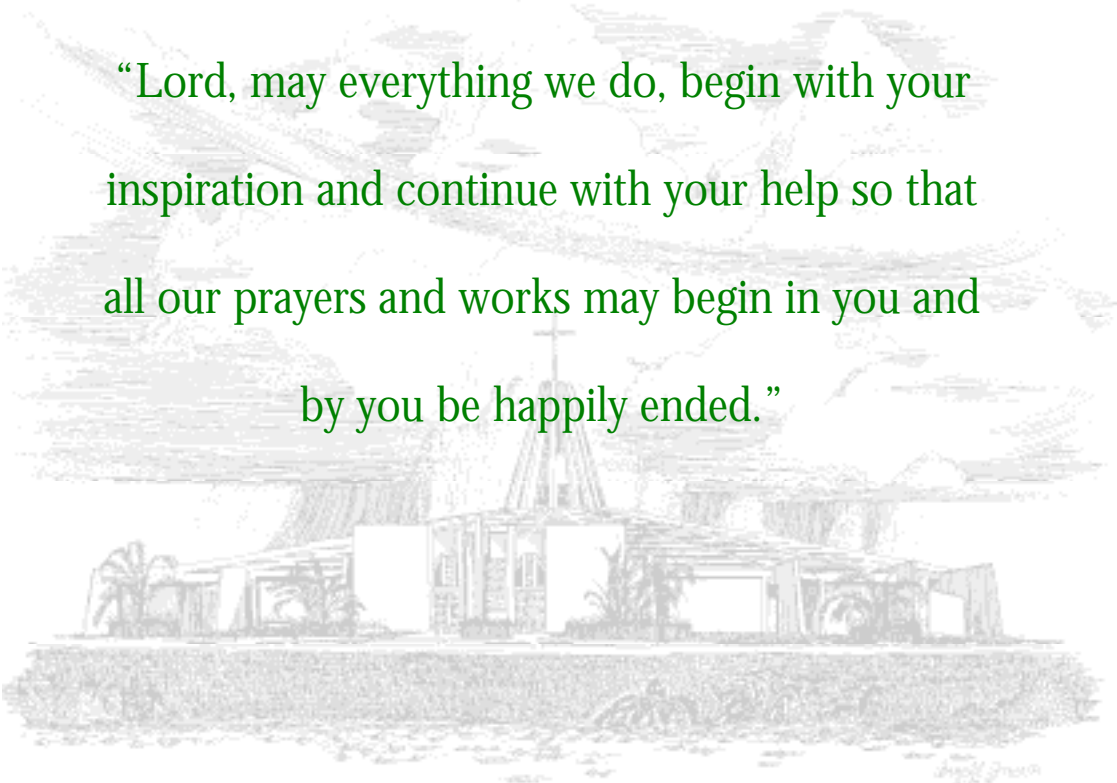


Holy Family Catholic Church

200 78th Avenue NE
St. Petersburg, FL 33702
(727)526-5783

Email: faithformation@holyfamilystpete.com



“Lord, may everything we do, begin with your
inspiration and continue with your help so that
all our prayers and works may begin in you and
by you be happily ended.”

Faith Formation Parent Handbook 2009-2010

“Proclaim!”

Faith Formation Vision and Mission Statement

For

Holy Family Parish

Holy Family Parish embraces a vision of lifelong faith formation, which is centered on the celebration of the Liturgy and Sacraments of the Church. As members of the body of Christ we desire to find unity in our diversity, recognize the Lord in our midst and in all persons to whom we are called to serve in love and acceptance. Together we will strive to provide the atmosphere and opportunities for learning and spiritual growth needed by people of all ages and developmental levels.

A few words of wisdom:

Upon saying His final farewell to His apostles, Jesus gave His new Church the task to evangelize, that is, to bring the message of the Gospel to the world (Acts 1,8). The Bishops of the United States have pointed out that the first goal of evangelization is to bring about in all Catholics such an enthusiasm for their faith that, in living their faith in Jesus, they freely share it with others. (Go and Make Disciples). The mission of evangelization calls Catholic children "to be formed into disciples through the family's life and Faith Formation" (Go and Make Disciples). The family, then, is the first area in which the mission of evangelization takes place. Hence, parents are recognized as having the primary responsibility for training their children in the practice of the faith (Gaudium et Spes #48).

