

**PRINCIPLES OF ETHICS AND INTEGRITY IN MINISTRY:
CODE OF ETHICS**

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— ARCHDIOCESE OF —
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PRINCIPLES OF ETHICS AND INTEGRITY IN MINISTRY: CODE OF ETHICS

Relationships among people are a foundation of Christian ministry and are central to Catholic life. Defining healthy relationship boundaries is not meant, in any way, to undermine the strength and importance of personal contact or the ministerial role. Rather, it is to assist all who fulfill the many roles that create the living Church to demonstrate their love and compassion for children and adults in the most sincere and genuine relationships. The following Code of Ethics was adopted by the Archdiocese of New Orleans to ensure that all ministry relationships are experienced as charitable and pastoral without any intention to do harm nor to allow harm to occur.

Church personnel of the Archdiocese of New Orleans are asked to carefully consider each standard in this Code of Ethics before agreeing to this policy and prior to serving in a ministry role with the Archdiocese of New Orleans.

Adherence to the Code of Ethics rests with the individual. Church personnel shall conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the moral teachings and norms of the Catholic Church. Any violation of this Code of Ethics will require corrective action depending on the specific circumstance, including but not limited to, a written report and termination of employment or volunteer work.

Respect for the Dignity of the Human Person

As Catholics, we respect and show reverence for the inestimable dignity of the human person. This dignity is based on the “intimate bond” that humanity has with the Creator, who has formed man and woman to shine forth as a “reflection” of God himself.¹ Being created male and female, therefore, is not incidental, but rather integral to the human person and their spiritual, physical, emotional, and psychological development. It is God’s design – it is God’s gift – and it is central to how we are called to express God’s love to others in our lives. Moreover, it is precisely through the complementarity of male-female differences that the necessary conditions for procreation are assured, joining humanity to God as co-creators.²

With increasing frequency, however, the ideology of our current culture “denies the difference and reciprocity in nature of a man and a woman and envisages a society without sexual differences” thereby rejecting the relevance of the bodily dimension of a person’s dignity.³ This stands in contradiction to Catholic tradition and ultimately reduces the human person from someone to something.

Church personnel of the Archdiocese of New Orleans have the important responsibility of educating and forming children, youth, and adults in ways consistent with the teachings of the Catholic Church. As Christian witnesses, church personnel are expected to live a virtuous life and promote a lifestyle in accord with the values that serve to further promote the integrity of the human body. They shall conduct themselves in ways that always show respect for the bodily dimension of their sexuality.

Expectations for practice within this policy include, but are not limited to:

- All shall acknowledge the biological sex of every human person and shall apply all policies and procedures in relation to that person according to that person’s God-given, biological sex.⁴
- All will refer to others using language in accord with the person’s God-given, biological sex.
- All will reference the person’s God-given, biological sex in correspondence, documents and records.
- All shall use restrooms and locker rooms that correspond with a person’s God-given biological sex.
- All will be treated with dignity and respect.

This policy will be upheld by church personnel of the Archdiocese of New Orleans.

¹ John Paul II, *Evangelium vitae*, encyclical letter, Vatican website, March 25, 1995, <http://www.vatican.va/edocs/ENG0141/INDEX.HTM>, sec. 34.

² Congregation for Catholic Education, *Male and Female He Created Them: Towards a Path of Dialogue in the Question of Gender Theory in Education*, Vatican website, February 2, 2019, http://www.educatio.va/content/dam/cec/Documenti/19_0997_INGLESE.pdf, sec. 10.

³ *Male and Female He Created Them*, 2.

⁴ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2nd ed. (Vatican City: Vatican Press, 1997), 2393.

