

EPARCHY OF OUR LADY OF LEBANON OF LOS ANGELES
SAFE ENVIRONMENT PROGRAM

CODE OF ETHICAL CONDUCT FOR CLERGY, CHURCH
PERSONNEL AND VOLUNTEERS WORKING WITH
MINORS AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

Office for the Protection of Minors and Vulnerable Adults

POLICY

It is the policy of the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon of Los Angeles that Clergy, Church Personnel and Volunteers must maintain high standards of ethical conduct and personal integrity in their ministry as it relates to conduct and professional interactions with those who are entrusted to their pastoral care. Furthermore, it is the Eparchy's policy that Clergy, Church Personnel and Volunteers must abide by the teachings of the Catholic Church, lead an ethical life that reflects the precepts of the Gospel and avoid scandals.

GUIDELINES

The Eparchy recognizes that those who minister to minors and vulnerable adults face many decisions that have moral and ethical implications. This policy has been developed to help Clergy, Church personnel, and Volunteers to act in a manner consistent with Church teaching and ethical standards.

1. It is a core Christian belief that the dignity of each person as made in the image and likeness of God must be respected by Clergy, Church Personnel, and Volunteers.
2. Clergy, Church Personnel, and Volunteers must commit in their pastoral approach to protect the most vulnerable in our society, including those who are young, elderly, and those who are living with mental or physical disabilities.
3. Whenever possible adults must avoid situations which will place them in a position to be alone with a minor or vulnerable adult in the rectory or in a closed room. The only exception is the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
4. In meeting and/or counseling situations involving a minor or vulnerable adult, excluding the Sacrament of Reconciliation, the presence or proximity of another adult is required.
5. At least two adults are to be present when a group of minors or vulnerable adults engage in organized events or sports activities.
6. Youth trips of any kind must have a minimum of two adult chaperones.
7. While on youth trips, Clergy, Church Personnel, or Volunteers are never to stay alone overnight in the same motel/hotel room with a minor or minors.
8. The sacristy door is always to be open whenever minors are present within the sacristy.
9. Clergy, Church Personnel, and Volunteers must report any suspected abuse to the proper civil and Eparchial authorities as specified in the Reporting Policy Guidelines of the Eparchy.
10. Careful boundaries concerning physical contact with minors and vulnerable adults must be observed at all times and should only occur under public circumstances.

10.1 Examples of Appropriate Physical Contact

- a. Short hugs (particularly side to side hugs);

- b. Pats on the shoulder or back;
 - c. Handshakes;
 - d. “High-fives”;
 - e. Holding hands while walking with small children;
 - f. Sitting beside small children;
 - g. Kneeling or bending down to hugs with small children; or
 - h. Holdings hands during prayer.
- 10.2 Examples of Appropriate Behavior
- a. Maintaining professional relationship with minors or vulnerable adults and their families;
 - b. Following appropriate instructions of parent or guardian;
 - c. Informing parent or guardian of activities; or
 - d. Acquiring appropriate signed permission forms for all activities.
- 10.3 Examples of Appropriate Verbal Interactions
- a. Positive reinforcement;
 - b. Verbal praise; or
 - c. Appropriate jokes and age-appropriate humor.
- 10.4 Examples of Inappropriate Physical Interactions
- a. Lengthy hugs or forceful frontal hugs;
 - b. Kisses on the mouth;
 - c. Holding minors over four years old on the lap;
 - d. Touching buttocks or genital areas;
 - e. Being in bed with a minor;
 - f. Wrestling;
 - g. Tickling;
 - h. Piggyback rides; or
 - i. Any type of massage given by or to Clergy, Church Personnel, and Volunteers.
- 10.5 Examples of Inappropriate Behavior
- a. Giving personal email, telephone number or residence location to a minor, vulnerable adult or person to whom they minister;
 - b. Allowing minors or vulnerable adults to break rules or violate the law;
 - c. Offering alcohol to minors or illegal drugs to anyone;
 - d. Acquisition of and use of pornographic or other inappropriate reading materials;
 - e. Using audiovisual, internet, music, and printed resources in programs without screening or prior approval of the Eparchial Office for the Protection of Minors;

- f. Using, possessing or being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs in the presence of minors to whom they minister;
- g. Transporting a minor or vulnerable adult alone;
- h. Being the only adult in a bathroom, shower room, locker room, or other dressing areas whenever minors or vulnerable adults are using such facilities;
- i. Giving regular and/or expensive gifts to minors or vulnerable adults;
- j. Giving money to minors or vulnerable adults;
- k. Imposing “secrecy” on minors or vulnerable adults vis-à-vis their parents, legal guardian, police, etc. (e.g. under threat of physical harm, “punishment by God”, etc.);
- l. Violating these guidelines, as well as any sexual misconduct; or
- m. Failing to report these violations to the appropriate Eparchial and/or civil authorities.

