



# **The Episcopal Diocese of Western Louisiana**

## **Recognizing and Reporting Abuse of Children and Youth**

**November 1, 2017**

**RECOGNIZING AND REPORTING ABUSE  
OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH**

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# THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF WESTERN LOUISIANA

## RECOGNIZING AND REPORTING ABUSE OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH

### I. INTRODUCTION

This discussion of recognizing and reporting abuse and neglect is part of the *Safeguarding God's Children* program of the Episcopal Diocese of Western Louisiana. This program is designed to help people recognize, report, and, perhaps most importantly, prevent abuse and neglect of our children and youth. This program consists of instructional materials found on the Diocesan website (<http://www.diocesewla.org/safe-church/safeguarding-online/>) including informational videos. If you or a loved one has experienced abuse or neglect you might consider first talking with your clergy or a counselor before taking this training.

The Diocese supports behaviors and practices that allow members and participants in the life of congregations and other Episcopal institutions in the Diocese to fully demonstrate love and compassion for children and youth in sincere and genuine relationships. We recognize that relationships are the foundation of Christian ministry and that community is central to the life of the church. Relationships in ministry should always be experienced as caring and without intention to do harm or allow harm to occur. With this in mind, the diocese is committed to providing safe places for children and youth to grow in their life in Christ. The following information is intended to help create and maintain healthy environments for children and youth and for those who minister to them.

This document provides a summary of warning signs for abuse and neglect of a child and a description of the steps to take if you suspect there may be abuse or neglect, in addition to the steps that must be taken if you witness sexual abuse of a child or have knowledge of the commission of the homicide, rape or sexual abuse of a child. Any adult who witnesses sexual abuse of a child or has knowledge of the commission of the homicide, rape or sexual abuse of a child is a mandatory reporter with respect to these crimes, as described below.

This summary of signs of abuse and making reports is not comprehensive. Please visit the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) website for more information. <http://www.dcf.louisiana.gov/index.cfm?md=pagebuilder&tmp=home&pid=109> The DCFS website has a link to its online training program for mandatory reporters. While not required by the diocese, the DCFS online program provides additional information about mandatory reporting that you may find helpful. The *Safeguarding* Program of the Diocese also has online modules that are part of your training. These modules will help you better understand some of the issues relating to abuse and neglect.

## II. MANDATORY REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

### A. Mandatory Reporters:

In Louisiana Mandatory Reporters are required make a report if they have cause to believe there is or has been abuse or neglect of a child.<sup>1</sup> Mandatory Reporters include clergy, teachers (including teacher's aides), school staff, and organizational or youth activity providers (which include any person who provides organized activities for children, including administrators, employees and volunteers) and others listed in the Louisiana Children's Code.<sup>2</sup> If you volunteer for a church or school program or activity involving children you are likely a Mandatory Reporter. Failure to promptly report child abuse or neglect is a misdemeanor and failure to promptly report sexual abuse or physical abuse or neglect which results in bodily injury, neurological impairment or the death of a child is a felony.<sup>3</sup>

Even if someone is not a Mandatory Reporter, the State of Louisiana considers all adults be "permissive reporters." Permissive reporters are encouraged, but not required, to report abuse or neglect in order to protect the health and safety of our children. The Episcopal Church believes that all adults play an important role in helping make our churches, schools and other places where events are held become places where our children are safe and secure.

If you are a Mandatory Reporter, making a report to a supervisor, priest, principal, Diocesan official or other person does not relieve you of the legal obligation to make a report if you have cause to believe a child's health or welfare is in danger. Even if you know someone else has made a report you are still legally obligated to make a report and may face criminal penalties for failure to report. The information you provide, which may not have been provided by the other person(s) making a report, could be crucial in the investigation. It is often advisable for all of the Mandatory Reporters who have cause to believe there may be abuse or neglect to make a joint report.<sup>4</sup>

### B. ALL Adults are Mandatory Reporters in the following instances:

#### *Witnesses of Sexual Abuse:*

Any adult (age 18 or older) who witnesses the sexual abuse of a child is required to report the sexual abuse to law enforcement authorities (911) or the Department of Children and Family Services (855-452-5437). Failure to promptly report is a felony.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> LA Children's Code Art. 603(6) provides that a "child" is a person under age 18 (at the time of the abuse or neglect).

