



Archdiocese of Boston

EMPLOYEE CODE OF CONDUCT OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE OF BOSTON

Updated November 2024

The Roman Catholic Archbishop of Boston (the “Archbishop”) places the highest value on the integrity and high moral standards of those associated with the work of the Church. With these principles in mind, the Archbishop, in both his canonical role and on behalf of Roman Catholic Archbishop of Boston, a Corporation Sole (“RCAB”), hereby promulgates this Code of Conduct (the “Code” or “Code of Conduct”).

This Code of Conduct shall apply to all employees of RCAB and all clergy incardinated in the Archdiocese of Boston and those clergy who have received faculties to minister within the Archdiocese (“Church Personnel”). This Code shall apply to all central ministries, parishes, shrines, chapels, and parish schools. This Code shall not apply to separately incorporated organizations, including, but not limited to, Catholic Charities, independent Catholic Schools, or other Catholic organizations. However, those organizations are encouraged to adopt a Code of Conduct based upon this model.

Responsibility for adherence to the Code rests with each individual. It is required that all Church Personnel shall have read the Code carefully and understand what is expected of them in their employment/ministry with the Archdiocese of Boston.

Principles of Ethics and Integrity

As representatives of the Church and of the Archbishop, all Church Personnel must act responsibly and in a manner that will reflect favorably on the Church and the Archdiocese. Accordingly:

1. Church Personnel will, in the exercise of their responsibilities for the Archdiocese, conduct themselves in a manner that is consistent with the teachings of The Roman Catholic Church as enunciated by the Holy Father and the Bishops in communion with him; more specifically, Church Personnel shall, in all such matters, accept, rely upon and defer to the teaching authority of the Archbishop in all matters of faith and morals.
2. Church Personnel will exhibit the highest ethical standards and personal integrity.

3. Church Personnel will continually and objectively examine and evaluate their own actions and intentions to ensure that their behavior promotes the welfare and reputation of the Archdiocese.
4. Church Personnel will follow applicable federal, state and local laws and regulations, including, without limitation, mandated reporting requirements to the extent legally applicable.
5. Church Personnel will establish clear, appropriate boundaries with anyone with whom they have a ministerial, business or professional relationship.
6. Church Personnel will be responsible stewards of the resources, human and financial, of the Archdiocese, observing both canon and civil law, and making decisions concerning the disposition of resources that reflect Catholic social and moral teaching. Church Personnel must not, for any reason, exploit the trust placed in them by the faith community.
7. Church Personnel who are properly authorized to provide pastoral counseling or spiritual direction must recognize the special relationship that will necessarily evolve with such individuals seeking these pastoral services.
 - They must not develop inappropriate relationships with any individual, must always conduct themselves in a professionally supportive manner at all times, must be appropriately discrete, and must never exploit an individual for sexual or other inappropriate purposes.
 - They must respect the rights and protect the welfare of each individual, while at the same time recognizing their legal obligations to share information with others when required.
 - They must never purport to act beyond their level of competency in counseling situations and shall refer individuals to other professionals when appropriate.
 - They should always carefully consider the possible consequences before entering a counseling relationship with someone with whom they have a pre-existing relationship (e.g., employee, professional colleague, friend, or other pre-existing relationship).
 - They must never engage in sexual intimacies with any individual seeking such pastoral services, including consensual and nonconsensual contact, forced physical contact, and inappropriate sexual comments, nor should they ever engage in sexual intimacies with individuals who are close to the individual, such as relatives or friends of the individual.

