



MANUEL DE JESÚS RODRÍGUEZ

By the Grace of God and of the Apostolic See

BISHOP OF PALM BEACH



PARTICULAR LAW

FOR THE DIOCESE OF PALM BEACH

In the matter of:
**PROTECTING AND SAFEGUARDING
THE PEOPLE OF GOD**

No. I-2026

7 August 2026

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In Nomine Domini. Amen.

PREAMBLE

WHEREAS, canons 381 §1, 391 §§1–2, and 392 of the Code of Canon Law entrust to the Diocesan Bishop the responsibility of governing the particular Church committed to his pastoral care, safeguarding ecclesiastical discipline, and promoting the common good of the People of God;



WHEREAS, every human person is created in the image and likeness of God and possesses an inherent and inviolable dignity, which obliges the Church to protect all persons from every form of abuse, exploitation, neglect, misconduct, harassment, or other unlawful behavior;

WHEREAS, safeguarding constitutes an essential dimension of the Church's evangelical mission and must permeate every aspect of ecclesiastical life through prevention, accountability, transparency, justice, and pastoral charity;

WHEREAS, the Diocese of Palm Beach is firmly committed to fostering and maintaining safe environments throughout all of its parishes, schools, ministries, institutions, apostolates, and affiliated entities, and to responding promptly, compassionately, justly, and effectively to all allegations of misconduct;

WHEREAS, the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*, adopted by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in Dallas in 2002 and subsequently revised, together with the *Essential Norms for Diocesan/Eparchial Policies Dealing with Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Priests or Deacons*, promulgated with the *recognitio* of the Holy See as particular law for the dioceses and eparchies of the United States, establish binding canonical obligations and enduring pastoral principles for the safeguarding of minors and the protection of vulnerable persons;

WHEREAS, the universal legislation of the Church, including *Vos estis lux mundi* and the other applicable norms promulgated by the Apostolic See, further reinforce the obligation of every diocesan bishop to establish and maintain effective structures for prevention, reporting, accountability, investigation, pastoral care, and ecclesiastical discipline;

WHEREAS, I have judged it pastorally necessary and canonically opportune to consolidate, strengthen, and supplement the existing universal and particular norms by means of comprehensive diocesan legislation adapted to the pastoral needs of the Diocese of Palm Beach;

WHEREAS, the faithful observance of uniform Codes of Conduct by clerics, religious, employees, volunteers, and every other ecclesiastical agent is indispensable to the creation and maintenance of safe environments; and whereas such Codes of Conduct are intended to serve as binding normative instruments implementing and complementing the provisions of this Particular Law, establishing the minimum standards of conduct expected throughout the Diocese of Palm Beach;

WHEREAS, the complexity of safeguarding responsibilities within the life of the Church requires the permanent assistance of specialized diocesan advisory boards to provide expert consultation, interdisciplinary assessment, and informed recommendations in matters affecting the protection of the People of God; and whereas the incorporation of such advisory boards into this Particular Law is intended to ensure their stable juridical status, clearly define their competencies, and promote the consistent and coordinated application of safeguarding



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measures throughout the Diocese of Palm Beach, without prejudice to the authority of the Diocesan Bishop as the sole legislator and chief shepherd of the particular Church entrusted to his care;

NOW, THEREFORE, by virtue of the legislative authority vested in me as Diocesan Bishop of Palm Beach, and after having sought the counsel required by law, I hereby enact and promulgate the following *Particular Law No. I-2026 on the Protection and Safeguarding of the People of God*, to be faithfully observed throughout the Diocese of Palm Beach.

This Particular Law shall enter into force immediately upon its publication and dissemination on Saturday, August 8, 2026, in accordance with canon 8 §2 of the Code of Canon Law, and is hereby promulgated *ad experimentum* for a period of two (2) consecutive years from the date of its publication.

PROCEDURAL AND SUBSTANTIVE NORMS

PART I CODES OF CONDUCT OF THE DIOCESE OF PALM BEACH

TITLE A CODE OF PASTORAL CONDUCT FOR CLERGY



Article 1

General Principles

§1. Clergy¹ must uphold Christian values and conduct as established on the *Code of Canon Law* (or the *Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches*, whenever applicable), the Catechism of the Catholic Church and the teachings of the Magisterium. The present Code of Pastoral Conduct provides a set of standards for conduct in certain pastoral situations.

§2. The public and private conduct of clergy can inspire and motivate people, but it can also scandalize and undermine the people's faith. Clergy must, at all times, be aware of the responsibilities that accompany their work. They must also know that God's goodness and grace supports them in their ministry.

§3. Responsibility for adherence to the Code of Pastoral Conduct rests with the individual. Clergy who disregard this Code of Pastoral Conduct will be subject to remedial action by the Diocese, parish, and/or agency. Corrective action may take various forms, including and up to removal from ministry, as detailed in the Policy and Procedures Regarding Sexual Abuse of Minors, depending on the circumstances of the offense and the extent of the harm.

§4. This Code of Pastoral Conduct shall be carefully observed by all members of the clergy ministering within the Diocese of Palm Beach or acting as agents of said Diocese, in whichever place they may be.

Article 2

Conduct with Minors²

§1. Clergy working with minors shall maintain an open and trustworthy relationship between these individuals and their adult supervisors.

¹ The term *clergy*, as used herein, is understood to be coextensive with bishops, presbyters (priests) and deacons. With respect to priests, this Code applies equally to both diocesan priests and priests who belong to Institutes of Consecrated Life (a.k.a. religious priests), who serve within the territory of the Diocese of Palm Beach.

² A minor is defined as any person who is not yet eighteen years of age, or one who habitually lacks the use of reason, in compliance with the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* and art. 6, 1^o of the *Motu Proprio Sacramentorum Sanctitatis Tutela* (SST 2021).



§2. Clergy must be aware of their own and others' vulnerability when working alone with minors. Use a team approach to manage activities with minors.

§3. Physical contact with minors can be misconstrued and should occur (a) only when completely nonsexual and otherwise appropriate, and (b) ordinarily not in private.

§4. Clergy should refrain from (a) the illegal possession and/or illegal use of drugs and/or alcohol at all times, and (b) the use of alcohol when working with minors. For the avoidance of doubt, clergy should never provide alcohol or drugs of any kind (other than drugs prescribed by a health care provider) to minors.

§5. Clergy must not have unaccompanied minors as guests in a clergy member's private living and/or sleeping quarters. In the same manner, clergy must never have minors as guests in common spaces in a rectory, unless the minors are accompanied by their respective parents or legitimate guardians.

§6. Clergy should not take minors on a trip without either parental consent or other adults being present.

§7. Clergy must refrain from giving extravagant gifts to minors and/or inappropriate gifts that reveal favoritism towards a single or small group of minors.

Article 3

Sexual Conduct

§1. Clergy must not, for sexual gain or intimacy, exploit the trust placed in them by the faith community.

§2. Clergy are called to be examples of the virtue of chastity, as appropriate to their state of life, in all relationships at all times, which for celibate clerics and those in consecrated life includes the observance of "perfect and perpetual continence for the sake of the kingdom of heaven." (cf. canons 277, 599).

§3. Clergy who provide pastoral counseling or spiritual direction services must avoid developing inappropriately intimate relationships with minors, other staff, or parishioners.

§4. No clergy may exploit another person for sexual purposes.

§5. Allegations of sexual misconduct involving a clergy member and an adult should be taken seriously and reported to the immediate superior in the Church. Diocesan procedures will be followed to protect the rights of all involved.

§6. Clergy must ensure that allegations regarding sexual misconduct or abuse of a minor are reported to the Diocese's toll-free Reporting Line at 1-833-710-0909 or via the online form available at



<https://www.diocesepb.org/ministriesoffices/offices/safe-environments/reporting-abuse.html>, either by the complainant or by the clergy member himself. Diocesan procedures, as outlined in the Policy and Procedures Regarding Sexual Abuse of Minors, will be followed to protect the rights of all involved.

§7. Clergy should review and know the contents of the child abuse regulations and reporting requirements for the State of Florida, and should follow those mandates.

Article 4

Harassment/Boundaries

§1. Clergy must not engage in physical, psychological, written, or verbal harassment of staff, volunteers, or parishioners and must not tolerate such harassment by other Church staff or volunteers.

§2. Clergy shall provide a professional work environment that is free from physical, psychological, written, or verbal intimidation or harassment.

§3. Harassment encompasses a broad range of physical, written, or verbal behavior, including, without limitation, the following:

- a) Physical or mental abuse.
- b) Racial insults.
- c) Derogatory ethnic slurs.
- d) Unwelcome sexual advances or touching.
- e) Sexual comments or sexual jokes.
- f) Requests for sexual favors used as: a condition of employment, or to affect other personnel decisions, such as promotion or compensation.
- g) Display of offensive materials.

§4. Harassment can be a single severe incident or a persistent pattern of behavior where the purpose or the effect is to create a hostile, offensive, or intimidating work environment.

§5. Allegations of harassment should be taken seriously and reported immediately to the appropriate supervisor. Diocesan procedures will be followed to protect the rights of all involved.

§6. It is the responsibility of the clergy member to maintain appropriate emotional and sexual boundaries with those with whom they work or serve. Members of the clergy should never:



- a) embrace or kiss a minor;
- b) make comments about physique or physical development;
- c) show affection while in isolated areas;
- d) hold minors on their lap
- e) being alone with a minor in any single space, except a Church confessional (if the cleric is a priest or bishop), provided that full visibility from the outside is guaranteed through a clear glass window or by keeping the confessional's door open;
- f) engage in physical activity with minors, such as massages, tickling, wrestling, or piggy back rides.
- g) bring or allowing a minor to access a rectory's bedroom or the private living quarters of priests;

§7. No person who is not a cleric officially assigned to a rectory or other ecclesiastical residence of the Diocese of Palm Beach may be permitted to remain there overnight without the specific authorization of the Diocesan Bishop, granted through the Office of the Chancellor.

§8. No one may be permitted to remain overnight in any building or facility of the Diocese of Palm Beach and its affiliated organizations without the specific authorization of the Diocesan Bishop, granted through the Office of the Chancellor.

§9. All rectories and ecclesiastical residences of the Diocese of Palm Beach shall be considered restricted-access premises with respect to persons who are not officially assigned to reside there. Visitors may be admitted to designated common areas in accordance with the criteria established by the competent pastor or administrator. Except for authorized janitorial personnel, maintenance personnel, or specifically engaged contractors acting in the performance of their duties, access to clerics' bedrooms, swimming pools, and other private residential areas is prohibited for any person not officially assigned to that residence.

Article 5

Parish, Agency and Diocesan Records and Information

§1. Confidentiality will be maintained in creating, storing, accessing, transferring, and disposing of parish, religious community/institute, or organizational records.



§2. Sacramental records shall be regarded as confidential. When compiling and publishing parish, religious community/institute, or organization statistical information from these records, great care must be taken to preserve the anonymity of individuals.

§3. Subject to pertinent law or court order, information regarding adoption and legitimacy remains confidential, regardless of age.

§4. Only staff members who are authorized to access the records and supervise their use shall handle requests for more recent records.

§5. Pastors and Administrators should designate the specific persons who have access to sacramental records and other records of the parish or agency.

§6. Parish, religious community/institute, or organization financial records are confidential unless review is required by the Diocese or by an appropriate government agency. Contact the Finance Department at (561) 775-9518 upon receipt of any request for release of financial records.

§7. Individual contribution records of the parish, religious community/institute, or organization shall be regarded as private and shall be maintained in strictest confidence.

Article 6

Conduct for Clergy who act as Pastoral Counselors and Spiritual Directors³

§1. Some Clergy act as Pastoral Counselors and Spiritual Directors. Clergy must respect the rights and advance the welfare of each person when acting in these roles as well.

§2. Pastoral Counselors and Spiritual Directors shall not step beyond their competence in counseling situations and shall refer parishioners or persons entrusted to their care to other professionals when appropriate.

§3. Pastoral Counselors and Spiritual Directors should carefully consider the possible consequences before entering into a counseling or spiritual direction relationship with someone with whom they have a pre-existing relationship or over whom they have supervisory or evaluative control (*i.e.*, employee, professional colleague, friend, or other pre-existing relationship).

³ The provisions of this section govern all persons who act as Pastoral Counselors and Spiritual Directors. Accordingly, the Clergy Code of Conduct should be provided to all such persons, including laypersons, who, in addition to the other rules governing their conduct as employees of or volunteers within the Diocese, shall also be bound by the provisions of this section in their capacity as Pastoral Counselors and Spiritual Directors.



§4. Pastoral Counselors and Spiritual Directors should not audiotape or videotape sessions.

§5. Pastoral Counselors and Spiritual Directors must never engage in sexual intimacies with the persons they counsel or direct. This includes consensual and nonconsensual contact, forced physical contact, and inappropriate sexual comments.

§6. Pastoral Counselors and Spiritual Directors shall not engage in sexual intimacies with individuals who are close to the person entrusted to their care—such as relatives or friends of such person—when there is a risk of exploitation or potential harm to the person entrusted to their care. Pastoral Counselors and Spiritual Directors should presume that the potential for exploitation or harm exists in such intimate relationships.

§7. Pastoral Counselors and Spiritual Directors assume the full burden of responsibility for establishing and maintaining clear, appropriate boundaries in all counseling and counseling-related relationships.

§8. Physical contact of any kind (*e.g.*, touching, hugging, holding) between Pastoral Counselors or Spiritual Directors and persons whom they counsel or direct can be misconstrued and should be avoided.

§9. Sessions should be conducted in appropriate settings at appropriate times.

- a) No sessions should be conducted in private living quarters.
- b) Sessions should not be held at places or times that would tend to cause confusion about the nature of the relationship for the person being counseled.

§10. Pastoral Counselors and Spiritual Directors shall maintain a log of the times and places of sessions with each of the persons entrusted to their care. They must maintain appropriate confidentiality in creating, storing, accessing and disposing of such logs.

§11. Confidentiality: Information disclosed to a Pastoral Counselor or Spiritual Director during the course of counseling, advising, or spiritual direction shall be held in the strictest confidence possible.

- a) Information obtained in the course of sessions shall be confidential, except for compelling professional reasons or as required by law. The following confidentiality obligations are independent of and in addition to the confidentiality of the confessional. Under no circumstances whatsoever can there be any disclosure—even indirect disclosure—of information received through the confessional.
- b) If there is clear and imminent danger to the person entrusted to his/her care or to others, the Pastoral Counselor or Spiritual Director may disclose only the information necessary to protect the parties affected and to prevent harm.



- c) Before disclosure is made, if feasible, the Pastoral Counselor or Spiritual Director should inform the person being counseled about the disclosure and the potential consequences.
- d) Pastoral Counselors and Spiritual Directors should discuss the nature of confidentiality and its limitations with each person in counseling or direction.
- e) Pastoral Counselors and Spiritual Directors should keep minimal confidential records of the content of sessions.
- f) Knowledge that arises from professional contact may be used in teaching, writing, homilies, or other public presentations only when effective measures are taken to absolutely safeguard both the individual's identity and the confidentiality of the disclosures.
- g) While counseling a minor, if a Pastoral Counselor or Spiritual Director discovers that there is a serious threat to the welfare of the person entrusted to his/her care and that communication of confidential information to a parent or legal guardian is essential to the person entrusted to his/her care's health and well-being, the Pastoral Counselor or Spiritual Director should attempt to secure written consent from the person entrusted to his/her care for the specific disclosure.
- h) If consent is not given, disclose only the information necessary to protect the health and well-being of the person entrusted to his/her care.
- i) Consultation with the appropriate Church supervisory personnel is required before disclosure.

Article 7

Conflicts of Interest

§1. Clergy should avoid situations that might present a conflict of interest. Even the appearance of a conflict of interest can call integrity and professional conduct into question.

§2. Clergy should disclose all relevant factors that potentially could create a conflict of interest.

§3. Clergy should inform all parties when a real or potential conflict of interest arises. Resolution of the issues must protect the person receiving ministry services.



- a) No clergy should take advantage of anyone to whom they are providing services in order to further their personal, religious, political, or business interests.
- b) Clergy who act as Pastoral Counselors or Spiritual Directors should not provide counseling services to anyone with whom they have a business, professional, or social relationship. When this is unavoidable, the person entrusted to his care must be protected. The counselor must establish and keep clear, appropriate boundaries.
- c) When a clergy member provides pastoral counseling or spiritual direction services to two or more people who have a relationship with each other, the Pastoral Counselor or Spiritual Director must:
 - clarify with all parties the nature of each relationship;
 - anticipate any conflict of interest;
 - take appropriate actions to eliminate the conflict; and
 - obtain written consent from all parties to continue services.
- d) Conflicts of interest may also arise when a Pastoral Counselor's or Spiritual Director's independent judgment is impaired by:
 - prior dealings;
 - becoming personally involved; or
 - becoming an advocate for one person against another.

§4. Without the Ordinary's written permission, clergy must not act as executors or trustees of parishioners' estates.

§5. In the circumstances indicated on §3, the Pastoral Counselor or Spiritual Director shall advise the parties that he can no longer provide services and refer them to another Pastoral Counselor or Spiritual Director.

Article 8

Reporting Ethical or Professional Misconduct

§1. Clergy have a duty to report their own ethical or professional misconduct and the misconduct of others.

§2. Clergy must hold each other accountable for maintaining the highest ethical and professional standards.

§3. When an uncertainty exists about whether a situation or course of conduct violates this Code of Pastoral Conduct or other religious, moral, or ethical principles, clergy may consult with the Chief Safeguarding Officer of the Diocese of Palm Beach.



§4. When it appears that a member of the clergy has violated this Code of Pastoral Conduct or other religious, moral, or ethical principles related to improper conduct involving minors or other vulnerable persons, report of the issue should be immediately made to the Chief Safeguarding Officer of the Diocese of Palm Beach, as well as the Diocese's Reporting Line at 1-833-710-0909. All such reports will be documented and maintained consistent with the Record-Keeping Policies.

§5. Clergy must also abide by the requirements set forth in the Policy and Procedures Regarding Sexual Abuse of Minors.

Article 9

Administration and temporal matters

§1. Clergy shall be treated justly in the day-to-day administrative operations of their ministries.

§2. Personnel and other administrative decisions made by clergy and pastoral ministers shall meet civil and canon law obligations and reflect Catholic social teachings and this Code of Pastoral Conduct.

§3. No clergy shall use his position to wield unreasonable or inappropriate power and authority.

§4. Clergy are not permitted to participate in more than one (1) pilgrimage involving a group of parishioners in any calendar year unless they obtain the specific written permission of the Diocesan Bishop. This restriction also applies to pilgrimages organized during a cleric's vacation time if parishioners are involved.

§5. Each member of the clergy must participate in training sessions required by the Diocese, parish or agency to foster a safe environment and to prevent sexual abuse of minors.

§6. Each member of the clergy must read this Code of Pastoral Conduct, sign the hard copy Acknowledgment Form or the electronic acknowledgment, and, if signed in hard copy, return the Acknowledgment Form to the designated office, before providing services.

Article 10

Computers and Internet Usage, Pornography, Photography, and Social Media

§1. Social media represents a broad group of digital technologies whose content is driven entirely by its members. Individuals are generally allowed flexibility in privacy settings, in posting text, texting, photos, video, links and other information, and in level of interaction with other members. Examples include blogging, Wikis, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Myspace, YouTube, Instagram, etc.



§2. All social media usage by the clergy of the Diocese of Palm Beach must adhere to the religious standards of the Catechism of the Catholic Church and the policies of the Diocese of Palm Beach and of the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (U.S.C.C.B.). Mobile apps and Social Networking Sites are to be used according to the same standards.

§3. No member of the clergy will interact with minors through e-mail, social network sites, or other electronic communications except for delivering information about a bona fide parish program. Clergy must ensure that use of web pages and social media maintain proper professional/ministerial relationships, especially with minors.

§4. No member of the clergy will possess, distribute, or acquire, pornography in any form; nor will they view pornographic materials on any Diocesan property, or show to or share with minors pornographic materials, or assist minors in accessing pornography.

§5. No member of the clergy will use parish, school, or any agency computers or other electronic communications to participate in chat rooms or social network sites except for bona-fide parish or agency purposes.

§6. No member of the clergy will photograph minors or post said photographs without the explicit verifiable consent of the parents or legal guardians.

§7. Clergy are not permitted, under any circumstance, to use dating apps (*e.g.*, eHarmony, Grindr, Tinder, etc.) whose primary purpose is in contrary to their ordination promises.

§8. No member of the clergy will deny or hinder the Diocese's ability to inspect, review, and access all matters on any systems maintained or provided by the Diocese, including email and computer systems.

§9. No priest should be enrolled or engaging the usage of any kind of online dating application (a.k.a. dating apps).

Article 11

Virtus Training

§1. Every cleric required by diocesan policy to observe the norms and provisions of this Code shall commit to undergo *Virtus Training* and to comply regularly with all *Virtus Training* activities and follow-up procedures and duties. Negligence or violation of this norm shall be subject to immediate disciplinary measures to be imposed by the Diocesan Bishop after a written warning.



TITLE B
***CODE OF PASTORAL CONDUCT
FOR ALL EMPLOYEES OF THE DIOCESE OF PALM
BEACH AT THE PARISHES, SCHOOLS, PASTORAL
CENTER AND AFFILIATED ORGANIZATIONS***

Article 1

Purpose

§1. The purpose of this Code is to establish uniform standards of professional, ethical, responsible, and Christian conduct for employees of the Diocese of Palm Beach.

§2. In particular, this Code is intended to:

- 1° protect the dignity, safety, and well-being of all persons served by the Church;
- 2° establish and preserve appropriate professional and ministerial boundaries;
- 3° safeguard minors and vulnerable persons;
- 4° prevent abuse, sexual misconduct, harassment, exploitation, retaliation, financial misconduct, and other inappropriate behavior;
- 5° promote transparency, accountability, and responsible stewardship;
- 6° establish clear obligations concerning the reporting of suspected misconduct; and
- 7° preserve the integrity and credibility of the ecclesial mission of the Diocese of Palm Beach.



Article 2

Scope and Applicability

§1. This Code applies to all employees of the Diocese of Palm Beach and, according to the governance applicable to each entity, to employees of its parishes, schools, offices, ministries, agencies, institutions, cemeteries, foundations, and other affiliated ecclesiastical entities.

§2. The Code applies regardless of an employee's position, title, seniority, employment classification, or whether the employee's responsibilities are primarily pastoral, educational, administrative, professional, financial, technical, custodial, or otherwise.

§3. Compliance with this Code constitutes a condition of employment.

Article 3

Applicable Laws and Policies

§1. Employees shall observe this Code together with:

- 1° applicable civil law;
- 2° the universal and particular law of the Catholic Church, insofar as applicable;
- 3° diocesan personnel policies;
- 4° diocesan safeguarding and safe-environment policies;
- 5° applicable parish, school, institutional, and departmental policies;
- 6° applicable professional licensing and ethical requirements; and



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7° other policies, protocols, decrees, regulations, or directives legitimately issued by competent diocesan authority.

§2. Where applicable law or another binding diocesan norm imposes a more stringent requirement than this Code, the more stringent requirement shall govern.

Article 4

General Standards of Professional Conduct

§1. Employees shall conduct themselves with honesty, integrity, professionalism, prudence, charity, and respect for the dignity of every person.

§2. Employees shall faithfully perform the responsibilities entrusted to them and shall act within the limits of their position, authority, professional competence, training, licensure, and certification.

§3. Employees shall comply with lawful directives issued by their supervisors and competent ecclesiastical authorities.

§4. Employees shall foster a professional environment characterized by respect, collaboration, accountability, appropriate communication, and concern for the common good.

§5. Employees shall treat parishioners, students, parents, coworkers, clergy, religious, volunteers, visitors, vendors, beneficiaries of diocesan services, and members of the public with dignity and respect.

§6. Employees shall promptly seek appropriate assistance whenever a situation exceeds their professional competence, authority, qualifications, or assigned responsibilities.

Article 5

Positions of Trust and Authority



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§1. Employees shall recognize that employment by the Church frequently entails a relationship of trust and, in certain circumstances, an imbalance of authority or influence.

§2. No employee shall use his or her employment, position, authority, professional relationship, pastoral influence, or association with the Church to intimidate, manipulate, exploit, coerce, deceive, or improperly influence another person.

§3. No relationship of trust, authority, dependency, supervision, pastoral care, counseling, education, or professional responsibility shall be exploited for sexual, emotional, financial, political, or other improper personal advantage.

§4. Employees shall maintain appropriate professional and interpersonal boundaries at all times.

Article 6

Respectful Workplace Conduct

§1. Every employee shall contribute to a professional environment in which the dignity and legitimate rights of every person are respected.

§2. Employees shall not engage in:

1° sexual harassment;

2° unlawful discrimination;

3° bullying;

4° intimidation;

5° threats;

6° humiliation or degradation;

7° stalking;



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8° coercion;

9° retaliation;

10° physical violence; or

11° other abusive conduct incompatible with a safe and professional workplace.

§3. Employees shall not engage in sexually suggestive comments, gestures, jokes, communications, images, or behavior in the workplace or in connection with diocesan employment.

§4. Employees shall refrain from seriously offensive, degrading, threatening, or abusive language in the performance of their duties.

§5. Professional disagreements shall be addressed through appropriate supervisory, administrative, pastoral, or human-resources channels.

Article 7

Professional and Pastoral Boundaries

§1. Employees shall maintain boundaries appropriate to their professional, pastoral, educational, supervisory, charitable, or ministerial relationship with others.

§2. Employees shall not exploit persons who seek pastoral assistance, counseling, education, charitable assistance, employment assistance, spiritual support, or other services from the Church.

§3. Employees providing pastoral, educational, social, professional, or other services shall act within the scope of their competence and assigned responsibilities.

§4. Appropriate referrals shall be made whenever a person's needs exceed the employee's competence, qualifications, or responsibilities.

§5. Employees shall avoid inappropriate emotional dependency, excessive familiarity, improper favoritism, or relationships that compromise, or could reasonably appear to compromise, professional judgment or appropriate boundaries.



Article 8

Protection of Minors and Vulnerable Persons

§1. The Diocese of Palm Beach maintains zero tolerance for the sexual abuse or exploitation of minors and vulnerable persons.

§2. For purposes of this Code, a **minor** is a person under eighteen years of age.

§3. For purposes of this Code, a **vulnerable person** includes a person who, because of age, disability, illness, impairment, dependency, deprivation of liberty, or other circumstances, may have a diminished ability to protect himself or herself from abuse, exploitation, or coercion, according to applicable law and diocesan policy.

§4. Employees who work with minors or vulnerable persons occupy positions of particular trust and shall exercise heightened prudence, vigilance, and responsibility.

§5. Employees shall comply with all diocesan safe-environment requirements, including those concerning:

1° background screening;

2° safe-environment training;

3° supervision;

4° transportation;

5° overnight activities;

6° electronic communications;

7° photography and media;

8° physical contact;

9° reporting; and



10° access to diocesan facilities.

§6. Whenever reasonably possible, interactions with minors shall occur in observable and interruptible environments.

Article 9

Prohibited Conduct Involving Minors and Vulnerable Persons

§1. No employee shall:

- 1° engage in sexual activity or sexual contact with a minor or vulnerable person;
- 2° sexually abuse or exploit a minor or vulnerable person;
- 3° engage in grooming behavior;
- 4° possess, produce, distribute, request, transmit, or access child sexual abuse material;
- 5° expose a minor to pornography or sexually explicit material;
- 6° engage in inappropriate sexualized conversations with a minor;
- 7° strike, slap, shake, spank, or otherwise inflict physical punishment upon a minor;
- 8° humiliate, ridicule, threaten, or degrade a minor;
- 9° employ disciplinary methods intended to frighten or humiliate a minor;
- 10° provide alcohol, illegal drugs, controlled substances, or other prohibited substances to a minor;
- 11° consume alcohol or use impairing substances while responsible for supervising minors;
- 12° give inappropriate or extravagant gifts intended to foster secrecy, dependency, or improper favoritism; or



13° encourage a minor to conceal from a parent, legal guardian, or other responsible adult communications, conduct, gifts, meetings, or other aspects of the employee's relationship with the minor.

