

Episcopal Diocese of Fort Worth
Policies On Ethics and Integrity in Ministry



Revised December 2022

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Background Checks

Please contact Dale Ward, in the diocesan office (817-244-2885) to arrange for the certified background check required for all church personnel.

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

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

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

- Church Personnel shall exhibit the highest Christian ethical standards and personal integrity.
- Church Personnel shall conduct themselves in a manner that is consistent with the discipline and teachings of the Church.
- Church Personnel shall provide a professional environment that is free from harassment.
- Church Personnel shall not take advantage of a counseling, supervisory and/or authoritative relationship for their own benefit.
- Church Personnel shall not abuse or neglect a minor or an adult.
- Church Personnel shall share concerns about suspicious or inappropriate behavior with their rector/vicar, their principal, the chancellor or Bishop.
- Church Personnel shall adhere to the requirements of the law of the State of Texas regarding the reporting of any suspected abuse of a minor.
(https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/contact_us/report_abuse.asp)
- Church Personnel agree to do their best to prevent abuse and neglect among children and youth involved in church activities and services.
- Church Personnel agree to not physically, sexually or emotionally abuse or neglect a child or youth.
- Church Personnel agree to comply with the policies for general conduct with children and youth.
- All church personnel agree to comply with the Guidelines for Appropriate Affection with Children and Youth. In the event that Church Personnel observe any inappropriate behaviors or possible policy violations with children or youth, church personnel agree to immediately report their observations.
- All Church Personnel acknowledge their obligation and responsibility to protect children and youth and agree to report known or suspected abuse of children or youth to appropriate church leaders and state authorities in accordance with these policies.
- Church Personnel understand that the church will not tolerate abuse of children and youth and agree to comply in spirit and in action with this position.

II. General Definitions

A. Church Personnel

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

1. Priests and Deacons (Clergy)

- a. Clergy canonically resident in the Diocese of Fort Worth
- b. Clergy who are members of religious institutes or in other forms of consecrated life, and who are assigned to pastoral work in the Diocese or who are otherwise engaged in the care of souls, the public exercise of divine worship, and other works of the apostolate.
- c. Licensed clergy of other jurisdictions who are assigned to pastoral work in this Diocese, whether seeking canonical residency within the Diocese or not.
- d. Licensed clergy who are otherwise legitimately residing within the territory of the Diocese, including retired clerics and those engaged in part-time or supply ministry
- e. In addition to the provisions of these Policies, the above mentioned clergy are also bound by the Customary and Canons of the Diocese of Fort Worth.

2. Seminarians and Religious Orders

- a. All seminarians legitimately enrolled in the seminary program of the Diocese and those who are in process including aspirants, postulants and candidates to the priesthood.
- b. Those who are enrolled in the permanent diaconate formation program.
- c. Any members of religious orders working within the Diocese.

3. The Laity

- a. All paid personnel whether employed in areas of ministry or other kinds of services by the Diocese, its parishes, missions and schools.
- b. All volunteers. This includes any person who enters into or offers himself/herself for a Church related service or function of his/her own free will.

4. Service Contractors

- a. Any organization or individual under contract to the Diocese, its parishes, missions, schools or agencies.

B. Children and Youth

- a. A child is defined as anyone under the age of 12 years.
- b. A youth is defined as anyone who is at least 12 years old, but not yet 18 years old.

C. Types of Misconduct

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

1. Immoral conduct: Conduct that is contrary to the discipline and teachings of the Church and which may result in scandal to the faithful or harm to the ministry of the Church.
2. The illegitimate and offensive use of power where the purpose or the effect is to create a hostile or intimidating environment.
3. Exploitation: Taking advantage of a pastoral counseling relationship for the benefit of the pastoral counselor.
4. Abuse of minors and adults: 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.

