

Code of Conduct for Church Personnel for the Church of the Holy Paraclete, Especially in Regard to Interaction with Minors and Vulnerable Individuals

Preamble

The Church of the Holy Paraclete holds every person associated with the parish in any official capacity accountable for maintaining the integrity of all ministerial and professional relationships. The purpose of this Code of Conduct (“Code”) is to set forth the basic principles and guidelines. A comprehensive list of specific acts constituting a violation of this Code would be impossible. In addition to strict compliance with legal requirements, Church Personnel in the Church of the Holy Paraclete are expected to be guided by the basic principles of the Gospel in the conduct of parish’s affairs and to comply with all parish policies including never engaging in any act which constitutes Sexual Abuse of a minor (“Sexual Abuse”) as defined in the parish’s policy regarding Sexual Abuse of Minors, as amended from time to time (“Sexual Abuse Policy”) and the guidelines contained in this Code. No Church Personnel may engage in any activity within or outside of the conduct of their ministry which might affect the Archdiocese or the members of the Catholic community which would violate any applicable law or the standards set out in this Code or which constitutes Sexual Abuse. Common sense must be followed. However, the following Code is provided for the purpose of explicitly drawing attention to the special care, which must be taken in ministering to minors or other vulnerable individuals. Parish clergy, Religious, seminarians, personnel and volunteers must avoid contact with minors or vulnerable individuals that might be misconstrued by reasonable people or lead to misunderstandings. Given the consequences of sexual misconduct, clergy, Religious, seminarians, employees and volunteers should exercise caution and common sense to avoid situations which potentially might be misconstrued and to preclude any occasion that could give scandal or cause injury, whether that injury is intended or not by the individual.

Application of Code

The parish expects you to conduct yourself according to this Code and to support others in doing so.

If you do not comply with this Code or if you permit a member of Church Personnel under your supervision to fail to comply with this Code, you are not meeting your responsibilities and you will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment or ministry if you are an employee or lay volunteer, and action under canon law if you are a member of the clergy or Religious. Supervisors are responsible for communicating the expectations contained in this Code, and the Sexual Abuse Policy to all Church Personnel under their leadership. This Code and the “Procedures for Processing Allegations” are established as mechanisms for

reporting and addressing non compliance and for routinely assessing our operations and activities to ensure compliance with this Code and the Sexual Abuse Policy, other parish policies and the law. If you know about or suspect non-compliance with this Code or Sexual Abuse you are expected to report the non-compliance in accordance with the provisions of the “Procedures for Processing Allegations” adopted pursuant to the Sexual Abuse Policy. Any retaliation or threatened retaliation against you for reporting, in good faith, such actual or suspected non-compliance will be considered a serious violation of this Code, resulting in appropriate disciplinary action for anyone who retaliates against you, up to and including termination of employment or ministry and/or action under canon law. If you have questions about any of the provisions or the application of this Code or the Sexual Abuse Policy, you should contact the Pastor at 774-888-8576. The following specific guidelines are to assist you with meeting the standards of conduct set out in this Code and to avoid allegations of Sexual Abuse. Although they are not exhaustive, they are intended to provide guidance and direction with respect to issues that may arise in the course of your day-to-day work.

Implementation and Accountability

1. Compliance with Policies

In the Church of the Holy Paraclete, compliance with parish policies is part of everyone’s job, although ultimate responsibility for adherence to this Code rests with the individual. In order to repair scandal, restore justice and reform offenders, appropriate action will be taken when any Church Personnel disregards or fails to comply with the expectations and behaviors defined in this Code. As a condition of your employment and/or ministry in the Church of the Holy Paraclete, you must be familiar and comply with this Code, the Sexual Abuse Policy and all other Archdiocesan policies that apply to you. Violations of this Code or any other parish policy are grounds for disciplinary action and possible legal prosecution. This Code provides you with guidance about the parish’s expectations in regard to your conduct and basic legal responsibilities as Church Personnel of the parish. There are some standards specific to one’s ministry, which are more precise than the Code of Conduct.

