

DIOCESE OF HEARST-MOOSONEE

Code pastoral conduct  
For a safe and healthy environment

Dispositions

March 2021

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

March 2021

Name: \_\_\_\_\_



DIOCESE OF HEARST-MOOSONEE  
Code of pastoral conduct

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## Forward

Priests, deacons, seminarians, employees and volunteers in our parishes and other diocesan institutions must conform their lives according to our Christian values in their ministries and services to people entrusted to their care. In the image of Christ, our servant leader, we will use means that are above people's expectations and we commit to foster the highest respect for the dignity of each person, in particular the most vulnerable among us.

Everyone must acknowledge that their conduct, both public and private, is an inspiration for others. We will strive to ensure that our example is positive and is not a source of scandal that would harm people's faith. In order to achieve that, we always place ourselves under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

This document offers guidelines to assist in the protection of clerics, employees, volunteers and people entrusted to their care.

DIOCESE OF HEARST-MOOSONEE  
Code of pastoral conduct

---

## Table of Content

Forward .....	3
Terms Definition .....	5
1. Directives générales .....	6
A. Les lieux de résidences .....	6
B. Lieux de travail et balises .....	6
C. Proximité .....	7
D. Counseling et direction spirituelle .....	7
E. Directives financières .....	9
2. Directives particulières concernant les enfants, les jeunes et autres personnes vulnérables .....	10
A. Environnement de travail et limites .....	11
B. Proximité .....	12
C. Directives financières .....	13
3. Mises en application .....	13
4. Reconnaissance .....	15

## Definition of terms

**Child.** A person having completed 7 years old.

**Environment.** One must consider the circumstances and locations where a service is offered as an essential component of a safe and healthy environment.

**Youth.** A person between 7 and 19 years of age completed.

**Pornographic Material.** All and any representation, regardless of the means used to view it, of a minor involved in an explicit, real or simulated situation, and all and any representation of genital organs of minors used for sexual gratification.

**Trust ministry.** A situation where vulnerable individuals are involved or at least present under the supervision of an adult in either a private or semi-private setting.

**Service ministry.** A situation where vulnerable individuals are present along with adults in a public setting.

**Pastor.** Including the parish administrator.

**Perception of authority.** The perception of authority of a person offering a service and the degree of dependency of a person receiving a service are components to be taken into consideration when assigning a category to a service. The environment is another factor along with the frequency of the meeting and the intimacy that may develop.

DIOCESE OF HEARST-MOOSONEE  
Code of pastoral conduct

---

**Vulnerable person.** A person is considered vulnerable when he/she cannot protect oneself against physical, verbal, emotional and psychological abuses on a regular basis. This situation may be the result of age, physical or psychological dependency, a handicap or other circumstances either temporary or permanent, complete or partial. (2) Any person in the state of infirmity, physical or psychological deficient, deprived of their personal freedom which, indeed, limits, even occasionally, his or her capacity to understand or ability to choose, or at least offer any resistance to an attack.

**Presbytery.** Any residence for one or many priests as provided by the Diocese of Hearst-Moosonee.

**Supervision.** An essential component of a safe and healthy environment.

DIOCESE OF HEARST-MOOSONEE  
Code of pastoral conduct

---

*1. General Directives*

A. Places of residence

- Residence in presbyteries is reserved to priest, deacons and seminarians.
- With the written permission of the bishop, members of the immediate family may stay for a predetermined period of time with the one responsible of the parish.
- Priests may also host other priests, members of their families and other friends for a maximum of two weeks, ensuring that no scandal ensues from such a stay.

B. Workplaces and

- Members of the clergy, staff and volunteers must ensure that the workplace environment be free of harassment and intimidation either physical, sexual, psychological, written or verbal.
- Members of the clergy, staff and volunteers must ensure that the work environment is free of any form of physical, sexual, psychological, written or verbal harassment or intimidation.
- Members of the clergy, staff and volunteers must ensure that the work environment is free of any form of physical, sexual, psychological, written or verbal harassment or intimidation.



DIOCESE OF HEARST-MOOSONEE  
Code of pastoral conduct

---

- One-on-one meetings must take place in an open environment or at least with a glass part that allows you to see and be seen.
- It is prohibited to possess or use illegal drugs at any time.

- It is forbidden to use verbal or body language that is aggressive, vulgar, humiliating, threatening, intimidating, sexist or racist.

### C. Proximity

- - Any physical contact can be misinterpreted. Therefore, physical contact in private should be avoided. Any form of physical discipline such as hitting, shaking or slapping is prohibited.
- - Discussions of a sexual nature are only allowed to answer a specific question. Appropriate and professional language must be used for any discussion of a sexual nature.

- When a person is aware of an inappropriate attraction or attention to him or her within a pastoral relationship, the person should do everything in his or her power to avoid encouraging such an attitude or attention. If the situation persists, the pastoral relationship should be discontinued.

### D. Counselling and Spiritual Direction

- - In situations of counselling and spiritual direction, one should avoid exceeding one's competence. Referrals to other professionals should be made when deemed necessary and more appropriate. Pastoral counselling should not become a psychological clinic or psychotherapy session.

DIOCESE OF HEARST-MOOSONEE  
Code of pastoral conduct

---

- Any interview or session or other form of conversation of a personal nature should not be digitally, audio or video recorded.

In order to avoid confusion about the nature of the relationship, sessions such as interviews, formal or informal conversations, counselling and others, should take place in an appropriate environment, place and time. The frequency of such sessions should be considered to avoid the possibility of inappropriate attachment.

