



CATHOLIC DIOCESE  
OF ROCKHAMPTON

# Code of Conduct

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# 1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set the standards of conduct, professional and personal behaviour that the Catholic Diocese of Rockhampton ('Diocese') requires of its Personnel to uphold and achieve a safe, supportive, productive and harmonious workplace.

# 2. Scope

This Code of Conduct applies to all Personnel of the Diocese. Personnel include employees, clergy, religious, volunteers, contractors and students on work placements.

The Code outlines the obligations, responsibilities and standard of behaviour the Diocese requires of all Personnel, to uphold the values, integrity and reputation of the Diocese. It does not form part of an employee's contract of employment.

Personnel are to make themselves familiar with the requirements of this document and ensure they comply with the behaviours and obligations outlined within it.

Failure to comply with the responsibilities and obligations outlined in this document may result in disciplinary action being taken, including termination of employment, termination of volunteering agreement, notification to external agencies and/or criminal charges.

Certain sections of the Code reflect the requirements of legislation, and breaches of these conditions may be punishable under law.

In accordance with the Diocese's Policy & Procedure Framework, where an agency of the Diocese (such as Catholic Education or CentacareCQ) has its own Code of Conduct, that Code of Conduct will apply to the agency's Personnel.

# 3. Policy Statement

Personnel have a responsibility to uphold these standards including the teachings and values of the Catholic Church and to avoid by word, action or public lifestyle, behaviours which are contrary to those teachings and values.

The Diocese is committed to the delivery of services consistent with the principles and standards detailed in the resources:

- *Integrity in the Service of the Church: A Resource Document of Principles and Standards for Lay Workers in the Catholic Church in Australia* (National Committee for Professional Standards: A Committee of the Australian Catholic Bishops & the Leaders of Religious Institutes in Australia, 2011); and
- *Integrity in Ministry: A Document of Principles and Standards for Catholic Clergy & Religious in Australia* (National Committee for Professional Standards: A Committee of the Australian Catholic Bishops & the Leaders of Religious Institutes in Australia, 2004 [reprinted 2010]); supported by the definition of appropriate standards of professional and personal conduct contained within this Code of Conduct.

The principles we follow are extensions of the five basic principles for Church workers being:

- a commitment to justice and equity;
- upholding the dignity of all people and their right to respect;
- a commitment to safe and supportive relationships;
- outreach to those who are poor, alienated or marginalised; and
- striving for excellence in all their work.

## 4. Principles

### 4.1. Lawful Compliance

Personnel must act lawfully and comply with all legislative, contractual and industrial requirements while engaged by the Diocese. Personnel must comply with the Diocese's policies and follow all reasonable and lawful directions given by the Diocese.

### 4.2. Ethical Behaviour

Personnel are expected to:

- respect the dignity, rights and views of others;
- listen and seek to understand different points of view (this does not necessarily mean agreeing with the point of view);
- act respectfully at all times, including respecting cultural, ethnic and religious differences;
- acknowledge the genuine contributions that others make;
- express constructive feedback considerately and in a moderate tone;
- not harass, bully or discriminate against colleagues, students, people we support or members of the community;
- be courteous, fair, sensitive and considerate to the needs of others;
- be honest and act with integrity at all times;
- actively assist in managing workplace conflict that personally affects them or Personnel under their supervision to create positive and constructive outcomes; and
- immediately disclose to the Diocese any criminal charges or allegations, whether current or historic.

### 4.3. Safeguarding of Children & Vulnerable Adults

The Diocese is committed to creating and maintaining a supportive and caring environment which promotes the safety and inclusiveness of all children, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, those with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and children with a disability and/or particular vulnerabilities.

Personnel have legal and moral obligations to actively protect children and vulnerable adults in the course of their work, by:

- acting in accordance with Diocesan safeguarding policies and procedures;
- maintaining a duty of care for all children and vulnerable adults for whom they have responsibility; and
- reporting any conflicts of interest that they may have in relation to their work-related responsibilities to children and vulnerable adults.

Personnel of the Diocese must report:

- a child or class of children, who are at risk of serious harm;
- Personnel who have a reportable allegation made against them, or who have been charged or convicted of a reportable offence (against children or serious violence against adults);
- Personnel engaged in child-related work without a Working with Children Check; or
- Personnel who are alleged to have seriously breached professional standards with children or vulnerable adults.

Personnel must support Diocesan investigations into allegations of abuse, reportable conduct or breaches of professional standards against children or vulnerable adults by:

- maintaining neutrality during the investigative process;
- maintaining strict confidentiality about the investigation;
- being a truthful witness in the investigation; and
- volunteering any information that they hold that is relevant to the investigation.

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Personnel must not take any detrimental action against any other Personnel, child or vulnerable adult for reporting a concern, participating in an investigation or otherwise protecting the safety, welfare and wellbeing of any child or vulnerable adult.

