

SAFEGUARDING POLICY FOR CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE PERSONS

DRAFT CHILD SAFE GUARDING POLICY

Let the little children come to me (Matthew 19:14)



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INTRODUCTION

The Archdiocesan Safe Guarding Policy and Procedure (**“Safe Policy”**) lays down principles and guidelines specifically for the protection of children (including all minors). Hence, though the title refers to children, its ambit extends to all minors. Everyone working in the Catholic Archdiocese of Lagos (the **“Archdiocese”**) has an obligation to ensure that children's fundamental rights are respected.

Consequently, the Archdiocese undertakes to do all in her power to create a safe environment where the welfare of children is paramount. This duty of care extends to the many and varied ways that the Archdiocese shares in all the children's daily lives in our communities.

At the same time, all the people working for and with the Archdiocese must become aware of their obligation to protect children. There is a need to create and sustain a “culture of safety” for our children. They need to be cherished, nurtured and safeguarded by all.

To ensure that this objective of the Archdiocese is achieved in line with the *Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria Guidelines, 2017*, this Safe Policy considers the divergent context of our society. It sets out to achieve a threefold purpose (i.e., pastoral, disciplinary and preventive). It also provides structures and procedures and training in child safeguarding for all personnel working in the Archdiocese.

This Safe Policy document, which the Archbishop of Lagos presents, is a first step in articulating the policy and procedures for the personnel working in the Archdiocese. Its content should be incorporated into every aspect of our planning and practices.

The Archdiocese is committed to working in partnership with civil authorities to ensure that all aspects of child welfare are managed promptly, professionally, and justly.

Our hope and prayer are that this Safe Policy document will guide a healthy, happy, safe, and secure environment for all our children.



SECTION 1: GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Archdiocese is guided in making this Safe Policy document by the following principles we believe are universal:

- 1.1** Every child shall be cherished, nurtured, and affirmed as a gift from God.
- 1.2** Every child has an inherent right to personal dignity and bodily integrity.
- 1.3** All children, whatever their gender, culture, race, language, religious beliefs, or social status, have a right to protection.
- 1.4** Everyone working within the Archdiocese has an obligation to ensure that children's fundamental rights are respected.



SECTION 2: DEFINITIONS

The following definitions are for this Safe Policy only:

2.1 Minor

Any person who has not yet attained eighteen years of age (Cf. SST 2001). Also, a person who habitually has the imperfect use of reason (Revised SST 2010) is considered equivalent to a minor (Cf. art. 6 § 1, 1^o SST).

2.2 Vulnerable Persons

“Vulnerable persons” means any person in state of infirmity, physical or mental deficiency, or deprivation of personal liberty which, in fact, even occasionally, limits their ability to understand or to want or otherwise resist offence.

2.2 Personnel

Includes all persons (clergy, religious and laity) employed by, are under personal contract of employment with or volunteers in any of the entities of the Archdiocese.

2.3 Archdiocese

Encompasses the Catholic Archdiocese of Lagos according to canon 369 of the *Code of Canon Law*; all parishes, institutions, organisations, and other canonical juridical persons whose competent ecclesiastical superior is the Archbishop of Lagos.

2.4 Child Abuse

Refers to any form of mistreatment of a child which includes abuse or neglect by inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm.

2.4.1 Child Emotional Abuse

Refers to the emotional ill-treatment or rejection of a child by conveying sentiments that a child is unloved, inadequate, or even worthless; or by overprotection and limiting exploration, learning, and regular social interaction.

2.4.2 Child Physical Abuse

Includes acts of violence such as hitting, shaking, kicking, suffocation, misuse of medication, applying inappropriate sanctions or otherwise causing physical harm to a child and failure to act to protect the child from such.

2.4.3. Child Sexual Harassment

Refers to touching a child in certain parts of the child's body, looking at the child in a lascivious manner, making comments, or sharing sexual and inappropriate jokes with a child.

2.4.3 Child Sexual Abuse

This shall include, but not be limited to any sexual act between an adult and a minor; soliciting sexual acts or sexual materials from a minor; possession of child pornography (the acquisition,

possession (even temporary) or distribution of pornographic images of minors for purposes of sexual gratification by whatever means or using whatever technology); prostitution, providing sexual materials to a minor; conversations and/or propositions of a sexual nature, performing a sexual act or the indecent exposure of the private or intimate parts of the body under circumstances where it is reasonably likely that the act may be witnessed by a minor; and any offence involving sexual conduct committed against a minor that is prohibited by civil or canon law.

