



Aberdeen Catholic School System

Diocese of Sioux Falls Policy Regarding Incidents of Child Abuse

Diocese of Sioux Falls

POLICY REGARDING INCIDENTS OF CHILD ABUSE

1. South Dakota law requires that certain professional people report suspected cases of child abuse to the authorities (26-10-10). Other persons may report suspected cases as provided by law (26-10-12). This list of professionals and the action to be taken are part of Appendix 1.
2. Church employees & volunteers not covered by the mandatory professional reporting requirement who know or have reasonable cause to suspect that a child abuse or neglect by any person including another employee or volunteer shall report this to their Superior, Pastor, or other responsible Church authorities. These authorities in turn notify the proper civil authority and the Chancellor of the Diocese.
3. If the complaint is not received from the parent or guardian of the child, arrangements should be made by the Superior, Pastor, or other responsible Church authority to notify immediately the parent or guardian. **NOTICE SHOULD NOT BE GIVEN TO THE PARENT OR GUARDIAN IF HE OR SHE IS THE PERSON AGAINST WHOM THE COMPLAINT IS MADE.** In addition to such notice, pastoral care for the family should be made available.
4. As soon as report is made to civil authorities accusing an employee or volunteer of child abuse, the Bishop will appoint within forty-eight hours someone to institute a Diocesan internal investigation of the matter. The employee or volunteer will be removed from possible contact with children pending the resolution of the charges and the outcome of the investigation. Interim and future assignments shall take into account the interests of the Church and all other parties involved. The Diocese has responsibility and a legal duty to protect the children in its schools or programs from abuse, and to protect children in its schools or programs from abuse, and to protect children from exposure to an employee or volunteer who has been accused of abuse. At the same time, the Diocese must show due regard for the due process of law, contract rights and employer-employee relations. Should civil authorities and/or internal investigations substantiate the claim of abuse made against an employee or volunteer, **UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES SHOULD THAT KNOWLEDGE BE WITHHELD FROM ANOTHER DIOCESE TO WHICH THE EMPLOYEE OR VOLUNTEER MAY BE ASSIGNED OR TRANSFERRED, OR FROM A**

FUTURE EMPLOYER REQUESTING A RECOMMENDATION FOR EMPLOYMENT.

5. The Diocese shall show appropriate pastoral concern and support to all parties involved. Child abuse or neglect results in great harm to the child and indicates pathology in the family or perpetrator. Beyond the Church's concern to protect victims from further abuse, the Church is concerned with promoting whatever healing may be possible. Since one of the primary defenses of the abuser is denial, the Diocese, in showing pastoral concern and support to a parent and especially to an employee, should indicate to the abuser that the Diocese recognizes that child abuse is a serious problem requiring appropriate professional help.
6. All information related to a child abuse incident in which a complaint is made against an employee or volunteer should be assembled and retained in a written form in a confidential manner.

Retention of all information in a written form will insure that it is available for defense against a liability claim or available to civil or criminal process if not otherwise subject to an evidentiary privilege. Such information should be safeguarded from unauthorized disclosure.