



ARCHDIOCESE OF ST. LOUIS

CODE OF ETHICAL CONDUCT FOR CLERGY, EMPLOYEES AND VOLUNTEERS WORKING IN MINISTRY

JUNE 2018



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ARCHDIOCESE OF ST. LOUIS

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On June 14, 2002, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops approved the *Charter for the Protection Children and Young People*. Article six of the *Charter* requires all dioceses to have written “standards of ministerial behavior and appropriate boundaries for clergy and for any other church personnel in positions of trust who have regular contact with children and young people.” On September 26, 2003, Archbishop Justin Rigali promulgated the *Archdiocese of St. Louis Code of Ethical Conduct for Clergy, Employees and Volunteers Working in Ministry*, and directed that it become normative in the Archdiocese of St. Louis.

As your archbishop, I join my predecessors Cardinal Justin Rigali and Cardinal Raymond Burke in pledging my unwavering commitment to the protection of children and young people. As I express my commitment to protect children and young people in the Church, I offer my heartfelt apologies to anyone who has suffered sexual abuse at the hands of a member of the clergy or any worker in the Church. Through the efforts of the Archdiocesan Office of Child and Youth Protection, we remain committed to the prevention of sexual abuse of minors in the Church, to the promotion of safety for children and young people, and to the ongoing care of those who have suffered sexual abuse.

It is the policy of the Archdiocese of St. Louis that all clergy, employees and volunteers whose service in the Church brings them into contact with children must complete a national criminal record check and agree to regular updates. They must also attend a *Protecting God’s Children* workshop and sign this *Code of Ethical Conduct*.

The Church relies on the help of God’s grace to remain firm in her resolve and effective in her action to protect children and young people. Let us all pray that we may always express the love of Christ for children and the most vulnerable in our midst.

Invoking God’s blessing upon you and your homes, I remain

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Robert J. Carlson
Archbishop of St. Louis

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VULNERABLE ADULTS

When referencing children and youth under the age of 18 years, note that the ethical conduct outlined in the following pages pertains not only to interactions with minors but also to those interactions with vulnerable adults over the age of 18 years. An adult is considered vulnerable when he/she is significantly impaired in the ability to, or otherwise unable to, protect his/her own rights and vital interests or to report abuse or neglect without assistance because of physical, mental or emotional impairment.

I. PREAMBLE

It is God who calls people to ministry, therefore, those who serve in the name of the Church must be models of exemplary behavior. Clergy, employees and volunteers must at all times be mindful that they bear a tremendous responsibility for the sake of the Gospel. Their personal and professional conduct can and often does inspire and motivate others to deepened faith and personal holiness. However, because of the great trust placed in the Church by God's people, the conduct of the Church's clergy, employees and volunteers can also damage and diminish the faith of those whom God has entrusted to the Church's pastoral care.

It is to be understood, therefore, that all who minister, work or volunteer in the parishes, schools or other institutions, offices or agencies of the Catholic Church must at all times uphold Gospel values in their personal and professional conduct. Clergy, employees and volunteers should and will be held accountable for their behavior. They must exemplify a deep commitment to the Church and its traditions and live with integrity. They must respect the rights and inherent dignity of every other human person. Valuing the pursuit of personal, spiritual and intellectual growth, they must seek to maintain a professional level of competence with regard to the ministry or work entrusted to them.

In order to main the highest level of accountability, there must be a clear and definitive blueprint of appropriate and inappropriate behavior. The intent of this *Code of Ethical Conduct* is to provide a set of normative standards of conduct for all clergy, employees and volunteers engaged in ministerial and other Church-related activities within the Archdiocese of St. Louis. While this *Code* is not exhaustive in the variety of situations specifically mentioned, it is to be understood that the standards set out herein are to be considered normative for every pastoral or other Church-related setting.

Responsibility for adherence to this *Code of Ethical Conduct* rests with the individual. Any member of the clergy, employee or volunteer who violates this *Code* will be subject to appropriate remedial action by the competent authority in each case. Corrective action may take various forms depending on the specific nature and circumstance of the offense, including, but not limited to, an oral or written citation or even removal from ministry, termination of employment or discontinuance of one's volunteer status.

