



# Code of Conduct for Employees and Volunteers

Diocese of Memphis in Tennessee

## Preamble

The purpose of this Code of Conduct to ensure a safe, respectful, and morally responsible environment rooted in our Catholic mission. It applies to **all individuals who serve the Diocese of Memphis in any capacity**, whether through paid employment or volunteer service. The following are examples of those to whom the Code applies.

### 1. Diocesan Employees

All individuals employed by the Diocese, its parishes, schools, and affiliated ministries, including but not limited to:

- administrative and support staff
- teachers, principals, and school personnel
- pastoral associates, youth ministers, directors of religious education
- maintenance, custodial, and facilities staff
- chancery office personnel
- any temporary, seasonal, or contract-based employee working on diocesan property or for a diocesan entity

### 2. Volunteers

Any person who offers their time or service to a diocesan entity without financial compensation, including but not limited to volunteers in all parishes, Catholic schools, and other outreach ministries and social services.

- **Parishes**
  - Catechists, OCIA volunteers, sacristans, ushers, greeters
  - Youth ministry helpers, retreat chaperones
  - Music ministry, lectors, extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion
- **Catholic Schools**
  - Classroom aides, library assistants
  - Field-trip chaperones, coaches, club moderators
  - Volunteers in the lunchroom, office, playground, or for an event
- **Outreach Ministries and Social Services**
  - Soup kitchens, food pantries, clothing closets

- Homeless outreach, prison ministry, crisis assistance
- Volunteers serving through Catholic Charities or parish-based social ministries

### **3. Clergy and Religious Serving in a Volunteer or Employment Capacity**

While clergy have their own Code of Conduct, this Code also applies to both clergy and religious when they are functioning as:

- school faculty or staff;
- chaplains or ministry coordinators; and
- retreat leaders, program facilitators, or organizational volunteers.

### **4. Contractors, Consultants, and Third-Party Service Providers**

In addition to volunteers or employees, those who interact with diocesan communities are expected to observe the behavioral expectations of this Code when:

- working on diocesan, parish, or school property;
- providing services involving minors; and/or
- representing the Diocese in any program, event, or ministry.

### **5. Board and Committee Members**

Individuals appointed or elected to serve on boards, councils, committees, or advisory groups at any diocesan, parish, or school level.

### **6. Anyone Representing the Diocese in an Official Capacity**

Regardless of job title or volunteer status, this Code applies to anyone who:

- leads or assists with diocesan-sponsored programs;
- represents the Diocese, a parish, or school during events; and/or
- acts on behalf of the Diocese in the community, online, or in public forums.

---

## **I. General Principles**

### **1. Christian Witness**

- All employees and volunteers are called to uphold the teachings, values, and mission of the Catholic Church in their conduct and relationships.
- Personal behavior shall reflect honesty, integrity, compassion, and respect for the dignity of every person.

## **2. Responsibility and Accountability**

- Each individual is responsible for his or her own actions and for fostering a safe, respectful, and faith-filled environment.
- Violations of this Code may result in disciplinary action, including termination of employment or removal from ministry.

## **3. Compliance with Laws and Policies**

- All diocesan personnel must comply with applicable civil and Church laws, including those related to child protection, discrimination, harassment, and financial integrity.
- All are encouraged to receive Safe Environment training. Safe Environment training and background checks must be completed if required by diocesan policy.

---

# **II. Conduct in Ministry and the Workplace**

## **1. Respect and Dignity**

- Treat all persons with respect, courtesy, and fairness.
- No form of harassment, bullying, intimidation, or discrimination will be tolerated.
- Conduct that demeans, exploits, or threatens others—verbally, physically, or digitally—is contrary to Christian and diocesan values.

## **2. Integrity and Professionalism**

- Maintain appropriate boundaries in all interactions.
- Avoid gossip, negative criticism, or divisive behavior that harms the Church community.
- Use time, property, and resources entrusted by the Church responsibly and only for authorized purposes.

## **3. Confidentiality**

- Respect the privacy of those you serve. Information shared in confidence should not be disclosed unless required by law, diocesan policy, or to prevent harm.
- Personal data, records, and communications must be safeguarded with care and discretion.

## **4. Appropriate Relationships**

- Employees and volunteers must maintain healthy, professional boundaries, with all those served by the Church, especially with minors.
- Romantic or sexual relationships with minors or anyone receiving pastoral care are strictly prohibited.
- Avoid favoritism, excessive familiarity, or private meetings that could lead to misunderstanding or harm.

