

The Catholic
Archdiocese
of **Edmonton**

THE CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE OF EDMONTON

SEXUAL ABUSE PREVENTION & RESPONSE POLICIES

SEPTEMBER 2, 2022

Message from Archbishop Richard W. Smith September 2022

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

In recent years, the Church in Canada and the world has become painfully aware of the scourge of sexual abuse of minors perpetrated by members of the clergy. We share with our Holy Father Pope Francis the profound sorrow arising from the undeniable fact that some clergy have hurt innocent children, and some Bishops have badly mishandled their responses to these crimes. We cannot run or hide from these events, and we have no desire to do so; they need to be squarely faced with the Gospel principles of healing, truth, light and repentance.

The Archdiocese of Edmonton has had prevention and response policies and protocols in place for many years. Recently, these have been renewed in light of the updated guidelines offered by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops in its 2018 document, [*Protecting Minors from Sexual Abuse: A Call to Catholic Faithful in Canada for Healing, Reconciliation, and Transformation*](#), and recent changes to the Church's law addressing these matters. I take this opportunity to assure all staff, clergy and parishioners that the Archdiocese takes any allegations of sexual abuse very seriously. We are committed to ensuring that any archdiocesan employee, clergy or lay volunteer who commits sexual abuse of children or other vulnerable persons is promptly removed from ministry, that any criminal offences are immediately reported to civil authorities, and that victims receive an apology, compassion and assistance in recovering from any harm they have suffered, including compensation where appropriate.

We are also called to take active measures to prevent abuse of any kind. It is necessary to ensure to the best of our ability that our parishes and ministries offer a safe environment to all, particularly to children and vulnerable adults.

I am pleased to promulgate these updated policies throughout the Archdiocese and share with you the following:

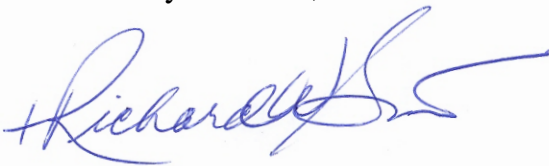
1. A confidential means of reporting abuse has been set up through a [special email account](#), and a toll-free phone number: **1-877-770-6777**. Additionally, the Canadian

Conference of Catholic Bishops has implemented the [Canadian Reporting System for Sexual Abuse or Cover-up by a Catholic Bishop](#).

2. We have reviewed, updated and posted online our processes and policies regarding our pastoral response to allegations of sexual abuse.
3. We continue to engage the services of [Praesidium Inc.](#), a firm that specializes in helping churches and other organizations create safe environments. With their assistance, we are providing the [Called to Protect](#) training program to all our clergy, faculty, parish staff, youth leaders and volunteers. This mandatory program provides our people with tools to identify inappropriate behaviours, understand methods to report potential abuse, and follow best practices in ministering safely to the young and vulnerable.
4. We continue to conduct workshops across the Archdiocese to assist parishes in implementing mandatory screening procedures, for both paid employees and any volunteers who work in ministries serving children or vulnerable persons, to ensure that all programs and ministries operate within safe environments.

Thank you for taking the time to learn more about this important topic. We pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit so that we shall always be diligent in answering the call to protect.

Sincerely in Christ,



✠Richard W. Smith
Archbishop of Edmonton

Pastoral Response to Allegations of Sexual Abuse

Introduction

The Archdiocese of Edmonton has a moral, spiritual and legal obligation to safeguard, in all respects, all of those to whom we minister. It is committed to exemplifying integrity and accountability and acting with justice and mercy. It expects its clergy, employees and volunteers to be outstanding individuals of high moral and ethical standards.

The Archdiocese of Edmonton opposes all forms of abuse, and pledges to offer safe environments, free from sexual abuse for all of its spiritual and pastoral activities. The Archdiocese will respond swiftly and compassionately to investigate an allegation of sexual abuse, aid those in need of healing and reconciliation and take any and all means to prevent a future occurrence of sexual abuse. Adhering to civil and canon law, the Archdiocese will provide a thorough and comprehensive response to resolve any allegations of abuse.

