



How We Respond to an Allegation of Abuse

The USA East Province seeks to protect the rights of all involved and to respond as pastorally as possible, as we strive toward justice, healing, and reconciliation. While each case is distinct, the Province takes the following basic steps* in responding to an allegation of sexual abuse of a minor or a vulnerable adult:

Immediate Steps:

- The Provincial's delegate and/or the Province attorney will collect as much pertinent information as possible as soon as possible.
- If there is at least a semblance of truth in the initial information, the Province will open a formal investigation with the help of a third-party investigator.
- The accused Jesuit will be suspended from ministry, pending the outcome of the investigation.
- The Province will promptly report an allegation in writing to the appropriate civil authorities and to the diocese(s) in which the alleged incident(s) occurred.

Attending to the Complainant:

- The Provincial or his delegate will offer to meet with the complainant, if he or she so desires. If he or she is still a minor, the meeting will occur in the presence of a parent or guardian.
- The Province will determine what type of pastoral and/or therapeutic assistance can be offered appropriately in the particular situation.
- The Pastoral Advocacy Coordinator (PAC) will assist with the ongoing needs of the complainant while the investigation is underway.

Moving toward Resolution:

- The Provincial or his delegate will inform the Province Review Board of any allegation of sexual abuse of a minor or vulnerable adult. The Review Board consists of mostly lay members (including parents) with expertise in law, law enforcement, mental health, and social services.
- Based on the written report of the third-party investigation, the Review Board will offer recommendations to the Provincial, who will then make a determination of credibility.
- If an allegation is substantiated, the accused Jesuit will remain suspended from ministry and will be placed on a supervised safety plan. His name will be listed on the Province website among those credibly accused of sexual abuse, and the Provincial's delegate will inform the leadership of any organization, ministry, or diocese in which the abuse took place.
- The Provincial or his delegate will inform the complainant of his determination and offer appropriate pastoral and/or therapeutic assistance.

*N.B. If, at any point during this process, civil or criminal proceedings are initiated, the process will normally be suspended until such proceedings are concluded, so as not to interfere with law enforcement or the justice system. The Province will cooperate fully with civil authorities.