

Belmont Abbey

Policy on Healthy Relationships and Prevention of Abuse of Minors and Vulnerable Adults

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish clear standards for mature, healthy, professional and moral relationships for the monks of Belmont Abbey with other persons in keeping with the monks' public profession of monastic vows for the sake of the Kingdom of God. In particular, it is intended to protect the safety and welfare of minors and vulnerable adults. It affirms the obligation of all monks of Belmont Abbey, including the Abbot: 1) to treat all people with dignity and respect in keeping with the faith and teachings of the Roman Catholic Church and the laws of the State of North Carolina; 2) to assist in identifying suspected child abuse, sexual abuse or misconduct and to report such abuse in compliance with this policy and with the laws of the State of North Carolina; 3) to establish proper procedures for responding to any allegation or report that a Member of the Benedictine Community of Belmont Abbey, including the Abbot, has allegedly engaged in sexual misconduct or in the abuse of a child or vulnerable adult.

This policy is intended to complement and comply with the "Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People" originally adopted by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in 2002, and most recently revised in 2011; the *motu proprio Vos Estis Lux Mundi* issued by Pope Francis in 2019, and the Instruments of Hope and Healing of the Conference of Major Superiors of Men.

This policy provides guidelines to assist the monks of Belmont Abbey in living their Catholic faith and monastic vows with integrity, in dealing with allegations of sexual misconduct or abuse with compassion and concern for the welfare of survivors of sexual exploitation and in assuring fair and just treatment for accused members of the monastic community. In exceptional circumstances, the precepts of the Catholic faith, the prescriptions of canon law, or the greater good of all concerned may require that action at variance with the provisions of this policy be taken.

This policy supersedes and replaces all previous policies at Belmont Abbey dealing with sexual abuse or misconduct.

Policy

It is the policy of Belmont Abbey that sexual misconduct, and especially abuse of any type involving children or vulnerable adults, by any Member of Belmont Abbey, including the Abbot, will not be tolerated under any circumstances. Belmont Abbey is committed to responding promptly to allegations/reports of abuse or improper conduct, reaching out to survivors and families for healing and reconciliation, cooperating fully with the appropriate civil authorities, educating the monastic community, and ensuring the implementation of the procedures established to deal with allegations/reports of sexual misconduct or abuse.

SECTION I

Promoting Healthy Relationships

The Abbot and monks of Belmont Abbey are committed to promoting good and healthy relationships between the Members of the monastic community and everyone whom we teach, to whom we minister and with whom we work and live. The formation for such relationships will be promoted in the following ways:

A. Screening of Candidates

- a. The evaluation of all candidates for admission to the novitiate at Belmont Abbey will include the following documentation:
 - i. A completed official background check including each state/county where the candidate has resided for the past seven years, and a national sex offender registry check.
 - ii. A minimum of three documented personal references (including at least one family member) and two professional references, for a total of five references.
 - iii. Verification that the candidate has completed a behavioral assessment interview with the Abbot which addresses, among other things, family relationships, friendships and professional relationship, and sexuality.
 - iv. Verification of face-to-face interviews with the Vocation Director and at least two monks from the Vocation/Formation Committee.
 - v. A psychological evaluation conducted by a licensed psychologist including a psycho-sexual history and an assessment of the candidate's psycho-sexual health in preparation for a life of celibate chastity.
 - vi. An autobiographical sketch focusing on the development of the candidate's faith and the factors leading the candidate to consider monastic life.
 - vii. A review of publicly accessible content on all social media, personal blog sites, and websites associated with accounts controlled by the candidate. Candidates will be required to provide access for a review of publicly accessible content on all social media, personal blog sites, and web sites associated with their accounts.
- b. A candidate who has an established allegation of sexually abusing a minor in his past, or who has acquired/intentionally viewed child pornography, will not be allowed to continue a discernment process for admission to the monastic community.
- c. The Vocation Director and Formation Director will be given education to assist in identifying candidates who may be at risk of engaging in sexual abuse.

B. Formation of Candidates

- a. Individuals in formation will be assisted to develop a mature, integrated sexuality as a foundation for a life of celibate chastity.
- b. Individuals in formation will be encouraged to identify and address challenges to maintaining celibate chastity and healthy intimate relationships.
- c. Individuals in formation will be instructed in maintaining proper boundaries in their relationships with confreres, friends, colleagues and co-workers, students, and minors and vulnerable adults.
- d. An individual in formation who sexually abuses a minor will be dismissed.
- e. An individual in formation who is unable to maintain appropriate boundaries with confreres, friends, colleagues and co-workers, students, and minors and vulnerable adults will be dismissed.

