

CHILD
PROTECTION
POLICY

SAINT BERNARD ABBEY
CULLMAN ALABAMA

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Introduction

The following policies and practices are intended to assist Monks of Saint Bernard Abbey in making decisions about interactions with minors in Abbey sponsored and affiliated programs.

While the Abbey's policies for boundaries with minors are intended to guide interactions in ministry and other relationships in which the Monk is acting as a representative of the Abbey, each Monk is responsible for maintaining the standards even when interacting outside of formal ministry, such as those involving family and friends. Monks are expected to adhere to the following ethical standards and specific behavioral guidelines in all aspects of their personal and ministerial lives. Visiting religious who are not Monks of Saint Bernard Abbey are expected to abide by these policies while residing in the Abbey.

A **Monk** is defined as a professed member of the Abbey, a novice, or a postulant formally accepted and living at the monastery.

The **Abbot** is the Major Superior of Saint Bernard Abbey.

A **Minor** is anyone under the age of 18.

A **Vulnerable Adult** is anyone aged 18 or over, who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age, or illness, and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.

Section 1. Standards of Conduct for Interactions with Minors

The sexual abuse of minors is contrary to the teachings of the Church and is prohibited. Monks have a responsibility to protect minors from all forms of sexual abuse. The following are guidelines to help direct appropriate interactions with minors. This is meant to be a non-exhaustive list of appropriate and inappropriate interactions with minors.

Expressions of affection between a Monk of Saint Bernard Abbey and a member of his family must also reflect these guidelines, socially appropriate norms, and family traditions.

1. Physical Interactions

a. Appropriate Interactions

- i. Side-hugs.
- ii. Pats on the shoulder or back.
- iii. Hand-shakes.
- iv. "High-fives" and hand slapping.
- v. Touching hands, faces, shoulders or arms of minors.
- vi. Holding hands while walking with small children.
- vii. Kneeling or bending down for hugs with small children.
- viii. Holding hands during prayer.
- ix. Pats on the head when culturally appropriate. (For example, this gesture should typically be avoided in some Asian communities).

b. Inappropriate Interactions

- i. Engaging in sexual contact with minors. For the purposes of this policy, sexual contact is defined as vaginal intercourse, anal intercourse, oral intercourse or the touching of another (including but not limited to the thighs, genitals, buttocks, pubic region or chest) for the purpose of sexually arousing or gratifying either person.
- ii. Members are prohibited from using physical discipline in any way for behavior management of minors. No form of physical discipline is acceptable. This prohibition includes spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, or any other physical force as retaliation or correction for inappropriate behaviors by minors
- iii. Inappropriate or lengthy embraces.
- iv. Kissing on the mouth.
- v. Holding minors over four years old on the lap.
- vi. Touching buttocks, chests or genital areas.
- vii. Showing affection in isolated areas such as bedrooms, closets, staff-only areas or other private rooms.
- viii. Being in bed with a minor.
- ix. Touching knees or legs of minors.
- x. Wrestling with minors.
- xi. Tickling minors.
- xii. Piggyback rides.
- xiii. Any type of massage given by minor to adult.

- xiv. Any type of massage given by adult to minor.
- xv. Any form of unwanted affection.
- xvi. Sleeping in the same beds, sleeping bags, or tents with minors

2. Verbal Interactions

a. Appropriate Interactions

- i. Verbal Praise.
- ii. Positive reinforcement.
- iii. Encouragement.
- iv. Appropriate Jokes.

b. Inappropriate Interactions

- i. Keeping secrets.
- ii. Swearing in the presence of minors.
- iii. Speaking to minors in a way that is or could be construed by any observer as harsh, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating.
- iv. Engaging in any sexually oriented conversations with minors unless the conversations are part of a legitimate lesson and discussion for teenagers regarding human sexuality issues. On such occasions, the lessons will convey to youth the Church's teachings on these topics. If youth have further questions not answered or addressed by their individual teachers, they should be referred to their parents or guardians for clarification or counseling.
- v. Compliments that relate to physique or body development.

3. Electronic Communications

- a. Monks should not communicate with minors (other than relatives) using electronic media except as a part of their professional/ministerial responsibilities. This includes email, instant messaging, texting, or social networking sites. If a minor contacts the Monk, a polite response is permitted, but future communications should be avoided.
- b. During any usage of social media or other electronic communications with minors, Monks are not to:
 - i. Make comments that are, or could be construed by any observer to be, harsh, coercive, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning or humiliating.
 - ii. Engage in sexually oriented conversations or discussions about sexual activities unless these are part of a pastoral situation.
 - iii. Post sexually oriented or morally inappropriate pictures, photos, or comments.
 - iv. Post photos of minors or details of ministry/program activities involving minors on any electronic media without the explicit, written permission of a parent or legal guardian.
 - v. Engage in one-on-one video chatting or have one-on-one interaction in a chatroom.
 - vi. Initiate or accept a "friend" request (or similar social media "connection") using a personal account.
- c. All communication between Monks and minors must be transparent.

4. Supervision of Programs that Involve Minors

- a. The Abbey's programs for minors in which Monks are involved must be supervised by at least two adults.
- b. Monks in leadership roles shall be aware of all programs for minors that are sponsored by their parish, school or agency. A list of these programs shall be maintained in the central office and include activities, purpose, sponsors or coordinators of the programs, meeting times and locations. Leaders shall examine these programs and consider whether there is adequate supervision.

5. Offsite Events

- a. Monks are prohibited from transporting minors without written permission of their parent or guardian.
- b. Monks are prohibited from unnecessary and/or inappropriate physical contact with minors while in vehicles.
- c. Minors should be transported directly to their destination. No unplanned stops should be made.
- d. Monks are prohibited from having minors stay at their residence. Requests for exceptions should be submitted to the Abbot in writing two weeks prior to the visit, and such requests require the approval of the Abbot.
- e. Changing and showering facilities or arrangements for Monks must be separate from facilities or arrangements for minors.

