

DIOCESE OF JOLIET'S PROCESS FOR RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS OF SEXUAL ABUSE OF MINORS AND/OR VULNERABLE ADULTS BY CLERGY MEMBERS

The Diocese of Joliet (the "Diocese") follows the [Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People](#) (the "Charter"), established by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in 2002. The Charter has been revised several times, most recently in 2018. The Charter was established to address allegations of the sexual abuse of minors by clergy and also includes guidelines for reconciliation, healing, accountability, and steps to prevent abuse.

The Diocese takes seriously every allegation that is brought forth, be it reported by an individual who suffered abuse or a third party. The first step is always the same: All real-time allegations of abuse and/or neglect of minors are encouraged to be reported to the state child welfare agency – the DCFS hotline (1-800-25-ABUSE) here in Illinois – and the local civil authorities. The Diocese also reports each real-time allegation in accordance with the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act and to local civil authorities and offers the help of our victim assistance coordinator to the victim/survivor. The victim assistance coordinator is available to talk with and listen to the victim/survivor and provide outreach and support services to the victim/survivor and his or her family. The victim assistance coordinator is also able to assist a victim/survivor in making a report to the authorities. The victim assistance coordinator may be reached at 815-263-6467.

Per [diocesan policy](#), upon receipt of an allegation of the sexual abuse of a minor by a cleric, the bishop is informed and the diocesan investigation begins.

The Diocese investigates every allegation received. The same investigative process is followed whether the accused is alive, deceased or already listed on the diocesan list of clergy members with substantiated allegation(s) of sexual abuse of a minor or vulnerable adult. If the cleric member is in active ministry, he is removed while the investigation is ongoing and advised of his right to counsel. If public authorities conduct a criminal investigation against the cleric, the diocese defers its own investigation until that public inquiry is concluded and cooperates fully with civil authorities.

Following the diocesan investigation, allegations against clergy not already on the diocesan public list go before the diocesan review board for a determination of whether the allegation is substantiated. The review board advises the bishop of its determination. Clergy members determined to have substantiated allegations are permanently removed from ministry and their names and assignments are published on the diocesan list. When an allegation is found to be unsubstantiated, the cleric is returned to active ministry.

When the Diocese receives an allegation of the sexual abuse of a minor by an extern priest, i.e., a priest from another diocese, religious order priests or religious men and women, the bishop of the other diocese or religious superior of the order is notified of the allegation. If the priest or religious man or woman is in active ministry in the Diocese, their ability to minister in the Diocese is immediately revoked (removal of faculties) while the allegation is investigated. The other diocese or religious order oversees the investigation into the allegation utilizing its own review board process and advises the Diocese of the outcome.

Anyone who knows or suspects that a child has been abused or neglected is encouraged to make a report to civil authorities. Please contact the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services hotline at 1-800-25-ABUSE and the local police department.