D. Types of Abuse

1. **Physical abuse** is non-accidental injury, which is intentionally inflicted upon a child or youth.
2. **Sexual abuse perpetrated by an adult** is any contact or activity of a sexual nature that occurs between a child or youth and an adult. This includes any activity, which is meant to arouse or gratify the sex-ual desires of the adult,
3. **Sexual abuse perpetrated by another child or youth** is any contact or activity of a sexual nature that occurs between a child or youth and another child or youth when there is no consent, when consent is not possible, or when one child or youth has power over the other child or youth. This includes any activity which is meant to arouse or gratify the sexual desires of any of the children or youth.
4. **Emotional abuse** is mental or emotional injury to a child or youth that results in an observable and material impairment in the child or youth's growth, development or psychological functioning.
5. **Neglect** is the failure to provide for a child or youth's basic needs or the failure to protect a child or youth from harm.
6. **Economic exploitation** is the deliberate misplacement exploitation, or wrongful temporary or permanent use of child or youth's belongings or money.

III. Prevention of Immoral Conduct: Guidelines for Ethical Behavior

A. Standards of the Diocese as to Prevention of Immoral Conduct

1. 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 strive to uphold the standards of the Church in their day-to-day work, electronic communications and personal lives.

2. Further, it is fundamental to the mission of the Diocese, that Church Personnel exhibit the highest ethical standards and personal integrity. Therefore, Church Personnel are prohibited from engaging in the following conduct.
 - a. Immoral conduct.
 - b. Actions that are disruptive to the ministry and public worship.
 - c. Possession or distribution of pornographic material.
 - d. Adultery, flagrant promiscuity or illicit cohabitation.
 - e. Abuse of alcohol, drugs or gambling
 - f. Stealing or any other form of theft, including misappropriation of Church funds.
 - g. Sexual harassment. Exploitation or abuse.
 - h. Physical assault and fighting.
3. Church Personnel should not harm the reputation of others by:
 - a. Disclosing without legitimate cause 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

1. Harassment is an illegitimate and offensive use of power where the effect is to create a hostile or intimidating environment.
2. Harassment encompasses a broad range of physical, psychological, written, or verbal behavior that includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 - a. Physical or mental abuse;
 - b. Racial insults;
 - c. Derogatory ethnic slurs;
 - d. Unwelcome sexual advances or touching;
 - e. Sexual comments or sexual jokes;
 - f. Requests for sexual favors as a condition of employment, or to affect other personnel decisions, such as promotion or compensation;
 - g. Display of offensive materials;
 - h. Intimidation.
3. 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 harassment.

B. Standards of the Diocese as to Prevention of Harassment

1. Church Personnel shall not engage in harassment and shall not tolerate harassment.
2. Church Personnel shall provide a professional environment that is free from harassment.

3. The Standards of the Diocese as to the Prevention of Harassment are applicable regardless of physical location. For example, the Standards apply at any Church function or other gathering related to the Church whether it is on Church property or not.

V. Prevention of Exploitation: Guidelines for Pastoral Counseling

A. Definitions

1. Pastoral counseling occurs when Church Personnel offer spiritual direction or advice concerning moral or spiritual matters.
2. Exploitation occurs when Church Personnel take advantage of the pastoral counseling relationship for their own benefit.
3. Sexual exploitation is sexual contact between Church Personnel and the recipient of their pastoral counseling services, regardless of who initiates the contact.
4. A conflict of interest occurs when Church Personnel take advantage of pastoral counseling relationships in order to further their own interest.
5. In the Line of Sight is when activity can be observed by others through an open door; a closed door that has a window, or an office/room with a window.

B. Standards of the Diocese in Prevention of Exploitation

1. Church Personnel shall know and recognize their limitations in pastoral counseling situations. Those providing pastoral care should either have ongoing professional supervision or refer an individual to professional counseling after six sessions have been held.
2. Fees or donations for pastoral care are prohibited; any person charging fees for counseling outside the scope of church employment must possess appropriate professional credentials and proof of separate professional liability insurance, including coverage for sexual misconduct, in force at all times.
3. Persons practicing formal spiritual direction shall submit that ministry to peer or supervisory review with a spiritual advisor approved by the Bishop.
4. Church Personnel shall not engage in exploitation, sexual exploitation, and/or sexual intimacies with persons whom they counsel. Church Personnel are also prohibited from engaging in situations or conduct that can give the appearance of exploitation, sexual exploitation or sexual intimacies. Church Personnel shall not engage in exploitation, sexual exploitation, and/or sexual intimacies with relatives or friends of someone whom they have a counseling relationship.
5. Church Personnel shall set and maintain clear, appropriate boundaries in all pastoral counseling relationships.
6. If physical contact is warranted for professional, clinical reasons, it should always be respectful and consistent with the intent to provide a safe and comfortable pastoral counseling environment.
7. Pastoral counseling should be conducted in appropriate settings at appropriate times and should not be held at places or times that would cause confusion about the nature of the

