

Guidelines for Reporting Sexual Abuse

The Western Province of the Society of the Divine Word recognizes that the sexual abuse of a minor by a Priest or Brother has devastating consequences for the victim and his or her family, for the lay and religious communities, and for the perpetrator.

The Society of the Divine Word has become increasingly aware of the effects of this tragic behavior and has developed a steadfast commitment to help those affected. This guide is intended to provide basic information on the procedures for reporting and responding to allegations of sexual abuse.

Where to Turn for Help

If you or someone you know believes that a member of the Society of the Divine Word has engaged in the sexual abuse of a minor, regardless of when, where, why, how or how long ago the alleged abuse occurred, we urge you to report such behavior immediately to one of the four people whose duty it is to address such matters:

The Provincial Superior, as the leader of the Western Province, is ultimately responsible for all the members, ministries and activities of the Society of the Divine Word in the Western United States.

The Chairperson of the Sexual Abuse Review Board: The Western Province is under the Review Board of CMSM Region 6. The Chairperson convenes the Review Board which is composed of specialists from the fields of psychology, law enforcement, medicine, canon law, civil law, and other trained professionals. They review and advise the Province administration on all matters related to incidents of sexual abuse, prevention of abuse and the protection of children.

The Director of Child Protection oversees the efforts of the Western Province to protect children and youth from sexual abuse. He represents the Western Province at the national annual meetings organized by CMSM, all the regular Region 6 Board meetings, and at the update programs on victim assistance and safety plans. He provides documentation for the Review Board that includes recording and reporting allegations. He arranges for victim assistance and facilitates efforts to provide assessment and counseling services for the victims. He also coordinates Praesidium visits and reports.

The Rector of the Divine Word Residence

The Rector of the Western Province Center, in his capacity as the supervisor for the Province's persons on a safety plan, assists the director. He attends the victim assistance and safety plan Review Board meetings and prepares the appropriate restrictions, supervision and safety plans for those in the Province who have been credibly accused.

Provincial Superior
USW Province Center
951-687-7600
svdusw@gmail.com

Director of Child Protection
Duong Nguyen
909-883-8981
duongnguyen73@hotmail.com

Rector, Divine Word Residence
Alan Jenkins 951-689-4858
lesteralanjenkins@gmail.com

Sexual Abuse Review Board (Reg 6)
Rick Burns (chair) 818-232-2648
soitgoes@sbcglobal.net

How to Report Sexual Abuse

Any adult reporting sexual abuse as a minor or any minor abused by a member of the Society of the Divine Word should contact one or more of the individuals / offices noted above for assistance. The allegation will be handled with the strictest confidentiality and utmost sensitivity, and reported to the proper civil authorities in accord with prevailing laws and statutes.

The person reporting the sexual abuse of a minor is free to report the incident directly to the appropriate local, county and / or state law enforcement authorities.

If there is suspicion or knowledge that a child is currently being abused, the one so informed should immediately notify the proper civil authorities.

How the Society of the Divine Word Responds to an Allegation

The Society of the Divine Word takes all allegations of sexual abuse of a minor very seriously. Upon receiving such an allegation, the Provincial Superior of the Western Province will initiate several steps in response to the allegation.

1. Any new allegation of sexual abuse of a minor that may have been committed by a Member or other agent of the Province shall be promptly reported to civil authorities in the jurisdiction in which the alleged incident occurred.
 - A. Allegations of sexual abuse of a minor will be reported to civil authorities regardless of whether the accused Member is living or dead, or whether he is a current or former Member of the Province.
 - B. Allegations of sexual abuse of a minor will be reported to civil authorities regardless of whether the alleged victim's identity is known.
 - C. Allegations of sexual abuse of a minor, when the victim is no longer a minor at the time the incident is first reported, will be reported as obligated by the civil laws of the state where the sexual abuse of the minor allegedly occurred.
2. Allegations of sexual abuse of a minor will be reported to civil authorities regardless of whether the allegations are believed to be likely to be established at the time they

are received.

3. Counseling services will be offered. A trained professional will listen to and offer help to the victim and others affected by the abuse, including the services of appropriate psychological counseling and other resources that may be helpful.
4. The Province, through an independent investigator, will respond swiftly to evaluate and investigate any accusation of sexual abuse of a minor perpetrated by a member of the Society of the Divine Word. Any such investigation will be conducted with respect for any investigation being conducted by civil authorities.
5. Any member of the Society of the Divine Word who has engaged in the sexual abuse of a minor will be permanently removed from any public ministry, and placed in a restricted and supervised environment.
6. This entire matter including the allegation, investigation, response to the victim and restrictions placed on the perpetrator will be presented to the Western Province Sexual Abuse Review Board. This independent, interdisciplinary Board of lay professionals advises the Provincial on all matters related to sexual abuse perpetrated by a member of the Western Province. All aspects of the Province's response will be reviewed by the Board in order to determine if further action is advisable.