2.4.4 Child Pornography

“Child pornography” means: any representation of a minor, regardless of the means used, involved in explicit sexual activities, whether real or simulated and any representation of sexual organs of minors for a primarily sexual purpose.

2.5 Child Neglect

Refers to the omission or the failure to protect a child, which includes deprivation of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, intellectual stimulation, safety, and failure to give appropriate medical care by a responsible adult who has a duty of care towards the child.

2.6 Abuse of Power

Involves sexualising a pastoral relationship. It involves sexual exploitation of the imbalance of power inherent in a ministerial relationship between a representative of a Church entity and the child or minor with whom a ministerial relationship exists. 'Abuse Within Ministerial Relationships' would include abuses which transpire between one Church representative and another Church representative in this case a child or minor for whom there is an imbalance of power.



SECTION 3: RECOGNISING CHILD ABUSE

3.1 Recognising when child abuse has occurred should be the responsibility of every adult, but it is not the individual's responsibility to establish whether or not child abuse has taken place. However, one does have the responsibility to alert the appropriate authorities to take the necessary actions to protect a child.

3.2 The following information should be helpful, so that one may become more alert to the signs of possible abuse:

Physical Abuse	Emotional Abuse	Sexual Abuse	Neglect
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unexplained bruising, or marks of injuries on any part of the body including hand or finger marks. - Cigarette burns - Bite marks - Broken bones - Scalds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Failure to thrive, particularly if the child gains or loses weight in other circumstances e.g. when away from home - Sudden speech disorders - Developmental delay: physically or emotionally - Withdrawal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pain, itching bruising or bleeding in the genital area. - Sexually transmitted disease - Vaginal discharge or infection - Discomfort when walking or sitting down - Abdominal pains - Pregnancy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Constant hunger sometimes stealing food from other children - Constantly dirty or smelly. - Constantly underweight or loss of weight - Being left alone or unsupervised. - Inappropriate dress for conditions
Changes in Behaviour	Changes in Behaviour	Changes in Behaviour	Changes in Behaviour
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fear of parents being approached. - Temper outbursts - Flinching when approached or touched. - Aggression - Depression - Withdrawn - Running away 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sulking, - Hair twisting, - Rocking - Unable to play - Fear of making mistakes - Self-harm - Fear of parents being approached regarding their behaviour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unexplained aggression, withdrawn - fear of being left with a specific person/people - Nightmares, - Running away - Sexual knowledge or sexual language beyond age; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tiredness - Not seeking medical assistance - Failing to keep appointments - Having a few friends - Withdrawn - Constant sadness

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bedwetting; - Self-harm sometimes leading to suicide attempts; - Secrets they cannot share; - Substance or drug abuse; - unexplained sources of money; - avoids making friends; - sexually explicit actions towards adults 	
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Note: These definitions and indicators are neither definitive nor exhaustive. They serve only as a guide to assist in recognising possible child abuse.



SECTION 4: GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF THE SAFE POLICY

4.1. The Archdiocese is committed to the best practices which protect all children from harm.

4.1.1 The Archdiocese shall promote an understanding of the child's safeguarding needs and the acceptable modes of behaviour to reduce the risks of harm and create a safe environment for our children.

4.1.2 The Archdiocese shall keep under review all structures put in place and actions taken on the creation of awareness, prevention, reporting and responding to all forms of child abuse.

4.2 The Safe Policy applies to all personnel, partners of various Institutions; and groups including independent contractors working in various Archdiocese institutions.



SECTION 5: GUIDELINES OF THE SAFE POLICY

5.1 Understanding good practice that can be applied in everyday work and life situations must be a priority at all times.

