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Tab S-1

How and Where to Report Suspected Child Sexual Abuse

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How and Where to Report Suspected Child Sexual Abuse

I. All Allegations Should be Reported to Child Protective Services

The initial report for all suspected child sexual abuse should be made to Child Protective Services ("CPS"). See county numbers in front of the Manual. Although the name of the person reporting the suspected abuse may be requested for follow-up purposes, the person reporting abuse to CPS is NOT required to give his/ her name. If the person reporting does provide his name and requests anonymity, his name will not be given to the alleged abuser, except under court order.

A Information to Provide to CPS When Reporting Suspected Child Abuse

It is helpful for the person reporting suspected abuse to provide the following:

1) ***The name and address of the child and the parent or person responsible for his/her care;***
2) ***The names of other persons, especially children, living in the suspected victim's home;***
3) ***Directions to the child's home;***
4) ***The child's age, sex, and race;***
5) ***The name of the school the child attends;***
6) ***A description of the alleged abuse and/or neglect, including how long it may have been happening;***
7) ***The relationship between the person reporting the abuse and the child.***

The Diocese of San Diego has created a suggested form to be used when reporting allegations of child abuse to CPS and other authorities. That form Is included as Tab S-2. Once completed, that form should be kept on file with the affected parish, and a copy should be sent to the Bishop.

B. CPS Procedure After Initial Report

If the CPS worker determines that the report of abuse is a valid complaint, then the complaint must be investigated. To constitute a valid complaint, all of the following criteria must be met:

1) ***The child must be under the age of 18 at the time of the complaint;***
2) ***The alleged abuser must be the child's parent or caretaker at the time of the abuse;***
3) ***The report must be made in the city or county where (a) the child lives, (b) the abuse occurred, or (c) if neither of these is known, where the abuse is discovered; and***
4) ***The circumstances must meet the state definition of abuse or neglect.***

C. CPS Findings

Where CPS determines a complaint is valid, it must file a report of its finding within 45 days after the initial complaint has been received. The CPS findings will be reported in one of the following categories:

Founded: After a complete investigation, the CPS worker has clear and convincing evidence that the child has been abused or neglected.

Unfounded: After a complete investigation, the CPS worker has not found evidence of abuse.

By law, the CPS worker is not allowed to give detailed information to the person who reported the suspected abuse.

II. When to Report to Local Police

Whenever it appears a child is in immediate danger, the local police should be contacted, as well as CPS. Additionally, if the suspected abuser is not a parent or care- taker, the police should be contacted.

III. When to Report to the Church

A. Contacting the Church

The church should be contacted, in addition to CPS, if:

1) ***The abuse occurred on church property or during a church event;***
2) ***The suspected abuser is a member of the clergy; or***
3) ***The suspected abuser gained access to the child through relationships at the church.***

B. Guidelines for Reporting

When reporting to the parish and/or diocese, the following guidelines should be utilized:

1) ***No allegations or complaints should be ignored. If there are reasonable grounds to believe that abuse has occurred, it must be reported.***
2) ***Reporting the abuse to the church does not eliminate the need to report to CPS and/or to the police when appropriate.***
3) ***In all cases, the primary concern must be to protect the child and others from abuse.***
4) ***Secondary concerns include providing pastoral care for the suspected abuser and for the parish, and assessing legal issues.***

If the suspected abuser is a member of the clergy, call the Bishop at the diocesan office (**1-619- 291-5947**). State that the matter is urgent and confidential.

When the suspected abuser is other than a member of the clergy, report directly and immediately to the rector or other appropriate member of the clergy. If response at the parish level is unsatisfactory, call the Bishop at the diocesan office (**1-619-291-5947**). State that the matter is urgent and confidential.