



Diocese of Tyler Ethics and Integrity for Church Personnel

Promulgated by Most Rev. Joseph E. Strickland

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ETHICS AND INTEGRITY POLICY AND GUIDELINES DOCUMENT REVISION LISTING

A. Revision Date: August 1, 2003

Modified Section 6, Part C, #2

Modified Section 8, Part A, #4

Added Appendix F

Modified Appendix A: *Diocese of Tyler Application for Employees and Volunteers*

B. Revision Date August 1, 2015

Reissued Policy and updated Guidelines under Most Rev. Joseph Strickland

Updated references to reflect new name of Texas Department of Family and Protective Services

Included email address for Promoter of Justice with phone number

Added 'Boundary Violations' explicitly under II B

Added Section 'D' on Online and Electronic Contact with Minors to section III

Added prohibition of 'Caressing, stroking, or other 'wandering' of hands' explicitly to VI C3

Updated Appendix A with the Background Check application in use by Diocese and eliminated reference to a standard written application for Church Personnel

Updated Appendix F: Incorporated text from the Charter as revised June 2011.

Added Appendix G: incorporating other policies implementing the Charter

Added Appendix H: Social Media Policy



I. POLICY ON CHURCH PERSONNEL CONDUCT

The Diocese of Tyler expects all Church personnel (whether priest, deacon, vowed religious, paid employee, or volunteer) to conduct their lives and ministry (whether in a parish, mission, Catholic School, or other Catholic institution or ministry) with ethics and integrity. While Vatican II calls all baptized and confirmed Christians to holiness, the obligation upon Church personnel is increased because of their education and position. They should lead by an example that will inspire others to follow Jesus more closely in their life and they should always safeguard the well-being of others. Ethics and integrity in ministry require “doing what is right” rather than simply not breaking the rules

All Church personnel are to be committed to a life of ethics and integrity and formally commit themselves to the Code of Ethics and Integrity for the Conduct of Church Personnel in the Diocese of Tyler.

All Church personnel will cooperate with criminal background checks and will report promptly if they are ever accused, arrested, fined, or convicted of any charge involving abuse of a minor or an adult.

A Promoter of Justice will be appointed who is to receive concerns regarding possible Church personnel who violate the Code of Ethics and Integrity, Guidelines for Ethical behavior, commonly accepted professional or social conduct, or any behavior that places the people of God and most especially children at risk. Reporting or questions can be made to the pastor, principal, head of the agency, or to the Promoter of Justice or to the Bishop. **The Promoter of Justice can be reached at 903.266.2159 or promoter@dioceseoftyler.org**

A Review Board of lay persons will be established to promote accountability in responding to cases of possible misconduct by Church personnel, by reviewing cases and giving advice to the Diocese through the office of the Judicial Vicar. In addition to meeting to review specific allegations of clergy misconduct with a minor, the board will meet at least once a year to review policy and procedures.

The Diocese will maintain written guidelines to further insure that behavior of Church personnel is guided by ethics and integrity for: counseling situations, ministry with minors, reporting of concerns, social networking, and other areas as seems warranted.

The Diocese of Tyler is committed to both justice and openness. The documents to implement and support this policy will be publicly available on the website (www.dioceseoftyler.org) and by request from the Tribunal.

This policy and the accompanying guidelines reaffirm with minor updating the policy signed by Bishop Corrada on the 27th day of February 2003. This revision signed July 15, 2015 and is effective August 1, 2015.

Most Reverend Joseph Strickland



Code of Ethics and Integrity for Conduct of Church Personnel in the Diocese of Tyler

As part of our witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, it is imperative that all Church personnel in the Diocese consistently act with ethics and integrity. People of all ages deserve to be respected and protected in their relationships with Church personnel. Defining healthy and safe relationships is not meant, in any way, to undermine the strength and importance of appropriate 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 through sincere and genuine relationships.

All Church personnel are asked to carefully consider each statement in this Code of Ethics and Integrity and to sign their name to demonstrate their commitment to observing this Code in their life and ministry in the Diocese of Tyler.

1. Church personnel will exhibit the highest Christian ethical standards and personal integrity.
2. Church personnel will conduct themselves in a manner that is consistent with the discipline and teachings of the Catholic Church.
3. Church personnel will foster a professional work environment that is free from physical, psychological, written, or verbal intimidation or harassment.
4. Church personnel will act professionally in all counseling, advising, or spiritual direction relationships protecting the well-being of the other party at all times.
5. Church personnel will not physically, sexually or emotionally abuse or neglect a minor or an adult.
6. Church personnel will share concerns about suspicious or inappropriate behavior with their pastor, their principal, the Promoter of Justice, or the Bishop.
7. Church personnel will report any suspected abuse or neglect of a minor to the **Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (1-800-252-5400) or www.txabusehotline.org. In case of an EMERGENCY, call 911.**
8. Church personnel will accept their personal responsibility to protect minors and adults from all forms of abuse.
9. Church personnel will guide their behaviors by this Code, civil and canon law, policies of the Diocese of Tyler, particularly the diocesan guidelines for Ethics and Integrity in Ministry.

I have read, understand, and commit myself to living and ministering according to this Code.

_____ (Name) _____ (Parish, School, Agency)

_____ (Date) (NOTE: Keep one signed copy, return other to the Diocese.)

Concerns about violations of this Code can be reported to the Promoter of Justice at 903.266.2159 or promoter@dioceseoftyler.org



Decree Promulgating the Guidelines for the Conduct of Church Personnel

As Bishop, I reaffirm the commitment of the Diocese of Tyler to consistently act in a way that protects children, minors and adults who have any dealings with the Church or any Catholic agencies operating in our Diocese.

These updated Guidelines will serve to direct Church personnel and the Diocese in living out of the commitment to Ethics and Integrity as outlined in the Policy on Conduct of Church Personnel and as agreed to in the Code of Ethics and Integrity.

These updated Guidelines are to be implemented effective August 1, 2015.

Most Reverend Joseph Strickland



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 Diocese of Tyler.
2. Priests who are members of religious institutes assigned to pastoral work in the Diocese.
3. Priests of other jurisdictions who are assigned to pastoral work in this Diocese; priests seeking incardination in this Diocese; 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 Diocese.
5. Permanent deacons of other jurisdictions who have canonical faculties to function in this Diocese.
6. Seminarians and those enrolled in the Permanent Diaconate Formation Program.
7. Men and Women in consecrated life working for the Diocese, its parishes, schools or agencies. All members of a community of diocesan right or of a nascent community
8. Individual lay missionaries who are associated with the Diocese.
9. All paid personnel whether employed in areas of ministry or other kinds of services by the Diocese, its parishes, schools or other agencies.
10. All volunteers who could reasonably be expected to come into direct contact with minors or vulnerable adults while engaged in volunteer work in connection with the Diocese, its parishes, schools or other agencies. This includes any person who enters into or offers himself/herself for a Church related service of his/her own free will.

B. Types of Misconduct

For the purpose of this policy, misconduct includes the five 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 that creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment.
3. Exploitation. Taking unfair advantage of a counseling or pastoral relationship for the benefit of the church personnel.
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.
5. Boundary violations: Failure to observe and respect either the common boundaries established for church personnel, or the personal boundaries of individuals.



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 honor and dignity of the human person and so goes against the discipline and teachings of the Church. Immoral conduct may result in an offense against the dignity of another person, scandal to the faithful, and 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. Scandal is grave when given by those who by nature or office are obliged to teach and educate others (Catechism of the Catholic Church, n. 2284-5). An occasion of scandal in the Church disheartens the faithful and discredits the proclamation of the Gospel.
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.

B. Standards of the Diocese

It is fundamental to the mission of the Diocese of Tyler 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:

1. Formally rejecting the teachings of the Catholic Church or the Christian way of life.
2. Exhibiting actions that are disruptive to the ministry and public worship.
3. Procuring or participating in abortion, homicide or euthanasia.
4. Possessing pornographic materials.
5. Engaging in adultery, flagrant promiscuity or illicit co-habitation.
6. Abusing alcohol, drugs or gambling.
7. Stealing or any other form of theft, including misappropriation of Church funds.
8. Sexual harassment, exploitation or abuse.
9. Physical assault and fighting.
10. Harming 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.



IV. PREVENTION OF HARASSMENT: GUIDELINES FOR PROFESSIONALISM

A. Definitions

Harassment encompasses a broad range of physical, written, or verbal behavior that includes, but is not limited to, the following:

1. Physical or mental abuse;
2. Racial insults;
3. Derogatory ethnic slurs;
4. Unwelcome sexual advances or touching;
5. Sexual comments or sexual jokes;
6. Requests for sexual favors used as a condition of employment, or to affect other personnel decisions, such as promotion or compensation.
7. Display of offensive materials.
8. Harassment is an offensive use of power where the purpose or the effect is to create a hostile or intimidating work environment.
9. 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 Diocese

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 foster a professional work environment that is free from physical, psychological, written, or verbal intimidation or harassment.



