



Catholic Diocese of Richmond

# Diocesan Safe Environment Regulations



April 2021 • Previously Revised: January 2018



# **Diocesan Safe Environment Regulations**

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**April 2021**

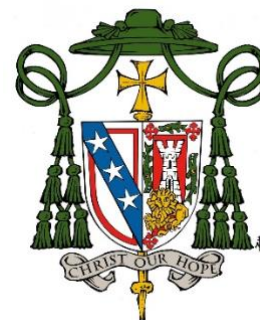
In accord with the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* (June 2018)

[*Regulations* First Issued: July 2002; Revised: July 2005, August 2014, August 2016, January 2018]

# **Diocese of Richmond**

*Pastoral Center 7800 Carousel Lane Richmond, VA 23294 • Phone: (804) 359-5661 • Fax: (804) 358-9159*

April 1, 2021



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

In our Diocese and indeed throughout the world, the Catholic Church is committed to the protection of children and vulnerable adults through healthy ministry. We are blessed with competent, qualified and responsible personnel to accomplish this vitally important work.

This diocesan handbook contains the revised policies, structure and procedures to facilitate our commitment to protect all who are entrusted to our care. It is a practical application of our obligation and commitment and is intended to promote the effective and fruitful expression of our mission.

I am pleased to promulgate this revised edition of the Diocesan Safe Environment Regulations, and I encourage each diocesan entity to disseminate them widely within your parish or school community.

I commend the diocesan staff and advisors in the Office of Safe Environment and members of the Diocesan Review Board for their diligent oversight of this project. I deeply appreciate their dedication and commitment to providing a safe and welcoming environment for all, especially young people.

Lastly, I am deeply grateful to all our priests, deacons, religious, school administrators and teachers, parish staff and volunteers for doing all you can to protect our youth and vulnerable adults by the implementation of these policies.

With prayerful best wishes, I remain

Sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "+Barry C. Knestout".

Most Reverend Barry C. Knestout

Bishop of Richmond

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## I. Introduction

The Scriptures announce the profound truth that we are all created in the image and likeness of God. Our identity with God endows every person with a sacred dignity. That dignity is a gift that directs all of us to a divine purpose.

We affirm and strengthen the sense of our sacred dignity through the experiences of daily living. We discover, develop and live out our divine purpose in the personal events and relationships that make up our daily life. Sin, selfishness, the misuse of ourselves and the abuse of others are corruptions that obstruct our progress and diminish the vision of our dignity.

Sexual abuse is among the worst of human corruptions. It rapes the human spirit of its God-given dignity, defiles what God cherishes and violates what God's own love protects. Sexual abuse ravages all who are entangled in its damaging consequences, which can affect abusers, the abused and their families for a lifetime.

Sexual abuse of minors and vulnerable adults is a horror which today infects every quarter of our society. When minors and vulnerable adults are the victims, the effects of sexual abuse take on even more evil and horrendous proportions. Those horrors multiply and expand when a priest, deacon, employee or volunteer of the Church inflicts the wounds of sexual abuse of minors and vulnerable adults.

With the publication of these *Regulations*, the employee/volunteer screening policies, and the diocesan Safe Environment Program, the Diocese of Richmond continues its longstanding commitment to foster the dignity and sacredness of every human person. In the spirit of that commitment, the diocese pledges to continue its efforts to provide within the Church an environment of love, respect and care for our minors and vulnerable adults.

## II. The Purpose of these Regulations

The Bishop of Richmond is committed to protecting minors and vulnerable adults from the horrors of sexual abuse. These *Regulations* provide the Diocese of Richmond with an official procedure and structure to address allegations of sexual abuse of minors and vulnerable adults by clergy and other Church personnel. The term "minor" in this document includes child or youth as defined in Appendix A. The Term "vulnerable adults" in this document is defined in Appendix A. The term "clergy" in this document includes priests and deacons as defined in Appendix A.

In following these *Regulations*, the diocese undertakes its own internal process to discover, gather and assess the facts of a claim. The goal is to assist the Bishop of Richmond in determining appropriate pastoral or personnel responses with regard to the accused and the accuser. This process does not mirror civil or criminal proceedings conducted by public authorities. It does not contend with or replace the actions of public authorities.

Since the diocese does not act in the place of public authorities, the diocese will cooperate fully with those authorities as required by law and as defined in Section VI: "Reporting a Claim of Sexual Abuse of a Minor or Vulnerable Adult."

These *Regulations* are part of a broad endeavor to ensure that diocesan institutions and ministries provide an environment safe from the sexual abuse of minors and vulnerable adults. Also included here are diocesan policies for screening seminarians, clergy, lay employees and volunteers. In addition to these methods of prevention and the implementation of Safe Environment training, the bishop will put into effect pastoral outreach to the survivor of sexual abuse, to family members and to any institutions or other persons affected by the abuse and, as appropriate, to the abuser.

### III. Diocesan Policies for Safe Environment Program for Adult Employees and Volunteers

**Safe Environment Program:** In accordance with the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*, **ARTICLE 12**, *Dioceses/eparchies are to maintain “safe environment” programs which the diocesan/eparchial bishop deems to be in accord with Catholic moral principles. They are to be conducted cooperatively with parents, civil authorities, educators and community organizations to provide education and training for minors and vulnerable adults, parents, ministers, employees, volunteers and others about ways to sustain and foster a safe environment with minors.* The Diocese of Richmond will make clear to all members of the community the standards of conduct for clergy and other persons with regard to their contact with minors and vulnerable adults.

1. The diocese, through its Office of Human Resources, has established a Safe Environment program which details ways by which Church entities may create and maintain a safe environment for minors and vulnerable adults.
2. The Office of Human Resources has issued the “**Code of Conduct with Minors and Vulnerable Adults (see section V)**” which makes clear to all clergy, employees and volunteers their obligations as persons in positions of trust with regard to sexual abuse.
3. The Office of Human Resources has established a mandatory Safe Environment program, with monthly follow up bulletins, for all clergy, employees and volunteers who are regularly working with minors and vulnerable adults or those who have highly responsible volunteer roles. The program approved for use in the diocese is VIRTUS: **Protecting God’s Children for Adults**
4. Churches and schools are required to maintain their own compliance records locally. Furthermore, the Office of Safe Environment completes an annual compliance review to ensure all employees and volunteers have received the Safe Environment training and background screening at the appropriate level.
5. The diocese utilizes the VIRTUS: **Empowering God’s Children** program. For more information, see the *Diocesan School Policy Handbook* found on the extranet.

