POLICY MANUAL

SEXUAL ABUSE AND MISCONDUCT PREVENTION AND RESPONSE

Prayer for the Care of Children

"Almighty God, you have blessed us with the joy and care of children: Give us calm strength and patient wisdom as we bring them up, that we may teach them to love whatever is just and true and good, following the example of our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen." BCP, page 829

Prayer for Guidance

"O God, by whom the meek are guided in judgment, and light rises up in darkness for the godly: Grant us, in all our doubts and uncertainties, the grace to ask what you would have us to do, that the Spirit of wisdom may save us from all false choices, and that in your light we may see light, and in your straight path may not stumble; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen." BCP, page 832

Scripture Reading

"People were bringing little children to him in order that he might touch them; and the disciples spoke sternly to them. But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, 'Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it.' And he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them." *Mark 10:13-16, NRSV*

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See the Misconduct Prevention Webpage for:

- Misconduct Prevention Training Options
- Background Check & Screening Procedures
- Social Media Guidelines
- Forms and Resources

1. Introduction to Misconduct Prevention

Responsibility

Sexuality is both a gift and a responsibility. It is central to our being and, used rightly, a source of joyous fulfillment. But it is a gift susceptible to abuse, particularly in relationships of trust, such as between clergy and those they serve, or between adults and children.

Those who serve the church, whether as clergy or laity, paid or unpaid, maintain a powerful relationship of authority and trust with the people they minister to. Betrayal of that trust through violation of sexual boundaries causes great emotional and spiritual harm. Such misconduct is a denial of our identity as Christians. We must take every step to prevent it, and to respond justly when misconduct does occur.

History and Precedent

When a diocesan policy on the prevention of sexual misconduct was first developed in the 1990s, it was primarily to respond to charges of sexual abuse and misconduct; the Diocese wanted to ensure that its response would be just and compassionate. The policy was also designed to meet the coverage conditions of church insurance companies, and to reduce the potential for litigation against the church. Therefore it also included guidelines for training church workers about child sexual abuse and adult sexual misconduct.

In 2002, church insurers dropped the requirement that workers be trained in the prevention and recognition of sexual misconduct or abuse. However, the Diocese of Virginia believes that a Christian commitment to reduce the potential for sexual abuse or misconduct dictates that such training continues.

Where It Led

To that end, at the request of the diocesan Commission for the Prevention of Sexual Misconduct in the Church*, the 208th Annual Council of the Diocese of Virginia adopted a resolution directing that training in the prevention of child sexual abuse and adult sexual misconduct continue to be required.

2. Training for the Prevention of Sexual Misconduct and Abuse: Why?

From the perspective of federal regulations and Episcopal Church polity

Federal Government: Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)

Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute **sexual harassment** when: submission to or rejection of this conduct explicitly or implicitly affects an individual's employment, unreasonably interferes with an individual's work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile or

offensive work environment.

General Convention Resolution 1991-B052

Resolved, the House of Deputies concurring, That the 70th General Convention of the Episcopal Church declares that sexual abuse, exploitation, coercion, and harassment of adults and minors by clergy and church employees are abuses of trust, a violation of the Baptismal Covenant, contrary to Christian Character, and are therefore wrong; [followed by establishment and tasking of Committee on Sexual Exploitation]

General Convention Resolution 2006-A156

Resolved, That the 75th General Convention of The Episcopal Church affirm the work already occurring in many dioceses and at the same time recommit itself to the positions taken by previous General Conventions that sexual misconduct (encompassing both sexual harassment and sexual exploitation) of adults by clergy, church employees, and volunteer workers has been and continues to be of deep concern to this Church, is an abuse of trust, a violation of the Baptismal Covenant, contrary to Christian character and is, therefore, wrong; and be it further

Resolved, That each diocese adopt policies for the protection from sexual misconduct of those served by diocesan programs, those who volunteer in the work of the diocese or are employed by the diocese, and that dioceses assist congregations in the development of such procedures and policies, including using the many resources that already exist, that address the following:

