

Dear dedicated Volunteers,

You would like to contribute your time and engagement and introduce your ideas regarding our work with children and adolescents, want to pass on the faith as well as usefully organize leisure time. We are very glad since the Church needs people like you!

We now request that you present us with an Extended Certificate of Good Conduct. You may question the purpose for this action, you may feel suspiciously eyed and are annoyed. Why such a bureaucratic obstacle prior to your engagement?!

Please continue to read for a moment. We are convinced that you will understand our request.

This is to protect the children and adolescents from violence and sexual abuse. As the responsible institution they are entrusted to our care and they have the right to find a place here where their bodies and souls are protected from abuse. Maybe your own children also participate in church activities? We want everyone to be able to develop, that is hear and experience the gospel. Unfortunately, in the diocese Rottenburg-Stuttgart – same as in other institutions - there were also cases of sexual abuse by full time as well as voluntary staff. The diocese Rottenburg-Stuttgart wants to learn from these bitter experiences and has resolved to systematically establish protection for the persons entrusted to their care. In the prevention regulation dated November 2015, Bishop Gebhard Fürst states among other things: *“The dignity and integrity of children, adolescents and adult wards as well as their rights must be honoured. One must refrain from encroaching behaviour. Psychological and physical boundary violations must be avoided.”*

One of the components is the presentation of an Extended Certificate of Good Conduct and the additional Declaration of Self Disclosure which we are requesting from you now. With that we are implementing a government guideline effecting all organisations working with children and adolescents, for instance also sports clubs and the youth fire brigade.

With that it shall be precluded that someone, who was already convicted for sexual abuse, can establish a relationship of trust with children or adolescents. Because: sex offenders will often make themselves „indispensable“ in organisations. They initially establish apparently affectionate relationships with adolescents which they then progressively misuse for their sexual power needs. With the use of threats they force their victims - who are confused, lonely and who feel ashamed - to silence. However, the responsibility lies solely with the offender.

These people violate their victim’s personality and the basis of our cohabitation: trust and love. With our measures we are sending them the signal: in our organisation there is no room for abuse (see www.kein-raum-fuer-missbrauch.de), and victims will have our support.

Therefore, please make the effort: obtain an **Extended Certificate of Good Conduct** and sign the **“Declaration of Self Disclosure”**.

An additional important component of our protection concept is the so-called „**Code of Conduct**“ which you will find on the reverse side of the page. It describes our values and what we have decided to do. Please carefully read the text (on the reverse side of the page) and show that you share these values and objectives by signing the document.

You may want to discuss the contents in the congregation and think about what these general terms could mean. Then – not just – child protection will come alive! Our parish shall be a safe and vibrant place for everyone living and practicing their faith here together.

During the course of the coming years you will be offered further information, learning events and activities. We want to attentively live together and take responsibility for each other. You can surely share these concerns.

Thank you very much for your co-operation and your engagement!

Your Priest

You will receive additional information under
www.drs.de/rat-und-hilfe/praevention-kinder-und-jugendschutz.html

and at the staff position “Prävention, Kinder- und Jugendschutz im Bischöflichen Ordinariat, Postfach 9, 72101 Rottenburg, Mrs. Sabine Hesse, Tel. 07472-169-385,
praevention@drs.de

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rottenburg-stuttgart

What you can do if someone confides in you

- > Keep **calm** – don't act hasty!
- > Listen **attentively** and take the statement made by the child/adolescent seriously.
- > Important messages: It is **not your fault**. It is good that you notified us.
- > Don't make **promises that cannot be kept** (Confidentiality, observe own boundaries)
- > Obtain **help yourself**
- > Short and **objective documentation**: situation, facts, statement made by the child/adolescent, date, observations
- > discuss further **steps** with the child or adolescent
- > **No information to the suspect(s)!**