

DIOCESE OF FORT WAYNE-SOUTH BEND

VOLUNTEER PERSONNEL

Policies Manual of the
Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, Inc.

Revised July 18, 2025



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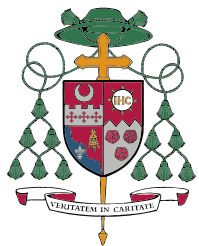
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WELCOME TO THE DIOCESE OF FORT WAYNE-SOUTH BEND, INC.

The Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, Inc. (the “Diocese”) is a not-for-profit religious corporation empowered under Canon Law to fulfill the spiritual, educational and charitable mission of the Catholic Church in the Northeastern portion of the State of Indiana. As a volunteer of the Diocese, your efforts play a vital role toward the successful fulfillment of the sacred mission of this local Church. The primary purpose of the work of our Diocese is pastoral. This will be done in a Christian atmosphere where the warmth within exudes love and concern for all we serve. We only settle for the best, and for this reason you have been asked to join our team. We look forward to working with you. This manual applies to all volunteers of the Diocese. It is provided to you as a guide to assist you in understanding the importance of your role and the standards of conduct and decorum that apply to your position. These materials are presented with the hope that your time of service will be pleasant, enduring and enriching for you and for the people of God whom we all serve. The Diocese reserves the right to change or discontinue any provision of this manual at any time. This manual is not intended to be nor, should it be construed as a contract of any type with the diocese or any of its agencies for any purpose, or a promise of continued volunteer service opportunity. Either you or the diocese may terminate your volunteer relationship for any reason at any time.

A WORD FROM BISHOP KEVIN C. RHOADES



The work of our diocese is eminently pastoral. We work to bring the message of Christ and his love to everyone. These policies are meant to make clear to all who serve our people that we are devoted to the mission of Jesus Christ and to the treatment of every single person, especially our beloved young, with dignity and in the spirit of the Gospel of Christ.



GENERAL POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY

Diocesan employment practices are based on job-related criteria such as one's fidelity to the Catholic faith, individual merit, ability, experience, performance, education and training.

This policy of nondiscrimination extends to all aspects of diocesan employment including recruitment, selection, compensation, training, reasonable accommodation, promotion, transfer, and termination.

Since the distinctive and unique mission of the Diocese is primarily religious, the Diocese will, whenever possible, retain a Catholic in good standing to perform work for the Diocese.

POLICY FOR THE PROTECTION OF Minors*

The Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend requires all priests, deacons, candidates for ordination and religious life, and other diocesan and parish personnel, lay and religious, paid and volunteer, to adhere to the diocese's ***Code of Conduct When Interacting with a Minor****. Likewise, **all** are subject to and must report the physical, emotional, or sexual abuse or neglect of a minor or the acquisition, possession, and/or distribution of pornography involving a minor to appropriate civil and diocesan authorities consistent with the diocese's ***Policy on Reporting Incidents of Abuse or Neglect of Minors including Vulnerable Adults.*** All mentioned previously as well the diocese's parishes and schools are subject to and obligated by this policy.

*A **minor** is defined as anyone under the age of eighteen years; or a person regardless

CODE OF CONDUCT WHEN INTERACTING WITH A CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON

The priests, deacons, candidates for ordination and the religious life, paid personnel, lay and religious, and volunteers, lay and religious, working in and on behalf of the diocese's schools, parishes, Offices of Catechesis and of Youth Ministry, and other diocesan programs or agencies engage in extensive services with and counseling, educational, and spiritual ministries to children and young persons ("children"). For purposes of this guideline, "children" includes anyone who has not yet reached his or her eighteenth birthday. 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 who perform services on behalf of the Diocese which involves interaction.

The following is a set of guidelines for conduct which must be observed by all the above-mentioned persons when dealing with children. These guidelines are not intended to prevent a person from performing service or ministry but rather to assist him/her in employing good sense when interacting with children. If it is necessary to depart from these guidelines due to some extraordinary circumstance, the person should be aware of the departure and must be able to justify one's actions. Consultation with a supervisor regarding the departure is recommended. If one-on-one involvement with a child is unavoidable, use extreme discretion in those dealings with the child.

All priests, deacons, candidates for ordination and the religious life, paid personnel, lay and religious, and volunteers, lay and religious, of the diocese must observe the following guidelines when engaging in ministry to or otherwise interacting with children:

1. Children who are not relatives may not stay overnight in a parish rectory in the diocese. No one, except priests and seminarians assigned by the Bishop, may live in a rectory on a long-term basis, that is, for more than a few days.
2. Avoid physical contact with a child. Never engage in any corporal punishment. In situations where physical contact is necessary and proper, such as in sacramental preparation, use sound discretion and moderation. If a child initiates innocent physical contact out of acceptable affection, an appropriate response is proper if not prolonged. Appropriate physical contact includes handshakes, side hugs, high fives. Inappropriate physical contact includes prolonged front-to-front hugging, massages, wrestling, piggyback rides, lap sitting, hitting, pinching.
3. Except in unavoidable circumstances that require otherwise, for example a pre-school student who needs assistance in the restroom, do not be alone with a child in a residence, school, sleeping facility, locker room, restroom, dressing facility, or other closed area. Adults should never shower, bathe, or dress in front of children and vice versa.
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 the 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 gender as participating children, to provide adequate supervision based upon the type of activity. Adult chaperones should supervise children of the same gender whenever possible. Children should have a chaperone of their same gender present on the trip even if it is not the adult assigned to their small group.
7. Never take an overnight trip alone with a child.
8. Do not drive alone with a child in a car unless parental permission has been given, preferably in writing.

