

# SPECIAL REPORT

## PROTECTING GOD’S CHILDREN – the Diocese of Kalamazoo’s response and resources

*“We can never become complacent. It is not enough for us to be able to say that we avoid evil; we must also commit ourselves to do good, to pursue holiness and to foster a safe environment of Christ-like love, that is pure, chaste, and selfless.”*

~ Bishop Paul J. Bradley, Letter to the Faithful, August 20, 2018



Over the course of the last month, the Catholic Church has been in the news for sex abuse scandals that have shaken many of the faithful and left many wondering what has been and is being done; what resources are available; what steps are being taken to protect all people from predatory behavior. This Special Report aims to provide information on the policies, procedures and resources provided by the local Church as well as a look at what is being planned at the national level by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

**For additional information, please visit: [www.diokzoo.org](http://www.diokzoo.org).**

### Dealing with allegations:

The Diocesan Delegate, Deacon Pat Hall who was appointed by Bishop Bradley, upon receipt of an allegation of sexual abuse proceeds as directed by diocesan policy, the Essential Norms of the Charter and State Law.



Dcn. Pat Hall

#### The following steps are taken:

1. Notify the Bishop
2. Initial investigation
3. Offer victim services
4. Report to local law enforcement
5. Convene the Review Board

For reference to diocesan policy see Dealing with Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors:

<https://www.diokzoo.org/documents/2016/4/dokpolicy.pdf>

## Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People

The Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People is a comprehensive set of procedures originally established by the USCCB in June 2002 for addressing allegations of sexual abuse of minors by Catholic clergy. The Charter also includes guidelines for reconciliation, healing, accountability, and prevention of future acts of abuse. It was revised in 2005, 2011, and 2018.

The Charter directs action in all the following matters:

- Creating a safe environment for children and young people;
- Healing and reconciliation of victims and survivors;
- Making prompt and effective response to allegations;
- Cooperating with civil authorities;
- Disciplining offenders;
- Providing for means of accountability for the future to ensure the problem continues to be effectively dealt with through the Secretariat of Child and Youth Protection and the National Review Board.

### What is the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People?

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### What did it replace?

The development of the Charter's principles is built on the work of the Bishops' Ad Hoc Committee on Sexual Abuse in the mid 1990's and their development of the document entitled "Restoring Trust." During 2000-2001, the Ad Hoc Committee shifted their focus to education, prevention, and review of diocesan policies for child safe environments. Meetings with victims and victim advocacy groups were conducted and the "Restoring Trust" materials were incorporated and further developed into the document now known as the Charter.

**Sexual Misconduct  
Questions & Reporting Line:  
877-802-0115**

### Who drafted the Charter?

The Charter was drafted by eight members of the Bishops' Ad Hoc committee on Sexual Abuse, two individuals who are experts in treating sexual abusers, and two lay people, one of whom was a victim of abuse himself.

### Who is a minor in the Charter's view?

In both civil and canon law a minor is anyone under the age of 18. Until 1994, under Canon Law, a minor was considered any person under the age of 16. In 1994, Canon Law was changed for dioceses/eparchies of the USCCB so that anyone under the age of 18 was considered to be a minor. In 2001, it changed for the universal Church.

### Has the Church in the United States ever enacted a uniform policy such as this?

In the past, the Ad Hoc Committee on Sexual Abuse formulated and recommended sexual abuse policies that were geared to combat sexual abuse by clergy. They were Restoring Trust Vol. I (1993), Restoring Trust Vol. II (1995), and Restoring Trust Vol. III (1996). Many dioceses instituted changes based on these policies; however, there was not universal adoption throughout the country. The Charter is the first comprehensive policy that all bishops have agreed to implement throughout the United States.

### What if the abuse occurred prior to the enactment of the Charter?

Any act of sexual abuse of a minor which occurred prior to the Charter being implemented but is brought forward now, will be considered relevant and subject to the Charter. The Charter pertains to acts of abuse in the past, present, and future.

### Does the Charter address due process for the accused?

The Charter states that "for the sake of due process, the accused is to be encouraged to retain the assistance of civil and canonical counsel."