§2. An employee who encounters inappropriate sexualized behavior initiated by a minor or vulnerable person shall maintain appropriate boundaries and promptly report the matter through the appropriate supervisory or safeguarding channels.

Article 10

Sexual Misconduct and Exploitation

§1. Employees shall respect the dignity and bodily integrity of every person.

§2. Sexual abuse, sexual assault, sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, grooming, and other forms of sexual misconduct are prohibited.

§3. No employee shall use a position of authority, supervision, trust, pastoral influence, professional responsibility, or dependency to obtain or attempt to obtain sexual contact, sexual favors, romantic involvement, or other inappropriate personal benefits.

§4. Employees shall exercise particular prudence whenever a substantial imbalance of authority, dependency, counseling, supervision, pastoral care, or professional responsibility exists.

§5. Employees shall comply with all diocesan policies governing sexual misconduct, harassment, safeguarding, and professional boundaries.

Article 11

Electronic Communications and Social Media

§1. Electronic communications undertaken in connection with diocesan employment shall be professional and consistent with diocesan policy.



§2. Employees communicating electronically with minors for legitimate educational, pastoral, athletic, or programmatic purposes shall use methods authorized by the Diocese or the respective parish, school, or institution.

§3. Communications with minors shall be transparent, professional, related to legitimate activities, and conducted in accordance with applicable parental-consent and safe-environment requirements.

§4. Employees shall not use disappearing-message applications, secret accounts, anonymous accounts, or other methods for the purpose of concealing inappropriate communications with minors or vulnerable persons.

§5. Employees shall not send, request, possess, access, display, or distribute pornographic or sexually explicit material using diocesan property, accounts, devices, networks, or systems.

§6. Employees shall never use diocesan resources to access, possess, produce, or distribute child sexual abuse material.

§7. Employees shall not photograph, record, livestream, publish, or distribute images of minors except in accordance with diocesan policy and applicable parental or legal-guardian authorization.

§8. Employees shall exercise prudence in personal social-media activity whenever such activity could reasonably affect their professional responsibilities, the safety or privacy of others, or the mission and legitimate interests of the Church.

Article 12

Confidentiality, Privacy, and Records

§1. Employees shall safeguard confidential and sensitive information obtained through their employment.

§2. Confidential information shall be accessed, used, disclosed, copied, transmitted, or retained only for legitimate professional purposes and by persons authorized to do so.

§3. Confidential information includes, according to the circumstances, personnel, student, educational, health, financial, donor, safeguarding, investigative, legal, pastoral, and personally identifying information.



§4. Employees shall comply with applicable laws and diocesan policies concerning confidentiality, privacy, cybersecurity, records retention, and data protection.

§5. No employee shall improperly destroy, alter, conceal, falsify, or remove a record for the purpose of obstructing an investigation, audit, canonical or civil proceeding, governmental inquiry, or legitimate diocesan review.

§6. The obligation to protect confidential information continues after employment terminates, subject to applicable law.

§7. Nothing in this Article shall prohibit or discourage a report required or protected by civil law or diocesan safeguarding policy.

Article 13

Financial Integrity and Stewardship

§1. Employees shall exercise responsible stewardship over all ecclesiastical goods, funds, donations, property, equipment, and resources entrusted to them.

§2. Employees shall comply with diocesan financial policies, accounting controls, authorization requirements, and audit procedures.

§3. No employee shall:

1° steal or misappropriate Church property;

2° embezzle funds;

3° falsify financial records;

4° conceal financial transactions;

5° make unauthorized transfers or expenditures;

6° misuse credit cards, bank accounts, purchasing authority, or reimbursement systems;



7° divert donations from their designated purposes;

8° use Church property for unauthorized personal benefit;

9° participate in fraudulent transactions; or

10° knowingly assist another person in any such conduct.

§4. Suspected fraud, theft, embezzlement, misappropriation, significant financial irregularities, or other financial misconduct shall be promptly reported.

Article 14

Conflicts of Interest and Gifts

§1. Employees shall avoid actual or apparent conflicts between their personal interests and their professional responsibilities.

§2. Any actual, potential, or reasonably perceived conflict of interest shall be disclosed to the appropriate authority.

§3. Employees shall not use their position, title, confidential information, purchasing authority, access, or influence for improper personal financial benefit or for the improper benefit of relatives, friends, associates, or businesses in which they have an interest.

§4. Employees shall not solicit or accept gifts, payments, favors, loans, services, or benefits when acceptance could reasonably be understood as influencing professional judgment or official action.

§5. Gifts of nominal value customarily associated with legitimate expressions of gratitude or hospitality may be accepted when permitted by diocesan policy and when they create no actual or apparent conflict of interest.

§6. Without the Ordinary's written permission, employees must not act as executors or trustees of parishioners' estates.



Article 15

Use of Diocesan Property and Technology

- §1. Diocesan property and resources shall be used responsibly and principally for authorized ecclesiastical, educational, charitable, administrative, or professional purposes.
- §2. Employees shall protect diocesan property against loss, theft, damage, unauthorized access, and misuse.
- §3. Employees shall comply with diocesan policies concerning computers, telephones, vehicles, credit cards, facilities, keys, passwords, networks, databases, intellectual property, and other resources.
- §4. Employees shall not use diocesan property, resources, or technology for unlawful activity or activity materially contrary to diocesan policy.
- §5. Employees shall have no expectation of privacy in diocesan-owned devices, accounts, networks, or information systems, subject to applicable law and diocesan policy.

Article 16

Alcohol, Drugs, and Impairment

- §1. Employees shall not report to work or perform professional responsibilities while impaired by alcohol, illegal drugs, or another substance that renders them unable to perform their duties safely and competently. Employees must not consume alcohol during regular working (duty) hours.
- §2. The possession, distribution, manufacture, or unlawful use of controlled substances on diocesan property or during diocesan activities is prohibited.
- §3. Employees responsible for minors or vulnerable persons shall not consume alcohol while exercising such supervision.
- §4. Nothing herein prohibits the lawful and responsible use of prescription or over-the-counter medication; however, employees remain responsible for ensuring their ability to perform their duties safely.



Article 17

Safety, Violence, and Threats

- §1. Employees shall contribute to maintaining safe workplaces, schools, parishes, institutions, and ministries.
- §2. Violence, credible threats of violence, intimidation, and conduct creating an unreasonable risk of physical harm are prohibited.
- §3. Employees shall promptly report serious threats, dangerous conduct, or significant safety concerns to the appropriate authority and, whenever required by the circumstances, to civil law-enforcement or emergency authorities.
- §4. Employees shall comply with diocesan policies and applicable civil law concerning weapons on diocesan property and at diocesan activities.

Article 18

Duty to Report

- §1. Employees have an affirmative obligation to report suspected abuse, exploitation, serious misconduct, financial malfeasance, or other conduct that may place another person or the Church at substantial risk.
- §2. Whenever civil law requires a report to law-enforcement, child-protection, adult-protection, or another governmental authority, the employee shall make such report promptly and in accordance with law.
- §3. An internal report to the Diocese does not substitute for a report to civil authorities whenever civil law requires such a report.
- §4. Employees shall comply with all diocesan policies governing the reporting of suspected abuse or neglect of minors or vulnerable persons.
- §5. Allegations of sexual abuse, sexual misconduct, financial malfeasance, or other serious misconduct shall also be reported through the reporting mechanisms established by the Diocese of Palm Beach.



§6. When alleged misconduct involves an employee's immediate supervisor, the employee shall not be required to report the matter to that supervisor and may report directly to another competent diocesan authority or through the Diocese's designated reporting mechanism.

§7. Nothing in this Code shall prevent any person from contacting civil law-enforcement authorities or another competent governmental agency directly.

§8. Employees shall not knowingly make false or malicious allegations.

§9. A report made in good faith shall not constitute a violation of this Code merely because the allegation is subsequently determined to be unsubstantiated.

Article 19

Cooperation with Investigations and Audits

§1. Employees shall cooperate truthfully and in good faith with duly authorized diocesan investigations, safeguarding reviews, audits, administrative inquiries, and other legitimate institutional processes, subject to applicable civil law.

§2. No employee shall:

1° knowingly provide false or materially misleading information;

2° conceal material information;

3° improperly destroy, alter, conceal, or fabricate evidence;

4° improperly influence, threaten, or intimidate a witness;

5° obstruct or interfere with a legitimate investigation;

6° encourage another person to withhold or falsify information; or

7° retaliate against a person because of his or her participation in an investigation.

§3. Nothing in this Article shall be interpreted as limiting any right provided by applicable civil law.



Article 20

Prohibition of Retaliation

§1. Retaliation against any person who makes a good-faith report of suspected abuse, misconduct, financial irregularity, safety concerns, or violations of law or diocesan policy is prohibited.

§2. Retaliation against any person who participates in good faith in an investigation, audit, safeguarding review, or other authorized inquiry is likewise prohibited.

§3. Prohibited retaliation includes, but is not limited to, termination, demotion, harassment, intimidation, threats, unjustified disciplinary action, adverse scheduling, exclusion, or other materially adverse treatment undertaken because a person made a protected report or participated in a protected process.

§4. Suspected retaliation shall itself be reported and may constitute an independent violation of this Code.

Article 21

Background Screening and Required Training

§1. Employees shall submit to background screening whenever required by civil law or diocesan policy.

§2. Employees shall timely complete all safe-environment, professional-conduct, workplace, cybersecurity, financial, or other training required for their position.

§3. Employees shall timely renew all certifications, licenses, screenings, and training required for the performance of their responsibilities.

§4. Employees shall make disclosures concerning their eligibility or fitness to perform assigned responsibilities whenever such disclosure is required by applicable law or diocesan policy.



Article 22

Responsibilities of Supervisors

§1. Employees exercising supervisory or managerial authority bear a particular responsibility to promote and enforce compliance with this Code.

§2. Supervisors shall:

- 1° model appropriate professional conduct;
- 2° respond appropriately to reports or warning signs of misconduct;
- 3° promptly refer safeguarding, legal, financial, personnel, or other serious concerns to the appropriate diocesan authority;
- 4° protect employees from prohibited retaliation;
- 5° respect confidentiality to the extent reasonably possible and legally permissible; and
- 6° refrain from suppressing, concealing, discouraging, or improperly handling reports of misconduct.

§3. No supervisor shall instruct, pressure, threaten, or otherwise attempt to prevent an employee from making a report required by law or diocesan policy.

Article 23

Violations and Disciplinary Measures



§1. A violation of this Code may result in corrective or disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment, in accordance with applicable civil law and diocesan personnel policies.

§2. Conduct violating this Code may, when appropriate, also be reported or referred to law-enforcement authorities, child-protection or adult-protection authorities, professional licensing bodies, insurance carriers, ecclesiastical authorities, or other competent agencies.

§3. The Diocese may adopt immediate protective, precautionary, or administrative measures when reasonably necessary to safeguard persons, preserve evidence, protect ecclesiastical property, maintain institutional integrity, or permit an investigation to proceed.

§4. A precautionary or administrative measure shall not, by itself, constitute a determination that misconduct has occurred.

§5. Nothing in this Code creates a contractual right to continued employment or alters the employment relationship except as expressly required by applicable law.

Article 24

Interpretation and Administration

§1. This Code establishes minimum standards of conduct and is not intended to anticipate every circumstance that may arise.

§2. Employees shall exercise sound professional judgment consistent with the letter, principles, purposes, and spirit of this Code.

§3. Questions concerning the interpretation or application of this Code shall be referred to the competent diocesan authority.

§4. The Diocese of Palm Beach reserves the right to interpret, amend, supplement, or replace this Code in accordance with applicable law.



Article 25

Employee Acknowledgment

§1. Every employee shall acknowledge receipt of this Code in the manner established by the Diocese of Palm Beach.

§2. By signing or electronically acknowledging the Code, the employee confirms that he or she:

1° has received or been provided access to the Code;

2° is responsible for reading and understanding its provisions;

3° agrees to comply with the standards established herein;

4° understands the obligation to report suspected misconduct as required by civil law and diocesan policy;

5° understands that violations may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment; and

6° agrees to complete all required training and screening associated with his or her employment.

Article 26

Virtus Training

§1. Every employee required by diocesan policy to observe the norms and provisions of this Code shall commit to undergo *Virtus Training* and to comply regularly with all *Virtus Training* activities and follow-up procedures and duties. Negligence or violation of this norm shall be subject to immediate suspension to be imposed by the competent authority after having heard the Chief Safeguarding Officer and after a written warning.



TITLE C
CODE OF PASTORAL CONDUCT
FOR ALL VOLUNTEERS OF THE DIOCESE OF
PALM BEACH AT THE PARISHES, SCHOOLS,
PASTORAL CENTER AND AFFILIATED
ORGANIZATIONS

Article 1

Purpose and Scope

§1. This Code of Pastoral Conduct applies to all persons who provide volunteer services on behalf of the Diocese of Palm Beach or any parish, school, institution, ministry, program, agency, or affiliated entity under its ecclesiastical authority.

§2. For purposes of this Code, the term “volunteer” means any person who, without being an employee or cleric acting by virtue of ecclesiastical office or assignment, freely provides services or participates in ministry on behalf of a diocesan entity.

§3. Volunteers shall comply with this Code together with all applicable diocesan policies, safe-environment requirements, particular law, and applicable civil law.

§4. Volunteers who work with minors or vulnerable persons shall satisfy all screening, background-check, training, certification, and other safe-environment requirements established by the Diocese before beginning such service and shall maintain such requirements throughout their volunteer service.

§5. Volunteer service within the Diocese is a privilege and an ecclesial responsibility. Nothing in this Code creates a contractual right to serve as a volunteer or a right to continued volunteer service.



Article 2

General Standards of Christian Conduct

- §1. Volunteers shall conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the teachings, moral principles, and mission of the Catholic Church.
- §2. Volunteers shall treat clergy, religious, employees, other volunteers, parishioners, students, parents, minors, vulnerable persons, visitors, and all other persons with respect, patience, courtesy, charity, and dignity.
- §3. Volunteers shall respect the inherent dignity of every human person and shall refrain from harassment, intimidation, bullying, humiliation, discrimination, retaliation, exploitation, or abusive behavior.
- §4. Volunteers shall work cooperatively with pastors, administrators, principals, supervisors, employees, clergy, and others responsible for the ministry or activity in which they serve.
- §5. Volunteers shall respect the legitimate ecclesiastical authority and administrative structure of the Diocese and of the particular parish, school, institution, ministry, or agency in which they serve.
- §6. Volunteers shall perform only those duties entrusted or authorized to them and shall comply with reasonable instructions issued by the competent pastor, administrator, principal, supervisor, or other diocesan authority.
- §7. Volunteers shall not use their position, ministry, access, influence, or relationship of trust for personal, financial, sexual, political, or other improper advantage.

Article 3

Safeguarding of Minors and Vulnerable Persons

- §1. The protection of minors and vulnerable persons is a fundamental obligation of every volunteer serving within the Diocese of Palm Beach.
- §2. Volunteers shall maintain appropriate physical, emotional, social, spiritual, and behavioral boundaries with minors and vulnerable persons at all times.



- §3. Volunteers shall avoid isolated, secret, or unobservable one-on-one interactions with minors in connection with diocesan, parish, school, or ministerial activities.
- §4. Activities involving minors shall, insofar as reasonably possible, occur in locations that are observable, interruptible, and accessible to other authorized adults.
- §5. Volunteers shall never engage in grooming behavior or cultivate an inappropriate exclusive, secretive, dependent, manipulative, or emotionally intimate relationship with a minor or vulnerable person.
- §6. Volunteers shall not encourage minors to keep secrets from their parents or legal guardians, clergy, teachers, supervisors, or other responsible adults.
- §7. Volunteers shall not share inappropriate personal, romantic, sexual, or intimate information with minors or solicit such information from them.
- §8. Volunteers shall immediately take appropriate action whenever they observe a minor or vulnerable person in a location, situation, or circumstance that presents a reasonable safeguarding concern.
- §9. Volunteers shall participate in all safe-environment training and continuing education required by the Diocese.

Article 4

Physical Contact and Discipline

- §1. Physical contact with minors or vulnerable persons shall always be nonsexual, appropriate to the circumstances, public, and consistent with the person's age, developmental needs, and legitimate pastoral or educational purpose.
- §2. Volunteers shall never touch a minor or vulnerable person in a sexual, sexually suggestive, intimate, coercive, violent, or otherwise inappropriate manner.
- §3. Corporal punishment is prohibited. Volunteers shall not strike, slap, spank, shake, pinch, push, restrain, or otherwise inflict physical punishment upon a minor, except for reasonable and proportionate physical intervention when immediately necessary to prevent serious harm to the minor or another person.



§4. Volunteers shall not use discipline that humiliates, degrades, threatens, terrorizes, ridicules, or intentionally frightens a minor.

§5. Positive reinforcement, appropriate instruction, and constructive correction shall be used when working with minors.

Article 5

Sexual Conduct, Harassment, and Pornography

§1. Volunteers shall not engage in sexual misconduct, sexual harassment, sexual exploitation, or sexually inappropriate behavior in connection with their volunteer service.

§2. Any sexual activity or sexualized conduct involving a minor is absolutely prohibited.

§3. Volunteers shall not make sexually suggestive comments, jokes, gestures, propositions, or communications.

§4. Volunteers shall not possess, distribute, produce, acquire, display, transmit, access, or intentionally view pornography while engaged in volunteer service or while using diocesan property, equipment, networks, accounts, or electronic systems.

§5. Volunteers shall never expose a minor to pornography, sexually explicit material, or other material inappropriate for minors, nor shall they assist, encourage, or permit a minor to access such material.

§6. Any apparent child sexual abuse material encountered in the course of volunteer service shall be handled strictly in accordance with applicable law and diocesan reporting procedures and shall not be copied, forwarded, downloaded, or redistributed except as expressly directed by competent civil authorities.



Article 6

Electronic Communications and Social Media

- §1. Electronic communications with minors arising from volunteer service shall be limited to legitimate parish, school, diocesan, educational, or ministerial purposes.
- §2. Such communications shall be transparent, appropriate, and conducted through methods authorized by the Diocese or the particular diocesan entity.
- §3. Volunteers shall not engage in secret, inappropriate, romantic, sexual, or excessively personal electronic communications with minors.
- §4. Volunteers shall not use disappearing-message functions, anonymous accounts, secret accounts, or other means intended to conceal communications with minors arising from their volunteer service.
- §5. Volunteers shall not send or request inappropriate photographs, videos, recordings, messages, or other digital content involving minors.
- §6. Volunteers shall not use diocesan electronic systems, devices, accounts, networks, or internet access for unlawful, immoral, sexually explicit, fraudulent, harassing, or otherwise inappropriate purposes.
- §7. Volunteers shall have no expectation of privacy when using electronic systems, devices, accounts, or networks owned, maintained, or provided by the Diocese or one of its entities, subject to applicable law.

Article 7

Photography, Video, and Use of Images

- §1. Volunteers shall photograph, film, record, publish, transmit, or post images of minors only for legitimate parish, school, diocesan, or ministerial purposes and in accordance with diocesan policies.
- §2. Required parental or legal-guardian consent shall be obtained before photographs, videos, recordings, or identifying information concerning minors are publicly distributed or posted.



§3. Volunteers shall not create or maintain private collections of photographs or recordings of minors obtained through their volunteer service for purposes unrelated to the authorized ministry or activity.

§4. Photographs or recordings shall never depict minors in circumstances that are undignified, sexually suggestive, exploitative, unnecessarily revealing, or otherwise inappropriate.

Article 8

Transportation, Trips, and Off-Site Activities

§1. Volunteers shall not transport minors in connection with diocesan activities except as authorized by the competent parish, school, or diocesan authority and in accordance with applicable diocesan policies.

§2. No volunteer shall take a minor on a trip, excursion, overnight activity, or other off-site activity without all required parental or legal-guardian consent and the authorization required by diocesan policy.

§3. Appropriate adult supervision shall be maintained during activities involving minors.

§4. Volunteers shall comply with all applicable transportation, vehicle, insurance, supervision, lodging, and safe-environment requirements established by the Diocese.

§5. Volunteers shall not share a bed with a minor or otherwise arrange sleeping accommodations inconsistent with diocesan safe-environment requirements.

Article 9

Alcohol, Drugs, and Impairment

§1. Volunteers are absolutely forbidden to consume alcohol during regular duty hours.

§2. Volunteers must not consume drugs, especially those which may impair their ministerial service.



Article 10

Gifts, Favoritism, and Financial Boundaries

- §1. Volunteers shall avoid favoritism and shall not cultivate exclusive relationships with individual minors that could reasonably be perceived as inappropriate.
- §2. Volunteers shall not give extravagant, secret, sexually suggestive, or otherwise inappropriate gifts to minors.
- §3. Volunteers shall not accept expensive or disproportionate gifts from minors, vulnerable persons, or their families when the gift could create an inappropriate obligation, dependency, appearance of favoritism, or conflict of interest.
- §4. When uncertainty exists concerning the appropriateness of a gift, the volunteer shall consult the competent pastor, administrator, principal, or supervisor before accepting or giving it.
- §5. Volunteers shall not borrow money from, lend money to, solicit personal financial assistance from, or otherwise exploit persons whom they serve through their volunteer ministry.

Article 11

Confidentiality and Privacy

- §1. Volunteers may acquire confidential, sensitive, pastoral, educational, financial, medical, personnel, or other private information through their service. Such information shall be protected and used only for legitimate purposes associated with the volunteer's authorized responsibilities.
- §2. Volunteers shall not disclose confidential information except when authorized, when legitimately required in the performance of their duties, or when disclosure is required by ecclesiastical or civil law.
- §3. Confidentiality shall never be invoked to conceal abuse, misconduct, criminal behavior, a safeguarding concern, or any matter that must be reported under law or diocesan policy.
- §4. Volunteers shall respect the privacy of clergy, employees, parishioners, students, families, other volunteers, and persons receiving pastoral or charitable assistance.



Article 12

Use of Diocesan Property and Resources

- §1. Volunteers shall use diocesan, parish, school, or agency property, funds, equipment, vehicles, electronic systems, records, and other resources only for authorized purposes.
- §2. Theft, fraud, misappropriation, unauthorized use, destruction, falsification of records, or other misuse of ecclesiastical goods or property is prohibited.
- §3. Volunteers shall comply with all reasonable security, technology, financial-control, and records-management requirements applicable to their volunteer responsibilities.
- §4. Volunteers shall not obstruct or interfere with an authorized inspection, audit, review, preservation, or lawful access to diocesan property, records, devices, accounts, or electronic systems.

Article 13

Duty to Report

- §1. Volunteers shall comply fully with all reporting obligations imposed by applicable civil law and diocesan policy.
- §2. Any person who knows or has reasonable cause to suspect that a minor or vulnerable person has been abused, neglected, exploited, or otherwise subjected to conduct requiring a report under civil law shall make the required report promptly to the competent civil authorities.
- §3. Reporting a matter internally to a pastor, supervisor, school official, diocesan office, or other ecclesiastical authority does not replace a report to civil authorities whenever such a report is required by law.
- §4. Volunteers shall also promptly report suspected sexual abuse, sexual misconduct, financial malfeasance, serious violations of this Code, or other serious misconduct by clergy, employees, volunteers, or other ecclesiastical agents through the reporting mechanisms established by the Diocese of Palm Beach.



§5. In an emergency or whenever a person is in immediate danger, volunteers shall contact emergency services or the appropriate law-enforcement authority without delay.

§6. No volunteer shall attempt personally to investigate an allegation of abuse or misconduct unless specifically authorized to do so. The volunteer's responsibility is to report the concern truthfully and promptly and to preserve any relevant information or evidence.

§7. No person shall knowingly make a false or malicious allegation. This provision shall never be interpreted to discourage good-faith reports, including reports that ultimately cannot be substantiated.

Article 14

Cooperation with Investigations

§1. Volunteers shall cooperate truthfully and fully with legitimate investigations, audits, reviews, or inquiries conducted or authorized by the Diocese or by competent civil authorities.

§2. Volunteers shall not destroy, alter, conceal, fabricate, or improperly remove records, communications, electronic information, photographs, documents, or other evidence relevant to an investigation.

§3. Volunteers shall not intimidate, pressure, coach, threaten, retaliate against, or improperly influence any complainant, alleged victim, witness, investigator, or other person participating in an investigation.

§4. Volunteers shall respect any confidentiality requirements legitimately imposed during an investigation, without prejudice to rights and obligations established by civil or ecclesiastical law.

Article 15

Non-Retaliation

§1. Retaliation against a person who, in good faith, reports suspected abuse, misconduct, unlawful behavior, or a violation of diocesan policy is strictly prohibited.



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§2. Retaliation against a person for cooperating with an investigation or providing truthful information to competent authorities is likewise prohibited.

§3. Any volunteer who believes that retaliation has occurred shall promptly report the matter to the appropriate diocesan authority.

Article 16

Conflicts of Interest and Integrity of Ministry

§1. Volunteers shall avoid circumstances in which personal, family, business, financial, or other interests improperly interfere, or reasonably appear to interfere, with their responsibilities to the Church.

§2. Volunteers shall disclose to the competent supervisor any actual or potential conflict of interest relevant to their volunteer responsibilities.

§3. A volunteer shall not use a diocesan ministry, parish, school, program, mailing list, database, facility, or relationship for unauthorized commercial solicitation, personal financial benefit, political campaigning, or other purposes unrelated to the ecclesial mission for which access was granted.

Article 17

Violations of this Code

§1. Every volunteer is personally responsible for understanding and observing this Code and all policies applicable to his or her particular ministry.

§2. A violation of this Code may result in corrective measures, restriction or suspension of volunteer activities, removal from a particular ministry, or termination of all volunteer service within the Diocese, according to the nature and gravity of the conduct.

§3. When appropriate, conduct may also be reported to civil authorities or other competent authorities.



§4. The Diocese reserves the right to restrict, suspend, or terminate volunteer service whenever it determines that such action is reasonably necessary for the protection of persons, the integrity of ecclesiastical ministry, or the common good of the Church.

§5. A volunteer may be temporarily removed or restricted from ministry while an allegation or safeguarding concern is being evaluated. Such precautionary action does not, in itself, constitute a determination of wrongdoing.

Article 18

Acknowledgment and Acceptance

§1. Every volunteer required by diocesan policy to receive this Code shall acknowledge that he or she has received, read, understood, and agrees to comply with it.

§2. Such acknowledgment may be made electronically or by signing the form prescribed by the Diocese.

§3. When required, acknowledgment and completion of applicable safe-environment requirements shall occur before the volunteer begins service.

§4. By accepting volunteer service within the Diocese of Palm Beach, the volunteer acknowledges that service in the Church requires conduct consistent with the dignity of the ecclesial mission and agrees to observe the standards established by this Code.

Article 19

Virtus Training

§1. Every volunteer required by diocesan policy to observe the norms and provisions of this Code shall commit to undergo *Virtus Training* and to comply regularly with all *Virtus Training* activities and follow-up procedures



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and duties. Negligence or violation of this norm shall be subject to immediate suspension to be imposed by the competent authority.

Article 20

Definitions

For purposes of this Code:

§1. “Diocese” means the Diocese of Palm Beach and, where applicable, its parishes, schools, institutions, ministries, programs, agencies, and affiliated ecclesiastical entities.

§2. “Minor” means a person under eighteen (18) years of age. Where applicable under canon law or diocesan safeguarding norms, provisions established for the protection of minors shall also apply to persons to whom the law accords equivalent protection.

§3. “Vulnerable person” means a person whose ability to understand, resist, report, or protect himself or herself from abuse or exploitation is substantially limited by reason of age, disability, illness, deprivation of liberty, dependency, or another condition recognized by applicable law or diocesan policy.

§4. “Clergy” includes bishops, priests, and deacons serving or exercising ministry within the Diocese, whether incardinated in the Diocese or belonging to another diocese, religious institute, society of apostolic life, or other ecclesiastical entity.