Parish Faith Formation programs assist in the sacred duty by providing opportunities for parents and children to develop their prayer lives and their formal understanding of the faith.

The gift of faith, which begins at Baptism, must be nourished throughout the entire life of each Christian. The family is rightfully called the "domestic church," and as such, is the foundation of the wider church community. Faith Formation within the Diocese of St. Petersburg serves the domestic church by offering the guidance and instructions whereby each individual can come to her/his full potential as members of the people of God. Sincere cooperation between the parish and its family members will bring about the goal of evangelizing youth and children through their active participation in the faith life of the church.

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Greeting 2009-2010

Dear Families,

We are very pleased to have your children participate in our Parish Faith Formation program this year; and, we look forward to working together.

The Diocesan Mission Statement makes reference to the primary responsibility parents have in forming their children in the faith, developing their prayer lives and providing formal understanding of the Catholic Faith.

We, at Holy Family, are privileged to be co-partners with you and invite your participation in our program. Our Catechists are trained volunteers who have a commitment to the Catholic Faith and a love for young people. This is a wonderful opportunity for you to grow in your faith with your family. I hope this "Parent Handbook" helps you become familiar with our program. Please, read it carefully and call me anytime regarding your child's Faith Formation. On behalf of the Holy Family community, it is our pleasure to serve the families of our parish.

Our desire is to deepen the students' relationship with our loving and merciful God, help them strengthen their faith, to enrich their prayer experiences, and to provide opportunities for them to serve the community. As your partners in the religious formation of your children, we strive to provide a welcoming, loving environment in which we can supplement what you are already teaching by your example.

May God bless you always and in all ways,

Linda Johnston
Director-Faith Formation



Registration

Families wishing to register their children for Faith Formation classes are required to be registered members of Holy Family Parish. Our classes, Pre-K thru 8th, meet every Sunday. There will be a few exceptions, at which time parents will be notified in writing of the date. Registration is held in August.

Applicants must be 4 years of age to enter Pre K; 5 years of age for Kindergarten; and 6 years of age for Grade 1.

Note: Sacraments of Penance, Eucharist and Confirmation are celebrated each year.

A **copy** of your child's baptismal certificate **must** be presented **at time of registration** *even if they were baptized at Holy Family.*

If you move during the school year, please inform the Faith Formation Office of your change of address and phone number. A student transferring from another program is required to submit a letter from that program's Faith Formation Director.

Faith Formation Hours

Classes are held every Sunday (unless specified), from 10:30 a.m. - 11:30 a. m. for Pre K and K; 10:30 a.m. – 11:45 a.m. for Grades 1 through 8. Please have your children report to their assigned classroom on time and with necessary materials.

Attendance: Mass and Class

Participation in Sunday (Saturday Vigil) Liturgy is mandatory. Attendance and participation in Sunday Faith Formation sessions is necessary for successful catechesis.

The 9 a.m. Mass is often convenient for families to attend Mass, followed immediately by class. It is extremely important that children attend Mass as well as class. Families are encouraged to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation regularly, especially during the seasons of Advent and Lent.

Communication

It is very important that your child and the Director know how to contact you. In case of sickness, injury or any major problem. We are not allowed to treat students; but, if the situation appears to warrant it, 911 will be called. Please provide alternate names and phone numbers (on registration form) in case we cannot reach you. Cell phone numbers are helpful and students should know these as well as their home phone numbers. (Email addresses are also useful should you be willing to share them with us.)

Please notify the Faith Formation Office – (at 526-5783) - of any changes to the registration information, giving both your name and that of the student.

After each class, please check with your children regarding information for your attention. A newsletter for your families will be sent home regularly. Please, read it thoroughly so that you may be informed of coming events and items of interest. Weekly donation envelopes for children will be distributed at the beginning of the year and should be used by the children weekly and placed in the Sunday collection basket. Children's donations will be going to a special area of need at the end of the school year.

