Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown

Office of Child and Youth Protection

*Office: (814) 695-5579 ext. 2614 * Fax: (814) 695-8894 *Website: www.dioceseaj.org*

Guidelines for Youth Volunteers 14 to 18 years of old

The following safeguards and guidelines must be followed for minor volunteers (14 to 17 years of age) parish youth programming and activities.

Minor volunteers (non-paid), ages 14-17, ***do not need clearances,*** however ***must be supervised*** at all times.

- Minor volunteers (non-paid), ages 14-17 must be supervised by youth protection cleared and compliant* adults with a ratio of 2:10, ***who are at least 21 years of age***.

  To be in compliance per diocese youth protection policies includes completion of the proper paperwork (youth protection application, code of conduct, use of technology and provide a ministry reference); obtain a PA Criminal and PA Child Abuse clearance; sign a CPSL Volunteer Disclosure and complete the following two trainings: Virtus Protecting God's Children and Mandated Reporting. All clearances and trainings are valid for five (5) years.* ***NOTE:* *FBI clearance would be needed if the youth applicant (14-17 years old) has not been a PA resident for more than 10 years consistently*.

- Minor volunteers (non-paid), ages 14-17 may not be alone with children and unsupervised, ***there are no exceptions.***
- Minor volunteers (non-paid), ages 14-17 will conduct themselves with appropriate behavior and must review and sign a youth code of conduct with parent/guardian approval and signature.

Required Paperwork for Volunteer Youth 14-17 years of age

- Volunteer Application (approved and co-signed by parent/guardian)
- CPSL Volunteer Disclosure
- Youth Code of Conduct
- Ministry Reference Form (completed by a reliable, non-relative)

Required Youth Protection Awareness Training for Volunteer Youth 14-17 years of age

- Virtus Healthy Relationships for Teens/PGCA (www.virtusonlineorg)

The student will need to create an account to view this training, they should choose this role: "Volunteer- A Youth ages 14 to 17" and will NOT be prompted to take a national background check.

Youth Protection Requirements for Paid Employees Youth (14- 17 years old)

Paid employees who are between the ages of 14-17 years old will follow the required guidelines for trainings and obtain the necessary clearances if they are employed.

Per diocesan policies, all employees must obtain the following clearances: a PA Criminal, PA Child Abuse FBI and national background check and complete the following two (2) trainings: Virtus Protecting God's Children and Mandated Reporting. All clearances and trainings are valid for five (5) years. Employees are also required to complete youth protection paperwork (application, code of conduct, use of technology and provide a ministry reference).

Youth Protection Requirements and Guidelines for High School Students 18+

I. To volunteer in the school in which they are enrolled:

For students who are 18 years of age and are currently enrolled in any of the catholic schools under the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown can follow the CPSL exception to background check requirements ONLY if they are volunteering within their school during **school-related volunteer** activities. They MUST complete the required paperwork, training and must be supervised at all times. The exemption applies ONLY if all of the following apply, under subsection (b):

i. The individual is currently enrolled in a school.
ii. The individual is not a person responsible for the child's welfare.
iii. The individual is volunteering for an event that occurs on school grounds.
iv. The event is sponsored by the school in which the individual is enrolled as a student.
v. The event is not for children who are in the care of a child-care service.

(Reference PA CPSL: 6344.2(b.1)(3)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)(v), https://www.legis.state.pa.us/WU01/LI/LI/CT/HTM/23/00.063.044.002..HTM)

II. To volunteer in a parish or diocesan program:

Current High School students who are 18+ years old and wish to volunteer with a parish or diocesan event where minors (under the age of 18) are present are considered to be an adult and must follow the same youth protection requirements per diocesan youth protection policies.

Per diocesan policies, all adult volunteers must obtain the following clearances**:

- PA Criminal
- PA Child Abuse
- National background check

Complete the following two (2) trainings:

- Virtus Protecting God's Children
- Mandated Reporting

All clearances and trainings are valid for five (5) years.

