CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF YOUNGSTOWN

BYLAWS OF THE REVIEW BOARD

AMENDED SEPTEMBER 16, 2026

INTRODUCTION

The Review Board of the Catholic Diocese of Youngstown is established under the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* and the *Essential Norms for Diocesan/Eparchial Policies Dealing with Allegation of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Priests or Deacons*, as published by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. The functions of this board may include **a)** advising the diocesan bishop in his assessment of allegations of the sexual abuse of children or vulnerable adults and in his determination of suitability for ministry; **b)** reviewing diocesan policies for dealing with sexual abuse of children or vulnerable adults; and **c)** offering advice on all aspects of these cases, whether retrospectively or prospectively *(Essential Norms 4)*.

SECTION 1
Membership and Tenure

1.1 The Bishop of Youngstown ("bishop"), or his legal equivalent, shall appoint the members of the Review Board.

1.2 The bishop shall fill all vacancies on the Review Board.

1.3 The bishop may remove any member of the Review Board on his own initiative or at the request of the Chairperson.

1.4 A Review Board member shall be appointed for a term of five years, which can be renewed once *(Essential Norms 5)*.

1.5 Review Board members should attend all scheduled meetings. A Review Board member who fails to attend a minimum of 75% of the scheduled meetings in a calendar year may be removed by the bishop on his own initiative or at the request of the Chairperson.

1.6 Review Board members whose terms have expired should continue to serve until a successor is appointed and available to serve.

1.7 Review Board members shall serve without compensation, but may be reimbursed for expenses incurred in the course of their duties in accordance with applicable diocesan policy.

1.8 The Review Board shall be composed of at least five (5), but not more than twelve (12), persons of outstanding integrity and good judgment *(Essential Norms 5)*.

1.9 All new Review Board members shall complete the diocesan safe environment requirements, which include a background check and safe environment training.

1.10 All new Review Board members shall review the *Charter*, *Essential Norms*, any applicable diocesan policies, and these bylaws, and any revisions to any of these documents as promulgated. The Chairperson or the Director of the Office of Safe Environment shall provide new members with an introduction to the operating procedures of the Review Board, and members will participate in periodic formation as required.

1.11 The Review Board shall consist of the following members:

a) The majority of the Review Board members shall be lay persons who are not in the employ of the diocese *(Essential Norms 5)*.

b) At least five of the Review Board members shall be in full communion with the Catholic Church *(Essential Norms 5)*.

c) One member of the Review Board shall be a priest who is an experienced and respected pastor of the diocese *(Essential Norms 5)*.

d) At least one member of the Review Board shall have particular expertise in the treatment of the sexual abuse of children *(Essential Norms 5)*.

e) At least one member of the Review Board shall be of a different faith *(Safe Environment Policy 4.1.3)*.

g) When possible, one member of the Review Board should be a survivor of sexual abuse, or a parent of a survivor of sexual abuse.

1.12 The Promoter of Justice shall be invited to participate in Review Board meetings *(Essential Norms 5)*.

1.13 The diocesan Vicar General, Promotor of Justice, Director of the Office of Safe Environment (hereinafter Director), and Victim Assistance Coordinator shall serve as resource persons to the Review Board and are designated as nonvoting *ex officio* members *(Safe Environment Policy 4.1.4).*

1.14 The Director shall keep complete and accurate records of the proceedings of the Review Board *(Safe Environment Policy 4.1.5).*

SECTION 2
Officers

2.1 Annually, the Review Board shall select one (1) member to serve as its Chairperson.

2.2 Members are eligible for reelection without limitation.

2.3 The Chairperson is elected by majority vote of the members.

2.4 The Chairperson shall:

a) speak on behalf of the Review Board to the bishop;

b) draft the agenda for each meeting of the Review Board with the assistance of the Director;

c) call and preside over the meetings of the Review Board;

d) approve the minutes;

c) and approve the official recommendation to the bishop.

2.5 If the Chairperson is absent, the members present shall elect a member to preside over the meeting.

2.6 The Director shall serve as the Recording Secretary for the Review Board. The Recording Secretary is not able to vote.

2.7 The Recording Secretary shall:

a) provide a written record of all meetings in official minutes;

b) present the minutes to the Chairperson for approval;

c) draft the official recommendation to the bishop;

d) submit the draft of the official recommendation to the Chairperson for approval;

e) and submit the approved recommendation to the bishop.

