

VI. COMMUNICATION POLICY AND RESPONSE TO THOSE IMPACTED BY THE PAIN OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

When members of the clergy or other ministers or volunteers engage in sexual misconduct, many people may be harmed or affected. This is true not only of those directly involved in the misconduct, but also of the members of the parishes or other Catholic entities where the minister currently serves or served in the past. Outlined below are the key elements of the response that the Diocese may take to help heal this pain. These responses are guided by three key principles.

First, the Diocese of Davenport acknowledges the complex process of grieving. When people first learn that a respected leader has been accused, there is often a reluctance to believe that the report could be true. This denial is a reflection of our American belief that an accused person is innocent until proven guilty. However, the same denial also can create a burden on those who, often after a long struggle, have found the ability to bring forth important information. Denial is usually followed by the other well-known steps in grieving a loss, including depression and significant anger against the accused, the accuser(s), the Diocese and the whole Catholic Church. Only after time passes and the appropriate steps are taken can the Church truly move on in the accomplishment of its mission.

Second, the Diocese of Davenport also acknowledges that one of the most important elements in healing is that the parish receives information about what happened. Information helps dispel the atmosphere of distrust that is fed by rumor, by the sudden departure of a “minister” assigned to or employed by the parish, and the feeling that a “cover-up” is being imposed. Information also assists other victims to come forward, if there are any, and assures that the appropriate steps are taken so that the Church can truly move ahead.

While committed to disclosure where possible, it is acknowledged that significant limitations on communication may exist. These limitations can include the concern of victims and their families for privacy as well as the need to protect the rights of the accused, especially when lawsuits or criminal action may be threatened. The fact that investigations often yield confusing, contradictory or unsubstantiated conclusions, especially in their early stages, further limits disclosure.

Third and finally, the Diocese of Davenport acknowledges that healing is a multidisciplinary challenge. Experience has taught us that neither Diocesan officials nor a pastor alone can respond to all the concerns and problems that arise in the aftermath of an incident or accusation of sexual misconduct in a parish setting. As a result, we may involve others such as teachers, therapists, lawyers and communication experts in a team approach to specific parishes. The Review Board may provide some of this expertise.

1.0 Communications to the People of the Diocese

Within the confines of respect for the privacy and the reputation of the individuals involved, the Diocese will deal as openly as possible with members of the community. This is especially so with regard to assisting and supporting parish communities directly affected by ministerial misconduct involving minors. Matters under litigation, unsubstantiated allegations, and information that an adult victim has asked the Diocese to keep private, are examples of circumstances necessitating confidentiality. Information that is received by the Diocese that indicates a case of sexual abuse that involves a minor or a dependent adult will be referred to the local authorities, pursuant to Iowa law.

2.0 Communication of Policies with the People of the Diocese

The Diocese will promulgate its relevant policies to all members of the community through dissemination to its parishes, the diocesan newspaper, *The Catholic Messenger*, and through the diocesan web-site, www.davenportdiocese.org. References will also be available there.

3.0 Response in the Current Ministry of the Accused

When a report of ministry-related sexual misconduct is received, Diocesan officials follow the policies regarding whether the accused can remain in his or her current position or assignment while the investigation progresses. If the accused remains, restrictions may or may not be imposed on his or her "ministry." Whether the accused remains or leaves, there are issues of communication to be faced.

3.1 When the Accused is Removed

Credible accusations may result in the removal of the accused from ministry. These steps follow:

- (a) If the accused is the pastor, the Bishop will appoint a temporary administrator in his place. (The administrator is informed of the accusation and of the follow-up steps.) If the accused is someone other than the pastor, it is the pastor who will decide if someone needs to be appointed to act in the accused person's capacity on a temporary basis. In non-parish entities, the administrator will consult with the Bishop.
- (b) Key parish or other personnel will be informed as soon as possible. Depending on the organization of the particular entity, they may include the lay trustees, the professional staff and the president of the parish council.
- (c) The pastor or administrator, after consulting with the Diocesan staff and with the parish leadership, will announce the absence of the accused. This announcement can happen in several ways, including pulpit announcements, bulletin notices or a mailing. Because the early stages of an investigation can be complex, the first

announcement sometimes will include little information and may indicate only a temporary absence. It also includes, however, an indication that more information will be provided, as it becomes available.

