



Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon
CATHOLIC PASTORAL CENTRE

123 Nelson Rd.
Saskatoon SK S7S 1H1
www.saskatoonrcdiocese.com

Phone: 306.242.1500
Fax: 306.244.6010
Toll Free: 877.611.5005

COVENANT OF CARE
REFERENCE SHEET
(Page 1 of 2)

The Diocese of Saskatoon is responsible to provide a safe, respectful and secure environment for ministry. The Covenant of Care is the code of conduct for all employees and volunteers, including clergy, religious and lay people. In providing ministry, employees and volunteers are placed in situations where they may have access to highly sensitive and confidential information. The specialized nature of Church work in many cases can place providers and recipients of pastoral services in a vulnerable situation; individuals are dependent upon the honesty and integrity of all employees and volunteers associated with the Church. This calls for responsibility and places the burden of adhering to the Covenant of Care on each employee and volunteer.

1. Employees and volunteers assume full responsibility for establishing and maintaining clear, appropriate boundaries in all ministerial situations, especially those involving children, youth and vulnerable adults. Employees and volunteers are expected to provide ministry that is free of verbal and physical abuse, grooming or exploitative behaviours.
2. All physical contact between employees or volunteers and children, youth or vulnerable adults must be appropriate to the ministerial relationship and absent of inappropriate, exploitative, harassing and/or abusive sexual contact.
3. Employees and volunteers who learn of information indicating clear and imminent danger to a child, youth or vulnerable adult must act to protect the safety, health and well-being of the vulnerable parties by disclosing necessary information and communicating such disclosures to their immediate superior and/or other appropriate person(s), including the police, as outlined in the *Sexual Abuse and Misconduct Protocol*.
4. At least two adults are to be present for all recreational activities, catechetical programs and pastoral care outreach. Situations where a minister is alone with a vulnerable person are particularly sensitive and conducive to abuse or allegations of abuse; every effort should be made to prevent both. When one to one meetings are necessary, they must take place in rooms and locations that are open to public view. For example, windows in doors should never be covered, and two adults (in addition to the person receiving communion) will be present when bringing communion to those at home.
5. Employees and volunteers shall not engage in corporal punishment of children, youth or vulnerable adults in their care. Discipline problems will be handled in coordination with the immediate supervisor and the parents/care providers.
6. Employees and volunteers will not dispense medications without written consent from a parent or legal guardian.
7. Employees and volunteers will never be alone with a child, youth or vulnerable adult in a residence, sleeping facility, locker room, rest room, dressing facility, or other closed room or area that is inappropriate to a ministerial relationship. Overnight trips, special events, and care due to illness, disability or emergency require the utmost attention and planning of leadership. Any off-site or overnight events with children or youth require a **Parental Consent Form** (Appendix E).
8. No diocesan employee or volunteer is permitted to be alone in his or her living quarters or motor vehicle with a child, youth or vulnerable adult whose relationship has been established through a ministerial relationship.
9. No employee or volunteer is permitted to take personal trips or vacations with a child, youth or vulnerable adult whose relationship has been established through a ministerial relationship.
10. All employees and volunteers working with vulnerable persons will sign that they have read and will adhere to this *Covenant of Care* and will follow diocesan guidelines concerning requisite screening processes, criminal record checks and ongoing education.

Within ministerial relationships, the Diocese of Saskatoon will not tolerate physical, verbal or sexual harassment or abuse among its employees and volunteers. In a spirit of common mission, all who work together on behalf of Christ's church must be alert to even the beginnings of abuse or misconduct and work to prevent and eliminate both. Investigations which result in the confirmation of allegations of misconduct or abuse will result in disciplinary measures against the perpetrator of abuse or harassment which may include suspension, dismissal and/or the reporting of the incident to secular authorities.

Violations of the *Covenant of Care* are dealt with according to the *Sexual Abuse and Misconduct Protocol* of the Diocese of Saskatoon.