relationship for the person being counseled. It is mandatory that in counseling situations, the Line of Sight Rule is to be practiced.

8. No pastoral counseling should be conducted in private living quarters.

C. Standards of the Diocese as to Confidentiality

1. The sacramental seal is inviolable by divine mandate. However, the sacramental seal is not recognized by the state of Texas as an exception to the required reporting related to abuse or neglect of a child, elderly person, or a person with a disability as defined by the Texas Human Resource Code. The Episcopal Diocese of Fort Worth requires all of its clergy to follow the laws of Texas in this regard.
2. Information disclosed to Church Personnel during the course of counseling, advising, or spiritual direction shall be held in the strictest confidence possible, with due regard for the norm of Canon Law and or Civil Law.
3. Church Personnel should discuss the nature of confidentiality, including its limitations, with each person who seeks pastoral counseling.
4. If there is clear and imminent danger, the Church Personnel are to disclose the information necessary to protect the parties involved and to prevent harm.
5. If disclosure must be made, if feasible, the Church Personnel should inform the person being counseled about the disclosure.
6. 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.

D. Standards of the Diocese as to Conflicts of Interest

1. Church Personnel shall observe clear, appropriate boundaries with anyone with whom they have a business, professional or social relationship.
2. Church Personnel shall avoid pastoral counseling that might present an actual or perceived conflict of interest. Even the appearance of a conflict of interest can call into question integrity and professional conduct.

It is the policy of the Episcopal Diocese of Fort Worth that every Board Member, Officer, Vestry Member, Committee Member, Clergy, or Employee shall abstain from involvement, whether by voting or otherwise participating in the decision-making process, in those situations where they have or may have a conflict of interest.

A conflict of interest exists where:

- The person has a direct or indirect substantive interest in the matter at hand or the party(ies) involved. The interest could include, but not be limited to, a financial

or business interest or a relational interest with friends or family that will influence decision-making;

- The person is either a director, officer, or employee of the other party(ies) involved, or
- The person(s)'s spouse, children, parent, or siblings are in substantive relationships with the party(ies) involved.
- The appropriate Committees (e.g. Risk Management, Standing), after reviewing the circumstances, deems the appearance of a conflict to warrant it be treated as if an actual conflict exists.

In those situations where a conflict of interest does exist or has the potential to exist, or has the appearance of a conflict, the person must notify the appropriate authority by submitting a written description of the facts comprising the conflict. For conflicts at the parish level, the person should report the conflict to the Rector, or his designee. For conflicts affecting Clergy, Diocesan Committees and Ministries, the person should report the conflict to the Bishop, or his designee.

While it is expected that parish level conflicts can be resolved at the parish level, in accordance with this policy, if additional guidance is required, the Rector should report the conflict to the Bishop.

For all conflicts, the Bishop may request the facts and circumstances of any reported conflict be reviewed by Risk Management and recommendations provided to the Bishop.

It is expected the person with the conflict will abstain in the decision-making process including

1. participating in discussions or deliberations with respect to the subject of the conflict (other than to present factual information or to answer questions),
2. using his or her personal influence to affect deliberations,
3. making motions,
4. voting,
5. executing agreements, or
6. taking similar actions on behalf of the Diocese or ministry.