§5. “Volunteer” means a person who freely provides authorized services to or on behalf of the Diocese or one of its entities without thereby acquiring the status of an employee.



PART II

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES CONCERNING SEXUAL ABUSE

Title A

OFFICIAL POLICY REGARDING ALLEGATIONS OF SEXUAL ABUSE

Article 1. Purpose and Commitment

§1. The Diocese of Palm Beach is firmly committed to safeguarding the dignity and integrity of every human person and to protecting minors, vulnerable adults, and all persons from sexual abuse, sexual misconduct, exploitation, and other violations of appropriate pastoral and professional boundaries.

§2. Sexual abuse constitutes a grave violation of human dignity, Christian morality, ecclesiastical discipline, and, where applicable, civil and criminal law. Such conduct is incompatible with ministry, employment, or service within the Church.

§3. The Diocese shall respond promptly, responsibly, pastorally, and justly to every allegation of sexual abuse involving clergy, religious, seminarians, employees, volunteers, or other ecclesiastical agents.

§4. In responding to allegations, the Diocese shall seek:

1. to protect minors, vulnerable adults, and other persons from harm;
2. to provide pastoral care and appropriate assistance to those who report having suffered abuse;
3. to comply with applicable civil and canonical reporting obligations;
4. to ensure the professional and impartial assessment and investigation of allegations;
5. to respect the rights, dignity, reputation, and due process of all persons involved; and
6. to promote accountability and appropriate transparency consistent with civil law, canon law, and legitimate considerations of privacy and confidentiality.



Article 2. Scope

§1. This Policy applies to allegations of sexual abuse or sexual misconduct involving:

1. bishops, priests, and deacons;
2. members of institutes of consecrated life or societies of apostolic life serving within the Diocese;
3. seminarians and candidates for Holy Orders;
4. diocesan, parish, school, and institutional employees;
5. volunteers; and
6. any other person exercising ministry or providing services under the authority or auspices of the Diocese of Palm Beach.

§2. For purposes of determining the competent advisory body under this Policy, allegations shall be classified according to whether the person allegedly subjected to sexual abuse or misconduct was:

1. a minor;
2. a vulnerable adult; or
3. another adult.

§3. Conduct that does not constitute sexual abuse but nevertheless violates applicable diocesan Codes of Conduct, safeguarding policies, or professional boundaries may also be investigated and addressed under the appropriate diocesan norms.

Article 3. Reporting of Allegations

§1. Every allegation or reasonable suspicion of sexual abuse shall be treated with the utmost seriousness.

§2. Allegations shall be reported promptly in accordance with applicable civil law and the reporting policies and procedures established by the Diocese of Palm Beach.

§3. Clergy, employees, and volunteers shall comply fully with all applicable mandatory-reporting requirements. No person shall obstruct, discourage, conceal, or retaliate against a good-faith report of suspected sexual abuse.

§4. Allegations received by the Diocese shall be promptly referred to the appropriate diocesan officials and, whenever required by law or diocesan policy, to the competent civil authorities.



§5. Nothing contained in this Policy may be interpreted as permitting or requiring a violation of the sacramental seal of Confession, which is inviolable.

Article 4. Pastoral Care

§1. The Diocese shall respond with compassion, respect, and pastoral concern to persons who report having suffered sexual abuse.

§2. The Victim Assistance Coordinator or another appropriately designated diocesan representative shall offer assistance to alleged victims and their families in accordance with diocesan policy.

§3. Appropriate pastoral, psychological, or other professional assistance may be offered according to the circumstances of each case.

§4. The pastoral care offered to an alleged victim shall remain distinct from the canonical, administrative, disciplinary, or civil determination of the allegation.

Article 5. Initial Response and Protective Measures

§1. Upon receiving an allegation, the Diocese shall take appropriate steps to assess any immediate risk to minors, vulnerable adults, or other persons and shall adopt reasonable protective or precautionary measures whenever necessary.

§2. When an allegation concerns a cleric and the requirements established by canon law are present, the Diocesan Bishop shall proceed according to the applicable canonical norms concerning the preliminary investigation and any appropriate precautionary measures.

§3. Precautionary or administrative measures imposed while an allegation is being investigated are protective and provisional in nature and shall not, by themselves, constitute a determination of guilt.

§4. Appropriate administrative measures may likewise be imposed upon employees, volunteers, religious, seminarians, or other persons subject to diocesan authority while an allegation is being investigated.



Article 6. Precautionary and Administrative Measures in Cases Involving Sexual Abuse of Adults or Vulnerable Adults: Temporary Removal from Ministry

§1. Whenever an allegation of sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, sexual coercion, or other grave sexual misconduct involving an adult or vulnerable adult is received, the Diocesan Bishop shall determine whether precautionary or administrative measures are necessary for the protection of the alleged victim, other persons who may be at risk, the integrity of the investigation, the preservation of evidence, the prevention of further alleged misconduct or scandal, or the protection of the common good of the Church.

§2. In the case of an accused cleric, taking into consideration the nature and gravity of the alleged conduct, the circumstances surrounding the allegation, any apparent imbalance or abuse of power, the vulnerability of the alleged victim, and any reasonably identifiable risk to others, the Diocesan Bishop may, according to his prudent judgment and from the outset of the Preliminary Investigation, temporarily remove the cleric from the exercise of sacred ministry or from an ecclesiastical office, assignment, or function; restrict or withdraw the exercise of faculties; prohibit or restrict public ministry; impose or prohibit residence in a particular place or territory; prohibit or restrict contact with the alleged victim, witnesses, or other specified persons; or impose any other appropriate precautionary measure permitted by canon law.

§3. Such measures may be imposed whenever the Diocesan Bishop prudently judges them necessary for the protection of the alleged victim or other persons, the integrity and independence of the investigation, the prevention of possible further misconduct, the avoidance of scandal, or the protection of the common good, even though no definitive determination concerning the allegation has yet been reached, always observing the requirements and limitations of canon law.

§4. Particular consideration shall be given to precautionary measures when the allegation involves an alleged abuse of ecclesiastical, pastoral, spiritual, sacramental, supervisory, professional, or other authority or a relationship characterized by dependency, vulnerability, trust, pastoral care, spiritual direction, counseling, formation, employment, or another significant imbalance of power.

§5. In imposing precautionary measures upon an accused cleric, the Diocesan Bishop shall be guided, where applicable, by the protective principles underlying canon 1722 and by the other provisions of universal and particular canon law governing the protection of persons and the ecclesial community, the integrity of canonical proceedings, and the legitimate rights of the accused.

§6. Depending upon the circumstances, precautionary or administrative measures may include:

a. temporary removal from the exercise of sacred ministry;



- b. temporary removal from or restriction in the exercise of an ecclesiastical office, assignment, ministry, or function;
- c. restriction or withdrawal of the exercise of faculties, according to the norm of law;
- d. prohibition or restriction of the public celebration of the sacraments, preaching, pastoral counseling, spiritual direction, or other acts of sacred or pastoral ministry;
- e. administrative leave or temporary modification of duties;
- f. prohibition or restriction of contact or communication, directly or indirectly, with the alleged victim, members of the alleged victim's family, witnesses, or other specified persons;
- g. restriction of access to particular parishes, schools, institutions, ministries, offices, residences, or other ecclesiastical premises;
- h. a requirement to reside, or prohibition against residing, in a particular place or territory, insofar as permitted by canon law;
- i. prohibition or restriction of unsupervised pastoral or ministerial contact with persons determined to be particularly vulnerable;
- j. requirements concerning supervision, monitoring, reporting, psychological or professional assessment when lawfully appropriate, or other forms of accountability;
- k. measures necessary for the preservation and securing of documents, electronic communications, records, or other potential evidence; or
- l. any other lawful precautionary or administrative measure that the Diocesan Bishop judges necessary or appropriate under the circumstances.

§7. The accused cleric shall be strictly prohibited from engaging in retaliation, intimidation, harassment, interference, or unauthorized contact with the alleged victim, witnesses, complainants, investigators, or any other person participating in the reporting, investigation, or assessment of the allegation.

§8. The imposition of any precautionary or administrative measure, including temporary removal from sacred ministry, is protective and precautionary in nature and does not constitute a canonical penalty, a declaration of guilt, or a determination that the allegation has been substantiated. The presumption of innocence, the right of



defense, the right to canonical counsel, and all other rights afforded to the accused by canon law shall remain intact.

§9. Precautionary measures shall remain subject to the authority of the Diocesan Bishop and shall be periodically reviewed in light of the progress of the Preliminary Investigation, any assessment undertaken by the competent diocesan advisory body, the circumstances of the case, the continuing need to protect persons and the ecclesial community, and the requirements of canon law. Such measures may be modified, strengthened, diminished, or revoked whenever the Diocesan Bishop judges it appropriate according to the norm of law.

§10. Whenever the matter proceeds to a canonical penal process and the requirements of canon 1722 are fulfilled, any precautionary measures thereafter imposed shall be governed by canon 1722 and the other applicable provisions of canonical penal law.

Article 7. Assessment of Allegations Involving Minors — Diocesan Review Board

§1. Every allegation of sexual abuse of a minor falling within the competency of this Policy shall be referred to and assessed by the Diocesan Review Board.

§2. The Diocesan Review Board is the advisory body established in accordance with 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*.

§3. With respect to allegations of sexual abuse of minors, the Diocesan Review Board shall advise the Diocesan Bishop, according to its governing norms, concerning:

1. the assessment of the allegation;
2. the sufficiency and credibility of the available information;
3. the suitability for ministry of an accused cleric;
4. appropriate safeguarding or precautionary measures;
5. the need for additional investigation when appropriate; and
6. any other aspect of the matter submitted to it by the Diocesan Bishop.

§4. The Diocesan Review Board shall exercise its responsibilities according to its Bylaws, Protocols, the *Essential Norms*, applicable canon law, and the particular law of the Diocese of Palm Beach.



§5. The assessment of an allegation by the Diocesan Review Board does not substitute for any investigation or determination required by civil or criminal authorities, nor does it substitute for the canonical processes required by the law of the Church.

Article 8. Assessment of Allegations Involving Adults and Vulnerable Adults — Adult Allegation Board

§1. **Every allegation of sexual abuse or sexual misconduct involving an adult or vulnerable adult falling within the competency of this Policy shall be referred to and assessed by the Adult Allegation Board.**

§2. The Adult Allegation Board is the diocesan advisory body established to assist the Diocesan Bishop in the assessment of allegations of sexual abuse or sexual misconduct involving adults and vulnerable adults that do not fall within the competency of the Diocesan Review Board.

§3. The Adult Allegation Board shall advise the Diocesan Bishop, according to its governing norms, concerning:

1. the assessment of the allegation;
2. the sufficiency and credibility of the available information;
3. the suitability for ministry, employment, volunteer service, or other ecclesiastical service of the accused;
4. appropriate safeguarding, administrative, disciplinary, or precautionary measures;
5. the need for additional investigation when appropriate; and
6. any other aspect of the matter submitted to it by the Diocesan Bishop.

§4. The Adult Allegation Board shall exercise its responsibilities according to its Bylaws and Protocols, applicable civil and canon law, and the particular law and policies of the Diocese of Palm Beach.

§5. The assessment of an allegation by the Adult Allegation Board does not substitute for any investigation or determination required by civil or criminal authorities or for any canonical process required by the law of the Church.

Article 9. Canonical Preliminary Investigation and Investigation of Allegations

§1. Upon receiving any allegation of sexual abuse involving a cleric or other person subject to the applicable penal law of the Church, the Diocesan Bishop shall immediately proceed in accordance with the prescriptions of



cann. 1717–1719 of the Code of Canon Law concerning the conduct of the canonical Preliminary Investigation, whenever required by law.

§2. Accordingly, whenever the Diocesan Bishop receives information concerning a possible canonical delict which at least seems to be true (*saltem verisimilis*), he shall initiate, personally or through a suitable person designated by decree, the Preliminary Investigation required by can. 1717 §1, unless such an investigation appears entirely superfluous.

§3. The Preliminary Investigation shall inquire carefully into the facts, circumstances, and imputability surrounding the allegation, while ensuring that the good name of all persons involved is protected according to can. 1717 §2 and that the rights of the accused and the integrity of any civil investigation are duly respected.

§4. The canonical Preliminary Investigation required by cann. 1717–1719 shall be distinguished from, and shall not replace, any investigation conducted by civil authorities, law enforcement agencies, independent professional investigators, or the competent diocesan advisory board. The Diocese shall cooperate fully with competent civil authorities and shall conduct its canonical processes in a manner that does not improperly interfere with a civil or criminal investigation.

§5. The Diocesan Bishop may appoint a qualified independent investigator or investigative agency to assist in gathering the facts and evidence necessary for the Preliminary Investigation. The acts and evidence lawfully gathered shall be preserved according to canon law and applicable diocesan norms.

§6. Allegations involving the sexual abuse of a minor shall be submitted to the **Diocesan Review Board** for its assessment and recommendation to the Diocesan Bishop, in accordance with the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*, the *Essential Norms*, and the Bylaws and Protocols of the Diocesan Review Board.

§7. Allegations involving the sexual abuse or sexual misconduct of an adult or vulnerable adult shall be submitted to the **Adult Allegation Board** for its assessment and recommendation to the Diocesan Bishop, in accordance with its Bylaws and Protocols and other applicable diocesan norms.

§8. The Preliminary Investigation and the assessment undertaken by the competent advisory board are distinct but complementary functions. Neither the Diocesan Review Board nor the Adult Allegation Board substitutes for the canonical authority and responsibility of the Diocesan Bishop under cann. 1717–1719.

§9. Upon completion of the Preliminary Investigation, the Diocesan Bishop shall proceed according to can. 1718 and determine, in accordance with law, whether a process for the imposition or declaration of a penalty may be initiated, whether this is expedient, and whether the matter may appropriately be resolved through the means permitted by law.



§10. The acts of the Preliminary Investigation, together with the decrees of the Diocesan Bishop by which the investigation was opened and closed and all other documentation required by law, shall be preserved in accordance with can. 1719 and the applicable diocesan norms concerning canonical and confidential records.

Article 10. Rights of the Accused

§1. Every person accused of sexual abuse or sexual misconduct shall be treated fairly and with due regard for his or her dignity and rights.

§2. An allegation does not, in itself, constitute proof of guilt.

§3. Clerics accused of canonical offenses shall enjoy all rights afforded to them by canon law, including the presumption of innocence and the right to canonical counsel according to law.

§4. Appropriate measures shall be taken to protect the reputation of an accused person during the investigation, insofar as this is compatible with the protection of others, applicable reporting obligations, and the proper administration of justice.

§5. CANONICAL AND CIVIL REPRESENTATION. Whenever a diocesan cleric freely chooses to retain a particular Procurator-Advocate, canonical counsel, or civil legal counsel of his own choosing, responsibility for the payment of all corresponding professional fees and expenses shall rest solely with the cleric, unless otherwise expressly agreed in writing by the Diocese.

§6. Should a diocesan cleric wish the Diocese to assume responsibility for such professional fees and expenses, he shall notify the Diocese before retaining or engaging the services of the professional concerned.

§7. In such circumstances, the Diocese may propose and make available to the cleric, at no expense to him, a qualified Procurator-Advocate, canonical counsel, or civil legal counsel, as appropriate to the nature and circumstances of the matter.

§8. The cleric shall remain entirely free to accept or decline the professional proposed by the Diocese. Should he decline and instead choose to retain another professional of his own selection, the corresponding fees and expenses shall ordinarily remain his sole responsibility, unless the Diocese expressly agrees otherwise in writing.

§9. The assumption by the Diocese of professional fees or expenses pursuant to this Article shall be understood solely as a means of safeguarding the cleric's legitimate right of defense and the proper administration of justice.



It shall constitute neither an admission of liability by the Diocese nor a determination concerning the merits of any allegation, complaint, investigation, proceeding, or canonical recourse involving the cleric.

§10. Nothing in this Article shall prejudice the rights of the cleric under canon law or civil law, including his right freely to appoint a Procurator-Advocate in accordance with the applicable norms of law.

§11. All clerics incardinated in the Diocese of Palm Beach, including accused clerics who remain within the clerical state, have the right to receive from the Diocese adequate financial support for their proper sustenance, in accordance with diocesan policy. Such support shall include appropriate medical coverage and any other benefits to which they are entitled under applicable law and diocesan policy.

Article 11. Determination and Consequences

§1. Upon completion of the appropriate investigation and after receiving the recommendation of the competent advisory board, the Diocesan Bishop shall make those determinations entrusted to him by canon law and diocesan particular law.

§2. When sexual abuse of a minor by a priest or deacon is admitted or established according to the applicable canonical process, the Diocese shall proceed in accordance with universal canon law, the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*, the *Essential Norms*, and the directives of the competent authority of the Holy See.

§3. No priest or deacon who has committed even a single act of sexual abuse of a minor, established according to the applicable canonical process, shall be permitted to return to ecclesiastical ministry.

§4. Substantiated allegations involving adults or vulnerable adults shall result in such canonical, administrative, disciplinary, pastoral, or other measures as may be warranted according to the nature and gravity of the conduct and applicable law.

§5. Employees or volunteers against whom allegations of sexual abuse are substantiated shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, which may include termination of employment or permanent removal from volunteer service.



Article 12. Unsubstantiated or False Allegations

§1. If an allegation is determined to be unfounded or if an accused person is exonerated, the Diocese shall take appropriate measures to restore that person's good name and reputation.

§2. When circumstances warrant, such measures may include restoration to ministry, employment, or service and appropriate communication to the communities affected by the allegation.

Article 13. Prevention and Safe Environment

§1. The Diocese shall maintain comprehensive safe-environment programs designed to prevent sexual abuse and inappropriate conduct.

§2. Clergy, religious, employees, volunteers, and other persons having contact with minors or vulnerable persons shall complete such background screening, training, and continuing education as required by diocesan policy.

§3. All persons subject to diocesan Codes of Conduct shall acknowledge and comply with the Code applicable to their ministry, employment, or volunteer service.

Article 14. Records, Confidentiality, and Cooperation

§1. The Diocese shall maintain appropriate records concerning allegations, investigations, board recommendations, determinations, disciplinary measures, and other safeguarding matters in accordance with canon law, civil law, and diocesan record-retention policies.

§2. Such records shall be maintained securely and access shall be limited to persons having legitimate responsibilities concerning the matter.

§3. Confidentiality shall be respected to the extent reasonably possible; however, confidentiality shall never be used to conceal abuse, prevent required reporting, obstruct an investigation, or impede the proper administration of justice.

§4. All clergy, religious, employees, volunteers, and diocesan officials shall cooperate fully and truthfully with duly authorized investigations and canonical processes.

§5. Retaliation against any person who, in good faith, reports suspected abuse, participates in an investigation, assists an alleged victim, or provides information to competent authorities is strictly prohibited.



Article 15. Governing Norms

§1. This Policy shall be interpreted and applied in conformity with the Code of Canon Law, other applicable universal and particular ecclesiastical law, the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*, the *Essential Norms for Diocesan/Eparchial Policies Dealing with Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Priests or Deacons*, applicable civil law, and the particular law and policies of the Diocese of Palm Beach.

§2. This Policy shall be read together with the Diocese's Codes of Conduct, reporting and referral policies, safe-environment policies, the Bylaws and Protocols of the Diocesan Review Board, the Bylaws and Protocols of the Adult Allegation Board, and other applicable safeguarding regulations.

§3. For purposes of diocesan advisory assessment under this Policy, allegations involving the sexual abuse of minors belong to the competency of the Diocesan Review Board, while allegations involving the sexual abuse or sexual misconduct of adults or vulnerable adults belong to the competency of the Adult Allegation Board.

§4. Nothing contained in this Policy limits the authority and responsibility of the Diocesan Bishop to exercise those powers of governance entrusted to him by universal or particular law for the protection of the faithful, the administration of justice, and the good order of the Diocese.

Article 16. Promulgation and Effect

§1. This **Official Policy Regarding Allegations of Sexual Abuse** is hereby established for the Diocese of Palm Beach.

§2. All diocesan parishes, schools, institutions, offices, ministries, and affiliated entities subject to the authority of the Diocesan Bishop shall observe this Policy.

§3. This Policy shall become effective immediately and shall remain in force until lawfully amended, replaced, or revoked by the Diocesan Bishop.



Title B

OFFICIAL REPORTING AND REFERRAL POLICY

Article 1 — Purpose and General Principles

§1. The Diocese of Palm Beach is firmly committed to the protection of minors and vulnerable persons, the pastoral care of victims and survivors of sexual abuse, accountability, transparency, and full compliance with applicable civil and canon law.

§2. Consistent with the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*, the *Essential Norms for Diocesan/Eparchial Policies Dealing with Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Priests or Deacons*, applicable universal and particular canon law, the laws of the State of Florida, and the policies of the Diocese of Palm Beach, allegations of sexual abuse shall be received, reported, referred, and assessed promptly and responsibly.

§3. The Diocese shall cooperate with competent civil authorities in accordance with applicable law and shall not impede, obstruct, or interfere with any legitimate civil or criminal investigation.

Article 2 — Reception and Reporting of Allegations

§1. Any allegation of sexual abuse received by the Diocese, whether through the diocesan reporting line, in writing, electronically, orally, or by any other means, shall be promptly transmitted to the appropriate diocesan authorities and handled in accordance with diocesan policy.

§2. Whenever required by civil law or diocesan policy, allegations shall be reported promptly to the appropriate civil or law-enforcement authorities. Such reporting shall not be delayed pending an internal, canonical, or diocesan assessment of the allegation.

§3. Allegations shall also be communicated, as appropriate, to the Diocesan Bishop, the Victim Assistance Coordinator, the competent diocesan safeguarding officials, and such other persons as are required by diocesan policy or law.



§4. The Diocese shall offer appropriate pastoral assistance and support to persons who report that they have suffered sexual abuse by clergy, religious, employees, volunteers, or other ecclesiastical personnel.

Article 3 — Canonical Preliminary Investigation

§1. Upon receiving information concerning conduct that may constitute a canonical delict, the Diocesan Bishop shall immediately observe the prescriptions of canons 1717–1719 of the Code of Canon Law.

§2. Whenever the requirements of canon 1717 §1 are satisfied, the Diocesan Bishop shall initiate, personally or through a suitable person, the canonical Preliminary Investigation concerning the facts, circumstances, and imputability of the alleged conduct.

§3. The Preliminary Investigation shall be conducted with due regard for the good name and rights of all persons involved, the integrity of any investigation being conducted by civil authorities, the protection of potential victims, and the requirements of canonical due process.

§4. Nothing in the canonical Preliminary Investigation shall replace, delay, or interfere with any reporting obligation imposed by civil law.

Article 4 — Assessment of Allegations

§1. Allegations involving the sexual abuse of a minor shall be submitted for assessment to the **Diocesan Review Board**, in accordance with the *Charter*, the *Essential Norms*, applicable canon law, and the particular law and policies of the Diocese of Palm Beach.

§2. Allegations involving the sexual abuse or sexual misconduct of an adult or vulnerable adult shall be submitted for assessment to the **Adult Allegation Board**, according to its competency and the particular law and policies of the Diocese of Palm Beach.

§3. The respective Board shall serve as a confidential consultative body to the Diocesan Bishop. Its assessment and recommendations shall not substitute for the canonical authority and responsibility entrusted by law to the Diocesan Bishop.



Article 5 — Referral Letters and References

§1. All referral letters, letters of suitability, testimonial letters, certifications, recommendations, and references issued by or on behalf of the Diocese concerning clergy, religious, employees, or volunteers shall be truthful, accurate, and complete in accordance with applicable law and diocesan policy.

§2. No person acting on behalf of the Diocese may knowingly conceal or materially misrepresent information concerning sexual abuse or serious sexual misconduct when such information is required to be disclosed by law or diocesan policy.

§3. When an allegation has been determined to be credible or substantiated according to the applicable diocesan process, such information shall be disclosed in all referral letters, references, or certifications whenever required by civil or canon law, diocesan policy, or considerations concerning the protection of the faithful.

§4. Nothing in this Article shall authorize the disclosure of information contrary to civil or canon law, including information protected by applicable legal privileges, confidentiality requirements, or the sacramental seal.

Article 6 — Transfer, Residence, or Ministry Outside the Diocese

§1. Whenever a cleric against whom a credible or substantiated allegation of sexual abuse has been made seeks or establishes residence, ministry, employment, faculties, an assignment, or another ecclesiastical relationship outside the territory of the Diocese of Palm Beach, the Diocese shall provide the competent ecclesiastical authority with such information as is required by canon law, civil law, the *Essential Norms*, or diocesan policy.

§2. Such communication shall contain sufficient information to permit the receiving ecclesiastical authority to make an informed determination concerning the suitability of the cleric for residence or ministry and to take appropriate measures for the protection of the faithful.

§3. No cleric subject to restrictions arising from an allegation of sexual abuse or serious sexual misconduct may be presented by the Diocese as being in good standing or suitable for unrestricted ministry when such representation would be inaccurate or misleading.



Article 7 — Public Disclosure and Transparency

§1. The Diocese of Palm Beach shall endeavor to communicate openly and responsibly concerning sexual abuse, particularly the sexual abuse of minors by clergy, while respecting applicable civil and canon law, the privacy of victims and survivors, the integrity of investigations, and the legitimate rights and reputation of all persons involved.

§2. When an allegation has been determined to warrant public disclosure according to diocesan policy and applicable law, the Diocese shall provide appropriate information to the faithful and, when particularly affected, to the relevant parish, school, institution, or ecclesial community.

§3. The Diocese may maintain and periodically update a public list of clergy against whom allegations of sexual abuse of minors have been determined to be substantiated or otherwise meet the standard established by diocesan policy for public disclosure.

§4. Any public disclosure shall be made according to consistent criteria and with due regard for truth, justice, transparency, the protection of victims, and the canonical and civil rights of all persons concerned.

Article 8 — Confidentiality and Protection of Rights

§1. Information concerning allegations shall be shared only with those persons or authorities who have a legitimate need or legal right to receive it, except when public disclosure is required or authorized by law or diocesan policy.

§2. The Diocese shall respect the dignity, privacy, and legitimate rights of persons reporting abuse, alleged victims, witnesses, and accused persons throughout the reporting, investigative, assessment, and referral processes.

§3. The making of an allegation does not, by itself, constitute a determination of guilt. The presumption of innocence and the right of defense of an accused person shall be respected in accordance with canon and civil law.

§4. At the same time, the protection of minors, vulnerable persons, victims, and the ecclesial community may require appropriate precautionary or administrative measures while an allegation is under investigation.



Article 9 — Prohibition of Retaliation

No cleric, religious, employee, volunteer, or other person acting on behalf of the Diocese shall retaliate against a person for making a good-faith report of sexual abuse, cooperating with an investigation, providing information to civil or ecclesiastical authorities, or participating in a diocesan safeguarding process.

Article 10 — Interpretation and Application

§1. This Policy shall be interpreted and applied in harmony with applicable civil law, universal and particular canon law, the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*, the *Essential Norms*, and all other safeguarding policies and particular legislation of the Diocese of Palm Beach.

§2. Nothing contained in this Policy shall be interpreted as limiting any obligation to report suspected abuse to civil authorities or as preventing any person from communicating directly with law enforcement or other competent governmental authorities.

§3. In cases involving bishops or persons equivalent to them in law, the applicable provisions of universal canon law and the procedures established by the Holy See shall be observed.

§4. The Diocesan Bishop retains those responsibilities, powers, and prerogatives entrusted to him by universal and particular law concerning the governance of the Diocese, the protection of the faithful, and the investigation and disposition of allegations of misconduct.

PART III

OFFICIAL POLICY PERTAINING TO ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE OF POWER, FINANCIAL ABUSE, AND OTHER GRAVELY UNLAWFUL BEHAVIORS



Article 1 — Purpose and General Principles

§1. The Diocese of Palm Beach is committed to maintaining the highest standards of integrity, accountability, transparency, justice, and responsible ecclesiastical governance in all its parishes, schools, institutions, offices, agencies, ministries, and affiliated entities.