C. Continuing Education

- a. The monastic community will offer annually to the Members, including the Abbot, some form of continuing education in the areas such as celibate chastity, healthy interpersonal and professional relationships, pornography, recognizing and reporting sexual abuse or misconduct. All Members, including the Abbot, except those who because of age or disability do not have any pastoral responsibility, will participate in these programs.
- b. Members, including the Abbot, assigned to teaching, pastoral ministry or any other form of pastoral ministry will receive training in appropriate professional conduct and boundaries.
- c. Members, including the Abbot, assigned to pastoral ministry will comply with the diocesan standards of certification for work with minors.

D. Support for Monks

The Abbot will offer to provide support and assistance to any Member who discloses concerns about his own attraction to minors or potential boundary violations with minors or vulnerable adults. Every effort will be extended to offer compassionate support and appropriate resources to restore his health, including but not limited to evaluation and/or treatment.

E. Guide for Interactions with Minors and Vulnerable Adults

The following lists are provided to assist the Members of Belmont Abbey, including the Abbot, in making decisions regarding interactions with minors and vulnerable adults. These guidelines are applicable to all interactions with minors and vulnerable adults, including relatives.

a. Appropriate Behaviors - The following forms of contact and interaction are examples of such appropriate behavior with minors and/or vulnerable adults, including those who are part of a monk's family:

- i. Brief hugs
- ii. Pats on the shoulder or back
- iii. Handshakes
- iv. "High Fives" and hand slapping
- v. Verbal praise
- vi. Touching the face, arms, hands and shoulders of minors
- vii. Arms around shoulders
- viii. Holding hands while walking with small children
- ix. Sitting with a small child
- x. Holding hands during prayer
- xi. Pats on the head (when culturally appropriate)

b. Prohibited behaviors - The following activities are prohibited at all times:

- i. Using, possessing, or being under the influence of illegal drugs while in the presence of minors.
- ii. Using or being under the influence of alcohol while supervising minors or vulnerable adults.
- iii. Providing or allowing minors or vulnerable adults under one's supervision to consume alcohol or illegal drugs.
- iv. Engaging in sexual contact of any kind with minors.
- v. Acquisition, possession, distribution, downloading and/or intentionally viewing real or virtual pornographic images of minors under the age of eighteen (18) by whatever means.
- vi. Possessing or distributing sexually oriented or morally inappropriate printed materials (magazines, cards, videos, films, clothing, etc.)
- vii. Transporting persons under the age of eighteen (18) by automobile without another adult, who is not a monk, present
- viii. Wrestling with minors.
- ix. Being unclothed at any time in the presence of a minor.
- x. Using profanity in the presence of minors or vulnerable adults.
- xi. Speaking to minors or vulnerable adults in a manner that could be construed by an observer as being harsh, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning or humiliating.
- xii. Engaging in any sexually oriented conversation with minors or vulnerable adults unless the conversations are part of a legitimate assignment or religious instruction for teenagers regarding human

sexuality. Parents or guardians should be informed in advance of the content of such instruction. The prohibited behaviors concerning communication with minors or vulnerable adults (Nos. vii-viii) apply equally to communications through electronic means.

- xiii. Accepting Facebook friend requests, LinkedIn connections or any other similar social media connection request from minors or vulnerable adults.
- xiv. Communicating with others on internet chat rooms.

F. Community Awareness and Education

- a. The Abbot and those responsible for the formation of new Members of the community will pursue regular training on the best practices for the prevention of the sexual abuse of minors and the promotion of healthy celibacy.
- b. The Abbot on at least an annual basis will remind the Members of our commitment as a community to promoting and maintaining an environment that is safe and ethical for minors and vulnerable adults.
- c. The Community will provide ongoing Education and Information for all members including but not limited to:
 - i. Information about types of sexual offenders and red-flag behaviors.
 - ii. Information on protecting oneself from false accusations.
 - iii. Information on *Vos Estis Lux Mundi* of Pope Francis.
 - iv. Information on reporting known or suspected sexual abuse of someone who is currently a minor.
- d. All Members are to receive a copy of this policy and sign an attestation that they have received and read the policy and understand its contents.

G. Social Networking

Members, including the Abbot, must also comply with the Social Networking Policy for Belmont Abbey, which is attached as Appendix A to this policy.

