

Safe Environment Policies and Accreditation

The Jesuits USA Central and Southern Province has substantive policies for protecting children and responding to allegations of sexual abuse or misconduct by a member of the province.

The province is accredited by Praesidium, Inc., an organization providing consultation, risk management assessment, policy development, and training materials for use in preventing sexual misconduct and responding to allegations of sexual misconduct. The province maintains its accreditation through regular reviews by Praesidium's auditors.

Before a Jesuit is Accepted

We take great care in the screening and assessment of applicants to the Society of Jesus. Before a candidate is accepted, he undergoes in-depth screening, including psychosexual and social media screening, and an extensive criminal background check.

Our formation program fosters healthy development in the spiritual life of the Jesuit as well as his psychosexual health and well-being. Jesuits at every stage of their ministry and formation receive regular safe-environment training to promote ethical conduct in ministry and awareness and sensitivity of professional boundaries.

What Happens if a Jesuit is Accused of Sexual Abuse

When a claim involving a minor is made against a Jesuit, the province:

- Reports it immediately, both verbally and in writing, to law enforcement
- Cooperates throughout the investigation
- Suspends the accused from ministry, pending the outcome of the investigation
- Offers pastoral and therapeutic services to the victim.

Internal Procedures

- If law enforcement decides to pursue a criminal investigation, the province initiates its own investigation only after the criminal investigation concludes.
- The results of the province's internal investigation are presented to an independent review board comprised of mental health and law enforcement professionals, most of whom are not Jesuits, other clergy or employees of the province. The review board helps determine if a claim is credible and makes its recommendation to the provincial.
- No Jesuit who has a credible allegation of sexually abusing a minor or vulnerable adult is allowed to remain in public ministry.

How to Report a Claim

If you or someone you know has been abused by a Jesuit, you are urged to contact the appropriate law enforcement or child-protection agency in the location in which the incident took place.

You are further encouraged to advise the Jesuits by calling Carol Zarinelli Brescia, Licensed Clinical Social Worker, at (314) 915-7168 or at her confidential e-mail address: ucsoutreach@jesuits.org. If the victim is currently a minor, we will report the incident to the appropriate state or local law enforcement agency. The province will also report an allegation of past sexual abuse of a minor even if the alleged victim is now an adult, unless the person accused of abuse is known to be deceased. Similar action will be taken if an allegation is received that a vulnerable adult was sexually abused.