

# **Archdiocese of Seattle Safe Environment Program**

## **Definition of Sexual Misconduct**

Sexual contact or conduct with an adult who may otherwise be consenting, however, the following conditions are in place: the perpetrator is acting on behalf of or representing a parish, school, institution or agency of the Archdiocese; and there is a ministerial relationship of trust; therefore a disparity of power is presumed.

## **Is Sexual Misconduct Criminal?**

Sexual misconduct does not ordinarily constitute criminal behavior. However, since it is a violation of the ministerial relationship: it is unethical and impermissible; an employee engaging in sexual misconduct may be terminated in accordance with the policies of the Archdiocese of Seattle; civil damages may be filed against the perpetrator by the victim.

## **Definition of Sexual Harassment**

Unwelcomed advances, requests for sexual favors or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment; or
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as a basis for employment decisions affecting such individual; or
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment.

## **Examples of Sexual Harassment**

- Non-verbal – Obscene hand or finger gestures, sexually explicit drawings, suggestive greeting cards, unwanted "love letters", pornography;
- Verbal – Innuendos, slurs, jokes, requests/demands/pressure for sexual favors;
- Physical – Any type of physical contact when action is not welcomed by recipient (for example, brushing up against someone in an offensive manner.)

## **Important Facts about Sexual Harassment**

- Does not need to be intentional or directed at one person;
- Courts use "reasonable person" standard;
- Failure to complain does not mean behavior is welcome;
- An offender can be anyone in the workplace – employee or visitor.

**Please refer to the Policies of the Archdiocese of Seattle and the Code of Conduct for detailed information about Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Harassment.** 9/18/2007

**We each have a responsibility to:**

- Treat co-workers/volunteers with respect;
- Understand that we all have different sensitivities to: age, gender, race, etc;
- When in doubt, DON'T SAY IT and DON'T DO IT!

**Managers' Responsibilities**

- Be a role model for your employees and volunteers;
- Monitor the work environment/programs;
- Take all allegations of harassment very seriously;
- Offer discretion but not confidentiality to complainant;

Report all allegations to the pastor/pastoral leader AND human resources **immediately!!!**

**Please refer to the Policies of the Archdiocese of Seattle and the Code of Conduct for detailed information about Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Harassment.**