Please! Watch the bulletin each week! The Faith Formation column advises of new, upcoming events and changes (when possible).

Please know also that the Director of Faith Formation (DFF) is always available to answer questions concerning your child and can be reached at 526-5783, ext. 21.

Statement of Purpose

Holy Family Faith Formation accepts responsibility to teach the Catholic faith, to build community and to foster service to others. We strive to assist parents/guardians - the primary educators - in the spiritual formation of their children.

1. We will strive to provide an experience of our faith as a community with God as our Father, Jesus as the center of our lives, and the Holy Spirit as our inspiration and guide
 - a) By sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ and celebrating the Sacraments together
 - b) By learning about Catholic tradition and teachings
 - c) By encouraging families to worship as a faith community
2. We will strive to provide children with religious knowledge and skills to enable them to make decisions in light of Catholic Christian values and principles
 - a) By meeting diocesan criteria curriculum
 - b) By meeting needs of individual children
 - c) By maintaining a positive and warm learning environment
3. We will strive to develop a spirit of cooperation and self-discipline in order to promote the social responsibility of each person as members of a family, school, church and community
 - a) By providing opportunities for family involvement
 - b) By encouraging children to do Christian service projects
 - c) By helping to teach the children respect in all areas

Intergenerational Parish Events

Are offered seasonally in accordance with the Liturgical year. Attendance at these events is strongly encouraged.

Grade Curriculum

Pre K and K: Sessions recognize the special needs and attention span of four and five year olds. Emphasis is on the love of God for us and His goodness revealed through Jesus and Scripture. Materials and activities lead children to an appreciation of God, themselves and others.

Prayers: Sign of the Cross, and short spontaneous prayers. The Our Father and the Hail Mary will be introduced.

Grade One: Emphasis is placed on each individual child knowing that he/she is special and that God loves him and that Jesus is her friend. Through prayers, sharing feelings, decision making, problem solving, memorization and role playing, students will welcome sharing love, peace and joy with others. They will learn to love and trust in God as well as in their family and friends.

Prayers: All of the above listed for Kindergarten level plus the Angel of God.



Grade Two: The children learn about belonging to God's family as a special member. They sense this through the study of the sacraments with emphasis on Baptism, Eucharist and Reconciliation. They become more aware of trusting Jesus as their friend and of showing this love and trust with others. They learn to thank God for His special gifts of forgiveness, the gift of Himself in the Eucharist and His presence in the Catholic Church.

Prayers: Same as in Grade One. In addition, they will learn the Act of Contrition and Acts of Faith, Hope and Love, plus the Glory Be to the Father.

First Reconciliation and First Eucharist: The occasion of receiving the sacraments of Reconciliation and First Communion are very special and important times for parents, children and the entire parish. First Communion is one of the three *Sacraments of Initiation* into full participation in the Church. Because this sacrament belongs to the entire Church, we celebrate it in a special public way. Parents are expected to be involved in the actual preparation of their children for First Reconciliation and First Communion. Special preparation programs are scheduled for parents and students. Attendance at these programs is mandatory for the reception of the sacraments.

Grade Three: Through the study of the life of Jesus, with emphasis on His relationship with the Apostles and the people of His time, the children learn to follow and imitate Jesus and value the gift of His Church. Developmental catechesis includes Sacraments, Prayer, and the Mass. Themes of peace and justice are also introduced.

Prayers: Same as in Grades One and Two. In addition, the children will learn the Apostles Creed and become familiar with the Rosary.



Grade Four: This program helps children grow in moral discernment as they explore their own lives and the life of Christ. Students study Biblical characters in order to learn how to respond to God's call. Emphasis is placed on the Ten Commandments and the Beatitudes. A review of the Sacrament of Reconciliation is included.

Prayers: Same as in Grades One, Two and Three. In addition, the children will learn the Angelus and continue to learn more about the Rosary.