Volunteers are also to complete youth protection paperwork:

- Application
- CPSL volunteer disclosure
- Code of conduct
- Use of technology
- Provide a ministry reference

***Note: if the applicant has not been a resident of PA for 10 years consistently, they are required to obtain an FBI clearance.*

Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown

Office of Child and Youth Protection

2713 W Chestnut Avenue
Altoona, PA 16601

Telephone: (814) 695-5579
Website: www.dioceseaj.org

Youth Protection Application

Primary Location: _____ City:_____
(Parish, School, Diocese Office/Activity)

Primary Ministry Role: _____ Other Roles: _____

Personal Information

Name: _____
Last First Middle Maiden Name/Alias

Present Address: Street: _____

City: _____ State _____ Zip Code_____

Home Phone: _____ Alternate Phone #: _____

Email: _____ Date of Birth: _____

List the name, location and dates of attendance with respect to the last two educational institutions in which you have been enrolled.

Name of Institutions Date/s Attended Degree/Diploma

1._____

2._____

Previous home addresses (if any) with applicable dates. Please list at least last two.

_____

_____

_____

_____

List all previous experiences involving youth (employment/volunteer):

Location/Address ***Phone*** ***Contact person*** ***Type of Work*** ***Dates***

_____

_____

_____

_____

List any gifts, training, education or other factors that have prepared you for work with children/youth.

_____

_____

List your employers for the past ten years *(please use the back if needed)*

Employer ***Street Address*** ***Phone*** ***Contact Person*** ***Dates of Employment***

_____

_____

_____

Please respond Yes or No to the following questions. Any yes answer requires a detailed explanation below.

Yes	No	
○	○	**Have you been arrested/charged with driving under the influence of alcohol/other substances?**
○	○	**Have you ever been arrested/charged with a summary criminal offense or a misdemeanor criminal offense in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania or any other state or federal jurisdiction for which the charge(s) were withdrawn, dismissed or expunged? For purposes of this question, summary criminal offenses or misdemeanor criminal offenses include, without limitation, the following Commonwealth of Pennsylvania offenses or their equivalent in other state or federal jurisdictions: Simple Assault (18 Pa. C.S.A. § 2701); Reckless Endangerment (18 Pa. C.S.A. § 2705); Harassment/Stalking (18 Pa. C.S.A. §2709); Indecent Assault (18 Pa. C.S.A. §3126); Indecent Exposure (18 Pa. C.S.A. § 3127); and Disorderly Conduct (18 Pa. C.S.A. §5503).**
○	○	**Have you ever had your driver's license or a professional license revoked or suspended?**
○	○	**Have you ever been convicted of any felony?**

○ ○ **Have you ever been convicted of child abuse or a crime involving actual or attempted sexual molestation of a minor?**

○ ○ **Is there any fact or circumstance about you or your background that would call into questions the advisability of entrusting you with the supervision, guidance, and/or care of young people?**

If you answered yes for any of the above, please explain.

Please provide three references other than relatives or present or former employers.

1. **Name: _____Relationship: _____**

   Address: _____

   Phone Number: _____ Email: _____

2. **Name: _____Relationship: _____**

   Address: _____

   Phone Number: _____ Email: _____

3. **Name: _____Relationship: _____**

   Address: _____

   Phone Number: _____ Email: _____

- **I declare that all statements contained in this form are true and that any misrepresentation or omission is cause for discontinuation of my involvement as an employee or a volunteer.**
- **I authorize the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown to conduct personal and professional reference checks as needed. I realize that the criminal record check will be conducted by the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown or I may be asked to furnish it.**
- **Subsequent to any approval by the Diocese of my volunteer application, if I am arrested for or convicted of an offense that would constitute grounds for denying participation in a program, activity or service under the Child Protective Services Law (said offenses being identified in the Disclosure Statement form that I am submitting to the Diocese as part of this Application), or am named as a perpetrator in a founded or indicated report, I must provide the Pastor, Principal, Administrator, or designee of the Diocese with written notice not later than 72 hours after the arrest, conviction or notification that I have been listed as a perpetrator in the Statewide database.**

