AUSTRALIAN
CATHOLIC BISHOPS
CONFERENCE

Integrity in Our Common Mission

NATIONAL CODE OF CONDUCT FOR THOSE EXERCISING PASTORAL MINISTRY IN THE DIOCESES OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA

2023

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians who have walked upon and cared for this land for thousands of years. We acknowledge the continued deep spiritual attachment and relationship of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to this country and commit ourselves to the ongoing journey of reconciliation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF SURVIVORS

The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference acknowledges with sorrow the experiences of adults subjected to childhood abuse within the Church. We recognise and acknowledge the harm caused by the abuse and the ongoing suffering this has caused in people's lives. We deeply regret the failure of the Catholic Church to protect, believe and respond to them with justice. We also recognise the harm this has caused to their families, to the Catholic community, and in Australian society. The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference is committed to promoting and fostering a culture of care, compassion and safety for children and adults coming forward with reports of historical child abuse.

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Foreword

Our life in Christ is both a gift and a responsibility. Through the specific duties and responsibilities of the laity and those ordained as deacon, priest or bishop, all contribute to the building of the Reign of God. This takes expression in many forms: through the sacramental life of the Church, in prayer, through missionary outreach to the poor, sick, disadvantaged and vulnerable, in parish communities, and in so many other ways. We are all called by virtue of our vocation to reflect the presence of Jesus in every aspect of life, thus shaping the world in the image and love of God. Accordingly, the formation and guidance of those engaged in the ministry and service of their brothers and sisters must have as its aim the quality of the personal conduct, behaviour and self-awareness of these servants of the Good News.

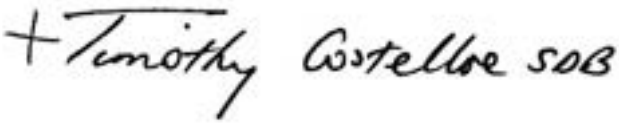
In response to the final report of the *Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse*, Recommendation 16.49, and in continuance of those initiatives already in place to guide the variety of pastoral ministries in the Church, *Integrity in Our Common Mission* has been developed as the primary code of conduct for clergy, religious and laity. The principles in *Integrity in Our Common Mission* have been developed to guide, form, strengthen and affirm those behaviours which are expected of all engaged in the ministries of the Church: in parish and sacramental life, education, health and community services, pastoral care, social welfare support and the variety of other ministries to which people of faith are called.

Building upon this framework, and the earlier documents *Integrity in Ministry* and *Integrity in the Service of the Church, Integrity in Our Common Mission* develops its

approach to the daily pastoral, administrative and personal interactions which occur across the breadth of ministries. While it is not exhaustive, *Integrity in Our Common Mission* provides a necessary framework which can be applied to the variety of settings, experiences, relationships and pastoral engagements in daily ministry. It is our firm hope this code of conduct will be a living resource that will form a culture of quality and excellence that directs, guides and strengthens our shared mission.

The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference renews its ongoing commitment to the safety of children and vulnerable people. The Conference expresses its gratitude to the Bishops Commission for Professional Standards and Safeguarding, and its Reference Group, who were entrusted with the preparation of this code of conduct. The Conference now endorses and approves *Integrity in our Common Mission* and its use in every diocese.

May this code of conduct guide all those called to the joyful service of others. May it assist in the formation and induction of clergy and lay leaders in every diocese and across each province, enabling us to reflect, in every aspect of our life, *Integrity in Our Common Mission.*



Most Rev Timothy Costelloe SDB
President, Australian Catholic Bishops Conference

11 November 2023

Our Common Mission

National Framework for all Catholic Ministry and Service (2022)

In committing to a culture of safeguarding, we have a responsibility to:

- think and act in the best interests of children, and adults who are at risk.
- value the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.
- speak out when actions, behaviours, language, or environments may cause harm.

- embed effective safeguarding policies and practices at all levels of governance and leadership.
- ensure safeguarding resources are easily available and reviewed regularly; and
- meet all mandatory reporting and record-keeping requirements.

In committing to positive relationships, we have a responsibility to:

- acknowledge our own vulnerability and power in any relationship.
- promote the autonomy and voice of others.
- clarify the nature of personal and professional relationships.
- understand and maintain physical, sexual, emotional, and psychological boundaries.
- report boundary violations to the relevant safeguarding authority.
- only act within and not beyond an area of expertise; and
- accept full responsibility for any real or perceived abuse of power.

In committing to stewardship of all, we have a responsibility to:

- use resources ethically and sustainably.
- administer open and transparent financial and operational systems.
- respect confidential information.
- seek external, independent expertise; and
- identify and declare potential conflicts of interest.

In committing to lifelong formation, we have a responsibility to:

- undertake relevant education, training, and development, including in safeguarding, professional standards and interculturality.
- have professional/pastoral supervision with a registered, independent supervisor if in a ministry role.
- engage in spiritual direction, or other form of reflective practice.
- attend to our own spiritual, physical, social, mental, and emotional wellbeing and seek additional professional or personal support as needed; and
- relate codes of conduct to both personal and professional formation.

