



United in Faith, Hope and Love

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR CHURCH PERSONNEL

This *Code of Conduct (Code)* of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis (Archdiocese) establishes standard policies and provides guidance for the service of Church Personnel. It is the mission of the Archdiocese to make disciples of Jesus Christ and to witness the love of Jesus Christ to all. We recognize, as disciples of Jesus Christ, that we must witness to Jesus both by what we say and what we do, and that our conduct should always seek to be in accord with the Faith which we profess. As Jesus said, "Let your light so shine before all, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven" (Matt 5: 16).¹

This *Code* aims to further the Church's mission by providing concrete guidelines which achieve several overarching objectives:

- Promote authentic witness to Jesus Christ by those who serve in the Church,²
- Protect, nurture and guide children, vulnerable adults and all others with whom we interact,
- Provide practical guidance to Church Personnel to enable them to serve effectively and safely,
- Promote personal well-being and professional competence, and
- Build positive relationships founded upon trust and integrity.

This *Code* applies to Church Personnel conduct that relates to their role with the Church.

Church Personnel means religious (other than priests and deacons), seminarians, candidates for the diaconate, business administrators, teachers, and employees, as well as volunteers in positions of leadership within a parish, Catholic school or the Archdiocese. Parish trustees, parish council members, parish finance council members, Catholic school advisory council members, and archdiocesan finance council members are examples of volunteers in leadership positions.

¹ The provisions of the Code apply to all Church Personnel regardless of individual religious beliefs or affiliation. For non-Catholics, this introductory section reminds them of the mission of the organization they have chosen to serve and are called to support through their service. It does not imply a personal assent to all Catholic Church doctrine, but rather a commitment to conduct themselves in their role with the Catholic Church in a way that is consistent with Church teachings so as not to give a public witness counter to the faith and teaching of the organization they are serving. Therefore, Catholics and non-catholics alike, who are serving the Church in an official capacity, are expected to comply with the provisions of this code which is based on our teaching about the dignity of the human person and the witness we are called to give as a Church.

² *Ibid* [1]

An adult volunteer whose ministry involves either regular or unsupervised interaction with minors or vulnerable adults must agree to follow the *Code of Conduct for Adult Volunteers Who Interact with Minors or Vulnerable Adults* before beginning volunteer service. Youth under age 18 who work or volunteer with minors or vulnerable adults must agree to follow the *Code of Conduct for Youth Employees and Volunteers Who Interact with Children, Other Youth, or Vulnerable Adults* before beginning volunteer service or employment.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

1. Church Personnel must bear witness to the mission of the Church through their conduct.
2. Church Personnel must exhibit high ethical standards and personal integrity. They must be aware of the responsibilities and positions of trust that accompany their work and exhibit this awareness by maintaining appropriate boundaries and exercising caution against all harm.
3. Relationships are at the foundation of our ministries and are central to Catholic life. Healthy and safe relationships are founded upon and demonstrate our sincere love, respect and compassion for all of those we serve.
4. Church Personnel are responsible for their own spiritual, physical, mental and emotional well-being. They are also responsible for maintaining professional competence and for meeting the commonly recognized professional standards of their particular roles. They should seek the necessary help when either personal or professional areas of their life need attention.

KEY TERMS³

“Archdiocese” means that certain corporate entity formed, maintained and existing under Minnesota Section 315.16 with Minnesota Business Name: “The Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis”.

“Clergy” means any persons ordained – bishops, priests, and deacons – who administer the rites of the Catholic Church.

“Cleric” means a member of the Clergy.

³ See Settlement Agreement, section 5.7, dated December 12, 2015 between the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis and Ramsey County Attorney. Ramsey County District Court File No.: 62-JV-15-1674; County Attorney File No.: 2138749.

“Code of Conduct” means the Code of Conduct for Clergy, the Code of Conduct for Church Personnel, the Code of Conduct for Adult Volunteers, and the Code of Conduct for Youth Volunteers, as applicable.

“Minor” means anyone who has not reached the age of 18. For the purpose of this policy, “minor” includes a **“Vulnerable Adult”** as applicable.

“Parish” means a parish within the Archdiocese Territory that is Archdiocese-recognized as Catholic.

“School” means a primary school or a secondary school within the Archdiocese Territory that is Archdiocese-recognized as Catholic.

“Seminary” or Seminaries” means the St. Paul Seminary, St. John Vianney Seminary, or both.

“Unprofessional” means below or contrary to the standards expected in a particular profession.

