

Archdiocese of Kingston

Code of Pastoral Conduct for Priests, Deacons, Seminarians, Employees, and Volunteers Engaged in Ministries and Services in the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Kingston

September 30, 2016

CODE OF PASTORAL CONDUCT
FOR PRIESTS, DEACONS, SEMINARIANS, EMPLOYEES, and VOLUNTEERS
ENGAGED IN MINISTRIES AND SERVICES
IN THE ROMAN CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE OF KINGSTON

1. Preamble

Priests, deacons, seminarians, employees, and volunteers in our parishes must uphold Christian values and conduct as they minister to, or work with, the People of God. Imitating Christ, the servant-leader, all who serve in these ministries will employ practices that meet the needs of God's people and promote the highest respect for the dignity of individuals, especially the most vulnerable members of our community.

All who minister within our Church family must be aware that their public and private conduct can inspire others, and that their misconduct can lead to scandal which could seriously undermine the faith of the people they serve. With the help of the Holy Spirit, they must be constantly aware of the responsibilities that accompany their role in the Church.

This document will provide clear directives to protect our clergy, staff, and volunteers, and those individuals with whom they interact.

2. General Directives

A. Living Arrangements

- 1) Residence in rectories¹ and buildings operated by the Archdiocese of Kingston is limited to pastors, parish administrators, priest associates, and seminarians.²
- 2) With the Archbishop's written permission, close family members may live with the pastor³ / administrator. The same arrangement applies to housekeepers who have lived in the rectory for some time.
- 3) Guests are welcome to stay in the rectory for only a brief period of time. The Archbishop is to be notified if residency is longer than two weeks.

¹ The term "rectory" includes residences operated or supported by the Church to accommodate a priest.

² A student in a theological seminary.

³ The term "pastor" includes parochial administrator

B. Work Environment and Boundaries

- 1) Clergy, staff, and volunteers shall provide a professional work environment that is free from physical, sexual, psychological, written, or verbal intimidation or harassment.
- 2) Clergy, staff, and volunteers assume the full burden of responsibility for establishing and maintaining clear, appropriate boundaries in all pastoral relationships, including counselling and counselling-related ministry.
- 3) One-on-one private meetings must be held in an area with glass openings offering unobstructed vision or in a room with the door open.
- 4) Illegal possession and/or illegal use of drugs are prohibited at all times.
- 5) Use of aggressive, profane, humiliating, threatening, intimidating, sexist, or racist language and conduct is always unacceptable.

C. Proximity

- 1) Physical contact of any kind can be misconstrued. It is to occur only when it is clearly nonsexual and otherwise appropriate, and never in private. Physical discipline such as spanking, shaking, or slapping is prohibited.
- 2) Discussions of a sexual nature must only occur in response to a specific question, and only if necessary. Any such discussion must use appropriate and professional language.
- 3) Should one discover an inappropriate attraction or attention being shown to him or her in a pastoral relationship, one must make every effort to defuse the situation. One must cease the relationship if the attraction or attention continues.

D. Counselling and Spiritual Direction

- 1) In counselling and spiritual direction, one shall not step beyond one's competence. One must refer individuals to other professionals when necessary or appropriate. It is never appropriate that a pastoral counselling relationship be considered a clinical relationship, or psychotherapy.
- 2) No interview, session or other conversation of a personal nature should ever be recorded (either digitally or by audiotape or videotape).
- 3) In order to avoid confusion about the nature of the relationship, pastoral sessions (e.g., interviews, formal or informal conversations, counselling) must be conducted in appropriate settings at appropriate times that ensure accountability. One must also be concerned about the number and frequency of such sessions to avoid possible inappropriate attachments.

E. Financial Directives

- 1) Ministry is part of pastoral service, and one must not ask for, nor expect, financial compensation other than that outlined in other diocesan policies and protocols.

- 2) It is forbidden for anyone to solicit, in any way, directly or indirectly, by word or action, any personal gift, bequest, or endowment from a person with whom he or she has, or has had, a pastoral relationship.
- 3) It is forbidden for anyone to request or obtain a personal loan, or other financial benefit or consideration, from a person with whom he or she has, or has had, a pastoral relationship.
- 4) In the case of clergy, one must not act as a financial advisor, take on the responsibility for power of attorney, draw a will, or serve as the executor or as a witness for a will for a vulnerable person without the express permission of the Chancery Office.
- 5) Clergy, staff, and volunteers who are involved in the financial administration of a parish must review and know the contents of the Archdiocesan Protocol for Parish Financial Administration, which can be found in the Archdiocesan Financial Guidelines.

