

# The Roman Catholic Church of the Diocese of Baton Rouge

## ***Code of Ethics and Behavior for Adults who Minister with Minors and Vulnerable Adults in the Diocese of Baton Rouge (the "Code of Ethics and Behavior")***

### **USCCB Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People:**

**Article 12.** Dioceses/eparchies are to maintain "safe environment" programs which the diocesan/eparchial bishop deems to be in accord with Catholic moral principles. They are to be conducted cooperatively with parents, civil authorities, educators, and community organizations to provide education and training for children, youth, parents, ministers, educators, volunteers, and others about ways to make and maintain a safe environment for children and young people. Dioceses/eparchies are to make clear to clergy and all members of the community the standards of conduct for clergy and other persons in positions of trust with regard to children.

### **The Roman Catholic Church of the Diocese of Baton Rouge (the "Diocese of Baton Rouge" or "Diocese"):**

1. All personnel who are deemed to be subject to the child and vulnerable adult protection policies of the Diocese shall adhere to the *Code of Ethics and Behavior* which they have agreed in writing to follow.
2. All personnel shall notify their pastor, principal or agency director immediately, orally and in writing, when they become aware that the *Code of Ethics and Behavior* has been violated.
3. The *Code of Ethics and Behavior* shall be published on the Diocese website and printed copies shall be made available upon request to the faithful at every parish, school and agency of the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

### **Code of Conduct for Interactions with Minors and Vulnerable Adults ("Code of Conduct"):**

As an adult working with minors and vulnerable adults (each, a "Protected Individual" and collectively, "Protected Individuals"), I agree to strictly follow the provisions of this *Code of Conduct* as a condition of my providing services to Protected Individuals in the parish, school or Diocese where I worship, work or volunteer.

### **In my ministry interactions with Protected Individuals (face to face and via technology), I shall:**

- Treat everyone with respect, patience, integrity, courtesy, dignity and consideration.
- Avoid situations that do not allow for public visibility and accessibility, where I am isolated with Protected Individuals (e.g., avoid developing outside *private* relationships with Protected Individuals and *initiating* private communications with Protected Individuals outside of approved ministry activities).
- Safeguard my use of technology so as to avoid private/isolated communications with Protected Individuals, the sharing of personal information regarding Protected Individuals, and the public identification of Protected Individuals that does not conform to the technology policies and procedures of my parish, school, or agency where I am in ministry with Protected Individuals.
- Follow all guidelines for communications with Protected Individuals set forth by the parish, school or diocesan agency for which I am working or volunteering.
- Refrain from giving or accepting expensive gifts to/from Protected Individuals or their parents without prior written approval from the pastor, principal, or agency director.
- Report suspected child and vulnerable adult abuse in accordance with Louisiana state law and the *Diocese of Baton Rouge Process for Reporting the Alleged Abuse of Protected Individuals* (the "Reporting Process") (copy attached).
- Cooperate fully in any investigation of abuse of Protected Individuals.
- Conduct myself in a manner that is consistent with the discipline, norms, and teachings of the Catholic Church.
- Provide a professional work environment that is free from harassment.

**Code of Conduct:**

As an adult working with Protected Individuals, I promise to strictly follow the provisions of the *Code of Conduct* as a condition of my providing services to Protected Individuals in the parish, school or Diocese where I worship, work or volunteer.