Archdiocesan policies encompass an approach that focuses on prevention, education, intervention and healing. It aims to protect the vulnerable, reduce the risk of sexual abuse, and offer due process for all. It offers clear procedures and protocols to prevent and respond to sexual abuse.

These policies and procedures reflect the existing law of the Province of Alberta, the laws of Canada, current canonical norms, and the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops' [*Protecting Minors from Sexual Abuse: A Call to Catholic Faithful in Canada for Healing, Reconciliation, and Transformation \(2018\)*](#). They apply to all clergy, employees and volunteers of the Archdiocese.

These policies and procedures will be reviewed regularly, as needed.

Prevention of Sexual Abuse

Policy No. 355

Policy Statement

The Archdiocese will do all that is possible to prevent sexual abuse within the Archdiocese

Intent of Policy

To establish safe environments that are free from abuse throughout the Archdiocese.

Called to Protect

The Archdiocese of Edmonton uses *Called to Protect*TM for Parents, Families and Ministries to provide training for all clergy, employees and lay volunteers. The training materials, developed by *Praesidium*, offer a five-step model for keeping safe environments in parishes through:

1. **Screening.** What to look for on an application, how to get useful information from references, the importance of sex offender and criminal background checks, and questions to ask during interviews.
2. **Interacting.** How to use policies to define acceptable verbal and physical interactions between adults and children, and how to identify interactions that could indicate a child may be at risk for abuse or is already being abused.
3. **Monitoring.** Why offenders need privacy and how to monitor high risk building locations, activities, and interactions between adults and children, and between children.
4. **Training.** What church leaders, parents, and youths need to know to contribute to creating and maintaining safe environments and how abuse affects children, their parents, and those who serve and care for them.
5. **Responding.** Understand the difference between suspicious or inappropriate interactions and allegations of abuse, and how to respond in ways that respect the rights of everyone while complying with the law.

Procedure

- a) Psychological and other screening processes are utilized by St. Joseph Seminary for candidates for the priesthood, and also for candidates for the Permanent Diaconate and for admission and incardination of clergy from outside the Archdiocese.
- b) All clergy, employees and volunteers of the Archdiocese will be given a copy of the archdiocesan policies regarding abuse.

OUR COMMITMENTS

The Catholic Archdiocese of Edmonton opposes all forms of abuse, and pledges to offer safe environments, free from sexual abuse for all of its spiritual and pastoral activities.

We commit to:

- Listening to those who identify as victims of sexual abuse by others in the church, acting on their allegations with empathy and integrity, and providing support through trustworthy and competent caregivers.
- Ensuring that any archdiocesan employee, clergy or lay volunteer, who offends against children or other vulnerable persons is promptly removed from ministry, that any criminal offences are reported to civil authorities, and that victims receive an apology, compassion and assistance in recovering from any harm they have suffered, including compensation where appropriate.
- Responding swiftly and compassionately to investigate allegations of sexual abuse, provide aid to those in need of healing and reconciliation, and take any and all means to prevent a future occurrence of sexual abuse.
- Adhering to civil and canon law, the Archdiocese will provide a thorough and comprehensive response to resolve allegations of abuse.

- c) All clergy, employees and volunteers of the Archdiocese will participate in the abuse prevention education and training programs offered by the Archdiocese. Successful completion of this program will be required by all clergy, archdiocesan employees, and those volunteers who work directly with children and vulnerable persons.
- d) Clergy, employees and volunteers are obliged to have a Police Information Check (PIC) and applicable vulnerable sector check every four (4) years. A copy of this record is to be kept in Human Resources of the Archdiocese, Parish, Camp or Institution.
- e) All clergy and employees are obliged to sign the Archdiocesan *Code of Ethics and Accountability Form*. All volunteers are obliged to sign the Archdiocesan *Covenant of Care Form*.

