

PROCEDURES OF THE DIOCESE OF FORT WAYNE-SOUTH BEND
IF A PRIEST OR DEACON SHOULD BE ACCUSED OF SEXUAL ABUSE
OF A MINOR

STATEMENT OF INTENT

It is the intent of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, Inc. to maintain compliance with the provisions of applicable law of the State of Indiana concerning the protection of children and young people and with the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, and to adopt procedures compliant with the Essential Norms for Diocesan/Eparchial Policies Dealing with Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Priests or Deacons, as approved by the full body of the United States Catholic Bishops in November 2002 and revised in June 2005 (“Essential Norms”). To this end, the Procedures Of The Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend If A Priest or Deacon Should Be Accused Of Sexual Abuse Of A Child Or Young Person originally adopted on May 12, 2003, are revised as provided herein effective the date noted below.

SCOPE

1. These procedures apply to all circumstances involving allegations of sexual abuse of a minor made against a current or former diocesan priest or deacon (living or deceased, active or inactive). Any allegation of sexual abuse of a minor against a priest or deacon of another diocese or against men or women religious shall be referred to the diocesan bishop or the superior of the religious congregation, as appropriate, for investigation and review, provided that the Bishop of the Diocese of Fort Wayne – South Bend, Inc. (“the Bishop”) shall retain all rights provided under canon law to revoke faculties of individuals within this diocese or take such other steps concerning men and women religious as he believes necessary to protect children and young people and to fulfill the intent, goals, and purposes of the diocese.

2. Sexual abuse of a minor, as applied in these procedures, refers to recent acts as well as to events alleged to have occurred many years in the past. For purposes of these procedures, “sexual abuse of a minor” includes any conduct or interaction by a priest or deacon with a child or young person under the age of eighteen (18) which is considered to qualify as:

a. a delict against morals, specifically:

- the delict against the sixth commandment of the Decalogue committed by a cleric with a minor under the age of eighteen; in this case, a person who habitually lacks the use of reason is to be considered equivalent to a minor.
- the acquisition, possession, or distribution by a cleric of pornographic images of minors under the age of eighteen, for purposes of sexual gratification, by whatever means or using whatever technology; or

b. a violation of any applicable civil or criminal law involving a minor, including but not limited to Indiana’s prohibitions against child molesting, child exploitation (which includes possession of child pornography), vicarious sexual gratification (sexual conduct in the presence of a minor), child solicitation, child seduction, sexual misconduct with a minor, rape, criminal deviate conduct, sexual battery, public indecency (indecent exposure), prostitution and incest; or

c. any other inappropriate sexual or physical behavior with a minor.

3. These procedures supplement, and do not supplant, any other child abuse or neglect detection and reporting policies or procedures adopted by the diocese for use in its schools, religious education programs, or any of its other programs or agencies. In every instance, all diocesan personnel (religious, employee, and volunteer) are expected to comply

with applicable law and appropriate diocesan policy regarding the reporting of incidents of abuse or neglect of a minor, sexual or otherwise, to appropriate civil and diocesan representatives. These procedures are not intended to nor do they change, restrict, or expand any legal right or claim provided under any civil law.

STANDARDS

These procedures are intended to provide a non-adversarial investigation and decision-making framework consistent with canon law which is fair and responsive to the temporal and pastoral needs of all concerned. Optimum utilization is dependent upon the voluntary cooperation of all participants. For the sake of due process, an accused will be encouraged to retain the assistance of civil and canonical counsel. All findings, recommendations, and decisions made pursuant to these procedures shall be made in good faith based upon that information which is cooperatively offered and that which is discovered without means of compulsion through available investigative processes. Findings, recommendations, and decisions shall be made in accordance with canon law, even if not sufficient to meet civil law standards of guilt or innocence or rules of evidence. Decisions shall be appealable pursuant to the applicable provisions of canon law.

PROCEDURES

1. Allegations of sexual abuse of a minor against a priest, deacon, or any men or women religious should be reported to the diocese's Victim Assistance Coordinator by telephone at 260 399-1458 or a Vicar General by telephone at (260) 422-4611, in writing to the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, c/o Victim Assistance Coordinator or Vicar General, 915 South Clinton Street, P.O. Box 390, Fort Wayne, Indiana 46801, or in person at 915 South Clinton Street, Fort Wayne, Indiana.

2. Every person making an initial report of alleged sexual abuse of a minor, and every alleged victim of sexual abuse of a minor that diocesan personnel may contact as a result of an initial report, shall be advised of the right or obligation to report information concerning alleged sexual abuse of a minor to appropriate civil authorities.

