

**FOCOLARE
MOVEMENT POLICY TO
PROMOTE THE
WELLBEING AND
SAFEGUARDING OF
MINORS AND
VULNERABLE ADULTS IN
THE ZONE OF
NORTH AMERICA ¹**

(3/1/2021)

¹ The Focolare Movement Zone of North America consists of the USA, Canada and Haiti

FOCOLARE MOVEMENT POLICY TO PROMOTE THE WELLBEING AND SAFEGUARDING OF MINORS AND VULNERABLE ADULTS IN THE ZONE OF NORTH AMERICA

(3/1/2021)

I. REFERENCES:

A. Focolare Movement Guidelines to Promote the Wellbeing and Protection of Minors and Vulnerable Persons. June 2020².

B. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People. Revised June 2018³.

C. Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, Protecting Minors from Sexual Abuse: A Call to the Catholic Faithful in Canada for Healing, Reconciliation, and Transformation. 2018⁴.

D. Apostolic Letter “Vos Estis Lux Mundi” May 7, 2019⁵

II. GENERAL STATEMENT

1. This policy elaborates on specific rules and guidelines presented in the Focolare Movement Guidelines to Promote the Wellbeing and Protection of Minors and Vulnerable Persons worldwide policy (Reference A) to implement it in the Zone of North America with the objective of preventing abuse of minors⁶ and vulnerable adults⁷. It establishes protocols and procedures to follow should an allegation of abuse occur. Following these norms is one way to implement the Focolare’s Gospel spirit.

2. The Focolare Movement is committed to preventing and avoiding any type of violence, abuse⁸, maltreatment, and bullying of minors, including those perpetrated by other minors, during any of its activities. It does so, first of all, by adopting the following precautionary measures:

- a. Entrusting minors to people who are fully responsible for their actions and behavior, are committed to living the Gospel in line with the Focolare Movement’s Spirituality of Communion, and are trained to be with children and young people (as specified in the criteria for the promotion and protection of the wellbeing of minors in this document);

² <https://www.focolare.org/en/download/guidelines-for-the-protection-of-minors/>

³ [2011 Charter Revisions with EDITS](#)

⁴ [The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops Releases New Document to Protect Minors and Vulnerable Adults from Sexual Abuse](#)

⁵ [Apostolic Letter in the form of “Motu Proprio” of the Supreme Pontiff Francis “Vos estis lux mundi” \(7 May 2019\)](#)

⁶ For the purpose of these guidelines, see definition of “minor” in part X of this document, # 11.

⁷ For the purpose of these guidelines, see definition of “vulnerable adults” in part X of this document, # 23 and also Articles 20 to 22.

⁸ For the purpose of these guidelines, see definition of “Abuse” in part X of this document, # 1.

- b. Providing and ensuring safe environments for children and young people, in which they can engage in age-appropriate recreational and educational activities without psychological pressure, where their dignity is respected and safeguarded, and their development is fostered and encouraged;
 - c. Cultivating a culture of respect and esteem for others, safeguarding the freedom, altruism, and the equality, dignity, and autonomy of each individual, so as to prevent any form of peer-on-peer abuse;
 - d. Responding effectively and promptly to any report of abuse against a member of the Focolare Movement in accordance with the provisions of these Guidelines; committing to reconstruct, as far as possible, the facts of the reported allegation;
 - e. Informing the relevant legal authority, according to state, province or territory and local laws and regulations and the local Bishops' Conference;
 - f. Guaranteeing the Focolare Movement's unlimited support to those who have suffered abuse and to their families;
 - g. As deemed necessary and appropriate, offering psychological and spiritual support to any member of the Focolare Movement who has committed an offense against a child, a young person, or a vulnerable adult, in order to guarantee increased protection and safeguarding for children.
3. For the purposes of these guidelines and the protections they support, 'vulnerable adults'⁹ are considered equivalent to minors.
4. The Focolare's Gospel spirit teaches its members and adherents to deal with and love each human being, seeking only what is best for each person and never using a relationship for one's own interest, benefit, or gratification. The Focolare Movement recognizes the dignity of every child and young person in line with the Gospel vision, helping to develop their human and spiritual capabilities and bring out the best in each individual.
5. In activities involving minors, the Focolare Movement aims at an educational approach based on communion-fellowship that places Jesus' presence at the center of the relationship.
6. Nothing could be more antithetical to this spirit than the abuse¹⁰ of a human person. Supervisors¹¹ and Members of the Focolare Movement¹² should not abuse minors or vulnerable adults or allow this to happen.
7. The Focolare Movement commits to preventing the abuse of any persons. Each of its programs and events should only be to the benefit of all those who participate.