V. PREVENTION OF EXPLOITATION: GUIDELINES FOR COUNSELING RELATIONSHIPS

A. Definitions

1. Counseling as used in these guidelines concerns non-clinical conversations that occur in a pastoral or ministerial setting, such as reflective listening, advising, or spiritual direction.
2. Exploitation in the context of this policy refers to Church personnel taking unfair advantage of the counseling relationship for the benefit of the counselor.
3. Sexual exploitation is sexual contact between Church personnel and the recipient of his or her counseling services, regardless of who initiates the contact.
4. Conflicts of interest exist when Church personnel take advantage of counseling relationships in order to further their own personal, religious, political, or business interests.
5. Church personnel are expected to avoid situations and conduct that are or may give the appearance of exploitation or conflicts of interest.

B. Standards of the Diocese

1. Church personnel shall not step beyond their competence in counseling situations and shall refer to other professionals when appropriate.
2. Church personnel must never engage in sexual intimacies with the persons they counsel. This includes consensual contact, forced physical contact, and sexually explicit conversations not related to counseling issues.
3. Church personnel shall not engage in sexual intimacies with relatives, friends, or other individuals who are close to those they minister to, when there is a risk of exploitation or potential harm to the person. Church personnel should presume that a potential exploitation or harm exists in such intimate relationships.
4. Church personnel assume the full burden for setting and maintaining clear, appropriate boundaries in all counseling and counseling-related relationships.
5. Sessions should be conducted in appropriate settings at appropriate times and should not be held at places or times that would tend to cause confusion about the nature of the relationship for the person being counseled.
6. No sessions should be conducted in private living quarters

C. Confidentiality

1. Church personnel shall always act to safeguard the well being of minors and to observe state laws concerning reporting of suspected abuse.
2. Information disclosed to Church personnel during the course of counseling, advising, or spiritual direction shall be held in the strictest confidence possible.



3. In accordance with the norm of canon law (c.983), the sacramental seal is inviolable; therefore, it is absolutely forbidden for a confessor to betray the seal of confession in any way and for any reason. This is applicable whether the penitent is living or dead.
4. Church personnel should discuss the nature of confidentiality and its limitations with each person in counseling, as appropriate.
5. Information obtained in the course of sessions shall be confidential, except for compelling professional reasons or as required by law.
6. If there is clear and imminent danger to the client or to others, the Church personnel are to disclose the information necessary to protect the parties involved and to prevent harm.
7. Before disclosure is made, if feasible, the Church personnel should inform the person being counseled about the disclosure and the potential consequences.
8. The Church personnel providing pastoral counseling services or spiritual direction should keep minimal records of sessions.
9. With the exception of knowledge gained in the Sacrament of Penance, knowledge that arises from professional contact may be used in teaching, delivering homilies, or other public presentations only when effective measures have been taken to absolutely safeguard both the individual's identity and the confidentiality of the disclosures. In the rare event that such disclosures are used, good pastoral judgment is of the utmost importance when making decisions about the use of information in public ministry.
10. If Church personnel discover, while counseling a minor, that there is a serious threat to the welfare of the minor and that communication of confidential information to a parent or legal guardian is essential to the child's health and well-being, the pastoral counselor or spiritual directors should disclose only the information necessary to protect the health and well-being of the minor.

D. Conflicts of Interest

1. Church personnel should avoid situations that might present a conflict of interest between a counselor and a person being counseled. Even the appearance of a conflict of interest can call integrity and professional conduct into question.
2. If a conflict of interest exists or arises, Church personnel should inform all parties.
3. Resolution of the issues must protect the person being counseled.
4. Church personnel must establish clear, appropriate boundaries with anyone with whom they have a business, professional, or social relationship.



VI. PREVENTION OF ABUSE: GUIDELINES FOR MINISTRY WITH MINORS

Abuse of minors is contrary to the teachings of the Church and is prohibited by the Diocese. Church personnel have a responsibility to actively protect minors from all forms of abuse.

In response to the call by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops to break the “cycle of abuse,” the Diocese of Tyler adopted the following child abuse education and prevention policies. The intent of these policies is to have “zero tolerance” for abuse of minors.

A. Definitions

1. A minor is defined as anyone under the age of 18. For the purposes of this policy, the term “minors” also includes adults who would be considered uniquely vulnerable to danger of abuse because of physical or mental disabilities.
2. Physical abuse is non-accidental injury that is intentionally inflicted upon a minor.
3. Sexual abuse is any contact of a sexual nature that occurs between a minor and an adult.
 - a. This includes any activity that is meant to arouse or gratify the sexual desires of the adult.
 - b. This includes any intentional contact with the private parts of either the adult or child.
4. Emotional abuse is mental or emotional injury to a minor that results in an observable and material impairment in the minor’s growth, development or psychological functioning.
5. Neglect is the failure to provide for a minor’s basic needs or the failure to protect a minor from harm.

B. Standards of the Diocese

The following guidelines are intended to assist Church personnel in making decisions about interactions with minors in Church sponsored and affiliated programs. They are not designed or intended to address interactions within families. For clarification of any guideline or to inquire about behaviors not addressed here, contact your pastor, agency director, principal or the **Promoter of Justice, at 903.266.2159 or promoter@dioceseoftyler.org**

1. Abuse of minors is contrary to the teachings of the Church and is prohibited by the Diocese. Church personnel have a responsibility to actively protect minors from all forms of abuse.
2. All activities involving minors shall have sufficient adult supervision to maintain the safe environment of the group. At all times a minimum of two adults should be present for any activity.
3. Church personnel are responsible for releasing minors in their care only to parents, legal guardians, or other persons designated by parents or legal guardians at the close of services or activities. In the event that Church personnel are uncertain of the propriety of releasing a



minor, they should immediately locate or contact their immediate supervisor before releasing the child.

4. Church personnel should report uncontrollable or unusual behavior of minors immediately to parents.
5. Church personnel are prohibited from the use, possession, or being under the influence of alcohol or any illegal drugs while working with minors.
6. Church personnel may occasionally be in a position to provide transportation for minors. The following guidelines should be strictly observed when Church personnel are involved in the transportation of minors:
 - a. Ordinarily, minors should never be transported without written permission.
 - b. Minors should be transported directly to their destination. No unauthorized stops should be made.
 - c. Church personnel should avoid unnecessary and/or inappropriate physical contact with minors while in vehicles.
 - d. Drivers who are assigned to transport minors must be at least 25 years old.
7. Church personnel are prohibited from speaking to minors in a way that is or could be construed by a reasonable observer such as harsh, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating. In addition, church personnel are required to refrain from swearing in the presence of minors.
8. Church personnel are prohibited from engaging in any sexually oriented conversations with minors. However, it is expected that from time to time youth ministry may provide with parental consent lessons and discussions for teenagers that address human sexuality issues related to dating and sex. These lessons will convey to youth the Church's views on these topics. If youth have further questions not answered or addressed by their individual teachers they should be referred to their parents or guardians for clarification or counseling. In addition, Church personnel are not permitted to discuss with minors their own sexual activities.
9. Church personnel should never be nude in the presence of minors in their care.
10. Changing and showering facilities or arrangements for adults should be separate from facilities or arrangements for minors.
11. Church personnel are prohibited from possessing any sexually oriented or morally inappropriate printed materials (magazines, cards, videos, films, clothing etc.) on Church property or in the presence of minors.
12. Church personnel are prohibited from sleeping in the same beds, sleeping bags or small tents with minors unless the adult is an immediate family member of the minor.
13. As provided for in the Supplementary Norms for Clergy and Religious, houses used for residences of priests and religious are exclusively for the use of the priest or religious. With the exception of occasional visits from immediate family members, minors, and non-family members are not permitted to be overnight guests in the residence of a priest or religious.



C. Physical Contact with Minors

The Diocese of Tyler has implemented a physical contact policy that will promote a positive, nurturing environment for our children and youth ministries while protecting our children and our Church personnel from misunderstandings. The following guidelines are to be carefully followed by all Church personnel working in children and youth programs.

1. Church personnel are prohibited from using physical discipline in any way for behavior management of minors. No form of physical discipline is acceptable. This prohibition includes spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, or any other physical force as retaliation or correction for inappropriate behaviors by minors.
2. Appropriate affection between Church personnel and minors is important for a child's development and a positive part of Church life and ministry. The following forms of affection are regarded as appropriate examples for most Church sponsored and affiliated programs and can be used in moderation:

Side hugs.

Shoulder to shoulder or "temple" hugs.

