

THE AUSTRALIAN AND NEW ZEALAND DIOCESE
OF THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH OUTSIDE OF RUSSIA

CODE OF CONDUCT

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1. Introduction

1.0 Message from the Ruling Bishop

Humanity has never lived without laws and guidelines. Even the simplicity of Adam's life in paradise required a commandment from God, albeit only one. The simplicity of life in Grace, experienced by the first Church community in Jerusalem, also required few guidelines. The Christian conscience was sufficient, in most cases, with reference to the spirit of the Gospel. However, as history progressed, the Church found it necessary to clarify certain positions and to provide guidelines to help make Christians live more harmoniously. This became especially relevant when the numbers of Christians grew and it took time to educate them in the proper understanding and acceptance of Gospel ethics in the context of structured Church life. As a result, we now have a body of Church legislation that runs into many hundreds of pages, beginning with the apostolic canons. Look at the ample tome of 'The Rudder', a collection of Church canons and rules. The Russian Church Abroad, and our ANZ Diocese in particular, have collections of Church By-Laws and regulations, some of which are now reflected in NSW civil legislation.

The risk of erosion of the Gospel spirit has always been present in the historical path of the Church, and no amount of Church-generated legislation can prevent it. Our challenge now is to understand that there is a hierarchy of values within which God is first and Caesar second. In this instance, we are responding to the accepted worldly norms, by providing a Diocesan policy and a set of guidelines in the form of a "Code of Conduct". The things of God and the things of Caesar are different, but they are not of necessity in opposition to each other. The Church acknowledges secular rule as God given, when it does not consciously oppose the primacy of God. Thus, we need to educate ourselves to understand that the demands of secular law are always minimalistic, while Christ points to perfection as the direction of our efforts. In terms of ethical and behavioural norms, worldly expectations are always minimalistic, i.e., "don't do unto others ...", "don't do evil", whereas Christ expects us to be initiators and conductors of Divine love, even toward our enemies.

The existence of this Code is to articulate expected behaviour and ethics. It is part of the challenge of preserving the true spirit of the Church in the world.

1.1 Scope

The personal behaviour and practices required of clergy and monastics are specified in the Holy Scriptures as well as in the canons, 'The Rudder', Church By-laws and regulations and in the oath given at the time of ordination. This Code sets out the expected standards of behaviour for clergy, church workers and the church community within the Diocese and in the case of clergy and monastics, supplements existing guidance around personal behaviour and practices.

1.2 Purpose

The Diocese is committed to caring for the salvation and well-being of souls, ensuring a church environment that is nurturing, sustaining, faithful to Orthodoxy and expressing the love that we have been asked to reflect by our Lord Jesus Christ.

This Code is intended to outline expectations of behaviour to ensure the churches and monasteries within the Diocese are safe places for everyone and where integrity is valued and accountability is practised.

1.3 Definitions

Acronym / Term	Definition
Diocese	The Australian and New Zealand Diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia
Children	Refers to children and young people under the age of 18
Church	The Diocese
Church entity	Parishes, monasteries and missions within the Diocese
Church workers	Individuals elected or appointed by parishes to assigned duties either with or without payment, including Parish officials, Diocesan employees and Diocesan officials
Church community	A parish, mission or monastic community of the ANZ Diocese, which may include which may include clergy, monastics, Diocesan employees, Diocesan officials, Church workers, Parish officials, Parish School Workers, Volunteers, Parishioners and Visitors of church entities
Clergy	Bishops, priests, deacons, sub-deacons, readers
Dean	A senior cleric appointed by the Ruling Bishop to have administrative oversight of all clergy in his Deanery
Diocesan employees	Employees working for the Diocese
Diocesan officials	Individuals elected or appointed to Diocesan positions within the Diocesan Council
Inappropriate behaviour	Such behaviours may include, but are not limited to: - yelling, abusive or offensive language, one-on-one or in front of others, - any form of physical force, whether directed at people or objects (e.g., pushing people, thumping tables, inappropriate gestures), - inappropriate comments about a person's race, nationality, culture, language, appearance, personal life, or defamation/slander of people and/or their families, - drinking to excess - inappropriate sexual comments/jokes, advances or physical contact, - spending excessive amounts of time alone with children or in contact with children outside of work hours (either physical or via email/phone/social media) - the supply of alcohol, drugs and or gifts to children; kissing or touching of a sexual nature consistent with grooming children - constant belittling or unreasonable criticism of others,

