

GULF ATLANTIC DIOCESE
OF THE ANGLICAN CHURCH
IN NORTH AMERICA

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Jacksonville, FL 32204-3869

www.gulfatlanticdiocese.org



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May 31st, 2013

Dear Rectors and Senior Wardens:

Attached is the diocese Policy Regarding Sexual Misconduct and Child Abuse. This policy has been in development for most of this year and was put into final form and approved by the Standing Committee on May 9th, 2013. This document requires your careful reading and action on behalf of your church/congregation.

We request that this document be presented to your Vestry or Leadership Council for review, discussion and adoption at the earliest possible meeting. Secondly we ask that you review this policy with your insurance carrier to be sure that your policies include adequate sexual misconduct coverage. We ask that you review this policy and provide copies to all employees (full or part time) and all volunteers who regularly supervise youth activities. Finally, we ask that you certify, by signing and returning Appendix A, that the above reviews and completion of the MinistrySafe training by all who are required to complete the training has been done. Once completed, we ask that Appendix A be sent to the diocese office and recommend that you keep a copy for your file. It is our expectation that all churches/congregations will have completed this certification by November 30th 2013.

Appendix B will be used by the diocese to individually certify that all clergy canonically resident, licensed or serving in this diocese; all employees of the diocese; all Postulants for Holy Orders; all Volunteers for the diocese who regularly supervise youth activities; and all lay members of diocesan leadership groups.

Appendix B is also recommended to be used by your church/congregation to internally certify compliance by your employees, volunteers, and lay leadership. The diocese DOES NOT need Appendix B to be returned to the diocese office for your employees, volunteers or lay leaders. Those documents and a copy of the MinistrySafe certificate should be maintained in your church records for review by the Diocese Review Committee during its annual review process.

Appendix C is intended as a reference guide to be used in case of an incident or accusation of violation of this policy. You should keep the policy document and Appendix C in an easily accessible place for quick and easy reference.

In Jesus the Messiah,

Neil

+Neil G. Lebhar
Bishop, Gulf Atlantic Diocese
Bishop-in Residence, Church of the Redeemer (Anglican)
Jacksonville, FL

POLICIES
REGARDING ALLEGATIONS AND INCIDENTS
of
SEXUAL MISCONDUCT AND CHILD ABUSE
by
CLERGY, EMPLOYEES AND VOLUNTEERS
in the
GULF ATLANTIC DIOCESE
OF THE ANGLICAN CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA



May 2013

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Policies Regarding Allegations and Incidents of Sexual Misconduct and Child Abuse by Clergy, Employees and Volunteers in the Anglican Gulf Atlantic Diocese, approved by the Bishop and Standing Committee on May 9th, 2013, describe these policies as reference.

INTERPRETATION AND DEFINITIONS:

For purposes of this policy, unless the context requires a different interpretation, a reference to:

- a. “the bishop” shall be deemed to include the ecclesiastical entity authorized to act in the absence of the bishop,
- b. a reference to “the rector” shall be deemed to include the person in charge of a parish where such person has a title other than “rector” (such as vicar, deacon, or lay pastor),
- c. the phrase “the complainant” shall be interpreted to include the words “the alleged victim, if not the complainant” and
- d. as used herein, “congregation” includes all parishes, worshiping communities and any other entity affiliated or in association with the Diocese.

I. THEOLOGICAL STATEMENT

The Holy Scriptures speak of the Church as the Body of Christ, and call its members to live lives that are rooted in Christ and grow together in love, thanksgiving and service to God and neighbor. To be a Christian is to be part of a new creation, a new humanity guided and empowered by the Holy Spirit. As a sign to the world, and to exemplify in its own life and relationships, the Church is to work for a community of truth, justice and mercy, compassion and reconciliation, mutual service and steadfast faithfulness.

In company with the bishops and people of the Anglican Communion, the congregations of the Gulf Atlantic Diocese (GAD) affirm that: every human being is created in the image of God; we are called to be stewards of creation and God values sexuality as good, blessed and purposeful. Sexuality is understood to be a gift to be celebrated with sexual union within the bond of love and covenant of heterosexual marriage. This understanding of sexuality calls for equal respect for all men, women and children as persons made in God's image and for everyone's right to sexual and bodily (physical) integrity.