Pats on the shoulder or back.

Handshakes.

"High-fives" and hand slapping.

Verbal praise.

Touching hands, faces, shoulders and arms of minors.

Arms around shoulders.

Holding hands while walking with small children.

Sitting beside small children.

Kneeling or bending down for hugs with small children.

Holding hands during prayer.

Pats on the head when culturally appropriate. (For example, this gesture should typically be avoided in some Asian communities and other culturally diverse ethnic communities.)



3. Adults to initiate inappropriate contact with minors have often used some forms of physical affection. In order to maintain the safest possible environment for minors, the following are examples of affection that are not to be used in Church sponsored and affiliated programs:

Inappropriate or lengthy embraces.

Kisses

Caressing, stroking, or other 'wandering' of hands

Holding minors over two years old on the lap.

Touching bottoms, chests or genital areas.

Showing affection in isolated areas of the program such as bedrooms, closets, staff only areas or other private rooms.

Sleeping or lying down with a child.

Touching knees or legs of minors.

Wrestling with minors.

Tickling minors.

Piggyback rides.

Any type of massage given by minor to adult.

Any type of massage given by adult to minor.

Any form of unwanted affection or physical contact.

Compliments that relate to physique or body development.

Compliments that make people uncomfortable.

D. Online and Electronic Contact with Minors

We live in a world in which contact between adults and minors is not limited to the physical world, but in the virtual world as well. The need to respect appropriate boundaries of physical contact must be extended to all virtual contacts, be it cell phones, texting, chatting, websites or one of the ever expanding number of social media services. Therefore, the Diocese of Tyler has implemented a social media policy (see Appendix H) that will promote a positive, nurturing environment for our children and youth ministries while protecting our children and our Church personnel from potential harm. The following guidelines are to be carefully followed when using social media by all Church personnel working in children and youth programs.

1. Church personnel are to observe in electronic communications/contacts the same respect for appropriate boundaries as in a physical setting. Because of the nature of these communication tools, there must be an intentional limitation imposed by Church Personnel on the time of day and the frequency of communications.



2. Church Personnel are responsible for their online presence
 - a. Volunteers and employees represent the Church in the online world in a similar way to their presence in the physical world. The online world however provides even less privacy and realistically one must anticipate that all electronic communications are likely to become public and engage others as if the information is public.
 - b. Clergy and Religious, by their state in life, are public persons and are naturally seen to always be representing the Church. As a result, Priests, Deacons and Religious need to be very diligent in their presence on social media to maintain appropriate decorum. Permanent Deacons who may legitimately have personal or profession social media sites that are not part of their Church ministry, must still refrain from content or actions inappropriate for a Minister of the Gospel.
 - c. Instituted Acolytes, and people in formation for Holy Orders or Consecrated Life should also recognize their special connection to the Church and so be very attentive to their social media presence.
3. Parents of minors have a right to know whenever a Church Personnel has contact with their child/youth.
 - a. Parents must be notified and provide consent to the methods of communication which are used in each particular ministry and must be granted access to all communications when requested.
 - b. Prior to children entering 9th grade, communications should be addressed to their parents. Social Media or other electronic communications may not be used to communicate directly with children before they enter 9th grade.
 - c. Private messaging between minors and adults is prohibited. Adults should make parents or other ACS trained adults aware of the communication. Adults could also include at least one other adult or send a group message in order to remove the privacy of the communication.
4. Appropriate ministerial boundaries must be observed, similar to physical interactions
 - a. Social media should be used for ministerial purposes, this may include providing information about events as well as formative content.
 - b. Communications should be limited to between 8 AM and 9 PM and should not frequent any particular minors.
 - c. Church personnel should limit the access of minors into their personal life, particularly when adult behavior or dialog may be visible. This includes the access to images of adults consuming alcohol, smoking or wearing immodest clothing. This also includes written content that is not intended for minors or may be considered scandalous.
 - d. Church personnel should not engage minors socially. All interaction should be with the purpose of ministry, and based on the student's needs, not an adults needs. Adults should set appropriate boundaries on time of day and frequency of interaction.



- e. Counseling of minors through social communications is discouraged. In the event a situation arises where there is a counseling conversations it should be shared with a supervisor and the Youth Minister, Faith Formation Leader, or Pastor. A copy of such conversations should be kept on file for your personal records.
- f. Private Social groups formed by minors for their own gatherings, that are not functions of the Church group, should not be joined by Church Personnel.
- g. Adults should not initiate friend request, or follow young people on social media.
- h. If a minor is inclined not to respect appropriate boundaries either by contacting outside of appropriate time, contacting frequently, or seeking to discuss inappropriate topics, the Church Personnel should promptly notify the ministerial leaders and get another adult assigned to work with the minor. The parents/guardian should also be notified.

Please contact the Communication Office or the Promoter of Justice for assistance in using social media in a manner respectful of the dignity of others and the integrity of the Church or find more information in the full social media policy found online at www.dioceseoftyler.org

E. Screening of Church Personnel who Work with Minors

1. All applicants for Church personnel positions working with minors will be required to complete the following without exception:
 - a. A standard application that includes a release of information to conduct background checks (See Appendix A). Applicants will also be required to undergo training for the Ethics and Integrity program and then read and sign a Code of Ethics for Church personnel (See Appendix B).
 - b. Criminal records check for the State of Texas which shall also include other state and national records as provided by the online service provider.
2. For employees and volunteers who have worked in the parish or school for two years or more, the application and criminal records check will complete their screening process.
3. Additional screening procedures, such as reference checks and face-to-face interviews are recommended for new applicants as well as existing employees and volunteers with who have held their positions for less than two years.
4. Volunteers for programs working with minors in parishes should be registered members of the parish for at least six months before being placed in a volunteer position with minors. After careful consultation, exceptions may be made for parents of minors in the specific programs in which their child or children are participating.
5. Criminal records checks will be conducted prior to the beginning of employment or volunteer ministry, and repeated as required by the Diocese to maintain a safe environment. Failure to pass the background check may result in immediate termination without compensation.



6. Church personnel who transfer within the Diocese are required to request in writing for their personnel files to be transferred to the new parish or school.
7. Clergy seeking to serve in the Diocese shall complete this screening process (Training, Commitment to the Code, and background check) prior to being given faculties for ministry.

F. Training for Church Personnel who Work with Minors

1. Church personnel are required to review the Diocese of Tyler Policies on Ethics and Integrity in Ministry and agree to comply with Diocesan Code of Ethics (See Appendix B).
2. Members of the clergy, religious, employees and all volunteers who work with minors will be required to participate in training that addresses their role in protecting minors in the Diocese of Tyler.

G. Supervision of Programs that Involve Minors

1. Parents are encouraged to be a part of any and all services and programs in which their children are involved in the Diocese of Tyler. Parents have an open invitation to observe programs and activities in which their children are involved. However, parents who desire to participate in or have continuous, ongoing contact with their child's programs in the Church are required to complete the volunteer application process.
2. Programs for minors should not be sponsored or administered by only one adult without supervision.
3. Church personnel under the age of 21 must work under the direction of an adult supervisor.
4. Church personnel in leadership roles must be aware of all programs for minors that are sponsored by a parish or school. A list of these programs should be maintained in the parish or school office and include activities, purpose, sponsors or coordinators of the programs, meeting times and locations. Leaders are encouraged to examine these programs and consider whether they have adequate supervision.
5. Because new programs for minors are far more likely to have difficulties than established ones, individual Church personnel should not be permitted to develop new programs for minors without proper consent and review within the parish or school. Requests to develop new programs should be submitted in writing to the pastoral council. The pastoral council should consider whether the plan for a new program includes adequate adult supervision and will be structured to comply with the guidelines.



VII. GUIDELINES FOR REPORTING OF INCIDENTS, ALLEGATIONS AND CONCERNS

A. *Reporting of Immoral Conduct, Harassment or Exploitation*

Church personnel have a duty to report violations of the Policies on Ethics and Integrity in Ministry to appropriate parties:

1. When there is an indication of illegal actions by Church personnel, Church personnel will notify the police or other civil authorities immediately. Although it is not a legal requirement, the Diocese of Tyler is better able to respond promptly if it is informed directly. Church personnel are encouraged to inform the **Promoter of Justice, at 903.266.2159.**
2. When there is an indication that the actions of Church personnel member may constitute immoral conduct, harassment or exploitation, report to one of the following:
 - a. The pastor of the parish; who will immediately report same to the Diocese
 - b. The principal of the school; who will immediately report same to the Diocese
 - c. **The Promoter of Justice, at 903.266.2159**
 - d. **The Bishop at 903.534.1077**
 - e. Submit an anonymous, specific and verifiable letter to the Promoter of Justice or the Bishop at 1015 ESE Loop 323 Tyler, TX 75701; or promoter@diocesesoftyler.org
3. Allegations of immoral conduct, harassment or exploitation will be taken seriously and Diocesan procedures will be followed to protect the rights of all involved.
4. If there are questions about the applicability of these policies, consult the **Promoter of Justice, 903.266.2159, or the Tribunal 903.534.1077 ext 188.**
5. If infractions of Diocesan policy are confirmed, Church personnel will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination and possible prosecution. Disciplinary action will follow the Progressive Discipline Process outlined in Section VIII of these policies.