VI. Safeguards for Children and Youth

A. Screening and Selection

- a. Any and all Church Personnel who regularly work with or around children or youth shall be screened and selected utilizing at least the following:
 - i. A standard application completed by the applicant that includes an authorization for the release of information to conduct back-ground checks.
 - ii. Criminal records check in any state where the applicant has resided during the past seven (7) years, and other states, if any, as determined by the church.
 - iii. Sexual offender registry check in any state where the applicant has resided during the past seven (7) years.
 - iv. Individual interview with the applicant.

- v. Reference checks of persons outside the congregation who know the applicant, preferably who know how the applicant works with children.
 - vi. Driving or Motor Vehicle records check if the person may be transporting children or youth.
- b. All information gathered about an applicant will be carefully reviewed and evaluated to make a determination, in consultation with others as necessary, of whether or not the person is appropriate to work with children or youth.
 - c. Church Personnel who work with or around children or youth must have a personnel file that is kept where other church records are kept.
 - d. Criminal records checks and sexual offender registry checks will be conducted every three (3) years for church personnel who work with or around children or youth.
 - e. Church Personnel who transfer within the Diocese of Fort Worth and apply for or are asked to or who do undertake a position working with or around children or youth are required to undergo the same screen-ing and selection process in Section A above. This requirement may be met through a transfer of a copy of their screening records to the new congregation, school, agency, or program together with completion of a new application, individual interview and reference checks with the congregations, schools, agencies or other programs for which the applicant has worked with or around children or youth since the screening was last done as shown in the applicant’s screening records.

B. Education and Training Requirements

Child abuse prevention and awareness education and training is required for all Church Personnel who regularly work with or around children or youth before they start their work with children or youth. The training program shall be one approved by the Risk Management Committee.

C. Monitoring and Supervision of Programs

The monitoring and supervision of programs and activities involving children or youth is important for safeguarding children and youth and involves several aspects.

One aspect involves having structural guidelines or standards for the programs and activities for children and youth. These include such things as who approves new programs, how many adults need to be present and the like. In addition to setting structural guidelines and standards, church leaders must make sure the structural safeguards are followed. Programs and activities have to be monitored and supervised to do that.

Another aspect of monitoring and supervision is that supervisory per-sonnel and others monitor and supervise the behavior of adults, youth and other children with children and youth so that inappropriate behav-iors and interactions can be detected and stopped. Some behaviors and interactions are potentially harmful to children or youth in and of themselves. Examples include providing alcohol or drugs to children or youth or actually having sexual contact with a child or youth. Other behaviors and interactions are not necessarily harmful in and of them-selves but are the same behaviors and interactions known to be used by those who abuse children or youth to “groom” them or their parents for eventual abuse or which provide the privacy child molesters need in order to abuse children or youth. Examples of those behaviors and interactions include

holding children over the age of three on the lap, transporting a child or youth alone, and the like. The structural guidelines and standards are covered in both this Monitoring and Supervision section and in the following section, General Conduct for the Protection of Children and Youth. The behaviors and interactions of persons with children and youth that need to be monitored and supervised are covered in the section on General Conduct for the Protection of Children and Youth and in the Guidelines for Appropriate Affection.

- a. Every program for children and youth must have a minimum of two adults with a minimum ratio of one additional adult for every ten youth. For smaller churches where two adults is not reasonable, a parent or another leader can be within close proximity of an open door.
- b. Church Personnel are prohibited from being alone with a child or youth or multiple children or youth where other adults cannot easily observe them.
- c. An up to date list of approved congregation-sponsored programs for children and youth will be maintained in the church office or other place where church records are kept.
- d. Church Personnel are not permitted to develop new activities for children and youth without approval from the Rector or canonical equivalent. Requests to develop new activities should be submitted in writing to the Rector. The Rector will consider whether the plan for a new activity includes adequate adult supervision.
- e. Each program will develop age-appropriate procedures to ensure the safety of children and youth using restrooms and showers or baths.
- f. When supervising or assisting private activities such as dressing, showering or diapering infants or children, Church Personnel will remain in an area observable by other adults or work in pairs.
- g. At least two Church Personnel must supervise activities. When both boys and girls are participating, male and female adults must supervise.

