

HOW TO REPORT AN ALLEGATION OF SEXUAL OR PHYSICAL ABUSE

If you have a reasonable suspicion of abuse, neglect or maltreatment of a child, youth or at-risk adult, report it immediately. If you have a reasonable suspicion that abuse has occurred, regardless of where it may have occurred or by whom, contact Child Protective or Welfare Services where it occurred and they will be able to make an appropriate response.

In the United States, for information on how to report child abuse in your state go to: www.virtusonline.org. Click on “Reporting Child Abuse” and you will be brought to contact information and links to Child and Family Welfare Services state by state. Please note that it is a requirement of the USCCB Charter for the Protection of Children to report all allegations of abuse of a child under age 18 and many dioceses routinely report all allegations to authorities regardless of when the abuse occurred.

In Canada, contact your local Children’s Aid Society.

If you are in doubt as to who to contact or whether a crime has been committed, call your local police department. In case of an emergency, call 911. For further information, you can also contact the Ordinariate’s Safe Environment Coordinator.

If the alleged abuse involved Ordinariate personnel, (priests, deacons, employees, teachers or volunteers), after contacting the authorities, contact the Ordinariate Safe Environment Coordinator.

Lynn Schmidt

Safe Environment Coordinator

The Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter

907/317-6257, SafeEnvironment@ordinariate.net

The point of contact within the Ordinariate for the receipt of reports, allegations, and concerns related to the abuse of children, youth and at-risk adults, regardless of the age of the person making the report, is the Safe Environment Coordinator. All such reports must be made to this

Coordinator, even if such reports have also been made to the pastor, a leader of an Ordinariate or parish activity, or to civil authorities.

It is the policy of the Ordinariate to respond promptly and with compassion to all reports of abuse. Be aware that if you report abuse to us and have not been in contact with authorities, the Ordinariate will report the matter to local law enforcement and child protection authorities.

To the extent that it is known, the information to be reported shall be:

- a) The name, address and age of the alleged victim (now and at the time of the alleged abuse); b) if the person is under the age of 18 at present, the contact information for his or her parents or guardian; c) the nature, type and extent of the alleged abuse; d) the dates and places when and where the alleged abuse occurred; e) the name of the alleged perpetrator; and f) any other pertinent information provided by the alleged victim.

In addition, we note the following guidelines for the response to allegations:

- The healing of victims, their families, and their community from the effects of sexual abuse begins when the allegations of such abuse are received. When victims decide to disclose the abuse, it is important that the response they receive is compassionate and non-judgmental.
- The response to any report of sexual abuse of a child, youth or at-risk adult will be governed by the Gospel values of dignity, compassion, understanding, and justice. Anyone receiving an allegation of abuse will respond in a pastoral, supportive manner, leaving investigative concerns to those who serve in that role.
- An allegation will be received without initial judgment as to the truth of the complaint. No intimation of blame will be made by the initial recipient of information.
- Individuals making allegations will be supported positively in their decision to disclose.
- The Ordinariate will arrange for pastoral, psychological, and spiritual support not only to the alleged victim, but to the accused cleric and the communities impacted by the report, keeping in mind that both confidentiality and legal concerns may limit the amount of information that can be made available to any party.