



**PHONG TRÀO THIẾU NHI THÁNH THỂ VIỆT NAM TẠI HOA KỲ**  
***The Vietnamese Eucharistic Youth Movement in the U.S.A (VEYM)***  
**BAN CHẤP HÀNH TRUNG ƯƠNG | NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**  
*1811 E. Center St., Anaheim, CA 92805 | headquarters@veym.net | 714-603-7586*

# **VEYM Youth Leaders' Code of Conduct**

**September, 2022**

## A. Purpose

This Code of Conduct is intended to serve as a general guideline of expectations for all members of the Vietnamese Eucharistic Youth Movement in the U.S.A. (VEYM) including but not limited to church, camps, conferences/conventions, and other events. VEYM members in uniform not only serve as role models within their local Chapters but are also more increasingly recognized as ambassadors of both their League of Chapters and the national VEYM organization. As the VEYM continues to grow at the local, league, national, and international level, it is even more imperative that all VEYM members are reminded on an annual basis to conduct themselves with the utmost ethical and moral standards in keeping with the teachings of the Catholic Church. Any conduct deemed improper, unethical, or immoral could have an exponentially negative impact upon members and the public trust in the integrity of the entire national organization.

## B. Annual Training Requirement

All VEYM adult members (18 years old and older from here on will be identified as “VEYM members”) are required to review the following Code of Conduct and submit the **Code of Conduct Acknowledgement Form** (found at the end of this document).

## C. Noncompliance & Required Reporting

Any conduct that may be considered noncompliance of the VEYM Code of Conduct must be reported to the local Chapter President and Chaplain. A sample form is provided for convenience at the end of this policy (written letters or emails are also acceptable).

***The local Chapter President must immediately initiate an inquiry  
and notify both, the League of Chapters President and National Headquarters -headquarters@veym.net***

## D. Principles of Ministerial Conduct

VEYM members are considered 24/7 ambassadors of the organization and held to the highest standard of expectations. This applies whether serving in an active weekly leadership role, attending official VEYM activities in-person or virtually, participating with youth outside of official activities, as well as activities conducted in daily personal lives. VEYM members must be presented as role models – both in and out of VEYM uniform.

### Standard expectations include the following:

- VEYM members shall exhibit the highest Christian ethical standards and personal integrity.
- VEYM members shall conduct themselves in a manner that is consistent with teachings of the Catholic Church.
- VEYM members shall adhere to the Bylaws (*Nội Quy*), Servant Leaders Training Manual (*Quy Chế Huấn Luyện các Cấp Lãnh Đạo Phục*), and other official policies as promulgated from the National Executive Committee (*Ban Chấp Hành Trung Ương*), to include the annual membership dues guidelines.
- VEYM members shall treat each other with utmost respect and professionalism.
- VEYM members shall not take advantage of any supervisory and/or authoritative relationship for their own benefit.
- VEYM members shall not abuse or neglect a minor, or harass or assault another member.
- VEYM members shall adhere to the requirements of the law of the State within which VEYM activities occur regarding the reporting of any suspected abuse of a minor or harassment/assault of another member.
- VEYM members shall wear their uniforms properly as outlined in the Ceremonial Manual (*Sách Nghi Thức*).
- VEYM members shall purchase official VEYM merchandises (uniforms, scarves, badges/banners) only from VEYM store or from authorized retailers.

### Types of Misconduct

For the purpose of this policy, misconduct includes but is not limited to the behaviors listed:

### **1. Immoral Conduct**

Conduct that is contrary to the teachings of the Catholic Church and/or which may result in scandal to the faithful or harm to the ministry of the Catholic Church and VEYM.

### **2. Exploitation**

Taking advantage of a youth ministry relationship for personal benefit.

### **3. Abuse of Minors**

Conduct resulting in the physical, sexual, or emotional abuse of a minor under the age of 18.

Physical abuse is non-accidental injury that is intentionally inflicted upon a minor.

Sexual abuse is any contact of a sexual nature that occurs between a minor and an adult.

Emotional abuse is mental or emotional injury to a minor that results in an observable and material impairment in the minor's growth, development or psychological functioning.

Neglect is the failure to provide for a minor's basic needs or failure to protect them from harm.