Grade Five: Through the study of the Sacraments, the Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy and Church traditions, the students discover the importance of becoming witnesses of God's love; and they are invited to accept the challenge to carry out Jesus' mission in the world.

Prayers: Same as in Grades One, Two, Three and Four. In addition, the children will learn the Memorare and Hail Holy Queen.

Grade Six and Seven Combined: Through discussion, study, reflection, and Scripture the students are introduced to the great figures and events in the Bible. They come to discover how Scripture has meaning for their lives today and in the future. Through review of the Sacraments and Traditions of the Church, they value anew that God's love is constant and unchanging.

Prayers: Same as in Grades One through Five, plus becoming familiar with the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

Grade Eight: Besides gaining insights into the life and times of Jesus Christ and His Sacraments, students will learn how to apply the wisdom of the Gospel to their daily lives as they deal with some of the tough issues facing teenagers today. Strong focus on prayer and the Mass is included.

Prayers: Same as in Grades One thru Six with a renewed emphasis on the Acts of Faith, Hope, Love and Contrition. In addition, they will learn the Come Holy Spirit, Prayer Meditations, Shared Prayer, Prayer based on Scripture and the Order of Mass.

Note: Immediate preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation is offered during the eight grade year.

Preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation is a free standing program, it is not eighth grade curriculum. Confirmation is a Sacrament of Initiation intimately connected with Baptism and Eucharist. Sacramental catechesis includes sharing in the faith-life of the community, expanding individual and liturgical prayer, taking part in Christian service as well as reinforcement of Catholic foundation. The entire parish community is responsible for the catechesis of candidates to help them review, clarify, and expand their knowledge and love of the Catholic Faith

Sacraments

Baptism/First Penance and Eucharist/Confirmation

Contact Ms. Linda Johnston, DFF, 526-5783, ext. 21.

First Reconciliation and First Eucharist

Second grade students participate in Sacramental preparation as well as grade level curriculum during Sunday sessions.

Confirmation:

Students who wish to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation must have had one year of religious instruction prior to the year in which they are confirmed. Students for Confirmation should have a basic knowledge of their Catholic faith. The Confirmation program includes Catechetical sessions, blessing rites, service opportunities, and retreat experiences. Weekly attendance at Sunday Mass is a required part of the preparation for this sacrament. Participation in all areas of the Confirmation Program is essential.



Sacrament Preparation

Sacraments are a direct encounter with Jesus, with the gift of His presence that we call 'grace'. They celebrate what we already know – that God loves us unconditionally forever and wishes us to have 'life in all its fullness'.

It is Diocesan policy that: candidates for the sacrament be in their second consecutive year of religious education. Sacrament preparation is done within the parish. Faith Formation, parochial school, and home school students prepare together.

Adult Confirmation

Adults who are practicing the Catholic Faith, but who have never been Confirmed please call Linda Johnston for information.

Rite of Christian Initiation for Children/Youth

Children/youth age eight and up who have not been baptized or have not yet received Eucharist. For details please call Linda Johnston at 727-526-5783 x 21.

Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA)

On-going formation process for those interested in becoming Catholic, - please call Linda Johnston.

For more information on any of the above, please contact Ms. Linda Johnston, 526-5783, ext. 21.

Re-Membering the Church

Other programs for those who have been away from the church are available. For details please call Linda Johnston at the above number.

Health

If your child must receive medication while at class, you are required to send medicine with the child, and you must be responsible for administering any medication..

Parental Participation

Parents are asked to cooperate with teachers in helping to teach basic Catholic concepts, values and prayers. Good religious habits should be encouraged and reinforced. Try to set aside time for prayer, spiritual reading, scripture stories, and sharing of faith experiences. Attendance at all parent meetings is required; especially Safe Environment Training for parents offered in the Fall.

Faith Formation Evaluation

The National Assessment of Catholic Religious Education (A.C.R.E.) Survey is administered to students in Grades 5 and 8. This survey helps us evaluate progress and growth on a year-to-year basis. It is important that students be present for this survey, which is scheduled in the Spring.

