



CONSTITUTION OF THE ERIE DIOCESAN REVIEW BOARD

1. Mission.

1.1 To serve as a confidential consultative body to the Diocesan Bishop.

2. Membership.

2.1 Voting Members:

2.1.1 At least six persons of outstanding integrity and good judgment who are in full communion with the Catholic Church, the majority of whom are lay persons not in the employ of the diocese.

2.1.2 One of the voting members is to be an experienced and respected pastor.

2.1.3 At least one of the voting members shall have particular knowledge and expertise regarding the sexual abuse of minors.

2.2 Non-voting Members:

2.2.1 *Ex-officio*, the Vicar General.

2.2.2 *Ex-officio*, the Promoter of Justice.

2.2.3 *Ex-officio*, Legal Counsel for the Diocese.

2.3 Non-Member Resource Persons in attendance:

2.3.1 *Ex officio*, the Victim Assistance Coordinator.

2.3.2 *Ex officio*, Coordinator of the Office for the Protection of Children and Youth.

2.3.3 Others, with the consent of the Diocesan Bishop, either *ad causam* or on a standing basis.

3. Nomination, Appointment and Terms of Members.

3.1 The Office for the Protection of Children and Youth will submit to the Diocesan Bishop the names of new potential Review Board members.

3.2 The Diocesan Bishop will appoint new members to the Review Board.

3.3 Members are appointed for a term of five (5) years, renewable once.

4. Officers of the Review Board.

- 4.1 The Diocesan Bishop serves as *ex officio* Chair of the Review Board.
- 4.2 The Promotor of Justice serves as *ex officio* Secretary of the Review Board. After having heard the Review Board, the Diocesan Bishop may appoint a non-voting, non-member to serve as the Recording Secretary.

5. Responsibilities of the Review Board.

- 5.1 To advise the Diocesan Bishop in assessing allegations of the sexual abuse of minors by priests, deacons and other diocesan personnel.
- 5.2 To assist the Diocesan Bishop in determining suitability for ministry of priests, deacons and other diocesan personnel against whom allegations of sexual abuse of minors have been made.
- 5.3 To advise the Diocesan Bishop regarding all aspects of cases of the sexual abuse of minors, whether retrospectively or prospectively.
- 5.4 To approve amendments to the diocesan *Policy for the Protection of Children* and related policies and procedures.

6. Meetings.

- 6.1 Meetings will be held at least once a year, and additionally as needed at the discretion of the Diocesan Bishop.
- 6.2 In consultation with the Diocesan Bishop, the Office for the Protection of Children and Youth will set the agenda for the meetings.
- 6.3 A majority of the voting members of the Review Board shall constitute a quorum.

7. Role of the Victim Assistance Coordinator at Review Board Meetings

- 7.1 When necessary or advantageous, provide Review Board members with a descriptive report of circumstances or other pertinent information, but never to include victims' names or identifying information, to assist in the discernment process;
- 7.2 To act as liaison and channel of communication between the Clinical Pastoral Council and the Review Board;

8. Confidentiality and Ethics

- 8.1 At all times, both voting and non-voting Review Board Members as well as all resource persons will maintain strict confidentiality and privacy regarding matters discussed at the Review Board meetings.
- 8.2 Minutes will be taken by the Secretary and retained in the Chancery Office of the Diocese of Erie office. All documents given to the Review Board will be collected at the conclusion of each meeting and returned to the Vicar General.

8.3 Both voting and non-voting members of the Review Board will abide by the Code of Ethics which is attached (cf. Appendix A).

9. Media Relations

9.1 The Diocesan Bishop alone serves as spokesperson for the Review Board.

10. Amendments

10.1 Any member of the Review Board, voting and non-voting, may recommend to the Diocesan Bishop or to the Office for the Protection of Children and Youth any amendments to this constitution.

10.2 The Office for the Protection of Children and Youth will prepare the draft text of any amendments to be formally presented to review.

10.3 In order to take effect, proposed amendments must receive a majority of the votes of voting members as well as the affirmative acceptance of the Diocesan Bishop, without which the proposed amendment will have no effect.

Approved by the Diocesan Review Board
August 9, 2022
Erie Pennsylvania

The previous constitutions of August 5, 2003, of June 8, 2016 and of August 19, 2021 are hereby abrogated.

Appendix A

Code of Ethics of the Review Board of The Diocese of Erie

1. Review Board Members will abstain from voting in any case in which they have not heard or examined substantially all the evidence made available to all other board members.
2. Subject to other diocesan policies and applicable law:
 - All information and documents received during the review of cases are confidential.
 - Case information will not be disclosed or repeated to non-members of the Board.
 - All files, records and other documents containing confidential information shall be returned to the Vicar General upon the conclusion of the meeting.
 - The remarks of the bishop, legal counsel, diocesan staff members, and other Board members made during formal discussions or deliberations are confidential and shall not be repeated outside formal meetings, unless permitted by the Bishop of the Diocese of Erie.
3. The exercise of care and confidentiality will continue after members complete their term(s) on the Board.
4. Board members shall disclose to the Chairperson (Bishop) any material relationship with case individuals that would contravene the terms of this Code of Ethics. The Chairperson, acting in his discretion, shall determine if a personal conflict exists and if the Board member who, upon receipt of such notification, must immediately remove him/herself from all future proceedings in a given case.
5. No Board member will have outside contact other than in a professional manner in the exercise of his or her profession, including the work of the Office for the Protection of Children and Youth, or any incidental contact with a case individual, his/her family, or close associates while said case is under review.
6. Board Member agrees that he/she will be bound by this Code of Ethics

Signature of Review Board Member

Date

Witness

All copies of the signed Code of Ethics shall be kept on file in the Office for the Protection of Children and Youth at the Diocese of Erie.