9. Topics or vocabulary that would not be discussed or used comfortably in the presence of parents should not be discussed or used with children.
10. Alcohol, in the form of wine, may be given to those under the age of 21 only in very limited quantity and only in 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.
11. Always maintain a professional posture in dealing with children. Avoid unwarranted emotional attachment and be aware of the attraction that children may have for adults in positions of authority and trust. If an adult senses that a child is developing an emotional or physical attraction, the adult should refer the child to another qualified adult, particularly in counseling situations.
12. 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 provided the schedule of appointments. If the subject matter properly precludes notification, the adult must consult with and receive the approval of his/her supervisor on the local or diocesan level before engaging in such appointments.
13. All adults have an obligation to take appropriate steps to protect children, particularly when they are in the care of the church. If an adult observes another adult violating this guideline or engaging in other conduct which causes him/her to have reason for concern for the well-being of a child, the adult should confront that other adult in a forthright manner and report his/her concerns to the supervisor, pastor, or the Vicar General. If an adult has reason to believe that child abuse or neglect has occurred or is occurring, that adult must follow the diocesan policy on reporting incidents of child abuse to civil authorities and report the matter to his/her supervisor or the Vicar General at (260) 422-4611.
14. Report the physical, emotional, or sexual abuse or neglect of a minor to appropriate civil and diocesan authorities consistent with the diocese's ***Policy on Reporting Incidents of Abuse or Neglect of a Minor including Vulnerable Adults***; and report the acquisition, possession, and/or distribution of pornography involving any minor to appropriate civil and diocesan authorities consistent with the diocese's ***Policy of Reporting Incidents of Abuse or Neglect of a Minor and Vulnerable Adults***.
15. Refer to and abide by the diocese's ***Policy for All Youth Events Involving Overnight Stay*** for any event for which that policy applies; the Diocese's ***Guideline for Small Group Meetings in Homes or on Property Not Owned by the Diocese*** for any events with children or young people for which that guideline applies; and the diocese's ***Electronic Communication and Technology Policy***.

POLICY ON REPORTING INCIDENTS OF CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT

Purpose

The Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend shares the conviction of Indiana legal authorities, all concerned adults,

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whether they are parents, and the Church that every effort should and must be made to report child abuse or neglect to appropriate authorities. Incidents of the physical, emotional or sexual abuse or neglect of children, unfortunately, occur with regularity throughout our society.

Very often the victims of this abuse are too young to relate to others the fact of occurrence or are too frightened or ashamed to reveal the identities of those responsible for the abuse or neglect. Therefore, only when concerned individuals report those facts which give them reason to believe an incident of child abuse or neglect has occurred can this distressing problem be brought forward for legal redress, as well as psychological assistance and spiritual rehabilitation. This Diocesan policy on reporting child abuse or neglect is intended to promote awareness of the laws of the State of Indiana already in effect for all and thus enhance our pastoral awareness of, and response to, this grave problem.

Definitions

1. **“Diocese”** means the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend. As used in this policy, the diocese includes all diocesan offices, parishes, schools, agencies, programs, and departments.
2. **“DCS”** means the Indiana Department of Child Services, the agency to which child abuse or neglect may be reported.
3. **“APS”** means the Indiana Department of Adult Protective Services, the agency to which abuse, or neglect of adults may be reported.
4. For purposes of this policy, **“local law enforcement agency”** means a local town or city police department, county sheriff’s department or Indiana State Police post. A list of county sheriff’s department offices located within the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend to which reports of child abuse or neglect may be made is provided at the end of this policy. Local town or city police departments and Indiana State Police posts are not listed, but may be contacted to make a required report.
5. **“Employee”** as used in this policy means any priest, deacon, candidate for ordination of the religious life, paid personnel, lay or religious, and any person acting as a volunteer, in any capacity, for the Diocese.
6. For purposes of this policy, **“child abuse or neglect”** refers to any physical, emotional or sexual abuse or neglect of a child less than 18 years of age. This includes children who suffer physical and/or emotional abuse by the acts or omissions of their parents, guardians, custodians or others. It also refers to children who are victims of certain sex offenses perpetrated by anyone.
7. For purposes of this policy, **“child pornography”** refers to any representation of a minor, regardless of the means used, involved in explicit sexual activities, whether real or simulated, and any representation of sexual organs of minors for primarily sexual purposes. The acquisition, possession and/or distribution of child pornography is prohibited and must be reported to the proper civil and diocesan authorities.
8. For purposes of this policy, **“reason to believe”** means information which, if presented to individuals of

similar background and training, would cause those individuals to believe that a child may have been abused or neglected.

9. For purposes of this policy, **“direct supervisor”** means:

- for parish school employees and volunteers, their school principal;
- for non-school employees and volunteers in a parish, their parish pastor, DRE, or Youth Ministry leader, as applicable;
- for all high school employees and volunteers, their school principal;
- for diocesan agency or department employees, their agency or department administrator; and
- for chancery employees and volunteers, the Chief Financial Officer for those in the finance office and the Vicar General for all others.

Policy

1. Reporting Incidents

Indiana law requires that all persons, without exception, make an immediate oral report to a local law enforcement agency or DCS if that person has “reason to believe” that **a child** may be a victim of child abuse or neglect (unless that person knows a report of the incident has already been made). The obligation to report exists regardless of who the accused may be. This duty applies to all diocesan personnel:

- All priests, deacons, candidates for ordination and the religious life, and other religious personnel,
- All school and parish personnel, paid and volunteer (including counselors); and
- All other employees and volunteers of the diocese or any of its affiliated organizations.

The Diocese expects and requires that all its priests, deacons, candidates for ordination and the religious life, paid personnel, lay and religious, and volunteers, especially those who work in diocesan programs that are directly and immediately involved with children, recognize and report **child** abuse and neglect in accordance with Indiana law. The Diocese expects and requires that the report be made regardless of when the suspected abuse or neglect is claimed to have occurred.

