

Catholic Diocese of Raleigh Code of Conduct for Church Personnel

PREAMBLE

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 heaven 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 it is in serving our brothers and sisters that we are reconciled to God and that all that passes between us is a function of our relationship with God.

Our call to discipleship is an abundant grace. It is also an awesome responsibility. Church personnel who publicly represent the Church, whether by office, employment, or appointment, have a special obligation because they have chosen to assume 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. Because of this trust our behavior, both public and private, has the potential to inspire them to faith and hope and motivate them greater generosity and participation. Sadly, it may also scandalize them, weaken or destroy their faith or increase their sense of isolation.

It is essential therefore, that anyone who undertakes a position of leadership or ministry in the Church be constantly mindful of the trust they have been given. To faithfully discharge the responsibilities that accompany our work requires constant prayerful reflection since we must be sustained and supported by God's grace. Our obligations also require each of us to periodically undertake a personal inventory. It is hoped this Code of Conduct will assist us in this task.

These statements do not presume to provide answers to all ethical questions. They present a set of general ethical standards to help guide our day to day actions and form a framework for developing policies and discussing ethical questions. It is anticipated, however, that Church personnel in the Diocese of Raleigh do agree to abide by these principles and understand that disregarding them may lead to remedial action.

PRINCIPLES

Church personnel of the Diocese of Raleigh shall:

- Actively embrace the teachings and precepts of the Church and work to promote the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
- Demonstrate their respect for the rights, dignity and worth of each person from conception to natural death. Conduct relationships with others free of deception, manipulation, exploitation or intimidation.
- Ensure just treatment of colleagues, employees, volunteers, parishioners and others who may be effected by the administration of their ministries.
- Provide a professional education and work environment that is non-discriminatory, free of all forms of physical, sexual, psychological abuse including written or verbal intimidation or harassment.
- Accept personal responsibility to protect, to the best of their ability, children, youths, and adults, especially those who are physically or mentally challenged, from all forms of abuse or neglect.
- Provide counseling for individuals or groups in a way that protects and respects each person's rights and advances their welfare without benefit to themselves as counselor.
- Keep all information received in the course of counseling, spiritual direction or other professional or ministerial contact, in the strictest confidence except as mandated by law.
- Refrain from making false accusations against another or revealing the faults and failings of another to those who have no right to know.
- Be responsible stewards of Church resources, human and financial, observing canon and civil law and making decisions regarding the disposition of resources which reflect Catholic Social teachings.
- Maintain a high level of competence in their particular ministry. Prudently attend to their own physical, spiritual, mental and emotional well-being.
- Avoid accepting or conferring an office, position, assignment or compensation which may present even the appearance of a conflict of interest.
- Examine their own actions and intentions objectively to ensure that their behavior promotes the welfare of the community and exemplifies the strong moral tradition of the Church.
- Promptly report incidents of ethical misconduct by Church personnel to the proper church authority.

Behavioral guidelines for Church Personnel Working with Minors

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.

1. Church personnel are prohibited from speaking to minors in a manner that is or could be construed by an observer as derogatory, demeaning or humiliating and are expected to refrain from swearing or using foul language in the presence of minors.
2. Church personnel are prohibited from using physical discipline in any way for the behavior management of minors. No form of physical discipline is acceptable including physical force as retaliation or correction for inappropriate behavior except as may be needed to restrain them from inflicting harm on themselves or others.
3. Church personnel are prohibited from possessing any sexually explicit or morally inappropriate materials on Church property 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.
4. Church personnel are prohibited from engaging in any sexually oriented conversations/discussions with minors and are never permitted to discuss their own sexual activities with minors. It is expected that, from time to time, the diocesan approved curriculum in our schools or religious education programs may address issues of human sexuality, especially for teenagers who may have questions related to dating and sex before marriage. These occasions give educators an excellent opportunity to present the Church's teachings in a creative and positive way. Questions that go beyond the scope of the lesson plan should be referred to the parents of the minor, their guardian or qualified counselor for clarification.
5. Church personnel are prohibited from the use, possession or being under the influence of any tobacco products, alcoholic beverage or any illegal drugs while working with minors. Church personnel are prohibited from providing minors with any alcoholic beverage, tobacco, drugs or any substance prohibited by law. Medications of any kind may be administered to minors only with written parental consent.
6. Church personnel should schedule one-on-one counseling sessions or meetings with minors at times and locations that promote accountability and meet accepted standards of propriety. They should limit the length and the number of meetings, make referrals as appropriate and notify the parents and/or guardian of the meetings.
7. 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. 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, restroom, dressing facility, car or transportation 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.
8. 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 the 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.
9. 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. They may not drive a diocesan vehicle without prior authorization.
10. Clergy should not allow individual minors who are not members of their immediate family to stay overnight in their private accommodations or residence. Other Church personnel should not provide shared, private, overnight accommodations for individual minors including, but 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.
11. 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 & civil law.

Guidelines for the Supervision of Minors

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

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.
2. Programs for minors should not be administered by only one adult without additional adult supervision.
3. Church personnel should report uncontrollable or unusual behavior of minors to parents as soon as possible.
4. Facilities should be monitored during church services, and all school and other activities.
5. Encourage parents to join all services and programs in which their children and youth are involved.
6. Parental permission should be obtained, including a signed medical treatment authorization form before taking minors on trips. Have minors use a “buddy system” whenever they go on trips away from church property.
7. Always obtain parental approval before permitting any minor to participate in athletic or other activities that involves potential risk.