Introduction to Integrity in Our Common Mission

History

For nearly twenty years, the Catholic Church in Australia has benefited from a code of conduct pertaining to clergy and religious. *Integrity in Ministry* was published in June 2004 by the then National Committee for Professional Standards, a Committee of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, and the Australian Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes, and was re-printed in April 2010. Dioceses have found this an invaluable resource for the formation and accountability of clergy. In 2011, and reprinted in 2013, the same National Committee published an adapted version for all lay workers in the Catholic Church in Australia, *Integrity in the Service of the Church*. It dealt with the behavioural standards expected of any lay person who performs paid or unpaid work in the service of the Church. Though not a code of conduct, it was meant as a guide to assist ecclesial organisations to develop new, or review existing, behavioural processes and/or guidelines to meet their own circumstances or needs. It was especially helpful to those who employ, engage, assign, supervise, train or are responsible for Church workers.

Australian Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse

The Final Report of the Australian Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (2018) made recommendations relevant to these codes and guidelines. Amongst them, the following were tabled:

RECOMMENDATION 16.25

The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference and Catholic Religious Australia should develop and each diocese and religious institute should implement mandatory

national standards to ensure that all people in religious or pastoral ministry (bishops, provincials, clergy, religious, and lay personnel):

a. undertake mandatory, regular professional development, compulsory components being professional responsibility and boundaries, ethics in ministry, and child safety
b. undertake mandatory professional/pastoral supervision; and
c. undergo regular performance appraisals.

RECOMMENDATION 16.49

Codes of conduct in religious institutions should explicitly and equally apply to people in religious ministry and to lay people.

RECOMMENDATION 16.50

Consistent with Child Safe Standard 7, each religious institution should require all people in religious ministry, leaders, members of boards, councils and other governing bodies, employees, relevant contractors and volunteers to undergo initial and periodic training on its code of conduct. This training should include:

a. what kinds of allegations or complaints relating to child sexual abuse should be reported and to whom
b. identifying inappropriate behaviour which may be a precursor to abuse, including grooming
c. recognising physical and behavioural indicators of child sexual abuse; and
d. that all complaints relating to child sexual abuse must be taken seriously, regardless of the perceived severity of the behavior

National Catholic Safeguarding Standards

In 2019, in light of its own experience, 10 *National Catholic Safeguarding Standards* (NCSS) were published by the then Catholic Professional Standards Ltd. The first version focused on safeguarding practices to protect children. The second version, published by Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd in 2022, incorporates care and

protection of adults, with a focus on adults at risk. The NCSS outline the policies and activities that prevent, respond to and support reporting of concerns regarding abuse. The Standards work together to ensure that every entity, ministry and organisation across the Catholic Church places the safety of children and adults at risk with the utmost significicance for how they plan, think and act. Consistent with NCSS 10, the Standards are to be regularly reviewed to ensure the integration of potentially new applicable standards or a changed emphasis in existing standards.

National Response Protocol

Further, in 2020 the Bishops Conference adopted the National Response Protocol outlining principles and procedures to offer a consistent response to children and adults who have been subjected to abuse by Church personnel. It came into effect for all dioceses and Bishops Conference member entities from 1 February 2021.

In May 2022, the Bishops Conference adopted a second version of the National Response Protocol to include abuse against vulnerable adults. This was underscored by The National Response Framework developed by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, Catholic Religious Australia (CRA) and the Association of Ministerial Public Juridic Persons (AMPJP), which details those principles Church entities are to assume so as to ensure a consistent and appropriate response to allegations or concerns about children and adults who have or may have been abused by a person working for, or engaged, by a Church entity.

Code of Canon Law

In the meantime, changes to Book VI of the *Code of Canon Law*, titled "Penal Sanctions in the Church" , took effect on 8 December 2021. In *Pascite Gregem Dei*, the Apostolic Constitution announcing revisions to 63 of the book's 89 canons, Pope Francis wrote that the process of revision sought "to determine new needs, to identify the limitations and flaws of the current legislation, and to indicate possible clear and simple solutions".

Our Common Mission

In November 2022, the ACBC, CRA and AMPJP adopted *Our Common Mission* as a national framework for ministry and service in the Church in Australia. This prefaces this National Code of Conduct, which updates and integrates the earlier work of *Integrity in Ministry* and *Integrity in the Service of the Church*.

National Code of Conduct – Integrity in Our Common Mission

Integrity in our Common Mission is a National Code of Conduct for those exercising pastoral ministry in the dioceses of the Catholic Church in Australia: bishops, priests, deacons, seminarians, religious and lay men and lay women who are exercising a pastoral ministry in the name of the diocese, its parishes and agencies. This pastoral ministry may be by appointment or may be exercised in a voluntary capacity.

The objectives of the National Code of Conduct are to:

- encourage those who exercise pastoral ministry as witnesses and ministers of the reign of God through lives of respect, service, integrity and selfless love
- support those who exercise pastoral ministry in their efforts to be visibly accountable as witnesses and ministers of the Church's mission
- support those who exercise pastoral ministry in their concern to protect children and adults from all abuses of power, including sexual abuse and harassment
- inform the Church in responding to instances of sexual abuse and professional misconduct, in the best interests of those who have been harmed, the wider community and the defendant
- support those who exercise pastoral ministry in their efforts to care for themselves and one another
- offer a theology of Christ and his Church as the context for shaping and measuring behavioural standards of those who work in its name.

Any person performing pastoral work at the request of, or under the ultimate supervision of, a diocesan bishop must comply with the National Code of Conduct.