Where a person suspects that **a child** may be a victim of abuse or neglect, but is unsure whether he or she has sufficient “reason to believe” to make a report, that person should always err on the side of caution and report. The key is to report rather than not report.

Any persons required to make a report to the DCS or law enforcement agency in their capacity as diocesan employees or volunteers are also required to notify immediately their direct supervisor concerning their report to the DCS or law enforcement agency. The direct supervisor then also becomes personally responsible to report, or to cause a report to be made, to the DCS or law enforcement.

If the direct supervisor of the individual making the initial report is unavailable or if the individual feels the direct supervisor is not the appropriate party to contact, the employee/volunteer should immediately notify the Vicar General of the report. The phone number at the Fort Wayne Chancery is (260) 422-4611. The person making the report must document his/her actions. A form is attached to this policy for these purposes. The person making the report must use this form or a similar one.

2. Possible Indicators of Child Abuse or Neglect

Many children who are not abused or neglected may exhibit one or more of these indicators from time to time. Children who have many of these signs or symptoms, however, may have a problem that should be reported.

In viewing possible indicators of child abuse, it is always important to distinguish between physical contact and emotional attachment which is nurturing and supportive and that which exploits a child.

Emotional Abuse

Be alert for a child who:

- has a poor self-image
- has slow physical, mental or emotional growth
- is extremely passive or aggressive
- is terrified or extremely nervous if parents are contacted
- is afraid of going home
- has a speech problem
- has a habit of biting or rocking
- attempts suicide

Physical Abuse

Be alert for a child who:

- has unexplained injuries or burns
- does not want to tell you how an injury occurred
- explains an injury differently than do other members of family
- has serious injuries that are left untreated
- fears going home
- has bald spots (a sign of hair pulling)
- wears clothing that covers arms and legs, even in warm weather
- refuses to undress for gym class
- is overly aggressive or withdrawn

Sexual Abuse

Be alert for a child who:

- has difficulty walking or sitting
- has pain or itching around genitals
- has unusual knowledge of or interest in sex
- is extremely moody
- has poor peer relationships, especially with opposite sex
- has a sudden onset of behavior problems
- is unwilling to change or participate in physical education class
- fears going home
- new instances of bed wetting or wetting of pants

Physical Neglect

Be alert for a child who:

- wears clothes that are unusually dirty, the wrong size or torn
- has poor hygiene
- seems to be underfed and is always hungry
- has unattended medical needs
- begs or steals food
- is often absent or late
- consistently lacks supervision, especially for dangerous activities or for long periods of time
- has drug or alcohol problems

3. Report Confidentiality

The identities of persons making child abuse or neglect reports to the DCS or local law enforcement are confidential and only made available to individuals legally authorized to obtain such information. Persons making reports may be required to testify at judicial proceedings if court action becomes necessary.

4. Privileged Communications Waived

Indiana law provides that what is generally considered as “privileged communication” between a husband and a wife, a health care provider and patient, or a school guidance counselor and student, is not grounds for

failing to make the required reports concerning child abuse or neglect. Priests must also make reports unless the information formulating the reason to believe was gained within the Sacrament of Reconciliation. In such cases, priests may urge the individual providing the information to make a report or to provide the information to another person who may then make the report.

5. Reporting Immunities

Any person who has reason to believe a child is a victim of abuse or neglect and reports to DCS or law enforcement, or a person who cooperates in a judicial proceeding resulting from such a report, is presumed to have acted in good faith and, therefore, is immune from civil or criminal liability. Such liability will only become a factor if it can be shown the person acted maliciously or in bad faith.

One must remember; however, this immunity is only available to those making the statutorily required reports to a DCS or law enforcement agency and/or their direct supervisor. Legal actions for damages may still be available if a person disseminates information to other, additional parties. **Therefore, a person should only make the report to the statutorily designated parties to ensure retention of the statutory immunity protection. Although a well-intentioned person may feel an obligation to inform the parents or guardian of the child, this is not to be done.**

Another important point a person reporting child abuse or neglect must remember is that his or her duty is a duty to report only. Once someone reports to DCS or local law enforcement and, if applicable, a direct supervisor or Vicar General, his or her duty under the statute ends. Although the person reporting may have to cooperate in a DCS or other public authority's investigation, or may have to testify at judicial proceedings, he or she should not conduct a personal investigation. Investigating is the responsibility of DCS or law enforcement authorities. In fact, an unauthorized person who conducts his or her own investigation risks civil liability for invasion of privacy or defamation.

6. Purpose of Reporting

Protective service agencies are charged with the responsibility of protecting children and preserving family life. Their goal is to help families cope with the problems that cause child abuse, not to separate children from their parents.

7. Penalty for Not Reporting

Persons who knowingly fail to make a required report of child abuse or neglect commit a Class B misdemeanor. (I.C. 31-33-22-1) Therefore, a person should always err on the side of reporting, as opposed to not reporting. A person having "reason to believe" a child is a victim of child abuse or neglect must make the immediate oral report to shield himself or herself from civil or criminal liability and must inform his or her direct supervisor or the Vicar General, if applicable. A form for this purpose is available on the diocesan website under Youth Protection/Report Abuse.

8. Child Pornography

The acquisition, possession, and/or distribution of child pornography will be reported to the Civil Authorities.

DIOCESAN COOPERATION WITH CIVIL AUTHORITIES

Any civil investigations of suspected incidents of child abuse or neglect will be accorded the complete and willing assistance of the appropriate diocesan personnel. All necessary action will be taken to ensure the fair treatment of any diocesan employee accused of child abuse or neglect. As a precautionary measure, an accused employee may be placed on administrative leave pending the investigation of the claim or the completion of any civil process. Pastoral counseling and guidance will be made available to any accused individual to support them through any investigatory period. Additional pastoral counseling will continue at the individual's request regardless of the outcome of the civil investigation. Everything will also be done to see that any child who is abused or neglected receives appropriate assistance and counseling.

