



Code of Conduct



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1. Introduction and Purpose

Message from the Bishop

I am pleased to introduce this update to the Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle (the Diocese) Code of Conduct which sets out the standards of conduct, professional and personal behaviour the Diocese requires of its workers to uphold and encourage a safe, supportive, productive and harmonious workplace.

Workers have a responsibility to uphold these standards including the teachings and values of the Catholic Church and to avoid by word, action or public lifestyle, behaviours which are contrary to those teachings and values.

The Diocese is committed to the delivery of services consistent with the principles and standards detailed in the resources *Integrity in the Service of the Church* supported by the definition of appropriate standards of professional and person conduct contained within this Code of Conduct.

The principles we follow are extensions of the five basic principles for Church workers being:

- ▶ a commitment to justice and equity
- ▶ upholding the dignity of all people and their right to respect
- ▶ a commitment to safe and supportive relationships
- ▶ outreach to those who are poor, alienated or marginalised
- ▶ striving for excellence in all their work.

2. Scope

This Code of Conduct applies to all workers of the Diocese. Workers include paid employees, religious, volunteers, contractors and students on work placements.

The Code outlines the obligations, responsibilities and standard of behaviour the Diocese requires of all workers, to uphold the values, integrity and reputation of the Diocese. It does not form part of an employee's contract of employment.

Workers are to make themselves familiar with the requirements of this document and ensure they comply with the behaviours and obligations outlined within it.

Failure to comply with the responsibilities and obligations outlined in this document may result in disciplinary action being taken, including termination of employment, termination of volunteering agreement, notification to external agencies and/or criminal charges.

Certain sections of the Code reflect the requirements of legislation, and breaches of these conditions may be punishable under law.

3. Lawful Compliance

Workers must act lawfully and comply with all legislative, contractual and industrial requirements while engaged by the Diocese. Workers must comply with the Diocese's policies and follow all reasonable and lawful directions given by the Diocese.

4. Ethical Behaviour

Workers of the Diocese are expected to:

- ▶ respect the dignity, rights and views of others
- ▶ listen and seek to understand different points of view (this does not necessarily mean agreeing with the point of view)
- ▶ act respectfully at all times, including respecting cultural, ethnic and religious differences
- ▶ acknowledge the genuine contributions that others make
- ▶ express constructive feedback considerately and in a moderate tone
- ▶ not harass, bully or discriminate against colleagues, students, people we support or members of the community
- ▶ be courteous, fair, sensitive and considerate to the needs of others
- ▶ be honest and act with integrity at all times
- ▶ actively assist in managing workplace conflict that personally affects them or workers under their supervision to create positive and constructive outcomes.

5. Safeguarding of Children and Vulnerable Adults

The Diocese is committed to the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and vulnerable adults, particularly those who participate in the life of the Diocese, whether in our faith communities, early education centres, schools, welfare services or other programmes.

Workers have legal and moral obligations to actively protect children and vulnerable adults in the course of their work, by:

- ▶ acting in accordance with Diocesan safeguarding policies and procedures;
- ▶ maintaining a duty of care for all children and vulnerable adults for whom they have responsibility; and
- ▶ reporting any conflicts of interest that they may have in relation to their work-related responsibilities to children and vulnerable adults.

Workers of the Diocese must report:

- ▶ a child or class of children, who are at risk of serious harm;
- ▶ workers who have a reportable allegation made

against them, or who have been charged or convicted of a reportable offence (against children or serious violence against adults);

- ▶ a worker engaged in child-related work without a Working with Children Check; or
- ▶ workers who are alleged to have seriously breached professional standards with children or vulnerable adults.

Workers must support Diocesan investigations into allegations of abuse, reportable conduct or breaches of professional standards against children or vulnerable adults by:

- ▶ maintaining neutrality during the investigative process;
- ▶ maintaining strict confidentiality about the investigation;
- ▶ being a truthful witness in the investigation; and
- ▶ volunteering any information that they hold that is relevant to the investigation.

Workers must not take any detrimental action against any other worker, child or vulnerable adult for reporting a concern, participating in an investigation or otherwise protecting the safety, welfare and wellbeing of any child or vulnerable adult.

Workers who fail to actively protect children or vulnerable adults in the course of their work or take adverse actions against those who do, will be considered to have committed serious misconduct which may result in:

- ▶ counselling;
- ▶ formal censure and warnings;
- ▶ withholding of an increment;
- ▶ demotion to a lower classification or increment;
- ▶ transfer to another more appropriate position;
- ▶ suspension; or
- ▶ termination of employment.

6. Professional Behaviour and Development

Workers of the Diocese are expected to:

- ▶ maintain a high standard and quality of work
- ▶ maintain and develop knowledge and understanding of their area of expertise
- ▶ continuously seek to improve work performance and bring about improvements in the workplace

- ▶ exercise care, responsibility and sound judgement when carrying out their duties
- ▶ ensure procedural fairness is followed in all processes
- ▶ maintain adequate documentation to support any decision making
- ▶ take reasonable care of their safety and health
- ▶ take reasonable steps that their acts/omissions do not adversely affect the health and safety of others
- ▶ comply and cooperate with any reasonable instruction, policy or procedure, including with respect to work health safety matters
- ▶ refrain from carrying out their duties under the influence of alcohol, any illegal substance, or any drug which impairs work performance or poses a safety risk to themselves or others
- ▶ not ignore work duties or waste time during working hours
- ▶ not take or seek to take improper advantage of any information gained in the course of their engagement
- ▶ not take improper advantage of their position to benefit themselves or others
- ▶ not allow personal political views/affiliations or other personal interests to influence the performance of duties or exercise of responsibilities
- ▶ where relevant, adhere by any dress code requirements of the Diocese
- ▶ maintain confidentiality and privacy where required
- ▶ report to the Diocese any instance where the staff member believes they, or anyone within their workplace, has breached an obligation under this policy.

