

POLICY ON SAFEGUARDING OUR CHILDREN

Section A: Introduction.

Preamble

In Mark 9: 36-37 we read “Jesus took a little child, set him in front of them, put His arms around him and said to them, ‘ Anyone who welcomes one of these little children in my name, welcomes Me, and anyone who welcomes Me welcomes not Me but the One who sent Me’. In verse 42, Jesus gives a stern warning: ‘Anyone who is an obstacle to bring down one of these little ones who have faith, would be better thrown into the sea with a great millstone round his neck’.

Children are a gift from God. They have a right to be respected, nurtured, cared for and protected. This right is embedded in Gospel values, best practice guidelines and international and domestic laws.

Compliance with the Law

Members of the Church, like all citizens, are subject to the laws of the countries in which they live and they are expected to be models of respect for those laws. If civil laws have been violated the normal consequences must follow.

In addition, the Catholic Church functions within the legal framework of the Code of Canon Law. The Code covers the rights and duties of all members of the Church and it has a penal section which legislates for church disciplinary procedures, even if civil law has not been broken.

The Church expects a high degree of integrity in all who are involved in ministry, especially in those who deal with children. In Southern Africa it has published a document of ethical standards called ‘*Integrity in Ministry*’. Its aim is to enable all Church workers to develop and maintain the highest possible standards in pastoral ministry. ‘*Integrity in Ministry*’ is based on the values of the Gospel.ⁱ An extract of the document is found in appendix D1.

Abuse against the young

The Catholic Church seeks to safeguard and protect the young from any form of abuse.ⁱⁱ The primary responsibility for the safety and well-being of children lies with parents and the immediate family, but parents need the active support of the whole community. The Church is an important part of that community.

Ministry to the young is an essential part of the mission of the Church. Young people spend much of their time in the Church and in Church-related activities: Sunday Mass and Sunday school; catechism classes during the week or just playing in the Church yard; parish-run clubs and societies; excursions, pilgrimages and retreats.

The whole Catholic community has a duty to ensure that these and other activities take place in an environment that is safe physically, spiritually and emotionally.

As Church leaders, we realise that a policy cannot cover every possible situation. We pledge ourselves to revise it after three years in the light of experience in implementing it and in the light of new circumstances which will arise with the passage of time.

In the meantime we trust that this first edition will heighten awareness of our responsibility to our children, will set before us the standards expected of us, help us to be aware of the possibility of abuse within our Church environment, to recognise signs of it and provide a structure for responding in an appropriate manner. Children are a precious gift to families, the community and the Church. We have a serious obligation to ensure that they grow and mature in a safe and nurturing environment.

Who is bound by this policy?

This policy is meant for Clergy, Religious, Employees, Volunteersⁱⁱⁱ and others who minister or work with children in the Church environment. In this policy they will be referred to collectively as “Church personnel”.

Sexual abuse of minors by Clerics and Religious

The sexual abuse of minors is a crime in both Canon and Civil Law. In addition to civil laws, the Church in Southern Africa (South Africa, Botswana and Swaziland) has its own procedures for responding to allegations of sexual abuse of minors by Clerics or Religious. This is called the ‘*Protocol for the Investigation of Complaints Against Clerics and Religious in Regard to Sexual Abuse of Minors*’.^{iv} If an allegation of sexual abuse of a minor is made against a cleric or religious, the procedures of the Protocol are to be followed. A summary of the Protocol procedure are given in appendix in D4.1.

Section B. Principles and Standards

B. 1 Underlying Principles

In the light of the teaching of the Church and of international and domestic law, every part of the Church and every organisation within the Church must be committed to take the necessary steps to:

- demonstrate that the right of the child to protection from harm is paramount
- ensure that all minors in the care of the Church are in a safe and secure environment
- ensure that codes of behaviour and procedures are in place and implemented, making clear what is and is not acceptable behavior
- create awareness of child safeguarding issues as well as Church policy and procedures in all parishes.
- support Church organisations and personnel in safeguarding children
- establish safe recruitment of personnel and vetting practices, aimed at preventing those who pose a risk to children from holding positions of trust.
- train personnel who will oversee the implementation of this policy

B. 2 Seven Standards

The Standards (criteria) described in this document represent the expected level of performance that the Church is required to reach.

