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APPENDIX FOR COPYING: Form DH710

## Preface

WE IN THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF STOCKHOLM, wish to present these safeguarding outlines, in order to establish a clear set of rules to follow if we should become aware or suspect that children and young people have been subjected to sexual abuse. We wish to make it clear that we do not tolerate any form of abuse in church settings. We want to work preventively and make ourselves and everyone else aware of the risks that may exist.

The Gospel stands in stark contrast to all forms of sexual abuse. If priests, employees or volunteers in the Church are ever guilty of such behaviour, it causes even greater harm, because people trust them so much. The diocesan authorities must intervene immediately and forcefully to protect the victim or victims. The one who has been exploited always comes first.

Documentary evidence in recent decades of the abuse of children by priests and lay people in different parts of the world, a misuse of power that culminated around the end of the 1970s, has revealed both ignorance and laziness on the part of leaders of local churches. The abuse was able to continue because those responsible did not care or did not want to understand. One is reminded of the words of the prophet Ezechiel about the shepherds of the people who only looked after their own interests and did not care about the sheep (Ezek 34).

Jesus always defended the vulnerable. He taught us that children have an important place in the kingdom of God: "Let the children come to me, do not hinder them" (Mark 10:14). Jesus could put a child in the centre and say, "Whoever receives such a child in my name, receives me" (Mark 9:37). This attitude must be expressed in our behaviour with all children, indeed, with all those who are defenceless.

We too have had to rethink. The diocese has long been involved in policies safeguarding against abuse of children and young people. Nearly two hundred physical courses have been held for priests, employees and volunteers, and today online courses are being added. In 2019, the diocese appointed a special child welfare representative to help in the implementation of these guidelines by means of inspections of what had been done at the local level. The results were not encouraging. In most places, the work had not even begun but on the contrary had been forgotten. This can not be tolerated if we wish to be credible. In future, those leaders who do not take this seriously can expect that harsher measures will be taken.

When a report comes to the knowledge of the diocese, it feels like a heavy burden. But those who do report render the church a great service and deserve everyone's recognition. We learn on an ongoing basis, just like other communities and organizations in society that in recent years have been developing their rules for the protection of vulnerable persons.

The diocese published the first edition of the safeguarding policy against sexual abuse of children and young people in 2004, and the second in 2010. An update was needed for several reasons, not least because the increasingly comprehensive digitalisation of children's lives changes the risk pattern for them. We also wanted the safeguarding policy to be supplemented with new church and state legislation. The previous edition of the safeguarding policy ceases to apply now that the present third revised edition enters into force.

I hereby ratify the third revised edition of these regulations and stipulate that they shall be used and followed by parishes, language missions and national missions, oriental churches and other organisations and groups under the jurisdiction of the diocese.

Yes, I expect that all those activities that call themselves "Catholic", shall show wholehearted support for these principles and put them into practice. As disciples of Christ, we are committed to doing all we can to prevent and deter all abuses.

This third revised edition of the safeguarding policy enters into force on All Saints' Day 2021.  
Stockholm, November 1, 2021 Cardinal Anders Arborelius ocd Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Stockholm

## 1

### **Introduction**

THE SAFEGUARDING POLICY begins with a section outlining basic theological ideas about the church's view of man and about sexuality. This is followed by a section that describes how we define children and sexual abuse in these guidelines. Then a description is given of how the work against sexual abuse is organised within the diocese, how we should act in case of accusations or suspicions of sexual abuse and what support and information should be given to the person who has been abused and others concerned. The following section describes the measures to be taken regarding the person who is accused or suspected and what is to happen after the investigation and judicial review have been completed.

The safeguarding policy also includes a section with rules of action to prevent sexual abuse, a section containing ten concrete safety rules for activities with children and a section on the importance of paying attention to "the forgotten children".

Finally, there is information about what we should do if someone wants to report that he or she has been abused.

A form to be used for interviews prior to employment or a volunteer assignment is included as an appendix (dh710, see p. 50).