1. the articulation of behavioral standards for all clergy, lay employees, and volunteers who work with adults or who provide pastoral counseling, pastoral care, spiritual direction, or the sacraments;
2. a screening process for all clergy, lay employees, and volunteers who provide pastoral counseling and care, spiritual direction, or the sacraments and who supervise clergy or lay volunteers;
3. education and training for all clergy, lay employees, and volunteers as listed above, with particular attention paid to what legally constitutes sexual harassment and to appropriate behavior and inappropriate sexual or sexualized behaviors towards adults, and with periodic refresher training encouraged;
4. guidelines for responding to concerns of sexual misconduct; and be it further

Resolved, That each diocese shall report to the House of Bishops Committee on Pastoral Development prior to the Spring 2009 House of Bishops meeting with a copy of its adopted and implemented policy and an evaluation of the history of its use. A summary report shall be made to the House of Bishops Spring 2009 meeting and a full report made to the 76th General Convention.

The Diocese of Virginia's Policy on Sexual Abuse and Misconduct

The Diocese of Virginia will not tolerate sexual misconduct involving its clergy, lay employees or volunteers. Every person who serves the church through parish, educational, pastoral, recreational or other activities is expected to maintain the highest ethical standards in relationships with those they serve. That commitment extends to sexual behavior.

The relationship between those who serve the church and the children the church serves is particularly fragile. Therefore clergy and others in the employ and service of the church who have a civil or criminal record of child sexual abuse, who have admitted committing prior sexual abuse, or who are known to have a paraphiliac diagnosis (for example, pedophilia, exhibitionism, or voyeurism) as defined by the American Psychiatric Association, are not permitted to interact with children or youth.

The Diocese of Virginia is also committed to providing pastoral care to all involved with and/or affected by instances of child sexual abuse or adult sexual misconduct. In essence, pastoral care grows out of faith based relationships and proceeds with an awareness of the spiritual and emotional needs of both the individual and the community. It may include providing guidance, support, consolation and even confrontation, in an effort to minister as we believe God would desire.

Additional Specific Policies

Prohibition against Pornography: No computer or other electronic device in church buildings or on church property may be used to access pornography.

Mission Trip Policy: For any diocesan or parish mission trip, whether foreign or domestic, where missioners will meet or work with anyone under the age of 18 or where the mission trip includes any participants under the age of 18, all adult participants and leaders are required to have completed appropriate training before the trip begins.

3. Definitions

Defining Child Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse of a child is a criminal offense in every state in the United States. Virginia law defines an abused child as a child less than 18 years of age whose parents or other persons responsible for his or her care:

> Commit or allow to be committed any illegal sexual act upon a child, including rape, incest, indecent exposure, and prostitution, or allow a child to be used in any sexually explicit visual material.

Child abuse that takes place within the family or where the child is in the care of another adult is the responsibility of Child Protective Services. In other situations where the child is abused by a non-caretaker whether that person is known to the child or not, the police are

responsible for the investigation.

The law also defines child neglect or abuse as:

1. Causing, or threatening to cause, a non-accidental physical or mental injury, or creating a substantial risk of impairment of bodily or mental function.

2. Neglecting or refusing to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, emotional nurturing or health care.

3. Neglecting or refusing to provide adequate supervision in relation to a child's age and level of development.

4. Abandoning the child.

Sexual abuse encompasses acts of sexual assault and sexual exploitation by a parent or other caregiver. It includes a broad range of behaviors, such as fondling; oral, vaginal, or anal intercourse; indecent exposure; voyeurism and sexual exploitation. It may consist of a single incident or of many incidents over a long period of time. Victims range in age from infants to teenagers.

Defining Adult Sexual Misconduct

Sexual Exploitation: Exploitation involves an imbalance of power, such as employer over employee, strong over weak, spiritual leader over parishioner, and so on. It can be overt, such as where favors are given in return for sexual favors. It can be more subtle, such as where a sexual relationship develops between a church worker and someone under him or her in a pastoral, mentoring, or supervisory relationship.

