

Code of Conduct for Church Personnel for the Diocese of Raleigh¹

SECTION ONE: Preamble

- 1.1 By virtue of our baptism, all Catholics share in the mission of the Church to continue the work of Jesus Christ. Jesus is Lord and we must seek the Kingdom as He did. We must preach the Good News that there is a God who loves us beyond our imagining. We must give our love and the provisions of life to those who have them in small measure. By our actions we must share our conviction that everything that occurs between us is a function of our relationship with God.
- 1.2 The call to discipleship is abundant in grace. It is also an awesome responsibility. We who represent the Church, the bishop, priests, deacons, seminarians, non-ordained religious, lay employees and lay volunteers who are involved in work for the Diocese of Raleigh, its parishes and agencies and who represent the Church by virtue of office, designated position, employment or contract (hereafter called Church Personnel) have a special obligation due to roles of leadership and positions of trust. Our brothers and sisters, young and old, invite us into their lives, open their hearts, share their joys and hopes, their grief and anxieties with us. They are confident that we will listen compassionately and act honorably in their best interest. Our behavior as Church Personnel, both public and private, has the potential to inspire those entrusted to our pastoral care to faith and hope and to motivate them toward greater generosity and participation in a life of faith. Sadly, when trust is abused it also has the potential to weaken or destroy faith, and cause scandal.
- 1.3 It is essential that Church Personnel be constantly mindful of the trust given to them. Faithfully discharging the responsibilities that accompany our work requires constant prayerful reflection and must be sustained and supported by God's grace. Our obligations require each of us to act with love and prudence. This Code of Conduct will assist in this task.
- 1.4 These statements do not presume to provide answers to all ethical questions. They present a set of general standards to help guide day to day actions and form a framework for developing policies and discussing ethical questions. Church Personnel in the Diocese of Raleigh agree to abide by this Code of Conduct and understand that disregarding these principles through personal conduct or life style contrary to the moral and religious doctrines or teachings of the Roman Catholic Church may lead to corrective and/or disciplinary action.

SECTION 2: Principles

- 2.1 Church personnel of the Diocese of Raleigh shall:
 - a. Respect the teachings and precepts of the Catholic Church

- b. Respect the rights, dignity and worth of each person from conception to natural death.
- c. Conduct their relationships with others free of deception, manipulation, exploitation or intimidation.
- d. Work to ensure just treatment for colleagues, employees, volunteers, parishioners and others with whom they interact.
- e. Seek to provide an environment that is non-discriminatory, free from all forms of abuse and promotes respect, self control and personal safety.
- f. While under our supervision to protect, to the best of our ability those entrusted to our care, especially children and youth as well as adults who are physically or mentally challenged.
- g. Provide guidance for individuals or groups in a way that protects and respects each person, and is free from deception, manipulation, exploitation or intimidation.
- h. Keep all information received in the course of formal counseling or spiritual direction in the strictest confidence in accord with professional ethical codes and as mandated by canon and civil law.
- i. Make no false accusations against another or reveal the faults and failings of another to those who have no right to know.
- j. Be responsible stewards of the human, temporal, and financial resources of the Church.
- k. Maintain a high level of competence in our designated role in the Church and prudently attend to our physical, spiritual, mental and emotional well-being.
- l. Avoid accepting or conferring an office, position, assignment or compensation that creates a conflict of interest or the perception of impropriety.
- m. Examine our own actions and intentions objectively to ensure that our behavior promotes the welfare of the community and exemplifies the strong moral tradition of the Church.
- n. Promptly report incidents of ethical misconduct by other Church Personnel to the proper Church and/or civil authority
- o. Church personnel are prohibited from speaking in a manner that is derogatory or demeaning. All are expected to refrain from swearing or using foul language.

- p. Church personnel are prohibited from possessing any sexually explicit or morally inappropriate materials on Church property, at Church sponsored events or in the presence of minors. Such materials include, but are not limited to: magazines, videos, films, recordings, computer software, computer games, or printed materials. In addition, topics of conversation or discussion, vocabulary or any other form of personal interaction or entertainment that could not be used in the presence of parents or a responsible adult are also prohibited.
- q. Church personnel are to refrain from sexually offensive humor and conversation.

2.2 In addition to these guidelines church personnel shall abide by any applicable professional codes of conduct, ethical norms, canon or civil laws.

SECTION 3: Behavioral Guidelines for Church Personnel Working with Minors

3.1 The following guidelines are intended to assist Church Personnel in making decisions about interactions with minors in Church sponsored and affiliated programs. They are not intended to address every possible situation or designed to address interactions within families. For clarification of any guideline or to inquire about a behavior not addressed here, please contact your pastor, agency director, principal or the Director for the Program for the Protection of Children and Young People.