§2. Abuse of ecclesiastical authority, financial abuse or malfeasance, fraud, corruption, retaliation, coercion, grave violations of ecclesiastical discipline, and other gravely unlawful behaviors are incompatible with the responsibilities entrusted to clergy, religious, employees, volunteers, and all other persons exercising ministry, employment, office, or authority within the Church.

§3. Accordingly, the Diocese shall receive, assess, investigate, and appropriately address allegations of such conduct in accordance with applicable civil law, canon law, diocesan particular law, and diocesan policies.

§4. The Diocese shall cooperate with competent civil authorities whenever required by law and shall not impede, obstruct, conceal, or improperly interfere with any legitimate civil or criminal investigation.

Article 2 — Conduct Subject to this Policy

§1. This Policy applies to allegations involving conduct of a grave nature, including but not limited to:

- a. abuse of ecclesiastical, pastoral, supervisory, administrative, or professional authority;
- b. coercion, intimidation, exploitation, manipulation, or retaliation arising from the misuse of a position of authority or trust;
- c. financial abuse, financial malfeasance, fraud, embezzlement, misappropriation, theft, diversion, or unauthorized use or transfer of ecclesiastical funds or property;
- d. falsification, concealment, destruction, or material alteration of financial, administrative, sacramental, personnel, or other official records;
- e. serious conflicts of interest, self-dealing, corruption, kickbacks, bribery, or other improper financial arrangements;



- f. grave violations of fiduciary, administrative, canonical, professional, or employment responsibilities;
- g. obstruction of a civil, canonical, administrative, financial, or diocesan investigation;
- h. retaliation against a complainant, victim, witness, investigator, whistleblower, or other person participating in an investigation or reporting process;
- i. grave violations of applicable civil or criminal law;
- j. grave violations of canon law, diocesan particular law, diocesan policies, Codes of Conduct, or legitimate ecclesiastical directives; and
- k. any other gravely unlawful behavior or serious misconduct that threatens the rights, safety, property, reputation, mission, integrity, or good order of the Diocese or the faithful entrusted to its pastoral care.

§2. The enumeration contained in §1 is illustrative and shall not be interpreted as limiting the authority of the Diocese to investigate or address other serious misconduct.

Article 3 — Diocesan Reporting Line

§1. The Diocese of Palm Beach maintains a confidential, toll-free, third-party managed Diocesan Reporting Line, available twenty-four (24) hours a day, seven (7) days a week, for reporting allegations of abuse of power, financial abuse, unlawful conduct, serious misconduct, and other violations involving clergy, religious, employees, volunteers, or other persons serving within the Diocese or any of its parishes, schools, institutions, agencies, ministries, or affiliated entities.

The Diocesan Reporting Line is: 1-833-710-0909.

§2. Any person may make a report through the Diocesan Reporting Line.

§3. Reports may also be made directly to the appropriate diocesan authority or, whenever applicable, directly to civil, regulatory, or law-enforcement authorities.

§4. The existence of the Diocesan Reporting Line shall never be interpreted as restricting or discouraging any person from communicating directly with law enforcement or any other competent governmental authority.



§5. No person shall be required to report alleged wrongdoing exclusively through his or her immediate supervisor, particularly when the supervisor is the subject of the allegation or may otherwise have a conflict of interest.

Article 4 — Reception and Initial Referral of Allegations

§1. Any allegation falling within the scope of this Policy, regardless of the manner in which it is received, shall be promptly referred to the competent diocesan authority for appropriate assessment.

§2. Reports received through the Diocesan Reporting Line shall be transmitted to those diocesan officials designated by the Diocesan Bishop to receive and evaluate such reports.

§3. Whenever an allegation reasonably indicates conduct that may constitute a violation of civil or criminal law, the matter shall be referred to the competent civil or law-enforcement authority whenever required by law or diocesan policy.

§4. Civil reporting or referral shall not be delayed solely because an internal, canonical, financial, or administrative assessment or investigation has not yet been completed.

§5. Appropriate measures shall be taken to preserve relevant documents, financial records, electronic communications, electronically stored information, and other potential evidence.

Article 5 — Canonical Preliminary Investigation

§1. Whenever the Diocesan Bishop receives information, which has at least the semblance of truth, concerning conduct that may constitute a canonical delict, he shall observe the prescriptions of canons 1717–1719 of the Code of Canon Law.

§2. When required by canon 1717 §1, the Diocesan Bishop shall initiate a Preliminary Investigation concerning the facts, circumstances, and imputability of the alleged conduct, either personally or through a suitable person appointed for that purpose.

§3. The Preliminary Investigation shall be conducted with due regard for the rights and good name of all persons concerned, the preservation of evidence, the integrity of any investigation being conducted by civil authorities, and the requirements of canonical due process.

§4. The commencement of a canonical Preliminary Investigation shall not prevent the Diocese from undertaking other administrative, financial, employment, safeguarding, or precautionary measures that may legitimately be required.



§5. Nothing in the canonical Preliminary Investigation shall replace, delay, or interfere with any reporting obligation imposed by civil law.

Article 6 — Investigation and Professional Assistance

§1. Depending upon the nature and gravity of an allegation, the Diocesan Bishop or his delegate may direct that the matter be investigated by qualified internal or independent professionals.

§2. Such professionals may include, as appropriate, independent investigators, forensic accountants, auditors, attorneys, canon lawyers, human-resources professionals, safeguarding professionals, law-enforcement authorities, or other persons possessing appropriate expertise.

§3. Investigations shall be conducted impartially, objectively, and with due respect for the rights of complainants, witnesses, and accused persons.

§4. Persons subject to this Policy are expected to cooperate truthfully and appropriately with legitimate diocesan investigations, without prejudice to rights afforded to them by civil or canon law.

§5. No person shall conceal, destroy, falsify, alter, or improperly withhold evidence relevant to an investigation.

Article 7 — Advisory Review

§1. When appropriate because of the nature, complexity, or gravity of an allegation, the Diocesan Bishop may submit the matter to the competent diocesan advisory body or to other qualified advisors for assessment and recommendation.

§2. Any such advisory body shall act in a consultative capacity and shall assist the Diocesan Bishop in evaluating the facts, risks, consequences, and appropriate canonical, administrative, financial, pastoral, or disciplinary response.

§3. The recommendations of an advisory body shall not substitute for the authority, responsibilities, and canonical discretion entrusted by law to the Diocesan Bishop.

Article 8 — Precautionary and Administrative Measures: Temporary Removal from Ministry

§1. Whenever, because of the nature, seriousness, or circumstances of an allegation, the Diocesan Bishop judges that precautionary measures are necessary for the protection of persons, the safeguarding of ecclesiastical goods,



the preservation of evidence, the integrity of an investigation, the prevention of scandal, or the protection of the common good of the Church, he may impose such measures upon an accused person according to the norm of law.

§2. In the case of an accused cleric, and taking into consideration the gravity of the alleged conduct and the particular circumstances of the case, the Diocesan Bishop may, according to his prudent judgment and since the outset of the Preliminary Investigation, temporarily remove the cleric from the exercise of sacred ministry or from an ecclesiastical office or function, restrict or withdraw the exercise of faculties, prohibit or restrict public ministry, impose or prohibit residence in a particular place or territory, restrict contact with specified persons, or impose other appropriate precautionary measures.

§3. Such measures may be imposed whenever the Diocesan Bishop prudently judges them necessary for the protection of the ecclesial community, the integrity of an investigation, the prevention of further alleged misconduct, the avoidance of scandal, or the protection of the common good, even though no definitive determination concerning the allegation has yet been reached, always observing the requirements and limitations of canon law.

§4. In imposing precautionary measures upon a cleric, the Diocesan Bishop shall be guided, where applicable, by the principles underlying canon 1722 and by the other provisions of universal and particular canon law governing the protection of the community and the rights of the accused.

§5. Depending upon the circumstances, precautionary or administrative measures may include:

- a. temporary removal from the exercise of sacred ministry;
- b. temporary removal from or restriction in the exercise of an ecclesiastical office, assignment, ministry, or function;
- c. restriction or withdrawal of the exercise of faculties, according to the norm of law;
- d. prohibition or restriction of public celebration of the sacraments or other acts of sacred ministry;
- e. administrative leave or temporary modification of duties;
- f. restriction of financial, administrative, supervisory, or decision-making authority;
- g. restriction of access to diocesan or parish accounts, records, facilities, computer systems, electronic information, or other ecclesiastical property;



- h. prohibition or restriction of contact with particular persons;
- i. a requirement to reside, or prohibition against residing, in a particular place or territory, insofar as permitted by canon law;
- j. requirements concerning supervision, monitoring, reporting, or accountability;
- k. measures necessary for the preservation and securing of financial, administrative, personnel, or other relevant records; or
- l. any other lawful precautionary measure that the Diocesan Bishop judges necessary or appropriate under the circumstances.

§6. The imposition of any precautionary measure, including temporary removal from ministry, **is administrative and precautionary in nature and does not constitute a penalty, a declaration of guilt, or a determination that the allegation has been substantiated.** The presumption of innocence and the canonical right of defense of the accused shall remain intact.

§7. Precautionary measures shall remain subject to the authority of the Diocesan Bishop and shall be periodically reviewed in light of the progress of the investigation, the circumstances of the case, the protection of the common good, and the requirements of canon law. They may be modified, strengthened, diminished, or revoked whenever the Diocesan Bishop judges it appropriate according to the norm of law.

§8. Whenever the matter proceeds to a canonical penal process and the requirements of canon 1722 are fulfilled, any precautionary measures thereafter imposed shall be governed by canon 1722 and the other applicable provisions of canonical penal law.

Article 9 — Financial Misconduct and Ecclesiastical Goods

§1. Allegations involving the possible misappropriation, diversion, concealment, unauthorized transfer, misuse, or unlawful administration of ecclesiastical goods shall receive prompt attention.

§2. When warranted, the Diocese may order an independent audit, forensic accounting review, preservation of financial records, restriction of access to accounts, or other measures necessary to safeguard ecclesiastical goods.

§3. Persons responsible for the administration of ecclesiastical goods shall cooperate fully with legitimate audits, financial reviews, and investigations and shall provide accurate and complete records when lawfully requested.



§4. When credible evidence indicates possible criminal financial conduct, the Diocese shall make such reports or referrals to civil authorities as are required by applicable law or diocesan policy.

§5. Nothing in this Policy shall limit the canonical obligations concerning the administration, alienation, protection, or recovery of ecclesiastical goods.

Article 10 — Protection of Elderly Persons and Prohibition of Elder Abuse

§1. The Diocese of Palm Beach recognizes the inherent dignity of elderly persons and their particular right to be protected from abuse, exploitation, neglect, coercion, manipulation, and other forms of mistreatment. Elder abuse in any form is strictly prohibited within the Diocese of Palm Beach.

§2. For purposes of this Policy, elder abuse includes any act or omission that causes or creates a serious risk of physical, psychological, emotional, sexual, spiritual, or financial harm to an elderly person, particularly when committed by a person occupying a position of trust, authority, pastoral responsibility, caregiving, supervision, or financial responsibility.

§3. Prohibited conduct includes, but is not limited to:

- a. physical abuse, violence, inappropriate restraint, or intentional infliction of bodily harm;
- b. sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, sexual coercion, or other grave sexual misconduct;
- c. psychological or emotional abuse, including intimidation, threats, humiliation, harassment, isolation, or coercive behavior;
- d. spiritual abuse, including the improper use of religious, sacramental, pastoral, or spiritual authority to manipulate, intimidate, exploit, or exercise undue influence over an elderly person;
- e. financial exploitation, including theft, fraud, misappropriation, unauthorized use or transfer of money or property, improper solicitation of gifts, manipulation concerning wills, trusts, inheritances, donations, or other financial instruments, and the misuse of a pastoral or fiduciary relationship for personal or institutional financial advantage;
- f. neglect or deliberate failure to provide reasonably necessary care when such care falls within the person's assigned or assumed responsibilities;



- g. abandonment of an elderly person for whom the person has undertaken a duty of care;
- h. coercion, manipulation, or undue influence intended to obtain money, property, gifts, testamentary dispositions, personal services, confidential information, or another benefit; and
- i. retaliation, intimidation, or interference directed against an elderly person who reports abuse or against any person who reports suspected elder abuse or assists in an investigation.

§4. No cleric, religious, employee, volunteer, agent, or other person acting on behalf of the Diocese or any of its parishes, schools, institutions, agencies, ministries, or affiliated entities shall exploit an elderly person's age, illness, dependency, diminished capacity, isolation, grief, trust, pastoral relationship, or other circumstance of vulnerability for personal, sexual, financial, institutional, or other improper advantage.

§5. Particular vigilance shall be exercised whenever a cleric or other ecclesiastical agent exercises pastoral, spiritual, sacramental, financial, caregiving, or other significant influence over an elderly person. The existence of consent shall not, by itself, exclude the possibility of abuse when coercion, undue influence, exploitation, diminished capacity, dependency, or a grave imbalance of power may reasonably be present.

§6. Any allegation or reasonable suspicion of elder abuse shall be reported and addressed promptly in accordance with this Policy and all applicable civil reporting requirements. Nothing in this Policy shall prevent or discourage any person from reporting suspected elder abuse directly to law enforcement, protective services, or another competent governmental authority.

§7. Whenever the alleged conduct may constitute a canonical delict, the Diocesan Bishop shall proceed according to the applicable provisions of canon law, including canons 1717–1719 when their requirements are satisfied.

§8. When an allegation of elder abuse is made against a cleric, the Diocesan Bishop may, according to his prudent judgment and considering the nature and gravity of the allegation, impose the precautionary and administrative measures established by this Policy, including temporary removal from sacred ministry from the outset of the Preliminary Investigation, when such action is judged necessary for the protection of the alleged victim or other persons, the integrity of the investigation, the prevention of further alleged misconduct or scandal, or the protection of the common good.

§9. The Diocese shall take reasonable measures to protect an elderly person who reports abuse from retaliation, intimidation, coercion, further exploitation, or unauthorized contact by the accused person.

§10. For purposes of diocesan safeguarding, the protection afforded by this Article shall not depend exclusively upon whether an elderly person independently satisfies the canonical or civil definition of a “vulnerable adult.”



Age, dependency, diminished capacity, physical or cognitive limitations, isolation, and the existence of a relationship of trust or authority shall be considered according to the particular circumstances of each case.

Article 10 — Spiritual Abuse and the Abuse of Authority Associated with Holy Orders

§1. The Diocese of Palm Beach recognizes that sacred ministry necessarily involves relationships of profound spiritual trust. The authority and responsibilities conferred through Holy Orders are given for the service, sanctification, pastoral care, and spiritual welfare of the People of God and shall never be employed as instruments of domination, coercion, manipulation, exploitation, intimidation, or improper personal advantage.

§2. Spiritual abuse is strictly prohibited within the Diocese of Palm Beach. For purposes of this Policy, spiritual abuse consists in the grave or abusive exercise of spiritual, sacramental, pastoral, or ecclesiastical authority, or the misuse of a relationship of spiritual trust, in a manner that coerces, manipulates, exploits, controls, intimidates, humiliates, or unjustly harms another person.

§3. Particular gravity attaches to spiritual abuse committed by a bishop, priest, or deacon when the perpetrator invokes, exploits, or improperly uses the authority, dignity, influence, access, or trust associated with Holy Orders or sacred ministry in order to exercise improper control over another person or to obtain a personal, sexual, emotional, financial, professional, or other improper advantage.

§4. Spiritual abuse may include, but is not limited to:

- a. invoking priestly, diaconal, episcopal, or other ecclesiastical authority in order to coerce, intimidate, manipulate, or improperly control another person;
- b. representing personal desires, preferences, demands, or interests as though they constituted the will of God, an obligation of conscience, or an authoritative requirement of the Church when no such obligation legitimately exists;
- c. using the threat of divine punishment, spiritual condemnation, loss of God's favor, ecclesiastical retaliation, denial of legitimate pastoral care, or other spiritual consequences as a means of coercion or manipulation;
- d. exploiting the trust created through pastoral counseling, spiritual direction, formation, confession, sacramental preparation, bereavement ministry, vocational discernment, or another pastoral relationship for an improper purpose;



- e. intentionally creating or exploiting excessive emotional, psychological, or spiritual dependency upon a cleric or other pastoral minister;
- f. improperly interfering with or attempting to control another person's conscience, legitimate personal decisions, relationships, employment, finances, property, or other affairs through the misuse of spiritual or ecclesiastical influence;
- g. inappropriately demanding unlawful secrecy, silence, loyalty, blind obedience, gifts, money, services, affection, personal access, or other benefits by improperly invoking sacred ministry or ecclesiastical authority;
- h. using privileged spiritual or pastoral information obtained through a relationship of trust to manipulate, threaten, humiliate, exploit, retaliate against, or otherwise harm another person, always without prejudice to the absolute inviolability of the sacramental seal;
- i. using sacramental ministry, access to the sacraments, pastoral services, spiritual direction, recommendations, ecclesiastical opportunities, or ministerial assistance as leverage to obtain an improper advantage;
- j. isolating a person from family, friends, legitimate ecclesiastical authorities, professional assistance, or other sources of support for the purpose of increasing improper spiritual or personal control;
- k. using ecclesiastical status, clerical prestige, religious language, sacred symbols, prayer, Scripture, doctrine, or devotional practices as instruments of coercion, intimidation, exploitation, or manipulation; or
- l. retaliating against a person for resisting, questioning, reporting, or disclosing spiritually abusive conduct.

§5. The authority associated with Holy Orders shall never be used to demand personal submission or obedience beyond that which is legitimately established by divine law, canon law, ecclesiastical office, or a person's freely assumed canonical obligations. A cleric shall not represent his personal wishes, preferences, judgments, or interests as binding upon the conscience of another person merely by reason of his sacred ordination or ecclesiastical position.

§6. Particular vigilance shall be exercised in relationships involving spiritual direction, pastoral counseling, confession, vocational discernment, seminary or religious formation, employment, supervision, bereavement, illness, advanced age, disability, immigration circumstances, financial dependency, emotional distress, or other situations in which a significant imbalance of power, trust, or dependency may exist.

§7. The use of spiritual or pastoral authority to obtain, facilitate, conceal, or perpetuate sexual conduct or sexual exploitation constitutes an especially grave form of abuse of power. The apparent consent of an adult shall not, by itself, preclude a finding of abusive conduct when such consent has been materially compromised by coercion,



manipulation, exploitation, undue influence, dependency, vulnerability, or a grave abuse of spiritual or ecclesiastical authority.

§8. Nothing in this Article shall be interpreted as restricting the legitimate exercise of ecclesiastical authority, pastoral governance, preaching, teaching, spiritual counsel, fraternal correction, sacramental discipline, or canonical obedience when exercised according to the doctrine and discipline of the Church and with respect for the dignity and legitimate rights of the faithful.

§9. Any allegation of spiritual abuse shall be promptly assessed according to its nature and gravity. When the alleged conduct may constitute a canonical delict, the Diocesan Bishop shall proceed according to applicable canon law, including canons 1717–1719 whenever their requirements are satisfied.

§10. When an allegation of grave spiritual abuse is made against a cleric, particularly when it involves sexual exploitation, coercion, serious manipulation of conscience, exploitation of a vulnerable person, or another grave misuse of the authority associated with Holy Orders, the Diocesan Bishop may, according to his prudent judgment and from the outset of the Preliminary Investigation, temporarily remove the accused cleric from sacred ministry or impose any other precautionary or administrative measures established by this Policy and permitted by canon law.

§11. The imposition of such precautionary measures shall be protective and administrative in nature and shall not constitute a penalty, declaration of guilt, or determination that the allegation has been substantiated. The presumption of innocence, right of defense, and other rights afforded to the accused by canon law shall remain intact.

Article 11 — Abuse of Power and Authority

§1. No person exercising ecclesiastical office, ministry, employment, supervision, or other authority within the Diocese may use that authority to coerce, exploit, intimidate, manipulate, retaliate against, or improperly obtain personal, financial, professional, or other advantage from another person.

§2. Particular attention shall be given to allegations involving an imbalance of power arising from pastoral relationships, spiritual direction, employment, supervision, formation, education, financial dependence, immigration circumstances, or other relationships of trust or dependency.

§3. The legitimate exercise of ecclesiastical governance, supervision, discipline, employment authority, or correction in accordance with civil and canon law does not, by itself, constitute abuse of power.



§4. No person exercising ecclesiastical office, ministry, employment, supervision, or other authority within the Diocese may engage in vulgar language, profanity or insults.

Article 12 — Prohibition of Retaliation

§1. Retaliation against any person who, in good faith, reports suspected wrongdoing, provides information, cooperates with an investigation, or communicates with civil or ecclesiastical authorities is strictly prohibited.

§2. Prohibited retaliation may include dismissal, demotion, intimidation, harassment, threats, adverse employment action, discriminatory treatment, interference with ministry, or other punitive measures undertaken because a person made or assisted with a good-faith report.

§3. Allegations of retaliation shall themselves constitute matters subject to investigation and possible disciplinary action under this Policy.

Article 13 — False or Malicious Allegations

§1. The Diocese recognizes and protects the right of every person to make a good-faith report, including reports that ultimately cannot be substantiated.

§2. The fact that an allegation is determined to be unsubstantiated does not, by itself, establish that the allegation was false, malicious, or made in bad faith.

§3. Knowingly making a materially false allegation with the deliberate intention of causing unjust harm to another person may itself constitute serious misconduct and shall be addressed in accordance with applicable civil and canon law.

Article 14 — Confidentiality and Protection of Rights

§1. Reports and investigations shall be handled with appropriate discretion and confidentiality, insofar as reasonably possible and consistent with civil law, canon law, the requirements of a proper investigation, and the protection of the common good.



§2. Information shall be disclosed to persons or authorities having a legitimate need or legal right to receive it.

§3. The Diocese shall respect the dignity, privacy, good name, and legitimate rights of complainants, alleged victims, witnesses, and accused persons.

§4. The making of an allegation does not constitute a determination of guilt. The presumption of innocence, the right of defense, and applicable requirements of due process shall be respected.

§5. Confidentiality shall never be invoked for the purpose of concealing unlawful conduct, preventing legally required reporting, obstructing an investigation, or retaliating against a complainant or witness.

§6. CANONICAL AND CIVIL REPRESENTATION. Whenever a diocesan cleric freely chooses to retain a particular Procurator-Advocate, canonical counsel, or civil legal counsel of his own choosing, responsibility for the payment of all corresponding professional fees and expenses shall rest solely with the cleric, unless otherwise expressly agreed in writing by the Diocese.

§7. Should a diocesan cleric wish the Diocese to assume responsibility for such professional fees and expenses, he shall notify the Diocese before retaining or engaging the services of the professional concerned.

§8. In such circumstances, the Diocese may propose and make available to the cleric, at no expense to him, a qualified Procurator-Advocate, canonical counsel, or civil legal counsel, as appropriate to the nature and circumstances of the matter.

§9. The cleric shall remain entirely free to accept or decline the professional proposed by the Diocese. Should he decline and instead choose to retain another professional of his own selection, the corresponding fees and expenses shall ordinarily remain his sole responsibility, unless the Diocese expressly agrees otherwise in writing.

§10. The assumption by the Diocese of professional fees or expenses pursuant to this Article shall be understood solely as a means of safeguarding the cleric's legitimate right of defense and the proper administration of justice. It shall constitute neither an admission of liability by the Diocese nor a determination concerning the merits of any allegation, complaint, investigation, proceeding, or canonical recourse involving the cleric.

§11. Nothing in this Article shall prejudice the rights of the cleric under canon law or civil law, including his right freely to appoint a Procurator or Advocate in accordance with the applicable norms of law.

§12. All clerics incardinated in the Diocese of Palm Beach, including accused clerics who remain within the clerical state, have the right to receive from the Diocese adequate financial support for their proper sustenance, in accordance with diocesan policy. Such support shall include appropriate medical coverage and any other benefits to which they are entitled under applicable law and diocesan policy.



Article 15 — Findings and Appropriate Action

§1. Upon completion of the appropriate investigation or assessment, the competent ecclesiastical authority shall determine what further action is required according to civil law, canon law, diocesan policy, and the circumstances of the case.

§2. Appropriate action may include administrative or disciplinary measures, canonical proceedings, employment action, financial restitution or recovery, modification or removal of authority, restrictions upon ministry, referral to civil authorities, corrective measures, additional supervision, or other remedies permitted by law.

§3. When the evidence does not substantiate an allegation, appropriate steps shall be taken, insofar as possible and just, to protect or restore the good name and legitimate rights of persons who have been unjustly accused.

Article 16 — Interpretation and Application

§1. This Policy applies to clergy, religious, diocesan and parish employees, school personnel, volunteers, officers, board members, agents, contractors when applicable, and other persons exercising responsibilities on behalf of the Diocese of Palm Beach or its parishes, schools, institutions, agencies, ministries, or affiliated entities.

§2. This Policy shall be interpreted and applied in harmony with applicable civil law, universal and particular canon law, diocesan particular law, diocesan financial and administrative policies, applicable Codes of Conduct, and other policies of the Diocese of Palm Beach.

§3. Nothing contained in this Policy shall be interpreted as limiting any person's right or legal obligation to communicate suspected unlawful conduct directly to civil, regulatory, or law-enforcement authorities.

§4. When an allegation concerns a bishop or another person for whom universal canon law establishes a special procedure or competent authority, the matter shall be handled according to the applicable provisions of universal law and the procedures established by the Holy See.

§5. The Diocesan Bishop retains all responsibilities, powers, and prerogatives entrusted to him by universal and particular law concerning the governance of the Diocese, ecclesiastical discipline, the administration and protection of ecclesiastical goods, the investigation of alleged misconduct, and the protection of the common good.



PART IV

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES CONCERNING MONITORING AND WISTLEBLOWING IN ALL ABUSE AND MISCONDUCT ALLEGATIONS

Title A ***OFFICIAL CLERGY MONITORING POLICY***

Article 1 — Purpose

§1. The Diocese of Palm Beach is committed to the protection and safeguarding of minors, vulnerable adults, and all persons entrusted to the pastoral care of the Church, as well as to the responsible exercise of ecclesiastical ministry and authority.

§2. The purpose of this Policy is to establish uniform procedures for the monitoring and supervision of clerics who, because of allegations, findings of misconduct, canonical restrictions, precautionary measures, or other serious circumstances, are determined by the Diocesan Bishop to require monitoring.

§3. Clergy monitoring shall have as its principal purposes:

1° the protection and safeguarding of persons;

2° the prevention of further misconduct or inappropriate behavior;

3° the effective implementation of canonical and administrative restrictions;

4° accountability for clerics whose ministry, conduct, residence, activities, or contacts have been restricted;

5° the protection of the common good of the Church;



6° the promotion, whenever possible and appropriate, of the human and spiritual welfare of the cleric being monitored.

§4. Monitoring imposed while an allegation remains under investigation is a precautionary and administrative measure and shall not, by itself, constitute a determination of guilt or a finding that the allegation has been substantiated.

Article 2 — Scope and Applicability

§1. This Policy applies to priests and deacons incardinated in the Diocese of Palm Beach and, insofar as applicable, to other clerics residing, exercising ministry, or otherwise serving within the Diocese.

§2. For purposes of this Policy, a cleric placed under monitoring shall be referred to as a **“Monitored Cleric.”**

§3. A cleric may be placed under monitoring when:

1° an allegation of sexual abuse or sexual misconduct involving a minor has been received and the circumstances warrant precautionary supervision;

2° an allegation of sexual abuse or sexual misconduct involving an adult or vulnerable adult has been received and the circumstances warrant precautionary supervision;

3° an allegation involves abuse, exploitation, harassment, grooming, coercion, spiritual abuse, elder abuse, or the improper exercise of ecclesiastical authority;

4° the cleric is the subject of a Preliminary Investigation according to cann. 1717–1719 of the Code of Canon Law and monitoring is considered necessary;

5° precautionary measures or other restrictions have been imposed according to the norm of canon law;

6° an allegation of abuse or serious misconduct has been determined to be credible or substantiated according to the applicable diocesan procedures;

7° the cleric has seriously or repeatedly violated the Code of Pastoral Conduct for Clergy, a penal precept, decree, administrative restriction, or other legitimate directive;

8° the cleric has engaged in conduct that creates a reasonable safeguarding concern;



9° monitoring is required as part of a return-to-ministry, treatment, rehabilitation, or other individualized plan;
or

10° for another grave or reasonable cause, the Diocesan Bishop determines that monitoring is necessary for the protection of persons or the common good of the Church.

