

Code of conduct for intervention with minors and vulnerable adults

St. Thomas à Becket is a reputable organization, and that's why we created this code of conduct for all our employees and our **volunteers including clergy members, religious or laity**. While our employees and volunteers all have unique importance and individuality, we are all collectively an organization committed to acting in the best interests of minors and vulnerable adults. Safety, rights and well-being of minors and vulnerable adults we serve are central to our daily activities. Within reasonable limits, we develop constructive relationships with this group.

[We will not tolerate misconduct by an employee or volunteer, especially if it affects the welfare of the minors and vulnerable adults we serve.](#)

Misconduct is an inappropriate behavior that can be manifested among others by the following ways:

- Contact a minor or a vulnerable adult outside the normal scope of responsibilities or tasks of an employee or volunteer, for example:
 - Sending personal letters or texts (SMS)
 - Making personal phone calls;
 - Having personal Internet communications (email, instant messaging, social networking sites, chat rooms, etc.);
 - Sending personalized gifts.

Note: We are not talking of misconduct when a person gives a thank you card, a birthday card, a greeting card or a small gift, provided that this gesture is considered reasonable in the circumstances, that such actions do not add up to give an excessive number and that these exchanges are made within the workplace, in the presence of others and knowledge of the organization.

- Ask a minor or a vulnerable adult to accompany him without permission of parents/guardians/caregivers.
- Spend time with a minor or a vulnerable adult out of work or planned activities (unless this is an activity resulting from parental initiative and that the organization is aware of this activity and has previously approved it).
- Favoritism toward a minor or a vulnerable adult.
- Telling lewd jokes to a minor or a vulnerable adult.
- Showing a minor or a vulnerable adult pornographic or sexist material (posters, cartoons, calendars, journals, photos, etc.) or display such material in plain view.
- Taking pictures of a minor or a vulnerable adult, except at the express request of the organization, and provided that these photos are taken with devices that belong to the organization or are its responsibility.

Note: A staff member must never use his/her own cell phone or camera to photograph a minor or a vulnerable adult or send or copy pictures taken by him/her of a minor or a vulnerable adult over the Internet or any personal storage device.

Staff and volunteers of St. Thomas à Becket

- Respect at all times the policies and procedures of the Parish when dealing with minors and vulnerable adults;
- Treat minors with respect and dignity;
- Always display a label (badge) with their name during activities and meetings;
- Take seriously any allegation or suspicion of sexual misconduct; all staff and volunteers have a duty to report such allegations or suspicions;
- Follow established procedures* when reporting allegations of misconduct or violation of internal policies;
- Consider the final results of any behavior and the reaction of a minor or a vulnerable adult in any activity, conversation or interaction in order to avoid embarrassing him, to make him feel ashamed or humiliated;
- Ask, observe and maintain boundaries with all minors and vulnerable adults.

Staff and volunteers of St. Thomas à Becket must not:

- Be engaged in any activity that threatens the safety of a minor or vulnerable adult or makes a minor or vulnerable adult feel uncomfortable;
- Be engaged in any activity that goes against the mandate, policies or the organization code of conduct;
- Make remarks, comments or jokes suggestive, obscene or sexual to a minor or vulnerable adult or about a minor or vulnerable adult;
- Have physical contacts with a child that could make them uncomfortable or contact outside of reasonable limits;
- Do their own investigation of allegations or suspicions of sexual misconduct; **staff and volunteers have a duty to report, not to investigate;**
- Place a minor or a vulnerable adult in a situation of vulnerability to anyone, both inside and outside the organization;
- Use corporal punishment such as hitting, spanking or kicking with a belt;
- Offer a minor or a vulnerable adult a "special" treatment that is not within the mandate of the organization or would place (or give the impression of placing) a minor or a vulnerable adult in a situation where it might be exploited.

Staff and volunteers of St. Thomas à Becket must ensure that:

- The activities in which they engage with a minor or a vulnerable adult are reported and approved by supervisors or parents; no relation to a minor or a vulnerable adult should be kept secret; these reports must be transparent ;

- Their activities **MUST** not be considered inappropriate by a reasonable observer;
- Their activities are not likely to harm the organization's reputation;
- Their activities could not, in the eyes of a reasonable observer, be deemed dangerous to the safety or the personal integrity of a minor or a vulnerable adult;
- Their activities are not likely to make a minor or a vulnerable adult uncomfortable;
- Their activities are not likely to seem inadequate in the eyes of the organization, of the minor's or the vulnerable adult's family or of the public.
- The places chosen are never those of a private home;
- An attendance list is written at the beginning of each meeting. It must be then stored carefully in the parish or in the Service;
- It is imperative that two adults, working at arm's length, vetted by this ministry are present during the activity;
- The door of the room used is always open during the activity.

In all activities involving travelling, staff and volunteers of **St. Thomas à Becket** must ensure that:

- The driver has an appropriate driver's license;
- That the trip is covered by adequate insurance;
- The number of people per vehicle never exceeds the number of available seats or safety belts;
- That parents or guardians are clearly informed of the place and time of the return;
- For travelling outside of Quebec and Canada, see the rules governing such trips.

In all activities involving an overnight stay, staff and volunteers of **St. Thomas à Becket** ensure that:

- An authorization has to be signed by parents or legal guardians or caregivers when an activity involves travelling or an overnight stay;
- When they have to share a room or a dorm with minors or vulnerable adults, never to be alone with a minor or vulnerable adult, and wearing appropriate sleep wear.
- Watching for minors and vulnerable adults at all times;
- The presence of two authorized adults (parent or guardian, or designated staff) in sanitary areas, showers and locker rooms. If the accommodation does not have sanitary facilities, showers and separate changing rooms for girls and boys, they have to be used in turns. Authorized personnel will never use these facilities along with minors or vulnerable adults;
- Decency of every minor or vulnerable adult should be respected, especially in showers, never force him to undress.

In all sport activities, staff and volunteers of **St. Thomas à Becket** must ensure that:

- At least one member appointed or designated staffs have first aid certification level required by insurers;
- The activities are covered by adequate insurance.

Any breach of code of conduct by an employee or volunteer will be investigated and will lead to a disciplinary action if necessary. The consequences or disciplinary measures to be imposed shall be determined by the diocesan or parish authority, depending on the nature and severity of the incident.

I agree to abide by this Code of Conduct.

Name and signature of the employee or volunteer

Date

* Reporting is required if the ground is reasonable, the Director of the Office of the pastoral personnel should be notified, if absent the Vicar General, if absent, the Chancellor. After investigation, if the reporting is justified, the Director of the Office of the pastoral personnel will report to the Director of Youth Protection.