⁹ See part V.

¹⁰ See definition of "Abuse" in part X of this document, # 1.

¹¹ See definition of "Supervisors" in part X of this document, # 16.

¹² See definition of "Members of the Focolare Movement" in part X of this document, #

8. This policy applies to all members of the Focolare Movement and to any person participating in a Focolare event.

III. ZONE COMMISSION FOR THE PROTECTION OF MINORS AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

9. In order to achieve the objectives indicated in this policy, the Zone Delegates¹³ of the Focolare Movement in the North American Zone shall create a Zone Commission reflecting the criteria used for the Central Commission for the Promotion of the Wellbeing and Protection of Minors (CO.BE.TU.) of the Focolare Movement¹⁴. The Zone Commission should be made up of a minimum number of 5 (five) members - the number of members must always be an odd number - nominated by the Zone Delegates. They shall all be people with proven experience and expertise in their respective professional fields. The coordination and representation of the Zone Commission shall be entrusted to a member chosen by the Zone Delegates.

10. In the meantime, while the commission is being set up, the delegates shall appoint two Safeguarding Officers, a man and a woman, from among the members of the Focolare Movement and in the Zone of North America. They shall be people with suitable skills and proven experience and prudence, They shall carry out their tasks in complete freedom and independence and in close collaboration with the Zone Delegates and with the CO.BE.TU.

11. When cases of sexual abuse, violence, maltreatment, and bullying against minors or vulnerable adults are reported within the zone (except in cases of competence of the CO.BE.TU¹⁵), the Zone Commission or the Safeguarding Officers are responsible for handling the case, for carrying out the internal inquiry according to this policy and for engaging in effective collaboration with the local statutory authorities in charge of establishing the facts and ensuring the protection of victims, while in every case maintaining the relationship with the family of the minor or vulnerable adult involved (the parents or whoever has parental authority). Therefore, any request for information concerning this disclosure, from anyone, must be immediately sent to the Zone Commission or Safeguarding Officers. All information must be treated with the utmost confidentiality.

12. The Zone Commission or the Safeguarding Officers can be helped by other specialists, with previous experience in this area, including people external to the Focolare Movement.

¹³ See definition of “Zone Delegates” in part X of this document, # 22.

¹⁴ <https://www.focolare.org/en/download/guidelines-for-the-protection-of-minors/>, #23 to 29.

¹⁵ See <https://www.focolare.org/en/download/guidelines-for-the-protection-of-minors/>, #25 and #46: “If a disclosure is reported regarding the members of the General Council of the Work of Mary, the women and men Focolarini living in a Focolare house who have taken perpetual vows, or the women and men married Focolarini who have taken promises, even if it is during their formation period, the CO.BE.TU. shall coordinate and manage the case having been given this specific mandate by the President of the Focolare Movement”

13. Additional duties and responsibilities of the Zone Commission are elaborated in Appendix 6.

IV. SCREENING OF VOLUNTEER SUPERVISORS OF YOUTH

14. Screening consists of identifying persons who are suitable for working with minors and/or vulnerable adults. For a person to become a supervisor for minors and vulnerable adults at an event, the local regional directors¹⁶ should know such a candidate personally for at least six months and another current supervisor must concur with the regional directors that such a candidate does not pose a risk to minors.

15. A criminal background check should be run on a candidate and sex offender registries should be consulted for any states, provinces, or territories in which the candidate lived during the prior five years. If this research and/or documentation were to reveal that the person could pose a significant risk to minors, such a person should not be given access to minors. Supervisors will undergo criminal record checks every five years (every three years in Canada) as long as they continue in their position of supervising minors at events.