6. Other Prohibited Behaviors

- a. Being nude in the presence of minors.
- b. Using, possessing, or being under the influence of alcohol and/or illegal drugs while supervising minors.
- c. Providing or allowing minors to consume alcohol or illegal drugs.
- d. Known or suspected possession, distribution, downloading and/or intentionally viewing real or virtual child pornography. This a violation of civil and Canon Law. Any Member who has engaged in these behaviors must have an individualized Safety Plan (See Section 7).
- e. Possessing sexually oriented or morally inappropriate materials (magazines, cards, videos, films, clothing, etc.) in presence of minors.

It is the policy of the Abbey to interrupt and intervene in boundary violations before the activity may progress into criminal activity. Monks have an obligation to report known or suspected boundary violations and/or inappropriate forms of physical affection toward minors (see Section 4.1).

Section 2. Support and Accountability for Monks

By ensuring that all Monks participate in systems of support and accountability, the Abbey is better able to recognize potential issues early on, and possibly prevent sexual abuse of a minor.

1. Training for Monks

- a. The Abbey will educate its Monks regarding the prevalence, identification, and prevention of sexual abuse of minors, giving special attention to topics which are of unique relevance to religious.
- b. All Monks who serve in public ministry, even those who only occasionally serve in public ministry, must participate in an average of one hour of education annually. This training must include the following:
 - i. Information about both preferential and situational type sexual offenders. Warning signs of both types of offenders must be clearly stated in the materials.
 - ii. Information regarding self-protection from false allegations of sexual abuse of a minor, including what to do if one is concerned about being falsely accused.
 - iii. Information about child pornography as a crime both in canon and civil law.
 - iv. Information regarding abuse with vulnerable adults, including its nature as an offense considered under the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops document, *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*.
 - v. Information on how to make a report to the civil authorities of known or suspected sexual abuse of a victim who is currently a minor in the jurisdictions where the Monk is assigned.
- c. Educational programs may be provided by the organizations by which Monks are employed, such as a diocese, hospital, or school.
- d. Educational programs may be provided at the local or national level, but they should not be a repetition of the same program two years in a row. Monks are encouraged to document their educational program completion.
- e. Only the Abbot may excuse a Monk from the educational requirements due to physical or medical difficulties and who will not be involved in public ministry.
- f. On-going training programs will be provided and may include a variety of topics that support the prevention of the sexual abuse of minors more broadly, including the appropriate use of electronic communications and social media.
- g. Monks who are returning from ministry outside of the U.S. will undergo an individual educational plan to insure they are properly trained on these issues.

2. Assistance for Monks

- a. The Abbot will communicate annually to the Monks regarding the Abbey's commitment to the protection of minors and the Abbey's current initiatives and actions with respect to the protection of the vulnerable and healing for those who have been harmed by abuse. The communication must contain:
 - i. The Abbey's current accreditation status and date of expiration.

- ii. Information about any new reports or events of abuse that have occurred since the last communication and the status of those reports or events. The level of specificity will be determined by the Abbot.
- b. The Abbot must meet annually with each Monk.
- c. The Abbot will annually communicate with any organization in which a Monk is employed or in public ministry. Such communication will include an identification and the contact information of the Abbot.
- d. The Abbey will maintain a list of Monks who are living outside the typical systems of support and accountability for the Abbey.
- e. When a member of another monastery begins the probation period to transfer into Saint Bernard Abbey, the member becomes subject to the proper law and the superior of this Abbey and is required to adhere to the Abbey's systems of support and accountability.
- f. The Abbey will have a written policy or protocol on support and accountability for those religious from other Institutes or diocesan priests who are residing in the Abbey (Appendix 4).
- g. A Monk who discloses to any other Monk an unhealthy attraction to minors or an inability to respect boundaries with minors will be offered professional assistance.

Section 3. Individual Response to Policy Violations and Abuse Allegations

Vigilance regarding the maintenance of proper boundaries must include a system of accountability based on the standards of conduct as explained Section 1 above. It is essential that, in our communities and the places where we work and minister, a transparent and effective system of monitoring and reporting is in place.

1. Boundary Violations

- a. Each Monk is responsible for identifying warning signs and responding to those signs.
- b. Monks must report to the Abbot or Prior when another Monk violates the Abbey's policy on boundaries with minors or when another Monk exhibits warning signs of inappropriate behavior with minors. The Abbot will coordinate appropriate assistance for the at-risk Monk and will create a written plan to ensure the on-going cessation of problem behaviors.
- c. Monks are encouraged, if they feel comfortable, to discuss their concerns with the Monk engaged in the boundary violations, after having reported the behavior to the Abbot.

2. Abuse When the Victim is Currently a Minor

- a. Monks must report known or suspected sexual abuse of a victim who is currently a minor to the appropriate civil authorities of the state in which the abuse allegedly occurred within 48 hours regardless of state mandatory reporting laws, whether alleged to have been perpetrated by a Monk or by anyone else. This is the case if the accused Monk is still living or not, or whether he is a current or former Monk of the Abbey.
- b. Monks must report known or suspected possession, distribution, downloading and/or intentionally viewing real or virtual child pornography to the appropriate civil authorities within 48 hours regardless of the state mandatory reporting laws.
- c. The Monk who has first-hand knowledge of the known or suspected sexual abuse of a minor must be the person to make the initial contact with the appropriate civil authorities. This task cannot be delegated or passed on to others.
- d. If the alleged victim is a minor at the time the allegation is received, his or her identity must be provided to the civil authorities.