2. Compliance with the Law

Compliance with laws and regulations that apply to the parish is an absolute minimum requirement to maintaining our Catholic values and standard of conduct. While we are called to a higher standard, this minimum requirement means that each of us is responsible for understanding the laws that apply. Violating the law can seriously damage innocent youth, will subject the parish to liability and subject you to personal civil or criminal liability. The parish’s leadership will support you in meeting your responsibility to comply with the law and will provide you with the resources necessary for compliance. Questions concerning any legal responsibility should be referred to the Pastor at 774-888-8576.

3. "Am I My Brother's Keeper?" Pledge To Report Abuse of Minors Who Is A Mandatory Reporter?

- Mandatory reporters are legally required to report allegations and suspicions of sexual abuse. Failure to report can result in legal action. Rhode Island has very minimum standards for mandatory reports. Mandatory reporters include:
- Any physician or duly certified registered nurse practitioner is required to report.¹
- Any person who has reasonable cause to know or suspect that a child has been abused or neglected must report.²

Mandatory Reporters

If you are a mandatory reporter and have reasonable cause to believe that sexual abuse has occurred, you must complete all of the following steps:

REMEMBER: Your Role is to Report. There is to be no investigation by you or anyone else at the parish, school, or diocesan level.

1. If the alleged/suspected victim is a minor, call the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) in the county where the abuse minor lives or in the absence of such agency, to an appropriate police authority or district attorney.
 - a) A list of DFCS contact numbers can be found at www.dcyf.ri.gov.
 - b) Be prepared to give them the child's name, address, age, the nature of the suspected abuse, the name of the suspected perpetrator, and his/her relationship to the child.
 - c) Follow-up with a letter to DCYF.
2. Call the Office of the District Attorney in the county where the abuse occurred.
 - a) A list of DA office contact numbers can be found at www.riag.ri.gov
 - b) Be prepared to give them the suspected victim's name, address, age, the nature of the suspected abuse, the name of the suspected perpetrator, and his/her relationship to the suspected victim.
 - c) Follow-up with a letter to the District Attorney's Office.
3. If the alleged abuse involves church personnel (priests, deacons, seminarians, religious, teachers, employees or volunteers) do all of the following after contacting DFCS and the District Attorney's Office:
 - a) Call the police (24 hours a day) to file a report.
 - b) Call the pastor at 774-888-8576 so that the parish can be an active participant in cooperating with the appropriate state and local authorities. The report to the parish is NOT in lieu of the report to the appropriate state and local authorities.

¹ RI Gen. Laws § 40-11-6

² RI Gen. Laws § 40-11-3(a)

Reporting of Non-Compliance

If you know about or suspect misconduct, illegal activities, fraud, misuse of the parish's assets or violations of this Code you are to report these concerns to the appropriate authorities. There will be no retribution against you for making such a report in good faith. In fact, the parish strictly prohibits retaliation or threatened retaliation against you for reporting, in good faith, actual or suspected wrongdoing.

Principles

Church Personnel of the Church of the Holy Paraclete shall:

- Actively support the teachings of the Catholic Church and work to build up the body of Christ in thought, word, deed and action.
- Respect the rights, dignity and worth of each person from conception to natural death, and conduct relationships with others in a manner that is consistent with Catholic teaching. This is an even higher obligation for supervisors.
- Meet civil and canon law obligations.
- To the best of their ability, protect children, youth and vulnerable adults from all forms of abuse or neglect.
- 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.
- Maintain a high level of competence in their particular ministry, and 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.
- Promptly report incidents of ethical misconduct or Sexual Abuse by other Church Personnel to the proper Church authority.
- Review and know the contents of the child abuse regulations and reporting requirements for the State of Georgia and follow those requirements as applicable.
- Review and know the contents of the child abuse regulations and reporting requirements for the Archdiocese of Atlanta and follow those requirements as applicable.
- Read, sign, understand and comply with this "Code of Conduct" and the "Policies for the Protection of Children and Youth from Abuse" before engaging in any form of ministerial work.

