



DIOCESE OF KANSAS CITY-ST. JOSEPH

Safety Policy for Parishes regarding Sexual Abuse Allegations and Parish Involvement by Sex Offenders or Suspects

Approved by Most Reverend Robert W. Finn, effective January 1, 2014

Purpose:

This Policy provides guidelines to a parish with a parishioner who (1) is a registered sex offender, or has been convicted of a crime requiring sex offender registry; (2) is currently being investigated for sexual abuse of a minor or vulnerable adult; or (3) engages in suspicious behavior with a minor or vulnerable adult. The goal of this Policy is to protect children, youth and vulnerable adults from victimization, while promoting a safe and secure environment for both the offender/suspect and the parish community. Nothing in this Policy is intended to prohibit or discourage any person from attending or participating in a liturgical service or the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The seal of Confession remains absolute; any information, allegations or admissions given in the Sacrament cannot be used in any manner.

Guidelines:

If a pastor (or pastoral administrator) has knowledge of a parishioner who (1) identifies as a sex offender, registered or otherwise; (2) is currently being investigated for sexual abuse of a minor or vulnerable adult, including the possession or distribution of child pornography; or (3) engages in suspicious behavior with a minor or vulnerable adult, the pastor shall contact the Ombudsman. The pastor in consultation with the Ombudsman and the Office of Child and Youth Protection will develop a safety plan for attendance by such a parishioner at Mass and other parish functions. The offender/suspect may not participate in any special role in parish activities where, in the judgment of the pastor/parochial administrator, this participation would put minors or vulnerable adults at risk. The pastor will have responsibility for the implementation of the safety plan. It is the responsibility of the offender/suspect to follow the safety plan. Further, it is the offender/suspect's responsibility to know and comply with all registration, reporting and other laws.

If the pastor receives an *allegation* of sexual abuse of a minor or vulnerable adult by a parishioner, the pastor shall call the Missouri Child Abuse or Elder Abuse hotline, law enforcement, and the Office of Child and Youth Protection.

Enforcement:

If a parishioner violates this Policy or a safety plan, the pastor may contact law enforcement and/or contact the Office of Child and Youth Protection for further assessment and guidance. In such a situation, the pastor or his designee may file a report or sign a complaint with law enforcement on behalf of the Diocese.

THE CATHOLIC CENTER

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