

MANDATORY REPORTING RESPONSIBILITIES

The Archdiocese of Milwaukee requires all adults to exercise reporting responsibilities for any suspected physical or sexual abuse of minors, whether or not designated as a mandatory reporter under Wisconsin law.

A volunteer in any program should discuss any concerns about sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional maltreatment, or neglect of a minor with their immediate supervisor (such as a DRE or teacher), and cooperate together in making a report to local law enforcement officials or local child protective service agencies.

Any paid personnel should engage in direct reporting to local law enforcement officials or child protective service agencies. They should notify their supervisor (such as a pastor or principal) that a report is being made and seek consultation as needed.

A pastor, parish director or principal must notify either the Director of Sexual Abuse Prevention & Response Services (SAPRS) at 414-769-3436 or Scott Weyda, Associate Superintendent of Schools, at 414-769-3359 that a report has been made. In addition, the Director of SAPRS and Scott Weyda are available for consultation about reporting.

Concerns about lack of cooperation or resistance to reporting should be taken to the pastor, principal, the Director of SAPRS or Scott Weyda, as one chooses.

The State provides immunity for any professional who reports suspected abuse. The law does not require absolute proof. The "good faith" of any person required to report is presumed. Reporting must occur promptly once a problem is suspected, and failure to report may incur legal penalties.

Illegal behaviors should be referred to law enforcement officials; usually someone trained in handling sensitive crimes with children is available. Sexual assault and abuse are illegal behaviors. Concerns about a child's welfare in his or her own home are usually best referred to child protection agencies.



Sexual assault is defined as any kind of unwanted sexual contact or sexual intercourse with the clothed or unclothed intimate parts of another person's body without his or her consent. Under Wisconsin law, minors under age eighteen may not consent to sexual intercourse and minors under sixteen may not consent to sexual contact. While Wisconsin law is silent about whether a minor who is sixteen or seventeen may consent to sexual contact, any sexual contact with a minor by an adult in any ministerial role is unacceptable. Exposing minors to pornography or soliciting minors for sexual activity is also illegal. All such behaviors should be reported to law enforcement officials (rather than to child protective service agencies). This may include sexual abuse by one student toward another as well as between adults and minors.

On the following page is a listing of phone numbers for child protective service agencies for each of the ten counties served by the archdiocese. Complete information for all child protective service agencies in Wisconsin is available at:

www.dhfs.state.wi.us/Children/CPS/cpswimap.HTM

DODGE COUNTY	
Department of Human Services	920-386-3750 or after hours 920-887-6713
FOND DU LAC COUNTY	
Department of Social Services	920-929-3400 or after hours 920-929-3391
KENOSHA COUNTY	
Department of Human Services	262-605-6582 or after hours 262-657-7188
MILWAUKEE COUNTY	
Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare	414-220-SAFE (7233) or after hours 414-220-SAFE (7233)
OZAUKEE COUNTY	
Department of Social Services	262-238-8200 or after hours 262-238-8436
RACINE COUNTY	
Human Services Department	262-538-6321 or after hours 262-638-6321
SHEBOYGAN COUNTY	
Health and Human Services Department	920-459-6418 or after hours 920-459-3111
WALWORTH COUNTY	
Department of Health and Human Services	262-741-3200 or 800-365-1587 or after hours 262-741-3200 or 800-741-3200
WASHINGTON COUNTY	
Department of Social Services	262-335-4610 or after hours Resource Center 262-306-2222
WAUKESHA COUNTY	
Department of Health and Human Services	262-548-7212 or after hours 262-548-7666

RECEIVING DISCLOSURES OF SEXUAL ABUSE FROM CHILDREN

Do...

1. Practice your response before you are in the real situation.
2. Pay attention to your body language. Give the child signals that you are hearing what he/she says and that you can help.
3. Let the child describe what happened in his or her own words. If you need to ask questions, make them open-ended (e.g., "Tell me about that"). Do not ask questions that suggest a particular answer.
4. Gather only the minimum amount of information necessary to meet the threshold of reasonable suspicion. Multiple interviews are painful for the child and can weaken the child's case in court.
5. Maintain a calm demeanor. Avoid showing embarrassment, disgust, anger or shock. Let the child know it was brave to share something about a difficult subject.
6. Believe the child. It is damaging for a child who is telling the truth to not be believed, and false reporting is uncommon. It is the responsibility of investigators to determine if abuse has occurred.
7. Reassure the child. Children may feel ashamed or less lovable because of the abuse. Tell the child "What happened was not your fault and I'm glad you told me."
8. Tell the child you will do everything you can to protect the child. Be honest with the child about your requirement to respond and about the steps you will take.

9. If you must tell someone else in your setting, consider inviting the child to listen as you tell this person what has been said to you and to add or correct anything, which is inaccurate. It is better to bring the principal (or DRE, etc.) to the child's classroom than to take the child to the principal's office.
10. As soon as possible, write down the actual words used in the disclosure and in your interaction with the child.

DON'T...

1. Do NOT try to determine for yourself if the allegation is valid or invalid. This is the role of law enforcement and Child Protective Services.
2. Do NOT try to talk a child out of what he/she is saying. If you are skeptical, do NOT express your doubts to the child. This is a task for investigators to sort through, and you can express your doubts to them.
3. Do NOT attempt to find out the details in a group of children. Sexual abuse is not an appropriate subject for classmates to discuss.
4. Do NOT suggest to a child that you think he/she may have been abused. This can be damaging and is problematic in cases in which abuse did happen but the information was elicited through the use of leading questions.
5. Do NOT gossip about these allegations to friends, colleagues, or other professionals. Follow strict rules about confidentiality and remember that legal processes may be entailed.