<sup>2</sup> LA Children's Code Art. 603(17).

<sup>3</sup> LA RS 14:403(A)(1).

<sup>4</sup> See *Section III.A.6* below, which describes the process for making a joint report.

<sup>5</sup> LA RS 14:403(A)(4)(a).

Knowledge of Homicide, Rape or Sexual Abuse of a Child:

Anyone who has knowledge of the commission of a homicide, rape or sexual abuse of a child is required to report the information to either law enforcement (911) or a district attorney unless the person with knowledge is bound by any privilege or confidentiality recognized by law.<sup>6</sup>

### III. RECOGNIZING ABUSE AND NEGLECT

#### A. Abuse

Abuse is defined as any of the following acts which seriously endanger the physical, mental, or emotional health and safety of a child:<sup>7</sup>

- The infliction, attempted infliction, or as a result of inadequate supervision, the allowance of the infliction or attempted infliction of physical or mental injury upon the child by a parent or other person.
- The exploitation or overwork of a child by a parent or any other person.
- The involvement of the child in any sexual act with a parent or any other person, or the aiding or toleration by the parent or any other person of the child's sexual involvement with another person or of the child's involvement in pornographic displays, or any other involvement of a child in sexual activity constituting a crime under the laws of this state.
- The coercion of a child into having an abortion.

#### 1. Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is generally defined as any non-accidental physical injury to a child and can include the following: punching, beating, kicking, burning, biting, shaking, throwing, slapping, inappropriate restraint, stabbing, choking, hitting (with a hand, stick, strap, or other object), misuse of medications or other action that results in a physical injury (*e.g.*, bruises, internal, fractures or death). Physical abuse may result from extreme discipline or punishment that is inappropriate to the child's age or condition or a caretaker may experience recurrent lapses in self-control brought on by immaturity, stress, or the use of alcohol/drugs.

Signs of physical abuse of a child include:

- Unexplained marks on the body.
- Bruises or welts in various stages of healing.
- Pattern burns in the shape of a specific object (*e.g.*, cigarette or iron burns).
- Scald burns in an immersion pattern.
- Marks hidden from typically exposed areas of skin.

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<sup>6</sup> LA RS 14:131.1.

<sup>7</sup> LA Children's Code Art. 603(2).

Warning signs that an adult may be abusing a child include:

- Attempts to conceal a child's injury.
- Offers unconvincing, illogical or contradictory explanation of a child's injury.
- Disciplines excessively in response to a child's misbehavior.
- Expects more from a child than the child is capable given his or her age, ability and maturity.
- Perceives a child as evil or bad.
- Protects the identity of a person responsible for physically abusing a child.
- Abuses alcohol or drugs.

## 2. Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse may include constant criticism, threats, or rejection, as well as withholding love, support, or guidance. This abuse may even include labeling a child with names such as stupid, idiot or dummy. Acts that reject, belittle or ignore children, terrorize them or isolate them from others can also be considered emotionally abusive.

The following may be signs of emotional abuse:

- Shows extremes in behavior, such as overly compliant or demanding behavior, extreme passivity, or aggression.
- Is either inappropriately adult (parenting other children, for example) or inappropriately infantile (frequently rocking or head-banging, for example).
- Is delayed in physical or emotional development.
- Attempted suicide.
- Reports a lack of attachment to the parent.

The following may be signs that an adult is emotionally abusing a child:

- Constantly blames, belittles, shames, intimidates, shouts or curses at the child.
- Is not concerned about the child and refuses to consider offers of help for the child's problems.
- Overtly rejects the child.
- Seldom responds to, stimulates or shows affection toward an infant, and rarely, if ever holds the child during feeding.
- Punishes, ostracizes or condemns the child when the child does not achieve far above normal abilities in areas such as school, arts, sports and social status.
- Consistently singles out the child to criticize and punish, to perform most of the household chores, and to receive fewer rewards.
- Forces workloads on a child inside or outside the home so as to interfere with the health, education and well-being of the child.