Article 3 — Authority of the Diocesan Bishop

§1. The determination that a cleric shall be subject to monitoring belongs to the Diocesan Bishop, without prejudice to the rights of other competent ecclesiastical authorities according to the norm of law.

§2. The Diocesan Bishop shall determine, according to the circumstances of each case:

1° the necessity and extent of monitoring;

2° the restrictions applicable to the cleric;

3° the duration of monitoring;

4° the identity and authority of the Clergy Monitor;

5° the frequency and manner of reporting;

6° any conditions concerning residence, travel, employment, ministry, communications, or contact with particular persons or classes of persons; and

7° any additional measures necessary to safeguard persons and protect the common good.

§3. Whenever required by canon law, restrictions affecting the rights or exercise of ministry of a cleric shall be imposed by an appropriate canonical act.

§4. Nothing contained in this Policy shall restrict the authority of the Diocesan Bishop to impose additional precautionary, administrative, disciplinary, or canonical measures permitted by law.



Article 4 — Appointment and Responsibilities of the Clergy Monitor

§1. Every Monitored Cleric shall ordinarily be assigned a **Clergy Monitor** designated by the Diocesan Bishop or his delegate.

§2. The Clergy Monitor may be a cleric or layperson possessing the maturity, discretion, professional competence, and integrity necessary to perform the assignment.

§3. The Clergy Monitor shall be responsible for supervising compliance with the individualized monitoring plan and for reporting significant concerns or violations to the competent diocesan authority.

§4. The Clergy Monitor may:

- 1° meet personally with the Monitored Cleric;
- 2° communicate with him by telephone, electronic means, or other appropriate methods;
- 3° conduct announced or unannounced visits when authorized by the monitoring plan;
- 4° verify the cleric's residence, employment, ministry, travel, and other activities;
- 5° verify compliance with restrictions concerning contact with minors, vulnerable adults, alleged victims, parishioners, employees, or other persons;
- 6° review publicly available information, including publicly accessible social-media activity, when reasonably related to the purposes of monitoring;
- 7° receive documentation required under the monitoring plan; and
- 8° immediately report suspected violations or safeguarding concerns to the competent diocesan authority.

Article 5 — Individualized Monitoring Plan

§1. A written **Individualized Monitoring Plan** shall ordinarily be established for every Monitored Cleric.

§2. The monitoring plan shall reflect the circumstances of the particular case, the restrictions imposed by competent authority, the level of risk reasonably identified, and the pastoral and human needs of the cleric.



§3. In developing the plan, consideration may be given to:

- 1° the nature and seriousness of the allegation or misconduct;
- 2° whether the allegation remains under investigation or has been substantiated;
- 3° the age and vulnerability of persons potentially affected;
- 4° the cleric's residence and proximity to minors or vulnerable adults;
- 5° the cleric's access to parishes, schools, ecclesiastical institutions, or other ministries;
- 6° the cleric's employment or other regular activities;
- 7° his travel;
- 8° his use of social media and other forms of public communication;
- 9° relevant behavioral or professional assessments;
- 10° prior violations of restrictions, policies, or directives;
- 11° the cleric's cooperation with ecclesiastical authority; and
- 12° any other circumstance relevant to safeguarding and responsible supervision.

§4. The monitoring plan shall specify the obligations and restrictions applicable to the Monitored Cleric and shall be reviewed periodically.

Article 6 — Restrictions on Ministry

§1. Depending upon the circumstances and the canonical status of the cleric, a monitoring plan may include restrictions or prohibitions concerning:

- 1° public or private exercise of sacred ministry;
- 2° celebration of the Sacraments or sacramentals;



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- 3° preaching;
- 4° hearing confessions;
- 5° providing spiritual direction;
- 6° pastoral counseling;
- 7° holding ecclesiastical office or performing ecclesiastical functions;
- 8° access to parish, school, diocesan, or other ecclesiastical properties;
- 9° wearing clerical attire;
- 10° publicly presenting himself as authorized to exercise ministry;
- 11° contact with minors or vulnerable adults;
- 12° contact with alleged victims, complainants, witnesses, or their families; and
- 13° participation in parish, diocesan, or other Church-sponsored activities.

§2. The restrictions imposed shall be proportionate to the circumstances and shall distinguish, whenever appropriate, between precautionary measures pending investigation and restrictions arising from established misconduct.

§3. No Monitored Cleric shall exercise ministry contrary to a restriction imposed by the Diocesan Bishop or other competent ecclesiastical authority.

Article 7 — Residence

§1. The Diocesan Bishop may designate or approve the residence of a Monitored Cleric whenever such a measure is appropriate and permitted by law.

§2. The suitability of a residence shall be evaluated in light of:

- 1° proximity and access to minors and vulnerable adults;



- 2° the presence of schools, playgrounds, youth facilities, or similar environments;
- 3° opportunities for appropriate supervision;
- 4° the nature of any restrictions imposed upon the cleric; and
- 5° other relevant safeguarding considerations.

§3. When warranted, a Monitored Cleric may be required to reside in a designated ecclesiastical residence or other appropriate supervised setting.

§4. When provided for in the monitoring plan, the Clergy Monitor or another authorized diocesan representative may conduct announced or unannounced visits to a diocesan or ecclesiastical residence occupied by the Monitored Cleric, with due regard for the cleric's legitimate rights and applicable law.

Article 8 — Travel and Absences

§1. A Monitored Cleric may be required to notify the Clergy Monitor in advance of travel or absences from his approved residence.

§2. The monitoring plan may require disclosure of:

- 1° destination;
- 2° dates of departure and return;
- 3° means of transportation;
- 4° place of lodging;
- 5° purpose of travel; and
- 6° other information reasonably necessary to ensure compliance with imposed restrictions.

§3. When circumstances warrant, particular travel may require prior authorization from the Diocesan Bishop or his delegate.



§4. Travel shall not be used to circumvent restrictions imposed within the Diocese of Palm Beach.

Article 9 — Contact with Minors and Vulnerable Persons

§1. A Monitored Cleric may be prohibited from having unsupervised or any contact with minors or vulnerable adults whenever such a restriction is imposed by competent authority.

§2. Restrictions may apply to contact occurring:

1° in person;

2° by telephone;

3° through text messaging;

4° through email;

5° through social media;

6° through electronic or digital communications; or

7° through third parties.

§3. Any unavoidable or accidental contact contrary to the ordinary parameters of the monitoring plan shall be reported promptly to the Clergy Monitor when required by the plan.

§4. Nothing in this Article shall be interpreted as permitting conduct otherwise prohibited by civil or canon law.

Article 10 — Contact with Alleged Victims, Complainants, and Witnesses

§1. A Monitored Cleric may be expressly prohibited from contacting, directly or indirectly, an alleged victim, complainant, witness, or member of such person's family.

§2. The prohibition may include communication through third parties, electronic communications, social media, gifts, messages, or other forms of indirect contact.



§3. Legitimate communications required for canonical or civil proceedings shall ordinarily occur through authorized representatives or according to procedures established by competent authority.

Article 11 — Meetings and Reporting

§1. The Individualized Monitoring Plan shall determine the frequency with which the Monitored Cleric must meet with or report to the Clergy Monitor.

§2. Meetings may occur in person or, when appropriate, through secure electronic means.

§3. The Clergy Monitor may require additional meetings when reasonably necessary.

§4. When authorized by the monitoring plan, meetings or visits may be unscheduled or unannounced.

§5. The Monitored Cleric shall provide truthful and complete information concerning matters legitimately within the scope of the monitoring plan.

Article 12 — Professional Assessment, Treatment, and Support

§1. When warranted by the circumstances, the Diocesan Bishop may request or, insofar as permitted by law, require a Monitored Cleric to undergo an appropriate professional evaluation.

§2. A monitoring plan may include participation in:

1° psychological or behavioral treatment;

2° counseling;

3° programs addressing boundaries or professional conduct;

4° programs addressing alcohol, substance abuse, or other behavioral concerns;

5° spiritual direction;

6° priestly support or accountability programs; or



7° other appropriate rehabilitative or therapeutic programs.

§3. When participation in such a program constitutes a condition of the monitoring plan, the cleric may be required to provide appropriate verification of attendance or participation, with due regard for professional confidentiality and applicable law.

§4. The Diocese shall not require disclosure of privileged or confidential therapeutic communications except as permitted by law and knowingly authorized when applicable.

Article 13 — Spiritual and Human Support

§1. Monitoring shall not be understood solely as a disciplinary mechanism. Consistent with safeguarding requirements and the circumstances of the individual case, reasonable provision should be made for the spiritual and human welfare of the Monitored Cleric.

§2. When appropriate, the cleric may be assigned or encouraged to maintain regular contact with a designated priest, spiritual director, counselor, or other appropriate person.

§3. Spiritual accompaniment or pastoral support shall never substitute for monitoring, professional treatment, canonical accountability, or safeguarding measures when such measures are required.

Article 14 — Cooperation with the Monitoring Plan

§1. A Monitored Cleric shall comply with all legitimate restrictions, directives, and reporting obligations established by competent ecclesiastical authority.

§2. Refusal to cooperate with a monitoring plan, providing false or misleading information, evasion of supervision, or violation of imposed restrictions shall be reported immediately to the Diocesan Bishop or his delegate.

§3. Such conduct may result in modification or intensification of restrictions and may constitute grounds for additional administrative, disciplinary, or canonical action according to the norm of law.

§4. When the cleric belongs to a religious institute, society of apostolic life, or another ecclesiastical entity, serious noncompliance may also be communicated to the competent Major Superior or Ordinary.



Article 15 — Violations and Immediate Safeguarding Measures

§1. Whenever the Clergy Monitor reasonably believes that a violation of the monitoring plan has occurred, the matter shall be promptly reported to the competent diocesan authority.

§2. If a violation creates an immediate safeguarding concern, appropriate protective measures shall be taken without unnecessary delay.

§3. Whenever information received during monitoring gives rise to a reporting obligation under civil law or diocesan safeguarding policy, the matter shall be reported to the appropriate civil authorities in accordance with applicable law.

§4. The monitoring program shall never be used as a substitute for reporting suspected criminal conduct to civil authorities when such reporting is required.

Article 16 — Documentation and Records

§1. The Clergy Monitor shall maintain appropriate written records concerning implementation of the monitoring plan.

§2. Such records may include:

- 1° the monitoring plan and subsequent modifications;
- 2° dates and summaries of monitoring contacts;
- 3° documentation of required participation in programs;
- 4° travel notifications or authorizations;
- 5° reports of violations or concerns;
- 6° actions taken in response to violations; and
- 7° periodic assessments of compliance.



§3. Monitoring records shall be maintained securely by the Diocese in accordance with canon law, civil law, and diocesan records-retention policies.

§4. Access shall be restricted to persons who have a legitimate ecclesiastical, safeguarding, professional, or legal need for such information.

Article 17 — Confidentiality

§1. Information obtained through clergy monitoring shall be treated with appropriate confidentiality, without prejudice to:

- 1° mandatory reporting obligations;
- 2° the protection of minors, vulnerable adults, or other persons;
- 3° legitimate canonical proceedings;
- 4° legitimate civil proceedings;
- 5° communications with competent ecclesiastical authorities; or
- 6° other disclosures required or permitted by law.

§2. Confidentiality shall never be interpreted in a manner that obstructs a legitimate investigation, conceals misconduct, or prevents a report required by law.

Article 18 — Periodic Review of Monitoring

§1. Every monitoring plan shall be reviewed periodically by the competent diocesan authority.

§2. Such review shall consider:

- 1° the cleric's compliance with the monitoring plan;
- 2° developments in any canonical, civil, or criminal proceeding;



- 3° professional assessments or recommendations, when applicable;
- 4° changes in residence or circumstances;
- 5° new safeguarding information;
- 6° the continued necessity and proportionality of restrictions; and
- 7° the protection of the common good.

§3. Following such review, the Diocesan Bishop may maintain, modify, increase, reduce, or terminate the monitoring requirements according to the norm of law and the circumstances of the case.

Article 19 — Clerics of Other Dioceses and Religious Institutes

§1. A cleric incardinated in another diocese or belonging to a religious institute or society of apostolic life who resides or ministers within the Diocese of Palm Beach may be subject to monitoring conditions established by the Diocesan Bishop as a condition for residence or ministry within the Diocese, according to the norm of law.

§2. When appropriate, monitoring shall be coordinated with the cleric's proper Ordinary or Major Superior.

§3. The Diocese of Palm Beach may require written confirmation of any restrictions or monitoring plan established by the cleric's proper ecclesiastical authority.

§4. Nothing in this Policy creates a right for a cleric from outside the Diocese to reside or exercise ministry within the Diocese of Palm Beach.

Article 20 — Employees and Volunteers

§1. Although this Policy principally governs clergy monitoring, employees and volunteers who are the subject of safeguarding allegations shall be subject to the applicable diocesan safeguarding policies and Codes of Conduct.



§2. An employee or volunteer against whom a credible or substantiated allegation of sexual abuse of a minor has been made shall be removed from ministry, employment, or volunteer service in accordance with applicable diocesan policy and law.

§3. Employees and volunteers who violate applicable Codes of Conduct may be subject to disciplinary measures, up to and including termination of employment or volunteer service.

§4. Nothing in this Article prevents the Diocese from establishing appropriate supervision, restrictions, or other safeguarding measures for an employee or volunteer when circumstances warrant.

Article 21 — Relationship to Civil and Canon Law

§1. This Policy shall be interpreted and applied consistently with the Code of Canon Law -CIC-, applicable universal and particular ecclesiastical law (e.g. the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches -CCEO-), the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*, the *Essential Norms for Diocesan/Eparchial Policies Dealing with Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Priests or Deacons*, applicable civil law, and the safeguarding policies of the Diocese of Palm Beach.

§2. Nothing contained herein shall prevent or delay compliance with mandatory reporting requirements or cooperation with legitimate civil authorities.

§3. Nothing contained herein shall prejudice the canonical rights of an accused cleric, including his right of defense and the presumption of innocence until the contrary is proved according to the norm of law.

§4. Precautionary monitoring, restrictions, or administrative measures imposed during the investigation of an allegation shall not be construed as a canonical penalty or as a determination that the allegation has been established.

Article 22 — Final Provisions

§1. The Diocesan Bishop retains authority to interpret, implement, modify, dispense from, or supplement the administrative provisions of this Policy, consistent with applicable universal and particular law.

§2. Because safeguarding circumstances differ substantially from case to case, monitoring shall be individualized and proportionate to the circumstances, while always giving appropriate priority to the protection of persons and the common good.



§3. No provision of this Policy shall be interpreted as limiting the authority of the Diocesan Bishop otherwise provided by universal or particular law.

§4. This Policy shall enter into force on the date determined by the Diocesan Bishop and shall remain in effect until legitimately amended, replaced, or revoked.

Title B

OFFICIAL WHISTLEBLOWER POLICY

Article 1 — Purpose and General Principle

§1. The Diocese of Palm Beach and its parishes, schools, offices, ministries, agencies, and affiliated entities are committed to the highest standards of honesty, integrity, accountability, transparency, and compliance with ecclesiastical and civil law.

§2. All clergy, religious, seminarians, employees, volunteers, and other persons acting on behalf of the Diocese are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with applicable law, diocesan policies, Codes of Conduct, and the moral and disciplinary norms of the Catholic Church.

§3. The purpose of this Policy is to provide safe and effective means for reporting suspected misconduct and to protect persons who, in good faith, make such reports or cooperate in their investigation.

Article 2 — Duty to Report

§1. Any person subject to this Policy who becomes aware of conduct reasonably believed to constitute a violation of civil or canon law, diocesan policy, or an applicable Code of Conduct is expected to report the matter promptly through the appropriate channels.

§2. Reportable conduct includes, but is not limited to:



1. sexual abuse, sexual misconduct, harassment, or exploitation;
2. abuse or neglect of minors, vulnerable adults, or elderly persons;
3. spiritual abuse, coercion, or abuse of ecclesiastical authority;
4. fraud, theft, financial malfeasance, misappropriation, or improper use of ecclesiastical goods;
5. serious violations of diocesan policies or Codes of Conduct;
6. unlawful discrimination or harassment;
7. obstruction, concealment, destruction of evidence, or interference with an investigation; and
8. retaliation against a person who has made or assisted with a good-faith report.

Article 3 — Reporting Procedures

- §1. Reports may be made to the appropriate diocesan authority, including the Chancellor, the competent safeguarding or compliance office, or another official designated by the Diocesan Bishop.
- §2. Reports may also be made through the Diocese of Palm Beach confidential third-party Reporting Line at **1-833-710-0909**, available twenty-four (24) hours a day, seven (7) days a week.
- §3. Nothing in this Policy shall prohibit, discourage, obstruct, or delay any person from making a report directly to law enforcement, child or adult protective services, or any other competent civil authority.
- §4. Whenever reporting to civil authorities is required by law or diocesan policy, an internal report shall not substitute for such mandatory reporting.

Article 4 — Safeguarding Allegations

- §1. Allegations of sexual abuse of a minor shall be handled according to applicable civil and canon law, the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*, the *Essential Norms*, and the safeguarding policies of the Diocese of Palm Beach. Such allegations shall be referred to the Diocesan Review Board according to its proper competence.
- §2. Allegations of sexual abuse or sexual misconduct involving adults or vulnerable adults shall be handled according to applicable diocesan policy and shall be referred to the Adult Allegation Board according to its proper competence.



§3. Whenever the Diocesan Bishop receives information concerning a possible canonical delict and the requirements of law are present, he shall proceed according to the prescriptions of canons 1717–1719 and other applicable provisions of canon law concerning the Preliminary Investigation.

Article 5 — Protection Against Retaliation

§1. Retaliation against any person who, in good faith, reports suspected misconduct, provides information, participates in an investigation, assists a complainant, or otherwise cooperates with a lawful inquiry is strictly prohibited.

§2. Prohibited retaliation includes intimidation, threats, harassment, discrimination, adverse employment action, improper alteration of ecclesiastical assignment or ministry, ostracism, interference with employment or volunteer service, or any other adverse action motivated by the person's good-faith participation in the reporting or investigative process.

§3. Any person who engages in retaliation shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary or canonical measures, up to and including termination of employment or volunteer service, removal from office or ministry when permitted by law, and any other measures provided by civil or canon law.

Article 6 — Good-Faith Reports

§1. A person making a report must act in good faith and have reasonable grounds for believing that the information reported may indicate misconduct.

§2. A report shall not be considered improper merely because an allegation cannot ultimately be substantiated.

§3. Knowingly making a materially false allegation, fabricating evidence, or deliberately providing false information with malicious intent may constitute grounds for disciplinary action.



Article 7 — Confidentiality and Cooperation

§1. Reports may be made confidentially or anonymously whenever permitted by law and by the available reporting mechanism.

§2. The Diocese shall protect the confidentiality of reports and the identities of persons involved to the extent reasonably possible and consistent with civil and canon law, due process, safeguarding obligations, and the proper investigation and resolution of the matter.

§3. All persons subject to this Policy shall cooperate truthfully with investigations lawfully undertaken by competent diocesan or civil authorities.

Article 8 — Investigation and Corrective Action

§1. Reports shall be promptly assessed and, when warranted, referred for investigation to the competent diocesan authority, independent investigator, advisory board, law-enforcement agency, or other competent body.

§2. Appropriate precautionary, administrative, disciplinary, canonical, pastoral, or employment measures may be adopted according to the nature and circumstances of the matter and the requirements of law.

§3. Nothing in this Policy shall prejudice the canonical rights of any person, the presumption of innocence, the requirements of due process, or the authority of the Diocesan Bishop according to the norm of law.

Article 9 — Publication and Applicability

§1. This Policy shall be made reasonably accessible throughout the Diocese, including publication through appropriate diocesan communications and availability to parishes, schools, offices, ministries, and affiliated entities.

§2. All diocesan entities and persons subject to this Policy shall comply with its provisions and with any procedures promulgated for its implementation.

§3. This Policy shall be interpreted in harmony with applicable civil law, universal and particular canon law, and the other safeguarding and conduct policies of the Diocese of Palm Beach.



PART V

STATUTES OF THE SAFEGUARDING ADVISORY BOARDS

TITLE A

STATUTES OF THE DIOCESAN REVIEW BOARD

Article 1 — Establishment and Nature

§1. Pursuant to Article 2 of the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* and Norm 5 of the *Essential Norms for Diocesan/Eparchial Policies Dealing with Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Priests or Deacons*, the **Diocesan Review Board of the Diocese of Palm Beach** (“Review Board” or “Board”) is hereby established and governed according to these Statutes.

§2. The Review Board is a confidential consultative body established to assist the Diocesan Bishop in the exercise of his pastoral and canonical responsibilities concerning allegations of sexual abuse of minors by clerics and the safeguarding of children and young people.

§3. The Review Board possesses no executive, legislative, or judicial authority. Its determinations and recommendations are consultative in nature and do not bind the Diocesan Bishop.

§4. Nothing contained in these Statutes shall limit or derogate from the authority, rights, obligations, or responsibilities of the Diocesan Bishop according to universal or particular law.



Article 2 — Purpose and Competence

§1. The principal purpose of the Review Board is to advise the Diocesan Bishop in his assessment of allegations of sexual abuse of minors by priests or deacons and in his determination regarding the suitability of an accused cleric for ministry.

§2. In fulfilling its consultative function, the Review Board may:

1. review information concerning allegations presented to it;
2. advise the Diocesan Bishop regarding the credibility and significance of an allegation;
3. advise regarding the suitability of an accused cleric for ministry;
4. provide recommendations concerning appropriate pastoral, canonical, administrative, or safeguarding measures;
5. review diocesan policies and procedures concerning the protection of children and young people;
6. offer recommendations regarding the effectiveness and implementation of diocesan safeguarding policies; and
7. advise the Diocesan Bishop concerning other safeguarding matters that he may submit to the Board.

§3. The Review Board may offer advice concerning both retrospective and prospective aspects of diocesan safeguarding policies and practices.

§4. Allegations concerning sexual abuse or sexual misconduct involving **adults or vulnerable adults**, when they do not also involve the sexual abuse of a minor, shall ordinarily be referred to the **Adult Allegation Board of the Diocese of Palm Beach**, according to the particular law and policies of the Diocese.

Article 3 — Relationship to the Preliminary Investigation

§1. Whenever the Diocesan Bishop receives information concerning a possible delict and determines that the requirements of canon 1717 §1 are present, the Preliminary Investigation shall be conducted according to canons 1717–1719 and other applicable universal and particular law.

§2. The Review Board does not conduct the canonical Preliminary Investigation and shall not substitute for the person or persons lawfully appointed by the Diocesan Bishop to conduct it.

§3. The Diocesan Bishop may seek the advice of the Review Board at such stages of the matter as he considers appropriate, without prejudice to the independence, integrity, and confidentiality of the Preliminary Investigation.



§4. Upon completion of the Preliminary Investigation, the Diocesan Bishop may submit its acts, findings, or a summary thereof to the Review Board for its assessment and recommendation, insofar as permitted by law.

§5. The Review Board shall respect the presumption of innocence, the right of defense, the good name of all persons involved, and the confidentiality required by canon law and civil law.

Article 4 — Composition

§1. The Review Board shall consist of **not fewer than five (5) voting members**, all of whom shall be appointed by the Diocesan Bishop.

§2. The majority of the members shall be lay persons who are not employed by the Diocese of Palm Beach.

§3. At least one member shall be a priest who is an experienced and respected pastor of the Diocese.

§4. At least one member shall possess particular expertise in the treatment of persons who have suffered sexual abuse of minors.

§5. Members shall be selected principally for their integrity, prudence, professional competence, sound judgment, and commitment to the protection of children and the mission of the Church.

§6. Insofar as possible, the Board should include persons possessing professional knowledge or experience in fields such as:

1. canon law;
2. civil or criminal law;
3. law enforcement or criminal investigations;
4. psychology or psychiatry;
5. medicine;
6. child protection;
7. social work;
8. education;
9. pastoral ministry; or
10. other disciplines relevant to safeguarding and the assessment of allegations.

§7. The Diocesan Bishop may appoint additional members whenever he judges that the needs of the Diocese or the effective functioning of the Board so require.



Article 5 — Appointment and Terms of Office

§1. All members of the Review Board are appointed exclusively by the Diocesan Bishop.

§2. Members shall ordinarily be appointed for a term of **five (5) consecutive years**.

§3. Members may be reappointed for additional terms at the discretion of the Diocesan Bishop.

§4. Membership terminates upon:

1. expiration of the member's term unless reappointed;
2. resignation accepted by the Diocesan Bishop;
3. death or incapacity;
4. removal by the Diocesan Bishop; or
5. another cause established by law.

§5. Members serve at the pleasure of the Diocesan Bishop and may be removed by him whenever, in his prudent judgment, the good of the Diocese, the integrity of the Board, or another sufficient reason requires it.

§6. A vacancy shall not invalidate the acts of the Board provided that the requirements for a quorum remain satisfied.

Article 6 — Officers

§1. The Diocesan Bishop shall appoint from among the members a **Chair** and may appoint a **Vice-Chair**.

§2. The Chair shall preside over meetings of the Board and facilitate its deliberations.

§3. The Vice-Chair, when appointed, shall exercise the functions of the Chair whenever the Chair is absent or unable to act.

§4. The Chair shall designate a **Secretary**, who may be a voting member of the Board.

§5. The Secretary shall prepare and preserve the minutes of meetings and perform such other administrative duties as may be assigned.



§6. The officers exercise their functions under the authority of the Diocesan Bishop and according to these Statutes.

Article 7 — Non-Voting Participants and Resource Persons

§1. The Diocesan Bishop may designate diocesan officials or other persons to participate in meetings of the Review Board as non-voting participants, advisors, or resource persons.

§2. Such persons may include, according to the circumstances:

1. the Promoter of Justice;
2. the Chancellor;
3. the Victim Assistance Coordinator;
4. the Director of Safe Environment;
5. diocesan legal counsel;
6. canonical counsel;
7. investigators; or
8. other professionals or experts whose participation would assist the Board.

§3. Consistent with the *Essential Norms*, the Promoter of Justice should ordinarily be encouraged to participate in meetings of the Review Board.

§4. Non-voting participants shall be bound by the same obligations of confidentiality applicable to members of the Board.

Article 8 — Meetings

§1. The Review Board shall ordinarily meet at least **quarterly**.

§2. Additional meetings may be convoked:

1. by the Diocesan Bishop;
2. by the Chair with the approval of the Diocesan Bishop; or
3. whenever circumstances require the timely consideration of an allegation or other matter entrusted to the Board.



§3. Meetings may be conducted in person or through secure electronic means capable of preserving the confidentiality of the proceedings.

§4. The Diocesan Bishop may not attend and/or preside over any meeting of the Review Board.

§5. The Board may invite persons possessing relevant information or professional expertise to participate in portions of a meeting when their participation would assist its deliberations.

Article 9 — Quorum and Recommendations

§1. A majority of the appointed voting members shall constitute a quorum.

§2. The Board should ordinarily seek to formulate its recommendations through careful deliberation and, insofar as possible, consensus.

§3. When a vote is necessary, a recommendation shall ordinarily be adopted by a majority of the voting members present.

§4. Minority opinions or significant disagreements may be communicated to the Diocesan Bishop when the Board judges such information relevant to his decision.