### IV. Diocesan Policies for Screening Adult Employees and Volunteers Working with Minors or Vulnerable Adults

In accordance with the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*, **ARTICLE 13**, *Diocese/eparchies are to evaluate the background of all personnel and volunteers whose duties include contact with minors and vulnerable adults. Specifically, they are to utilize the resources of law enforcement and other community agencies. Each diocesan/eparchial bishop is to evaluate the background of all incardinated priests and deacons. When a priest or deacon, not incardinated in the diocese/eparchy, is to engage in ministry in the diocese/eparchy, regardless of the length of time, the evaluation of his background may be satisfied through a written attestation of suitability for ministry supplied by his proper ordinary/major superior to the diocese/eparchy. Dioceses/eparchies are to evaluate the background of all their respective diocesan/eparchial and parish/school or other paid diocese/eparchy is to determine the application/renewal of background checks according to local practice. In addition, they are to employ adequate screening and evaluative techniques in deciding the suitability of candidates for ordination (see USCCB, Program of Priestly Formation [Fifth Edition], 2006, no. 39 and the National Directory for the Formation, Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States, n. 178 j).*

1. **Employees and Volunteers Working with Minors/Vulnerable Adults:** All lay and religious employees and volunteers must be screened on or before the first day of employment or volunteer service. Re-screening will take place every five years.
2. **Screening Information and Forms:** All forms and information are available on the Richmond Diocese website, on the employee extranet or by contacting any parish/school location.
3. **Additional Screening Procedures:** Interviews and reference checks are highly encouraged.

#### A. Screening Employees and Volunteers:

1. **Lay and Religious Employees and Volunteers:** All employees and volunteers must be screened at the time they are hired or before the first day of employment or service.
2. **Parish and Non-School Employees:** All lay and religious parish employees of the diocese shall be screened every five years. Screening forms and information can be obtained on the employee extranet under Safe Environment. Applicants must agree to the screening procedures specified above at the time they submit an employment application.
3. **School Employees:** All school employees shall be fingerprinted at point of hire through the **FBI Criminal Records Exchange** and **Virginia Central Criminal Records Exchange** and screened every five years thereafter using the diocesan approved employee national criminal search. Additionally, school employees will complete the **Central Registry of Child Protective Services** search every five years.
4. **School/Church Day and Child Care Employees:** All day and child care employees shall be fingerprinted and screened every five years through the **FBI Criminal Records** and the **Virginia Central Criminal Records Exchange** of the Virginia State Police at the time they are hired and thereafter complete the diocesan approved employee criminal search. Additionally, employees will complete the **Central Registry of Child Protective Services** search every five years.
5. **School and Parish Volunteers:** All volunteers shall be screened every five years using the approved diocesan volunteer national search.

#### B. Screening Seminarians and Clergy:

1. **Applicants for the Seminary or for the Permanent Diaconate:** All applicants for the seminary or for the permanent diaconate shall be, as part of the admission process, fingerprinted and screened through the **FBI Criminal Records** and the **Virginia Central Criminal Records Exchange** of the Virginia State Police and through the **Central Registry of Child Protective Services** of the Virginia Department of Social Services.
2. **All Seminarians and Clergy, to Include Bishops and All Religious Order Priests, Assigned to the Diocese:** All seminarians and clergy, to include bishops and all religious order priests, assigned to the diocese (in addition to the testimony of their major superiors) shall be fingerprinted and screened at point of service to the diocese through the **FBI Criminal Records** and the **Virginia Central Criminal Records Exchange** of the Virginia State Police and every five years thereafter screened using the approved diocesan screening. Additionally, clergy will be screened through the **Central Registry of Child Protective Services** of the Virginia Department of Social Services every five years.
3. **Clergy From Other Dioceses:** All clergy coming for service in the diocese from other dioceses, in addition to the testimony of their bishops or major superiors, shall be, as part of the admission process, fingerprinted and screened through the **FBI Criminal Records** and the **Virginia Central Criminal Records Exchange** of the Virginia State Police and thereafter screened using the approved diocesan screening. Additionally, clergy will be screened through the **Central Registry of Child Protective Services** of the Virginia Department of Social Services.
4. **Clergy Visiting the Diocese on a Temporary Status From Other Dioceses:** All clergy coming into the Diocese of Richmond from other dioceses must provide the parish/diocese with a letter (Celebret) from their diocese indicating that they are a priest/deacon in good standing and that they have been cleared through the screening process used in their home diocese. This letter is good for 30 consecutive calendar days per visit. After 30 calendar days, the requirements detailed in number 3 will apply.
5. **Military Priests/Deacons, Chaplains from the Military Archdiocese:** All clergy temporarily stationed in Virginia and in the Diocese of Richmond will submit a letter (Celebret) from their home diocese indicating that they are in good standing and that they have been cleared through the military. This document is good for their tour of duty in Virginia. This letter would be renewable every time clergy is reassigned duty in Virginia.

6. **Clergy From a Diocese Outside the Country:** All clergy coming for service in the diocese from outside the country, in addition to the testimony of their bishops or superiors, shall complete, as a part of the admission process, an international screening and every five years thereafter complete the diocesan approved screening.

### **C. Screening Volunteers with Highly Responsible Roles:**

A volunteer with a highly responsible role is encouraged to complete the Safe Environment program and background screening at the discretion of the pastor/principal. A list of highly responsible roles can be found in Appendix A.

## **V. Code of Conduct with Minors and Vulnerable Adults**

The purpose of the *Code of Conduct with Minors and Vulnerable Adults* is to provide a safe environment for minors and vulnerable adults in the faith communities in the Diocese of Richmond. All Church personnel as well as volunteers working with minors and vulnerable adults must attend a Safe Environment training session and complete the diocesan background screening process. Church personnel who work with minors and vulnerable adults must be aware of their own as well as others' vulnerability when working alone with minors and vulnerable adults. Therefore, two unrelated adults who have completed Safe Environment training and background screening must be present when supervising activities with minors and vulnerable adults. For this reason, the Diocese of Richmond encourages a team approach and follows the established ratio of adults to youth.

1. Routinely monitor facilities during any parish, school or diocesan events, particularly any restroom facilities and any secluded areas used by minors and vulnerable adults.
2. Two unrelated adults must be present during parish, school or diocesan activities, whether it is a residence, meeting hall, rectory or any other closed or private location.
3. Programs for minors and vulnerable adults shall be approved by parish, school or diocesan administration, including any off-site event, and must be staffed by at least two unrelated adults.
4. Transportation provided while on parish, school or diocesan sponsored events requires the presence of two unrelated adults in the vehicle while minors/vulnerable adults are being transported. When it is not possible to provide two adults for each vehicle, the minimum requirement is one adult with two or more minors/vulnerable adults. It should never be one adult to one minor/vulnerable adult.
5. Overnight retreats/events require the minimum presence of two unrelated adults. An adult may not share sleeping quarters with minors such as hotel rooms or cabins, except when necessary (such as personal safety) and only with another adult present. In some situations, where accommodations may be in large, open areas, the adults may be housed with minors in the same area but should sleep in an area that is separate from the minors. All adults must respect the privacy of minors in situations such as changing clothes and taking showers, intruding only to the extent that health and safety requires.
6. Adults should be aware that physical contact with minors and vulnerable adults can be easily misconstrued, especially in private settings. Physical contact with minors and vulnerable adults should be public, appropriate and nonsexual.
7. Parents have a right to observe programs and activities in which their children are involved. Parents who desire to participate in or have continuous contact with their child's programs at school or the parish must fulfill the requirements of the volunteer background screening process and Safe Environment training.
8. In those rare emergency situations, when accommodation is necessary for the health and well-being of the minor/vulnerable adult, extraordinary care should be taken by the cleric, employee or volunteer to protect all parties from the appearance of impropriety and from all harm. When possible, a team approach should be used to deal with emergency situations.
9. No form of physical discipline is acceptable. Church personnel and volunteers should never engage in physical discipline for behavior management of a minor/vulnerable adult. Moreover, Church personnel and volunteers should not humiliate, ridicule or degrade minors or vulnerable adults.