“Vulnerable Adult” means persons with physical, mental or emotional conditions that render them unable to defend or protect themselves, or get help when at risk of harm.

ETHICAL STANDARDS

1. Professional and Personal Interaction

- 1.1 Church Personnel will maintain appropriate boundaries in professional relationships, and not use the power inherent in their position to exercise unreasonable or inappropriate authority over others.
- 1.2 Church Personnel will relate to others respectfully and professionally, and will work collaboratively and cooperatively with others serving the Church.
- 1.3 Church Personnel must not engage in physical, psychological, or sexual harassment of any person, and must not tolerate such harassment by others serving the Church. Harassment may be a single incident or a persistent pattern of behavior where the purpose is to create a hostile, offensive, or intimidating work environment

- 1.4 Church Personnel are called to integrity according to their life vocation and to exhibit this through their conduct.
 - a. Church Personnel must not exploit another person for any purpose.
 - b. Church Personnel must not acquire, possess, or distribute any pornographic images. Church personnel are prohibited from viewing pornographic materials on, or taking pornographic materials onto, the property of the Archdiocese, a Parish or a School. ⁴
 - c. Church Personnel will dress professionally, appropriately, and commensurate with their role.
- 1.5 Church Personnel must not possess, use, or distribute alcohol or other drugs illegally. Church Personnel must not be under the influence of illegal drugs, or under the influence of alcohol or medications that impair stable functioning or sound judgment.
- 1.6 Church Personnel are prohibited from showing pornographic material to minors.⁵
- 1.7 While reasonable debate on matters of social import is valued, Church Personnel must conduct themselves in a manner consistent with Catholic teaching as set forth in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* in all public communications. Public communications are communications offered in a public forum or disseminated to a general audience, and also include communications whose potential for broad dissemination is reasonably foreseeable (e.g., public speech, bulletin article, op-ed submission to media, social media post, or blog).
- 1.8 Church Personnel must exercise discretion and confidentiality in handling sensitive information and may not disclose confidential information to others not entitled to such information.

2. Conduct with Minors

- 2.1 Church Personnel must use prudent judgment and common sense when working with minors.
- 2.2 Church Personnel should be aware of their own vulnerability and the vulnerability of others when working with minors. Church Personnel should avoid any conduct that a reasonable person could misconstrue as improper. A team approach should be used

⁴ See Settlement Agreement, section 5.8, dated December 12, 2015 between the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis and Ramsey County Attorney. Ramsey County District Court File No.: 62-JV-15-1674; County Attorney File No.: 2138749.

⁵ See Settlement Agreement, section 5.9, dated December 12, 2015 between the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis and Ramsey County Attorney. Ramsey County District Court File No.: 62-JV-15-1674; County Attorney File No.: 2138749.

when working with minors or vulnerable adults, and appropriate supervision should be in place to promote safe environments for all.

- 2.3 Church Personnel should avoid being alone with any unrelated minor, except for reasonable, common sense exceptions, such as emergency situations and circumstances where the interaction is incidental and not extended. One-on-one meetings with an unrelated minor are best held in a public area; or if that is not appropriate or possible, in an area visible to others through a window or open door.⁶
- 2.4 Physical contact with a minor must be nonsexual and appropriate.
- 2.5 Church Personnel who minister to the home-bound and to minors are encouraged to serve in the company of another safe-environment trained adult whenever possible.
- 2.6 Church Personnel are prohibited from using alcohol or tobacco when working with minors and providing alcohol or tobacco to a minor, except as permissible during sacramental, liturgical, or prayers services.⁷
- 2.7 Church Personnel must not travel alone in a vehicle with one unrelated minor without another safe-environment trained adult present, except in documented emergencies. In documented situations where groups of minors are being transported with only one adult in a vehicle, a sufficient number of drivers should be available to manage unanticipated situations.
- 2.8 Church Personnel must not share private overnight accommodations (bedroom, hotel room, tent, camper, bed, etc.) with any unrelated minor. In situations in which overnight accommodations are in open spaces (gymnasiums, classrooms, gathering spaces, etc.), actions should be taken to provide suitable supervision and create reasonable separation between sexes and between adults and minors.
- 2.9 Communications by Church Personnel with unrelated minors must be for professional reasons only. Church Personnel must maintain appropriate boundaries in all communications with an unrelated minor, including communications through the use of electronic devices or web-based media.
 - a. Church Personnel should make certain that the parents or guardians of an unrelated minor are aware of the content of private electronic or print communications sent to or received from that unrelated minor or vulnerable adult. In exceptional situations when a parent or guardian is not made aware of

⁶ See Settlement Agreement, section 3.3, dated December 12, 2015 between the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis and Ramsey County Attorney. Ramsey County District Court File No.: 62-JV-15-1674; County Attorney File No.: 2138749.

