



## How to Report Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation

The Diocese of Sioux Falls is committed to providing a safe place for children, youth, and adults to learn and practice their faith. Your vigilance is needed to maintain safe environments within all ministries. To assist in this essential role, the following is offered as guidance.

### If a child discloses abuse, neglect, or exploitation to you...

1. Make certain your facial expression and body language reflect an outward and sincere openness to the child's disclosure.
2. Listen to the exact words the child uses; these are very important. AVOID asking the child direct questions that might cause the child to interpret you as doubting his or her disclosure. If the child says something that is not clear, say to the child "tell me a little more" or "help me to understand".
3. After the child has finished, thank the child for telling you. Inform the child that you are going to share this information with persons who can help him/her.
4. Without leaving the child alone, find an adult to stay with the child. In an area where the child cannot hear you, call and report the incident to local law enforcement (city police or county sheriff) or to the Department of Social Services Child Protection Office at (877) 244-0864. **Call 911 if the child is in immediate danger.**
5. Immediately after you make the report, write down the exact words the child used in his/her disclosure and during your interactions with him/her. Provide this report to the local safe environment coordinator, the director of religious education, the school principal or the pastor.
6. Confirm that the pastor or school administrator has contacted the Diocesan Chancellor at (605) 988-3704, in accord with the Diocesan Misconduct Policy, if the suspected abuse or exploitation involves someone representing the Church.

### If you suspect abuse, neglect, or exploitation...

1. Report your suspicions to local law enforcement (city police or county sheriff) or to the Department of Social Services Child Protection Office (877) 244-0864. **Call 911 if the child is in immediate danger.**
2. Call the Diocesan Chancellor at (605) 988-3704 if the suspected abuse or exploitation involves someone representing the Church.