



## ARCHDIOCESE *of* MILWAUKEE

*September 1, 2019*

# RESPONSE TO CLERGY SEXUAL ABUSE OF MINORS

## *Actions Taken, Commitments Made, Promises Kept*

### INTRODUCTION

Keeping children safe, responding to abuse survivors and holding perpetrators accountable are priorities of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee. We want to do everything we can to assure no one suffers again from clergy sexual abuse of minors and that no past abuse is covered up. We understand that the failures of some Church leaders have broken trust. In response, this report is to help Catholics understand what action is being taken to protect minors and respond to those who have been harmed.

### REPORTING ABUSE

**If you or someone you know is being abused or you suspect abuse is occurring, contact your local law enforcement department immediately.**

Any instance of abuse involving a person currently under 18 years of age (minor) should be reported immediately to the civil authorities.

If you or someone you know was abused as a minor by clergy or church personnel, call your local police, sheriff or district attorney's office to file a criminal report.

Reports can also be made to the Victim Assistance Coordinator, who is available to support abuse survivors. A formal complaint of abuse can be made to the archdiocese by calling the Victim Assistance Coordinator at 414-758-2232.

An alternative way to make a formal report for those not wanting to contact the archdiocese is available to you 24 hours a day/7 days a week through the Healing Center ([aurorahealthcare.org/healing-advocacy-services](http://aurorahealthcare.org/healing-advocacy-services)) by calling 414-219-5555. The Healing Center provides survivor assistance services and is part of Aurora Health Care.

You can locate offices for civil authorities in the 10 counties of the archdiocese and review Wisconsin mandatory reporting responsibilities at [dcf.wisconsin.gov/cps/mandatedreporters](http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cps/mandatedreporters).

## HANDLING ALLEGATIONS OF SEXUAL ABUSE OF MINORS

Any allegation of abuse of a minor made against a priest or deacon is immediately reported to civil authorities if the accused is still alive. If law enforcement is unable to pursue criminal charges, the archdiocese hires an investigator to conduct an independent investigation. During an investigation, the priest or deacon is fully restricted from ministry. The detective's report and conclusion are given to the Diocesan Review Board for review and deliberation. Using a standard of "more likely than not" to have happened (51%-49%), the Review Board makes its recommendation to the archbishop regarding whether the allegation should be considered substantiated. The archbishop has made the commitment to follow the Review Board's recommendation. If the board recommends substantiation, the priest remains fully restricted from ministry. Then, the case is referred to the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith for canon law processes to be undertaken. Once proven guilty through the canonical process, the priest/deacon is permanently removed from ministry and his name is added to the list of priest offenders on the archdiocesan website.

## OUTREACH TO ABUSE SURVIVORS

The Archdiocese of Milwaukee's outreach to abuse survivors and their families is coordinated through Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee. The Victim Assistance Coordinator (VAC) can be reached at 414-758-2232. The VAC will assist in the filing of an intake report about the abuse. Other services include referrals to area therapists trained in working with those who have suffered abuse, as well as assistance to family members of abuse survivors.

## SUPPORTING ABUSE SURVIVORS

Believing, supporting and caring for individuals who have suffered sexual abuse by clergy is an important pastoral concern for the Church. When an individual contacts the Victim Assistance Coordinator, a variety of resources are offered, including counseling referrals, spiritual direction and therapy support.

## MEETING WITH ABUSE SURVIVORS

Archbishop Jerome E. ListECKI invites any individual suffering from sexual abuse of a minor by clergy to meet with him personally and share their story, if they desire.

## ZERO TOLERANCE

No priest or deacon with a substantiated allegation of sexual abuse of a minor can or will ever serve as a priest or deacon in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee.

## CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECKS

A criminal background check is conducted on every archdiocesan priest, bishop and deacon every five years. Religious order priests serving in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee are also subject to criminal background checks prior to their serving in the archdiocese, as attested to by their superiors. Lay parish leaders and volunteers working with minors in a parish or school also receive a criminal background check as part of the archdiocesan Safe Environment Program.

## PRIEST OFFENDERS

A list of priests of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee with substantiated allegations of sexual abuse of a minor is available on the archdiocesan website. The list includes the individual's name, photograph, dates and locations of service and documents related to their abuse. The list of priest offenders was first published in July 2004, and is updated with any new information when available.