B. Reporting of Suspicious or Inappropriate Behaviors with Minors

1. Because the Diocese of Tyler is dedicated to maintaining a zero tolerance for abuse, it is imperative for every member of this community to participate actively in the protection of minors. In the event that Church personnel observe any suspicious or inappropriate behaviors on the part of other Church personnel, it is their personal responsibility to immediately report their observations. Examples of suspicious or inappropriate behaviors would be policy violations, neglectful supervision, and poor role-modeling, seeking private time with minors, taking minors on overnight trips without other adults, swearing or making suggestive comments to minors.
2. Inappropriate behaviors or policy violations that relate to interactions with minors should be reported to one of the following:
 - a. The pastor of the parish; who will immediately report same to the Diocese
 - b. The principal of the school; who will immediately report same to the Diocese
 - c. **The Promoter of Justice, at 903.266.2159; promoter@dioceseoftyler.org**
 - d. **The Bishop at 903.534.1077 ext 132**
 - e. Submit an anonymous, specific and verifiable letter to the Promoter of Justice or the Bishop at 1015 ESE Loop 323 Tyler, TX 75701.
3. All reports of suspicious or inappropriate behavior with minors will be taken seriously. Diocesan procedures will be carefully followed to ensure that the rights of all those involved are protected. (See Process for Responding, Appendix C).
4. When suspicious or inappropriate behaviors are reported to a pastor or a principal, he or she is asked to gather additional information about the nature of the concern and contact the Promoter of Justice (903.266.2159), for consultation and direction of how to proceed. To assist in collecting the information gathering and transferring it to the Diocese, a Notice of Concern (See Appendix D) may be completed and faxed to the **confidential fax line in the Bishop's office, 903.939.1037.**
5. If at any point in gathering information about suspicious or inappropriate behavior, a concern arises that there is a possibility of abuse or a crime, the local police or the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (1-800-252-5400) or www.txabusehotline.org will be contacted and a report filed. The Diocese will cooperate with the civil authorities in any investigation. See Section VII C below for additional procedures in the event that there is a suspicion of abuse of minors.
6. If at any point, policy violations with minors are confirmed, Church personnel will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination and possible prosecution. Disciplinary action will follow the Progressive Discipline Process outlined in Section VIII of these policies.



C. Reporting Abuse of Minors

1. In accordance with Texas Law, any citizen who has cause to believe a minor may have been or is being abused must report his or her suspicions to civil authorities. Emergencies should be reported to 911. Non-emergencies can be reported to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services: 24 hour hotline: (1-800-252-5400) or www.txabusehotline.org. The *Notice of Concern* form (See Appendix D) may be used to maintain documentation of the report.
2. Failure to report suspected abuse of a minor in Texas is a crime punishable by fine, imprisonment or both. Reports may be made confidentially or anonymously. A person who mistakenly reports suspected abuse is immune from civil or criminal liability as long as the report was made in good faith and without malice.
3. In addition to reporting to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, Church personnel are strongly encouraged to also report any suspected or known abuse of minors that may have been perpetrated by Church personnel directly to the Diocese of Tyler, so that immediate and proper steps may be taken to ensure the safety of alleged victims and to initiate an appropriate pastoral response. Reports of suspected or known abuse may be made confidentially to any of the following:
 - a. The pastor of the parish; who will immediately report same to the Diocese
 - b. The principal of the school; who will immediately report same to the Diocese
 - c. **The Promoter of Justice, at 903.266.2159; promoter@dioceseoftyler.org**
 - d. **The Bishop at 903.534.1077 ext 132.**
 - e. Submit an anonymous, specific and verifiable letter to the Promoter of Justice or the Bishop at 1015 ESE Loop 323 Tyler, TX 75701.
4. When suspicious behavior, inappropriate behavior or suspected abuse is reported to the civil authorities, the Diocese of Tyler cooperate fully with their inquiry and any investigation and will not conduct a further investigation without approval from the civil authorities.
5. If an investigation by civil authorities results in a finding of “unable to determine” or that no civil violation seems to have occurred, an investigation within the Diocese will be initiated to determine if a violation of diocesan policy or Church law may have occurred.
6. If the situation does not require civil investigation, the Diocese will initiate an internal investigation within 24 hours.
7. During investigations by civil authorities or internal investigations, the Church personnel who are the subject of the investigation will be temporarily removed from Church responsibilities and duties.
8. Internal investigations will be documented. Documentation will be maintained in the diocesan office.



9. Internal investigations will follow Diocesan procedures.
10. At the conclusion of an internal investigation, the Promoter of Justice will submit a recommendation for action to the Bishop.
11. If abuse of a minor is confirmed, Church personnel will be subject to termination in accordance with Guidelines for Progressive Discipline Procedure of the Diocese, which provides for termination in cases of serious and major offenses. If abuse by a member of the clergy is confirmed, procedures will follow the appropriate norms of canon law defined in the Supplementary Norms for Clergy and Religious.
12. If evidence of abuse of a minor is discovered through an internal investigation, the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services and the police will be re-contacted and a follow-up report will be submitted.

D. Reporting Past Abuse by Church Personnel, Particularly Priests or Deacons

In any case in which a crime is believed to have been committed, the civil authorities should be contacted.

All cases of possible past abuse by Church Personnel will be investigated. The concern of the Diocese of Tyler is that those hurting, as a result of possible abuse, receive our pastoral care and, if necessary, appropriate professional care. While this is the case for anyone hurt by the conduct of someone working in the name of the Church, it is even more imperative for those harmed by a priest or deacon.

Cases of past abuse will be handled in conformity with the current policy and guidelines of the Diocese of Tyler, with canon law, and the Essential Norms for Diocesan/Eparchial Policies Dealing with Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Priests and Deacons.

Concerns of possible past abuse should be directed to the **Promoter of Justice at 903.266.2159, promoter@dioceseoftyler.org** or to the **Bishop at 903.534.1077 ext 132.**



VIII. GUIDELINES FOR PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE PROCEDURE

A. *Standards of the Diocese*

1. It is the policy of the Diocese of Tyler to maintain the highest quality personnel who exhibit exemplary conduct and superior performance. To this end, all Church personnel are to be informed by their supervisors of what is expected of them in the performance of their roles, how to conform to Diocesan policies.
2. When Church personnel performance or conduct does not meet the expectations of the Diocese of Tyler, it is the responsibility of supervisors to address the problem(s) in a timely and equitable manner. The procedure would normally include four steps: 1) Counseling, 2) Formal Warning, 3) Probation and 4) Termination.
3. All documents associated with the Progressive Discipline Procedure are to be retained in the personnel file of the Church personnel. In cases regarding Ethics and Integrity Formal Warning Documents can also be forwarded to **the Promoter of Justice either promoter@dioceseoftyler.org or on the confidential fax line, 903.939.1037.**
4. The Promoter of Justice serves as a resource in matters regarding Ethics and Integrity. He maybe contacted for advice in dealing with concerns of Ethics and Integrity. In more serious cases the supervisor should consult with the Promoter of Justice to help guide the response.
5. The Business Manager for the Diocese of Tyler also serves as a resource for matters involving employees. The Business Manager should always be consulted in cases which are likely to result in termination. Consultation with the Business Manager is expected before any termination.
6. Procedures for progressive discipline of clergy will be consistent with these policies and the appropriate norms of canon law defined in the Supplementary Norms for Clergy and Religious. (See Appendix F).

B. *Steps in Progressive Discipline*

1. **Counseling.** A large portion of performance and conduct deficiencies are identifiable and in many cases, can be addressed and resolved through informal counseling between the supervisor and the Church personnel. Effective counseling includes the following:
 - a. Clear identification of the problem with specific examples,
 - b. A mutually agreed upon action plan to resolve the problem,
 - c. Documentation of the counseling and communication, which is kept in the personnel file of the individual who receives counseling.



