



# **Charter for the Protection of minors and vulnerable persons**

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*«so that the Church may be a safe house for all»*

Pope Francis

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**Mgr. Jean-Marc Micas**, bishop of Tarbes et Lourdes

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*Charter for the protection of minors and vulnerable persons*

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## **ENFORCEMENT DECREE**

**T**he Church's mission in our diocese and in the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Lourdes must be respectful of minors and vulnerable persons and protect them against all abuse and all forms of violence. Recognising that aggression and sexual abuse of minors and vulnerable persons are intolerable acts against which we must fight, I decree that:

**Article 1** - These standards apply to anyone working in the diocese and in the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Lourdes (priests, monks, nuns, hospitaliers, lay people, employees or volunteers), whether permanently or temporarily (examples: youth camp, pilgrimage, etc.).

**Article 2** - The charter annexed to this decree is authoritative for the protection of minors and vulnerable persons in order to prevent any abuse and to allow rapid and effective action.

**Article 3** - In accordance with the provisions of this charter, any person having knowledge of abuse of a minor or a vulnerable adult must report the facts to the Helpline for the diocese and the Sanctuary, which is in contact with the Episcopal Delegate for the Protection of Minors and Vulnerable People. The delegate reports directly to the bishop and to the rector of the Sanctuary, subject to the provisions of the *Motu proprio Vos estis lux mundi* art. 3 and 4 as well as the general rules of law.

**Article 4** - These standards are established without prejudice to French law, in particular the reporting obligations to the competent civil authorities.

**Article 5** - The Episcopal Delegate is responsible for ensuring the application of these standards.

**Article 6** - These present standards are approved for 3 years and take effect from this day.

Tarbes, 27/06/2023



Mgr. Jean-Marc Micas





## **WHAT THE FRENCH LAW SAYS**

**The Charter established for the protection of minors and vulnerable persons is not intended to replace common law. It specifies how, in the mission of the Church, this law can intervene in the interests of the most vulnerable people. Although not including every detail, what follows covers the main processes of French law, which protect citizens and, in particular, the most vulnerable. Given the internationality of the place, French law applies in the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Lourdes.**

Adults cannot cite the consent of the victim to exempt themselves from their criminal responsibility, irrespective of the criminal offence, infraction or crime.

### **1. PHYSICAL VIOLENCE**

Physical violence comprises all matters resulting from the use of force or physical constraint against a person. This applies to any attack on the physical integrity of persons, acts of mistreatment, assault and battery, torture, obstruction or threat, with or without the use of a weapon and resulting or not in incapacity for work. It is punishable under articles 222-7 and following of the penal code.

### **2. PSYCHOLOGICAL VIOLENCE**

Violence can also be psychological, moral or mental, towards a person without direct physical violence. It is characterised by morally aggressive or violent behaviour towards others, in particular by insults, abuse, manipulation, blackmail or harassment. These offences are punishable under article 222-13-1 of the Penal Code.

**[1 & 2]**

The penalties imposed for these offences are increased when the violence is committed against a minor under the age of 15 or against a particularly vulnerable person.

### **3. SEXUAL OFFENCES**

A sexual act becomes punishable by law if it is not consented to, that is to say if one of the two people did not want this act, whether those involved in the act are adults or minors.

#### **Minors of 15 years and under**

In principle, the law considers that any adult having sexual relations with a minor under 15 who is five years younger than him or her is guilty of rape even if the minor says that he or she consents. Consequently, below the age of 15, only sexual relations between young people aged 14 and 18 are not automatically considered rape, provided they consent, are not subject to payment (prostitution), and if there is no relationship of authority between the minor and the adult.

#### **Minors over 15 years old**

The law considers that a young person can have consensual sexual relations with an adult except in two circumstances:

- 1) if there is a relationship of authority between the minor and the adult (a teacher, an ascendant, i.e. a family member, an instructor, a chaplain, etc.)
- 2) or if there is too great an age difference (Schiappa law).

In these two cases, the law considers that minors could not be consenting, even if they seemed to be so, and even if they thought they were.