## SAFE ENVIRONMENT

All priests, deacons and bishops, all parish personnel, and anyone volunteering with minors must:

- Receive training in recognizing and reporting child abuse.
- Undergo a criminal background check every 5 years.
- Review, sign and abide by the Code of Ethical Standards.
- Review and understand the Mandatory Reporting Requirements in the State of Wisconsin.

## RELIGIOUS ORDER PRIESTS

Although religious order priests function separately from the archbishop, the same rules and policies apply. No religious order priest with a substantiated allegation of sexual abuse of a minor can serve as a priest in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee. Religious Order Superiors must attest to the suitability for ministry of any of its members serving in or traveling to the archdiocese.

## FORMING OUR YOUNG PEOPLE

All students in Catholic programs, including Catholic schools and religious education programs, receive age-appropriate education in recognizing, resisting and reporting sexual abuse.

## INVOLVEMENT OF LAY PEOPLE

The majority of the members of the Diocesan Review Board are lay men and women. This Review Board is charged with overseeing investigations of sexual abuse of minors by clergy and making recommendations to the archbishop about fitness for ministry. They are also responsible for reviewing and recommending policies for handling sexual abuse of minors by clergy. Lay men and women also serve on the archdiocesan Community Advisory Board, which reviews and recommends initiatives in response to clergy sexual abuse of minors. Members of the Advisory Board include victim advocates, professional psychologists and therapists who work with abuse survivors, parents and Catholic professionals. In addition, a lay woman serves on the archdiocesan Priest Placement Board, which coordinates and recommends the ministry assignments of priests and parish directors.

## SAFEGUARDING TRAINING

The archdiocese runs approximately 175 *Safeguarding All God's Children* training sessions each year. Since 2002, more than 85,000 adults have been trained. More than 50,000 children participate in age-appropriate training in our Catholic schools and religious education programs each year.

Every Church and school employee—including priests, deacons, bishops, employees at the archdiocesan offices, parish staff and Catholic school faculty and staff – is required to complete Safe Environment Education. Every volunteer who has contact with minors must also complete Safe Environment Education prior to their service.

## CODE OF ETHICAL STANDARDS

The Code of Ethical Standards for Church Personnel was adopted in 1994 and has been updated and revised eight times, most recently in 2010. Every Church and School employee, and volunteers who have contact with minors, are required to read, sign and abide by the Code. In addition, each employee must pass a criminal background check, which includes a search of national and state criminal databases, as well as sex offender registries.

## SEMINARY FORMATION

Before a man can even apply to the seminary, an extensive and rigorous screening process is conducted. Once a man applies for admission to the seminary program, the process continues with criminal background and reference checks, psychological testing, and review by an admissions board (which includes lay men and women). Once accepted, the seminarian participates in a formation program which includes formation each year in chastity, celibacy, maturity, human sexuality and other related human formation topics. There are regular meetings with spiritual directors, monitoring of social media and internet usage, and annual formation evaluations. Seminarians are required to complete Safe Environment Education training, which includes child abuse prevention and mandatory reporting training.

## HOW IS ACTION COMMUNICATED TO THE PARISH OR BROADER COMMUNITY?

When an allegation of sexual abuse of a minor involves a priest in active ministry at a parish or school, the priest is required to step away from his ministry assignment during the process and is restricted from any public ministry. Details are shared immediately with the parish and school community, including the invitation for anyone with information to contact civil authorities. Media is also informed. Updates are provided to the parish/school community throughout the process, until a final resolution is reached.

## DIOCESAN REVIEW BOARD

The Diocesan Review Board reviews and assesses allegations of sexual abuse of minors after a decision by civil authorities is complete. The Review Board examines and discusses investigative reports on an allegation and makes recommendations regarding suitability for ministry of an accused priest or deacon, based upon the standard of “more likely than not” the abuse occurred. The Review Board reviews and approves diocesan policies for responding to allegations of clergy sexual abuse. It also reviews compliance with the commitments made in the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*, which was adopted by the United States’ Bishops at their 2002 meeting in Dallas (and is often referred to as the *Dallas Charter*).

## ACCOUNTABILITY OF BISHOPS

Archbishop Jerome E. ListECKI has commissioned development of a process that would provide an avenue for individuals to report any misconduct by bishops, including instances in which bishops are not honoring their commitments in responding to clergy sexual abuse or living up to safe environment standards.

## TRANSPARENCY

The first Accountability Statement in response to this crisis was released September 12, 2002. This report was issued annually to parishioners through 2015. In ensuing years, information was kept up to date on the archdiocesan website.