

Model Policies and Procedures for Response to Allegations of Sexual Abuse¹

General Statement of Guidelines²

The *[name of diocese, religious community/institute, or organization]* will manage the issue of sexual abuse by clergy, staff, and volunteers in an open and straightforward manner. We must respond with compassion to those who have been harmed, take action to redress the wrongs, extend God's healing love to all those injured, and protect and promote the safety of children. We must strengthen the education program for all clergy and religious, staff, and volunteers on maintaining appropriate boundaries and on the issue of sexual abuse of children.

We must stand by clergy and religious, staff, and volunteers serving as ministers while maintaining the right of the people to a safe and secure environment in which to worship and pray together. Our actions must be grounded in a commitment to justice, accountability, and mercy.

We are committed to continuously review and refine policies and procedures. We will comply with all laws regarding the reporting of allegations of sexual abuse against children to the proper civil authorities for investigation. When civil authorities are involved with a criminal investigation, the *[diocese, religious community/institute, or organization]* will defer to the civil/criminal process and use every available means to continue the investigation of allegations.

Section 1: Prevention, Education and Reporting

1.1 Educating priests, deacons, and religious.

Priests, permanent deacons, and religious educated in and by the *[diocese, religious community/institute, or organization]* shall attend scheduled training sessions that include the following subjects:

- a. Appropriate boundaries in ministry.
- b. Nature of the problem of sexual abuse.
- c. Signs and symptoms of sexual abuse in children and youth.
- d. Policies and procedures for prevention of sexual abuse by clergy or other Church personnel.
- e. Policies and procedures for prevention of sexual abuse on any Church-owned property or at Church-sponsored events and activities.
- f. Policies and procedures for reporting allegations of sexual abuse.
- g. Types of disclosures and how to respond appropriately.
- h. FOR PRIESTS AND RELIGIOUS: Formation for celibate chastity.
- i. Policies and procedures for responding to allegations of sexual abuse.

¹For purposes of this document, "sexual abuse" is defined as: Any sexual activity with a child—whether in the home by a caretaker, in a daycare situation, a foster/residential setting, or in any other setting, including on the street by a person unknown to the child. The abuser may be an adult, an adolescent, or another child, provided the child is four years older than the victim.

²All references to "*[diocese, religious community/institute, or organization]*" or "diocesan" will be understood to include "archdiocese" and "archdiocesan." References to "bishop" will be understood to include "archbishop."

1.2 Educating staff and volunteers.

Each staff member and every volunteer who works with or has regular contact with children and young people shall be required to attend scheduled training sessions that include, but are not limited to, the following subjects:

- a. Appropriate boundaries in ministry.
- b. Nature of the problem of sexual abuse with children.
- c. Signs and symptoms of sexual abuse in children and youth.
- d. Policies and procedures for prevention of sexual abuse by clergy or other Church personnel.
- e. Policies and procedures for prevention of sexual abuse on any Church-owned property or at Church-sponsored events and activities.
- f. Reporting allegations of sexual abuse.
- g. Types of disclosures and how to respond appropriately.
- h. Policies and procedures for responding to allegations of sexual abuse.

Deadline for completing training:

- a. Before assuming duties: New staff and volunteers who will work with or have direct contact with children.
- b. Within 30 days of assuming duties: Staff and volunteers who do not work directly with or have regular contact with children and youth.

Availability of training:

Training shall be available at both the local and diocesan or organizational level. New staff and volunteers may:

- a. Attend a regularly scheduled training session in the parish or [*diocese, religious community/institute, or organization*].
- b. Complete training through online, web-based training courses.
- c. Arrange for individual training if no training is available in the area.

1.3 Educating parents and other adults.

It is critical that we raise awareness among all adults about the nature and scope of the problem of child abuse and educate them about the signs and symptoms and what to do when they suspect abuse. Each parish or local venue shall provide an opportunity for parents and other adults to attend onsite, instructor-led training and to access web-based training courses. The material provided shall include, but is not limited to, the following subjects:

- a. Appropriate boundaries in ministry.
- b. Nature of the problem of sexual abuse with children.
- c. Signs and symptoms of sexual abuse in children and youth.

