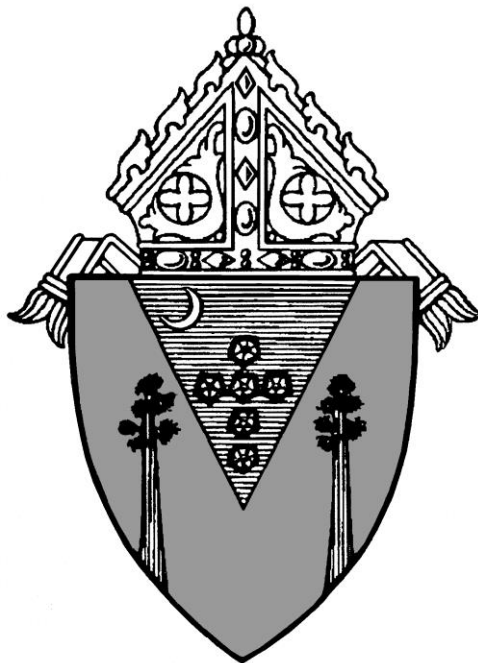


DIOCESE OF SANTA ROSA
POLICY FOR THE PROTECTION
OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE



Serving the Diocese of Santa Rosa in California
Sonoma; Napa; Mendocino; Lake; Humboldt and Del Norte Counties

June 2014

June 2014

Office of the Bishop

Phone: (707) 566-3325
Email: BpVasa@SRDiocese.org



Diocese of Santa

P.O. Box 1297
Santa Rosa, California 95402

June 2014

To the People of God of the Diocese of Santa Rosa:

In the past, a number of children and young people have been subjected to various forms and degrees of abuse by clergy and other representatives of the Church of the Diocese of Santa Rosa. This is extremely distressing. Fortunately, the efforts of the Church have resulted in much better policies, programs and procedures all of which result in greater protection for children. While much progress, thanks be to God, has been made, it is clear to me that we cannot rest or grow complacent about the role which every one of us needs to play in the important work of keeping children safe.

Nothing tears at my heart more severely than the thought that a child has been harmed by a priest or deacon or that one could be harmed by someone appointed by me. I have not and I never will assign anyone to service for the Diocese of Santa Rosa who poses an identifiable risk for any child or young person. Unfortunately I cannot absolutely guarantee that no child will ever again be harmed by someone in the Church, but I can guarantee that I have zero tolerance for anyone who does.

I cannot protect the children of the Diocese without your active assistance and so, I ask of you five things:

- 1) Pray for holiness for clergy, religious and those who work with the Church.
- 2) Read, study and take to heart the enclosed policy and pray for its ongoing success.
- 3) Report to me and to appropriate civil authorities any instances of suspected child abuse or neglect of which you are aware.
- 4) Participate in the mandated training, even when not required to do so as an employee or volunteer of the Parish or Diocese.
- 5) Be vigilant about your Parish volunteers. Ask the coordinators of parish programs: "Have our volunteers been screened and trained?"

I offer to you this revised Diocesan Policy for the Protection of Children, not because the previous versions were inadequate but rather to keep the importance of this protection fresh and alive. In order for any Diocesan plan to protect children to work, I need your help and active participation. Please view this policy, not as a set of rules which you must follow as a kind of formality, but rather as an expression of a desire to keep all children safe. This must stand at the forefront of every youth activity and program sponsored by the Church. If we fail to take these statutes seriously then we fail the children.

June 2014

I would not be so foolish as to promise to you perfection, such a promise could not be kept for we live in an imperfect and sinful world. I can only promise that I will always do my best and that I will exert my best efforts on behalf of the protection of innocent children.

For my part I also want to thank you. The laity of the Church have been exemplary in their kindness to bishops, their understanding toward clergy and their compassion for those wounded by abuse. This is a marvelous witness to faith and a witness to hope and I commend you for it. It is precisely because of the faith and hope of the laity that I too can have great hope for the future of the Church in the North Coast area of California and indeed throughout the United States.

Finally, I beg you to pray for the grace to forgive those who have harmed you, whether clergy or laity. Forgiveness, as difficult as it is, is the graced path to healing. Forgive those who were too blind to act appropriately in the defense of children. Forgive the Church, the bishops and the clergy for their serious defects in responding to these crimes.