Depending on the circumstances , Catholic personnel engaged in ministry may also be subject to specific statutory, contractual or other obligations. They may be subject to specific codes of conduct determined by a religious congregation or as determined by a ministerial public juridic person. Where that is so, all such requirements must be met.

This National Code of Conduct is informed by and reflects the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards. Those standards are always applicable and are not intended to be reduced or modified by this National Code of Conduct. The National Code of Conduct is published in alignment with NCSS Standard 1, Criterion 1.4: "The entity's Code of Conduct sets clear behavioural standards towards adults and children". Subsequently, the National Code of Conduct is explicit and inclusive of all personnel and provides guidance on appropriate and expected standards of behaviour. (NCSS Indicator 1.4.1). The National Code of Conduct is written in accessible language and made available to all personnel, children, adults, families and carers. (NCSS Indicator 1.4.2)

The task of each diocese in Australia

Each diocese is to develop a supplementary guide to detail those pathways that are available when a breach of the provisions of the National Code of Conduct may be alleged. These guides are to include the details of the appropriate contact person and the processes that are in place to address the complaints. These are to be outlined in a diocese's Complaints Handling Policy, which are to be informed in part by the principles of the *National Response Framework.* The outcome of any substantiated allegation will be determined by the nature of the complaint, the statutory obligations and the canonical processes that may need to be involved, and the personal and pastoral consideration most appropriate in the circumstances.

The National Code of Conduct for those exercising pastoral ministry in the dioceses of the Catholic Church in Australia follows below.

Our Common Mission: *National Framework for all Catholic Ministry and Service (2022) obliges us to*

1. A Culture of Safeguarding

We read in Our Common Mission:

A culture of safeguarding has zero tolerance of abuse. A culture of safeguarding puts the needs of a child or adult at risk first and involves them in decision-making wherever possible.

In committing to a culture of safeguarding, we have a responsibility to:

- think and act in the best interests of children, and adults who are at risk;
- value the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples;
- speak out when actions, behaviours, language, or environments may cause harm;
- embed effective safeguarding policies and practices at all levels of governance and leadership.
- ensure safeguarding resources are easily available and reviewed regularly; and
- meet all mandatory reporting and record-keeping requirements.

Accordingly, the following standards of conduct apply:

1.1 We witness to God's care for the most vulnerable by our concern for the dignity and safety of children and young people.[1]

Conduct in keeping with this standard includes:

- avoiding any form of over-familiarity or inappropriate language
- avoiding actions that a reasonable person may perceive as grooming
- ensuring that another adult is present or close by when providing pastoral ministry to a child
- ensuring that one is not alone with a child or a group of children or young people in sleeping, dressing, or bathing areas, or in modes of transport
- familiarising ourselves with the causes and signs of child abuse or neglect, the steps to be taken for the protection of children, and the procedures to follow if abuse or neglect is suspected or observed
- refraining from taking or sharing photographs of children without written parental consent
- familiarising ourselves with the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards of Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd, recognising that these are applicable and mandatory in everything we do.

1.2 We respect the physical and emotional boundaries appropriate to relationships with adults, children and young people.[2]

An unsafe relationship is one that poses risk to the emotional, physical or sexual wellbeing of any of the individuals involved, does not recognise the needs of those it is supposed to assist, and has a harmful impact on human dignity and self-esteem.

Conduct in keeping with this standard includes:

- working within a well-defined role description that complies with the relevant legal obligations associated with the tasks
- being conscious of and respecting the physical and emotional space and privacy required by others
- providing pastoral support always in accordance with proper accountability guidelines

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[1] Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd, *National Catholic Safeguarding Standards – Edition 2* (2022) (NCSS), Standards 2, 8.

[2] NCSS, Standards 2, 8.

- providing pastoral support in places that offer sufficient safe, open and visible environments
- ensuring that the priest, religious or lay parish leader has a clearly demarcated private residence for their personal time and activities, where parishioners or others are not ministered to
- recognising that physical contact can be necessary and helpful in giving care, comfort or affirmation, and following the appropriate standards for such contact
- exercising prudent judgment in the expression of affection and regard, and in the giving and receiving of gifts
- interacting with others in a consistent professional manner.

1.3 We practice the maintenance of appropriate records as an aspect of pastoral care.[3]

Conduct in keeping with this standard includes:

- keeping an accurate diary of appointments, written and/or electronic, ensuring that those kept electronically are backed up
- retaining one's written/electronic diaries for at least 10 years
- keeping a record of significant phone calls and other communications, especially if they provoke concern in the one exercising pastoral ministry, with such notes to include a record of the date, time and matter of concern
- collating, maintaining and disposing of personal and sensitive information in accordance with the National Privacy Principles. Some confidential records may need to be retained if these provide evidence of maintaining appropriate boundaries and relationships
- where pastoral work is child-related, retaining any records related to child sexual abuse that has occurred or is alleged to have occurred for at least 45 years
- storing all records securely in accordance with diocesan policy and legislation.

[3] NCSS, Standards 1, 5, 6.