- **Subsequent to any approval by the Diocese of my volunteer application, I understand that the Diocese or its designee responsible for the approval of my volunteer status must demand that I produce new background clearances if the Diocese or its designee has a reasonable belief that I have been arrested for or convicted of a crime that would require disqualification from volunteer service that involves contact with children or I have been named the subject of an indicated or founded report of child abuse. The cost of new clearances shall be borne by the Diocese.**
- **I hereby release and agree to hold harmless from liability any person or organization that provides information to the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown and/or the above mentioned Parish/Organization and their employees, officers and directors or any authorized representative of the same as a result of this record.**
- **My signature indicates that I have read and understood the above statement and am signing below of my own free will. I also understand that the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown will conduct a background check every five years for the duration of my employment/volunteerism.**

_____ _____

Signature of Employee/Volunteer **Date**

_____

Printed Name

_____ _____

Signature of Parent if under the age of 18 **Date**

_____

Printed Name

DISCLOSURE STATEMENT APPLICATION FOR VOLUNTEERS
Required by the Child Protective Service Law
23 Pa. C.S. Section 6344.2 (relating to volunteers having contact with children)

I swear/affirm that I am seeking a volunteer position and **AM NOT** required to obtain a certification through the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), as:

- the position I am applying for is unpaid; **and**
- I have been a resident of Pennsylvania during the entirety of the previous ten-year period.

I understand that if I have not been a resident of Pennsylvania during the entirety of the pervious ten-year period, but have received certification from the FBI since establishing residency, I must provide a copy of the certification to my employer and am not required to obtain any additional FBI certifications.

I swear/affirm that, if providing certifications that have been obtained within the preceding 60 months, I have not been disqualified from service as outlined below or have not been convicted of an offense similar in nature to a crime listed below under the laws or former laws of the United States or one of its territories or possessions, another state, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico or a foreign nation, or under a former law of this Commonwealth.

I swear/affirm that I have not been named as a perpetrator of a founded report of child abuse within the past five (5) years as defined by the Child Protective Services Law.

I swear/affirm that I have not been convicted of any of the following crimes under Title 18 of the Pennsylvania consolidated statutes or of offenses similar in nature to those crimes under the laws or former laws of the United States or one of its territories or possessions, another state, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico or a foreign nation, or under a former law of this Commonwealth.

Chapter 25 (relating to criminal homicide)
Section 2702 (relating to aggravated assault)
Section 2709.1 (relating to stalking)
Section 2901 (relating to kidnapping)
Section 2902 (relating to unlawful restraint)
Section 3121 (relating to rape)
Section 3122.1 (relating to statutory sexual assault)
Section 3123 (relating to involuntary deviate sexual intercourse)
Section 3124.1 (relating to sexual assault)
Section 3125 (relating to aggravated indecent assault)
Section 3126 (relating to indecent assault)
Section 3127 (relating to indecent exposure)
Section 4302 (relating to incest)
Section 4303 (relating to concealing death of child)
Section 4304 (relating to endangering welfare of children)
Section 4305 (relating to dealing in infant children)
Section 5902(b) (relating to prostitution and related offenses)
Section 5903(c) (d) (relating to obscene and other sexual material and performances)
Section 6301 (relating to corruption of minors)

Section 6312 (relating to sexual abuse of children), or an equivalent crime under Federal law or the law of another state.

I swear/affirm that I have not been convicted of a felony offense under Act 64-1972 (relating to the controlled substance, drug device and cosmetic act) committed within the past five years.

I understand that I shall not be approved for service if I am named as a perpetrator of a founded report of child abuse within the past five (5) years or have been convicted of any of the crimes listed above or of offenses similar in nature to those crimes under the laws or former laws of the United States or one of its territories or possessions, another state, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico or a foreign nation, or under a former law of this Commonwealth.

