



***The Code of Ethical Conduct
For Clergy, Employees, And Volunteers
Working In Ministry
For The Archdiocese of Saint Louis***

Created For The



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experience excellence

Chapters:

Chapter One: General Conduct

Chapter Two: Integrity And Proper Conduct For Counseling

Chapter Three: Personal And Professional Interactions

Chapter Four: Sexual Conduct

Chapter Five: Communications

Introduction

Welcome to this SafeParish™ training module regarding the Code of Ethical Conduct for Clergy, Employees, and Volunteers Working in Ministry for the Archdiocese of Saint Louis. This module will discuss certain provisions of the Code of Ethical Conduct.

Although this training module will focus on five provisions of the Code of Ethical Conduct, everyone who works in the ministry is encouraged to read and know every provision of the Code. You will find a copy of the entire Code of Ethical Conduct on this Platform.

This module is approximately 20 minutes long. If you need to leave for any reason, you may do so. The module will bookmark your place. When you resume your training, you will be returned to where you left the training.

This module has five chapters. Each chapter begins with a true or false statement. Your reply to the statement is recorded. Before you can receive your certification, you must correctly answer each statement.

Chapter One: General Conduct

Statement One:

A minor's location and activities should be known by his or her parents or guardians at all times.

True False Don't Know

The best answer is "True". A minor's location and activities should be known by his or her parents or guardians at all times.

Under the Code of Ethical Conduct, clergy, employees, and volunteers who work with minors and who are referred to hereafter, collectively, as Church personnel, should maintain an open and trustworthy relationship between minors and adult supervisors. Church personnel must be aware of their own and others' vulnerability when working alone with a minor. Whether in a social or ministerial situation, the minor's location and

activities should be known by parents or guardians at all times. Church personnel must also be mindful that minors do not possess the capacity to make freewill and voluntary decisions.

The General Conduct section of the Code of Ethical Conduct asks that all Church personnel:

Use a team approach to managing activities. In general, two adults should be present in situations involving minors with the exception of sacramental confession.

The Code of Ethical Conduct provides strict guidance on how Church personnel should interact with minors including:

- When meeting with a minor, the office door should have a window or be left open. Do not meet with a minor if there are no other adults in the immediate vicinity.
- Never visit a minor's home without at least one other adult present and without the expressed welcome of parents or guardians.
- Adults providing transportation for parish or archdiocesan-sponsored events may not be alone in a vehicle with one child. It is permissible for one adult to provide transportation for two or more minors but at no time should one adult be alone with one child in a vehicle. Transportation arrangements must be made in advance to avoid the possibility of an adult and a minor being alone together.
- All outings with minors (i.e., retreats, youth group trips, sports-related activities and overnight trips) require the presence of at least two adults at all times and parental permission for the minor to attend.
- Locker rooms, shower rooms, and dressing rooms are not to be shared with minors unless another adult is present.
- Minors are not to be accompanied into restrooms without another adult present unless the circumstance makes it absolutely unavoidable.

Scenario

Father Tim receives a call from his sister, asking if his nephew can stay one night at the rectory with Father Tim. Father Tim should:

- A. Agree because his sister knows him and his nephew is family;
- B. Agree so long as his nephew sleeps in the guest accommodations;
- C. Both A and B
- D. None of the above.

The best answer is "D", none of the above. Although his sister requested that his nephew stay in the rectory; his nephew is part of Father Tim's family; and his nephew would sleep in a separate room, Father Tim would be violating the Code of Ethical Conduct, if he permitted his nephew to stay with him at the rectory.

The Code states:

Minors should be permitted only in the public section of a rectory, never in the private living quarters.

The Code also states:

Minors should never be permitted to stay overnight in a rectory, convent or religious community, even if alone in a separate guestroom.

Adults may not share sleeping quarters with minors, unless accommodations are barrack-style with multiple adults and multiple minors in the same room. Each adult and each minor must have a separate bed.

Finally, according to the Code: Church personnel should not provide shared or private overnight accommodation for any minors, including, but not limited to, accommodations in any Church-owned facility, private residence, hotel room or any other place, unless ample adult supervision is present.

In rare emergency situations when shared or private overnight accommodation is necessary for the health and well-being of the minor, Church personnel should take extraordinary care to protect all parties from the appearance of impropriety and from all risk of harm.

It is important to note that the Code states that a team approach should always be employed in managing such emergency situations.

The Code's restrictions on overnight stays is based on the fact that most acts of child sexual abuse occur either at the home of the offender; at the home of the victim; or in a secluded place, without safe adults present. To protect children from sexual abuse and to protect safe adults from accusations of impropriety, Church personnel must strictly follow the Code.

