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of
LAFAYETTE-IN-INDIANA

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Diocese of Lafayette-in-Indiana
Office of Communications

Communication Policy for Allegations of Sexual Abuse by Clergy or Other Church Personnel

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Diocese of Lafayette Office of Communications
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 COM 2019-1

DOCUMENT INFORMATION

Document Owner	Diocese of Lafayette-in-Indiana
Document Location	SharePoint/
Associated Documents	List of documents that are referenced in the policy or other policies that reference this policy. List the associated documents by their official name and policy number.

REVIEW

As author, reviewer or subject matter expert, my signature indicates that this document accurately, completely and comprehensively reflects the good of the diocese. Furthermore, current Diocesan policies, directives and guidelines have been considered in the creation of this policy.

Role	Name	Depart.	Signature	Date
Author	Gabby Hlavek	Office of Communications		
Reviewer (insert the person's title)	Very Reverend Theodore C. Dudzinski, V.G.	Office of the Chancellor		
Reviewer (insert the person's title)	Deacon Mike Mescall	Office of Communications		
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1.0	New Document	June 19, 2019

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Policy Purpose Statement:

The Diocese of Lafayette-in-Indiana recognizes the importance of disseminating full and accurate information to the public regarding sexual abuse of minors by clergy. The Diocese of Lafayette-in-Indiana is committed to sharing information openly and willingly about credible and substantiated claims of sexual abuse of minors by clergy in the diocese.

The communications policy of the Diocese of Lafayette-in-Indiana is intended to reflect the spirit of “transparency and openness” referred to in the Dallas Charter, while maintaining respect for privacy and the reputation of those individuals involved.

Policy Scope:

It is the Diocese of Lafayette-in-Indiana’s intent to foster a spirit of understanding between itself, Catholics in the diocese, and the community by communicating as openly as possible, whether the story is positive or reflects new complaints. It is also the mission of the diocesan policy to promote the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, and to insure the community is properly informed concerning all policies, procedures, and resources that apply to the issues of sexual abuse of minors.

Policy:

Consistent with the provisions cited above, Office of Communications’ activities are guided by the following primary values:

- The alleged victim’s welfare, and the protection of children and young people;
- The Church’s pastoral responsibility in the world and to its members, staff and volunteers;
- The rights and welfare of the accused; and
- The Church’s credibility with the commercial media and their various audiences.

With these values in mind, the Office of Communication acts as proactively as possible to report substantiated allegations of its clergy, employees and/or volunteers to the public and to its stakeholders (whether they be parishioners, parents, students, faculty, volunteers, etc.) in a timely manner whenever necessary through press releases, statements read at Masses and published in bulletins, through email notifications and postings on its official web site, social media and *The Catholic Moment*. *The Catholic Moment* remains the official communication channel of the diocese.

The communication policy for the Diocese of Lafayette-in-Indiana in matters dealing with sexual abuse of minors by clergy is as follows.

1. The Bishop is the official spokesperson for the Diocese of Lafayette-in-Indiana. The Communications Manager serves as the main media contact and serves as spokesperson for the Bishop and the Diocese for reports on sexual abuse of a minor by clergy, when appropriate.
2. The Communications Manager administers the media policy. No contact or response to media should be initiated through any other diocesan office. If media representatives initiate contact with diocesan staff, the inquiry must be referred to the Office of Communications.

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3. The Office of Communications will strive for the highest professional standards in responding to the media in a timely fashion. While always respecting the dignity, privacy and reputation of the individuals involved, the diocese is committed to report relevant information concerning ministerial misconduct with honesty and clarity to the general public as appropriate.
 - a. Exceptions to this policy include matters under litigation, matters currently being investigated by civil authorities, unsubstantiated allegations, and information which a victim-survivor has asked the diocese to keep private.
 - b. While it is always the diocese's intention to be as open and complete as possible in its communications, decisions regarding any public statement must be made on a case-by-case basis. The diocese, as a matter of policy, will neither confirm nor deny specific details in cases that may be in the public eye because of current litigation. We are committed to allowing the objective review of allegations and the facts involved occur in the proper forum. The legal process must be allowed to come to a just conclusion to questions in this matter.
 - c. The Manager of Communications will consult with the members of the Review Board and others whose responsibilities come to bear on the specific allegations. All responses and statements to the media will be guided by the hierarchy of values identified at the outset of this policy for the continued protection of all its Catholic people, especially the young and vulnerable among them.

4. All policies for reporting sexual abuse are written and communicated in multiple formats, including print and electronically. Policies and policy updates are distributed to all parish and school locations. Policies and policy updates are distributed to all parishes, schools and other diocesan institutions, and posted on the diocesan website. To report a case of sexual abuse, the following number should be used: (765) 464-4988. This number is readily available to the public on the diocesan website, through the diocese's Catholic Education Office and its website, and is regularly published in the diocese's newspaper, *The Catholic Moment*.

5. Annual updates about the Diocese of Lafayette-in-Indiana's compliance with the "Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People" are widely communicated to the Faithful throughout the year through *The Catholic Moment*.

6. Information about how to report sexual abuse and agencies to contact if you are a victim/survivor of sexual abuse – both within the Church structure and external social service agencies -- is updated annually and distributed to parishes, schools and Catholic institutions, and posted on the diocesan web site.

7. When a clergy offender's name becomes public, either because of criminal charges being filed by the district attorney or after substantiation by the independent investigation, the following information will be released to the public and media via the diocesan website:
 - a. Name, ordination date, action taken/date effective, current status/date effective

Contact Information

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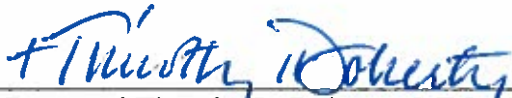
Email: communications@dol-in.org

Policy Approval

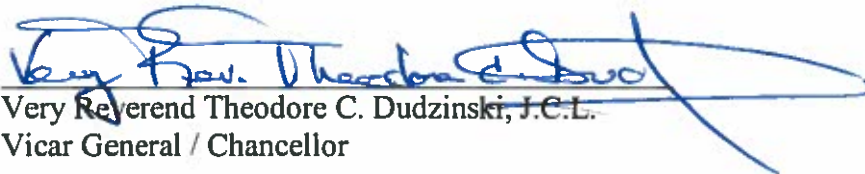
DECREE

By means of this general decree, and in accordance with particular law in the Diocese of Lafayette-in-Indiana, I hereby establish the policy concerning Communication Policy for Allegations of Sexual Abuse by Clergy or Other Church Personnel within the Diocese of Lafayette-in-Indiana. The decree will become effective June 19, 2019, superseding all current policies concerning Communication Policy for Allegations of Sexual Abuse by Clergy or Other Church Personnel according to the norms of the Code of Canon Law (1983).

Given at the Chancery of the Diocese of Lafayette-in-Indiana on this 19th day of June in the year of Our Lord, 2019.



Most Reverend Timothy L. Doherty, S.T.L., Ph.D.
Bishop of the Diocese of Lafayette-in-Indiana



Very Reverend Theodore C. Dudzinski, J.C.L.
Vicar General / Chancellor