- inappropriate teasing and/or joking at the expense of others, distressing others,
- isolating people from the Church community or discouraging them from participating in community life,
- making unreasonable demands on church workers
- minimisation or non-acknowledgement of people's contributions,
- abusive oral or written communications or any other form of abusive, aggressive or offensive behaviour via any electronic medium (including social media).

Monastics	Monks, nuns and novices
Parish Officials	Individuals elected to Parish Councils, Sisterhood Councils, and Auditing Committees.
Parishioners	Individuals who attend divine services at a Diocesan church or monastery, or other gatherings, including social occasions, associated with the life of the parish or monastery.
Rector	Priest, abbot or abbess appointed by the Ruling Bishop to oversee a Parish, Monastery, Convent or Mission.
ROCORA	Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia.
Ruling Bishop	Bishop or Archbishop appointed by the Synod of Bishops of ROCORA with responsibility for all the parishes and church communities within the Diocese and authority over all the orders of clergy in the Diocese.
Visitors	Newcomers to the church community or parishioners from other parishes.
Volunteers	Individuals undertaking voluntary duties on a regular basis within parishes or parish schools without payment.

1.4 Responsibilities

The **Diocesan Council** is responsible for updating and implementing this policy across the Diocese.

The **Ruling Bishop and Deans** are responsible for complying with this Code and:

- Ensuring clergy and monastics in their deanery comply with this Code.

All Rectors are responsible for complying with this Code and:

- Ensuring members of their church entity are aware of the requirements of this Code.

All **Church Workers** are responsible for complying with this Code.

2. Conduct Obligations

2.1 Compliance

For Clergy and Monastics, this Code is to be read in conjunction with the Holy Scriptures, the canons, 'The Rudder', Church By-laws and regulations and in the case of clergy, the oath given at the time of ordination.

All members of the Church Community must comply with any reasonable directions given by the Rector or the Ruling Bishop and ensure all laws of the specific Australian state and territory or New Zealand laws are complied with in their dealings with the Diocese.

2.2 Ethical Decision Making

Situations that arise within a Church entity or within the Diocese are to be dealt with in a manner that is consistent with Orthodox Christian principles and beliefs, in the spirit of Christian love and with a willingness to enter into fair discussion, co-operation and with the common goal of resolving the situation satisfactorily for all concerned.

2.3 Accountability

Being accountable as a member of the Church community means that as citizens of our respective countries, states and territories, we act consistently with all applicable laws and exercise good decision-making and judgement.

2.4 Respectful Behaviour

As members of the Church community, individuals are expected to behave and communicate with each other in a respectful and courteous way towards everyone and seek to provide an environment free from bullying, harassment or aggressive behaviours.

It is recognised that there will be instances where differences of opinion will be expressed by members of the church community. Reasonable discussion is welcomed. However, if a dispute requires resolution, every effort should be made in such cases, drawing on Christian principles, to resolve the situation with love, respect and courtesy for one another. The assistance of a mutually respected third party in a mediating role may help to resolve the situation.

Bullying, harassment, intimidation, humiliation and sexual impropriety will not be tolerated.

It is expected that all members of the church community will:

- Be courteous and polite towards everyone and avoid treating people unfairly, giving orders without authority, causing them to be isolated or ignored
- Treat people fairly and give directions with the relevant authority
- Not engage in Inappropriate Behaviour

2.5 Media and Public Comment

Public Comment

Members of the church community are not authorised to make public comment to the media or other public forums on behalf of the Diocese unless they have been authorised to do so by the Ruling Bishop.

