



## **MISCONDUCT**

All Agents of the Church are to be treated with dignity and respect. The Diocese of Victoria does not allow any form of harassment (misconduct) and it is prohibited. The prohibition against acts of harassment (misconduct) applies to all Agents of the Church.

**Boundary Violations:** A set of behaviors concerning role, time, place, space, money, gifts, services, clothing, language, self-disclosure and physical contact. Diocesan guidance is clear that Agents of the Church must not use their positions to establish or pursue a sexual or improper emotional relationship with a minor; they must treat minors with dignity and must protect minors from risk of harm posed by the conduct of another Agent of the Church. The safety of minors is paramount. If one has concerns about an Agent of the Church, it is necessary to immediately report it to the proper chain of command.

**Exploitation:** Taking advantage of a person or relationship for the self-serving benefit of the service or ministry provider.

**Grooming:** An act of deliberately establishing an emotional connection with a minor to prepare the minor for abuse. “Grooming” is undertaken usually to carry out sexual abuse and/or other exploitation such as human trafficking, prostitution and pornography.

**Harassment:** The illegitimate and offensive use of power where the purpose or the effect is to create a hostile, intimidating, or offensive work environment.

- **Physical Harassment:** Includes unwanted physical touching, contact, assault, deliberate intimidating interference, including impeding or blocking movements with normal work or movement.
- **Sexual Harassment:** Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.
- **Verbal Harassment:** Includes derogatory comments, jokes, or slurs towards an employee and/or Agent of the Church. This can also include belligerent or threatening words spoken to another employee and/or Agent of the Church.
- **Visual Harassment:** Includes derogatory, demeaning, or inflammatory posters, cartoons, written words, drawings, novelties, or gestures.

**Immoral Conduct:** Conduct that is contrary to the discipline and teachings of the Roman Catholic Church and which may result in scandal to the faithful or harm to the ministry of the Roman Catholic Church. Agents of the Church are expected to act in ways, which promote the best interest of the organization. They are not to engage in, directly or indirectly, either on or off the job, in any conduct which is disloyal, disruptive, damaging to the organization, or contrary to the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church.

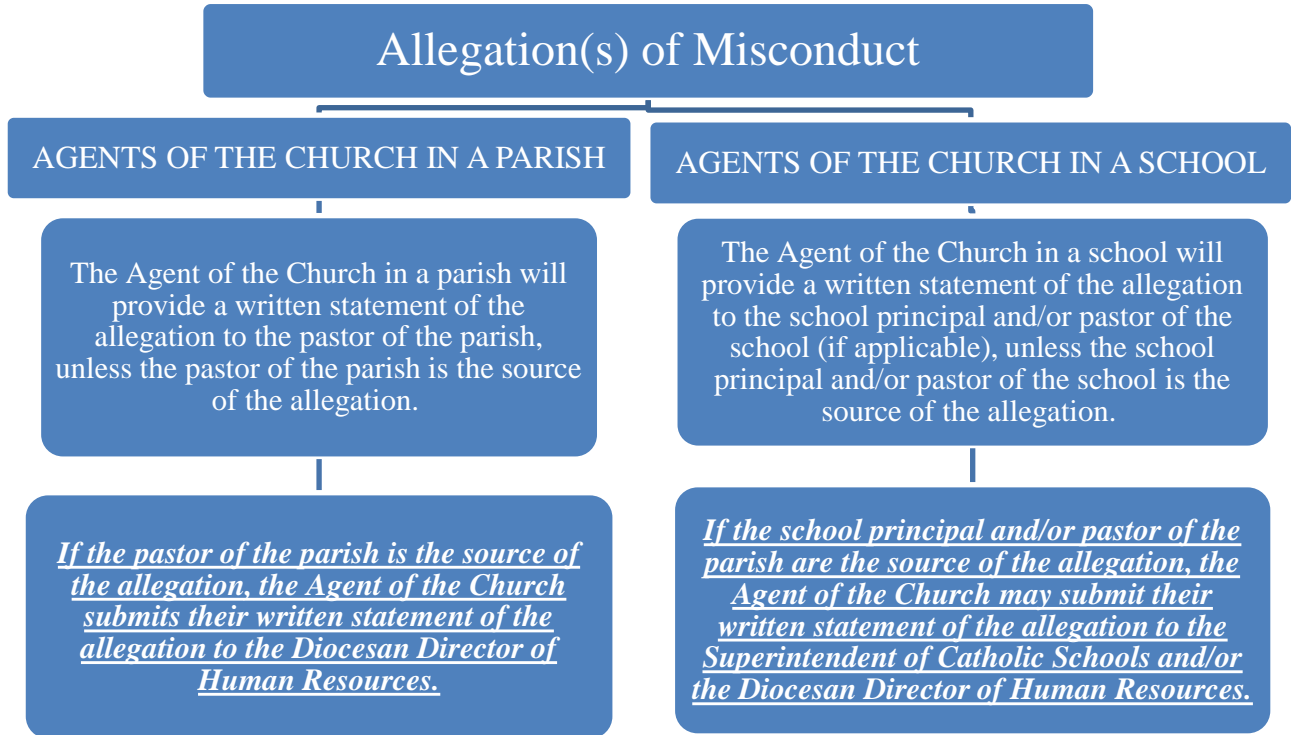
Violations of this policy by an employee will subject the employee to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

An Agent of the Church will follow the *Reporting Process for Allegation(s) of Misconduct* found in the [Code of Pastoral Conduct and Policy Regarding Sexual Abuse of Minors Handbook](#).



## **REPORTING PROCESS FOR ALLEGATION(S) OF MISCONDUCT**

For any allegation(s) of boundary violations, exploitation, harassment, and immoral conduct, an Agent of the Church must provide the *Allegation of Misconduct Reporting Form* (written statement) immediately (following the chain of command below).



### ***AGENTS OF THE CHURCH AT THE DIOCESAN LEVEL:***

The Agent of the Church at the diocesan level will provide a written statement of the allegation to the Diocesan Director of Human Resources, unless the Diocesan Director of Human Resources is the source of the allegation.

*If the Diocesan Director of Human Resources is the source of the allegation, the Agent of the Church at the diocesan level submits their written statement of the allegation to the Diocesan Director of Safe Environment.*

### **Contact Information:**

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**Diocese of Victoria, Chancery**

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