### 3. Sexual Abuse

Most children have no physical signs of sexual abuse. A child of any age who indicates any of the following may be a victim of sexual abuse:

- Difficulty in walking or sitting.
- Complaints of genital or anal itching, pain, or bleeding.
- Frequent psychosomatic (imaginary) illnesses.
- Vomiting without apparent cause.
- Sexually transmitted diseases.
- In-depth sexual play with peers (different from the normal 'playing doctor' form of exploration).

In addition, the following may be signs of sexual abuse in small children:

- Complaining about people or activities they used to like.
- Becoming isolated.
- Major behavior change.
- Unexplained anxiety.
- Sudden onset of bedwetting.
- Sudden onset of inability to control bowels.
- Excessively touching themselves - inability to stop touching genitals or masturbating in public.

The following may also be warning signs of sexual abuse in older children:

- Depression.
- Aggressive behavior.
- Moodiness.
- Drastic change in schoolwork.
- Sudden promiscuity or indiscretion in sexual activity.
- Distance from family.
- Pregnancy.
- Fear about sexuality (masculinity or femininity).

Sexually abused children keep the secret not only because the abuser may have threatened them, their families, or their pets, but also because they feel they are to blame for their involvement and fear that no one will believe them if they report the abuse.

Some signs of an individual who may be seeking or involved in an abusive relationship with a child are:

- Discourages other adults from participating or monitoring activities.
- Wants to be alone with children.
- Prefers involvement with children more than with adults.

- Seeks opportunities or has unsupervised access to children.
- Thinks or acts as if the rules do not apply to them.
- Uses bad language or tells dirty jokes to children.
- Shows children pornography.
- Gives gifts to kids, particularly without parental permission.
- Overly physical (*e.g.* wrestling, tickling, hugging) with children.
- Permits children to engage in activities the child's parents would not allow.

## **B. Neglect**

Neglect means the refusal or unreasonable failure of a parent or caretaker (such as a guardian, someone who lives in the child's household whether related or not, a tutor, or a day care worker) to supply the child with necessary food, clothing, shelter, care, treatment, or counseling for any injury, illness, or condition of the child, as a result of which the child's physical, mental, or emotional health and safety is substantially threatened or impaired. Neglect includes prenatal neglect.<sup>8</sup> Neglect tends to be ongoing as opposed to specific instances or events.

A child who shows the following signs may be a victim of neglect:

- Dirty, unwashed and/or hungry.
- Inadequately dressed for the weather.
- Improper dental care, loose teeth or infected gums.
- Inadequate medical care
- Begging or stealing food or money.
- Losing or failure to gain weight.
- Wearing soiled or torn clothing or clothing that is significantly too small or too large for them.
- Other evidence of no or poor supervision.
- Erratic attendance at school.<sup>9</sup>

When several of these signs are combined or appear repeatedly, there is an increased possibility of neglect.

Signs that a caretaker may be neglecting a child include the following:

- Appears to be indifferent to the child.
- Lacks follow through on a prescribed medical or mental health treatment plan for a serious condition that could constitute long term harm to the child.
- Engages in excessive alcohol or other drug use which interferes with the caretaker's ability to provide care and protection for the child.

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<sup>8</sup> LA Children's Code Art. 603(16).

<sup>9</sup>DCFS does not accept reports of Educational Neglect when a child's lack of school attendance is the ONLY concern of the reporter. That information should be reported to the local school board office.



In addition, in preschools or day care, leaving a child unattended for any length of time is considered to be neglect and must be reported to the Department of Children and Family Services immediately.

### **C. Consensual Sex Involving Minors; Statutory Rape**

In Louisiana a person can be prosecuted for the crime of “carnal knowledge of a juvenile” (more popularly known as “statutory rape”) if he or she is 17 or older and has consensual sexual intercourse with someone who (a) is not his or her spouse and (b)(i) is 13 or older but less than 17 and (ii) the difference in ages is more than 2 years.<sup>10</sup> For example, a 17-year old can have consensual sex with a 15-year old (2 year age difference) but not a 14-year old (3 year age difference). Children under age 13 cannot legally consent to sexual activity.

## **IV. MAKING A REPORT**

### **A. Preparing to Make a Report**

1. *Emergency or Immediate Danger.* Call **911** immediately if someone is in immediate danger or needs medical attention, if a suspect is likely to escape, or if there is some other reason for emergency action. Law enforcement officials can let you know whether you need to make additional reports.