I understand that if I am arrested for or convicted of an offense that would constitute grounds for denying participation in a program, activity or service under the Child Protective Services Law as listed above, or am named as perpetrator in a founded or indicated report, I must provide the administrator or designee with written notice not later than 72 hours after the arrest, conviction or notification that I have been listed as a perpetrator in the Statewide database.

I understand that if the person responsible for employment decisions or the administrator of a program, activity or service has a reasonable belief that I was arrested or convicted for an offense that would constitute grounds for denying participation in a program, activity or service under the Child Protective Services Law, or was named as perpetrator in a founded or indicated report, or I have provided notice as required under this section, the person responsible for employment decisions or administrator of a program, activity or service shall immediately require me to submit current certifications obtained through the Department of Human Services, the Pennsylvania State Police, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, as appropriate. The cost of certifications shall be borne by the employing entity or program, activity or service.

I understand that if I willfully fail to disclose information required above, I commit a misdemeanor of the third degree and shall be subject to discipline up to and including denial of a volunteer position.

I understand that certifications obtained for the volunteering purposes can only be used for that purpose and cannot be used for employment purposes.

I understand that the person responsible for employment decisions or the administrator of a program, activity or service is required to maintain a copy of my certifications.

I hereby swear/affirm that the information as set forth above is true and correct. I understand that false swearing is a misdemeanor pursuant to Section 4903 of the Crimes Code.

Name: _____Signature:_____

Witness: _____Signature:_____

Date: _____

Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown

Office of Child and Youth Protection

*Email: mulciano@dioceseaj.org *Office: (814) 695-5579 ext. 2614 * Fax: (814) 695-8894

YOUTH (14 to 17 years old) VOLUNTEER CODE OF CONDUCT

This Code of Conduct is for use with minor youth volunteers (non-paid) between the ages of 14 to 17 years of age who serve and volunteer in parishes, schools or diocesan offices within the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown.

Adults responsible for the supervision of youth in ministry or work situations need to review this document with the youth and explain any part that may not be understood. This can be done in a group or individual meeting. This form is to be signed by the youth, his or her parent/guardian, supervisor, and stored with the Safe Environment documentation on file at the corresponding parish, school or diocesan organization and a copy sent to the attention of the Office of Child and Youth Protection for the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown.

Please note that for the purposes of this Code, the words "minor" and "youth" are used to describe all persons under the age of 18. "Vulnerable adults" are persons with physical, mental, or emotional conditions that cause them to be unable to defend or protect themselves.

Any unlawful conduct would be subject to reporting to appropriate law enforcement authorities, in addition to the parent/guardian as indicated.

Purpose:

You are about to begin what could become a lifelong commitment of working or volunteering in the Church. It is a privilege to help carry on the mission of Jesus – a mission which no one takes lightly. As a minor, it is important that you understand and follow certain rules and guidelines, both for your own protection and for the protection of those to whom you minister. The Church takes the issue of misconduct very seriously and any instance of misconduct will be evaluated carefully. You are urged to report misconduct that you see to your adult supervisor. Likewise, your own conduct must be beyond question. You have been entrusted with a responsible position and are expected to "*Let your light so shine before all, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."* (Matt 5:14)

This ***Code of Conduct*** applies to your behavior as it relates to your interaction with minors, any adult or vulnerable adults on behalf of a parish, school or diocesan organization.

To ensure the safety of those whom we serve, all youth (under the age of 18) who wish to volunteer with other youth, any adult or vulnerable adults, must review and sign this Code of Conduct along with their parent/guardian and supervisor.

While serving as a youth employee or volunteer, I will:

- At all times, protect and guide all those entrusted to my care
- Demonstrate patience, courtesy, respect and dignity
- Be positive, supportive, and caring in my speech and interactions with minors, other adults and vulnerable adults
- Use positive words and encouragement to change behavior and engage others to do likewise
- Maintain appropriate physical and emotional boundaries with minors, other adults and vulnerable adults. Examples of permissible physical contact include:
- Brief side hugs or arm around the shoulder
- Hand-shakes or "high fives'
- Holding hands while walking with young children or the unsteady