5.2 Among the behavioural patterns to be followed are:

- Treat all children with respect. Be mindful of their boundaries.
- Provide a good example of acceptable behaviour in a way that is in line with and truthful to the Gospel values and the Church's mission.
- Be visible to others when working with children and maintain an appropriate distance.
- Challenge and report potentially abusive behaviour.
- Help children develop a sense of their rights and know what to do if they are violated.
- Develop a culture that enables children to talk openly about their contacts with Personnel of the Archdiocese, or others.
- Avoid taking children to your home where they will be alone with you. Choose open, public locations for meetings.
- Whenever possible, in meeting a child, it is advisable to have another responsible adult present.
- Do not develop relationships with children that can be deemed in any way exploitative or abusive.
- Do not do things of a personal nature that a child can do for him/herself (e.g. grooming, dressing or bathing).
- Do not show favouritism or spend excessive amounts of time with one child.
- Never sleep in the same room or bed with a child with whom one is working.
- Never act in ways that are intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade a child.
- Never condone or participate in behaviour that is illegal, unsafe or abusive.
- Avoid inappropriate use of social media, the internet, videos and photographs. Those with pornographic contents are totally forbidden.
- Never make suggestive remarks that are offensive or abusive.
- Never behave physically in a sexually provocative manner.
- Never engage in, or allow sexually provocative games, with children.
- Never touch a child in an inappropriate or culturally insensitive way.

- Never engage in transactional sex in any form or prostitution with children.

5.3 Among the psychological patterns to be noted and followed are:

- Be aware of the power-relationships between an adult or a staff member with a child
- Never take any psychological advantage of a child.
- Use language that mentally and emotionally empowers a child.
- Never degrade or humiliate a child.
- Show neutrality and impartiality to children regardless of race, culture, age, gender, disability, family background, social status or religious beliefs.
- Make other adults aware of children's proper treatment, thus minimising the risks of child abuse.
- Ensure that other adults are clear on what steps are to be taken when concerns arise regarding children's safety.
- Keep in mind that actions, no matter how well-intended, can be subject to misinterpretation or even malicious intent by a third party.
- Remember that the Archdiocese must treat any accusation with seriousness and investigate the matter fully once reported.



SECTION 6: RESPONDING TO CHILD ABUSE

6.1 The Archdiocese will ensure an environment conducive to disclosure, irrespective of whether the abuse involves a child or an adult as subject, observer, object or complainant.

6.2 The Archdiocese shall:

- Take seriously any concern raised.
- Take positive steps to ensure the protection of children who are the subject of any concern.
- Support children who are the subjects of possible child abuse, and personnel or other adults who raise the concerns.
- Act appropriately and effectively in investigating, and in cooperating with, any subsequent process of investigations.
- Be guided by the child safeguarding process and the principle of the best interests of the child.
- Listen to the child who may be involved, and take seriously his/her views and concerns. In doing so, it is important to assure him/her that he/she is not to blame; they are doing the “right thing” in reporting, and that all will be done to help them.
- Work in partnership with parents/guardians, caregivers, and other professionals to ensure the child's protection.
- Make no promises that cannot be kept – particularly about secrecy – and let the person know that the information will be passed on to the appropriate authorities.
- Ensure that those involved in child safeguarding receive proper training and support in their role.
- Develop effective links and cooperation with relevant agencies.
- Provide spiritual and psychological assistance to the victims.
- Ensure that all Personnel of the Archdiocese understand their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse, and their duty to refer such concerns to the appropriate authority.
- Adopt procedures for dealing with concerns about possible child abuse.



SECTION 7: ARCHDIOCESAN SAFEGUARDING STRUCTURES

7.0 The official structures for dealing with child safeguarding concerns in the Archdiocese are:

- i. Parish/Institution's Child Safeguarding Committee,
- ii. Deanery Child Safeguarding Committee,
- iii. Archdiocesan Designated Child Safeguarding Officer
- iv. Archdiocesan Child Safeguarding Review Board.

7.1 Every parish or institution in the Archdiocese shall constitute a Child Safeguarding Committee ("CSC") which shall be led by a person to be known as the Child Safeguarding Officer ("CSO").

7.1.1 The CSC shall be a five-person committee made of professionals in areas relevant to the subject matter such as law, medicine, psychology, education and counselling. They shall be persons of moral probity and proven integrity trained in dealing with child safeguarding issues. The CSC shall:

- Receive information and reports about child safeguarding concerns.
- Investigate promptly all such reports (not more than one month); conduct initial interviews as soon as possible, inform suspects of the nature of the accusation and the process.
- Provide advice, support, direction and act as a resource to the parish or institution and victims on all aspects regarding child safeguarding.
- Ensure on receiving any complaint that the first priority is always the safety and welfare of the child.
- In consultation with and advisement from the DSC and Archdiocesan Designated Person, report all child safeguarding cases received to the civil authorities as shall be considered appropriate.
- Record all reports, i.e. keep a log of actions, events and information. These must be dated and signed by the author.
- Explain the Archdiocesan procedures to the person who has raised the concern.
- Contact appropriate services where a child requires immediate help, including pastoral care.
- In the case of accusations involving a priest or deacon, religious men or women, immediately inform the Archdiocesan Child Safeguarding Person, who will manage all subsequent internal investigations in such cases.
- If the CSC needs further assistance or review of cases reported to them, the CSC will consult or forward for review such cases to the Deanery Child Safeguarding Committee.