The Church has always recognized that those chosen for ordained ministry bear a particular responsibility to pattern their lives according to Jesus' teaching. Bishops, priests, deacons and lay leaders are called to be faithful examples of Christian life. Any moral offense by clergy or laity entrusted with pastoral and educational ministries is especially hurtful because it betrays the trust committed to each by the Church to nurture and care for every member.

This manual outlines policies developed to respond to the issue of sexual misconduct and confront the reality of inappropriate sexual misconduct by members of the clergy, lay

employees and volunteers and educate on the issues related to sexual misconduct with special concern for the prevention of incidents and the protection of potential victims. Its purpose is to educate on issues related to sexual misconduct with special concern for the prevention of incidents and the protection of potential victims. **It is required reading for all church leaders, including, but not limited to, any clergy seeking ordination or redeployment and church workers.** It is recommended reading for all Sunday School teachers. The manual is also recommended to the people of the Diocese for comprehensive understanding of the issues involved with sexual misconduct and the ramifications of engagement therein.

II. POLICY STATEMENT

The Bishop's office in cooperation with the Standing Committee is responsible for setting clear diocesan policies and disciplines and diocesan leaders are responsible for knowing and abiding by them. **Any allegation of sexual exploitation or abuse must and will be taken seriously. If the allegation involves behavior directed toward a minor, it shall be reported to the relevant law enforcement authorities in conformity with applicable law.**

Sexual Misconduct Prohibited: The Bishop of the Gulf Atlantic Diocese and the Gulf Atlantic Diocese strictly prohibit sexual misconduct, as defined in this document, by any member of the clergy, aspirant, postulant, candidate or seminarian sponsored by or working in the diocese and by any lay employee, staff person or volunteer working in any capacity for the Gulf Atlantic Diocese, any diocesan related institution or congregation in this diocese.

Protection of Children: The Gulf Atlantic Diocese strictly prohibits interaction with children and youth under the age of 18 at any church sponsored or church related activity or program on or off church property by anyone with a civil or criminal record of child sexual abuse or other sexual crime(s) or who has admitted prior sexual abuse or anyone known to have a paraphiliac diagnosis (e.g. pedophilia, hebephilia, ephebophilia, exhibitionism or voyeurism) as defined in Section IV, below.

Child Abuse Reporting: Anyone, who knows of or has reasonable cause to suspect a child or vulnerable adult has been abused, abandoned, neglected or exploited should contact the appropriate state abuse hotline. All reports are confidential and access to these reports is limited by specific criteria described in the appropriate state's statute(s).

A. IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICY

1. **Adult Misconduct Training:** All members of the clergy canonically resident, licensed or serving in the diocese, and all employees of the diocese are **required** to have a minimum of two hours of diocesan approved initial training on issues of sexual harassment, mentor and colleague relationships and sexual exploitation in pastoral relationship. **It is also required that all employees of diocesan institutions and congregations attend either the diocesan sponsored training or equivalent training in compliance with their insurance carrier's requirements.** Although secretarial and maintenance workers are not required to attend this training, it is strongly recommended they do.

2. **Child Abuse Training:** All members of the clergy canonically resident-licensed or serving in the diocese and all employees of the diocese are required to have a minimum of two (2) hours of initial training on issues of child sexual abuse in a church setting or online. This training shall include a review of all types of child abuse (verbal, physical, neglect, and sexual), youth protection safeguards and a review of the (relevant) state child abuse statutes and reporting requirements. **It is also required that all employees of diocesan institutions and congregations and adult volunteers who regularly supervise youth activities in diocesan institutions and programs and congregations take the diocesan training or equivalent training in compliance with their insurance carrier's requirements.** Volunteer Sunday School teachers who work with children during public church school hours in places where other adults are present are not required to have this training, but it is recommended that they be encouraged to attend. (The currently approved training is MinistrySafe.com)

