

Prevention and Education

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Code of Conduct for Church Personnel

Prevention/Education

Education alone cannot shape mature attitudes and behavior. It is, however, a powerful tool in raising awareness and in educating staff and volunteers about child abuse and about their legal and moral responsibilities to report abuse.

The Archdiocese is instituting a “safe environment” program to insure that children and youth who worship, study, or participate in Church programs can do so safely. The following elements will be included in this safe environment program:

- The Archdiocese has established a code of conduct for all adults who work with youth on a regular basis. This code defines and establishes acceptable behavior that is legal, professional, and responsible. (See below for this code of conduct.) Signatures on a “Church Personnel Acknowledgement Card” reflect employees’ and volunteers’ agreement to abide by these guidelines.
- The Archdiocese will conduct regular training for parents, clergy, educators, volunteers, and other Church personnel regularly involved with minors. This training will address child abuse, including sexual abuse, and will focus on what child abuse is, how to prevent child abuse, how to identify instances of child abuse, and how to report child abuse. (For information, contact safe@archlou.org or go to www.archlou.org/safe.)
- In addition to routine screening of seminarians and the application process for lay employees, criminal background checks will be conducted on all church personnel who have regular contact with children. References and the voluntary reporting of any accusation or convictions of child abuse also will be required. Depending on the position, other background investigations may be conducted.

Background and Reference Checks

Every five years, all Church personnel (clergy, staff, and volunteers) who work with vulnerable persons are required to undergo background checks, including but not limited to, a criminal records check from the state of Kentucky or the state in which they live presently.

Church personnel from other states must undergo a national criminal records check. The employment or volunteer service of persons whose criminal check reveals records of sex crimes against vulnerable persons will be terminated immediately.

Transfer Policies

No priest or deacon who has committed an act of sexual abuse of a minor may be transferred for ministerial assignment or residence to another diocese/eparchy or religious province. Before a priest or deacon will be accepted for assignment or residence in this Archdiocese, the Archbishop or his delegate will obtain a written statement from the Bishop of the diocese and/or the religious superior regarding the existence of any past act of sexual abuse of a minor or sexual misconduct by the priest or deacon in question. In a similar fashion, the Archbishop or his delegate will provide a written statement to any bishop or religious superior who is receiving a priest or deacon from our Archdiocese.

Distribution of Policy

A copy of this policy will be distributed to every employee of the Archdiocese and to all volunteers who work with children or vulnerable adults. As a condition of employment or volunteer service, all church personnel must sign the card in the back of the book indicating that they have read and understood the policies and that they agree to abide by the code of conduct (see code of conduct below). This card shall be maintained in the personnel files of employees and in a general file for volunteers. A copy of this acknowledgement card is included in the Sexual Abuse Guidelines document as Appendix E.

This policy must be reflected in all diocesan personnel policies, and applicable sections should be included in all parish and school handbooks.

This policy and all updates will be published on the archdiocesan web page. Periodic notifications about the policy and its availability will be included in the archdiocesan newspaper, *The Record*.

Code of Conduct for Church Personnel

Because of the many programs and services parishes, schools, and other Church organizations sponsor, the Catholic Church is a major youth-serving organization in our community. As such, we must model effective safeguards and proactive initiatives in our safe environment programming. The following “Code of Conduct” is meant to assist employees and volunteers who work with young people to employ good sense and best practices in their ministries.

These policies relate to ministry- or employment-related circumstances and should be understood in that context. Obvious exceptions exist for employees and volunteers with families.

For more information about social media recommendations, see the *Social Media Guidelines* of the Archdiocese [here](#).

As someone who ministers to young people I will:

- Maintain a professional role and be aware of the trust and power I possess as a minister to young people.
- Avoid physical contact when alone with a minor. Physical contact with young people can be misconstrued, especially in private settings.
- Never touch a young person in a sexual way or other inappropriate manner.
- Report any suspected child abuse (sexual, physical, neglect) to the authorities.
- Never view, possess, or distribute child pornography.
- Avoid being alone with a minor in a residence, rectory, sleeping facility, locker room, rest room, dressing facility, or other closed rooms.
- Never take an overnight trip alone with a minor.
- Avoid driving alone in a vehicle with a young person.
- Never share a bed with a minor.
- Avoid providing overnight accommodations for minors in rectories or private homes.
- Avoid meeting privately with minors in areas where there is no window or where the door cannot remain open. If one-on-one pastoral care of a minor is necessary (e.g. Sacrament of Reconciliation), avoid meeting in isolated environments.
- Never introduce sexually explicit or pornographic topics, vocabulary, music, recordings, films, games, web sites, computer software, or entertainment.
- Never provide alcohol, drugs, or tobacco to a minor.
- Never use alcohol when engaged in ministering to minor.
- Never use, possess, or be under the influence of illegal drugs.
- Refrain from giving inappropriate or expensive gifts to young people.
- Ensure that all activities (extracurricular, catechetical, youth ministry, scouting, athletics, etc.) for which I am responsible have been approved in advance by the appropriate administrator.
- Have an adequate number of adults present at events. A minimum of two adults must always be present during activities for minors.
- Release young people only to parents or guardians, unless the parent or guardian has provided permission allowing release to another adult.
- Obtain written parental permission, including a signed medical release form, before taking minors away from the parish, school, or agency for events, field trips, etc. Permission slips should include the type, location, dates, and times of the activity and emergency contact numbers.
- Exercise caution in communicating with young people through e-mail, through social media, or through the Internet. Only share work/ministry related e-mail addresses with minors. For further information see the [Social Media Guidelines](#) of the Archdiocese.

- Never participate in chat rooms or video chats with minors unless they have been created for a particular ministry or employment-related circumstance. See the social media guidelines for the Archdiocese of Louisville for more detailed information about the use of social media.
- Ensure that all social media utilized in ministry with minors be approved and monitored by the appropriate administrator (pastor, principal, director). Ensure that parents are informed about all social media communication utilized by the group/ministry in question.
- Never engage in the physical discipline of minors or in discipline that frightens or degrades them. Discipline should be handled in coordination with a supervisor and parents.