Meeting the Standards will protect:

- children: by ensuring they are in a safe environment and minimizing risk of abuse

- church personnel: by clarifying how they are expected to behave with children and what to do if there are allegations or suspicions about abuse of a child
- the integrity of the Church and its mission: by making clear its commitment to keeping children safe and by modeling best practice.

The seven standards are of a general nature and are intended to help a wide range of Church communities and Church-related organisations address the challenges of keeping children safe. Specific organisations may adapt them as required to their particular situations and needs. CaSPA and CIE, the agencies of the Church directly involved in Catholic schools, have drawn up a Child Safeguarding Policy for Catholic Schools.

Standard 1	A written policy on child safeguarding
Standard 2	Procedures – how to respond to allegations and suspicions in the SACBC territory
Standard 3	Preventing harm to children: - recruitment and vetting - running safe activities for children - codes of behaviour
Standard 4	Training and education
Standard 5	Communicating the Church’s safeguarding message: - to children - to parents and adults - to other organisations
Standard 6	Access to advice and support
Standard 7	Implementing and monitoring the Standards

Section C: Implementation of the Standards

C. 1 Standard 1: A Written Policy on Keeping Children Safe

Purpose: To promote the safety and well-being of children, to protect the child from maltreatment, abuse, neglect, degradation, discrimination, exploitation and any other physical, emotional or moral harm or hazards and to make sure that Church personnel are aware of situations that could reasonably lead to such situations. Furthermore, to make Church Personnel aware of the consequences of abuse, both in terms of Church procedures and criminal charges.

According to South African law:

- Any person who has knowledge that a sexual offence has been committed against a child must report such knowledge to a police official or registered social worker.
- Any person, who on reasonable grounds, suspects that a child has been physically abused or deliberately neglected must report that suspicion to the police or registered social worker who has had the appropriate training.^v

Moreover, the Church requires acceptable behaviour from all Church Personnel^{vi} and where these have been breached a Church procedure may be instituted.

Implementation: This policy, titled “Safeguarding our Children” provides the framework for the protection of children engaged in Church-related activities, as well as procedures where allegations of abuse have been made. This is done not only in terms of civil law^{vii} but also in fidelity to the Mission of the Church and Church procedures. The policy is to be adopted by each diocese in the SACBC area.

C. 2 Standard 2: Procedures on How to Respond to Allegations and Suspicions.

Purpose: Church authorities and organisations must respond effectively and ensure all allegations and suspicions of abuse are reported within the Church as well as to civil authorities as required by law. It is essential that there should be a prompt response to allegations or suspicions about a child’s safety or welfare. All incidents, allegations, suspicions and referrals are to be recorded. Provision is made for confidentiality and for information sharing. Contact details for local Church and State protection services must be provided.

Implementation:

If a concern, suspicion, disclosure or allegation of abuse is made:

- Listen carefully, but do not ask intrusive or leading questions.
- Be mindful of the rights of all involved.
- Stay calm, take what is being said seriously, and give reassurance to the person.
- Allow the person to continue at his/her own pace.
- Check with the person to make sure that they have understood what they actually said. Do not suggest words, but use theirs.
- Make no promises that cannot be kept, particularly in relation to confidentiality, but listen carefully to what is being sought.
- Explain the procedures.
- Offer to accompany the person to meet the Contact Person.
- Do not make any comments about the alleged perpetrator.
- Be sensitive to person’s, culture, nationality and any disability which may affect the use of language and range of vocabulary.
- Adopt a listening style which is compassionate, calm and reassuring. Do not show shock, disgust or distress.
- Avoid saying whether you believe the statement or not.
- Do not question beyond checking what has been said - there must be no probing.
- Do not speak to the alleged perpetrator.

Further information on procedures is given in Appendix D.4.2

C.3 Standard 3: Preventing harm to children.