3. At any point, whether based upon information received in the initial contact or discovered during further investigation of the allegation(s) as provided in these procedures, if anyone acting on behalf of the diocese has reason to believe that a minor is the victim of sexual abuse, that person shall immediately report such information to appropriate civil authorities. All pertinent civil laws should be followed. In addition, the diocese will cooperate with civil authorities about reporting in circumstances when the alleged victim is no longer a minor.

4. The request of an alleged victim of sexual abuse of a minor to keep disclosure of his or her name from the accused or others (excepting the Bishop) shall be honored to the extent possible. An individual making such a request shall be advised that the inability to disclose his or her identity may hinder or impede the internal investigation process.

5. After the allegation is received by the diocese, the Bishop shall be notified of the allegation. The Bishop will appoint, generally, an investigation team of people (including lay persons) with suitable experience and expertise to promptly make efforts to contact and interview, by telephone or in person, the individual who presents the allegation(s) in order to gather appropriate information such as the name(s) of the alleged victim(s), the name(s) of the accused, a detailed description of the alleged sexual abuse, and the specific dates, places, and other circumstances of the alleged sexual abuse, including the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of others who may have knowledge pertinent to the incident(s) of alleged sexual abuse. If the person making the report is an alleged victim and is a minor, the alleged victim's

parent(s)/legal guardian(s) will be contacted and apprised of the circumstances. If the person making the initial report is not an alleged victim, discreet efforts shall be made to contact the alleged victim(s), or parent(s)/legal guardian(s) if a minor, with respect for the right of the alleged victim(s) to not engage or cooperate with these procedures.

6. If undisputed facts discovered in the initial investigation make it clear that the allegation(s) is not credible, the accused priest or deacon shall still be contacted to notify him of the allegation(s) and to document his response. Unless new or additional information is discovered, no further investigation will be conducted.

7. If the initial information or information discovered through investigation makes the allegation(s) appear plausible, the investigation team will visit the accused priest or deacon and question him about the matter, whenever possible. If the accused priest or deacon admits to the allegation(s) or does not provide facts sufficient to make it clear that the allegation(s) is not credible, the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith shall be notified and the accused priest shall be placed on administrative leave and excluded from all public ministry, in accord with c. 1722 as soon as possible, or the deacon suspended from all public ministry while the investigation continues. A priest removed from his ministry for this reason shall be assigned to a place of residence where his activities can be monitored and he shall be prevented from engaging in any public ministry until receiving further notice from the Bishop. Should a priest or deacon under investigation move or travel from the diocese, the Bishop shall notify the bishop of the diocese into which the accused priest or deacon is moving or traveling of the investigation. All appropriate steps shall be taken to protect the reputation of the accused during the investigation.

8. The alleged offender will be requested to seek, and will be urged voluntarily to comply with, an appropriate medical and psychological evaluation at a facility mutually

acceptable to the diocese and to the accused. The Vicar General shall contact a qualified facility (not owned by or affiliated with the diocese), mutually acceptable to the diocese and the accused, to conduct an appropriate evaluation of the priest removed or deacon suspended due to an allegation of sexual abuse of a minor. A priest or deacon who refuses to undergo such evaluation and to authorize the selected facility to provide a copy of its findings, analysis, and reports to the diocese for use in further investigating the allegation(s) and making a decision on his fitness for ministry will be suspended and his faculties removed.

9. To assist the Bishop, the diocese will have a Review Board which will function as a confidential consultative body to the Bishop in discharging his responsibilities. The functions of this Board will include:

- a. advising the Bishop in his assessment of allegations of sexual abuse of minors and in his determination of suitability for ministry;
- b. reviewing Diocesan policies for dealing with sexual abuse of minors; and
- c. offering advice on all aspects of these cases, whether retrospectively or prospectively.

10. In every case that information of alleged sexual abuse of a minor is presented, the allegations made and the actions taken shall be brought to the attention of the Diocesan Review Board promptly. The Review Board shall consist of at least five (5) but no more than twelve (12) individuals appointed by the Bishop, the majority of whom will be lay persons not in the employ of the diocese and at least one (1) of whom should be a respected and experienced pastor of the diocese. It is desirable that the Bishop and the diocesan Promoter of Justice participate in the Review Board meetings. If considered necessary to facilitate the initial investigation of or response to an allegation, a special meeting of the Review Board may be scheduled to occur on a

date and at a time and place so that the Vicar General, Bishop, and at least a majority of the Review Board members may participate in person or by telephone. At such meeting the Vicar General shall apprise the Bishop and participating Review Board members of the full allegation(s), the status of the investigation, any initial evaluation report from a facility concerning the accused priest or deacon (if available), and the steps already taken to provide assistance and support for the alleged victim and the accused. The Review Board members may ask questions and offer suggestions concerning the investigation and provision of assistance and support, which shall be considered by the Vicar General and Bishop, respectively.

