



Policy to Address Claims of Sexual Abuse of a Minor
Revised and Promulgated 3 December 2015
Memorial of St. Francis Xavier

*Reviewed and affirmed by the
Archdiocesan Review Board on 23 October 2020.*

Sexual misconduct by a cleric with a minor is both a grave sin and a crime. Such misconduct violates human dignity, ministerial commitment, and the mission of the Church. The purposes of these policies are to provide for the safe care of children, the well being of the community, and the integrity of the Church. These policies and procedures are the next step in our continuing effort to provide for the safety of the people among whom we carry on our pastoral mission. These policies are intended to be fair and responsive to the pastoral needs of the victim, the victim's family, military Catholic communities, and the cleric.

These policies recognize that the Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA, is a unique ecclesiastical circumscription with global responsibility for the sacramental and spiritual care of Catholics and their families in our Armed Forces, in our VA hospitals, and for the United States government civilians stationed outside the United States. Because all priest chaplains and deacons are incardinated to a diocesan bishop or religious superior and are loaned to this Archdiocese, implementation of these policies will occur in close coordination with the ecclesiastical superior who has primary canonical responsibility for the cleric.

It is our fervent prayer that these policies will not be necessary but it is important for the Catholic **faithful** of the Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA, (herein "AMS") and the priests who serve them to know their Archdiocese is prepared to support them during these difficult times. Promulgation of these policies demonstrates, in a small way, the commitment of the AMS to those Catholics and their dedicated clergy.

1. The AMS recognizes that the first obligation of the Church with regard to victims is to heal and reconcile. The AMS will respond promptly to allegations of sexual abuse of a minor. The AMS will also coordinate this response with the diocese of incardination or religious superior, and with local and military/federal authorities, to identify the pastoral and professional resources, which will be made available to assist the victims of misconduct for necessary victim assistance. These resources may include provision of counseling, spiritual assistance, support groups and other services.
2. The AMS cooperates fully with the diocese of incardination or religious superior and with appropriate military and civilian law enforcement. Any misconduct complaints of sexual

abuse against a cleric will be referred to the diocese of incardination or religious superior for appropriate ecclesiastical action and to appropriate military or civilian law enforcement authorities.

3. Any allegation of sexual abuse of a minor by any priest, deacon, seminarian, employee or volunteer serving in the AMS should be reported immediately to the Victim Assistance Coordinator of the AMS, Dr. Eileen Dombo, Ph.D., LICSW at 202-681-5069 or in writing to VAC@milarch.org. The person making the report is requested to provide the following information:
 - a. The name of the alleged violator;
 - b. The name or names of the alleged victims;
 - c. The relevant times dates and location of the alleged abuse;
 - d. The setting in which the abuse occurred and its specific nature;
 - e. The names, addresses and telephone numbers of the accused, accuser and other persons who may have knowledge.
4. The Archbishop and/or his representatives will offer to meet victims and their families as well as with military faith communities in which sexual abuse has occurred. In every instance, the AMS will advise victims of their right to make a report to public authorities.
5. Investigation: In addition to offering immediate pastoral care to persons who claim to have been sexually abused as minors by a cleric, an investigation may be conducted when there is reason to believe that sexual abuse of a minor has occurred. The AMS will cooperate fully with military and civilian law enforcement. Law enforcement investigations and criminal and /or administrative disposition of allegations will usually take precedence over the Archdiocesan review. Nothing in the Archdiocesan review will interfere with appropriate disposition of an allegation by military authorities. The AMS recognizes that federal privacy policies may limit access to government investigation files. However, military or civilian disposition of an allegation, while necessary to protect victims, alleged perpetrators, and the military Catholic community, does not limit the AMS. The AMS may, in coordination with the diocese of incardination or religious superior, conduct its own investigation.
6. Investigation teams will be led by the Vicar General and, at minimum include the following procedures:
 - a. Keep the Archbishop informed about the investigation.
 - b. Interview the victim and the victim's family.
 - c. Explain the process to the alleged victim and his/her family, and to designate a member of the Team as a contact person.
 - d. Interview witnesses provided by the victim.
 - e. Notify the accused of the allegation and request a response.
 - f. Interview the accused.
 - g. Interview all witnesses provided by the accused.

- h. Interview any other person deemed necessary to the investigation.
 - i. Audio tape these interviews and/or keep detailed notes. All documents and evidence obtained during the investigation shall be confidential, and kept in the Archbishop's archives.
 - j. Recommend to the Archbishop that the victim and/or the accused undergo professional evaluation when appropriate
 - k. Arrange for appropriate pastoral care for the victim, the family of the victim, the accused, the family of the accused and the military faith community of the victim and of the accused.
 - l. To prepare a written report of the investigation. The report shall contain:
 - i. A summary of findings;
 - ii. A specific statement about whether or not reasonable cause exists to suspect that sexual abuse has occurred;
 - iii. Recommendations for the Archbishop
- 7. When a credible complaint is received, the Archbishop will relieve the alleged offender of his ministerial duties. This action will be taken in coordination with the diocese of incardination or religious superior and with appropriate military or VA authorities. The alleged offender should be referred to appropriate medical and psychological evaluation, so long as this does not interfere with the investigation by the civil and military authorities. When the accusation has proved to be unfounded, every step possible will be taken to restore the good name of the priest or deacon.
- 8. A Review Board appointed by the Archbishop shall serve as a confidential consultative body to the Archbishop. The Board will advise the Archbishop in his assessment for further service of clerics against whom allegations of sexual abuse of minors have been made. The Board will regularly review Archdiocesan policy and procedures for dealing with sexual abuse of minors. The Board can review these matters both retrospectively and prospectively, and give advice on all aspects of responses required in connection with these cases. A majority of this Board will be lay Catholics, not in the employ of the AMS. Because all priests and most deacons are incardinated elsewhere, the Board will not meet until the diocese of incardination or religious superior has given an opportunity to address the allegations against the cleric.
- 9. The AMS will not enter into confidentiality agreements with victims of sexual abuse except at the express request of the victim. The reason for this request will be contained in the agreement.
- 10. The communications policy of the AMS reflects a commitment to transparency and openness.
- 11. These policies will be promulgated on the AMS web site and be the subject of pastoral guidance to all priest chaplains and military Catholic Communities.



ARCHDIOCESE FOR THE MILITARY SERVICES, USA
OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

Timothy P. Broglio
By the Grace of God and the Favor of the Apostolic See
Archbishop for the Military Services, USA

DECREE OF PROMULGATION

Policy to Address Claims of Sexual Abuse of a Minor

The Pastoral care of the Christian faithful of the Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA, committed to me by the Holy Father, includes ensuring the safety of children and young persons.

After consultation with the Archdiocesan Review Board, established in accord with Norm 4 of the *Essential Norms for Diocesan/Eparchial Policies Dealing with Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Priests and Deacons*, I hereby promulgate the attached Policy to Address Claims of Sexual Abuse of a Minor for the Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA. The revised policy is effective immediately.

I further direct that this revised Policy be sent to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in accord with Norm 2 of the *Essential Norms*.

Given this 3rd day of December in the Year of Our Lord two thousand fifteen in the Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA.

The Most Reverend Timothy P. Broglio
Archbishop for the Military Services, USA

Deacon Michael D. Yakir
Chancellor