Purpose:

The Church and Church organisations will strive to develop a safe environment for children and a culture that minimises risk by:

- safe recruitment and vetting practices – to prevent those who pose a risk to children from holding positions of trust
- running safe activities for children
- supervision
- codes of behaviour giving clear guidelines of what is and is not acceptable behaviour when working with children

Implementation:

1. Recruitment and Vetting of Church Personnel:

The vast majority of people who want to work with children are well-motivated. Nonetheless, good recruitment and selection procedures will help screen out those who are not suitable.

The following steps should be followed for the recruitment process:

- An application form should be completed for all prospective Church Personnel. This excludes volunteers for a once-off event. A sample form is attached as Appendix D.3.
- National registers will be consulted^{viii} by the person to whom the applicant will be accountable.
- Applicants will be asked if they have any convictions relating to the abuse of children. A written record of the interview will be kept on file.
- Obtain at least two references from persons who have experience of the applicant's paid or voluntary work with children.
- All appointments should be probation period of 3 to 6 months.
- All Church personnel are to be given a copy of *Integrity in Ministry* and of *Safeguarding Our Children*. They will sign that they have received them and agree to be bound by them in spirit and in law.
- Before a cleric is given work in a diocese, the sending diocese or Religious Congregation will submit to the receiving diocese a completed copy of the form approved by the Bishops' Conference.^{ix}
- Workshops will be organised in each diocese for Church personnel on *Integrity in Ministry* and *Safeguarding Our Children*.

2. Running Safe Activities for Children:

In general, every effort must be made to minimise the risk of any form of abuse. The following guidelines should be observed:

- Church-related children's groups, activities and trips should have adequate adult supervision. A ratio of one adult to every ten children is the guideline.
- If an outing or event is for a mixed group of boys and girls, there should be male and female supervisors.
- Supervisors are to be vigilant in order to prevent child on child abuse, such as bullying
- Every attempt should be made to ensure that an adult is not left alone with a minor where there is little opportunity for their activity to be observed by others.
- Where an adult and minor meet in a one-to-one situation, it should be in an area where they can be seen by other adults, e.g. in an open space or in a room with a glass or open door.
- When transporting children, make sure that there is more than one adult in the vehicle, that the vehicle is roadworthy and insured and that the driver has a valid driver's licence.
- The use of IT equipment should be carefully monitored to reduce the risk of harmful online activity or pornography.
- Obtain parents' consent, especially when activities involve trips outside the local Church facilities or spending nights away from home. A sample Parental Consent form is attached as Appendix D.2.

- Maintain a culture of awareness among adults and children by ensuring everyone is clear about roles and responsibilities, and people are encouraged to challenge and report any inappropriate conduct with children. Inform children how to report concerns.

3. Codes of Behaviour:

It is important for Church personnel to:

- treat all children with respect
- provide an example of good conduct they wish others to follow
- operate within the Church principles and guidance and any specific procedures
- be visible to others when working with children whenever possible
- challenge and report potentially abusive behaviour
- develop a culture where children can talk about their contacts with staff and others openly
- respect each child's boundaries and help them to develop their own sense of rights as well as help them to know what they can do if they feel there is a problem.

In general, it is inappropriate to:

- spend excessive time alone with a child away from others
- take a child to your own home, especially where he/she will be alone with an adult

Church personnel must never:

- hit or otherwise physically assault or physically abuse children
- develop sexual relationships with children
- develop relationships with children which could in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive
- act in ways that may be abusive or may place a child at risk of abuse.

Church personnel must avoid actions or behaviour that could be construed as poor practice or potentially abusive. They should never:

- use language, make suggestions or offer advice which is inappropriate, offensive or abusive
- behave physically in a manner which is inappropriate or sexually provocative
- have a child/children with whom they are working to stay overnight at their home unsupervised
- sleep in the same room or bed as a child with whom they are working
- do things for children of a personal nature that they can do for themselves
- condone, or participate in, behaviour of children which is illegal, unsafe or abusive
- act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade
- discriminate against or favour particular children or one child to the exclusion of others.

The above must be read in conjunction with 3.4, 3.5 and 3.6 of *Integrity in Ministry*, (attached as Appendix D.1).

