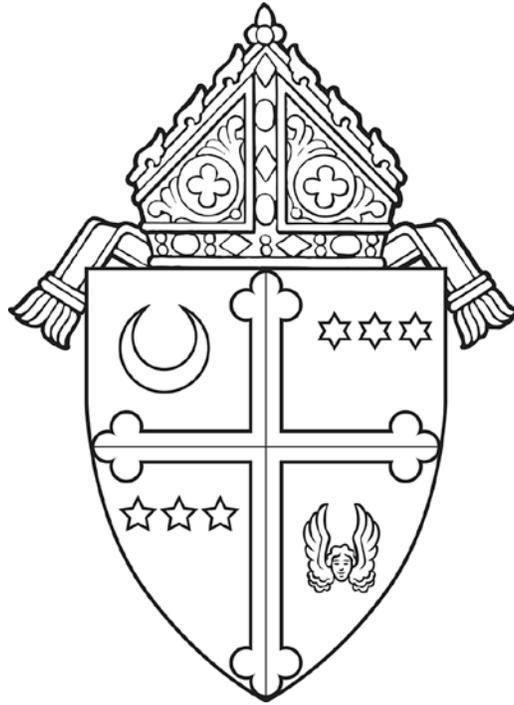


Pastoral  
Code of Conduct

ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON



Office of the Moderator of the Curia  
P.O. Box 29260  
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## ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON

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301-853-4500

Vicar General  
and Moderator of the Curia

July 1, 2016

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As the Church carries out her evangelistic mission of spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ and manifesting the kingdom of God, it is vitally important that those who represent the public face of the Church recognize how their conduct should reflect this mission. Those who serve the People of God in various ministries express the Church's Catholic identity and support its mission of proclaiming the faith, celebrating the sacraments and reaching out with charity toward all in need. They lead those they serve to Jesus and assist them in experiencing the joy of the Gospel.

Bearing this in mind, I present to you the Archdiocese of Washington's Pastoral Code of Conduct, which applies to all church ministers, staff members, and volunteers. As you will read in the preamble to the code, it is intended to provide a framework for appropriate behavior throughout the archdiocese and to complement, rather than supersede, existing archdiocesan policies. If you have questions concerning the code and its application, please contact Ms. Courtney Chase at [childprotection@adw.org](mailto:childprotection@adw.org) or 301-853-5328.

Please be assured of my gratitude for all that you do in service to Our Lord and to His Church.

With every good wish, I am

Sincerely in Christ,

Most Reverend Barry C. Knestout  
Vicar General and Moderator of the Curia

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## Section I: Preamble

Those who serve the People of God in their various ministries, at every level, represent the public face of the Church and its genuine Catholic identity. In this way, they lead those they serve to Jesus Himself and to experience the joy of the Gospel. At its essence, the various ministries of the Church are effective instruments of God's love in the day-to-day lives of the people they serve.

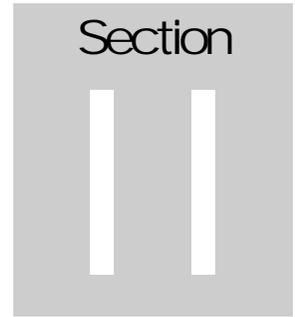
As a result, in the Archdiocese of Washington, all church ministers, staff and volunteers (definitions below) must uphold Christian values and conduct and support Catholic teaching. This applies to church ministers, staff and volunteers in our parishes, schools, youth ministries, religious communities/institutes and organizations in the Archdiocese of Washington. This Pastoral Code of Conduct provides a helpful set of standards for conduct in pastoral situations and a framework for appropriate behavior throughout the Archdiocese. This Code applies not only to the ordained clergy and volunteers, but to the lay employees whose jobs involve ministerial functions, including the spread and promotion of the Gospel and the teaching of the Catholic faith.

This Pastoral Code of Conduct is intended to complement, rather than supersede, existing policies of the Archdiocese of Washington. To the extent that its terms may conflict with those of another Archdiocesan policy, the terms of that other policy shall control. The Pastoral Code of Conduct is not all inclusive and not intended to supersede or replace duties or responsibilities pursuant to the laws of the jurisdiction in which the church ministers, staff or volunteers exercise their ministry. In addition to this policy, all church ministers, staff and volunteers are expected to comply with all federal, state and local laws, and avoid any and all illegal or unlawful harm or behavior.

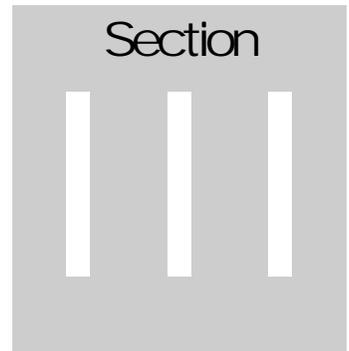
## Section II: Responsibility

The public and private conduct of church ministers, staff, and volunteers can inspire and motivate people, but it can also scandalize and undermine the people's faith. Church ministers, staff, and volunteers must, at all times, be aware of the responsibilities that accompany their work. They must also know that God's goodness and grace support them in their ministry.