II. PERSONAL & PROFESSIONAL INTERACTIONS

1. GENERAL CONDUCT

Clergy, employees and volunteers (hereafter referred to as “Church personnel”) working with minors should maintain an open and trustworthy relationship between the minors and adult supervisors.

- I.1 Church personnel must be aware of their own and others’ vulnerability when working alone with a minor. They must always be mindful that minors, whether in a social or ministerial situation, are not to be considered as possessing the capacity to make free will and voluntary decisions. Their location and activities should be known by parents or guardians at all times.
- I.2 Use a team approach to managing activities. In general, two adults should be present in situations involving minors with the exception of sacramental confession.
- I.3 Clergy, employees and volunteers must always observe the following regarding interaction with minors:
 - I.3.1 When meeting with a minor, the office door should have a window or be left open. Do not meet with a minor if there are no other adults in the immediate vicinity.
 - I.3.2 Never visit a minor’s home without at least one other adult present and without the expressed welcome of parents or guardians.
 - I.3.3 Do not drive alone with a minor for any reason on a regular basis or for any long distance.
 - I.3.4 All outings with minors (i.e. retreats, youth group trips, sports-related activities and overnight trips) require the presence of at least two adults at all times and parental permission for the minor to attend.
 - I.3.5 Adults may not share sleeping quarters with minors, unless accommodations are barrack-style with multiple adults and multiple minors in the same room, each individual having a separate bed.
 - I.3.6 Locker rooms, shower rooms and dressing rooms are not to be shared with minors unless another adult is present.
 - I.3.7 Minors are not to be accompanied into restrooms without another adult present unless the circumstance makes it absolutely unavoidable.

- I.3.8 Minors should be permitted only in the public section of a rectory, never in the private living quarters.
- I.3.9 Minors should never be permitted to stay overnight in a rectory, convent or religious community, even if alone in a separate guestroom.
- I.4 Physical contact with youth can be misconstrued and should occur:
 - (a) only when completely nonsexual and otherwise appropriate, and
 - (b) never in private.
- I.5 Church personnel should never be involved with the illegal possession and/or illegal use of drugs and/or alcohol. They must never supply such substances to minors, nor may they consume alcohol while functioning in an official capacity with minors. This includes those who are involved as coaches or managers of youth sports teams.
- I.6 Church personnel should not provide shared or private overnight accommodation for any minors, including, but not limited to, accommodations in any Church-owned facility, private residence, hotel room or any other place, unless ample adult supervision is present.
 - I.6.1 In rare emergency situations when accommodation is necessary for the health and well-being of the minor, Church personnel should take extraordinary care to protect all parties from the appearance of impropriety and from all risk of harm.
 - I.6.2 A team approach should always be employed in managing such emergency situations.
- I.7 Physical force or demeaning language should not be used in disciplining minors. Physical force is only permissible to protect oneself, another innocent party or a person who is out of control.
- I.8 Prudent caution is to be employed regarding physical displays of affection (e.g. hugging or even social rough-housing), language, and topics of conversation used with minors. At no time are any of the above appropriate if they could not also be carried out comfortably, and with approval, in the presence of the minor's parent or guardian.
- I.9 Church personnel should not accept expensive gifts from minors, their parents, or vulnerable adults without prior written approval from the pastor or school administrator, and archdiocesan agencies.

II. PERSONAL & PROFESSIONAL INTERACTIONS

- 1.10 Church personnel should refrain from giving expensive gifts to minors without prior written approval from the parents or guardians and the pastor or school administrator, and archdiocesan agencies.

2. INTEGRITY

All Church personnel must maintain a presence of mind about their proper role in the circumstance in which they find themselves.