2. **Formal Warning.** Formal Warnings should be initiated when 1) counseling fails to resolve the problem, or 2) the problem is of such a serious nature that immediate and formal resolution is required.
 - a. Formal Warnings should be in writing and may follow the format provided in the “Formal Warning Document” (See Appendix E). The document should include:
 - i) A specific statement of the problem.
 - ii) Reference to any counseling that was attempted.
 - iii) A statement of the policy that was violated.
 - iv) A summary of corrective actions to be taken.
 - v) A statement of the consequences of failure to resolve the problem(s).
 - vi) A reasonable timeframe for resolution (often 15 to 30 days).
 - b. Formal Warnings should be presented at a meeting with the supervisor.
 - c. Church personnel should be required to sign the Formal Warning Document.
 - d. Formal Warning Documents and all accompanying materials should be stored in the personnel file of the individual who receives the warning.
 - e. If Formal Warnings relate to ethics and integrity in ministry, Formal Warning Documents may be faxed to the Promoter of Justice on the **confidential fax line 903.939.1037**.
3. **Probation.** Probation is the third step in the Progressive Discipline Procedure prior to dismissal.
 - a. Probation should be initiated when a warning process has not succeeded or when the misconduct is such that a second infraction would clearly warrant termination.
 - b. The probation process consists of the same elements as the formal warning process with an emphasis on the fact that failure to meet the conditions of the probation will result in termination if significant improvement is not demonstrated consistently in the probation period (typically 30 days).
 - c. A second Formal Warning Document should be completed when the Church personnel is placed on probation.
 - d. At the successful conclusion of probation, Church personnel should be notified in writing that he or she is no longer in a probationary status.
 - e. Any documentation of probation that relates to ethics and integrity in ministry may be faxed to the Promoter of Justice on the **confidential fax line 903.939.1037**.
4. **Termination.** Termination should be administered under one of two conditions:
 - a. Failure to improve conduct during the steps of Progressive Discipline, or
 - b. Serious and major offenses, including but not limited to, violations of the Policies on Ethics and Integrity in Ministry.
 - c. Consultation with the Business Manager should proceed termination.



IX. GUIDELINES FOR THE CHURCH'S PASTORAL RESPONSE TO MISCONDUCT IN MINISTRY

A. Care of the One Who Brings Allegations of Misconduct

1. The Diocese of Tyler will take all allegations seriously and will immediately and thoroughly investigate all concerns. Investigations will follow Diocesan procedures.
2. The Diocese of Tyler will respond immediately and effectively to deal with any accusation of misconduct brought against Church personnel. The willingness of the Diocese to respond to an allegation is in no way a judgment of the person being accused. Innocence is always presumed until facts prove otherwise, but steps will be taken to prevent possible further harm.
3. At all times it is expected that an allegation brought by the one directly involved or by that person's parent or legal guardian, is based on fact, and is an honest representation of the truth. In cases brought forward by third parties it is presumed that the report honestly represents their perspective. It is always important for all members of the Church to be sensitive to the needs and feelings of those who allege misconduct.
4. The Church will offer counseling services to the victim of misconduct to enable healing, and when appropriate to their family. This assistance for an individual victim may vary with circumstances and support from the Diocese will be determined in proportion to the defined course of therapy. The Diocese will provide reasonable assistance as the need arises.

B. Care of Church Personnel Accused of Misconduct

1. The Diocese of Tyler has a deep concern for any Church personnel who is accused of misconduct.
2. The Diocese will take great care in ensuring that a proper investigation is conducted following any allegation of misconduct. All investigations will follow Diocesan procedures. The rights of the accused will be taken into consideration throughout the investigation process and every effort will be made to protect the interests of an individual who may be falsely accused.
3. During investigations of allegations, the accused may be removed from contact with alleged victims to ensure the integrity of the investigation and the safety of alleged victims during the information-gathering process. This action should in no way be interpreted as a presumption of guilt. In the event that allegations are not founded, the accused Church personnel will resume his or her position as quickly as possible.
4. In the event that allegations are founded and the accused is not permitted to resume work within the Diocese, the Diocese will offer pastoral care to the extent that it is able.
5. Any allegation of misconduct involving a priest, deacon or religious will be taken seriously and the process of investigation described in the Supplementary Norms for Clergy and



Religious will be initiated. The Bishop, in reaching final decisions, will always be guided by the appropriate norms of canon law.

C. Care of the Community Affected by Misconduct

1. The Diocese also has a special concern for the parishes and other Church organizations served by personnel who are accused of misconduct.
2. The Diocese will make every effort to provide pastoral care to the individuals affected in a parish or other Church organization that experiences an incident or allegation of misconduct.



APPENDIX A: CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK FOR EMPLOYEES AND VOLUNTEERS

(Application appears on next page...)



APPENDIX B: Code of Ethics and Integrity for Conduct of Church Personnel in the Diocese of Tyler

(Rev. June 2009)

As part of our witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, it is imperative that all Church personnel in the Diocese consistently act with ethics and integrity. People of all ages deserve to be respected and protected in their relationships with Church personnel. Defining healthy and safe relationships is not meant, in any way, to undermine the strength and importance of appropriate 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 through sincere and genuine relationships.

All Church personnel are asked to carefully consider each statement in this Code of Ethics and Integrity and to sign their name to demonstrate their commitment to observing this Code in their life and ministry in the Diocese of Tyler.

- I. Church personnel will exhibit the highest Christian ethical standards and personal integrity.
- II. Church personnel will conduct themselves in a manner that is consistent with the discipline and teachings of the Catholic Church.
- III. Church personnel will foster a professional work environment that is free from physical, psychological, written, or verbal intimidation or harassment.
- IV. Church personnel will act professionally in all counseling, advising, or spiritual direction relationships protecting the well being of the other party at all times.
- V. Church personnel will not physically, sexually or emotionally abuse or neglect a minor or an adult.
- VI. Church personnel will share concerns about suspicious or inappropriate behavior with their pastor, their principal, the Promoter of Justice, or the Bishop.
- VII. Church personnel will report any suspected abuse or neglect of minors or the elderly to: Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (1-800-252-5400) or www.txabusehotline.org. In case of an EMERGENCY, call 911.
- VIII. Church personnel will accept their personal responsibility to protect minors and adults from all forms of abuse.
- IX. Church personnel will guide their behaviors by this Code, civil and canon law, policies of the Diocese of Tyler, particularly the diocesan guidelines for Ethics and Integrity in Ministry. (Guidelines can be found at: www.dioceseoftyler.org/ethics.)

**Concerns about violations of this Code can be reported to the Promoter of Justice, at
903.571.7069.**



APPENDIX C: PROCESS FOR RESPONDING TO SUSPICIOUS OR INAPPROPRIATE CONDUCT BY CHURCH PERSONNEL

Initial concern of possible violation of the Code of Ethics and Integrity, the Diocesan Guidelines, State or local law, should be reported to the local pastor, principal or the agency head; it can be reported to the Diocese of Tyler directly to the **Promoter of Justice, 903.266.2159, or to the Bishop 903.534.1077, ext. 132.**

If the concern involves suspected abuse of a minor, the reporting party should also notify the State of **Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services, 800.252.5400.** Local law enforcement may also be notified.

The pastor, principal or agency officer, who receives a report, shall request the party complete the “Confidential Notice of Concern” (Appendix D). They will immediately document the report they received and begin keeping accurate notes of all communications on this matter. They will immediately contact the **Promoter of Justice, 903.266.2159.** Catholic Schools will then contact the Superintendent; other agencies will contact the Business Office of the Diocese. Accuse party should be isolated from any situation in which further harm could occur. The alleged victim should receive the immediate pastoral care necessary. **NO INVESTIGATION** is to be done at this time! Keep notes of what the party shares, but **MAKE** no inquiry.

The Promoter of Justice will set in motion appropriate follow up, and see that ongoing pastoral needs of both alleged victim and the accused are met.

The initial assessment of the situation will be shared with the Bishop and Judicial Vicar.

The basic information on the situation and the response of the Diocese will be presented to the panel of lay persons established by the Bishop.

Investigation will be done in cooperation with civil authorities in cases where there is any indication of criminal misconduct.



APPENDIX D: CONFIDENTIAL NOTICE OF CONCERN

Date of Occurrence: ____ - ____ - ____ Time of Occurrence: ____: ____AM/PM

Type of Concern:

- Harassment Exploitation Policy violation with a minor Possible risk of abuse
- Known or suspected abuse. Has this been reported to **TDPRS at 1-800-825-5400**? Yes No

If YES, Report #: _____

Time/Date of Report: ____ : ____ AM/PM, : ____ - ____ - ____

Other Concern: _____

Describe the Situation: What happened, where it happened, when it happened, who was involved, who was present, who was notified? If reported to TDPRS, what was their recommendation?

Has this situation ever occurred previously? Yes No

What action was taken? How was the situation handled, who was involved, who was questioned, were the police called?

What is the follow-up plan? Does anyone else need to be notified? Will the situation need monitoring? Would you like someone to call you to discuss this situation?