## 2

### **Some basic theological ideas**

A. God has created man out of love and for love. This theological insight can help us deepen our understanding of God and of man. But God's creation has been hurt and damaged by sin. God sent His Son into the world to reconcile creation with Himself, to reveal the fullness of His love and to restore the dignity of man as the image of God. God communicates his grace and forgiveness to people, but at the same time we know that the fight against sin continues the whole of one's life.

B. By virtue of Jesus' words "let the children come to me", the Church has always reflected on the role and significance of the child and thereby emphasised and defended the child's unique dignity. The Church therefore regards sexual abuse of children as one of the most heinous crimes against man and thus against God, who himself has become a child.

C. The word abuse denotes a number of different acts, ranging from pure physical violence to causing mental suffering. It is often a matter of an adult wanting to achieve his or her own immoral

purposes by exploiting a child's gullibility and trust. When authority is used in a disrespectful way that harms the child due to its weakness and dependence, it is a matter of abuse. Sexual abuse occurs when someone exploits the child to satisfy their own sexuality. Such abuse, of course, can never be tolerated in any context, but must always be condemned as a serious crime against the child and against its Creator.

D. When the Church reflects on the role and significance of the child, she starts from the theological premise that man is created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27). This likeness to God means that man is a person, that is, a unique individual with inviolable dignity. The free will that God has given man makes it possible for him to shape life in a good way - with due respect for the inherent laws of life. In his relationship with others, man is a subject and gives to each person the opportunity to be and act as a subject. This means that no one may regard and treat a fellow human being as an object, that is, as someone one could have at one's disposal and use for one's own purposes. Abuse is based precisely on a lack of respect for the fellow human being as a person.

E. The inviolable dignity of man applies throughout his whole existence, that is, from conception to a natural death. Unfortunately, this is not always respected. The child's dependence on adults as well as its weakness and its still undeveloped autonomy make the child vulnerable. A child has the right to grow up in an environment where it can find security and trust in life and people. The responsibility for this normally lies with the child's parents and other adults in the child's environment. Still, we know that many children are treated badly. Therefore, the Church and society must work together to defend and secure the children's integrity and human dignity.

F. The awareness of the inviolable dignity of man is confirmed by faith in the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ. By becoming man, God has shown us how human life is meant to be. In the gospel we see how Jesus always defends the vulnerable. Therefore, children have an important place in the kingdom of God: "let the children come to me, and do not hinder them" (Mark 10:14). On another occasion, Jesus puts a child at the centre and says, "He who receives such a child in my name, he receives me. And he that receives me receives not me, but the one that sent me" (Mark 9:37). Receiving a child is tantamount to receiving God. This attitude must be expressed in our behaviour towards children. In a strong and concrete way, Jesus reminds us of the consequences of contrary behaviour: "he who misleads one of these little ones who believe in me, for him it would be best if he had a millstone hung around his neck and sunk in the depths of the sea" (Matt 18: 6) and "make sure that you do not despise any of these little ones" (Matthew 18:10).

G. God has created human beings as man and woman. Man and woman are called to imitate God in love and fellowship. Through sexuality, which is a gift from God to human beings, they express and affirm their love for each other. The Catechism of the Catholic Church presents this with the following words: "The union between man and woman is a way of imitating in the body the Creator's fertility and generosity" (n. 2335). According to the Church's teaching, therefore, the gift of sexuality belongs within the lifelong covenant constituted by marriage. Love and respect for each other, fidelity and community of life, and also fertility, pleasure and joy all develop within marriage. All this is possible only when the spouses consider and treat each other as persons. Offending or exploiting each other is incompatible with the self-giving community constituted by love.

H. As with many other gifts of God, man can abuse the gift of sexuality and thereby cause harm. When a child, who is not yet mature for adult sexuality, is exploited by an adult, this is an abuse

and a deep violation of the child that often causes almost incurable wounds for life. Such abuse is a crime against the child as a person and a serious violation of God's law. If priests, employees or volunteers in the Church are ever guilty of such behaviour, it causes even greater harm, because priests and others who work within the church enjoy so much trust. Church leaders must therefore intervene immediately and vigorously to protect the child who has been abused. The leaders must also take action against the accused person by ensuring that a police report is made and by cooperating with the civil authorities during the preliminary investigation and trial. It is also important that Church leaders fully apply the rules of criminal law contained in the Church's own legislation, Canon law. The Church must not act in a way that could be interpreted as wanting to silence and obscure what has happened. The care of the child and his family must come first. The following regulations are an expression of the responsibility that the Catholic Diocese of Stockholm wants to take, partly to prevent and deter abuse, partly to be able to take quick and effective action if an abuse should nevertheless occur.