Asking every good blessing and grace of God upon you, I am, sincerely yours in Christ Jesus,

+Most Reverend Robert F. Vasa
Bishop of Santa Rosa, California

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PREAMBLE:

Children are a most precious gift from God and it is most distressing to acknowledge that these precious gifts have sometimes been abused and even sexually abused by those whom they have been encouraged to trust. Past efforts by the Church to deal effectively with this problem have, in some cases, been woefully inadequate. In others, the effort has been haphazard and lukewarm at best.

The Diocese of Santa Rosa has had previous policies designed to prevent and properly deal with sexual misconduct by Church personnel. The policies could be deemed effective in the sense that there are now strong safeguards in place both by way of protecting children and prompt reporting. This progress, however, does not justify any type of complacency. There is still much to be done in the way of staff and public education, stricter standards for hiring, greater consistency and conscientiousness about screening of volunteers and certainly vigilance on the part of all relative to any abuse by clergy. Children are a most precious gift from God and nothing short of our best and most concerted effort to protect them is acceptable. This Revised Policy is intended to be clear, direct and firm -- our children deserve nothing less. This policy will be most strictly observed, and while every attempt will be made to avoid harm to innocent employees and volunteers, our first duty is to avoid any harm to the innocent young entrusted to our care.

In light of the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, as revised by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) in June 2011, we have reviewed and revised the Policy for the Diocese of Santa Rosa. The goal of this revised policy is multifaceted. The first and primary goal is to keep children safe from harm. With this in mind we seek to minimize the possibility of any abuse by any cleric, employee or volunteer of the Church by establishing well defined procedures for employee screening and education. We also desire to be supportive of those who have experienced some form of abuse. Thus, the policy also includes reporting of abuse, dealing with perpetrators and assisting those injured. Finally, the publication of this policy is intended to be instructive for the wider community by making them more aware of the vigilance which they need to exercise in helping to keep children safe.

While this policy is designed especially for the protection of children and young people, it also refers to any unethical sexual conduct committed by employees or volunteers. Any time Church personnel use the influence of their role to engage in sexual activity with parishioners or clients, young or adult, they involve themselves in irresponsible, unethical and unacceptable behavior. Such behavior will not be tolerated.

Child abuse is absolutely contrary to the Gospel values of care and concern that Jesus commands us to have for one another. Child abuse is contrary to all that the Catholic Church believes and professes about the dignity of the human person. It is never to be tolerated.

Diocesan Personnel is defined as clergy, religious, employees and volunteers – of the Diocese or its related Parishes, Schools, and Institutions. Diocesan Personnel are bound to maintain the strictest legal and moral standards in their ministerial relationships, especially with regard to children and young people. Abusive conduct toward children or young people is not only a crime it also violates the moral teaching of the Church.

Vigilance is necessary in order to prevent abuse and to see that no child, not one at all, is victimized by such sinful and hurtful behavior. The Diocese of Santa Rosa promulgates this Policy for the Protection of Children and Young People with the goal of fostering that vigilance.

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PREVENTING CHILD ABUSE

The Diocese of Santa Rosa shall implement the following actions to prevent child abuse and to recognize the signs of child abuse:

SCREENING AND EDUCATION: All Diocesan personnel, clergy, members of religious orders, lay employees and volunteers, who in any manner have access to children or young people shall submit to a background check by way of fingerprinting to ensure that no past reported events which could pose a future risk to children are present. The Diocese, each Parish, School and Institution shall retain files on the results of the background checks. This information, though public, will be kept confidential. These same Diocesan personnel will be required to attend presentations and training dealing with the prevention, recognition and reporting requirements for child abuse.

EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN: A curriculum for all children in our Diocesan Catholic Schools and Religious Education Programs will include teaching children about personal dignity and respect, instructing them about appropriate boundaries with adults, and giving them support and guidance about reporting abuse to trusted adults. The program presently implemented in the Diocese of Santa Rosa is **Circle of Grace**.