7.1.2 Other duties of the CSC include:

- Providing basic information about keeping children safe.
- Ensuring that child safeguarding is built into all management systems and processes.
- Monitoring safeguarding measures and performances.
- Establishing clear, local reporting procedure, e.g. preparing official forms.
- Guiding staff about what will happen after they have reported a child safeguarding concern.
- Raising awareness on child safeguarding issues among the children, so that they can report any abuses.
- Ensuring that key partners know that all who work in the parish or institution are held accountable under the Archdiocesan Safe Policy.
- Alerting hiring personnel within the parish or institution about the need to ascertain from referees the suitability of applicants for jobs involving contact with children.
- Obtaining legal counsel on children's issues, when needed.

7.2 The Dean of each Deanery shall constitute a Deanery Child Safeguarding Committee whose members shall be drawn from within the Deanery. The functions of the Deanery Committee shall include:

- Ensure that the child safeguarding committee is set up in every parish or institution within the Deanery.
- Review and evaluate cases referred to the Committee from the parish or institution CSC and make appropriate recommendations.
- Serve as an appellate body to the parish/institutions CSC.
- Monitor at the Deanery level implementation of the Safe Policy.
- Provide periodic report to the Archdiocesan Designated Person and promptly inform him of all cases requiring urgent attention

7.3 The Archbishop shall appoint an Archdiocesan Designated Child Safeguarding Officer ("Designated Person"). The Archdiocesan Designated Person shall be a Catholic priest of proven integrity who has been well trained on the subject matter. He shall:

- Receive information about any child safeguarding concern involving a priest or deacon of the Archdiocese or working in the Archdiocese.
- Receive information about any child safeguarding concern involving a religious (male or female) working in the Archdiocese.
- Report the matter to the Archbishop promptly and to relevant civil authorities.
- Provide immediate pastoral support for the supposed victim.
- Manage all subsequent internal investigations.

- Keep all records meticulously.
- Observe the requirements of Canon Law.
- Serve as the Chief Liaison Officer between the Archdiocese and other child safeguarding committees in the Archdiocese.

7.4 The Archbishop shall constitute the Archdiocesan Child Safeguarding Review Board (“Review Board”). The Review Board shall consist of at least five but not more than seven persons. The Review Board shall be made of persons of proven integrity and, where possible, some experts in matters relating to child safeguarding. The tenure of office of this Board is three years, which may or may not be renewable. The Archbishop reserves absolute discretion to remove or substitute any member at any time.

The Board shall:

- Assist the Archbishop, in assessing and reviewing allegations of abuse of children to the extent permitted by law.
- Offer advice on creating and maintaining a safe environment for children in the Archdiocese.
- Advise on the human (and other) resources required for implementing best safeguarding practices across services.
- Receive periodic reports from the Designated Person.
- Review the Safe Policy Document every two years.

Note: No Member of the Board shall act professionally to either the person making an allegation or the respondent.



SECTION 8: PROCEDURES

Without any prejudice to Article 3 of *Vos Estis Lux Mundi's* provisions, the reporting procedures below are to be adhered to for cases of child abuse in the Archdiocese.

8.1 Receiving Report before reference to Child Safeguarding Officer or the Archdiocesan Designated Person:

- Listen carefully. No intrusive or leading questions. Stay Calm
- Take their concerns seriously. Reassure them
- Check with the person to make sure that you have understood what they actually said. Do not suggest words, but use theirs.
- Make no promises that cannot be kept, concerning secrecy
- Make no comments about the respondent. Don't Assume/Speculate
- Do not probe for details beyond what is freely given
- Do not speak to the alleged abuser. Offer to accompany the complaint to the Designated person.
- **Do not investigate the allegation. Hand it over to the Designated Person and stay out of the case unless formally invited back by the Designated Person.**

8.2 Cases of child abuse are to be reported to the Child Safeguarding Officer or the Archdiocesan Designated Person.

8.3 Where access to the Child Safeguarding Officer or the Archdiocesan Designated Person is difficult, the initial report may be made to the Parish Priest who will refer the matter to the Child Safeguarding Officer or Designated Person as soon as possible. However note clause 10, where the accusation is against the Parish Priest.

