



Diocese of Harrisburg
Youth Protection Program
Code of Ministerial Conduct
for

Clergy and Those in Formation for Priesthood or Diaconate

The following standards enumerate and limit particular inappropriate actions when dealing with minors and must be adhered to by all clergy and those in formation for priesthood and diaconate within the Diocese of Harrisburg:

- Clergy and those in formation for priesthood or diaconate should exercise prudent professional caution in all interactions with minors. Even the appearance of impropriety should be recognized and avoided.
- Clergy and those in formation for priesthood or diaconate should avoid being alone with a minor, excluding sacramental confession (normally taking place within the Church), as well as counseling and spiritual direction (normally occurring in the professional offices of the Church or rectory).*
- Minors are permitted only in the public areas of rectories and never in the private living quarters of the clergy and those in formation for priesthood or diaconate.* Note that the diocesan *Program for Priestly Life* also states that minors are not permitted to work in rectories or parish offices (answering phones and doors, etc.), since it is an unsafe practice and potentially a serious liability.
- Clergy and those in formation for priesthood or diaconate should never be alone with a minor in a closed room (except for the instances mentioned above), nor sleep in the same room with a minor.*
- Clergy and those in formation for priesthood or diaconate should never accompany minors to movies, sporting events or other forms of entertainment without at least one other non-clergy adult being present.*
- Clergy and those in formation for priesthood or diaconate should never be present in locker rooms or other dressing rooms used by minors without another non-clergy adult present. Likewise, they should never change clothes or shower in facilities that are being used by minors.
- All youth trips, especially overnight trips, must have a sufficient number of adult non-clergy chaperones. Clergy and those in formation for priesthood or diaconate should never be the sole chaperone on any youth trip.
- Clergy and those in formation for priesthood or diaconate should never obtain or possess sexually explicit or pornographic materials, nor participate in distribution or receipt of pornographic materials through any medium.

- Clergy and those in formation for priesthood or diaconate, who find themselves attracted to minors or who frequently seek their companionship (rather than that of adults), should seek advice and assistance from the Secretary for Clergy and Religious Life, who may suggest a professional evaluation with a trained psychological expert.
- Conversations or discussions of topics of a sexual nature with minors should be limited to the cleric's teaching office or made in response to specific questions.
- Clergy and those in formation for priesthood or diaconate should avoid using inappropriate expressions of physical affection with minors, including but not limited to the following examples: inappropriate or lengthy embraces; kisses on the mouth; holding minors over two years of age on the lap; touching bottoms, chests or genital areas; sleeping in bed with a minor; wrestling with minors; tickling minors; piggyback rides; any type of massage given to or received from a minor; any form of unwanted affection; compliments that relate to physique or body development; any form of physical affection/contact given to a minor in private.
- Clergy and those in formation for priesthood or diaconate should avoid taking unfair advantage of a counseling relationship with a minor for personal benefit or gratification.
- Clergy and those in formation for priesthood or diaconate should share concerns about suspicious or inappropriate behavior of others with minors with the appropriate civil authorities and, if it involves a cleric or other Church personnel, also with the Secretary for Clergy and Religious Life.
- Clergy and those in formation for priesthood or diaconate must always conduct themselves as professional adults who set the limits and boundaries of the relationship, in all interpersonal relations with minors.
- Clergy and those in formation for priesthood or diaconate are asked to accept their personal responsibility to provide a safe environment for minors within the Church.
- Clergy and those in formation for priesthood or diaconate should be familiar with the mandated reporting requirements for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and are directed to follow those mandates.

* NOTE: Permanent deacons with their families and other clerics in their private dwellings or with family members must use due diligence and discretion in applying these standards