D. Standards of the Diocese for Conduct Related to Children and Youth

The following guidelines are intended to assist Church Personnel in monitoring and supervising behaviors and interactions with children and youth to identify and stop those that may be inherently harmful to children or youth, that are the type used by child molesters to groom children, youth and their parents, or that may create the conditions where abuse can occur more easily. These guidelines should also be used to make decisions about interactions with children and youth in church sponsored and affiliated programs. They are not designed or intended to address interactions within families. When exceptions to these guidelines must be made, they should be reported to the supervisor of the Church Personnel making the exception as soon as possible.

- a. All Church Personnel who work with children or youth must agree to comply with the Diocese of Fort Worth Standards for Appropriate Affection.
- b. No person will be allowed to volunteer to regularly work with children or youth until the person has been known to the clergy and congregation for at least six months.
- c. Programs for infants and children under six (6) years old will have procedures to ensure that children are released only to their parents or legal guardians or those designated by them.

- d. Church Personnel are prohibited from the use, possession, distribution, or being under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, or the mis-use of legal drugs while participating in or assisting with programs or activities specifically for children or youth.
- e. Parents or guardians must complete written permission forms before Church Personnel transport children and youth for a church sponsored activity or for any purpose on more than an occasional basis.
- f. Church Personnel will respond to children and youth with respect, consideration and equal treatment, regardless of sex, race, religion, sexual orientation, culture or socio-economic status. Church Personnel will portray a positive role model for children and youth by maintaining an attitude of respect, patience, and maturity. They will avoid even the appearance of favoritism.
- g. One-to-one counseling with children or youth will be done in an open or public or other place where private conversations are possible but occur in full view of others.
- h. No dating relationships will take place between those who minister with youth and those they supervise at any time. Such a relationship blurs the ministry being performed, and is easily and predictably misunderstood. Supervisors and ministers who violate this policy will be immediately and permanently removed from their supervisory and ministerial position.
- i. Church Personnel are prohibited from having sexual contact with a child or youth.
- j. Church Personnel are prohibited from possessing any sexually orientated materials (magazines, cards, videos, films, clothing, etc.) on church property or in the presence of children or youth except as expressly permitted as part of a pre-authorized educational program.
- k. Church Personnel are prohibited from using the Internet to view or download any sexually oriented materials on church property or in the presence of children or youth.
- l. Church Personnel are prohibited from discussing their own sexual activities, including dreams and fantasies, or discussing their use of sexually oriented or explicit materials such as pornography, videos or materials on or from the Internet, with children or youth.
- m. Church Personnel are **required** to remain in a common sleeping area with children and youth in order to provide immediate adult supervision.
- n. When common sleeping areas are used at least two adult sponsors of the same gender will be assigned to reside in the sleeping area. When boys and girls sleep in a common area together, adults of each gender must be present.
- o. The assignment of these adult sponsors for this duty will be given by the chief sponsor on any given event.
- p. Church Personnel are prohibited from sleeping in the same beds, sleeping bags, tents or any similar place with children or youth unless the adult is an immediate family member of the child or youth.
- q. Church Personnel are prohibited from dressing, undressing, bathing, or showering in the presence of children or youth.
- r. Church Personnel are prohibited from using physical punishment in any way for behavior management of children and youth. No form of physical discipline is acceptable. This prohibition includes spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, or any other physical force.

Physical force may only be used to stop a behavior that may cause immediate harm to the individual or to a child, youth or others.

- s. Church Personnel are prohibited from using harsh language, improper punishment, or mechanical restraint such as rope or tape for behavior management.
- t. Church Personnel are prohibited from participating in allowing others to conduct any hazing activities relating to children's or youth ministry or camp activities.

E. Responding to Problems

Reporting Inappropriate Behaviors or Policy Violations with Children or Youth

1. When Church Personnel observe any inappropriate behaviors, behaviors that are inconsistent with the Guidelines for Appropriate Affection, or which may violate any provision of these policies they must immediately report their observations. Examples of inappropriate behaviors or policy violations (but not limited to the following) would be seeking private time with children or youth, taking children or youth on over-night trips without other adults, swearing or making suggestive comments to children or youth, or selecting or using staff or volunteers without the required screening.