- 2.1 Church personnel must always protect the interests and rights of those who are most susceptible to harm, especially minors and vulnerable adults.
- 2.2 Explicit sexual interactions or even sexually suggestive interaction with persons who are served or with whom one works are never appropriate in a ministerial setting. Members of the clergy are expected to conduct themselves chastely according to their state of life.
- 2.3 Those who work for or volunteer their service to the Church must protect the confidentiality and privacy rights of others at all times.

3. PROPER CONDUCT FOR INSTANCES OF PASTORAL COUNSELING AND SPIRITUAL DIRECTION

Those who provide pastoral counseling and spiritual direction must respect the rights and advance the welfare of each person with whom they have this type of professional ministerial relationship.

- 3.1 Any counseling conducted by Church personnel must be within the parameters of their training or certification from a recognized association of peers or licensure from the State of Missouri. Those who provide pastoral counseling and spiritual direction should also be diligent in referring clients to other qualified professionals when appropriate or necessary.
- 3.2 It must always be clear, both to those who provide pastoral counseling and spiritual direction as well as to their clients, that it is a counseling or spiritual relationship that is in progress.
 - 3.2.1 This includes maintaining a clear distinction between the ministry in which they are engaged and other specialized forms of clinical therapy.

- 3.2.2 It also includes making certain that sessions are conducted in appropriate settings and, at appropriate times, supported by a calendar record of the contact. Counseling or spiritual direction should not take place at times or in locations which could make the nature of the session ambiguous or misleading to the client. Sessions may not be conducted in private living quarters.
- 3.3 Those who provide pastoral counseling and spiritual direction should carefully consider the possible consequences before entering into a counseling relationship with someone with whom they have a pre-existing relationship (i.e. employee, professional colleague, friend, etc.)
- 3.4 Those who provide pastoral counseling and spiritual direction are not to record audio or video of sessions.
- 3.5 Those who provide pastoral counseling and spiritual direction assume the full burden of responsibility for establishing and maintaining clear and appropriate boundaries in all counseling and counseling-related relationships.
- 3.5.1 They are to avoid unnecessary social contact with clients during the course counseling, including the use of social media engagement and communication.
- 3.5.2 They are never to engage in sexual intimacies with the persons whom they counsel or with other persons who are close to the client (e.g. relatives or friends). This includes consensual or nonconsensual intimacies and forced physical contact, as well as the use of sexual language or comments which are inappropriate to the professional nature of the relationship.
- 3.5.3 Physical contact of any kind (i.e. touching, hugging, holding) between those who provide pastoral counseling and spiritual direction and the persons whom they counsel, especially during sessions, can easily be misconstrued and should be avoided. This prohibition of physical contact applies also to the Sacrament of Penance, except for the sacramental imposition of hands.

II. PERSONAL & PROFESSIONAL INTERACTIONS

4. CONFIDENTIALITY

Information disclosed to a Pastoral Counselor or Spiritual Director during the course of counseling, advising or spiritual direction must be held in the strictest confidence possible.

- 4.1 Information obtained in the course of sessions must be held in confidence, except for compelling professional reasons or as required by law.
 - 4.1.1 If there is clear and imminent danger to the client or to others, those who provide pastoral counseling or spiritual direction may disclose to the necessary authorities only the information necessary to protect the parties affected and to prevent harm (e.g. a client that threatens harm to himself/herself or others).
 - 4.1.2 Before disclosure is made, if feasible, those who provide pastoral counseling or spiritual direction should inform the person being counseled about the disclosure and the potential consequences.
- 4.2 At the start of this type of professional relationship, those who provide pastoral counseling and spiritual direction should discuss with each client the nature of confidentiality and its limits should the client disclose intent to put himself/herself and/or others in imminent danger.
- 4.3 Those who provide pastoral counseling and spiritual direction should keep appropriate records of the content of sessions.
- 4.4 Knowledge acquired from professional contact may be used in teaching, writing, homilies or other public presentations only when effective measures are taken to safeguard both the individual's identity and the confidentiality of the disclosures.
- 4.5 While counseling a minor, if a Pastoral Counselor or Spiritual Director discovers that there is a serious threat to the welfare of the minor and that communication of confidential information to a parent or legal guardian is essential to the minor's health and well-being, the Pastoral Counselor or Spiritual Director should:
 - Attempt to secure written consent from the minor for specific disclosure if such is appropriate under the circumstances.
 - If consent is not obtained, disclose only the information necessary to protect the health and well-being of the minor.