DIOCESAN REVIEW BOARD: A Board composed of not less than five members shall be maintained. The majority of the Board shall be members of the laity, who are not otherwise employees of the Diocese of Santa Rosa. The Board shall be appointed by the Bishop of the Diocese of Santa Rosa and its members shall have expertise in matters related to child abuse such as reporting laws, counseling, and victim assistance and offender treatment. The Board shall meet at regular intervals, not less than annually, to assist the Bishop of the Diocese of Santa Rosa in implementing the Diocesan Policy for the Protection of Children and Young People. The Board may be asked to review allegations of child abuse by Diocesan personnel, help determine a suitable course of action and oversee that action.

REPORTING CHILD ABUSE

Since even an accusation of sexual misconduct with a child or any kind of child abuse is extremely damaging to an individual's good name and reputation, great care must be taken at the beginning of the process to ensure the rights of both the accuser and the accused. Failure to act on a founded report is irresponsible, but acting too precipitously can cause irreparable harm. In each case the counsel of the Diocesan Review Board is to be sought.

Child abuse of any kind is a violation of the laws of the State of California. Regardless of whether the perpetrator is an adult or a minor, when the victim is a child (a person under the age of 18) child abuse is defined as sexual abuse which includes sexual assault and sexual exploitation, neglect, willful cruelty or unjustified punishment, unlawful corporal punishment or injury, physical injury or traumatic condition inflicted by other than accidental means (*California Penal Code 11165 and following*). Some public or private officials, including the clergy and teachers, are required by law to report suspected child abuse to the civil authorities. **The clergy are not required nor allowed to report a penitential communication intended to be in confidence.** The Diocese of Santa Rosa will comply with the child abuse statutes of the state of California. (<http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/cgi-bin/displaycode?section=pen&group=11001-12000&file=11164-11174.3>).

TO CIVIL AUTHORITIES

MANDATED REPORTERS: All officials in the Diocese of Santa Rosa who are mandated reporters shall report any suspected child abuse to the civil authorities pursuant to law.

VOLUNTARY REPORTERS: All other Diocesan personnel, who are **not** mandated reporters, are encouraged to voluntarily report suspected child abuse to the civil authorities.

TO CHURCH AUTHORITIES

All Diocesan personnel shall also report any suspected child abuse by Diocesan personnel to the Bishop of the Diocese of Santa Rosa or to the Diocesan Director for the Office of Child and Youth Protection (DDOCYP). Persons reporting abuse to the Bishop or DDOCYP may, in addition, also report any suspected child abuse by Diocesan personnel to any member of the Diocesan Review Board. If it is determined that a report has not yet been submitted to civil authorities, either the Bishop or the DDOCYP is to make such a report. It is the responsibility of the Bishop to verify that such a report has been submitted.

THE INVESTIGATION

CIVIL INVESTIGATION: Once a report has been submitted to civil authorities the Diocese, Parish, School or Institution will cooperate fully with the investigation by civil authorities.

ADMINISTRATIVE LEAVE: Pending the outcome of any civil or ecclesial investigation of suspected child abuse by Diocesan personnel, the suspected person shall be temporarily relieved of any Diocesan or Parochial duties. A Priest, in addition to being relieved of his duties shall, if the case warrants and if this does not interfere with a civil investigation, be removed to a non-ministerial residence.

ECCLESIAL INVESTIGATION: If a separate ecclesial investigation is deemed advisable, members of the Diocesan Review Board will oversee any investigation of allegations and may prepare a written report for the Bishop. Should the Diocesan Review Board desire, an independent investigator may be recommended to the Bishop for appointment to assist in this task. The investigation by the Diocese shall in no way interfere with the civil investigation and may even be conducted subsequent to the civil investigation, even if the civil authorities determine that there is insufficient evidence to pursue criminal charges.

The ecclesiastical investigation shall be conducted in a manner to avoid any undue hardship to the accuser or the family of the person filing the complaint.

CONFIDENTIALITY: The findings of the Diocesan investigation and report shall be confidential from the public at large, but shall be available to the Diocesan Review Board and to civil authorities concerning the same matter. If the allegations are judged by the Diocesan Review Board or by civil authorities to be credible and substantial, then appropriate reports shall be made at the Parish, School and Institution level as well.

