What to do

when someone tells you about a case of abuse in the Catholic church

Try to listen **actively** and **attentively**, memorize words and phrases, the wording of the account.

Do not question the veracity of the account.

Do **not ask any questions** others than those that may help to clarify what has happened, and do not respond hastily.

Encourage the person reporting a case to **report** what has happened to the police and the social authorities, and also to contact **a representative of the diocese**. Offer help to take these contacts and do it as soon as possible.

Do not give any promise of silence or secrecy! Make it clear to the person that this is so serious that a representative of the diocese must be informed even if it is not the victim or their family who reports it.

Immediately after the conversation: take **notes**; date, time, the main points of the conversation and what has been agreed upon regarding how to proceed. Use initials when referring to certain individuals. Contact the diocese and inform the authorities of what has happened.

Contacts

when there is a suspected case of sexual abuse of children

VICAR GENERAL P. **Pascal René Lung** OP
generalvikarie@katolskakyrkan.se
+46 – (0)8 – 462 66 02

Katarina Miksits, BISHOP'S DELEGATE
Child Protection Officer
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Parish priests, rectors of national missions and other leaders of church organizations are responsible for implementing the contingency plan in their respective organizations. Deficiencies regarding child safety in the church should be brought to the immediate attention of the Child Protection Officer.

Other questions, opinions or ideas should be addressed to the Child Protection Officer of the diocese.

THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF STOCKHOLM
www.katolskakyrkan.se/en • Phone +46–(0)8 – 462 66 00

Child safety in the church

Working against child abuse in the Catholic church

Children and young people must be safe in the Catholic church.

KATARINA MIKSITS
CHILD PROTECTION OFFICER

A **Child Protection Officer** (barnskyddsombud) has been appointed to protect children and young people against sexual abuse in the Catholic church. The "Contingency Plan in Case of Sexual Abuse against Children" aims to raise awareness and knowledge about sexual abuse and thus help to ensure safety. The contingency plan can be downloaded from the homepage of the diocese, www.katolska-kyrkan.se, under the menu point "Barnskyddsarbete".

This flyer is a brief summary of the safety regulations found in the contingency plan. A "child" by definition is every person under 18.

Abuse comprises physical as well as psychological mistreatment – any activity where authority is misused in a way that may harm minors or other vulnerable people. When a child is exploited by an adult, it is a serious offence that can cause life-long trauma. If priests, employees or volunteers in the Church commit such crimes, the harm they cause is all the more serious, since those who work in the Church enjoy the trust of others. That is why we have to intervene with immediate effect and great effort to protect those who have been subject to abuse.

- **Suspicion** or **knowledge** of **abuse** in the church **must be reported to the police** or social authorities. Everyone has the right to do it.
- **Suspicion** or **knowledge** of **abuse** in the church **must also be reported immediately to the Vicar General** or any other representative of the Diocese.
- Employees of the Church, volunteers and others assigned to work with children must participate in a compulsory training based on the contingency plan, and confirm by signature that they have understood the regulations.
- Any knowledge of accusations or suspicions that have not been reported or investigated should immediately be reported to the Vicar General or other representatives of the diocese. The intent of reporting must always be made clear to the person making the accusations. No promise of silence shall be given.

If sexual abuse of a child is not reported, it can lead to further cases of abuse where also other children are harmed.

It is therefore absolutely necessary that each accusation or suspicion receives attention and is investigated properly.

Those who hear the account of an abused child play an important role. If you need help to proceed, contact the representatives of the diocese or the Child Protection Officer.

- A priest who learns about abuse during confession is bound by the seal of the confessional not to disclose anything he hears **but** must encourage the penitent to report the abuse and offer them help and support to do so.

Safety procedures

to prevent abuse and to avoid suspicion

An adult should not be alone with a minor when there is little or no possibility for others to witness what they are doing. This is for safeguarding the integrity of both the child and the adult.

Always try to make sure that there are **two adults** present at youth activities. Those who work with children must never meet individuals in order to build a relationship outside the ordinary activity.

When driving children in a car: make sure that every vehicle has **more than one passenger**. On excursions: use a **common meeting point** for drop-off and pick-up.

When **accomodating** children, a single child and an adult should never share a bedroom. When accommodating children in a house, at least two children must be placed in one room.

Strive for an environment where children are always taken seriously. Incidents and relationships which might lead to insecurity should never be ignored. They must be discussed at employee meetings and dealt with. This must be documented in written form.

THE SAFETY MEASURES LISTED ABOVE APPLY TO
EVERYONE WITHOUT EXCEPTION.
THEY MUST BE APPLIED IN ORDER TO ENSURE THE SAFETY OF EVERYONE IN THE CHURCH.