⁷ *Ibid*[5]

the content of a private communication, Church Personnel must share the communication with another Church Personnel.

- b. Informing parents or guardians is not required for non-private communications, such as those sent to youth groups regarding meeting locations or times, or other administrative matters.
 - c. Some Church Personnel have been issued school, parish, or Archdiocesan computers or other communication devices that are monitored for proper usage. Electronic communications sent to, or received from, unrelated minors using such devices are not private for the purposes of this *Code*.
- 2.10 Church Personnel will not use physical force or use profane, demeaning, or abusive language in interactions with a minor; except that proportional physical force may be used as necessary in situations of self-defense or when the minor or vulnerable adult is a danger to self or others.
- 2.11 Church Personnel should not accept expensive or excessive gifts from an unrelated minor, or give expensive, individual or personal gifts to an unrelated minor without the permission of the parent or guardian. Exchanges of modest, appropriate gifts between groups of minors and Church Personnel in the ordinary course of parish programs and school settings are permissible.

3. Conduct Related to Counseling⁸

- 3.1 When engaged in counseling or spiritual direction, Church Personnel must take great care to respect the rights and advance the welfare of all involved.
- 3.2 When counseling services are provided to two or more people who have a relationship with each other, Church Personnel must:
 - a. Clarify the nature of the relationship(s);
 - b. Identify potential conflicts of interest; and
 - c. Discuss how to eliminate or manage the conflicts.
- 3.3 Counseling services provided by Church Personnel must be within the scope of their expertise, training or certification.
- 3.4 Church Personnel are responsible for establishing and maintaining clear, appropriate boundaries in counseling relationships. ⁹

⁸ See Settlement Agreement, section 5.10, dated December 12, 2015 between the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis and Ramsey County Attorney. Ramsey County District Court File No.: 62-JV-15-1674; County Attorney File No.: 2138749.

- 3.5 Counseling sessions must be held in appropriate settings and at appropriate times. Sessions must not be held at places or times that might confuse the person being counseled as to the nature of the relationship with the counselor.
- 3.6 Physical contact during counseling or spiritual direction may be misconstrued. Any physical contact must be appropriate in nature and duration.
- 3.7 Upon ending a counseling relationship, Church Personnel should recommend appropriate arrangements for the continued care of person(s) they have been counseling.

4. Confidentiality in Pastoral Counseling Relationships

- 4.1 Church Personnel must discuss the nature of confidentiality and its limitations with each person in counseling.
- 4.2 Information obtained by Church Personnel in the course of religious or spiritual advice, aid, or comfort is confidential and may be disclosed only:
 - a. With the written, informed consent of the person being counseled;
 - b. When there is clear and imminent danger to the person being counseled or to others (in this situation, Church Personnel must act in good faith to disclose only the information necessary to protect the parties affected and to prevent harm; if prudent, Church Personnel should inform the person being counseled about a possible disclosure before the disclosure is made);
 - c. When there is a serious threat to the health, safety, or welfare of a minor or vulnerable adult and disclosure of confidential information to a parent, legal guardian, or civil authorities is essential to the minor's or vulnerable adult's health, safety, or welfare (in this situation, Church Personnel should attempt to obtain informed consent from the minor before disclosure, and must act in good faith to disclose only the information necessary to address the health, safety or welfare threat);
 - d. When consultation with another professional would be beneficial to the person being counseled (in this situation, Church Personnel should attempt to obtain written informed consent from the person being counseled before disclosure, must act in good faith to disclose only the information necessary to receive assistance, and must obtain assurance from the other professional that he/she agrees to be bound by our standards of confidentiality);

⁹ See Settlement Agreement, section 5.10.a., dated December 12, 2015 between the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis and Ramsey County Attorney. Ramsey County District Court File No.: 62-JV-15-1674; County Attorney File No.: 2138749.

- e. When a member of Church Personnel is a defendant in a legal proceeding and the disclosure of confidential information is necessary to his/her defense (in this situation, Church Personnel may disclose only the information necessary for their defense and only as permitted by civil and canon law); or
 - f. When legally required to do so consistent with civil or canon law.
- 4.3 Church Personnel must safeguard the confidentiality of any notes, files, or electronic records pertaining to counseling services. Counseling or spiritual direction sessions must not be video or audio recorded without the prior informed, written consent of all parties involved.
- 4.4 Knowledge that arises from professional pastoral counseling interactions may be used with discretion in teaching, writing, or public presentations only when effective measures have been taken to safeguard individual identity and confidentiality.