The Code of Conduct also addresses physical boundaries with children; specifically, how Church personnel should physically interact with children.

First, the Code recognizes that physical contact with youth can be misconstrued and should occur only when completely nonsexual and otherwise appropriate. Physical contact should never occur in private.

Second, physical force or demeaning language should not be used in disciplining minors. Physical force is only permissible to protect oneself, another innocent party, or a person who is out of control.

Third, prudent caution is to be employed regarding physical contact with minors. Interactions like wrestling, tickling, and social rough-housing are unacceptable and

would be cause for concern. Church personnel must always be careful to use appropriate language when in the company of minors and avoid discussing topics that could reasonably be considered inappropriate by other trusted adults.

Scenario

Veronica is a volunteer soccer coach for the Catholic high school's soccer team. Her daughter is a member of the team. All the team's members are minors. After the last game, Veronica hosted a party for the seniors on the team. She provided a bottle of champagne for the celebration and gave each girl a 14k gold soccer ball charm and necklace. Veronica has:

- A. Violated the Code of Conduct
- B. Not violated the Code of Conduct because she is not in ministry
- C. Not violated the Code of Conduct so long as she does not let the girls drive
- D. Not violated the Code of Conduct so long as the other girls' parents or guardians know about the party

The best answer is "A", Veronica has violated the Code of Conduct.

As a volunteer soccer coach, Veronica works with minors on behalf of the school and the archdiocese and must follow the provisions of the Code.

The Code states that Church personnel, like Veronica, should never be involved with the illegal possession and/or illegal use of drugs and/or alcohol. Providing alcohol to minors, even in celebration, is illegal.

Moreover, the Code states that Church personnel must never provide such substances to minors, nor may they consume alcohol while functioning in an official capacity with minors. This includes those who are involved as coaches or managers of youth sports teams.

The Code goes further and states that Church personnel should refrain from giving expensive gifts to minors without prior written approval from the parents or guardians and the pastor or school administrator; and archdiocesan agencies.

Finally, on the subject of gifts, Church personnel should not accept expensive gifts from minors, their parents, or vulnerable adults without prior written approval from the pastor or school administrator, and archdiocesan agencies.

Chapter Two: Integrity And Proper Conduct For Counseling

Statement Two:

Church personnel must always protect the interests and rights of minors only.

True False Don't Know

The best answer is "False." All Church personnel must maintain a presence of mind about their proper role in the circumstances in which they find themselves. We need to protect the interests and rights of all those we minister to, regardless of age or circumstances. However, special care should be taken when ministering to minors and vulnerable adults.

Scenario

Father Kyle is counseling an adult parishioner who has recently divorced. In addition to receiving spiritual counseling, she disclosed to Father Kyle that she is taking medication for severe anxiety and depression. During a session, she told Father Kyle that she is lonely and depressed and that she finds Father Kyle attractive. She asked Father Kyle if he would like to come to dinner at her home for a personal visit. Father Kyle should:

- A. Politely decline her invitation
- B. Accept her invitation on the condition that they keep their relationship professional
- C. Accept her invitation so long as she agrees to stay in counseling
- D. Both B and C

The best answer is "A". Father Kyle should politely decline the invitation.

The facts in the scenario demonstrate that the parishioner is vulnerable and that the parishioner may want to breach Father Kyle's professional and ministerial boundaries.

As the Code dictates, Father Kyle should have the presence of mind about his proper role as to the parishioner and protect her interests, his integrity, and the integrity of the Church. He should make sure the interactions between him and the parishioner remain professional and never occur in a private location.

In addition to maintaining proper roles, the Code states that explicit sexual interactions or even sexually-suggestive interaction with persons who are served or with whom one works are never appropriate in a ministerial setting.

Specifically, ministers of the clergy are expected to conduct themselves chastely according to their state of life.

Scenario

Lilly volunteers in the parish office three times a month. One of her daily tasks is opening parish mail and sorting it for internal delivery. She opens a note from Jim, the music director, to Father William that states Jim has been diagnosed with cancer and must have some time off work. Lilly should:

- A. Let others know about Jim's condition so he can be in their prayers
- B. Ask others to donate to help Jim with his medical expenses
- C. Just put the note in Father's William's daily mail file and keep the matter private and confidential
- D. None of the above

The best answer is "C". Lilly should keep the matter private and confidential.

Although Lilly's heart is in the right place, the Code states that those who work for or volunteer their service to the Church must protect the confidentiality and privacy rights of others at all times.

Jim's medical condition is a private matter. If Jim wants to disclose information about his condition to Lilly or anyone else, that is a decision for Jim alone to make.

