Statement of Policy:
The policies of the review board of the Diocese of Fairbanks are those set forth in the revised “Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People” (hereafter “Charter”) and the revised “Essential Norms for Diocesan/Eparchial Policies Dealing with Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Priests or Deacons” (hereafter “Essential Norms”). The policies of the Diocese of Fairbanks will be updated in accordance with any revisions, amendments or other modifications to the Charter or the Essential Norms or any other applicable document subsequently approved by the USCCB.

Mission of the Review Board:
It is the mission of the review board, as a confidential consultative body, to serve the people of God in the Diocese of Fairbanks by assisting the bishop in his responsibilities for the protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults. The board is charged with advising the bishop in the work of the just handling of allegations of sexual abuse, the prevention of further abuse, the healing of those who have been injured, and the recreation of a sense of trust among the faithful and larger community.

Review Board Objectives:
The review board operates under the pastoral vision of encountering Christ, being transformed, and being sent as missionary disciples. The role of the review board is not investigatory; rather it evaluates evidence presented to it by investigators and offers advice and opinions, retrospectively and prospectively. The board is to advise the bishop in his determination of suitability for ministry of priest, deacons, or lay staff and volunteers accused of sexual misconduct. The board also has the responsibility for reviewing diocesan norms and policies that govern sexual harassment and sexual misconduct. By extending and ensuring communication with the laity, the board demonstrates a sincere commitment to the healing mission of the church.

OPERATING GUIDELINES

Section 1: Membership, Tenure, & Officers
1.1 The Bishop shall appoint the members of the Board.
1.2 The Board “will be composed of at least five persons of outstanding integrity and good judgment in full communion with the Church. Most of the Board members will be lay persons who are not in the employ of the diocese; but at least one member should be a priest who is an experienced and respected pastor of the diocese, and at least one member should have expertise in the treatment of the sexual abuse of minors.” Charter, Art. 2; Norm § 5.

1.3 Board members will be appointed for a term of five years and may be reappointed. No member will serve more than three consecutive terms.

1.4 The board will select one member to be nominated to serve as Chairperson. The chair will draw up the agenda for the meeting in consultation with the bishop and other members of the board. The Chairperson will serve a three-year term and may be reappointed.

1.6 The Safe Environment Coordinator shall serve as an ex officio and non-voting member of the board.

1.7 The Victim’s Assistance Coordinator shall serve as an ex officio and non-voting member of the board.

1.8 The Bishop may, at any time, remove or extend any member of the board on his own initiative.

1.9 All board members shall serve without compensation.

Section 2 – Schedule of Meetings:

2.1 The review board will have at least two meetings per fiscal calendar year. Additional meetings may be convened in order to address specific matters.

2.2 A quorum of the board is two-thirds of the members.

2.3 Meetings ordinarily take place at the diocesan offices. Members may attend meetings electronically if they are unable to be physically present for meetings, provided the confidentiality of the meetings is strictly safeguarded.

2.4 Persons who are not members of the board may attend some or all of a meeting when invited to do so by the bishop. Such individuals may include, for example, attorneys working for the diocese, individuals conducting an investigation, the accused, and/or the person making the allegation.

2.5 The proceedings of all meetings shall follow a written agenda as set by the Chairperson and such agenda shall be kept on file with the Chairperson as proof of meeting. Complete minutes of the board are to be marked confidential and placed in a secure archive with the Safe Environment Coordinator at the Chancery.
Section 3 – Board Duties

3.1 Review of allegations. The review board shall receive a timely and comprehensive report from the Victim Assistance Coordinator and/or a diocesan investigator through the Bishop’s office of all allegations of abuse of minors by priests or deacons.

3.2 Consultation on allegations. The board shall provide consultation to the bishop regarding validity of allegations and suitability for ministry.

3.3 Policy compliance. For all allegations, the board shall determine whether the diocesan policy on sexual abuse was followed regarding the reporting to civil authorities, the outreach to the victims, the outreach to parish communities, and the appropriate action, in accord with Cannon Law and prudent judgment, toward clergy alleged to have caused the abuse.

3.4 Policy Review. The board shall review, every two years, the diocesan policy on sexual abuse. A report of the recommendations regarding the creation, revision, and effectiveness of Safe Environment policies, including the training programs for all adults and children, criminal background check procedures, compliance tracking and related issues shall be sent to the bishop.

3.5 Communication with laity: Extend and ensure effective collaboration with the laity. The board shall communicate regularly with the people of the diocese, reporting on all matters that are not confidential.

Section 4 – Key Responsibilities

4.1 Board members should be familiar with The Charter and its revisions, The Essential Norms and the diocesan policies on abuse and code of conduct.

4.2 All Board members will sign a pledge of confidence about review board deliberations and other confidential matters discussed at board meetings. The exercise of care and confidentiality will continue after members complete their term(s) on the board.