3. **Background Checks:**
 - a) The Gulf Atlantic Diocese's policy requires complete background checks of all members of the clergy seeking canonical residence or license in the diocese prior to the acceptance of Letters Dimissory or issuance of a License to Officiate. The Bishop's office will not sign Letters of Agreement for parishes calling clergy without the complete results of the Background Check available. It is the responsibility of the parish to notify the Diocesan Office, to begin a background check as soon as the vestry has made a decision of whom they would like to call. It is recommended that a call not be considered final until the results of the background check are received. The parish is responsible for the cost of the background check; however, assistance may be requested in special cases.
 - b) Each member of the clergy with residence or license in the diocese will be required to update their background check on a five year rotating schedule to be determined by the diocese.
 - c) Each member of the clergy is required to attend a diocesan sponsored training class or program on the prevention of adult misconduct and child Abuse within 6 months of employment (or volunteering) in the Diocese. If an individual has attended these classes in another diocese, he/she may submit certification that the training has been completed in lieu of attending a second class or program. (The currently approved training is MinistrySafe.com)
 - d) The diocese will conduct background checks as follows: of all individuals applying in the diocese as a Postulant for Holy Orders and may be conducted again prior to ordination to the Diaconate at the discretion of the bishop; of all members of the clergy seeking canonical residence or license in the diocese prior to the acceptance of Letters Dimissory or issuance of a License to Officiate and of all employees, lay or clergy, of the diocese **prior** to employment.

- e) It is also required that congregations and diocesan institutions conduct equivalent background checks of all volunteers who regularly supervise youth activities (excluding unpaid Sunday School teachers) in diocesan institutions, programs and congregations; and of all lay employees prior to employment in compliance with their insurance carrier's requirements.
- f) **Background checks include the following:**
 - (1) Oxford Document Management Company (ODM) or another approved agency will conduct a background check that will include:
 - (a) Inquiries of all bishops having past or present canonical authority over the individual, all schools attended by the individual during the past five years, and all employers of the individual during the past five years. Those coming from the Episcopal Church may substitute a previous senior warden in place of their bishop. If the individual has had more than one employer for over five years, then inquiries will be made of the two most recent employers. In the case of clergy, "employer" shall be the senior wardens of congregations served during the past five years.
 - (b) Credit Bureau Record Check: This check is required for clergy, treasurers, bookkeepers, check signers, and those having access to church credit cards only.
 - (c) Motor Vehicle Record Check.
 - (d) Sexual Misconduct and Criminal Record Check

NOTE: ODM or an equivalent agency will not divulge, furnish or make accessible to any person, or use in any other way, any confidential information other than as specifically set forth by written instruction of the diocese. Completed background checks will be evaluated and stored on behalf of the bishop by his Canon to the Ordinary or the Diocesan Administrator. ODM retains and stores all records under lock and key for a minimum period of five years, unless instructed otherwise by the diocese. Congregations may use the services of ODM or other equivalent agencies at congregational expense to conduct background checks.

- 2) Local criminal history records check through local law enforcement agencies.
- 3) Statewide criminal history records check through the appropriate state law enforcement agencies.

4. Pastoral Counseling and Spiritual Direction: The Gulf Atlantic Diocese requires that members of the clergy and other pastoral caregivers have ongoing professional supervision or refer an individual to professional counseling after meeting for six (6) sessions. **Fees or donations for pastoral counseling are prohibited.** Any person charging fees for counseling outside the scope of church employment must possess appropriate professional credentials and **proof of separate professional liability insurance** including coverage for sexual misconduct, in force at all times. Persons practicing formal spiritual direction shall submit that ministry to peer or supervisory review with a spiritual advisor approved by the bishop.

III. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

These policies acknowledge the following concerns:

1. Children, adolescents, the infirm and elderly are particularly vulnerable to the tragic consequences of broken covenants and abusive treatment. Special care must be taken to protect their individual rights and personal integrity.
2. The protection of children shall be of utmost concern. Allegations of sexual misconduct and/or child abuse within the church will be taken seriously. Allegations of sexual misconduct and/or child abuse within the church deserve a response from the diocese and will be acted upon in a timely manner.
3. A person can be wrongly accused of sexual misconduct.
4. The bishop cannot be the only one to actually assess or evaluate the substance of allegations. An approach involving legal, mental health and pastoral components is desirable as a uniform procedure ensures all cases will be treated with compassion and justice. The protection of the complainant(s) and the complainant's family will be of paramount concern.
5. The bishop holds both pastoral and disciplinary responsibilities. The bishop's pastoral concern is directed to the alleged offender(s) as well as the alleged victim(s) and congregation(s) involved.
6. The bishop and any clergy involved should refrain from placing conversations regarding allegations of sexual misconduct within a sacramental framework (e.g. confession) and are well-advised to show concern for privacy of all individuals concerned.
7. The bishop may refer cases for further investigation under relevant canonical procedures when deemed appropriate.
8. With limited exceptions occurring in a privileged relationship (as defined in the relevant state's statutes), anyone subject to this Policy who learns of suspected sexual misconduct (i) by anyone subject to this Policy or (ii) against anyone intended to be protected by this Policy has a

responsibility to report the information to appropriate ecclesiastical authorities promptly.

9. Leaders who learn of sexual misconduct of colleagues, even if the information is gained in a counseling setting, have an ethical responsibility to follow up on this information by reporting the information to the appropriate ecclesiastical authorities.

IV. **DEFINITIONS OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT IN PASTORAL CARE**

Reference local law for the purposes of and as used in these policies and procedures:

ADVOCATES are persons appointed by the bishop to assist the complainants and alleged victims in understanding and participating in the disciplinary processes of the Church, to obtain assistance to formulate and submit an appropriate charge and in obtaining assistance in spiritual matters. Advocates are not to serve as legal advisors or pastors.

CHILD OR YOUTH means any unmarried person under the age of 18 years who has not been emancipated by order of the court.

CHILD ABUSE means any willful act or threatened act resulting in any physical, mental, or sexual injury or harm that causes, or is likely to cause, the child's physical, mental, or emotional health to be significantly impaired. Abuse of a child includes acts or omissions. Corporal discipline of a child by a parent or legal custodian for disciplinary purposes does not in itself constitute abuse when it does not result in harm to the child.

CONSULTANT(S) are person(s) appointed by the bishop to consult with and advise the member of the clergy accused of sexual misconduct and his or her legal advisors at reasonable times prior to the issuance of a Presentment. The consultant shall explain the rights of the member of the clergy and the alternatives.

DATING RELATIONSHIPS are excluded from the definition of Sexual Exploitation. These would include relationships in which two parties are publicly engaged intending a Christian marriage or when two persons are exploring a relationship that may lead to a Christian marriage. In such situations, the relationship is to be conducted with the knowledge of the rector and the bishop and with the spiritual guidance of at least two pastoral care givers within the diocese.

PARAPHILIAIC BEHAVIOR includes:

- a) Pedophilia: a sexual disorder which includes recurrent intense sexual urges and/or sexual fantasies involving sexual activity with a prepubescent child or children (generally age 13 or younger), the person has acted on these urges, or is markedly distressed by them,

and the person is at least 16 years old and at least five years older than the child who is the subject of the urges and/or fantasies.

- b) Hebephilia: a sexual disorder in which a male offender prefers adolescent females and has acted on these urges or is markedly distressed by them.
- c) Ephebophilia: a sexual disorder in which a male offender prefers young males and has acted on these urges or is markedly distressed by them.
- d) Exhibitionism: a sexual disorder which includes recurrent intense sexual urges and/or sexually arousing fantasies involving the exposure of one's genitals to an unsuspecting stranger and has acted on these urges or is markedly distressed by them.
- e) Voyeurism: a sexual disorder which includes recurrent, intense sexual urges and/or sexually arousing fantasies involving the act of observing unsuspecting people, usually strangers, who are either naked, or in the process of disrobing, or engaged in sexual activity, and the person has acted on these urges, or is markedly distressed by them.

PASTORAL RELATIONSHIP is a relationship between a member of the clergy, employee or volunteer and any person to whom such member of the clergy, employee or volunteer provides formal counseling, pastoral care, spiritual direction or spiritual guidance or from whom such member of the clergy, employee or volunteer has received a confession or confidential or privileged information.

