

The policies and procedures of the Diocese of Ogdensburg governing its internal and external communications are intended to promote the development of cooperative, responsive, and candid relationships. The diocese seeks to actively engage the community and the media in its efforts to prevent child abuse, protect children, support families, and inform the public. Within the confines of respect for privacy of the individuals involved, the Diocese will communicate as openly as possible with the members of the media, the faith community, and general public regarding allegations of child abuse and related issues.

I Public Awareness of Child Abuse Issues

The Department of Communications (in collaboration with the Safe Environment Coordinator) will work with the faith community and with the general public to disseminate information in order to increase the awareness and understanding of the prevention, identification, and treatment of child abuse and neglect.

II Timeliness of Communications

Communications with an affected parish and/or school, the media, and the broader diocesan community are to be timely, open, and clear. All communications shall occur within the confines of respect for the privacy and reputation of those involved, as well as applicable canon and civil law.

III Responding to the Media

The Director of the Department of Communications is responsible for coordinating all media contacts. All media inquiries made to schools, parishes, etc. should be referred to that office or responded to in consultation with it. The Director of the Department of Communications will consult with, guide, and coordinate relevant persons in the handling of media inquiries.

IV Communications Training

The Director of the Department of Communications will provide training to pastors, pastoral delegates, principals, and agency directors so that they can, when required to do so, competently respond to media inquiries. This is undertaken to reassure the community that abuse allegations are taken seriously and that the Diocese of Ogdensburg will cooperate fully with civil authorities.

V Communicating with Directly Affected Communities

Recognizing the importance of supporting parishes and schools directly affected by misconduct involving the victimization of minors, in all specific instances the Director of the Department of Communications will coordinate with the Victim's Assistance Coordinator, Safe Environment Coordinator, Vicar for Clergy, Chancellor, Moderator of the Curia, relevant diocesan offices (such as the Catholic Schools Office), and school and parish leadership to ensure that

parishioners and school families receive timely, factual, and pastorally appropriate communication from the diocese, school, and parish.

VI Communicating with the Broader Community

In particular instances the Diocese may communicate with priests at other parishes, particularly those where an accused person previously served, school principals, and/or parish staff in order to assist them in reaching out pastorally to all parishioners and school families impacted by allegations of abuse.

7/1/13