



## Diocese of Rockford

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Vicar General/Moderator of the Curia

TO: All Priests, Superintendents, Principals, Department Heads,  
Program Directors, Regional Directors of Religious Education,  
Parish Business Managers, and High School Bookkeepers

FROM: Rev. Msgr. Glenn L. Nelson *GLN*

DATE: February 22, 2021

RE: ***Revisions to the Norms for the Prohibition of Sexual Abuse of  
Minors***

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The Diocese's ***Norms for the Prohibition of Sexual Abuse of Minors and Sexual Misconduct with Adults: Education, Prevention, Assistance to Persons Making a Report, Investigation, and Procedures for Determination of Fitness for Ministry/Employment***, has been revised and approved by Bishop David J. Malloy.

The revision is the result of the efforts of the Diocese's Review Board which is charged with periodically reviewing the Norms and recommending revisions when appropriate. Some of the proposed revisions considered by the Review Board arose out of the inquiry by the Illinois Attorney General's Office of the six Illinois arch/dioceses. The progress of that inquiry is resuming after being on hold since March 2020 due to the Illinois Governor's restrictions on meetings and gatherings.

The Norms will be effective beginning March 1, 2021 and published in English and Spanish on the Diocese's website here: <https://www.rockforddiocese.org/documents/> under Safe Environment. The password is: **#safedio**. An advance copy of the revised Norms is enclosed for you.

Please inform your employees and volunteers and ask them to access their online Virtus account to read and sign the Acknowledgement Form by June 30, 2021. We ask you to do the same. The main changes in the 2021 Norms are the following:

- References to "victim" throughout the document, and in the title of the document, have been changed to "person reporting to have been sexually abused as a minor".
- Section 1.2 adds the definitions of vulnerable adult and of child pornography.
- Section 1.6 describes the procedure for making a report against a bishop.
- Section 1.7 provides an overview of the response to a report of sexual abuse of a minor.

- Section 1.8(f) clarifies that a report of sexual abuse of a minor will be investigated regardless of the accused's status as deceased, removed, laicized, or no longer employed by the Diocese, or the limitations period for criminal prosecution or civil legal action.
- Section 1.9 clarifies that mandated reporters who have reasonable cause to believe a person has been sexually abused as a minor are required to report this, even if the person who may have been abused is no longer a minor, and even if the accused is deceased, no longer in ministry or employed by the Diocese, and regardless of how long ago the alleged abuse occurred.
- Section 1.10(a) and Section 5.2 clarify that a person's duty to report to the Diocese known or suspected sexual abuse of a minor is in addition to the person's duty to report the same to the Department of Children and Family Services.
- Section 1.10(b) gives a clear description of those individuals who are mandated reporters under this Policy.
- Section 3.1 has been revised to state that the Diocese shall always, instead of when appropriate, offer to arrange and pay for counseling for person reporting to have been sexually abused as a minor. This has been our practice for many years.
- Section 4.2(d) and (e) set forth the procedure for investigating a report made against a priest of a religious order.
- Section 4.3 (c) and (d) set forth the procedure for investigating a report made against a priest of another diocese.
- Section 5.8(b) has been revised to state the practice of the Diocese which is to remove from ministry or employment position a person accused of sexual abuse of a minor, pending completion of an investigation.
- Section 5.8(c) has been revised to state the practice of the Diocese which is to report to law enforcement every allegation of sexual abuse of a minor it receives, regardless of the accused's status as deceased, laicized, removed, or no longer employed by the Diocese, or the limitations period for criminal prosecution or civil legal action.
- Section 5.8(f) has been revised to state the practice of the Diocese which is to notify the affected parish, school or other affected community that the accused person has been temporarily removed from ministry or employment position due to a report of sexual abuse of a minor against the accused, pending the outcome of an investigation.
- Sections 5.13 and 5.14 state the procedure when an accused cleric is the subject of a criminal investigation and/or the subject of a civil lawsuit.
- Section 5.15 states that if a person making a report of abuse asks whether the accused has had other reports of abuse made against him or her, the Diocese will disclose substantiated, if any, but not unsubstantiated allegations, against the accused.

- The title of Article Six is now titled, “Actions Following a Completed Investigation.”
- Section 6.1(c) to state the current practice of publishing on the Diocese’s website the names of accused clerics against whom a substantiated finding of sexual abuse of a minor has been made.
- Section 6.1(d) has been revised to state that a cleric removed from ministry due to a substantiated allegation of abuse wishing to move his residence to another diocese must obtain approval from the Bishop. The requirement that the Bishop disclose the circumstances of the removed priest to the ordinary of the diocese to which a permanently removed priest wishes to move has been the practice for many years.