### **THE LAW PROVIDES FOR SEVERAL CATEGORIES OF OFFENCES**

#### **Sexual abuse**

Sexual abuse refers to behaviour, a series of actions and attitudes related to sexual activity, adopted by an adult against a minor, without violence, coercion, threat or surprise. It is punishable:

- when it occurs against a minor under the age of 15 (article 227-25 of the Penal Code) and the penalties are increased when it is committed by a person having legal or de facto authority over the victim;
- when it occurs against a minor over the age of 15, committed by a

person having legal or de facto authority over the victim (article 227-27 of the Penal Code).

### **Sexual assault**

Sexual assault means any sexual offence committed with violence, coercion, threat or surprise. The penalties are more severe when it is committed:

- on a minor over the age of 15 (five years), by a person having authority over the victim
- on a particularly vulnerable person or a minor under 15 years of age.

### **Rape**

Rape means any act of sexual penetration of any kind whatsoever, or any oral or genital act committed on a person by violence, coercion, threat or surprise. Rape is punishable by fifteen years' imprisonment (article 222-23). Rape is punishable by twenty years of criminal imprisonment (article 222-24). This is particularly the case when the acts are committed against a minor of 15 years, a person whose particular vulnerability, due to age, illness, infirmity, physical or mental deficiency or state of pregnancy, is apparent or known to the perpetrator. This is also the case when they are committed by a person abusing the authority conferred by his functions.

### **Other sexual offences**

**Corruption of a minor** (article 227-22 of the Penal Code): acts that reflect a desire to pervert the sexuality of a minor. **Sexual advances towards a 15-year-old minor by electronic communication** (article 227-22-1 of the Penal Code). **The recording, distribution or possession of pornographic images of a minor and standard or paid for viewing of a child pornography site** (article 227-23 of the Penal Code). **Sexual harassment** which is aggravated when it is committed against a minor under 15 or a particularly vulnerable person (art 222-33 of the Penal Code).

**Incest:** sexual assault committed within the family against a minor, by an ascendant or by any other person having legal or de facto authority, as well as by a brother, sister or partner of a member of the family; the law specifies that a minor cannot consent to a sexual act with a member of his or her family.

## **4. DAMAGE TO PROPERTY**

Attacks on a person's property essentially concern offences relating to the property of persons through fraudulent appropriation. These

facts may in particular constitute an abuse of the weakness of vulnerable persons, or fraud by the use of fraudulent manoeuvres or extortion. The penalties are more severe when the acts are committed to the detriment of minors or particularly vulnerable persons. The applicable penalties are provided for in articles 223-15-2 of the Penal Code, 313-1 of the Penal Code or 312-1 of the Penal Code.

## **5. DISCRIMINATION**

Discrimination constitutes any distinction made between actual persons on the basis of their origin, sex, family background, pregnancy, physical appearance, vulnerability resulting from their economic situation, apparent or known to the offending party. This also includes their surname, place of residence, state of health, vulnerability, handicap, genetic characteristics, their mores, their sexual orientation, their gender identity, their age, their political opinions, their union activities, their ability to express themselves in a language other than French, their membership or non-membership, real or supposed, of an ethnic group, nation, alleged race or a specific religion. These abuses are punishable by article 225-1 of the Penal Code.

## **6. FAILURE TO REPORT A CRIME, ILL-TREATMENT OR SEXUAL ASSAULTS AGAINST A MINOR OR VULNERABLE PERSON (ARTICLES 434-1 AND 434-3 OF THE PENAL CODE)**

Any person who, having knowledge of a crime the consequences of which it is still possible to prevent or limit, or the perpetrators of which are liable to commit new crimes that could be prevented, omits to inform the administrative or judicial authorities, is punished by three years' imprisonment and a fine of €45,000.

Any person who, having knowledge of maltreatment, deprivations, or sexual assaults inflicted upon a minor under fifteen years of age or upon a person incapable of self-protection by reason of age, sickness, infirmity, physical or psychological disability or pregnancy, omits to report this to the administrative or judicial authorities is punished by three years' imprisonment and a fine of €45,000. Except where the law otherwise provides, persons bound by an obligation of secrecy pursuant to the conditions set out under article 226-13 are exempted from the above provisions.