C. 4 Standard 4: Training and Education for Keeping Children Safe.

Purpose: Church personnel will be offered training in child protection issues and in particular on understanding and implementing this policy. Training will include recruitment of Church personnel and dealing with complaints.

Implementation: Church personnel and, indeed, the Christian community as a whole, have a role to play in protecting children. In order for them to do so confidently they need to be aware of safeguarding issues and to be given the knowledge and skills that are necessary. Every Diocese should:

- Provide a budget for the training of Church personnel in child safeguarding issues
- Ensure that training of existing Church personnel be achieved within 12 months of the date of this policy – the training can be done on Diocesan or deanery (regional) level
- Ensure that those conducting the training include not only Church authorities (or those acting on their behalf), but also some professionals knowledgeable about the needs of children or working with children, for example: representatives of Social Development, Child-line, social workers, psychologists
- Give training to new Church Personnel as part of their introduction to their work
- Create awareness of this policy and ensure that it is accessible to anyone who wants it, for example by having it available on the Diocesan website
- Ensure that in every parish, contact details are available of the police, local office of social development, the contact person, child-line, and so on.

C. 5 Standard 5: Communicating the Church's Safeguarding Message.

Purpose: To disseminate this policy and procedures to Church personnel, parishes and non-church agencies.

Implementation:

- The Policy on Safeguarding Children will be placed on the SACBC website
- When possible, the policy will be placed on Diocesan and Parish websites, as well as those of Church organizations
- A copy of the Policy will be given to all Church personnel
- Within each diocese copies of the Policy will be given to every institution and organization that falls under the jurisdiction of the bishop, especially children's organizations
- All parish pastoral councils will be given a copy
- Posters will be placed in an accessible place in churches advertising the Policy and how to obtain it^x
- Children's groups will be made aware of their right to be safe from abuse and who to approach if they have concerns – it is the responsibility of the local parish priest to ensure that this happens
- The name and contact details of the Contact Persons will be displayed on the posters.
- Contact details of the statutory child protection agencies will be advertised on the posters
- The CIE and CaSPA will communicate their Child Safeguarding Policy to all Catholic Schools in the Conference territory

C. 6 Standard 6: Access to Advice and Support.

Purpose: Those who have suffered child abuse should receive a compassionate and just response. They should have access to specialist advice from appropriate providers and should be offered pastoral care to rebuild their lives. Those who have harmed others should be helped to face up to the reality of abuse, as well as being assisted in healing. Children, parents and those who get information about the abuse of children in a Church context must know where to find help.

Implementation:

- This standard does not remove the obligation to report a suspected crime to civil authorities
- Lists of services, authorities and organizations (with contact details) that can help children will be displayed in areas of church property used by children
- All Church personnel will also be given these lists in order that they have knowledge of services available and can refer children
- Victims of abuse – and their families – will be given pastoral care, as well as advice as to where they can access professional therapy/counseling
- Children who speak languages other than English, or those with communication difficulties, will be provided with a suitable interpreter if necessary
- Alleged perpetrators of abuse will also receive suitable pastoral care and will be advised where they can seek professional counseling/therapy independent of the Church and legal advice

C. 7 Standard 7: Implementing and Monitoring the Standards.

Purpose: To keep children safe, policies, procedures and plans have to be implemented by all Church organisations involved with children. Checks are needed to ensure this is happening consistently. The experiences of those working with children inside and outside of the Church will help to improve the effectiveness of this policy. Procedures will be put in place to monitor that there is compliance with the Policy at parish, diocesan and Conference levels of the Church in Southern Africa.