SECTION 3
Operating Procedures

3.1 The Review Board shall meet biannually and whenever necessary at the call of the Chairperson.

3.2 The fiscal year of the Review Board shall be from July 1 through June 30.

3.3 A quorum of the Review Board shall consist of two-thirds of the membership. If a board member must recuse him or herself, they no longer count toward the total membership number used to calculate quorum.

3.4 All records of the Review Board shall be kept by the Director in a secure location at the diocesan offices.

3.5 Deliberation of matters before the Review Board shall be primarily and preferentially by discussion, and actions of the Review Board shall be taken by consensus of the members. If consensus is not reached, a matter presented to the Review Board shall be decided by vote, with each member having one vote, and a majority of the votes of the members present shall control. The number of dissenting votes shall be noted and a tie vote is permissible.

3.6 The actions taken by the Review Board shall be formalized in minutes, which shall be prepared under authority of the Recording Secretary and submitted to the Chairperson for approval.

3.7 All deliberations and actions taken by the Review Board shall be confidential.

3.8 The Review Board shall act as one body and members shall not investigate allegations or disclose information individually.

3.9 If a Review Board member becomes aware of a conflict of interest, they shall notify the Chairperson or the Director.

3.10 The diocese fulfills section 2.2.5 of the *Safe Environment Policy* by sending a notification to the Chairperson. The resolution of any matter reported to the Chairperson in accordance with section 2.2.5 of the *Safe Environment Policy*, shall be reported to the entire Review Board.

SECTION 4
Assessing Allegations

4.1 When an allegation is referred to the Review Board, the following procedures shall be observed:

a) The Director shall notify the Chairperson that an allegation is being referred to the Review Board.

b) The Chairperson and the Director shall meet and agree on the redaction of any documents that are to be shared with the Review Board.

c) The Chairperson, via the Recording Secretary, shall call a meeting of the Review Board.

d) The Director, or another person designated by the Vicar General, shall present the allegations to the Review Board. The information presented to the Review Board may include any written statements presented by the alleged victim, the accused, or any other persons involved. When applicable, a canon lawyer will be invited to explain the nature and purpose of the board with respect to Canon Law, as well as the applicable canonical norms, including an understanding of the rights of the accuser and of the accused.

e) The accused is to be accorded the presumption of innocence during the investigation of the allegation and all appropriate steps are to be taken to protect his or her reputation *(Charter, Article 5)*.

f) The Review Board may request information in addition to what was presented. The additional information requested may consist of written materials or statements.

4.2 Review Board members shall not have direct contact with the accuser or the accused, and neither the accuser nor the accused shall be permitted to speak with Review Board members or attend Review Board meetings.

4.3 After receipt of all information determined necessary by the Review Board, the members shall make a recommendation to the bishop stating the determination of the Review Board as to the

allegations presented. If applicable, this recommendation shall include a note of any dissenting members.

a) The Recording Secretary shall present a draft of the recommendation to the Chairperson for approval. Once approved by the Chairperson, the Recording Secretary shall provide the bishop with the recommendation.

b) The recommendation to the bishop is confidential.

4.4 Upon receipt of the recommendation, the bishop may accept or reject the recommendation of the Review Board.

SECTION 5
Assessing Fitness for Ministry

5.1 In the event that inappropriate action is admitted or established, the bishop may request the Review Board to assist him in assessing the fitness for ministry of the accused.

5.2 In the event that a person is seeking an exception to section 1.2.2 of the *Safe Environment Policy*, the Review Board may be asked to review the request and make a recommendation.

SECTION 6
Assessing Policies and Procedures

6.1 The policies and procedures of the diocese shall be subject to review and modification by the bishop, if appropriate or necessary. Any proposed amendments may be presented to the Review Board for consideration prior to adoption by the bishop, and the Review Board shall provide the bishop with any comments as to the proposed amendments.

6.2 The Review Board shall make a full review of the current policies and procedures of the diocese at least once each fiscal year. The Review Board shall recommend to the bishop any modification which the Review Board determines to be appropriate to ensure that the policies and procedures are in full compliance with the *Charter*, *Essential Norms*, and *Safe Environment Policy*.