3. Abuse When the Victim is Now an Adult

- a. Monks must report known or suspected sexual abuse of a minor when the victim is no longer a minor in accordance with the civil laws of the state in which the sexual abuse of a minor was alleged to have occurred, regardless of whether the accused Monk is still living or not, or whether he is a current or former Monk of the Abbey.
- b. Individuals who have approached the Abbey since June of 2002 to report the sexual abuse of a minor must be advised of their right to report to civil authorities and encouraged to make a report.
- c. If the alleged victim is an adult at the time the allegation is received and consents, his/her identity will be provided to the civil authorities, provided the alleged victim consents to have his/her identity disclosed. If the alleged victim does not consent, he/she will be informed that his/her identity may be disclosed if required by the civil authorities.

In addition to reporting to civil authorities, reports of suspected or known abuse of a minor may be made confidentially (unless otherwise disclosed by Canon Law) to any of the following:

i. The Prior

ii. The Abbot

iii. The Abbot President of the American-Cassinese Congregation of Benedictine Monasteries

iv. The Chair of the Review Board

Section 4. Institutional Response to Policy Violations and Abuse Allegations

Systematic procedures for responding to an allegation of sexual abuse can protect everyone's rights, ensure that the organization responds legally and effectively, and minimize disruption. Reports and allegations of sexual abuse may come from a variety of sources, including alleged victims or their family members, diocesan offices, Members of the Institute, a colleague in the workplace or from an alleged perpetrator. Because each case is unique, the following is a general outline of the response system for allegations of abuse but is not necessarily a procedure that is to be followed in the same way for each case. The process may be modified according to the nature of the allegation, the needs of the alleged victim and the circumstances of the accused Monk. In every case, the Abbey commits itself to dealing pastorally with, and protecting the rights of, all those involved.

1. Boundary Violations

- a. The Abbot is responsible for coordinating appropriate assistance for at-risk Monks who have violated the boundaries as established in these policies. The Abbot will document all reports and subsequent interventions, remedial actions taken, plans for continued observation, and conditions, if any, placed on the Monk. Such documentation shall be included in files maintained by the Abbey. Access to these materials will be available on a need-to-know basis or as required by civil law. Access to these materials will be prohibited as required by Canon Law.
- b. The Abbey will present any situation in which a Monk has repeated boundary violations, or when a minor is known to be in danger, to the Review Board. An intervention plan must be developed which outlines how the boundary violations with minors will be interrupted, and the Abbey will verify that the intervention plan has been implemented.
- c. The Abbey shall immediately intervene in situations where there is potential risk of harm to an identifiable minor.

2. Initial Response Protocol to Reports and Allegations of Sexual Abuse

- a. The Abbot shall identify a Delegate for the Protection of Children (hereafter: Delegate), qualified by education, training or experience, to respond to reports and allegations of sexual abuse by a current, former and/or deceased Monk of the Abbey. This Delegate will have written guidelines for fulfilling this role.
- b. The Abbey will have written protocols for responding to reports and allegations of sexual abuse of a minor, indicating who is responsible for each part of the Abbey's response, and will document adherence to these protocols.
- c. When an allegation of sexual abuse is first received, the Delegate shall attempt to gather sufficient information to complete a written preliminary report. The report should include the following information:
 - i. Name of the alleged victim;
 - ii. Age of alleged victim;
 - iii. Address and phone number of alleged victim;
 - iv. Name of alleged perpetrator;
 - v. Approximate dates of alleged abuse;

- vi. Nature, type and location of alleged abuse;
- vii. Any additional relevant details

d. All reports and allegations of the sexual abuse of minors shall be submitted to the Review Board, which will be kept apprised of the situation at regular intervals.

3. Response to Victims

- a. When a person comes forward with an allegation of being sexually abused as a minor, the Delegate will explain the procedure and provide a guide explaining the procedure the Abbey follows in responding to allegations.
- b. The Abbot may also assign a Victim Assistance Coordinator to provide support for the immediate and ongoing needs of individuals who have experienced sexual abuse and their families. The Abbot may not serve as the person responsible for assisting individuals who have been abused and as the person responsible for the governance of the Abbey. Any form of “dual relationships” is strongly discouraged.
- c. The Victim Assistance Coordinator will offer to meet in person with the alleged victim if he or she so desires. The Victim Assistance Coordinator will maintain a compassionate and pastoral manner regardless of the demeanor of the alleged victim, recognizing that the experience of sexual abuse and difficulty of coming forward may bring out strong emotions during the disclosure process.

- i. It is recognized that some individuals who have experienced being sexually abused as minors may first approach the Abbey through legal proceedings. While this situation presents difficulties for assisting in the healing of the individual, the Victim Assistance Coordinator must still offer, through his or her legal counsel, to meet with the individual who alleges being sexually abused as a minor, as may be appropriate for the situation.
- ii. It is understood that some individuals who have alleged being sexually abused as minors may choose to not accept a meeting with Victim Assistance Coordinator.
- iii. It is recognized that some unusual circumstances may cause a meeting or even an offer of a meeting with an individual who has alleged being sexually abused as a minor to be impossible. The Abbey will document these circumstances and any alternative form of pastoral assistance that has been offered.

d. The Victim Assistance Coordinator of the Abbey will document every attempt to assist in the healing of an individual who has approached the Abbey since June of 2002 to report being sexually abused as a minor by a current, former, or deceased Monk.

4. Response to Monks

- a. The Abbey provides all Monks with a basic procedure so that they will have an understanding of pastoral response to an individual who alleges sexual abuse of a minor and to ensure that the individual will be treated with respect and dignity.