## **WHAT THE CHURCH OF FRANCE SAYS TODAY**

**The leaders of the Catholic Church in France have taken important decisions in recent years to fight against all types of abuse. Concerning the protection of minors and vulnerable people, they have undertaken to develop, on the one hand, a culture based on listening to victims, and on the other hand, a culture based on vigilance, by giving everyone the means to take action through processes that are clear and known to all. To achieve this, the Church is working on the three focus areas below.**

### **Focus area n°1: Welcoming, Recognition and Reparation**

- For each diocese and a large number of religious institutes, the creation of Helplines aimed at supporting victims, made up of health-care and legal professionals, etc.
- In the training of new bishops, modules on sexual assault and acts of abuse as well as on developments in civil and canon law. And for the leaders and trainers of religious institutes, setting up training on sexual assault, abuse as a whole and the phenomena of influence.
- The creation of two independent bodies for recognition and reparation, the INIRR for the CEF and the CRR for the CORREF.
- In order to finance these actions, the creation of the SELAM endowment fund for the CEF, and for the CORREF, the FREVAS subsidiary fund.
- The celebration, each year during Lent, in all dioceses, of a day of remembrance and prayer for the victims of sexual violence in the Church.
- Projects to create places of remembrance and a documentary col-

lection, making it possible to keep track of the words of victims and witnesses, and of what they have experienced.

### **Focus area n°2: Alert and take action**

- In addition to diocesan committees and religious institutes, the creation, with the association France Victimes, of a dedicated national telephone number: 01 41 83 42 17 (trained experts, professionals in victim support, independent of the Church, are available 7 days a week from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.) and creation of two email addresses: [paroledevictimes@cef.fr](mailto:paroledevictimes@cef.fr) and [ecoutevictimes@corref.fr](mailto:ecoutevictimes@corref.fr)
- More than 80 memorandums of understanding signed between public prosecutor's offices and dioceses throughout France, in order to facilitate reporting to the courts and any follow-up.
- The creation, by CORREF, of a decision-making support unit when reporting, taking precautionary measures, etc., made up of different experts: psychiatrist, magistrate, canonist lawyer, etc.
- The creation of an independent national canonical penal tribunal, composed of clerics and lay people, to judge, according to the penal law of the Church, in addition to civil justice, the persons implicated (ex: dismissal of the clerical status, reparation of wrongs inflicted...).

### **Focus area n°3: PREVENT**

- The establishment, at the CEF, of specialised national bodies to train people on the ground and deploy preventative actions: the CPLP and the SNPM.
- The deployment of a national welfare charter for the protection of minors for dioceses, associations and communities, detailing the fundamentals of appropriate behaviour towards children and young people.
- Systematic verification of the criminal record of any person called upon to work for the Church who has access to minors (B3 criminal record extract).
- The establishment of an identification card for all clerics to verify clearances and possible restrictions of ministry (celebret).
- The participation of women on the council of each seminary or

house of formation for priests, with the right to vote.

- The systematic presence of lay people in all CEF councils.
- The training of leaders and members of religious congregations on the issue of sexual violence in the Church, including the care of perpetrators in partnership with Miviludes and CRIAVS.
- The reinforcement of the role of councils so that the superiors of congregations do not govern alone and can benefit from the expertise of lay people.
- The implementation of external audits mainly entrusted to professionals but also to monks or nuns outside the institute to help with sound governance.
- The encouragement for candidates to religious life to complete a course of study or gain professional experience.
- The training of trainers, particularly in the areas of human and spiritual accompaniment, human sciences, emotional and sexual experiences.
- The completion, by religious congregations, of a specific analysis of the risks generated by their work and missions (education, health and social, hospitality industry, etc.).

## **GLOSSARY**

**CEF** : Conference of Bishops of France

**CORREF** : Conference of Men and Women Religious of France

**INIRR** : Independent National Authority for Recognition and Reparation

**CRR** : Recognition and Reparation Commission

**SELAM** : Fund for Solidarity and the Fight against Sexual Assault on Minors

**FREVAS** : Endowment fund for victims of abuse by monks or nuns



## **GENERAL RULES**

**A “vulnerable person” means: any person in a state of infirmity, physical or mental deficiency, or deprivation of personal liberty which, in fact, even occasionally, limits their ability to understand or to want or otherwise resist violence or threat or abuse of authority.”**

Extract from the Apostolic Letter (2019) *Vos estis lux mundi* issued *Motu proprio*, by Pope Francis

All those who have a pastoral responsibility in the diocese and in the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Lourdes, must pay attention to their expression, their language, their physical contact, and more broadly, to their behaviour towards these people. It is particularly important for all those who work in the Sanctuary or the Hospitalities (Hospitalité Notre-Dame de Lourdes or Hospitalité de Bigorre) always and everywhere to uphold the measures in place to ensure the welfare of minors and vulnerable people. This is what is asked of all those who are involved in the pastoral field, within the duties of their mission.