8.4 Conduct an initial interview with the respondent as soon as possible, informing him/her of the nature of the accusation and the process to be followed, as well as his/her right to seek legal advice.

8.5 A written record of the interview must be prepared, agreed upon by the respondent, and then signed and dated. A prepared format to be used as a guide at interviews is to be adhered to.

8.6 Investigation of accusations is to be done with due respect to the privacy, confidentiality and good reputation of the persons involved. The accused is not obliged, by law, to respond or to furnish evidence, but will be informed that any statement provided will be taken into account in the investigation.

- 8.7** Unless there are serious contrary indications, even in the course of preliminary investigations, the accused should be informed of the accusation and allowed to respond to it.
- 8.8** Vague or general accusations based on rumour are generally insufficient, but should not be entirely disregarded.
- 8.9** Priority and weight of evidence are always given to written statements.
- 8.10** The Child Safeguarding Officer or the Designated Person will keep written records of cases, even where there is no need to report the matter immediately. They will also ensure that all records are kept in locked locations.
- 8.11** Following a preliminary evaluation, if this initial evaluation concludes that there is reasonable cause to believe the allegation, the Child Safeguarding Officer or Designated Person will bring the issue to appropriate authority. Any complainant who is dissatisfied with a preliminary evaluation outcome can forward an appeal to the Archdiocesan Review Board.
- 8.12** The Archdiocesan Review Board will advise the Archbishop on further action if need be.
- 8.13** Evaluation of individual cases.
- 8.14** At the end of every case, an evaluation of the process and outcome should be done to ensure that the safe policy principles and guidelines were followed correctly throughout the entire process.
- 8.15** Based on 8. 13 above, a feedback report shall be prepared, which shall contain; details of all parties concerned; steps taken by the relevant authorities in addressing the abuse; summary of the case management plan and details of the case closure.



SECTION 9: GENERAL SANCTIONS

- 9.1** If there is an allegation of violation of the guidelines, policies, or principles of the Safe Policy from a verifiable source, the individual concerned may be suspended from the employment or service of the Archdiocese, pending the outcome of an independent investigation. The investigation must comply with reporting procedures.
- 9.2** Failure to report and actual breaches of confidentiality in the process will be subject to investigation and disciplinary procedures.
- 9.3** Following the outcome of the investigation, if it is found that an act had been committed against a child, which is either criminal, grossly infringes on the rights of the child, or contravenes the principle and standards of the Safe Policy, the Archbishop will take immediate disciplinary action appropriate to the circumstances.
- 9.4** In the case of Personnel of the Archdiocese, the disciplinary action envisaged includes dismissal or termination of employment/service as the case may be.
- 9.5** In the case of partners in Institutions and Programmes, the disciplinary action envisaged includes termination of agreements.
- 9.6** In the case of groups contracted to work in Institutions, the disciplinary action envisaged includes termination of the contract.
- 9.7** In the case of priests, consecrated men or women, the disciplinary action envisaged includes removal from the Archdiocese, the handing over documentation concerning the case to the major superiors concerned, and the recommendation for further action.
- 9.8** Without prejudice to the internal sacramental forum, civil law prescriptions regarding the reporting of such crimes to the designated authorities should always be followed.
- 9.9** If an allegation is being investigated or handled by civil authorities, the Church will suspend her internal investigations until the civil process has been completed. Ecclesiastical processes will resume. Precautionary measure envisaged in canon 1722 can be applied at any time during civil or ecclesiastical processes.
- 9.10** Acquittal from the civil process does not automatically mean acquittal from Canonical process. What is not a civil offence may be a Delict in the Church (canonical offence).



SECTION 10: THE SPECIFIC CASE OF CLERGY

In the case of a complaint concerning the sexual abuse of a child being made against a priest or deacon in the Archdiocese, there are clear procedure and sanctions.