Feelings of attraction can develop from unequal relationships, giving rise to exploitation even where there is apparent consent from both individuals. This is why a romantic relationship between a clergyperson, whose role as a spiritual advisor places him or her in a position of power, and a parishioner is fraught with danger, whether or not it involves sexual relations.

Historically, romantic relationships between a single clergyperson and a single layperson with whom the clergyperson has a pastoral relationship have not been defined as sexual exploitation. However, such clergy dating could create feelings of resentment, competition, or rejection for other members of the parish. In some circumstances, it could lead to lawsuits.

A clergyperson cannot be both spiritual advisor and suitor at the same time. Therefore, in the event a romantic relationship does develop, steps must be taken to address the facts that (a) when dating a clergyperson a parishioner loses his or her priest, and (b) secrecy surrounding such a relationship could harm the parish. At the very least, the clergyperson must arrange for alternate pastoral care for the involved parishioner.

One way to do that is to have either the clergyperson or the parishioner leave the parish. For

rectors, vicars and priests-in-charge, such relationships might be possible if there is ongoing consultation with a Bishop. Additionally, in a multi-staffed congregation, a dating relationship might be possible where there is ongoing consultation between the priest and the rector. In a single clergy parish, such a relationship might be possible if there is ongoing consultation with the Bishop.

While dating is allowed between lay staff and parishioners generally, because of the imbalance of power concerns, dating between a lay worker and those parishioners who participate in that worker's programs also is discouraged, and requires similar safeguards.

Sexual Abuse: Sexual Abuse refers to any sexual behavior engaged in by, at the request of, or acquiesced to by an adult with a person under 18 years of age, a person in high school, or a person who is legally incompetent, regardless of apparent consent. It includes any act committed with the intent to sexually molest, arouse, or gratify, where the abuser touches or forces the victim to touch the genitalia, anus, groin, breast, buttocks, or the material touching such intimate parts.

Sexual Harassment: The term sexual harassment comes from employment law and refers to behavior of a sexual nature that is experienced by an employee in the workplace. There are two broad categories:

1. In **quid pro quo harassment**, an employee's hiring, pay, promotion or maintenance of a job is made contingent on his or her response to sexual advances.

2. In **hostile environment harassment**, unwelcome sexual conduct unreasonably interferes with an individual's job performance or creates a hostile, intimidating or offensive work environment.

Harassment can take three forms:

1. **Physical harassment** involves unwanted physical touching of the hair, body or clothing, or even purposefully brushing against someone. Prolonged hugs, especially front to front, or those with pelvic contact or rubbing the hands across the back, could constitute physical harassment, as could unwanted massage of the shoulders, back or neck. Even behavior that is intended to be playful could be considered physical abuse.
2. **Verbal harassment** includes making explicit comments or innuendos about one's own sex life, or asking questions about another's sexual behavior. Verbal harassment can include comments about a person's body or clothing that may be perceived as sexual, using nicknames with sexual connotations (such as "hunk" or "babe"), or making repeated requests for social engagements. It can also take the form of sexually oriented humor or language, or sending e-mails, telephone messages or other communications that contain such humor or language. It is important to note that appropriate conversational norms develop and evolve in every workplace or community over time. When in doubt about propriety, refrain from such conversations or seek counsel from an advisor.

3. **Non-verbal harassment** can include displaying sexually suggestive visual materials, from cartoons to calendars, to displaying one's own body parts through lack of clothing of positioning of the body. It also includes making sexual gestures with hands or body movements, and making facial expressions that communicate sexual or romantic interest.

The rector or priest in charge of a congregation is expected to take action to stop the harassing behavior, and to prevent any future behavior. If the rector or priest in charge is the accused, then the Bishop will respond.

4. Training and Screening: Objectives, Waivers and Documentation: Preventing Child Sexual Abuse and Adult Sexual Misconduct

Training is a crucial deterrent to child sexual abuse and adult sexual misconduct. Training

1. educates clergy and laypeople on what types of behaviors can foster an environment where misconduct can take place;
2. equips ministers to recognize warning signs of misconduct;
3. sets out best practices for misconduct prevention;
4. and provides a framework for response in the tragic event that misconduct does happen.