- d. Policies and procedures for prevention of sexual abuse by clergy and other Church personnel.
- e. Policies and procedures for prevention of sexual abuse on any Church-owned property and at Church-sponsored events and activities.
- f. Policies and procedures for reporting allegations of sexual abuse.
- g. Types of disclosures by children and how to respond.
- h. Policies and procedures for responding to allegations of sexual abuse

Section 2: Civil and Canonical Responsibilities (reporting and investigation)

- 2.1 State laws mandate that certain persons report suspected incidents of child sexual abuse to civil authorities. All clergy, staff, and volunteers, even those not mandated by state law, *must* report knowledge or belief that a child is the victim of abuse to child protection or law enforcement authorities and the appropriate Church official or supervisor.

Clergy, staff, volunteers, or other agents of the Church or religious institution shall report suspected abuse if he or she:

- a. Has actual knowledge that a child is the victim of abuse.
- b. Has reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been sexually abused.

The only exception to this policy is disclosures made to a priest in the sacrament of reconciliation. However, any priest who hears the confession of someone who abuses children or someone who is the victim of abuse shall urge the penitent to report the abuse to the proper civil and Church authorities.

“Reasonable cause” means a reason that would motivate a person of ordinary intelligence under the circumstances to believe, based on observations or conversations that a child has been or is being abused.

- 2.2 The Code of Canon Law governs the relationship between the priest and the Church. Careful adherence to canon law is the Church’s access to permanently removing offending clergy from ministry. The *[diocese, religious community/institute, or organization]* will follow canon law when making decisions about the accused’s ministry and during all investigations of allegations against clergy.
- 2.3 The *[diocese, religious community/institute, or organization]* will strictly adhere to all procedures adopted by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith for reporting allegations and complaints of sexual abuse by clergy.
- 2.4 Upon receipt of a complaint of child sexual abuse by clergy, staff, or volunteers, the *[diocese, religious community/institute, or organization]* will refer the matter to civil authorities and begin an internal investigation according to established procedures and, if the accused is clergy, in accordance with canon law. When civil authorities are conducting a criminal investigation, the *[diocese, religious community institute, or organization]* will defer to that investigative process.
- 2.5 The *[diocese, religious community/institute, or organization]* shall retain all records and other materials related to the matter that may be considered evidence. The records shall contain claims, intakes, investigation reports, and records of services provided to those harmed by sexual misconduct.

Files maintained on the case are confidential and may contain both privileged and non-privileged information. “Privileged” documents include records protected from disclosure by state or federal statute

such as medical records, citizenship status, etc. Access to privileged documents is limited to the *[staff liaison to the review board]*, diocesan counsel, other necessary diocesan or organizational personnel, and those authorized through appropriate Court Order.

Documents shall include:

- a. The Intake Form.
- b. The complainant's detailed description of the allegations.
- c. The "Rights of the Complainant" and "Rights of the Accused" forms.
- d. The Investigation Report, including the accompanying witness affidavits and documentation.

Section 3: Administrative Guidelines for Dealing With a Complaint³

These policies are administrative, not penal, in nature and take into account the rights and duties imposed by civil and canon law. These guidelines are not intended to create any rights in any person, to obligate the [diocese, religious community/institute, or organization] to take action, or to establish any responsibility of the [diocese, religious community/institute, or organization].

3.1 The *[diocese, religious community/institute, or organization]* response to complaints and allegations is multi-faceted and includes:

- a. The pastoral care of the victim.
- b. The well-being of the community.
- c. A thorough, fair, and objective investigation.
- d. The assessment and treatment of the offender.

All persons involved shall be treated in a manner consistent with the Gospel values of dignity, compassion, understanding, and justice.

3.2 Separate guidelines shall be established for handling:

- a. Allegations of current, ongoing abuse.
- b. Allegations of past abuse.
- c. Allegations of past abuse with concerns about present risks.
- d. Allegations of abuse in another diocese, a religious community/institute, or a Church-related organization.
- e. False allegations.
- f. Unsubstantiated or unverifiable allegations.
- g. Allegations against a member of a religious community/institute that is providing services in the *[diocese, religious community/institute, or organization]*.