Responsibility for adherence to implementation of the Archdiocese of Washington's Pastoral Code of Conduct rests with the individual. Church ministers, staff, and volunteers who disregard this code of conduct will be subject to remedial action by the Office of Human Resources, the Office of the Vicar for Clergy, or other appropriate offices.



## Section III: Definitions



*Church Ministers* – those ordained as priests and deacons, religious (persons in consecrated life), specially designated lay persons or seminarians who serve in a ministerial capacity.

*Confidential information* – information disclosed to church ministers, staff, or volunteers, by or about recipients, in connection with the provision of pastoral care, which the person disclosing the information or the person the information is about might reasonably expect to be kept confidential.

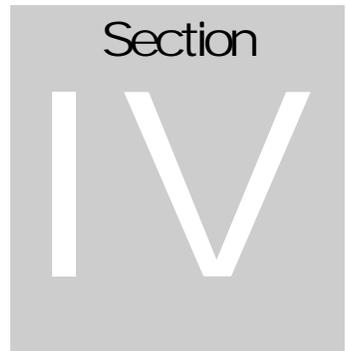
*Pastoral care* – ministry or service provided under the auspices of the Archdiocese of Washington.

*Recipient* – a person receiving pastoral care.

*Staff* – any employee, whether full-time or part-time, of the Archdiocese of Washington, its parishes, schools, or affiliated corporations.

*Volunteer* – any volunteer of the Archdiocese of Washington, including its parishes, schools, or affiliated corporations.

## Section IV: Pastoral Standards



### 1. Conduct for Church Ministers, Staff and Volunteers

Church ministers, staff and volunteers must respect the rights and advance the welfare of each person. Pastoral care involves listening to, praying for and with recipients, speaking the truth in love, and calling them to faithfulness. It always respects the individual's freedom of conscience and dignity as a child of God.

- 1.1 Church ministers, staff and volunteers shall not step beyond their competence in offering pastoral care and shall refer recipients to other professionals when appropriate.
- 1.2 Church ministers, staff and volunteers should carefully consider the possible consequences before providing pastoral care to someone with whom they had a pre-existing relationship (i.e., employee, professional colleague, friend, or other pre-existing relationship).
- 1.3 Church ministers, staff and volunteers may not audiotape or videotape the provision of pastoral care to recipients without the recipients' permission.
- 1.4 Church ministers, staff and volunteers must never engage in sexual intimacies with recipients. This includes consensual and nonconsensual contact, forced physical contact, and inappropriate sexual comments.
- 1.5 Church ministers, staff and volunteers shall not engage in sexual intimacies with individuals who are close to the recipient of pastoral care—such as relatives or friends of the recipient—when there is a risk of exploitation or potential harm to the recipient. Church ministers, staff and volunteers should presume that the potential for exploitation or harm exists in such intimate relationships.
- 1.6 Church ministers, staff and volunteers assume the full burden of responsibility for establishing and maintaining clear, appropriate boundaries with recipients.
- 1.7 Inappropriate physical contact of any kind (i.e., touching, hugging, holding) between church ministers, staff and volunteers and recipients of pastoral care should be avoided.
- 1.8 Meetings with recipients of pastoral care should be conducted in appropriate settings at appropriate times.

1.8.1 No meetings should be conducted in private living quarters.

1.8.2 Meetings should not be held at places or times that would tend to cause confusion about the nature of the relationship between the church ministers, staff, or volunteer and the recipient of pastoral care.

## 2. Confidentiality

Confidential information shall be held in the strictest confidence possible. Prudent restraint in the sharing of information about others is required in pastoral care.

2.1 Confidential information may only be disclosed for compelling professional reasons, as required by the Archdiocese of Washington’s Child Protection Policy, or as required by law.

2.1.1. If there is serious and foreseeable harm to the recipient of pastoral care or to others, church ministers, staff or volunteer may disclose only the information necessary to protect the parties affected and/or the information necessary to fulfill the reporting requirements of the Archdiocese of Washington’s Child Protection Policy, if applicable.

2.1.2 Church ministers, staff and volunteers should discuss the nature of confidentiality and its limitations with each person when engaging in discussions of a sensitive manner.

2.2 Knowledge obtained in the connection with the provision of pastoral care may be used in teaching, writing, homilies or other public presentations only when effective measures are taken to absolutely safeguard both the individual’s identity and the confidentiality of the disclosures.