Personnel may be required to provide a Working with Children Check and a clear criminal history check at any time, as per the Employment Screening Policy. Given that all Personnel of the Diocese serve the vulnerable in some respect in their roles, and that all Personnel can reasonably and foreseeably come into contact with children and vulnerable people, such clearances and disclosures form inherent requirements of all Personnel's work and positions.

Personnel who fail to actively protect children or vulnerable adults in the course of their work or take adverse actions against those who do, will be considered to have committed serious misconduct which may result in:

- counselling;
- formal censure and warnings;
- withholding of an increment;
- demotion to a lower classification or increment;
- transfer to another more appropriate position;
- suspension; or
- termination of employment.

#### 4.4. Professional Behaviour and Development

Personnel are expected to:

- maintain a high standard and quality of work;
- maintain and develop knowledge and understanding of their area of expertise;
- continuously seek to improve work performance and bring about improvements in the workplace;
- exercise care, responsibility and sound judgement when carrying out their duties;
- ensure procedural fairness is followed in all processes;
- maintain adequate documentation to support any decision making;
- take reasonable care of their safety and health;
- take reasonable steps that their acts/omissions do not adversely affect the health and safety of others;
- comply and cooperate with any reasonable instruction, policy or procedure, including with respect to work health safety matters;
- refrain from carrying out their duties under the influence of alcohol, any illegal substance, or any drug which impairs work performance or poses a safety risk to themselves or others;
- not ignore work duties or waste time during working hours;
- not take or seek to take improper advantage of any information gained in the course of their engagement;
- not take improper advantage of their position to benefit themselves or others;
- not allow personal political views/affiliations or other personal interests to influence the performance of duties or exercise of responsibilities;
- where relevant, adhere by any dress code requirements of the Diocese;
- maintain confidentiality and privacy where required; and
- report to the Diocese any instance where they believe they, or anyone within their workplace, has breached an obligation under this policy.

#### 4.5. Conflicts of interest

A conflict of interest includes any circumstance, whether actual or perceived, arising from a conflict between the performance of a member of Personnel's professional duties with the Diocese and their personal interests. Personnel are to take all appropriate steps to disclose a conflict of interest (or potential conflict) to the Diocese as soon as the member of Personnel becomes aware of it.

A conflict can arise when there is a reasonable expectation of a personal benefit, direct or indirect, for a member of Personnel that could influence the performance of their duties. This benefit may be financial or non-financial.

Personnel must take suitable measures to avoid, or appropriately deal with, any situation or relationship they may have where a conflict of interest could, directly or indirectly, compromise the performance of their duties.

Personnel may ask themselves the following questions to assist in identifying whether a situation or relationship is potentially a conflict of interest:

*Do I have a personal interest that may conflict or be perceived to conflict with my position at the Diocese?*

*Could there be benefits for me, now, or in the future, that could cast doubt on my objectivity to make decisions in my position at the Diocese?*

*How would my involvement in the decision or action be viewed by others?*

*Does my involvement appear fair and reasonable in all the circumstances?*

## 4.6. Gifts and Benefits

Personnel must not solicit or accept gifts, benefits or hospitality which might be reasonably seen to either directly or indirectly compromise or influence their professional duties with the Diocese.

All gifts must be brought to the attention of the relevant manager who will decide how the gift should be treated, in line with the Diocese financial protocols and policies.

Generally, gifts of a nominal value or moderate acts of hospitality offered as a genuine thank you by a client, may be personally retained as long as they have not been solicited by Personnel or could be seen to have comprised or unduly influenced a member of Personnel's professional duties with the Diocese.

Gifts or hospitality offered as an inducement to purchase, provide information or treat some-one favourably are not acceptable regardless of their monetary value. Examples of inducement include a recruitment agency offering theatre tickets for each temporary person engaged.

Gifts, such as a Christmas hamper or a box of chocolates from a consultant, should be shared and made available for consumption by all Personnel. Consideration should also be given to donating such gifts to charity.

## 4.7. Social Media

Personnel should not use social media in a manner which may bring the Diocese into disrepute nor in a way that conflicts with the values and teachings of the Catholic Church. Refer to the Social Media Policy for the Diocese and associated documents in this regard.

## 4.8. Public Comment

Only authorised Personnel are permitted to make public statements or give interviews on behalf of the Diocese to a media representative.

## 4.9. Secondary Employment

Personnel employed on a full-time basis must seek and obtain approval in writing from the Director prior to engaging in any secondary employment or business activity, including employment within a family company.

Part-time and casual Personnel must also seek approval to undertake secondary employment from the Director if the employment may result in potential conflicts of interest that could adversely impact on the member of Personnel's ability to perform their duties with the Diocese, including work, health and safety concerns, or where the secondary employment may affect the Diocese's financial position, reputation, services or standing in the community.