16. Every supervisor is required to read and sign the Focolare Movement's Certification form (Appendix 2), to be renewed every three years, attesting that they have also read and agree to abide by the Focolare Movement's Code of Conduct with regard to Supervision of Minors and Vulnerable Adults (Appendix 1).

17. In the case of a single or married men or women focolarini who is a candidate to be a supervisor, a letter of good standing should be obtained from the Focolare Movement's worldwide central offices¹⁷ to determine that the candidate does not pose a significant risk to minors. A criminal background check should also be run, and sex offender registries should be consulted for any states, provinces and territories in which the candidate lived during the prior five years. In Canada, a vulnerable sector check will also be obtained. If it is determined that there is such a risk, the Focolarino should not be allowed to be a supervisor of youth nor should he/she have access to minors.

18. Parents and legal guardians have a right to observe programs¹⁸ and activities in which their children are involved. However, parents or legal guardians who desire to participate in or assist supervisors with events where they will have continuous, ongoing contact with their child's programs in the Focolare Movement will fulfill the requirements of supervisors as indicated in Articles 14, 15 and 16 above.

¹⁶ See definition of "Regional Director" in part X of this document, #19.

¹⁷ See definition of "Focolare Movement worldwide central office" in part X of this document, #12.

¹⁸ See definition of "Programs" in part X of this document, # 14.

19. Only those Catholic priests whose bishop or religious superior confirms that they are in good standing in their diocese or religious order by signing and sending a copy of a Priests' Verification Form (Appendix 4) (or a similar form or letter from the diocese or religious order) may be asked to administer or assist in the sacraments, including penance, at an event. Furthermore, if a priest were to be a candidate to be a supervisor, he must also comply with the conditions required above in Articles 14, 15, and 16 above.

V. FOCOLARE MOVEMENT POLICIES REGARDING VULNERABLE ADULTS

20. A Vulnerable Adult is considered a person over the age of 18 (or age of majority in the state, province or territory) who because of impairment of mental or physical functions, or deprivation of personal liberty, is unable or unlikely to report abuse or neglect without assistance. In addition, such a person lacks the capacity to give consent due to a physical, mental or developmental condition or disability. In considering the capacity of an adult to give consent, the following factors should be considered:

- a. The adult has the capacity to understand what is being asked of him or her.
- b. Sufficient information is given, in a way that the person understands, to enable him/her to make an informed decision.
- c. Consent is not received through any form of coercion.

21. If a report is to be made to civil authorities regarding an allegation of abuse, the Focolare Movement must follow the laws of the state, province, or territory in which the allegations occurred.

22. The vulnerable adult should be afforded the same rights and support as a minor during any investigation as outlined in Section IX.

VI. TRAINING

23. Each person who is becoming a supervisor or a helper¹⁹ with minors or vulnerable adults will participate in an initial training session, other in-service training as required by the Focolare Movement, and then refresher training at least once every year, that addresses their role in protecting minors and vulnerable adults at events. Training for Protection of Minors and Vulnerable Adults is conducted through an on-line program by VIRTUS. One may register and participate in the training at virtusonline.org.

24. Each person who is a candidate to be a supervisor will acknowledge receipt of a copy of and will sign the Focolare Movement's Code of Conduct regarding Supervision of Minors and Vulnerable Adults (Appendix 1) by completing the required documents section on VIRTUS.

25. Further, each person who is becoming a supervisor must comply with the local training requirements for protection of minors and vulnerable adults of the state, province, territory and diocese in which the event occurs. Therefore, it is necessary to consult the local statutes and guidelines published by such jurisdictions.

¹⁹ See definition of "helper" in Section X, #25.

VII. PROCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER EACH EVENT

26. Programs and events for youth should be planned and prepared in advance by at least two supervisors to pay particular attention that the program complies with this policy and does not pose a risk to minors or vulnerable adults.

27. Supervisors under the age of 21 should work under the direction of a supervisor over the age of 25.

28. People who carry out activities with minors shall work to build a positive relationship with the minor's parents/guardians and involve the family as much as possible. When possible, local Focolare Movement communities should be informed about activities with minors (by ways and means that are possible and appropriate), along with the general program and the topics that will be discussed, so that the children's parents can be informed too.