Reporting and Handling Misconduct

(Excerpt of Section 3C of the *Sexual Abuse and Misconduct Protocol*)

COVENANT OF CARE REFERENCE SHEET (Page 2 of 2)

Recognizing the good will of the vast majority of employees and volunteers, the Diocese of Saskatoon strives first to prevent abuse through education, and secondly through naming and eliminating misconduct. Wherever possible, misconduct is to be addressed at the local level. Any time that misconduct involves a Pastor or Parish Life Director, the Parish Coordinator of Care (PCC) will carry out the Pastor or Parish Life Director's role in the protocol, in conversation with the Diocesan Coordinator of Care (DCC). Assistance and support is available at any time from the DCC, and is required in some circumstances, as outlined below.

Any exploitation, harassment or abuse that is sexual in nature is considered serious and will be reported immediately to the DCC, as per section 3D of the *Sexual Abuse and Misconduct Protocol*. The aim of an investigation of misconduct is to stop potentially harmful or abusive behaviours before harm or abuse occurs. When an allegation of misconduct is reported, the Pastor or Parish Life Director will:

1. Contact the person making the report to gather details of the alleged misconduct.
2. Assess whether or not misconduct has occurred.
3. Communicate to the person who made the report as to what action will be taken.
4. Follow up on misconduct according to the protocol below.

Misconduct falls under the following three categories, and the protocol for each immediately follows:

1. **Unintentional misconduct where no harm has been perceived by another person or has actually occurred.**
 - a. The employee or volunteer is to be made aware of their misconduct. They are to have a discussion with their immediate supervisor and/or the pastor about the circumstances of the misconduct and identify an action plan to prevent repeat misconduct.
 - b. If a second misconduct of the same type occurs, the incident is to be recorded in written form, including a preventative action plan, and filed with the signed **Code of Conduct Form** (Appendix C).
 - c. A third misconduct of this type will result in disciplinary action appropriate to the misconduct, which may include removal from the ministry. Action taken on a third misconduct of the same type must be written up by the pastor and submitted to the DCC.
2. **Unintentional misconduct where harm has been perceived by another person and/or where harm has allegedly or actually occurred.**
 - a. The employee or volunteer is to be made aware of their misconduct. They are to have a discussion with their immediate supervisor and/or the pastor about the circumstances of the misconduct and identify an action plan to prevent repeat misconduct.
 - b. Provided that the misconduct does not pose present or future risk to vulnerable persons, warranting the end of employment or volunteer ministry, the incident is to be recorded in written form, including a preventative action plan, and filed with the employee or volunteer's completed **Covenant of Care Form** (Appendix C).
 - c. If the misconduct and/or the harm it caused jeopardizes the employee or volunteer's suitability for ministry, ministry may be terminated. The DCC and/or Diocesan Human Resources Consultant must be called upon in such circumstances.
3. **Intentional and/or illegal misconduct.**
 - a. Intentional misconduct on the part of an employee or volunteer is a violation of the individual's agreement to abide by the *Covenant of Care*. Regardless of whether or not harm is perceived or actual, intentional misconduct is to be reported to and dealt with in collaboration with the DCC.
 - b. Illegal activity or allegations of illegal activity on the part of an employee or volunteer in the context of a ministerial relationship must be reported to the DCC. Reporting and investigation will follow the protocol outlined in sections 3D and 3E of this protocol.

In every category of misconduct, repeat misconduct is to be considered an adequate reason for questioning an employee or volunteer's suitability for ministry. In some cases, it may be necessary to suspend or modify the services or duties of the accused until such time as the Pastor/Parish Life Director and/or Diocesan Coordinator of Care is assured of compliance with the *Covenant of Care*. In cases where there is not a willingness to comply with the expectations outlined within the *Covenant of Care*, the individual(s) may be asked to resign from their position or their employment/volunteer ministry may be terminated.