

Making a Report of Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect

Who must report?

- All archdiocesan personnel who have reason to believe or suspect that any minor has been victim of physical or sexual abuse

What must be reported?

- Any suspected physical or sexual abuse of a minor

To whom are reports to be made?

- Reports on employees, lay volunteers, and clergy are made to local law enforcement or the Department of Human Resources (DHR). A listing of local DHR and law enforcement agency phone numbers can be found on the archdiocesan webpage.
- In addition, please notify the Archdiocese of Mobile.
 - In school situations, notify the principal of the school.
 - In parish programs, notify the pastor.
 - In other situations, notify the Director of Child Protection by calling 251-434-1559.

What if?

- It happened a long time ago –
 - There are no statutes of limitations for sexual abuse occurring after January 1, 1985. All cases of sexual abuse involving a minor must be reported to civil authorities.
 - If the victim who was sexually abused is now an adult, encourage the adult victim to make a report to DHR, as the perpetrator might still be active.
 - If the perpetrator was an employee of the Archdiocese, in addition, make a report to the Office of Child Protection.

What if?

- I'm not sure it happened –
 - Report it anyway. It is up to DHR to investigate it and confirm. We report if we have “reason to believe...”
 - It is better to err on the side of caution.

Am I protected?

- Yes. Alabama law provides civil and criminal immunity to those who report suspected child abuse in good faith.