

Belmont Abbey

Guide for Those Reporting or Suspecting Sexual Misconduct

This guide is intended to provide basic information and instructions concerning (1) how Belmont Abbey defines sexual misconduct, (2) Belmont Abbey's procedures for responding to allegations/reports of sexually inappropriate behavior, and (3) contact information for reporting knowledge or suspicion of sexual misconduct by monks of Belmont Abbey.

Sexual Misconduct is a general term including sexual abuse, sexual harassment and sexual exploitation.

Sexual Abuse is sexual contact between an adult and a minor or vulnerable adult, including, but not limited to:

- Physical touch or contact experienced by the recipient as uncomfortable
- Sexual propositions
- Sexual innuendo or talk, pornography
- Coercion to engage in sexual conduct
- Indecent exposure
- Sexual intercourse, sodomy or rape

Sexual misconduct between adults can take the form of sexual harassment or sexual exploitation. Sexual harassment is unwanted sexualized conduct or language between co-workers, between supervisors and employees, between teachers and students or between a priest or religious and a member of the faithful in a setting or ministry or spiritual direction. Sexual exploitation is sexual contact within these aforementioned relationships. Sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to:

- unsolicited sexual advances and propositions;
- the use of sexually degrading words towards someone;
- the telling of inappropriate or sexually-charged jokes;
- retaliation against someone who refuses sexual advances;
- offers of preferential treatment in exchange for sexual favors.

Belmont Abbey regards all forms of sexual abuse and sexual misconduct, whether harassment or exploitation, to be contrary to the Gospel, the faith and life of the Catholic Church and the discipline of consecrated religious life. **Sexual misconduct is never acceptable in a pastoral or teaching relationship** with students parishioners, employees, spiritual directees, counseling clients, or anyone who has sought out instruction, ministry or direction. **It is entirely the responsibility of a Monk of Belmont Abbey to maintain appropriate emotional and sexual boundaries with those with whom he works and/or serves.**

Belmont Abbey's Response to Reports of Sexual Abuse or Misconduct

Belmont Abbey responds to all allegations of sexual abuse or misconduct promptly and with great care. To ensure that we handle each instance promptly, thoroughly, and compassionately, the Abbey has established the position of Survivor Assistance Coordinator, who serves as a representative of Belmont Abbey. The Survivor Assistance Coordinator will contact persons reporting sexual abuse or misconduct in order to listen, understand, and offer help, including appropriate psychological counseling, for those affected by misconduct on the part of monks of Belmont Abbey.

Belmont Abbey, through the Survivor Assistance Coordinator and independent investigators will evaluate and investigate any allegation or report of sexual abuse or misconduct against a monk of the Abbey. The Abbey will report all allegations and reports of sexual abuse of minors to the appropriate civil authorities. Credible allegations and reports will be sent to the independent Lay Review Board for further investigation and determination. Any monk who has engaged in the sexual abuse of a minor will be removed from all public ministry and placed on a Safety Plan. The Safety Plan provides appropriate psychological treatment specific for offenders, and entails ongoing restrictions and supervision for the rest of the offender's life in the Abbey.

Preventing Sexual Misconduct

In addition to establishing procedures for responding to sexual misconduct, Belmont Abbey has undertaken a series of measures to prevent incidents of abuse. These include extensive background checks and mandatory psychological evaluation of candidates before they enter the monastery, as well as formation and continuing education programs for monks regarding issues of sexuality and personal conduct.

We are committed to maintaining the highest standards of professional and personal life for the monks of Belmont Abbey in order to preserve the integrity of our consecrated religious life and of our ministerial relationships with those whom we serve. We ask anyone with knowledge of a monk's inappropriate behavior, whether past or present, to come forward with this information, and we urge everyone to report known or suspected sexual abuse of anyone who is currently a minor to report the abuse immediately to the civil authorities.

How to Report Sexual Abuse or Misconduct

If you or someone you know believe that a monk of Belmont Abbey has engaged in sexual abuse or misconduct, we urge you to report such behavior immediately to the Abbot of Belmont Abbey and/or the Survivor Assistance Coordinator. Your report will be handled with the strictest sensitivity and confidentiality.

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**Victim Assistance Coordinator
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