DEFINITIONS

- **“Adult”** (major) means any individual eighteen (18) years of age or older, this does not include vulnerable adults as defined in this policy.
- **“Archdiocese of New Orleans”** and **“Archdiocese”** include the Archdiocesan departments and administrative offices, all parishes, missions, schools, institutions, agencies, and other offices under the direct supervision of the Archdiocese and its related entities.
- **“Contact with Minors”** or **“Vulnerable Adults”** includes any church personnel having the possibility of on-going, unsupervised contact with minors or vulnerable adults; any church personnel foreseen to have more than 8 hours contact with minors; any church personnel attending an over-night event.
- **“Church Personnel”** is any priest or deacon (cleric), seminarian, aspirant, deacon candidate, religious in formation, or lay faithful who serve the Archdiocese or its related entities in ministry to minors or vulnerable adults as either clergy, employees or volunteers.
- **“Vulnerable Adult”** is an individual 18 or older who is dependent on the care of others and who is ministered to by church personnel.
- **“Vulnerable Adult Abuse”** is an intentional act or failure to act that causes or creates a risk of harm to a vulnerable adult which happens at the hands of church personnel assigned to their care. Forms of abuse may be physical, sexual, emotional or psychological, financial or neglect.
- **“Executive Directors”** or **“Department Heads”** are the heads of Departments within the Archdiocese.
- **“Financial Abuse”** is when a person, including a caregiver, intentionally takes, spends or uses money or resources of a vulnerable adult, without some kind of valid permission.
- **“Harassment”** is behavior that fails to respect the rights of others, that lowers morale and that, therefore, interferes with ministry effectiveness. Harassment may take different forms, including, but not limited to:
 - Verbal Harassment: Sexual innuendos, suggestive comments, jokes of a sexual nature, sexual propositions, and threats of bodily harm.
 - Non-verbal Harassment: Sexually suggestive objects or pictures, graphic commentaries, suggestive or insulting sounds, leering, whistling, obscene gestures.
 - Physical Harassment: Inappropriate physical contact, including touching, pinching, brushing the body, pushing, patting, feeling, tickling, massaging.
- **“Pastoral Care/Ministry”** occurs when any church personnel offers pastoral guidance and support regarding an individual’s moral, spiritual or personal matters.
- **“Exploitation”** occurs when church personnel take advantage of the pastoral/ministerial relationship for the benefit of the minister.

- **“Sexual exploitation”** is sexual contact between church personnel and the recipient of pastoral/ministerial services, regardless of who initiates the contact.
- **“Mandated reporter(s)”** are church personnel who minister to a minor in a voluntary or professional capacity. A mandated reporter who has cause to believe that a child’s physical or mental health or welfare is endangered is required to report any abuse or neglect of a minor to law enforcement and/or the Department of Children and Family Services immediately (Summary LA Children’s Code 603, Policy Concerning Abuse and neglect of Minors or Vulnerable Adults)
- **“Ministry”** is any activity held under the auspices of the Archdiocese of New Orleans.
- **“Minor”** is any individual under the age of eighteen (18). Students in high school over the age of 18 enrolled in youth programs of the archdiocese, including schools, are covered under the policies of the Archdiocese as a minor.
- **“Person Responsible for the Minor or Vulnerable Adult’s Care”** is any church personnel of the Archdiocese of New Orleans or its related entities that cares for or supervises minors for defined periods of time.
- **“Related entity”** includes parishes, schools, agencies, and institutions with direct accountability to the Archbishop of New Orleans.
- **“Supervisor”** is a pastor of a parish, principal of a school, or the director of an archdiocesan office or related entity or their delegate responsible for the oversight of those individuals who serve in the Archdiocese.
- **“Immoral conduct”** is conduct that is contrary to the moral teachings of the Catholic Church.
- **“Abuse or Neglect of Minors or Vulnerable Adults”** is physical or sexual abuse or neglect as defined in Policy Concerning Abuse and Neglect of Minors or Vulnerable Adults.

STANDARDS OF THE ARCHDIOCESE AS TO PREVENTION OF IMMORAL CONDUCT

Those engaged as church personnel of the Archdiocese of New Orleans must be worthy of public trust and confidence. Church personnel have a responsibility to uphold the standards of the Catholic Church in their day-to-day ministry and personal lives.