2.3 If a church minister, staff or volunteer discovers that there is a serious threat to the welfare of a minor, the church minister, staff or volunteer should immediately follow the steps in the Archdiocese of Washington’s Child Protection Policy.

2.4 **These obligations are independent of the confidentiality of the confessional. Under no circumstances whatsoever can there be any disclosure—even indirect disclosure—of information received through the confessional.**

### 3. Conduct with Youth

Church ministers, staff, and volunteers working with youth shall maintain an open and trustworthy relationship between youth and adult supervisors. All involved with youth ministry must maintain an open and honest relationship with youth, their parents or guardians, and the adults responsible for their supervision, education, or formation.

- 3.1 Church ministers, staff, and volunteers must be aware of their own and others' vulnerability when working alone with youth. As a result, all are encouraged to use a team approach to manage youth activities.
- 3.2 Physical contact with youth can be misconstrued and should occur (a) only when completely nonsexual and otherwise appropriate, and (b) never in private.
- 3.3 Church ministers, staff, and volunteers should refrain from (a) the illegal possession and/or illegal use of drugs and/or alcohol at all times, and (b) the use of alcohol when working with youth.
- 3.4 Church ministers may not allow individual young people to stay overnight in the cleric's private accommodations or residence.
- 3.5 Staff and volunteers may not provide shared, private, overnight accommodation for individual young people including, but not limited to, accommodations in any Church owned facility, private residence, hotel room, or any other place where there is no other adult supervision present.
  - 3.5.1 In rare, emergency situations, when accommodation is necessary for the health and well-being of the youth, the clergy, staff, or volunteer should take extraordinary care to protect all parties from the appearance of impropriety and from all risk of harm.

### 4. Sexual Conduct

Church ministers, staff and volunteers are called to be examples of chastity in all relationships at all times, and must never exploit the trust placed in them by the faith community for sexual intimacy.

- 4.1 Church ministers, staff, and volunteers are called to be examples of chastity in all relationships at all times.

- 4.2 Staff and volunteers who provide pastoral care or supportive services must not develop inappropriate intimate relationships with minors, other staff, or parishioners. Staff and volunteers must behave in a professional manner at all times
- 4.3 No Church ministers, staff, or volunteer may exploit another person for sexual purposes.
- 4.4 Allegations of sexual misconduct should be taken seriously and reported to civil authorities in accordance with the Archdiocese of Washington's Child Protection Policy.
- 4.5 Church ministers, staff, and volunteers should review and know the contents of the Archdiocese of Washington's Child Protection Policy and should follow the steps outlined in the policy.

## 5. Harassment

Church ministers, staff, and volunteers must not engage in physical, psychological, written, or verbal harassment of staff, volunteers, or parishioners and must not tolerate such harassment by other church staff or volunteers. Harassment can be a single severe incident or a persistent pattern of behavior where the purpose or the effect is to create a hostile, offensive, or intimidating work environment. While not all behavior constitutes harassment as a matter of law, all behaviors that create a hostile, offensive or intimidating work environment must be avoided.

- 5.1 Church ministers, staff, and volunteers shall provide a professional work environment that is free from physical, psychological, written, or verbal intimidation or harassment.
- 5.2 Harassment encompasses a broad range of physical, written, or verbal behavior, including without limitation the following:
  - Physical or mental abuse.
  - Racial insults.
  - Ethnic slurs.
  - Unwelcome sexual advances or touching.
  - Sexual comments or sexual jokes.

- Display of offensive materials.
  - Requests for sexual favors used as:
    - condition of employment, or
    - to affect other personnel decisions, such as promotion or compensation.
- 5.3 Allegations of harassment should be taken seriously and reported immediately to the Child Protection Office, Office of Human Resources and in the case of clergy, the Office of the Vicar for Clergy.

## 6. Reporting Ethical or Professional Misconduct

Church ministers, staff, and volunteers have a duty to report their own ethical or professional misconduct and the misconduct of others.

- 6.1 Any Church minister, staff, or volunteers who has reason to believe or suspects that any child or minor has been the victim of physical abuse, sexual abuse, sexual assault, or neglect must make a report to the appropriate civil authorities, as directed by the Archdiocese Child Protection Policy.
- 6.2 Church ministers, staff, or volunteers may at times be uncertain about whether their own situation or course of conduct in the context of pastoral care may violate Archdiocese of Washington's Pastoral Code of Conduct or other religious, moral, or ethical principles. In such situations, church ministers should consult with the Office of the Vicar for Clergy, and staff and volunteers should consult with their pastor or departmental supervisor, who in turn should seek assistance from offices with the Central Pastoral Administration as appropriate.
- 6.3 Anyone who suspects that a church minister, a staff member, or a volunteer has violated the Archdiocese of Washington's Code of Conduct or other religious, moral, or ethical principles should report the violation on the Archdiocese of Washington's EthicsPoint reporting hotline. Reports may be made anonymously online (a link is available at the bottom of the Archdiocese's homepage, [www.adw.org](http://www.adw.org)), or by calling 855-290-3381.
- 6.4 The obligation of church ministers, staff and volunteers to report recipients' misconduct is subject to the duty of confidentiality. However, except in the

case of statements made under the seal of the confessional, any agreement or duty to maintain confidentiality must yield to the need to report misconduct that threatens the safety, health, or well-being of any of the persons involved.