PRIVILEGED RELATIONSHIP is a relationship between a person and a member of the clergy in which communications between the person and the member of the clergy are deemed confidential. (Reference local law for definition)

RESPONSE TEAM is drawn from psychologists, counselors, attorneys and members of the clergy or other persons appointed by the Bishop of the Gulf Atlantic Diocese to provide pastoral, emotional and spiritual support to congregations in crisis.

SEXUAL ABUSE implies acts of a sexual nature committed in the presence of a vulnerable adult without that person's informed consent. **Sexual abuse must be reported to law enforcement or child protective services with the very limited exception of information received in a Privileged Relationship.**

SEXUAL ABUSE of a CHILD For purposes of the policies of the GAD, sexual abuse of children also includes the obscene or pornographic photographing, filming or depiction of children for commercial purposes or exploitation, the employment, use, persuasion, inducement, enticement or coercion of any child to

engage in or assist any other person to engage in any sexually explicit conduct, or any simulation of any sexually explicit conduct for the purpose of producing any visual depiction of any sexually explicit conduct, or the rape, molestation, incest, prostitution or other form of sexual exploitation of children.

SEXUAL MISCONDUCT refers to:

- a) Sexual abuse or sexual molestation of any person, including but not limited to, any sexual involvement or sexual contact with a person who is a minor or who is legally incompetent.
- b) Sexual harassment (unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, sexually motivated physical contact or other unwelcome verbal or physical conduct or communication of a sexual nature) in a situation where there is an employment, mentor or colleague relationship between the persons involved, including but not limited to, sexually oriented humor or language, questions or comments about sexual behavior or preference unrelated to employment qualifications, undesired physical contact, inappropriate comments about clothing or physical appearance, or repeated requests for social engagements.
- c) Sexual coercion includes the use of physical or emotional power to gain sexual gratification.
- d) Sexual exploitation, includes, but is not limited to, the development of or the attempt to develop a sexual relationship between a member of the clergy, employee or volunteer affiliated with the GAD and a person with whom he/she has a pastoral relationship whether or not there is apparent consent from the individual. Sexual exploitation includes activity during the course of a pastoral relationship such as sexual involvement or sexually demeaning comments. **The apparent consent of a possible victim to the sexual or romantic relationship seldom determines whether there has been sexual exploitation. The imbalance of power between the church worker and the person in a pastoral relationship may undermine the validity of such consent. The fact that sexual activity is initiated by someone other than the church worker does not relieve that worker of responsibility, nor does it make sexual activity under those circumstances acceptable.**

V. RESPONDING TO COMPLAINTS OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

A. NOTIFICATION

1. All complaints of sexual misconduct by a member of the clergy, lay employee or volunteer of the diocese will be reported immediately to the bishop.
2. The head of any diocesan agency or institution or the rector of a parish or

clergy in charge of a congregation who receives a complaint about a lay employee or volunteer will notify the Bishop, Wardens, and/or lay leadership boards.

3. If required by law, the bishop will refer a complaint alleging abuse of a minor or incapacitated adult to the appropriate law enforcement officials immediately. Refer to the reference guide or other readily available resources for the officials within your jurisdiction. The bishop will comply with the reporting and notification requirements as contained in the diocesan, parish or other liability policies for insurance claims.

B. RESPONSE

1. Upon receiving a complaint of sexual misconduct, the bishop or rector or clergy in charge will personally assure the complainant that the church is concerned and that the complaint will be investigated promptly and thoroughly.
2. Any member of the clergy who believes himself or herself to be under imputation of sexual misconduct may request the bishop to begin an investigation. The bishop is required to see that the requested investigation is conducted.
3. If the alleged offender is a lay employee or volunteer of the diocese, employment or volunteer activities may be suspended by the bishop, the rector of the parish, clergy in charge, or other person in charge of a congregation until such time as the allegations of sexual misconduct or child abuse are resolved. This leave is without prejudice (i.e. does not imply guilt or innocence of the person under investigation) and payment of benefits to the employee may continue at the discretion of the bishop.
 - a) If the alleged offender(s) is a/are lay employee(s) or volunteer(s) of an agency related to the diocese or congregation, employment or volunteer activities may be suspended by the employer or person responsible until such time as the allegations of sexual misconduct or child abuse are resolved. This leave is without prejudice and does not imply guilt or innocence of the person(s) under investigation; and payment of benefits to the employee(s) may continue at the discretion of the employer or person responsible. The employer or person responsible will notify the bishop of the suspension.
4. The bishop, or anyone who may subsequently be involved in the process, will not, at any time following the first receipt of the complaint, hear the sacramental confession of any person(s) involved.

