

# CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF SPOKANE

## CODE OF CONDUCT

(for training Age 18 and over)

This **CODE OF CONDUCT** applies to all of the following Church personnel in parishes, schools and institutions of the Catholic Bishop of Spokane:

- Bishops
- Clergy
- Seminarians
- Employees
- Volunteers
- Women Religious
- Independent contractors

(Hereafter referred to as “Church Personnel” or a “Church Person”)

This **CODE OF CONDUCT** is intended to protect all:

- Minors
- Legally Vulnerable Adults
- Young Adults age 18-21
- Adults

who participate in ministries and activities with Church Personnel.

### **RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN CHURCH PERSONNEL AND THOSE THEY SERVE**

Church Personnel act in the Church’s name and have special influence in the lives of the people to whom they minister and serve. Because of the respect and even reverence with which many people regard Church Personnel, an imbalance of power exists that makes any sexual activity between Church Personnel and those they serve always inappropriate. Church Personnel are at all times responsible to maintain appropriate emotional and sexual boundaries since the other person in the relationship can never give meaningful consent.

Dual relationships are those in which personal friendship is intermingled with the ministerial relationship. Boundary violations, including grooming behavior, can occur in a dual relationship when a Church Person seeks to satisfy her/his own needs rather than the other person’s needs.

As in other helping professions such as physicians and therapists, the special nature of the relationship between Church Personnel and the people they serve requires a higher ethical standard of behavior. Behavior is judged not by the Church Person’s intentions, but by its impact upon the other person. The Diocese expects all Church Personnel to comply with Catholic moral standards and professional ethics. Not only must the actual behavior be appropriate, but Church Personnel are expected to act in ways that do not give the appearance of impropriety.

### **SUMMARY OF RELATIONSHIP STANDARDS**

Critical standards for Church Personnel to maintain appropriate behavior in all relationships with those they serve are summarized here:

1. Church Personnel assume the full burden for setting and maintaining clear, appropriate physical and emotional boundaries in all ministerial relationships.
2. In situations where an inappropriate emotional or physical attraction develops between a Church Person and any adult or young adult, the Church Person is responsible to maintain clear professional boundaries.
3. The relationship between caregivers and those who seek their help is not a two-way relationship in which the caregiver also gains from the interaction. The responsibility to maintain an appropriate ministerial/professional relationship lies entirely with Church Personnel, not the other person.

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4. The appearance or reality of concealing or asking individuals to conceal the fact and nature of a relationship violates these boundaries.
5. A Church Person must be accompanied by at least one other adult when hosting any non-ministerial activity for minors with whom she/he has become acquainted through ministry.
6. Church employees and volunteers acting in their parental role must apply these guidelines in situations involving minors other than their own.

### REPORTING VIOLATIONS

**1. Reporting Abuse of a Minor or Legally Vulnerable Adult (including child pornography):**

Any person who suspects sexual abuse of a minor or legally vulnerable adult by any Church Person must report this information first to local law enforcement and Child or Adult Protective Services (CPS or APS), then to the Victim Assistance Coordinator or Bishop and Vicars.

**2. Reporting Code of Conduct violations:**

Any person who suspects or observes grooming behavior or boundary violations that are not sexual abuse but violate this Code of Conduct must report this information first to the Church Person's supervisor, then to the Victim Assistance Coordinator.

Aiding, abetting, ignoring and/ or not reporting abusive behavior or Code of Conduct violations is the same as facilitating this behavior.

See diocesan policy 7.01.02 Administrative Policies/Procedures Regarding Abuse, and/or Violations of the Code of Conduct

### SPECIFIC STANDARDS FOR CONDUCT WITH MINORS, YOUNG ADULTS, AND LEGALLY VULNERABLE ADULTS

#### TRANSPORTATION AND OUTINGS

When taking minors on field trips, conferences, or tours, follow these rules:

- One staff member or adult volunteer may never transport only one minor unless the child is his/her own child.
- One person may transport a group of minors. However, upon arrival, two staff members or adult volunteers must accompany minor children during all activities, events, and/or outings outside of parish, school or agency grounds.
- When sleeping in a room, hotel room, or tent with minors, an adult must always be accompanied by another adult.
- Each adult and each minor shall sleep in his/her own bed or sleeping bag.
- When using one's own home for youth work, more than one child and at least two adults must always be present. This policy assumes that Church Personnel participating in transportation or outings have fulfilled the Sexual Abuse Education Requirements in 7.01.02 Administrative Policy/Procedure Regarding Abuse and/or Violations of the Code of Conduct.
- Clergy, except for immediate family, must not provide overnight accommodation for individual minors, including but not limited to, accommodations in any church-owned facility, private residence, hotel room or any place where no other adult supervision is present
- Young adults under 21 may never be taken on personal trips or vacations without other adults or appropriate chaperones.
- Adults must not appear in front of minors or young people when not appropriately clothed, and may not change clothes, bathe, or shower in view of a minor or young person.

