



## **Code of Conduct for the Diocese of La Crosse**

All clergy, candidates for ordination, and anyone who works or volunteers within the Diocese of La Crosse at any of its parishes or schools have the legal, moral, and religious responsibility to perform their duties in a way that educates and assists – and does not harm – the people with whom they work. All of us deserve a place to worship, work, and study in an environment free from harassment, bullying, physical or sexual abuse. In keeping with that obligation, the Diocese of La Crosse establishes the following Code of Conduct for all who serve within the Diocese of La Crosse.

**As a member of the clergy serving the Diocese of La Crosse, a candidate for ordination, a diocesan, parish or school employee or a volunteer who works in, or throughout the Diocese of La Crosse, I solemnly pledge that:**

### **I will**

- Support and exemplify in conduct both Catholic doctrine and morality.
- Perform my work in a manner consistent with the mission of the Catholic Church and the Diocese of La Crosse.
- To the best of my ability create and maintain a safe environment for everyone, including minors and vulnerable adults.
- Participate in training sessions required by the Diocese to foster a safe environment and to prevent the sexual abuse of anyone, including children and vulnerable adults.
- Submit to a background check according to the Diocesan Policy.
- Treat everyone with respect, patience, integrity, courtesy, dignity, and consideration.
- Avoid situations where I am alone with minors in Church or at the Parish or School.
- Use encouragement, constructive criticism,

and positive reinforcement rather than harsh or negative criticism when working with others.

- Dress appropriately and not wear any clothing considered immodest or with offensive messages or pictures in accordance with the Diocesan modesty guidelines.
- Maintain appropriate physical and emotional boundaries with all, including minors and vulnerable adults.
- Report suspected abuse and neglect to the appropriate civil authorities.
- Cooperate fully in any investigation of abuse.

### **I will not**

- Endorse, teach, advocate, encourage or counsel any beliefs or practices contrary to the teachings of the Catholic Church.
- Use tobacco products or use electronic smoking devices in the immediate presence of minors.
- Use, possess, or be under the influence of alcohol while chaperoning minors.

- Use or possess illegal drugs or misuse prescription drugs at any time.
- Engage in dangerous risk-taking behaviors in the presence of minors or encourage these behaviors in minors.
- Create, acquire, possess, or distribute pornographic images of any kind to anyone especially minors.
- Strike, spank, shake, or slap anyone, including minors or vulnerable adults.
- Purposely humiliate, ridicule, threaten, or degrade anyone including minors and vulnerable adults.
- Touch anyone in a sexual or other inappropriate manner, including but not limited to minors and vulnerable adults.
- Intentionally use any discipline that frightens or humiliates minors or vulnerable adults.
- Give or accept expensive gifts from a minor or their parents without prior written approval from their superior.
- Use profanity or sexually suggestive language at any time while in the presence of others, including minors or vulnerable adults.
- Commit an illegal or immoral act.

**I understand that it is the express policy of the Diocese to alert appropriate civil authorities of any suspected inappropriate or criminal behavior towards minors and to comply with all federal, state, or local, civil and criminal laws, prohibiting sexual misconduct; and all requirements, procedural and substantive set forth in this policy. I will cooperate fully with any investigations of such suspected behavior by any competent authority.** *(Revised Policy and Procedure on Sexual Misconduct for the Diocese of La Crosse, 10/18/1997 – Red Book) and (Revised Policy and Procedures on Child Sexual Abuse of the Diocese of La Crosse, 2/5/2003 and as updated in 2010 & 9/25/2019 - Green Book).*

**I understand that under Diocesan policy, the term "minor" means a person who has not yet attained eighteen years of age; an adult who habitually lacks the use of reason; a person of any age who lacks the capacity to give consent due to a mental or developmental condition or disability; or a person in a state of infirmity, physical or mental deficiency, or deprivation of personal liberty which, in fact, even occasionally, limits their ability to understand or to want or otherwise resist an offense.**

**I understand that any action inconsistent with this Code of Conduct or failure to act mandated by this Code of Conduct may result in removal from my work assignment or volunteer position.** *(Educator Professional Contracts- 1980), (Parish Administration Manual, revised Spring 1999, and as updated 2/10-2025.) (Revised Policy and Procedure on Sexual Misconduct for the Diocese of La Crosse, 10/18/1997 – Red Book) and (Revised Policy and Procedures on Child Sexual Abuse of the Diocese of La Crosse, 2/5/2003 and as updated in 2010 & 9-25-2019- Green Book).*

**My signature below indicates that I have read and agree to adhere to the Code of Conduct above.**

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Printed Name

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Signature

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Date