

Dear Parents and Volunteers:

In an effort to provide a safe environment for all children in the parish and the school, the Diocese of Grand Rapids has instituted some mandates for all parishes and schools to follow. Please help our school and parish reach compliance with these policies for a safe environment.

- 1. All volunteers who have access to children (including attending field trips and class parties) must attend a "Protecting God's Children" awareness session training prior to working with the children.**
 - To pre-register, go to www.virtus.org and click on the left First-Time Registrant.
 - Click on *View a list of sessions* and select Grand Rapids Diocese.
 - Choose the class you would like to attend and click *Start Registration*.
 - Create an account. Please be as specific as possible when listing your volunteer position. For example, do not just list coach. Listing Coach at West Catholic or Coach at Holy Spirit School helps us determine who is actually volunteering at the parish or school and who is on our list because they belong to the parish or did have students in the school.

You only have to attend this session once. You do not have to go again or renew it. Your record is transferrable to other parishes or schools within this diocese and to other dioceses that use the Virtus program if you move. It is important to pre-register for the session at virtus.org and to sign the "Sign-in" sheet when you attend the class. The session is informative for all parents to help them recognize the signs of the grooming process that predators use to gain the trust of parents and children.

2. Standards of Ministerial Behaviors in Dealing with Children and Young People

- 3. Background Check Authorization Form** for those who have lived in Michigan since turning 18. If you have lived outside of Michigan since turning age 18, email me at dschoof@hsparish.org for a link to a national background check.

I realize that this might seem to be a hassle when all you want to do is help at the parish or school. Our goal is not to make it difficult to volunteer, but to secure the safety of all children to the best of our ability. As much as we need volunteers, the safety of the children has to be a priority. Anyone not meeting these mandates will not be able to volunteer.

Thank you for understanding our concern for your child's safety. If you have any questions, please contact me at 453-1591 or dschoof@hsparish.org.

Peace,

Diane M. Schoof
Virtus Coordinator
Parish of the Holy Spirit



BACKGROUND CHECK AUTHORIZATION FORM FOR VOLUNTEERS AND EMPLOYEES

Parish/School/Organization: _____

Name

City

Administrator: Initial box(es) to indicate which background check(s) may be conducted with authorization:

Criminal

Driving

Please complete, sign and date this form, and return it to the designated administrator for background checks at your organization.

Required Information

Full Name		Race/Ethnic Group ¹	Gender ¹ (M/F)	Date of Birth ¹ (Mo/Day/Yr)	
Address		City	State	Zip	
Known by Other Name(s)					
Number of Years in Michigan	Previous residence within or outside of Michigan: *				
	a.	Street	City	State	Zip
					County
b.	Street	City	State	Zip	County
Volunteer Position or Job Title Held or Sought with Diocese or Affiliate Organization:					

Authorization

I understand that investigative inquiries into my background are to be made to assess my suitability for employment or volunteer placement. By signing below, I authorize the Diocese of Grand Rapids or its affiliate organizations or representatives to verify any of the information I have provided, and conduct a check of records and/or references with the appropriate individuals and/or organizations. I authorize any of them to release such information as the Diocese of Grand Rapids or its affiliate organizations require, without any obligation to give me written notice of such disclosure. I hereby release the Diocese or its affiliate organizations or representatives from any liability whatsoever as a result of inquiries or disclosures related to my background or character. Further, I will allow a photocopy of this authorization to be as valid as the original for purposes of conducting background investigations.

Signature _____

Date _____

***Please note:** For those who have lived OUTSIDE Michigan after turning 18 years of age, please contact Diane Schoof at dschoof@hsparish.org with your complete name, previous names, and email address so she can provide you with the required link to the national background check.

¹ Race/Ethnic Group, gender, and date of birth are requested only for purposes of accurate identification and will not be used to discriminate or violate privacy.



BACKGROUND CHECKS FOR VOLUNTEERS AND EMPLOYEES

In all ministries and programs, we are committed to assure a safe place for our children and young people, and others who may be at risk due to infirmity or disability. Accordingly, the Diocese of Grand Rapids has mandated that criminal history checks be conducted on all employees and volunteers who have regular contact with children or young people [Ref. Diocesan Policy on Sexual Abuse of Minors, Section VI, Article D.] Criminal background checks may also be conducted on employees and volunteers who regularly work with at risk adults. Other background checks such as driving records may be conducted on select employees or volunteers where their positions include responsibilities operating vehicles.

In conducting background checks, we will comply with all state requirements, and the federal Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA).

Please Note:

- According to the FCRA, we must have your written authorization to conduct a background check. Please give your authorization by completing and signing the *Background Check Authorization Form* we provide.
- On the authorization form, each background check we will be conducting will be indicated by an initialed box. If no box has been initialed, ask your background checks administrator to do so before you sign the form.
- If you do not sign the form and provide all required information, we will not be able to conduct the background check, and we will not be able to place or retain you in a volunteer or employment position.

Be Assured:

- We will conduct only the background checks that are initialed on the form.
- Your information will be held and processed in accordance with strict standards of confidentiality. We will do everything possible to prevent identity theft, and protect your privacy.
- The information you provide will be used only for legitimate employment or volunteer placement purposes, and will not be sold or distributed for other reasons.
- If we find any records or references that might influence a decision to not place or retain you, you will receive all proper notices as required by the FCRA. You will also be able to obtain a copy of the record or other documentation we receive, and contact information for the reporting agency that provided the report. You will have an opportunity to correct any inaccuracies or discrepancies in the report.
- You may request a copy of the *Summary of Your Rights Under the Fair Credit Reporting Act*, prepared by the U.S. Federal Trade Commission, from your background checks administrator. You will receive a copy of the summary of rights if we notify you that we have found a negative report that might cause us to not place or retain you.

