

Policy Regarding Allegations of Child Abuse by Clerics

Set forth herein is the Diocese of Cleveland's policy with respect to allegations of child abuse by clerics:

Definitions:

For the purpose of this policy, the term "cleric" shall include and be limited to ordained priests, ordained religious priests, and ordained deacons.

For the purpose of this policy the term "child" shall include and be limited to a person under eighteen years of age, or a physically or mentally handicapped person under twenty-one years of age.

1. If any person knows or suspects that a child has been subjected to child abuse by a cleric, that individual should immediately report or cause a report to be made of that knowledge or suspicion to the children's services board, the county department of human services exercising the children's services function, or a municipal or county peace officer in the county in which the child resides or in which the abuse is occurring or has occurred as required by Ohio Statute 2151.421. If the parents or the child say that a cleric has improperly touched the child, that is to be construed as knowledge or suspicion, and the report should be made or cause to be made immediately.
2. The knowledge, or suspicion, of the improper touching of a child should also be reported to the Diocesan Vicar for Clergy and Religious or to the Diocesan Legal Office.
3. The Diocesan Legal Office will contact the county departments of human services exercising the children's services function to make sure that the proper report has been made.

4. As soon as a report is made to the Vicar for Clergy and Religious or to the Diocesan Legal Office, the Diocese will immediately initiate a canonical inquiry. The cleric shall immediately be called in by the Diocesan Legal Office and made aware of the allegation against him. During the investigation the cleric shall be relieved of all pastoral responsibilities and assigned to evaluation.
5. The Diocese shall show appropriate pastoral and psychological concern and support to all parties involved.
6. There is no intention to assign a diagnosed pedophile to parish ministry or ministry with access to children.
7. If there is to be a reassignment of a cleric involved in child abuse, the diagnosis of the medical and mental health professionals, and the sensitivities of the victim, must be considered. The needs and well-being of those who will be served in the new assignment must be considered. The assignment shall allow for appropriate on-going support and monitoring.
8. All information related to a child abuse incident shall be retained in a confidential manner as dictated by Ohio Law (ORC 2151.421).

This policy is established and takes effect immediately.

Given this 21st day of March, 1989, and as amended on the 16th day of October, 1992.

Reverend Ralph E. Wiatrowski
Chancellor

Most Reverend Anthony M. Pilla
Bishop of Cleveland

870/1992

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