



**Catholic Diocese of Sandhurst**

**Code of Conduct for Employees of Diocesan Agencies**

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. The code of conduct outlines the standard of behaviour, motivated by the teachings of the Church, expected of employees of the Catholic Diocese of Sandhurst (the Diocese). It is designed for no other purpose than to further the mission of the Church and is promoted for that purpose alone. It is designed to help you understand your responsibilities and provide guidance to you. Fundamental to the code is the requirement for all employees to understand the impact of the code on them and take all reasonable steps to comply.
- 1.2. It is directed at employees who work in the central agencies, departments and auspiced bodies of the Diocese<sup>1</sup>. Most aspects of the code have Christian motivation and do not differ from that applying in secular organisations, where those accepting employment also accept a number of obligations and responsibilities to their employer. The code does not supersede canon or civil law nor can it cover every situation. If you are unsure of the appropriate response, you should discuss the situation with the person to whom you report.
- 1.3. Where an agency of the Diocese has adopted its own code of conduct, then the agency is to make reference to the principles contained within this document.
- 1.4. This Code is not a term of any contract, including any contract of employment. It may be varied by the Diocese from time to time.

## 2. The Mission of the Church

- 2.1. The Church's mandate is the call to preach the gospel to all people *'Go therefore, make disciples of all nations; baptise them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to observe all the commands I gave you. And know that I am with you always; yes, to the end of time.'* (Matthew 28:19-20).
- 2.2. The conduct of all employees must be inspired by the Church's mandate. This requirement extends beyond the workplace as many external to the Church will often see you as 'the Church' even when you may not see yourself as such. Employee conduct, both public and private, has the potential to inspire and motivate people. Conversely, it can scandalise and jeopardise people's faith.
- 2.3. The Catholic Diocese of Sandhurst is a Suffragan Diocese of the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne. It is a portion of the people of God that is entrusted to the Bishop of Sandhurst who is your employer. It is in hierarchical communion. Its members consist of lay faithful (laity), Clergy and Religious. The lay are those who have become members of the Church through baptism. From among these, by divine institution, men are chosen to serve as Bishops, Priests and Deacons (clergy). There are also those who profess the evangelical counsels, and are consecrated to God in a special way (religious).
- 2.4. Not all of our employees are members of the lay faithful. However, all of our employees are engaged to promote the mission of the Church, even though that may not always be apparent to them in the normal course of their work, and all need to behave accordingly.

## 3. Personal and Professional Behaviour

- 3.1. Employees should strive to present and relate to the world with the Church's mission first and foremost in their language, symbols and actions. This will differ from role to role but you should strive to understand the Church's mission to serve all, and your part in it. Mission by its very nature is robust, uncompromised and unapologetic. The reason for a particular Church endeavour and the way that activity is carried out need to be apparent and distinguishable.

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<sup>1</sup> Specifically it is applicable to those employees whose conditions of employment are covered by the *Catholic Diocese of Sandhurst Conditions of Employment for diocesan employees*, other employees as notified and volunteers who work beside them. It does not apply to clergy and religious as they are covered by the *Integrity in Ministry* protocol. It does not apply to contractors and employees of contractors, although depending upon the nature of the engagement some contractors and their employees may be required to abide by it and others may be required to acknowledge and respect it.

