



DIOCESE OF  
Jefferson City

BETTER  
TOGETHER

# POLICY FOR THE CARE OF CLERGY WHEN THERE IS AN ALLEGATION

2 MARCH 2021

## WHEN THERE IS AN ALLEGATION OF SEXUAL ABUSE OF A MINOR

When an allegation of sexual abuse of a minor by a priest or deacon is received, which has a semblance of truth, a preliminary investigation in accordance with canon law will be initiated and conducted promptly and objectively (CIC, c. 1717; CCEO, c 1468). Additionally, civil authorities shall be notified in accordance with the Diocesan Safe Environment Policy. The Diocesan Bishop must make the determination after having consulted with civil counsel, the promoter of justice, the director of child and youth protection and possibly members of the review board, whether the accusation does indeed possess a semblance of truth. During the investigation, the accused enjoys the presumption of innocence, and all appropriate steps shall be taken to protect his reputation. The accused will be encouraged to retain the assistance of civil and canonical counsel and will be promptly notified of the results of the investigation (Norms 6).

### WHEN A SEMBLANCE OF TRUTH OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT IS DETERMINED

At all times, the Diocesan Bishop, through an administrative act, having consulted with the promoter of justice may remove a cleric from office, may remove or restrict his faculties and may limit his exercise of priestly ministry (c 1722).

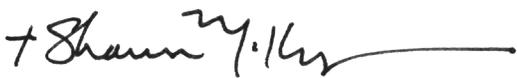
When a priest is placed on administrative leave from his assignment because of an allegation of sexual abuse of a minor that has a semblance of truth, the Bishop or his designee will assist him in finding housing, arrange for his financial support and encourage him to receive pastoral and psychological support during the time immediately following the accusation.

A permanent deacon in this circumstance will be assisted by the Vicar for the Permanent Diaconate in obtaining appropriate pastoral and psychological support.

### WHEN THE PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION HAS DETERMINED THAT THE ALLEGATION IS NOT CREDIBLE

If the preliminary investigation has determined that what appeared to have the semblance of truth has not been found to be credible, the Diocesan Bishop will take whatever steps may be necessary to restore the good name of the cleric, as appropriate to the circumstances. The cleric may be returned to active ministry. However, depending upon what was learned in the preliminary investigation, additional measures may be imposed by the Diocesan Bishop and shall be adhered to as a condition to the cleric's return to ministry. Ongoing support and emotional care will be provided for the accused cleric.

This policy has been written in accord with Norms 6 of the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People. After consulting with the Diocesan Review Board, I hereby decree that this Policy for the Care of Clergy When There Is an Allegation become effective this day, March 2, 2021.



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Most Rev. W. Shawn McKnight  
Bishop of Jefferson City