§5. Recommendations of the Review Board are exclusively consultative. The Diocesan Bishop remains free to accept, reject, or modify any recommendation according to his prudent judgment and the requirements of law.

Article 10 — Standards Governing Deliberations

§1. Members shall exercise their responsibilities impartially, prudently, objectively, and with due regard for justice and charity.

§2. In considering any allegation, the Board shall respect:

1. the dignity of the person reporting abuse;
2. the protection and pastoral care of victims and survivors;
3. the presumption of innocence of the accused;
4. the right of defense;



5. the canonical and civil rights of all persons involved;
6. the right to a good reputation and privacy;
7. the integrity of ecclesiastical and civil investigations; and
8. the protection of the common good of the Church.

§3. The Board shall distinguish its consultative assessment from any determination of canonical or civil criminal responsibility, which belongs exclusively to the competent authority according to law.

Article 11 — Confidentiality

§1. The proceedings, deliberations, records, documents, and recommendations of the Review Board shall be treated as confidential to the extent permitted or required by canon law and civil law.

§2. Every member shall execute a **Confidentiality Agreement** upon appointment and thereafter as required by diocesan policy.

§3. Members shall not disclose information obtained through their service on the Board except when authorized by the Diocesan Bishop or required by law.

§4. The obligation of confidentiality continues after a member ceases to serve on the Board.

§5. Nothing in this Article shall be interpreted as preventing or discouraging any report required by civil law, canon law, or diocesan safeguarding policy.

Article 12 — Conflicts of Interest

§1. A member shall disclose any actual, potential, or apparent conflict of interest concerning a matter presented to the Board.

§2. A conflict may arise from:

1. a personal or familial relationship with a person involved;
2. a financial or professional interest;
3. prior professional involvement in the matter;
4. prior representation of a person or entity involved;



5. circumstances reasonably calling the member's impartiality into question; or
6. any other circumstance capable of creating an appearance of bias.

§3. A member possessing a conflict shall recuse himself or herself from deliberation and voting concerning that matter.

§4. When there is uncertainty or disagreement concerning the existence or extent of a conflict, the matter shall be referred to the Diocesan Bishop for determination.

Article 13 — Records and Minutes

§1. Confidential minutes shall be maintained for each meeting.

§2. The minutes shall ordinarily record:

1. the date and place of the meeting;
2. members present and absent;
3. matters considered;
4. recommendations adopted;
5. votes taken, when applicable; and
6. recusals or other matters necessary for an accurate institutional record.

§3. The minutes shall not ordinarily contain unnecessary details concerning victims, accused persons, witnesses, or confidential investigative information.

§4. Investigative files, canonical acts, and other official records shall remain in the custody of the Chancellor or another diocesan official designated by the Diocesan Bishop and shall be preserved according to canon law, civil law, and diocesan record-retention policies.

§5. Members shall not retain personal copies of confidential case materials after the conclusion of their consideration of a matter, except when expressly authorized.



Article 14 — Cooperation with Civil Authorities

§1. Nothing in these Statutes shall replace, impede, delay, or interfere with any obligation imposed by civil law concerning the reporting of suspected abuse of a minor to competent public authorities.

§2. The Diocese shall cooperate with civil authorities according to applicable law and diocesan policy.

§3. The Review Board shall not interfere with a civil or criminal investigation and shall conduct its consultative work in a manner that preserves the integrity of such investigations.

Article 15 — Formation of Members

§1. Members shall receive appropriate orientation concerning their responsibilities before or promptly after beginning their service.

§2. Formation should include, as appropriate:

1. the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*;
2. the *Essential Norms*;
3. applicable provisions of canon law;
4. diocesan safeguarding policies and Codes of Conduct;
5. civil reporting obligations;
6. trauma-informed approaches to persons reporting abuse;
7. procedural fairness and the rights of accused persons; and
8. confidentiality and conflicts of interest.

§3. Continuing formation may be required by the Diocesan Bishop or his delegate.

Article 16 — Relationship with Other Diocesan Advisory Bodies

§1. The Review Board shall exercise its functions without prejudice to the competence of other diocesan boards, councils, offices, or advisory bodies.



§2. Allegations of sexual abuse or sexual misconduct involving adults or vulnerable adults shall ordinarily fall within the competence of the **Adult Allegation Board**, according to its own statutes and applicable diocesan law.

§3. Matters involving broader safeguarding policy may, when appropriate, also be referred to the **Safeguarding Advisory Board** or another competent diocesan body.

§4. When a matter appears to fall within the competence of more than one diocesan advisory body, the Diocesan Bishop shall determine the appropriate body or bodies to be consulted.

Article 17 — Interpretation

§1. These Statutes shall be interpreted in conformity with the Code of Canon Law, applicable particular law, the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*, the *Essential Norms*, and other applicable norms of the Holy See and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

§2. Any question concerning the interpretation or application of these Statutes shall be referred to the Diocesan Bishop, whose determination shall govern without prejudice to the rights established by law.

Article 18 — Amendments

§1. These Statutes may be amended, supplemented, or replaced only by the Diocesan Bishop.

§2. Any amendment shall take effect according to the terms established in the decree by which it is promulgated.

Article 19 — Final Provision

§1. These Statutes shall enter into force immediately.

§2. Upon their entry into force, any prior diocesan norms governing the Diocesan Review Board that are contrary to these Statutes are hereby abrogated.



§3. These Statutes shall remain in force until lawfully amended, replaced, or revoked by competent authority.

TITLE B

STATUTES OF THE ADULT ALLEGATION BOARD

Article 1

Establishment and Nature

§1. In the exercise of the authority entrusted to the Diocesan Bishop by the Code of Canon Law and in furtherance of his responsibility for ecclesiastical discipline, safeguarding, and the pastoral care of the faithful, there is hereby established the **Adult Allegation Board of the Diocese of Palm Beach**.

§2. The Adult Allegation Board is a permanent, confidential, consultative body established to assist the Diocesan Bishop in the assessment of allegations of serious misconduct involving adults.

§3. The Board possesses no executive, legislative, or judicial authority. Its function is exclusively advisory, and its recommendations shall not bind the Diocesan Bishop.

§4. Nothing contained in these Statutes shall restrict the authority, rights, obligations, or discretion entrusted to the Diocesan Bishop by universal or particular law.

Article 2

Purpose

§1. The purpose of the Board is to provide the Diocesan Bishop with independent and competent advice concerning allegations of serious misconduct involving adults committed by clerics, candidates for Holy Orders, members of institutes of consecrated life or societies of apostolic life serving within the Diocese, diocesan employees, volunteers, or other persons acting on behalf of diocesan entities.



§2. In particular, the Board may advise the Diocesan Bishop concerning:

1. the credibility or substantiation of allegations following the completion of the appropriate investigation;
2. the gravity and circumstances of the alleged or established conduct;
3. the suitability of a cleric or other ecclesiastical minister for ministry;
4. appropriate administrative, disciplinary, pastoral, or safeguarding measures;
5. the protection and pastoral care of persons affected by alleged misconduct;
6. diocesan policies concerning professional and ministerial conduct, sexual misconduct, harassment, coercion, exploitation, abuse of authority, and safeguarding of adults; and
7. any other related matter referred to the Board by the Diocesan Bishop.

Article 3

Jurisdiction

§1. The Board may consider allegations involving adults concerning, among other matters:

1. sexual misconduct or sexual exploitation;
2. sexual harassment;
3. abuse of authority or office;
4. spiritual abuse or manipulation;
5. the abusive exercise of authority associated with Holy Orders, ecclesiastical office, pastoral ministry, or spiritual direction;
6. coercive, exploitative, or otherwise improper relationships;
7. serious violations of professional or ministerial boundaries;
8. workplace harassment or retaliation;
9. grooming, manipulation, or exploitation of adults;
10. financial exploitation, particularly involving elderly or vulnerable adults;
11. violations of diocesan Codes of Conduct or other applicable diocesan policies; and
12. other serious misconduct affecting the dignity, safety, or legitimate rights of adults.

§2. The competence of the Board is not limited to conduct constituting a canonical delict. The Board may evaluate conduct that may reasonably constitute a serious violation of diocesan policy, professional ethics, fiduciary obligations, ministerial standards, or the obligations inherent in an ecclesiastical office or ministry.



§3. Allegations of sexual abuse of minors falling within the competence of the Diocesan Review Board shall be referred to that Board in accordance with applicable universal and particular law and the policies of the Diocese of Palm Beach.

§4. Whenever an allegation concerns conduct involving both minors and adults, the Diocesan Bishop shall determine the appropriate manner of referral and consultation with the competent advisory bodies.

§5. The Diocesan Bishop may reserve any matter to himself or refer it to another competent ecclesiastical or civil authority.

Article 4

Canonical Preliminary Investigation

§1. Whenever the Diocesan Bishop receives information concerning a possible canonical delict and the requirements of canon 1717 §1 are present, he shall proceed according to canons 1717–1719 and other applicable provisions of canon law.

§2. The Adult Allegation Board shall not conduct, direct, replace, or interfere with the canonical Preliminary Investigation.

§3. Ordinarily, when a canonical Preliminary Investigation is required, the matter shall be presented to the Board for its assessment after the investigative phase has been sufficiently completed and the Bishop determines that consultation with the Board is appropriate.

§4. Nothing prevents the Diocesan Bishop from consulting the Board at an earlier stage regarding safeguarding, administrative, pastoral, or other matters that do not compromise the independence or integrity of an investigation.

Article 5

Relationship with Civil Authorities and Other Proceedings

§1. The work of the Board shall never substitute for reporting to civil authorities whenever such reporting is required by civil law or diocesan policy.



§2. The Board shall not interfere with any investigation conducted by law enforcement or other competent civil authorities.

§3. When appropriate, ecclesiastical proceedings or the Board's consideration of a matter may be coordinated in a manner intended to preserve the integrity of civil investigations and the rights of all persons concerned.

§4. The Board does not replace canonical penal administrative or judicial processes, employment proceedings, civil investigations, or procedures undertaken pursuant to *Vos estis lux mundi* or other applicable ecclesiastical legislation.

Article 6

Membership

§1. The Board shall consist of not fewer than seven (7) voting members appointed by the Diocesan Bishop.

§2. Members shall be persons of outstanding integrity, prudence, sound judgment, professional competence, and commitment to justice, safeguarding, due process, and pastoral charity.

§3. To the extent reasonably possible, the membership shall collectively possess professional experience in areas such as canon law, civil law, criminal investigation, employment law, human resources, psychology, psychiatry, social work, safeguarding, medicine, pastoral ministry, law enforcement, or professional ethics.

§4. A majority of the voting members shall be members of the lay faithful.

§5. The Diocesan Bishop may appoint one or more priests or other clerics with appropriate pastoral or professional experience as voting members.

§6. Members shall exercise their responsibilities independently, impartially, and exclusively for the purpose of providing competent advice to the Diocesan Bishop.



Article 7

Appointment and Term of Office

- §1. Members shall be appointed exclusively by the Diocesan Bishop.
- §2. The ordinary term of appointment shall be five (5) years.
- §3. Members may be reappointed for additional terms.
- §4. Members serve at the pleasure of the Diocesan Bishop and may be removed or replaced by him at any time for a just and reasonable cause.
- §5. A vacancy shall not invalidate the acts of the Board provided that the quorum required by these Statutes is present.

Article 8

Officers

- §1. The Diocesan Bishop shall appoint from among the members of the Board a Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary.
- §2. The Chair shall preside at meetings and facilitate the orderly consideration of matters submitted to the Board.
- §3. The Vice-Chair shall perform the duties of the Chair whenever the Chair is absent or unable to act.
- §4. The Secretary shall ensure that appropriate confidential minutes and records of the proceedings of the Board are maintained.



Article 9

Non-Voting Participants and Experts

§1. At the request or with the authorization of the Diocesan Bishop, diocesan officials or other experts may participate in meetings of the Board as non-voting resource persons.

§2. Such persons may include the Vicar General, Chancellor, Promoter of Justice, General Counsel, Victim Assistance Coordinator, Director of Human Resources, Director of Safe Environment, Director of Risk Management, investigators retained by the Diocese, canonists, psychologists, medical professionals, or other qualified experts.

§3. Participation as a resource person shall not confer membership or voting rights upon such persons unless they have separately been appointed as voting members by the Diocesan Bishop.

Article 10

Meetings

§1. The Board shall meet whenever convoked by or on behalf of the Diocesan Bishop.

§2. The Chair may recommend that an additional meeting be convoked whenever circumstances warrant.

§3. Meetings may be conducted in person or through secure electronic means when appropriate.

§4. The materials necessary for the Board's deliberations shall ordinarily be provided to members sufficiently in advance to permit meaningful review, subject always to requirements of confidentiality, privilege, and applicable law.

Article 11

Quorum and Recommendations

§1. A majority of the voting members then serving shall constitute a quorum.



§2. Recommendations shall ordinarily be adopted by a majority of the voting members participating in the deliberation.

§3. When appropriate, the Board may communicate differing or minority opinions to the Diocesan Bishop.

§4. The Board's conclusions and recommendations are advisory only. Final determinations and decisions remain within the competence of the Diocesan Bishop or other authority competent according to law.

Article 12

Principles Governing Deliberations

§1. In considering any matter, the Board shall seek to promote truth, justice, safeguarding, accountability, due process, and pastoral charity.

§2. The Board shall respect the dignity and legitimate rights of persons who report misconduct, alleged victims, witnesses, accused persons, and all others affected by the matter.

§3. The Board shall distinguish carefully between the credibility of an allegation, the establishment of facts, the possible commission of a canonical delict or civil offense, and the separate question of suitability for ministry, employment, office, or service.

§4. No recommendation shall be understood as a determination of criminal or civil liability, which belongs exclusively to the competent authority.

Article 13

Confidentiality

§1. The proceedings, deliberations, records, and recommendations of the Board shall be treated as confidential to the fullest extent permitted by canon and civil law.

§2. Before assuming office, every member shall execute a Confidentiality Agreement in the form approved by the Diocese.



§3. Members shall not disclose information obtained through their service on the Board except as authorized by the Diocesan Bishop or required by law.

§4. The obligation of confidentiality continues after the conclusion of a member's service on the Board.

Article 14

Conflict of Interest and Recusal

§1. A member who has an actual, potential, or reasonably perceived conflict of interest concerning a matter before the Board shall disclose the conflict promptly.

§2. A member shall recuse himself or herself whenever impartial participation could reasonably be questioned.

§3. The Diocesan Bishop shall resolve any disputed question concerning a member's participation or recusal.

§4. A recused member shall not receive confidential materials concerning the matter beyond those already lawfully received and shall not participate in its deliberation or vote.

Article 15

Records

§1. Appropriate confidential minutes shall be maintained for each meeting of the Board.

§2. The minutes shall reflect the members present, matters considered, recommendations made, and, when appropriate, the result of any vote.

§3. Records of the Board shall constitute confidential diocesan records and shall be maintained under the custody of the Chancellor or another official designated by the Diocesan Bishop.

§4. Access to such records shall be governed by canon law, civil law, diocesan policy, and the directives of the Diocesan Bishop.



Article 16

Relationship with the Diocesan Bishop

§1. The Board exercises its functions solely as a consultative body to the Diocesan Bishop.

§2. The Diocesan Bishop may accept, reject, modify, or request reconsideration of any recommendation made by the Board.

§3. The Bishop may request additional investigation, documentation, expert consultation, or further deliberation before making a determination.

§4. The Board shall respect at all times the canonical authority and responsibility of the Diocesan Bishop for governance, ecclesiastical discipline, safeguarding, and the pastoral care of the Diocese.

Article 17

Amendments and Interpretation

§1. These Statutes may be amended, supplemented, or revoked only by the Diocesan Bishop.

§2. Questions concerning the interpretation or application of these Statutes shall be resolved by the Diocesan Bishop, without prejudice to the competence of any superior ecclesiastical authority according to law.

Article 18

Entry into Force

§1. These Statutes shall enter into force immediately.

§2. They shall remain in force until lawfully amended, replaced, or revoked.

§3. All persons appointed to the Adult Allegation Board shall observe these Statutes and any additional norms or directives legitimately issued by the Diocesan Bishop concerning the exercise of their responsibilities.



TITLE C

STATUTES OF THE SAFEGUARDING ADVISORY BOARD

Article 1

Establishment

§1. In the exercise of the executive authority entrusted to the Diocesan Bishop by the Code of Canon Law, there is hereby established the **Safeguarding Advisory Board of the Diocese of Palm Beach**.

§2. The Safeguarding Advisory Board is constituted as a **permanent confidential consultative body** to assist the Diocesan Bishop in promoting a comprehensive culture of safeguarding throughout the Diocese.

§3. The Board possesses solely a consultative function and enjoys no executive, legislative, judicial, disciplinary, or investigative authority.

§4. The Board shall exercise its functions in accordance with universal and particular ecclesiastical law, applicable civil law, these Statutes, and other policies and norms legitimately promulgated within the Diocese of Palm Beach.

Article 2

Definition of Safeguarding

§1. For purposes of these Statutes, **safeguarding** means the comprehensive protection and promotion of:

1. the dignity, rights, safety, and well-being of every human person;
2. children, young people, vulnerable adults, and all persons entrusted to the pastoral care of the Church;
3. ecclesiastical goods and other temporal goods entrusted to the Diocese;
4. the integrity, mission, identity, and good name of the Catholic Church; and



5. the lawful, ethical, transparent, prudent, and accountable governance of diocesan institutions, parishes, schools, ministries, apostolates, agencies, foundations, and affiliated entities.

§2. Safeguarding includes the prevention, identification, mitigation, and appropriate management of risks capable of causing physical, psychological, sexual, spiritual, moral, financial, legal, reputational, or institutional harm.

Article 3

Safeguarding as a Responsibility of Ecclesiastical Governance

§1. Safeguarding constitutes an essential dimension of responsible ecclesiastical governance within the Diocese of Palm Beach and shall inform the exercise of ecclesiastical authority, pastoral ministry, administration, employment, stewardship, and institutional decision-making.

§2. Every person who exercises an ecclesiastical office or ministry, or who performs employment, volunteer service, or another function on behalf of the Diocese, shares responsibility, according to his or her respective role, for fostering and maintaining a culture of safeguarding.

§3. This responsibility shall be exercised through integrity, accountability, vigilance, transparency consistent with law and legitimate confidentiality, respect for the dignity and rights of persons, prudent stewardship of ecclesiastical goods, observance of ecclesiastical and civil law, and faithful service to the mission of the Church.

§4. Safeguarding shall therefore be understood not merely as a response to allegations of abuse or misconduct, but as a continuing responsibility to identify, prevent, mitigate, and appropriately address risks capable of causing harm to persons, ecclesiastical goods, diocesan institutions, or the mission and integrity of the Church.

Article 4

Purpose

§1. The purpose of the Safeguarding Advisory Board is to assist the Diocesan Bishop by providing independent advice concerning the development, implementation, evaluation, and continuous improvement of safeguarding throughout the Diocese.



§2. In fulfilling this purpose, the Board shall promote:

1. the protection of persons;
2. the responsible stewardship of ecclesiastical goods;
3. institutional integrity;
4. compliance with ecclesiastical and applicable civil law;
5. ethical and accountable governance;
6. transparency consistent with justice, charity, confidentiality, and due process;
7. prudent risk management;
8. prevention of abuse, misconduct, fraud, and other forms of institutional harm; and
9. the integrity, mission, and public witness of the Catholic Church.

Article 5

Responsibilities

The Board shall advise the Diocesan Bishop regarding matters including, but not limited to:

1. diocesan safeguarding policies, protocols, and procedures;
2. protection of minors and vulnerable adults;
3. professional conduct and appropriate ministerial boundaries;
4. prevention of sexual, physical, psychological, spiritual, and financial abuse;
5. prevention of abuse of authority, abuse of office, coercion, manipulation, exploitation, and retaliation;
6. professional and ministerial conduct involving clergy, religious, employees, volunteers, and other persons acting on behalf of the Church;
7. institutional compliance with applicable ecclesiastical and civil requirements;
8. implementation and periodic review of diocesan Codes of Conduct;
9. governance risks affecting diocesan institutions;
10. financial integrity and responsible stewardship of ecclesiastical goods;
11. conflicts of interest;
12. prevention and detection of fraud, misappropriation, and financial misconduct;
13. internal controls and institutional accountability;
14. ethical standards applicable to diocesan leadership;
15. safeguarding audits, compliance reviews, and institutional assessments;
16. crisis preparedness and organizational resilience;
17. education, formation, and continuing training concerning safeguarding;
18. mechanisms for reporting misconduct and protection against retaliation;



19. emerging safeguarding risks and developments in best practices;
20. institutional and reputational risks capable of adversely affecting the mission of the Diocese or the Catholic Church; and
21. any other safeguarding matter referred to the Board by the Diocesan Bishop.

Article 6

Relationship with Other Diocesan Consultative Bodies

§1. The Safeguarding Advisory Board exercises a general advisory, preventive, policy, compliance, and systemic function. It shall not ordinarily assess the credibility of individual allegations or recommend the canonical, disciplinary, or administrative disposition of particular accused persons.

§2. Allegations involving the sexual abuse of minors by clerics shall be submitted to the **Diocesan Review Board** according to universal and particular law, the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*, the *Essential Norms for Diocesan/Eparchial Policies Dealing with Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Priests or Deacons*, and applicable diocesan policy.

§3. Allegations of sexual abuse or other misconduct involving adults or vulnerable adults that fall within the competence of the **Adult Allegation Board** shall be submitted to that Board according to its Statutes and applicable diocesan policy.

§4. The Safeguarding Advisory Board may study systemic issues, institutional practices, policies, patterns of risk, or lessons arising from matters considered by other diocesan bodies, provided that such review respects confidentiality, due process, the rights of all persons concerned, and the respective competence of each body.

§5. Nothing in these Statutes limits or prejudices the authority of the Diocesan Bishop, the requirements of canonical law, including canons 1717–1719 whenever applicable, obligations imposed by civil law, or the competence of any ecclesiastical or civil authority.

Article 7

Membership

§1. The Board shall consist of not fewer than **five (5)** members appointed freely by the Diocesan Bishop.



§2. Membership should, insofar as reasonably possible, reflect an appropriate diversity of professional competence and experience relevant to the responsibilities of the Board.

§3. Members may be selected from persons possessing expertise or substantial experience in areas including:

1. safeguarding and protection of vulnerable persons;
2. canon law or civil law;
3. law enforcement or investigations;
4. psychology, counseling, or behavioral sciences;
5. education;
6. finance, accounting, auditing, or risk management;
7. corporate or nonprofit governance;
8. ethics and compliance;
9. human resources;
10. communications or crisis management;
11. pastoral ministry; and
12. other disciplines considered useful to the work of the Board.

§4. A majority of the members should, insofar as practicable, be lay persons who are not employed by the Diocese of Palm Beach.

§5. Membership on the Board constitutes an office of ecclesial trust and shall be exercised in fidelity to the mission and teaching of the Catholic Church.

Article 8

Appointment and Term of Office

§1. Members shall be appointed by written decree of the Diocesan Bishop.

§2. Members shall ordinarily serve a term of **five (5) years** and may be reappointed.

§3. A member shall continue in office until the expiration of the term for which he or she was appointed, unless the member resigns, becomes incapable of fulfilling the office, or is removed by the Diocesan Bishop for a just cause.

§4. A vacancy occurring before the expiration of a term may be filled by the Diocesan Bishop for a new term.



§5. Service on the Board shall ordinarily be without remuneration, without prejudice to reimbursement for reasonable expenses when authorized by the Diocese.

Article 9

Officers

§1. The Diocesan Bishop shall appoint from among the members a **Chairperson** and, when considered appropriate, a **Vice-Chairperson**.

§2. The Chairperson shall:

1. preside at meetings;
2. approve agendas in consultation with the appropriate diocesan liaison;
3. promote orderly and impartial deliberation;
4. ensure that recommendations accurately reflect the deliberations of the Board; and
5. communicate the advice and recommendations of the Board to the Diocesan Bishop.

§3. The Vice-Chairperson shall exercise the functions of the Chairperson whenever the Chairperson is absent or impeded.

§4. Appropriate administrative assistance shall be provided by the Diocese for the preparation of agendas, preservation of records, and other organizational needs of the Board.

Article 10

Independence of Deliberations

§1. The Board shall be afforded reasonable independence in its deliberations so that its advice to the Diocesan Bishop may be objective, candid, and professionally informed.

§2. The **Diocesan Bishop shall not participate in the meetings or deliberations of the Board.**

§3. **No Episcopal Vicar of the Diocese of Palm Beach shall participate as a member of the Board or take part in its meetings or deliberations.**



§4. The Diocesan Bishop may refer matters or questions to the Board and may request its advice or recommendations in writing.

§5. When necessary for the proper consideration of a matter, the Chairperson may invite diocesan officials, employees, consultants, experts, or other persons to provide information or professional assistance. Such persons shall not participate in the Board's final deliberations unless expressly requested by the Chairperson and shall possess no vote.

§6. The exclusion established by §§2–3 is intended to preserve the independence and freedom of the Board's deliberations and does not diminish the canonical authority or responsibility of the Diocesan Bishop for the governance of the Diocese.

Article 11

Meetings

§1. The Board shall meet regularly and at least **twice each calendar year**, or more frequently when necessary.

§2. Additional meetings may be called by the Chairperson or at the request of the Diocesan Bishop.

§3. Meetings may be conducted in person or through secure electronic means when circumstances warrant.

§4. A majority of the appointed members shall constitute a quorum.

§5. The Board should ordinarily seek to formulate its recommendations by consensus. When consensus cannot reasonably be achieved, the Chairperson may call for a vote.

§6. Each member shall possess one vote. Recommendations approved by vote shall require a majority of the members present and voting.

§7. A dissenting member may request that his or her dissenting opinion be communicated to the Diocesan Bishop together with the recommendation of the majority.



Article 12

Confidentiality

§1. The proceedings, deliberations, documents, records, and recommendations of the Board shall be treated as confidential except when disclosure is authorized or required by competent authority or by law.

§2. Every member and every person invited to participate in a meeting shall observe the confidentiality appropriate to the information received in connection with the work of the Board.

§3. Members shall execute any confidentiality agreement or acknowledgment required by the Diocese.

§4. Confidentiality shall not be interpreted or applied so as to prevent or impede any report required by civil or ecclesiastical law.

Article 13

Conflicts of Interest

§1. Members shall disclose any actual, potential, or reasonably perceived conflict of interest relating to a matter under consideration by the Board.

§2. A member who possesses a conflict of interest shall not participate in the deliberation or recommendation concerning that matter, except to provide factual information when requested.

§3. Questions concerning recusal shall be determined by the Chairperson. Questions involving the Chairperson shall be determined by the Vice-Chairperson or, in the absence of a Vice-Chairperson, by the other members of the Board.



Article 14

Access to Information and Expert Assistance

§1. The Board shall receive such information as is reasonably necessary for the proper exercise of its consultative responsibilities, subject to applicable ecclesiastical and civil law, legitimate claims of privilege, confidentiality requirements, and the rights of persons concerned.

§2. With appropriate authorization, the Board may receive assistance from legal counsel, auditors, safeguarding professionals, psychologists, risk-management professionals, financial experts, or other specialists whose expertise may assist its deliberations.

§3. The Board may recommend that the Diocese undertake audits, assessments, policy reviews, training initiatives, or other preventive measures when it considers them appropriate.

Article 15

Recommendations and Reports

§1. Recommendations of the Board shall be advisory and shall not bind the Diocesan Bishop.

§2. The Board shall communicate its recommendations to the Diocesan Bishop through the Chairperson or in such other manner as the Bishop may establish.

§3. The Board may submit periodic reports concerning the general state of safeguarding within the Diocese, including identified risks, institutional strengths, areas requiring improvement, and recommendations for preventive or corrective action.

§4. The Board may recommend amendments to diocesan safeguarding policies, Codes of Conduct, procedures, training programs, reporting mechanisms, and institutional controls.



Article 16

Annual Safeguarding Review

§1. At least annually, the Board shall undertake a general review of safeguarding within the Diocese.