Implementation:

- The duty of protecting our children rests with all Church members.
- Those in positions of leadership have a special duty to make sure this policy is made known and implemented, especially:
 - ❖ the head of each Church movement or institution which has a child-related apostolate
 - ❖ the priest in charge of the parish
 - ❖ the bishop of the diocese
 - ❖ the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference.
- This policy will be monitored and assessed on an annual basis. The purpose of monitoring is to:
 - ❖ check on implementation
 - ❖ ascertain what worked well, what did not work, what needs to be changed, added or removed
 - ❖ keep records at Conference level of the issues dealt with and how they were resolved.
- The Bishops' Conference will establish a Monitoring Committee. Its function will be to monitor and assess, on an annual basis, the functioning of both this Policy and the *Protocol for the Investigation of Complaints Against Clerics and Religious in Regard to Sexual Abuse of Minors*. It will give an annual report to the January Plenary Session of bishops, based on the reports that it has received from the Diocesan Safeguarding Officers, the bishops' Delegates and the Chairman of the SACBC Professional Conduct Committee.

- The members of the Monitoring Committee will include:
 - ❖ the Liaison bishop for the SACBC Professional Conduct Committee
 - ❖ two other bishops
 - ❖ the Secretary General of the SACBC
 - ❖ a lay expert on children's issues
 - ❖ civil lawyer
 - ❖ a canon lawyer
 - ❖ a psychologist
 - ❖ a member of the LCCL(SA) Executive
 - ❖ a member of the SACOP Executive

Section D: Appendices.

D.1 Extracts from the SACBC' S *Integrity in Ministry*

3.4. Clergy, religious and church lay workers shall respect the physical, emotional and cultural boundaries appropriate to pastoral relationships with adults and minors.

Commitment to this standard would be indicated by:

- strictly following the rubrics with regard to the use of touch in celebrating the Sacraments of the Church;
- providing counselling only in rooms appropriately set up for such purpose;
- exercising prudence in initiating and responding to physical contact, such as giving a comforting hug or an affirming touch;
- exercising prudence in the use of language that expresses affection or regard;
- exercising prudence in the giving and receiving of gifts.

With regard to this standard, the following behaviour is mandatory for all clergy, religious and church lay workers:

- one shall never provide pastoral ministry in the sleeping quarters/bedrooms of one's home, community house, or of the presbytery/parish house.

3.5. Religious and clergy^{xi} shall have a profound esteem for the personal dignity of children and youth.¹

Commitment to this standard would be indicated by:

- Never staying overnight in the same room as a minor, even if there are two beds
- Never supplying or serving alcohol or any controlled substance to a minor
- Never administering corporal punishment to a minor.

3.6. Clergy, religious and church lay workers, respecting the rights of children and youth, shall be concerned that these rights are respected by all.²

Commitment to this standard would be indicated by:

- Being aware of the causes and signs of child abuse or neglect, the steps to take to protect children, and the procedures to follow if abuse or neglect is suspected or observed;
- Being aware of any legal responsibilities under civil law, and of the Church's procedures in relation to the notification of child abuse or neglect;³

1

John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio*, 27

2

Ibid

3

The SACBC'S *Protocol for Church Personnel in Regard to Sexual Abuse of Minors*

D.4 Procedures

D.4.1 Protocol for the Investigation of Complaints Against Clerics and Religious in Regard to Sexual Abuse of Minors

This is merely a summary of the procedure. If an allegation of sexual abuse of a minor is made against a cleric (bishop, priest or deacon) or a Religious (a member of a Religious Congregation) the Protocol in its entirety must be followed as well as the accompanying *Vade Mecum*.

The sexual abuse of minors must be reported to the civil authorities as required by law. The Church has its own protocol to respond to allegations of sexual abuse of minors by clerics and religious, but the protocol is suspended until the State has completed its own procedures. Below is a summary of the procedures of the Protocol.

- Each Archdiocese and Diocese has two Contact Persons
- Each Ecclesiastical Province has a Provincial Professional Conduct Committee, headed by a Bishops' Delegate appointed by the Bishops of the Province
- The Bishops' Conference has a SACBC Professional Conduct Committee, led by a Chairperson appointed by the Conference.