The following is a list of DCS and sheriff's department offices located within the diocese to which child abuse or neglect may be reported. Local town or city police departments or Indiana State Police Posts are not listed but may be contacted to make a required report.

The Indiana Department of Child Services has a Child Abuse Hotline

To report child abuse or neglect to DCS, call 1 (800) 800-5556.

The hotline serves as the central reporting center for all allegations of child abuse or neglect in the State of Indiana. It is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

County Sheriff's Offices within the Diocese

Adams County	Adams County Sheriff's Department 313 South 1st Street, P.O. Box 608 Decatur, Indiana 46733 (260) 724-5345
Allen County	Allen County Sheriff's Department 101 Courthouse, 715 South Calhoun Street Fort Wayne, Indiana 46802 (260) 449-3000
DeKalb County	DeKalb County Sheriff's Department 215 East 8th Street Auburn, Indiana 46706 (260) 925-3365
Elkhart County	Elkhart County Sheriff's Department 111 North 3rd Street Goshen, Indiana 46526 (574) 533-4151
Huntington County	Huntington County Sheriff's Department 332 East State Street Huntington, Indiana 46750

(260) 356-8316

Kosciusko County Kosciusko County Sheriff's Department
221 West Main Street
Warsaw, Indiana 46580
(574) 267-5667

LaGrange County LaGrange County Sheriff's Department
0875 South State Road 9
LaGrange, Indiana 46761
(260) 463-7491

Marshall County Marshall County Sheriff's Department
210 West Madison Street
Plymouth, Indiana 46563
(574) 936-3187

Noble County Noble County Sheriff's Department
210 South 7th Street, P.O. Box 22
Albion, Indiana 46701
(260) 636-2182

St. Joseph County St. Joseph County Sheriff's Department
401 West Sample Street
South Bend, Indiana 46601
(574) 235-9611

Steuben County Steuben County Sheriff's Department
206 West Martha Street
Angola, Indiana 46703
(260) 668-1000, Ext. 4000

Wabash County Wabash County Sheriff's Department
79 West Main Street
Wabash, Indiana 46992
(260) 563-8891

Wells County Wells County Sheriff's Department
1615 West Western Avenue
Bluffton, Indiana 46714
(260) 824-3426

Whitley County Whitley County Sheriff's Department
101 West Market Street
Columbia City, Indiana 46725 |
(260) 244-6410

CONFIDENTIALITY

As a Diocesan employee, you may become privy to personal, privileged and/or confidential information. Security of such information is of utmost importance. Such information must be treated in a confidential manner. It should be used only for the purposes for which it was obtained and shared only internally with those having a legitimate business reason for access to the information except for disclosure required by law. Care should always be taken regarding all information gained by virtue of service with the Diocese, whether related to Diocesan matters, students in any of its schools, or to any other individuals served by or having dealings with the Diocese or its staff members.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

All Diocesan employees must exercise good faith in the performance of their duties. You have the obligation to avoid any personal interest or relationship, financial or other, which might adversely affect or influence your judgment in the performance of your duties, or which might even create the appearance of same. If you have any concern on an issue in this area, contact your immediate supervisor or the pastor of the parish in which you perform duties so that the situation may be reviewed in detail.

HARASSMENT

All diocesan volunteers and those with whom they interact, especially children, are entitled to be treated with dignity and respect. Supervisors, department heads and pastors are charged with the responsibility to see to it that all over whom they have supervision are treated in a manner consistent with the religious and moral standards espoused by the Church and the diocese. All diocesan facilities and programs should be free from verbal or physical harassment (whether on the basis of sex, race, religion, national origin, disability, or other civilly-protected status) and from any actual or implied threat that such harassment must be tolerated in connection with diocesan service, or the receipt of services.

For purposes of this policy, harassment includes, but is not limited to, sexual advances; unwelcome and/or unwanted touching; the use of obscene or objectionable language, or name calling; and any action reasonably considered offensive, based on race, religion, national origin, disability, or sex. This includes jokes, comments, insults, cartoons, innuendoes, personal conduct or mannerisms that could be reasonably construed as offensive.

If you believe that you, a diocesan volunteer or another employee, or anyone with whom you or they interact, are or have been subjected to such treatment, you must immediately report the incidents to your supervisor or supervising pastor. There will be no recriminations against any person making such a report in good faith. All pertinent information shall be kept confidential to the fullest extent possible, consistent with the prompt investigation of any such complaints, and with the taking of appropriate corrective actions, if necessary, based upon the outcome of such investigations. If for any reason you feel that your supervisor or pastor is an

inappropriate person to whom the report should be made or if they are unavailable, such reports should be made directly to the Vicar General in person or by telephone at (260) 422-4611.

SAFETY

You must immediately report to your supervisor or pastor any accident occurring on diocesan property or involving diocesan employees or volunteers which involves property damage or personal injury. You must immediately report any situation, hazard, or practice which you believe is unsafe. We want to take all reasonable steps to maintain a safe environment for all who serve and are served by the Diocese.

NOTIFICATION TO SUPERVISOR FOLLOWING ARREST

Employees of the Diocese of Fort Wayne–South Bend are required to notify their supervisor if arrested of any crime during the period of their employment. Notification should be made within twenty-four (24) hours of the arrest if at all possible, or as soon thereafter as possible. The employee must provide the supervisor with enough detail of the charge(s) to enable the supervisor to make a decision as to whether the employee can remain on the job.

The employee's supervisor must alert the diocesan Safe Environment Coordinator of the arrest.

For purposes of this policy, "*supervisor*" means:

- for grade school employees and volunteers, the school's principal;
- for non-school employees and volunteers in a parish, the parish's pastor, DRE, or Youth Ministry leader, as applicable;
- for all high school employees and volunteers, the school's principal;
- for Diocesan agency or department employees, the agency or department administrator; and• for any others, the Vicar General.