Behavioral Guidelines for Church Personnel Working with Minors

Pastoral Standards for Volunteers, Lay Employees, Religious and Clergy include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Church Personnel are expected to maintain a high ethical and professional standard in their interaction with minors.
2. Church Personnel, unless they are the parent(s) and/or legal guardians of the child, are prohibited from using physical discipline in any way for the behavior management of minors, except insofar as restraint may be necessary to prevent them from inflicting harm on themselves or others, in which case a detailed written record of the incident is to be made as soon as possible and maintained on file.
3. Church Personnel may never show, provide or make available in any way to minors sexually explicit or morally inappropriate materials. In essence, any discussion, materials, and personal interaction with minors are prohibited if they could not occur or be used in the presence of the minor's parents or guardians. This does not preclude parish-approved curricula in schools or religious education programs.
4. Church Personnel are prohibited from the using, possessing or being under the influence of any mind or mood altering substances, including alcohol, 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 permission unless you are the parent and/or legal guardian of the minor.
5. 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. Pastors, principals or the administrator of the appropriate Archdiocesan agency and parent(s) or legal guardians must be notified in writing of any scheduled meeting involving a minor to assist in maintaining a safe environment for our children. Additionally, informal meetings should be the exception not the rule. However, if a minor approaches you and seeks immediate, brief assistance it should be documented and communicated to the pastor, principal, or the administrator of the appropriate Archdiocesan agency and parent or legal guardian if a meeting takes place that has not been scheduled or cleared by a parent or legal guardian in advance.
6. Church Personnel are prohibited from sleeping in the same bed, van, hotel room, sleeping bag or tent with a minor unless the adult is a parent, guardian or sibling. Sharing a bedroom, other than a large dormitory style room, should always be avoided. 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, changing or showering facility. Furthermore, Church Personnel may not take photographs of minors who are unclothed or dressing, for example, in a locker room or bathing facility, nor shall they permit such photographs to be taken by others.

7. Church Personnel may not give minors keys to any parish church or school facility.
8. Church Personnel shall not act as a chaperone for activities that conflict with curfew laws pertaining to minors.
9. Church Personnel observing or becoming aware of 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 parish policies and civil law.
10. Church Personnel shall never date or give the appearance of dating a minor, engage in sexualized contact with a minor, give gifts that have more than an intrinsic value, or grant special privileges or opportunities to a specific minor.
11. Church Personnel shall not tutor, counsel, meet with individually or allow overnight stays in their personal residence to individuals to whom they minister unless they are the parent(s) and/or legal guardians. If you teach at the school or parish and have a child who is enrolled at the parish or school ask another responsible adult, preferably one who is not a relative, to assist you with supervision during a social event held at your home.
12. Church Personnel shall not engage in any form of behavior including: (a) verbal harassment, such as derogatory comments, jokes, or slurs; (b) visual harassment, such as derogatory or sexually explicit posters, cards, calendars, cartoons, graffiti, drawings, messages, notes or gestures; (c) sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.
13. Church Personnel shall not engage in any behavior that violates a prior written warning from the Archbishop.

Guidelines for the Supervision of Minors

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

1. Unless Church Personnel have a parent's or legal guardian's knowledge and consent in the form of a written permission slip, they are never to drive minors, unless there is a medical emergency or the child is theirs.
2. Programs for minors shall not be conducted by only one adult without additional adult presence.
3. Church Personnel shall report uncontrollable or unusual behavior of minors to parents as soon as possible.
4. Facilities shall be monitored during church services and all school and other activities.

5. Parents shall be encouraged to be part of all services and programs in which their children are involved.

6. Parental permission shall be obtained, including a signed medical treatment authorization form, before taking minors on trips. All due precautions for the safety and well-being of the children must be taken on such trips.

7. Written parental approval must be obtained before permitting any minor to participate in athletic or other activities that involve potential risk.