- b. The Abbot will inform the accused Monk of his right to seek canonical and civil counsel before any further conversation into the matter. The Abbey recognizes that the Monk may need assistance to engage such counsel.
- c. The Abbot will maintain contact with the accused Monk throughout the entire process.
- d. When he has received the completed investigation report, the Abbot will present the results of the investigation to the accused Monk for response.
- e. During investigations by civil authorities or by the Abbey, the Monk who is the subject of the investigation will be temporarily removed from ministry responsibilities and duties. The Abbey is expected to be familiar with and respect each Monk's rights under civil and Canon Law.

5. Communication with Other Involved Parties

- a. The Abbey shall notify the diocesan bishop where the alleged abuse took place, and where the accused Monk is currently residing, as appropriate to the circumstances.
- b. The Abbey will notify the employer of the place where the alleged abuse took place, and where the accused Monk is currently employed, as appropriate to the circumstances.
- c. The Abbey will communicate with the faith community and the public regarding the alleged abuse, as appropriate to the circumstances.

6. Investigations

- a. All information that is provided to the Abbey must be investigated to the extent possible, including information that is provided anonymously.
- b. If at the conclusion of an initial investigation, which may be performed by the Abbot or his Delegate, there is a "semblance of truth" to the allegations of sexual abuse against a Monk, the Abbot must ensure that the Monk against whom the allegations are made has no access to minors during the pendency of a full investigation.
- c. The Abbot and the Abbey will cooperate fully with any investigation by civil authorities.
- d. The Abbot will designate a trained individual as Investigator to independently gather information regarding the allegation. In the cases of an established or undisputed allegation, an investigation may be conducted to identify any other potential victims and to obtain information to inform the ongoing supervision plans for the Monk who has abused.
 - i. The Investigator will advise any parties that he/she represents the Abbey and that conversations with the Investigator are not subject to any attorney/client privilege.
 - ii. The Investigator will advise the parties that, although pastoral care is available, the Investigator will not be the one to provide that care.
 - iii. The Investigator, who shall obtain statements from the parties and any witnesses, will keep the Abbot informed regarding the status of the investigation.
 - iv. The Investigator will produce a written report and submit it to the Abbot.
- e. All cases of sexual abuse of a minor reported since June of 2002 must have a documented investigation or documentation of the reason(s) an investigation is not possible or is not

necessary. A summary of the investigation findings will be stored in the personnel file of the current, former, or deceased Monk who is the subject of the investigation.

- f. In order to fulfill his responsibilities, the Abbot will consult with the Review Board at each juncture of the process and will convene the Board as soon as possible after receiving the final report from the Investigator.
- g. When it has been established that a Monk has sexually abused a minor, the Abbey will provide for the pastoral care and treatment of the Monk, offering him fraternal support in whatever penalties are imposed upon him by the legal system or restrictions imposed upon him by the Abbey.
- h. If an allegation could not be established, the Abbey will reinstate the accused Monk to ministry and will work towards the restitution of his good name.
- i. If sexual abuse of a minor has been established through an investigation, civil authorities shall be re-contacted and a follow-up report will be submitted, if requested. If further investigation indicates the allegation is not established, civil authorities will be contacted to provide the additional information.
- j. The Abbey will strive to maintain the rights of all concerned in the process of an investigation of sexual abuse of a minor.
- k. Documentation of allegations, reports, responses, and investigations are confidential and shall remain with the office of the Abbot following election of a new Abbot; access to these materials will be prohibited as required by Canon Law and will be available only as required by civil law.

7. Decision-Making

- a. Upon the conclusion of the investigation, the Abbot will exercise his judgment in delivering an appropriate response. If the accused Monk has admitted to a report or allegation, or in those cases where the allegation has been established, the Abbot's response could include any of the following:
 - i. psychological and medical assessment and intervention;
 - ii. restrictions on community life and personal activities;
 - iii. limitations imposed on ministerial activities, including total removal from public ministry.
- b. The Abbey will inform the leadership of any organization or ministry in which the Monk has admitted to the sexual abuse of a minor, or in which the Monk has an established allegation of the sexual abuse of a minor. The Abbey will maintain documentation concerning these communications with organizations, including any reasons why this communication was not possible or not feasible, if such is the case.
- c. In cases where an allegation of sexual abuse of a minor by a Monk has been established, that Monk may not return to public ministry.
- d. If an allegation of sexual abuse of a minor cannot be investigated or established, the Review Board must be consulted regarding the disposition of the case.

- e. When an allegation of sexual abuse of a minor cannot be established, the Abbot will coordinate communication with all appropriate parties so that reconciliation can take place where possible and repair of damage to reputations can be undertaken.
- f. In all instances, the final disposition of the matter rests with the Abbot, always recognizing:
 - i. The Monk's right to appeal to Abbot President and/or the Holy See.
 - ii. It is the Abbot's responsibility to communicate his decision to the person who made the complaint, to the Monk involved, and to other parties, including the Abbot President of the Congregation, as necessary and appropriate.
- g. If at any time during the course of implementing these procedures, civil or criminal proceedings are initiated against the accused Monk, these procedures may be suspended immediately, to be resumed, if deemed necessary, only after the completion of the civil or criminal proceedings. In such a case, the Delegate shall recommend to the Abbot a possible course of action with respect to the accused Monk, in keeping with the intention of these procedures and in the interests of justice.

