled in keeping with the norms of the Diocese of Baton Rouge and the laws of the State of Louisiana.

A. Regarding the alleged abuse of a minor, any adult who serves in ministry with minors in the Diocese of Baton Rouge, in any context and role, is considered to be a **mandated reporter** and **shall report such alleged abuse by strictly following the diocesan norms and procedures.**

B. The diocesan process for reporting the alleged abuse of a minor, outlined on pages 20-21 of this *Code of Ethics and Behavior*, is in compliance with the legal standards set by Louisiana State law.

C. Ministry with minors takes place in many different contexts. Therefore, it should be noted that the following are examples of ministerial roles in which adults are considered to be mandated reporters. This list is not all-inclusive. Questions regarding further clarification on the issue of a mandated reporter should be brought to the direct attention of the Diocesan Child Protection Officer:

C.1 Catholic School Faculty, Staff, and Parent Volunteers

C.2 Coaches (both Employed and Volunteer)

C.3 All Parish Employees

C.4 All Adult Volunteers Serving in Parishes in Ministries with Minors:

C.4.1 Catechists

C.4.2 Youth Ministers

C.4.3 Vacation Bible School Staff

C.4.4 All Youth Retreat Ministry Personnel

C.4.5 All Youth House Personnel

C.4.6 Altar Server Coordinators and Personnel

C.4.7 Youth Music Ministry Coordinators and Personnel

C.4.8 Clergy

C.4.9 Seminarians

C.4.10 *Any Adult Serving in Any Ministry with Minors*

- C.5** Again, since the above is not a complete list but a list of examples, all questions regarding further clarification on the issue of a mandated reporter should be brought to the direct attention of the Diocesan Child Protection Officer.
- D.** All parishes and Catholic schools in the Diocese of Baton Rouge will review on an annual basis, with their personnel, the diocesan process for reporting abuse.

SECTION 7

7. PRIVATE COMMUNICATION WITH MINORS:

(Between Minors and Adults who Minister with them in the Diocese of Baton Rouge)

Value Statement- adults in ministry with minors will commit themselves to the support of parents in their role and the enhancement of the parent-child relationship.

- A. Private communication with a minor child is defined as ***any type and form of communication that takes place apart from an appropriate and approved ministry setting.***
- B. Therefore, adults in ministry with minors shall not enter into any type of private communication with a minor that is not within the scope of their ministry, or any communication that would undermine the parent-child relationship or serve to foster an inappropriate relationship with a minor or group of minors.
- C. Adults in ministry are called to promote healthy communication between a parent and child and to not hinder the development of such a relationship.
- D. It is important for adults to consider the purpose, tone, and medium of any private communication with a minor child (whether that communication take place in person, in writing, or in any type of electronic form.)
 - D.1 If there is a legitimate need to communicate with minors by way of email, it is strongly recommended that the only address given by an adult is the email address that is formally associated with the parish, school, or other ministry institution in which they serve.
 - D.1.1 It is also recommended that parishes and diocesan schools establish a policy regarding email communication between adults and minors, if these institutions have not already done so.
 - D.3 Adults in ministry should avoid relationships and communication with minors that take on the following 3 characteristics:
 - D.3.1 Relationships that are ***Secretive***
 - D.3.2 Relationships that are ***Exclusive***
 - D.3.3 Relationships that are ***Competitive***

E. There are **2 exceptions** to this aforementioned private communication policy. They are as follows:

E.1 *Communication for the Purpose of Information:* it is acceptable for an adult in ministry to respond to a minor's inquiry regarding information connected with a particular area or ministry program, such as:

E.1.1 Inquiries Regarding Religious Education Class Times

E.1.2 Class Assignment Directions or Due Dates

E.1.3 Other Information Associated with a Class or Other Ministry Program or Project

E.2 *Spontaneous Communication:* it is not only acceptable but normal for an adult in ministry to enter into a spontaneous conversation with a minor. However, adults should consider that some issues, even if shared spontaneously in open conversation, must be brought to the attention of a minor's parent(s).