1.4 We act promptly and with integrity and fairness when we receive complaints of sexual, physical or psychological abuse.[4]

Conduct in keeping with this standard includes:

- abiding by the requirements of mandatory reporting and other relevant civil legislation, ensuring that the proper processes of law are not interfered with or hindered
- acting always in accord with the *National Response Protocol* and the Motu Proprio (2023) *Vos Estis Lux Mundi* and their principles
- responding to information promptly and seriously, and with sensitivity
- responding to complaints made by children always in a child-focused manner
- promptly informing the relevant Church Authority and the relevant Civil Authority
- alerting the complainant to the existence of appropriate processes available and providing relevant contact and referral details

- working with the complainant to identify what needs to be done immediately to ensure that he or she feels safe from further harm
- explicitly assuring those who allege abuse that immediate assistance can be made available to provide independent support
- in collaboration with the Church Authority, supporting the healing of others who, as well as the victims, have been seriously affected by incidents of abuse – family, friends and community of both the alleged victim and offender.

[4] NCSS, Standard 5, 6; National Response Framework (2020), National Response Protocol (2022)

Our Common Mission: *National Framework for all Catholic Ministry and Service (2022) obliges us to*

2. Positive Relationships

We read in Our Common Mission:

Ministry and service relationships involve certain kinds of power and are intended for the good of other people and situations. Ministerial relationships are thus also open to the abuse of power. Safeguarding these relationships is the responsibility of all who work and serve within or on behalf of the Church.

In committing to positive relationships, we have a responsibility to:

- acknowledge our own vulnerability and power in any relationship;
- promote the autonomy and voice of others;
- clarify the nature of personal and professional relationships;
- understand and maintain physical, sexual, emotional, and psychological boundaries;
- report boundary violations to the relevant safeguarding authority;
- only act within and not beyond an area of expertise; and
- accept full responsibility for any real or perceived abuse of power.

Accordingly, the following standards of conduct apply:

2.1 In our lives and ministries, we witness God's love for every human person by sensitivity, reverence, courtesy, and respect in our relationships. We are particularly called to witness a spirit of service. Because of the trust we are given and the visibility of our witness and leadership, we are conscious of the unique power and responsibility we have in pastoral relationships.[5]

Conduct in keeping with this standard includes:

- avoiding every impulse to 'lord it over' those we serve (Matt 20:25)
- treating all to whom one provides pastoral support with respect and courtesy
- honouring the equality and dignity of each person
- listening attentively to and responding courteously towards all
- consulting widely, seeking consensus and providing feedback where possible and appropriate to do so, before making important decisions
- being mindful of the use of one's status or institutional power, and never using these for one's own advantage
- behaving and speaking in ways that nurture the growth and vocation of all and indicate a respect for each person's role and contribution
- creating cooperative and harmonious relationships in the communities in which one lives and works
- behaving in ways that are not discriminatory and using language that is appropriate and not sarcastic or belittling of others
- being sensitive and helpful to those who have difficulty with language or communication
- refraining from attributing motives and blame to those seeking help
- avoiding the fostering of dependency or subservience by encouraging collaboration and mutual respect
- discouraging the development of personality cults centred on oneself
- creating environments where others feel confident to offer constructive criticism
- not engaging in any form of physical, psychological or emotional coercion within relationships
- not engaging in any behaviour that could reasonably be interpreted as harassment. Harassment can occur as a result of a single incident or a pattern of behaviour where the purpose or effect is to create a hostile, offensive, humiliating or intimidating environment. Harassment encompasses a broad range of behaviours, including but not limited to:

[5] NCSS Standards 1, 2, 5.

- physical, verbal, written or psychological abuse
- bullying
- racial and religious insults
- derogatory ethnic slurs
- unwelcome touching and inappropriate behaviour
- sexual jokes and comments
- requests for sexual favours
- display of pornographic materials or other offensive material

- not engaging in actions or language that could reasonably be interpreted as sexually provocative
- never seeking to initiate sexual behaviour, except with one's spouse
- rejecting any invitation to participate in sexual behaviour, except with one's spouse.

2.2 We witness to the inclusive embrace of God's love.[6]

Conduct in keeping with this standard includes:

- working in ways that respect different charisms, spiritualities, qualifications and ministries (1 Cor 12:4-11)
- seeking to understand and respect the beliefs, fears and desires of all irrespective of disability, culture, race, religious affiliation, gender or sexual orientation
- reaching out to all people, especially those who feel alienated from or marginalised within the Catholic community
- seeking to understand the factors that lead to alienation through listening non-defensively to people, especially when they express their pain or anger
- behaving in conformity with the values of justice and charity, so as not to contribute further to alienation
- encouraging and supporting programmes of outreach that seek to meet needs of those who are alienated
- familiarising oneself with the Social Teaching of the Church
- encouraging ecumenical and interfaith dialogue.

[6] NCSS, Standards 2, 3, 4.

2.3 We witness to and minister God's nurturing love for every person.[7]

Conduct in keeping with this standard includes:

- maintaining clear communication with colleagues, clients and our designated supervisor or mentor
- using consultation methods that provide appropriate transparency, collaboration and involvement in decision-making
- being fair and equitable in dealing with others, and using consistent and appropriate methods of settling grievances as to relevant processes
- attempting to resolve disputes amicably through respectful dialogue, negotiation and/or professional mediation.