II

Reporting Sexual Abuse, Child Pornography and Sexual Misconduct

The monks of Belmont Abbey, including the Abbot, are committed to protecting minors and vulnerable adults from all forms of abuse, especially sexual abuse.

Sexual abuse or exploitation is the employment, use, persuasion, inducement, enticement or coercion of any minor to engage in or assist any other person to engage in any sexually explicit conduct, or any simulation of any sexually explicit conduct, for the purpose of producing any visual depiction, including photographing, videotaping, computer depicting or filming, of any sexually explicit conduct; or the rape, sexual assault, involuntary deviate sexual intercourse, aggravated indecent assault, molestation, incest, indecent exposure, prostitution, sexual abuse, statutory sexual assault, or other forms of sexual exploitation of children (Legal definition of abuse: N. C. General Statutes 7B-101)

A. Reporting of Sexual Abuse

- a. Members must report known or suspected sexual abuse by another Member of the abbey to the Abbot. Allegations against the Abbot are to be forwarded to the Prior of the monastery and the President of the American-Cassinese Congregation of Benedictine Monasteries.
- b. Monks must also report known or suspected abuse of an individual who is currently a minor to the appropriate civil authority in the state where the abuse is alleged to have occurred within 24 hours.
- c. The Abbot will report known or suspected sexual abuse of an individual who is currently a minor to the appropriate civil authority in the state where the abuse is alleged to have occurred within 24 hours. The Abbot will inform any Member who reports the abuse that he will convey the report to the appropriate civil authority.
- d. If an alleged survivor is a minor at the time the allegations is received, his/her name will be provided to the civil authorities.
- e. The Abbot will report known or suspected sexual abuse by a living current or former Member when the survivor is no longer a minor, as obligated by the civil laws of the state where the abuse allegedly occurred. The Abbot will advise individuals who report abuse of their right to make a report to civil authorities and encourage them to do so.
- f. If an alleged survivor is an adult at the time an allegation is received and consents to have his/her identity disclosed, the identity will be provided to the civil authorities.
- g. In conforming to the reporting requirements of this policy a Member cannot reveal information obtained from another individual during the Sacrament of Confession or the Manifestation of Conscience.

B. Reporting Child Pornography

Child pornography is any written, printed, electronic, photographic or other depiction or description of a minor in a sexually explicit context or any material of any kind that is

produced, created or displayed for the purpose of sexual gratification of adults through the exploitation of minors.

- a. Members must report the known or suspected possession, distribution, downloading and/or intentional viewing of child pornography by a Member to the Abbot. Reports against the Abbot are to be reported to the Prior of the monastery and the President of the American-Cassinese Congregation of Benedictine Monasteries.
- b. Members, including the Abbot, must also report the known or suspected possession, distribution, downloading, and/or intentional viewing of child pornography to the appropriate civil authority in the state where the activity is alleged to have occurred within 48 hours.

C. Reporting Sexual Misconduct with Adults

Sexual misconduct consists of sexual advances towards, or sexual exploitation or harassment of adults with whom a monk has a professional or pastoral relationship, or who are employees.

- a. Members must report known or suspected sexual misconduct by a Member of the abbey to the Abbot. Allegations against the Abbot are to be forwarded to the Prior of the monastery and the President of the American-Cassinese Congregation of Benedictine Monasteries.
- b. The Abbot will report all allegations of known or suspected sexual misconduct to the civil authorities in accord with the civil laws of the state where the misconduct is alleged to have occurred, regardless of whether the accused Member is living or dead, or whether he is a current or a former Member of the abbey.
- c. If the alleged survivor of sexual misconduct consents to have his/her identity disclosed, that identity will be provided to the civil authorities.

D. Reporting Boundary Violations

Awareness of warning signs of inappropriate behavior or interactions between Members and minors or vulnerable adults is the responsibility of the entire community. Examples of boundary violations are excessive touching or physical contact, excessive attention or possessive behavior, involving minors in behaviors parents would not likely approve or encouraging minors to withhold aspects of the relationship from parents. A Member should inform the Abbot if he believes that another Member exhibits warning signs of unhealthy boundaries or relationships with minors or vulnerable adults, with persons with whom the monk has a professional or pastoral relationship, or with an employee. Warning signs in themselves may not constitute reasonable belief that sexual abuse has occurred. Concerns

regarding the Abbot should be communicated to the Prior of the monastery and the President of the American-Cassinese Congregation of Benedictine Monasteries.