### **1. PROVIDE A CRIMINAL RECORD (DBS) CHECK**

At the request of the bishops of France (resolution 2.2 voted on 8th November 2021), a criminal record (DBS) check, dating from less than a year previously, is mandatory for anyone working with minors or vulnerable people. This certificate must be shown to the person in charge of each activity or service, according to the procedures determined by them.

In France, requesting your criminal record (or bulletin n°3) is free-of-

charge. For UK volunteers, the service also remains free-of-charge. The procedure may vary if you were born abroad or overseas. If your report does not contain any criminal convictions, it will be sent to you by e-mail (in a few minutes) or by post (within a maximum of two weeks). Please note: if the form mentions convictions, disqualifications or incapacities, it will be sent to you by registered letter with acknowledgment of receipt, within a maximum of two weeks.

**Online request**

A Ministry of Justice teleservice enables the document to be requested via the internet: <https://casierjudiciaire.justice.gouv.fr>

**Postal request**

You must complete a Cerfa form n°10071 and send it to the National Criminal Records by post: National Criminal Records 44317 Nantes cedex 3. This service is free. A stamped addressed envelope is not necessary.

## **2. COMPLETE BASIC TRAINING**

The training will be run by the Episcopal Delegate for the Prevention of and Fight against Abuse, and will look at practical ways of identifying a minor who is suffering abuse, what practical rules to follow to avoid risky situations, what the law says, how it protects people, and how to react in the event of a problem.

## **3. ADHERE TO CERTAIN RULES OF BEHAVIOUR**

- Show the same kindness to everyone. Do not show any favouritism.
- Do not flirt with or react to flirting by a minor or a vulnerable person. Disabled or sick people are often looking for signs of affection and humanity, which must not prevent us from maintaining an appropriate distance. Be careful not to solicit such signs, such gestures, but to respond to them with gentleness and caution, while fully respecting the freedom of the minor or vulnerable person.
- Do not be alone with a minor or a vulnerable person in an enclosed space or one that cannot be seen into, for example a car, tent, bedroom, office space or confessional. Warn the occupant before entering a tent, a changing room or a bedroom, and always refer to the person in charge first, if care for a minor or a vulnerable person needs to be provided in such a place.
- Demonstrate exemplary behaviour with minors and vulnerable

people (alcohol, cigarettes, flirting).

- Be it alone or in a group, never ever view or share images of a sexual or pornographic nature, of naked people, regardless of age.
- Within the precincts of the Sanctuary or in any office of the Diocesan Curia, never download videos or images of a sexual or pornographic nature, via among other things the Sanctuary or Curia's computer network.
- Because of their disability, some people may not have the necessary skills to interpret gestures made. It is up to those in charge to exercise particular vigilance in this regard; when a person deprived of part or all of his understanding commits a serious improper act within the meaning of the law. Particular vigilance should be shown when these contacts take place in the Sanctuary, during the exercise of care or in the execution of services at the Baths, at the Youth Village, at the train station, at the airport, or in the Accueils. The greatest respect for the dignity of the person is the rule that everyone should always respect.

#### **4. ADHERE TO RULES OF LANGUAGE USE**

- Use language that is respectful to people in all communication (speech, emails, SMS, social networks, etc.) including in tone, words, and expression, without discriminating against social origin, physical appearance, religion, ethnic origin or sexual orientation.
- Adults should not use SMS and social networks for personal chats with a minor or a vulnerable person; adults should also be mindful of the times at which text messages are sent, especially when they are intended for teenagers.
- Ensure that you do not make or countenance sexual jokes.



## **PROCEDURE FOR REPORTING ABUSE**

Any victim, any person witnessing or suspecting a child or a vulnerable person to be in danger, or at risk of being so, must report their concerns to the French justice system by contacting either the police, “Enfance en danger”, or the Public Prosecutor.