- Brief pat on the shoulder/upper back
- Holding hands during prayer
- Brief touching of hand, head, shoulder or arm
- Always be in the presence of an adult when interacting with minors, other adults or vulnerable adults. This means that an adult should be nearby to see and hear what I am doing and help me if I need assistance.
- Promptly report any uncomfortable, inappropriate or bullying behavior to my supervisor
- Cooperate fully in any investigation of abuse; report suspected abuse to my supervisor, or if it involves my supervisor, report it to the Pastor/Parish Life Coordinator/Director
- Observe confidentiality when describing my work experiences to protect the identity of those whom I serve
- Dress appropriately, consistent with my role and assigned activities; this includes wearing clothing with no offensive or profane messages and pictures
- Be aware that children and young people can easily become infatuated with a youth leader or an adult. If I think this is happening, I will immediately discourage it. I will make my supervisor aware of it so that he/she can resolve the matter, including reassigning me to other activities.
- Consult with adult supervisors on the appropriateness of communicating (electronically or through any other form of communication) with minors, all adults or vulnerable adults whom I serve through this employment or volunteer ministry. I will inform my supervisor and obtain parental/guardianship permission before communicating with those I serve.

While working as a youth employee or volunteer, I will not:

- Smoke, vape or use tobacco products in the presence of youth, any adult or vulnerable adults
- Use, possess, be under the influence or impaired by alcohol or drugs at any time while working or volunteering
- Possess weapons of any kind
- Pose any health risk to youth, all adults or vulnerable adults (fevers, flu and other contagious situations)
- Strike, spank, shake or slap youth, other adults or vulnerable adults
- Use or allow profanity in the presence of minors, other adults or vulnerable adults
- Acquire, possess, distribute or show sexually explicit, violent or otherwise inappropriate images of minors/adults including but not limited to books, music, games, photographs, films or computer generated images
- Accept gifts from or give gifts to minors, other adults or vulnerable adults without approval from my supervisor

Acknowledgement and Consent:

I understand that I may face consequences up to and including dismissal from service and/or termination of my role for violations of this Code. We, the undersigned, understand that the parent/guardian will be notified at the time of any infraction requiring dismissal from work or volunteer assignment at the parish, school or diocesan organization where the young person is working or ministering.

We, the undersigned, have read and understand the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown's Code of Conduct for Youth Volunteers.

Name of Parish/School/Diocesan Program: _____

Physical Location(s) Youth will volunteer: _____City: _____

Name of Youth (PLEASE PRINT): _____

Signature of Youth: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Parent/Guardian: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Location Supervisor: _____ Date: _____

Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown

Office of Child and Youth Protection

2713 West Chestnut Avenue
Altoona, PA 16601
Phone: (814) 695-5579 ext. 2614
www.dioceseaj.org

Please return the completed form to the attention of the Youth Protection contact at the primary site where the employee/volunteer is listed below OR directly to the Director of Child and Youth Protection @
Email: mluciano@dioceseaj.org
USPS Mail: Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown c/o Children & Youth Protection,
2713 W Chestnut Avenue, Altoona, PA 16601

Employee/Volunteer Ministry Reference

Please complete this form for an individual who is applying to be an employee and/or a volunteer within the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown. This form must be completed by a person **not related** to the applicant.

Name of Employee/Volunteer: _____ **Primary Location:** _____

Is this applicant an: ☐ **Employee** ☐ **Volunteer**

Applicant Position(s): _____
How many years have you known this individual? _____
In what capacity do you know this individual? _____
In your words, please describe this individual's reliability and willingness to continue his/her commitment.

Please answer yes or no to the following question(s). If you answer yes to any of the question(s), please explain in detail on the reverse side of this page.