2. *Determining Whether to Make a Report.* A Mandatory Reporter who has “cause to believe a child’s health or welfare is in danger” is legally required to make a report. It is not always easy to determine when “cause to believe” exists. “Cause to believe” is more than a suspicion not supported by evidence, an unfounded rumor or a disagreement with someone’s parenting style.

- If you witness several of the signs of abuse (physical, emotional or sexual) or neglect,<sup>11</sup> it is best to make the report.
- If immediate action is not required, discussing the signs with a supervisor, principal, or someone else trained or experienced in reporting situations may help clarify whether to make the report.
- If a child describes to you a situation that constitutes abuse or neglect, you should make the report promptly.
- You should NOT conduct an investigation other than asking general questions needed to complete as much of the report as possible.<sup>12</sup> Investigations should be done by trained investigators; this is the duty of the state. You could jeopardize the state’s investigation by trying to conduct your own investigation.

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<sup>10</sup> LA RS 14:80, 14:80.1.

<sup>11</sup> The signs are described in *Section III* above.

<sup>12</sup> See *Section IV.B* below for the information needed for a report.

- If you are not certain but think you may have “cause to believe a child’s health or welfare is in danger” go ahead and make the report. The intake person can help you determine whether a report is necessary.

Louisiana law provides exceptions to mandatory reporting under certain limited circumstances for mental health/social service practitioners and members of the clergy. A discussion of these exceptions is beyond the scope of the *Safeguarding* program and is a part of the professional training of these persons.

3. *Do Not Delay Reporting.* If you are a Mandatory Reporter and you have cause to believe there has been abuse or neglect of a child, do not hesitate to make the report. People have been prosecuted for delaying a report, even though the report was made within 24 hours of the incident, when officials have deemed that the delay was unjustified. Do not delay a report to perform investigations or gather more information once you have cause to believe there has been abuse or neglect. A report is not an accusation but rather a request for investigation by the state.

If you are having trouble deciding whether to call the Department of Children and Family Services or local law enforcement, simply call one or the other and explain the situation. They will help you determine whether you have called the right organization.

Unless it is an emergency or there is immediate danger (in which case you should call **911** immediately).

4. *Written Reports.* Telephonic reports to the Department of Children and Family Services must be followed up by a written report (which can be found at <http://dss.louisiana.gov/index.cfm?md=pagebuilder&tmp=home&pid=109>) to be delivered within 5 days of the initial report. A copy of the report form is also attached as *Appendix B*. It is preferable to fax the written report as soon as possible after making the telephonic report in order to ensure that DCFS has complete and accurate information. If you call law enforcement ask whether you need to do anything with respect to written follow up.

5. *Telephone and Fax Numbers.*

*DCFS Telephone Number.* The telephone number for the **Department of Children and Family Services** is **855-452-5437** and it is staffed 24 hours a day, every day. When you make a telephonic report you should ask where the written report should be faxed and ask for the fax number. You can find more information on local DCFS/Child Welfare offices throughout the state, including fax numbers, at <http://www.dcf.louisiana.gov/index.cfm?md=directory&search=1&catid=6&city=&zip=&parishID=0>. It is recommended that you add the DCFS telephone number to your cell phone’s address book.

Law Enforcement Telephone Numbers. Call **911** for all emergency situations. You are advised to look up the non-emergency telephone number for law enforcement in your city or town (police) and parish (sheriff) and add them to your cell phone's address book.

6. *Multiple Witnesses.* If there are multiple witnesses to an incident it is a good idea for all of them to make the telephonic report to DCFS or law enforcement together. They should follow up promptly with a written report, with each witness describing on a separate sheet what he or she saw, and signing and submitting the documents as a joint written report. Investigators can better determine how to proceed if they have information from all the witnesses. A Mandatory Reporter is not relieved of responsibility to report, or of legal liability for failure to report, just because someone else has made a report.

7. *Subsequent Incidents.* If you observe a subsequent incident or have additional information that should be reported, call DCFS or law enforcement even if you have made a previous report about the same child. You are required to report each new incident.

8. *Confidentiality.* Reports made to DCFS and law enforcement are confidential and the confidentiality is legally protected. Your name as a reporter will not be released. Even if the suspected abuser believes you have made the report and accuses you of making a fraudulent report, the law gives you immunity from prosecution if you made the report in good faith.

