

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Reporting requirements

(from the Diocese of Austin Policies on Ethics and Integrity in Ministry, 2016)

1. Allegation of Abuse of Minors or Vulnerable Adults
 - a. In accordance with Texas law, any citizen who has cause to believe a minor or vulnerable adult is being, or may have been, abused, is required to report the information to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (TDFPS) or local civil authorities (police). To report child or elder abuse, TDFPS maintains a 24-hour abuse hotline at 1-800-252-5400; or a report may be made on their web site at www.txabusehotline.org. *This reporting requirement is the same for allegations against Church personnel, a parent, guardian or any other person.*
 - b. **The investigation of allegations of abuse is the responsibility of civil authorities.** Church personnel should not conduct any investigation of abuse allegations unless directed to do so by civil authorities.
 - c. Reports of suspected or known abuse may be made anonymously to civil and diocesan authorities, unless otherwise required to be disclosed by canon law or State of Texas law. However, disclosure of the informant's name may be necessary to conduct an appropriate investigation or take other action.
2. Allegation of an EIM Policy Violation
 - a. Concurrent with the report to civil authorities, suspected or known abuse of a minor or vulnerable person that may involve Church personnel, or any suspected or observed violation of an EIM policy, shall be reported to any of the following persons:
 - i. the immediate supervisor;
 - ii. the pastor of the parish or principal of the school; or
 - iii. a designated representative of the Diocese (contact information is on page 5 of these policies).
 - b. Once reported to civil authorities, suspected or known abuse of a minor or vulnerable person that may involve a parent, guardian or any other person should be reported to the pastor or principal and documented, including a copy or case number of the report to TDFPS.
 - c. It is recommended that persons making a report of abuse or policy violation use the Notice of Concern form (See Appendix A) to maintain documentation of the report. If a report to TDFPS was made, a copy or case number of that report should be included with the Notice of Concern.
 - d. The Diocese will cooperate fully with investigations by all civil authorities and will report indications of illegal actions discovered during policy violation investigations to civil authorities.

Together we are *Fulfilling our Commitment to Heal and Protect.*