10. Exposing a minor or vulnerable adult to sexually oriented or morally inappropriate materials is prohibited.
11. Church personnel are prohibited from the acquisition, possession and distribution of pornographic images of minors. Church personnel found in possession, distribution or in receipt of child pornography will be removed from employment or volunteer assignment.
12. Church personnel and volunteers should never offer alcohol, tobacco or drugs to a minor, nor should Church personnel use, possess or be under the influence of drugs or alcohol or use tobacco when ministering to minors or vulnerable adults.
13. Caution should be exercised in communication with minors and vulnerable adults through emails or the internet. For more information, refer to the *Digital Communications and Media Policy* found on the diocesan website.
14. Church/school employees and volunteers will report suspected abuse to the civil authorities and, in cases involving a Church official, to the 24-Hour Reporting Line at 877-887-9603.
15. For use of Church property by unaffiliated organizations, refer to Appendix F for guidelines.

Church personnel and volunteers working with minors and vulnerable adults should review the *Diocesan Safe Environment Regulations* before beginning ministry. Any action inconsistent with diocesan policies for the protection of minors and vulnerable adults or failure to take action mandated by the *Diocesan Safe Environment Regulations* may result in the removal from position.

## VI. Reporting a Claim of Sexual Abuse of a Minor or Vulnerable Adult

### *General Considerations*

1. **Reporting to the Diocese:** All clergy, seminarians and other Church personnel of the diocese are obliged to report immediately to the bishop any allegation or suspicion that a priest, deacon or other Church personnel has sexually abused a minor or vulnerable adult. No clergy, seminarian or Church personnel are to interact with the accused before or after reporting a claim to the Office of Safe Environment unless and until otherwise instructed. Likewise, after making an immediate report, no Church personnel are to interact with an accuser, unless and until otherwise instructed. In the event the accused is a former bishop of this or another diocese, report should be made to the civil authorities and, thereafter, to the Bishop of Richmond. If the accused is the current Bishop of Richmond, report should be made to the civil authorities and to the Archbishop of Baltimore (Ap. Const. *Vos Estis Lux Mundi*, Title II, Art. 8).

A claim may be reported to the Bishop's Office or the Office of Safe Environment. Whether given in writing or orally, the information should include:

- The name, address and telephone number(s) of the individual reporting the abuse.
- The name, address and telephone number(s) of the accused.
- The name(s), address(es) and telephone number(s) of the alleged victim(s)/survivor(s).
- The relevant date(s), time(s) and location(s) of the alleged abuse.
- The nature of the alleged abuse and the setting in which it allegedly occurred.
- The name(s), address(es) and telephone number(s) of any person(s) with knowledge or information about the alleged abuse.

2. **Reporting to and Cooperating with Civil Authorities:** Since the diocese does not act in the place of civil authorities, when addressing a claim of sexual abuse of a minor, the diocese will cooperate with those authorities as required by law **with due regard for the seal of the Sacrament of Penance** and as follows:
  - **When the Allegation Involves a Minor or When the Credible Allegation Involves an Alleged Victim Survivor Who Claims to Have Been Abused as a Minor:** The diocese will report the allegation to civil authorities and will cooperate with their investigation.
  - **When the Alleged Victim is a Vulnerable Adult:** The diocese will report the allegation to civil authorities and will cooperate in their investigation.

- **In All Cases:** The diocese will advise alleged victim survivors or their families of the diocesan policy of reporting credible claims of child sexual abuse to civil authorities.  
Refer to Appendix B.
3. **Assistance and Immediate Pastoral Care:** Individuals who report having been sexually abused as minors by clergy or Church personnel will be assisted by the Victim Assistance Coordinator. Response to allegations of sexual abuse will be made within 72 hours of report to the diocesan office, victim assistance email or reporting number. Documentation must be maintained of the response date, time and explanation for any delay in responding.
  4. **Communication to the Media and the Public:** Only the Bishop of Richmond or his appointed delegate is to issue statements to the media about allegation(s) of sexual abuse or about the related proceedings. Likewise, statements are not issued to a parish or other institution except at the direction of the bishop. The diocese will be open and transparent in communicating with the public about sexual abuse of minors and vulnerable adults by clergy within the confines of respect for the privacy and the reputation of the individuals involved. A parish or school affected directly by the abuse will be contacted by the Bishop's Office or the Office of Safe Environment.
  5. **Anonymous Allegations or Information:** Due to consequences of false allegations, when the source of a claim (or of information related to a claim) cannot be identified or contacted, the claim will not be considered. Likewise, when the person making an allegation or offering information will not identify himself or herself to the diocese, the claim or the information will not be considered. Any exceptions for special circumstances are made only by the Bishop of Richmond and to the extent he imposes.
  6. **False Allegations:** False accusations against an innocent person are a matter of serious consequence. Where appropriate, the diocese may recommend that the person falsely accused consider taking legal action against the accuser.
  7. **Allegations Surfaced by the Media:** If an allegation surfaces in the media, attempts will be made to identify the original source of the allegation. If the source can be contacted, the allegation will be addressed as provided in these *Regulations*.
  8. **Revisions or Modifications to the Regulations:** On a regular basis, the Diocesan Review Board shall review and propose revisions of these policies and procedures for the bishop's review and approval. Likewise, a Fact-Finder may propose modifications of the fact-finding process to the Review Board. No revisions or modifications are to be incorporated into these policies and procedures without the review and approval of the Bishop of Richmond.
  9. **Distribution of Regulations:** The *Regulations* are available on the diocesan website and at parish/school locations. Priests, deacons, seminarians and lay employees and volunteers are required to read these *Regulations*.