RESPONSE BY THE VICTIM ASSISTANCE COORDINATOR

When either a civil or ecclesial investigation proves that a child has been harmed by Diocesan Personnel, great efforts shall be exerted on behalf of the victim and the victim's family to facilitate healing, rehabilitation and reconciliation. Even if evidence indicates that neither the Diocese nor the Parish was, in fact, negligent, the Diocese may voluntarily provide the necessary pastoral care, compensation for uninsured medical treatment and uninsured psychological counseling reasonably required by the victim.

The Diocese, through its Victim Assistance Coordinator, shall establish contact with victims who are still minors and their families and demonstrate a sincere commitment to their spiritual and emotional well-being. The Bishop of the Diocese will offer to meet personally with victims and their families.

For accusations by those who are no longer minors reasonable attempts shall be made to establish a pastoral relationship and to offer counseling for those troubled by the effects of past abuse.

CONFIDENTIALITY: The Diocese will not enter into confidentiality agreements, except for grave and substantial reasons brought forth by the victim and noted in the text of the agreement.

PENALTIES and CONSEQUENCES

CLERICS OF THE DIOCESE ACCUSED OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE: Any cleric proven to have committed even a single act of child sexual abuse shall be permanently removed from ministry in or for the Diocese of Santa Rosa in accord with the provisions of canon law. An offending cleric may be offered professional assistance for his own healing and well-being as well as for the purpose of prevention if this is deemed to be warranted by the Diocesan Review Board.

CLERICS ACCUSED OF NON-SEXUAL ABUSE: Any cleric proven to have physically or emotionally abused or mistreated a minor shall be temporarily removed from office, offered professional counseling and thoroughly evaluated for fitness for ecclesiastical duties. Such a cleric will not be offered another assignment in the Diocese of Santa Rosa unless it is clear that he represents no threat, after proper evaluation, to the wellbeing of children. If the cleric belongs to another Religious Community or Diocese, the Major Superior or Bishop of the cleric will be fully informed of the nature of the allegations and proofs brought against him so that prudent decisions may be made in his regard by them.

CLERICS SERVING IN THE DIOCESE BUT BELONGING TO ANOTHER DIOCESE OR RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY: Any cleric belonging to another jurisdiction proven to have committed even a single act of child sexual abuse while serving in the Diocese of Santa Rosa shall be permanently removed from ministry in or for the Diocese of Santa Rosa in accord with the provisions of canon law. An offending cleric may be offered professional assistance by his own Diocese or Religious Community if this is deemed to be warranted by his own proper superiors. The Major Superior or Bishop of the cleric will be fully informed of the nature of the allegations and proofs brought against him to help assure, to the best of the ability of the Diocese of Santa Rosa, that he is not proposed for another assignment, transfer, or residence without the full knowledge of the receiving superior.

OTHER DIOCESAN PERSONNEL ACCUSED OF SEXUAL ABUSE: Any Diocesan Personnel, other than clerics, proven to have committed an act of child sexual abuse, shall not be allowed to hold any positions in the Diocese which would involve children or young people. Continued employment is not guaranteed.

ANY DIOCESAN PERSONNEL ACCUSED OF NON-SEXUAL ABUSE: Other than clerics, Diocesan Personnel credibly accused of having physically or emotionally abused or mistreated a minor shall not be allowed to hold any positions in the Diocese which would involve direct and unsupervised contact with children or young people. Such a person will not be offered another

assignment in the Diocese of Santa Rosa unless it is clear that he or she represents no threat, after proper evaluation, to the wellbeing of children. Continued employment is not guaranteed.

RELATED CONCERNS

While this Policy concerns the abuse of children, it likewise proscribes any unethical sexual conduct on the part of clergy, religious, employees and volunteers of the Diocese of Santa Rosa. Misconduct in this area shall not be tolerated. Substantiated reports of illicit sexual relationships shall result in penalties and consequences comparable to those directed by this policy for the abuse of children.

CONCLUSION

The maintenance of the strictest standards of conduct relative to children and young people is of supreme importance. This Policy by itself is only a set of propositions which will only be as effective as their implementation. The concerted effort and continued vigilance on the part of clergy, religious and laity is necessary if the evil of child abuse is to be eliminated. This Policy represents a firm commitment on the part of the Diocese of Santa Rosa and its personnel to be proactive in our protection of children and young people. It reiterates our insistence on the necessity of prompt and consistent reporting to civil authorities. It holds those guilty of abuse accountable for their immoral and illegal behaviors. It manifests our desire to restore genuine trust in the institution of the Catholic Church.