I. Finally, we must not forget that God's mercy extends to all people, even those who have been guilty of crimes and misconduct. But forgiveness from God requires sincere contrition and a willingness to repent and make amends. Anyone who has caused children harm has to examine their conscience, openly admit their guilt and answer for their crimes, if necessary before the courts. The person in question must also strive to personally atone for his actions by submitting to civil and ecclesiastical punishment as well as through prayer and penance.

### 3

#### **Definitions of *children* and of *sexual abuse***

In these guidelines, we use the word *child* in accordance with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. By child is thus meant every person *under the age of 18*.

When we talk in the guidelines about *sexual abuse*, we primarily refer to such acts that are criminal according to the provisions in ch. 6 of the Penal Code on sexual offences. Some of these provisions are quoted below in abbreviated form.

Nowadays there is in ch. 6 Section 6 of the Penal Code (see below) a particular limited crime called «sexual abuse of children». However, when the guidelines refer to sexual abuse of children, as stated in the previous paragraph, they do not refer only to this particular crime but to all cases of sexual crimes that are directed at children.

#### *Rape*

Section 1: A person who performs sexual intercourse, or some other sexual act that in view of the seriousness of the violation is comparable to sexual intercourse, with a person who is not participating voluntarily is guilty of rape and is sentenced to imprisonment for at least two and at most six years. When assessing whether participation is voluntary or not, particular consideration is given to whether voluntariness was expressed by word or deed or in some other way. A person can never be considered to be participating voluntarily if:

1. their participation is a result of assault, other violence or a threat of a criminal act, a threat of bringing a prosecution against or reporting another person for an offence, or a threat of giving detrimental information about another person;
- 2.

the perpetrator improperly exploits the fact that the person is in a particularly vulnerable situation due to unconsciousness, sleep, grave fear, the influence of alcohol or drugs, illness, bodily injury, mental disturbance or otherwise in view of the circumstances; or

3. the perpetrator induces the person to participate by seriously abusing the person's position of dependence on the perpetrator.

#### *Sexual assault*

Section 2: A person who performs a sexual act other than those referred to in Section 1 with a person who is not participating voluntarily is guilty of sexual assault and is sentenced to imprisonment for at most two years. When assessing whether participation was voluntary or not, Section 1, first paragraph, second and third sentences apply.

#### *Rape of children*

Section 4: A person who performs sexual intercourse, or another sexual act that in view of the seriousness of the violation is comparable to sexual intercourse, with a child under fifteen years of age is guilty of rape of a child and is sentenced to imprisonment for at least two and at most six years.

#### *Sexual assault of children*

Section 6: A person who performs a sexual act other than those referred to in Sections 4 and 5 with a child under fifteen years of age (...) is guilty of *sexual assault of a child* and is sentenced to imprisonment for at most two years.

#### *Sexual molestation*

Section 10: A person who, in cases other than those previously referred to in this Chapter, sexually touches a child under fifteen years of age or induces the child to undertake or participate in an act with sexual implications, is guilty of *sexual molestation* and is sentenced to a fine or imprisonment for at most two years.

This also applies to persons who expose themselves to another person in a manner that is liable to cause discomfort, or who otherwise molest a person by word or deed in a way that is liable to violate that person's sexual integrity.

#### *Contact with a child for sexual purposes*

Section 10 a: A person who, with the aim of committing an act against a child under fifteen years of age for which a penalty is provided in Section 4, 5, 6, 8 or 10, proposes or agrees to a meeting with the child, is guilty of *contact with a child for sexual purposes* and is sentenced to a fine or to imprisonment for at most two years.

Engaging in child pornography is a criminal offence under Chapter 16 of the Criminal Code and constitutes a very serious crime under the Church's own legislation. If a priest or another person working within the church is suspected of committing a child pornography offence, this must be reported to the police.