**In my ministry interactions with Protected Individuals (face to face and via technology)**

**I shall not:**

- Smoke, vape or use tobacco or vaping products in the presence of Protected Individuals.
  - Use, possess, or be under the influence of alcohol at any time while working with Protected Individuals.
  - Use, possess, or be under the influence of illegal drugs at any time.
  - Pose any health risk to Protected Individuals.
  - Strike, spank, shake, or slap Protected Individuals.
  - Humiliate, ridicule, threaten, or degrade Protected Individuals.
  - Use any discipline that frightens or humiliates a Protected Individual or a group of Protected Individuals.
  - Make any type of statement about a Protected Individual's body type, shape, build, or looks.
  - Make any type of statement that degrades or puts down in any way any other adult, minor or group of people, including without limitation any type of racial joke, slur or degrading comment about any race, person or group of people.
  - Touch a Protected Individual in a sexual or other inappropriate manner.
  - Plan or conduct any type of youth-oriented event in the name of the Diocese, other than those that are approved, planned, and conducted by my church and/or school ministry team.
  - Share with a Protected Individual anything about my own sexual history or any other past or present experience that crosses the boundary between public and private. (Catechists who are responsible for teaching Catholic sexual morality must be certified through the diocesan human sexuality course.)
  - Share a room (i.e., stay overnight in the same room) with a Protected Individual or group of Protected Individuals during any type of event.
  - Allow a Protected Individual or group of Protected Individuals to stay overnight in my own home unless due to a shared friendship between my child and another adult's child.
  - Take improper advantage of a counseling and/or authoritative relationship for my own benefit.
  - Manufacture, possess, or distribute child pornography.
  - View movies or other similar materials containing inappropriate content with or in the presence of Protected Individuals.
  - Listen to music that is degrading of any person or race, or of one's sexuality, with or in the presence of Protected Individuals.
  - Contribute to the delinquency of a Protected Individual as prohibited by Louisiana law.
  - Enter into any type of private communication with a Protected Individual that is not within the scope of my ministry, or any communication that would undermine the parent-child relationship, or serve to foster an inappropriate relationship with a Protected Individual.
  - Request confidentiality of one or more Protected Individuals.\*
  - Promise confidentiality to one or more Protected Individuals.\*
  - Abuse or neglect a minor or vulnerable adult as prohibited by Louisiana law.
- \*See also "Communications and Confidentiality" section below.

**Appropriate Physical Contact Allowed While Working with Protected Individuals**

**I understand that the following forms of physical contact are appropriate while working with Protected Individuals:**

- Handshakes and "High Fives."
- Brief hugs (when initiated by a Protected Individual).
- Hand holding (during group prayer).
- Contact that is a component of an acceptable group activity (such as an icebreaker, group prayer service, or sporting activity).

**Inappropriate Physical Contact Not Allowed While Working with Protected Individuals:**

**I understand that the following forms of physical contact are not allowed while working with Protected Individuals:**

- Kissing or prolonged embraces involving a Protected Individual.
- Giving or receiving any type of massage involving a Protected Individual.
- Showering or bathing with a Protected Individual.
- Allowing a Protected Individual to sit on one's shoulders or lap.
- Fondling, petting, or any type of genital contact involving a Protected Individual.
- Leaning against a Protected Individual (when seated or standing).

**Communications and Confidentiality with Protected Individuals in Ministry**

Private communication with a Protected Individual is defined as any type or form of communication that takes place apart from an appropriate and approved ministry setting. Therefore, adults in ministry with Protected Individuals shall not enter into any type of private communication with a Protected Individual that is not within the scope of their ministry, or any communication that would undermine the parent-child relationship or serve to foster an inappropriate relationship with a Protected Individual.

**Types of Communications (Verbal/Written) While Working with Protected Individuals:**

It is normal for an adult in ministry to enter into a spontaneous conversation with a Protected Individual. However, adults shall consider that some issues, even if shared spontaneously in open conversation, must be brought to the attention of a Protected Individual's parents in the case of a minor, or guardian in the case of a Vulnerable Adult.

Adults in ministry with Protected Individuals shall follow all communications/technology guidelines and policies established by the parish, school or diocesan agency where they worship, work or volunteer.

Adults in ministry with Protected Individuals are obligated to read thoroughly any written communication that the adult receives from a Protected Individual. If it is appropriate to ask a Protected Individual to make journal entries as a part of the religious education process, then adults are also obligated to read and take seriously such entries and to respond to them in keeping with the standards stated in this *Code of Ethics and Behavior*, particularly if the information shared is that of the alleged abuse of that Protected Individual or if the information leads the adult to suspect that a Protected Individual is at risk of harming him or herself or others.

Confidentiality in ministry with Protected Individuals has an appropriate place. However, no communication between adults and the Protected Individuals to whom they minister is protected by privilege (i.e., such as that which exists between a priest and penitent in sacramental confession, a lawyer and client, or a doctor and patient.) Adults will, therefore, commit themselves to a specific standard regarding communications with Protected Individuals. In settings such as small groups during a retreat, an adult small group leader may encourage the group to keep what is shared in the group confidential, unless a member of the group shares information that leads the adult to suspect that a Protected Individual is at risk of harming him or herself or others. Such information shall not be kept confidential. In cases of alleged or suspected abuse, diocesan personnel shall follow the *Reporting Process*.

