

Roman Catholic Diocese of Lubbock

Reporting an Alleged Incident

While working or volunteering as a representative of the Diocese of Lubbock, it is your moral responsibility to protect children, young people, and vulnerable adults from physical abuse, sexual abuse, sexual assault, or neglect. The expectation is that you will report any disclosure or suspicion of physical abuse, sexual abuse, sexual assault, or neglect to the appropriate civil authorities. Reporting suspected abuse makes it possible for an individual to get help.

Texas law says anyone who thinks a **child**, or **person 65 years or older**, or **an adult with disabilities** is being abused, neglected, or exploited must report it to their local authority or Texas Department of Families and Protective Services.

A person who reports abuse in good faith **is immune** from civil or criminal liability. DFPS keeps the name of the person making the report confidential. Anyone who does not report suspected abuse can be held liable for a misdemeanor or felony.

- To report known or suspected neglect or abuse of a minor (under age 18) or vulnerable adult, call the **Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) Child/Vulnerable Adult Abuse Hotline at 1-800-252-5400 or your local law enforcement agency.**

If there is an immediate danger, call 911.

Once Local Law Enforcement Agency, 911 and/or the Child Abuse/Vulnerable Adult hotline has been called regarding present or past sexual abuse or sexual assault allegedly by any clergy, religious, diocesan/parish employee or volunteer, **contact the Diocesan Victim Assistance Coordinator, Oscar Reyes at 806-543-9178** who will initiate diocesan procedures.

How to Respond to a Disclosure

Listen

Listening is more important than talking.

Respond calmly; do not panic. Most disclosures are not emergencies.

Be patient; give your full attention allowing them time to tell you what happened.

Do not interrupt or voice any opinions.

Response

Reassure them that it was right to tell you what happened. Say: "I am glad you told me" or "It was very brave of you to tell."

Do not promise to keep it secret. Do not make promises.

Explain that in order for them to be safe you will need to share their story with someone who can help. "I am going to talk to someone who can help us."

Report

The following general information is needed to begin an investigation.

**Do not ask for additional information other than what is listed below.*

- Who is the alleged victim (name, address, age, parent/guardian contact information)?
- Who is the alleged offender?
- What is the abusive or neglectful act?
 - Details are not necessary; only basic information of the abusive/neglectful act is needed.
- When did the abuse happen?
 - If this information is nonspecific or unavailable, call anyway.
- Where did the abuse happen?
 - If this information is nonspecific or unavailable, call anyway.

Other

You do not need to be 100% sure that abuse or neglect has occurred; you only need a reasonable suspicion.

Keep confidential notes about the contacts and all verbal/written correspondence that transpired.

Do not confront the alleged offender.

Do not inform the parent(s)/guardian. It may jeopardize the investigation or may put the child, young person, or vulnerable adult at risk.

If assistance is needed in reporting to the authorities, speak to the pastor, supervisor or the **Diocese of Lubbock Victim Assistance Coordinator, Oscar Reyes at 806-543-9178.** However, you **do not** need permission to make a report.