Classrooms for Faith Formation

<u>Location</u>	<u>Room</u>	<u>Grade</u>
Diffley Hall - ECC	ECC	Pre K
School – <u>Downstairs</u>	Rm 103	K
	Rm 101	1 st
	Rm 102	2 nd
School – <u>Upstairs</u>	Rm 203	3 rd
	Rm 204	4 th
	Rm 205	5 th
	Rm 206	6 th and 7 th Combined
	Rm 207	RCIC (Rite of Christian Initiation adapted for Children/Youth)
	Rm 208	8 th
Director of Faith Formation: Secretary to the Director	Linda Johnston Katie Davis:	526-5783 x 21 526-5783 x 28

Safety & Security

For the protection of the children and staff:

- Dismissal procedures will be followed as outlined above..
- If someone other than a designated family member is picking up your child on a regular basis, please file the name, relationship and phone number with the DFF.
- Emergency procedures for Fire, etc. are in teacher files; teachers walk students through these procedures.

Catechists:

We take a great deal of pride in our volunteer Catechists and staff. They work as a team under the direction of the Director of Faith Formation. Diocesan and Parish training is provided for all Catechists. Our Catechists are volunteers who give very generously of their time and talent to serve the people of this parish. We ask that you cooperate with them, ask them if they need your help and give them words of thanks and encouragement. Please feel free to contact the Director, Linda Johnston at 526-5783, X21 for any questions or concerns.

Extra Opportunities

Youth

Children's Choir: We are sure you are aware that we now have a Children's Choir that sings at the 9 a.m. Mass once a month and on other special occasions. Children in grades 3 thru 8 are eligible to join. Please call the Music office, 526-5783, ext. 18 for information. Sign-up forms will be available at Orientation, Sunday, August 26th, or by calling Mr. Robert Todd at the above number.

Child Readers: We welcome children in grades 3 thru 8 to participate in the Mass as readers. Please call Ms. Linda Johnston at the Faith Formation office, 526-5783, ext. 21, for more information. Training will be made available for those students who would like to be readers on a regular basis.

Adults and older teens









Volunteer Ministry Duties: We encourage you to deepen your relationship with the Faith Formation program while giving your children an example of service.

Classroom Duties: Check with the Director and sign up with the teacher to be a homeroom parent.

Dismissal Duties: By the month (if possible). See the Director for sign-up.

“For Students Only”

Student Responsibilities:

-  Attendance at Sunday or Sat. Vigil Mass (9:00 a.m. Family Mass Preferred)
-  Participation in weekly sessions, GOF as scheduled, and additional events.
-  Get to class on time – participate fully – stay until the end of class.
-  Dress properly and modestly. No inappropriate words/symbols on any article of clothing please. No I-Pods during class time! C-phone on mute during class!
-  Be respectful of all Catechists, fellow students, church property, & personal property.
-  No bad language, inappropriate remarks, destructive behavior, cigarettes, alcohol, weapons, etc.
-  Know and adhere to all class rules and disciplinary actions. Practice self-control.
-  Participate in the “BE – ATTITUDES”

BE – PREPARED	Bring all necessary supplies/work to class
BE – OPEN	Participate in the various discussions/dynamics of class
BE – YOURSELF	You are unique in God’s eyes and ours; know you are special
BE – FLEXIBLE	Be patient and understanding during “those” times
BE – SUPPORTIVE	Good friends/good students are really needed and appreciated
BE – COMMITTED	Don’t give up – be part of the solution not part of the problem
BE – HAPPY	Recognize and enjoy all your many gifts and blessings

Harassment Policy for Non-Employment Situation in Schools/Center, Parish Religious Education and Parish Youth Ministry Programs of the Diocese of St. Petersburg

Policy

The Diocese of St. Petersburg Requires that each parish, Catholic school or early childhood center, establish and adopt the policy that prohibits any form of harassment by any individual. The Diocese of St. Petersburg strives for the establishment of a Christian, professional and supportive educational environment for all persons engaged in or involved with faith formation programs, schools and early childhood centers and parish youth ministry programs in non-employment situations. No parish, school, or early childhood center will be responsible for off-campus harassment, unless it occurs at a parish, school or early childhood center sponsored event.