APPENDIX I

MAKING A REPORT OF CHILD ABUSE TO CIVIL AUTHORITIES

When there is *reasonable suspicion* that a child has been abused by a *family member*, the report is made to *Child Protective Services (CPS)*. When there is *reasonable suspicion* that abuse has occurred by a *non-family member* a report is to be made to the *law enforcement agency* where the alleged abuse occurred. Reports are to be telephoned *immediately* and followed up by a written account within 36 hours of the telephone report.

The following telephone numbers are subject to change. For an accurate listing of current numbers go to www.dss.cahwnet.gov/cdssweb/pg20.htm.

DEL NORTE COUNTY LAW ENFORCEMENT JURISDICTIONS

A. If inside the city limits call the following:

Crescent City PD	464-2133	686 G St. 95531
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B. If outside the city limits (i.e. unincorporated areas) call the following:

Del Norte County Sheriff	464-4191	650 5 th St. Crescent City 95531
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C. CPS

Child Protective Services	464-3191	880 Northcrest Dr., Crescent City 95531
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HUMBOLDT COUNTY LAW ENFORCEMENT JURISDICTIONS

A. If inside the city limits call the following:

Arcata PD	822-2424	736 F. Street, 95521
Blue Lake PD	445-7251	111 Greenwood Rd. 95525
HSU-Arcata	826-5555	#1 Harpst St., 95521
Eureka PD	441-4060	604 C Street, 95501
Ferndale PD	786-4025	600 Berding, 95536
Fortuna	725-7550	621 11 th St. 95540
Rio Dell PD	764-5642	675 Wildwood Ave. 95562
Scotia	445-7251	736 F. Street, Arcata 95521
Garberville	445-7251	736 F. Street, Arcata 95521
Trinidad PD	445-7251	463 Trinity St., 95570

B. If outside the city limits (i.e. unincorporated areas) call the following:

Humboldt County Sheriff	445-7251	736 F. Street, Arcata 95521
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C. CPS

Child Welfare Services 445-6180 929 Koster Street, Eureka, 95501

LAKE COUNTY LAW ENFORCEMENT JURISDICTIONS

A. If inside city limits call the following:

Lakeport Sheriff	263-2690	1220 Martin St. 95453
Clearlake PD	994-8251	14050 Olympic Dr. 95422
Middletown	263-2690	1220 Martin St. 95453

B. If outside the city limits (i. e. unincorporated areas) call the following:

Lake County Sheriff 263-2690 1220 Martin St., Lakeport 95453

A. CPS

Child Welfare Services 262-0235 926 S. Forbes Street, Lakeport, 95453
800-386-4090

MENDOCINO COUNTY LAW ENFORCEMENT JURISDICTIONS

B. If inside the city limits call the following:

Ukiah PD	463-6262	300 Seminary Ave. 95482
Willits PD	459-6122	125 E. Commercial #150 95490
Ft. Bragg PD	964-0200	250 Cypress St. 95437
Mendocino Sheriff	463-4411	951 Low Gap Rd. Ukiah 95482
Pt. Arena Sheriff	961-2421	700 S. Franklin St. #110 Ft. Bragg
Gualala Sheriff	961-2421	700 S. Franklin St. #110 Ft. Bragg

C. If outside the city limits (i.e. unincorporated) areas:

Mendocino County Sheriff 463-4086 125 E. Commercial St. #200 Willits 95490

D. CPS

Child Protective Services 463-7992 727 So. State Street, Ukiah, 95482

NAPA COUNTY LAW ENFORCEMENT JURISDICTIONS

A. If inside the city limits call the following:

American Canyon PD	253-4452	911 Donaldson Way East, 95403
Calistoga PD	942-2810	1235 Washington St., 94515
Napa PD	257-9223	1539 1st St. 94558
St. Helena PD	967-2850	1480 Main St. 94574
Yountville	253-4451	1535 Airport Blvd. Napa 94558 (Sheriff)