DIOCESE OF FORT WAYNE-SOUTH BEND POLICY TO REPORT WRONGDOING (May 2018)

General

The Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend requires all representatives of the Church, including clergy, religious, directors, and other volunteers and lay employees, to observe high standards of business and personal ethics in the conduct of their duties and responsibilities. All representatives of the Church must practice honesty and integrity in fulfilling their responsibilities, and comply with all applicable laws and regulations.

The objectives of the Policy to Report Wrongdoing are to establish policies and procedures for:

- The submission of concerns regarding questionable financial or legal matters and violations or suspected violations of the Code of Canon Law on a confidential or anonymous basis;
- The receipt, retention and treatment of complaints received by the organization; and,
- The protection of anyone reporting concerns from retaliatory actions.

Reporting Responsibility

Each representative of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend has an obligation to report in accordance with this policy (a) questionable or improper accounting or auditing matters, and (b) other financial, legal or canonical concerns (hereinafter collectively referred to as Concerns).

Reports of Concerns should be made to Tom Skiba by any of the following methods.

Work- 260-969-1231 ext. 312

Home- 260-436-1003

E-Mail- tskiba@hainescpa.com

Concerns are to be reported as soon as possible. Reports of Concerns should include all relevant information about the suspected act, including any material evidence that exists.

No Retaliation

This policy is intended to encourage and enable representatives of the Diocese to raise Concerns within the Organization for investigation and appropriate action. With this goal in mind, no stakeholder who, in good faith, reports a Concern shall be subject to retaliation or, in the case of an employee, adverse employment consequences. Moreover, anyone who retaliates against someone who has reported a Concern in good faith is subject to discipline up to and including dismissal from their position within the Church.

Investigation

The designated personnel shall be responsible to a thorough and expeditious investigation of the reported Concern. Proposed decisions on disposition of a case will be discussed with the Bishop or his designee(s). The results of all reported Concern investigations and the final resolution shall be reported to the Audit Committee.



ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION AND TECHNOLOGY POLICY

INTRODUCTION

“The image of the body and the members reminds us that the use of the social web is complementary to an encounter in the flesh that comes alive through the body, heart, eyes, gaze, breath of the other. If the Net is used as an extension or expectation of such an encounter, then the network concept is not betrayed and remains a resource for communion. If a family uses the Net to be more connected, to then meet at table and look into each other’s eyes, then it is a resource. If a Church community coordinates its activity through the network, and then celebrates the Eucharist together, then it is a resource. If the Net becomes an opportunity to share stories and experiences of beauty or suffering that are physically distant from us, in order to pray together and together seek out the good to rediscover what unites us, then it is a resource.”

We can, in this way, move from diagnosis to treatment: opening the way for dialogue, for encounter, for “smiles” and expressions of tenderness... This is the network we want, a network created not to entrap, but to liberate, to protect a communion of people who are free. The Church herself is a network woven together by Eucharistic communion, where unity is based not on “likes”, but on the truth, on the “Amen”, by which each one clings to the Body of Christ and welcomes others.”

Pope Francis, 24 January 2019, 53rd World Communications Day Message

Note: Throughout this policy, certain words will be noted by an asterisk. These words are defined in the appendix of this policy. Diocesan school personnel should also refer to Policy P3645 as found in the Catholic Schools Office Educational Policies. Resources and forms for use with this policy are contained in an additional supplement.

PURPOSE

This policy assists those who minister in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend by outlining the acceptable use of electronic communication* and technology. The policy protects both the diocese and its members by defining use that is safe, responsible, civil, and, most importantly, reflects our discipleship of Jesus Christ. The diocese believes these resources are an important educational and evangelizing tool to further the mission of the Church. Therefore, use of these resources must always be consistent with the mission of the Catholic Church. The benefits to using electronic communication and technology include its speed of transmission, ability to reach large numbers of persons, low cost, ease of use, and opportunity for feedback and collaboration. Its thoughtful and careful use promotes healthy communication in building relationships and promoting the mission of the church. However, electronic communication is a tool in relationship-building and

is never a substitute for personal encounter. Moreover, electronic communication can inflict great harm to individuals, especially minors*, and the church itself if misused.

POLICY STATEMENT

The Diocese of Fort Wayne – South Bend may supply computers, software, internet access, and/or other electronic communication devices to its clerics*, those preparing for ordination, employees*, volunteers*, (“church personnel”) and students so they may complete the responsibilities assigned by their positions. All users must take care to apply these tools for their intended purposes. The diocese may monitor electronic communication or any other related use of its computers, devices and networks at any time, with or without notice to users.

The diocese encourages administrators, pastors and principals to support the use of electronic communication and technology and to give church personnel the necessary training to communicate safely and responsibly while using electronic communication.

Any communication that includes defamatory or harmful comments regarding the diocese, its personnel*, parishes, schools, institutions or those it serves may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. All church personnel and students of the diocese are required to adhere to the information provided in this policy when using electronic communication.

PROTECTION OF MINORS*

The diocese requires that church personnel and students comply with all aspects of the Safe Environment Policy (<https://diocesefwsb.org/safe-environment-resources/#se-resources>). The diocese will review alleged violations of the *Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act* and the *Safe Environment Policy* of the diocese as needed. See also Policy 4170 in the Catholic Schools Office Educational Policies concerning disclosure of student education records.

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

There are many forms of electronic communication with some enabling private exchanges between two or more persons while others share information in the public domain. Some forms of communication are intended only for adults* while others may include adults and minors. Those utilizing electronic communication should consider the type that best serves their ministry and those for whom the messages are intended. For example, a closed group on a social media platform allows adults and minors the freedom to communicate freely within the group. The communication has a public aspect, but it is contained within the group affording some protection. Whereas open groups on social media platforms allow for the greatest transparency and work well for outreach with adults and promoting events.