³ This section must be customized to include the processes and procedures of the local organization's case management and victim services programs. (*i.e.*, *Pastoral Case Management Program* and *Victim Advocacy Program*.)

- 3.3 The *[diocese, religious community/institute, or organization]* shall maintain a list of available resources for victims, faith communities, and those accused of abuse. Those resources shall include the following disciplines:
- a. Pastoral counseling
 - b. Law
 - c. Psychological counseling
 - d. Sociology
 - e. Medicine
 - f. Victim support groups
 - g. Treatment facilities
- 3.4 The *[diocese, religious community/institute, or organization]* shall maintain records of all complaints against clergy, staff, or volunteers, including anonymous complaints. However, in the absence of accompanying verifiable facts, anonymous complaints may not be investigated. The accused shall be informed of anonymous complaints.
- 3.5 The *[bishop, religious superior, or administrator]* shall establish an independent review board, made up primarily of lay people, to examine and make recommendations regarding:
- a. Reports of child abuse.
 - b. Actions taken in response to reports.
 - c. The effectiveness of existing policies.
- The board shall also make recommendations to the *[bishop, superior, or administrator]* regarding:
- a. Revisions to policies and procedures.
 - b. Monitoring aftercare for offending clergy.
- 3.6 Actions taken by the *[diocese, religious community/institute, or organization]* when an allegation is made are not an expression of judgment concerning the validity of the complaint or the veracity of the complainant. Actions are intended to indicate the serious nature of such cases and to respect the rights of all concerned.
- 3.7 Any person may secure legal representation to pursue claims. However, it is not necessary to retain an attorney or file a lawsuit to resolve a complaint with the *[diocese, religious community/institute, or organization]*.
- 3.8 Retaliation or discrimination against a person who complains or who reports sexual abuse is strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated.
- 3.9 Individual circumstances may prescribe a course of action at variance with these guidelines. Actions that are inconsistent with these guidelines will be documented and will include a statement setting forth the circumstances requiring the variance and the actions taken in place of those prescribed in these guidelines.

Section 4: Services to Victims

- 4.1 The *[diocese, religious community/institute, or organization]* offers pastoral, psychological, and spiritual support to victims, their families, and the faith community. Such assistance is pastoral and shall not, in any way, be considered as an indication that the *[diocese, religious community/institute, or organization]* is legally responsible for the actions of the accused clergy, staff, or volunteer.
- 4.2 The *[diocese, religious community/institute, or organization]* will designate a competent lay assistance coordinator to organize and direct outreach to victims and the delivery of victim assistance and support services to persons who claim to have been sexually abused when they were minors by priest or deacons.
- 4.3 The *[diocese, religious community/institute, or organization]* will:
- a. Be respectful of all persons bringing a complaint.
 - b. Provide an advocate/advisor upon request.
 - c. Help victims obtain counseling support.
 - d. Provide information about support groups.
 - e. Help victims and families obtain spiritual direction.
 - f. Help bring concerns to the proper Church officials outside the *[diocese, religious community/institute, or organization]* when indicated.
 - g. Provide printed material that outlines the services available, procedures for making a complaint, appellate procedures, and civil reporting requirements.
 - h. Make periodic public announcements about the services available and the procedures for making a complaint.
- 4.4 The *[diocese, religious community/institute, or organization]* will not bind any complainants to a condition of confidentiality or nondisclosure of the complaint except at the specific request of the complainant for substantial reasons. The text of the agreement shall contain the reasons for the confidentiality agreement.
- 4.5 While reconciliation remains desirable as a part of the healing process for victims, the *[diocese, religious community/institute, or organization]* will not attempt to force a reconciliation between the offender and the victim. Any involvement in non-authorized reconciliation efforts by diocesan staff or agents will be considered a violation of these policies.
- 4.6 Families and significant others require the same consideration, compassion, and sensitivity as that for the victim in the healing process.
- 4.7 Parishes and religious communities/institutes are also victims of child sexual abuse by clergy or other Church personnel. The Church is guided by the following principles in its response to affected communities:
- a. Faith communities, organizations, and institutions undergo a complex process of grieving when they learn about accusations of child sexual abuse by a trusted and respected leader.
 - b. A critical element in healing is providing accurate information regarding the facts of the allegations and investigations.