Submitted by: _____ Telephone number: ____ - ____ - ____

Location and address: _____

Signature: _____ Date: ____ - ____ - ____

Reviewed by Promoter of Justice:



APPENDIX E: FORMAL WARNING DOCUMENT

Church Personnel Name: _____ Position: _____

Purpose:

- Formal warning
- Probation

Statement of the Problem: (Violation of policies, standards, poor performance)

Prior Discussion or Cautions of the Problem: (Oral or written and dates of discussions)

Statement of Diocesan Policy on the Subject?

Summary of Corrective Action to be taken by Church Personnel?

Consequences of Failure to Complete and Maintain Correction Action?

Signature of Supervisor: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Church Personnel: _____ Date: _____

Copy to: Promoter of Justice, FAX 903.939.1037



APPENDIX F: ARTICLE 5 OF THE CHARTER FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE (Approved June 2011)

We affirm the words of His Holiness, Pope John Paul II, in his Address to the Cardinals of the United States and Conference Officers: “There is no place in the priesthood or religious life for those who would harm the young.”

Sexual abuse of a minor by a cleric is a crime in the universal law of the Church (CIC, c. 1395 §2; CCEO, c. 1453 §1). Because of the seriousness of this matter, jurisdiction has been reserved to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (*Motu proprio Sacramentorum sanctitatis tutela*, AAS 93, 2001). Sexual abuse of a minor is also a crime in all civil jurisdictions in the United States.

Diocesan/eparchial policy is to provide that for even a single act of sexual abuse of a minor*—whenever it occurred—which is admitted or established after an appropriate process in accord with canon law, the offending priest or deacon is to be permanently removed from ministry and, if warranted, dismissed from the clerical state. In keeping with the stated purpose of this Charter, an offending priest or deacon is to be offered therapeutic professional assistance both for the purpose of prevention and also for his own healing and well-being.

The diocesan/eparchial bishop is to exercise his power of governance, within the parameters of the universal law of the Church, to ensure that any priest or deacon subject to his governance who has committed even one act of sexual abuse of a minor as described below (see note) shall not continue in ministry.

A priest or deacon who is accused of sexual abuse of a minor is to be accorded the presumption of innocence during the investigation of the allegation and all appropriate steps are to be taken to protect his reputation. He is to be encouraged to retain the assistance of civil and canonical counsel. If the allegation is deemed not substantiated, every step possible is to be taken to restore his good name, should it have been harmed.

In fulfilling this article, dioceses/eparchies are to follow the requirements of the universal law of the Church and of the Essential Norms approved for the United States.

* For purposes of this Charter, the offense of sexual abuse of a minor will be understood in accord with the provisions of *Sacramentorum sanctitatis tutela* (SST), article 6, which reads:

§1. The more grave delicts against morals which are reserved to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith are: 1o the delict against the sixth commandment of the Decalogue committed by a cleric with a minor below the age of eighteen years; in this case, a person who habitually lacks the use of reason is to be considered equivalent to a minor. 2o the acquisition, possession, or distribution by a cleric of pornographic images of minors under the age of fourteen, for purposes of sexual gratification, by whatever means or using whatever technology;



§2. A cleric who commits the delicts mentioned above in §1 is to be punished according to the gravity of his crime, not excluding dismissal or deposition.

In view of the Circular Letter from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, dated May 3, 2011, which calls for “mak[ing] allowance for the legislation of the country where the Conference is located,” Section III(g), we will apply the federal legal age for defining child pornography, which includes pornographic images of minors under the age of eighteen, for assessing a cleric’s suitability for ministry and for complying with civil reporting statutes.

If there is any doubt whether a specific act qualifies as an external, objectively grave violation, the writings of recognized moral theologians should be consulted, and the opinions of recognized experts should be appropriately obtained (Canonical Delicts Involving Sexual Misconduct and Dismissal from the Clerical State, 1995, p. 6). Ultimately, it is the responsibility of the diocesan bishop/eparch, with the advice of a qualified review board, to determine the gravity of the alleged act.



APPENDIX G: Additional Diocesan Policies for CHILD PROTECTION

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Charter Article 7 – Communications Policy

The Diocese of Tyler Communications Plan reflects a commitment to disseminate timely and forthright information while respecting the dignity and rights of all. It provides avenues to publicize the Charter and the Policy in a proactive stance.

This structure is in place to openly address the issues of prevention of child abuse, protection of children and vulnerable persons, procedures for allegations, response to victims, and safe environment programs. These communications efforts extend to clergy, alleged victims and families, law enforcement, the Catholic community, general public, and the media when cases of alleged sexual abuse by clergy or church personnel have been received.

Promoting the Charter and Policy

1. Promote the existence of the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People and the Diocese of Tyler Ethics and Integrity for Church Personnel through diocesan media, including print, radio, and television when appropriate.
2. Use the diocesan website to provide instant information regarding the Charter and Policy and the Diocese of Tyler Ethics and Integrity for Church Personnel including contacting the Promoter of Justice.
3. Promote the Charter and Policy through secular press via news releases, interviews, press conferences and Q & A when appropriate.
4. Use diocesan media and secular press as avenues of reaching out to victims and to encourage those who have been abused to come forward.
5. Meet with editorial staffs of newspapers and broadcast outlets to familiarize each with the Charter and Policy and the Diocese of Tyler Ethics and Integrity for Church Personnel to answer questions when appropriate.
6. Provide the proper spokesperson for media interviews regarding this issue.

Notification of Allegations

1. All communications regarding allegations of child abuse will follow the laws of the State of Texas while protecting the identity of the alleged victim and reflecting the confidential nature of the investigation.



2. Care will be taken to insure that the rights of the alleged abuser are not violated.
3. The Promoter of Justice and the victims assistance coordinator will be notified.

Internal Communications

1. Notification to parishes, schools, priests, religious, lay employees and volunteers will be made through statements provided by the Chancery Office and approved by the bishop or his delegate.
2. All efforts will be made that the diocese “break” the story, allowing accurate and timely information communicated to our clergy, parishioners and communities.

External Communications

1. All media inquiries will be directed to the Director of Communications. No other diocesan employee will respond to media inquiries without prior approval of the bishop.
2. Every effort will be made to insure that all information is disseminated in a timely and appropriate manner to the secular press.
3. Respond to media inquiries with openness without jeopardizing aspects of the legal investigation/litigation or breaching elements of confidentiality for either the alleged victim or abuser.
4. Information regarding safe environment programs will be publicized to parishioners, parents and children, the general public and the media.

Signed by Bishop Corrada, August 23, 2004



CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Charter Article 14 – Transfer of Clergy

No priest or deacon who has committed an act of sexual abuse of a minor may be transferred for ministerial assignment to another diocese or religious province. Before a priest or deacon can be transferred for residence to another diocese or religious province, the bishop shall forward in a confidential manner to the local bishop or religious superior of the proposed place of residence any and all information concerning and act of sexual abuse of a minor and any other information indicating that he has been or may be a danger to children or young people. This shall apply even if the priest or deacon will reside in the local community of an institute of consecrated life or society of apostolic life.

Signed by Bishop Corrada, August 23, 2004



Procedure for Ongoing Compliance with Policies and Guidelines for Ethics and Integrity for Church Personnel in the Diocese of Tyler

The policy for Ethics and Integrity for Church Personnel in the Diocese of Tyler requires ongoing effort to insure that people coming into the diocese to minister in the name of the church are properly screened, trained, and that they personally commit to the Code of Ethics and Integrity for Church Personnel.

Awareness Training is based on a 30 minute video and can be conducted by anyone who has done Basic Training. Basic Training is 3 hours and must be led by one of the certified trainers authorized by the Bishop.

All new priests and deacons before being given faculties: are to go through Awareness Training (30 minute video), commit to the Code of Ethics and submit the application for a background check. They also must provide the Diocese of Tyler with a suitability document from their own diocese or religious community. They will be given six months to complete Basic Training.

All religious sisters and brothers who are working for the Diocese, its parishes, schools or agencies must complete the Awareness Training, commit to the Code of Ethics and submit the application for a background check, prior to start of ministry. They will be given six months to complete Basic Training.

All new seminarians and aspirants to the Permanent Diaconate are to complete Basic Training and have an ACS before beginning formation. If this is not possible they need to complete Awareness Training, commit to the Code of Ethics and submit the application for a background check, prior to beginning formation. If they do not complete Basic Training prior to beginning formation, they should complete Basic Training at the first reasonable opportunity, but must complete it before going into the second year of formation for our Diocese.

All employees (full time, part time or stipend) should have an ACS. New employees are to go through Awareness Training (30 minute video) and complete the commitment to the Code of Ethics and the application for background check as part of the hiring process. All employees are obligated to attend Basic Training and should make plans to attend as soon as possible, but they must complete Basic Training within six months of being hired.

