



Since 2002, the Catholic Church in the U.S.A. has followed a set of rules initiated by the bishops of the country and approved by the Vatican for dealing with sexual abuse of minors by priests or deacons: The Essential Norms for Diocesan/Eparchial Policies Dealing with Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Priests or Deacons.

Every U.S. diocese/eparchy is required...

- To have a **written policy** for dealing with sexual abuse of minors by priests, deacons and other Church personnel
- To appoint a **victim assistance coordinator**, who is available for the immediate pastoral care of persons who report having been sexually abused as a minor by a priest or deacon
- To **report** allegations concerning child sexual abuse to **civil authorities** and to cooperate with the civil investigations
- To establish a **review board** of at least five persons, mostly members of the **laity**, who counsel the bishop on allegations and review local policies dealing with sexual abuse of minors
- To investigate **promptly** and **objectively** any allegation of sexual abuse of minors by a priest or deacon
- To **remove** offending priests or deacons **permanently** from Church ministry
- To **prohibit the transfer** of offending priests or deacons for ministerial assignment in another diocese or eparchy
- To receive necessary **background information** before permitting a priest or deacon to exercise ministry in a diocese or eparchy
- To **protect** the rights of accusers and of the accused

For more information and to read the full text of the norms, visit:

<http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/child-and-youth-protection/charter.cfm>