

# Sexual Misconduct Toward Minors and Others at Risk

## The Policy of the Diocese of Gary

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THESE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES ARE TO BE IMPLEMENTED IN  
RESPONSE TO AN ALLEGATION OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT  
TOWARD MINORS AND OTHERS AT RISK.

7-10-93

*slightly revised* 4-25-02

*further revised* 6-27-02

*further revised* 4-1-03

### ***Introduction***

In recent years there has been an explosive increase in reported cases of sexual misconduct towards minors and others at risk throughout our country. Because of the destructive impact of such incidents on the victim, the victim's family, the local Church community, as well as the accused, a diocesan policy exists to deal in a forthright and compassionate way with situations in which an employee, volunteer or cleric is accused of sexual misconduct toward a minor or other at risk.

Our purpose in establishing this policy is to assure victims of sexual misconduct the healing they need to help reduce the destructive effects of their traumatic experience. It is also our strong desire to ensure appropriate pastoral outreach to the affected families and local Church communities. Pastoral concern is also extended to the accused and to those ultimately found guilty of sexual misconduct as they are made aware of the destructiveness of their behavior by prescribing the necessary professional treatment.

With a profound respect for the dignity of each person involved, it is our goal that compassion and healing be the foundation upon which this policy is based. For those abused, those accused, and those found guilty of sexual misconduct, this is how we approach this work.

## *Policies and Procedures*

### **I. RESPONSE TO COMPLAINTS AND ALLEGATIONS OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT**

- A. Indiana Code (I.C.) Sections 31-33-5-1, 31-33-5-2, 31-33-5-3, and 31-33-5-4 (See Appendix II) require that staff members of a private institution, school or facility who have reason to believe that a minor has been physically or sexually abused shall immediately orally report such belief to the local Child Protection Service or law enforcement agency.
1. Note that the statute says to report immediately when a person has "reason to believe" that physical or sexual abuse has occurred. This means that if a report is made of sexual abuse, it must be reported immediately and not after an "in-house" investigation.
  2. The definition of "Reason to Believe," according to Indiana Statute, means that if presented to individuals of similar background and training, it would cause those individuals to make a judgment that a child was abused or neglected.
- B. It is the responsibility of every cleric, administrator, employee or volunteer of the Diocese of Gary who receives a complaint or allegation of sexual misconduct to report it immediately to the Bishop's Delegate. If he/she is not available, the report is made to the Bishop's Administrative Assistant. In the case of a minor, the public authorities will be notified and then the Response Team.
- C. The diocese will cooperate with the authorities in the investigation. The Bishop's Delegate will direct an investigation of all rumors, anonymous phone calls and unsigned letters. Members of the Response Team will be contacted to assist in this process.
- D. The Diocese of Gary will not enter into confidentiality agreements except for grave and substantial reasons brought forth by the victim. Such reasons shall be noted in the agreement.
- E. Any modifications to this policy will be made after consultation with the Response Team and if appropriate other consultative bodies of the diocese. Any modifications must have the approval of the Bishop of the Diocese of Gary. If modifications are made, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops shall receive a copy of the revised policy within three months after such modifications.

## **II. RESPONSE TEAM**

- A. The Bishop has established a Response Team consisting of two priests, a psychologist, a social worker versed in cases of sexual misconduct and abuse, and six other persons who bring a particular sensitivity to this role. One member of the Response Team is the Bishop's Delegate and chairperson. The majority of the Response Team members will be lay individuals and not in the employ of the Diocese of Gary. He/she will also serve as the Assistance Coordinator on behalf of the alleged victim. The concept of the Response Team is to have a small representative group which can act with promptness, fairness, confidentiality and compassion toward all concerned.
- B. The Team Chairperson's responsibility is to convene the Response Team to ensure that the prescribed process is implemented and that proper procedures are followed. It will also be the Chairperson's responsibility to keep the Bishop informed in a timely fashion of an allegation and the progress of the Response Team concerning the allegation.
- C. The Response Team will oversee all steps of the procedure for dealing with the accusations, and will act as guarantor of the due process for all parties.
- D. Members of the Response Team are appointed by the Bishop who is to ensure that the Team's composition reflects expertise in the areas addressed by the Team. Members are appointed to a five-year term which is renewable. At least eight members of the Response Team will be in full communion with the Church.
- E. The Communications Director of the diocese is the spokesperson to the media, and will be appropriately informed in each situation by the Bishop's Delegate.