Section 5. Screening and Formation

1. Screening of New Candidates

- a. Candidates will be specifically screened for a history of sexually abusing minors or violating the boundaries of minors.
- b. Each Candidate will have the following documentation:
 - i. A completed background check, which includes each state/county that the Candidate has resided in for the past seven years and a national sex offender registry check.
 - ii. A minimum of three documented personal references (including at least one from a family member) and two professional references, for a total of five references.
 - iii. Face-to-face interviews with more than one representative of the Abbey.
 - iv. A psychological evaluation which was conducted by a licensed psychologist, and a psycho-sexual history which was conducted by either a licensed psychologist or a licensed mental health professional with skills in conducting psycho-sexual histories and in assessing psycho-sexual health in preparation for a life of celibate chastity.
 - v. A review of publicly accessible content on all social media, personal blog sites, and web sites associated with accounts controlled by the Candidate.
- c. A Candidate who has an established allegation of sexually abusing a minor in his past, or who has acquired/intentionally viewed child pornography, cannot be permitted to continue to Membership of the Abbey.
- d. Vocation Directors and Formation Directors must be able, by education, training, or experience, to identify Candidates who may be a risk to sexually abuse a minor.

2. Initial Formation of Monks

- a. Monks in formation must be educated about how to develop a mature, integrated sexuality as a foundation for celibate chastity.
- b. Monks in formation must be encouraged to identify and address challenges to maintaining celibate chastity and healthy intimate relationships.
- c. A Monk in formation who sexually abuses a minor will be dismissed.
- d. A Monk in formation who is unable to maintain appropriate boundaries with minors, despite guidelines and instruction, cannot be permitted to continue in formation.

Section 6. Review Board

1. Establishment and Purpose

- a. The Abbot will utilize a Review Board for the purpose of providing consultation to the Abbot regarding the Abbey's management of all cases of sexual abuse of a minor by current, former, and/or deceased Monks. The Review Board is also responsible for reviewing Safety Plans at least annually. The Review Board exists solely to provide such advice and has no independent power or authority.
- b. The Review Board shall consist of at least 5 Members, with no more than one Monk of the Abbey.
- c. The Review Board shall include representation from the following groups: religious (of the Abbey or from outside the Abbey), professionals from the social sciences (psychologists, counselors, victims' advocates and/or social workers), representatives from the legal or law enforcement profession or state protective services, and laity, preferably parents. The Abbey's legal counsel should not be a member of the Review Board.
- d. The Abbot shall appoint Members of the Review Board by letter of appointment signed by himself. A Member of the Review Board may be removed at the discretion of the Abbot in consultation with the chair of the Review Board. Members shall be removed by letter of removal signed by the Abbot.
- e. The Abbey shall provide initial training (or orientation) for new Members of the Review Board, as well as ongoing training for all the Members of the Review Board.
- f. The Review Board shall meet at least annually. Additionally, meetings may be called when necessary and always in the case of any new allegations. Review Board meetings may be conducted in person, by conference call, or web conferencing.

2. Operating Procedures

- a. The Review Board shall have its own operating procedures, approved by the Abbot in consultation with the Senior Council.
- b. Review Board Members shall sign a confidentiality agreement and undergo a criminal records check.
- c. The records and other information received by the Review Board shall be treated as confidential, subject to the requirements of law and the Policies of the Abbey. The files of the Review Board are the property of the Abbey.
- d. The Review Board shall determine a timeframe allotted for providing a response once an allegation has been received.
- e. The Abbot shall consult the Review Board at each step of the investigation and processing of a report or allegation of sexual abuse of a minor by a Monk.
- f. When considering allegations of sexual abuse of a minor, the Review Board must be given the following:
 - i. original report or allegation of sexual abuse of minor submitted to the Abbey;
 - ii. the final report of an investigation;
 - iii. all other allegations of sexual misconduct by that Monk;

- iv. any relevant disciplinary actions that have been taken in the past to that Monk and the reasons for the actions.
- g. Where appropriate, the Review Board provides consultation to the Abbot regarding the reporting of cases to the authorities when such reporting is not required by law.
- h. The Abbot may share recommendations of the Review Board with the Senior Council as needed.

3. Disposition of Cases

- a. After carefully reviewing all the information, the Review Board makes a recommendation to the Abbot regarding (a) the assessment of the allegation of sexual abuse committed by a Monk and (b) the suitability for ministry for the accused Monk.
- b. After hearing the Review Board, the Abbot alone judges whether an allegation of sexual abuse of a minor by a Monk has (or has not) been established.
- c. The judgment of the Abbot must be objective, i.e., based on facts and circumstances discovered in the course of the investigation. The judgment of the Abbot admits that the contrary (falsity of the accusation) is indeed possible but highly unlikely or improbable, to the extent that the Abbot has no fear that the contrary (falsity of the accusation) may be true.
- d. The recommendations of the Review Board shall be summarized in writing for presentation to the Abbot. The original written recommendation(s) shall be presented to the Abbot and a copy shall be maintained in the files of the Review Board.

Section 7. Supervision and Care of Monks with an Established Allegation of Sexual Abuse of a Minor

These procedures describe the elements of a pastoral care framework which will be developed for each Monk of the Abbey for whom an accusation of sexual abuse of a minor has been established.

The purpose of this framework is to:

- a. assure the Church and the public, especially minors, of all reasonable measures to prevent any future occurrence;
- b. provide a structure within which the Monk can continue his life in the Abbey;
- c. provide appropriate care for the Monk and the opportunity for such personal conversion and rehabilitation as may be needed;
- d. guide local superiors, the Monk, and others in determining work, place of residence, and other activities;
- e. encourage the monastic community in welcoming and supporting the Monk in his desire to continue his life as a Monk within this framework; and
- f. assure the Monk's own community of both proper care and appropriate limits with respect to their brothers in the Abbey.

It is intended that all the elements below be adapted in an individualized Safety Plan for each Monk who has sexually abused a minor, depending on such factors as severity of the accusation(s), age and health of the Monk, and the recommendations of the Review Board. The framework, however, sets out the elements to be developed in writing for each Monk, reviewed by the Review Board, and shared with the Monk, his superiors, his supervisor, and, as appropriate, other members of the monastic community. The Safety Plan shall be implemented and signed by the Monk, the abbot, and at least one individual who is directly involved in the supervision of the Monk. Compliance with each Safety Plan shall be documented and there shall also be an annual review of each Safety Plan by the Review Board.