Consultation with the appropriate Church supervisory personnel is required before disclosure.

- 4.6 In conducting group sessions, those who provide counseling must ensure that no individual is subject to trauma or abuse resulting from group interactions. The nature of the group and the parameters of confidentiality regarding all individual disclosures during group sessions must be explained to all participants at the beginning of the session. Such group interactions include pastoral counseling groups, faith formation groups, Renew groups, etc.

These obligations are exclusive of the sacramental seal of Confession, which demands that under no circumstance whatsoever may there be any disclosure, even indirect disclosure, of information received through Confession.

5. SEXUAL CONDUCT

Church personnel must not, for sexual gratification or intimacy, exploit the trust placed in them by the faith community.

- 5.1 Church personnel who are committed to a celibate lifestyle of complete self-restraint are called to be an example of celibate chastity in all relationships at all times.
- 5.2 Church personnel who provide pastoral counseling or spiritual direction services must avoid developing inappropriately intimate relationships with everyone. They must conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times.
- 5.3 Church personnel may not exploit another person for sexual purposes. This includes but is not limited to the creation, distribution and/or possession of all forms of child pornography.
- 5.4 Allegations of sexual misconduct are taken seriously and are to be reported to the competent authority in the archdiocesan office or agency, parish or school, as well as to civil authorities, if the situation involves one who is presently a minor. The norms of the *Pastoral Policy Regarding Alleged Cases of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Clergy or other Church Personnel of the Archdiocese of St. Louis* and the archdiocesan *Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines on Child Abuse* are to be followed without exception in every situation of this kind in order to protect the rights of all involved.
- 5.5 Church personnel should review and know the contents of the child abuse regulations and reporting requirements for the State of Missouri and should follow those mandates.

II. PERSONAL & PROFESSIONAL INTERACTIONS

6. HARASSMENT

Church personnel must not engage in physical, psychological, written or verbal harassment of employees, volunteers or parishioners of any age and must not tolerate such harassment by other Church personnel.

- 6.1 Church personnel must maintain a professional work environment that is free from physical, psychological, written or verbal intimidation or harassment.
- 6.2 Harassment encompasses a broad range of physical, written or verbal behavior, including without limitation the following:
 - Physical or mental abuse
 - Racial insults
 - Derogatory ethnic slurs
 - Unwelcome sexual advances or touching
 - Sexual comments or sexual jokes
 - Requests for sexual favors used as a condition of employment, or to affect other personnel decisions, such as promotion or compensation
 - Display of offensive materials
- 6.3 Harassment can take place in a single severe incident or as a persistent pattern of behavior where the purpose or the effect is to create a hostile, offensive or intimidating work environment.
- 6.4 Allegations of harassment must be taken seriously and reported immediately to the competent authority in the archdiocesan office or agency, parish or school. The applicable personnel policy of the archdiocese or the parish, school or agency is to be followed to protect the rights of all involved.

7. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Church personnel must avoid professional interactions and situations that could present a conflict of interest. Even the appearance of a conflict of interest can call integrity and professional conduct into question.

- 7.1 Church personnel should disclose all relevant factors that could potentially create a conflict of interest. Sound moral principles, uprightness, sincerity and transparent accountability must be the hallmarks of conduct for all who serve in the Church.

8. REPORTING ETHICAL OR PROFESSIONAL MISCONDUCT

Church personnel have a duty to report their own ethical or professional misconduct in addition to the misconduct of others.

