



CATHOLIC DIOCESE
OF WICHITA

Questions and Answers Regarding Clergy Disclosures

Q: What information are you releasing on this list?

A: This list contains the names of diocesan clergy against whom an allegation of sexual abuse of a minor has been substantiated.

Q: What is a “substantiated” allegation?

A: A substantiated allegation is one for which sufficient evidence exists to believe that the abuse occurred. It is one that is supported by documentation, witness statements, law enforcement, or any other reliable source. The facts and circumstances that substantiate an allegation vary from case to case. If the accused has admitted to the action giving rise to the allegation, it is a substantiated one.

Q.: What is the definition of “sexual abuse of a minor?”

A: A minor is any person below the age of 18 years. “Sexual abuse of a minor” includes sexual touching, exploitation, molestation, or other behavior by which an adult uses a minor as an object of sexual gratification. It includes rape, criminal sodomy, sexual battery, indecent liberties with a child, indecent solicitation of a child, unlawful sexual relations, lewd and lascivious behavior, electronic solicitation, and sexual exploitation of a child.

Q: How is the Catholic Diocese of Wichita disclosing the names of clergy against whom a substantiated allegation of sexually abusing a minor was made while assigned to ministry in the diocese?

A: The Catholic Diocese of Wichita will maintain a list of names on its website at catholicdioceseofwichita.org/promise-to-protect/. The disclosed information includes the following, if known: name, date of birth, date of ordination, assignment history, date ministry ended, and current status.

The majority of the reported incidents of abuse occurred between the 1950s and 1980s. The clergy currently listed have either been long removed from ministry or are deceased. The majority are deceased.

Q: Why did the Catholic Diocese of Wichita decide to disclose the names of clergy with substantiated allegations of sexual abuse of a minor against them while they were in ministry?

A: In addition to its long-standing Policy on Suspected Abuse of Children and the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, the disclosure is part of a diocesan plan to keep children safe, help victims/survivors of abuse heal, and regain trust and confidence from our communities.

Q: Who conducted the external audit of clergy files?

A: The audit was conducted over several months by Mr. Stephen Robison, a non-Catholic lawyer with many years of experience in criminal and civil investigations, of Fleeson, Gooing, Coulson and Kitch, Attorneys at Law.

Q: What was the scope of the audit of clergy files?

A: The scope of the audit was to review clergy files existing in the Chancery Office of the Catholic Diocese of Wichita as of April 2019. It included the identification of substantiated allegations of sex abuse of a minor by a member of the clergy.

Q. What process does the Catholic Diocese of Wichita follow upon receipt of an allegation of sexual abuse of a minor by a member of the clergy?

A. The diocese initiates an investigation into all allegations of sexual abuse of a minor by a member of the clergy, whether alleged to have occurred currently, or in the distant past. If the allegation concerns a recent or current act of sexual abuse of a minor by a cleric in current ministry, the accused may be removed from ministry and placed on leave during the investigation. Law enforcement is contacted in accordance with diocesan policy. The diocesan investigation may be suspended until law enforcement has completed its investigation. Even if law enforcement authorities determine not to pursue an investigation, the diocese still conducts its own investigation. Allegations of sexual abuse of a minor by a member of the clergy are communicated to the Diocesan Charter Review Board (DCRB) in accordance with the Diocesan Safe Environment Policy and the National Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People. The DCRB is made up of mostly lay men and women volunteers with professional expertise in the areas of medicine, psychology, law enforcement and counseling. If the allegation is not able to be substantiated, consistent with the recommendation of the Diocesan Charter Review Board, a removed cleric may be returned to active ministry.

[Policy on Suspected Abuse of Children](#)

Q: Can a priest or deacon against whom a substantiated allegation of sexual abuse of a minor is made ever be put back into public ministry?

A: No. A priest or deacon against whom a substantiated allegation of sexual abuse of a minor has been made cannot return to public ministry.

Q: What does canon law require regarding the removal of abusive clergy from ministry?