All volunteers who have contact with minors, must complete the appropriate training (Basic Training for those that will have supervisory responsibility for minors, or Awareness Training for those who will not be in charge of minors), commit to the Code of Ethics, submit the application for background check and have been issued an ACS prior to beginning work with minors.

Every three years there will be a new recertification program with additional training, a recommitment to the Code of Ethics and a renewal of the background check.

Reapproved July 6, 2015, effective immediately

Most Rev. Joseph Strickland



APPENDIX H:

Diocese of Tyler Social Media Policy

Policy Statement

The Diocese of Tyler and its affiliates recognize that in today's environment, with the increasing prevalence of the Internet, employees, clerics and volunteers will use the Internet to conduct ministry work and to communicate with associates and friends. The Internet provides various ways for individuals to interact and has changed the way we communicate and share information. The Diocese of Tyler views the Internet as an important educational and evangelizing tool to promote school and ministerial programs. The diocese encourages administrators, pastors and principals to support Internet use and to give employees, clerics and volunteers the necessary training and tools to interact safely and responsibly online. Those using the Internet should bear in mind that certain comments and information may have a harmful effect on the Diocese of Tyler, its reputation, its employees and constituents. In light of this possibility, employees, clerics and volunteers are required to adhere to the following policy regarding the use of personal and ministry websites including social networks and blogs and other forms of online communication.

This policy and accompanying procedures are approved on July 6, 2015, the Feast of St. Maria Goretti.

Most Reverend Joseph E. Strickland
Bishop of Tyler



Introduction

The field of social media is rapidly changing. These guidelines are offered as a synthesis of best practices. They include material compiled from church entities, for-profit corporations and non-profit organizations. In the Diocese of Tyler both the Communications Office and the Youth Evangelization Office are available as resources in using Social Media in ministry.

In this document, “church personnel” is defined as anyone – priest, deacon, religious, bishop, lay employee or volunteer – who provides ministry or service or is employed by an entity associated with the Catholic Church. Please see appendix for additional definitions.

Procedures

Respect and Appropriate Boundaries

In the Diocese of Tyler, all online and electronic communications must be done in a way that insures a Safe Environment as we do in physical interactions. These procedures are offered to guide our Church’s effort. In accomplishing this, the Diocese of Tyler can offer assistance through the Communications and Youth Evangelization offices.

Password-Protected Sites

Both ministry websites and personal websites may involve the use of a username/password or other such means to access all or portions of the site. In the event that a cleric, employee or volunteer, subject to approval by the Diocese of Tyler or its affiliate, gives a child access to a website that is not otherwise openly accessible to the public, that same access must also be provided to the child’s parent/guardian, if the parent/guardian so desires.

Ministry Websites

The Diocese of Tyler and its affiliates support the creation of ministry websites as a means to conduct diocesan/affiliate ministry. The use of ministry websites is encouraged when conducting diocesan/affiliate educational and evangelizing programs. Supervisors who approve individuals to create a ministry website for dispersal of information are responsible for monitoring the ministry website. Sites should be set up in a way that is easily sustained and documented. The Communications Office is glad to assist in this effort.

Personal Websites

The Diocese of Tyler and its affiliates recognize that church personnel, employees and volunteers may create personal websites as a medium of self-expression. Clerics and religious are public people and so no website or postings can be for them truly “personal”, all are expressions as public persons of the Church. Employees, clerics and volunteers must recognize that anything published on a personal website is no different from making such information available in any public forum. Any program contrary to the magisterium of the Catholic Church or that causes or has the potential to cause embarrassment to the Diocese of Tyler or its affiliates should be avoided. Note: If church personnel elect to use personal websites to conduct diocesan/affiliate ministry, the personal websites must be approved, and are subject to monitoring, by their supervisor or designee.



Ministry Blogs

The Diocese of Tyler and its affiliates support the use of blogging as a ministry communication tool. It is an excellent platform for creating and distributing information. Blogging for ministry should be approved by ones supervisor. Although blogging is a powerful communication tool, ministry blogs may not be used for: 1) conducting or promoting outside business 2) defaming the character of any individual or institution 3) causing embarrassment to the Diocese of Tyler or its affiliates or 4) divulging any personal information about children, particularly that which jeopardize their safety or well-being in any way.

Personal Blogs and Personal Profiles on Social Media Platforms

Clerics and religious are public persons and so their online and electronic communications must always be in good taste and reflect Church teachings and values.

When employees and volunteers identify himself/herself as, or is manifestly understood to be, an employee or minister/volunteer of the Diocese of Tyler or its affiliates on a personal blog, a personal profile for a social media platform, or other website with a similar purpose, the employee automatically (even without intention) represents the Catholic Church and it's teachings. To help reduce the potential of confusion, statements like:

“The views expressed on this [website, personal profile, etc] are mine alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of my employer, or the Catholic Church”. This statement does not grant permission for those representing the Diocese officially or unofficially to express themselves contrary to Catholic teaching.

Confidential and Proprietary Information

Church personnel are prohibited from disclosing via the Internet information that is understood to be held in confidence by the Diocese of Tyler or its affiliates.

Employees, clerics and volunteers are prohibited from disclosing via the Internet any information that is proprietary to the Diocese of Tyler or its affiliates, except by explicit permission of the appropriate authority.

Trademarks and Logos

Diocesan trademarks and logos are not to be used on any flyer, mailer, email, video, or publication without written consent from the Diocesan Communication office. Church personnel who have received permission to use such trademarks or logo's, may only use them for publication in ways that clearly promote or call positive attention to diocesan sponsored events, websites or organizations associated with the trademark or logo. Church personnel may not use diocesan or affiliate trademarks or logos on their personal websites, flyers or advertisements in any way that could reasonably suggest diocesan or affiliate sponsorship or agreement with any views expressed.

Inappropriate Language and Images

The Diocese of Tyler and its affiliates will not tolerate employees, clerics or volunteers posting obscene, harassing, offensive, derogatory, defamatory or otherwise potentially scandalous comments, links and/or images which reflect discredit or cause embarrassment to the Diocese of Tyler or its affiliates, employees,



vendors, partners, agencies, schools and others. Any activity via Social Media or other Electronic Communication that contains any of the above and/or reflects negatively on the Diocese of Tyler or its affiliates, employees, vendors, partners, agencies, schools, or others is prohibited.

Right to Review

The Diocese of Tyler and its affiliates reserve the right to review any personal website, social media or messaging systems that are being used for ministry purposes by any church personnel if there are reasonable grounds for believing that this diocesan policy is being violated.

Protection of Children

Church personnel of the Diocese of Tyler and its affiliates will comply with all aspects of the Ethics and Integrity policy of the Diocese of Tyler. Employees, clerics and volunteers are forbidden to post or distribute personal identifiable information, including photos and/or video, of any child under the age of eighteen without verifiable consent of a parent or guardian. Personal identifiable information includes full name, photos, home address, email address, telephone number or any information that would allow someone to identify or contact a child. Verifiable consent can take the form of a release/permission form, an email from a parent or guardian, or spoken permission by a parent or guardian in the presence of another adult. The Diocese of Tyler and its affiliates will review alleged violations of the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act, and the Ethics and integrity Policy of the Diocese of Tyler, on a case-by-case basis.



When Communicating with Children Using Social Media or Other Electronic Communication:

- There must be at least two adults with administrative rights for each Social Media account used specifically for ministry communication.
- When any Social Media accounts are being used for communication, Adults must not initiate or continue conversation with children for socialization purposes.
- The primary purpose of such communication shall be for ministerial purposes, or for providing information related to a ministry or event and not for socialization or other personal interaction.
- Counseling of children through such communication methods is discouraged. In the event social media conversations like this arise, printed or electronic copy must be provided to youth minister, religious education coordinator, pastor or director supervisor and kept on file for your personal records.
- Parents must be notified of the methods of communication which are used in each particular ministry and must be granted access in such communications.
- Social Media, online or other electronic communication may not be used to communicate with children who have not reached the 9th grade, but instead should be directed to their parents.
- Children may “Like” public Facebook pages and other official social media accounts for a ministry where children are involved.
- Church Personnel are not permitted to “friend” or “follow” social media of children without the consent of parents. Adults should limit the access to personal information to young people regardless of consent. This includes home address, cell phone, photos of alcohol consumption or immodesty.
- When children form their own Social Media groups for their own social media gatherings, adults should not join these groups.
- Group messages with multiple “ethics and integrity” trained adults is encouraged over personal messaging. If children contact particular adults engaged in ministry, it is the responsibility of the adult to keep the conversation limited in time, frequency, and only for the purpose of ministry.
- When the contact between an adult and child is not appropriate, becomes frequent, or is done during inappropriate times, the adult is to avoid using social media, or devices to respond. In those cases where Social Media or electronic devices are used to respond to children, adults should maintain copies of all such messages and notify direct church supervisor and parents of the correspondence.



