

Code of Ethics specific to ministry involving minors and vulnerable adults

This Code of Ethics is a formal step in the process of developing the Responsible Pastoral Ministry. It is discussed and signed during stage 8 of the Screening Process: "Orientation and training".

The current Code of Ethics aims to define a general framework outlining expected attitudes and behaviours of pastoral employees and volunteers hereinafter called "Ministers". This Code of Ethics applies to two levels to be described as:

1. Ethics towards the Church
2. Ethics towards people

Ethics towards the Church

The Church is the entire people of God following in the footsteps of Christ. It is also an institution that has its leaders, its structure and its rules of operation. As an institution, the Church is a familiar entity to the Quebec public and is recognized for its mission to promulgate the message of Jesus Christ.

1. Ministers acknowledge that they have a responsibility in the perception the public may have of the Church.
2. Ministers represent the Catholic Church. There is an expectation that they will advocate the teachings of the Church and apply it to their own lives.
3. As part of their pastoral work, Ministers will act to the best of their knowledge and capabilities. They carry out their commitments and treat their colleagues with respect, courtesy, honesty and good faith.
4. Ministers recognize that they are not "owners" of their pastoral work and its fruits. They perform a task that is conferred by their community and to whom they are accountable. They act in concert with other adults at different parish or diocesan levels.
5. Ministers comply with the standards, policies and procedures that are given to them by the parish and / or diocese.
6. Ministers know that they should be in solidarity with decisions or directions taken by the competent bodies.
7. Finally, Ministers know that their commitment must be aligned with their values, their faith and their conscience. Commitment in the Catholic Church is never an obligation nor a constraint.

Ethics towards people

Overall, ethics towards people are based on principles of respect for their physical and psychological integrity. This Code of Ethics recognizes the dignity of the person and his/her potential for growth, and human and spiritual development. At any time, Ministers, as well as persons supervising pastoral ministers, should be aware of the need for the protection and safety of people in their care as well as that of volunteers and staff. Detailed hereunder are the various aspects related to the Minister's task or commitment:

Aspects related to the pastoral role

1. Ministers work in collaboration with the pastor of the community and / or other individuals involved with the pastoral task (PCL, group leader, etc.).
2. Ministers are competent in their duties. They accept and care about their continuing formation in line with the possibilities afforded them.
3. Ministers should respect the different expressions of devotion and spirituality of the Catholic faith.
4. Ministers recognize that faith cannot be measured. They know that there are different stages in the development of faith. They respect the faith journey of the people entrusted to them, and of their parents, and are willing to accompany them.

Aspects related to the principle of inclusion

5. Ministers respect the dignity of every person. Their behaviour and words should demonstrate respect and consideration for people.
6. Ministers establish healthy relationships with young people regardless of their age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status and / or any physical or cognitive deficits. Furthermore, with adults, they do not discriminate on the grounds of marital status, political affiliation or opinions.
7. Ministers ensure that every person has access to resources and services despite handicaps or deficits that may affect some people.

Aspects related to the principle of responsibility and accountability

8. In the performance of their duties, Ministers are answerable to the pastor of the community or the delegated individual responsible for the supervision. They understand and respect the different levels of parish and diocesan authority.
9. Ministers are placed in positions of trust and must merit that trust. They act responsibly and carefully with the material or funds entrusted to them.

Aspects related to the duty of confidentiality

10. Ministers respect the confidentiality of files entrusted to them. When they manage people's contact details, they treat the available data with respect for the privacy of individuals and in accordance with the permissions obtained.
11. Ministers respect the confidentiality inherent to their pastoral care. Always within the context of their mandate or their tasks, they welcome and respect, with discretion, the journey of those they accompany.
12. In the context of their pastoral function, Ministers acknowledge that there are no grounds for keeping a secret. Under no circumstances, should Ministers ever require or demand secrecy from a minor or a vulnerable adult.

Aspects related to the behaviour of Ministers

13. Ministers are aware that their work or their ministry gives them potential influence over the people they accompany. Also, their relationships should be limited to those required by their duties.
14. As expected of a disciple of Christ, Ministers agree to be positive role models for the integration of faith in their daily lives.

15. In addition to the parish or diocesan requirements set at the beginning, Ministers never expect, require or accept any compensation, benefits or services from the people whom they serve.

16. Ministers must demonstrate transparency, and establish and maintain professional relationships with people in their charge. All behaviours, gestures, attitudes or words with flirtatious, erotic or sexual overtones, are prohibited.

17. Ministers know that it is forbidden to promote, purchase or consume alcohol, cigarettes, drugs or other illegal substances in the presence of minors.

18. With regards the administering of medication Ministers strictly follow the instructions of parents, guardians or persons in authority. They make sure to get the proper written consent.

Aspects related to the reference obligation

19. Ministers recognize that their pastoral care has boundaries. They do not substitute parents or qualified professionals (psychologists, doctors, therapists, health professionals, social workers, lawyers, accountants, etc.). In addition, they accept the obligation to report cases of abuse or negligence caused by a third party.

Aspects related to Parish and / or diocesan policies

20. Ministers acknowledge and comply with policies and procedures established by the parish and / or diocese. They pay special attention to policies governing sexual behaviour, human safety, transport and travel, parental consent, and the conditions of insurability. The ratio of minister to persons in their care must be respected.

I have read the Code of Ethics and agree to respect it throughout the entire period in which I exercise my functions.

Signed at _____ on _____

Name of the volunteer / employee _____

Representative of the parish /Office/Service. _____