** Code of Conduct & Behavior Standards for**

**CATHOLIC DIOCESE**

***of* FORT WORTH**

**Independent Contractors**

*"For our boast is this, the testimony of our conscience that we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially toward you, with the simplicity and sincerity of God, (and) not by human wisdom but by the grace of God."*

**(St.** **Paul, 2 Cor. 1:12)**

Article 6 of the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People,* published by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, mandates: "There are to be clear and well-publicized diocesan/eparchial standards of ministerial behavior and appropriate boundaries for clergy and for any other paid personnel and volunteers of the Church in positions of trust who have regular contact with children and young people." This document is the Diocese of Fort Worth's response to this mandate and is one of the cornerstones of our Safe Environment Program. All clergy, religious, and lay ministers (employees and volunteers) indicate their agreement with and adherence to the Code of Conduct by signing and dating it.

**Ethical Obligations**

**Independent Contractors** (Contractors) are accountable to His Excellency, Bishop Michael F. Olson, or the person(s) he designates and, if serving a parish or school, to the pastor or other duly appointed representative under the authority of the Bishop.

**Contractors** must be aware of and comply with all applicable parish/school, organizational and/or diocesan policies and guidelines with special attention to sexual misconduct, safety, transportation, , social media, and medical emergency policies.

**Additional Obligations Include:**

**Inclusion**

* Recognize the dignity of each person and refrain from actions or words that are disrespectful of anyone.
* Engage with all people in accordance with the law and the requirements set forth in this document.
* Ensure that all persons have reasonable access to the resources, services, and opportunities they require with particular regard for persons with special needs or disabilities.

**Accountability**

* Exercise responsible stewardship of resources while holding themselves to the highest standards of integrity regarding the fiscal matters placed in their trust.
* With other employees, contractors and volunteers be responsible for supporting each other toward being effective leaders. This support must include discussing concerns about inappropriate behavior with their supervisor.

**Confidentiality**

* Respect confidentiality.
* Adhere to civil law and diocesan policies and procedures concerning the reporting of neglect or abuse or whenever physical harm could come to the person or to a third party.

**Conduct**

* Sustain respectful relationships with all those they encounter in fulfilling their obligations and performing their work, avoiding manipulation, sexual harassment and other abuses of the authority that comes with executing their contract.
* Maintain appropriate professional boundaries with others they encounter while engaged in performing their contract.
* Model healthy and positive behaviors with all those encountered through their work and executing their contract.
* Procuring, providing, or using alcohol for persons under 21 years of age and procuring, providing, or using controlled substances for anyone is illegal, inappropriate, and unethical.

**Referrals and Intervention**

* Be aware of the signs of sexual abuse and physical neglect.
* Be aware of personal and professional limitations with respect to paraprofessional counseling and make appropriate referrals.
* Adhere to civil law and diocesan and parish policies and procedures for reporting abuse, suspected abuse, or neglect.

**BEHAVIOR STANDARDS**

* Independent contractors are to act as role models 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 contractor 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 individual having an inappropriate relationship with a child or young person must be reported promptly to that person's supervisor or parish or diocesan leadership.
* 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 an adult and a child or young person is not allowed.
* When initiating physical contact, utmost 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 interaction, if necessary, between a contractor and children or youth 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 and emergent 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.

All observed Code of Conduct violations must be reported to the supervisor or parish or diocesan leadership and documented. Any contractors who cannot maintain these Behavior Standards cannot serve in the Diocese**.**

**UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIORS**

* Engaging in actions which are disruptive to the ministry and public worship
* Speaking graphically about sexual activities (including your own) and/or allowing others to do so (this includes telling sexually suggestive jokes)
* Hosting parish or school events for children or youth in your home without at least one other Safe Environment trained adult present
* Showing pornographic materials (photos, films, cartoons, stories, and drawings) to others
* Acquiring, possessing, or distributing sexual and/or pornographic images of children or adults
* Allowing anyone to become sexual with you or with another
* Assaultive behavior with another, specifically including spanking, shaking, slapping, wrestling, tickling or physically punishing children or youth
* Giving, possessing or being under the influence of alcohol
* Giving, possessing or being under the influence of illegal drugs
* Giving persons tobacco products
* Shaming, degrading, ridiculing, threatening, belittling, or humiliating another person
* Using foul or abusive language
* Showing favoritism
* Going out/Dating a child or young person
* Having physical contact with another that can be misinterpreted
* Wearing provocative or revealing attire
* Being nude in front of others
* Being in bed with children or youth
* Keeping "secrets" about relationships
* Showing affection when no one else is around or in bedrooms, closets, restricted areas, and other private rooms
* Staring while others are dressing
* Commenting on others' bodies
* Taking pictures or video/digital recording while others are dressing or showering
* Failing to adhere to uniform or accepted standards of affection

**WARNING SIGNS**

* Wearing special clothes when you know you're going to see a certain person
* Spending extra time grooming yourself when you know you are going to see a certain person
* Finding ways or reasons to be alone with a certain person
* Keeping aspects of your relationship with a person secret from others (such as how often you talk on the phone or see each other alone)
* Giving and receiving special gifts from a certain person
* Neglecting ministry to others in order to spend more time with a certain person
* Sharing personal information about others with a certain person
* Sharing personal information or seeking help with personal problems from a certain person
* Discussing adult issues with children and/or youth
* Excessively looking forward to seeing a certain person
* Fantasizing or daydreaming about a certain person
* Spending disproportionate time or devoting more time with a certain person than with others

**DISPLAYS OF AFFECTION**

**Appropriate Inappropriate**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Asking permission before touching |  | Any form of unwanted affection |
| Side hugs (with adults) |  | Full frontal hugs or "bear hugs" |
| Brief shoulder to shoulder hugs |  | Touching bottoms, chests, or genital areas |
| Pats on the shoulder or back |  | Massages |
| Handshakes |  | Patting others on the thigh, knee, or leg |
| "High-fives" and hand slapping |  | Tickling or wrestling |
| Verbal praise |  | Touching or hugging from behind |
| Touching hands, faces, shoulders and arms |  | Games involving inappropriate touching |
| Arms around shoulders |  | Kisses on the mouth |
| Holding hands during prayer or when a person is upset |  | Special gift giving to/from a certain person |
| Holding hands while walking with small children |  |  |
| Sitting close to small children |  |  |
| Kneeling or bending down for hugs with a small child |  |  |

**Violations of the *Code of Conduct & Behavior Standards for Independent Contractors* are**

**grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal or termination of the contract(s)**. Independent contractors operating or serving in 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 action up to and including cancellation of the contract.

**Code of Conduct Acknowledgement**

I understand that violations of the ***Code of Conduct & Behavior Standards for All Independent Contractors*** *(“Code of Conduct”)* as outlined, are grounds for termination of the contract(s). 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 contracts and corresponding roles in which I serve.

Signature Date Email

Printed Name Home Phone Cell Phone

Home Address City, State, Zip

Parish/Location of service City (location)

Primary position/contract service

\* Recognizing that *Independent Contractors* sometimes operate in more than one location, please name your “primary” location. For *Independent Contractors who serve or operate in numerous parishes*, the primary entity is the Diocese, and this form should be submitted to the Safe Environment Department at the Catholic Center. For *Independent Contractors* serving or operating at only one location this form must be submitted to the Safe Environment Coordinator at the location.

**BEHAVIOR STANDARDS**

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

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Printed Name Home Phone Cell Phone

Home Address City, State, Zip

Parish/Location of service City (location)

Primary position/contract service

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