

Diocese of Fargo Communications Plan Regarding The Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People

At the Diocese of Fargo, we are committed to consistent, accurate and responsible communications that will both protect the children and young people in our care and respect the rights of persons who may be accused of sexual misconduct with a minor.

The Office of Communications will assist the Bishop, Vicars General, or other designee(s) in providing information on policies and procedures, codes of conduct, safe environment programs and reporting requirements for employees. It will also assist in publicizing abuse reporting procedures and requirements, along with relevant telephone numbers and e-mail addresses, to assist those individuals seeking to make a report. These communications will be accomplished through available diocesan media, including the diocesan Web site, which is available 24 hours a day at www.fargodiocese.org. On its home page, the Web site includes an easy-to-find link to detailed information about reporting. In addition, the diocesan newspaper "New Earth" will publish at least quarterly the diocesan policy on reporting incidents or suspected incidents of abuse, including the phone number and e-mail address for the victims assistance coordinator.

In the event of a report of sexual misconduct, the Diocese is committed to communicating openly and fully with the affected parish or community, consistent with respect for the privacy of the individuals involved and any ongoing legal process. The Office of Communications will utilize the "New Earth", the diocesan Web site, press releases, e-mails to priests and parishes, bulletin and pulpit announcements, and other means to assist in providing clear communications as appropriate. If possible, the accused will be notified in advance of the nature of any such public disclosure and will be invited to add remarks to the information.

To encourage responsible and accurate coverage in the media, the Director of Communications will serve as the contact person for media inquiries regarding allegations of misconduct. The Office of Communications may be contacted at 701-356-7958 or via the diocesan Web site at www.fargodiocese.org.

Approved by Most Rev. Samuel J. Aquila, D.D., Bishop of Fargo, on August 26, 2004.