Purpose of the Policy

This policy intends

- That each individual is free from physical, psychological or verbal intimidation and harassment in the schools, early childhood centers, faith formation and youth ministry settings;
- That each individual involved in schools, early childhood centers, faith formation and youth ministry programs maintain and further develop attitudes and behaviors which express respect for others and are reflective of each person's God-given dignity;
- To encourage a heightened sensitivity toward behaviors that others may find offensive and intimidating, whether these behaviors refer to race, religion, color, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, age, marital status, familiar status, veteran status or disability.

This policy is not intended to otherwise limit the expectation of staff, children, students and volunteers to engage fully in the traditions of teaching, celebrating, participating in and being formed by the Catholic faith, including but not limited to curriculum, catechesis, the Sacraments, other liturgies, worship services and ministries.

Explanation of Harassment

Harassment can result from a single incident or from a pattern of behavior involving verbal, written or physical conduct or communication.

Harassment encompasses a broad range of behaviors, which could include, but are not limited to:

- Physical, mental or verbal abuse;
- Insults, jokes or derogatory slurs based on one or more of an individual's protected status(es);
- Unwelcome sexual advances or touching;

- Implicit or explicit requests for sexual favors;

- Unwanted sexual comments, serious or humorous;
- Unwanted sexually suggestive telephone calls, letters, e-mail, etc.
- Comments or jokes based on issues of modesty and developing social awareness;
- Unwanted forced involvement in activities (e.g., physical, religious, etc.);
- Coercion of religious styles or personal beliefs upon a participant;
- Intimidation in front of a group or forced personal sharing in groups;
- Inappropriate media or music use which would violate this policy.

Confidentiality

The right to confidentiality, both of the complainant and of the accused, will be respected to the extent possible, but will be consistent with legal obligations and with the necessity to investigate allegations of misconduct and to take corrective action when this conduct has occurred.

Reporting Procedures

When an individual believes they are being harassed or feel uncomfortable with the actions or comments of another, or observe harassment of another person, the individual must report their concerns in writing as follows:

Individuals involved with Parish Faith Formation programs must report their concerns to their Catechetical Leader, the Pastor, or the Diocesan Director of Faith Formation. It is desirable that the Pastor and Parish Catechetical Leader, as canonical and/or administrative authorities, are informed as to any allegations, but the investigation must be conducted nonetheless as promptly as possible in accordance with designated procedures. The investigation will not be delayed due to the inability to make immediate contact with administrative authorities.



Diocese of St. Petersburg

Policy for the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults

(Revised and Approved May 8, 2006)

I. INTRODUCTION

The Diocese of St. Petersburg is committed to the well being of those served by the Church. The People of God have a right to be able to trust those who minister to them in God's name. The violation of this trust through any sexual abuse by Church Personnel is a source of great pain, for those involved and for the entire Church community. The Diocese published its first policy for the protection of children and youth on June 10, 1991, which required both employees and volunteers, who work with children and youth in any parish or Catholic School program to complete written employment applications for service with accompanying references. The following year on April 15, 1992, the diocese required background screening and fingerprinting of all employees who have the care, responsibility and/or supervision of children and youth.

In July 1997, the Province of Miami required all dioceses to add vulnerable adults to the protected classes of children and young people. Background screening, reference checking, fingerprinting and written employment and volunteer applications were now required of those wishing access to children, young people, and vulnerable adults. In June 2002, the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops (USCCB) adopted the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People (Charter)*, which required background screening and Safe Environment Program training for all who may have the care, responsibility and/or supervision of children and young people. The US Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) obtained recognition for the *Essential Norms for Diocesan/Epaarchial Policies dealing with allegations of sexual abuse of minors by priests or deacons in November 2002*. The Diocese of St. Petersburg revised its policy to comply with the *Charter* and the *Essential Norms* during December 2002. The diocese publishes this revision of its current policy in response to a revision of the *Charter* in 2005 and as part of a continuing commitment to its gospel and pastoral responsibilities. This revised policy, in combination with procedures and guidelines, provides for the implementation and enforcement of a safe environment for our children, youth and vulnerable adults.