- They must never permit, cause, encourage or assist in the depiction of or posing for viewing by any person, either in person or by way of graphic means including digital or photographic image of the partially or fully unclothed body of a child, displaying intimate parts, in motion or not in motion, alone or with other persons, or the depiction of a child in apparent observation of sex acts by others in the child's presence;
 - They must never display or distribute to a child any picture, photograph, book, pamphlet, digital image, movie or magazine the cover or content of which is principally made up of descriptions or depictions of sexual acts or contact, or which consists of pictures of nude or partially nude figures posed or presented in a manner which the average person applying contemporary community standards would find, taken as a whole, appeals to the prurient interest.
 - They must assume the full burden of responsibility for establishing and maintaining clear, appropriate boundaries in all counselling and counseling-related relationships and recognize that inappropriate physical contact of any kind (e.g., touching, hugging, holding) with any such individuals can be misunderstood and should be avoided.
 - While respecting applicable confidentiality, sessions should be conducted in visible and accessible settings (with other persons in the building whenever feasible). Sessions should not be held at places or times that would tend to cause confusion about the nature of the relationship with the individual.
 - Whenever good judgement under the circumstances dictate, they should maintain a record of the times and places of sessions with each individual.
8. They must avoid inappropriate communications with any individuals on social media or other means of electronic or video technology (*Cross reference Social Media Guidelines*).
9. Church Personnel must not engage in or encourage physical, psychological, written, social media-based or verbal harassment of individuals with whom they interact and should seek to provide and preserve a professional work environment that is free from intimidation and harassment. (*Cross reference RCAB Sexual Harassment Policy*)
- Harassment encompasses a broad range of physical, written, social media-based, or verbal behavior, including, but not limited to: physical or mental abuse, racial insults, derogatory ethnic slurs, bullying, 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, and the display of offensive materials.

- 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.

10. Church Personnel working with children and youth under age 18 and any individual over the age of 18 who habitually lacks the use of reason (“Protected Individuals”) must maintain an open and trustworthy relationship with them and their parents, guardians or other adults responsible for their welfare, must be aware of their own and others’ vulnerability when working alone with them and should consider a collaborative approach when working with them.

- Physical contact with Protected Individuals can be misunderstood and should occur only when completely nonsexual and otherwise appropriate under the circumstances, and never in private. One-on-one meetings with any Protected Individual are best held in a visible and accessible location, or if that is not feasible, then another Church Personnel should be notified about the meeting. While maintaining the confidentiality of sacramental confession as necessary, it is always a safe practice to have two adults in the area where Protected Individuals are present.
- Church Personnel should always refrain from a) the illegal possession and/or illegal use of drugs and/or alcohol, and b) the use of alcohol when working with Protected Individuals. Adults should never purchase or otherwise provide access to alcohol, drugs, cigarettes, or any inappropriate videos or reading material (such as pornography) to Protected Individuals.
- Other than under emergency circumstances, Church Personnel should not provide shared, private, or overnight accommodation for anyone, 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, if applicable.

Violations/Reporting

Violations of this Code of Conduct should be taken seriously and should be reported to the appropriate civil and ecclesial authorities according to the policies and procedures of the Archdiocese of Boston. There shall be no retaliation for any such reporting. Church Personnel should review and know the contents of the child abuse regulations and reporting requirements for The Commonwealth of Massachusetts and should always follow those mandates. Violations

reported to the Archdiocese of Boston shall be responded to in the appropriate manner and according to established policies.

Confidentiality

The following obligations regarding confidentiality are independent of, and subject at all times to, the confidentiality of the Sacrament of Confession as defined by Canon Law. Under no circumstances whatsoever can there be any disclosure of information received solely through the Sacrament of Confession as defined by Canon Law. Under no circumstances whatsoever can there be any disclosure of information received solely through the Sacrament of Confession.

Information obtained during pastoral counselling or spiritual direction should be confidential, except for compelling professional reasons or as required by law. In all cases, however, sound pastoral judgment and discretion should be exercised. If there is clear and imminent danger to the individual being counselled or to others, Church Personnel may disclose only the information necessary to protect the parties affected and to prevent harm. Before disclosure is made, if feasible, Church Personnel should inform the person being counseled about the disclosure and the potential consequences.

While counseling a Protected Individual, if Church Personnel discover a reasonable cause to believe that there is a serious threat to the Protected Individual's health or welfare, including sexual abuse or neglect, or a disclosure is made indicating that the Protected Individual is being abused in any way, such Church Personnel should contact the appropriate civil and ecclesial authorities and make a report consistent with this Code of Conduct.

Church Personnel Well-being

Church Personnel have the duty to be responsible for their own spiritual, physical, mental, and emotional health. They should be aware of warning signs that indicate potential problems with their own spiritual, physical, mental, and/or emotional health, and seek help immediately whenever they notice behavioral or emotional warning signs in their own professional and/or personal lives.