§2. Such review may include:

1. implementation of diocesan safeguarding policies;
2. compliance and audit findings;
3. safeguarding education and formation;
4. reporting mechanisms;
5. institutional and governance risks;
6. trends or recurring areas of concern;
7. financial and administrative controls insofar as they relate to safeguarding;
8. emerging risks and developments in safeguarding practice; and
9. recommendations for institutional improvement.

§3. The annual review shall remain systemic and preventive in character and shall not substitute for the work of any body competent to assess individual allegations.

Article 17

Relationship with Diocesan Offices and Institutions

§1. Diocesan offices, parishes, schools, ministries, agencies, and other entities subject to the authority of the Diocese shall cooperate reasonably with the Board in the fulfillment of its responsibilities.

§2. The Board shall respect the proper authority and competence of pastors, administrators, diocesan officials, canonical bodies, boards, and other institutions established according to law.

§3. The Board shall not exercise ordinary supervision or administrative authority over any diocesan office, parish, school, institution, employee, cleric, religious, or volunteer.



Article 18

Records

§1. Records of the Board shall be maintained securely in accordance with diocesan policy and applicable ecclesiastical and civil law.

§2. Minutes shall record the matters considered, the presence of members, recommendations adopted, and other matters necessary to preserve an appropriate institutional record, without unnecessarily reproducing confidential deliberations.

§3. Access to the records of the Board shall be restricted to persons authorized according to diocesan policy or competent authority.

Article 19

Interpretation

§1. These Statutes shall be interpreted in harmony with universal ecclesiastical law, particular law applicable to the Diocese of Palm Beach, and the proper authority of the Diocesan Bishop.

§2. Nothing contained in these Statutes shall be interpreted as transferring or delegating to the Board any authority that belongs by divine or ecclesiastical law to the Diocesan Bishop or to another competent ecclesiastical authority.

§3. Questions concerning the interpretation or application of these Statutes shall be resolved by the Diocesan Bishop.

Article 20

Amendment of the Statutes

These Statutes may be amended, supplemented, derogated from, or abrogated by the Diocesan Bishop according to the norm of law.



No. I-2026

Particular Law: Protecting and Safeguarding the People of God / 7 August 2026

Article 21

Entry into Force

These Statutes shall enter into force immediately and shall remain in effect until legitimately amended or abrogated.

TITLE D *NORMS GOVERNING THE BISHOP'S CRISIS MANAGEMENT BOARD*

PREAMBLE

The Diocese of Palm Beach has a solemn responsibility to protect the People of God, preserve the integrity of ecclesiastical governance, ensure the prudent stewardship of ecclesiastical goods, safeguard the good name and mission of the Church, and respond promptly, lawfully, prudently, and pastorally to circumstances capable of causing significant harm to persons or ecclesiastical institutions.

Recognizing that certain situations require prompt and coordinated consultation involving canonical, civil, financial, safeguarding, pastoral, communications, operational, and other specialized expertise, and in the exercise of the authority entrusted to the Diocesan Bishop by universal and particular law, the following Statutes govern the **Bishop's Crisis Management Board of the Diocese of Palm Beach**.

Article 1

Establishment and Nature

§1. The **Bishop's Crisis Management Board**, hereinafter referred to as the "**BCM**" or the "**Board**," is a permanent confidential consultative body of the Diocese of Palm Beach.



§2. The Board is directly accountable to the Diocesan Bishop and exists exclusively to assist him through coordinated multidisciplinary consultation concerning matters presenting significant risks to persons, ecclesiastical institutions, ecclesiastical goods, or the mission of the Diocese.

§3. The Board possesses no legislative, executive, judicial, penal, investigative, or disciplinary authority of its own.

§4. Recommendations of the Board are consultative and shall not bind the Diocesan Bishop unless otherwise expressly provided by universal or particular law.

§5. Nothing contained in these Statutes shall restrict the authority, rights, obligations, or responsibilities entrusted to the Diocesan Bishop by universal or particular law.

Article 2

Purpose

§1. The purpose of the BCM is to assist the Diocesan Bishop in identifying, evaluating, managing, and mitigating significant risks affecting the Diocese of Palm Beach.

§2. In particular, the Board shall promote:

1. coordinated and informed decision-making;
2. institutional preparedness;
3. protection of persons;
4. safeguarding of ecclesiastical goods;
5. observance of canon and civil law;
6. responsible and transparent ecclesiastical governance;
7. prudent stewardship;
8. appropriate pastoral responses;
9. effective crisis communications;
10. preservation of the integrity, credibility, and mission of the Church.

§3. The Board shall approach every matter entrusted to it according to the principles of justice, charity, due process, confidentiality, accountability, proportionality, prudence, and respect for the dignity and rights of all persons concerned.



Article 3

Competence

§1. The BCM may advise the Diocesan Bishop concerning matters including, but not limited to:

1. allegations of sexual abuse, sexual misconduct, exploitation, grooming, harassment, coercion, spiritual abuse, or other serious misconduct involving clergy, religious, seminarians, employees, volunteers, or other ecclesiastical agents;
2. allegations or evidence of fraud, theft, embezzlement, misappropriation, corruption, financial malfeasance, conflicts of interest, misuse or alienation of ecclesiastical goods, or other significant financial irregularities;
3. actual or potential violations of universal ecclesiastical law, particular law, diocesan policies, employment regulations, ethical standards, or applicable civil law;
4. matters capable of causing grave scandal, seriously disturbing ecclesial communion, or substantially undermining pastoral confidence or public trust;
5. matters affecting the institutional integrity, credibility, reputation, or good name of the Diocese or the Catholic Church;
6. unauthorized, misleading, or improper use of the name or designation “Catholic,” without prejudice to the provisions of canon law;
7. significant communications, media, public-relations, or reputational crises;
8. significant litigation, governmental investigations, regulatory inquiries, subpoenas, or law-enforcement matters affecting the Diocese or any diocesan entity;
9. major crises affecting parishes, schools, ministries, Catholic charitable institutions, cemeteries, foundations, agencies, or other diocesan or affiliated entities;
10. significant cybersecurity incidents, data breaches, loss of confidential information, or technological risks;
11. emergency preparedness, disaster response, business continuity, institutional security, and crisis recovery;
12. any other matter which, in the prudent judgment of the Diocesan Bishop, presents a significant safeguarding, canonical, civil, financial, pastoral, operational, institutional, communications, or reputational risk.

§2. The BCM shall consider only those matters referred to it by the Diocesan Bishop or according to procedures expressly authorized by him.



Article 4

Relationship with Other Diocesan Bodies

§1. The BCM shall respect the proper competence of all diocesan councils, boards, offices, tribunals, investigators, and other ecclesiastical bodies established by universal or particular law.

§2. In particular, the BCM shall neither replace nor usurp the proper functions of:

1. the Diocesan Review Board;
2. the Adult Allegation Board;
3. the Safeguarding Advisory Board;
4. the Diocesan Finance Council;
5. the Presbyteral Council;
6. the College of Consultors;
7. the diocesan tribunal;
8. canonical preliminary investigations;
9. canonical administrative or penal procedures;
10. civil or criminal investigations;
11. the ordinary responsibilities of diocesan offices.

§3. In matters involving allegations of sexual abuse of minors falling within the competence of the Diocesan Review Board, the determination and assessment properly entrusted to that Board shall remain with the Diocesan Review Board.

§4. In matters involving allegations of sexual abuse or serious sexual misconduct involving adults or vulnerable adults falling within the competence of the Adult Allegation Board, the assessment properly entrusted to that Board shall remain with the Adult Allegation Board.

§5. The BCM may nevertheless advise the Diocesan Bishop regarding the broader institutional, pastoral, financial, legal, communications, safeguarding, or operational consequences arising from such matters.

§6. The BCM shall not determine the canonical guilt or innocence of any person, nor shall it substitute itself for any process established by canon or civil law.



Article 5

Civil and Canonical Reporting Obligations

§1. Nothing in these Statutes shall be interpreted as delaying, limiting, or replacing any obligation to report allegations, suspected criminal conduct, abuse, neglect, exploitation, or other matters to civil authorities when required by applicable law or diocesan policy.

§2. Referral of a matter to the BCM shall never constitute a substitute for a report required by civil law.

§3. Whenever the law requires immediate notification of law enforcement, child-protection authorities, adult-protective services, or another governmental agency, such notification shall be made without awaiting a meeting, recommendation, or decision of the BCM.

§4. Likewise, consultation with the BCM shall not suspend or replace canonical procedures required by universal or particular ecclesiastical law.

Article 6

Membership

§1. Members of the BCM shall be freely appointed by the Diocesan Bishop.

§2. Membership should, insofar as circumstances permit, provide the Board with multidisciplinary expertise in areas such as:

1. canon law;
2. civil and criminal law;
3. law enforcement and criminal investigations;
4. safeguarding;
5. finance and accounting;
6. auditing and forensic accounting;
7. banking and financial management;
8. insurance and risk management;
9. human resources and employment matters;
10. communications and public relations;
11. cybersecurity and information technology;



12. psychology, psychiatry, or behavioral sciences;
13. pastoral ministry;
14. emergency management and institutional security.

§3. Members may be clerics, members of institutes of consecrated life, or members of the lay Christian faithful.

§4. Appointment to the BCM does not confer an ecclesiastical office unless this is expressly provided by a separate canonical act.

§5. The Diocesan Bishop may appoint additional experts or consultants to participate in the consideration of a particular matter whenever their expertise would be beneficial.

§6. Such experts or consultants shall be bound by the same obligations of confidentiality applicable to members of the Board.

Article 7

Terms of Membership

§1. Members shall serve for the term specified in their decree or letter of appointment.

§2. Members may be reappointed.

§3. The Diocesan Bishop may accept the resignation of a member or terminate an appointment at any time according to his prudent judgment and the norm of law.

§4. A member who wishes to resign shall submit the resignation in writing to the Diocesan Bishop.

§5. Vacancies shall be filled by appointment of the Diocesan Bishop.



Article 8

Chairperson

§1. The Diocesan Bishop shall appoint a Chairperson of the BCM from among its members.

§2. The Chairperson shall:

1. coordinate the work of the Board;
2. assist in preparing matters for consideration;
3. convene meetings when authorized by the Diocesan Bishop;
4. establish the agenda in consultation with the Diocesan Bishop or his delegate;
5. facilitate the orderly deliberations of the Board;
6. ensure that recommendations are accurately transmitted to the Diocesan Bishop;
7. ensure observance of these Statutes and the confidentiality requirements of the Board.

§3. The Chairperson possesses no authority to act in the name of the Diocesan Bishop or the Diocese unless expressly delegated to do so.

Article 9

Secretary

§1. The Diocesan Bishop may appoint a Secretary of the BCM.

§2. The Secretary shall maintain such records as are authorized by the Diocesan Bishop, prepare notices and agendas, record recommendations and decisions regarding administrative follow-up, and perform such other duties as may be assigned.

§3. Records of the Board shall be maintained according to diocesan record-retention policies and applicable canon and civil law.

§4. The Secretary shall exercise particular care to prevent the creation or circulation of unnecessary copies of confidential or privileged materials.



Article 10

Convocation and Meetings

- §1. The BCM shall meet whenever circumstances require.
- §2. Meetings may be convened by the Diocesan Bishop or, with his authorization, by the Chairperson.
- §3. Meetings may be conducted in person or by secure electronic means when circumstances warrant.
- §4. Because the BCM is consultative, no fixed quorum shall be required unless the Diocesan Bishop determines otherwise. Nevertheless, the Chairperson should ordinarily ensure that sufficient expertise relevant to the matter under consideration is represented.
- §5. In urgent circumstances, individual members may be consulted separately, and the Board need not be formally assembled before advice is provided to the Diocesan Bishop.
- §6. The urgency of a matter shall never excuse failure to comply with mandatory civil reporting requirements or canonical obligations.

Article 11

Participation of the Diocesan Bishop

- §1. The Diocesan Bishop may attend meetings of the BCM whenever he judges it appropriate.
- §2. He may also request that the Board deliberate in his absence so that members may engage in a full and independent exchange of professional judgments before presenting their recommendations to him.
- §3. The Diocesan Bishop may request additional information, further consultation, or reconsideration of any matter.
- §4. The final determination concerning any recommendation presented by the BCM belongs to the Diocesan Bishop, without prejudice to those matters for which universal or particular law requires the consent or consultation of another body.



Article 12

Referral and Initial Assessment

§1. Upon referral of a matter to the BCM, the Chairperson or another person designated by the Diocesan Bishop may prepare an initial summary identifying:

1. the nature of the matter;
2. known facts;
3. immediate risks;
4. applicable reporting obligations;
5. canonical considerations;
6. civil-law considerations;
7. safeguarding concerns;
8. financial or operational implications;
9. communications considerations;
10. matters requiring immediate action.

§2. The purpose of such an assessment is to facilitate consultation and shall not constitute a canonical preliminary investigation, civil investigation, credibility determination, or adjudication.

§3. The BCM may recommend that the Diocesan Bishop obtain additional professional advice or authorize an appropriate investigation when warranted.

Article 13

Deliberations

§1. Members shall participate freely and candidly in the deliberations of the Board.

§2. Each member shall exercise independent professional judgment and shall place the protection of persons, the good of the Church, justice, and observance of law above personal, institutional, financial, or reputational interests.

§3. The BCM should ordinarily seek consensus.



§4. When consensus cannot be achieved, differing recommendations or significant dissenting opinions shall be communicated to the Diocesan Bishop.

§5. No member shall be penalized or disadvantaged for expressing in good faith a professional opinion during the confidential deliberations of the Board.

Article 14

Conflicts of Interest and Recusal

§1. Members shall disclose any actual, potential, or reasonably perceived conflict of interest concerning a matter under consideration.

§2. A member shall recuse himself or herself whenever personal, professional, financial, familial, pastoral, or other circumstances could reasonably call into question the member's impartiality.

§3. The Chairperson shall communicate significant questions concerning conflicts of interest to the Diocesan Bishop.

§4. The Diocesan Bishop may direct the recusal of any member from a particular matter.

§5. A recused member shall not receive confidential information concerning the matter beyond what is necessary for administrative purposes.

Article 15

Confidentiality

§1. The work of the BCM is strictly confidential.

§2. All members, consultants, experts, and other persons participating in its work shall execute a written Confidentiality Agreement before participating in deliberations.

§3. Confidentiality shall extend to:



1. allegations and reports;
2. identities of persons involved;
3. investigative information;
4. legal and canonical advice;
5. financial information;
6. personnel information;
7. privileged communications;
8. deliberations of the Board;
9. recommendations presented to the Diocesan Bishop;
10. documents and electronic communications received or generated in connection with the work of the BCM.

§4. No member shall make any public statement concerning a matter before the BCM unless expressly authorized by the Diocesan Bishop.

§5. The obligation of confidentiality continues after a member's service on the Board has concluded.

§6. Confidentiality under these Statutes shall always remain subject to applicable civil law, mandatory reporting requirements, canonical obligations, legitimate governmental authority, and the rights of competent ecclesiastical authority.

Article 16

Attorney-Client Privilege and Protected Communications

§1. Whenever legal counsel participates in BCM deliberations for the purpose of providing legal advice to the Diocese, appropriate measures shall be taken to preserve attorney-client privilege and attorney work-product protections according to applicable law.

§2. Materials subject to legal privilege shall be identified, handled, stored, and distributed in accordance with the direction of diocesan legal counsel.

§3. Nothing in these Statutes shall be interpreted as creating a legal privilege where none exists under applicable law.



Article 17

Recommendations to the Diocesan Bishop

§1. Following its consideration of a matter, the BCM shall provide the Diocesan Bishop with such recommendations as it judges appropriate.

§2. Recommendations may concern, among other matters:

1. protection and safeguarding of persons;
2. precautionary or administrative measures;
3. canonical procedures;
4. civil-law obligations;
5. law-enforcement cooperation;
6. financial controls;
7. preservation of evidence and records;
8. pastoral responses;
9. communications strategy;
10. employment or personnel considerations;
11. insurance notification;
12. cybersecurity measures;
13. institutional security;
14. remediation and prevention;
15. continuity of diocesan operations.

§3. Recommendations may be communicated orally or in writing according to the nature and urgency of the matter.

§4. The Diocesan Bishop is free to accept, reject, modify, or request reconsideration of any recommendation, without prejudice to obligations imposed upon him by law.

Article 18

Communications

§1. All public communications concerning matters considered by the BCM shall be made only through persons authorized by the Diocesan Bishop.



§2. Individual members shall not communicate with the media, publish information, or make public statements regarding the work of the Board unless expressly authorized.

§3. The BCM may advise the Diocesan Bishop concerning the timing, content, manner, and pastoral implications of public communications.

§4. Communications strategies shall respect the rights and dignity of victims, alleged victims, accused persons, witnesses, employees, clergy, institutions, and other affected persons, together with the requirements of transparency, due process, confidentiality, and applicable law.

Article 19

Records and Information Security

§1. Records of the BCM shall be treated as confidential diocesan records.

§2. Access shall be limited to persons authorized by the Diocesan Bishop or otherwise entitled to access according to law.

§3. Confidential electronic information shall be transmitted and stored through secure systems approved by the Diocese.

§4. Members shall not retain confidential BCM records in personal files, personal electronic accounts, or unauthorized electronic storage systems.

§5. Upon completion of their service, members shall return or securely destroy confidential materials as directed by the Diocese, subject to applicable record-retention requirements.

Article 20

Cooperation with Investigations

§1. The BCM shall cooperate appropriately with canonical investigators, diocesan officials, independent investigators, auditors, legal counsel, law-enforcement agencies, governmental authorities, and other competent persons or bodies according to the norm of law.



§2. The Board shall take care that its consultative activity does not compromise the independence or integrity of any canonical, civil, criminal, financial, or administrative investigation.

§3. Where appropriate, the BCM may recommend measures for the preservation of documents, electronic information, financial records, physical evidence, or other materials relevant to an investigation.

Article 21

Protection Against Retaliation

§1. No person shall suffer retaliation for making in good faith a report of suspected misconduct, abuse, financial irregularity, violation of law, or other matter properly falling within the scope of these Statutes.

§2. The BCM may advise the Diocesan Bishop regarding measures necessary to protect complainants, alleged victims, witnesses, whistleblowers, employees, clergy, volunteers, or other persons from intimidation, retaliation, interference, or harassment.

§3. Knowingly false accusations, deliberate misrepresentations, or malicious misuse of reporting procedures may be addressed according to canon law, civil law, diocesan policy, or applicable employment procedures.

Article 22

Emergency Action

§1. Nothing in these Statutes shall prevent the Diocesan Bishop or another competent authority from taking immediate lawful action when necessary to protect persons, preserve evidence, safeguard ecclesiastical goods, fulfill civil reporting requirements, prevent serious harm, or protect the common good.

§2. Consultation with the BCM shall not be understood as a prerequisite to urgent action whenever delay could reasonably increase risk or harm.

§3. When immediate action has been taken, the matter may subsequently be referred to the BCM for further assessment and recommendations concerning continuing risk management and institutional response.



Article 23

Formation and Continuing Education

Members should periodically receive appropriate formation concerning:

1. diocesan safeguarding policies;
2. mandatory reporting requirements;
3. relevant developments in canon and civil law;
4. financial controls and fraud prevention;
5. crisis management;
6. cybersecurity and information protection;
7. confidentiality and privilege;
8. trauma-informed approaches;
9. communications and media response;
10. other matters relevant to the work of the Board.

Article 24

Interpretation of the Statutes

§1. Questions concerning the interpretation or application of these Statutes shall be referred to the Diocesan Bishop.

§2. The Diocesan Bishop may issue directives, protocols, procedures, or complementary norms for the implementation of these Statutes.

§3. In the event of a conflict between these Statutes and universal ecclesiastical law, universal law shall prevail.

§4. In the event of a conflict between these Statutes and other diocesan norms, the matter shall be resolved by the Diocesan Bishop according to the norm of law.



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Article 25

Amendment

These Statutes may be amended, supplemented, replaced, or abrogated by the Diocesan Bishop according to his prudent judgment and the norm of law.

Article 26

Vacancy or Impediment of the Episcopal See

In the event that the See of Palm Beach becomes vacant or impeded, the BCM shall act only to the extent permitted by canon law and under the authority of the person legitimately responsible for the governance of the Diocese, without prejudice to the principle that nothing is to be altered during a vacancy of the See contrary to the norm of law.

Article 27

Entry into Force

§1. These Statutes shall enter into force immediately.

§2. Upon their entry into force, these Statutes shall govern the constitution, organization, procedures, and operation of the Bishop's Crisis Management Board of the Diocese of Palm Beach.

§3. They shall remain in force until legitimately amended, replaced, or abrogated.



PART VI

POLICY PERTAINING TO THE CRITERIA OF SUITABILITY FOR MINISTRY TO BE OBSERVED BY THE DIOCESAN REVIEW BOARD AND THE ADULT ALLEGATION BOARD

Article 1

Purpose and Scope

§1. This Policy establishes the criteria to be observed by the **Diocesan Review Board (DRB)** and the **Adult Allegation Board (AAB)** when advising the Diocesan Bishop concerning the suitability of a cleric for the exercise of sacred ministry, ecclesiastical office, pastoral ministry, or other ecclesiastical functions within the Diocese of Palm Beach.

§2. The DRB and the AAB are confidential consultative bodies. Neither Board possesses executive, legislative, judicial, or penal authority.

§3. Any assessment or recommendation made pursuant to this Policy constitutes advice to the Diocesan Bishop and shall not itself constitute a canonical declaration, administrative decree, penal judgment, or imposition of a canonical penalty.

§4. The final determination concerning whether a cleric is suitable, unsuitable, or suitable subject to restrictions for the exercise of ministry within the Diocese of Palm Beach belongs exclusively to the Diocesan Bishop, according to the norm of law.

§5. Nothing contained in this Policy shall prejudice the rights of any person under canon or civil law, the presumption of innocence, the right of defense, or the canonical procedures applicable to the investigation or prosecution of an alleged delict.



Article 2

Respective Competence of the Boards

§1. The **Diocesan Review Board (DRB)** shall assess matters involving allegations of sexual abuse of minors or persons who habitually have an imperfect use of reason, together with such related matters as are entrusted to it by universal or particular law or by the Diocesan Bishop.

§2. The **Adult Allegation Board (AAB)** shall assess allegations of sexual misconduct, sexual abuse, abuse of authority of a sexual nature, or other serious misconduct involving adults or vulnerable adults, whenever such matters are referred to it by the Diocesan Bishop.

§3. When uncertainty exists concerning which Board is competent to consider a particular matter, the Diocesan Bishop shall determine the competent Board.

§4. The competence of either Board is consultative and shall not replace the canonical Preliminary Investigation required by canons 1717–1719 whenever information concerning a possible canonical delict has at least the semblance of truth.

Article 3

Mandatory Recommendation of Unsuitability by the Diocesan Review Board

§1. The DRB shall recommend that a cleric be considered **unsuitable for ministry** whenever, after reviewing the information properly submitted to it, the Board determines by majority vote that an allegation is credible and that the established conduct constitutes sexual abuse of a minor or of a person who habitually has an imperfect use of reason.

§2. Such conduct includes, without limitation:

1. a delict against the sixth commandment of the Decalogue committed by a cleric with a minor below the age of eighteen years or with a person who habitually has an imperfect use of reason;
2. grooming, inducing, or causing such a person to expose himself or herself pornographically or to participate in pornographic exhibitions, whether real or simulated;
3. the acquisition, possession, retention, exhibition, or distribution, by whatever means or technology, of pornographic images of minors or persons who habitually have an imperfect use of reason;



4. solicitation in the Sacrament of Penance, on the occasion of confession, or under the pretext of confession, directed toward a minor or person who habitually has an imperfect use of reason, for the purpose of committing a sin against the sixth commandment; and
5. any other sexual abuse or exploitation of a minor or person who habitually has an imperfect use of reason that constitutes a canonical delict or serious violation of diocesan safeguarding norms.

§3. A cleric shall likewise be recommended as unsuitable for ministry when he has admitted to conduct constituting sexual abuse of a minor or person who habitually has an imperfect use of reason, provided that the nature and circumstances of the admission have been sufficiently established.

§4. Repeated serious violations of the applicable diocesan Code of Conduct involving minors or persons who habitually have an imperfect use of reason may also constitute grounds for a recommendation of unsuitability, even when the particular conduct does not independently constitute a canonical delict.

Article 4

Attempted Conduct and Grooming

§1. An attempt to engage in sexual abuse, exploitation, grooming, or other conduct described in Article 3 shall be assessed according to its nature, gravity, circumstances, degree of execution, and the danger presented to the person concerned.

§2. Grooming behavior, boundary violations, electronic communications, gifts, secrecy, isolation, manipulation, or other conduct reasonably demonstrating preparation for sexual exploitation shall be considered cumulatively and in context.

§3. Nothing in this Article shall require the DRB to characterize attempted conduct as a consummated canonical delict when universal law provides otherwise.



Article 5

Other Violations Involving Minors

§1. Serious violations of the applicable diocesan Code of Conduct or safeguarding policies involving minors or persons who habitually have an imperfect use of reason may constitute grounds for a recommendation of unsuitability even when sexual abuse has not been established.

§2. In determining whether such conduct warrants a recommendation of unsuitability, the DRB shall consider, among other relevant circumstances:

1. the gravity and nature of the conduct;
2. whether the conduct was intentional, reckless, negligent, or imprudent;
3. whether the conduct was isolated or repeated;
4. whether previous warnings or corrective measures had been imposed;
5. the cleric's response to previous interventions;
6. the degree of risk presented to minors or vulnerable persons;
7. the cleric's demonstrated judgment and observance of appropriate pastoral boundaries; and
8. the protection of the faithful and the common good of the Church.

Article 6

Restricted Ministry upon Recommendation of the Diocesan Review Board

§1. When conduct does not warrant a recommendation of complete unsuitability but nevertheless raises serious concerns concerning prudence, judgment, boundaries, or the protection of minors, the DRB may recommend that the cleric be considered **suitable for restricted ministry**.

§2. Such recommendation may include proposed restrictions, supervision, monitoring, treatment, formation, evaluation, limitations upon particular ministries, or other appropriate safeguards.

§3. No restriction recommended by the DRB shall acquire juridical effect unless lawfully imposed by the competent ecclesiastical authority.



Article 7

Mandatory Recommendation of Unsuitability by the Adult Allegation Board

§1. The AAB shall recommend that a cleric be considered **unsuitable for ministry** whenever, after reviewing the information properly submitted to it, the Board determines by majority vote that an allegation is credible and that the established conduct involves grave sexual abuse, sexual violence, coercion, exploitation, or abuse of ecclesiastical or pastoral authority involving an adult or vulnerable adult.

§2. Such conduct includes, without limitation:

1. solicitation in confession, on the occasion of confession, or under the pretext of confession, for the purpose of committing a sin against the sixth commandment;
2. sexual misconduct committed through force, violence, threats, coercion, intimidation, or other substantial impairment of the freedom of another person;
3. sexual misconduct committed through abuse of authority, office, ministry, spiritual influence, pastoral dependency, or another relationship of trust;
4. sexual assault or other acts of sexual violence;
5. grave sexual exploitation of a vulnerable adult;
6. the use of spiritual authority, the Sacraments, spiritual direction, pastoral counseling, or the authority associated with Holy Orders as an instrument to obtain, facilitate, conceal, or perpetuate sexual conduct;
7. repeated grave external violations of the obligations arising from the clerical state when such conduct seriously compromises suitability for ministry;
8. persistence in grave external sexual misconduct that causes scandal or seriously compromises the cleric's ability credibly to exercise ecclesiastical ministry;
9. attempted marriage, even civilly, by a cleric; and
10. repeated serious violations of the applicable diocesan Code of Conduct involving adults or vulnerable adults.

§3. A cleric who admits to conduct described in §2 may be recommended as unsuitable for ministry on the basis of such admission when the nature and circumstances of the admission have been sufficiently established.