B. If outside the city limits (i.e. unincorporated areas) call the following:

Napa County Sheriff	253-4451	1535 Airport Blvd. Napa. 94558
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C. CPS

Child Welfare Services	253-4261	2344 Old Sonoma Road, Napa 94559
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SONOMA COUNTY LAW ENFORCEMENT JURISDICTIONS

A. If inside the city limits call the following:

Cloverdale PD	894-2150	112 Broad St. 95425
Cotati PD	792-4611	201 W. Sierra Ave. 94931
Healdsburg PD	431-3377	238 Center St. 95448
Petaluma PD	778-4372	969 Petaluma Blvd. North 94952
Rohnert Park PD	584-2611	500 City Center Dr. 94928
Santa Rosa PD	528-5222	965 Sonoma Ave. 95404
Sebastopol PD	829-4400	6850 Laguna Park Way 95472
Sonoma PD	996-3601	175 1st St. West 95476
SSU-Rohnert Park	664-4444	1801 E. Cotati Ave. 94928
Windsor PD	838-1234	9291 Old Redwood Hwy Bldg. 300 B 95492

B. If outside the city limits (i.e. unincorporated areas) call the following:

Sonoma County Sheriff	565-2121	2796 Ventura Ave., Santa Rosa, 95403
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D. CPS

Child Protective Services	565-4304	1202 Apollo Way, Santa Rosa 95407
	800-870-7064	

MAKING A REPORT TO CHURCH AUTHORITIES

CHURCH: A report may also be filed with the Diocese of Santa Rosa.

Director, Child/Youth Protection: Julie Sparacio (707) 566-3308
P.O. Box 1297
Santa Rosa, CA 05402

OR

Bishop Bishop Robert Vasa (707) 545-7610
P.O. Box 1297
Santa Rosa, California 95402

WHAT IS NEEDED FOR THE REPORT?

CIVIL AUTHORITIES: A mandated reporter shall make a report when he or she observes, knows or has reasonable suspicion that a child has been the victim of abuse or neglect.

Reasonable suspicion is defined as it is objectively reasonable for a person to entertain a suspicion, based upon the fact that could cause a reasonable person in a like position, drawing, when appropriate, on his or her training and experience, to suspect child abuse or neglect. A report of suspected child abuse should provide the name, age, and address of the child, parent information and incident information.

CHURCH AUTHORITIES: After a mandated reporter has submitted the suspected child abuse or neglect report to the civil authorities, he or she is to provide a written account of the suspected child abuse or neglect to the Diocesan Director of the Child and Youth Protection Office or to the Diocesan Bishop. In addition to the information noted above Church personnel must have the name, address and phone number of the person filing the report. It may not be possible for the Church to pursue a proper investigation without this information should there be a need for follow up questions. The person filing the report will not be identified to the child, the parents, or to the perpetrator.

WHEN SHOULD AN INCIDENT BE REPORTED? For mandated reporters, the laws of the State of California require that the report be made as soon as is reasonably possible and followed up with a written report within 36 hours.

APPENDIX II

PROCEDURES FOR THE UTILIZATION OF THE DIOCESAN REVIEW BOARD

CURRENT ACCUSATION OF *RECENT* CHILD ABUSE: When a report is received that a child has been the recent subject of abuse by Diocesan Personnel, the matter shall immediately be referred to the proper civil authorities.

The Diocesan Review Board shall be informed of the allegation. Names of both the victim and the accused shall be omitted as far as is feasible.

Consultation with the Review Board shall also take place to help determine what intermediate steps (if any) need to be taken in regard to the Diocesan Personnel pending the outcome of the civil investigation. A member of the Review Board may be asked to contact law enforcement to ensure that the actions of the Diocese do not interfere with those of the civil authorities. Temporary relief from duties is the norm.

When the civil and the initial ecclesial investigations are completed the Review Board shall be convened to discuss and give counsel regarding the future of the accused. While the Board's recommendations are not binding on the Bishop, he is not to act contrary to their recommendations unless he is able to present to them good and objectively valid reasons for doing so. At all times the Articles of the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, The Essential Norms for Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors and The Code of Canon Law are to be observed.