VI. APPLICABILITY

The policies contained in this manual are applicable to all members of the clergy canonically resident, licensed or serving in the Gulf Atlantic Diocese, to all lay employees and church volunteers affiliated with any activities and programs of the Gulf Atlantic Diocese, including any committee, commission or similar body of the Gulf Atlantic Diocese.

This manual is provided as a resource to the congregations in the Gulf Atlantic Diocese. Insurance companies report a disturbing increase in claims alleging sexual misconduct against members of the clergy and secular mental health practitioners. A congregation's adoption of written standards of conduct may be required by insurers as a condition of coverage. Strong warranty language in some policies requires careful compliance on the part of insured entities. Failure to comply with policy standards could result in denial of insurance coverage in the event of a claim.

To Rectors and Wardens: We believe that the policies set forth in this manual represent an appropriate standard of care, and we urge each congregation to adopt them as their own (Appendix A). However, this manual is not intended as a substitute for understanding the conditions of your particular congregation's insurance coverage. You have an obligation to yourself, your staff, your congregation and the diocese to ensure the conditions to your insurance coverage are met. Read your policy and call the Diocesan Office if you have any questions. **The diocese assumes no responsibility for a congregation's non-compliance with its insurance carrier's policy.**

Documenting Compliance

The bishop is required to notify all members of the clergy canonically resident, licensed and serving in the diocese, employees of the diocese, Postulants for Holy Orders, volunteers for the diocese who regularly supervise youth activities, lay members of Diocesan Council, and other diocesan leadership groups, including boards of any diocesan agency or institution, of the contents of and requirements of this manual. The manual will be reviewed annually by the Standing Committee and, if changes are made, a revised copy will be provided to each of the listed parties with a signed receipt required (Appendix B).

It will be the responsibility of the rector of each parish or clergy in charge of a congregation to ensure all clergy, volunteers who regularly supervise youth activities, vestry members and employees (full or part-time) affiliated with any activities and programs of the parish are made aware of the parish or congregation's policies and that those who are required to complete approved training do so. Appendix B may be used as an example of acknowledgment of receipt of parish policies and procedures. **The diocese assumes no responsibility for a parish or congregation's non-compliance with their insurance carrier's policy on acknowledgment of receipt of parish or congregation's policies and procedures or insurance carrier training requirements.**

Appendix A

CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE

We _____
(insert church name) hereby certify that the Congregation has adopted the POLICIES REGARDING ALLEGATIONS AND INCIDENTS of SEXUAL MISCONDUCT AND CHILD ABUSE by CLERGY, EMPLOYEES AND VOLUNTEERS in the GULF ATLANTIC DIOCESE OF THE ANGLICAN CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA.

And we further certify that the congregation has obtained and will maintain at all times, sexual misconduct insurance coverage.

We further certify that all clergy; volunteers who regularly supervise youth activities; vestry members and employees (full or part-time) affiliated with any activities and programs of the Congregation who are required to complete diocesan approved training have done so. (The currently approved training is MinistrySafe.com)

Rector/Priest-in-Charge Date _____
Senior Warden _____
Date

Return this form to the Gulf Atlantic Diocesan Office.

**Gulf Atlantic Diocese
2150 Riverside Avenue
Jacksonville, FL 32204-4417**

Appendix B

Acknowledgment of Receipt of Policies

Clergy, Lay Employees, Volunteers and Postulants *

I hereby acknowledge that I have received a copy of the POLICIES REGARDING ALLEGATIONS AND INCIDENTS of SEXUAL MISCONDUCT AND CHILD ABUSE by CLERGY, EMPLOYEES AND VOLUNTEERS in the GULF ATLANTIC DIOCESE OF THE ANGLICAN CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA adopted by the Bishop and Standing Committee, May 9th, 2013, and that I understand its content.