*The safeguarding policy for child pornography offences also applies in other relevant cases.*

Sexual abuse can take place in different places, and in different ways, also on the internet. Examples of offences committed online include sending sexual messages to a child in a chat,

persuading a child to pose in front of a webcam or to send pictures, or the perpetrator exposing himself or sending pictures to a child.

We also wish to emphasise that certain acts that are not criminal under the criminal law of the State could constitute sexual abuse of children under the Church's own legislation, canon law, and could therefore give rise to Church investigation and Church punishment.

According to canon law, suspicions of serious sexual abuse committed by priests and members of religious orders and congregations must be submitted to a Church (ecclesiastical) court in Rome for review. These include suspicions of sexual abuse of minors and suspicions that someone has engaged in child pornography or persuaded minors to participate in a pornographic production. If there is a suspicion that a layman, e.g. a volunteer or staff member, has committed such offences, the trial is conducted locally in the diocese. It is important to remember that the ecclesiastical trial and any ecclesiastical punishment do not replace the state criminal proceedings, but are complementary to it.

#### 4

### **Organisation within the diocese for work against sexual abuse**

The practical responsibility for implementing the rules of the safeguarding policy rests on *parish priests, rectors* of the language and national missions and the Oriental churches that are represented in Sweden, and also *leaders* within the Catholic movements and organisations that have contact with children and young people in their activities.

All parishes, missions, Oriental churches and other organizations that work with children and young people should, if possible, appoint their own local safety representative, e.g. for a period of three years. The safety representative can assist the priest and the parish pastoral council or the leaders of the organisation in the local work of monitoring the implementation of this safeguarding policy, concretely and in detail. The safety representative keeps in touch with the diocesan child protection representative and participates in any further training arranged by the diocese through the child protection representative. The person appointed as a safety representative must have completed the diocesan training for safeguarding against abuse and must have filled in form DH710.

The diocesan child welfare representative maintains regular contact with parishes, missions and other groups within the church that have activities for children and young people, and arranges inspections and training of staff and volunteers.

The child welfare representative has the right to investigate in matters concerning the safety of children and young people in the diocese, at the local or the national level. The child welfare representative can summon leaders and those in authority to conversations, indicating the need for operational changes and taking the initiative for further investigations, exploratory follow-ups or targeted supervision. The child protection representative can also be one of the diocesan contact persons.

The diocesan working group for matters concerning abuse is made up of the vicar general, the episcopal vicar for priests and deacons, the episcopal vicar for canon law matters as well as a female and a male contact person. The vicar general leads the proceedings. If the vicar general is unable to attend, the episcopal vicar for priests and deacons acts as his deputy. If necessary, people with professional knowledge, such as a psychologist, diocesan lawyer, diocesan information officer or others can be co-opted to the working group. The working group is responsible for ensuring that there is a plan to protect children and young people from abuse.

*The vicar general and the contact persons have the task of receiving reports of sexual abuse.* The vicar general shall act immediately if accusations or suspicions of abuse are made. The working group must always be informed of what has taken place and what measures have been taken.

Anyone who reports sexual abuse must be treated unconditionally with respect and consideration. He or she should feel listened to, supported, taken seriously and not questioned. Anyone who has been abused can be offered therapy and pastoral care (the diocese can pay for therapy for a period of time if needed).

The vicar general has the ultimate responsibility for making a report to the police and social authorities. When there is an acute risk that children will be harmed, the report should be made immediately.

## 5

### **The safeguarding policy covers all activities in the Church**

There are catholic orders and ecclesiastical movements with their own regulations within the Church. They have been granted permission by the Catholic Diocese of Stockholm to operate in Sweden and they must follow the safeguarding policy of the diocese. If the accusations concern one of their members, they must supplement the diocesan investigation with internal investigations and report the results of these to the bishop of the diocese, who ultimately decides whether the person should continue to have assignments within the Catholic Church in Sweden. The diocese can provide advice, help and resources for this investigative work if needed. The diocese expects that all the independent associations and organizations that describe themselves as "Catholic" will support the safeguarding policy and cooperate when controls need to be made.

