

PRACTICAL GUIDELINES FOR CONDUCT WHEN INTERACTING WITH CHILD OR YOUNG PERSONS

- A. The Diocesan clergy, religious, employees and volunteers, working in and on behalf of its schools, parishes, Offices of Religious Education and Youth Ministry, and other Diocesan programs or agencies engaged in extensive services with and counseling, educational and spiritual ministries to children and young persons. Children are dependent on adults, particularly adults in positions of trust and leadership. It is vitally important therefore, that reasonable prudence be exercised by all adults that perform services on behalf of the Diocese which involves interaction.
- B. The following is a set of practical guidelines for conducting yourself which must be observed by all clergy, religious, lay employees and volunteers of the Diocese when dealing with children. These guidelines are not intended to prevent you from performing your services or ministry, but rather to assist you in employing good judgment when interacting with children. If you find it necessary to depart from these guidelines due to some extraordinary circumstance, you should be aware of your departure and must be able to justify your actions. If one-on-one involvement with a minor is unavoidable, you must use extreme prudential judgment in your dealings with the minor.
- C. All clergy, religious, lay employees and volunteers of the Diocese will observe the following guidelines when engaging in ministry to or otherwise interacting with children:
- (1) Children under eighteen (18) years of age who are not relatives may not stay overnight in the parish rectory, in the Diocese, unless accompanied by a parent or guardian.
 - (2) Avoid any physical contact with a child that would be deemed inappropriate if carried out in the presence of the child's parent.
 - (3) Except in unavoidable circumstances that require otherwise, for example a pre-schooler who needs assistance in the restroom, do not be alone with a child in residence, school, sleeping facility, locker room, restroom, dressing facility, or other closed area.
 - (4) Any one-on-one counseling, tutoring, training, or other assistance or service with a child must be conducted in an open room setting without closed doors, except for a door

with a window, and only if readily observable by others who may be in the room or in a hallway outside the room.

- (5) Seek responsible adults to be present at events involving children, such as games and athletic activities.
- (6) Youth group trips and school field trips must have enough adult chaperones, preferably of the same sex as the participants, to provide adequate supervision based on the type of activity.
- (7) Never take an overnight trip with a child.
- (8) Alcohol, in the form of wine, may be given to those under the age of 21 only on a very limited quantity and only preparation for First Communion. Otherwise, never provide alcohol to anyone under the age of 21. Alcohol should not be used by adult supervisors or chaperones if activities with, or responsibilities for children, are scheduled.
- (9) Always maintain a professional relationship in dealing with children.
- (10) If one-on-one counseling, tutoring or other training or care of a child requires frequent or regular appointments, parents should be notified that these appointments are occurring and provide the schedule of appointments.
- (11) All of us have an obligation to take appropriate steps to protect children, particularly when they are in the care of the church. If you observe another adult violating these guidelines or engaging in other conduct which causes you to have reason for concern for the well-being of a child, you should confront that adult in a forthright manner and report your concerns to your supervisor, pastor or the Vicar for Priests. If you have reason to believe that child abuse or neglect has occurred or is occurring, you shall follow the Diocesan policy on reporting instances of child abuse to civil authorities and report the matter to your supervisor and otherwise follow the Child Sexual Abuse Policy and Procedures of the Diocese of La Crosse.