5. Records and Information

- 5.1 All Chancery Corporation, parish, or Catholic school records are solely the property of the respective entity.
- 5.2 Records include all recorded information, documents, letters, maps, books, photographs, film, sound recordings, tapes, records generated in an electronic format, emails and any other documentary material regardless of media format.
- 5.3 No records will be accessed, shared, removed, destroyed, stored, or transferred into another media format, or otherwise disposed of, except in compliance with archdiocesan, parish, or Catholic school policies.
- 5.4 Confidential records will be kept separate from public records for privacy purposes. Confidential records include sacramental records, clergy files, personnel files, and records of individual financial contributions to, as well as financial records of, the Archdiocese, parish, or Catholic school.
- 5.5 When compiling and publishing statistical information from records, great care must be taken to preserve the anonymity of individuals.
- 5.6 Archdiocesan, parish, and Catholic school employees who have been issued an archdiocesan, parish, or Catholic school email account are expected to use their issued account whenever possible.

6. Stewardship

- 6.1 Church Personnel must exercise responsible stewardship of all financial and material resources.
- 6.2 Church Personnel must provide a clear and accurate accounting of all funds and material resources for which they are responsible and must ensure that adequate systems and safeguards are in place and followed. Church personnel will not misappropriate Church funds or materials for personal uses or purposes.

7. Conflicts of Interest

- 7.1 Church Personnel must avoid actions that may reasonably be perceived as exploiting their position with the Church to further their personal, religious, political, or business interests. Church Personnel should avoid situations that present conflicts of interest. Even the appearance of a conflict of interest can call integrity and professional conduct into question and should be avoided.
- 7.2 A conflict of interest may exist when Church Personnel have an ownership interest in, an investment interest in, or a compensation arrangement with, an entity or individual who engages in regular or substantial business with the Archdiocese, relevant parish, or relevant Catholic school.
- 7.3 Conflicts of interest situations that are to be avoided include:
 - a. Acting with unfair bias or partiality toward anyone with whom Church Personnel have an existing professional or personal relationship;
 - b. Violating the confidence of another person for personal gain; and
 - c. Accepting any gift of excessive material value.
- 7.4 Church Personnel must exercise discretion when considering assumption of fiduciary obligations or financial responsibility for a person associated with a parish or Catholic school, with the exception of family members, and should consult with the pastor or canonical administrator before assuming such obligation or responsibility.
- 7.5 Church Personnel may not receive dual compensation for work within the scope of their assignment or employment.
- 7.6 Church Personnel must disclose conflicts of interest to all affected parties. In resolving the issues, primary attention must always be given to the protection of the person receiving ministry or services.

8. Reporting Misconduct¹⁰

- 8.1 Church Personnel must adhere to high ethical standards and report illegal, unethical or unprofessional behavior to their supervisor or other appropriate church authority.
- 8.2 Church Personnel must self-report to their supervisor or to the Director of Ministerial Standards and Safe Environment as promptly as possible if they are arrested or charged with a crime.
- 8.3 Church Personnel who have reason to believe that a minor or vulnerable adult is being abused or neglected or has been abused or neglected must immediately report the basis for their belief to:
 - a. Proper civil authorities, in accordance with state statutes,
 - b. The Director of Ministerial Standards and Safe Environment (or other appropriate Archdiocesan official), and
 - c. Parents or guardians, unless to do so would expose the minor or vulnerable adult to additional risk, or unless instructed otherwise by civil authorities.
- 8.4 Suspected child pornography must be referred to law enforcement immediately.

¹⁰ See Settlement Agreement, section 5.11, dated December 12, 2015 between the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis and Ramsey County Attorney. Ramsey County District Court File No.: 62-JV-15-1674; County Attorney File No.: 2138749.



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ARCHDIOCESE OF SAINT PAUL AND MINNEAPOLIS

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR CHURCH PERSONNEL

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am a member of Church Personnel within the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis. I have read this *Code of Conduct for Church Personnel* and promise to abide by it.

I understand and agree that I am subject to periodic background checks, and am required to participate in Archdiocesan safe environment training commensurate with my role. I also understand that I may face consequences or discipline, up to and including termination of my employment or other relationship with the Church, for violations of this *Code*.

Printed Name

Signature

Date

Position and Location of Employment or Service