- **Police - Tel: 17**
- **Enfance en danger - Tel: 119**
- **Public prosecutor - Tel: 05 81 75 04 00**  
sec.pr.tj-tarbes@justice.fr

Those seeking support can also contact the Helpline set up by the Diocese and the Sanctuary, or call France Victimes, whose mission is to facilitate your case and to support you appropriately so that Justice can be served.

**Helpline for the diocese of Tarbes-Lourdes  
and the Sanctuary of Lourdes for victims of abuse**

**Tel: 07 89 78 59 35**

**paroledevictimes@catholique65.fr**

**France Victimes**

**Tel: 116016 (National) – Tel: 05 62 51 98 58 (Hautes-Pyrenees)**

If you have been a victim and if you have approached the French justice system, you should also inform:

**Episcopal Delegate for the Protection of Minors and Vulnerable  
People (Hautes-Pyrenees) Tel: 07 57 41 18 63**  
**deleguepreventionabus@catholique65.fr**

**Failure to report a vulnerable person in danger constitutes an offence under article 434-3 of the Penal Code.**

Namely: “Any person who, having knowledge of maltreatment, deprivations, or sexual assaults inflicted upon a minor under fifteen years of age or upon a person incapable of self-protection by reason of age,

sickness, infirmity, physical or psychological disability or pregnancy, omits to report this to the administrative or judicial authorities is punished by three years' imprisonment and a fine of €45,000. When this omission concerns an offence mentioned in the first paragraph committed against a minor under the age of fifteen, the penalties are increased to five years' imprisonment and a fine of €75,000. Except where the law otherwise provides, persons bound by an obligation of secrecy pursuant to the conditions set out under article 226-13 are exempted from the above provisions." **Calumny is punishable by articles 226-10 to 226-12 of the Penal Code.**

### **IMPORTANT INFORMATION!**

#### **The VERY FIRST step is to inform the person in charge of your service/group.**

- If the events take place in a school, you should first speak to the head of the establishment.
- If the events take place in a parish hall or during preparation for a sacrament, you should first speak to the parish priest.
- If the events take place during a pilgrimage, you should speak to the pilgrimage director.
- If the events take place during a group activity (walk, camp, meeting, assembly...), you should first speak to the group leader.
- If the events take place in the Sanctuary of Lourdes during a pilgrimage or a period of service (Hospitality), you should first speak to the pilgrimage director or to the Hospitality president.

**The person in charge of your service/group is responsible for contacting our Helpline to issue the alert. If however, you cannot or do not want to speak to the person in charge (or if the events take place in the Sanctuary and you have come as an independent pilgrim outside of an official organisation), you can make direct contact with the French Justice system or the Helpline for the diocese and Sanctuary.**

## **PRIESTS AND DEACONS**

**“Dear brothers, I leave you with these thoughts that come from my heart, and I conclude with two simple and important words: Thank you. Thank you for your witness and for your service. Thank you for the hidden good you do, and for the forgiveness and consolation that you bestow in God’s name. Always forgive, please, do not withhold forgiveness. Thank you for your ministry, which is often carried out with great effort, with little recognition and is not always understood. Brothers, may the Spirit of God, who does not disappoint those who trust in him, fill you with peace and bring to conclusion the good work he began in you, so that you may be prophetic witnesses of his anointing and apostles of harmony.”**

*Pope Francis, homily, Holy Chrism Mass 2023*

- Pay particular attention to your language. Unnecessary interest that is at odds with pastoral care is to be avoided.
- Do not entertain minors or vulnerable people in private spaces.
- For the celebration of the Sacrament of reconciliation, “It is important to be mindful of God’s forgiveness, to remember his tender love, and taste again and again the peace and freedom we have experienced. For this is the heart of Confession: not the sins we declare, but the divine love we receive, of which we are ever in need.” (Pope Francis, Penitential Celebration, 29th March 2019).

During confession, the priest authorised to hear confessions will ensure that he:

- Always uses confessionals or places visible to others, in ways that preserve the necessary discretion.
- Does not make improper inquiries affecting the person’s privacy.
- Advises in good conscience without blaming or manipulating.
- Does not keep the penitent for a disproportionate amount of time.
- Does not hear the confessions of children and young people in enclosed places.

