

Pledge to Promote a Safe Environment in the Whole Community of the Faithful

As a member of the church, as clergy, an employee, volunteer, vendor or independent contractor of the Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee serving in a professional role, I am committed to being a person of good moral character. I am conscious of the unique authority and responsibility that I hold due to the trust placed in me by way of service to minors, vulnerable adults and all members of the church community.

I am expected to uphold the following **Pledge to Promote a Safe Environment** which covers activities in which I may be working with minors, vulnerable adults and other members of the church. The pledge supports the Diocesan policy outlined in the “Code of Conduct for Church Personnel and Volunteers”. This effort is also supported by the Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee Employee Manual. I declare that I have read the following.

Based on the following I pledge to:

1. Treat everyone with respect, loyalty, patience, integrity, courtesy, dignity, and consideration, regardless of the circumstances of the encounter.
2. Assume the full burden of responsibility for setting and maintaining clear and appropriate physical and emotional boundaries with minors, vulnerable adults and other members of the church.
3. Be proactive in identifying minors and/or vulnerable adults who may be at risk of unhealthy relationships and to assist them in developing their sense of self-worth and avoiding emotional manipulation.
4. Avoid any covert or overt sexual behavior with minors, vulnerable adults, and other members of the church, even if they initiate such behavior. This includes seductive speech or gestures as well as physical contact that sexually abuses, exploits, or harasses a person.
5. Never initiate sexual behavior with a minor or vulnerable adult. Such behavior, if witnessed, must be reported to a Supervisor, Principal, Program Director or Clergy immediately.
6. Understand and comply with mandatory Florida law for all persons who know or have reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been the victim of abuse to immediately report to the Department of Children and Families (DCF) by calling the toll-free statewide abuse or neglect registry at 1-800-96ABUSE and then to notify my supervisor of the report, including the case number, as soon as possible.
7. Show prudent discretion in the expression of affections used with minors and vulnerable adults and to adhere to the **PAN** principle – keeping all touch **P**ublic, **A**ppropriate and **N**onsexual. Discretion should also be used in giving or receiving gifts.
8. Use positive reinforcement rather than criticism, competition, or comparison when working with others, especially minors and/or vulnerable adults.

9. Never strike, spank, slap or shake anyone. Avoid forms of touch with those in your ministry which could be construed as sexually inappropriate.
10. Assure that a meeting space with a minor, vulnerable adult or other members of the church, is accessible and visible to others.
11. Never lock the room or door when meeting with minors, vulnerable adults or other members of the church, except for reasons of safety, such as a “lock-down” scenario.
12. Never allow a one-on-one situation where a child and/or vulnerable adult is alone in a car with an adult if that adult is neither a parent nor guardian. A level two background check is required for all adults who will transport minors and vulnerable adults. (“Code of Conduct for Church Personnel and Volunteers” pg. 7 section 3.5) *
13. Never use profanity in the presence of anyone.
14. Never provide anyone, especially minors and/or vulnerable adults, with videos, readings or graphic materials which are inappropriately sexual in nature. Creating, distributing, or maintaining child pornography in any form is a crime in the state of Florida and is immediately reported to law enforcement officials.
15. Never possess, consume, or offer alcohol products or illegal drugs to minors and/or vulnerable adults.
16. Never engage in sexual behavior over the Internet with anyone when engaged in ministry, especially minors and/or vulnerable adults.
17. Comply with the ratio of adults to minors required by the institution or department of the Diocese under which my ministry program operates.
18. Never communicate electronically, including social networking sites and text messaging, with minors and/or vulnerable adults, except as specifically authorized by Diocesan and school policy. Parents/guardians should always be the primary contact source and all communication must be copied to the Supervisor. (“Code of Conduct for Church Personnel and Volunteers” pg. 8 section 3.6.2) *
19. Immediately report suspected violations of the Pledge to Promote a Safe Environment to the Supervisor, Principal, Program Director or Clergy. If the suspected violator is the Supervisor, Principal, Program Director or Clergy the report should be made to the Diocesan Office of Child and Youth Protection. 850-435-3536

*See additional reporting requirements contained in the Diocesan Policy "[Code of Conduct for Church Personnel and Volunteers](#)".