It is fundamental to the mission of the Archdiocese that church personnel exhibit the highest ethical standards and personal integrity. Therefore, church personnel are prohibited from engaging in the following conduct:

- Conduct not consistent with the morals and teachings of the Catholic Church.
- Actions that are disruptive to the ministry and public worship.
- Procurement or participation in the procurement of abortion, committing homicide or euthanasia.
- Possession or distribution of pornographic material.

- Adultery, promiscuity or illicit co-habitation.
- Abuse or distribution of alcohol, drugs, gambling.
- Stealing or any other form of theft, including but not limited to misappropriation of Church funds.
- Sexual harassment, exploitation, human trafficking, neglect or abuse.
- Physical assault and fighting.
- Inappropriate use of electronic media, as defined in the [Technology Policy For Pastoral Work with Young People](#) of the Archdiocese of New Orleans.

Church personnel should not harm the reputation of others by:

- Disclosing, without legitimate cause, any information, faults or failings of others to persons who have no cause to know this information.
- Making false allegations against another.

STANDARDS OF THE ARCHDIOCESE AS TO THE PREVENTION OF HARASSMENT

The Archdiocese of New Orleans works to protect the rights of all who serve and are served in the Archdiocese.

Church personnel shall not tolerate harassment by other church personnel.

Harassment which alters a workplace environment must be measured objectively, not subjectively.

Allegations of harassment shall be taken seriously and reported to the immediate supervisor. If, in the event the allegation of harassment is by the immediate supervisor, the report shall be made to the Director of Human Resources.

STANDARDS OF THE ARCHDIOCESE IN PREVENTION OF EXPLOITATION

Church personnel shall set and maintain clear, appropriate boundaries in all ministerial relationships, including but not limited to the following:

- Pastoral care should be conducted in appropriate settings at appropriate times.
- Pastoral care is to be held in places and at times that do not cause confusion about the nature of the relationship for the person ministered/served.
- No pastoral care is conducted in private living quarters.
- Church personnel shall recognize their limitations when providing pastoral care and refer individuals and families to appropriate professionals when necessary.
- Church personnel should not engage in dating, romantic relationships, exploitation, sexual exploitation, and/or sexual intimacies with persons to whom they minister/serve.
- Church personnel are also prohibited from engaging in situations or conduct that can give the appearance of exploitation, sexual exploitation, or sexual intimacies with persons to whom they minister or have ministered to.

STANDARDS OF THE ARCHDIOCESE AS TO CONFIDENTIALITY

In accordance with the norm of canon law (cic. 983), under the Sacramental Seal it is absolutely forbidden for a confessor to betray the confidence of a penitent in any way and for any reason. The Sacramental Seal is applicable forever, even after the penitent has died.

Information of a confidential nature disclosed to church personnel during the course of pastoral care/ministry, advising, or spiritual direction shall be held in the strictest confidence possible, with due regard for the restrictions of confidentiality in civil and/or canon law.

Church personnel shall discuss the nature of confidentiality, including its limitations, with each person who seeks pastoral care.

While church personnel should strive to keep information confidential, depending on the nature of the information they receive, they also may be obligated by Louisiana law to inform the civil authorities of abuse or neglect of a minor to report that either the person receiving pastoral care, or another person is in danger of physical harm. (LA Children's Code 603)

We refer here to the [*Policy Concerning the Abuse and Neglect of Minors or Vulnerable Adults, Archdiocese of New Orleans.*](#)

Any questions should be discussed with the pastor, supervisor, or the Director of Human Resources.

STANDARDS OF THE ARCHDIOCESE AS TO CONFLICT OF INTEREST

In spiritual, ministerial, business, professional, or social relationships, church personnel shall establish clear, appropriate interests. Even the appearance of a conflict of interest can call into question integrity and professional conduct.

