

DIOCESE OF COLUMBUS REVIEW BOARD POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

I. Purpose of Review Board

The Review Board of the Diocese of Columbus is established under the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, and the Essential Norms for Diocesan/Eparchial Policies Dealing with Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Priests, Deacons, or Other Church Personnel, as published by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. The Charter and Essential Norms are attached hereto as Appendix A and Appendix B, and are incorporated into these Policies and Procedures. The actions of the Board of Review are to protect the children in the Diocese of Columbus, and are taken as part of the internal administration of the disciplinary process of the Roman Catholic Church. The Board of Review will assist the Bishop by:

- A. The assessment of allegations of sexual abuse of minors by priests, deacons and other church personnel in order to advise the Bishop as to whether the allegations appear to be credible;
- B. Making recommendations concerning fitness for ministry in particular cases; and
- C. Reviewing the policy and procedures of the Diocese for dealing with allegations of sexual abuse of minors at least every two years to recommend to the Bishop any appropriate modifications.

II. Formation of the Board of Review

The Board of Review shall consist of at least five members in full communion with the Catholic Church, the majority of which will be lay persons not in the employ of the Diocese. At least one member of the Board of Review shall be a priest, and at least one member shall have expertise in the treatment of sexual abuse of minors.

The initial members of the Board of Review shall be appointed by the Bishop. Two of the initial members as selected by the members shall have initial terms of two years each. The other three members will have an initial term of three years. Terms after the initial terms shall be for three years. Any member of the Board of Review can serve a maximum of two terms.

In the event of termination of membership for any reason, including expiration of a term, the remaining members of the Board shall nominate a replacement member. The nomination shall be presented to the Bishop, and upon approval by the Bishop, the nominee shall become a member of the Board of Review.

III. Operating Procedures

The Board of Review shall have the following operating procedures:

- A. The members of the Board shall annually elect a member to be Chairperson, and a member to

be Secretary. The Chairperson shall act as spokesperson for the Board of Review, and the Secretary shall maintain the records of the Board of Review. Members are eligible for reelection without limitation. The Chairperson shall preside over the meetings of the Board of Review, and if the Chairperson is not present, the Secretary shall preside over the meeting. If neither officer is present, the members present shall elect a member to preside over the meeting, and a member to maintain the records of the meeting.

B. The fiscal year of the Board of Review shall be from July 1 through June 30.

C. The Board of Review may adopt any operating rules which the members determine appropriate for the conduct of business. It is anticipated that the deliberation of matters before the Board will be primarily and preferentially by discussion, and that actions of the Board will be taken by consensus of the members. If consensus is not reached, a matter presented to the Board may be decided by vote, with each member having one vote, and a majority of the votes of the members present shall control. The actions taken by the Board shall be formalized in minutes which shall be prepared under authority of the Secretary, and signed by the Secretary.

D. All deliberations and actions taken by the Board of Review shall be confidential. A disclosure of any information shall be made solely to the Bishop or the Bishop's representative. If the Board of Review desires or recommends further disclosure of any matters, the Board shall advise the Bishop as to the matter to be disclosed and the method of disclosure. If the Bishop requests, the Bishop and the Review Board would review and discuss information prior to disclosure. Within the confines of law and the Norms, and of respect for the privacy and the reputation of the individuals involved, the Board will deal as openly as possible with members of the community.

IV. Procedures for Assistance in Assessing Allegations

A. Any allegation of sexual abuse of a minor which is made against any priest, deacon, or other church personnel shall be received by the designated Diocesan personnel as stated in the Charter and the Essential Norms. The Diocesan personnel will immediately determine if the allegations are credible, as provided in the Charter, Article 5. If the allegation is determined not credible, no further action shall be taken. If the allegation is admitted, or is determined to be credible, the procedures in the Charter, Article 5, shall be followed.

B. When an allegation is referred to the Board, the following procedures will be observed:

1. The Secretary of the Board of Review will be requested by the Diocesan representative immediately to call a meeting of the Board of Review. The Secretary will call a meeting within 14 days.

The Bishop or his representative shall present to the Board of Review the allegations, and all the materials received and considered by the Diocesan representative. The Bishop or his representative shall personally attend the meeting of the Board of Review to discuss the allegations.

2. The information presented to the Board of Review may include any written statements presented by the alleged victim, and any statements by the clergy or church personnel involved.