II. POLICY AND SCOPE

A. Policy to Protect The Bishop of the Diocese of St. Petersburg will make every reasonable effort to prevent sexual abuse of minors and vulnerable adults and to respond promptly to all allegations of abuse where there is a reasonable belief that abuse has occurred. As such, the Diocese of St. Petersburg will comply with all obligations of civil and canon law and will promote healing where it is needed, provide education, training and guidance when it is appropriate and endeavor to prevent any sexual abuse of minors and vulnerable adults with firm justice and mercy towards all. No person, including clergy, who has been determined to have engaged in sexual abuse of a minor or vulnerable adult, will be allowed to remain in active ministry. Such actions violate Christian principles and are outside the scope of duties and employment of all church personnel. The diocese will not tolerate such behavior. This policy applies to all diocesan entities to include parishes, schools, early childhood centers and associated activities within the diocese.

Care will always be taken to protect the rights of all parties involved, particularly those of the person claiming to have been sexually abused and the person against whom the charge has been made. When the accusation has been proved to be unfounded, every reasonable step will be taken to restore the good name of the person falsely accused

B. Policy to Respond to Allegations. The Diocese of St. Petersburg will respond promptly to any allegation where there is reason to believe that sexual abuse of a minor has occurred. The diocese will utilize an objective outside investigator to investigate any such allegations. The diocese will maintain a Victim Assistance Minister to coordinate assistance for the immediate pastoral care of persons who report sexual abuse incidents that occurred when they were minors by clergy or other church personnel. The procedures for those making a complaint will be readily available on the Internet, via the website for the Diocese of St. Petersburg www.diocesofstpete.org, and in printed form in English and Spanish.

1-866-407-4504

Toll Free Contact Number for the Diocesan Victim Assistance Minister

C. Policy to Report. The Diocese of St. Petersburg will report an allegation of sexual abuse of a person who is a minor or vulnerable adult to the public authorities. The diocese will comply with all applicable civil laws with respect to the reporting of allegations of sexual abuse of minors and vulnerable adults to civil authorities and cooperate in their investigation in accord with the law of the state of Florida. The diocese will cooperate with public authorities about reporting cases even when the person is no longer a minor. In every instance, the diocese will advise victims of their right to make a report to public authorities and support this right.

Call in all mandatory reports of abuse to the statewide toll free abuse and neglect registry at 1-800-96ABUSE, to the local Department and Families (DCF) or to the local law enforcement agency.

D. Policy on the Diocesan Review Board. The Diocese of St. Petersburg Diocesan Review Board functions as a confidential consultative body to the bishop. The majority of its members will be lay persons not in the employ of the diocese in accordance with *Essential Norms for Diocesan/Eparchial Policies Dealing with Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Priests or Deacons, 2002*. This board will advise the bishop in his assessment of allegations of sexual abuse of minors and vulnerable adults and will review diocesan policies and procedures.

E. Policy on Removal of a Priest or Deacon from Ministry. Sexual abuse of a minor by a cleric is a crime in the universal law of the Church (**CIC, c. 1395 §2; CCEO, c. 1453 §1**) The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (Motu proprio, *Sacramentorum sanctitatis tutela, AAS, 93, 2001*) has reserved this jurisdiction because of the seriousness of this matter. Even after a single act of sexual abuse of a minor – whenever it occurred – which is admitted or established after an appropriate process in accord with canon law and the *Essential Norms*, the offending priest or deacon is to be permanently removed from ministry and, if warranted, dismissed from the clerical state. If an allegation of sexual abuse of a minor is made against the bishop, the Apostolic Nuncio shall be notified and the investigation shall proceed according to his direction.

The Diocese of St. Petersburg will follow the requirements of the universal law of the Church and the *Essential Norms* approved for the United States.

F. Policy on the Standards of Ministerial Behavior. The Diocese of St. Petersburg will maintain standards of ministerial behavior and appropriate boundaries for clergy and for any other paid personnel and volunteers of

the church in positions of trust who have the care, responsibility, and/or supervision of minors or vulnerable adults.

