



Code of Pastoral Conduct Interaction with Children and Young People (Revised 2017)

Children and young people are the most important gifts God has entrusted to the Church. In order to create a safe environment that will reverence the dignity of the child's life, all who interact with children and youth within the Diocese of Dodge City are to follow the norms of this Code of Conduct. Violations to the Code of Conduct could result in a public announcement.

As I interact with children and young people, I will:

- Treat everyone with respect, dignity, patience, integrity, courtesy and consideration.
- Use positive reinforcement rather than criticism, competition or comparison.
- Interact with children or youth in areas that are accessible and visible.
- Avoid situations where I am alone with a child or young person.
- Avoid driving alone with a child or young person who is not my own child.
- Refrain from giving expensive gifts to children or youth without approval from parents or guardians and the pastor. The imparting of expensive gifts could be misunderstood by others as grooming behavior.
- Refuse to accept expensive gifts from children, youth or their parents without prior approval from the pastor.
- Report suspected sexual abuse to the pastor or appropriate supervisor and proper local authorities. In cases where suspected abuse was perpetrated by the pastor, supervisor or other church leader, a report should be made immediately to the proper civil authority and to the bishop or his representative.
- Cooperate fully in any investigation that may occur into an allegation of sexual child abuse.
- If I am the director of religious education, principal of a Catholic School or director of youth ministry, I will periodically review this Code of Conduct with those who interact with young people under my supervision.

As I interact with children and young people, I will not:

- Humiliate, ridicule, threaten or degrade; strike, spank, shake or slap children or youth.
- Allow minors to be the primary supervisor of other minors. There must be present one adult who has received safe environment training and has a completed background check.
- Use, possess or be under the influence of alcohol while interacting with minors.
- Use, possess or be under the influence of illegal drugs at any time.
- Touch a child or young person in a sexual way or in any other inappropriate manner.
- Share, promote or disseminate pornographic, sexually explicit or otherwise inappropriate material with a minor. I understand and agree that possessing, posting, downloading or accessing child pornography is a criminal offense. All who interact with minors on behalf of the Diocese of Dodge City have a legal obligation to report this behavior to civil authorities and law enforcement when it is discovered. Proven participation in child pornography will result in strong disciplinary action with regard to employment or volunteer activity.