



**CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF JACKSON**  
**PROTECTION OF CHILDREN PROGRAM**

**CHILD ABUSE REPORTING POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

The obligation to protect children and young people and to prevent sexual abuse flows from the Mission of the Church and example given by Jesus Christ himself. Sexual abuse of a minor violates human dignity and the Mission of the Church and will not be tolerated. The Bishops of the United States adopted two documents on the subject of sexual abuse of minors. They are the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* and the *Essential Norms for Diocesan/Eparchial Policies Dealing with Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Priests or Deacons*.

The Protection of Children policy and procedures shall be fair and responsive to the pastoral needs of the victim, the victim's family, the community, and the accused person. At all stages of the proceedings addressed by this policy, the Diocese of Jackson will cooperate with the civil authorities and comply with the legally established reporting requirements of the State of Mississippi as outlined in the Mississippi Reporting Statutes/Reporting Procedures.

Sexual abuse of a minor is contrary to the moral instruction, doctrines and Canon Law of the Catholic Church and is obviously outside the scope of duties of church ministry and employment for all personnel. Such abuse is prohibited and will be considered grounds for immediate termination of employment or voluntary service. All personnel of the diocese must comply with applicable church and civil laws regarding incidents of actual, alleged or even suspected sexual abuse of a minor.

Allegations or serious suspicions of sexual abuse of a minor must be reported as soon as possible to the Mississippi Department of Child Protection Services: 1-800-222-8000 or (601) 432-4570 (<https://reportabuse.mdcps.ms.gov/>) or in an emergency to the appropriate civil authority. Mississippi law requires that any person who has "reasonable cause to suspect" that a child is a neglected child or an abused child shall cause an oral report to be made immediately to the Department of Child Protection Services.

If the perpetrator is a Parish/Diocesan Employee/or Volunteer, notify the Diocesan Vicar General immediately at (601) 969-2290 or the Victim Assistance Coordinator at (601) 326-3728. A copy of the Child Protection Services written report should be forwarded to the Diocesan Vicar General. The address of the Diocese is as follows: P. O. Box 2248, Jackson, MS 39225-2248.

Child abuse in its many forms is not a church problem. It is a societal problem. And, it will take all of us working together to provide a safe environment for all our children not only in our churches but also in our homes and community.