Complaints are dealt with in the following way:

- Whoever receives a complaint or has a well-founded suspicion reports it to one of the Contact Persons
- The Contact Person meets the one who made the complaint and makes a written report of the interview, signed by the Contact Person and the one who made the complaint
- The Contact Person submits the written report to the relevant Church authority and to the Bishops' Delegate
- The Contact Person and Bishops' Delegate meet and decide if further investigation is needed
- If the decision is for further investigation, the Church Authority is informed
- If the Church authority agrees that an investigation is called for, he will instruct the Bishops' Delegate to appoint two investigators
- The Church Authority informs the respondent about the allegation and the action being taken
- Reports to the civil authorities are made in accordance with the law
- The Investigators meet the complainant and the alleged victim (they may or may not be the same person) and make a written report of the interview
- They meet with the respondent and write an account of the interview
- They meet others as required
- The Provincial Committee examines the report of the investigators and submits its own report to the Church Authority
- The Church Authority examines the report, meets with the Bishops' Delegate and comes to a decision
- If the allegation of sexual abuse of a minor by a cleric is credible, the case is referred to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF)
- If the issue is being investigated by the civil authorities, the Church suspends the above procedure until the civil case is completed.

D.4.2 Procedure for responding to allegations of abuse of a child

1. General Guidelines

- 1.1 Any person who has knowledge that a sexual offence has been committed against a minor must report such knowledge to civil authorities. Furthermore, any person, who on reasonable grounds, suspects that a minor has been physically abused or deliberately neglected must report that suspicion to civil authorities.
- 1.2 If there is an allegation of sexual abuse of a minor against a Church employee. The employer (Appropriate Authority) must follow National Legislation relating to reporting, all processes recognized in Labour Legislation as well as Church protocols
- 1.3 If there is an allegation of sexual abuse of a minor against a volunteer, the Appropriate Authority^{xii} to whom he/she is immediately responsible / answerable to must follow National Legislation relating to reporting, as well as Church Protocols.
- 1.4 If allegations of abuse of a minor are made that are not of a sexual or criminal nature, the Church may institute its own internal enquiry.
- 1.5 If allegations of sexual abuse, or of physical abuse or neglect of a minor are made, the Church will institute its own enquiry provided that there is compliance with civil law and there is no interference in civil procedures.
- 1.6 If alleged abuse is reported to civil authorities or, if the allegation is considered sufficiently serious in terms of the Church's code of conduct even if a civil law has not been broken, the alleged perpetrator will be required to step aside from a particular ministry or all ministry pending the outcome of the investigation. This temporary suspension does not imply any admission or presumption of guilt. It is to be regarded as a routine requirement. The appropriate authority will ensure that this is carried out and that the alleged perpetrator has a support person and is aware of his right to legal representation
- 1.7 The Appropriate Authority will ensure that the complainant has a support person.
- 1.8 The accused will be instructed not to make contact with the complainant and/or the victim or the family
- 1.9 Church personnel, who work in Church Institutions or Organizations that have their own Policy for the safeguarding of children, will be governed by that Policy which shall meet the requirements of this policy'.
- 1.10 Church Institutions or Organizations that do not have their own policy are bound by this policy and are to appoint a child safeguarding representative in their organization and to co-operate with the Child Safeguarding Officer

2. Diocesan Structure

- 2.1 Each parish in the Diocese has a Child Safeguarding Representative on the Parish Pastoral Council, appointed by the parish priest whose task is to create awareness of child safeguarding issues and to be the link person with the Child Safeguarding Panel.
- 2.2 Each Diocese has two Contact Persons^{xiii}
- 2.3 Each Diocese has a Child Safeguarding Panel, headed by a Child Safeguarding Officer all appointed by the Bishop
- 2.4 The Child Safeguarding Officer is assisted by two assistants appointed by the Bishop
- 2.5 The Child Safeguarding Panel will consist of the following members: the Child safeguarding Officer, the two assistants and other suitably qualified professionals (Social worker, lawyer, psychologist.....) all appointed by the Bishop.
- 2.6 The panel must make use of appropriately qualified interviewers who may or may not be members of the panel.

