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offense in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania or any other state or federal jurisdiction for which the charge(s) were withdrawn, dismissed or expunged?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

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Code of Conduct for Diocesan Personnel

Appropriate Boundaries and Interactions

All personnel will follow a code of conduct to guide their interactions with youth and vulnerable persons. For the purposes of this policy, the term "personnel" shall mean clergy and members of religious orders, any diocesan, parish or school employee, volunteer or contractor.

Key points:

- Applies to all diocesan personnel
- Addresses ministerial counseling and confession involving youth and vulnerable persons
- Some activities require consent of a parent or guardian
- Consequences for violating these requirements

General: All diocesan personnel shall conduct themselves with propriety, morality and ethics in any activity or situation and for as long as they are employed by or in service to the diocese. All personnel shall read and acknowledge these requirements prior to commencing employment or service. The diocese shall maintain a permanent record of all such acknowledgments. For the purposes of this policy, the term "personnel" shall mean all clergy, members of religious orders, diocesan, parish or school employees, volunteers or contractors.

All diocesan personnel shall:

a. Conduct any interactions with youth or vulnerable persons, only in approved ways, times and places.
b. Maintain objectivity in all interactions with youth or vulnerable persons showing no favoritism.
c. Avoid situations or interactions with youth and vulnerable persons that would cause confusion about the nature of the relationship.
d. Share any concerns about the behavior of personnel, an adult, youth or vulnerable person with a supervisor.
e. Hold themselves and others accountable to protect youth and vulnerable persons from harm.

Consequences for Violating of the Code of Conduct: All diocesan personnel are required to report any violation of these requirements to their direct supervisor or if the violation involves their direct supervisor, another supervisor. The diocese shall investigate and take disciplinary action against any personnel who are found to have violated these requirements.

Prohibited Forms of Interaction

Diocesan personnel are prohibited from:

a. Touching youth or vulnerable persons in a sexual or inappropriate way.
b. Sharing pornography, sexually explicit topics or materials with youth or vulnerable persons.
c. Viewing or possessing child pornography is a crime under federal law; allegations regarding this type of behavior will be reported immediately to the proper civil authorities and to the appropriate person in charge (I.e., pastor, principal, or supervisor).
d. Providing a youth or vulnerable person with alcohol, drugs or tobacco.
e. Being alone or secluded with a youth or vulnerable person in a vehicle, an office, classroom, residence, dormitory, restroom, kitchen, storage room or any other closed setting.

f. Sharing a bedroom with or taking an unsupervised overnight trip with a youth or vulnerable person.
g. Being under the influence of alcohol or medication when interacting with youth or vulnerable persons
h. Possessing or using illegal drugs at any time.
i. Engaging in the physical discipline of youth or vulnerable persons.
j. Conducting telephone or internet communications with a youth using an unauthorized telephone account, email account or website.
k. Engaging in after-hours, off-site or isolated meetings without the express permission a diocesan supervisor and the person's legal caregiver.
l. Comments about a youth's or vulnerable person's physique or body development
m. Lengthy or romantic embraces.
n. Kissing.
o. Touching a youth's or vulnerable person's thighs, buttocks, groin or breasts.
p. Wrestling, tickling, rough housing or piggyback rides with a youth or vulnerable person.
q. Massaging a youth or vulnerable person.
r. Allowing youth to sit on the lap.
s. Any display of unwanted affection.

Acceptable Forms of Interactions

The following are acceptable form of interaction between diocesan personnel and youth or vulnerable persons:

a. Interaction is Public, Appropriate and Non-Sexual in nature and Non-Threatening
b. Verbal praise
c. Handshakes, high-fives and hand slaps
d. Pats on the shoulder, back or head
e. Side hugs and bending down for hugs with small children
f. Holding hands during prayer, while walking, kneeling or sitting beside a youth or vulnerable person
g. Respect an individual's preference if they do not want to be touched in an appropriate way

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In accord with my role as Church personnel, and in witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, I will conduct myself with integrity, acting in a manner that is consistent with the discipline and teachings of the Catholic Church.