The diocese expects that organisations outside the Church wishing to arrange events for children and young people together with Catholic parishes or organisations will have similar rules for their own leaders, who will thereby be answerable. Independent associations or companies wishing to rent or borrow Church premises for children's activities (eg dance, choir, theatre) must similarly be asked about their safeguarding policy before the agreements are entered into.

Catholic schools and preschools are independent of the diocese and are subject by law to the National Agency for Education and the School Inspectorate, which investigates child-related reports. The diocese strives for dialogue with these about child protection, as well as with child safety officers in other dioceses and communities as well as with the specialists for such issues within the Police force.

The work to protect minors is never good enough. It needs to be developed all the time. It is therefore desirable that people who believe that something can be done better contact the diocese. It can also happen that someone thinks that a case has been forgotten or that a person has been treated badly. Such complaints must be investigated, those responsible must be held



accountable and errors corrected. Complaints about the way the diocese has handled cases can always be directed to the Child Welfare Ombudsman, who must ensure that they are investigated.

## 6

### **In cases of suspected sexual abuse**

Whenever one suspects that children or young people have been sexually abused, this must be reported to the police and social services.

The obligation to report suspicions of sexual abuse within the Church is incumbent on all Church employees and all volunteers who have anything to do with children and young people in their assignments in the Church. They commit themselves to this by signing form DH710 (see p. 50) in which their assignment is confirmed.

The report should be made to the vicar general or to one of the diocese's contact persons whose contact information can be found on the website of the diocese:

[www.katolskakyrkan.se/barnskyddsombud](http://www.katolskakyrkan.se/barnskyddsombud)

As we are dealing here with a crime, a police report must also be made. The police in turn contact the social services, which then investigate the child's situation and needs. Help and support in formulating a police report can be given by the vicar general, the diocese's contact persons or by the child safety representative. If you are not able to report yourself, they will make sure that it is done.

A police report must be made even if the child or the child's family oppose it. A case that is not reported can lead to more children being abused; in fact it is even probable that this will happen. Therefore, it is imperative that every accusation or suspicion is properly investigated. You who get to hear the story of a child who has been a victim play a key role here.

If there are other children or young people around the suspected perpetrator who could be harmed, this constitutes a risk that must be reported to the social services.

## 7

### **Support for victims of abuse and for others affected**

The child protection representative shall quickly, and as far as possible in consultation with social authorities, make an assessment of what kind of support needs to be given to the child who has been abused and to the child's family, and to what extent the diocese can be of service, both in the short term and the long term. During the investigation the child protection representative informs the victim or victims as to how the case is progressing and acts as the support person until the case is closed.

The diocesan management ensures that information is given to others who may be affected, e.g. a parish or a youth group. For the victim of abuse, it can take a very long time to heal the wounds. The diocese will help to ensure that this process can be conducted with expert help.

## 8

### **Measures to be taken with regard to someone accused or suspected**

Child safety must take precedence over all other considerations. If an accusation against an employee or a volunteer in the diocese is made in the way described above and a police report / report to the social authorities has been made, then the bishop of the diocese, or, where applicable, the superior of the order, must ensure that there is no risk of child abuse while the investigation is proceeding.

This involves applying the necessary specific measures, such as suspension from activities, suspension from service, leave of absence or other measures that as far as possible guarantee the safety of children. If the accusation concerns the bishop of the diocese himself, he should resign during the time that the investigation is being carried out.

The diocese should appoint someone who can keep in contact with and support the accused, informing that person about how the investigation is proceeding. If the accused belongs to an order, the diocese can, if the order so wishes, assist with support for the accused.

## 9

### **After completed investigation and judicial review**

Criminal proceedings can, of course, lead to different outcomes. These are of great importance for how the diocese should act towards a person who is accused of having committed sexual abuse of children. Four possible outcomes can be distinguished:

1. The case against the accused is dismissed by the court and the diocese also judges that the person has not been guilty of sexual abuse. In such cases, news of the acquittal should be published with the clarity that best serves the purpose of clearing the accused. This can also mean that the diocese will support someone wrongfully accused who wishes to report to the police the person who has made the accusation.
2. The accused, having been prosecuted in court, is convicted of sexual offences. As soon as a legally binding judgment has been given, an assessment shall be made in accordance with the following paragraph.
3. The charges against the accused are dismissed by the court, but the diocese considers it doubtful whether the person should be allowed to continue his work in the Church.
4. Following a police report, the preliminary investigation is closed without charges for sexual offences being brought before a court.