10.6 Examples of Inappropriate Verbal Interactions

- a. Swearing;
- b. Telling sexually suggestive jokes;
- c. Shaming;
- d. Comments relating to the physique or body development;
- e. Involving minors or vulnerable adults in personal problems or issues of adults;
- f. Derogatory remarks about a minor or vulnerable adults family; or
- g. Engaging in sexually oriented conversations unless part of a legitimate lesson in an approved program, in accord with Church teachings i.e. theology of the body.

GUIDELINES WITH REGARD TO PASTORAL COUNSELING

1. Pastoral counseling must take place only in the professional portion of a rectory or parish facility, never in the living quarters.
2. Offices or classrooms used for pastoral counseling must have a window in the door, or the door is to be left ajar during the counseling session.
3. Another adult must be in close proximity during any counseling session.
4. Unless the subject matter precludes their presence and/or knowledge, parents or guardians of minors should be made aware of the counseling session.
5. A referral for professional assistance is encouraged if counseling is expected to extend beyond two or three sessions with a minor or vulnerable adult. Evaluation of the situation should be made with the parents or guardians.

6. The counselor is responsible to recognize any personal/physical attraction to or from a client. In such a situation, the client should be immediately referred to another qualified adult or licensed professional.

Supplement

Code of Ethical Conduct for Junior High and High School Youth Volunteering with Minors

All junior high and high school volunteering with minors in parishes in the Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon of Los Angeles are required to take safe environment programs training which covers safe and appropriate ways to interact with others. Following the Code of Ethical Conduct for youth volunteering with minors is a condition on your having the privilege of working with young people.

As a youth volunteer, I will:

1. Respect the adults and supervisors with I interact.
2. Protect and care for all children or other youth in my care.
3. Treat everyone with respect, loyalty, patience, integrity, courtesy and dignity.
4. Take care to be positive, supportive and caring in my speaking, writing and actions with children/youth.
5. Report suspected sexual abuse to my supervisor, parent, or pastor.
6. Maintain appropriate sexual, physical and emotional boundaries with children/youth.
7. Dress appropriately and not wear any clothing with offensive messages or pictures.
8. Avoid situations where I am alone with a child/youth.
9. Seek to affirm good behavior in children/youth and avoid criticism or comparison that could hurt.
10. Be aware that young people can easily become overly attached to a youth leader or an adult. If I sense that is happening, I will not encourage it. I will make my parent, supervisor or pastor aware of it so that he/she can help in the matter.

As a youth volunteer, I will not:

1. Commit an illegal or immoral act.

2. Smoke or use tobacco products in the presence of children/youth.
3. Use, possess or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs at anytime.
4. Verbally threaten or physically abuse anyone.
5. Use profanity in the presence of children/youth.
6. Use discipline that frightens or humiliates a child/youth.
7. Touch a child/youth in a sexual, overly affectionate or other inappropriate manner.
8. Sexually harass, request sexual favors from, or make sexually explicit statements to anyone.
9. Tolerate inappropriate or bullying behavior.
10. Promote any view contrary to the teachings of the Catholic Church.
11. Place myself in a situation where my interaction with a child/children cannot be witnessed.
12. Participate in private visits, parties or other activities with children/youth unless approved by my supervisor.
13. Develop inappropriate relationships with children over the internet or through other forms of communication unless approved by my supervisor.
14. Accept gifts from or give gifts to children/youth in my care without approval from my supervisor.

CODE OF ETHICAL CONDUCT AGREEMENT FORM

I have read the Code of Ethical Conduct for Church Personnel and Volunteers of the Eparchy, and understand its contents. I accept that I am bound to comply with this Code of Ethical Conduct and will remain in compliance with said code, policies, and procedures listed in this document.

I understand the Code of Ethical Conduct is administered under the authority of the Eparchy and that a violation of the Code subjects me to the process of the Eparchy to be provided in the event of disciplinary action.

The Eparchy reserves the right to change this Code of Ethical Conduct at a future date, so that it remains in compliance with Eparchial policies and procedures.

_____ Printed Name

_____ Name of Parish, Other
Institution

_____ Signature

_____ Date

I expect my child to abide by this code of conduct.

Parent or legal guardian's (signature) for youth under age 18