Please note:

1. **Clergy must keep a copy of their certificate** in their own files and submit copies to the diocese and to the parish or other institution they serve.
2. **Laypersons must keep a copy of their certificate** for their files and submit a copy to their parish.
3. Those unable to present documentation when requested must retake training.
4. Training must be renewed every 3 years. Parishes may require more frequent renewals at the discretion of the rector. If someone has engaged an equivalent training in another Episcopal diocese within the last three years, they may be able to apply that training and certify that they have read this manual using the "Certification Regarding Reading of Diocesan Policy" found on the misconduct prevention webpage. But please note: We cannot accept training from other denominations or secular organizations, and the Diocese of Virginia training should be completed before the expiration of three years from any training previously received.

Screening and Recruiting/Hiring: Another effective means of reducing the incidence of child sexual abuse or adult sexual misconduct is to carefully screen clergy and all lay workers, paid and unpaid. This may include:

1. Carefully reviewing a signed job application.
2. Conducting a personal reference check.
3. Conducting a background check.
4. Requiring an employee to sign a certification that he/she has not been arrested for or convicted of any crime involving child abuse or been diagnosed with any paraphiliac psychological condition (e.g., pedophilia, voyeurism or exhibitionism).

5. Warning Signs and Prevention Strategies

Personal Warning Signs for Leaders

1. **Be aware of the power differential** that exists between leaders and employees or parishioners and do not exploit their trust.

2. **Be aware of the danger signs** of sexual boundary breakdown: excessive self-disclosure by the minister/supervisor; excessive availability, including giving or receiving inappropriate gifts; excessive touch; undue anticipation of future visits, including rearrangement of one's schedule; excessive fretting about clothing or appearance; meeting at a secluded or private location; anything tying extra emotional energy to the meeting; continual fantasy about the person; and keeping secrets that go beyond the requirements of professional confidentiality.

3. If any of the above signs appear, **do a self-examination** by asking yourself the following questions:
    a) What can I learn about myself through the experience of my attention being drawn to this other person?
    b) What is lacking in my marriage, my love relationships, my spiritual life, or within me that I believe an involvement with this person might satisfy?
    c) Why am I vulnerable at this time to falling in love outside of my commitments or to overstepping appropriate boundaries?
4. **Be aware that sexual attraction and misconduct can cripple ministry.** Develop appropriate staff relationships and office arrangements (such as windows in doors) that protect against misconduct.

5. **Be aware that there are sexually aggressive,** emotionally needy, **even predatory** persons among parishioners who seek out leaders at church, conferences, and public places. Their purpose may be an inappropriate attachment and perhaps sexual misconduct. Always use prudence regarding times and places of meeting, especially until a person's motives are known. Understand that the person in power is

responsible for keeping appropriate boundaries even if pursued.

6. **Seek counsel** and pastoral guidance from someone trained in the field of sexual misconduct if you find yourself at risk of acting on a romantic or sexual attraction to a parishioner or coworker.

7. All allegations of sexual misconduct will be taken seriously by the Bishop. If they involve a minor, the allegations will be taken immediately to authorities.

8. If clergy learn of or suspect sexual misconduct by their clergy colleagues, they are required by the canons to report it to an Intake Officer. The Intake Officer will work with the reporter regarding appropriate next steps.

Personal Precautions

1. No **clergyperson shall meet a parishioner for more than six sessions** in regard to a particular pastoral episode or life issue. After three to six sessions, a parishioner or counselee is to be referred to an appropriate professional.

2. No clergyperson shall provide spiritual direction to parishioners or others unless he/she is also under spiritual direction.

3. **Clergy and other lay ministers should not visit or contact** parishioners at times of day that might create an awkward appearance or signal a degree of privacy that is inappropriate. Exercise discretion and good judgment so as not to create occasions when misconduct might occur or might appear to be occurring. Clergy should not call in the homes of single parishioners of the opposite sex in the evening. Meetings should be scheduled during business hours when others are present. A person in a ministerial position should discuss any meeting or visit that could appear awkward with his/her spouse and with a colleague, supervisor, therapist or spiritual director.