## **HOSPITALIERS**

WITH THE HOSPITALITY NOTRE-DAME DE LOURDES  
& THE HOSPITALITY OF BIGORRE

**Hospitaliers work to welcome and accompany pilgrims to Lourdes, especially sick or disabled pilgrims well as those who come alone, and to facilitate their pilgrimage. Attention and respect for people are at the heart of their mission. This mission of welcoming and accompanying pilgrims is particularly delicate at the Baths, which is a key place of prayer, peace and healing in the Sanctuary. People go there as a sign of devotion, with all their hopes, expectations, weaknesses and vulnerabilities. The Baths must be a place where attentiveness to others and delicacy are even more important than elsewhere because it is where people take off their clothes.**

Thus, in addition to the general standards which have been established for the protection of minors and vulnerable persons, all hospitaliers must:

- Follow specific training on respect for and welfare of minors and vulnerable people.
- Refrain from any inappropriate actions or behaviours towards minors and vulnerable people.
- In any place of Pilgrimage activity, ensure the safety of and respect for all pilgrims with due regard to necessary standards of modesty, especially in their journey of faith at the Baths.
- Sign the attendance sheet at the Baths to express their commitment to the protection and respect of any person entering, with the following statement: "I undertake to accompany spiritually and morally, to ensure the safety of and to respect, with necessary modesty, any pilgrim in his or her journey of faith at the Baths. I undertake to behave appropriately towards minors and vulnerable people."
- Bathe minors in the Baths with only the people who have been designated for this purpose by the person in charge of the Baths.
- Acknowledge having read this charter and adhere to it.

## **CHILDREN'S MINISTRY**

**“Being a catechist is a vocation of service to the Church; what was received as a gift from the Lord should be transmitted in one’s turn. (...). The Catechist walks from and with Christ. They are not persons who set out with their own ideas and tastes, but rather who let themselves be looked at by him, by that gaze that makes the heart burn.”**

*Pape François at the first international catechetical symposium, 2017*

The diocese and the Sanctuary of Lourdes thank the catechists and the leaders of the children’s organisations for having accepted this service to transmit the faith in the Church.

Children are treasures entrusted to us. This is why our responsibility as adults demands that we modify our behaviour when with them so that catechetical activities provide a safe haven and a source of spiritual growth.

In any activity organised for children under 15 (a catechism session, team events, camp...), the presence of 2 adults is recommended. The second adult can be a parent or a grandparent.

- Modify your behaviour according to the area you are in, making sure you are never alone with a child in an enclosed space or one that cannot be seen into (car, room, etc.).
- Modify your behaviour as regards emotions and relationships by avoiding inappropriate contacts and excessive familiarity.
- Educating children to respect their bodies and the bodies of others will be beneficial and a safeguard for developing appropriate behaviours.
- Be vigilant so that you can identify risky situations or behaviours. Collaboration between catechists and leaders to help each other and to recognise the dangers is fundamental for this.
- If you suspect that a child is at risk, inform your line manager who can contact the diocesan Helpline or 119.
- If your trip includes an overnight stay, you should be aware that a single adult should never sleep in the same room as the children. The smooth running of overnight stays will always require the presence of several adults.
- Washing facilities: an adult should never be alone with a child who is getting washed.

## **YOUTH MINISTRY**

**Accompanying young people involves feeling collectively responsible for accepting, motivating, encouraging and challenging them. All should regard young people with understanding, appreciation and affection, and avoid constantly judging them or demanding of them a perfection beyond their years. Mentors should not lead young people as passive followers, but walk alongside them, allowing them to be active participants in the journey. They should respect the freedom that comes with a young person's process of discernment and equip them with tools to do so well.**

*Pope Francis, Post-synodal apostolic exhortation Christus Vivit to young people, 2019*

Leaders, chaplains, guides, youth educators all are figures of authority: minors do not have informed consent. There is no room for ambiguity. You are responsible for and have a duty to protect them, including when they engage in risky behaviour.

### **15 rules for the protection of minors**

1. Demonstrate exemplary with young people (alcohol, cigarettes, narcotics, flirtation, speech etc.)
2. Do not flirt with or react to flirting by a minor
3. Minors must also respect others and respect the law.
4. All instructions must be clear and understood by all.
5. Avoid ambiguous, prolonged or suggestive physical contact.
6. Avoid conversations without an eyewitness and think carefully about your choice of words.
7. Do not enter a minor's room, tent or changing room, unless for a serious reason, in which case warn the occupant before entering, and ensure that you take another adult with you.
8. Do not force a minor to undress in front of others.
9. Make sure you do not see a minor naked, even a child.
10. Maintain segregation in places reserved for boys and girls.