2.4 We engage the means of modern communication and technology with the utmost responsibility and with a profound care for persons, and in accord with diocesan policy.[8]

Conduct in keeping with this standard includes:

- interacting responsibly and ethically in line with Catholic values and beliefs when using all forms of social media
- using digital and online services or social media in ways that respect the dignity of self and others
- refusing to acces all forms of pornography and never participating in online forums of a sexual nature
- carefully considering the context for the uploading of online images of children, mindful that even when these are unidentifiable the posting can be exploitative and harmful
- carefully considering the context of online forums in which children are involved and ensuring adherence to relevant policies
- recognising that digital devices and online services or social media may cause harm if used inappropriately such as to bully or intimidate others.

[7] NCSS, Standard 1, 2, 4.

[8] NCSS, Standard 8.

2.5 We develop relationships beyond our pastoral and work relationships wherever that is possible, so that pastoral and work relationships do not bear the burden of providing us affirmation and emotional support.[9]

Conduct in keeping with this standard includes:

- being faithful to our own vocation as people who are married, single or committed to celibacy, and avoiding any situations that would endanger our primary commitment
- gaining an understanding of one's own human, psychological, spiritual and sexual needs
- developing a network of supportive peers and friends with whom one has no formal pastoral relationship
- cultivating a sensitivity to the inequalities and risks that might accompany a personal relationship with any person with whom one has or has had a pastoral relationship; exercise of similar care with regard to establishing a pastoral relationship with a close friend
- developing sensitivity to the indicators of vulnerability or risk that might render a person as vulnerable or as an 'adult at risk', noting the varying factors which contribute to the category
- reflecting on any such relationships with one's professional supervisor or support person when appropriate to review how effectively the boundaries between the pastoral and the personal have been maintained.

2.6 We are sensitive to the risks accompanying relationships in which professional and personal lines are blurred. We are mindful of our human needs and motivations.In professional and pastoral relationships the well-being of the other, the avoidance of any risk of exploitation, and the maintenance of professional judgment will determine our decisions.[10]

Conduct in keeping with this standard includes:

- establishing professional relationships that prioritise the needs of others
- understanding that by virtue of our position of trust we are placed in a position of power

[9] NCSS, Standard 5, 7 and 8. See also Glossary to NCSS which describes the term, 'adult at risk.'

[10] NCSS, Standards 5, 8.

- being alert to the inherent risk of professional relationships being compromised by conflicts of interest, personal gain, manipulation and emotional dependence
- monitoring any unavoidable dual relationships and evaluating their impact on those being served with the assistance of a third party if appropriate or needed
- being careful to avoid potential conflicts of interest when called upon to advise family members, employees and close friends, refraining from entering formal counselling relationships with family members, employees and close friends
- avoiding as far as possible close business relationships with persons to whom one is providing intensive and/or one-to-one pastoral ministry
- exercising prudent judgment before ministering in a situation where a conflict of interest may arise, e.g. when offering counselling, advice or spiritual direction to more than one person from the same family
- exercising prudent judgment in the giving and receiving of gifts
- keeping relevant, appropriate, dated notes and records when providing counselling, advice or emotional support and ensuring that these are securely stored in accord with diocesan policy.

2.7 We recognise the limits of our own skills.[11]

Conduct in keeping with this standard includes:

- working within one's role description and engaging with professional supervision
- clarifying the context, purpose and expectations accompanying a request for spiritual direction, counselling, support or advice
- not engaging in tasks or activities for which we have inadequate expertise or qualifications
- understanding the processes of counselling and spiritual direction, and recognising one's limitations in those areas
- recognising the appropriate time to make referrals and maintaining an awareness of the professionals to whom one can refer people with specific needs
- assessing the needs of a person who seeks assistance with any complex personal or relationship problem, and then referring the person on to an appropriately qualified professional

[11] NCSS, Standards 1, 8.

- not using psychological tools or tests unless accredited and supervised in their use.

2.8 We recognise that pastoral care requires that a pastoral relationship be terminated when it becomes reasonably clear that the person seeking support is not benefiting.[12]

Conduct in keeping with this standard includes:

- reviewing pastoral relationships with a colleague or a professional supervisor to assess their effectiveness when that is in doubt
- developing and maintaining a referral network
- being clear about the limits of pastoral relationships when they commence.

2.9 We safeguard integrity, and ensure clarity of sexual and professional boundaries.[13]

Conduct in keeping with this standard includes:

- seeking professional advice and review of pastoral and work relationships when we are aware of
    - feeling continually frustrated or angry in the relationship
    - being sexually attracted to the person one is supporting
    - projecting one's own feelings and issues onto the other person or persons in the pastoral relationship.

[12] NCSS, Standard 8.

[13] NCSS, Standard 8.

Our Common Mission: *National Framework for all Catholic Ministry and Service (2022) obliges us to*

3. Stewardship for All

We read in Our Common Mission:

Care for all things in common means all information, systems, finance and property support the whole of mission. A Church that thrives invites oversight from external and independent bodies.

In committing to stewardship of all, we have a responsibility to:

- use resources ethically and sustainably;
- administer open and transparent financial and operational systems;
- respect confidential information;
- seek external, independent expertise; and
- identify and declare potential conflicts of interest.

Accordingly, the following standards of conduct apply:

3.1 We exercise our responsibilities in the service of communion and in the light of Church Tradition.[14]

Conduct in keeping with this standard includes:

- exercising our administrative responsibilities in the light of the Gospel
- exercising our administration in conformity with the Church's teaching regarding its mission and call to justice

[14] NCSS, Standard 1.