TO REPORT ABUSE

(English or French, Anywhere In Canada, Anytime)

Confidential Toll-Free Line: 1-877-770-6777

Confidential Email: reportsexualabuse@caedm.ca

TO REPORT AN ABUSE OR COVER-UP BY A CATHOLIC BISHOP

Confidential Toll-Free Line: 1-866-892-3737

Online: BishopReportingSystem.ca

Definitions

Policy Statement

To provide definitions and terms used in policies 355-358, inclusive, having regard to both civil and canon law.

Intent of Policy

To protect society, especially the members of the Church, from the harm that comes from abuse.

Abuse Definitions

Abuse means any physical, verbal, emotional, or sexual behaviour by a representative of a Church entity:

- 1) which causes a person to reasonably fear for his or her physical, psychological, or emotional safety and well-being; and
- 2) which the alleged perpetrator knew or ought to have reasonably known would cause that other person to experience fear for his or her physical, psychological, or emotional safety and well-being.

Conduct does not need to be criminal in nature in order to qualify as Abuse.

Abuse within Ministerial Relationships is considered to be any abuse of power, betrayal of trust, or exploitation of the imbalance of power inherent in a ministerial relationship between a representative of a Church entity and the person with whom a ministerial relationship exists. It includes (but is not limited to) abuses which transpire between one Church representative and another for whom there is an imbalance of power. For example, between an ecclesiastical superior and subject or between a formator and a candidate for ministry. Abuse within a Ministerial Relationship may include Sexual Abuse (as defined in this policy) or Abuse (also as defined in this policy) of a non-sexual nature.

Physical Abuse means the intentional physical contact of one person by another, without consent, in circumstances where the person initiating the contact knew or ought to have reasonably known that the physical contact was injurious, offensive, or unwelcome.

Sexual Abuse means Physical Abuse (as defined in this Policy) of a sexual nature. Sexual Abuse includes any physical contact of a sexual nature with a Minor or with a Vulnerable Adult, and further includes the acquisition, possession, or distribution of pornographic images of minors for the purpose of sexual gratification, by whatever means and via whatever technology or media.

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We commit to:

- Listening to those who identify as victims of sexual abuse by others in the church, acting on their allegations with empathy and integrity, and providing support through trustworthy and competent caregivers.
- Ensuring that any archdiocesan employee, clergy or lay volunteer, who offends against children or other vulnerable persons is promptly removed from ministry, that any criminal offences are reported to civil authorities, and that victims receive an apology, compassion and assistance in recovering from any harm they have suffered, including compensation where appropriate.
- Responding swiftly and compassionately to investigate allegations of sexual abuse, provide aid to those in need of healing and reconciliation, and take any and all means to prevent a future occurrence of sexual abuse.
- Adhering to civil and canon law, the Archdiocese will provide a thorough and comprehensive response to resolve allegations of abuse.

Sexual Harassment means conduct (which may include physical contact, gestures, and written or spoken words) characterized by unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favours, or other conduct of a sexual nature when such conduct would reasonably be expected to cause embarrassment, insecurity, discomfort, offence, or humiliation to another person or group. By way of illustration, but without limitation, the types of behaviour constituting sexual harassment include leering, displaying offensive material of a sexual nature, using sexually degrading words to describe a person, using derogatory or degrading remarks toward an individual's sex or gender, making unwelcome sexual flirtations, advances, or propositions, or making unwelcome inquiries about a person's sex life.

Non-Sexual Harassment is any objectionable or unwelcome conduct, comment, bullying, or action that the person knows, or ought reasonably to know, will or would cause offense or humiliation to another. Generally, harassment is a behavior that persists over time. Serious one-time incidents can also sometimes be considered harassment.

Verbal Abuse means Abuse (as defined in this Policy) perpetrated through the use of oral or written language. Verbal Abuse includes any oral or written statement(s) when the maker of the statement knew or ought reasonably to have known that the statement would result in ridicule, insult, humiliation, or offence to the target of the statement(s).

Supervisory direction and performance management given to clergy, employees, or volunteers in the normal course of business is not Verbal Abuse.

General Definitions

Adult is any person aged 18 years or older.