- (d) The investigation of the matter will proceed as quickly as possible and follow the applicable Diocesan policy. The investigation will first attempt to determine the reliability of the accusation and its implication for the ministry of the accused. As soon as possible, a more comprehensive report about the reason for the absence of the accused will be given. This will include the resignation, vindication of the accused or of any other result. Along with this announcement, there may be a parish/staff meeting within the following few days.
- (e) The meeting is a key step in the process of healing. It allows for a more complete discussion of the complaint, its investigation and its implications for the entity. The meeting should include the participation of some or all of the following: a Diocesan official (the Bishop or his designee), pastor or temporary administrator, Review Board member, a facilitator, a therapist, an attorney and a communication expert. Because it is a pastoral gathering, non-members of the parish or other entity are generally excluded.
- (f) Following this meeting, a team will be formed to assess the immediate results of the meeting and other issues of healing that may arise in the parish. The team includes the pastor or temporary administrator, some or all of the professional staff, the trustees and the parish council or board president. An outside expert may meet with the team. The team sets its own mode of operating. It should meet with the Bishop or his designee at least quarterly for the first year following the parish meeting. The Review Board may help comprise this team.
- (g) In consultation with the Bishop or his designee, the team arranges for whatever healing measures are needed in the parish. These may include further general meetings, a small group process of reflection, a reconciliation service and a request for communication from the accused.

3.2 When the Accused Remains in Assignment

- (a) Key personnel (as above) are informed of the accusation, of the process of investigation and of the restrictions that are in place. They are asked to report inappropriate behavior or violations of ministerial restrictions to a designated person.
- (b) The investigation will progress as outlined in the applicable policy. Respect for the confidential nature of any investigation will be honored to the extent possible.

3.3 Response in Former Assignments of the Accused

Two reasons may cause the Diocese to inform members of former parishes or other entities of a “minister” that he or she has been accused of sexual misconduct. The first and more pressing reason is so persons who may have been victims of misconduct in those other settings will know that they may come forward for assistance. The second is to encourage healing of the hurt and betrayal that can result from knowledge of the accusations. Diocesan officials will assess the applicability of each of these reasons to each former parish or entity. Generally speaking, the current pastor or administrator will be consulted in making this determination. If disclosure is called for, then the following steps will be taken:

- (a) Key personnel will be informed of the accusation, the follow-up steps that are planned, and the potential impact of the news on their own parish or other entity. They will work with a Diocesan official to plan together for the best way to inform the people at large, or at least subgroups that may be affected by the news.
- (b) The pastor or administrator, after consulting with Diocesan officials and the parish leadership, will announce the accusation against their former “minister.” The announcement of disclosure also indicates that some process for immediate follow-up has been put in place. This is generally a meeting of the parish or other group impacted, but other options may be used.
- (c) Key personnel will form a team to assess the ongoing impact of the disclosure in the parish/entity. The team should meet at least once with the Bishop or his designee about three to six weeks after the initial disclosure. More meetings can be scheduled if needed.

3.4 Concern for the People of the Diocese

A primary concern of the Diocese of Davenport is the pastoral care of all people who are affected by sexual misconduct and ways to prevent others from being victimized. The Diocese will continue to promote the work of the Diocesan Victim Assistance Coordinator, the Safe Environment Program and other resources available to victims through notices in the diocesan newspaper, the diocesan website and electronic mail.

3.5 Spokesperson for the Diocese

The spokesperson for the Diocese on matters concerning sexual abuse and misconduct is the Associate Director of Communication.

3.6 Media Interviews

All communication from the Diocese to the public through the media will be approved by the Chancellor or Associate Director of Communication in consultation with the Bishop. Diocesan responses to inquiries from the media will be as responsive as possible. Requests from the media for interviews on these issues shall be made through the Diocesan Spokesperson who for these matters will be the

Associate Director of Communication. No interviews will be given without scheduled appointments.

3.7 Diocesan Relationship to the Media

It is relevant to the Diocese's overall relationship with the media to develop contacts with the media at all levels. If a member of the media does not comply with his or her own standards of professional conduct at any level, this should be pointed out by contacting the media with supporting evidence.