### How is compliance with the Charter monitored?

In June 2003, the Office (now Secretariat) of Child and Youth Protection began an audit process of all dioceses and eparchies throughout the United States. The audit is used to determine if the diocese is implementing the practices required by the Charter. An Annual Report on the Implementation of the Charter is prepared by the Secretariat of Child and Youth Protection.

Note: During the June 2018 Plenary Assembly, the full Conference of Bishops voted in favor of proposed revisions to the Charter. The revisions are the result of the dedicated efforts and collaboration of the Committees on the Protection of Children and Young People; Canonical Affairs and Church Governance; Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations; the National Review Board, and the Office of General Counsel.

## The Office of Safe Environment



**Marina Hentz**  
Associate Director

The mission of the Safe Environment Office is to assist parishes and schools in their implementation of the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People (see opposite page for details on the Charter).

The Office of Safe Environment conducts criminal background checks on all clergy and employees, as well as all volunteers who have regular contact with children in parishes and schools. The Office, under the direction of

Marina Hentz, Associate Director, works with parishes and schools to schedule training sessions. The VIRTUS™ program "Protecting God's Children for Adults" is used to train employees and volunteers to prevent child sexual abuse. The three-hour session covers the scope and nature of child sexual abuse.

Training offers five specific steps adults can take to protect children:

- 1 – Know the Warning Signs
- 2 – Control Access through Screening
- 3 – Monitor All Ministries and Programs
- 4 – Be Aware of Child and Youth Behavior
- 5 – Communicate Your Concerns

### Proactive prevention:

- Since 2002: Close to 20,000 Catholics including all clergy, volunteers, diocese, parish and school employees have undergone background checks. Those with minors and vulnerable adults participated in proactive training to identify and prevent predatory behavior.
- All new employees and volunteers are background checked prior to beginning their roles
- All employees and volunteers who work with minors must complete three-hour Virtus training within 30 days of their start date
- All church employees and volunteers serving minors and vulnerable adults are required to complete on-going education (read monthly bulletins)
- All clergy- priests, deacons, and also seminarians are required to follow the same standards as employees
- The Diocese instituted changes to background checking in August 2017 (more frequent, added national reporting)
- The Diocese is audited annually to assess its adherence to the Charter and every three years is audited by an independent audit firm with an on-site visit. Results are shared with the USCCB and published each year.

## Diocese offers road to recovery for trauma survivors

The Trauma Recovery Program is a faith-based response to adult survivors of childhood abuse and/or neglect. It is offered free of charge by the Diocese of Kalamazoo. Trauma is an event or series of events, combined with an individual's vulnerability, that creates an obstacle in normal human development.

The treatment goal of the Trauma Recovery Program is to help individuals improve their functioning by helping them to stabilize, using new tools learned in a group setting. The program encourages effective living in the present, rather than recovery of repressed memories. Healing occurs with the processing and integrating of feelings, thoughts and behaviors.

The Trauma Recovery Program embraces the core concepts and skills of the "Trauma Model," a treatment model developed by Colin A. Ross, M.D. With his permission, the program utilizes Dr. Ross' concepts in conjunction with the expertise and skills of the facilitator-therapists.

The Diocesan Trauma Recovery Program will be holding the next round of classes in the greater Kalamazoo area, beginning October 2018. Registration is now open and space is limited. If you believe your past hurts from childhood experiences of abuse — verbal/physical/sexual — or emotional neglect have made life difficult for you, then this program may be for you. It's not about rehashing the past; it's about healing for the present and a better future.

**The program is free for the people of the Catholic Diocese of Kalamazoo. Please call (269) 903-0134 and leave a message.**

**Past Participant's Testimonial:** *I am extremely grateful for the opportunity to participate in this program. At first, I was hesitant because I thought my trauma wasn't as severe as the trauma of others, but I learned that trauma is trauma. I knew something was holding me back from being my best self, wife and mother. This program taught me the skills I needed to be more successful in all aspects and I continue to revisit the materials provided in class to remind myself that I am the best work in progress. K.M.*

Since the 1980's the seminarian discernment and formation process has included increased use of screening and evaluations tools to ensure the candidate is called by God to the Priesthood to be a Shepherd for the People.