Alleged offender refers to the person who has been accused of committing an act of sexual abuse of a minor or of a vulnerable adult.

Archbishop refers to the Ordinary of the Archdiocese of Edmonton.

Archbishop's Delegate for Sexual Abuse (hereafter *the Delegate*) refers to the individual appointed by the Archbishop to deal with issues related to sexual abuse. The Delegate may be a priest, a deacon or any other person who is trustworthy and qualified to perform these duties. It is preferable for the Delegate not to be a Vicar of the Archbishop.

Archbishop's Deputy Delegate(s) for Sexual Abuse (hereafter *the Deputy Delegate*) refers to the individual(s) appointed by the Archbishop to act when the Delegate cannot. The Deputy Delegate(s) should be similarly qualified as the Delegate. It is preferable for the Deputy Delegate(s) not to be a Vicar of the Archbishop.

Archdiocese refers to the Catholic Archdiocese of Edmonton.

Chancellor is a priest (or lay person) appointed by the Archbishop to oversee the Archdiocesan Archives. The Chancellor is also the principal Ecclesiastical Notary. The Archbishop may delegate other duties, as required. (cf. c.482)

Child or Minor is a person under eighteen years old.

Communications Lead refers to the person appointed for relations with news media for all questions concerning allegations of sexual abuse. This person cannot be the Delegate or Deputy Delegate.

Complainant refers to the person who brings forward an allegation of sexual abuse.

Human Resources Lead is an employee of the Archdiocese responsible to promote and facilitate equity, engagement, and trust to support people within the Archdiocese to flourish.

Investigator refers to a person designated by the Archbishop responsible to collect facts in an objective manner when a canonical process is opened.

Offender refers to the person who has committed an act of sexual abuse as determined and proven by an investigation.

Sexual Abuse Prevention and Response Advisory Committee (hereafter *the Committee*) refers to the committee formed by the Archbishop to assist the Archbishop and/or the Delegate in matters relating to the prevention of and response to sexual abuse. (cf. Policy No. 357)

Victim refers to the person who has suffered sexual abuse as determined and proven by an investigation.

Vulnerable Adult refers to an adult who lacks an adult mental capacity or who, by reason of advanced age, physical diminishment/disability, mental or emotional condition, developmental disability, socio-economic circumstance, or other life circumstance is unable reasonably to protect himself or herself from harm or exploitation.

TO REPORT ABUSE

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Sexual Abuse Prevention and Response Advisory Committee

Policy No. 357

Policy Statement

The Archbishop will establish and maintain a Sexual Abuse Prevention and Response Committee for the Archdiocese.

Intent of Policy

To have an advisory committee of professional men and women of outstanding integrity and good judgment with expertise in various disciplines to assess, review and advise the Archbishop on developing an environment free from abuse that includes education, prevention, training and response to allegations of sexual abuse.

Composition

The Sexual Abuse Prevention and Response Advisory Committee shall consist of, but is not limited to:

- The Delegate
- The Deputy Delegate
- A Social/Public Administrator
- A Forensic Psychologist or Counsellor
- A Communications or Public Relations Expert
- A Canon Lawyer
- A Civil Lawyer

Procedure

- a) The Committee will meet as required.
- b) Others may be invited to attend all or part of a Committee meeting to address specific agenda items in their area of competence, expertise, or area of responsibility.
- c) The Committee is to assist the Archbishop and/or the Delegate in matters relating to the prevention of and response to sexual abuse.
- d) The Committee will provide advice on the preparation and updating of protocols and policies relating to sexual abuse.
- e) The Committee will assist in the interpretation and proper application of protocols and policies relating to sexual abuse.
- f) The Committee will, when consulted in respect of a sexual abuse allegation, propose a course of action based on the report prepared by the Investigator.

OUR COMMITMENTS

The Catholic Archdiocese of Edmonton opposes all forms of abuse, and pledges to offer safe environments, free from sexual abuse for all of its spiritual and pastoral activities.