## **III. INTERVENTION PROCESS**

- A. The Bishop's Assistance Coordinator will ensure that appropriate pastoral care be provided for the alleged victim and family to assist them in healing and reconciliation. If the Response Team considers it necessary, reasonable qualified medical/psychological care support groups and other social services will be offered.
- B. The Response Team will, when reasonably indicated, provide prompt pastoral care to all pastoral institutions affected by the allegations of sexual misconduct. The scope, type and duration of this service will be determined by the Response Team on a case-by-case basis.

- C. The person who made the allegation, the parents of the minor or other at risk, and, if advisable, the victim of the sexual misconduct will be interviewed by the Bishop's Delegate or member(s) of the Response Team appointed by him/her.
- D. The victim will be advised of their right to make a report to the public authorities.
- E. The volunteer, employee or cleric against whom the allegation is made will be informed of the allegation and advised of their right to legal counsel.
- F. Every interview will be respectful and courteous. The goal is to determine each person's account of the alleged incident.
- G. If, after careful review, the Response Team judges the complaint to be without merit, the Bishop's Delegate will fully inform all parties in a timely fashion of the results of the investigation. The Team will take all necessary steps to protect the accused from defamation, and to restore the peace of the community.
- H. If, after careful review, the complaint is judged to be credible, the Response Team will recommend that the Bishop take immediate administrative action toward the accused.
- I. The following procedure will then apply:
  - 1. A volunteer: the volunteer will be immediately relieved of all volunteer duties, responsibilities, and activities.
  - 2. An employee: the employee will be immediately terminated or placed on administrative leave at the discretion of the Bishop who will determine whether or not the leave will be with or without pay.
- J. Where sexual abuse by a priest or deacon is admitted or is established after an appropriate investigation in accordance with common law, the following will apply:
  - 1. The cleric will be immediately placed on administrative leave, and moved to a supervised residency.
    - a) He is asked to sign a medical and psychological assessment release form prepared by the diocese.
    - b) He is required to undergo, as soon as possible, a complete psychological and medical assessment at a facility designated by the Bishop.

- c) In the event that cleric refuses to comply with the above, he will immediately incur suspension from all priestly or diaconal duties.
2. When even a single act of sexual abuse of a minor by a priest or deacon is admitted or is established after an appropriate process in accord with canon law, the offending priest or deacon will be removed permanently from ecclesiastical ministry, not excluding dismissal from the clerical state, if the case so warrants. The Bishop of the Diocese of Gary has the executive power of governance, through an administrative act, to remove an offending cleric from office, to remove or restrict his faculties, and to limit his exercise of priestly ministry. See paragraph 5 below.
  3. In every case the process provided in common law shall be observed, and the various provisions of common law shall be considered.
  4. The accused priest or deacon shall be encouraged to retain the assistance of civil and/or canonical counsel. If requested, the diocese will supply canonical counsel to a cleric. See paragraph 5.
  5. In the case of a minor, where the penalty of dismissal from the clerical state has not been applied for reasons such as advanced age or infirmity, the offender is to lead a life of prayer and penance. A priest-offender will not be permitted to celebrate Mass publicly, wear clerical garb, or present himself publicly as a priest.
- K. For clerics accused of sexual misconduct toward others at risk: When allegations of sexual misconduct are brought against a cleric and are substantiated, it might be possible for continued ministry within the diocese. However, it will be the responsibility of the Response Team to make a recommendation to the Bishop about a ministerial assignment for the cleric. This will be based upon the evaluation and advice of qualified experts, and following in-patient residential or out-patient psychological/psychiatric treatment. the Response Team's recommendation may include:
1. the cleric receiving no ministerial assignment within the diocese
  2. support for resignation from priestly or diaconal ministry
  3. canonical process for laicization
  4. a ministerial assignment with various conditions.

#### IV. FOLLOW-UP

- A. For the victims of sexual misconduct: The Bishop's Delegate/Assistance Coordinator, in consultation with the Response Team, will continue to monitor the pastoral needs of the victim as well as to confirm that proper medical/psychological care, group support, or other social services are available for an appropriate period of time. Similar pastoral care and reconciliation will be offered to the affected community.
- B. For clerics accused, but found not guilty of sexual misconduct: If it has become public knowledge, every possible, appropriate step will be taken by the Bishop's Delegate, in collaboration with the Bishop and the falsely accused cleric, to repair any damage to the cleric's reputation.
- C. For volunteers and lay employees accused, but found not guilty of sexual misconduct: Every possible, appropriate step will be taken by the Bishop's Delegate and members of the Response Team to repair any damage to the volunteer's and lay employee's reputation.