### III. Conduct with Minors

1. **Safe Environment**
    - All employees and volunteers who regularly work with minors must comply fully with the diocesan **Safe Environment Program**, including required training and background checks.
  2. **Boundaries and Contact**
    - Physical contact should always be non-sexual, appropriate, and in the presence of others.
    - Avoid being alone with a minor in private settings unless necessary and visible to others.
    - Overnight stays or travel with minors require the presence of multiple adults and written parental consent.
  3. **Digital and Social Media Use**
    - Electronic communications with minors must be transparent, professional, and for legitimate ministry purposes only. A parent should be copied on electronic communications with minors.
    - No private, secretive, or inappropriate online interactions are permitted.
  4. **Reporting Obligations**
    - Any suspicion, knowledge, or reasonable concern of abuse or misconduct involving minors must be **immediately reported** to civil authorities and the diocesan Victim Assistance Coordinator in accordance with diocesan policy and Tennessee law.
- 

### IV. Stewardship and Financial Responsibility

1. **Proper Use of Resources**
    - Church property, funds, and equipment must be used solely for legitimate Church purposes.
    - Misuse, fraud, or theft of Church assets is forbidden.
  2. **Transparency**
    - All financial activities must follow diocesan accounting procedures and be subject to oversight and audit.
    - Conflicts of interest or personal gain from ministerial roles are prohibited.
- 

### V. Substance Use and Personal Conduct

1. **Substance Abuse**
  - The possession, use, or distribution of illegal drugs while engaged in diocesan work or ministry is strictly forbidden.
  - Alcohol use during Church and/or School functions must be moderate and consistent with the Employee Handbook.

## 2. **Moral Integrity**

- Employees and volunteers are expected to live lives consistent with the moral and social teachings of the Catholic Church.
  - Behavior, speech, and lifestyle that publicly contradict Church teaching or causes scandal to the faithful may be grounds for disciplinary action.
- 

# **VI. Public Communications and Social Media**

## 1. **Representation of the Catholic Church**

- When posting online or speaking in public forums, employees and volunteers must represent the Diocese with respect, accuracy, and professionalism. They should avoid statements that contradict Catholic Church teaching, disclose confidential information, or cause scandal. Any content—digital or otherwise—that speaks on behalf of the Diocese, references Diocesan positions, or may be perceived as an official statement *must* be reviewed and approved in advance by the Office of Communications.
- Confidential diocesan information must never be shared.

## 2. **Online Conduct**

- Do not post or share content that is defamatory, obscene, discriminatory, or otherwise inconsistent with Catholic morality.
  - Maintain the same standards of professionalism online as in person.
- 

# **VII. Reporting Misconduct**

## 1. **Duty to Report**

- Employees and volunteers are required to report suspected violations of this Code, including misconduct, harassment, abuse, or illegal activity. Volunteers are to report to their supervisor and pastor, and all employees to the diocesan Office of Human Resources.
- Reports involving minors must follow diocesan Safe Environment procedures.

## 2. **Protection from Retaliation**

- Anyone who reports misconduct in good faith is protected from retaliation.
  - False or malicious reports are prohibited and subject to disciplinary action.
- 

# **VIII. Enforcement and Disciplinary Action**

- Violations of this Code will be investigated by the appropriate diocesan authority.
- Consequences may include verbal or written warnings, suspension, termination, removal from ministry, or other action as deemed necessary by the Diocese.

- Serious violations may also be referred to civil authorities as required by law.
- 

## **IX. Acknowledgment**

All employees and volunteers of the Diocese of Memphis must read this Code of Conduct and acknowledge their commitment to abide by it as a condition of service in their online Virtus profile. Those volunteers who do not regularly interact with minors are to complete the Volunteer Acknowledgement Form.

---

## **Conclusion**

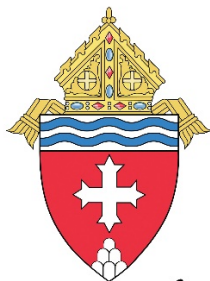
In serving the Diocese of Memphis in Tennessee, every employee and volunteer shares in the mission of Christ. Let our conduct be guided by the Gospel, our relationships shaped by respect and charity, and our ministries grounded in faith and integrity so that all we do may bring glory to God and build up His Church.

---

## **To Report Child Abuse**

To report abuse, neglect, or exploitation of a child, immediately make an online report at [carat.app.tn.gov](http://carat.app.tn.gov) or call (877) 237-0004. Suspected sexual abuse of a child by a cleric (priest or deacon) is also to be reported to the diocesan Victim Assistance Coordinator at (901) 373-1266.

---



Catholic Diocese of Memphis

## Volunteer Acknowledgment Form

*Note: This acknowledgment form is only for those volunteers who do not have a profile on the Virtus website.  
Employees and volunteers who regularly interact with children must acknowledge on the Virtus website.*

I have received the *Code of Conduct for Employees and Volunteers* and agree to abide by it.

Name (Please Print): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_