Approval for secondary employment is still required when Personnel are on leave, including periods of leave without pay.

Where a member of Personnel is already involved in secondary employment, they must provide details of the secondary employment to the Director and obtain the necessary approval.

Current and former Personnel are to seek and obtain approval in writing from the Director to act in the capacity of a volunteer for the Diocese.

## 4.10. Management and Resources

Personnel must use the Diocese's resources economically and ethically. Such resources include money, facilities, equipment (e.g. phones, computers, and iPads), vehicles, services (e.g. internet) and any other property which is owned or is the responsibility of the Diocese. Personnel also have a duty to ensure the Diocese resources are used only for their intended purpose, are well maintained and secured against theft or misuse.

Personnel are fully accountable for the use of the Diocese work time and resources. Personnel should not use the Diocese work time or resources for an outside interest, secondary employment or personal gain, such examples include the development of a new commercial idea or writing a book.

Personnel have a duty to report to the Diocese any improper use, waste or abuse of resources, corrupt or fraudulent conduct or inadequate administration or accountability.

## 4.11. Protected Disclosures

In reporting any suspected improper use, fraud, waste or abuse of resources, corrupt conduct, inadequate administration or accountability, Personnel are entitled to seek support and protection when making such disclosures, and to be notified of the action taken in relation to the disclosure.

Personnel are not entitled to protection for disclosures which, on investigation, are found to be vexatious or malicious allegations, and may be liable for disciplinary action as a result.

## 4.12. Confidentiality

Personnel must not divulge, either during employment or after, any confidential information gained as a member of Personnel of the Diocese.

Personnel of the Diocese are expected to:

- Abide by the Australian Privacy Principles (APPs) found in the *Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)* in the conduct of their work;
- Treat confidential and personal information about colleagues, volunteers, students, people we support and other members of the community respectfully;

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- Exercise caution and sound judgement in discussing other people’s confidential and personal information;
- Comply with relevant laws and regulations regarding the collection, dissemination, use and security of all such information;
- Only use such information for work-related purposes; and
- Only communicate such information to those who need to know in order to perform their role.

Sharing of confidential and personal information with external persons or agencies may only occur:

- within the established guidelines for such communication, or
- in accordance with any relevant legislation relating to the provision of such information.

### 4.13. Breach

Personnel have a responsibility to report any suspected breaches to their manager immediately. Where the suspected breach involves their respective manager, Personnel are required to report the matter immediately to their manager’s supervisor.

### 4.14. Clergy and religious

Because of the trust given to clergy and religious and the privilege of being called to minister among the People of God, they must be conscious of the unique power and responsibility they have in pastoral relationships. In addition to this Code, clergy and religious must adhere to the principles and standards in the publication *Integrity in Ministry: A Document of Principles and Standards for Catholic Clergy & Religious in Australia* (National Committee for Professional Standards: A Committee of the Australian Catholic Bishops & the Leaders of Religious Institutes in Australia, 2004 [reprinted 2010]).

## 5. References

National Committee for Professional Standards: A Committee of the Australian Catholic Bishops & the Leaders of Religious Institutes in Australia. (2004 [reprinted 2010]). *Integrity in Ministry: A Document of Principles and Standards for Catholic Clergy & Religious in Australia*. Alexandria.

National Committee for Professional Standards: A Committee of the Australian Catholic Bishops & the Leaders of Religious Institutes in Australia. (2011). *Integrity in the Service of the Church: A Resource Document of Principles and Standards for Lay Workers in the Catholic Church in Australia*. Alexandria.

## 6. Schedules

This policy must be read in conjunction with its subordinate schedules as provided in the table below.

## 7. Policy Information

<b>Subordinate Schedules</b>	
<b>Accountable Officer</b>	Director of Diocesan Services
<b>Policy Type</b>	Governance Policy
<b>Approved Date</b>	25/05/2022
<b>Effective Date</b>	25/05/2022
<b>Review Date</b>	23/02/2023
<b>Relevant Legislation</b>	
<b>Related Policies</b>	

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<b>Related Procedures</b>	
<b>Related forms, publications and websites</b>	
<b>Definitions</b>	<p><b>Director</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For CentacareCQ employees: the Director of CentacareCQ;</li> <li>• For Diocesan Catholic Education employees: the Diocesan Director Catholic Education;</li> <li>• For parish employees: the relevant Parish Priest / Administrator; and</li> <li>• For all other Diocesan employees: the Director of Diocesan Services</li> </ul> <p><b>Personnel</b></p> <p>Employees, clergy, religious brothers and sisters, contractors, volunteers, work experience participants or trainees of the Diocese, including those working in its parishes.</p>