- a. The Abbot or his delegate will communicate the concerns to the at-risk monk and coordinate appropriate assistance for him.
- b. The Abbot or his delegate will draw up a written plan to address and eliminate the problem behaviors.
- c. The Abbot or his delegate will monitor the at-risk monk to insure appropriate conduct. If there are no indications of sexual abuse or misconduct the matter will not be reported to the Review Board.
- d. When a monk has repeated boundary violations with a minor or a minor is known to be in danger, that situation must be presented to the Review Board, an intervention plan must be developed which outlines how the boundary violations with minors will be interrupted, and the Abbot must verify that the intervention plan has been implemented.
- e. The Abbot shall immediately intervene in situations where there is potential risk of harm to an identifiable minor.

III

Response to Allegations/Reports

Allegations and reports of sexual abuse may come from a variety of sources, including alleged survivors or their family members, diocesan offices, Members of the Abbey, a colleague in the workplace, from an alleged perpetrator or from a survivor's legal counsel. Because each case is unique, the following is a general outline of the response system for allegations of abuse. Since each case is unique, the process may be modified according to the nature of the allegation, the needs of the alleged survivor and the circumstances of the accused Member. In every case, the Abbey commits itself to dealing pastorally with, and protecting the rights of, all those involved.

A. Survivor Assistance Coordinator

- a. The Abbot shall identify a Survivor Assistance Coordinator qualified by education, training, or experience, to respond to reports and allegations of sexual abuse by a current, former and/or deceased Member of the Abbey. This Survivor Assistance Coordinator will have written guidelines for fulfilling this role.
- b. The Abbey will have written protocols for responding to reports and allegations of sexual abuse of a minor, indicating who is responsible for each part of the Abbey's response, and will document adherence to these protocols.

B. Pastoral Response to the Alleged Survivor

- a. When an allegation or report of sexual abuse or misconduct against a current, former or deceased Member is received by any Member, he is to report the allegation immediately to the Abbot. If the allegation is against the Abbot, the

Member is to report the allegation immediately to the Prior and to the President of the American Cassinese Congregation of Benedictine Monasteries.

- b. Upon receipt of an allegation or report of sexual abuse or misconduct the Abbot shall contact the Survivor Assistance Coordinator, who will provide the alleged survivor with an explanation of the procedures the abbey typically follows in responding to allegations.
- c. The Survivor Assistance Coordinator shall attempt to gather sufficient information to complete a written preliminary report. The report should include the following information:
 - i. Name of the alleged survivor;
 - ii. Age of alleged survivor both currently and at the time of the alleged abuse;
 - iii. Contact information of the alleged survivor;
 - iv. Name of alleged perpetrator;
 - v. Approximate date of alleged abuse;
 - vi. Nature, type and location of alleged abuse;
- d. The Survivor Assistance Coordinator of the Abbey will offer to meet in person, or for the Abbot to meet in person, with the alleged survivor if he or she so desires. If an allegation or report is first made a result of legal proceedings, and the alleged survivor is represented by legal counsel, the offer of a personal meeting will be made through the alleged survivor's legal counsel.
- e. The Survivor Assistance Coordinator, in consultation with the Abbot, will provide to the extent possible, support for the immediate and ongoing needs of individuals who have experienced sexual abuse and their families.
- f. The Survivor Assistance Coordinator will document every attempt to assist in the healing of an individual who approaches the Abbey to report sexual abuse as a minor or sexual misconduct by a current, former, or deceased Member.

C. Communication with the Accused Member

- a. The Abbey provides all members with an outline of the procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation/report of sexual abuse or misconduct so that they will have an understanding of the initial pastoral response to the person who reports abuse.
- b. After receiving an allegation of sexual abuse or misconduct against a Member, the Abbot will meet with the Member. Prior to explaining the allegation, the Abbot will advise the Member that the conversation is not privileged, and therefore, before responding, the monk may wish to consult civil and canonical legal counsel and, if advisable, have such counsel present for his meeting with the Abbot.

- c. The Abbot will inform the Member that the abbey will assist him in finding, and will provide civil and canonical counsel, as long as the monk agrees to select counsel approved by the abbey.
- d. The Abbot will advise the Member of the nature of the allegation.
- e. In cases of misconduct, the Abbot will inform the Member whether the allegation will be reported to the civil authorities.
- f. The Abbot will discuss with the Member the advisability of immediate psychological evaluation and, if appropriate, psychological care. The Abbot may not require the Member to undergo evaluation of psychological care.
- g. The Abbot will request that the Member choose a support person and inform the Abbot of the identity of the support person.
- h. The Abbot will take care to ensure that an accused Member receives the support and assistance he needs while the allegation is being investigated.
- i. At time of notification, the Member will be removed temporarily from public ministry and any assignment which may put others at risk until the investigation is complete.