Conflict of interest issues must reported to the Pastor, Supervisor, or the Director of Human Resources and the person being ministered to should be protected as conflict of interest issues are being resolved.

PREVENTION OF ABUSE: GUIDELINES FOR WORKING WITH MINORS OR VULNERABLE ADULTS

We refer here to the [*Policy Concerning the Abuse and Neglect of Minors or Vulnerable Adults, Archdiocese of New Orleans.*](#)

STANDARDS OF THE ARCHDIOCESE AS TO ABUSE AND NEGLECT OF MINORS OR VULNERABLE ADULTS

Church personnel shall release minors in their care only to parents, legal guardians, or other persons designated by parent or legal guardian at the close of any archdiocesan sponsored event. When church personnel are uncertain of the propriety of releasing a minor, they should immediately contact their supervisor.

Church personnel should communicate only with a parent, legal guardian or supervisor in addressing any issues regarding a minor or vulnerable adult.

Church personnel should recognize their vulnerability and that of others when working alone with minors.

Programs with minors will be always supervised by at least two unrelated adults.

Programs should not take place in private homes.

In ministering to a minor, the office should have a window through which the adult may be visible, but not the minor, if at all possible. When possible leave the door open.

Abuse and neglect of minors and vulnerable adults is contrary to the teachings of the Church and prohibited. Church personnel have a responsibility to protect minors from all forms of abuse and neglect. In the interest of protecting minors and vulnerable adults, Church personnel are prohibited from:

- Use of alcohol while supervising minors.
- Use of or possession of illegal drugs.
- Use of profanity in the presence of minors or vulnerable adults.
- Speaking to minors or vulnerable adults in a way that could be reasonably construed by any observer as harsh, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating.
- Discussing sexual activities with minors or vulnerable adults.
- Discussion of sexual topics unless it is within an approved Catholic sexual morality class. If youth have further questions not answered or addressed by teachers they should be referred to their parents or legal guardians for clarification.
- Being nude in the presence of minors or vulnerable adults.
- Communicating with a minor through the use of electronic means, such as texting, which is contrary to the Electronic Media policy with minors of the Archdiocese. See [*Policy Regarding Youth Activities*](#).
- Photographing or videoing of minors or vulnerable adults without the written consent in the form of a release from a parent or legal guardian. All images of minors or vulnerable adults can only be taken and posted on parish, school or organization of the Archdiocese social media which is monitored by more than one member of church personnel.
- Sleeping in the same beds, sleeping bags or tents with minors.
- Acquisition, possession, or distribution of any form of pornography includes, but is not limited to inappropriate printed and electronic materials, magazines, cards, videos, films, clothing, electronic media, etc.

STANDARDS OF THE ARCHDIOCESE AS TO OFFSITE AND/OR OVERNIGHT EVENTS

The following standards shall be observed when church personnel are involved in the transportation of minors:

- The Archdiocese's [*Policy Regarding Youth Activities*](#) from the CYO Office shall be followed for any off site or overnight event.

- Church personnel are prohibited from having minors stay at their residence unless they are supervised by at least two unrelated adult church personnel who have a current criminal background check, current Safe Environment training, and were pre-approved by their supervisor.
- All overnight events must be supervised by at least two unrelated adult church personnel who have a current criminal background check, current Safe Environment training and were pre-approved by their supervisor.
- Sleeping, changing and showering facilities or arrangements for adults, except for their own children, must be separate from facilities or arrangements for minors.
- Drivers shall comply with the [*Archdiocese of New Orleans Transportation Policy*](#).
- Church personnel are prohibited from transporting minors without written permission from their parent or legal guardian.
- Minors should be transported directly to their destination.
- Church personnel assigned to transport minors must be at least 21 years old and have a valid driver's license.
- In transporting minors, an adult driver should be accompanied by a second adult.
- The driver will not use a cell phone or any electronic communication device while driving with minors in the car, van, bus.
- Drivers must comply with civil laws regarding transportation.