Those who serve in the diocese may also use electronic communication in their personal lives. If so, they must use care in those communications also. This is due to the public nature of electronic communication and the association of content to the creator.

Examples of electronic communication platforms

- Learning management systems (LMS): used in educational settings for class and course work. Ex. Canvas, Blackboard, Google Classroom
- Information management systems: information system used for decision-making and reporting, including the coordination, control, analysis, and visualization of information or financial transactions in an organization. Ex. Powerschool, CMG Connect, Parishsoft, Shopwithscrip, and FACTS
- Social media* platforms: used to communicate with others, find people with like interests, share information. Ex. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, LinkedIn
- Texting/email, and marketing platforms: send short messages (texts or email) via mobile devices or using an online application. Ex. Remind, Flocknote, Constant Contact, MailChimp, and GroupMe

Websites/online accounts/blogs

The diocese may approve the creation of ministry websites*/online accounts or blogs* on platforms but only as an extension of a ministry, program, or event. Initiation of such sites must have the prior approval of the proper supervisor*/administrator before beginning such work. Supervisors who give approval to an individual to create a ministry website/online account/blog for dispersal of information are responsible for it. The diocese does not permit use of a personal site* or account to be used by lay employees, volunteers, or those preparing for ordination as the official means of extending a diocesan, parish or school ministry, program, or event. Clerics may use personal sites to share homilies and other spiritual resources.

Email

The diocese requires that a ministry/work email account be established and used in all ministry and professional work on behalf of the diocese by clerics, those preparing for ordination, and employees. The account should be in a domain that is owned or controlled by the diocese so that archiving of all messages is possible for retrieval if needed. The pastor/principal/supervisor should ensure every employee who needs an email account to complete job duties has one. The diocese does not permit use of a personal email account to conduct ministry or work on behalf of the diocese by clerics, those preparing for ordination, or employees. While volunteers may use their personal email accounts in their volunteer role, the parish/school may consider providing an account in the parish/school domain to certain volunteers so that it controls access to and retention of messages.

Cell phones/other devices

Since the diocese does not provide cell phones to most of its church personnel, they may use their personal devices for electronic communication. When doing so, adults in their roles within the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend must use the approved electronic communication methods outlined in this policy. In cases where organizations do, however, provide a device that is owned or paid for by a diocesan entity, the diocese shall retain all rights to monitor, track, or analyze usage of the device.

Confidential and proprietary information

Church personnel are prohibited from disclosing information that is understood to be held in confidence by the diocese, FERPA (the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974) or HIPAA (Health Insurance

Portability and Accountability Act of 1996). Church personnel are prohibited from disclosing any information that is proprietary to the diocese, except by explicit permission of the appropriate authority.

Trademarks and logos

Use of the diocesan crest, logo, and name requires explicit permission from the diocesan Communications Office. The diocese does not allow use of its name, trademarks or logos, names of any parish, school or entity of the diocese on personal websites or in any way that could reasonably suggest diocesan or affiliate sponsorship or agreement with any views expressed on personal accounts.

The crests of the bishops belong to them and are not to be used in any unofficial capacity.

Right to review

The diocese reserves the right to review the electronic communications of any church personnel that is generated by diocesan accounts or using diocesan equipment.

RULES/PROCEDURES

In using electronic devices to communicate in their roles with of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, including but not limited to email messages, text messages, tweets, websites, blogs, and social networking sites, church personnel and students will:

1. Always use respectful language.
2. Maintain appropriate relational boundaries in all forms of communication.
3. Never access, post or send immoral, obscene, illegal, threatening, abusive, defamatory, or profane material or pornography (adult or minor) of any kind to any person.
4. Never send anonymous messages. Messages sent by an address from an office holder, such as info@diocesefwsb.org or bishopsoffice@diocesefwsb.org are permitted.
5. Create usernames on a diocesan-owned entity or third-party account that allow transparency as to the identity of the user.
6. Treat all communication as if it were public. Communication via these forms of technology does not always remain private. Always use language and communicate as if you were face to face with the person. The message may be altered and sent beyond the original author's intention.

When communicating with minors using forms of electronic communication:

7. The purpose is to provide information related to a ministry, educational activity, or event and not for socialization or other personal interaction. Prolonged conversations or interactions of a personal nature with minors through such communication methods are not permitted. Family members are exempt.
8. Parents must be notified of the methods of communication which are used with their minor children and their consent obtained. Parents must be granted access to such communications including the minor's account login credentials and/or membership in a closed social media group. Written

verification of understanding from parents/guardians is required. See the resources and forms document for a sample form.

9. Social Media/Network or other electronic communication may not be used to communicate directly to minors who have not reached the 9th grade, but instead should be directed to their parents. Educational or curriculum-based electronic communications are acceptable for those below 9th grade if it is approved by the pastor/principal/supervisor and parents/guardians via signature(s) and occur on a learning management platform used by the school. These programs must always be transparent in nature and freely accessible by parents/guardians. If the school allows individual communication between adults and minors on the platform, e.g. teachers and students, then parents must be informed that this feature will be used and given access to the messages. It is also acceptable to create public organizational pages which may be viewed by any individual. Minors may only be given information to follow these public pages if they are permitted by the rules of the site to open an account.
10. For electronic messages that are sent to *groups of minors* who have reached the 9th grade, the following is required:

Email:

- a. Parents/guardians informed of use with their minor children and written consent given.
- b. Message sent to all members of group.
- c. Parents copied on message if they request this.
- d. Supervisor copied on all messages.

Text:

- a. Parents/guardians informed of use with their minor children and written consent given.
- b. Message sent to all members of group.
- c. Parents copied on message if they request this.
- d. Supervisor copied on all messages.

