



CODE OF CONDUCT

for working and dealing with minors and adults in need of protection or assistance to prevent sexualized violence

In the Diocese of Würzburg, we make a special effort to protect minors and vulnerable adults from sexualized violence. Clear rules of conduct in this Code of Conduct are intended, with regard to the respective area of work an appropriate human and professional relationship between proximity and distance, respectful and attentive interaction, an open culture of open communication and appropriate participation of the people present in the processes and procedures towards, from and with minors and vulnerable adults.

This Code of Conduct serves to achieve these goals. It obliges all employees in accordance with the prevention regulations for the Diocese of Würzburg (*WDBI 169 [2023] No. 1 of 26.01.2023, p. 14–27*) in the exercise of their ministry and voluntary work.

If codes of conduct already exist in the various fields of work, these must be checked for consistency of content and supplemented if necessary.

Professionals as well as caregivers and support staff must base their specific actions and relationships on the criteria of this code of conduct.

Organization of closeness and distance

- Individual discussions, training sessions, individual lessons, etc. only take place in the designated and suitable rooms. These must be accessible from outside at all times.
- Individual perceptions of boundaries must be taken seriously, respected and not commented on in a derogatory manner.
- Boundary violations must be addressed and must not be ignored.
- High-profile friendly and intimate relationships between caregivers and minors and adults in need of protection or assistance must be avoided, e.g. sexual contact, private vacations together, etc.
- There must be no secrets with minors and vulnerable adults.
- Games, methods, exercises and activities must be checked and scrutinized with regard to the objectives and the participants individually and as a group before they are used. They are designed in such a way that no fear is and no boundaries are overstepped and no encouragement of boundary violations is given. Voluntary participation is a basic requirement, especially for acceptance rituals and tests of courage.
- Gifts may neither be accepted nor given (exceptions only in accordance with the gift guidelines of the Diocese of Würzburg, *WDBI 169 [2023] No. 1 of 26.01.2023, p. 50–52*).
- Proximity and distance must be handled carefully and responsibly. Respect your own boundaries. The privacy and personal boundaries of the entrusted minors and adults in need of protection or assistance must be respected.
- The special relationship of trust and the position of authority towards minors and vulnerable adults is present and leads to comprehensible and honest actions. Dependencies are not exploited.

Language, choice of words and non-verbal interaction

- This must be done in an appreciative manner and should correspond to the respective role, the task, the target group and their needs.
- Minors and adults in need of protection or assistance are addressed by their (preferred) name.
- Inappropriate sexualized language is not used.
- Violations of language boundaries must be addressed.
- Interactions with one another are characterized by appreciation and respect, regardless of origin, education, religion, ideology, physical and mental abilities, gender or sexual identity.
- Appropriate clothing is worn.

Physical contact

- Physical contact must be age-appropriate and appropriate to the respective context and must be mutually accepted/wanted.
- Physical contact (hugs to greet or comfort etc.) requires the free and declared consent of both parties.
- Physical contact is sensitive and only permitted for the duration and purpose of care such as first aid, comfort or care while respecting privacy.
- The rooms or accommodation of all participants are considered their private or intimate sphere. Shared accommodation of participants and supervisors in the same room is generally inappropriate.
- No one may be observed, photographed or filmed in an intimate situation (changing rooms, showers, going to the toilet, etc.).
- Participants and supervisors may not shower together.

Behavior during day activities, camps and trips

- A sufficient number of accompanying adults must be ensured for events and trips. If the group is made up of more than one gender, this should also be reflected in the group of accompanying persons.
- All participants are informed about the guidelines for action and contact details for contact persons in the event of sexualized violence.

Handling and use of media and social networks

- The selection of films, photos, music, (computer) games and materials must be pedagogically appropriate and age-appropriate.
- Films, photos, music, (computer) games and printed material with pornographic content are not permitted.
- No one will be photographed or filmed without their consent. Videos or photos will only be posted on the internet or otherwise published with prior written consent.
- The use of social networks on the internet for contact with third parties or participants is only permitted within the framework of the applicable rules and terms and conditions and on the basis of the diocesan social media guidelines.
- The guidelines on language, choice of words and non-verbal interaction must also be applied to the use of electronic messaging systems (messenger services, etc.) and private chats.
- An independent person or several recipients enable responsible publicity for the purposes of agreements and planning.
- Everyone is obliged to take a stand against any form of discriminatory, violent or sexist behavior and bullying online. This also applies to the behavior of children and young people among themselves.

Entry into force and implementation

This amended Code of Conduct comes into force on July 20, 2023 and applies to all full-time and voluntary employees in the Diocese of Würzburg. It supersedes the version of June 15, 2019 (*WDBI 165 [2019] of 01.07.2019, No. 13, p. 259–262*) and replaces it at the time it comes into force.

The chairpersons, full-time and honorary managers as well as the heads of institutions and departments must communicate this Code of Conduct for their respective areas of responsibility and implement compliance with it. To this end, the Code of Conduct will be made available in writing to all those responsible, affected and interested parties. For requirements of the respective fields of work and areas of responsibility, further provisions – in particular with regard to the institutional protection concepts in the facilities and their processes and structures. Should it be necessary to deviate from the requirements of the Code of Conduct in justified exceptional cases, this must always be communicated clearly and transparently to all those involved and affected as well as to those responsible, or obtain the consent of those affected or responsible.

Würzburg, June 30, 2023

Dr. Jürgen Vorndran, Vicar General