4. **Meetings with individuals** should, to the extent possible and practicable, occur during normal business hours and when someone else is nearby in the building.

5. **Consult with a supervisor** or a colleague when a meeting is needed that might appear to others as inappropriate. If married, speak with your spouse. While appropriate standards of confidentiality ought to be observed, being open about nonstandard meetings protects all who are involved.

6. **Be cautious when traveling** to conferences, retreats, and other out-of-town meetings with only one other person when that association might have the appearance of impropriety.

7. **Be careful about social occasions** with only one other person that can lead to sexual misconduct or the appearance of sexual misconduct. Be especially careful about the use of alcohol when in the company of only one other person.

8. **Touch or hug appropriately.** It may be appropriate, when one is comforting a grieving parishioner, for example, to embrace that parishioner in a reassuring manner that communicates acceptance/inclusion in the loving community of faith. However, an identical embrace might be inappropriate when a parishioner shares about his/her dysfunctional marriage and the embrace unintentionally conveys an alternate form of intimacy. Sensitivity and discretion are necessary and it is proper to ask first before offering a physical embrace. It is always safer to hug side to side, instead of face to face. (A pat on the shoulder may be most appropriate when you want to express concern and keep some emotional distance at the same time.)

None of these precautions are meant to inhibit appropriate pastoral relationships. They are illustrations of the prudent limits mature clergy and lay leaders accept for effective ministry.

Institutional Warning Signs

Abuse is more likely to occur when:

1. Boundaries in an organization are not clear. When, for example, work and personal/social situations are consistently blended.
2. There is very rigid or closed communication so that what happens takes place in secret.
3. There is poor or nonexistent supervision, particularly with new or junior staff or clergy.
4. There is a controlling or charismatic leader and disagreement would be seen as a betrayal of that leader.
5. The clergy/lay leader does not have friends outside the church.

Institutional Precautions

1. Appropriately **screen staff** when hiring.
2. Ensure that all staff, whether lay or ordained, **receive training** in the prevention of sexual misconduct.
3. Ensure that your congregation has **adequate and appropriate insurance coverage**.
4. While there are no rules about lay coworkers having mutually agreed upon romantic relationships, they ought to be entered into very carefully so as not to disrupt the parish. Secrecy in a relationship can be particularly dangerous.
5. **Background checks** must be done on clergy and on lay professionals and some volunteers. Background check instructions and procedures can be found on the misconduct prevention webpage.
6. **Interview all the references** in the application process, keep records at all stages of the screening process, make them easily accessible for future reference, and maintain their confidentiality.

7. The Diocese of Virginia expressly prohibits the viewing of pornography on church computers.

Wellness of Clergy and Lay Leaders

Self-Care: One of the best ways to prevent sexual misconduct in the Church is for clergy and other staff members to pay careful attention to their own well-being. Ignoring self-care is irresponsible and even dangerous.

1. All men and women have some **basic emotional needs**, including affection, conversation, recreational companionship, honesty and openness, financial support, and admiration.
2. **For those who have children**, help in caring for their children is also a strong emotional need.
3. When these needs are not being met outside of the parish, lay and ordained ministers may look to parishioners to fulfill their emotional needs. Such relationships are, at best, complicated and, at worst, abusive.

To avoid falling into misconduct, all church workers need to pay very close attention to self-care. Being overly wrapped up in work is a danger sign, particularly when ministers become isolated from people and activities not connected with the church. As is true for everyone, church employees need to meet their primary emotional needs outside of the workplace. Friendships and family relationships need to be nurtured so that emotional needs can be met in appropriate ways.

Married people and people in other committed relationships, in particular, need to be careful that they are not having their own emotional needs met by someone other than their partners. Paying attention to commitments and making efforts to keep them strong can be a powerful way to avoid sexual misconduct.

Safe Practices for Congregations for Preventing Child Abuse

1. The **best way to prevent child sexual abuse** in the church is to make sure that there are always two or more unrelated adults with children at all times.

2. **Watch** for physical, behavioral, and emotional boundary violations.

