

Diocese of Manchester
Guidelines for Service Projects Involving Minors

Many parishes and schools encourage minors (those under the age of 18) to perform community service projects. Sometimes, the service hours are performed by one person at an activity s/he organizes. At other times, service projects are organized by the parish or school as youth ministry, Confirmation, or campus ministry activities. Common service projects include assisting elderly, ill, disabled, or homebound individuals with work around their homes and volunteering at social service agencies. We hope the following guidelines will assist you when planning service projects for minors.

1. Minors involved in service projects should be at least thirteen (13) years old or in the seventh grade.
2. Minors participating in volunteer service projects may not undertake any activity that a minor of the same age is prohibited from performing per the Department of Labor (see below).
3. Limit the number of consecutive service hours to no more than four (4). If the activity will last “all day,” we recommend limiting the number of consecutive hours to three (3) and a total service day of six (6) hours. The minors should have at least a half hour break between the two 3-hour sessions.
4. The parish or school should determine, in advance, what types of activities the minors may perform and set clear guidelines with those whom they will be assisting.
5. Minors should only assist individuals or agencies known to the parish or school.
6. Minors should be assigned in teams of at least two persons if the work is to be performed inside a person’s home.
7. An adult supervisor must accompany the teams performing the service work. Supervising adults must have completed all diocesan safe environment requirements (training, background check, etc.). Contact your parish/school safe environment coordinator for more information.

The safety of minors is of utmost importance to us. For that reason, we recommend the following guidelines based upon the regulations of the Department of Labor and our experience:

1. Minors may not use step stools, ladders, scaffolding, or similar items in order to perform tasks higher than they can reach unassisted.
2. Minors may not operate power tools including saws, drills, nail guns, weed wackers, trimmers, etc.
3. Minors may not operate riding lawn mowers, forklifts, or motor vehicles.
4. Per State law, minors under the age of fourteen (14) may not work in warehousing and storage and may not perform outside window washing if it involves working from window sills.
5. Visit <http://www.nh.gov/labor/documents/child-labor-guide.pdf> for more information about the Department of Labor regulations for youth employment.