1. Evaluation and Therapy

- a. A Monk about whom a report or allegation of sexual abuse of a minor has been established may be asked to submit to a professional evaluation as to his psychological condition and proclivity to harmful behavior in the future.
- b. The Monk is free to refuse to undergo an evaluation. If the Monk agrees to undergo an evaluation, the Abbot or his delegate will arrange for the evaluation and seek the appropriate releases.
- c. Subsequent to that evaluation, the Monk may be asked to participate in such in-patient and/or out-patient treatment as recommended by the evaluating professionals, as well as such other physical, psychological, and spiritual rehabilitation as may be recommended by such professionals or the Review Board, as well as the terms of his Safety Plan.
- d. Information gained from the process of the investigation (and subsequent treatment), shall be documented in the Safety Plan, including a summary of problem behaviors, information about how the Monk spends a majority of his time, risk reduction strategies

including limitations on the Monk's access to minors and how any such access is supervised, issues related to personal relationships with friends and family members, the person responsible for each risk reduction strategy, consequences for noncompliance and the dates the plan was reviewed by the Review Board.

- e. Information resulting from such evaluation, treatment, and correspondence is the property of the Monk. He may agree to make it available to the Abbot or he may decline to do so. A Monk may further agree to have the information available to the Review Board.
- f. The Monk may be required to report to the Abbot in writing periodically (e.g., monthly, quarterly or annually, as appropriate to the situation), describing his progress in terms of work, therapy, spiritual direction, community life, and such other matters as may be appropriate.
- g. Any information about a Monk who has been accused of abuse shall be kept confidential by those receiving it, except as required by civil law.

2. Public Ministry as a Monk

- a. A Monk for whom an allegation of sexual abuse of a minor has been established will not be allowed to function in an ecclesiastical or public ministry as a priest or deacon, including public celebration of the sacraments, use of the title "Father" or "Reverend" in public communications
- b. In the case of a Brother, he would not be allowed to function publicly in external ministry associated with the Abbey (e.g., school teaching, coaching, parish staff work) or use of the title "Brother" in public communications.
- c. Clerical or distinctive religious attire would not be allowed outside the Abbey for a Priest or Brother for whom an allegation(s) of sexual abuse of a minor has been established.

3. Appropriate Work

- a. If physically and mentally able, the Monk who has been removed from public ministry should engage in appropriate work in support of the ministries of the Institute or in other service to people in need. Such employment might include the following:
 - i. Internal work within the Abbey, such as the Infirmary or the farm;
 - ii. Administrative work for the Abbey, such as financial or archival work;
 - iii. Remunerative non-ministerial work to support the ministries of the Abbey, such as clerical work;
 - iv. Service to people in need such as writing to prisoners, taping books for the sight-impaired;
 - v. Telephone reassurance programs for shut-ins, working in a food bank or soup kitchen, or some other form of supervised social services, provided that minors do not volunteer at these organizations.
- b. Where appropriate, Monks restricted or removed from public ministry may need vocational assessment and/or occupational counseling to assist in determining meaningful and useful work. The Abbot should consult with the Monk involved to

determine his interests and capacities and to promote his initiative in developing work opportunities, where appropriate.

- c. The appropriate work, and specific assignment of the Monk who has sexually abused a minor must be determined in consultation with the Review Board and, when appropriate, the local bishop.
- d. The work assignment of the Monk who has sexually abused a minor must be documented in the Safety Plan.
- e. In all cases, the service of prayer for the Abbey and the Church would be a valuable contribution.

4. Place of Residence

- a. Any Monk on a Safety Plan will be allowed to live only at the Abbey itself or another appropriate supervised place of residence, as determined by the Abbot.
- b. No separate apartment, private home, or other domicile would be allowed as a permanent residence for the Monk on a Safety Plan.

5. Supervision of Monks on Safety Plans

- a. Supervision of Monks who have Safety Plans can be conducted by qualified individuals, including Monks, employees, or third-party contractors of the Abbey.
- b. Individuals who supervise Monks on Safety Plans will be physically and emotionally capable and adequately trained to perform the duties involved in supervision.
- c. Individuals who supervise will have adequate information of cases to fulfill their role, which may include relevant history of sexual abuse of a minor, all allegations of sexual misconduct (including adults), history of compliance with Safety Plans, current progress in treatment (if applicable), history of substance abuse (if applicable).
- d. Individuals who supervise will receive written guidelines and adequate training regarding their role and procedures for supervision.
- e. Individuals who supervise will have all the pertinent information about the Monk that is not privileged, including relevant history of sexual abuse, all allegations of sexual misconduct, history of compliance with Safety Plans, current progress in treatment, if applicable, history of substance use and/or abuse, if applicable.
- f. The Abbot (or his delegate) will annually evaluate and document compliance (and non-compliance) with the Safety Plan, and report to the Review Board annually regarding compliance for each Safety Plan.
- g. Due regard must be given to the need for any Monk who has a Safety Plan to authorize the release of any confidential information to Members of the Review Board.
- h. Where Monks and/or the Abbey may be subject to criminal and/or civil liabilities, the Abbey should consult with legal counsel about the text and implementation of a Safety Plan.