- 10.1** The Archdiocese shall designate a competent person to coordinate immediate pastoral care of the person claiming to have been abused by a cleric.
- 10.2** The Archdiocesan Designated Person and the Review Board will assist the Archbishop in assessing all aspects of a case of child abuse.
- 10.3** When an allegation of abuse of a child by a cleric is received, a preliminary investigation following Canon 1717 shall be carried out promptly. During this investigation, the accused is presumed innocent. He may also retain the services of a lawyer. He will be notified of the results.
- 10.4** If there is sufficient evidence that the sexual abuse has occurred, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) will be notified. The Archbishop will also follow the directives received from the CDF including withdrawal of the accused from exercising the sacred ministry or any other ecclesiastical office or function. The Archbishop will also prohibit public participation in the Holy Eucharist, pending the outcome of the process. He may also impose or prohibit residence in a given place.
- 10.5** The alleged offender shall be urged to comply with medical and psychological evaluation at a mutually acceptable facility to the Archdiocese and the respondent.
- 10.6** When even a single act of sexual abuse of a child by a cleric is admitted or established after an appropriate process the CDF may authorise the Archbishop to issue a decree prohibiting or restricting the public ministry of the cleric.
- 10.7** In every case involving canonical penalties, the processes provided for under the Canon Law must be observed. The provisions of Canon 1722 shall be observed during the duration of the penal process.
- 10.8** If the penalty of dismissal from the clerical state has not been applied (e.g. for reasons of age or infirmity), the offender shall not be permitted to celebrate the Holy Mass publicly, administer the sacraments or present himself publicly as a priest (for example, by wearing clerical dress).
- 10.9** At all times, the Archbishop has the executive power of governance, within the parameters of the universal law of the Church, to remove an offending cleric from office, to remove or restrict his faculties and to limit his exercise of priestly ministry. The Archbishop shall exercise this power of governance to ensure that any cleric who has committed even a single act of sexual abuse of a minor shall not continue in active ministry, without prejudice to Cann 281, 384 and 1342 §2.

- 10.10** The priest or deacon may, at any time, request a dispensation from the obligations of the clerical state. The Archbishop may also, in exceptional cases, request the Holy See to dismiss a priest or deacon from the clerical state, even without their consent.
- 10.11** The Archdiocese will comply with all applicable civil laws, with respect to the reporting of allegations of sexual abuse of children, to the civil authorities, and will cooperate with their investigations. The Archdiocese will also advise and support the complainant's right to make a report to the public authorities.
- 10.12** No priest or deacon alleged to have committed an act of sexual abuse of a minor may be transferred for a ministerial assignment until the case is investigated and such cleric found not to be guilty.
- 10.13** The Archbishop shall receive a priest or deacon from outside the Archdiocese only after obtaining all necessary information about that cleric. This shall take into account Canons 678 & 679, and Canon 586 (i.e. the autonomy of the religious life). It must be established that they are in “good standing” and that there are no child safeguarding concerns. In this regard, a form is to be filled by the bishop or superior *a quo* and forwarded to the Archbishop as a prerequisite for any assignment in the Archdiocese (see appendix for the form).
- This also applies to “visiting priests” or those who come to the Archdiocese to perform any liturgical function(s).
- 10.14** Care will always be taken to protect the rights of all parties involved, particularly the person claiming to have been sexually abused, and the person against whom the accusation has been made. When an accusation has been shown to be unfounded, every step possible will be taken to restore the good name of the person falsely accused.



SECTION 11: CHILD TO CHILD ABUSE

- 11.1** The Archdiocese is committed to providing a safe environment free from psychological, physical, emotional, verbal and sexual abuse of children by other children. The Archdiocese is cognizant that older children abuse their juniors through bullying and demanding other abusive services from them.
- 11.2** All institutions linked to the Archdiocese are expected to enhance relationships founded on the Gospel values of honesty, fairness, respect, love, compassion, forgiveness, justice and reconciliation. In witnessing to the Gospel values, the Archdiocese rejects any ideas, beliefs and behaviours which marginalise and/or victimise children.
- 11.3** The Archdiocese discourages all forms of bullying be they:
- Physical: Hitting, Punishing, Kicking, tripping, spitting, etc.
 - Verbal: Teasing, using offensive names, ridiculing, spreading rumours, etc.
 - Non-verbal: writing offensive notes or graffiti about others, rude gestures and the like.
 - Internet and intranet: Carried out through email, chatroom, SMS, MMS, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Video, Webcam and voice recordings and other such media.
 - Exclusion: Deliberately excluding others from the group, refusing to sit next to someone, saving a seat for friends, etc.
- 11.4 STRATEGIES TO STEM “CHILD TO CHILD” ABUSE**
- Every institution shall:
- 11.4.1** Provide effective pastoral care to all children.
- 11.4.2** Educate all children, parents and guardians regarding all forms of bullying and other abuses.
- 11.4.3** Firmly implement anti-bullying and other abuse policies at the school level.
- 11.4.4** Promote a pastoral care structure and culture that encourages children to speak out about their personal experiences regarding bullying and other children's abuses.