- 3.2. Employees play a vital role in upholding the good name of the Church and instilling confidence. This may require you at times to champion or defend the Church but this should always be done in a manner appropriate to the circumstances.
- 3.3. You are expected to maintain high levels of professional competence and to attend to your own human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral wellbeing, and support others in their efforts. This could involve participating in activities such as Reflection Days.
- 3.4. Work with a generosity of spirit and reflect this by treating all you come in contact with respect, fairness, courtesy and sensitivity.
- 3.5. Be accountable not only for your work but your actions in general based on the concept of being a good citizen who sees his or her efforts as having greater meaning and value in respect of the common good.
- 3.6. Boundary awareness is important in all spheres of employment and it is your responsibility to maintain appropriate boundaries in your work such that you do not operate outside of your area of competence and you observe personal boundaries. This is particularly important for those involved in pastoral activities. In the Church, it is also important to observe the boundaries between the clergy and laity and for employees to understand the sacramental, teaching and governance roles that are the preserve of the clergy.
- 3.7. You must not be under the influence of alcohol, illicit drugs or have misused other medication in undertaking your duties and role with the Diocese.
- 3.8. Discriminatory behaviour or language in relation to any of the following is not acceptable: race, culture, age, gender, disability, religion, sexuality or political views.
- 3.9. Serious criminal offences should be reported to the Agency Head and/or the Business Manager.
- 3.10. You may use the Church's facilities and equipment including computers, email, internet access and mobile phones that are provided for official purposes, for limited private use. This is a privilege and care must be taken not to abuse this and you should err on the side of restraint.
- 3.11. The Diocese has policies on appropriate use of email and the internet, and policies in relation to sexual harassment and bullying. You are required to observe these policies which can be accessed on the diocesan web site at [www.sandhurst.catholic.org.au](http://www.sandhurst.catholic.org.au)
- 3.12. A gift or favour with a value in excess of \$50 is to be recorded in a Gifts Register with notification also sent to the Agency Head, or in the case of the Agency Head to the Business Manager. A copy of the gift register is to be sent to the Chancery Office of the Diocese at the end of each calendar year.
- 3.13. Care needs to be taken in handling official information. All information obtained during the course of your employment is confidential<sup>2</sup> and must not be used other than for official purposes. In particular, always treat personal information with respect and special care. Unguarded conversations regarding your work have the potential to compromise its effective implementation.
- 3.14. You need to be cautious when either initiating or responding to a request to make a public comment in the name of the agency or diocese and that you have authority to do so. If you are in any doubt you should discuss this in advance with the Business Manager. Public comment includes speaking engagements, comments on radio and television, and expressing views in letters to newspapers.
- 3.15. Like employees of any organisation, employees of the Diocese need to conduct themselves in both their private and public life in a manner that is in harmony with the employer's policies, (which in our context includes the Church's teachings), practices and interests.
- 3.16. Some examples of inappropriate conduct are listed below. This list is not intended to be exhaustive.

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<sup>2</sup> Catholic Diocese of Sandhurst Privacy Policy

- Promoting lifestyles that are incompatible with the Church's teachings on marriage and family.
- Taking a public position that is at odds with that taken by the Bishop, or those acting on his behalf, or could reasonably be assumed to be his position.
- Employees in leadership and advocacy roles taking an active role in politics in its many forms, where the public may not be able to distinguish their involvement as a citizen from their being a representative of the Church. All involvement in political affairs should be declared on an ongoing basis.
- Employees in leadership and pastoral roles operating as civil celebrants performing ceremonies which in the Catholic Church are the exclusive domain of the clergy, in circumstances which may create the false impression of their being sanctioned by the Church.
- Engaging in activities that are blasphemous in nature.
- Inappropriate dress and language.

3.17. Should you be experiencing difficulties adhering to some aspects of the code, you should not be afraid to make this known to the person to whom you report or, if you choose, the Business Manager. A variety of support sensitive to your personal circumstances can be made available. Alternatively, you may choose to take advantage of the confidential counselling for work-related or personal concerns through AccessEAP (Employee Assistance Provider) 1800 818 728. This counselling service is free, confidential and no names are disclosed to the Diocese. Further information is available at [www.accesseap.com.au](http://www.accesseap.com.au).

#### 4. Breach of Policy

- 4.1. Where an employee is suspected of breaching any obligation, duty or responsibility within this Policy this may result in disciplinary consequences, such as remedial education, counselling, suspension, termination of his or her employment.
- 4.2. If there is any reasonable belief that a criminal act has been committed, the concerned party is advised to contact Victoria Police.

#### 5. Approval

Approved by	Signature	Date
Bishop Leslie Tomlinson		1.7.18

#### 6. Revision History

Version	Date	Revised By	Description of Revision	Next Review
1.0	1/07/2018	Child Safety Officer	New Policy	1/07/2020