### Before acceptance as a diocesan seminarian:

- + Letters of recommendation are required
- + Psychological screening is conducted
- + Multiple personal interviews are conducted with the Vocations Directors
- + Criminal Background check is completed
- + Candidates are required to complete a VIRTUS training session

### After acceptance as a diocesan seminarian:

- + Annual evaluations conducted by seminary formation faculty are submitted to the diocese
- + Continual evaluation and mentoring during seminarian's pastoral assignments
- + Invitation of feedback from clergy and laity interacting with seminarians during summer assignments
- + Regular meetings with the Bishop

## National plan to involve laity

On August 18, Cardinal Daniel DiNardo, President, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) issued a statement about the USCCB's plan to involve laity to address the "moral catastrophe" that the Church is facing.

He wrote:

*We are faced with a spiritual crisis that requires not only spiritual conversion, but practical changes to avoid repeating the sins and failures of the past that are so evident in the recent report.*

*The Executive Committee has established three goals: (1) an **investigation** into the questions surrounding Archbishop McCarrick; (2) an opening of new and confidential channels for **reporting** complaints against bishops; and (3) advocacy for more effective **resolution** of future complaints. These goals will be pursued according to three criteria: proper **independence**, sufficient **authority**, and substantial leadership by **laity**.*

*We have already begun to develop a concrete plan for accomplishing these goals, relying upon consultation with experts, laity, and clergy, as well as the Vatican.*

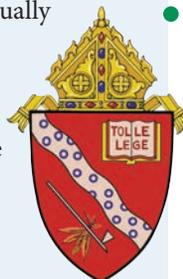
### The three goals outlined by Cardinal DiNardo include:

- **Investigation** of questions surrounding Archbishop McCarrick in order to prevent a recurrence, and protect minors, seminarians, and others who are vulnerable in the future.
- **Making reporting** of abuse and misconduct by bishops easier. The 2002 *Statement of Episcopal Commitment* does not make clear what avenue victims should follow to report abuse or other sexual misconduct by a bishop. That is being addressed.
- **Better procedures to resolve** complaints against bishops. For example, the canonical procedures that follow a complaint will be studied with an eye toward concrete proposals to make them more prompt, fair, and transparent and to specify what constraints may be imposed on bishops at each stage of that process.

## Making a Report of Sexual Misconduct

A report of sexual misconduct may be initiated at the Diocese of Kalamazoo's **Sexual Misconduct Reporting Line (877) 802-0115**. A caller will be requested to provide his or her name and telephone number. All calls regarding sexual misconduct will be returned, usually within one hour.

This toll-free telephone number has been established as a part of the Diocese's effort to protect children, young people and other vulnerable people in our schools, parishes and ministries. This line is for reporting suspected sexual misconduct or child abuse within Diocesan institutions and ministries only. If you have some other concern about Diocesan schools, parishes, or ministries, please contact the appropriate Diocesan school, parish, or office directly.



### As a Church, We Face a Crisis That Requires Spiritual Conversion and Practical Changes

#### Apostolic Visitation

An investigation with answers necessary to protect minors, seminarians, and others who are vulnerable in the future.



#### Reporting of Abuse

Develop reliable third-party mechanisms to make reporting of abuse by a bishop easier.

#### Resolve Complaints Against Bishops

Concrete proposals to make them more prompt, fair, and transparent.



#### Assemble Lay Experts

National lay commission granted independent authority to seek the truth.



## Diocesan Review Board

The Diocesan Review Board serves as a confidential consultative body to the Bishop. They advise the Bishop in his assessment of allegations of sexual abuse of minors in his determination of suitability for ministry.

They regularly review the Diocesan Policy and Procedures for addressing allegations of sexual abuse of minors and make appropriate recommendations to the Bishop for change or modification.

At the request of the Bishop, they offer advice to the Bishop on all aspects of cases, whether retrospectively or prospectively.

### Diocesan Review Board Members:

- Rev. Msgr. Michael Osborn, Vicar General
- Mr. Gerard Alexander
- Ms. Christine Bourgeois
- The Honorable Paul Bridenstine
- Mr. David Chadderdon
- Ms. Theresa Cypher
- Mr. Michael Emmons
- Ms. Lisette Mira-Amaya
- The Rev. Kenneth Schmidt