G. Policy on Communications. The Diocese of St. Petersburg will be open and transparent in communicating with parish, other church communities, and the public about sexual abuse of minors and vulnerable adults within the confines of respect for the privacy and the reputation of the individuals involved.

H. Policy on Distribution. A copy of this policy will be distributed to all diocesan entities in printed form for posting to the general public. This policy will also be posted on the diocesan website at www.dioceseofstpete.org.

I. Policy on Background Screening. The diocese of St. Petersburg will require that church personnel and candidates for ordination undergo a Level 2 (FBI) criminal history background screen and must meet minimum standards of moral conduct.

All church personnel will be required to undergo a criminal history background screening conducted by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) every 5 years subsequent to the initial FBI background screening. Church personnel who move from one entity to another must be screened through the Florida Department of Law Enforcement criminal history database system.

J. Policy on the Diocesan Safe Environment Program (SEP) and SEP Training. Under the auspices of the Safe Environment Program Office, which is responsible for the oversight, operation, maintenance, and enforcement of the Diocesan Safe Environment Program, the Diocese of St. Petersburg will require SEP training of all church personnel. The Safe Environment Program Office will conduct training and education in cooperation with parents, civil authorities, educators, and community organizations. It will require education and training for children, youth, ministers, educators, volunteers, and others to make and maintain a safe environment.

The Diocesan Safe Environment Program Office is also responsible for maintaining a central Database that will track the training and background screening status on all program participants.

K. Definitions (See End Notes)

End Notes:

The statutory confidentiality of privileged communications established in Section 90.505, F.S., shall be observed when applicable to all reporting required under this paragraph. Section 90.505, F.S. establishes a privilege with respect to communications to clergy, if made privately for the purposes of seeking spiritual counsel and advice from a member of the clergy in the usual course of practice or discipline and not intended for further disclosure.

Definitions:

- 2-1 **Allegation:** A statement or accusation of abuse, especially sexual abuse
- 2-2 **Child, Youth, or Minor:** Generally, a person less than 18 years of age. Minors and the combined term “children and youth” are used interchangeably.
- 2-3 **Church Personnel shall mean all of the following:**
 - 2-3-1 **Clergy:** All priests and deacons who have faculties of the Diocese of St. Petersburg.
 - 2-3-2 **Employee:** Any lay individual who is employed by or engaged in ministry who is given payment for services (any form of compensation, whether monetary or otherwise) rendered in which the obligation to withhold for payroll tax (FICS, Medicare and withholding) exists, whether part-time or full-time. This definition shall include all such persons whether employed by the diocese, parish, school, early childhood center, nursing home, group home or other Diocesan entity that is controlled by or operated by the bishop. “Personnel” as defined herein, has reference only to the applicability of this policy, and is not indicative of any agency or employment relationship between the diocese and the party whose compliance with this policy is sought.
 - 2-3-3 **Covered Volunteer:** Any unpaid person who is engaged or involved in any diocesan institution or parish activity, and who is entrusted with the care, responsibility, or supervision of children or vulnerable adults.
- 2-4 **Criminal History Background Screen:** An investigation of an individual’s background that may be contained in the public record to include municipal, county, state, federal law enforcement, Social Security and state driving records. This screening is meant to (1)

- provide an insight into one's character indicator of personal integrity (2) offer a view of problem areas with personal situations, and (3) provide an indicator of personal integrity before allowing access to children, youth, or vulnerable adults.
- 2-5 **Sexual Abuse:** Sexual abuse means any act constituting sexual abuse as defined in Chapter 39 and Chapter 415, Florida Statutes, whether perpetrated against a child or vulnerable adult as defined therein.
- 2-6 **Vulnerable Adult:** A person 18 years or older whose ability to perform the normal activities of daily living or to provide for his or her own care or protection is impaired due to a mental, emotional, physical, or developmental disability dysfunction, brain damage, or *the infirmities of aging*.

Notes: