

(Excerpt from Diocese of Dodge City *Policy for the Protection of Children and Young People*)

IV. Reporting

1 Every incident or allegation of suspected child sexual abuse, whether reportable to state officials or not, must be brought to the Bishop's attention promptly (within 24 hours). Upon receipt of the oral report, the Bishop or his Vicar General will notify the Diocesan attorney. A written report shall follow as soon as practicable. Generally, Diocesan personnel should report to the person to whom they are responsible. Priests should report to the Bishop or Vicar General. If that person is not available, or should such a step be inappropriate, the report is made to the next person in the chain of responsibility.

2 Generally speaking, persons responsible for the care of children must report suspected child sexual abuse to civil authorities. Such reports are made to the Kansas Department of the Social and Rehabilitation Services (SRS). Persons who must report are those who deal with the care or supervision of children: for example, teachers, principals, other school officials, day care center workers or child care workers. Priests must report to civil authorities only when they fall within the categories of professionals listed in K.S.A. 38-1522 (See Kansas Law Summary, Section XVI attached to this *Policy*, especially paragraphs 1, 2, and 8).

3 The seal of sacramental confession is inviolable. Nothing a priest hears in the Sacrament of Penance (Confession) from either a perpetrator or victim may ever be revealed or reported.

4 The Diocese will comply with all applicable civil laws with respect to the reporting of allegations of sexual abuse of minors to civil authorities and will cooperate in their investigation. In every instance, the Diocese will advise and support a person's right to make a report to public authorities.¹ If the alleged victim is presently a minor, the Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services, the county attorney for the county in which (1) the incident occurred, (2) where the alleged victim resides, or (3) where the accused resides, should be notified immediately by the Vicar General, the Diocesan Attorney or other designee of the Bishop. This notification may be made verbally, but should be followed with a written confirmation of the verbal report directed to the county attorney.

5 The Diocese will cooperate with public authorities about reporting cases even when the person is no longer a minor. If the alleged victim is no longer a minor, the person will be advised they have a right to make a report to the public authorities, and that the Diocese will cooperate with public authorities if a report is made. If the alleged victim requests assistance from the Diocese in making the report to the public authorities, the county attorney for the county in which (1) the incident occurred, (2) where the victim resides, or (3) where the accused resides, shall be notified of the report by the Vicar General, Diocesan Attorney or other designee of the Bishop. This notification may be made verbally, but should be followed with a written confirmation of the verbal report directed to the county attorney.

¹ See *Charter* Article 4.

6 A standard report form will be provided by the Diocese to any person requesting information about reporting an incident of abuse, and is available at the Diocesan offices as well as at all Diocesan churches and schools. A standard report form is also available on the Diocesan web site: <http://www.dcdiocese.org/diocese/reportform.pdf>. The report form contains the following:

- (a) the full name, position, address and telephone number of the person making the report.
- (b) the date of the report.
- (c) the full name, position, address and telephone number of the person suspected or accused of misconduct
- (d) the full name, sex, age, address, and telephone number of the child who has been or is suspected to be the victim of sexual abuse, and the name, address and telephone number of the parents or guardian of such victim.
- (e) a description of the incident of sexual abuse including date, time and location.
- (f) the names, positions, addresses and telephone numbers of all eyewitnesses or others having information.
- (g) any additional information bearing on the incident that may be helpful to the investigation.

7 Allegations of abuse which are required to be reported to the public authorities pursuant to paragraph 2 above should be directed to the Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services (SRS hotline 1-800-922-5330).