- c. Communication may be limited by the concern for privacy of the victim and the victim's family and the need to protect the rights of the accused, particularly when criminal charges are pending.
- d. The healing of a parish, organization, or religious community/institute is a multidisciplinary challenge requiring expertise from a variety of experts.
- e. An official voice of the Church and/or the particular religious community/institute, or organization must meet with the community.

Section 5: The Accused

- 5.1 In both civil and canon law, a person is presumed innocent until proven guilty. The presumption of innocence does not preclude the *[diocese, religious community/institute, or organization]* from taking immediate, prudent action to protect the community in response to complaints and before an investigation is complete.
- 5.2 After an allegation is made, no bishop or priest involved in the investigation may hear the sacramental confession of the accused.
- 5.3 When an allegation of child sexual abuse is made against a priest or permanent deacon, the Church will initiate a prompt, objective, preliminary investigation. During the investigation, the Church will take all appropriate steps to protect the reputation of the accused. When there is sufficient evidence that child sexual abuse has occurred, the Church will take appropriate measures to remove the cleric from ministry and place him on administrative leave. The Church will also notify the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.
- 5.4 Administrative leave will be planned and imposed consistent with the provisions of Canon 1722. The length of time for leave will be specified along with living arrangements, location, financial support, treatment, conduct, and aftercare, where applicable. At the end of the imposed time limit, the need for and terms of administrative leave will be reevaluated pursuant to canon law.
- 5.5 The *[director of priest personnel]* will support and assist any priest on administrative leave to find housing and other pastoral support. The *[diocese, religious community/institute, or organization]* shall be responsible for his financial support.
- 5.6 Accused clergy will be advised to retain civil and canonical counsel. When necessary, the *[diocese, religious community/institute, or organization]* may provide canonical counsel to the accused.
- 5.7 Non-clergy, staff, and volunteers will be placed on administrative leave during an investigation of credible complaints. The length of time for imposed administrative leave will be specified and, upon expiration, will be reevaluated.
- 5.8 Pastoral and psychological support is essential to the support of any staff member or clergy accused of sexual abuse.
 - a. The *[bishop/superior]* may refer accused clergy for assessment, evaluation, counseling, and/or treatment. If the accused clergy chooses not to cooperate, the *[bishop/superior]* will be notified of the lack of cooperation. The *[bishop/superior]* or his designee shall make all decisions regarding the non-cooperating accused's ministry and ministerial status without his input.
 - b. Non-clergy staff and volunteers accused of sexual abuse are required to participate in pastoral and psychological counseling as a condition of further employment or volunteer activities regardless of the outcome of the investigation.

- 5.9 The *[diocese, religious community/institute, or organization]* recognizes that if a permanent deacon is accused of sexual misconduct, his family will face enormous strain. The *[diocese, religious community/institute, or organization]* is committed to the emotional, psychosocial, and spiritual support of the deacon's spouse, children, and other family members.
- 5.10 When allegations are substantiated, the *[diocese, religious community/institute, or organization]* may seek restitution from the offender for the services provided to persons harmed by sexual abuse by clergy or other Church personnel. The offender may be held responsible for the costs of therapy and for all other expenses incurred by the Archdiocese, including but not limited to attorney fees, court costs, and judgments.