E.2.1 Adults should also give particular attention to Section VI of this Code of Ethics and Behavior, regarding the reporting of the alleged abuse of a minor and Section VIII, regarding confidentiality in relationships with minors.

F. *Issues of Concern Shared in Email Communication and Journaling:* adults in ministry with minors are obligated to read thoroughly any email communication that the adult receives from a minor child. If it is appropriate to ask a minor to make journal entries as part of the religious education process, then adults are also obligated to read and take seriously such entries and to respond to them in keeping with the standards stated in this Code of Ethics and Behavior, particularly if the information shared is that of the alleged abuse of that minor child or if the information leads the adult to suspect that a minor child is at risk of harming him or herself or others.

G. *An Adult's Personal Telephone Number:* Unless there is a shared friendship between a minor and an adult's own minor child, it is strongly recommended that adults in ministry with minors not give their personal (home or cell) telephone number to a minor child.

G.1 It is also recommended that parishes and diocesan schools establish a policy regarding telephone communication between adults and minors, if these institutions have not already done so.

SECTION 8

8. CONFIDENTIALITY AND MINORS:

(*Between Minors and Adults who Minister with them* in the Diocese of Baton Rouge)

Value Statement: Confidentiality in ministry with minors has an appropriate place. However, no communication between adults and the minors to whom they minister is protected by privilege (i.e.- such as that which exists between a priest and penitent in sacramental confession, a lawyer and client, or a doctor and patient.) Adults will, therefore, commit themselves to a specific standard regarding communication with minors.

A. This Code distinguishes **3 TYPES** of confidentiality between adults and the minors to whom they minister in the Diocese of Baton Rouge:

A.1 When confidentiality is requested ***of an adult by a minor child***: no adult in ministry with minors in the Diocese of Baton Rouge shall promise confidentiality to a minor or group of minors.

A.2 When confidentiality is offered and ***promised by an adult (to a minor child)***: no person in ministry with minors in the Diocese of Baton Rouge shall promise or choose on their own to invoke confidentiality in any of their communication with a minor or group of minors. There are, however, 2 exceptions to this standard:

A.2.1 When the information shared by a minor with an adult is an allegation of abuse, then the adult with whom the information is shared must follow the diocesan guidelines for reporting alleged abuse, as outlined in **Section III** of this **Code of Ethics and Behavior**.

A.2.2 In settings such as small groups during a retreat, an adult small group leader may encourage the group to keep what is shared in the group confidential, unless a member of the group shares information that leads the adult to suspect that a minor is at risk of harming him or herself or others. Such information will not be kept confidential.

A.3 When confidentiality is ***requested of a minor child by an adult***: no person in ministry with minors in the Diocese of Baton Rouge shall ever ask a minor to keep confidential any communication shared with that minor by that adult, nor any activity that occurs between that minor (or a group of minors) and that adult.

B. Questions for clarification regarding further confidentiality issues should be directed to the Diocesan Child Protection Officer.

SECTION 9

9. CONDUCT, BEHAVIOR, LANGUAGE AND PHYSICAL CONTACT: (*Between Adults and the Minors* to whom they Minister in the Diocese of Baton Rouge)

Value Statement- the manner in which adults relate, speak, and behave with minors will have a profound effect on (both) the quality and integrity of their ministry and on the children entrusted to their care. Our behavior, as adults, will be modeled upon the example of Jesus Christ.

A. Adults in ministry with minors in the Diocese of Baton Rouge shall conduct themselves and their ministry in keeping with a specific code of conduct and behavior.

A.1 Adults in ministry with minors should commit themselves to the following standards:

A.1.1 Church personnel shall commit themselves to Personal Prayer and Faithful Participation in the Sacramental Life of the Church

A.1.2 Church personnel shall exhibit the highest Christian ethical and moral standards and personal integrity.

A.1.3 Church personnel shall conduct themselves in a manner that is consistent with the discipline, norms, and teachings of the Catholic Church.

A.1.4 Church personnel shall provide a professional work environment that is free from harassment.

A.1.5 Church personnel shall not take improper advantage of a counseling and/or authoritative relationship for their own benefit.

A.1.6 Church personnel shall not abuse or neglect a minor or an adult.