SECTION 12: PUBLIC COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA

The Archbishop, Director of Communications, or any other person assigned by the Archbishop shall be the only authorised representative of the Archdiocese who may respond to any media inquiries made of the Archdiocese or institutions thereof.



SECTION 13: OUR COMMITMENT TO THE CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

- 13.1** The Archdiocese is committed to a culture of safety that minimises risk to children with regards to:
- 13.1.1** Safe recruitment and vetting practices help prevent those who pose a risk to children from holding positions of trust.
 - 13.1.2** Codes of behaviour – having clear guidelines that set out what is and what is not acceptable behaviour regarding keeping children safe.
 - 13.1.3** Running safe institutions and activities for children – helping to ensure a safe environment for children.
- 13.2** All Archdiocesan Personnel will sign the commitment form and abide by the Safe Policy Document's provisions.
- 13.3** All Archdiocesan Personnel will have a copy of the Safe Policy document.
- 13.4** All Archdiocesan Personnel will be formally briefed on child safeguarding issues, and, contact details of the Child Protection Officer and Archdiocesan Designated Person.
- 13.5** All Partners and groups contracted to work for various Institutions will have a copy of the Safe Policy document
- 13.6** Every workplace will display contact details for reporting possible child safeguarding concerns.
- 13.7** The Archdiocese will provide training, learning opportunities and support on child safeguarding issues.



SECTION 14: CONCLUSION

We express our sincere gratitude to all personnel working in the Archdiocese for the profound sacrifices being made to ensure our children's education, growth, and safety in the various parishes and institutions. To render Christ-like services and promote our children's welfare and interests, the Archdiocese unequivocally pledges to abide by the principles and guidelines laid down by this Safe Policy document. Anyone who breaches the contents of this Document will face the full “rigour” of the law as an individual and NOT in the Archdiocese’s name.

The Archdiocese shall remain blameless and accepts no responsibility or liability for payment of any legal fees, damages, compensations or penalties for any failure/refusal or negligence of any person whether religious or non-religious to adhere to this policy. The Archdiocese has a full indemnity from all Personnel religious and non-religious, engaged or working as volunteers with children as they are all mandated to adhere to this policy strictly.



APPENDIX 1: COMMITMENT FORM (SAMPLE)

COMITMENT FORM

I _____ confirm that I have been briefed on, and read the Archdiocesan Safe Policy Document.

The contents of this Document have been explained to me, and I have had the opportunity to ask questions and to seek clarifications on points that were not clear to me.

I am now fully aware of my obligations to act under the requirement of this Document, including reporting instances of abuse or suspected abuse of children that have been or are taking place.

I understand the consequences if I fail to act on all matters contained in this Document.

Name (Block Capitals) _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Name of Witness:

(Block Capitals) _____

Signature _____

Date: _____



APPENDIX 2: REFERENCES

- *The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version* (New York: Collins, 1973)
- *The Code of Canon Law: Latin-English Edition*. Washington, DC: Canon Law Society of America, 1999
- John Paul II, Motu Proprio: *Sacramentorum Sanctitatis Tutela*, 2001
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- Congregation for The Doctrine of The Faith, *Vademecum: Certain Points of Procedure in Treating Cases of Sexual Abuse of Minors Committed By Clerics*, 2020
- Francis, Motu Proprio: *Vos Estis Lux Mundi*, 2019
- Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria, *Called to Love – Ethical Standards for Clergy and Seminarians in Nigeria*: Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria, Revised Edition, 2012.
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- *Child's Right Law*: Lagos State, 2015
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- *Child Protection Policy*: Catholic Diocese of Navrongo-Bolgatanga, 2016
- *Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy*: Society of the Holy Child Jesus, African Province, 2015
- *Safeguarding Policy and Procedures*: St. Patrick's Missionary Society, District of West Africa, 2019