## VII. Addressing Claims of Sexual Abuse of Minors and Vulnerable Adults

### A. The Role of the Bishop

1. **Overseeing the Process of Addressing a Claim:** The Bishop of Richmond establishes and oversees procedures to ensure a prompt response both as to the victim or survivor and as to the accused through the Diocesan Review Board whenever there is reason to believe that a minor or vulnerable adult has been sexually abused by a priest, deacon or other Church personnel of the diocese. The bishop is to be notified of every allegation and is to be kept informed of the progress of fact-finding. Those who assist the bishop in responding to an allegation are accountable with him to address claims in a timely, thorough and comprehensive manner.
  - When an allegation is received, the bishop will direct the notification of the accused. The bishop will initiate and conduct a preliminary investigation. The purpose of the bishop's preliminary investigation

is to allow the bishop to determine, based on the facts surrounding the allegation, whether or not a canonical crime has been committed, whether the accused was responsible for the crime before the law, and what type of canonical process should be used to resolve the matter. The bishop may ask for an initial interview of the accused and, if necessary, of the accuser.

- The bishop's preliminary investigation will not interfere with any civil or criminal investigation at the same time. If necessary, the bishop may prudently delay his investigation until it is suitable to process so as not to obstruct the civil or criminal investigation.
- When there is a credible allegation, and in accord with the precautions set out in canon law, the bishop will order that the accused priest, deacon or other Church personnel be placed on administrative leave. The accused maintains the presumption of innocence and all appropriate steps will be taken to protect the accused's reputation. The accused will be encouraged to retain the assistance of civil and/or canonical counsel.
- In the case of a cleric, the bishop may utilize the Diocesan Office of Human Resources, the Vicar General, the Vicar for Clergy, the Director for Safe Environment and appropriate mental health evaluation for the accused as necessary. In the case of a lay employee or volunteer, the Diocesan Office of Human Resources may, at the direction of the bishop, utilize the Employee Assistance Program to arrange for appropriate intervention
- If the bishop receives any allegation of sexual abuse of a minor, he will notify the Office of Safe Environment and the Vicar General. He will provide the details of the allegation and of any preliminary actions taken. The bishop will instruct the Fact-Finder to initiate the process for gathering facts for the Review Board to assess the claim.

2. **Working with the Review Board:** The bishop relies on the work of the Fact-Finder and the Review Board while formulating his decisions about allegations. He looks to the Review Board for consultation, advice and insight in handling allegations. He can also seek the assistance of the Review Board to address all aspects of sexual abuse of minors and vulnerable adults.
3. **The Role of the Priest Representative:** The bishop assigns the Priest Representative to represent him on the Review Board in order to facilitate communication between the bishop, the Office of Safe Environment and the Review Board and to keep the bishop informed of progress with allegations. The Priest Representative may also assist the bishop and the Review Board to coordinate contact with and provide assistance to the accuser(s) and the accused. The bishop may also meet with the Priest Representative and/or the Chairperson of the Review Board to expedite communication and consultation.
4. **Further Sources of Consultation:** While relying principally on the Review Board for its assessment of facts, the bishop may turn to other sources to develop and formulate his conclusions in addressing allegations. He may utilize these other sources to supplement the assistance of the Review Board and as part of an ongoing consultative process. He may, for example, consult with professional evaluators, confer with official advisors and converse with any persons who can provide pertinent knowledge, information or insight.
5. **Judging and Responding to a Claim:** The bishop is the final judge of credibility, substance and gravity of an allegation. The bishop alone determines what actions are to be taken in response to allegations. The diocese is to provide that even for a single act of sexual abuse of a minor or vulnerable adult whenever it occurred – which is admitted or established after appropriate process in accord with canon law, the offending priest or deacon is to be permanently removed from ministry, and, if warranted, dismissed from clerical state. No priest or deacon who has committed an act of sexual abuse of a minor or vulnerable adult may be transferred for a ministerial assignment in another diocese/eparchy. This includes retired clergy. If the allegation is deemed not substantiated, every step possible is to be taken to restore the good name of the clergy, should it have been harmed.

6. **Professional Assistance:** In the case of clergy accused of sexual abuse of a minor, the bishop may utilize the assistance of religiously affiliated psychological assessment and evaluation facilities, both for the purpose of prevention and also for his own healing and well-being. In the case of an accusation of sexual abuse of a minor or vulnerable adult by a lay/religious employee or volunteer, the bishop may utilize the assistance of the Diocesan Office of Human Resources and the Employee Assistance Program. In both cases, the bishop may seek the advice of legal counsel, either civil, canonical or both.
7. **Settlement Agreements:** The Diocese of Richmond will not enter into settlements which bind the parties to confidentiality unless the victim survivor requests confidentiality and this request is noted in the text of the agreement.

## **B. The Role of the Fact-Finder**

1. **The Purpose of the Fact-Finder:** Following the preliminary investigation presented to the diocesan bishop, as outlined by the Congregation of the Doctrine of Faith and Canon Law, a Fact-Finder is assigned to assist the Review Board in gathering facts relevant to an individual case of an allegation or allegation(s) of sexual abuse of minors or vulnerable adults by a priest, deacon or other Church personnel.
2. **Qualifications of the Fact-Finder:** The diocesan bishop will appoint a Fact-Finder who is a licensed investigator and shall be a person with sufficient knowledge, skills, experience and training to conduct investigations. Experience in counseling would be desirable.
3. **Function of the Fact-Finder:** Following the preliminary investigation and the bishop's decision to further assess the allegation(s) through the Diocesan Review Board, the Fact-Finder serves to assist the bishop and the Review Board in gathering facts and preparing a thorough and comprehensive Report. The Fact-Finder does not evaluate or judge the information, but he or she examines the information closely to carry out a comprehensive discovery of the facts and present the report for assessment by the Review Board.
4. **Duties of a Fact-Finder:** In carrying out its responsibility to assist the Review Board in gathering facts relevant to an individual case of an allegation or allegation(s) of sexual abuse of minors or vulnerable adults, the duties assigned to a Fact-Finder include:
  - a. To outline the overall process for handling allegations.
  - b. To conduct a process to discover and collect information relevant to the allegation(s).
  - c. To keep accurate records of all interviews and conversations, and to document fully all other relevant materials or information.
  - d. To keep the Director of Safe Environment informed of progress throughout the fact-finding process.
  - e. To present a comprehensive report and all supporting documentation to the Review Board at the conclusion of the fact-finding process.
  - f. To follow the directions and guidance of the Review Board and Director of Safe Environment throughout the process.
  - g. To propose modifications of the fact-finding process to the Review Board.
  - h. If further allegations related to the alleged abuser should arise, the Fact-Finder shall immediately inform the diocesan bishop and seek the direction of the Review Board. Likewise, if any claim should arise against another alleged accused, the Fact-Finder shall refer that allegation immediately to the bishop for further action.
  - i. Generally, the Fact-Finder should complete his or her work within 30 calendar days of being convened by the Review Board.

## **C. The Role of The Review Board**

1. **Purpose of the Review Board:** The Review Board assists the bishop in examining and assessing allegations of sexual abuse of minors and vulnerable adults by clergy and other Church personnel and in determining the fitness for ministry of an alleged offender.