- a. All Church Personnel are required by this policy to report known or suspected abuse of children or youth to the appropriate state authorities.
- b. Failure to report suspected abuse of children or youth may be a crime. Reports may be made confidentially or anonymously. Every state provides immunity from civil liability for persons required to report suspected abuse in good faith and without malice. Simply stated, "in good faith" means that the person submitting the report believes what he or she is reporting to be true.
- c. In addition to reporting to the state authorities, Church Personnel are required to report any suspected or known abuse of children or youth that may have been perpetrated by Church Personnel directly to the rector/vicar of your Parish so that immediate and proper steps may be taken to ensure the safety of alleged victims.

2. Such inappropriate behaviors or possible policy violations that relate to interactions with children or youth should be reported in one of the following ways:

- a. A telephone call or meeting with the immediate supervisor of the person,
- b. A telephone call or meeting with the rector/vicar if the person is not the rector/vicar;
- c. A telephone call or meeting with a church warden if the person is the rector/vicar;
- d. A telephone call, meeting or text to the bishop;
- e. Submit a *Notice of Concern* (Appendix B), signed or unsigned, to the bishop.

3. All reports of inappropriate behavior or policy violations with children or youth will be taken seriously.

4. Reports of suspected or known abuse that involve Church Personnel should be reported to the Diocese of Fort Worth in one of the following ways:

- a. A telephone call, meeting or text to the bishop, or his appointee
- b. Submit a *Notice of Concern* (Appendix B), signed or unsigned, to the bishop or his appointee

5. The Diocese of Fort Worth and your Parish will cooperate with any investigation by state authorities to the fullest extent appropriate and inform authorities that a concurrent internal investigation will be directed by the Diocese of Fort Worth.

6. All Church Personnel are required to report to the Diocesan Office the potential integration of a known sex offender into the Parish. Each situation is firstly pastoral, confidential, and unique to the individual offender. The Diocesan Office will provide guidance and support for the specific situation and assist with the development of precautions and policies.

F. Standards for Appropriate Affection

The following Standards are to be carefully followed by all Church Personnel working around or with children or youth.

1. Love and affection are part of church life and ministry. There are many ways to demonstrate affection while maintaining positive and safe boundaries with children and youth.

Some positive and appropriate forms of affection are listed below:

- Asking permission before touching
- Pats on the shoulder or back.
- Handshakes.
- “High-fives” and hand slapping.
- Verbal praise.
- Touching hands, faces, shoulders and arms of children or youth
- 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).

2. The following forms of affection are considered inappropriate with children and youth in ministry setting because many of them are the behaviors that child molesters use to groom children or youth and their parents for later molestation or can be, in and of themselves, sexual abuse.

- Inappropriate or lengthy embraces.
- Kisses on the mouth.
- Holding children over three years old on the lap.
- Touching bottoms, chests or genital areas other than for appropriate diapering or toileting of infants and toddlers.
- Showing affection in isolated areas such as bedrooms, closets, staff only areas or other private rooms.
- Occupying a bed with a child or youth
- Touching knees or legs of children or youth.
- Wrestling with children or youth.
- Tickling children or youth.

- Piggyback rides.
- Any type of massage
- Any form of unwanted affection.
- Comments or compliments (spoken, written, or electronic) that relate to physique or body development. Examples would be, “You sure are developing,” or “You look really hot in those jeans.”
- Snapping bras or giving wedgies or similar touch or underwear whether or not it is covered by other clothing.
- Giving gifts or money to individual children or youth.
- Private meals with individual children or youth
- Touching or hugging from behind
- Games involved in inappropriate touching