- observing the rules of office relating to administration of property and finances, as set out in ecclesiastical and civil law.

3.2 We serve as witnesses and agents of God's justice by living and ministering justly in all things.[15]

Conduct in keeping with this standard includes:

- living a life committed to 'do justice, to love tenderly, and to walk humbly with God' (Micah 6:8)
- accepting responsibility for sustainable and equitable stewardship of the earth's resources
- being involved in advocacy for the poor and disenfranchised
- building partnerships with government and non-government agencies to influence policy and legislation that protects the vulnerable in our society as well as the global community
- seeking to build strong partnerships with the whole community in the service of others
- encouraging one's community to support local, national and universal actions for justice
- collaborating with other Christian churches, faith groups and other organisations
- knowing and promoting the social justice teachings of the local, national and universal Church
- encouraging just action among those whom one serves.

3.3 We commit ourselves to providing professional and competent service.[16]

Conduct in keeping with this standard includes:

- carrying out all requirements of our role with due diligence and commitment in accord with the mission of the Church, and consistent with the Gospel
- having the necessary knowledge and skills for the optimum exercise of our roles and responsibilities
- striving for optimum performance in all areas of our work
- respecting and promoting the mission/vision of the organization

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[15] NCSS, Standards 1, 3, 4.

[16] NCSS, Standards 5, 6, 7.

- being conscious of our leadership role and our responsibility as role models
- modelling and promoting the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards
- escalating concerns to the appropriate line of report
- seeking to bring out the best in people
- working within our defined role and avoiding the overstepping of boundaries
- setting realistic goals and encouraging others to do the same
- seeking advice and guidance from appropriately qualified supervisors when in doubt
- giving priority to complying with, and not undermining, a court or similar order.

3.4 We ensure just working conditions.[17]

Conduct in keeping with this standard includes:

- ensuring that all employment procedures are based on principles of justice and equity, appropriate to each situation
- observing all relevant State and Commonwealth legislation regarding terms and conditions of employment
- complying with statutory requirements in matters such as work-place safety, privacy and anti-discrimination
- establishing clear, documented agreed descriptions of each person's roles, responsibilities and duties, including one's own, and ensuring that alterations are made with the agreement of the people concerned so far as reasonably practicable, and in any event in consultation with those people
- providing paid workers and volunteers with access to adequately resourced training, formation, professional development and, where appropriate, professional supervision
- providing safe and healthy working conditions
- providing rates of remuneration for skill, responsibility and performance in accordance with legislative requirements and community standards.

[17] NCSS, Standards 1, 5, 6.

3.5 We respond appropriately in the event of any abuse in the workplace.[18]

Conduct in keeping with this standard includes:

- being alert to workplace inadequacies/injustices and responding promptly, sensitively and decisively
- implementing appropriate grievance procedures against improper and unreasonable administrative acts and any other expressions of injustice in the workplace
- alerting proper authorities to signs and acts of injustice, unfairness and abuse
- informing complainants of appropriate resources and procedures for redress
- remaining impartial when allegations of injustice, unfairness and abuse arise
- providing support impartially for both accused and complainant when grievances arise
- identifying with relevant Church authorities systemic issues that may require addressing at the service of achieving continuous improvement.

3.6 We avoid using our positions to seek or obtain any financial or other personal advantage.[19]

Conduct in keeping with this standard includes:

- recording the acceptance of financial gifts or benefits for and on behalf of the ministry in which one is engaged and accounting for the same
- refusing gifts, rewards or benefits which might compromise the integrity of one's role
- not soliciting gifts, rewards or benefits for oneself, even by implication
- exercising prudent judgment in the giving of gifts or benefits
- not borrowing or misappropriating money from accounts.

[18] NCSS, Standard 6.

[19] NCSS, Standard 1, 5, 9.

Our Common Mission: *National Framework for all Catholic Ministry and Service (2022) obliges us to*

4. Lifelong Formation

We read in Our Common Mission:

Entry level training and qualifications are the beginning of lifelong learning and formation. While there are different models, everyone is called to continuous formation, conversion and accountability in ministry and service.

In committing to lifelong formation, we have a responsibility to:

- undertake relevant education, training, and development, including in safeguarding, professional standards and interculturality;
- have professional/pastoral supervision with a registered, independent supervisor if in a ministry role;
- engage in spiritual direction, or other form of reflective practice;
- attend to our own spiritual, physical, social, mental, and emotional wellbeing;
- seek additional professional or personal support as needed; and
- relate codes of conduct to both personal and professional formation.

Accordingly, the following standards of conduct apply:

4.1 We continually open ourselves in response to the Spirit in the midst of the Church and the human community.[20]

Conduct in keeping with this standard includes:

- committing to a life of faith, hope and love

[20] NCSS, Standard 1.

- engaging in prayerful reflection on, and commitment to, the virtues appropriate to one's way of life thorugh the processes of spiritual direction and other forms of reflective practice
- developing knowledge and understanding of scripture, theology, Church teaching and Tradition.