## **Standards for Preventing the Abuse and/or Neglect of a Minor**

To prevent minors from all forms of abuse, VEYM members are prohibited from the following:

1. Using, possessing, or being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs while in the presence of minors. This prohibition does not exclude the consumption of alcoholic beverages at Archdiocesan social functions and social functions approved by the Chapter Chaplain.
2. Using profanity in the presence of minors.
3. Speaking to minors in a way that is or could be construed by any reasonable observer as harsh, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating.
4. Discussing their own sexual activities with minors.
5. Applying any form of grooming or manipulative techniques with minors.
6. Engaging in an intimate relationship with minors, whether physical or emotional. Exception may be made in instances where the emotional relationship may have existed before the VEYM members turned 18 years old.
7. Engaging in any sexually oriented conversations with minors unless the conversations are part of a legitimate lesson and discussion for teenagers regarding human sexuality issues. On such occasions, the lessons will convey to youth the Catholic Church teachings on these topics. Further questions from the youth which are not answered/addressed by their individual VEYM youth leaders should be referred to their parents or guardians for clarification or counseling.
8. Being nude in the presence of minors.
9. Sleeping in the same beds, sleeping bags or small tents with minors unless the VEYM member is an immediate family member of the minor.

## **Standards for Maintaining the Safety of a Minor**

To ensure the safety of minors entrusted in our care, VEYM members are responsible for:

1. Releasing minors in their care only to parents, legal guardians, or other persons designated by parents or legal guardians at the close of services or activities. If VEYM members are uncertain of the individual(s) requesting release of a minor, immediately contact their team leader.
2. Reporting uncontrollable or unusual behavior of minors immediately to parents.
3. Maintaining awareness of their own and others' vulnerability when working alone with minors. A team approach should always be used to manage child and youth activities and other contacts with minors. For example:
  - a. Two adults should be present if altar servers require assistance putting on their robes in preparation for Mass.
  - b. If a youth requires a ride home after VEYM activities, parents should be encouraged to designate an alternate family member or 2 VEYM adults must escort the child home.

## **Standards for Social Media Interaction with Minors**

1. All ministry social networks and communication should be open and transparent.
2. All VEYM members must always self-identify themselves as VEYM members with the appropriate title in their username and/or profile.

3. VEYM Chapter social media accounts are always to be presumed to be ministry accounts and thus to be open and transparent.
4. VEYM members' personal social media accounts may not be used for ministry communication with minors.
5. Use of social media communication for private one-on-one contact with minors is not permitted. In the rare event that these activities occur, the communication must be kept on-file and at the organization location in an easily accessible format.
6. Written permission from their parent(s) or the legal guardian is necessary prior to any electronic communication with a minor that cannot be openly seen by the parents and unrelated adults.
7. All text-based communications sent to or received from young people must be copied to their parent(s) or the legal guardian or an additional adult volunteer.
8. Communication with minors via electronic means is to be restricted to the hours that are appropriate for a phone call to the residence, except in the event of an emergency or to communicate time-sensitive information.

### **Standards for Offsite and/or Overnight Events**

1. The following standards shall be observed when VEYM members are involved in the transportation of minors:
  - a. VEYM members are prohibited from transporting minors without written permission of their parent or guardian.
  - b. VEYM members are prohibited from unnecessary and/or inappropriate physical contact with minors while in vehicles.
  - c. Minors should be transported directly to their destination. No stops should be made unless approved by the Chapter President or designee.
  - d. VEYM members assigned to transport minors must be at least 24 years old with a valid driver's license and automobile insurance.
2. VEYM members are prohibited from having minors stay overnight at their residence.
3. Changing and showering facilities or arrangements for adults must be separate from facilities or arrangements for minors.

### **Standards Regarding Physical Contact with Minors**

1. VEYM members are prohibited from using physical discipline in any way for behavior management of minors. No form of physical discipline is acceptable. This prohibition includes spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, or any other physical force as retaliation or correction for inappropriate behavior by minors.
2. Appropriate affection between VEYM members and minors is important for a child's development. It also constitutes a positive part of VEYM life and youth ministry. However, VEYM members should always be aware that physical contact with minors can be misconstrued and should occur (a) only when completely nonsexual, when there is no possibility of others perceiving it as sexual, and when such contact is otherwise appropriate, and (b) never in private.