With regard to groups 2, 3 and 4 above, the diocesan leadership makes a risk assessment, if necessary in consultation with civil authorities, to investigate whether the person can continue to work within the diocese, and if so in what contexts. In the case of a priest, it may be necessary to start an ecclesiastical process, which can lead to different types of punishment.

## 10

### **Sexual abuse of adults**

The rules in this safeguarding policy apply only to children and young people, i.e. persons under 18 years of age. This means, for example, that the diocese's obligation to report suspicions of sexual abuse to the police only applies if the person who has been abused is under 18 years of age or was under 18 years of age when the abuse was committed.

If it is an adult who has been abused, the diocese cannot report it to the police unless the victim himself or herself is willing to do so. Reporting a crime against the will of an adult would take away the person's control of his or her own story. In the worst case, it could be perceived as a new abuse. However, we must always encourage the person to contact the police, offering help to make a report. Young adults especially may need information and support in order to pluck up courage and make a report to the police.

There are also special ecclesiastical penalties for sexual abuse committed against adults. Even acts that are not punishable under state criminal law can be subject to ecclesiastical punishment, e.g. if a priest breaks his promise to live in celibacy. The canon law contains special penal rules regarding sexual abuse committed against vulnerable adults. There are also special rules for cases where the perpetrator has persuaded vulnerable adults to participate in a pornographic presentation.

When priests or members of religious orders or congregations are suspected of having committed serious sexual offences against adults, the case must be submitted to a church court in Rome for review. When other people (lay people) are suspects, the investigation is carried out locally in the diocese.

Adults who have been abused may also need support from the diocese. In cases where vulnerable adults have been abused, the vicar general assesses what support measures the person may need, and if so, to what extent the diocese can contribute. These assessments are made in consultation with the person himself and any support representatives that the person may have chosen to have with him.

## **11**

### **The work of prevention**

#### *a. The diocesan safeguarding policy*

All parishes, language and national missions, Oriental churches and other organisations and groups under the jurisdiction of the diocese that work with children and young people should use and follow this document.

#### *b. Training*

Parish priests, other priests, and all employees and volunteers must be trained to acquire the knowledge and insight needed to implement what is laid down in the safeguarding policy. Knowledge of how to prevent abuse and what to do if abuse occurs or allegations of abuse are made shall be included in the training of persons who are to work with children and young people.

Everyone who is employed in the diocese or at parish level must participate in the diocesan training courses on safeguarding against abuse of children and young people. Extra courses are provided for priests and deacons.

Everyone involved in volunteer work with children and young people must also participate in the diocesan training. This includes catechists, aides to catechists, youth leaders, parents who help in the kitchen during a children's camp or persons who are elected to the boards of Catholic youth associations and thus bear co-responsibility for the activities organised by their association for minors.

Anyone who has not completed the diocesan training may not take on an assignment involving children.

*c. Clear information*

The small folder in different languages, Children's Safety in the Church, with information about the stance taken by the diocese and its work against sexual abuse, contains the contact details of the vicar general and the diocese's contact persons. It must be clearly visible in the premises of the parish / organization. It is equally important that the website of the parish / organisation should contain a clear link to the contact persons on the diocesan website [www.katolskakyrkan.se/barnskyddsombud](http://www.katolskakyrkan.se/barnskyddsombud)

*d. The precautionary measures shall be applied in general*

The precautionary measures taken by the parish / mission / Oriental church / organisation to protect children and young people should apply to everyone, without exception. It is easy to be lulled into a false security and believe that priests, other employees or volunteers cannot commit abuse. Precautionary measures which have been thought out and planned should be applied to minimise the risks of both actual abuse and false allegations of abuse.

*e. Work / project descriptions for employees and volunteers*

Child abuse is most easily hidden where there is confusion among adults concerning tasks and responsibilities. Both employees and volunteers must have a written work or task description (see form DH710, p. 50) where their task is clearly defined. It must also state who the supervisor is.