**Diocesan Requirements/Certification to Work in Ministry with Protected Individuals**

**I understand and agree that I shall complete the following requirements prior to working in ministry with Protected Individuals:**

- Obtain a Criminal Background Check (to comply with state and federal laws).
- Complete promulgated diocesan training on Recognizing and Reporting Abuse.
- Read, sign and submit the *Code of Ethics and Behavior* acknowledgment form.
- Complete the appropriate diocesan EAPPS application.

## THE DIOCESE OF BATON ROUGE

### Process for Reporting the Alleged Abuse of a Protected Individual

*When the  
Accused is a:*

**Priest, Deacon,  
Religious Brother  
or Sister, or  
Seminarist**

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- Step 1: Mandated Reporter calls local Police or Sheriff's Department
  - Step 2: Mandated Reporter alerts Diocesan Victim Assistance Coordinator via the 24-Hour VAC Hotline
  - Step 3: Victim Assistance Coordinator alerts the appropriate Diocesan Chancery Official
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**Diocesan 24-Hour Victim  
Assistance Hotline  
(225) 242-0250**

**Diocesan Office of Child  
and Youth Protection  
(225) 242-0202**

**Employee of the  
Diocese, Volunteer  
in Ministry or  
Other person**

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- Step 1: Mandated Reporter makes report to appropriate Civil Authority (Abuse of minor within the home: Call Department of Children and Family Services; Abuse of minor outside of the home: Call local Police or Sheriff's Department; Abuse of Vulnerable Adult: Call local Police or Sheriff's Department and appropriate Louisiana Vulnerable Adult Services)
  - Step 2: Mandated Reporter alerts his or her immediate supervisor
  - Step 3: Supervisor alerts appropriate Department Head and the Director, Office of Child and Youth Protection
  - Step 4: If abuse is sexual in nature, call the diocesan Victim Assistance Coordinator via the 24-Hour Victim Assistance Hotline when accused is a diocesan employee, volunteer or other person
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**Diocesan Office of  
Human Resources  
(225) 387-0561**

**Louisiana Department  
of Children and Family  
Services State-Wide  
24-Hour Hotline  
855-452-5437**

**Louisiana Adult  
Protective Services  
(for vulnerable adults  
ages 18-59)  
1-800-898-4910**

**Licensed  
Daycare  
Staff**

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- Step 1: Mandated Reporter makes report to Department of Children and Family Services
  - Step 2: Mandated Reporter alerts his or her immediate supervisor
  - Step 3: Supervisor alerts appropriate Department Head and the Director, Office of Child and Youth Protection
  - \*Step 4: If abuse is sexual in nature, call the diocesan Victim Assistance Coordinator via the 24-Hour Victim Assistance Hotline
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**Louisiana Department of  
Elderly Protective  
Services  
(for vulnerable adults  
ages 60 and older)  
1-833-577-6532**

**Acknowledgement of Receipt and Review of, and Agreement to Comply with, the Code of Ethics and Behavior, Including the Code of Conduct and the Reporting Process\***

By signing where indicated below, I acknowledge that I have received, carefully read and fully understand the attached Code of Ethics and Behavior for Adults who Minister with Minors and Vulnerable Adults in the Diocese of Baton Rouge ("*Code of Ethics and Behavior*"), including the Code of Conduct for Interactions with Minors and Vulnerable Adults ("*Code of Conduct*") and the Process for Reporting the Alleged Abuse of a Protected Individual ("*Reporting Process*"), and agree to comply with them in all respects, and to conduct myself and fulfill my ministerial responsibilities according to all of their provisions.

I accept responsibility to carry out all of the provisions of the *Code of Ethics and Behavior*, including the *Code of Conduct* and the *Reporting Process*, and to refer any questions concerning them to my immediate supervisor or the Diocesan Child Protection Officer for further clarification. I understand that the Diocese of Baton Rouge reserves the right to change, modify, and/or revise any of the provisions contained in them at any time.

I acknowledge that the Diocese of Baton Rouge is relying upon my representations made herein and in the documents referenced above to allow me to minister to Protected Individuals as therein defined.

Diocesan Child Protection Officer:

Amy J. Cordon

P.O. Box 2028

Baton Rouge, LA 70821-2028

(225) 242-0202

[childprotection@diobr.org](mailto:childprotection@diobr.org)

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Employee/Volunteer Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date Signed

\_\_\_\_\_  
PRINT Full Name of Employee/Volunteer

**\*This statement when signed and dated must be returned to the appointed Child Protection Site Coordinator and placed in the signatory's Child Protection file.**