29. Regional directors, or their delegates, should approve all programs for minors that are sponsored by the Focolare Movement in their respective regions. A list of these programs should be maintained in the Regional Center²⁰ and include events, a listing of supervisors for the events, pre-approved locations and the general times at which events will be held. The regional directors and supervisors should periodically examine and update these programs and assure that they have adequate supervision.

30. A session should be held periodically with participating minors to explain what behavior is prohibited, and particularly how to report an infraction to someone with responsibility. Members²¹ that are minors should participate in such a session at least one time each year.

31. When a parent or legal guardian is not present throughout an event, minors may be allowed to participate in such an event only with the explicit, written and signed permission slip of a parent or legal guardian. Appendix IV is a sample permission slip containing suitable language, to be appropriately adapted for particular events and programs, for such signed written permission. When possible, every year parents can give a year-long written consent allowing their children to participate in the activities provided for them by the Focolare Movement throughout a given year.

32. Temporary, verbal telephone authorization should suffice only in exceptional circumstances to be determined by the regional director. Any verbal approvals should be documented and archived for any future reference. If a particular event were to include explicitly scheduled unsupervised time for

²⁰ See definition of "Regional Center" in part X of this document, # 9.

²¹ See definition of "Member" in part X of this document, #10.

participating minors, and if the minor's parent or legal guardian were not to be present throughout that event, signed written authorization should be given by a parent or legal guardian to another adult present, who has the time and capability to supervise the minor in question, and who agrees to be that minor's temporary guardian during such time at the event.

33. If necessary, for the safety and well-being of the minor, and if the event were to span more than one day, such direction and authorization should also give permission for such a temporary guardian to share sleeping quarters with the minor.

34. To prevent child abuse, a person responsible for an event or regional directors may exclude any adult or minor from any event for misconduct or inappropriate behavior. Regional directors should prohibit any possible contact at events between minors and persons who are known to pose a risk to minors.

35. Transportation

- a. Parents or legal guardians should provide transportation for their children to, during and from events as much as possible.
- b. When parents or a legal guardian are unable to provide such transportation however, they should approve beforehand the itineraries of their children before, during and after events. Written (electronic form is permitted) permission from parents or a legal guardian is required for supervisors to transport minors.
- c. Supervisors should minimize as much as possible occasions of driving or accompanying a minor alone on a trip. If such transportation is necessary; however, the accompanying supervisor should communicate with the program director or Focolare center by telephone, cell phone, email, text messaging, or some other direct means both at the origin and upon reaching the destination of the trip, indicating the precise time at both moments. No unplanned, unnecessary stops should be made between the origin and the destination. No trips should be made alone with a minor after 11 PM and before 6 AM unless special parental permission is obtained for such transportation during those hours.
- d. Upon reaching the trip's destination, supervisors will do all that is reasonably possible to hand over the minor being transported to the care and responsibility of the parents or legal guardian, or the person designated by the parents or legal guardian for this purpose. In the event it is impossible to comply with this provision, the supervisor must immediately, or as soon as possible, report it to the regional director, the program coordinator or the Zone Delegate.
- e. At the conclusion of any exceptional transportation, all of these steps should be documented, and a record kept at the Regional Center.

36. Events and private conversations²²

- a. All children participating in events should be supervised by youth supervisors during scheduled supervised time. Parents, legal guardians, or temporary guardians are responsible for supervision of their children at all other times during an event.
- b. Events and private conversations with minors should be conducted in locations that are visible and accessible to adults, never in bedrooms or behind closed doors without windows.
- c. If an event or private conversation with minors is conducted in a Focolare center or a minor's home, at least two adults should be present in the building (the supervisor and at least one other adult). At least two supervisors should supervise any event conducted in a location other than a Focolare center or a minor's home. Every effort should be made to maintain visual contact²³ among the supervisors while in the presence of minors during the event.
- d. While respecting the dignity of each person regarding what they may disclose during a private conversation, supervisors should share with the regional director or a person designated by the regional director about the general content of private conversations with minors.
- e. If a supervisor were to learn through a private conversation with a minor of clear imminent danger²⁴, refer to section VIII of this policy for actions to take immediately.