3. Additional Directives when dealing with Children, Youth, and Other Vulnerable Persons

Clergy, staff, and volunteers are encouraged to develop transparent and trustworthy relationships with children, youth, and other vulnerable persons, while maintaining clear professional boundaries.

Particular care and attention must be taken in dealing with vulnerable persons.

A vulnerable person is anyone of any age or gender who might easily be exploited by another. Children, youth, and some adults fall into this category of individuals. Some may be physically or mentally challenged or emotionally susceptible. Others may be socially isolated, in need socially or materially, or unable to communicate adequately, or even unable to understand or speak the languages of our area. Others may live in fear, real or imagined, or in awe of authority figures. Others, such as immigrants and refugees, may be disadvantaged in a variety of ways.

A. Ministerial Environment and Boundaries

- 1) Meetings, wedding rehearsals, liturgical training, and other such activities must take place in groups, in a public setting, such as the church or parish hall, and be supervised by at least two adults who are not related.
- 2) Interaction with children, youth, and other vulnerable persons must never take place in the residential part of the church property, or in any private residence owned by members of the clergy.
- 3) One must never provide overnight accommodation for children, youth, or other vulnerable persons where there is not another, unrelated adult present and actively engaged in supervision. Under no circumstances shall such accommodation be provided in the residential part of church property.
- 4) Where an adult chaperone occupies a sleeping facility with a group of children, youth, or vulnerable persons, the chaperone must always sleep in a separate bed.

- 5) Family members of priests who are still minors can be guests in a church residence on the condition that they are accompanied by one of their parents.
- 6) While in the presence of children, youth, or other vulnerable persons, one shall refrain from the use of alcohol, drugs and tobacco products.
- 7) One must never purchase or provide access to alcohol, drugs, tobacco products, inappropriate videos, media, or reading material for children, youth, or other vulnerable persons.
- 8) Transportation of minors or other vulnerable persons may take place only with the permission of a parent or guardian and in the presence of another adult. Everyone should be aware of the exclusion clauses in his or her personal insurance policy which may affect coverage in such cases. Every consideration should be given to the use of public transportation or rented vehicles, especially when dealing with groups.
- 9) The Sacrament of Reconciliation with minors or other vulnerable persons should be celebrated in an open space which allows both priest and penitent to be in full view of others.

B. Proximity

- 1) One must never be alone with children, youth, or other vulnerable persons. A parent or other adult must always be present or in close vicinity. Use a team approach to managing activities.
- 2) One must not accept gifts from individual children, youth, or other vulnerable persons. Similarly, one must not buy gifts for individual children, youth, or other vulnerable persons.
- 3) One shall not take overnight trips alone with children, youth, or other vulnerable persons. An appropriate number of adult chaperones are to accompany participants in such activities organized through the parish or diocese.
- 4) Topics of a sexual nature that could not be comfortably discussed with parents or other adults must not be discussed with children.

C. Implementation

- 1) Responsibility for compliance with this Code rests with the individual engaged in pastoral ministry or service.
- 2) Clergy, staff, and volunteers must hold one another accountable for maintaining the highest ethical and professional standards.
- 3) Clergy, staff, and volunteers must review and familiarize themselves with the contents of the Protocol for Creating a Safe Faith Community and Responding to Cases of Alleged Sexual Misconduct, and act accordingly. The Protocol can be found on the Archdiocesan website, www.romancatholic.kingston.on.ca.
- 4) Allegations of sexual misconduct must be taken seriously and reported immediately to the Pastor, or to the Archbishop or his Delegate.

- 5) When uncertainty exists about whether or not a situation violates this Code of Pastoral Conduct, the matter is to be referred to the Pastor, or to the Archbishop or his Delegate.
- 6) When it appears that a member of the clergy, a staff member, or a volunteer has violated this Code of Pastoral Conduct, the issue is to be reported immediately to the Pastor, or to the Archbishop or his Delegate.
- 7) Any request for derogation from the provisions of this Code must be submitted in writing to the Archbishop or his Delegate.

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