6. Community Support and Community Roles

- a. The monastic community will play an important part in helping a Monk on a Safety Plan who wishes to continue his life as a Monk.
- b. After a Monk has submitted to evaluation and appropriate treatment, the community should welcome the Monk on a Safety Plan as a brother.
- c. It may also be appropriate for a mentor to be appointed for the Monk on a Safety Plan who would assist and support him in his efforts to maintain his program of care and treatment.
- d. A Monk on a Safety Plan can, within the monastic community, as allowed by Canon Law, be permitted to celebrate the Eucharist only with Monk present, lead community prayer, hear confessions of Monk only, and perform community assignments and other responsibilities.
- e. A Monk on a Safety Plan would not be allowed to serve as a superior (e.g. Prior, Subprior).
- f. A Monk on a Safety Plan must have the permission of the Abbot to serve in any other leadership role within the local community.
- g. The Abbot shall, as appropriate and with the consent of the Monk on the Safety Plan, inform all or part of the monastic community of the fact that the Monk is on a Safety Plan and the appropriate specific terms of the plan, so that the community can assist him in achieving his goals.
- h. The monastic community may need the advice and consultation of appropriate professionals in preparing itself to receive a Monk on a Safety Plan and provide him the necessary care and support.

7. Contact with Others

- a. Under no circumstances would a Monk on a Safety Plan be allowed in contact with minors without the ongoing supervision of other informed adults present at the time.
- b. This prohibition would include meals in restaurants, going to the movies, riding in automobiles, or private conferences in parish or community offices, community parlors, etc.

8. Travel

- a. Restrictions may be placed on driving alone or having use of a personal vehicle. Some restricted Monks may be required to request specific permissions for use of house cars from the Prior, to keep a driving log, or to only drive with other Monks.
- b. For a Monk on a Safety Plan, vacations alone or with minors, even supervised, would not be permitted. Vacation may be restricted to travel with another Monk.
- c. Retreats in locations alone would not be permitted, and retreats would be restricted to Catholic retreat facilities or other Benedictine monasteries.
- d. Other travel may be restricted to that related to assigned work or family visits; if appropriate, a Monk companion for travel also may be required.
- e. Additional specific permissions for travel may be required from the Abbot. Doubts about specific travel should be referred by the Abbot.

9. Publications and Publicity

- a. For Monks on Safety Plans, restrictions on publications, letters to the editor, web-pages, radio and television appearances, and email may be appropriate.
- b. Sensitivity for victims would dictate caution with regard to photographs of Monks displayed in Abbey publications and institutions, especially those in service to minors.
- c. In some cases, a Monk's use of mail, e-mail, internet, and phone may need to be regulated.

10. Information for Monks and Others

- a. The Abbot, in consultation with the Review Board, will determine whether and/or how to inform the monastic community — in general terms — of those Monks who are on Safety Plans.
- b. The Abbot, in consultation with the Review Board, will determine whether and/or how to inform others who may have a need to know — in general terms — of those Monks who are on Safety Plans.

11. Regular Review of Safety Plans

- a. The Abbot or his Delegate, in consultation with the Review Board, will annually evaluate and document compliance for each Safety Plan.
- b. The Monk on a Safety Plan and his supervisor are notified in advance of this annual review so that they can contribute to the evaluation.

If a Monk on a Safety Plan experiences any significant change in behavior or health, or new allegations surface, his Safety Plan must be reviewed as soon as possible by the Abbot. Any adjustments to the Safety Plan must be communicated to the supervisor and Review Board immediately.

APPENDIX 1

GUIDELINES FOR PASTORAL RESPONSE TO VICTIMS OF SEXUAL ABUSE

The experience of sexual abuse can have lasting effects on the individual. It may affect the person's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. It is important to recognize that these are human experiences and that each individual will be affected differently.

- **Thoughts.** Many individuals who experience sexual abuse begin to think that the world is not a safe place and that no one can be trusted. He or she may think that they are only valuable as a sexual object or that everyone has a hidden agenda. This thinking is a result of having their trust betrayed by sexual abuse.
- **Feelings.** Individuals who have experienced sexual abuse may feel ashamed and guilty about the abuse. They may feel that the abuse was their fault and that they could have stopped it if they had tried harder. They may feel confused about their feelings toward the offender if the relationship was close and caring in other ways. Many individuals feel angry with the adults who were in their lives who they feel should have protected them from the abuse. Some individuals feel angry with themselves for not telling at the time.
- **Behaviors.** Some individuals who experience sexual abuse act out sexually, become depressed, even suicidal, abuse drugs or alcohol, and have difficulty establishing or maintaining relationships. Children who have been sexually abused sometimes wet the bed, engage in sexual acting out, get in fights with their peers, and have difficulty in school.

WHAT AFFECTS HEALING?

- **Frequency.** How often the abuse occurred.
- **Duration.** How long the abuse took place.
- **Intensity.** The nature of the sexual acts themselves.
- **Betrayal.** The level of trust between the victim and perpetrator.
- **Treatment.** The extent and quality of treatment.
- **Support.** The level of support from family and friends.
- **Response.** How individuals respond at the first outcry.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR PASTORAL RESPONSE

- It is typically better to use a different person for pastoral response than you use for investigations.
- Take time to put yourself in the place of the individual and understand how he or she has felt and continues to feel.
- If you do not feel patient and compassionate toward individuals who have may have experienced abuse, someone else may be better equipped to serve in the pastoral response role.
- It is essential to spend time listening to a survivor's story of abuse.
- It is important to realize that these situations are complicated, painful, and not likely to be resolved quickly.
- The reality is that responding to the needs of survivors of sexual abuse is often a long-term process.
- Survivors of sexual abuse are often suspicious and untrusting.
- Many survivors of sexual abuse show a range of strong emotions over a short period of time or over a long period of time.
- Most survivors want validation that the incidents occurred.
- It is not uncommon for survivors to want support but to not always accept it.
- It is not productive or helpful to defend, justify, excuse, or argue.
- Avoid asking the survivor why he or she did not stop the perpetrator or come forward sooner. These questions can make an individual feel guilty, or responsible, or blamed.
- Ask the person about his or her personal goals and what he or she believes would help with the healing process.
- If the person has made a specific request, ask how that would help.
- Be sure to do what you say you are going to do as quickly as possible.
- Be sure not to make promises you can't keep and to keep the promises you make.
- If they would like, stay in contact with survivors over time.