#### E. Directives financières

- - Our ministry is part of the pastoral service and no one should ask or even expect financial compensation other than that stipulated in their contract or as part of other diocesan provisions.
- - It is forbidden for anyone to solicit, directly or indirectly, in word or deed, any form of personal gift, bequest or capital (or foundation?) from anyone with whom there is any pastoral relationship, present or past.
- - It is forbidden for anyone to apply for (and) or attempt to obtain a personal loan, or any other form of financial benefit, who has any pastoral relationship, present or past.

- All persons, clergy, staff and volunteers involved in the financial administration of a parish should be aware of diocesan policies in this area. These policies are available in the Diocesan Code.

*2. Specific guidelines for children, young people and other vulnerable persons*

DIOCESE OF HEARST-MOOSONEE  
Code of pastoral conduct

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Clergy, staff and volunteers are encouraged to develop transparent and trusting relationships with children, young people and other vulnerable people while maintaining professional attitudes and boundaries.

Special attention should be paid (towards) the most vulnerable people.

A vulnerable person is considered vulnerable when, regardless of age and gender, he or she may be exploited by another person. Children, young people and certain categories of adults may fall into this category. Some people may face physical, psychological or emotional challenges. For others, it may be social isolation - either a social or material need - or they may (find) themselves unable to communicate adequately, or they may not understand or speak our language. Still others live in fear, real or imagined, or in admiration of people without authority. Others, such as refugees and immigrants, may be disadvantaged on several levels at the same time.

(Others may experience social isolation, or be unable to understand etc.).

#### A. Working environment and limits

- - Meetings, various practices, liturgical trainings and other such activities must take place in groups and be supervised by at least two unrelated adults, in a public place or in the parish hall.
- - No interaction with children, young people or vulnerable persons should take place in the parish residence or in (any) other private residence belonging to a member of the clergy.

DIOCESE OF HEARST-MOOSONEE  
Code of pastoral conduct

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- - Children, young people and vulnerable persons should not be provided with an overnight stay without the presence of another adult who is not related to the clerk, employee or volunteer, who is responsible for supervision. Under no circumstances and at no time should such a stay be allowed in the parish residence - such as the rectory - without permission from the bishop or his delegate.
- - When an adult (person) is acting as a supervisor for overnight accommodations with children, young people or other vulnerable persons, that supervisor must not, under any circumstances and under any circumstances, sleep in the same bed as a child, young person or other vulnerable person.
- - Family members of a priest who are still minors may stay in the parish residence provided they are accompanied by their parents.
- - The use of drugs, alcohol, tobacco products or spraying should be avoided in the presence of children, young people or other vulnerable persons.
- - It is prohibited to purchase or facilitate access to alcohol, drugs, tobacco products or vapes, inappropriate videos, (or other inappropriate material) to children, young people or other vulnerable persons.
- - It is forbidden to transport children, young people or other vulnerable persons in a vehicle without the presence of another unrelated adult. Everyone should be aware of the exclusion clauses in their own insurance policy in such circumstances. As much as possible, consideration should be given to public transportation or

DIOCESE OF HEARST-MOOSONEE  
Code of pastoral conduct

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car rentals, especially when group transportation is involved.

- The celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation with a minor or vulnerable person must take place in an open place where both the priest and the other person are fully visible at all times, or in a confessional with a physical separation or even a partition between the priest and the other person.

*B. Proximity*

- - It is forbidden to be alone with a child, young person or other vulnerable person. A parent or other adult must always be nearby. It is recommended to use the team approach for the management of activities.
- - It is forbidden to accept a gift from a child, young person or other vulnerable person. Similarly, it is forbidden to buy a gift for a child, young person or other vulnerable person.
- - One should not travel alone overnight in the presence of a child, young person or other vulnerable person. An appropriate number of adult supervisors should be provided for such activities.

- It is prohibited to make any comments of a sexual nature that are inappropriate or inappropriate with anyone, especially children, parents or other adults, with children, young people or other vulnerable persons.

C. Financial guidelines

DIOCESE OF HEARST-MOOSONEE  
Code of pastoral conduct

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- It is prohibited to act as a financial advisor or to act as a Power of Attorney for any vulnerable person. It is also prohibited to prepare a will or act as a witness for a will for vulnerable persons.

### *3. Enforcement*

- - Every person working in ministry or pastoral service is responsible for the implementation of this Code of Conduct.
- - Clerks, staff and volunteers must hold each other accountable in order to commit to maintaining the highest level of professional ethics.
- - Clerics, employees and volunteers must be aware of this diocesan protocol regarding abuse of any kind. This protocol is available from your parish.
- - Any allegation of a sexual nature should be taken seriously and reported immediately to the pastor or bishop or his delegate.
- - When there is something fishy or a situation is open to interpretation, the case may be referred to the pastor or bishop or his delegate.
- - When a member of the clergy, a staff member or a volunteer has contravened the provisions of this Code of Pastoral Conduct, it should be reported immediately to the pastor or bishop or his delegate.

- Any request for exceptions to the provisions of this Code of Pastoral Conduct must be made in writing to the Bishop or his delegate.

DIOCESE OF HEARST-MOOSONEE  
Code of pastoral conduct

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*4. Acknowledgement*

I have read this Code of Pastoral Conduct and I undertake to put it into practice.

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Names (Please Print)

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Signature

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Date (JJ/MM/AAA)

*NB: For lay employees/lay employees, this document should be kept in the parish or diocesan files and a copy given to the person who signed.*

*For priests, deacons and seminarians, the original must be sent to the chancery. One copy must be kept in the parish where the priest is assigned, another copy must be given to him.*