37. Bathrooms and showers

- a. If possible, there should be bathroom and shower facilities for the supervisors separate from the bathroom and shower facilities for minors at an event. Supervisors should not use bathrooms or shower facilities while minors or vulnerable adults are using them.
- b. Supervisors should not undress or appear nude in the presence of minors or vulnerable adults.
- c. Minors who are able to use toilets and showers on their own shall be accompanied only in emergencies or in case of the child's particular necessity. Supervisors should supervise bathroom and shower activity of minors only as needed, for example when several minors must utilize a bathroom or a shower facility simultaneously. To avoid being alone in bathrooms or shower facilities with only one minor, supervisors should enter or be present if necessary, in the presence of another adult, or at least with other minors present as well.
- d. When possible, only one child should use a single bathroom or bathroom stall at a time.
- e. If a minor or vulnerable adult is not self-sufficient, the help to be given shall be agreed with the family.

²² See definition of "Private Conversation" in part X of this document, # 13.

²³ See definition of "Visual Contact" in part X of this document, # 17.

²⁴ See definition of "Imminent Danger" in part X of this document, # 5.

38. Formative content pertaining to sexuality: Parents are children's primary educators in the area of sexuality. The Focolare Movement's goal is to help people, including minors, know and apply its Gospel spirituality in all areas of life, including sexuality. If parents or guardians were to object to any communication to their children outlined in this paragraph, their wishes will be respected.

- a. The regional director should review and approve any educational/formative content dealing with sexuality and sexual morality to be offered to minors.
- b. The regional director should authorize a particular supervisor to discuss such material with minors. Two supervisors should be present at such a session. The authorized supervisor should report the outcome of the session to the regional director immediately afterwards.
- c. Minors should be invited to also discuss these issues with their parents or legal guardian.
- d. Supervisors should not take initiative or offer to discuss these issues further (i.e. beyond the time originally allotted for discussion) privately. If one or more minors were to ask to further discuss these topics, then the supervisor should first obtain approval from the parent or guardian and regional director (or their designated representative) before proceeding with subsequent discussion at another time.
- e. If a minor were to have further questions following such a session or felt the need to discuss his/her own particular situation, before proceeding with such a conversation, the supervisor should seek to consult if possible, with the regional director, who may suggest another person to talk with the minor instead. With reference to Section IV, Paragraph F, Part 6 above, a supervisor should share the substance of the conversation with the regional director afterwards. If possible, and if it does not jeopardize the minor's good, the minor's parents or legal guardian should also be informed of this exchange.

39. If a supervisor of a non-Catholic faith tradition were to provide information and/or formation at an event about his/her own tradition to minors belonging to his/her same faith tradition, and if this teaching were at variance with Catholic moral doctrine, a regional director should be explicitly aware of any such variance.

40. Overnight events.

- a. Parents' or a legal guardian's written permission should be required for minors to participate in overnight events if the parents or legal guardian are not present throughout the event.
- b. At least two (and preferably more) supervisors should be present at any overnight event involving minors and/or vulnerable adults. There should be a ratio of one adult supervisor for 8 youth with a minimum of two supervisors present.

- c. No minor or vulnerable adult should stay alone (i.e. without other minors) overnight at a Focolare center or at an event unless his/her parent or legal guardian is also present. In the exceptional circumstances that a minor's safety would necessitate such lodging in a Focolare center, his/her parent's or legal guardian's written permission should be provided. This situation should be documented, stating that the minor slept alone and was supervised by more than one adult the whole time the minor was under the care of the Focolare.
 - d. At an event involving more than one minor, every effort should be made to minimize individual sleeping arrangements for those minors. It is preferable to use large rooms and have separated areas for girls and boys for sleeping, whether on beds, mattresses or in sleeping bags. If only smaller rooms are available, then all doors should be kept open (and never locked) throughout the night. No minor should be allowed to sleep alone, in isolation. Space should be maintained between beds, sleeping bags or other sleeping arrangements. Supervisors should periodically check during the night to assure that there is no danger of minors being abused.
 - e. Adults should sleep in separate rooms, located close to those of the minors, to ensure appropriate vigilance. If it is necessary for supervisors to share a room with minors for the safety and well-being of the minors, then such supervisors should sleep in visible proximity with other adults, seeking to distance their sleeping arrangements as far as reasonably possible from the minors' sleeping arrangements. Minors should not be allowed to enter the space designated for adults' sleeping arrangements.
 - f. If the safety and well-being of minors and logistical limitations require a supervisor to sleep in the same room with minors without the presence of another adult, then at least three minors should also occupy that room. The supervisor should locate his/her sleeping arrangement as far as reasonably possible from the minors' sleeping arrangements.
 - g. A sleeping bag, bed, mat, or small tent should be shared only by members of the same immediate family. Otherwise, no one should be allowed to share a sleeping bag, bed, mat, small tent, or other sleeping arrangement.
41. Youth Events or Meetings held by conference call or video conference and other on-line communication.
- a. It is becoming more commonplace and with increasing frequency that meetings and events with youth may be held by conference call or video conference. Supervisors of youth for these types of meetings should obtain parental permission for youth to participate in these meetings in the same way as a permission slip would be completed by the parent or guardian for an in-person meeting.
 - b. The youth supervisor should send the parent/guardian a communication informing them of the intent to communicate with their child/children on-line.
 - c. The parent/guardian will be asked to complete a permission form granting permission for the youth to participate in on-line meetings of the Focolare