- Acceptable hours for communication with children via other electronic communications shall be between 8a.m. and 9p.m. Communication outside of the acceptable hours may be used only in emergency situations or to communicate time sensitive information related to the ministry or ministry related event.
- On line “chatting” for social reasons with children is not permitted.
- Communication with children using social media should only be done for ministerial purposes, with the consent of parents and church personnel. Only those who have “Ethics and Integrity” training, and are holding an official position as a youth minister, catechist, or trained adult working with teens, are permitted to communicate with minors.
- Anyone using social media to contact minors within the Diocese of Tyler should be open and willing to undergo search of social media messaging systems. As a general rule, adults should not engage children in social media in ways they would not allow any adult to view their profiles, messages, texts or other forms of communication.
- Posting inappropriate text, pictures, videos or other media content, where minors of the Diocese of Tyler are present is never acceptable. This includes inappropriate language or content, photographs of alcohol consumption, illegal activity, scandalous behavior, excessive violence, discriminatory words or actions, immodesty, or anything which may be offensive. These items posted in youth accessible areas of social media are subject to removal.

Social media accounts in which minors have access to and communication with should be monitored frequently and with multiple “Ethics and integrity” trained users who have a current ACS. Multiple adults monitoring a social media account will help prevent breakdowns in communication and assure that an important message is responded to in a timely fashion.



Social Media Policy: APPENDIX A

Guiding Principles

"The world of digital communication, with its almost limitless expressive capacity, makes us appreciate all the more Saint Paul's exclamation: "Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel"

(1 Cor 9:16) – Pope Benedict XVI, 2010 World Communication Day message

Social media is one of the fastest growing forms of communication in the United States, especially among youth and young adults. Our Church cannot ignore it, but at the same time we must engage social media in a manner that is safe, responsible and civil.

As Pope Benedict XVI noted in his message for the 44th World Day of Communication, this new form of media "can offer priests and all pastoral workers a wealth of information and content that was difficult to access before, and facilitate forms of collaboration and greater communion in ways that were unthinkable in the past."

The Church can use social media to encourage respect, dialogue and honest relationships – in other words, "true friendship" (43rd World Communication Day Message). To do so requires us to approach social media as a powerful means of evangelization and to consider the Church's role in providing a Christian perspective to digital literacy.

You may want to read both the [43rd](#) and [44th](#) World Day of Communication messages. These are available by Googling Pope Benedict Communications



The Church and Social Media: An Overview

The online encyclopedia Wikipedia defines social media as “ ... media designed to be disseminated through social interaction, using highly accessible and scalable publishing techniques. Social media use web-based technologies to transform and broadcast media monologues into social media dialogues”¹.

A longer and perhaps more philosophical definition is offered by Jon Lebkowsky, a longtime social media specialist, on his site, weblogsky.com:

Social Media is a fundamental transformation in the way(s) people find and use information and content, from hard news to light entertainment. It’s an evolution from broadcast delivery of content – content created by a few and distributed to many – to network delivery, where content can be created by anyone and published to everyone, in a context that is “many to many.” Said another way, publication and delivery by professionals to mass audiences has changed – now publication and delivery can be by anyone, professional or not, to niche audiences through networks of many channels. This is because the means of production are broadly accessible and inexpensive.

As a result of all this, attention and mindshare are fragmented, there’s emphasis on relationship, new forms of media are conversational, and transaction costs for communication approach zero.

Social media offers both opportunities and challenges to Catholic organizations. These can be grouped into three primary categories:

- Visibility
- Community
- Accountability

Visibility

Online social media communities are vast and growing at a rapid pace². Given the size and scope of these communities, they offer excellent forums for the Church's visibility and evangelization.

The key question that faces each Church organization that decides to engage social media is: “How will we engage?” Careful consideration should be made to determine the particular strengths of each form of social media (blogs, social networks, text messaging, etc.) and the needs of a ministry, parish or organization. The strengths should match the needs. For instance, a blog post may not be the most effective way of reminding students of an event. However, a mass text message to all students and their parents telling them that the retreat begins at 9 a.m. may be very effective.

1 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_media

2 For example, the number of active users on Facebook is greater than the population of the United States. (<http://www.facebook.com/press/info.php?statistics>).



Social media also requires constant input and monitoring to maintain visibility and awareness of the Church's presence through that particular social media. To keep members, a social networking site needs to have new content on a regular basis. In the case of social media, the axiom "build it and they will come" is not applicable. It would be important to set internal expectations regarding how often posts will be made, so that your "followers" can become accustomed to your schedule.

Community

Social media can be a powerful tool for strengthening community, although social media interaction should not be viewed as a substitute for face-to-face gatherings. Social media can support communities in a myriad of ways: connecting people with similar interests, sharing information about in-person events, providing ways for people to dialogue, etc.

A well-considered use of social media has the ultimate goal of encouraging "true friendship" (43rd World Communication Day Message) and of understanding the human longing for meaningful community.

Accountability

Social media provides a tool for building community. Membership in communities also requires accountability and responsibility. Users of social media expect site administrators to allow dialogue, to provide information and to acknowledge mistakes. The explosion of information available to social media consumers has meant that they often only use information from trusted sites or sites recommended by those whom they trust.

While not every demand or inquiry can be met, it is important that creators and site administrators of social media understand how different social media is from mass media and the expectations of its consumers. Many communication experts are describing the adaption of social media as a paradigm shift in how humans communicate, as important a development as that of the printing press and the discovery of electronic communication.



Social Media Policy: APPENDIX B

Definitions

Definitions provide clarity and a common language.

Blog: A blog (a contraction of the term "web log") is a type of website, usually maintained by an individual with regular entries of commentary, descriptions of events, or other material such as graphics or video. Entries are commonly displayed in reverse-chronological order. "Blog" can also be used as a verb, meaning to maintain or add content to a blog.
Examples: There are many types of blogs on sites throughout the Internet. They are common for celebrities, writers, journalists, etc. WordPress is one of the more popular tools used to create blogs.

Micro-blog: A form of multimedia blogging that allows users to send brief text updates or micromedia such as photos or audio clips and publish them, either to be viewed by anyone or by a restricted group which can be chosen by the user. These messages can be submitted by a variety of means, including text messaging, instant messaging, E-mail, digital audio or the web. The content of a micro-blog differs from a traditional blog in that it is typically smaller in actual size and aggregate file size. A single entry could consist of a single sentence or fragment or an image or a brief, ten second video.
Example: Twitter – A form of micro-blogging, entries are limited to 140 characters.

Social Media/Network: A Web 2.0 site that is entirely driven by content of its members. Individuals are allowed flexibility in privacy settings, in posting text, photos, video, links and other information, and in level of interaction with other members.
Examples: Facebook, LinkedIn, MySpace. Twitter, YouTube and Flickr are often also included in lists of social networking sites, although sometimes YouTube and Flickr are designated as multimedia sharing sites, while Twitter is currently more often designated as a micro-blogging application.

Ministry website³: An Internet website/tool created by employees, clerics and volunteers for the sole purpose of conducting diocesan/ affiliate business.

Personal website: A social network page, blog or any Internet website/tool created by employees, clerics, and volunteers primarily to share personal communication with friends and family.

Other Electronic Communication: Electronic communication technologies that are not defined as Social Media/Network (e.g., cell phone, email, texting, etc.)

Supervisor: the hiring and/or supervising agent: for parish staff, the pastor; for parish volunteers, the appropriate administrator (e.g., Director of Religious Education or Director of Youth Ministry); for school personnel, the principal.

3 Definitions for ministry website and personal website are from the Archdiocese of Cincinnati's Social Media Policy
Ethics Policy— August 1, 2015
Social Media Policy July 2015



Employee: any person who is employed by the Diocese of Tyler or an affiliate. An employee may be a cleric or a lay person who may also be a member of a religious institute.

Cleric: an ordained priest or an ordained deacon who is incardinated in the Diocese of Tyler, as well as a religious priest or deacon, or a priest or deacon incardinated in another diocese, who is engaged in a ministry under the control or auspices of the Diocese of Tyler or an affiliate.

Adult: an individual who is eighteen years of age or older.

Child: a person under 18 years of age or a physically or mentally disabled person under 21 years of age.

Volunteer: an adult who works without financial or material gain on behalf of the Diocese of Tyler or its affiliates who is not an employee or a cleric (for example, an intern, catechist, scout leader, coach, student teacher and others in similar capacities).

Affiliate: a joining member that has ties to or relationship with a larger entity. This could include parish or diocesan groups, volunteers, organization leaders, members of a community or anyone with known association or connection.

(End of Social Media Policy)