CURRENT ACCUSATION OF *PAST* CHILD ABUSE: When a report is received from an adult who claims to have been the subject of abuse as a child by Diocesan Personnel, the matter shall be immediately reported to the appropriate civil authorities regardless of the statute of limitations.

The accused shall be temporarily relieved of ecclesial duties unless the Review Board unanimously determines that more time is needed to collect more and evaluative information.

When sufficient information has been collected the Review Board shall be convened to discuss and give counsel regarding the assessment of the accusation and the future of the accused. While the Board's recommendations are not binding upon the Bishop, he is not to act contrary to their recommendations unless he is able to present to them good and objectively valid reasons for doing so. At all times the Articles of the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, The Essential Norms for Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors and The Code of Canon Law are to be observed.

Accurate summaries of meetings and accurate records of decisions made at the Diocesan Review Board meetings whether held in person, by phone or through e-mail are to be kept at the Chancery.

Reasonable attempts shall be made to establish a pastoral relationship and to offer counseling for those troubled by the effects of past abuse.

PASTORAL ASSISTANCE FOR THOSE WHO SUFFERED *PAST* CHILD ABUSE

When a report is received by an adult who claims to have been the subject of abuse as a child either by someone in another Diocese or by someone now deceased the Bishop shall immediately notify the Diocesan Review Board and seek counsel.

The Victim Assistance Coordinator (VAC) shall seek out available help, and shall make contact with the Victim Assistance Coordinator of the Diocese or Religious Community involved. The VAC shall contact the person and offer to meet with them to help assess their needs and to facilitate a meeting, if desirable, with the local Bishop or with the Bishop or Religious Superior of the offending person.

If the accused is still serving in some capacity in another Diocese, the Bishop of that Diocese shall immediately be apprised of the allegation. All pertinent information shall be made available to that Bishop so that he and his own Diocesan Review Board may adequately consider the matter.

The Victim Assistance Coordinator shall be in close contact with the Victim Assistance Coordinator of the other Diocese and shall offer, as far as feasible, the services of the Diocesan Review Board. At all times the Articles of the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, The Essential Norms for Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors and The Code of Canon Law are to be observed.

The Victim Assistance Coordinator shall keep accurate summaries of meetings and accurate records of decisions made at meetings, whether held in person, by phone or through e-mail. These summaries and records are to be kept at the Chancery and forwarded to the pertinent Diocese or Religious Community.

APPENDIX III

DIOCESAN COMMUNICATION POLICY

In keeping with the recommendation of the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, it is the general policy of the Diocese of Santa Rosa that information it possesses is shared unless there are compelling reasons to maintain a higher degree of confidentiality. Matters under litigation, unsubstantiated allegations, and sensitive matters about deceased persons, information which affects a minor or information which a victim has asked the Diocese to keep private would all qualify as possible exceptions to the general policy of transparency.

The Diocese will communicate any information it has to the proper authorities when there is a danger to the health or wellbeing of children or other illegal activity.

The Diocese, in consultation with the Diocesan Review Board for those matters relating to the well being of children, will issue suitable and explanatory Press Releases and host Press Conferences if this seems advisable. If the name of the victim is not released by civil authorities the Diocese will not reveal the name. If the name of the accused is not revealed by civil authorities and if the accused has been removed from any Diocesan position pending a thorough investigation then this name will likewise not be released. Even an unfounded allegation of child sexual abuse can have dire consequences for the life of the accused and such individuals have a right to maintain their reputation pending a more thorough investigation of the matter.

In the event that names are revealed and an accusation proves to be unfounded then the Diocese shall insist that the information about the unfounded allegation receive as much emphasis in the Press as the revelation of the original claim.

The Diocese shall seek the assistance of the Media as well as its own internal communication media to publicize the presentation of its Safe Environment Programs in the parishes, schools, and institutions of the Diocese of Santa Rosa. As a general rule the spokesperson for the Diocese of Santa Rosa shall be the Diocesan Bishop or other appropriate Staff person designated by him depending on the nature of the matter being discussed. In general an advance statement will be prepared and further questions clarified as necessary.

A complete list of the various local Media, including television and radio, which cover news matters affecting Northern California and the designated Media Representatives shall be maintained at the Chancery to assure the ability to deliver news matters to them in a timely fashion.