

**Diocese of Fall River
CODE OF CONDUCT**

Our Children are the most precious gifts God has entrusted to our care. As a Priest/Deacon/Religious/Employee/Volunteer of the church, I acknowledge that all individuals shall be treated with respect, courtesy, dignity, patience, loyalty and integrity. I promise to strictly follow rules in this Code of Conduct as a condition of my providing services to the children and/or youth of our parish/school/diocese.

1. Situations in which an individual is alone with an unrelated minor are to be avoided. However, if a one-to-one meeting with an unrelated minor needs to occur, it should be held in a public or visible area such as an office with an interior window or an office with the door open.
2. As professionals it is inappropriate for us to give expensive gifts to (or receive expensive gifts from) minors who receive services from us. While it is difficult to define the term “expensive,” for this purpose it is defined as a gift not to exceed \$50.00.
3. Minors are never to be disciplined corporally or corrected with abusive or other inappropriate language.
4. It is understood that alcohol and tobacco products are regulated and defined by age limits as established by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Employees, volunteers, priests, deacons, and religious are expected to enforce these regulations and never purchase or provide alcohol and tobacco products for those who are underage.
5. Illegal drugs shall never be distributed to or purchased for minors in the care of a priest, religious, deacon, volunteer, or employee of the Diocese of Fall River.
6. Prescription drugs shall never be distributed to a person whose name is not on the prescription.
7. No one will abuse alcohol when engaged in professional activities representing the Diocese of Fall River.
8. As professionals, we should always provide a safe environment, which ensures that sexual boundaries will not be violated. These include, but are not limited to, sexual, physical, and emotional boundaries, and all forms of contact, such as telephone, email, texting, social networking, and any other form of electronic media.
9. Never touch a minor in a sexual or other inappropriate manner.
10. It is illegal to engage in any form of sexual behavior with a minor.
11. Professionals in a supervisory capacity should be mindful of their responsibilities to the youth that they serve, and at no time shall their role be used to coerce an individual to engage in any sexual behavior.
12. Always report any suspected abuse to Catholic Social Services at 508-674-4681 and other appropriate designated staff.

I understand that as a priest/deacon/religious/volunteer/employee working with children and/or youth, an investigative background check will be made on me. I understand that failure to follow any rule in the Code of Conduct will result in an inquiry from the Diocese.

Priest/Deacon/Religious/Volunteer/Employee Signature

Date

Priest/Deacon/Religious/Volunteer/Employee Printed Name

Date

Name of School/Parish

Town