7. Conflicts of Interest

A conflict of interest includes any circumstance, whether actual or perceived, arising from a conflict between the performance of a staff member's professional duties with the Diocese and their personal interests. Workers are to take all appropriate steps to disclose a conflict of interest (or potential conflict) to the Diocese as soon as the staff member becomes aware of it.

A conflict can arise when there is a reasonable expectation of a personal benefit, direct or indirect, for a staff member that could influence the performance of their duties. This benefit may be financial or non-financial.

Workers must take suitable measures to avoid, or appropriately deal with, any situation or relationship they

may have where a conflict of interest could, directly or indirectly, compromise the performance of their duties.

A staff member may ask themselves the following questions to assist in identifying whether a situation or relationship is potentially a conflict of interest:

- ▶ Do I have personal interests that may conflict, or be perceived to conflict, with my position at the Diocese?
- ▶ Could there be benefits for me now, or in the future, that could cast doubt on my objectivity?
- ▶ How will my involvement in the decision or action be viewed by others?
- ▶ Does my involvement appear fair and reasonable in all the circumstances?

8. Gifts and Benefits

Workers must not solicit or accept gifts, benefits or hospitality which might be reasonably seen to either directly or indirectly compromise or influence their professional duties with the Diocese.

All gifts must be brought to the attention of the relevant manager who will decide how the gift should be treated, in line with the Diocese financial protocols and policies.

Generally gifts of a nominal value or moderate acts of hospitality offered as a genuine thank you by a client, may be personally retained as long as they have not been solicited by the staff member or could be seen to have comprised or unduly influenced the staff member's professional duties with the Diocese.

Gifts or hospitality offered as an inducement to purchase, provide information or treat some-one favourably are not acceptable regardless of their monetary value. Examples of inducement include a recruitment agency offering theatre tickets for each temporary person engaged.

Gifts, such as a Christmas hamper or a box of chocolates from a consultant, should be shared and made available for consumption by all workers. Consideration should also be given to donating such gifts to charity.

9. Secondary Employment

Staff members employed on a full-time basis must seek and obtain approval in writing from the Diocese prior to engaging in any secondary employment or business activity, including employment within a family company.

Part-time and casual staff members must also seek approval to undertake secondary employment from the

Diocese if the employment may result in potential conflicts of interest that could adversely impact on the staff member's ability to perform their duties with the Diocese, including work, health and safety concerns, or where the secondary employment may affect the Diocese financial position, services or standing in the community.

Approval for secondary employment is still required when workers are on leave, including periods of leave without pay.

Where a staff member is already involved in secondary employment, they must provide details of the secondary employment to the Diocese and obtain the necessary approval.

Current and former staff members are to seek and obtain approval in writing from the Diocese to act in the capacity of a volunteer.

10. Social Media

Workers should not use social media in a manner which may bring the Diocese into disrepute. Refer to the Social Media Policy for the Diocese and associated documents in this regard.

11. Public Comment

Only authorised workers are permitted to make public statements or give interviews on behalf of the Diocese to a media representative.

12. Management and Resources

Workers must use the Diocese resources economically and ethically. Such resources include money, facilities, equipment (e.g. phones, computers, iPads, and fax machines), vehicles, services (e.g. internet) and any other property which is owned or is the responsibility of the Diocese. Workers also have a duty to ensure the Diocese resources are used only for their intended purpose, are well maintained and secured against theft or misuse.

Workers are fully accountable for the use of the Diocese work time and resources. Workers should not use the Diocese work time or resources for an outside interest, secondary employment or personal gain, such examples include the development of a new commercial idea or writing a book.

Workers have a duty to report to the Diocese any improper use, waste or abuse of resources, corrupt or fraudulent conduct or inadequate administration or accountability.

13. Protected Disclosures

In reporting any suspected improper use, fraud, waste or abuse of resources, corrupt conduct, inadequate administration or accountability, workers are entitled to seek support and protection when making such disclosures, and to be notified of the action taken in relation to the disclosure.

Workers are not entitled to protection for disclosures which, on investigation, are found to be vexatious or malicious allegations, and may be liable for disciplinary action as a result.

14. Confidentiality

Workers must not divulge, either during employment or after, any confidential information gained as a staff member of the Diocese.

Workers of the Diocese are expected to:

- ▶ Abide by the Australian Privacy Principles (APPs) found in the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) in the conduct of their work
- ▶ Treat confidential and personal information about colleagues, volunteers, students, people we support and other members of the community respectfully
- ▶ Exercise caution and sound judgement in discussing other people's confidential and personal information
- ▶ Comply with relevant laws and regulations regarding the collection, dissemination, use and security of all such information
- ▶ Only use such information for work-related purposes
- ▶ Only communicate such information to those who need to know in order to perform their role.

Sharing of confidential and personal information with external persons or agencies may only occur:

- ▶ within the established guidelines for such communication, or
- ▶ in accordance with any relevant legislation relating to the provision of such information.

15. Further Information

Further information about this document can be sought from the Head of Human Resources, Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle on 02 4979 1148.



Code of Conduct Declaration



This form is to be completed by all workers of the Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle.

Name:	
Department:	
Home Address:	
Date of Birth:	

Declaration

I declare that:

1. I have read, understand and agree to abide by the 2018 Code of Conduct for workers of the Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle;
2. I am aware of the guidelines contained within this policy document and its implications for my conduct as I carry out my duties as a worker of the Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle.

Signed: **Date:**

Witness Name:

Home Address:

Witness Signature: **Date:**

Original signed declaration to be returned to Human Resources for placement in personnel file.

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