## **7. Administration**

Employers and supervisors shall treat church ministers, staff, and volunteers justly in the day-to-day administrative operations of their ministries.

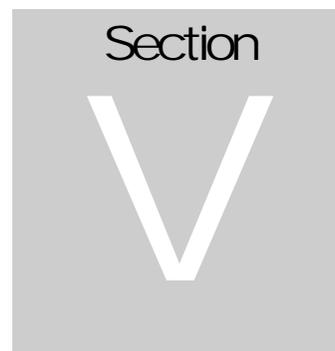
- 7.1 Personnel and other administrative decisions made by church ministers, staff, and volunteers shall meet civil and canonical law obligations and also reflect Catholic social teaching and the Archdiocese of Washington's Pastoral Code of Conduct.
- 7.2 No church minister, staff, or volunteer shall use his or her position to exercise unreasonable or inappropriate power and authority.
- 7.3 Each volunteer providing services to children and youth must read and sign the Volunteer Code of Conduct and be compliant with the requirements established in the Archdiocese of Washington's Child Protection Policy.

## **8. Church Ministers, Staff, or Volunteer Well-being**

Church ministers, staff, and volunteers have the duty to be responsible for their own spiritual, physical, mental, and emotional health.

- 8.1 Church ministers, staff, and volunteers should be aware of warning signs that indicate potential problems with their own spiritual, physical, mental, and/or emotional health.
- 8.2 Church ministers, staff, and volunteers should seek help immediately whenever they notice behavioral or emotional warning signs in their own professional and/or personal lives.
- 8.3 Church ministers, staff, and volunteers must address their own spiritual and/or psychological needs. Support from a Spiritual Director and/or professional therapist, as the case may be, is highly recommended.
- 8.4 Inappropriate or illegal use of alcohol and drugs is prohibited.

# Section V: Church Ministers, Staff and Volunteer's Pastoral Code of Conduct



God has called us to love our neighbors as ourselves. In light of this call,

I promise to strictly follow the rules and guidelines in this Pastoral Code of Conduct as a condition of my participation in the mission of the Archdiocese of Washington.

## **As a church minister, staff or volunteer, I shall:**

- Treat everyone with respect, loyalty, patience, integrity, courtesy, dignity, and consideration.
- Avoid situations where I am alone with children and/or youth at Church activities.
- Use positive reinforcement rather than criticism, competition, or comparison when working with others, especially children and/or youth.
- Refuse to accept expensive gifts from people I work with or serve without prior written approval from the pastor, supervisor, administrator or ecclesiastical superior.
- Refrain from giving expensive gifts to people I work with or serve without prior written approval from my pastor, administrator or ecclesiastical superior.
- Report suspected abuse to the civil authorities as outlined in the Archdiocese of Washington's Child Protection Policy.
- Cooperate fully in any investigation of abuse of children and/or youth in conjunction with the Archdiocese of Washington's Child Protection Policy.

## **As a church minister, staff or volunteer, I shall not:**

- Smoke or use tobacco products in the presence of children and/or youth.

- Use, possess, or be under the influence of alcohol at any time while working or volunteering with children.
- Use, possess, or be under the influence of illegal drugs at any time.
- Knowingly pose any significant health risk to children and/or youth or the elderly (e.g., I will refrain from providing pastoral care to children or the elderly when I am contagious with an illness).
- Strike, spank, shake, or slap children and/or youth, or anyone else.
- Humiliate, ridicule, threaten, or degrade children and/or youth, or anyone else.
- Touch a child and/or youth in a sexual or other inappropriate manner.
- Use any discipline that frightens or humiliates children and/or youth.
- Use profanity in the presence of children and/or youth.

I understand that the responsibility for adherence to implementation of the Archdiocese of Washington's Pastoral Code of Conduct rests with me; that church ministers, staff, and volunteers who disregard this Code of Conduct will be subject to remedial action.

I understand that as a church minister, staff or volunteer, if I work with children and/or youth, I am subject to a thorough background check including criminal history. I understand that any action inconsistent with this Pastoral Code of Conduct or failure to take action mandated by this Pastoral Code of Conduct may result in my removal from ministry or termination from my position.