- 8.1 Church personnel must hold each other accountable for maintaining the highest ethical and professional standards. When there is an indication of illegal actions by Church personnel, the proper civil authorities should be notified immediately as well as the competent authority at the archdiocesan office or agency, parish or school.
- 8.2 When an uncertainty exists about whether a situation or course of conduct violates this *Code of Ethical Conduct* or other religious, moral or ethical principles, consult with the Archdiocesan Director of Human Resources, school administrators, others who are knowledgeable about ethical issues or the Executive Director of the Office of Child and Youth Protection (OCYP).
- 8.3 When it appears that a member of Church personnel has violated this *Code of Ethical Conduct* or other religious, moral or ethical principles, the matter is to be reported to the employment supervisor, or next higher authority, or the Executive Director of the Office of Child and Youth Protection (OCYP).
- 8.4 The obligation of those who provide pastoral counseling and spiritual direction to report client misconduct is subject to the duty of confidentiality. However, any agreement or duty to maintain confidentiality must yield to the need to report misconduct that threatens the safety, health or well-being of any of the persons involved as stated in Section 4.1.

9. ADMINISTRATION

Employers and supervisors should treat Church personnel justly in the date-to-day administrative operations of their ministries.

- 9.1 Administrative decisions made by Church personnel must meet the requirements of civil and canon law and be consistent with Catholic social teachings and this *Code of Ethical Conduct*.
- 9.2 Church personnel may not use his or her position to exercise unreasonable or inappropriate power and authority.
- 9.3 Church personnel providing services to minors must read and sign this *Code of Ethical Conduct* before providing services.

II. PERSONAL & PROFESSIONAL INTERACTIONS

10. WELL-BEING OF CLERGY, EMPLOYEES AND VOLUNTEERS

Church personnel have the duty to be responsible for their own spiritual, physical, mental and emotional health.

- 10.1 Church personnel should always be aware of warning signs that indicate potential problems with their own spiritual, physical, mental and emotional health.
- 10.2 Church personnel should seek help immediately whenever they notice behavioral or emotional warning signs in their own professional and/or personal lives (i.e. excessive use of alcohol or controlled substances, etc).
- 10.3 Church personnel must address their own spiritual needs, at the heart of which are frequent participation in the celebration of the Eucharist and the Sacrament of Penance. Support from a Spiritual Director is highly recommended.
- 10.4 Inappropriate or illegal use of alcohol and drugs is prohibited.

11. THE USE OF ELECTRONIC MEDIA AND ELECTRONIC DEVICES

When communicating with a minor using any form of electronic media or an electronic device it is essential that the communication is consistent with Catholic values. It should be respectful to both the minor as well as the parent and direct in nature as to avoid any misunderstanding. This includes photos and posts on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat and any other social media platform.

- 11.1 Always make every attempt to be transparent when communicating with a minor by including parents and/or other adults in ministry. Private messages sent through email or social media platforms between an adult and a minor must be avoided.

III. COMMITMENT TO ETHICAL CONDUCT

COMMITMENT TO ETHICAL CONDUCT FOR CLERGY, EMPLOYEES AND VOLUNTEERS WORKING IN MINISTRY

The vulnerable of our community are the most important gifts God has entrusted to us. I promise to strictly follow the rules and guidelines in the Archdiocese of St. Louis *Code of Ethical Conduct for Clergy, Employees and Volunteers Working in Ministry* as a condition of my providing services to the children, youth and vulnerable adults of our Archdiocese.

I understand that since I may be working with minors, I will be subject regularly to a thorough background check including criminal history. I understand that any action mandated thereby may result in removal from my position or of my ability to work with minors.

I further understand that I will, as a condition of continuing in my position, be required to participate in education and training provided by the Archdiocese or the school, parish or agency with which I am associated.

Printed Name _____

Signature _____

Date _____

**MISSOURI DIVISION OF FAMILY SERVICES
CHILD ABUSE HOTLINE NUMBER**

1-800-392-3738

For reporting procedures and other information related to reporting incidents of suspected abuse, please refer to the Archdiocese's *Policies, Procedures and Guidelines on Child Abuse* or contact the Archdiocesan Office of Child and Youth Protection at 314-792-7704.