3. Procedures

Complaints are dealt with in the following way

- 3.1 Whoever has a complaint, or whoever receives a complaint or has a well-founded suspicion reports it to one of the Contact Persons. A complainant can be: (i) The alleged victim (a minor under 18 years), (ii) A parent, (iii) Any person who is aware of the abuse.
- 3.2 The Contact Person informs the complainant of the process to be followed and informs the Child Safeguarding Officer or one of the assistants. The report will include the name and contact details of the complainant, the victim if not the complainant, the nature of the complaint and, if known, the identity of alleged perpetrator. A written report to the Child Safeguarding Officer must follow within 24 hours.
- 3.3 The Child Safeguarding Officer together with one of the assistants makes contact with an adult complainant and explains in detail the procedures. If the complainant is a minor the parents/guardians of a minor are contacted and the procedures related to reporting and investigation are explained in detail.
- 3.4 If the allegation is of such a nature that reporting by law is required and this has not been done then the Child Safeguarding Officer is responsible for seeing that it happens and that all the relevant parties are informed that it has happened.
- 3.5 The Child Safeguarding Officer is to inform the Bishop and the Appropriate Authority, giving the name of the alleged perpetrator and nature of the complaint. The Appropriate Authority is to ensure that the alleged perpetrator steps aside from ministry until all investigations are complete.
- 3.6 If the alleged offence is non reportable or if the no legal case is made after reporting, the decision is made regarding further investigation by the Panel who meets to discuss the alleged incident.
- 3.7 Two interviewers will be engaged to interview all the relevant parties. If interviewing minors this must be done in the presence of parents/guardians. All interviews must be reported in writing and signed by the persons conducting the interview and forwarded to the Child Safeguarding Officer.
- 3.8 The Panel examines the reports of the interviewers and submits its own report to the Bishop
- 3.9 The Bishop examines the report, and may meet with the Panel to discuss the report. A decision is made as to whether the respondent is suitable to exercise ministry in the Church Community.
- 3.10 The Child Safeguarding Officer meets with the relevant Appropriate Authority and in writing conveys the decision reached.
- 3.11 If the allegation is found to be credible, and that the volunteer is not suitable to exercise ministry in the Catholic Church, the person who called the volunteer to ministry is to formally revoke that calling.
- 3.12 The Bishop and all relevant parties should be kept informed by the Child Safeguarding Officer of the process and decisions of the investigation of the allegation.
- 3.13 If the issue is being investigated by the civil authorities, the Church suspends investigation until the civil case is completed.
- 3.14 Professional opinion may be obtained at any stage of the process.

D.4.3 Workshop on the Policy

1. Workshops on the Policy will be organized in the five Ecclesiastical Province for the diocesan Child Safeguarding Officers and the two assistants
2. Follow up workshops will be organized in each diocese by the Child Safeguarding Officer for parish pastoral council child safeguarding representatives, and for Church personnel
3. The parish child safeguarding representatives will inform the parish pastoral council on the requirement to implement the policy in parishes.

D. 5 Protecting Children and Young People in the Diocese of Aliwal North

Children and young people have a very important place in our Church and we are always eager to encourage their active participation in parish life. We are committed to doing everything we can to create a safe and welcoming place for our young parishioners, where their welfare is of greatest importance. It is our Archdiocesan/Diocesan policy to ensure that children and young people will always be safe, protected and supported in all activities associated with the Church.

If you have any concerns about the well-being of a child or young person connected to, or involved in the Church, or you suspect that a child or young person may be suffering abuse by anyone within the Church, please report the matter immediately to one of the Contact Persons (details given below) or to a priest whom you know.

If you or you know of a child or young person who has been sexually abused, or if you suspect that a child or young person has been physically abused or neglected, you should report this to the police or a registered social worker.

Please provide as much detail as possible, so that the matter can be quickly and fully investigated. It is important that we do everything we can to protect children and to prevent them from being harmed in any way.

The names and telephone numbers of the
Contact Persons are:

Name:	Fr Paul Musafiri
Telephone No:	072 5912077
Name:	Sr Gladys Papiso
Telephone No:	076 9019257

Thank you for your help in protecting children and young people.

Other important telephone numbers:

Local Police:

Closest SAPS Family Violence, Child Protection and Sexual Offences Unit:

Local Office of Department of Social development:

Childline:

Diocesan Child Safeguarding Officer:

The Church's Policy on Safeguarding our Children is obtainable from your parish priest or from the Child Safeguarding Officer

D.6 From the Catholic Church To all Children and Young People

KEEPING YOU SAFE

You are always welcome in Church and in our parish community.
We are committed to keeping you safe from harm.