9. *Reports to Diocese.* When reports are made to the Missioner for Christian Formation of the Diocese the confidentiality of the complainant, the accused and all other parties will be observed to the extent that the confidentiality does not impede the diocese's ability to investigate or take corrective action. All reports will be taken seriously and thoroughly investigated. The Diocese will cooperate fully with an investigation by law enforcement authorities and with other legal processes, which may entail turning over copies of reports to investigators, attorneys and others with a legal right or duty to review the documents. **IF THE SUSPECTED ABUSER IS A MEMBER OF THE CLERGY IT IS CRITICAL THAT YOU MAKE A REPORT TO THE MISSIONER FOR CHRISTIAN FORMATION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE ([jowensby@diocesewla.org](mailto:jowensby@diocesewla.org) or 318-442-1304).**

10. *Witnesses Under the Age of 18.* If someone under age 18 witnesses what he or she believes may be abuse or neglect, hears someone talking about being abused or neglected, or has other good reason to suspect that someone is being abused or neglected, he or she should promptly talk to a trusted adult, such as a parent, teacher, principal, or priest, about his or her concerns. If the concern arises at an event, he or she should talk with one of the adults in charge of the event.

## B. Information for Report

All reports should contain as much of the following information as possible.<sup>13</sup> However, you should not delay making a report because you do not have all the information:

- (1) The name, address, age, sex, and race of the child.
- (2) The nature, extent, and cause of the child's injuries or endangered condition, including any previous known or suspected abuse to this child or the child's siblings.
- (3) The name and address of the child's parent(s) or other caretaker.
- (4) The names and ages of all other members of the child's household.
- (5) The name and address of the reporter.
- (6) An account of how this child came to the reporter's attention.
- (7) Any explanation of the cause of the child's injury or condition offered by the child, the caretaker, or any other person.
- (8) The number of times the reporter has filed a report on the child or the child's siblings.
- (9) Any other information which the reporter believes might be important or relevant.
- (10) The name of the person or persons who are thought to have caused or contributed to the child's condition, if known, and the name of such person if he is named by the child.

## C. Making the Report

### 1. Reporting Sexual Abuse of a Child

If you are 18 years old or older you must promptly report any sexual abuse of a child (someone under 18) that you witness. You must also make a report if you have knowledge of the homicide, rape or sexual abuse of a child. See *Sections III.A.3* and *III.C* above for more information on what may constitute sexual abuse when minors are involved.

a. Call **911** immediately to make the report if you have witnessed sexual abuse of a child. If you have knowledge of the homicide, rape or sexual abuse of a child call either **911** or the local district attorney.

b. If you do not have knowledge of sexual abuse of a child but you have cause to believe there may have been sexual abuse:

(i) If the suspected abuser is not a caretaker<sup>14</sup> of the child (*e.g.*, suspect is clergy, teacher, coach, stranger, *etc.*), call **911**.

(ii) If the suspected abuser is a caretaker<sup>15</sup> (*e.g.*, parent, guardian, tutor, day care worker, someone who lives in the household whether related or not, or other person obligated to provide care for the child), call the Department of Children and Family Services (**855-452-5437**) and follow the instructions immediately below.

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<sup>13</sup> LA Children's Code Art. 610(B) and 610(C).

<sup>14</sup> LA Children's Code Art. 603(16)

<sup>15</sup> LA Children's Code Art. 603(16)

c. If you have called law enforcement first, ask whether you should also make a report to the Department of Children and Family Services (855-452-5437). If so, make the call promptly. If you make a telephonic report to DCFS you must provide a written report within 5 days. Ask DCFS for the fax number to which you should fax the written report. More information and a link to the written report form can be found on the DCFS website at <http://dss.louisiana.gov/index.cfm?md=pagebuilder&tmp=home&pid=109>. A copy of the report form is also attached as *Appendix B*. While the written report is not required to be submitted for 5 days it is advisable to prepare it promptly and fax it to the number given to you by DCFS in order to ensure that DCFS has complete and accurate information from you while it determines whether to investigate.

