

# DIOCESE OF ST. PETERSBURG REVIEW BOARD BYLAWS

(Rev 1-12-2021)

The Diocesan Review Board is the successor of the Response Team of the Diocese of St. Petersburg. The Response Team was established in 1996 to evaluate and make recommendations to the Bishop concerning allegations of sexual abuse of minors by clergy.

In accordance with the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*, of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, June 2002, and most recently reconfirmed June 2019, the Diocese of St. Petersburg (“Diocese”) has reconstituted a Review Board, which henceforth, will be a standing committee within the Diocese. As recommended by the Charter, the membership shall consist of members of the laity, non-church employees, and one priest, serving as the Promoter of Justice, and the Diocesan attorney as staff member.

## **PROCEDURES AND OBJECTIVES**

1. The Review Board assesses allegations of sexual abuse of minors by a priest or deacon of the Diocese and advises the Bishop on whether the allegations appear credible.
2. The Review Board may also be convened by the Bishop to assess allegations of sexual abuse of vulnerable adults by a priest or deacon of the Diocese and advise the Bishop whether the allegations appear credible.
3. The Review Board makes recommendations to the Bishop on fitness for ministry for priests and deacons or for professional evaluations in particular cases.
4. The Review Board itself will not conduct investigations, but when the need arises, the Diocesan attorney is authorized to commence a preliminary investigation, in which an outside professional investigator will be engaged. The results of the investigation will be brought to the Board.
5. All recommendations of the Review Board will be promptly communicated to the Bishop.
6. The Review Board will meet annually to review pertinent Diocesan policy and procedures for appropriate modifications, and for membership updates.

## **MEMBERSHIP**

A maximum of eleven (11) members, all appointed by the Bishop, will be comprised of lay members (which may not be employees of the Diocese and some of which will have experience in the field of sexual abuse) and one (1) priest.

## **TERM**

Membership terms are for five (5) years, renewable. In the interest of continuity, the first term may be staggered, three (3), four (4) and five (5) years.

## **OFFICERS**

The Bishop will appoint a Chairperson for a period of two (2) years, renewable.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

The deliberations of the Review Board will be strictly confidential, and no detailed minutes will be taken or maintained. Summary notes indicating the purpose of the meeting, the individuals in attendance, the decisions made, and the next steps will be recorded and retained. All documents given to the Review Board will be collected at the conclusion of each meeting and returned to the Diocese.

Unless authorized by the Bishop or compelled by law, all information received by the Review Board shall be considered confidential and shall not be revealed by any member. Each Review Board member will execute a confidentiality agreement as provided by the Canon Law of the Roman Catholic Church.