

PROTOCOL FOR SEXUAL ACTIVITY INVOLVING A MINOR

This policy applies in all situations where sexual activity involving a minor attending a school, parish, or Diocesan program or function becomes known to a school, parish, or Diocesan official or entity, except in those situations where the Seal of Confession is implicated or Diocesan policies on sexual abuse or harassment apply.

Sexual activity involving minors attending a school, parish, or Diocesan program or function presents difficult issues. While we clearly and firmly discourage such activity, we recognize that it can occur in these contexts. School, parish, or Diocesan officials who became aware of such activity have in the past requested guidance in addressing this issue.

At the outset, it is not the proper role of a school, parish, or Diocesan official to seek out such information. However, where such information becomes known to us, there are both moral and legal issues which must be addressed.

The civil laws of the State of Illinois impose certain mandated reporting requirements upon persons and entities where the sexual or other physical abuse of minors has occurred. Evaluating that requirement can sometimes be difficult, but it is essential that such reporting, where required, be accomplished. If there are doubts as to the application of the mandated reporting laws, an individual should immediately contact the Office of the Vicar General.

Morally, we have a responsibility to the minors left to our care, but we also have a responsibility to the parents who put their children into our care. Where information comes to our knowledge which materially relates not only to the moral development of the child but also raises health and safety issues, we believe we have a moral obligation to share that information with the child's parents. Moreover, we believe the child's parents would want and expect that information to be shared with them.

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Where sexual activity involving a minor attending a school, parish, or Diocesan program or function becomes known to a school, parish, or Diocesan official or entity (with those exceptions noted in the policy statement above), the following procedures will apply:

1. The person who obtains such information shall promptly advise the chief administrator in the applicable entity (in a school, the principal; in a parish, the Pastor; and in the Diocese, the Vicar General).

2. The chief administrator shall in turn promptly advise the Pastor of the parish school or the head of the Pastor's Board and the Chaplain, if one is assigned, the Vicar General and in the case of a school matter also the Office of the Catholic Schools.
3. The Vicar General, in consultation with those parties he deems appropriate, and with such additional investigation as he deems necessary, shall determine whether this policy and administrative regulation applies and what reporting shall be undertaken, including whether the parents or guardians of the minor shall be notified. The Vicar General shall delegate such reporting to appropriate persons.

This policy and administrative regulation shall favor reporting of sexual activity. However, this is not a disciplinary policy and does not warrant or support disciplinary action being taken against a minor absent compelling circumstances.