d. If the suspected abuser is a members of the clergy or employee of or volunteer for a church, school or the diocese, or if the sexual abuse took place on church, school or diocesan property or at a church, school or diocesan event, after you have made your report to law enforcement and/or DCFS, contact the Missioner for Christian Formation of the Diocese, Joy Owensby, at [jowensby@diocesewla.org](mailto:jowensby@diocesewla.org) or 318-442-1304 to report the incident. You should provide a copy of the any written report you have submitted to DCFS or law enforcement to the Missioner for Christian Formation.

d. You should also contact your Rector, Head of School, or other appropriate person in authority at your church, school or other institution so that any appropriate actions with respect to safety, pastoral care or other concerns may be taken. If the suspected abuser is the person to whom such a report would normally be made, you should report to another person in authority or ask the Missioner for Christian Formation for guidance.

## 2. Reporting Suspected Abuse or Neglect of a Child by a Caretaker

A discussion of signs of abuse and neglect is in *Section III* above.

If you have cause to believe there is abuse or neglect of a child by a **caretaker**,<sup>16</sup> which includes a parent, guardian, tutor, day care worker, someone who lives in the child's household whether related or not, or other person obliged to provide care for the child:

a. If it is an emergency call 911 immediately.

b. If you are not certain as to whether the suspected abuser is a caretaker, call either law enforcement or DCFS to describe the situation and ask for help.

c. In non-emergency situations of abuse or neglect by a caretaker call the Department of Children and Family Services (855-452-5437) to make your report as soon as possible. Ask DCFS if you should also report to law enforcement if you have not already done so. If you make a telephonic report to DCFS you must provide a written report within 5 days. Ask DCFS for the fax number to which you should fax the written report. More

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<sup>16</sup> LA Children's Code Art. 603(16)

information and a link to the written report form can be found on the DCFS website at <http://dss.louisiana.gov/index.cfm?md=pagebuilder&tmp=home&pid=109>

A copy of the report form is also attached as *Appendix B*. While the written report is not required to be submitted for 5 days it is advisable to prepare it promptly and fax it to the number given to you by DCFS in order to ensure that DCFS has complete and accurate information from you while it determines whether to investigate.

d. If the suspect is a member of the clergy or employee of or volunteer for a church, school or the diocese, or if the abuse or neglect took place on church, school or diocesan property or at a church, school or diocesan event, after you have made your report to law enforcement and/or DCFS, contact the Missioner for Christian Formation of the Diocese, Joy Owensby, at [jowensby@diocesewa.org](mailto:jowensby@diocesewa.org) or 318-442-1304 to report the incident. You should provide a copy of any written report you have submitted to DCFS or law enforcement to the Missioner for Christian Formation.

e. You should also contact your Rector, Head of School, or other appropriate person in authority at your church, school or other institution so that any appropriate actions may be taken with respect to safety, pastoral care or other concerns. If the suspect is the person to whom such a report would normally be made, you should report to another person in authority or ask the Missioner for Christian Formation for guidance.

### 3. Reporting Suspected Abuse of a Child by Someone Other Than a Caretaker

A discussion of signs of abuse is in *Section III.A* above.

If you have cause to believe there is abuse of a child by someone who is NOT a parent, guardian, tutor, day care worker, someone who lives with the child, or other person obliged to provide care for the child (such as a member of the clergy, church staff or volunteer, stranger, *etc.*):

a. Call law enforcement at **911** if it is an emergency or if not an emergency, the local non-emergency number for the area in which the child resides. If you are not certain as to whether the person is a caretaker, call either law enforcement or DCFS.

b. Ask law enforcement whether you should call the Department of Children and Family Services (**855-452-5437**) to make a report. If so you should make your report as soon as possible. If you make a telephonic report to DCFS you must provide a written report within 5 days. Ask DCFS for the fax number to which you should fax the written report. More information and a link to the written report form can be found on the DCFS website at <http://dss.louisiana.gov/index.cfm?md=pagebuilder&tmp=home&pid=109>.