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See Part II Sexual Abuse Education Requirements in 7.01.02 Administrative Policy/Procedure Regarding Abuse and/or Violations of the Code of Conduct.

### DRUGS AND ALCOHOL

The following are unacceptable at youth events and during school hours:

- Using, possessing or distributing illegal drugs or marijuana
- Smoking
- Alcoholic beverages
- Smokeless tobacco
- E-Cigarettes

### ENVIRONMENT

Church Personnel cannot always avoid situations where they are alone with a minor or legally vulnerable adult. If a one-on-one meeting is necessary, the following actions are recommended:

- Avoid meeting in isolated environments
- Meet in as public a place as possible
- Schedule meetings at times when others are around
- Limit session time
- Leave door ajar
- Choose a room with a window when available
- Avoid all physical contact with the minor or vulnerable adult
- Make appropriate referrals

### TOUCHING

Touching must be age-appropriate and based on the need of the minor person or legally vulnerable adult and not on the need of the Church Person. Adults must avoid physical contact when alone with a minor or legally vulnerable adult. Touches and embraces experienced or perceived as uncomfortable to an individual -- minor or adult -- are forbidden. Church Personnel should avoid any physical touching that may be reasonably perceived as sexual in nature. Examples of touching behaviors that can be construed as sexual in nature include but are not limited to:

- Inappropriate or lengthy embraces
- Kissing
- Touching bottoms, chests, legs or genital areas
- Spanking or slapping
- Showing affection while in an isolated location
- Wrestling or tickling
- Piggy-back rides
- Massages

### PORNOGRAPHY

Church Personnel are forbidden from acquiring, possessing or distributing any pornographic images while at work or in the course of ministry. Acquiring, possessing or distributing pornographic images of minors under the age of 18 by whatever means or any form of technology is considered child sexual abuse.

Church Personnel are prohibited from using workplace computers or other means of communications inappropriately as outlined in the Diocesan policy on technology use.

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See Section C. Administrative Policies/Procedures Regarding Allegations and/or Violations of the Code of Conduct

**CRIMINAL HISTORY**

A Church Person may not serve with minors, young adults 18-21, or legally vulnerable adults if he or she: 1) has ever been convicted of any of the criminal offenses listed below, or 2) has ever received deferred adjudication for any of these criminal offenses, or 3) has a pending criminal charge for any offense until a determination of not guilty is made. These felonies are:

- offenses against a person or family, including but not limited to: murder, assault, sexual assault, abandoning or endangering a child, bigamy or incest
- offenses against public order or indecency, including but not limited to, promoting prostitution possessing or promoting child pornography
- violations within the last five years of any law intended to prevent the possession or distribution of any substance considered a controlled substance in the Washington State Uniform Controlled Substances Act.

**SPECIFIC STANDARDS FOR CONDUCT WITH ALL INDIVIDUALS SERVED BY CHURCH PERSONNEL**

Church Personnel should not engage in any inappropriate speech or actions with those whom they serve, including but not limited to:

**1. SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

Sexual harassment is *unwelcome* sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and/or other verbal or physical conduct based on gender that either 1) is made a term or condition of an individual's employment, education, living environment, or participation in a church or school community, OR 2) creates an intimidating or hostile environment. Reports of sexual harassment will be investigated and appropriate action taken. A sexual harassment finding could lead to discharge from the work or volunteer position and result in the victim filing a civil claim against the offender.

**2. VERBAL AND NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION**

- Comments about physique or body development
- Humiliating, ridiculing, bullying, or degrading another person
- Discussions, vocabulary, recordings, films, games, computer software, internet sites or any other form of personal interaction or entertainment that could be reasonably construed as inappropriate
- Sexually explicit or pornographic material
- Singling out persons, especially children or legally vulnerable adults, for special personal attention or gifts

**I have read this Code of Conduct and sign with full knowledge of its terms and conditions:**

FULL NAME
SIGNATURE
PARISH/SCHOOL/MINISTRY
DATE