Movement. The permission slip is found at Appendix 6 and may also be made available to be completed by the parent on-line.

- d. Below are guidelines for youth supervisors of the Focolare Movement to follow when communicating with youth on-line, on social media, by phone or text message.
 - i. It is strongly recommended that supervisors not send communications to parents or youth from their personal email (use an official Focolare email address).
 - ii. Supervisors should create a secure folder with the form and the responses and securely share the folder with their local Focolare and regional center so that they can keep it in their permanent files.
 - iii. The youth contact information collected in the form should only be shared with designated Focolare youth leaders and they should have completed training on the Protection of Minors and Vulnerable Adults in accordance with this policy.
 - iv. Supervisors should inform parents of the names of any youth leaders who will be in touch with the youth. This should be as limited a group as possible - people they consider key members of the local youth committee who can represent the Focolare Movement in their communication. As soon as one of these members leaves the youth committee, the supervisor should inform the parents of the new, updated list of people who will possibly contact their children, specifying who has left and who will no longer be contacting the minor on behalf of the Focolare Movement.
 - v. During conference calls/video conferences:
 1. There should be an adult in addition to the supervisor present (either online or physically present on the premises with the supervisor) for a conference call or video conference.
 2. Supervisors should be aware of the best practices for online conferences with minors as presented in training modules and newsletters from VIRTUS.
 3. Supervisors should be mindful of the background in the call, by trying to have it as neutral as possible. The best option is a solid background.
 4. If a supervisor sees anything on the call that is cause for concern, it needs to be reported in accordance with this policy and local laws. This includes anything one might see in the background (what siblings are doing, etc.). Refer to Section VIII for guidance on actions to report the matter.
 5. For on-line video conferences, supervisors should disable any private chat features that would allow participants to have a side conversation or chat without the conference.

- e. Texting:
 - i. Supervisors should keep parents informed about texting conversations. If a supervisor is texting to invite the minors to an event, they should also inform the parents about it.
 - ii. Supervisors should limit texting content to their role as a youth leader and representative of the Focolare Movement.
 - iii. Supervisors should not text the minors after a reasonable bedtime.

VIII. REPORTING OF SUSPICIOUS OR INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR WITH MINORS OR VULNERABLE ADULTS OR WHEN ALLEGATIONS OF SEXUAL ABUSE, VIOLENCE, MALTREATMENT AND BULLYING OF MINORS ARE REPORTED

42. In accordance with local state, provincial or territorial law, any person who has cause to believe a minor or vulnerable adult may have been or is being physically or sexually abused, or is a victim of bullying²⁵, as defined by local state, provincial or territorial law, is required to report his or her suspicions to the police or local civil authorities²⁶.

43. It must be emphasized that the Focolare Movement is aware of the legal obligation, on the part of those in charge, to take all necessary measures to prevent any kind of abuse concerning minors occurring within it.