Section 6: Legal Representation

- 6.1 Legal expense of accused clergy and other Church personnel: *(These guidelines must provide for how legal expenses of accused clergy and others are managed. The following are possible choices.)*
- Option 1: The *[diocese, religious community/institute, or organization]* may provide legal counsel to accused clergy or religious. Accused lay staff and volunteers will be responsible for their own legal defense.
- Option 2: The cost of legal defense shall be the responsibility of the accused.
- Option 3: The cost of legal defense shall be borne by the accused. The *[diocese, religious community/institute, or organization]* shall reimburse him/her for reasonable legal fees if he/she is found to be innocent of the allegations and there is a determination that the accused complied with applicable policies.
- Option 4: The accused is advised to retain civil and canonical counsel independent from the *[diocese, religious community/institute, or organization]*. Financial assistance for legal fees incurred by the accused may be available depending on the nature of the case.
- 6.2 The *[diocese, religious community/institute, or organization]* has a right to take action against guilty parties to recover judgments and/or legal expenses it incurs as a result of child sexual abuse by clergy, religious, staff, and/or volunteers.

Section 7: Reassignment of Clergy and Religious

No priest or permanent deacon who engages in sexual activities with a minor shall be allowed to return to any ministry. THERE SHALL BE NO EXCEPTIONS TO THIS POLICY.

- 7.1 The *[bishop, religious superior, or administrator]* shall establish a review board to assist with assessing allegations and determining the fitness for ministry of clergy and religious suspended from ministry during an investigation of accusations of sexual abuse. The board shall:
- a. Report directly to the *[bishop, religious superior, or administrator]* or his designee.
 - b. Consist of not less than five members appointed for five-year, renewable terms. Membership in the review board shall include:
 - One clergy or religious.
 - Lay members of integrity and good judgment who are not in the employ of the diocese, including:

- Three non-clergy members from the professional community, including one psychiatrist, psychologist, and/or social worker having expertise in the area of treatment of sexual abuse of minors, and one attorney or other person experienced in law enforcement matters.
 - Additional at-large members, one of whom may be a complainant or family member and one of whom may be non-Catholic.
- c. Establish its own rules and procedures for operation.
 - d. Have access to all information in the possession of the *[diocese, religious community/institute, or organization]*, including the reports of the priest monitor, provided that all necessary releases have been secured.
 - e. Retrospectively and prospectively review allegations and advise the *[bishop, superior, or administrator]* as to the credibility of complaints of child sexual abuse. The board shall communicate its assessment to the victim and the accused.
 - f. Review investigation reports and make recommendations to leadership regarding actions necessary to resolve complaints.
 - g. Review and make recommendations regarding the continuation of the cleric in pastoral ministry, counseling, or aftercare.
 - h. Review and make recommendations regarding the fitness for ministry of any cleric whose ministry was restricted due to false, unsubstantiated, or unverifiable accusations of misconduct.
 - i. At least every two years, review and recommend changes to current diocesan policies regarding the response to allegations of sexual abuse and the assignment of clergy.

The *[bishop, religious superior, or administrator]* shall appoint an administrative staff member to act as liaison to the review board, the chairperson, and other officers and shall request that the Promoter of Justice attend all meetings of the Board.

All information gained by the review board shall be considered confidential and may only be disclosed, under certain circumstances, to the parties involved, the *[bishop, religious superior, or administrator]* and as required by civil and/or canon law.

- 7.2 When allegations are unsubstantiated, or unverifiable, the *[bishop, religious superior, or administrator]*, in consultation with the review board, will consider the following factors in making decisions about ministry reassignment:
- a. The completed investigation report.
 - b. The assessment of the review board and delegate.
 - c. The outcome of proceedings in a civil or criminal court case.
 - d. The judgment, recommendation, and advice of professional therapists.
 - e. The well-being of the faith community and all those ministered to by the Church or religious community/institute.
 - f. The concerns of complainants and their families.
 - g. The ability of the Church or religious community/institute to assure the safety of the community or organization to be served.

- h. The ability of the clergy to provide effective ministry in light of the circumstances.
- i. The best interests of the *[diocese, religious community/institute, or organization]* and its people.
- j. The stewardship of the *[diocese's, religious community/institute's, or organization's]* financial resources.