If a public comment is made in a private capacity, it must not:

- make a comment in such a way that it could be inferred they represent the Diocese or the official position of the Diocese on a matter.
- be made by using an individual's position within the Diocese to strengthen the weight of their personal opinion with the media.
- divulge any confidential information they have encountered as a member of the Diocese.

If a public comment is made in a private capacity by a clergy or monastic, it must not disrespect fellow clergy, senior clergy or the Ruling Bishop and it must state that it is a comment “made in a private capacity” which “may, or may not, represent the views of the Church/Diocese”.

Social Media

All individuals within the church community, in their capacity as private individuals have the right to participate in public debate on political and social issues on social media. In making public comments in a private capacity, you must:

- observe the above restrictions for public comment
- not use any Diocese logos or insignia that may give the impression of official support by the Diocese of your personal comment
- not make any comment or posts that could compromise or be reasonably perceived as compromising your capacity to fulfil your duties as a clergy, monastic or church worker – this includes ensuring that you do not engage in hate speech or divisive speech online

Where a church community member's social media clearly identifies a relationship with the Diocese, they must be mindful that any post or comment made may be perceived to reflect the official position of the Diocese on a matter. Clergy in particular, should be aware that any views that they express could be understood/interpreted as the views of the Diocese or the Church Community.

2.6 Mandatory reporting requirements

It is the Christian responsibility of all individuals within the Church Community to report any form of inappropriate behaviour that they may see towards children in accordance with the *Child Safe Policy* [INSERT LINK]..[\..\Child Safety\2023 Child-Safe Policy\Ukase and Policy\Child Safe Policy - Final.24052023.pdf](#)

Under Australian law suspected cases of physical and/or sexual abuse of children must be reported to the relevant statutory child protection authorities.

This is separate to the requirement to report to the police an allegation of a criminal offence.

Clergy and monastics, should be aware that there are mandatory reporting provisions which apply to persons in religious ministry across all states and territories of Australia and New Zealand by certain persons of suspected child abuse or neglect.

3. Additional Conduct Obligations relevant to Clergy, Monastics and Church Workers

3.1 Conflicts of Interest

A conflict of interest exists where a reasonable person might perceive that your personal interests (family, friendships, financial or social factors) could be favoured over your duties as a Clergy, Monastic or Church worker.

Where you encounter a conflict of interest, you should disclose the conflict of interest to the Rector, Dean, Ruling Bishop and/or Parish Council where appropriate.

Discuss the conflict and determine the best course of action with the Rector, Dean or Ruling Bishop to manage the conflict. This may involve:

- taking no further action
- removing yourself from certain discussions or meetings
- changing your role to an advisory one with no decision-making authority or financial responsibility
- limiting access to certain information
- in the case of a rector, ensuring that someone of greater seniority (such as the dean or Ruling Bishop) is involved in the matter

3.2 Gifts

If you are a Clergy, Monastic or Church worker and you are offered or receive a personal gift, whether monetary or otherwise, from a person with whom you have a pastoral relationship (in the case of Clergy or Monastics) or other relationship (in the case of Church workers) you should:

- establish for whom the gift is intended and exercise discretion as to whether the gift should be personally accepted
- consider the size of the gift; the intentions and circumstances of the giver; the risk of your integrity being compromised; and whether acceptance of the gift would cause scandal and embarrassment if known publicly
- in the case of Clergy or Monastics, if it is substantial (a gift valued at \$10,000 or more), disclose the offer or receipt to the Ruling Bishop
- if there is any uncertainty as to the gift's appropriateness, seek advice from the Ruling Bishop

Disclosure to the Ruling Bishop in circumstances involving substantial gifts reduces the risk of undue influence for Clergy, Monastics and Church workers in relation to decision-making within parishes and monasteries.

3.3 Health, Safety and Wellbeing

Clergy, Monastics and Church workers with overall authority in a church entity have a responsibility for the implementation and maintenance of proper systems for the health, safety and wellbeing of the church community entering the church grounds and children participating in its pastoral ministry.