11. Sleep in an area that is separated from those of young people.
12. Do not get changed, or washed with young people.
13. Do not take photos during certain activities (swimming, bathing, going to bed, etc.)
14. Do not publish any images without written consent from adults or parents.
15. All these rules apply equally on the internet or social networks.

## **FURTHER RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Vigilance and benevolence:**

- Any abnormal behaviour on the part of child, which could potentially be indicative of unease, demands attention and vigilance on the part of the caregivers.
- Adults must prevent, note and report any attempt at discrimination, harassment, extortion... between minors. Adults should watch out for the isolation or exclusion of certain minors by their classmates: these situations can be indicative of more serious problems.
- Adults are encouraged to set an example of appropriate dress for young people.
- If a young person is brought to the sickbay, an adult of the same sex should be sent to visit from time to time to check up on them or to keep the young person company, as far as possible accompanied by other young people or adults.
- Exercising authority over a group of young people must be firstly profoundly benevolent. Where sanctions have to be implemented, they should be temporary, fair and proportionate. The latter must respect the physical and moral integrity of minors, as well as their dignity and their privacy. Sanctions must never include corporal punishment and must never be experienced as humiliation.

### **Toilet and shower facilities (in the Youth Village, for example)**

- Supervisors must ensure that minors going to and from showers and toilets are appropriately dressed; they should also make sure there is no gender mixing in, or on routes to and from, these places.
- Regardless of their age, minors must be able to shower alone. An adult must never open the shower door for a minor, except in a proven emergency and in the presence of a third person. If it is necessary to wash a minor or a vulnerable person (for example in cases of

disability or injury), the adult is chosen in agreement with the young person concerned and is accompanied by another person chosen also in consultation with the young person concerned.

- Where adults have to use the same toilets and showers as minors, accompanying adults must shower at different times from the young people.

**Bedrooms and dormitories (in the Youth Village, for example)**

- Leaders responsible for the rest, relaxation and safety of the young people must sleep in areas separate from those of the minors. However, the layout of the premises must allow for the supervision of minors in all circumstances. Young people must be able to rely on the availability of their adults at any time of the night if necessary.

- Rooms must be organised by similar age group.

- Care must be taken to use common sense in separating the dormitories reserved for girls from those reserved for boys (separate floors or building); this non-mixing of sleeping areas is also requested for the camping areas: the tents are also not mixed.

- In order to guarantee the privacy of minors and to respect everyone's space, please ensure that you do not move any of the beds in the dormitories or in the rooms for young people. Adults should ensure that they only enter the dormitories or bedrooms where absolutely necessary (always keeping the door open). Generally, adults should stand in the doorway.

- Under no circumstances should adult rooms be a stop-off or meeting room for minors. Nor is it ever permissible for minors to enter or be hosted there.

## **MINISTRY FOR HEALTH AND DISABILITY**

**“A miracle does not mean doing the impossible; a miracle means finding in the sick person, in the helpless person before us, a brother or sister.”**

*Pope Francis, Seminar on ethics in health services management, 2018*

To accomplish their mission fully, people involved in the ministry of health (and those involved with disabled people - in hospital and social institution chaplaincies, care homes, chaplaincy volunteer visitors, etc.) should take particular care to respect the General Rules of this charter as well as any elements on other specific pages that might concern them.

People involved in the ministry of health and those involved in the ministry of people with disabilities:

- must be aware of and be attentive to each person’s individual state of health and the reality of their vulnerability in mind and body,
- must be respectful in their behaviour and speech,
- will be trained in listening, which enables people to speak freely, within an appropriately modified sense of closeness,
- must respect and maintain the person’s privacy,
- will work with others and share their experiences so they do not find themselves in an exclusive face-to-face relationship with a sick, elderly, lonely and/or disabled person.