7.3 If the review board recommends that a priest or permanent deacon be denied the opportunity to return to ministry and the *[bishop, religious superior, or administrator]* agrees, the priest or permanent deacon may be confined to a life of prayer and penance, offered an opportunity for job training or, in the alternative, when appropriate, he may apply for permanent disability. Under no circumstances will an offender be allowed to celebrate Mass publicly, wear clerical garb, or present himself publicly as a priest or permanent deacon.

7.4 If the review board recommends that a priest or permanent deacon be confined to restricted ministry, live in a supervised setting, resign from ministry, or apply for laicization, the *[diocese, religious community/institute, or organization]* may pursue all available courses of action permitted by the Code of Canon Law.

If it is recommended that the priest or permanent deacon be counseled out of the ministry, and he refuses, canonical procedures for removal from office will be initiated and followed. If the priest holds an ecclesiastical office and refuses to resign, a formal ecclesiastical trial may be instituted.

7.5 A priest or permanent deacon convicted of sexual abuse will be permanently removed from ecclesiastical ministry. He will not be allowed to celebrate Mass publicly, wear clerical garb, or present himself publicly as a priest or permanent deacon. Diagnosis of pedophilia or other related sexual disorder is not a condition for the removal of an offender from ministry.

7.6 A priest-monitor will provide pastoral support for the priest or permanent deacon throughout the transition from ministry to private life.

7.7 No religious or non-incardinated priest or permanent deacon known to have sexually abused a minor will be accepted for ministry in the *[diocese, religious community/institute, or organization]*. Furthermore, before any priest or permanent deacon transfers to or takes up residence in another diocese for any purpose, his ordinary/hierarch shall forward an accurate and complete description of the clergy's record to the ordinary/hierarch in the new location. The description shall include any information in the transferee's background indicating that he could be a danger to children or young people. This applies to all circumstances, including clergy offenders who take up residence in a community/institute to lead a life of prayer and penance.

7.8 The *[diocese, religious community/institute, or organization]* shall seek advice from the province's appellate review board as needed. The *[diocese, religious community/institute, or organization]* shall advise the alleged victim and the accused of the availability of the appellate process and the procedures for initiating the process. Any bishop, alleged victim, or accused may request the appellate review board's advice within 15 days of the alleged victim or the accused receiving notification of the review board's assessment of the complaint. The appellate review board will communicate its advice within sixty (60) days of receipt of the request.

Section 8: False Accusations

When allegations are false, the *[diocese, religious community/institute, or organization]* will work closely with the accused and the faith community to restore trust and recreate the pastoral and ministerial relationships. Particular attention will be given to the thoughts, feelings, fears, and concerns of the accused. The *[diocese, religious community/institute, or organization]* will provide a supportive environment and counseling or therapy to the

accused to help mitigate the effects of the false accusation. The *[diocese, religious community/institute, or organization]*, through the review board, will work with the falsely accused person to protect or, if necessary, restore his or her good name and reputation and create a workable plan for the future. The *[diocese, religious community/institute, or organization]* will inform the faith community of the results of the investigation.

- 8.1 The *[diocese, religious community/institute, or organization]* recognizes that the trauma of being falsely accused can do irreparable harm to the accused's ability to be effective in ministry. However, no person falsely accused of child sexual abuse should suffer any adverse consequences or have his or her future ministry opportunities compromised as a result of a false accusation. Therefore, when making decisions about the reassignment of clergy who are the subject of false allegations, the *[bishop, religious superior, or administrator]* will consider the following factors:
- a. The completed investigation report.
 - b. The recommendation of the review board and delegate.
 - c. The spiritual, emotional, and psychological well-being of the accused.
 - d. The judgment, recommendation, and advice of trained mental health professionals.
 - e. The well-being of the faith community and of all those ministered to by the Church or religious community/institute.
 - f. The ability of the cleric to provide effective ministry in light of the circumstances.
 - g. The best interests of the *[diocese, religious community/institute, or organization]* and all its people.
- 8.2 A priest monitor will be appointed by the *[bishop, religious superior, or administrator]* to serve as a link between a falsely accused priest or permanent deacon returning to ministry and the *[diocese, religious community/institute, or organization]*. The monitor shall provide pastoral support for the priest or permanent deacon to ensure that the accused's ability to minister effectively in the wake of false accusations is fully restored.
- 8.3 The human resource supervisor responsible for staff or volunteers who are falsely accused of child sexual abuse shall provide continuing moral support to the individuals as they return to work or volunteer services. The *[diocese, religious community/institute, or organization]* will provide necessary mental health services to assist falsely accused individuals to overcome the consequences of the accusations and to become restored to power and effectiveness in their job duties and volunteer services.

