

*“Our main concern remains the protection of children and youth,  
and these...are vehicles to accomplish that.”  
~ Archbishop Basil*

## Guide to the *Sexual Misconduct Policy* of the Archeparchy of Pittsburgh

### **Does the Archeparchy of Pittsburgh have a written policy on sexual misconduct?**

Yes, the Archeparchy of Pittsburgh *Policy on Sexual Misconduct*, revised August 2006, outlines procedures for responding to complaints of sexual abuse by clergy and employees, in response to the *Universal Norms and Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* approved by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, revised in June 2005.

### **How do I get a copy of this policy?**

Copies of the policy regarding sexual misconduct are available in pamphlet form from the Office of Communications, Metropolitan Archeparchy of Pittsburgh, 66 Riverview Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA, 15214. A link to the policy is also available online at [www.archeparchy.org/page/policies/protection.htm](http://www.archeparchy.org/page/policies/protection.htm).

### **What is the purpose of this policy?**

It is the desire of the Archeparchy of Pittsburgh to protect the rights, safety and dignity of every person, especially children, entrusted to its pastoral care. The *Policy* is intended to be pastoral and administrative. It is to complement the *Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches* as well as be in conformity with the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* established by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

### **If I have an allegation of sexual misconduct against a member of the clergy or other person working for the Church, what do I need to do?**

A person who has an allegation should contact the Office of Clergy at 66 Riverview Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA, 15214. The Office of Clergy also may be reached by calling 412-231-4000 Ext. 22. The Archeparchy will respond immediately to all allegations of sexual abuse.

### **What happens after I contact the Archeparchy?**

After the initial report of the allegation is made, the individual making the allegation is interviewed by at least two members of the Archieparchial staff. This typically includes the Archieparchial Assistance Coordinator, the Syncellus for Clergy and/or a delegate of the Metropolitan. The individual making the allegation also is asked to put his or her allegation in writing.

### **What is the job of the Archieparchial Assistance Coordinator?**

The Archieparchial Assistance Coordinator aids in the immediate pastoral care of the victims and their families in matters of sexual misconduct. The Assistance Coordinator also keeps the person making an allegation informed of the progress of the review and its outcome.

### **Who will know that I made an allegation?**

While the Archeparchy understands how difficult it is for someone to come forward and share sensitive information, all allegations of sexual misconduct with a minor will be reported to the appropriate civil authorities immediately. Although, the Archeparchy cannot promise absolute confidentiality, the information is not shared indiscriminately. The person against whom the allegation has been made obviously will need to be informed. In addition, only Archieparchial staff members specifically involved in handling these matters are informed of the allegation.

### **What happens to a person against whom an allegation has been made?**

Once the allegation is made, the priest or any other Church personnel may be placed on leave of absence while the allegation is being investigated. This is not an admission of guilt, nor is it punishment. Rather, the purpose of the leave of absence is to protect everyone involved while the review moves forward.

### **What happens to the priest or deacon if he admits to, or is found to have engaged in child sexual abuse?**

If the priest or deacon admits to the abuse or if the allegation has been established, then the priest or deacon is removed from ministry. The priest would no longer be able to celebrate Divine Liturgy publicly, hear confessions, wear clerical garb, or present himself as a member of the clergy. Meanwhile, the priest or deacon would be provided appropriate assistance such as treatment to help him in addressing his behavior. In all of this, the provisions of Church law must be followed.

### **What happens if the person accused denies the allegation?**

If the person denies the allegation then the Archieparchial Review Board is convened to examine the allegation and to make a recommendation to the Archbishop regarding the individual's suitability for ministry.

## Who serves on the Archieparchial Review Board?

Members of the Archieparchial Review Board include lay people who are not in the employment of the Archeparchy and a priest. Among the laity are parents and professionals from legal and medical fields. When there is a question about suitability for ministry, the Archbishop or his delegate convenes the Archieparchial Review Board to review the case.

## What kind of support is offered to victims of abuse?

The Archeparchy works with each individual to determine the assistance that is necessary and appropriate. This may include counseling, spiritual assistance, and referrals to support groups.

## What does the Archeparchy do to help detect and prevent child sexual abuse?

The Archeparchy has a number of programs for screening Church personnel, including seminary and deaconate programs, as well as training programs for clergy and ministers who work with children. The Archeparchy is continuing to expand its Safe Environment programs to help parents and all those who work with children to identify the signs of child sexual abuse and ways to prevent it. The Archeparchy also is exploring additional procedures for screening anyone who works for the church and has contact with children, including volunteers.

“Let there be no doubt or confusion on anyone’s part:  
For us, your bishops, our obligation to protect children and young people  
and to prevent sexual abuse flows from the mission and example  
given to us by Jesus Christ himself in whose name we serve.”

*Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*  
U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops

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Copies of the Archieparchial *Policy on Sexual Misconduct* are available in booklet form from the:

**Office of Communications  
Archeparchy of Pittsburgh  
66 Riverview Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15214  
412.231.4000 Ext. 21  
communications@archeparchy.org**

Links to the *Policy* and related information are also available online at [www.archeparchy.org/page/policies/protection.htm](http://www.archeparchy.org/page/policies/protection.htm).