

## REPORTING CHILD ABUSE TO CIVIL AND CHURCH AUTHORITIES

**A report must be filed with civil authorities concerning abuse of a child or young person who is now under the age of 18:**

- **Civil law:** When a mandated reporter has reasonable cause to believe that a person under the age of 18 is suffering abuse or neglect, he/she is to report immediately to the Department of Social Services.

- **The law of the Archdiocese of Boston** requires all clergy, archdiocesan personnel, and volunteers to contact the appropriate civil authorities when a person has knowledge or reasonable cause to suspect that a person under eighteen (18) years of age is being, or has been, abused or neglected.

**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Social Services**  
**800-792-5200**  
**617-748-2000**

**A person who was abused as a child but who is now an adult:**

- **Civil law:** The person has the right to file a report with the local District Attorney.

See Text for List of DA Numbers

**The Statutes of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, chapter 119, §51A**

The report to DSS must be made immediately by telephone and a written report submitted within 48 hours, containing:

- the names and addresses of the child and his parents or other person responsible for his care, if known;
- the child's age; the child's sex;
- the nature and extent of the child's injuries, abuse, maltreatment, or neglect, including any evidence of prior injuries, abuse, maltreatment, or neglect;
- the circumstances under which the person required to report first became aware of the child's injuries, abuse, maltreatment, or neglect;
- whatever action, if any, was taken to treat, shelter, or otherwise assist the child;
- the name of the person or persons making such report.

**A report concerning child abuse by clergy, archdiocesan personnel, or volunteers may also be filed with Church authorities.**

Any person may make a complaint to ecclesiastical authorities concerning child abuse by clergy, archdiocesan personnel, or volunteers.

**Special Assistant to the Cardinal (Fr. John Connolly)**  
**617-782-2544**

**Office of Pastoral Support and Outreach**  
**866-244-9603**  
**617-244-9603**

**The law of the Archdiocese of Boston requires clergy, archdiocesan personnel, and volunteers to communicate:**

- any complaints they receive concerning child abuse by clergy, archdiocesan personnel, and volunteers;
- any report filed with civil authorities concerning child abuse by clergy, archdiocesan personnel, or volunteers;

**to the Special Assistant to the Cardinal within 24 hours.**

**Policies and Procedures for the Protection of Children, article 7**

"Persons making a complaint about child abuse to the Church will normally be asked to provide the following information:

- the name of the person against whom the complaint is made, and the name of the complainant;
- a detailed description of the alleged abuse, including relevant dates, times, and circumstances;
- the names and contact information for persons who may have knowledge of the alleged abuse.

The Archdiocese will cooperate with civil authorities concerning investigations of a complaint of child abuse and conduct investigations with respect for civil law and the rights of individuals."

NOTE: Child Abuse Prevention (CAP) Teams exist in every parish and parish cluster of the Archdiocese and have been trained in reporting procedures. The CAP Team may be consulted for help in contacting the appropriate DSS and District Attorney offices and filing a report.