Post on social media platform:

- a. Parents/guardians informed of use with their minor children and written consent given.
- b. Posts or messages are visible to all group members.
- c. Parents are invited or admitted as members if the group is closed.
- d. Supervisor given access to the social media site or designated as a co-administrator with full access and posting privileges to the social media account.

11. For messages that are sent to *individual* minors (9th grade and above), the following is required:

Email:

- a. Parents/guardians informed of use with their minor children and written consent given.
- b. Parents copied on message.

Text:

- a. Parents/guardians informed of use with their minor children and written consent given.
 - b. Parents copied on message.

Telephone call:

- a. Parents/guardians informed of use with their minor children and written consent given.
- b. Calls are made infrequently and only for a purpose associated with ministry, program, or event.
- c. Calls are not made for socializing.

Post on social media platform: Not recommended between adult and individual minor.

12. When using social media sites for communication with minors, a closed or private group or page may keep the group safer as it prevents interference from outsiders.
13. When using a ministry social media account, adults must not “follow” or “like” a minor but may accept the request from minors who are involved in the ministry. Church personnel may not post publicly or privately on a minor’s personal social media page.
14. When minors form their own electronic communication groups, adults should not join these groups. If the teens involved with a ministry, club, team or organization have a running group message, the ministry and/or its leaders would not be responsible.
15. If minors contact an adult engaged in ministry without copying their parents/guardians on the message, (other than a “follow” request), the adult may reply with a group message (i.e., when the personal contact was for information relevant to the group). When the contact is such that a group response is not appropriate, the adult should respond with: *“I have received your message but am unable to reply as you have not copied your parent/guardian on the message. Please resend to me with at least one parent/guardian copied so that I may reply to you. If this is an emergency and you need to communicate with me immediately, reply and include that in your message. Thank you.”* It is also permissible for the adult minister to respond to the message if the parent is copied. Church personnel should maintain copies of all such messages.
16. Adults are permitted to initiate communication with minors between 8:00 AM and 9:00 PM. They may respond to communication sent to them by a minor outside of this time period only if it is an emergency, urgent such that it cannot wait until the next morning or occurs in the context of a retreat or pilgrimage and is necessary.
17. Online “chatting” with minors is not permitted.
18. Adults must remember that they are adult professionals who are rendering service to a minor. Appropriate boundaries must exist between adults and minors so that effective ministry may occur. Adults are not friends or buddies with the minors they serve. All electronic interaction with youth should be conducted as if the adult minister would be willing to say or give the same response in person, in the presence of that minor’s parent.

Additional information for social networking sites (as part of a parish, school or diocesan site)

1. Before creating a social media account on a platform, the pastor/principal/administrator must approve its use in writing. See the resources and forms supplement for a form for this use.
2. There must be at least two administrators with rights for each social media account used for ministry communication.
3. The adult creating the account should use electronic communication platforms that are based in the United States to assure compliance with US laws for safety, security, and privacy.
4. Consider the audience and purpose of the account to determine if it should be a public or private site.
5. The site administrator must approve each request to follow/like the site after verification of current participation in the program or ministry.
6. Do not post or distribute personal identifiable information of a minor without verifiable consent of the parent or guardian. Personal identifiable information includes the minor’s home address, email address, telephone number or other information that would allow someone to contact the minor.

Personal identifiable information pursuant to this policy also includes any photo and/or video of a minor that is published or posted along with the minor's name or the name of any family member of the minor, or the minor's age or grade level. Verifiable consent may be given by a release/permission form, an email from a parent or guardian, a parent/guardian request, or spoken permission by a parent or guardian in the presence of another adult.

7. Absolutely no tagging pictures with the minors' names or other identifiers which could show up in search engines can be used without a parent's/guardian's written permission. (Use of diocesan permission form required).
8. Post rules of conduct on the site. If public posting or replies to posts are allowed, site administrators must actively monitor the content for appropriateness and civility; deleting such content and/or blocking or sanctioning members that do not abide by those principles.
9. Snapchat is not youth ministry friendly. Attempting to connect with youth with a personal account or attempting to set up a ministry account is not compliant with proper professional standards.

Computers

In using a computer or other electronic device supplied by the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend or one of its entities, church personnel must:

1. Respect the privacy of other users.
2. Respect and honor copyright and license agreements.
3. Safeguard user identification (user ID) and private passwords.
4. Protect information from unauthorized use or disclosure.
5. Never use the computer for illegal purposes or in any way that violates any international, federal, state or local laws.
6. Never use the computer to harass, threaten, or transmit inappropriate material.
7. When separating from employment or volunteer service with the diocese, never delete any computer files or download diocesan information without appropriate authorization.

Internet access

In accessing and using the internet from diocesan-owned electronic equipment or accounts, all church personnel must adhere to the above-mentioned items. Also, they must:

1. Never attempt to block, bypass or remove filtering software.
2. Use great care when downloading files from the internet to the diocesan, parish or school system. Files must be scanned for viruses. Compressed files should be scanned before and after decompression.

ENFORCEMENT

The Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend will enforce the policy set forth here and expects all church personnel to comply. Failure to comply with any of the provisions of the Electronic Communication and Technology Policy will be grounds for disciplinary action up to and including termination.

The diocese reserves the right to make changes to this policy at any time, at its sole discretion, and interpret and administer the policy considering circumstances and events.