G. Standards for Behavior

- Any verbal or nonverbal sexual behavior with any child, youth or vulnerable adult is inappropriate and forbidden.
 - Never allow children, youth or vulnerable adults to become sexual with one another during ministry activities.
 - Sexual gestures or overtures a child, youth or vulnerable adult makes to a minister should be reported to the supervisor and the parent/guardian so that discussion can be held with the child, youth or vulnerable adult.
- Dating, going out with, or becoming romantically involved with any child, youth, or vulnerable adult is forbidden.
- Discretion must be used in dealing with all, especially regarding physical contact. Any overt display of affection should be made in a public setting in front of other group members and should respect wishes of the other person.
- “Buddy systems” must be used by Church Personnel whenever possible, but especially when children, youth or vulnerable adults are involved.
 - *Never* be alone with a child or youth or multiple children or youth where others cannot easily observe the program or activity.
 - One-to-one counseling with a child, youth or vulnerable adult should always occur in a public place, never alone in a car or a private place.
 - Never invite or host children, youth or vulnerable adults in your home unless another unrelated adult is present.
- Parents/Guardians must complete written permission forms before transporting children and youth for a church sponsored activity.
- Driving *alone* with a child, youth or vulnerable adult should be avoided at all times.
 - However, if riding or driving alone with a child, youth or vulnerable adult cannot be avoided, special care should be taken:
 - Don’t sit close to one another in the car.
 - Do not come into physical contact with each other.
 - Do not stop the car to talk.
 - If you must stop, turn on the inside light of the car.
 - Avoid physical contact (hugs and kisses) when saying goodbye.

- Be aware of the time you depart and arrive. Mark those times in your diary or record.
- Never swear or use foul or abusive language in the presence of those you serve in ministry.
- Never use your role to degrade, ridicule, threaten or humiliate another person.
- Never speak graphically about sexual activities, including your own and do not allow others to do so. This includes dreams and fantasies or the use of sexually oriented materials such as pornography, videos, or materials on or from the Internet.
- Never show sexually oriented or pornographic materials to those you serve in ministry. (such as magazines, cards, videos, films, DVD's, clothing etc.)
- Never use the Internet to view or download any sexually oriented materials on church property or in the presence of children and youth.
- Never spank, shake, slap or physically punish children, youth or vulnerable adults.
- Never wrestle with or tickle a child, youth or vulnerable adult
- Never give tobacco, alcohol or unauthorized drugs to children, youth or vulnerable adults.
- Never use, possess or be under the influence of alcohol at any time while ministering to children, youth or vulnerable adults.
- Never use, possess or be under the influence of illegal drugs at any time.
- Never use tobacco products while in the presence or children or youth.
- When Church Personnel experiences romantic or sexual attraction for a child, youth or vulnerable adult, the minister is required to discuss the situation with the supervisor or spiritual director for guidance.

All suspicions of child sexual abuse must be reported as required by state law and diocesan policies. Any knowledge or suspicion of any minister having an inappropriate relationship with a child, youth or vulnerable adult must be reported promptly to that person's supervisor.

Behaviors to Avoid:

- Meeting alone in isolated places.
- Showing favoritism.
- Physical contact that can be misinterpreted.
- Provocative or revealing attire.
- Meeting in homes and in bedrooms without others present.
- Being nude in front of children, youth or vulnerable adults.
- Sleeping in bed with children, youth or vulnerable adults
- Special gift giving.
- Discussion your own dating activities, sexual activities or encouraging others to do so.
- Keeping "secrets" about relationships.
- Failing to adhere to uniform or accepted standards of affection.
- Showing affection when no one else is around.
- Staring while others are dressing.
- Commenting on others' bodies.
- Taking pictures while others are dressing or showering.
- Shaming or belittling an individual.

Appendix A

Confidential Notice of Concern

Individual(s) of Concern: _____

Date of occurrence: _____

Time of occurrence: _____

Type of Concern:

- Inappropriate behavior with a child or youth.
- Policy violation with a child or youth
- Possible risk of abuse
- 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 the State, what was their recommendation about investigating? (Attach additional sheets if needed).

Has this situation ever occurred previously? (Attach additional sheets if needed).

What action was taken? How was the situation handled, who was involved, who was questioned, were police called? Attach additional sheets if needed.

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? Attach additional sheets if needed.

Submitted by: (Please print)

Telephone number:

Location and address: _____

Signature: _____

Reviewed by: _____

**Once completed, please email to the Bishop of Fort Worth:*