*f. Meetings with employees and supervision / leadership meetings*

Catechists, catechist assistants and youth leaders should meet regularly to review and plan their work, share experiences, receive training and talk openly about their relationship with the children and young people. The parish priest or the person who is otherwise in charge must pay special attention to the volunteers for whom he is responsible.

*g. Interview, references and checking on previous offences*

The person who wishes to become a youth leader or catechist should provide two *references* - preferably from people who have seen him or her work with children before, and preferably within the Church's activities. One reference can be given by, for example, another parish priest, or a pastor in a denomination the person has converted from. If the person in question has previously worked with children and youth activities within the Catholic Church, a reference must *always* be requested of the supervisor or other person responsible for the activity where the person was last active. The question to be asked in the references is whether they consider the person suitable for working with children. If one of the answers is vague or ambiguous, the person should not be accepted, even if the other answer is positive. Information from references must be kept confidential.

An *interview* should be conducted by the parish priest or supervisor, preferably not on his own but with someone else. Even if no formal obstacles are discovered, it may be that one feels hesitant. Experience shows that it may be wise to then trust one's instinct.

One should ask for an extract from the Police's *criminal records* - which show whether a person has previously been convicted of serious crimes - in relation to »Other work with children« (e.g. club activity, etc.).

This extract is requested by the person himself from the police authority ([www.polisen.se](http://www.polisen.se)). Register extracts from most EU countries can also be requested directly via the Police website or by the person contacting his or her own country's authorities. Those who are citizens of other

countries can in many cases request extracts from the criminal records from their home country (so-called *police extract*). Such an extract does not guarantee that serious crimes have not been committed, but it is the only means we have, and therefore it should be used. The person giving the assignment should tick the form DH710, indicating that the extract has been shown, but should *not* keep or copy the extract.

It should also be noted that anyone who is to work with children and young people must first be employed for a probationary period. Volunteer assignments and other assignments must always be limited in time. Volunteers should have a supervisor appointed for them from the beginning. The supervisor can be a priest or another person in a leading position.

## 12

### **Ten safety rules for activities with children**

THE PARISH / MISSION / ORIENTAL CHURCH / organisation shall actively work to reduce the risk of abuse, through, inter alia, the following measures:

1. An adult leader should, as far as possible, not be left alone with a child or young person when there is little or no opportunity for others to see what they are doing. Avoid private calls. The principle also applies to chat forums and other virtual rooms.
2. Ensure that there are always two adult leaders in group activities or when confidential conversations need to be held with an individual child. Both of these leaders must have taken the course on the diocese's safeguarding policy and be correctly appointed (see pp. 38–39). If one wants to comfort a crying child, there should also be another adult present. Be careful. If it feels right just then to hug the child, then first ask: "Is it okay if I give you a hug to cheer you up?"
3. Those who work with children and young people should not meet an individual child or young person in order to build up a relationship outside the activity. Many abuses have started in this way. One should also avoid a situation where leaders and children add one another as friends on social media.
4. Information for minors, e.g. via letter, sms or internet, may not be sent without the consent of the parents. The information should be restricted to the relevant activity.
5. Use bright, easily accessible and open rooms for work with children and young people where one can see what is happening. Where this is not possible, extra vigilance must be observed. Be there before the children arrive!
6. The leaders should supervise the children from the time they arrive until they leave the church / premises / activity, even during breaks. The parents must be clearly informed about the times. During "free time" on trips / camps, the leaders must see and know what the children are doing. Children can molest other children. It happens typically where adults do not think it happens, e.g. during recreation. Respectful vigilance prevents certain places from becoming risk areas (e.g. basements, changing rooms, toilets and bathrooms, or bushes outdoors).
7. Abuse of minors via the internet is increasing. Inform before the journey or the camp that mobile phones and other devices with internet connection will be stored throughout the period, or only left out during certain times when they are used under the supervision of adult leaders (not in rooms where there are no leaders). Camps without wifi should be preferred. Where wifi is still available, the password should not be given to minors.
8. All use of cameras, as well as the distribution of images / films involving minors, may only take place with the consent of the parents, of those involved and of the leader. In churches, the

approval of the parish priest is also required.

