

Code of Conduct for Clergy, Staff and Volunteers working with Children and Young People

All working or volunteering with children are required to observe the following code of conduct:

1. Respect for children and their rights is an integral element of all interaction.
2. Pastoral ministry to a child / young person should only be held in a publicly accessible place e.g. designated office or room with a clear glass window. Be visible to others when working with children, if at all possible.
3. Clergy, staff and volunteer workers should never plan to be alone in a building, car or a closed room with a child or young person. If one to one contact takes place in an emergency, the matter should be dealt with and parents must be informed.
4. Providing accommodation in the parochial house for minors is prohibited except in the case of family members or children / young people accompanied by parents or guardians. When the need for a visit to the home of a child / young person arises, professional boundaries must be observed at all times.
5. Written consent must be obtained from parents / guardians before organising activities for the children / young people in your care.
6. Establish whether there are any specific medical or dietary requirements.
7. Particular care should be taken to ensure that the privacy of children / young people is respected in places such as swimming pools, showers, toilets and changing rooms.
8. When working with children / young people take care to avoid the trap of becoming a "parental figure" or over involved with one particular child.
9. All trips organised by groups require careful advanced planning and a proportionate number of suitable volunteers to provide adequate supervision. Keep gender balance in mind.
10. Do not take photographs of children / young people while they are in changing areas (e.g. a locker room or bathing facility). Parental consent for taking photographs must always be sought.
11. Use only age appropriate language, media products and activities when working with children and young people. Sexually explicit materials or language are never appropriate.
12. Under no circumstances give alcohol, tobacco or drugs to children or young people.
13. Physical punishment, sexual relationships, emotional or verbal abuse are not permitted under any circumstances.
14. Ensure that the buildings and/or facilities used for activities with children and/or young people are suitable, safe and secure.

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Children are vulnerable and powerless on certain occasions. At times they may have difficulties making decisions in matters relating to their personal safety. As responsible adults, we have a special duty of care towards them.