Article 8

Abuse of Authority and Spiritual Abuse

§1. Particular attention shall be given to allegations in which sexual conduct is alleged to have occurred through the misuse of ecclesiastical, pastoral, spiritual, sacramental, supervisory, professional, or institutional authority.

§2. The apparent consent of an adult shall not, by itself, preclude a finding of serious misconduct when the evidence demonstrates that such consent was obtained or substantially influenced through coercion, manipulation, abuse of authority, exploitation of vulnerability, spiritual dependency, fear, threats, or misuse of the power associated with Holy Orders or ecclesiastical office.

§3. In assessing such cases, the AAB shall consider the nature of the relationship between the parties, any disparity of authority or power, the vulnerability or dependency of the alleged victim, the use of spiritual or sacramental influence, and all other circumstances affecting the person's freedom.

Article 9

Vulnerable Adults and Elder Abuse

§1. Allegations involving vulnerable adults shall receive particular scrutiny, taking into consideration the person's age, physical or psychological condition, dependency, disability, diminished capacity, social isolation, pastoral dependency, or other circumstances capable of limiting the person's ability to protect himself or herself from abuse or exploitation.

§2. The AAB shall likewise consider allegations of **elder abuse** involving a cleric whenever the alleged conduct includes sexual abuse or exploitation, coercion, manipulation, abuse of authority, financial exploitation connected with pastoral or spiritual influence, or other grave misconduct affecting an elderly adult.

§3. Where conduct involving an adult is equivalent under universal law to conduct involving a minor or a person who habitually has an imperfect use of reason, the applicable provisions of universal law shall govern.



Article 10

Other Misconduct Involving Adults

§1. A serious or repeated violation of the applicable diocesan Code of Conduct involving adults may constitute grounds for a recommendation of unsuitability even when the conduct does not independently constitute a canonical delict.

§2. In making its assessment, the AAB shall consider:

1. the nature and gravity of the misconduct;
2. whether the conduct involved sexual harm, violence, coercion, exploitation, or abuse of authority;
3. whether the conduct was isolated or repeated;
4. the existence of a pattern of inappropriate behavior;
5. prior complaints, warnings, corrective measures, or disciplinary interventions;
6. the cleric's judgment, prudence, and observance of appropriate pastoral boundaries;
7. the risk of recurrence;
8. the effect of the conduct upon victims, the ecclesial community, and the integrity of ministry; and
9. the protection of the faithful and the common good of the Church.

Article 11

Restricted Ministry upon Recommendation of the Adult Allegation Board

§1. When the AAB determines that complete unsuitability is not warranted but that serious concerns remain regarding a cleric's prudence, judgment, boundaries, or capacity safely to exercise unrestricted ministry, it may recommend that the cleric be considered **suitable for restricted ministry**.

§2. The AAB may recommend appropriate restrictions, supervision, monitoring, professional evaluation, treatment, formation, limitations upon particular pastoral activities, or other safeguards.

§3. Such recommendations remain consultative and acquire juridical effect only through the competent ecclesiastical authority.



Article 12

Common Standard for Assessment

§1. Neither the DRB nor the AAB shall determine canonical guilt or impose a canonical penalty.

§2. Each Board shall assess whether the information available to it provides a reasonable and sufficient basis for advising the Diocesan Bishop concerning the cleric's suitability for ministry and the protection of the faithful.

§3. In reaching its recommendation, the competent Board shall consider the totality of the available information, including, as applicable:

1. the allegation and supporting documentation;
2. the report of an independent or licensed investigator;
3. statements of the complainant, accused, and witnesses;
4. documentary, electronic, financial, medical, professional, or other relevant evidence lawfully available;
5. the cleric's prior ministerial and disciplinary history;
6. relevant professional assessments;
7. patterns of conduct or boundary violations;
8. aggravating and mitigating circumstances; and
9. any other information reasonably bearing upon suitability for ministry.

§4. The absence of a criminal conviction or civil judgment shall not, by itself, prevent either Board from making a recommendation concerning suitability for ecclesiastical ministry.

§5. Likewise, a determination by civil authorities not to prosecute, the dismissal of criminal charges, or the expiration of a civil or canonical period of prescription shall not, by itself, establish suitability for ministry.

Article 13

Canonical Prescription

§1. The expiration of a canonical period of prescription shall be distinguished from the substantive question of suitability for ministry.



§2. When canonical criminal action is prescribed, the competent Board may nevertheless advise the Diocesan Bishop concerning administrative, disciplinary, supervisory, or precautionary measures permitted by law when the established facts raise legitimate concerns regarding suitability for ministry.

§3. Nothing in this Article shall authorize the imposition of a canonical penalty contrary to the requirements of universal law.

Article 14

Voting and Recommendation

§1. A recommendation concerning suitability shall be adopted by majority vote of the members present at a meeting at which the quorum required by the applicable Statutes has been established.

§2. The competent Board may recommend one of the following determinations:

1. **Suitable for Ministry;**
2. **Suitable for Ministry with Restrictions;** or
3. **Unsuitable for Ministry.**

§3. The Board may also determine that the information presently available is insufficient to make a recommendation and may request, through the appropriate diocesan authority, additional investigation or information.

§4. The recommendation shall be communicated in writing to the Diocesan Bishop by the Chair of the competent Board and shall contain a concise statement of the reasons supporting the recommendation.

§5. The confidential record of the Board shall reflect the vote in accordance with the Statutes of the respective Board and applicable diocesan policy.



Article 15

Final Determination by the Diocesan Bishop

§1. Upon receiving the recommendation of the competent Board, the Diocesan Bishop shall determine what action, if any, is to be taken according to canon law, particular law, diocesan policy, and the circumstances of the case.

§2. The Diocesan Bishop is not juridically bound by the recommendation of either Board, without prejudice to those provisions of universal or particular law requiring consultation or consent in specific circumstances.

§3. Any administrative or penal measure affecting the juridical status, office, faculties, ministry, residence, remuneration, or other canonical rights or obligations of a cleric shall be imposed separately according to the norm of law.

Article 16

Reconsideration of Suitability

§1. A previous determination that a cleric is unsuitable for ministry or suitable only for restricted ministry shall not be reconsidered except for a grave and proportionate reason.

§2. Before substantially modifying such a determination, the Diocesan Bishop shall consult the Board competent for the underlying matter.

§3. The competent Board shall consider any new evidence, professional assessments, subsequent conduct, compliance with restrictions, risk assessments, and all other relevant circumstances.

§4. In cases involving the sexual abuse of a minor or a person who habitually has an imperfect use of reason, any reconsideration shall remain subject to the requirements of universal law, the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*, the *Essential Norms*, and other applicable ecclesiastical norms.



Article 17

Protection of Rights and Confidentiality

§1. These criteria shall be applied with due regard for the dignity and rights of complainants, alleged victims, accused persons, witnesses, and all other persons involved.

§2. The good name and privacy of all persons shall be protected according to canon 220 and applicable civil law.

§3. The accused cleric shall be afforded the rights guaranteed by canon law, including the right of defense and the presumption of innocence until the contrary is legitimately established according to the applicable canonical process.

§4. Board proceedings, deliberations, records, and recommendations shall remain confidential except when disclosure is required by law or authorized by competent ecclesiastical authority.

Article 18

Interpretation and Applicable Law

§1. This Policy shall be interpreted and applied in conformity with the Code of Canon Law, the norms concerning delicts reserved to the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith, the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*, the *Essential Norms*, applicable particular law of the Diocese of Palm Beach, and applicable civil law.

§2. In the event of a conflict between this Policy and universal or particular canon law, the applicable provision of canon law shall prevail.

§3. Nothing contained herein shall restrict the authority of the Diocesan Bishop to take precautionary, administrative, pastoral, or disciplinary measures otherwise permitted by law whenever he judges such measures necessary for the protection of persons, the integrity of ecclesiastical ministry, the prevention of scandal, or the common good of the Church.



PART VII

SPECIFIC PROTOCOLS TO BE OBSERVED PERTAINING THE DIOCESAN REVIEW BOARD AND THE ADULT ALLEGATION BOARD

TITLE A

PROTOCOLS TO BE OBSERVED AT THE DIOCESAN REVIEW BOARD

Article 1 — Purpose and Application

§1. These Protocols govern the procedures to be observed by the **Diocesan Review Board (DRB) of the Diocese of Palm Beach** in fulfilling its responsibilities under its Statutes and applicable diocesan and universal law.

§2. The DRB is a confidential consultative body to the Diocesan Bishop. Its determinations and recommendations are advisory and do not substitute for the authority or canonical judgment of the Diocesan Bishop.

§3. These Protocols apply principally to allegations of sexual abuse of minors falling within the competence of the DRB.



Article 2 — Referral of Allegations

§1. Whenever an allegation falling within the competence of the DRB is received and the Diocesan Bishop determines that an investigation is warranted, he shall proceed according to the applicable provisions of canon law, including canons 1717–1719 when applicable, and shall refer the matter to the DRB for its assessment.

§2. The DRB shall receive such information and documentation as are reasonably necessary for the proper exercise of its consultative function.

§3. Any canonical investigation shall be conducted in a manner that does not improperly interfere with an investigation being conducted by competent civil authorities.

Article 3 — Investigation and Investigative Report

§1. The Diocese may retain an independent qualified investigator to investigate the facts and circumstances surrounding an allegation.

§2. The investigator shall periodically report on the status of the investigation to the appropriate diocesan authority and, when appropriate, to the DRB.

§3. Upon completion of the investigation, the investigator shall prepare a written report setting forth the relevant facts and evidence obtained during the investigation.

§4. The investigative report should ordinarily present the evidence without making the determination reserved to the DRB concerning the credibility of the allegation or the suitability of the accused cleric for ministry.

Article 4 — Review of the Evidence

§1. The members of the DRB shall be provided with the investigative report and other relevant materials sufficiently in advance of the meeting whenever reasonably possible.

§2. Each member participating in the deliberation shall carefully review the materials before making any determination or recommendation.



§3. Investigators or other persons possessing relevant expertise may be invited to present information or answer questions but shall not participate in the confidential deliberations or voting of the DRB.

§4. Any member having an actual or apparent conflict of interest shall disclose the conflict and, when appropriate, recuse himself or herself from consideration of the matter.

Article 5 — Additional Investigation

If the DRB determines that the available evidence is insufficient to permit a responsible assessment, it may recommend to the Diocesan Bishop that additional investigation be undertaken before the Board reaches its determination.

Article 6 — Assessment of Credibility

§1. Upon completion of the investigation, the DRB shall independently evaluate all relevant evidence and advise the Diocesan Bishop whether the allegation is **credible**, understood as meaning that there is sufficient evidence that sexual abuse of a minor occurred.

§2. In assessing credibility, the DRB shall consider the totality of the evidence and circumstances presented.

§3. An allegation shall not be considered non-credible merely because there is only one allegation, one complainant, or an absence of corroborating allegations.

§4. Evidence supporting the allegation shall be evaluated together with any evidence tending to contradict, qualify, or otherwise affect its reliability.

Article 7 — Suitability for Ministry

§1. In addition to assessing the credibility of an allegation, the DRB shall advise the Diocesan Bishop concerning the **suitability for ministry** of the accused cleric whenever such an assessment is required.



§2. Suitability for ministry is distinct from the determination of whether a particular allegation is credible. Consequently, circumstances that may not establish the credibility of an allegation may nevertheless be relevant to the assessment of whether a cleric remains suitable for ecclesiastical ministry.

§3. In making this assessment, the DRB may consider the totality of the circumstances, including conduct revealed during the investigation, compliance with ecclesiastical discipline, observance of applicable Codes of Conduct, prudential concerns relating to ministry, and any other circumstances reasonably bearing upon the safe and effective exercise of ministry.

Article 8 — Deliberation and Voting

§1. Deliberations concerning allegations and suitability for ministry shall take place in confidential closed session.

§2. Only members entitled to vote under the Statutes of the DRB may participate in a formal vote.

§3. A determination of the DRB shall ordinarily require the affirmative vote of a majority of the voting members present, provided that the requirements for quorum established by the Statutes have been satisfied.

§4. Members who have not adequately reviewed the relevant materials shall abstain from voting.

§5. No vote may be cast by proxy.

Article 9 — Recommendation to the Diocesan Bishop

§1. Following its deliberations, the DRB shall communicate its determination and recommendation to the Diocesan Bishop in writing.

§2. The recommendation shall ordinarily identify:

1. whether the allegation is considered credible;
2. the principal reasons supporting that determination;
3. the Board's assessment of suitability for ministry, when applicable; and
4. any additional recommendations considered appropriate.



§3. A member who substantially disagrees with the recommendation of the majority may request that his or her dissenting opinion be communicated to the Diocesan Bishop.

§4. The final determination concerning the canonical or administrative disposition of the matter belongs exclusively to the competent ecclesiastical authority according to the norm of law.

Article 10 — Protection of Persons

§1. If at any time during its consideration of a matter the DRB reasonably believes that a person may be in imminent danger, the Chair shall immediately communicate the concern to the Diocesan Bishop or his designated representative.

§2. Nothing contained in these Protocols shall dispense from any obligation imposed by civil law concerning the reporting of suspected abuse to competent civil authorities.

Article 11 — Newly Discovered Allegations

Whenever information received during the consideration of a case reasonably indicates the existence of another allegation of abuse or misconduct, such information shall be promptly communicated through the appropriate diocesan reporting procedures and, whenever required by law, to the competent civil authorities.

Article 12 — Confidentiality

§1. All proceedings, deliberations, investigative materials, reports, and recommendations of the DRB shall be treated as confidential, subject to applicable civil and canon law and diocesan policy.

§2. Members shall not disclose confidential information obtained by reason of their service on the DRB except as authorized by competent ecclesiastical authority or required by law.



Article 13 — Records

§1. Appropriate records shall be maintained for every matter considered by the DRB.

§2. Such records shall ordinarily include the referral of the allegation, relevant investigative materials, investigative reports, minutes relating to the matter, the DRB's written recommendation, and other documentation necessary to preserve an adequate record of the proceedings.

§3. Records shall be maintained securely and in accordance with canon law and diocesan policies concerning confidential ecclesiastical records.

Article 14 — Policy Recommendations

In addition to its consideration of individual allegations, the DRB may recommend to the Diocesan Bishop modifications to diocesan policies, procedures, training, or safeguarding practices whenever its experience indicates that such measures would strengthen the protection of minors and the proper administration of ecclesiastical governance.

Article 15 — Training

Members of the DRB shall receive appropriate formation concerning their responsibilities, applicable diocesan safeguarding policies, relevant provisions of canon and civil law, standards for evaluating allegations, confidentiality, conflicts of interest, and the assessment of suitability for ministry.

Article 16 — Interpretation and Amendment

§1. These Protocols shall be interpreted consistently with the Statutes of the Diocesan Review Board, the particular law of the Diocese of Palm Beach, the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*, the *Essential Norms*, and applicable universal canon law.

§2. In the event of a conflict between these Protocols and applicable universal or particular law, the applicable law shall prevail.



§3. These Protocols may be amended according to the procedure established by the Statutes of the DRB and with the approval of the Diocesan Bishop.

TITLE B *PROTOCOLS TO BE OBSERVED AT THE ADULT ALLEGATION BOARD*

Article 1 — Purpose and Application

§1. These Protocols govern the procedures to be observed by the **Adult Allegation Board (AAB)** of the Diocese of Palm Beach in fulfilling its responsibilities under its Statutes and applicable diocesan and universal law.

§2. The AAB is a confidential consultative body to the Diocesan Bishop. Its determinations and recommendations are advisory and do not substitute for the authority or canonical judgment of the Diocesan Bishop.

§3. These Protocols apply principally to allegations of sexual abuse, sexual misconduct, sexual harassment, exploitation, abuse of authority, spiritual abuse, elder abuse, or other serious misconduct involving adults or vulnerable adults that fall within the competence of the AAB.

§4. Allegations involving the sexual abuse of minors fall within the competence of the **Diocesan Review Board (DRB)** and shall be handled according to its Statutes and Protocols.

Article 2 — Referral of Allegations

§1. Whenever an allegation falling within the competence of the AAB is received and the Diocesan Bishop determines that an investigation is warranted, he shall proceed according to applicable canon law, including canons 1717–1719 whenever the allegation concerns a possible canonical delict, and shall refer the matter to the AAB for its assessment.



§2. The AAB shall receive such information and documentation as are reasonably necessary for the proper exercise of its consultative function.

§3. Any canonical or diocesan investigation shall be conducted in a manner that does not improperly interfere with an investigation being conducted by competent civil authorities.

§4. Whenever information indicates that the alleged conduct may constitute a criminal offense or otherwise gives rise to a reporting obligation under civil law, the matter shall be referred to the competent civil authorities according to applicable law and diocesan policy.

Article 3 — Investigation and Investigative Report

§1. The Diocese may retain an independent qualified investigator to investigate the facts and circumstances surrounding an allegation.

§2. The investigator shall periodically report on the status of the investigation to the appropriate diocesan authority and, when appropriate, to the AAB.

§3. Upon completion of the investigation, the investigator shall prepare a written report setting forth the relevant facts and evidence obtained during the investigation.

§4. The investigative report should ordinarily present the evidence without making the determinations reserved to the AAB concerning the credibility of the allegation or the suitability of the accused person for ministry, employment, service, or other ecclesiastical responsibilities.

Article 4 — Review of the Evidence

§1. Members of the AAB shall be provided with the investigative report and other relevant materials sufficiently in advance of the meeting whenever reasonably possible.

§2. Each member participating in the deliberation shall carefully review the materials before making any determination or recommendation.

§3. Investigators, canonical or civil legal counsel, mental-health professionals, safeguarding specialists, financial experts, or other persons possessing relevant expertise may be invited to present information or answer



questions but shall not participate in the confidential deliberations or voting of the AAB unless they are voting members of the Board.

§4. Any member having an actual or apparent conflict of interest shall disclose the conflict and, when appropriate, recuse himself or herself from consideration of the matter.

Article 5 — Additional Investigation

If the AAB determines that the available evidence is insufficient to permit a responsible assessment, it may recommend to the Diocesan Bishop that additional investigation be undertaken before the Board reaches its determination.

Article 6 — Assessment of Credibility

§1. Upon completion of the investigation, the AAB shall independently evaluate all relevant evidence and advise the Diocesan Bishop whether the allegation is credible, understood as meaning that sufficient evidence exists to support a reasonable conclusion that the alleged conduct occurred.

§2. In assessing credibility, the AAB shall consider the totality of the evidence and circumstances presented.

§3. An allegation shall not be considered non-credible merely because there is only one allegation, one complainant, an absence of additional complainants, or an absence of independent corroborating evidence.

§4. Evidence supporting the allegation shall be evaluated together with evidence tending to contradict, qualify, explain, or otherwise affect its reliability.

§5. The assessment of credibility shall not be understood as a canonical judgment of guilt or the imposition of a penalty, matters which belong exclusively to the competent ecclesiastical authority according to the norm of law.



Article 7 — Particular Considerations in Cases Involving Adults

§1. In cases involving adults, the AAB shall carefully consider the nature of the relationship between the accused person and the complainant, including any pastoral, spiritual, sacramental, professional, supervisory, educational, financial, therapeutic, or other relationship of trust or dependency.

§2. The fact that the complainant was an adult at the time of the alleged conduct shall not, by itself, establish that the conduct was consensual, appropriate, or compatible with ecclesiastical discipline.

§3. In evaluating the circumstances surrounding alleged sexual or other misconduct, the AAB may consider disparities of authority, influence, dependency, vulnerability, age, position, spiritual trust, or other circumstances capable of affecting the freedom of the persons involved.

§4. Particular attention shall be given to any alleged misuse of ecclesiastical office, pastoral authority, spiritual direction, sacramental ministry, professional position, or other position of trust for sexual, emotional, financial, or personal advantage.

Article 8 — Vulnerable Adults and Elder Abuse

§1. Whenever an allegation involves a vulnerable adult, the AAB shall take particular account of any physical, psychological, intellectual, emotional, social, financial, or other condition that may have impaired or limited the person's ability to understand, resist, report, or protect himself or herself from the alleged conduct.

§2. Allegations involving elder abuse shall be evaluated with particular attention to possible physical, emotional, sexual, spiritual, or financial exploitation, neglect, coercion, manipulation, intimidation, or abuse of dependency or trust.

§3. Nothing in these Protocols shall dispense from any obligation imposed by civil law concerning the protection of vulnerable adults or elders or the reporting of suspected abuse to competent civil authorities.



Article 9 — Spiritual Abuse and Abuse of Ecclesiastical Authority

§1. The AAB shall give particular attention to allegations involving the abusive exercise of spiritual, pastoral, or ecclesiastical authority.

§2. Spiritual abuse may include the manipulation, coercion, intimidation, exploitation, or improper control of another person through the misuse of religious authority, spiritual direction, sacramental ministry, conscience, religious obedience, or claims of divine or ecclesiastical authority.

§3. Particular gravity shall attach to circumstances in which a cleric is alleged to have misused the authority, trust, dignity, or influence associated with **Holy Orders** for sexual, emotional, financial, spiritual, or other improper advantage.

§4. The apparent acquiescence or participation of an adult shall not prevent the AAB from considering whether such conduct resulted from an abuse of authority, manipulation, coercion, dependency, exploitation, or an improper imbalance of power.

Article 10 — Suitability for Ministry, Employment, or Service

§1. In addition to assessing the credibility of an allegation, the AAB shall advise the Diocesan Bishop concerning the suitability of the accused person for ministry, employment, volunteer service, ecclesiastical office, or other responsibilities whenever such an assessment is required.

§2. Suitability is distinct from the determination of whether a particular allegation is credible. Consequently, circumstances that may not establish the credibility of a particular allegation may nevertheless be relevant to determining whether the accused person remains suitable for ecclesiastical ministry, employment, or service.

§3. In making this assessment, the AAB may consider the totality of the circumstances, including conduct revealed during the investigation, patterns of behavior, professional or ministerial boundaries, compliance with ecclesiastical discipline, observance of applicable Codes of Conduct, abuse of authority or trust, prudential concerns, and other circumstances reasonably bearing upon the safe and effective exercise of ministry, employment, or service.

§4. In the case of a cleric, particular consideration shall be given to whether the conduct is compatible with the obligations, discipline, integrity, and pastoral trust inherent in the clerical state and the exercise of sacred ministry.



Article 11 — Deliberation and Voting

§1. Deliberations concerning allegations and suitability shall take place in confidential closed session.

§2. Only members entitled to vote under the Statutes of the AAB may participate in a formal vote.

§3. A determination of the AAB shall ordinarily require the affirmative vote of a majority of the voting members present, provided that the requirements for quorum established by the Statutes have been satisfied.

§4. Members who have not adequately reviewed the relevant materials shall abstain from voting.

§5. No vote may be cast by proxy.

§6. The **Diocesan Bishop shall not participate in meetings, deliberations, or voting of the AAB. No Episcopal Vicar shall participate in meetings, deliberations, or voting of the Board**, so as to preserve the independence of its consultative assessment.

Article 12 — Recommendation to the Diocesan Bishop

§1. Following its deliberations, the AAB shall communicate its determination and recommendation to the Diocesan Bishop in writing.

§2. The recommendation shall ordinarily identify:

1. whether the allegation is considered credible;
2. the principal reasons supporting that determination;
3. the Board's assessment of suitability for ministry, employment, service, or ecclesiastical responsibility, when applicable;
4. any safeguarding or precautionary concerns identified by the Board; and
5. any additional recommendations considered appropriate.

§3. A member who substantially disagrees with the recommendation of the majority may request that his or her dissenting opinion be communicated to the Diocesan Bishop.

§4. The final determination concerning the canonical, administrative, disciplinary, employment, or other disposition of the matter belongs exclusively to the competent ecclesiastical authority according to the norm of law.



Article 13 — Protection of Persons

§1. If at any time during its consideration of a matter the AAB reasonably believes that a person may be in imminent danger or at substantial risk of abuse, exploitation, retaliation, or other serious harm, the Chair shall immediately communicate the concern to the appropriate diocesan authority.

§2. Nothing contained in these Protocols shall dispense from any obligation imposed by civil law concerning reporting to law enforcement, protective services, or other competent civil authorities.

§3. Appropriate measures should be taken, consistent with law and diocesan policy, to protect complainants, witnesses, and other persons from retaliation, intimidation, harassment, or improper interference arising from their good-faith participation in an investigation.

Article 14 — Newly Discovered Allegations

Whenever information received during the consideration of a case reasonably indicates the existence of another allegation of abuse, exploitation, misconduct, financial malfeasance, or other serious wrongdoing, such information shall be promptly communicated through the appropriate diocesan reporting procedures and, whenever required by law, to the competent civil authorities.

Article 15 — Confidentiality

§1. All proceedings, deliberations, investigative materials, reports, and recommendations of the AAB shall be treated as confidential, subject to applicable civil and canon law and diocesan policy.

§2. Members shall not disclose confidential information obtained by reason of their service on the AAB except as authorized by competent ecclesiastical authority or required by law.

§3. Confidentiality shall not be interpreted or applied in a manner that prevents or discourages lawful reporting to civil authorities or cooperation with competent governmental investigations.



Article 16 — Records

§1. Appropriate records shall be maintained for every matter considered by the AAB.

§2. Such records shall ordinarily include the referral of the allegation, relevant investigative materials, investigative reports, minutes relating to the matter, the AAB's written recommendation, and other documentation necessary to preserve an adequate record of the proceedings.

§3. Records shall be maintained securely and in accordance with canon law and diocesan policies concerning confidential ecclesiastical records.

Article 17 — Policy Recommendations

In addition to its consideration of individual allegations, the AAB may recommend to the Diocesan Bishop modifications to diocesan policies, Codes of Conduct, procedures, training, safeguarding practices, or standards of ministerial and professional conduct whenever its experience indicates that such measures would strengthen the protection of persons and the proper administration of ecclesiastical governance.

Article 18 — Training

Members of the AAB shall receive appropriate formation concerning their responsibilities, applicable diocesan safeguarding policies, relevant provisions of canon and civil law, standards for evaluating allegations, professional and ministerial boundaries, abuse of authority and power differentials, vulnerable-adult and elder abuse, spiritual abuse, confidentiality, conflicts of interest, and the assessment of suitability for ministry, employment, or service.

Article 19 — Interpretation and Amendment

§1. These Protocols shall be interpreted consistently with the Statutes of the Adult Allegation Board, the particular law and policies of the Diocese of Palm Beach, and applicable universal canon law.

§2. In the event of a conflict between these Protocols and applicable universal or particular law, the applicable law shall prevail.



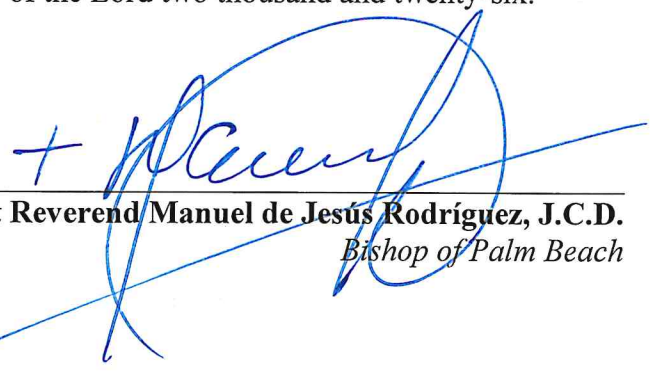
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§3. These Protocols may be amended according to the procedure established by the Statutes of the AAB and with the approval of the Diocesan Bishop.



Notwithstanding anything to the contrary contained herein. Solemnly promulgated and signed at the Office of the Diocesan Bishop, located at the Pastoral Center of the Diocese of Palm Beach, Palm Beach Gardens, State of Florida, on the seventh day of the month of August, in the Year of the Lord two thousand and twenty-six.


Most Reverend Manuel de Jesús Rodríguez, J.C.D.
Bishop of Palm Beach


Very Reverend Antony Pulikal, V.E.
Chancellor, Moderator of the Curia
and Episcopal Vicar for Strategic Planning