I will guide my behavior by civil and canon law, by the policies of the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown and by the Code of Conduct by…

1. Respecting the rights of each person and advancing his or her welfare during the course of counseling, advising or spiritual direction.
2. Holding in the strictest confidence information disclosed during the course of counseling, advising or spiritual direction with respect to Pennsylvania Child Protective Services Law and Mandated Reporting Requirements.
3. Maintaining an open and trustworthy relationship when working with youth, free from inappropriate behavior that would put them at risk.
4. Honoring the trust placed in Church personnel by not exploiting others for sexual gain or intimacy.
5. Providing a professional work environment that is free from physical, psychological, written or verbal intimidation or harassment.
6. Maintaining confidentiality in creating, storing, accessing, transferring and disposing of Church records.
7. Avoiding situations that might present a conflict of interest.
8. Reporting to proper authorities my own ethical or professional misconduct and the misconduct of others.
9. Treating Church personnel justly in the day-to-day operations of work and ministry.
10. Being responsible for my own spiritual, physical, mental, and emotional health.

I HAVE CAREFULLY READ, UNDERSTAND, AND HEREBY COMMIT TO CONDUCTING MYSELF IN ACCORD WITH THE DIOCESE OF ALTOONA-JOHNSTOWN CODE OF CONDUCT.

_____ _____ _____
(Print Name) (Signature) (Date)

_____ _____
(Position) (Name of Parish/School/Diocesan Office) (Revised: July 2022)

Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown

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Use of Technology, Electronic Communication, Texting, Social Media, Video, Gaming, etc.

For the purposes of this policy, the term "personnel" shall mean clergy and members of religious orders, any diocesan, parish or school employee, volunteer or contractor.

General: Regardless of the manner or method, all communication with minors must be faithful to the teachings and values of the Catholic Church. As leaders and role models for children our communication with minors must respect the psychological, physical and behavioral boundaries of the young person and be appropriate to the ministerial and professional relationship. Permission of the parent or guardian must be obtained, in writing, in order for an adult leader to communicate with minors via telephone, cell phone, text messaging, e-mail, social networks, or other electronic means. All means of communication (written, text, email, etc.) with minors will be copied to the parent or guardian.

The Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown shall manage the use of its electronic or digital communication devices, computers, email accounts, social media accounts, websites and digital data storage for the protection of youth and others. All personnel or any person who is granted access to diocesan technology devices or technology accounts, shall complete an orientation on the responsible use of technology and sign the 'Standards for the Utilization of Electronic Media Policy' provided by the Director of Information Technologies and Director of Human Resources. The diocese shall maintain a record of all persons who are oriented.

Unacceptable Use Restrictions for Diocesan Personnel

Personnel shall NOT:

a. Use any technology to violate a federal, state or local law
b. Conduct electronic or digital communications with a non-familial minor without using a diocese-approved device and/or account, and without the approval of the minor's legal caregiver
c. Encourage a sexual relationship between an adult and a minor
d. Use, transmit or store pornographic or obscene content
e. Share a person's personal information without their consent or the consent of their legal caregiver
f. Use diocese-owned equipment or devices to harm others, for personal profit or for partisan political purposes
g. Use diocese-owned equipment or devices for pornography purposes
h. Allow the use of a diocesan email account by an unauthorized user
i. Allow access to a diocesan digital file to anyone not authorized to view, edit, or copy its contents
j. Electronic media may not be used to knowingly submit, publish, or display any defamatory, inaccurate, abusive, obscene, profane, sexually oriented, threatening, racially offensive or otherwise illegal material; nor

shall the user encourage the use, sale, or distribution of controlled substances. Any use in violation of any local, state or federal law is also prohibited and is a breach of the terms and conditions of this policy

k. Any messages or information sent by a user to one or more individuals via an electronic network are statements identifiable and attributable to the Diocese, must comply with this and other Diocesan policies, and may not disclose any confidential or proprietary information

l. The use of chat rooms is prohibited. An authorized alternative is the use of Project Discussion Groups

m. Any employee or client found to be abusing the privilege of Diocesan-facilitated access to electronic media or services will be subject to disciplinary action including risk of having the privilege removed

Social Network, Media and Text Messaging

While the Diocese respects the right of employees to use social media and networking sites, as well as personal websites and blogs, it is important that employees' personal use of these sites does not damage the reputation of the Diocese, its employees, or its students or their families. Employees should exercise care in setting appropriate boundaries between their personal and public online behavior, understanding that what is private in the digital world often has the possibility of becoming public, even without their knowledge or consent.