If you have been hurt in any way by someone,
or you are at risk of being hurt,
please tell us straight away so that we can help you.

or

If you know of another child or young person who has been
hurt by someone, or is at risk of being hurt,
please tell us straight away so that we can help him or her.

or

If you wish to obtain the Church's Policy on Safeguarding Children

Contact one of these people listed below:

Name: Fr Paul Musafiri
Telephone no: 072 5912077

Name: Sr Gladys Papiso
Telephone no: 076 9019257

Other important telephone numbers:

Local Police:

Closest SAPS Family Violence, Child Protection and Sexual Offences Unit:

Local Office of Department of Social development:

Childline:

Diocesan Child Safeguarding Officer:

Thank You!

N.B: This poster should appear prominently in all our churches, Mass centres, presbyteries, parish halls, schools, etc.

D. 7 Definitions of Abuse

In the context of this document a Child (“a minor”) is a person under the age of 18 years.

What is Child Abuse?

Abuse of a child may occur when somebody inflicts harm on the child or fails to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. Abuse includes bullying by another child, labour practices that exploit children, exposing or subjecting a child to behaviour that may harm them psychologically or emotionally.

Physical abuse includes hitting, shaking, kicking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.

Psychological abuse includes sarcasm, degrading punishments, threats and not giving love and affection, which can have adverse effects on the behaviour and emotional development of a child or young person. It may involve conveying to a child that he/she is worthless, unloved, inadequate or devalued insofar as he/she meets the needs of another person. It could feature having unrealistic expectations of a child. Eliciting fear, or exploiting or corrupting a child can also be features.

Neglect occurs when basic needs such as food, warmth, shelter and medical care are not met which results in serious impairment of the development of the child or young person. It may also involve failure to protect the child from harm or danger. It may also include unresponsiveness to a child’s basic emotional needs.

Sexual abuse involves forcing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. It may include penetrative or non-penetrative acts. It may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in production of, or viewing of, pornographic material, or encouraging children to act in sexually inappropriate ways. It includes exposing a child to sexual activities.

These types of abuse apply equally to children with disabilities but the abuse may take slightly different forms e.g. where there is lack of supervision, or where restraints are used to confine a child or young person to a wheelchair or bed.

It is vital that all Church personnel, staff and volunteers are alert to signs of child abuse. They may be alerted by:

1. Noticing signs and symptoms of abuse of a child e.g. bruising, withdrawal
2. A child reporting or showing signs of having been mistreated
3. Allegations made by another person
4. An admission or ‘cry for help’ from someone who says they are harming a child.

IMPORTANT TO NOTE:

1. Children and young people may be suffering from abuse which has taken place in the past as well as current abuse.
2. Abuse is always wrong.

3. Abuse is never the child's fault.
4. Women and children can be victims and/or perpetrators.

i Available in written form from Khanya House, PO Box 941, Pretoria 0001 and at www.sacbc.org.za

ii See appendix D7 for a definition of a child and definitions of abuse

iii Those allowed to minister/assist in any way by the parish priest or by the person responsible for a parish

iv Available in written form from Khanya House, PO Box 941, Pretoria 0001 and at www.sacbc.org.za

v South African Children's Act 2005, Section 9, Section 110

vi Refer to "Integrity in Ministry"

vii Current South African legislation and registers are quoted in this policy which will be updated to accommodate future legislation and the necessary adjustments to comply with the legislation of Botswana and Swaziland

viii National Register for Sex Offenders (Department of Justice)

National Child Protection Register (Department of Social Development)

ix Testimonial of suitability for priestly ministry

x See Appendix D.5 and D.6 for sample posters

xi Although not noted in the original document, this section also applies to lay workers

^{xii} The person to whom the employee or volunteer is immediately responsible

^{xiii} People who receive from the complainant the first allegations of abuse. They pass the information on to the Child Safeguarding Officer or the Assistants