Parish / Entity _____ Volunteer Employee Clergy

VII. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND CONSENT FORM

I hereby acknowledge that I received a copy of the Policies Relating to Sexuality and Personal Behavior of the Diocese of Davenport, have read the Policies, understand their meaning, and agree to conduct myself in accordance with them. Those Policies call for background checks (investigative consumer reports), as deemed appropriate, for some serving as employees or regular volunteers. Realizing, as Church, the importance of protecting youth and other vulnerable populations, I hereby consent and authorize an investigative consumer report, to be conducted if deemed appropriate by the Diocese or entities noted below. Public records may be used in this report, such as civil and criminal records and driving records as well as personal interviews, as needed. I realize this inquiry may include information regarding my character, general reputation, a criminal background check and motor vehicle report. I release the Diocese of Davenport, any parish, school, or other related Catholic institution and their agents from liability associated with obtaining that inquiry.

This consumer report will be used for employment/volunteer selection purposes and may be subject to the Fair Credit Reporting Act. I may receive a free copy of this report. Before any adverse action is taken based on this report I will receive a copy of the report and notice of my rights under the FCRA.

Mindful of the importance of protecting children and other vulnerable persons, the undersigned acknowledges a truthful response to the questions below. I understand that past violations would not necessarily preclude the employment or volunteer position sought.

1. Have you had any convictions other than a traffic violation? Yes No
2. Did you ever enter into an agreement with any past employer not to divulge the true reason for termination of employment? Yes No
3. Have you ever been subject to ecclesiastical discipline? Yes No
4. Please provide your addresses for the past 10 years, including the counties.

5. Please list any aliases.

6. Please provide two (2) references and phone numbers.

Date of birth _____ Gender male female Full Legal Name (printed) _____

Driver's License # _____ Social Security Number _____ Signature _____

Date _____

This form will be amended as needed to allow for appropriate background checks or an additional form may be required.

Office Use Only		
Background Check Completed Date _____	Background Check Not Required <input type="checkbox"/>	Signature _____

VIII. DRIVER INFORMATION SHEET

DIOCESE OF DAVENPORT

DRIVER

Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____
Address: _____ Social Security #: _____

Phone #: _____
Driver's License #: _____ Date of Expiration: _____

VEHICLE THAT WILL BE USED

Name of Owner: _____ Model of Vehicle: _____
Address of Owner: _____ Make of Vehicle: _____

Year of Vehicle: _____
License Plate #: _____ Date of Expiration: _____
Insurance Company: _____
Policy #: _____
Date of Policy Expiration: _____
Liability Limits of Policy*: _____

**Please note: The minimum, acceptable liability limit for privately owned vehicles is \$100,000/300,000/100,000.*

CERTIFICATION

I certify that the information given on this form is true and correct to the best of my knowledge. I understand that as a volunteer driver, I must be 21 years of age or older, possess a valid driver's license, have the proper and current license and vehicle registration, and have the required insurance coverage in effect on any vehicle used to transport participants of the event.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

*Please include a copy of your insurance card

IX. INTERNET SAFETY POLICY AGREEMENT

A copy of this signed agreement should be kept by the local computer system administrator.

Diocese of Davenport Internet Safety Policy Agreement

I understand and will abide by the above Internet Safety Policy. I further understand that any violation of the policy is unethical and may constitute a criminal offense that may result in the revocation of privileges, disciplinary action and/or legal action.

User's Full Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / ____

If the user is under age 18, a parent or guardian must also sign below:

Parent or Guardian: I understand the Internet Safety Policy and hereby give permission to issue an account for my child and certify that the information given on this form is correct.

Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / ____

NOTES

Irene Prior Loftus, the Victim Assistance Coordinator and Chancellor, may be reached by:

- calling the Diocese of Davenport Pastoral Center (563) 324-1911, or
- writing to the Victim Assistance Coordinator, 2706 N. Gaines St., Davenport, Iowa 52804-1998, or
- e-mailing: vac@davenportdiocese.org.

Other Resources Available:

- ❖ Restoring Trust: Response to Clergy Sexual Abuse - United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
www.usccb.org/comm/restoretrust.htm
- ❖ The Charter For The Protection Of Children And Young People -
www.usccb.org/bishops/charter.htm
- ❖ The Essential Norms For Diocesan/Eparchial Policies Dealing With Allegations Of Sexual Abuse Of Minors By Priests Or Deacons
www.usccb.org/bishops/norms.htm
- ❖ The Diocese of Davenport website: www.davenportdiocese.org

Copies of this policy may be made from this booklet or by downloading from the Diocese of Davenport website: www.davenportdiocese.org