3. The Board of Review may request information in addition to the information presented by the Bishop or the Bishop's representative. The additional information may consist of written materials or statements, and may include a personal appearance by the alleged victim or the clergy or church personnel involved, if the Board of Review determines such a personal appearance would be appropriate.

4. After receipt of all information determined necessary by the Board of Review, the Board of Review will prepare a written recommendation to the Bishop stating the determination of the Board of Review as to the allegations presented. The Board of Review shall set as its goal to present its recommendation to the Bishop within ten working days after receipt of all information.

5. Upon receipt of the recommendation, the Bishop may accept or reject the recommendation of the Board of Review. The assessment of the allegations by the Board of Review, and the determination by the Bishop, shall be communicated to the alleged victim and to the clergy or church personnel involved immediately upon completion of the determination by the Bishop. The information provided to the alleged victim and the clergy or church personnel involved as to the determination will include information as to referral of the case to the Provincial Appellate Review Board established under the Essential Norms, Paragraph 6.

V. Assistance in Assessing Fitness for Ministry

In the event sexual abuse by a priest or a deacon is admitted, or is established, the Bishop shall follow Canon Law and the Charter, Article 5, as to determining the status of the priest or deacon in ministry. Prior to making his determination under Canon Law, the Bishop shall request the Board of Review to assist the Bishop in assessing the fitness for ministry of the priest or deacon involved. The Bishop may also seek assistance from the Board of Review in determining the fitness for service in the Church as to an accused who is not a priest or deacon.

If the Bishop requests assistance in assessing fitness for ministry, the Bishop shall present to the Board of Review the information available to the Bishop as to the acts involved, and any personal information, such as age, present status of ministry (such as active or retired), and any pertinent health or infirmity information. Upon receipt of the information, the Board of Review shall recommend to the Bishop whether the provisions of the Charter, Article 5, should be applied, or whether some other action as to the ministry of the clergy or church personnel involved should be applied.

VI. Review of Policies and Procedures

The Charter, Article 2, provides that a printed form will be available for use in presenting an allegation to the Diocese. The Board of Review shall review the complaint form, and the complaint form shall be adopted for use in the Diocese upon approval by the Board of Review.

The complaint form shall be a part of periodic public announcements, so that the public will be aware of the procedure to make allegations of abuse of minors to the Diocese. The Board of Review will review and approve the form of public announcements, and the method of making the announcements, at least annually.

The Essential Norms, Paragraph 2, require the Diocese to have a written policy on the sexual abuse of minors by priests, deacons, or other church personnel. This policy must be adopted within three months after the effective date of the Norms. The Board of Review shall be presented with the form of written policy to be adopted by the Diocese, and the Board of Review may request the Bishop to provide additional information or background to clarify or explain the policies as proposed. The Board of Review shall review the proposed policies and procedures, and shall provide written comments to the Bishop as to the proposed policies and procedures.

The abuse policies and procedures of the Diocese shall be subject to review and modification by the Bishop, if appropriate or necessary. Any proposed amendments shall be presented to the Board of Review for consideration prior to adoption by the Bishop, and the Board of Review shall provide the Bishop with any comments as to the proposed amendments.

The Board of Review shall make a full review of the current policies and procedures of the Diocese at least once in each two-year calendar period. The Board of Review shall recommend to the Bishop any modifications which the Board of Review determines to be appropriate to ensure that the policies and procedures are in full compliance with the Charter and the Essential Norms, and provide for the protection of minors within the spirit and the letter of the Charter and the Essential Norms. The Board of Review shall present to the Bishop any recommendations for changes in the policies and procedures.

VII. Providing Additional Advice or Responses

In addition to those actions described above, the Board of Review may provide any other advice to the Bishop as to sexual abuse of minor cases as requested by the Bishop, or as determined to be appropriate by the Board of Review. This advice or response may be applied retrospectively or prospectively. This advice or response may include, but is not limited to, review and recommendation as to the Outreach program referred to in the Charter, Article 1, consideration of any request for confidentiality of settlement agreements as referred to in the Charter, Article 3, the Communications policy referred to in the Charter, Article 7, and review of the Safe Environmental programs to be adopted under the Charter, Article 12. The Board of Review may also offer assistance in the cooperation with other churches and ecclesial communities, religious bodies, institutions of learning and other interested organizations in conducting research in the area of sexual abuse of minors, as referred to in the Charter, Article 16.

VIII. Relationship of These Regulations to the Canon Law of the Church

In the event that any of the above contained norms or norms referenced above are in conflict with the canon law of the Church currently in force, the provisions of canon law will prevail.

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