3. These safe practices are not meant to inconvenience adult employees and volunteers but to protect children. They can also help protect adults from unfounded accusations. Here are some **behaviors that can lead to false allegations**:
    a) Meeting alone in isolated places
    b) Wearing provocative or revealing attire.
    c) Meeting in homes and in bedrooms without adults present.
    d) Giving special or secret gifts.
    e) Keeping secrets about the relationship.

f) Failing to adhere to uniform or accepted standards of affection.

4. **Team Teaching and Chaperoning**

   a) Concerted effort should be made to recruit sufficient volunteer teachers to permit two unrelated teachers in every class. At least two unrelated adults should be present in the parish nursery as well.

   b) Youth activities both on and off the church grounds should have two or more adult leaders who are known to the church and unrelated. If there are both boys and girls participating in the activity then both male and female leaders should be present.

   c) Community organizations using the church facilities should follow the same guidelines.

5. **Open Doors**: Parents of the children being served as well as the clergy, and professional staff of the church have the right to visit and observe the program at any time, unannounced.

6. **Driving**

   a) Drivers should never be alone with a child other than their own.

   b) Drivers going to or from the church for a church activity must be at least 18 years old and must have a valid state driver's license.

   c) Drivers must have no record of convictions for the past five years for drunken driving, driving under the influence, driving with a suspended or revoked license, or reckless endangerment.

7. **Individual Pastoral Care**

   a) While one-on-one pastoral care is a fundamental part of ministry, care must be taken to see that it is conducted in an environment that provides visibility by other adults.

   b) Another adult should know the volunteer's or staff member's whereabouts and whom he or she is meeting with.

   c) No one should engage in secretive and private relationships with children or young people.

   d) As a general rule, there should be no more than 3 to 5 private meetings with any one child or young person per year.

8. **Pornography** – It is the policy of the Diocese of Virginia that no church computers or other technology may ever be used to access pornography.

6. How to Report Sexual Misconduct or Suspected Sexual Misconduct

All misconduct or suspected misconduct must be reported to the appropriate person (see below) as soon as possible.

Reporting Misconduct Committed by a Clergyperson

Notify a Title IV Intake Officer by phone or e-mail. The Intake Officers and contact information are listed on the Reporting an Incident webpage.

Reporting Misconduct Committed by a Layperson

Notify the rector or other clergyperson on staff of the layperson's church or of the church of the offended person. The clergyperson should then call the Canon to the Ordinary's office at 1-804-643-8451 to discuss the appropriate response in the particular context.

Appropriate responses to a report may include one or more of the following:

1. **If the report regards suspected child abuse or child sexual abuse**, the layperson will be placed on administrative leave from all ministries involving children or teens, or which bring the layperson into proximity with children or teens until the matter is appropriately resolved.

2. **If the report regards suspected abuse or sexual misconduct toward an adult**, the layperson will be placed on administrative leave from all ministries in which there is one-on-one contact with adults, including Eucharistic visits and pastoral visits, until the matter is appropriately resolved.

3. **If formal charges of sexual misconduct or abuse are brought against a layperson who is in a position of leadership**, for example, a warden, member of the vestry, Diocesan Convention delegate, Standing Committee member, Executive Board member or Deputy to General Convention, that person will be placed on administrative leave from the leadership position until the investigation or legal proceedings are complete.

These actions are not intended to imply guilt, but are intended to create a safe space for all during a difficult time. Decisions about when and how to place a layperson on administrative leave are made on a case by case basis in a conversation between the rector, priest-in-charge, and the Bishop, or canon.

Pastoral care for all involved, including the person reported, the person(s) making the report, the victim(s) and the congregation, is vitally important. A plan for pastoral care for all will be developed in consultation with the Bishop or canon.

Required Reporting

All suspected child abuse or sexual misconduct must be reported to Child Protective Services. The preferred reporting mechanism for mandated reporters in Virginia is through the VA-CPS Mandated Reporter Portal - https://vacps.dss.virginia.gov/VACPSWeb/faces/landingPage.xhtml.