Please check **one** of the following: Clergy Lay

Signature

Date

Print Name

Position

Parish/Church/Congregation

City

***Please check one of the following:**

- I certify that I have completed the required diocesan approved training required in this manual. The currently approved training is MinistrySafe.com. Please attach a copy of your certificate to this form.
- I have not completed the required diocesan approved training but will complete the training within six months of the above date of my signature on this document.

*** This receipt must be signed by all clergy canonically resident, licensed or serving in this diocese; by all employees of the diocese and its churches; by all Postulants for Holy Orders; all Volunteers for the diocese who regularly supervise youth activities; and all lay members of diocesan leadership groups.**

Return this form to:

**Gulf Atlantic Diocese
2150 Riverside Avenue
Jacksonville, FL 32204-4417**

Appendix C

Child Abuse Reporting Websites and Contact Information

Florida Department of Children and Families
1317 Winewood Boulevard
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0700
Phone (850) 487-6100 • Fax (850) 488-1319

Florida Abuse Hotline Telephone: 1-800-962-2873

This toll free number is available 24/7; counselors are waiting to assist you.

Phone Options

Press 1 to report suspected abuse, neglect or abandonment of a child

Press 2 to report suspected abuse, neglect or exploitation of the elderly or a vulnerable adult

Press 3 to verify the identity of a child protective investigator who recently visited you

Press 4 for information/referrals to other services in your local area.

Be prepared to provide specific descriptions of the incident(s) or the circumstances contributing to the risk of harm, including who was involved, what occurred, when and where it occurred, why it happened, the extent of any injuries sustained, what the victim(s) said happened, and any other pertinent information are very important. Information callers should have ready includes:

Name, date of birth (or approximate age), race, and gender, for all adults and children involved.

Addresses or another means to locate the subjects of the report, including current location. Information regarding disabilities and/or limitations of the victims (especially for vulnerable adult victims).

Relationship of the alleged perpetrator to the child or adult victim(s).

Other relevant information that would expedite an investigation, such as directions to the victim (especially in rural areas) and potential risks to the investigator, should be given to the Abuse Hotline Counselor.

FAX: To make a report, via fax, please SEND a detailed written report with your name and contact telephone or FAX contact information using the Florida Abuse Hotline's [fax reporting form](#) to: **1-800-914-0004**.

WEB REPORTING: Web reporting should not be used for situations requiring immediate attention. Please contact the Hotline's toll free reporting number if you believe a child or vulnerable adult is at imminent risk of harm.

To make a report via the Florida Abuse Hotline's web reporting option, please gather all of your information in advance and click the following link to access the web reporting option: <http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/abuse/report/>

NOTIFICATION OF REPORT: Telephone reporters will always be told prior to concluding your conversation, whether the information provided has been accepted as a report. Fax reporters will only be notified if they request notification in the designated area on the [fax reporting form](#). Please do not fax multiple allegations of abuse or neglect for multiple families at a time. By submitting them one at a time, they will likely get processed faster.

Georgia: Division of Family and Children Services

Link: <http://dfcs.dhs.georgia.gov/how-report-child-abuse>

Alabama: Department of Human Resources

Link:

http://alcoholism.about.com/gi/o.htm?zi=1/XJ&zTi=1&sdn=alcoholism&cdn=health&tm=29&gps=180_11_1226_668&f=00&tt=13&bt=7&bts

[=7&zu=http%3A//www.dhr.state.al.us/services/Child_Protective_Services/Child_Protective_Services.aspx](http://www.dhr.state.al.us/services/Child_Protective_Services/Child_Protective_Services.aspx)

Mississippi: Department of Human Services

Link: http://www.mdhs.state.ms.us/fcs_prot.html

Louisiana: Department of Children and Family Services

<http://dss.louisiana.gov/index.cfm?md=pagebuilder&tmp=home&pid=109>