STANDARDS OF THE ARCHDIOCESE AS TO PHYSICAL CONTACT WITH MINORS OR VULNERABLE ADULTS

Church personnel are prohibited from using physical discipline for behavior management of minors or vulnerable adults. Physical discipline is the use of physical force as correction or retaliation for inappropriate behaviors by minors or vulnerable adults.

Appropriate contact between church personnel and minors or vulnerable adults is important for a person's well-being. It also constitutes a positive part of Church life and ministry. The following forms of affection are regarded as appropriate examples for most archdiocesan sponsored and affiliated programs:

- Pats on the shoulder or upper back.
- Hand-shakes.
- "High-fives," "fist bumps".
- Hugs that are initiated by a child or vulnerable adult.
- Verbal praise.
- Touching hands, shoulders and arms of minors or vulnerable adult.
- Arms around shoulders.
- Holding hands while walking with small children.
- Sitting beside small children or vulnerable adults.
- Kneeling or bending down for hugs with small children.
- Holding hands during prayer.
- Pats on the head of children when culturally appropriate.

Inappropriate contact between church personnel and minors or vulnerable adults shall not be used in events of the Archdiocese of New Orleans. In order to maintain the safest possible environment for minors, inappropriate contact is displayed as, but is not limited to:

- Kisses on the mouth.
- Holding minors over four years old on the lap.
- Touching buttocks, chests or genital areas.
- Inappropriate physical affection.
- Being reclined with a minor.
- Touching torso or legs of a minor or vulnerable adult unless it is a medical emergency or it is included as part of your job function, i.e. washing, changing, etc.
- Wrestling with minors, except for school sanctioned wrestling programs where coaches are demonstrating moves to teach, etc. and it is in the presence of others.
- Tickling.
- Piggyback rides.
- Any type of massage given by minor to adult.
- Any type of massage given by adult to minor, except for qualified athletic training or when it is included as part of your job function.
- Any form of unwanted affection.
- Compliments that relate to physique or body development.
- Inappropriate or lengthy embraces.
- Discussion of sexual topics unless it is within an approved Catholic sexual morality class.
- Use of secrecy, blame, or threats to maintain control.
- Special attention, outings, gifts, personal texts, electronic communication or phone calls.

STANDARDS OF THE ARCHDIOCESE AS TO SCREENING OF CHURCH PERONNEL WHO WORK WITH MINORS OR VULNERABLE ADULTS

Church personnel having contact with minors or vulnerable adults must complete the following:

- Create an account on Safe Environment database which requires an agreement to live according to the Safe Environment [policies and procedures of the Archdiocese of New Orleans](#).
- A criminal records check will be conducted prior to employment or volunteer services and renewed every three years.
- Safe Environment training will be required prior to employment or volunteer services and renewed every three years.
- An annual review of policies on the current database of the Archdiocese will be required.
- Church personnel having contact with minors or vulnerable adults are to report immediately to the Pastor or Supervisor, any arrests which occur subsequent to the criminal background check.

STANDARDS OF THE ARCHDIOCESE AS TO SUPERVISION OF PROGRAMS THAT INVOLVE MINORS

Parents have a right to observe programs and activities, excluding regular classroom curriculum, in which their children are involved. However, parents who desire to participate in their child's programs in the Church shall fulfill the requirements of the church personnel application process as stated in above section.

Church sponsored activities for minors shall be supervised by at least two unrelated adults.

Church personnel under the age of 18 shall work under the direction of an adult supervisor.

Supervisors shall examine programs to ensure there is adequate supervision of minors in their care at all times.

All new programs for minors must be approved by the Pastor, Principal, or a Director of archdiocesan programs.

Summer Camp requirements of the Archdiocese of New Orleans will be followed for ratio of adults to minors.

All Safe Environment requirements of the Archdiocese shall be followed.