Social media or Text Messaging

- Youth under the age of 18, including students, volunteers, etc., are not to be included as "friends," "followers," or any other similar terminology used by various sites.
- All communication with youth under the age of 18 must include their parent or guardian and be only for reasons related to school, volunteer activities, etc., and never for the purpose of sharing or requesting personal information.
- If the Diocese believes that an employee's activity on any means of social media social violates its policies, the Diocese will request that the employee cease such activity; and dependent upon the severity of the incident, the employee may be subject to disciplinary action.
- The use of pornography, sexting or any other inappropriate social media or text exchange with a minor or vulnerable person is prohibited.
- Any form of social media contact with youth will also be copied to the parent(s) or guardian (s) of the youth.
- Except in the case of emergency, personnel are not permitted to communicate with minors using private email accounts, or personal/private social media or telephone accounts.

Email

- Email services are available for Diocesan employees to conduct and communicate Diocesan business. Incidental personal use of email is allowed with the understanding that the primary use be job-related, and that occasional use does not adversely impact work responsibilities or the performance of the network and should never involve inappropriate or offensive content.
- Email services are provided only while a user is employed by the Diocese and once a user's electronic services are terminated, employees may no longer access the contents of their mailboxes, nor should they export their mailbox to a personal account before departure.
- Email users are advised that electronic data (and communications using the Diocesan network for transmission or storage) may be reviewed and/or accessed by authorized diocesan officials for purposes related to diocesan business. The Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown has the authority to access and inspect the contents of any equipment, files or email on its electronic systems.
- Personal email is not to be used to conduct diocesan business or communications under any circumstances.
- Any form of email contact with youth will also be copied to the parent(s) or guardian (s) of the youth.

Photograph and Video

If pictures and videos are taken during youth ministry events and gatherings there must be parental consent. No child or youth under the age of 18 should be photographed in any form without the knowledge of their parent or guardian and a signed consent form. All photographs and videos of minors considered to be used for flyers, parish and diocesan publications, and the ministry website must have the written consent of the parent or guardian. Names will not be posted unless written authorization is given the parent or guardian, and then only first names will be used.

Ministry Web Pages

Anyone who establishes a ministry web presence should make a commitment to this vehicle of communication. Web pages, especially the index or main page(s), should be regularly updated. As with any ministry effort, there should be an intentional plan and set of goals regarding establishing and maintaining a web presence. Great care should be used to protect people on a web page that is publicly accessible and use the following guidelines:

- Personal information should never be made available (i.e. home address, home or cell number, home email address, etc.).
- Written authorization must be obtained from parent/guardian before posting photos or videos of young people.
- Pictures or videos should not be captioned with a young person's name unless the parent/guardian has given you written authorization to do so.
- Never use a picture or video that might be considered embarrassing or unflattering or inconsistent with the mission of the Diocese.
- Care should be taken to protect the reputation of our church membership. If individuals are uncomfortable with a particular photo or video, it should be immediately removed from the website.

Online Gaming

Those who minister and work in pastoral settings with young people should take care in their involvement with online gaming. While this may be a recreational alternative, for many it is also an opportunity for social networking. Pastoral ministers should take care of protecting their online game identities so that appropriate boundaries are maintained.

No contact with minors in any form of online gaming, gambling or virtual reality and augmented reality gaming. Minors may not be physically present when personnel are engaged in any form of online gaming, gambling or virtual/augmented reality gaming.

Youth Protection policies extend into cyberspace. There should be no one-on-one online or digital activities (games, social media, etc.) or electronic communications. All users must respect the use of the electronic media. In doing so, we have the means to inform, educate and enlighten a vast number of people. Adults should always include or copy a parent or guardian in all online communications, ensuring no one-on-one contact exists in text, social media or other forms of online or digital communication. We are obligated to use the electronic tools in a manner reflective of the mission of the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown.

I HAVE CAREFULLY READ, UNDERSTAND, AND HEREBY COMMIT TO CONDUCTING MYSELF IN ACCORD WITH THE DIOCESE OF ALTOONA-JOHNSTOWN USE OF TECHNOLOGY AND WILL HAVE NO DIGITAL CONTACT WITH A MINOR.

_____	_____	_____
(PRINT Name)	(Signature)	(Date)
_____	_____	
(Position)	(Name of Parish/School/Diocesan Office)	

Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown

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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 Youth Protection Office:
CYP Office Coordinator: dhanna@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)