

Child Abuse

Look for the signs

Dial 1-800-96-ABUSE

Signs of Physical Abuse

The child may have unexplained:

- bruises, welts, cuts, or other injuries
- broken bones
- burns

A child experiencing physical abuse may:

- seem withdrawn or depressed
- seem afraid to go home or may run away
- shy away from physical contact
- be aggressive
- wear inappropriate clothing to hide injuries

Signs of Sexual Abuse

The child may have:

- torn, stained or bloody underwear
- trouble walking or sitting
- pain or itching in genital area
- a sexually transmitted disease

A child experiencing sexual abuse may:

- have unusual knowledge of sex or act seductively
- fear a particular person
- seem withdrawn or depressed
- gain or lose weight suddenly
- shy away from physical contact
- run away from home

Signs of Neglect

The child may have:

- unattended medical needs
- little or no supervision at home
- poor hygiene
- appear underweight

A child experiencing neglect may:

- be frequently tired or hungry
- steal food
- appear overly needy for adult attention

Look for the Patterns

Serious abuse usually involves a combination of factors. While a single sign may not be significant, a pattern of physical or behavioral signs is a serious indicator and should be reported.

If a child tells YOU about abuse:

Be a good listener. Show that you understand and believe what the child tells you. Encourage, but don't pressure him/her to talk. Ask open ended questions.

Be supportive. Tell the child he/she did the right thing by coming to you. Stress that he/she is not to blame. Let the child know that you want to help.

Don't overreact. This can frighten the child or prevent him/her from telling you more. Do not talk negatively about the suspected abuser in front of the child.

Document and report it. Document your conversation as soon as you can. If possible, write down the child's exact words.

Don't delay. Never assume someone else will report the abuse. The sooner it's reported, the sooner the child and their family can be helped.

WHO MUST REPORT ABUSE?

Doctors

Nurses

Social Workers

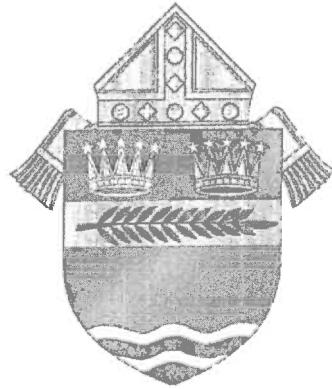
Police Officers

Child Care Workers

Any Witnesses

Any/All School Personnel

Call or Report it online at: <http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/abuse/report/>



Diocese of Palm Beach

**REPORTING PROCEDURES
FOR ALLEGATIONS OF
SEXUAL ABUSE OF MINORS and VULNERABLE ADULTS**

A person receiving an allegation of sexual abuse of a minor or vulnerable adult by Church Personnel must immediately report the allegation. Our policy requires priests to report allegations that are made in a spiritual counseling context, even though the law exempts ministers from the requirement of reporting. The only exception to this is the confidentiality of the confessional. At the outset, alleged victims and/or families should be informed of this requirement.

- STEP 1** The person receiving the allegation immediately makes an oral report to 1-800-96ABUSE (1-800-962-2873). *Notes should be taken including names, dates, and times, and a log should be kept of all telephone calls made.*
- STEP 2** The person receiving the allegation makes an oral report to the Chancellor of the Diocese of Palm Beach at 561-775-9507, (cell 561-373-7990) who reports it to the bishop and diocesan attorney.
- STEP 3** The diocesan attorney reports the allegation to the state attorney.
- STEP 4** The person receiving the allegation informs the school principal, pastor or the appropriate immediate authority.
- STEP 5** The person receiving the allegation sends a written report to the Department of Children and Families within 48 hours. Instructions regarding information to be included in this report are available from your entity's pastor, principal, or administrator or the Chancellor's office