D. Notification of Others

- a. The Abbot will report all allegations/reports of sexual abuse of a minor to the appropriate civil authorities within 24 hours if the survivor is currently a minor; as obligated by the civil laws of the state where the abuse allegedly occurred if the survivor is currently an adult.
- b. The abbot will communicate the allegation to the diocesan bishop where the abuse or misconduct took place and where the Member currently resides, as appropriate.
- c. The abbot will inform the Bishop of Charlotte that an allegation has been received and will keep him informed of the progress of the investigation.
- d. The abbot will communicate the allegation to the employer of the place where the alleged abuse or misconduct took place and/or where the Member is currently employed, as appropriate.

IV

Investigation and Determination

- A. If the allegation or report is not found to be manifestly false, or if the Member denies the allegation or report, or aspects of the allegation or report, then the allegation or report will be investigated to the extent possible, even if the allegation or report is anonymous. After seeking the advice, the Abbot will authorize the hiring of an independent trained investigator who will gather information regarding the allegation or report. The full investigation should commence within 30 days of the initial allegation or report.
- B. When the independent investigator has completed his/her investigation, he/she will make a confidential written report to the Abbot. If, on the basis of the report the Abbot

determines that the allegation or report is credible, he shall within three business days submit the issue to the Review Board.

- C. The Abbot will forward the following information to the Review Board:
 - a. The original report or allegation which was submitted to the abbey;
 - b. The final report from the investigation;
 - c. Any other allegations involving the Member;
 - d. Any relevant disciplinary actions taken with regard to the Member with an explanation of the reasons for such disciplinary actions.
- D. The *Belmont Abbey Review Board: Policies and Procedures* will govern the Review Board and its operations.
- E. The abbey will cooperate with state and federal civil and criminal authorities in their investigations of allegations of sexual abuse of minors involved a Member. If the matter has been turned over to the civil authorities and they assume conduct of the investigation, the abbey's independent investigation will be suspended pending the outcome of the civil or criminal investigation, unless, after consultation with civil authorities, it is determined that the continuation of the abbey's independent investigation will not impede the civil or criminal investigation, and the civil authorities do not object to the continuation of the independent investigation.

V. Review Board

See the Memorandum of Understanding between the Independent Lay Review Board established by the Diocese of Charlotte and Belmont Abbey.

VI. Procedures When Sexual Abuse or Misconduct Has Not Been Established

If the fact of sexual abuse of misconduct by a Member has not been established, the Abbot will:

- a. Issue a canonical decree to this effect within ten days and the case is closed.
- b. Reinstate the Member to any responsibilities and duties from which he was temporarily removed.
- c. Make every effort to restore the good name of the accused Member.
- d. Inform the employer of the place where the alleged abuse or misconduct took place and where the Member is currently employed that the allegation was not established.
- e. Inform the bishop of the diocese where the alleged abuse or misconduct occurred and of the diocese where the Member currently resides and inform him no allegation was established.

VII. Procedures When Sexual Abuse or Misconduct Has Been Established

- A. In all instances, the final decision on a determination from the Review Board rests with the Abbot.
- B. The Abbot will communicate his decision in writing to the Member and indicate further steps to be taken in the matter.
- C. The Abbot will communicate with the diocesan bishop(s) where the alleged abuse took place and where the Member currently resides as appropriate. If the Member is relocated to another diocese the diocesan bishop will be informed.
- D. A Member who has an established allegation of sexual abuse of a minor or vulnerable adult:
 - a. Will be permanently removed from any ecclesiastical ministry, all assignments in the apostolates of the abbey, and any position which allows unsupervised access to minors or vulnerable adults.
 - b. Will undergo a professional risk assessment.
 - c. Will be placed under a Safety Plan.
- E. A Member who has an established allegation of sexual misconduct with an adult:
 - a. Will undergo a professional risk assessment.
 - b. Will be placed under a Supervision Plan to monitor conduct or, if necessary, under a more stringent Safety Plan.
 - c. Depending on the gravity of the offense and the results of the risk assessment the Abbot will make a decision whether the Member may continue in ecclesiastical ministry or assignments in the apostolates of the abbey.

VIII. Safety Plans

- A. After appropriate consultation, the abbot will draw up a Safety Plan for a Member who has an established allegation of sexual abuse of a minor.
- B. The Safety Plan will include:
 - a. The history and nature of problem behaviors, including at a minimum the number, age, and gender of any survivors.
 - b. Information about how the Member spends the majority of his time.
 - c. Any applicable sex offender registry requirements, including parole and probation.
 - d. Documentation of appropriate work for the Member, including his specific assignment.
 - e. A summary of the Member's risk assessment and risk reduction strategies, including:
 - i. Association with friends and family, including how to ensure that any resulting access to minors is supervised.
 - ii. Monitoring of the Member's access to and use of electronic communications, including email, text messaging, telephone calls, social media and internet access to ensure that appropriate boundaries are maintained at all times.

- iii. Limiting the Member's access to minors and vulnerable adults, including the Member's relatives, ensuring that any such access is monitored, with particular attention given to the Member's access to the college campus.
 - iv. Issues of financial responsibility.
 - f. The provision that the Supervisor is responsible for the implementation of each of the risk reduction strategies.
 - g. The consequences for non-compliance with the Safety Plan.
 - h. Dates on which the Safety Plan has been reviewed by the Review Board.
- C. The Abbot will seek the appropriate advice before sharing any confidential information in the Safety Plan, including information regarding:
 - a. The history and nature of the monk's problem behaviors.
 - b. The Member's risk assessment.
 - c. Risk reduction strategies.
- D. The Abbot will consult with the Review Board regarding the Safety Plan pursuant to the Memorandum of Understanding with the Independent Lay Review Board.
- E. The Safety Plan must be signed by the Abbot and at least one Supervisor of the Member. The Member will be requested, but cannot be required, to sign the Safety Plan.
- F. The Safety Plan will be implemented by the abbey, and the abbey will make every reasonable effort to ensure that the Member understands the consequences for non-compliance with the Safety Plan.
- G. Within thirty (30) days of implementation of a new Safety Plan, the abbey will inform the appropriate accrediting agency of a new Safety Plan for a Member who is determined to be a "high risk" offender.
- H. A Member who has a Safety Plan will live at Belmont Abbey or in another supervised setting with individuals who provide support and accountability.
- I. A Supervisor of a Member who has a Safety Plan will:
 - a. Receive written guidelines regarding his/her role and procedures for supervision, including how to respond if the Member violates his Safety Plan.
 - b. Be provided with written instructions regarding documentation that must be maintained to verify compliance.
 - c. Be provided with training regarding his/her responsibilities.
 - d. Not have physical or emotional disabilities that prohibit his/her fulfillment of the function of supervision.
 - e. Be a qualified Member, employee, or contractor of Belmont Abbey.
 - f. Not have other assignments that interfere with his responsibility of supervision if the supervisor is a Member.
 - g. Receive all pertinent information needed to supervise properly, which is known in the external forum by the Abbot and not otherwise confidential or protected by privilege.

IX.. Administrative Recourse

At any stage of the process, a Member against whom an allegation has been made has a right to administrative recourse, according to the norms of Canon Law and the Proper Law of our Congregation.

X. Communication

- A. There will be only one spokesperson who officially coordinates all public communications in the name of the abbey. When advisable, this spokesperson will act in concert with designated representatives of the college, diocese or other entities.
- B. Public statements regarding allegations and investigations of sexual abuse may be prepared and released, after consultation with the Abbot.
- C. The abbey will follow the policies of a diocese on pastoral response to communities affected by the allegation if the allegation arose in the context of ministry or employment in a diocesan entity.
- D. If sexual abuse of a minor by a Member is established to have occurred at Belmont Abbey, the Abbot, in coordination with representatives of Belmont Abbey College or other appropriate entities will communicate in a pastoral manner with appropriate categories of persons.

XI. Documentation

- A. The abbey must document all allegations or reports of abuse against a Member.
- B. The abbey will document any circumstances that make it impossible for a meeting with an alleged survivor to occur, or for the offer of such a meeting to be made. The abbey will document any form of pastoral assistance offered pursuant to Section III (B) of this policy.
- C. The abbey will document that all allegations and reports of abuse of minors have been investigated and presented to the Review Board. If an investigation was not possible or necessary in response to an allegation the reason will be documented.
- D. When an allegation against a Member is not established following an investigation, the abbey will document efforts to restore the Member's good name.
- E. The abbey will document a Member's refusal to sign his safety plan.
- F. The abbey will document compliance with safety plans.
- G. The abbey may not release to a third party, including the independent investigator and the Review Board, without the written consent of the Member, any materials protected by attorney-client privilege or another legally recognized privilege, including but not limited to:
 - a. Medical records;
 - b. Psychological records;
 - c. Legal documents provided by the Member, and,

- d. Notes or written records of conversations with the Member regarding matters of canonical privacy or manifestation of conscience.
- H. All documents concerning an allegation or report of sexual abuse by a Member are maintained in a confidential file, to which only the Abbot controls access.
- I. A notation is placed in the personal file of the Member noting that such a confidential file exists. The notation should indicate whether or not sexual abuse by the Member was established.
- J. If a Member has a safety plan, the complete safety plan is kept in that Member's confidential file.
- K. In the event that a different person assumes the role of Supervisor, the previous Supervisor returns to the Abbot the copy of the complete safety plan and any other materials that had been provided to him/her by the Abbot.

XII. Application to Visiting Clerics and Religious

This policy will also apply to clerics and members of other religious communities who intend to reside at Belmont Abbey for more than thirty (30) days.

- A. The visiting cleric or religious must have written permission from his Ordinary or Major Superior. The permission must note that the visitor is in good standing in his own diocese/religious institute, that he has had an official background check, and has no allegations or reports of sexual abuse, and must include the duration of his intended stay at Belmont Abbey.
- B. The visitor will be provided a copy of Belmont Abbey's Policy on Healthy Relationships and Prevention of Abuse of Minors and Vulnerable Adults.
- C. The visitor will be required to sign an acknowledgment and compliance statement verifying that he has read and understands Belmont Abbey's Policy.
- D. If the visitor will be engaged in any pastoral ministry, he must provide current documentation of completion of a child protection and abuse awareness program in his own diocese/religious institute, or complete the program required by the Diocese of Charlotte.

XIII.

Ongoing Implementation and Transitions in Leadership

- A. Ongoing Implementation
 - a. The Abbot and Community will review this policy annually.
 - b. This Policy will be revised as needed to comply with revisions in the Standards for Accreditation published by Praesidium, Inc., in collaboration with the Conference of Major Superiors of Men (CMSM), or to comply with changes in Canon Law of the Proper Law of our Congregation.

B. Leadership Transition

- a. Every January, with the election of a new Senior Council, the Abbot will inform the members of the Council of updates to the policy, allegations and investigations, current status of accreditation or Members on Safety Plans.
- b. When a new Abbot is elected, if he was not already a member of the Senior Council that year, the retired Abbot, if available, or the Prior-Administrator, or the member of the Council senior by profession, will update the new Abbot on the location of the confidential files and any other issues related to allegations, investigations, Safety Plans and accreditation.
- c. Within four months of his election, the new abbot will:
 - i. if he is not already educated or experienced in the impact of child sexual abuse, how to promote healing for survivors and the role of a major superior, he will participate in relevant programs, conferences or workshops to become knowledgeable in these areas.
 - ii. review and become familiar with all Accreditation standards and all policies relating to abuse prevention.
 - iii. review all Safety Plans and Intervention Plans for Boundary Violations and meet individually with Monks on such plans.
 - iv. meet with the Review Board.
 - v. Contact and review procedures with the Survivor Assistance Coordinator.

C. Leadership Training

- a. Within his first year in office, a new Abbot or acting superior will pursue and attend training opportunities regarding the role of a Major Superior in the implementation of policies and procedures to ensure safe and ethical ministry with minors and vulnerable adults.

XIV.

Definition of Terms

Allegation – A first-person accusation of sexual abuse of a minor or of sexual misconduct.

Child pornography - Any written, printed, electronic, photographic, or other depiction or description of a minor in a sexually explicit context or any material of any kind that is produced, created, or displayed for the purpose of sexual gratification of adults through the exploitation of minors.

Credible allegation/report – An allegation/report which was not judged manifestly false upon receipt and which, on the basis of an investigation by the Abbey, the Abbot has determined must be referred to the Review Board.

Established allegation/report – An allegation/report, which the Review Board, after its investigation of the facts and circumstances of the allegation/report, has determined to be a case of sexual abuse of a minor, and which determination has been accepted by the Abbot.

Minor – Anyone under the age of eighteen (18).

Member – Any current or former, living or deceased professed monk or novice of Belmont Abbey, or a person formally accepted as a candidate and living in the monastery.

Report – A third-party accusation of sexual abuse or misconduct.