A.1.7 Church personnel shall strictly follow the guidelines for reporting the alleged abuse of a minor, as promulgated in this Code of Ethics and Behavior.

A.1.8 Church personnel shall avoid any situation with minors that is contrary to the standards stated in this Code of Ethics and Behavior.

B. ***Behavior and Conduct***: Adults in ministry with minors in the Diocese of Baton Rouge shall conduct their ministry in such a style of behavior and conduct that is healthy and balanced by avoiding the types of situations listed below. ***An adult in***

ministry with minors shall not:

- B.1.1** Plan or conduct any type of youth-oriented event in the name of the Diocese of Baton Rouge, other than those that are approved, planned, and conducted by their church and/or school ministry team.
- B.1.2** Be alone in any situation with a minor or group of minors that does not allow for public visibility and accessibility.
- B.1.3** Share a room with (i.e.- stay overnight in the same room with) a minor or group of minors during any type of event.
- B.1.4** Allow a minor or group of minors to stay overnight in their own home, unless the reason for such an overnight stay is that of a shared friendship between that adult's child and another child.
- B.1.5** Accompany a minor or group of minors to any type of adult-oriented location, such as a bar.
- B.1.6** View movies or other similar materials containing inappropriate content with and/or in the presence of a minor or group of minors.
- B.1.7** Listen to music that is degrading of any person, race, or of one's sexuality, with or in the presence of a minor or group of minors.
- B.1.8** Smoke or use tobacco products in the presence of minors.
- B.1.9** Contribute alcohol to, use, possess, or be under the influence of alcohol in the presence of minors.
- B.1.10** Use, possess, be under the influence of illegal drugs or contribute such drugs to minors at any time.
- B.1.11** Pose any health risk to minors (i.e., situations in which a health issue is contagious.)
- B.1.12** Strike, spank, shake, or slap a minor.
- B.1.13** Touch a minor in a sexual or other inappropriate manner.
- B.1.14** Use any discipline that frightens or humiliates a minor or group of minors.

C. *Language and Conversation:* Adults in ministry with minors in the Diocese of Baton Rouge shall conduct their ministry by using language and styles of conversation that are healthy, balanced, and in keeping with the diocesan norms

contained in this Code of Ethics and Behavior. **An adult in ministry with minors shall not:**

- C.1 Make any type of statement or comment about a minor's body type, shape, build, and looks.
- C.2 Make any type of statement or comment that degrades or puts down in anyway any other adult, minor, or group of people. This would include, for example, but not be limited to: any type of racial joke or slur or degrading comment about any race, person, or group of people.
- C.3 Use profanity in the presence of a minor or group of minors.
- C.4 Make any type of statement to a minor or group of minors that has as its purpose that of (or runs the risk of) initiating or fostering an exclusive relationship with that minor or group of minors.
- C.5 Share with a minor or a group of minors anything about their own sexual history or any other past (or present) experience that crosses the boundary between public and private.

D. **Physical Contact:** in ministry with minors physical contact can at times be appropriate and serve as an effective component of that ministry. Adults in ministry with minors in the Diocese of Baton Rouge shall be mindful that some forms of physical contact are appropriate and some forms inappropriate. In ministry with minors in the Diocese of Baton Rouge, **the following forms of physical contact are appropriate:**

D.1 Forms of Physical Contact that are **Appropriate:**

- D.1.1 Handshakes and "High Fives"
- D.1.2 Brief Hugs (when Initiated by Minors)
- D.1.3 Hand Holding (during Group Prayer)
- D.1.4 Contact that is a Component of an Acceptable Group Activity (such as an icebreaker, group prayer service, or sporting activity)

D.2 Forms of Physical Contact that are **Inappropriate and Not Allowed:**

(Adults in ministry with minors in the Diocese of Baton Rouge shall **never engage in the following types of physical contact**):

- D.2.1 Kissing and Prolonged Embraces
- D.2.2 Any Type of Massage
- D.2.3 Showering or Bathing with Minors
- D.2.4 Allowing Minors to Sit on One's Shoulders or Lap
- D.2.5 Fondling, Petting, or any Type of Genital Contact
- D.2.6 Leaning Against a Minor (When Seated or Standing)

SECTION 10

10. CHAPERONES: Definition, Minimum Age Requirement, Role Distinctions, and Ratio of Adults to Youth

Value Statement- adults and young adults alike have responded to the call to serve in ministry with children. As more and more people have come forward to offer their time and talent, clearer standards regarding the role of chaperone have been developed as a means of creating the safest environment possible.