APPENDIX 2

GUIDELINES FOR VICTIM ASSISTANCE COORDINATOR

The Victim Assistance Coordinator is a person, appointed by the Abbot, who has expertise in counseling and dealing with victims of sexual abuse. The Victim Assistance Coordinator is not a member of the Review Board. The Victim Assistance Coordinator may be a Monk of the Abbey or a lay person. The Victim Assistance Coordinator maintains a professional relationship with the alleged victim and/or family and does not act officially as a therapist, attorney, or spiritual director.

The Victim Assistance Coordinator's duties include the following:

1. To listen with respect to the alleged victim and/or family;
2. To offer support and professional resources to the alleged victim, the victim's family and other affected persons, assisting with referrals to therapists and/or support groups;
3. To explain to the alleged victim the Abbey's response to the allegations raised;
4. To offer to be present during meetings between the alleged victim and/or family and the Abbey, including the Abbot and/or the Review Board;
5. To coordinate all communications between the alleged victim and/or family and the Abbey, keeping all parties apprised of developments in the case.

APPENDIX 3

GUIDELINES FOR SUPERVISORS

The Supervisor of a Religious Priest or Brother on a Safety Plan is appointed by the Abbot.

The Supervisor may be a Monk of the Abbey or a third party contracted for purposes of Supervision.

The Supervisor will be qualified by training or experience for the role of supervision.

The Supervisor is an integral part of a positive, informed support system for the Monk on a Safety Plan to ensure a safe environment for minors, vulnerable adults, the Monastic Community, and the Monk being supervised.

The Supervisor will be provided with:

- Accurate knowledge of the Monk's allegations and problem behaviors.
- Accurate knowledge of the Monk's treatment programs and aftercare requirements.
- Accurate knowledge of the rules, restrictions, and expectations in the Safety Plan. This should also include knowledge of the requirement of the Charter and Norms of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.
- Awareness of the Monk's potential arousal patterns.
- Familiarity with the Monk's schedule and whereabouts.
- Knowledge of and the consequences for violations of the Safety Plan.
- The ability to hold the Monk accountable for violations of the Safety Plan, including imposing consequences.
- The ability to intervene in any onset of a risky or problem behavior.

The Supervisor will:

- Meet regularly with the Monk for a formal review of compliance with the Safety Plan.
- Maintain all documentation of compliance and non-compliance.
- Maintain documentation of imposing consequences for non-compliance.
- Maintain all logs and records required by the Safety Plan.
- Report all cases of non-compliance to the Abbot or his delegate.
- Provide regular updates regarding the Monk's compliance with the Safety Plan.

APPENDIX 4

PROTOCOL FOR VISITING RELIGIOUS

This Policy is intended to serve as a guide to Members of other religious Institutes and Societies of Apostolic Life regarding visiting religious to Saint Bernard Abbey if they intend to reside at the Abbey for more than 60 days.

- The visiting religious must have written permission from his proper Major Superior. This permission must note that the visitor is in good standing in his own institute and has no allegations or reports of sexual abuse of minors and must also indicate the duration of the residency.
- The Visitor will be provided a copy of the Saint Bernard Abbey Child Protection Policy.
- The Visitor will be provided with an orientation of the Abbey's Child Protection Policy, as well as other pertinent information concerning criminal background checks, child abuse history clearances, and child abuse awareness education.
- The Visitor will be asked to sign an acknowledgement and compliance statement verifying that he has read and understands and will comply with the Abbey's Child Protection Policy. A copy of this statement will be maintained in the Visitor's file in the appropriate office of the Abbey.
- If the Visitor stays at the Abbey for more than three months, he will be required to meet with the Abbot, or a delegated supervisor appointed by the Abbot, once each quarter (i.e. every three months). Documentation of this quarterly interview will be maintained in the Visitor's file in the appropriate office of the Abbey.
- If the Visitor resides at the Abbey for more than one year, he is required to fulfill the child abuse awareness educational training program expected of all Community Members.

APPENDIX 5

DELEGATE FOR CHILD PROTECTION

JOB DESCRIPTION

- The Delegate for Child Protection is responsible for maintaining the Abbey's Child Protection Policy and managing the Abbey's compliance with it.
- The Delegate maintains records of the education and accountability activity of the Abbot and monks.
- The Delegate will make sure that opportunities for education in child protection are available to the monks, whether by alerting the community to online resources or by arranging community presentations, as needed.
- The Delegate acts as the Abbey's liaison with Praesidium, Inc., particularly with regard to the Abbey's accreditation status.
- The Delegate serves as a non-voting member of the Abbey Review Board, where he acts as liaison between the Board and the Abbey. When an allegation is made against a monk of St. Bernard Abbey, the Delegate presents the case to the Review Board.
- When an allegation is made against a monk of St. Bernard Abbey, a preliminary investigation is made either by the Abbot himself, or the Abbot may charge the Delegate with this task. In either case, the Delegate shall maintain a file with the results of this investigation.
- The Delegate will maintain contact with the Abbot, the Abbey's legal counsel, and the Members of the Abbey Review Board regarding ongoing cases against any monk of the Abbey.
- The Delegate shall supervise visiting clergy or religious regarding compliance with the Abbey Ethics Policy and maintain documentation of such.
- The Delegate shall *not* serve as supervisor of any individual Safety/Supervision Plan.
- While the primary responsibility for the Abbey's response to allegations of sexual misconduct lies with the Abbot, the Delegate advises and supports the Abbot in these matters.