



EPARCHY OF STAMFORD

POLICY & PROCEDURES CONCERNING SEXUAL ABUSE OF MINORS BY CLERGY OR CHURCH PERSONNEL

Preamble

It is the position of the Eparchy of Stamford (hereafter "Eparchy") that sexual abuse of minors by clergy or church personnel is contrary to Christian principles and is in violation of the conditions of employment of all personnel of the Eparchy. All personnel of the Eparchy must comply with applicable laws regarding incidents of actual or suspected sexual abuse of minors, and with the requirements stated in this policy with respect to incidents of sexual abuse which occur while the work of the Eparchy is being performed. All incidents of sexual abuse of minors or sexual misconduct by any personnel of the Eparchy, whether in the course of employment or not, will be considered grounds for suspension or termination of employment or involvement with the work of the Eparchy.

"Eparchy" encompasses the Ukrainian Catholic Diocese (Eparchy) of Stamford in accord with canon 177.1 of the Code of Eastern Churches. It includes all parishes and other inferior canonical juridical persons whose competent ecclesiastical superior is the Bishop of Stamford. The Byzantine Rite Diocese of Stamford, Inc., is a corporation chartered by the State of Connecticut and includes all parish corporations, institutions, agencies, and organizations sponsored by these canonical or civil entities.

The Eparchy, by this policy, will implement the norms established by the Bishops of the United States in their documents "Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People" and "Essential Norms for Diocesan/Eparchial Policies Dealing with the Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Priests or Deacons." We will strengthen the education program for all clergy and religious, staff, and volunteers on maintaining appropriate boundaries in ministry and on the issue of sexual abuse of children.

We will strongly support our clergy and religious, staff, and volunteers serving as ministers while maintaining the right of the people to a safe and secure environment in which to worship and pray together. We are committed to continuously review and refine policies and procedures. We will comply with all laws regarding the reporting of allegations of sexual abuse against children to the proper civil authorities for investigation. When civil authorities are involved with a criminal investigation, the Eparchy will defer to the civil/criminal process and use every available means to continue the investigation of allegations.

Section 1:

Prevention, Education and Reporting

1.1 Educating priests, deacons, and religious.

Priests, permanent deacons, and religious educated in and by the Eparchy shall attend scheduled training sessions that include the following subjects:

- a. Appropriate boundaries in ministry.
- b. Nature of the problem of sexual abuse.
- c. Signs and symptoms of sexual abuse in children and youth.
- d. Policies and procedures for prevention of sexual abuse by clergy or other Church personnel.
- e. Policies and procedures for prevention of sexual abuse on any church-owned property or at church-sponsored events and activities.
- f. Policies and procedures for reporting allegations of sexual abuse.
- g. FOR PRIESTS, DEACONS, AND RELIGIOUS: Formation for celibate chastity.
- h. Policies and procedures for responding to allegations of sexual abuse.

For purposes of this document, "sexual abuse" is defined as: Any sexual activity, sexual interaction, or sexual exploitation by which an adult uses a minor as an object of sexual gratification. A minor is a person who has not yet reached his or her eighteenth birthday. The abuser may be an adult, an adolescent, or another child, provided the child is four years older than the victim.

Each staff member and every volunteer who works with or has regular contact with children and young people shall be required to attend scheduled training sessions that include, but are not limited to, the following subjects:

- a. Appropriate boundaries in ministry.
- b. Nature of the problem of sexual abuse with children.
- c. Signs and symptoms of sexual abuse in children and youth.
- d. Policies and procedures for prevention of sexual abuse by clergy or other Church personnel.
- e. Policies and procedures for prevention of sexual abuse on any Church-owned property or at Church-sponsored events and activities.
- f. Policies and procedures for reporting allegations of sexual abuse.
- g. Policies and procedures for responding to allegations of sexual abuse.

1.2 Educating staff and volunteers.

Deadline for completing training:

- a. Before assuming duties: New staff and volunteers who will work with or have direct contact with children.
- b. Annually, at the start of the school year: Staff

and volunteers who will not work directly with or have regular contact with children and youth.

Availability of training:

Training shall be available at both the local and Eparchial level. New staff and volunteers will:

- a. Attend a scheduled training session in the parish or protopresbyterate.
- b. Arrange for individual training if no training is available in the area.

1.3 Educating parents and other adults.

It is critical that we raise awareness among all adults about the nature and scope of the problem of child abuse and educate them about the signs and symptoms and what to do when they suspect abuse. Each parish shall provide an opportunity for parents and other adults to attend a training session. The material provided shall include, but is not limited to, the following subjects:

- a. Appropriate boundaries in ministry.
- b. Nature of the problem of sexual abuse with children.
- c. Signs and symptoms of sexual abuse in children and youth.
- d. Policies and procedures for prevention of sexual abuse by clergy and other Church personnel.
- e. Policies and procedures for prevention of sexual abuse on any Church-owned property and at Church-sponsored events and activities.
- f. Policies and procedures for reporting allegations of sexual abuse.
- g. Types of disclosures by children and how to respond.
- h. Policies and procedures for responding to allegations of sexual abuse.

Section 2:

Civil and Canonical Responsibilities (reporting and investigation)

2.1 State laws mandate that certain persons report suspected incidents of child sexual abuse to civil authorities. All clergy, staff, and volunteers, even those not mandated by state law, must report knowledge or belief that a child is the victim of abuse to child protection or law enforcement authorities. The proper agency and telephone numbers for reporting abuse has been made available to all clergy, staff, and volunteers of the Eparchy. In addition, a report should be made to the pastor, principal, or ministry supervisor who will report the incident to the Chancellor and Bishop.