2. **Board Membership:** The Review Board is composed of no more than seven regular members. All the regular members are persons recognized for their integrity, good judgment and respect for the Catholic Church. The majority of regular members are lay persons not in the employ of the diocese. One member must have professional experience in the area of sexual abuse of minors. One member is an experienced and respected priest of the diocese. For just cause, the bishop can rescind membership of an individual. *(The inclusion of experts cannot exceed the seven-member limitation; when necessary, the Review Board consults with outside persons who have pertinent expertise).*

The bishop appoints the members of the Review Board. The membership term is for three years and is renewable, with a limit of three terms for a total of nine years. The non-voting members appointed to the Review Board include a priest as the bishop's representative, an advisory resource staff, the Director of Safe Environment and the Victim Assistance Coordinator.

The bishop may appoint a Promoter of Justice for individual cases. The Promoter of Justice may participate in the meetings of the Review Board to help ensure and safeguard the integrity of the process followed by the Review Board in fulfilling its duties, specifically in regard to canon law. The Promoter of Justice is not a member of the Review Board but offers suggestions to the Review Board in its review and making final recommendations.

3. **Review Board Meetings:** The Review Board meets:
- a. Bi-monthly or whenever necessary to review and/or assess fact-finding report(s) of allegations.
  - b. Bi-monthly or at suitable intervals to examine and assess the facts of an allegation.
  - c. As required to assist the bishop in formulating a response to an allegation.
  - d. At least once a year to review policies and procedures for handling allegations.

The chairperson of the Review Board convenes and conducts all meetings and serves as liaison for the Review Board with the bishop, other diocesan officials and any expert consultants as necessary. The full membership of the Review Board elects a chairperson from among the lay members who are not in the employ of the diocese.

All proceedings of the Review Board and of any fact-finding, along with all supporting documentation, are strictly confidential to be released only at the direction of the bishop. The secretary for the Review Board records the minutes of Review Board meetings and assembles a record of all proceedings for each allegation. Records of meetings and other proceedings, including reports and all supporting documentation from a Fact-Finder, are strictly confidential and stored in the bishop's archives to be released only by the bishop.

4. **Duties of the Review Board:** In carrying out its responsibility to assist the bishop with assessing allegations of sexual abuse of minors and vulnerable adults, the duties assigned to the Review Board include:
- a. To examine and assess the facts relevant to an allegation.
  - b. To review the facts gathered by the Fact-Finder and other relevant sources. After examining the materials presented by the Fact-Finder, the Review Board can direct the Fact-Finder to continue with further fact-finding. Whenever it does so, the Review Board will establish a strict and expeditious timeline for the Fact-Finder to conclude his or her work.
  - c. To assess the allegation(s) for credibility, substance and gravity based on the facts.
  - d. To report its findings to the bishop, determining appropriate actions relating to the accused and the accuser.
  - e. To provide the bishop with advice and consultation in judging the allegations(s) and determining appropriate actions relating to the accused and the accuser.
  - f. To monitor the implementation of actions directed by the bishop.
  - g. To ensure that all documents related to the allegation(s) are filed with the Office of Safe Environment following the decision to ensure a thorough and complete record of the proceedings.
  - h. To transfer custody to the Office of Safe Environment all other documentation related to the allegation to avoid personal data exposure. Electronic documents must be deleted.
  - i. To review and propose revisions of policies and procedures for handling allegations.

## **D. Consultation and Subsequent Responses to a Claim**

- 1. The Consultation Phase:** When it has completed its assessment of the allegation(s), the Review Board reports its findings to the Bishop of Richmond. The Review Board assists the bishop, based on their findings, with advice and consultation as he formulates a judgment about the allegation(s). Likewise, the Review Board assists the bishop as he determines appropriate actions for responding to the accused and the accuser(s).

The bishop may also turn to other sources to develop and formulate his conclusions, incorporating these resources into a consultative relationship with the Review Board.

- 2. The Response Phase:** When the bishop has arrived at a judgment about the allegation(s) and has determined what the response actions will be, the Review Board serves to monitor the implementation of the bishop's decisions.

The Review Board, in cooperation with the bishop, sees to it that the accused and the accuser(s) are informed of the bishop's decisions before the bishop makes those decisions public. The accused and the accuser are invited to direct any inquiries into the bishop's decisions either to the Chairperson of the Review Board or to the Priest Representative who represents the bishop on the Review Board.

- 3. Documentation:** The Office of Safe Environment shall keep a record of all the proceedings related to the allegation(s). The Fact-Finder's report, all supporting documentation and the record of the Review Board proceedings are confidential. They are stored in the bishop's archives to be released only by the bishop.
- 4. Credible and Substantiated Claims:** The bishop determines what actions are to be taken in response to allegations. The diocese is to provide that even for a single act of sexual abuse of a minor or vulnerable adult whenever it occurred – which is admitted or established after appropriate process in accord with canon law – the offending priest or deacon is to be permanently removed from ministry, and, if warranted, dismissed from clerical state.
- 5. Unfounded Claim:** If an accusation has been shown to be unfounded, every step possible will be taken to restore the good name of the person falsely accused.

## **VIII. Sex Offenders on School or Church Property**

The Diocese of Richmond actively works to prevent abuse by appropriately handling the ability of sex offenders to gain access and be present on school or Church property.

Any individual (cleric, religious or lay person) who is known to the diocese to be a sex offender may not engage in activities with children in any program under the auspices of the diocese. This group includes any clergy against whom credible and substantiated allegations of child sexual abuse have been made, as well as any person whose name is currently listed on the Virginia Sex Offender Registry, any other State's Sex Offender Registry, or the National Sex Offender Registry.

The diocese prohibits sex offenders from coming into any Church and/or school building or grounds, or attending any Church/school sponsored event, except pursuant to advance written permission from the pastor, principal or his/her delegate. The pastor, principal or his/her delegate will make this decision in consultation with the Office of Safe Environment.

The pastor/principal or his/her delegate must adhere to the following guidelines in granting permission:

- The person offers a compelling reason for the Church/school to grant such permission.
- The permission can be granted without adversely impacting the safe environment.
- The stipulations must indicate that:
  - The individual may not come into contact with any child except their own.
  - The individual may not pick up/deliver any children to events except their own.
  - The pastor/principal shall be informed when to expect the presence of the individual on the property.
  - Acceptable places that the individual may go within the grounds or facility will be specified to include designated restroom facilities.
  - For group activities, such as sports events or performances, an adult designated companion, approved in the written letter of permission, must always accompany the individual.
- The sex offender may not hold a volunteer or employee position but may participate as a member of the assembly for religious events, or as a spectator for athletic events, etc. with the above stipulations in place.

Notwithstanding any of the foregoing, this policy will not operate to restrict any sex offender from attending Mass or the Sacrament of Reconciliation with the above stipulations in place.

## **IX. Safe Environment Program for Teens Employed or Serving as Volunteers**

The Diocese of Richmond values the contribution of teens employed or who serve in volunteer roles such as administration, aides in classrooms, childcare, altar servers, choir members and so on.