Yes	No	
☐	☐	*Are you aware of any problems that would limit the individual's ability to fulfill this obligation?*
☐	☐	*Are you aware of any problems or concerns that should limit or preclude this individual from working with children and/or youth? If yes, please explain on the back of this form.*
☐	☐	*Are you aware of any instance in which the individual's driver's license or other professional license was revoked or suspended?*
☐	☐	*Are you aware whether this individual has ever been charged or arrested for sexual misconduct with minors?*
☐	☐	*Is there any fact or circumstance about the individual's background that would call into question the advisability of entrusting the individual with the supervision, guidance, and/or care of children and young people?*
☐	☐	*Are you aware of any other information that would bear upon the appropriateness of the individual's involvement in Church activities?*

Are you willing to validate this individual's appropriateness for ministry as an employee and or volunteer for the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown? **Yes** ☐ **No** ☐ (*If No, please explain in detail on back of this form.)*

_____ _____ _____
Date ***Signature*** ***Printed Name***

Phone: _____ ***Email:*** _____

(Revised: 1/24/2024)

THE NATIONAL CATHOLIC RISK RETENTION GROUP, INC.
VIRTUS Online™

Youth Protection Awareness Training Registration Instructions for Teen Volunteers Ages 14 to 17 Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown

Before completing **Protecting God's Children** training online, all participants **must** first register with **VIRTUS Online. Please** click on the VIRTUS link to access the VIRTUS Registration page:

https://www.virtusonline.org/virtus/reg_2.cfm?theme=0&org=37531

VIRTUS® Excellence Builds Trust

Create a user ID and a password you can easily remember. This is necessary for all participants. This establishes your account with the VIRTUS program. If your preferred user ID is already taken, please choose another ID. We suggest the use of email addresses as user names.

Click **Continue** to proceed.

Provide all the information requested on the screen. Several fields are required, such as: First, Middle & Last Name, Email address, Home Address, City, State, Zip, and Phone Number, and Date of Birth.

(Note: Do not click the back button or your registration will be lost.)

Click **Continue** to proceed.

If you do not have an email address, consider obtaining a free email account at mail.yahoo.com, or any other free service. This is necessary for your VIRTUS Coordinator to communicate with you. If you cannot obtain an email address, enter: noaddress@virtus.org.

Select the PRIMARY location where you work or volunteer by clicking the downward arrow and highlighting the location.

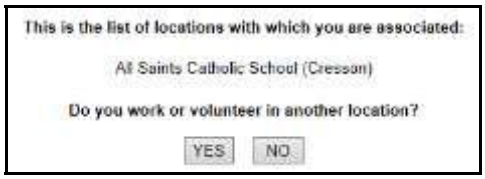
Click **Continue** to proceed.

Note: If you serve at multiple diocesan locations, you will be prompted to select those additional locations in future screen(s).)

Your selected location(s) are displayed on the screen.

Select **YES**, if you need to add secondary/additional locations. (Follow instructions in previous step to select additional locations.)

Otherwise, if your list of locations is complete, select **NO**.



THE NATIONAL CATHOLIC RISK RETENTION GROUP, INC.
VIRTUS Online™

Youth Protection Awareness Training Registration Instructions for Teen Volunteers Ages 14 to 17 Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown

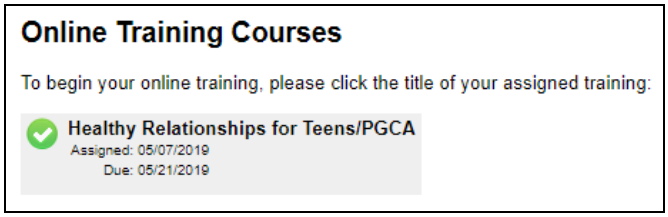
Select the role(s) that you serve within your parish. Please check **Volunteer- A Youth ages 14 to 17**.

Additionally, **enter** your title in the box provided that best describes your role within the Diocese -- ie. Parish Bible Camp helper, Diocese Camp CIT, etc.

Click **Continue** to proceed.

Please click on the green circle to begin the Online Training

Upon completion, the last screen will allow you to print a certificate, and you will always have the ability to log back into your account and access the certificate.



If you have additional questions about VIRTUS Online training, please contact the VIRTUS Help Desk at 888-847-8870.

Thank you!

VIRTUS®
Excellence
Builds
Trust