4.2 We are committed to develop the pastoral and professional skills our ministries and roles require.[21]

Conduct in keeping with this standard includes:

- ensuring in initial and periodic training that we develop skills in:
    - identifying what kinds of allegations or complaints relating to child sexual abuse should be reported and to whom
    - identifying inappropriate behaviour which may be a precursor to abuse, including grooming
    - recognising physical and behavioural indicators of child sexual abuse
    - appreciating all complaints related to child sexual abuse must be taken seriously, regardless of the perceived serverity of the behaviour
- participating in continuing education programmes, particularly in ministerial ethics and child safety
- participating in regular professional supervision
- establishing processes to evaluate the quality of one's work, including assessment by one's peers and those one serves
- participating in local and national associations of one's peers
- engaging in guided self-appraisal
- implementing the outcomes of such reflection and evaluations
- keeping abreast of literature in the area of our contribution
- attending seminars/inservices related to our role
- remaining updated in the social sciences and disciplines that contribute to our role
- being open to processes of personal and organisational review and development
- being eager to learn relevant new skills and encourage such learning in others

[21] NCSS, Standards 1, 5, 9.

- providing appropriate rolemodelling and mutual encouragement and support and affirm the initiatives of co-workers in their professional development.

4.3 We seek to live healthy lives out of reverence for the gift of life and wellbeing.[22]

Conduct in keeping with this standard includes:

- taking regular balanced meals, regular exercise, and adequate sleep
- taking scheduled days off, and annual holidays
- moderating use of alcohol and prescribed medicines
- refusing illicit substances
- nurturing friendships apart from one's work relationships
- supporting colleagues who appear to be in difficulty in their pastoral or personal life.

4.4 Clergy serve the communion of the Church by ministering or presiding at prayer, sacraments and eucharist. In those moments they are at the service of a community of active and equal persons, seeking to enable the best and fullest expression of the community's prayer, praise, and communion with the life of God.[23]

Conduct in keeping with this standard includes:

- preparing for and participating in liturgies and services of prayer, either as presider or minister, with reverence, humility and respect for all persons in the community
- supporting and participating in processes that prepare and assist people to celebrate in prayer and sacrament as fully and well as possible
- celebrating the Sacrament of Penance in ways that respect penitents' rights to privacy and to a safe environment. This will include providing options for openness and visibility and refraining from intrusive questioning. Where a child is involved, the Sacrament of Penance must only be conducted in an open space within the clear line of sight of another adult
- developing one's knowledge of liturgical norms, theology and practice

[22] NCSS, Standards 5, 7.

[23] NCSS, Standards 5, 7.

- preparing carefully, and developing skills for all the occasions in which the Word of God is preached or proclaimed.

4.5 Bishops and Pastors and Directors share a responsibility for promoting and encouraging the health and wellbeing, just working conditions, and professional development of those in their dioceses, parishes, and agencies.[24]

Conduct in keeping with this standard includes:

- creating structures, resources, environments and opportunities to support the spiritual, physical, intellectual and emotional health of those for whom one exercises responsibility
- providing specific opportunities for those who express a desire or need to address issues concerning their health
- monitoring issues of stress, isolation and other risks to health among those for whom one exercises responsibility
- providing structures and environments and providing resources and opportunities to support the professional development and professional supervision of those for whom one exercises responsibility.

[24] NCSS, Standards 1, 5, 7, 9.

Appendix

A Theology of Communion to underscore the principles of Integrity in our Common Mission from Integrity in Ministry (2004)

The word 'communion' is always used to translate the Latin word *communio*, or the Greek word *koinonia*. The ecclesiology of communion is an understanding of the Church and its mission that has its origins in Jesus' life and teaching. Throughout the first millennium the concept of communion held a central place in the Church: the development of the Christian Scriptures, creeds and doctrine all served to establish and safeguard communion. Communion between various local churches, under the care of the Church of Rome, was signified and celebrated by mutual admission to Eucharistic communion. Vatican II has shown how communion can contribute to the Church's self-understanding in the modern world.

The Church, by its life, mission, relationships and worship, strives to be a sign and an instrument of the communion that is God's plan for creation. The Church is to be a "sign of unity, and an instrument of God's peace". It could be said that the mission of the Church, its nature and its way of life are one: a communion of love committed to the love of God, humanity and God's creation, and to the healing of all hurt and division. The lives and actions of all the baptised, and particularly clergy and religious who hold positions of leadership and trust in the Church, are, therefore, to be evaluated in the light of this understanding of the Church's nature and mission.

How can such a large and significant notion be simply defined? At its broadest level it refers to God's plan for the whole of creation. God 'missions' the Son and the Spirit into the world to heal the wounds of sin and division. The world God wants is a world where all brokenness is mended, where all divisions are reconciled, where shalom (unity and peace) prevail throughout creation, and every human person is loved, respected and honoured as a son or daughter of God. Creation itself awaits its "share in the glorious freedom of the children of God" (Romans 8:21). On that day when God's plan is fulfilled to "bring all things together under Christ" (Ephesians 1:10), the whole of creation will share in God's own life as a perfect communion in love.

