



ESSENTIAL 3 GUIDELINES FOR MINOR YOUTH

(EMPLOYEES OR VOLUNTEERS INTERACTING WITH CHILDREN, OTHER YOUTH OR VULNERABLE ADULTS IN CATHOLIC PARISHES &/OR SCHOOLS)

- A. CODE OF CONDUCT:** Youth under the age of 18 (minors) who are employees or who interact with children, other youth or vulnerable adults as part of their volunteer position description should ***read and sign*** the *Code of Conduct for Youth Workers and Youth Volunteers Who Interact with Children, Other Youth, or Vulnerable Adults (Code of Conduct for Youth)*. The youth's supervisor (or designee) should provide in-person training on the terms and purpose of the *Code of Conduct for Youth* before the youth and parent/guardian sign and date the code.
- B. BACKGROUND EVALUATION:** Minor youth who are employed or who interact with children, other youth or vulnerable adults as part of their volunteer position description should ***have two written references from a non-parent/guardian on file***. At least one of the references should be written by a school leader. Upon turning 18 years of age, the youth is required to have a background check, submitting forms within two weeks of their birthdate.
- C. SAFE ENVIRONMENT TRAINING:** It is archdiocesan policy that all parish and school employees (including youth under 18 years of age) must attend VIRTUS training. It is recommended that minor youth between the ages of 16 and 18 years of age who interact with children, other youth or vulnerable adults as part of their volunteer position description ***attend a VIRTUS session***.

ALL youth under 18 years of age who attend a VIRTUS session must follow the guidelines below:

1. Minor youth who attend a VIRTUS session should be at least 16 years old.
2. All minor youth who attend a VIRTUS session must have a signed parental release form. Parents of the minor youth should be invited to attend the VIRTUS session with their child. Parishes or schools should use their standard release form for this parental release. Minor youth should not attend a VIRTUS session without a signed parental release form. (If you do not have a release form, please contact OPCY.)

The VIRTUS session contains sensitive material. It is important that supervisors respect parents' rights to decide what is appropriate for their children.

3. Minor youth in attendance should meet with their supervisor within two weeks of attending the VIRTUS session to discuss what was covered in the session.

Minor youth who interact with children, other youth or vulnerable adults as part of their volunteer position description and have **not** attended a VIRTUS session must:

1. be current on their own personal safety lessons at their parish or Catholic school;
2. receive in-person training from their supervisor on the *Code of Conduct for Youth* and how their own personal safety lessons can be applied to those they interact with; and
3. always have another adult who is **Essential 3** qualified present when they are interacting with children, other youth and vulnerable adults.

If you anticipate youth under the age of 18 will be attending a VIRTUS session, please send OPCY staff a notification of how many youth will be attending. OPCY staff will then pass this information along to the facilitator of the session.

Please contact the OPCY staff if you have any questions about these guidelines.

Inquiries should be sent to:

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