

# VOLUNTEER COVENANT



## FOR THE SAKE OF GOD'S CHILDREN

Our children are the most important gifts God has entrusted to us. As a volunteer, I promise to strictly follow these Behavioral Standards as a condition of my providing services to the children and youth of the Diocese of Wilmington.

### **As a volunteer, I will:**

1. Conduct myself in a manner that exhibits the highest Christian ethical Standards including developing and maintaining the level of skill required to be a competent volunteer.
2. Treat everyone with respect, loyalty, patience, integrity, courtesy, dignity, and consideration.
3. Be knowledgeable of and adhere to the all applicable aspects of the Safe Environment manual.
4. Avoid situations where I am alone with children and/or youth while volunteering, always following the two adult rule.
5. Use positive reinforcement and communication rather than criticism, unhealthy competition, or comparison when working with children and/or youth.
6. Honor the equality of all people, avoiding all forms of discrimination and respecting the dignity of each person without regard to economic status, age, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or physical or mental abilities.
7. Be responsible/accountable for stewardship of all resources entrusted to my care.
8. Exercise prudent judgment in the giving or accepting of gifts or benefits.
9. Report suspected abuse to the pastor, administrator, or appropriate supervisor and the local Child Protection Services agency. I understand that failure to report suspected abuse to civil authorities is, according to the law, a misdemeanor.
10. Cooperate fully in any investigation of abuse of children and/or youth.
11. Become thoroughly familiar with the objectives and guidelines of the program and strive to achieve these objectives and communicate them to youth and parents.
12. Uphold the authority of those responsible for the program or activity (DYM, DRE, Principal, Parish Staff, Officials, etc.) and assist them in every way to encourage learning and to conduct fair and impartial events.
13. Carefully follow the Diocesan guidelines for chaperones which provide for the safety and supervision of those entrusted to my care.
14. Avoid any form of over familiarity, inappropriate language, or any situation and conduct which exploits another.
15. Follow practices that consistently exhibit no tolerance for any form of abusive behavior.
16. Follow practices which demonstrate appropriate affection between all Church Personnel and minors which is important for a child's development and a positive part of Church life and ministry. The following forms of affection are regarded as appropriate examples:
  - a. Side Hugs
  - b. Hand-shakes
  - c. Verbal praise
  - d. Arms around shoulders
  - e. Kneeling or bending down for hugs with small children
  - f. Holding hands while walking with small children
  - g. Touching hands, faces, shoulders and arms of minors
  - h. Shoulder to shoulder or "temple hugs"
  - i. "High-fives" and hand slapping
  - j. Hold hands during prayers
  - k. Sitting beside small children
17. Be aware of and clearly understand the Behavioral Standards for Volunteers and act in accord with them.
18. Be aware of and adhere to emergency plans and evacuation routes appropriate to the Program.

**As a volunteer, I will not:**

1. Smoke or use tobacco products in the presence of children and/or youth.
2. Use, possess, or be under the influence of alcohol at any time while volunteering
3. Use, possess, or be under the influence of illegal drugs at any time.
4. Pose any known health risk to children and /or youth (i.e., no fevers or other contagious situations).
5. Use physical discipline in any way for behavior management of minors. No form of physical discipline is acceptable. This includes spanking, slapping, pinching, shaking, hitting or any other physical force as retaliation or correction for inappropriate behavior of a minor.
6. Humiliate, ridicule, threaten, or degrade children and/or youth nor tolerate them in the environment for which I am responsible.
7. Touch a child and/or youth in a sexual or other inappropriate manner.
8. Use any discipline that humiliates or demeans children and /or youth.
9. Use profanity in the presence of children and/or youth.
10. Some forms of physical affection have been used by adults to initiate inappropriate contact with minors. In order to maintain the safest possible environment for minors, the following are examples of affection that are inappropriate and are not to be used:
  - a. Inappropriate or lengthy embraces
  - b. Sleeping in bed with a child
  - c. Tickling minors
  - d. Touching bottoms, chests or genital areas
  - e. Any type of massage given by a minor to adult
  - f. Any type of massage given by an adult to a minor
  - g. Holding minors over two years old on the lap
  - h. Compliments that relate to physique of body development
  - i. Showing affection in isolated areas of the facility such as bedrooms, closets, staff only areas and other private rooms.
  - j. Kisses on the mouth
  - k. Wrestling with minors
  - l. Piggyback rides
  - m. Touching knees or legs of minors
  - n. Any form of unwanted affection
11. Post or access or pornography or other offensive legal or illegal material. If child pornography is discovered I realize the Diocese is obligated under the law to report this.
12. Communicate with minors via telephone, cell phone, text messaging, email, social networks or other electronic means without written permission of a parent or guardian.
13. Share/post pictures or videos of minors; or share email, telephone numbers, or other contact information with other minors or adults who are part of the class, group or organization without written permission of a parent/guardian.
14. Access/operate devices capable of capturing, transmitting, or storing images/recordings in restrooms, dressing rooms, sleeping areas where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy.
15. Consider typed conversations that take place via electronic means (emails, social networking sites, text messages, etc.) to be private, because the internet is, by its very nature, public.

I understand that as a volunteer working with children and/or youth, I am subject to a thorough background check including criminal history. I understand that any action inconsistent with these Behavioral Standards for Volunteers or failure to take action mandated by these Standards may result in my removal as a volunteer with children and /or youth in the Diocese of Wilmington.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Print name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_