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## APPENDIX I

### **DEFINITION OF TERMS:**

In this policy, regarding allegations of sexual misconduct towards minors and others at risk, the following terms are defined:

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| <i>Cleric</i>            | For the purpose of this Policy, the term "cleric" shall include and be limited to diocesan priests, religious priests, and transitional and permanent deacons.   |
| <i>Employee</i>          | For the purpose of this Policy, the term "employee" means any person employed by the diocese or any subdivision thereof. An employee may be a cleric, a lay person or a member of a religious order.   |
| <i>Regular Volunteer</i> | For the purpose of this Policy, the term "regular volunteer" shall mean any person who serves as a volunteer in a Church-sponsored activity, or under the auspices of the diocese or a subdivision thereof. This would include, but is not limited to, student teachers, aides, coaching assistants, special instructors, catechists, scout leaders, server coordinators, etc. |
| <i>Minors</i>            | For the purpose of this Policy, the term "minors" shall be limited to persons under eighteen (18) years of age.  |

*Others  
at Risk*

For purposes of this Policy, the term "others at risk" shall include, but not be limited to, developmentally disabled persons, and those who place themselves under the trust of a cleric, religious, or employee wherein a power/authority relationship is in place.

*Sexual  
Misconduct*

In this policy, sexual misconduct means any sexual conduct which is either unlawful and/or contrary to the moral teaching of the Church.

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## **APPENDIX II**

### **INDIANA CODE 31-33-5-1 DUTY TO MAKE REPORT**

Sec. 1. In addition to any other duty to report arising under this article, an individual who has reason to believe that a child is a victim of child abuse or neglect shall make a report as required by this article. *As added by P.L.1-1997, Sec. 16.*

### **INDIANA CODE 31-33-5-2 NOTIFICATION OF INDIVIDUAL IN CHARGE OF INSTITUTION, SCHOOL, FACILITY OR AGENCY; REPORT**

Sec. 2 (a) If an individual is required to make a report under this article in the individual's capacity as a member of the staff of a medical or other public or private institution, school, facility, or agency, the individual shall immediately notify the individual in charge of the institution, school, facility, or agency or the designated agent of the individual in charge of the institution, school, facility, or agency.

(b) An individual notified under subsection (a) shall report or cause a report to be made. *As added by P.L.1-1997, Sec. 16.*

### **INDIANA CODE 31-33-5-3 EFFECT OF COMPLIANCE ON INDIVIDUAL'S OWN DUTY TO REPORT**

Sec. 3. This chapter does not relieve an individual of the obligation to report on the individual's own behalf, unless a report has already been made to the best of the individual's belief. *As added by P.L.1-1997, Sec. 16.*

### **INDIANA CODE 31-33-5-4 IMMEDIATE ORAL REPORT TO LOCAL CHILD PROTECTION SERVICE OR LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY**

Sec. 4. A person who has a duty under this chapter to report that a child may be a victim of child abuse or neglect shall immediately make an oral report to:

- (1) the local child protection service; or
- (2) the local law enforcement agency.

As added by P.L.1-1997, Sec. 16.

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## APPENDIX III

### LIST OF AGENCIES FOR REPORTING OF SEXUAL ABUSE OR NEGLECT

<i>LAKE COUNTY</i>	Child Protection Services If closed, contact local police; or the Sheriff's Dept. at	219-881-6966  219-755-3300
<i>LAPORTE COUNTY</i>	Child Protection Services If closed, contact local police; or the Sheriff's Dept. at	219-326-5870  219-326-7700
<i>PORTER COUNTY</i>	Child Protection Services If closed, contact local police; or the Sheriff's Dept. at	219-462-7555  219-477-3000
<i>STARKE COUNTY</i>	Child Protection Services If closed, contact local police; or the Sheriff's Dept. at	574-772-3411  574-772-3771

### CONTACT CATHOLIC FAMILY SERVICES FOR COUNSELING FOR CHILD ABUSE

Victim Assistance Coordinator: **Anthony Panozzo, MS, LMHC**      **219-844-4883**

<i>LAKE COUNTY</i>	Crown Point East Chicago Gary Hammond	219-662-7677 219-397-5803 219-886-3565 219-844-4883
<i>LAPORTE COUNTY</i>	Michigan City	219-879-9312
<i>PORTER COUNTY</i>	Portage	219-762-1177

### CONTACT DR. KEN FLANAGAN FOR QUESTIONS ON POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

CATHOLIC CHARITIES 219-663-8417 ext. 329

Revised 11/2007