We commit to:

- Listening to those who identify as victims of sexual abuse by others in the church, acting on their allegations with empathy and integrity, and providing support through trustworthy and competent caregivers.
- Ensuring that any archdiocesan employee, clergy or lay volunteer, who offends against children or other vulnerable persons is promptly removed from ministry, that any criminal offences are reported to civil authorities, and that victims receive an apology, compassion and assistance in recovering from any harm they have suffered, including compensation where appropriate.
- Responding swiftly and compassionately to investigate allegations of sexual abuse, provide aid to those in need of healing and reconciliation, and take any and all means to prevent a future occurrence of sexual abuse.
- Adhering to civil and canon law, the Archdiocese will provide a thorough and comprehensive response to resolve allegations of abuse.

- g) The Committee's proceedings shall be strictly confidential and shall not be disclosed to any third parties excepting only privileged disclosures to legal counsel for the Catholic Archdiocese of Edmonton, and/or disclosure required by law.

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Pastoral Response to Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors and Vulnerable Adults¹

Policy No. 358

Policy Statement

The Archdiocese of Edmonton is committed to the prevention of and supplying a pastoral response to sexual abuse. This procedure is meant to be reviewed **every four years**, published and made available to the clergy, the faithful and the general public

Intent of Policy

- a) To establish safe environments that are free from abuse throughout the Archdiocese, in order to protect society, especially members of the Church, from the harm that comes from abuse.
- b) To establish a clear process to be followed in response to allegations of sexual abuse against minors and vulnerable adults.

Procedure

When an allegation of sexual abuse of a minor or vulnerable adult is brought forward, the following process is followed:

1. Every allegation of sexual abuse, whether doubtful or well-founded, must be reported to the Delegate.
2. Allegations that do not involve sexual abuse, such as physical abuse, verbal abuse, non-sexual harassment, or misconduct are referred to the Chancellor if a clergy member is involved, or Human Resources Lead, if an archdiocesan lay employee is involved.
3. The Delegate is to manage the Archdiocesan response to all allegations of sexual abuse from the time the complaint is received until it is resolved. The Delegate will ensure that a record is kept of the process. The Delegate will have access to all files and archives of the Archdiocese pertaining to the alleged offender.
4. While respecting the privacy of everyone concerned;
 - a. The Delegate is to inform the Archbishop and the Sexual Abuse Prevention and Response Advisory Committee that an allegation has been received. The Delegate and Committee advise the Archbishop who determines if there is “at least the semblance of truth” to the accusation.

OUR COMMITMENTS

The Catholic Archdiocese of Edmonton opposes all forms of abuse, and pledges to offer safe environments, free from sexual abuse for all of its spiritual and pastoral activities.

We commit to:

- Listening to those who identify as victims of sexual abuse by others in the church, acting on their allegations with empathy and integrity, and providing support through trustworthy and competent caregivers.
- Ensuring that any archdiocesan employee, clergy or lay volunteer, who offends against children or other vulnerable persons is promptly removed from ministry, that any criminal offences are reported to civil authorities, and that victims receive an apology, compassion and assistance in recovering from any harm they have suffered, including compensation where appropriate.
- Responding swiftly and compassionately to investigate allegations of sexual abuse, provide aid to those in need of healing and reconciliation, and take any and all means to prevent a future occurrence of sexual abuse.
- Adhering to civil and canon law, the Archdiocese will provide a thorough and comprehensive response to resolve allegations of abuse.

¹ These Guidelines are based on the provisions found in the document [Protecting Minors from Sexual Abuse: A Call to the Catholic Faithful in Canada for Healing, Reconciliation and Transformation](#) (2018) from the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, as well as subsequent civil and canonical norms.