To ensure the safety of children and young people, prior to starting employment, teens are required to complete an online VIRTUS training module – ***Boundaries Module for Youth Who are Employees or Assisting/Volunteers***. This training module is highly encouraged for teen volunteers.

Following the training, teens will be able to identify the difference between healthy and unhealthy relationships, understand boundaries and effectively communicate regarding concerns of unsafe situations. This training is mandatory for employees; however, it is highly recommended for teen volunteers.

Training must be completed within 30 days of the start of employment. Parents have the option to preview the training and must give consent via VIRTUS online for their child to take the training. If parents object to the training, accommodation will be made.

### **Points to Remember:**

- Teens are required to assist with at least one adult supervisor present and not on their own.
- Teens must direct any concerns toward the adult supervisor and not try to handle difficult issues themselves.
- Teens must be mindful of the safety of children and abide by rules and regulations. Any infraction will result in the removal of the youth from any work or volunteer assignment.
- Parents/guardians will be notified at the time of any infraction requiring dismissal from any work or volunteer assignment.
- Teens are not required to complete background screening checks. However, upon their 18th birthday, they must fulfill adult Safe Environment training and appropriate background screening requirements in order to continue in an employee or volunteer assignment.

## **X. Guidelines for Safe Virtual Meetings with Minors**

The Diocese of Richmond requires the same safe and nurturing settings for virtual meetings as in-person meetings.

### **Points to Remember When Ministering Online:**

- All virtual sessions with minors must be held with at least two unrelated adults who have been Safe Environment trained and background screened. One adult should host the meeting, and the other should be responsible for monitoring virtual behavior and have the ability to remove or block unexpected or disruptive participants. However, sessions can proceed with a single Safe Environment trained adult if all participants have their parents present at the meeting.
- Prior to the meeting, the obligation to obtain parental consent is required. (Appendix H: Parental Consent Form for Virtual Gatherings). The signed form must be maintained locally.
- Do not record or take a screen shot of a virtual meeting with minors unless you have approval from the pastor/principal and written parental consent prior to engaging in a recorded session or screen shot.
- Disable "Private Chat" to ensure that the host is aware of all conversations that occur during the meeting.
- Prior to each session, be fully aware of the capabilities of the online platform including: set up a password for the meeting, enable waiting room, lock the meeting, mute/unmute, remove participant(s), screen sharing, use virtual hand raise and chat box.

School teachers are required to follow the *Virtual Learning Expectations for Educators* found in the *Diocesan School Policy Handbook*.

Refer to Appendix G: Ministering Online to Minors



## APPENDIX A

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### Glossary of Terms

**Administrative Leave:** The accused is relieved of assigned duties during an investigation. Placing the accused on administrative leave does not infer guilt or innocence.

**Bishop:** The canonically appointed Bishop of Richmond or, in the case of a vacancy, the diocesan administrator. The bishop (or diocesan administrator) may work through an appointed representative.

**Church Personnel:** Bishops, priests, deacons, seminarians, lay employees and volunteers involved in the work of the diocese. Those enrolled in the Permanent Diaconate Formation Program, men and women religious working in the diocese.

**Civil Authorities:** Law enforcement including the Commonwealth Attorney or local Police Departments, Sheriff Offices or State Police Area Offices.

**Clergy:** An ordained member of the Church, including bishops, priests and deacons.

**Credible Allegation:** Information which has been received relative to an accusation of sexual abuse of minors or vulnerable adults by clergy or other Church personnel which has the semblance of truth. The information may be assessed as to whether or not:

- it is believable or plausible
- it is reasonable and probable

**Employee:** Lay or religious staff who are employed and who work full or part-time positions at any location within the Catholic Diocese of Richmond.

**Minor:** A child, young person or youth under the age of 18. In Virginia, a person is an adult at age 18.

**Safe Environment Program:** The diocesan approved child sexual abuse training program.

**Sexual Abuse:** An act committed against a minor with the intent to sexually assault, arouse or gratify any person that includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- a. The accused intentionally touches the complaining witness's (accuser or victim) intimate parts of material directly covering such intimate parts;
- b. The accused forces the complaining witness to touch the accused's, the witness's own or another person's intimate parts or material directly covering such intimate parts;
- c. The accused causes or assists the complaining witness to touch the accused's, the witness's own or another person's intimate parts or material directly covering such intimate parts;
- d. The accused forces another person to touch the complaining witness's intimate parts or material directly covering such intimate parts;
- e. The accused solicits information of a sexual nature from the complaining witness.

The definition further includes the acquisition, possession or distribution by the accused of pornographic images of a child, children, youth(s) or minor(s) for purposes of sexual gratification, by whatever means or using whatever technology.

If there is any doubt whether a specific act qualifies as an external, objectively grave violation, the writings or recognized moral theologians should be consulted, and the opinions of recognized experts should be appropriately obtained.

**Survivor:** A legal adult who has experienced abuse as a minor and is seeking a path of healing.

**Victim:** A minor or vulnerable adult who has been physically, psychologically, emotional or sexually abused.

**Volunteer:** A person with substantial contact with minors who gives their time voluntarily without compensation to a ministry of the Church or at a school. The individual has a defined position of specified duty, leadership or recognized position of authority/responsibility with oversight of activities or places where minors are present. This designation means that the person must fully comply with all background screening and attend VIRTUS training.

***A volunteer who has limited but sufficient access to minors includes but is not limited to:***

- a. Individual serving in any capacity that focuses on minors
- b. Individual serving on an RCIA team that has minor participants
- c. Individual serving in food pantries or regular meal service
- d. Individual serving in a before/after school program
- e. Individual serving in bereavement/funeral ministry
- f. Individual serving in hospitality events
- g. Individual serving as an usher
- h. Individual serving as a photographer

***A volunteer with a highly responsible role includes but is not limited to:***

Offertory collectors, money counters, data entry clerk on ParishSoft or other databases containing personal information, facility key holders, chairpersons and members of various Church/school committees, contractors, building and grounds workers and janitors.

**Vulnerable Adult:** A person who is unable to perform activities or normal daily living due to a mental, intellectual, emotional, long- term physical or developmental disability or dysfunction, brain damage, the infirmities of aging or other causes. In accordance with “Vos Estis Lux Mundi” issued Motu proprio on May 7, 2019, a vulnerable adult is defined as any person in a state of infirmity, physical or mental deficiency or deprivation of personal liberty which, in fact, even occasionally, limits their ability to understand or to want or otherwise resist the offense.

## APPENDIX B

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### Reporting Ministry-Related Child Sexual Abuse

In a commitment to support and facilitate healing, individuals who have been sexually abused by a cleric, religious, employee or volunteer of the Diocese of Richmond are encouraged to contact the **civil authorities and the confidential Victim Assistance Reporting 24 Hour Number 1-877-887-9603 or in writing to the Office of the Bishop**. Response will be made within 72 hours.