- A. Definition of Chaperone**- a chaperone is defined as an adult 21 years of age or older who serves in a leadership capacity with minors as part of an event or program sponsored by a parish, school, or any other organization formally affiliated with the Diocese of Baton Rouge.
- B. Minimum Age of a Chaperone**- in the Diocese of Baton Rouge, the minimum age of a chaperone is 21. (Please see the distinctions in roles described in paragraphs C through C.3 below.)
- C. Role Distinctions**- as young adults and minors often assist in ministry with minors, the following distinctions are made regarding the role of chaperone in the Diocese of Baton Rouge:
- C.1 Adult Chaperone** - an adult, 21 years of age or older, allowed to serve in the capacity of chaperone (defined in paragraph A above); he/she is required to complete the standard Criminal Background Investigation and (Fingerprinting process in the case of schools), as prescribed by the State of Louisiana and the Diocese of Baton Rouge, if his/her contact with minors will be regular.
- C.2 Young Adult Witness** - an adult who is 18 to 20 years of age allowed to serve in the capacity of chaperone ***with an adult chaperone*** (as defined in paragraph B.1 above) ***present for the entirety of the program or event***, and is required to complete the standard Criminal Background Investigation (and Fingerprinting process in the case of schools), as prescribed by the State of Louisiana and the Diocese of Baton Rouge, if his/her contact with minors will be regular.
- C.3 Peer Minister** - a minor (in other words, a person below the age of 18): never allowed to serve in the capacity of chaperone, he/she is required to complete all proper training, and all appropriate forms for the role in which he/she will function.
- D. Ratio of Adults to Youth**- in ministry with minors in the Diocese of Baton Rouge, the ratio of adults to youth for any event or program involving minors shall be 1 adult for every 6 minors. For events and programs connected with Catholic schools, consult the *Catholic Schools Office of the Diocese of Baton Rouge*.

***Application for Employment and Volunteer Service
in Ministry with Minors***

REMINDER

Those who coordinate ministry with minors in the Diocese of Baton Rouge are reminded that all forms for application for ministry are contained in the **Volunteer Information Packet** which accompanies this **Code of Ethics and Behavior**.

The "Volunteer Information Packet" may be obtained from the Child Protection Site Coordinators of the employee's/volunteer's Church Parish or Catholic School.

Criminal Background Check and Fingerprinting

REMINDER

All adult applicants for ministry with minors in the Diocese of Baton Rouge must also complete the standard Criminal Background Check (and Fingerprinting Process in the case of schools), as described in **Section 5** of this **Code of Ethics and Behavior**.

DIOCESE OF BATON ROUGE



**ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF RECEIPT AND REVIEW
OF THE CODE OF ETHICS AND BEHAVIOR
FOR ADULTS WHO MINISTER WITH MINORS
IN THE DIOCESE OF BATON ROUGE**

By signing the attached page, I acknowledge that I have received and thoroughly read the attached Code of Ethics and Behavior for Adults who Minister with Minors in the Diocese of Baton Rouge. Furthermore, by signing the attached page, I formally pledge to adhere to and conduct myself and my ministerial responsibilities according to all of the standards contained herein.

I accept responsibility for compliance with these policies as stated herein and the responsibility to refer any questions to my immediate supervisor or the Diocesan Child Protection Officer for further clarification. I further understand that the Diocese of Baton Rouge reserves the right to change, modify, and/or revise any of the policies contained herein at any time.

Diocesan Child Protection Officer
Mrs. Amy J. Cordon
Office of Child and Youth Protection
P.O. Box 2028
Baton Rouge, LA 70821-2028

Telephone 225-242-0202
Email youthprotection@diobr.org

(PLEASE READ AND SIGN THE NEXT PAGE)

Diocese of Baton Rouge
Code of Ethics Acknowledgement

I have read the *Code of Ethics and Behavior for Adults who Minister with Minors* given to me for the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

I understand the *Code of Ethics* and agree to abide by the guidelines listed therein.

