

QHR One-Sheet Explainer:

Safe Environment Policies & Procedures

Anytime a priest is removed from the public exercise of priestly ministry due to behavior that is not consistent with the Archdiocese's safe environment policies, it can be unsettling or even alarming. In the wake of the Church's failure to protect the vulnerable in decades past, we have learned hard but necessary truths. We are committed to not only rebuilding trust but, more importantly, to creating environments where every person, especially the most vulnerable, feels safe, respected, and protected. In that learning, we have developed robust policies and procedures to ensure we are doing everything we can to prevent abuse.

We are all called to be stewards of our parish community. This includes training and education in how to mentor and interact appropriately with those vulnerable members entrusted to our care. If something feels off, is observed to be outside the norm of appropriate mentoring behavior as outlined by policy, training, and protocol, we encourage you to speak up. Protecting the vulnerable is a responsibility we share. To learn more about appropriate interactions, you can review our Archdiocese Abuse Prevention Policy or find resources, including boundary training, through our VIRTUS partner.

That commitment to protection requires us to act swiftly and responsibly when concerns arise. When a report is made, the Archdiocese's Office for Protection and Care oversees the intake process to ensure the matter is handled with professionalism, compassion, and integrity. In cases where the concern involves behavior that may violate law or Church norms, the priest is temporarily withdrawn from ministry. This step does not presume guilt or wrongdoing, but rather serves as a precaution to allow a thorough review, both by civil authorities, if applicable, and through the Church's own internal investigative process.

It is important to understand: these steps are not taken lightly. Priests are not removed over minor misjudgments, misunderstandings, or vague complaints. A report must raise a serious and credible concern, significant enough to warrant this level of response. Once civil authorities are notified, they take the lead.

Once law enforcement has concluded any necessary involvement, the Archdiocese proceeds with an internal investigation to determine whether safe environment policies or behavioral boundaries have been violated. Even when actions are not criminal, they may still be inappropriate or harmful, especially when they undermine

the trust or safety of those we serve. The goal in every case is truth, accountability, and the protection of all.

The Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas takes all allegations of abuse and misconduct by church personnel very seriously and works to respond to survivors' needs with urgency, respect, and compassion. We encourage anyone with knowledge about any misconduct by a church volunteer, employee, religious or clergy member — regardless of when the abuse may have occurred — to contact civil authorities first, and then call or text the Archdiocese's confidential report line at 913-276-8703 or online at www.archkck.org/reportabuse.

If you have questions, concerns, or would like to share your thoughts regarding this situation, please email communications@archkck.org.