3.4 Use of Prohibited Substances

As a Clergy, Monastic and Church worker you are to be responsible in your use of alcohol and other mind altering or addictive substances or services.

Clergy members and Monastics are not to undertake any pastoral ministry when they are impaired by alcohol or any other mind-altering or addictive substances.

Clergy and Monastics are not to use any prohibited substance.

3.5 Financial Integrity

It is recognized that Clergy, Monastics and Church workers may be involved in matters of a financial nature within their church entity or for the Diocese. Financial integrity is essential to all financial processes and transactions. Clergy, Monastics and Church workers with overall authority for financial management are responsible for the implementation and maintenance of proper systems for financial integrity and accountability and:

- are not to engage in tax evasion
- are not to seek personal advantage or financial gain for themselves or their family from their position or from a pastoral relationship
- are not to be influenced by offers of money or financial reward
- are to avoid situations of conflict between their personal financial interest and their pastoral ministry responsibilities
- must fully disclose and be publicly accountable for all church monies which they handle

Where individuals have overall authority for financial management in a church entity or within the Diocese, they are to ensure that:

- proper systems for financial integrity and accountability are implemented and maintained
- all those who assist in the financial management of the church entity or Diocese are informed of their roles and responsibilities
- all stipends, wages and allowances payable are adequate, and paid promptly and in full

3.6 Record-Keeping

Clergy, Monastics or Church workers who handle records for the relevant church entity or Diocese must ensure that records containing personal information are:

- treated with confidentiality and never left where they can be accessed by unauthorised persons
- where kept on computer, are password protected and stored for an indefinite period of time with access limited to authorised persons
- where kept in paper form, are stored separately from any other documents and locked in secure place for an indefinite period of time, with access limited to authorised persons

Rectors should ensure:

- that a register of attendance of children and their emergency contact details is kept for each pastoral ministry/activity organised for children

- permission forms for children engaging in any extensive (overnight or all-day) pastoral ministry activities are kept and stored in a secure place

3.7 Vulnerable Parishioners

It is recognised that the Church is a place for spiritual healing and, as such, it attracts and welcomes those who recognise their spiritual ailments. This can also include those who are more vulnerable due to their personal difficulties, personal situation and disabilities.

Clergy must ensure that they address the spiritual needs of these parishioners, but also encourage them to seek help for their other issues from proper sources. This can include psychological help, counselling on personal and financial issues and disability services. Whilst the Church can support its parishioners through these difficulties, the resources and capabilities of the Church are limited and the need for external assistance needs to be recognised and encouraged.

4. Breaches of the Code

Members of the Church Community who do not comply with this Code could potentially bring themselves or the Diocese into disrepute and undermine relationships within the Church Community.

If you know or have reason to believe that a member of the Church Community has not followed this Code, you should approach the individual and identify the concern with them, if appropriate. In certain instances, it may be necessary to raise any concerns confidentially with the Rector, Dean or Ruling Bishop.

All allegations of criminal conduct should be reported to the police.

Allegations of reportable conduct relating to children should be notified to the relevant body within each state or territory. Refer to the *Child Safe Policy* for further information.

If the concerns relate to the rector, you should discuss the matter with the Dean or the Ruling Bishop.

Consequences for members of the Church Community who breach this Code will vary depending on the intent, nature and severity of the breach.

In the instance of clergy and monastics a failure to meet the standards of this Code may result in formal disciplinary action and will be a matter for the Ruling Bishop to decide.

The process for addressing breaches of this Code will follow principles of procedural fairness, transparency and accountability.

5. Code of Conduct Attestation

I (print name): _____ have read the
ANZ Diocese of ROCOR Code of Conduct and the Child Safe Policy.

I understand my responsibilities under this Code and the Child Safe Policy and will work in accordance with
the requirements outlined in these policies.

Signed: _____ (signature)

(printname) _____

Date: ____/____/____

6. Document Version Control

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7. Change History

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Authorisation



+ Archbishop George

Archbishop George of Sydney, Australia and New Zealand
Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia