

Archdiocese of Omaha
Safe Environment Code of Conduct
Standards of Responsibility and Accountability
For the Care, Contact and Conduct with Children and Youth.

For the purpose of this Code of Conduct, the term “All” refers to all ordained or lay persons who work (employed or volunteer) with children in the name of the Church.

Expectations:

- **Present Oneself with Dignity and Integrity**
All who exercise pastoral care and ministry in the name of the Church are to strive for the continual renewal of the Body of Christ embracing the principles and practices of integrity, generosity and compassion.
- **Faithfully Respect the Teachings of the Catholic Church**
All must represent and respect the Church’s teachings. All have an obligation to seek and develop holiness in their personal lives.
- **Treat All with Respect, Loyalty, Patience, Integrity, Courtesy, Dignity and Consideration**
All are obligated to work toward building up the community of faith. A safe environment is created through mutual respect of every person’s participation.
- **Establish Procedures, Guidelines and Practices that Ensure Safeguards for Youth**
All are responsible for knowing and implementing the policies and practices pertaining to their specific ministry. Additional procedures and guidelines should be employed as the need arises. All policies, practices, procedures and guidelines should be documented for required reports/disclosures and communicated to participants/families prior to involvement.
- **Avoid All Conduct Which Would Exploit the Trust of Youth**
All will reflect actions that are appropriate Code of Conduct behaviors whether in the presence of youth or not. All will keep an open line of communication with parents/guardians/staff, etc. and actions will be transparent as necessary. Children/Youth will never be put in any uncomfortable or compromising situation.
- **Understand and Respect that Leadership/Ministry Roles Come with Significant Status/Power.**
All should strive to use authority responsibly. All should be mindful of the power differential that exists in relationships and endeavor to be mutually respectful, empowering, and non-exploitive.
- **Recognize that the Ministry/Volunteer Role is to Serve Others Needs Rather than One’s Own**
All will strive to make a positive difference in the lives of children/youth. Working with them is a privileged relationship and should not be used to satisfy personal desires or needs.
- **Assume Full Responsibility for Establishing and Maintaining Clear, Appropriate Boundaries. Be Open to Feedback or Redirection Regarding any Concern.**
Appropriate personal and pastoral boundaries are maintained by following the policies and guidelines put in place by the Archdiocese, Parish/School, and Catholic morals and virtues. Intimate/physical/sexual relationships with those entrusted to care, are never permissible. Maintaining appropriate boundaries would also include monitoring all adults and minors who are assisting.

- **Respect the Confidentiality of Others**

All are obliged to observe confidentiality in matters involving the personal disclosure of information entrusted to them. Confidentiality is not binding if the information shared highlights serious risk and/or endangerment of others. Priests have a singular and unbreakable obligation to hold all matters received in the Sacrament of Reconciliation in strictest confidentiality. All confidential documents should remain in a secure place.

- **Adhere to NE State law and Archdiocese Safe Environment Policy on Child Abuse and Neglect Mandatory Reporting as Presented in the Circle of Care Training.**

When there is reasonable cause to believe that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect, or this activity has been observed, all shall report the incident or cause a report to be made to the proper law enforcement agency. Notify supervisor /administrator immediately. Only reasonable cause is needed to report abuse/neglect. Toll free number for the Adult & Child Abuse & Neglect Hotline: 1-800-652-1999.

- **Conduct Oneself in Accordance with the Law and in a Professional and Prudent Manner**

All illegal activity is prohibited and when supervising children/youth, the use, consumption, serving or distribution of alcohol is prohibited.

- **Understand Pornography (legal/ illegal) is Against Moral Teachings of the Church and is Prohibited.**

Pornography is addictive, perverse, widely accessible and anonymous. It has the potential to destroy both consumer and victim. All will promote and model Church teaching about the gift of sexuality and human dignity. Any discovery of illegal material (child pornography) must be reported to the authorities.

- **Adhere to Archdiocesan Guidelines Regarding Electronic/Technical Communications with Children/Youth**

All will be transparent and professional in electronic/technical or written communication with children/ youth and their families. It is encouraged to include other adults (parents or supervisor) in all technological communication. Electronic/technical communication guidelines are located on the Archdiocese website (www.archomaha.org) under safe environment.

- **Avoid Inappropriate Relationships with Co-workers, Staff, Volunteers or Parishioners, Always Act in a Professional and Moral Manner**

All have a responsibility to model appropriate boundaries and healthy relationships consistent with their role.

- **Know Where to Find the Archdiocese's Safe Environment Policies as They Pertain to Working with Children/Youth in the Name of the Church.**

All policies are on the Archdiocese website: www.archomaha.org under Safe Environment. They should also be located in the parish/school office.

I have read and understand the above code of conduct expectations regarding my role in working with children/youth in the name of the Church. I have been given and will read the full code of conduct document (which includes specifics about ordained ministers) included in my training packet.

I understand that any action inconsistent with the code or failure to take action mandated by this code may result in losing the privilege of working with children/youth in the Archdiocese of Omaha.

Print Name _____
Signature _____
Date _____