Sexual Abuse - Sexual abuse or exploitation is the employment, use, persuasion, inducement, enticement or coercion of any minor to engage in or assist any other person to engage in any sexually explicit conduct, or any simulation of any sexually explicit conduct, for the purpose of producing any visual depiction, including photographing, videotaping, computer depicting or filming, of any sexually explicit conduct; or the rape, sexual assault, involuntary deviate sexual intercourse, aggravated indecent assault, molestation, incest, indecent exposure, prostitution, sexual abuse, statutory sexual assault, or other forms of sexual exploitation of children (Legal definition of abuse: N. C. General Statutes 7B-101).

Forcing someone by violence or threat or through abuse of authority to perform or submit to sexual acts.

Performing sexual acts with a minor or vulnerable person.

The production, exhibition, possession or distribution, including by electronic means, of child pornography as well as by the recruitment of or inducement of a minor or a vulnerable person to participate in pornographic exhibitions.

Sexual misconduct - Sexual advances towards, or sexual exploitation or harassment of adults with whom a monk has a professional or pastoral relationship, or who are employees.

Vulnerable adult – Any person, eighteen years of age or older in a state of infirmity, physical or mental deficiency, or deprivation of personal liberty that, in fact, even occasionally, limits their ability to understand or to want or otherwise resist offenses.

Approved by the Chapter: December 7, 2022

Appendix A

Social Networking Policy for Belmont Abbey

Social networking involves the use of internet platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and other internet-based social networks. This policy is to be followed by the monks of Belmont Abbey in their use of online social networking.

Social networking presents an opportunity for sharing the values of our monastic life in a variety of effective ways. At the same time, those who use social networks must remain attentive to the problems and harm that can occur through careless or irresponsible use of social networks.

Belmont Abbey's *Policy on Healthy Relationships and Prevention of Abuse of Minors and Vulnerable Adults* incorporates the provisions of his Social Networking Policy. With regard to communications occurring over social media or any other electronic means, the monks of Belmont Abbey must pay particular attention to the prohibited behaviors listed in Section I.E.b.vi, x, & xi-xiv, and Section I.G of the *Policy on Healthy Relationships and Prevention of Abuse of Minors and Vulnerable Adults*.

Violations of this policy will result in sanctions, which may include referral to civil and criminal authorities when required by law.

Principles and Policies

Interacting with current or former students of the college or anyone else requires careful monitoring. Furthermore, postings by individual monks reflect on the entire monastic community. Standards of respect, prudence, professionalism and absolute protection of minors and vulnerable adults and their safety are heightened in all interactions. Expect that anything you post online will become public information.

- Any monk of Belmont Abbey who currently has or in the future establishes a personal social media account must inform the abbot and make the entire content of his account accessible to the abbot and/or the abbot's delegate. Monks of Belmont Abbey may not make use of Snapchat or Instagram. Postulants and novices may not have personal social media accounts on any platform.
- Posting material online gives the information a permanence that is different from face-to-face interactions. Community members should be aware of this if they post material for online viewing. Accordingly, anything that would potentially bring shame or disrepute to the monastic community of Belmont Abbey, to an individual monk or to any other individual is forbidden.

- As a monk is a member of a religious community, the public has high expectations regarding the ethical and moral acceptability of a monk's behavior and statements. The public considers statements from a monk to have authority. Comments that community members publish both in person and online must be in compliance with the high moral standards of religious life. Publishing any libelous, scandalous, abusive, or knowingly false information is immoral and carries possible civil and/or canonical penalties.
- Any opinions that a monk expresses on social networks must be faithful to and consistent with the established policies of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops: (<http://www.usccb.org/about/communications/social-media-guidelines.cfm>). Accordingly, community members may not publish any statements contrary to the teachings of the Catholic Church nor defamatory of its members or leaders.
- Guidance on the publication of any matter can be obtained from the abbot, prior or formation director.
- Community members shall not accept Facebook friend requests, LinkedIn connections, or any other similar social media connection request from minors or vulnerable adults. Parents must be copied on all email correspondence with minors.
- Community members shall not accept Facebook friend requests, LinkedIn connections, or any other similar social media connection request from unknown persons.
- Community members shall not communicate with others on internet chatrooms.
- Community members shall not incorporate into any electronic communication any trademarked or copyrighted material of the abbey or college, or any other source, without the specific permission of the abbot or his delegate.
- A community member who publishes a blog or posts online matters related to their work or on subjects associated with Belmont Abbey or Belmont Abbey College must make sure that the reader understands that his views do not necessarily reflect the views of Belmont Abbey or the Southern Benedictine Society of North Carolina, Inc.
- Violations of these social networking policies by any community member are to be reported to the Abbot or Prior.