9. When children and young people have to be transported by car or bus, the leaders should do all they can to have more than one passenger in each vehicle. Try to have a common meeting place for excursions, to pick up and drop off the children.

10. A single child and an adult (other than the child's parent) must not share a bedroom. When there is accommodation in homes, at least two children must be placed together. Bedrooms must always be gender-segregated: this also applies to adults. Make sure several people share a room. If leaders sleep separately, they should at least be so close that they can hear if it is quiet in the children's rooms and can be easily reached. The leaders should from time to time check that everything is as it should be in the rooms, and in that way the children will see that the leaders care about them.

## 13

### **Attention to »the forgotten children«**

Badly behaved children usually get their teachers' attention. However, there are many children who adjust well to their surroundings, who do not draw attention to themselves and who are considered by adults to be "well behaved". But they can, in fact, have a hard time inside. They are often overlooked.

Any kind of child could be the victim of abuse. There is no "characteristic" in any individual child that could "explain" why it is he or she who has to suffer. The responsibility for abuse lies always entirely on the perpetrator's side. At the same time, it is important to know that perpetrators often pick on children who are somehow overlooked. Their "grooming" can begin very cautiously. The goal in the long term is to isolate and control the child emotionally.

It can be a case of:

- Children who keep quiet.
- Children who do not know or do not think that one can say no to adults.
- Children who are afraid of punishment.
- Children who lack affection.
- Children who can seem physically provocative in the eyes of adults.
- Children who have inadequate supervision from parents and other adults.
- Children with disabilities.

Children with low status among other children can be added to the list, e.g. children who are often on their own or are sidelined by others. These can easily be dragged into unhealthy dependencies by adults.

All children are insecure. The person who treats them badly may be someone they like and admire. They may be shocked but still laugh at the same time. They may therefore feel reluctant to speak out or testify. It often feels easiest to pretend that nothing has happened. This insecurity can be exploited by adults who want to be alone with them.

## When a child has been abused – what do you do then?

LISTENING TO A STORY about a child who has experienced abuse evokes strong emotions in us. It's hard to listen, but it's even harder for the one who confides in you. Show that you want to listen! A victim who speaks out takes a difficult and courageous step and needs more than anything else to *be believed*. If we reject those who seek help in such an important matter, we make them suffer a new wound.

- You might hear about sexual abuse directly from the victim, or else through someone else. This is what you should do:
- Listen actively and attentively and try to remember the formulations.
- Do not question the person's story. You should not judge if it is true or false, but only listen. Do not ask any questions apart from those that may be needed to clarify what has happened, and do not give quick answers. Remember: You are here to listen to someone who is confiding something difficult to you.
- Explain to the person who tells his or her story that the matter is so important that one of the diocesan contact persons (or the vicar general) should be told about it. Contact one of these, preferably directly and together with the person who is telling the story. Make no promises about keeping silence! As soon as you discover that the conversation has to do with this subject, make it clear that it is so serious that you cannot keep it secret, but rather adults need to look after it.
- You will report it (to the police and social authorities) even if the victim or his family does not want to.
- As soon as possible after the call: Jot down what you remember: Date, time, the main content of the conversation and what you agreed to do next. Try writing the story as it was concretely presented to you, not in your own words. Use initials when writing down what different people are said to have done. Contact the vicar general or one of the diocesan contact persons.
- You have now done the right thing and should not do anything more. Let the diocese and the Police take over. The person who is reported must not be informed of the report until the Police have contacted him or her. Otherwise, if he or she really is a perpetrator, there is a risk that important evidence could be cleared away.

## For you who want to know more

THE DIOCESAN SAFEGUARDING POLICY does not stand still but evolves constantly. New literature, new formation courses and new material keep appearing, both in the Church in Sweden and all over the world, and likewise in society where other actors / agents work with similar issues and can be called on for support.

This development can be followed on the diocesan website [www.katolskakyrkan.se](http://www.katolskakyrkan.se). There one can find up-to-date contact information for the vicar general and the diocesan contact persons as well as links to useful books and articles containing facts and research. One can also find links to the Centre for Child Protection at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, where information about research reports, papal speeches, pastoral directives and documents on abuse within the Church are constantly updated.