- a. Corporal punishment is prohibited when disciplining minors. Physical force may only be used to restrain individuals from inflicting harm on themselves and/or others.
- b. Church Personnel are prohibited from engaging in sexually oriented conversations with minors except in the context of sharing the Church's teaching on human sexuality. Church personnel are never permitted to use examples from their own sexual history or experience.
- c. Church Personnel are prohibited from using tobacco products in the presence of minors or having in their possession or being under the influence of any alcoholic beverage or any illegal drugs when working with minors. Church Personnel are prohibited from providing minors with any alcoholic beverage, tobacco, drugs or any substance prohibited by law.
- d. Medications may be administered to minors only with written parental permission. Parents should provide the medication clearly labeled (prescriptions or over-the counter medications) and dosing instructions for the medication.
- e. Church Personnel should schedule one-on-one guidance sessions or meetings with minors at times and locations that promote accountability and meet accepted standards of propriety. This includes limiting the length and the number of meetings, making referrals and notifying the parents and/or

guardians as appropriate. Church Personnel providing counseling services should follow the standards of care and code of ethics for their respective professions in terms of services to minors and notification of parents and/or guardians.

- f. Adults should avoid being alone with a minor so as to remove the opportunity for, or perception of impropriety. Church Personnel are prohibited from sleeping in the same bed, hotel room, van, sleeping bag or tent with a minor unless the adult is a parent, guardian or sibling of the minor. Church personnel should not take an overnight trip alone with a minor who is not an immediate family member. Church Personnel should avoid being alone with a minor (not a member of the family) in a locker room, rest room, dressing facility, car or vehicle or other isolated area that is not appropriate to a ministerial relationship. When the good of the minor requires that they be accompanied by an adult to any of these locations, the time alone with the minor should be minimal and another adult should be made aware of the circumstances. As a general rule, changing and showering facilities should be separate for male and female and facilities and arrangements for minors separate from adults or should be used by adults and minors at different times.

NOTE: When there is only one large room that serves as the sleeping area for each gender, at least two adult leaders should be present in each sleeping area.

- g. Church Personnel, acting in their ministerial role, should not host minors who are not family members for overnight accommodations where there is no other adult supervision present. This includes, but is not limited to, accommodations in any church-owned facility, private residence, hotel room, or any other place where there is no other adult supervision present.
- h. Clergy should not allow minors who are not members of their family to stay overnight in their private accommodations or residence unless accompanied by other adults.
- i. Appropriate demonstrations of affection between Church Personnel and minors can be important for a child's development and a positive part of ministry. Touching must be age appropriate and based on the need of the minor not the adult. If an adult has questions regarding demonstrating affection toward a minor they should discuss the matter with their supervisor or an adult qualified to render an opinion about appropriate ministerial boundaries.

3.2 Church Personnel may be in a position to provide transportation for minors.

The following guidelines apply:

- a. Ordinarily minors should not be transported without written permission.
- b. Minors should be transported directly to their destination with no unauthorized stops.
- c. Drivers must be validly licensed and insured.
- d. Drivers may not drive a diocesan vehicle without prior authorization.

- e. Drivers are to abide by all applicable state laws (including safety seats /belts) and diocesan policies regarding the safe transportation of children and youth.
- 3.3 Church Personnel observing anyone (adult or minor) abusing a minor, must take immediate steps to intervene to provide a safe environment for the minor and report the misconduct in accord with diocesan policies and civil law. **Church personnel who have cause to suspect that a minor has been abused must report the suspected abuse in accord with the Diocese of Raleigh Policies and Procedures for the Protection of Children and Young People and civil law.**

SECTION 4: Guidelines for the Supervision of Minors

Guidelines include, but are not limited to, the following:

- 4.1 Church personnel are responsible for releasing minors in their care at the close of activities only to parents, legal guardians or other persons designated by parents or legal guardians in writing. Special circumstances for the release of children require written parental/guardian permission.
- 4.2 Programs for minors should be administered by at least two adult supervisors.
- 4.3 Church personnel should report uncontrollable, dangerous, or unusual behavior of minors to parents /guardians as soon as possible.
- 4.4 Church personnel are to report substance abuse by minors to parent/guardian as soon as possible.
- 4.5 As far as possible, facilities should be monitored during church services, and during all other (school and parish) activities on the church/school grounds.
- 4.6 Parents should be encouraged to be part of all services and programs in which their children and young people are involved.
- 4.7 Parental permission should be obtained, including a signed medical treatment authorization form before taking minors on trips.
- 4.8. Parental approval must always be obtained before permitting any minor to participate in athletic or other activities.

¹ Formerly the “Code of Professional Responsibility”