

Archdiocese of San Antonio



Policies on Ethics and Integrity in Ministry

April 8, 2003

Effective Date: September 1, 2003

I. Principles of Ethics and Integrity in Ministry: Code of Ethics

Relationships among people are the foundation of Christian ministry and are central to church life. Defining healthy and safe relationships is not meant, in any way, to undermine the strength and importance of personal contact or the ministerial role. Rather, it is to assist all who fulfill the many roles that create the living Church to demonstrate their love and compassion for children and adults in the most sincere and genuine relationships.

It is with the intention that relationships in ministry be experienced at all times as charitable and without intention to do harm or allow harm to occur that the following Code of Ethics has been adopted by the Archdiocese of San Antonio. All Church personnel are asked to carefully consider each standard in the Code and within the Policies on Ethics and Integrity in Ministry before agreeing to adhere to the standards and continue in service to the Archdiocese.

- Church personnel will exhibit the highest Christian ethical standards and personal integrity.
- Church personnel will conduct themselves in a manner that is consistent with the discipline and teachings of the Catholic Church.
- Church personnel shall provide a professional work environment that is free from physical, psychological, written, or verbal intimidation or harassment.
- Church personnel will not physically, sexually, or emotionally abuse or neglect a minor or an adult.
- Church personnel will share concerns about suspicious or inappropriate behavior with their pastor, their principal, the **Vicar General** or **Archbishop**.
- Church personnel will report any suspected abuse or neglect of a minor to the **Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services**.
- Church personnel will accept their personal responsibility to protect minors and adults from all forms of abuse.

II. General Definitions

A. Church Personnel

For the purposes of this policy, the following are included in the definition of Church personnel:

1. Priests incardinated in the Archdiocese of San Antonio.
2. Priests who are members of religious institutes assigned to pastoral work in the Archdiocese.
3. Priests of other jurisdictions who are assigned to pastoral work in this Archdiocese; priests seeking incardination in this archdiocese; other priests including those who are retired or who request canonical faculties to do part-time or supply ministry.
4. Permanent and transitional deacons incardinated in this Archdiocese; permanent deacons but with canonical faculties to function in this Archdiocese.
5. Seminarians and those enrolled in the permanent Diaconate Formation Program.
6. Women religious and religious brothers working for the Archdiocese, its parishes, schools, or agencies.
7. Individuals in other forms of consecrated life who are associated with the Archdiocese.
8. All paid personnel whether employed in areas of ministry or other kinds of services by the Archdiocese, its parishes, schools, or other agencies; also, those who contract their services to Church agencies.
9. All volunteers. This includes any person who enters into or offers him/herself for a Church-related service of his/her own free will.

B. Types of Misconduct

For the purposes of this policy, misconduct includes the four types of behavior listed below:

1. Immoral conduct. Conduct that is contrary to the discipline and teachings of the Church.
2. Harassment. Conduct or language which created an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment.
3. Exploitation. Taking unfair advantage of a counseling relationship for the benefit of the counselor.
4. Abuse of minors. Physical, sexual, or emotional abuse of children under the age of 18 or adults who are uniquely vulnerable to abuse because of physical or mental disabilities.

III. Prevention of Immoral Conduct: Guidelines for Ethical and Moral Behavior

A. Definitions

1. Immoral conduct is defined as behavior that is contrary to the discipline and teachings of the Church and may result in scandal to the faithful or harm to the ministry of the Church.
2. Scandal is an attitude or behavior, which leads another to do evil. Scandal damages virtue and integrity. It is a grave offense if by deed or omission another is deliberately led into a grave offense (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, n. 2284).

B. Standards of the Archdiocese

1. It is fundamental to the mission of the Archdiocese of San Antonio for Church personnel to exhibit the highest ethical standards and personal integrity. The purpose of this policy is to insure that all Church personnel follow the traditional strong moral and ethical standards of the Catholic Church. Therefore, Church personnel should not engage in the following conduct:
 - a. Formally rejecting the teachings of the Catholic Church or the Christian way of life.
 - b. Exhibiting actions that are disruptive to the ministry and public worship.
 - c. Procuring or participating in abortion, homicide, or euthanasia.
 - d. Possessing pornographic materials.
 - e. Engaging in adultery, flagrant promiscuity or illicit co-habitation.
 - f. Abusing alcohol, drugs, or gambling.
 - g. Stealing or any other form of theft, including misappropriation of Church funds.
 - h. Sexual harassment, exploitation or abuse.
 - i. Physical assault and fighting.
 - j. Committing any criminal act against a person.
2. Church personnel should not harm the reputation of others through:
 - a. Disclosing the faults or failings of others to persons who have no cause to know them.
 - b. Making false allegations against another.

3. Church personnel enjoy a public trust and confidence. It is essential that Church personnel view their own actions and intentions objectively to assure that no observer would have grounds to believe that irregularity in conduct exists. All Church personnel have a responsibility to uphold the standards of the Catholic Church in their day-to-day work and personal lives.

IV. Prevention of Harassment: Guidelines for Professionalism

A. Definitions

- a. Harassment encompasses a broad range of physical, written, or verbal behavior that includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 - Physical or mental abuse
 - Racial insults
 - Derogatory ethnic slurs
 - Unwelcome sexual advances or touching
 - Sexual comments or sexual jokes
 - Requests for sexual favors used as a condition of employment or to affect other personnel decisions, such as promotion or compensation
 - Display of offensive materials
- b. Harassment is an offensive use of power where the purpose or the effect is to create a hostile or intimidating work environment.
- c. Harassment may be severe and/or pervasive.
 - a. Severe conduct is sufficient to alter a workplace environment even though it may occur only once.
 - b. Pervasive conduct is a persistent pattern of offensive conduct.

B. Standards of the Archdiocese

1. Church personnel do not engage in physical, psychological, written or verbal harassment of employees, volunteers or parishioners and do not tolerate such harassment by other Church personnel.
2. Church personnel shall provide a professional work environment that is free from physical, psychological, written or verbal intimidation or harassment.