Revised 7/18/2025

APPENDIX – DEFINITIONS

- **Adult:** An individual who is eighteen years of age or older.
- **Blog:** A blog is a website usually maintained by an individual with regular entries of commentary, descriptions of events, or other material such as graphics or video. “Blog” can also be used as a verb, meaning to maintain or add content to a blog.
- **Cleric:** An ordained priest or deacon incardinated in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, a priest or deacon who is a member of a religious institute or society of apostolic life if engaged in a ministry in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend at the direction of its bishop, or any priest or deacon incardinated in another diocese but who is engaged in a ministry in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend at the direction of its bishop.
- **Electronic Communication:** All electronic communication technologies that are used to transmit information between persons either individually such as through text message or email message or those used to communicate through social media with small or large numbers of persons.
- **Employee:** Any person who is paid by the diocese for his or her work.
- **Interactive website:** A website that allows its users to communicate. A website in which visitors can post their replies and comments to communicate with the person behind the website to get solutions for their query in a more entertaining and effective manner. Some of the most common types of interactive websites include blogs, forums, wikis, and social networks. Interactive websites allow users to change the way the website displays, play games, interact with friends online, and perform a host of tasks.
- **Micro-blog:** A form of multimedia blogging that allows users to send brief text updates or micro media such as photos or audio clips and publish them, either to be viewed by anyone or by a restricted group which can be chosen by the user. These messages can be submitted by a variety of means, including text messaging, instant messaging, E-mail, digital audio or the web. The content of a micro-blog differs from a traditional blog in that it is typically smaller in actual size and aggregate file size. A single entry could consist of a single sentence or fragment or an image or a brief, ten-second video. *Example: Twitter – A form of micro-blogging, entries are limited to 140 characters.
- **Ministry Website:** An Internet website/tool created by employees, clerics and volunteers for the sole purpose of conducting diocesan/affiliate business.
- **Minor:** A person under 18 years of age. A person who habitually lacks the use of reason is to be considered equivalent to a minor (ref. Essential Norms for Diocesan / Eparchial Policies Dealing with Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Priests or Deacons).
- **Password-Protected Sites:** Sites that use a username/password or other such means to access all or portions of the site. For example: Powerschool account for grade and student information at a school.

- **Personal website:** A social network page, blog or any Internet website/tool created by employees, clerics, and volunteers primarily to share personal communication with friends and family.
- **Personnel:** Persons associated with the church such as clerics, those preparing for ordination, employees and volunteers who minister on behalf of the diocese.
- **Social Media/Network:** Social media networks are Interactive, a place to share information/content, mediated by algorithms, and create virtual community/networking among members. Individuals are allowed flexibility in privacy settings, in posting text, photos, video, links and other information, and in level of interaction with other members. *Examples: Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, YouTube and Flickr are often also included in lists of social networking sites (although sometimes YouTube and Flickr are designated as multimedia sharing sites, while Twitter is currently more often designated as a micro-blogging application).
- **Supervisor:** The hiring and/or supervising agent: for parish staff this is the pastor; for parish volunteers, the appropriate administrator (e.g., Director of Religious Education or Director of Youth Ministry); for school personnel, the principal / pastor.
- **Volunteer:** An adult or minor who works without financial or material gain on behalf of the diocese, who is not an employee or a cleric (for example, an intern, catechist, scout leader, coach, student teacher and others in similar capacities).



DRUG-AND-ALCOHOL POLICY

INTRODUCTION

The Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend works to ensure a drug-free, healthful, and safe workplace. Volunteers are required to report to their service in an appropriate mental and physical condition so that they can perform their responsibilities to a satisfactory level.

While conducting volunteer service for the diocese, no volunteer may use, possess, distribute, sell, or be under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, or cannabidiols (CBD oils). The legal use of prescribed drugs is permitted only if it does not impair a volunteer's ability to perform the essential functions of the job effectively, and in a safe manner that does not endanger other individuals. Such violations may also have legal consequences.

DEFINITIONS

- ***"Illegal Drug"*** means a substance whose use or possession is controlled by federal law, or that is not being used or possessed under the supervision of a licensed physician.
- ***"Under the influence of alcohol"*** means an alcohol concentration equal to or greater than .04, or actions, appearance, speech or bodily odors that reasonably cause a supervisor to conclude that an employee is impaired because of alcohol use.
- ***"Under the influence of drugs"*** means a confirmed positive test result for illegal drug use per this policy. It also includes the misuse of legal drugs (both prescription and over-the-counter drugs) when there is not a valid prescription from a physician for the lawful use of a drug.

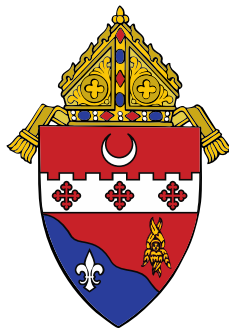


PERSONAL APPEARANCE POLICY (May 2018)

In everything we do as volunteers we represent the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend and the Catholic Church. For this reason, personal appearance is important. Volunteers are expected to dress with Christian modesty and in a professional manner. Neatness, cleanliness, and appropriate attire are essential for a professional appearance. A volunteer's appearance inspires the confidence of the public and other volunteers. Although styles of attire and hairstyles change, volunteers are expected to avoid extremes. Final determination of appropriate clothing will be made by your supervisor, if necessary.

CODE OF CONDUCT (May 2018)

We expect that all volunteers will exhibit common sense, a high level of Christian decency, courtesy, and diligence in their personal lives, and in all they do on behalf of the Diocese. Rudeness is NEVER appropriate. NO volunteer is exempt from respectfulness. We require that all volunteers comply with the Diocesan policies, standards, and guidelines set forth in this Volunteer Personnel Manual and any job-related rules set by a volunteer's supervisor, principal, pastor or department head. Volunteers must also, at all times, comply with all applicable laws and regulations. The importance of your role in the successful fulfillment of the Diocese's sacred mission requires that you take care to be certain that your actions cannot be interpreted as being, in any way, in contravention of laws, regulations or principles governing the activities and mission of the Diocese. If you are uncertain about the application or interpretation of any legal requirements, refer the matter to your supervisor or department head, who, if necessary, should seek the advice of the Vicar General, or his designee.



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