In reporting to Child Protective Services, it is helpful for the reporter to provide as much of the following as possible: the name and address of the child and the parent or person responsible for his/her care; the child's age, sex, and race; a description of the alleged abuse and neglect, including how long it may have been happening; the name of the school the child attends; the names of other people, especially children, in the home; the reporter's relationship to the child. Report even if you are unable to provide all of the information. The person reporting abuse to Child Protective Services is not required to give his or her name.

If you suspect abuse, neglect or exploitation of an adult over age 60, or an incapacitated adult over the age of 18, call the Adult Protective Services hotline of the Virginia Department of Social Services at (888) 832-3858.

7. Responding to Allegations of Sexual Abuse or Misconduct on the Parish Level

Report alleged sexual abuse or misconduct immediately. Click here to learn how to report.

Parish Level Response to Allegations of Misconduct by a Clergyperson

After a report is made to the Intake Officer, the process outlined in the Canons, Title IV: Ecclesiastical Discipline, is set in motion. For questions regarding Title IV process and parish response, you may contact the Canon for Vocations and Clergy Wellness who serves as the appointed Title IV Procedural Officer.

Parish Level Response to Allegations of Misconduct by a Layperson

Misconduct or suspected misconduct on the part of a layperson should be reported to the rector or other clergyperson on staff of the layperson's church, or of the church of the offended person.

The clergyperson who receives the report should then:

1. Call the Canon to the Ordinary to receive guidance and develop and appropriate response.

2. Fill out and submit a report form (found on misconduct prevention webpage and reporting webpage).

It is our practice in the Diocese of Virginia to empower clergy and wardens to respond to

reports of sexual misconduct by a lay member of the congregation, with support and guidance from the Bishop, canon and chancellor.
After filing the initial reports, additional appropriate responses by the clergyperson handling the report may include one or more of the following, determined in consultation with the Bishop, Canon to the Ordinary and/or chancellor:

- **Suspend the person** accused of abuse from church related duties. It is mandatory that when a layperson who works with children or youth is accused or suspected of child abuse or child sexual abuse, that person be immediately removed from all contact with children or youth until the matter is resolved.

- **Provide pastoral care** for those involved. In some cases, the canon will appoint a diocesan pastoral care team to provide such care.

- **Notify the wardens** or other appropriate leaders of the congregation.

- **Protect identity.** The identity of the person or persons who report the incident to the clergy must be protected. The identity of all minors must be protected and disclosed only to those professionally involved.

- **Document all actions** taken regarding the matter and retain the documentation in a confidential file at the church or institution. File a copy of the documentation with the canon.

Other Notifications and Responses

In the event of suspected **misconduct by a Bishop**, report the matter to the intake officer appointed by the Presiding Bishop, the Rev. Barbara Kempf.

Notification of Law Enforcement: If the complaint may involve a violation of federal or state laws regarding sexual abuse of a minor or incompetent adult, law enforcement officials must be notified. Church officials and/or employees with knowledge of such alleged abuse shall cooperate fully with law enforcement authorities, insofar as canonical responsibilities permit.

Notification of the Chancellor: The Bishop or Canon to the Ordinary shall notify the chancellor as appropriate.

Media Inquiries: A diocesan spokesperson will be appointed by the Bishop or canon to respond to media inquiries and to advise the congregation on media relations. No statements shall be made by anyone other than the appointed spokesperson.

Written Statement to the Congregation: The Bishop, the Canon to the Ordinary or another designated person may prepare and present a written statement to the affected congregation, stating the relevant information while maintaining appropriate confidences. The Bishop or canon may advise the rector and wardens to prepare and present a written statement to the affected congregation. All written statements, no matter who prepares them, will be read and approved by the chancellor before being presented.

Meeting with the Affected Congregation: The Bishop, the Canon to the Ordinary or another designated person may meet with the vestry and/or the congregation to assist the congregation in responding to and dealing with the incident and its aftermath.

Insurance Notification Requirements: The parish and diocese shall meet all reporting and notification requirements as stipulated in the parish, diocesan or other liability policies.