



Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown

Office of Child and Youth Protection

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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.**