### **Standards for Screening VEYM members Who Come into Contact with Minors**

1. Without exception, all applicants for VEYM leadership positions that involve coming into contact with minors must comply with the following procedures:
  - a. Be registered members of the local VEYM Chapter
  - b. Read and sign an agreement to abide by this Code of Conduct
  - b. Complete a criminal background record check in accordance with Arch/diocese's policy. This criminal background records check shall be conducted after the registration but prior to the start of ministry or volunteer work.
    - a. Attend the Call to Protect, Protecting God's Children, Virtus, or equivalent program as outlined by the local Arch/diocese.
2. VEYM members who transfer from one Chapter to another Chapter, or visiting, the receiving Chapter Executive Committee must take the following action:

- a. Adult member day visit to a Chapter's event – request the visiting adult member to provide concurrence from the Chapter's President indicating the visiting adult member is in good standing and cleared for visitation.
- b. Adult member overnight visit to a Chapter's event – request the visiting adult member to provide a recent Letter of Good Standing with signatures from the Chapter President and Chaplain.
- c. Adult member transferring to another Chapter – request the transferring adult member to provide a recent Letter of Good Standing with signatures from the Chapter President and Chaplain. Cross reference with the VEYM Membership Database or contact the transferring adult member's League of Chapters Executive Committee and National Executive to verify active status.

## **E. VEYM's Pastoral Response to Alleged Sexual Misconduct**

### ***VEYM Wellness, a Resource for Victims***

The VEYM Wellness is a confidential support service designed to assist VEYM adult members gain better insight into their lives, whether it be from a spiritual, psychological, medical, social or emotional need. The support process involves a therapeutic relationship between you and a priest, a religious brother or sister, or a pro-bono licensed provider who has the desire and willingness to journey with members and see members pull through. While the VEYM Wellness Network clinical providers are professionals with independent licenses, it is important to stress that this pro-bono support service is not therapy nor clinical counseling. The support service involves speaking with a VEYM Wellness Network member via telephone and may cover a variety of supportive topics per request. For a consultation, please contact [veym.wellness@gmail.com](mailto:veym.wellness@gmail.com).

### **Care of VEYM Members Alleged of Misconduct**

1. The rights of the alleged shall be taken into consideration throughout the inquiry process. Effort will be made to protect the interests of any individual who may be falsely alleged.
2. During inquiry of allegations, the alleged may be placed in an abeyance status and temporarily removed from VEYM ministry and contact with alleged victim(s) to ensure the integrity of the inquiry and the safety of the alleged victim(s) during the information-gathering process. This action should in no way be interpreted as a presumption of guilt. If the information-gathering process does not produce a basis to remove the person from his/her position or ministry, the alleged VEYM member will resume his or her role as quickly as possible.
3. In the event that an allegation is confirmed and the perpetrator is not permitted to resume VEYM ministry, the National Executive Committee will inform the perpetrator, the affiliated Chapter President and Chaplain, and affiliated League of Chapters President and Chaplain.



## Confidential Notice of Concern

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Date of occurrence: \_\_\_\_\_ Time of occurrence: \_\_\_\_\_

Has this been reported to local the VEYM Chapter President, Arch/diocese and/or police?

If yes, time/date of report \_\_\_\_\_

Describe the situation: What happened, where it happened, when it happened, who was involved, who was present, who was notified? If reported to VEYM, Arch/diocese or police, what was their recommendation about the incident?

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Has this situation ever occurred previously? \_\_\_ If yes, when \_\_\_\_\_  
What action was taken? How was the situation handled, who was involved, who was questioned, were police called?

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What is the follow-up plan? Does anyone else need to be notified? Will the situation need monitoring? Would you like someone to call you to discuss this situation?

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Submitted by: \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Location and address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Reviewed by (Chapter President's signature): \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix B.**



**Code of Conduct Acknowledgment**

1. I verify that I have received and read the adopted VEYM Code of Conduct.
2. I understand the policy guidelines as stated therein.
3. By my signature below, I agree to strictly adhere to the VEYM Code of Conduct and understand that noncompliance may result in termination of my ministry with the VEYM.

*PLEASE PRINT*

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Baptismal and Legal Name \_\_\_\_\_

Rank \_\_\_\_\_

Position \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Chapter \_\_\_\_\_

Name of League of Chapters \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Phone \_\_\_\_\_