Chapter Three: Personal And Professional Interactions

Statement Three:

Information disclosed to a Pastoral Counselor or Spiritual Director during the course of counseling, advising, or spiritual direction must be held in the strictest confidence possible.

True False Don't Know

The best answer is "True." Information disclosed to a Pastoral Counselor or Spiritual Director during the course of counseling, advising, or spiritual direction must be held in the strictest confidence possible.

The exceptions to this rule must be compelling or required by law. Such exceptions include:

- If there is clear and imminent danger to the client or to others, those who provide pastoral counseling or spiritual direction may disclose to the necessary authorities only the information necessary to protect the parties affected and to prevent harm, like a client who threatens harm to himself, herself, or others.
- Before disclosure is made, if feasible, those who provide pastoral counseling or spiritual direction should inform the person being counseled about the disclosure and the potential consequences.

Under the section of the Code titled "Personal and Professional Interactions", the Code states, in regard to a counseling, advising, or spiritual direction relationship:

- At the start of this type of professional relationship, those who provide pastoral counseling and spiritual direction should discuss with each client the nature of

confidentiality and its limits, should the client disclose intent to put himself/herself and/or others in imminent danger.

- Knowledge acquired from professional contact may be used in teaching, writing, homilies, or other public presentations only when effective measures are taken to safeguard both the individual's identity and the confidentiality of the disclosures.

Scenario

Father Ian is counseling Patrick, a minor. During the counseling session, Patrick disclosed that he would like to shoot a classmate who is bullying him with his dad's gun or just shoot himself. Father Ian should:

- A. Explain to Patrick that murder and suicide are sins and prohibited by law
- B. Let Patrick know that he feels obliged to explain to Patrick's parents how Patrick is feeling
- C. Ask Patrick to sign a written consent allowing disclosure to his parents
- D. All of the above

The best answer is "D", all of the above.

The Code states that while counseling a minor, if a Pastoral Counselor or Spiritual Director discovers that there is a serious threat to the welfare of the minor and that communication of confidential information to a parent or legal guardian is essential to the minor's health and well-being, the Pastoral Counselor or Spiritual Director should:

- Attempt to secure written consent from the minor for specific disclosure if such is appropriate under the circumstances
- If consent is not obtained, disclose only the information necessary to protect the health and well-being of the minor
- Consultation with the appropriate Church supervisory personnel is required before disclosure.

In conducting group sessions, those who provide counseling must ensure that no individual is subject to trauma or abuse resulting from group interactions. The nature of the group and the parameters of confidentiality regarding all individual disclosures during group sessions must be explained to all participants at the beginning of the session. Such group interactions including pastoral counseling groups, faith formation groups, Renew groups etc.

Please note that all of these obligations are exclusive of the sacramental seal of Confession, which demands that under no circumstance whatsoever may there be any disclosure, even indirect disclosure, of information received through Confession.

Chapter Four: Sexual Conduct

Statement Four:

Church personnel may not create, distribute, or possess child pornography in any form.

True False Don't Know

The best answer is "True. Church personnel may not create, distribute, or possess child pornography in any form.

Church personnel must not, for sexual gratification or intimacy, exploit the trust placed in them by the faith community. That includes Church personnel who are committed to a celibate lifestyle of complete self-restraint. They are called to be an example of celibate chastity in all relationships at all times.

Church personnel who provide pastoral counseling or spiritual direction services must avoid developing inappropriately intimate relationships with everyone. They must conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times.

It is important to know that Church personnel may not exploit another person for sexual purposes. This includes, but is not limited to the creation, distribution, and/or possession of all forms of child pornography.

Scenario

Deacon Luis is assisting in an archdiocese program for at-risk youth. In his professional life, Luis is a nurse at a local hospital. One of the attendees describes to Luis in detail an incident of sexual abuse by another teenager who is part of the program. Luis should **first**:

- A. Report the incident to the accused's parents
- B. Report the incident to the hospital
- C. Report the incident to the reporter's parents
- D. None of the above

The best answer is "D", none of the above. Luis is a mandatory reporter because of his position as a nurse at a local hospital. Under Missouri law and the Code of Conduct, Luis must report the allegations of abuse, even if they are not made against an adult, to the Missouri Department of Social Services-Children's Division.

The Code states that Church personnel should review and know the contents of the child abuse regulations and reporting requirements for the State of Missouri and should follow those mandates.

All adults should report their reasonable suspicions of child neglect and abuse, including physical, emotional, or sexual abuse. It is important to note that all allegations of sexual misconduct must be taken seriously.

In addition to reporting to the appropriate civil authorities of the State of Missouri, church personnel should also report their reasonable suspicions of child sexual abuse to the competent authority in the archdiocesan office or agency, parish, or school.