11. If the diocese receives the initial evaluation report from a facility concerning an accused priest or deacon after the Review Board's first consideration of the allegation(s) against the accused, the Vicar General shall provide each of the Review Board members an update on the investigation to date and a summary of the report from the facility. In any case, if the report includes advice for a more prolonged period of evaluation or in-patient therapy, that advice will be followed subject to civil law obligations.

12. After talking with the accused priest or deacon, considering all available information, hearing the advice of the participating Review Board members, and consulting any other professional he determines necessary, the Bishop will make a judgment about the future of the priest or deacon consistent with the Essential Norms. The Bishop's judgment may result in the imposition of canonical penalties by the Bishop under his own authority or by the Holy See at the Bishop's request, or restoration to public ministry. The Bishop will convey his decision directly to the priest or deacon. In every case involving canonical penalties, the process provided for in canon law must be observed, and the various provisions of canon law must be considered. The Bishop's decision will be reported to the Review Board.

13. When even a single act of sexual abuse of a minor by a priest or deacon is admitted or is established after following these procedures, the accused priest or deacon will be removed permanently from ecclesiastical ministry, including dismissal from the clerical state, if warranted. If the penalty of dismissal from the clerical state has not been applied (e.g., for reasons of advanced age or infirmity), the offender ought to lead a life of prayer and penance. He will not be permitted to offer Mass publicly or to administer the sacraments. He will not be permitted to wear clerical garb, or to present himself as a cleric. If the priest or deacon moves outside the diocese, and the Bishop is aware of the move, the Bishop shall inform the bishop of the diocese in which that priest or deacon is residing of the restrictions imposed.

14. No priest or deacon who has committed an act of sexual abuse of a minor may be transferred for a ministerial assignment in another diocese. The bishop who receives a priest or deacon from outside his jurisdiction will obtain an affidavit or other certification of suitability to attest that there has been no past act of sexual abuse of a minor perpetrated by the priest or deacon in question.

15. Any priest or deacon who is diagnosed as or found to be a pedophile, hebephile, or an ephebophile, or who is diagnosed with or found to have a related sexual disorder that presents a risk of harm to minors, will be subject to permanent removal from ecclesiastical ministry, in accord with the norms of canon law, and may be dismissed from the clerical state, if warranted.

16. Any priest or deacon who is removed from ecclesiastical ministry as the result of a credible allegation of sexual abuse of a minor, or the diagnosis or determination of being a pedophile, hebephile, or an ephebophile, or who is diagnosed with or found to have a related sexual disorder that presents a risk of harm to minors, shall be prohibited from engaging in any

activity on behalf of the Diocese either as a paid person or volunteer in any of the external works of the Diocese.

17. In any case when there exists credible allegations that sexual abuse of a minor has taken place, counseling, support group, or other assistance as may be agreed to by the alleged victim and the diocese will be offered to the victim to promote healing and reconciliation. The Victim Assistance Coordinator will act as the diocese's liaison for these purposes.

18. In all cases, no diocesan representative or agent shall ever request or suggest that the victim or the victim's family refrain from or delay in exercising or pursuing any right or claim which may be available under civil law. The diocese respects the right of the victim to engage in such processes subject to the limitations imposed by civil law.

19. The diocese shall not require or suggest that the provision of pastoral care or other assistance to an alleged victim be conditioned on a confidentiality agreement. The diocese will not enter into confidentiality agreements on such issues except for grave and substantial reasons brought forward by an alleged victim, which then must be noted in the text of the agreement.

20. Any allegation of sexual abuse of a minor against a former, deceased, or infirm priest or deacon will be responded to in the same manner as for an active priest or deacon, with appropriate modification to account for the circumstance.

21. In addition to any special Review Board meetings necessitated by specific allegations which warrant investigation, the Review Board shall have at least two (2) scheduled meetings per year. The purpose of the scheduled meetings shall be for the Bishop and the Vicar General to review and consult with the Review Board on: any prior cases brought to the attention of the diocese or any member of the Review Board; all report(s) of sexual abuse of a minor received by the diocese since the last scheduled meeting of the Review Board; any need

for revision of these procedures; and, any other matters necessary to assist the diocese in protecting minors from the harms of sexual abuse.

22. Care will always be taken to protect the rights of all parties involved, particularly those of the person claiming to have been sexually abused and of the person against whom the charge has been made. When an accusation has been shown to be unfounded, every step possible will be taken to restore the good name of the person falsely accused.

23. These procedures are subject to revision at any time by the Bishop as he determines necessary after consultation with the Vicar General, the Review Board, or any other consultant(s) whom he may select.

Revised procedures promulgated 18th day of October 2011.

By Most Reverend Kevin C. Rhoades

Bishop, Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend