

**Message from
Archbishop Paul Etienne:**

It is my expectation of all those who minister on behalf of and with the Archdiocese of Anchorage, do so, in a manner that is representative of the Love, Compassion and Care of Christ.

These guidelines are not meant to be all encompassing, but are meant to provide a framework of what is required to ensure the well being of those who trust in our ministry.

These guidelines are meant to ensure that those whom we serve, can trust the church to be a place of safety, security and comfort where the loving and healing care of Christ is received from those who minister in the name of Christ.

September 1, 2018

“What we say and how we say it, our every word and gesture, ought to express God’s compassion, tenderness and forgiveness for all.

Pope Francis, May 11, 2016



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*Church Personnel and Visiting Ministers include clerics, religious men and women, lay employees and volunteers and those mentioned above who are ministering within the Archdiocese on a permanent and/or temporary basis.



**STANDARDS OF PROFESSIONAL
CONDUCT**

**FOR
CHURCH PERSONNEL*
AND
VISITING MINISTERS***

Church Ministers are called to personal integrity, high standards of behavior and ethical conduct.

In order to maintain the highest level of accountability, there must be clear guiding principles of appropriate behavior.

The public and private conduct of pastoral ministers can inspire and motivate people, but it can also scandalize and undermine the people’s faith.

Pastoral ministers must, at all times, be aware of the responsibilities that accompany their ministry.

STANDARDS OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT FOR CHURCH PERSONNEL AND VISITING MINISTERS*

APPROPRIATE Interactions:

Appropriate interactions with all those ministered to, and especially minors and vulnerable adults are a positive and nurturing aspect of church life. If consent is given by the person, the following forms of interaction are customarily (but not always) regarded as appropriate:

Examples of APPROPRIATE Physical Contact:

- * Short hugs (particularly side to side hugs)
- * Pats on the shoulder or back
- * Handshakes, “high-fives” or “fist bumps”
- * Kneeling or bending down for hugs initiated by small children
- * Holding hands during prayer
- * Assisting someone when walking, if needed

Examples of APPROPRIATE Behavior:

- * Maintain professional relationships with those ministered to and their families, especially minors and vulnerable adults
- * Consulting and following appropriate instructions of parents or guardians
- * Informing parent or guardian of activities
- * Acquiring appropriate signed permission forms for all events

Examples of APPROPRIATE verbal interactions:

- * Positive reinforcement
- * Verbal praise
- * Appropriate jokes and age appropriate humor

MINISTERIAL BOUNDARIES

It is the responsibility of the minister to provide clarity, not confusion within ministerial relationships. They are to recognize their role and the vulnerabilities to whom they minister. Therefore, they are to always maintain appropriate boundaries and be mindful of, but not limited to:

- * Meeting locations, time of day, length of meetings
- * Use of Social Media forms, ie: blogs, texts, emails, etc...
- * Tone, vocabulary, and cultural norms

Church Personnel and Visiting Ministers are required to serve in the following manner:

- * Respect the dignity of each and every person as made in the image and likeness of God
- * Ensure the protection of those who are vulnerable, especially those who are young, elderly, living with a disability, under emotional or mental stress and are ill.
- * Maintain appropriate professional boundaries to avoid impropriety or the appearance of impropriety
- * Conduct themselves in a manner that is consistent with the discipline, norms and teachings of the Church
- * Follow all Archdiocesan policies included but not limited to those regarding Safe Environment, Contracts and Pagella
- * Maintain confidentiality
- * Refer people to appropriate professional resources for counseling services
- * Respect the reputation of all persons
- * Report violations of policy or suspected violations of policy to the appropriate civil and/or church authorities.

Church Personnel and Visiting Ministers are prohibited from engaging in the following conduct. This list is not exhaustive:

- * Crimes against persons
- * Immoral conduct
- * Actions disruptive to ministry and public worship
- * Stealing or any form of theft, including misappropriation of church funds
- * Possession or distribution of pornographic material
- * Adultery, promiscuity or illicit behavior
- * Engaging in sexual abuse, sexual misconduct or sexual harassment
- * Failure to follow Archdiocesan policies

INAPPROPRIATE Interactions:

The following interactions are to be avoided to ensure respect and dignity is given to all people and to ensure a safe and secure faith environment. The following are examples of, **but not limited to**, inappropriate physical interactions

- * Lengthy hugs or forceful frontal hugs
- * Kisses on the mouth
- * Holding toddlers or older children on the lap
- * Touching buttocks or genital areas
- * Being in bed with a minor
- * Wrestling or tickling
- * Any type of massage given by or to Church personnel

Examples of INAPPROPRIATE Verbal Interactions:

- * Swearing, shaming or making comments relating to physique or body image or development
- * Telling sexually suggestive or racial jokes or those which demean another

Examples of INAPPROPRIATE Behavior:

- * Good judgement must be used when giving personal email, telephone number or residence location to a person to whom they minister especially with a minor or vulnerable adult
- * Being alone with a minor or vulnerable adult in a private setting
- * Allowing others to break rules or violate the law
- * Offering alcohol to minors or marijuana or illegal drugs to anyone
- * Being under the influence of alcohol or drugs in the presence of minors or those to whom you minister
- * Showers with or in the immediate presence of a minor or vulnerable adult
- * Exposing persons to sexually oriented or morally inappropriate material, especially minors or vulnerable adults
- * Viewing, possessing or distributing pornographic materials in any form
- * Transporting a minor or vulnerable adult alone, unless in an emergency and other ministers have been notified
- * Giving special gifts or money to particular people you minister

Electronic Online Conduct

The standards of ethical conduct and personal integrity extend to all forms of written, verbal and electronic communications.

Church personnel using social networking sites for personal use should be aware that any information displayed therein may be evaluated in light of the individual’s position in the church.

These sites should not be used to have contact with people to whom they minister or provide any program or parish information.