Thank you for your cooperation in this important program that will help ensure the safety of those we are committed to protect, and promote greater trust and confidence in our ministries and programs among parents, caretakers, and all others we strive to serve.



Standards of Ministerial Behavior

In Dealing with Children & Young People

General Guidelines

- 1.1 Children and young people deserve the Church's highest standard of care. Since adults hold positions of power, we will set appropriate boundaries to assure a safe place for our children and young people in all Church ministries and programs.
- 1.2 We will witness in these and all our relationships the chastity appropriate to our state in life, whether celibate, single or married.
- 1.3 We recognize that needs for affection and intimacy must be addressed outside our work with children and young people.
- 1.4 Recognizing that physical contact with a minor may on occasion be appropriate and in some instances unavoidable, we acknowledge that it can also be misconstrued. It should occur in our work with youth (a) only when completely nonsexual and (b) never in private. In addition, we will not engage in speech, gesture or other behavior which may be construed as seductive or sexually suggestive to a minor.
- 1.5 When working with youth, we know that a team approach is best. We will, to the extent possible, avoid being alone with a minor, including transportation.
- 1.6 We will be accountable to a spiritual director, superior, colleague, spouse or peer to ensure we maintain proper boundaries in our relationships with young persons and openly discuss threats perceived to those boundaries by ourselves, a youth or others.
- 1.7 We will educate ourselves concerning the signs of abuse and neglect of minors and take appropriate and requisite action when such signs are recognized. We acknowledge the State of *Michigan's Child Protection Law* in that regard, as well as the *Diocese's Policy on the Sexual Abuse of Minors*, and pledge our support of them.
- 1.8 Where other civil laws or codes of ethics govern particular aspects of our relationships with minors, we agree to comply implicitly with them in all respects.

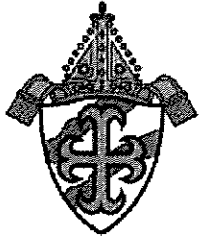
Particular Guidelines

- 2.1 Priests, unmarried deacons, religious and seminarians will not allow an unrelated minor to stay overnight in their private accommodations or residences unless the minor's parent or guardian is present. Married deacons, staff and volunteers will not share overnight accommodations with an unrelated minor if no other adult is present.

- 2.2 We will not meet with an unrelated minor in private absent exceptional circumstances. We will not do so, if at all possible, without notifying a superior or colleague in advance. When such a meeting occurs without such notice, we will promptly notify a superior or colleague in writing of the event, the circumstances giving rise to it and what occurred.
- 2.3 When we meet with an unrelated minor in a public place, but are alone with her or him, we will take the steps necessary to see that the meeting is readily observable to others, both visually and audibly unless confidentiality of the oral communication is necessary in the interest of the minor, in which case we will take additional precautions to assure that the meeting will be within the sight of other adults.
- 2.4 If a minor is sexually suggestive in speech or behavior, we will inform him or her that such conduct is unacceptable and, when appropriate, take other remedial action to prevent harm to the minor and scandal to others.
- 2.5 If a minor discloses information about a sexual issue or concern involving a parent, guardian or household member, we will ascertain whether reporting is required (*see 1.7, ante*) or appropriate, putting the minor's health and safety first, and having due regard for a request for confidentiality and/or anonymity by the minor. We will consult with an appropriate professional to determine a proper response.
- 2.6 Apart from the limited circumstance referenced in 2.5, we encourage parents and guardians to inquire about their children's welfare and our relationship with them. If we become aware of a danger to the health or safety of a young person, we will promptly advise the parent or guardian of our concern.
- 2.7 We will never provide alcohol, tobacco, illegal drugs, pornography or other inappropriate material to a child or young person. We will never use or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs while in ministry to them.
- 2.8 We will follow diocesan policies for screening, supervising and evaluating persons who work with children and young people on a regular basis, and make certain such persons sign on to these guidelines and agree to follow them.
- 2.9 We will not provide pastoral counseling, spiritual direction, psychological or other mental health services to a minor or young person unless we are qualified to do so. If we do, we will maintain a log showing the time and place of each session and include minimal information of the content. We will not audiotape or videotape such sessions, and will use the information obtained from them only in educational, homiletic or other professional settings, and only after taking effective means to safeguard the minor's identity and confidential disclosures.

These guidelines, both general and particular, do not address or govern the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Under no circumstances shall there be disclosure, Directly or indirectly, of information received in the confessional except as provided by Canon Law.

In implementing these guidelines, we are mindful that they provide a basic structure which seeks to protect children and youth from neglect and sexual abuse, but that no framework can address all the situations which may arise in our work. We believe that human sexuality, our own, as well as that of the young people we seek to serve, is a gift inherent in our creation in the image and likeness of our God. We pledge to honor both the spirit and the letter of these standards in light of this belief.



**Standards of Ministerial Behavior
In Dealing with Children & Young People Form**

Please returned this signed form no later than Thursday, August 16, 2018.

Family Name (Print): _____

Organization: Holy Spirit School

Pastor/Supervisor: Father Mark Peacock/Patrick Kalahar, Principal

Parent Name

Signature

Parent Name

Signature

Date