To make a report in writing, forward a letter describing the situation to the Office of the Bishop. Correspondence should be signed and provide contact information. Letters should be sent to:

Office of the Bishop  
Catholic Diocese of Richmond  
7800 Carousel Lane  
Richmond, VA 23294

### **To Report Child Abuse and Neglect in Virginia to Child Protective Services**

**Department of Social Services, Child Protective Services 24-Hour State Hotline:**  
**Out of State: (800) 552-7096; In Virginia: (804) 786-8536, Hearing-Impaired: (800) 828-1120**

Anyone can report suspected child abuse or neglect to a local department of social services or to the CPS Hotline. Callers will be asked to provide as much information as possible about the child, the alleged abuser and the incident. The caller is not required to give their name when the report is made, but if the caller does identify themselves, the local department of social services will be able to make contact in the event further information is needed. Additionally, CPS will be able to inform the caller of actions that were taken. NOTE: Each report is evaluated by the local department of social services to determine if the report information meets the legal definition of child abuse or neglect and whether CPS has the authority and responsibility to conduct a family assessment or an investigation to determine the child's immediate safety needs and to determine if the family needs services.

**If you are aware that a child is in imminent danger of abuse  
or have knowledge that abuse is happening, call 911 immediately.**

## APPENDIX C

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### Safe Environment Initiatives – Transportation Policy

The Catholic Diocese of Richmond is committed to providing a safe environment for all youth participating in off-site activities, including transportation to and from locations.

Transportation provided while on parish, school or diocesan sponsored events requires the presence of two unrelated adults who have been Safe Environment trained and background screened in the vehicle while minors are being transported. If it is not possible to provide two adults for each vehicle, the minimum required is one adult with two or more youth members – never one adult to one child. However, if this is not feasible during transportation to and from planned diocesan events in multiple vehicles, the following is the minimum requirement:

- Meet for departure at a designated area.
- Pre-arrange a schedule for periodic checkpoint stops as a group or be safely in communication with other vehicles.
- Plan for specific stop or break destination points.

The following guidelines are intended to assist employees and volunteers in complying with the policy when transporting minors to prevent harm to children as well as to protect adults:

- A Volunteer Driver Form must be completed. Refer to Appendix I.
- Drivers should be at least 21 years old to transport youth. They must be in compliance with Safe Environment training and appropriate background screening.
- Drivers must be adequately insured, whether using their own vehicle or a rental vehicle. Liability coverage requirements are found in the *Catholic Diocese of Richmond Protected Self-Insurance Program Policies and Procedures* (Found on the diocesan extranet).
- A signed release form must be on file for all youth being transported. Refer to Appendix J.
- Attendance should be taken prior to departure from each location.

Policy regarding diocesan school buses transporting children to and from school can be found on the extranet under the Office of Catholic Schools in the *Diocesan School Policy Handbook*.



## **APPENDIX D**

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### **Safe Environment Committee**

Parishes and schools are encouraged to create a “Safe Environment Committee” on a local level to ensure compliance with the diocesan policies, regulations and procedures.

- Depending on the size of the parish or school, committees should consist of 3 – 7 members.
- Committee membership should be changed on a regular basis so as to allow others to participate. Membership transitions should be staggered so there remains some continuity of service within the committee.
- Committee membership should be representative of the location’s diverse population (employees and volunteers).
- The Office of Human Resources will ensure that local committees receive all pertinent documents.
- Committee members should have attended Safe Environment training prior to becoming a member of the committee.
- The committee should review the parish/school background screening and Safe Environment compliance.

## APPENDIX E

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### Rights of the Accused

- Additional information is available in the *Handbook for Canonical Process for the Resolution of Complaints of Clerical Sexual Abuse of Minors*, including the specific provisions of the rights of the accused cleric.
- The Diocese of Richmond, through its Office of Safe Environment, follows its policies relative to complaints of sexual abuse of minors and vulnerable adults involving laypersons.

## APPENDIX F

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### Use of Church Property by Unaffiliated Organizations

The Catholic Diocese of Richmond is committed to providing a safe environment for all children participating in activities across the diocese. Compliance with this Safe Environment initiative will be a component of any facility usage agreement (Refer to Unaffiliated Organization Agreement found under *Catholic Diocese of Richmond Protected Self-Insurance Program Policies and Procedures*).

All church or school sponsored events using facilities associated with the diocese must observe and abide by the Diocesan *Safe Environment Regulations*. This will include the requirement for leaders and volunteers to be VIRTUS trained and background screened.

Unaffiliated organizations must demonstrate comparable child protection training and background screening requirements for their leaders and volunteers. These policies will be thoroughly reviewed by the pastor or principal to determine youth protection comparability. This must be done in consultation with the Office of Safe Environment. Proof of leader and volunteer compliance with their child protection policies must be given in writing to the pastor or principal before use of facilities can begin. If the organization's child protection screening program does not meet the standard of our *Safe Environment Regulations*, then the organization must follow diocesan training and background screening requirements. These unaffiliated organizations will assume full responsibility for the conduct of their leaders, volunteers and other members in attendance.

It is encouraged that the facilities be monitored by a staff member during these activities.

It is encouraged to plan logistics and space allocations to ensure adult meetings are not occurring at the same time with shared space areas with youth meetings.

## APPENDIX G



### Consider Your Attire

Plan to wear what you would have worn to the meet up had you attended in person.



### Consider Your Location

Plan to engage in online forums from public areas of your house - dining room, office space, living room, etc. The backdrop should be free from adult related paraphernalia, such as signs or displays of alcoholic beverages.



### Consider Your Platform

Limit your contact with minors to public platforms such as Google Hangouts, Zoom, or Flocknotes. Direct, private connections, such as FaceTime are discouraged.

## Ministering Online to Minors



### Creating a Safe Environment Online



### How Meet Ups are Scheduled

Schedule online face-to-face contact with minors in advance through a group forum and with the knowledge/permission of parents or guardians.



### How they Contact You

Avoid sharing personal contact information, instead provide minors with parish or group related email addresses or accounts.



### Who has Access to Your Meet Ups

Arrange to host group meet ups and always provide parents with links/access to the meeting ups, emails, and other messages.

## APPENDIX H

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### Parental Consent Form for Virtual Gatherings

Dear Parent/Legal Guardian,

Please complete the form below to consent that your child is eligible to participate in virtual gatherings through \_\_\_\_\_ (Parish Name). This form will provide consent for all gatherings unless the parent/legal guardian gives written notification to staff that consent has been withdrawn.

Church personnel have been instructed to abide by the following protocols in connection with virtual gatherings with minors:

- All virtual gatherings will be held with at least two unrelated, Safe Environment trained and background screened adults.
- Virtual gathering information, to include instructions on how to log in, will be made available to parents as well as to the youth.
- Gatherings with minors will not be recorded. However, if screen shots are taken, participants will be notified both verbally and written out in the chat function.