Volunteer/Employee Signature

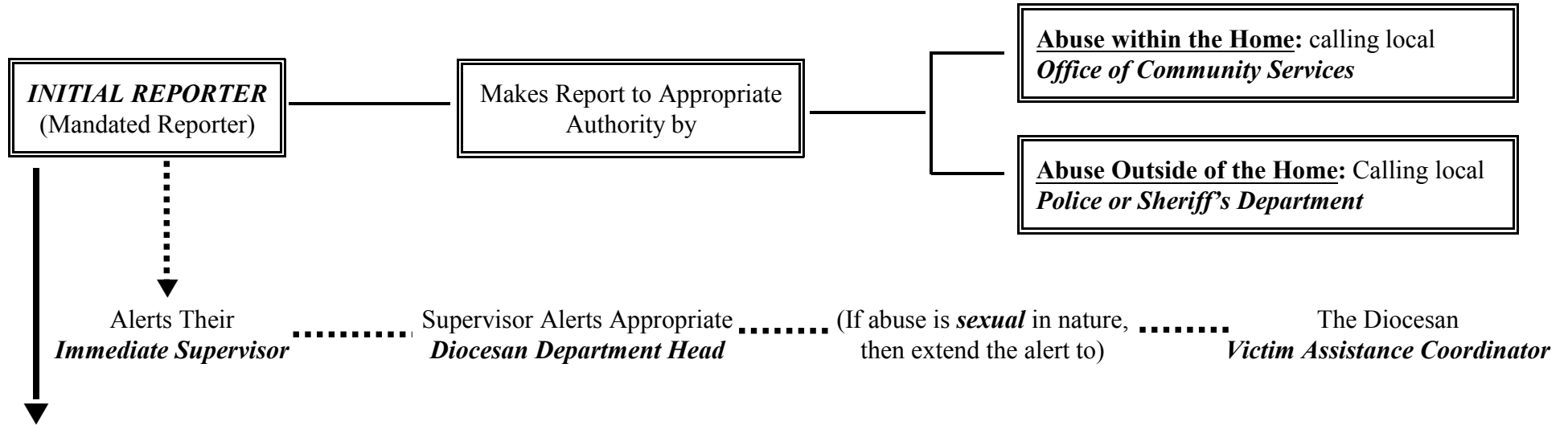
Date

This statement is to be returned and placed in the personnel or volunteer file.

The Diocese of Baton Rouge
Process for Reporting the Alleged Abuse of a Minor
(Sexual and Other)

Scenario #1

When the alleged abuser is *an employee of the Diocese of Baton Rouge (other than clergy, religious, or seminarian) or a volunteer in ministry* affiliated with the Diocese of Baton Rouge or other person.



An **“Initial Reporter”** is defined as, *“one who has direct knowledge from a minor that abuse (of that minor) is occurring or has occurred.”* An initial reporter could be: a Catholic school faculty or staff member, coach, catechist, youth minister, D.R.E., clergy V.B.S. staff member, college retreat team member, seminarian, etc. An **“Initial Reporter”** is also considered a **“Mandated Reporter”** which means that they are required by Louisiana State Law to report abuse.

- Summary of Steps for **Making an Initial Report**
 (All to be Done **Immediately**)
1. **Telephone** the Appropriate Authority
 2. Follow that Authority’s Instructions
 3. **Alert** Your Immediate Supervisor

KEY
 (For Lines Shown Above)

————— To File a Report to a Public Authority
 - - - - - To Alert Another Party (i.e.-supervisor)

█ Signifies the Definition of an **Initial Reporter** and a **Mandated Reporter**

The Diocese of Baton Rouge
Process for Reporting the Alleged Abuse of a Minor
(Sexual and Other)

Scenario #2

When the alleged abuser is a *priest, deacon, religious brother or sister, or a seminarian* serving in and/or affiliated with the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