Communion lies at the heart of Jesus' mission and his understanding of the reign of God. The first words spoken by Jesus in the Gospel of Mark are these: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is close at hand. Repent and believe the gospel" (Mark 1:14f). In the description of the day that follows, Jesus gathers disciples to share his mission, proclaims the word of God, heals men and women of physical and spiritual illness, and spends time in prayer. The day models life under the reign of God, where women and men are healed and gathered in a communion of faith, hope and love. Luke begins Jesus' public ministry with the quote from Isaiah: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, for he has anointed me to bring good news to the afflicted. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives, sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim a year of favour from the Lord" Luke 4:18f). Throughout Luke's Gospel Jesus reveals the meaning of God's rule when he heals, mends, reconciles, teaches, forgives and restores life to the men and women of his time. The "kingdom of God is among us" (cf. Matthew 12:28) when women and men are restored to communion with one another and with God. The Acts of the Apostles shows the Church continuing the mission of Jesus and the Spirit by becoming both a sign and an instrument of God's rule of love in the world. The Church brings good news, proclaims liberty, ministers healing and announces God's favour.

It is a mission that transforms the ordinary values of the world. It grows slowly, from small beginnings, often unnoticed but always carried forward by the powerful Spirit of God. Its foundation is love: "You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind"; "You must love your neighbour as yourself" (cf. Matthew 22:34-39).

We all have a responsibility to protect, honour and advance the dignity of every human person. We are often welcomed into the lives of people at sensitive and important moments when people are more than usually vulnerable. Our relationships with people in these moments are guided by a spirit of love, sensitivity and personal disinterest that has the wellbeing of the other as its foundation. Sometimes the desire for personal relationship or nourishment will be set aside for the sake of a greater love.

Care for others is expressed in many ways: words, silence, presence and touch all might convey love and solidarity. The area of physical touch calls for great sensitivity. Throughout his life Jesus held, embraced, reached towards and laid hands on those he loved. God is pictured as holding people against a cheek or in the palm of a hand and nursing them within folded arms. Touch can

communicate healing, love and respect. Touch may also be ambiguous, confusing, even threatening to those who are vulnerable. It can be used as a means of control, harassment or abuse. The use of touch in pastoral relationships needs to be guided by prudent judgment that has the deepest wellbeing of the other as its basis.

Jesus served God's plan by serving the men and women of his time. He came 'as one who serves', and he invited those who followed him to do the same, 'washing each other's feet' as he had done. His followers would not 'lord it over' one another, but each would count themselves least of all for the sake of the others. The lost would be sought, the wounded healed, the sinful forgiven, the walls of division brought down, so that 'all may be one' in the communion of love that unites human beings.

The Gospel commands us: "You shall love your neighbour as yourself." The Church is a communion of persons who, in love, care deeply for themselves and for one another. Each recognises in themselves and in each other the 'image of God' and a 'temple of the Spirit'. Because of this we are moved to care for ourselves and one another, recognising that our physical, emotional, and spiritual health are gifts from God. In addition to love and faith, many of these situations call for the pastoral application of professional skills. 'Professional skills' indicates recognised competence in areas such as psychology, social work, spiritual direction and counselling. In keeping with our vocation, we develop and maintain the skills our ministry or way of life requires. The demand of love also means that we recognise the limitations of our skills and ensure that those in need have access to the best possible resources and care when our own limit is reached.

For the Church committed to being a sign and an agent of God's reign, justice is central to its way of life and mission. There is a thread of revelation that runs through the Old Testament reminding the people of God that their ritual and activities are incomplete if they do not live and act justly as a community. The prophet Amos expresses this clearly: "I hate, I scorn your festivals, I take no pleasure in your solemn assemblies . . . but let justice flow like water, and uprightness like a never-failing stream" (Amos 5:21-24). Jesus took up the same message many times in his stories and actions. The reign of God is revealed when the hungry are fed, the naked are clothed, the poor and the outcast are gathered back into the communion of God's love and receive their just share in the gifts of creation.

While the experience of Pentecost was still fresh among them, the first Christians developed a way of life and prayer together that expressed their communion in Christ: “The whole group of believers was united, heart and soul; no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, as everything they owned was held in common” (Acts 4:32-37). It was a first attempt to exercise stewardship of the community’s goods in a way that nurtured ecclesial communion. They followed their Jewish heritage in believing that the gifts of creation and the fruits of human effort were to be used in the service of God’s plan and for the good of all people. Therefore, those of us who have responsibility for property and finance recognise that we are stewards, not owners of those goods. In the spirit of the first disciples, we administer our responsibilities with justice and integrity.

When from time to time communion is broken by the harmful misconduct of one to whom the Church has entrusted leadership and responsibility, then the Church will seek to restore communion as quickly and fully as possible. That responsibility lies with the whole community, and in a particular way with the bishops and religious leaders of the Church. Their first concern is for the healing and care of those who have been hurt by the Church’s ministers. Their next concerns are for justice and the healing of the community of the Church, its relations with the wider human community, and for the healing and wellbeing of those who have caused damage by their behaviour.

The Scriptures have always laid down laws and exhortations to welcome the stranger and look after the poor or marginalised person. Jesus gave new emphasis to this in his healing ministry. From the days of the early Church until now, we have all been commanded and exhorted to care for the poor and vulnerable. The Church has achieved this in remarkable ways for the good of humankind. Some in the Church have contravened both the spirit and the letter of the law (ecclesial and criminal). To those who have been abused, the Catholic Church apologises and makes recompense. The Church continues to reach out to the vulnerable and to survivors by making explicit in this document what behaviours all people would reasonably expect of us.

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