Section 9: Screening and Selection—Clergy, Staff and Volunteers

- 9.1 All applicants to the priesthood and/or permanent diaconate are required to participate in psychological screening and background checks to assess their fitness to the ministry and their fitness to work with minors.
- 9.2 All priests and permanent deacons seeking incardination, priests or religious seeking ministry or residency in the *[diocese, religious community/institute, or organization]* must demonstrate their fitness to work with minors.
- a. Superiors of religious congregations proposing names of individuals for ministry or residency in a Church institution are required to state in writing that there is nothing in the person's history or behavior that would make him or her unsuitable to work with minors.

- b. Pastors, associate pastors, administrators, or directors of Church institutions may not grant permission for full-time, part-time, or regular weekend ministry to an external priest or permanent deacon without prior written approval of the bishop or his designee.
- 9.3 All staff and all volunteers who work with or have regular contact with children shall be screened for their fitness to work with minors. The *[diocese or parish, religious community/institute, or organization]* shall screen potential staff and shall conduct background checks of potential staff prior to extending an offer of employment. Applicants who refuse to grant permission for the background checks and other screening will not be considered for any staff position in the *[diocese, religious community/institute, organization, or institution]*.
- 9.4 The basic screening program for all staff and volunteers shall include:
- a. A completed employment/volunteer application (*no missing relevant information*).
 - b. A completed screening information form.
 - c. A personal interview with the applicant.
 - d. Reference checks.
- 9.5 No individual who has sexually abused a minor will be employed or engaged as a volunteer for the *[diocese, religious community/institute, or organization]*. The *[diocese, religious community/institute, or organization]* will immediately terminate any staff member or volunteer if it discovers evidence of previous child sexual abuse by the person.
- 9.6 The *[diocese, religious community/institute, or organization]* will adopt a code of conduct for clergy, staff, and volunteers. The *Code of Conduct* will establish guidelines for appropriate interactions between Church personnel and those that they serve and will establish disciplinary consequences for violations of the *Code of Conduct*.

Section 10: Media

- 10.1 There shall be a designated spokesperson for the *[diocese, religious community/institute, or organization]*. The spokesperson shall be responsible for responding to all inquiries and news conferences regarding allegations of sexual abuse.
- 10.2 All complaints to the *[diocese, religious community/institute, or organization]* are treated as confidential. The *[diocese, religious community/institute, or organization]* shall neither confirm nor deny:
- a. That a complaint has been made.
 - b. The identity of any person reporting incidents, concerns, or allegations.
 - c. The identity of any person against whom a complaint is pending (until such time as the allegation becomes public record as a result of charges being filed or the matter is general public knowledge).
- 10.3 The spokesperson shall be informed immediately upon the receipt of any allegations.

Section 11: Insurance

- 11.1 Diocesan insurance covers individuals acting within the scope of their ministry or employment within the Church. (*Include accurate applicable insurance information.*)

- 11.2 Diocesan insurers shall be notified of incidents, concerns, or allegations in accordance with the terms of applicable insurance contracts.
- 11.3 The *[bishop, religious superior, or administrator]* shall appoint a responsible staff member to notify the *[diocesan, religious community's/institute's, or organization's]* attorney and insurance carrier.

Section 12: Conclusion

- 12.1 These policies will be reviewed and revised every three (3) years by a team of experts including a lawyer, a canon lawyer, a psychiatrist, a social worker or psychologist, a victim or member of a victim's family, a clergy member, and a representative of the *[bishop, religious superior, or administrator]*.
- 12.2 Recommendations for revisions shall be presented to the *[bishop, religious superior, or administrator]*.