- b. If upon receiving an allegation of sexual abuse, the Delegate has a reasonable basis to believe that current, ongoing abuses are occurring against a minor or a vulnerable adult, the Delegate may immediately take any and all steps within the Archdiocese's authority to prevent further abuse from occurring.
 - c. If appropriate, the Delegate informs insurance carriers and the Communications Lead that an allegation of sexual abuse has been brought forward. The Communications Lead will be the only person to address this matter with the media on behalf of the Archdiocese.
5. The Committee's proceedings shall be strictly confidential, and shall not be disclosed to any third parties excepting only privileged disclosures to legal counsel for the Catholic Archdiocese of Edmonton, and/or disclosure required by law.
6. The Delegate is:
 - a. to comply with the reporting obligations imposed by secular law, cooperate with the police in their investigation of the allegations, and avoid any interference which may arise on account of a canonical investigation.
 - b. to liaise with law enforcement agencies as required.
 - c. If the situation does not call for mandatory reporting to civil authorities, the Delegate is to inform those concerned of their right to make their own denunciation to the proper civil authorities and offer proper encouragement in this regard.
7. The Archbishop may begin a canonical Preliminary Investigation by appointing an Investigator, a Notary, and, if he thinks it prudent, a Promoter of Justice. The canonical Preliminary Investigation may occur at the same time as an investigation by law enforcement agencies, but always in full and open cooperation with the civil investigation.
8. The Investigator, who may be assisted by other trained individuals, is to collect facts in an objective manner and prepare a report for the Archbishop. Since the Investigator is involved at this stage with the canonical Preliminary Investigation, he/she is not weighing up the evidence or determining culpability, but rather preparing a report that can be used to determine which course of action is to be taken: a pastoral solution, a judicial trial, an administrative judicial process or dismissal of the complaint.
9. In the preliminary inquiry, there is to be attentive listening by the Delegate and Investigator to the complainant and members of their family, and commitment to their spiritual and psychological assistance. To note: the Delegate is not an advocate or counsellor for either the accuser or the accused, but rather an objective voice within the process.
10. The alleged offender is presumed innocent until the contrary is proven in accordance with the norms of law. To this end, any investigation of accusations is done with due respect for the principle of privacy and the good name of the persons involved. The Delegate will ensure that the alleged offender's right of defense is always respected.

11. After the Investigator's report is ready, it is to be confidentially forwarded to the Delegate, who will bring it to the Sexual Abuse Prevention and Response Advisory Committee for review. Once the report prepared by the Investigator is reviewed by the Committee, a proposed course of action and recommendations are submitted to the Archbishop.
12. With respect to the person who is alleged to have committed sexual abuse, the Archbishop is to systematically assess the canonical measures to be implemented, including the imposition of precautionary measures from the outset of the preliminary investigation, where permitted. These measures are to be adapted to the alleged abuser's canonical status.
13. a) If the alleged offender is cleared of all accusations, the necessary measures should be taken to restore as far as possible his or her good reputation.

b) If the alleged offender is found guilty, all civil and canonical penalties and consequences are followed.
14. Nothing in this policy affects the inviolability of the confessional seal. The seal of confession is inviolable regarding information received in the confessional (cc. 983; 984) despite the requirements of civil law, including the Province of Alberta [Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act](#) (RSA 2000 C-12). The penitent is to be strongly encouraged to make disclosure outside of the confessional.

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Selected Resources

1. **The Catholic Archdiocese of Edmonton** (caedm.ca)
 - a. Called to Protect (caedm.ca/calledtoprotect)
 - b. Policies and Procedures (caedm.ca/policy)
2. **Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops** (cccb.ca)
 - a. Responsible Ministry (cccb.ca/about/responsible-ministry)
 - b. *Protecting Minors from Sexual Abuse: A Call to Catholic Faithful in Canada for Healing, Reconciliation, and Transformation*
(www.cccb.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Protecting_Minors_2018.pdf)
3. **The Holy See** (vatican.va)
 - a. Abuse of Minors: The Church's Response (vatican.va/resources/index_en.htm)
4. **Praesidium Inc.** (praesidiuminc.com)
 - a. Called to Protect™ (praesidium.lpages.co/called-to-protect)
5. **Province of Alberta *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act (RSA 2000, C-12)***
([chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.qp.alberta.ca/documents/Acts/c12.pdf](https://www.qp.alberta.ca/documents/Acts/c12.pdf))

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