Church personnel should follow the guidance provided in all of the published materials provided by the Archdiocese regarding the abuse of minors, including child sexual abuse, without exception, to protect the rights of all involved. On this platform, in which you accessed this training, has those publications for your review. These include the “Pastoral Policy Regarding Alleged Cases of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Clergy or other Church Personnel of the Archdiocese of St. Louis” and the Archdiocesan “Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines on Child Abuse”.

Chapter Five: Communications

Statement Five:

The Code of Conduct requires all communications to be consistent with Catholic values, with the exception of personal social media posts.

True False Don't Know

The best answer is “False.” When communicating with a minor using any form of electronic media or an electronic device, it is essential that the communication is consistent with Catholic values. The communication should be respectful to the minor and their parents or guardian. The language used should be direct and clear to avoid any misunderstanding of intent. This includes photos and posts on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, and any other social media platform.

Scenario

Sister Rose likes to keep in touch with her middle school students over the summer. She will often remind her students of upcoming school sporting events and provide uplifting stories and bits of information. She sends these texts to the students using an application. Sister Rose:

- A. Has violated the Code
- B. Has not violated the Code
- C. Has not violated the Code so long as she sends the same message to the minors' parents/guardians and other school officials
- D. None of the above

The best answer is “C”. So long as Sister Rose is transparent when communicating with a minor by including parents, guardians, and/or other adults in ministry, she is within the guidelines of the Code.

As to sending electronic messages to minors, Church personnel should include the parents, guardians and/or other adults in ministry. Private messages sent through email, text or social media platforms between an adult and a minor must be avoided.

Thank you for participating in this training module on the Code of Ethical Conduct for Clergy, Employees, and Volunteers Working in Ministry for the Archdiocese of Saint Louis. In this module we reviewed five sections of the Code. There are other sections all Church personnel should read and understand. You can find a copy of the Code on this Platform.

In this module, we have discussed a number of boundaries that Church personnel must observe when working with minors and, when appropriate, vulnerable adults.

A common theme throughout the Code of Ethical Conduct is that your ministry with minors and vulnerable adults must be a public ministry. It should be performed whenever possible in the open.

The Code and society set boundaries for everyone who works with vulnerable people, but you must also respect the boundaries of minors and adults, including physical, verbal, and emotional boundaries. This includes respecting boundaries as to electronic communications.

How you touch, interact, and/or communicate with minors and vulnerable adults matters and must be governed by respect toward the recipient and our Catholic values. Additionally, it is essential that you avoid situations where you are alone with children without other adults present.

Please remember that the responsibility for adherence to the Code of Ethical Conduct rests with the individual. Any violation will be subject to remedial action including, but not limited to, removal from ministry, termination of employment, or discontinuance of one’s volunteer status.

As stated in the preamble of the Code:

It is God who calls people to ministry, therefore, those who serve in the name of the Church must be models of exemplary behavior. Clergy, employees and volunteers must at all times be mindful that they bear a tremendous responsibility for the sake of the Gospel. Their personal and professional conduct can and often does inspire and motivate others to deepened faith and personal holiness.

Summation:

Thank you for participating in this SafeParish™ training, entitled: “The Code of Ethical Conduct for Clergy, Employees, and Volunteers Working in Ministry for the Archdiocese of Saint Louis”. Your certificate of completion is ready to view or download. Please join us again for another SafeParish™ training session.

Answer Key:

1. A minor’s location and activities should be known by his or her parents or guardians at all times.

True

A minor’s location and activities should be known by his or her parents or guardians at all times.

2. Church personnel must always protect the interests and rights of minors only.

False

All Church personnel must maintain a presence of mind about their proper role in the circumstances in which they find themselves. We need to protect the interests and rights of all those we minister to, regardless of age or circumstances. However, special care should be taken when ministering to minors and vulnerable adults.

3. Information disclosed to a Pastoral Counselor or Spiritual Director during the course of counseling, advising, or spiritual direction must be held in the strictest confidence possible.

True

Information disclosed to a Pastoral Counselor or Spiritual Director during the course of counseling, advising, or spiritual direction must be held in the strictest confidence possible.

4. Church personnel may not create, distribute, or possess child pornography in any form.

True

Church personnel may not create, distribute, or possess child pornography in any form.

5. The Code of Conduct requires all communications to be consistent with Catholic values, with the exception of personal social media posts.

False

When communicating with a minor using any form of electronic media or an electronic device, it is essential that the communication is consistent with Catholic values. It should be respectful to both the minor as well as the parent and direct in nature so as to avoid any misunderstanding. This includes photos and posts on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat and any other social media platform.