

**Diocese of San Diego**  
**POLICY ON SEXUAL MISCONDUCT**

**Introduction**

Sexual misconduct is contrary to the principles and values which we hold as Catholics. Therefore, beyond any provisions of law, sexual misconduct by personnel of the Diocese of San Diego is totally inappropriate and unacceptable.

All personnel of the diocese shall comply with applicable laws as well as the policies of the diocese regarding incidents of actual or suspected sexual misconduct.

**Definitions**

Sexual misconduct is here defined as any sexual conduct which is civilly unlawful, e.g., sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, and sexual harassment.

The word diocesan is meant to include all entities operating under the Roman Catholic Bishop of San Diego, a corporation sole, e.g., the diocese, parishes and schools.

Diocesan personnel means all those whose source of compensation is a diocesan entity, and those whose volunteer services are formally accepted by a diocesan entity.

**Reporting Requirements**

California State Law, Article 2.5 of the Penal Code, provides reporting requirements for child abuse whether sexual abuse, physical non-accidental injury, or neglect. Diocesan personnel must comply with those legal requirements.

In addition, diocesan personnel who have actual knowledge, or reasonable cause to suspect, that a child or an adult has been subject to sexual misconduct by diocesan personnel, must make an immediate report to the office of the chancellor. This policy is not to be construed in such a way that it would violate the priest/penitent relationship of the Sacrament of Penance.

**Investigation and Response**

Each reported incident will be investigated with a high level of confidentiality, as well as concern and care for alleged victims, alleged perpetrators, and others affected.

If there is reason to believe that the report may be true, pending the outcome of the internal and any external investigation, the alleged perpetrator, if compensated by the diocese, will be placed on administrative leave; if a volunteer, services to the diocese will be suspended. At the same time there will be immediate outreach to alleged victims and

others affected. Personnel of the diocese who admit to, do not contest, or are found guilty of sexual misconduct shall be subject to appropriate administrative or disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment and/or ministerial duties.

### **Communication**

Within the confines of respect for privacy, authorized diocesan representatives will deal as openly as possible with members of the community involved. Any media contact or inquiries will be addressed only by the bishop or his delegate.

### **False Accusation**

In the case of false accusations or unsubstantiated claims, both civil and canon law provide penalties for defamation of character in which individuals become victims of calumny and detraction.

### **Applicability**

This policy applies to all diocesan personnel.

### **Forms**

Form 1:

[Report of Suspected Sexual Misconduct by Diocesan Personnel](#)

Form 2:

[Acknowledgment of Policies](#)

(for all Diocesan Employees and Volunteers).

Form 3:

[Certificate of Awareness of Child Abuse Reporting Law](#)

(Compensated Professional Staff)

Form 4:

[Certificate of Awareness of Child Abuse Reporting Law](#)

(Volunteer Staff)

For policy and forms in Spanish, see [Diocesan Policy 14 \(Spanish\)](#).