A copy of the report form is also attached as *Appendix B*. While the written report is not required to be submitted for 5 days it is advisable to prepare it promptly and fax it to the number given to you by DCFS in order to ensure that DCFS has complete and accurate information from you while it determines whether to investigate.

c. If the suspected abuser is a members of the clergy or employee of or volunteer for a church, school or the diocese, or if the sexual abuse took place on church, school or diocesan property or at a church, school or diocesan event, after you have made your report to law enforcement and/or DCFS, contact the Missioner for Christian Formation of the Diocese, Joy Owensby, at [jowensby@diocesewla.org](mailto:jowensby@diocesewla.org) or 318-442-1304 to report the incident. You should provide a copy of any written report submitted to DCFS or law enforcement to the Missioner for Christian Formation.

d. You should also contact your Rector, Head of School, or other appropriate person in authority at your church, school or other institution so that any appropriate actions may be taken with respect to safety, pastoral care or other concerns. If the suspected abuser is the person to whom such a report would normally be made, you should report to another person in authority or ask the Missioner for Christian Formation for guidance.

#### 4. Reporting Suspected Abuse Committed by Minors

If you witness or have knowledge of sexual abuse or rape of a child by anyone, including another minor, it must be reported immediately under Louisiana law. Call **911** immediately.

If you suspect other types of abuse, including bullying, stalking, etc. committed by a minor upon another minor, promptly make a report under the policies of your church or school. If the church or school does not have a reporting policy or if you do not know the policy, report to the Rector, Head of School, or other appropriate person in authority at the church, school or other institution. If you have made a report and are concerned that adequate steps are not being taken, contact the Missioner for Christian Formation of the Diocese, Joy Owensby, at [jowensby@diocesewla.org](mailto:jowensby@diocesewla.org) or 318-442-1304. You may submit a Confidential Notice of Concern (see *Appendix A*).

5. Communications with the Diocese should be made to the Missioner for Christian Formation:

Joy Owensby  
The Episcopal Diocese of Western Louisiana  
P.O. Box 2031  
Alexandria, Louisiana 71309  
Phone: 318-442-1304  
Fax: 318-442-8712  
Email: [jowensby@diocesewla.org](mailto:jowensby@diocesewla.org)

*The Diocese of Western Louisiana is grateful to the Diocese of Louisiana for their work in developing this policy,*

**APPENDIX A: CONFIDENTIAL NOTICE OF CONCERN**

**The following notice of concern allows individuals to report inappropriate behavior or policy violations to the Episcopal Diocese of Western Louisiana. Reports of abuse or neglect should be made to law enforcement (911), local law enforcement nonemergency phone number or the Department of Children and Family Services (855-452-5437) as described in the reporting procedures of the Diocese. Making a report of abuse or neglect to anyone other than these authorities will not fulfill the legal obligations of mandatory reporters. If you have questions about incidents or reporting procedures please contact Joy Owensby at [jowensby@diocesewla.org](mailto:jowensby@diocesewla.org) or 318-442-1304. The Diocese will cooperate fully with an investigation by law enforcement authorities and with other legal processes.**

Who is the complaint about? \_\_\_\_\_

Date of occurrence \_\_\_\_\_

Congregation/school/ institution: \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

Nature of Concern: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Inappropriate behavior with a child or youth (please describe the behavior)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Policy violation with a child or youth: \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No

Reason to believe abuse occurred/is occurring: \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No

\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Describe the situation:**

What happened?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Where did it happen?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



Who else was present? \_\_\_\_\_

Has it ever happened before? \_\_\_\_\_

Was it reported to the authorities? \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No

If reported, to whom: \_\_\_\_\_

Please attach a copy of the written report if a written report to DCFS was made.

What action, if any, was or is being taken? \_\_\_\_\_

**Follow-up:**

Does anyone else need to be notified? \_\_\_\_\_

Would you like someone to call you to discuss the situation? \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX B: STATE OF LOUISIANA FORM FOR MANDATORY REPORTER WRITTEN REPORTS TO DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES**

The written report must be filled out and sent to the Department of Children and Family Services within 5 days of making a telephonic report. However, sending it as soon as possible after the telephonic report is preferable. The report form can be found at <http://dss.louisiana.gov/index.cfm?md=pagebuilder&tmp=home&pid=109>. Click on this link to download the form: [http://www.dcfslouisiana.gov/assets/docs/searchable/ChildWelfare/MandatedReportersForm\\_CPI\\_2.pdf](http://www.dcfslouisiana.gov/assets/docs/searchable/ChildWelfare/MandatedReportersForm_CPI_2.pdf)