

Archdiocese of San Antonio Communications Policy Concerning an Investigation of Alleged Sexual Abuse of a Minor

Article 7 of the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People states:

Each diocese/eparchy will develop a communications policy that reflects a commitment to transparency and openness. Within the confines of respect for privacy and the reputation of the individuals involved, dioceses/eparchies will deal as openly as possible with members of the community. This is especially so with regard to assisting and supporting parish communities directly affected by ministerial misconduct involving minors.”

Mission

The communications policy of the Archdiocese of San Antonio is intended to reflect the spirit of “transparency and openness” referred to in the Charter, while maintaining respect for privacy and the reputation of those individuals involved. It is the Archdiocese of San Antonio’s intent to foster a spirit of understanding between itself, Catholics in the archdiocese, and the community by communicating as openly as possible, whether the story is positive or reflects new complaints. It is also the mission of the archdiocesan policy to insure the community is properly informed concerning all policies, procedures, and resources that apply to the issues of sexual abuse of minors.

The Communications office also is committed to assisting parishes, schools, and other catholic offices and ministries meet these ethical and professional standards when executing its responsibility to communicate with their own constituency and the general public.

Transparency and Openness

The hallmark of a truly transparent and open policy is the conducting of church policies in the full light of public scrutiny. We have a critical opportunity to regain the trust of people everywhere by insuring the church continues to pursue and implement a dynamic policy that helps to protect all those we serve. In order to accomplish this goal, we must promote the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, diocesan policies, programs, and procedures so that the public can clearly and fairly judge our intent versus our performance in these matters.

- The promotion of such efforts shall be done through such outlets as:
- [Today’s Catholic](#) (Diocesan Bi-Weekly Newspaper)
- [Catholic Television of San Antonio](#) - Time Warner Cable System Channel 15
- The Diocesan web site: <http://www.archdiosasa.org>
- Parish bulletins.
- Homilies and Letters to the Faithful
- Secular media outlets

Communications Contacts:

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Public Response to Ministerial Sexual Abuse of Minors

All media inquiries of all archdiocesan personnel concerning sexual abuse of minors will be directed to the Director of the Office of Communications. Unless otherwise designated by the Archbishop, The Director of Communication will be the sole spokesperson for the Diocese in matters concerning sexual abuse of minors. The Office of Communications will strive for the highest professional standards in responding to the media in a timely fashion.

While always respecting the dignity, privacy and reputation of the individuals involved, the Archdiocese is committed to report relevant information concerning ministerial misconduct with honesty and clarity to the general public as needed. The release of this information, however, should not be misconstrued as a statement of guilt or innocence.

The Director of Communications will, when necessary, work with the media to make available the proper archdiocesan personnel and experts to assist them in reporting the facts in their proper context and with a correct understanding of the guiding church canons and policies involved in an issue.

Cases in Litigation

While it is always the Archdiocese's intention to be as open and complete as possible in its communications, decisions regarding any public statement must be made on a case-by-case basis.

- The Archdiocese, as a matter of policy, will neither confirm nor deny specific details in cases that may be in the public eye because of current litigation. We are committed to allowing the objective review of allegations and the facts involved occur in the proper forum. The legal process must be allowed to come to a just conclusion to questions in this matter.

- The Archdiocese will disclose such information as may be required by law, including pursuant to a lawfully issued subpoena or court order.
- The Archdiocese will observe Church law on communications concerning a penal process for an offense that is reserved to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.