Virtual gatherings may include but are not limited to religious education, VBS program, youth group meetings and so on.

---

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
(First and Last Name)

Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
(First and Last Name)

Parent's Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Street, City, State, Zip)

I hereby consent to the participation of my child: Yes ☐ No ☐

Sign the parental consent form \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX I

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### Volunteer Driver Form

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Driver: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Driver's License #: \_\_\_\_\_ State Issued: \_\_\_\_\_

Year, Make & Model of Vehicle: \_\_\_\_\_

Insurance Company's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Liability Limits: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Minimum Limits of \$100,000/\$300,000 Required)

Agent's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

In order to provide for the safety of our students or other members of the parish and those we serve, we must ask each volunteer driver to list all accidents or moving violations they have had in the last three years:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Please be aware that as a volunteer driver, your insurance is primary.  
Thank you for helping us with our transportation needs.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Volunteer Driver

\_\_\_\_\_  
Church/School Representative

## APPENDIX J

### Release Form

(Title of Event) \_\_\_\_\_

(Parish Name) \_\_\_\_\_

### **YOUTH** Registration Form

#### YOUTH INFORMATION

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name \_\_\_\_\_

First/Nick Name for Badge: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Gender: \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Contact Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Contact Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ Adult T-Shirt size: \_\_\_\_\_

Parish Name: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_

Group Leader: \_\_\_\_\_

#### PARENT / GUARDIAN INFORMATION

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Father) (Mother)

Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Father) (Mother)

Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Father) (Mother)



## Medical Information and Release Form

*All information is kept private and confidential*

Name of Participant: \_\_\_\_\_

### MEDICAL INFORMATION

***In many cases, our staff and volunteers are not familiar with the medical, physical and/or emotional history of each participant. Please share ANY information relating to the participant in detail. BE AS SPECIFIC AS POSSIBLE.***

Does the participant have any dietary restrictions?

☐ YES ☐ NO

List any dietary restrictions (i.e., vegetarian, allergies):

Is the participant allergic to anything?

☐ YES ☐ NO

List any details of allergies below (this may include food allergies, allergies to specific medications or chemicals, allergies to any substances):

Is the participant currently taking or has taken any prescription medication in the last 6 months?

☐ YES ☐ NO

List the specific prescription medications, reasons for medication and daily dosage. Indicate if the medication is currently being administered.

Does the participant have any emotional, physical or sensory conditions?

☐ YES ☐ NO

List any emotional conditions that may impede participation in the event. This may include counseling, treatment for emotional conditions (i.e., depression, eating disorders), and/or family situations that may have a significant impact on the participant.

List any physical and/or sensory conditions of which we should be aware or of which need special accommodations (e.g., hearing loss, visual impairment, mobility).

### RELEASE OF LIABILITY AND MEDICAL RELEASE

*As parent and/or legal guardian I remain legally responsible for any personal actions taken by the above-named minor. I agree on behalf of myself, my child named herein, or our heirs, successors, and assigns, to hold harmless and defend \_\_\_\_\_ (PARISH NAME) the Catholic Diocese of Richmond, its employees and agents, chaperons, or representatives associated with this event from any claim arising from or in connection with my child attending the event or in connection with any illness or injury (including death) or cost of medical treatment in connection therewith, and I agree to compensate the Diocese, its employees and agents and chaperons, or representatives associated with the event for reasonable attorney's fees and expenses which may incur in any action brought against them as a result of such injury or damage, unless such claim arises from the negligence of the Diocese.*

*I hereby warrant that to the best of my knowledge, my child is in good health, and I assume all responsibility for the health of my child. In the event of any emergency, I hereby give permission to transport my child to a hospital for emergency medical or surgical treatment. I wish to be advised prior to any further treatment by the hospital or doctor. In the event of an emergency, if you are unable to reach me at the above numbers, I give permission for the noted emergency contact to be notified. I will not hold \_\_\_\_\_ (PARISH NAME) and the Diocese of Richmond responsible for authorizing any medical treatment beyond necessary transportation to the hospital.*

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### USE OF PICTURES AND/OR VIDEO

*I give permission for the use of the voice/audio recordings, photographs, video and quotations of my child (named above) engaged in activities related to the parish or Diocesan event posted in \_\_\_\_\_ (PARISH NAME) the Diocese of Richmond publications or websites. Names of participants **will not** be used without expressed permission from the parent or guardian. If no box is checked below, the Diocese of Richmond assumes you give permission.*

☐ YES ☐ NO

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## YOUTH CODE OF CONDUCT

Youth participants must read, understand, agree, sign and return this sheet with the Medical Information and Release Form. Each participant is expected to adhere to the following principles while at the event:

### SHOW LOVE AND RESPECT FOR GOD:

- ✓ Pray daily for self and others.
- ✓ Participate in opportunities to receive the sacraments.
- ✓ Participate in the sessions, activities and prayer experiences.
- ✓ Be open, flexible and have a servant's attitude.
- ✓ Represent God in your words and actions.

### SHOW LOVE AND RESPECT FOR SELF:

- ✓ Remember that you are the Temple of the Holy Spirit. Present yourself accordingly.
- ✓ No alcohol, drugs or smoking will be tolerated during the event.
- ✓ Dress with modesty. Bare mid-drifts, spaghetti straps, short-shorts, low cut tops or guys without shirts are not permitted during the event.
- ✓ Any music you bring and listen to should glorify God.
- ✓ Drink plenty of water, obey sleeping times and make sure you eat all meals. This will allow you to fully participate and not be tired.
- ✓ If you must leave an activity, adult chaperones should accompany you since they are responsible for you.

### SHOW LOVE AND RESPECT FOR OTHERS:

- ✓ All words and actions should be those of Christ to build up others and not injure.
- ✓ Make sure that your actions during the activities do not distract others from hearing, seeing or praying.
- ✓ Be safe. No horseplay or other potentially harmful actions. Leave pocketknives, lighters or other hazardous materials at home.
- ✓ No teenagers are allowed to drive to or from the conference due to limited parking and liabilities.
- ✓ Under no circumstances can a youth be in the room or hall of a member of the opposite sex.
- ✓ Allow others to sleep. "Lights Out" means that it is time to go to sleep. Do not be in the showers or halls after "Lights Out."
- ✓ No outside or unregistered visitors at the event will be permitted.
- ✓ The facility must remain clean and undamaged. Otherwise, you will personally be responsible to pay for the damage. Don't bring food or drinks to the rooms, and pick up trash if you see it.

---

***I have read, understand and agree to the above principles. Any violation of the above principles may result in immediate dismissal from the event and participants will forfeit their registration fee.***

Youth Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parish: \_\_\_\_\_



Catholic Diocese of Richmond  
Office of Human Resources  
7800 Carousel Lane  
Richmond, Virginia 23294