## **LAY AND RELIGIOUS**

**“Within the Church, all of us are servants, in accordance with the variety of our vocations, charisms and ministries. Our common vocation to give ourselves in love develops and finds concrete expression in the life of lay men and women, devoted to raising a family as a small domestic church and working as a leaven of the Gospel to renew the different sectors of society; in the testimony of consecrated women and men who are completely committed to God for the sake of their brothers and sisters as a prophetic sign of the kingdom of God (...).”**

*Pope Francis, Message for the world day of prayer for vocations, 2023*

To accomplish their mission fully, lay men and women as well as the religious, should take particular care to respect the General Rules of this charter as well as any elements on other specific pages that might concern them.

**For religious congregations,  
please note that in the diocese of Tarbes–Lourdes,  
as in any diocese in France,  
local law applies.**

## **SOCIAL MINISTRY (DIACONIA)**

**“Today too, we must acknowledge many new forms of bondage that enslave millions of men, women, young people and children. Daily, we encounter families forced to leave their homeland to seek a living elsewhere; orphans who have lost their parents or were violently torn from them by brutal means of exploitation; young people seeking professional fulfilment but prevented from employment by short-sighted economic policies; victims of different kinds of violence, ranging from prostitution to the narcotics trade, and profoundly demeaned. How can we overlook, too, the millions of immigrants who fall victim to any number of concealed interests, often exploited for political advantage, and are refused solidarity and equality? And all the homeless and ostracised persons who roam the streets of our cities?”**

*Pope Francis, Message for the World Day of the Poor, 2019*

The Church does not forget the poorest in society. In addition to the points indicated in the General Rules of this charter, people involved with the most vulnerable in society must also ensure that they adhere to the following points:

- When in contact with people or families living in a state of poverty, or detainees, always respect people without judging them.
- Avoid dominating or paternalistic behaviours because they can arouse feelings of shame or guilt.
- Always maintain a spirit of service and emotional detachment: being with the poorest is not about power.
- Avoid social ambiguity and do not create a sense of dependency: links with people and families must be made in an adult and responsible way.
- Maintain an appropriate distance in your language and contact with

the children, young people and vulnerable people you meet without forgetting, at the same time, to be charitable and compassionate.

- In relationships with vulnerable people, any dealings with money or material goods must be adult and responsible.
- Ensure that you maintain connections with relevant associations and social workers to get insights on the most sensitive issues.

## **CATHOLIC TEACHING**

**“We cannot speak of Catholic education without speaking about humanity, because in fact Catholic identity is God who became man. Moving forward in behaviour, in established human values, opens the door to the planting of the Christian seed. Then comes faith. To educate in a Christian way is not only about catechesis: this is only one part of it (...) To educate in a Christian manner is to lead young people and children forward in those human values present in all that is real, and one of these realities is transcendence.”**

*Pope Francis, Address to participants  
at the World Congress on Catholic Education, 2015*

Catholic Education published a document in 2018 that provides information on the PPPF (Programme for the Protection of Vulnerable Groups). This document is regularly updated. It is called, “From the fight against abuse to educational welfare”. The updated version can be found on the Catholic Education official website: [www.enseignement-catholique.fr](http://www.enseignement-catholique.fr)

In the diocese of Tarbes and Lourdes, school heads agree to observe this document.



Diocese ..... Pilgrimage .....

# **WELFARE** **STATEMENT OF INTENT 2026**

I, the undersigned:

First name, SURNAME .....

(tick all that are applicable):

- lay
- religious
- priest, deacon
- hospitalier, hospitalière
- involved in Children's Ministryinvolved in Youth Ministry
- involved in the Ministry for Health and Disability
- involved in Social Ministry (diaconia)
  
- declare that I have read the Charter for the Protection of Minors and vulnerable people,
  
- commit to uphold this Welfare Charter,
  
- agree to make available a copy of my criminal record check for inspection by the person in charge of my service (obligatory in 2027)

Signed in .....

On ..... /..... /.....

Signature :

Must be completed, signed and returned to the person in charge of your service.

This is a model of Statement of Intent proposed by



**“Looking back to the past, no effort to beg pardon and to seek to repair the harm done will ever be sufficient. Looking ahead to the future, no effort must be spared to create a culture able to prevent such situations from happening, but also to prevent the possibility of their being covered up and perpetuated.”**

***Pope Francis,  
Letter to the People of God, 20th August 2018.***