A: A priest or deacon who has sexually abused a minor must be removed from ministry immediately and permanently. A bishop who has received a report of sexual abuse of a minor must work with the Holy See in Rome to determine the most appropriate resolution to the priest's or deacon's status.

Q: Will the diocese continue to disclose names of clergy against whom allegations of sexual abuse of a minor are substantiated going forward?

A: Yes. If an allegation is substantiated, the diocese will add the name of the priest or deacon to the disclosure section of its website.

Q: Why not make all accusations of sexual abuse of a minor against clergy public?

A: Some allegations, especially ones that were made decades after the reported conduct occurred, simply cannot be substantiated. It would be wrong, and possibly defamatory, to publicize allegations where there is insufficient evidence to establish reasonable grounds to believe that abuse occurred.

Q: What is being done to prevent sexual abuse of children by church personnel?

A: The Catholic Diocese of Wichita has taken many steps over the past several decades:

Policy on Suspected Abuse of Children: The diocese implemented its Policy in 1992 and has consistently updated it since its inception almost 30 years ago. Among other protocol, the policy provides for reporting an allegation of sexual abuse of a minor to law enforcement when required by law. When there is an allegation of sexual abuse of a minor by clergy, the allegation is brought before the Diocesan Charter Review Board, and assistance is offered to the victim and family by the Diocesan Victim Assistance Coordinator. All clergy, employees, religious and volunteers who work with children are provided a copy of the Policy, attend VIRTUS training, undergo a background check and certify that they have been trained. The Policy, and all safe environment policies,

are available on the diocesan website, along with forms to report an allegation of sexual abuse of a minor.

Background Checks: The diocese performs background checks on all clergy, employees, religious, and volunteers who have contact with minors. The background checks are performed through the Kansas Bureau of Investigations (KBI) website, Kansas Adult Supervised Population Electronic Repository (KASPER), and National Sex Offender Public Website (NSOPW), and renewed every five years.

Psychological Testing: Candidates for the priesthood undergo rigorous and extensive psychological testing: including projective tests, personality tests and a psychosexual history to assure their fitness for priestly ministry.

Diocesan Charter Review Board: The Diocesan Charter Review Board, made up mostly of laypersons not employed by the diocese, meets quarterly to review diocesan safe environment policies and to advise the Bishop in his assessment of allegations of sexual abuse of minors by a member of the clergy. At any one given time, the Board may include a member of law enforcement, licensed psychologist, medical professional, social worker, clergy, and a lawyer and/or judges,

VIRTUS Training: Clergy, religious, employees and each volunteer who has regular contact with minors are required to attend a live awareness session called Protecting God's Children for Adults. This session, provided by certified VIRTUS facilitators, gives participants an awareness of the signs of child sexual abuse, the methods and means by which abusers commit abuse, and concrete steps to create safe environments and to prevent abuse. Over 2,600 training sessions have been held in the Catholic Diocese of Wichita since 2002 with 269 held in 2018. The diocese has over 34,000 active accounts in VIRTUS with over 100 VIRTUS facilitators on its roster.

Diocesan clergy and employees must complete ongoing online training, which is monitored several times a year.

Reports to Kansas District Attorneys: For over 15 years, allegations of sexual abuse of a minor made to the diocese by a victim have been reported to the appropriate Kansas county district attorney for investigation.

Safe Environment Audits: The Diocesan Safe Environment Office conducts visits to parishes within the diocese to assess how they are implementing safe environment policies, answer questions, and provide guidance regarding best practices.

The Catholic Diocese of Wichita has consistently passed national standards in safe environment audits performed by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) Office of Child and Youth Protection.

Q: What should a person do if he or she recognizes a name on the disclosure list and has concerns about further risks the cleric may pose?

A: Any concerns should be conveyed first to local law enforcement. In addition, a person with concerns is encouraged to notify the diocese's Victim Assistance Coordinator at (316) 269-3945.