44. The Focolare Movement recognizes that each of its members has a moral duty to report their knowledge or suspicion of any kind of alleged abuse regarding minors and any situation in which they perceive that a child with whom they have come into contact is experiencing harmful or neglectful behavior. All the more, any person supervising youth for an event for the Focolare Movement has a duty to report any suspicion of abuse or neglect of a minor or vulnerable adult.

45. In the fulfilment of this duty, anyone can be called upon to provide information useful for the reconstruction of the reported facts. Therefore, anyone acquainted with the facts has a moral duty to affirm the truth and not to keep silent, in whole or in part, about their knowledge of the facts in question.

46. In fulfilment of this duty, the paramount well-being of the child must be kept in mind as a primary concern. For this reason, the members of the Focolare Movement, are under obligation to report every form of alleged sexual abuse²⁷, stalking, violence, maltreatment, and bullying of minors, by adults who are in charge of their care, or by other minors, who are members of the Focolare Movement or by other people, on the occasion of activities organized by the Focolare Movement or in any case related to it.

47. If anyone, particularly supervisors, were to observe suspicious or inappropriate behavior with or among minors or vulnerable adults at an event, including infractions of the Focolare Movement's Code of Conduct regarding Supervision of Minors and Vulnerable Adults (Appendix 1), they should immediately report this to:

²⁵ See definition of Bullying in Section X, #26

²⁶ See also definitions in Part X.

²⁷ See definition of "Sexual abuse" in part X of this document, # 4.

- a. Local Civil Authority such as Child Protection Services or Police in accordance with the laws of the state, province or territory.

And:

- b. The Zone Commission for Protection of Minors or to the Safeguarding Officers.

email: protectminors@focolare.us
protectminors@focolare.ca

Phone: (240-468-7027)

48. Anyone who receives a spontaneous confidential disclosure by a minor, who claims to be a victim of any of the abuses listed above, is obliged to:

- a. listen carefully to the minor without asking specific questions, letting the minor tell what he or she has experienced without putting pressure on him/her;
- b. remain as calm as possible, remembering that the minor has decided to disclose the abuse received due to the trust placed in the adult;
- c. accompany the minor to his/her parents to inform them of exactly what they said, unless the minor's disclosure of abuse is against his/her parent or guardian, and unless doing so would mean putting the minor in danger;
- d. make sure, as far as possible, that the minor urgently receives all the care needed;
- e. explain—where appropriate—to both parents or to guardians the procedure for reporting to the relevant authorities;
- f. write down, as precisely as possible, all the information – name, address, telephone number, and the report of what the minor has said, keeping - as far as possible - the exact words used by the minor;
- g. immediately inform the Zone Commission or the Safeguarding Officers about the place where the alleged abuse has taken place. In the absence of these, the Zone Delegates shall urgently appoint two members, a woman and a man, to manage the case.

49. If the confidential disclosure is made to a minor, the minor shall inform the youth supervisor as soon as possible of what has happened, if that person is present, or inform an adult whom they trust as soon as possible. In this way, it is possible to proceed promptly as set out in this document.

50. If there are questions about the applicability of this policy, the policy Program Coordinator (Appendix 7) should be consulted.

51. Supervisors should report uncontrollable or unusual behavior of a minor immediately to his/her parents or legal guardian and file a document of this report which should be maintained in the minor's personal file in the regional center.

IX. INTERNAL PROCEDURES IN THE FOCOLARE MOVEMENT TO BE FOLLOWED AFTER THE LOCAL CIVIL AUTHORITIES AND THE ZONE COMMISSION FOR PROTECTION OF MINORS (OR THE SAFEGUARDING OFFICERS) HAVE BEEN CONTACTED.

52. The procedures established in the Focolare Movement, after local civil authorities have been notified and when there is disclosure of a possibility of alleged sexual abuse, violence or maltreatment and bullying of minors committed by its members, are necessarily different, taking into account the variety and international nature of the people who belong to it (cf. articles 129-140 of the General Statutes of the Work of Mary) and the consequent legal conditions deriving from Canon Law, the General Statutes, and the Regulations.

Practices to follow in the case of criminal investigations and prosecutions by the judicial authorities.

53. During criminal investigations, it is necessary to proceed with the utmost prudence and to evaluate, together with the investigating authority, the suitability of possible actions. This is all the more true if the collaborative attitude of the accused reduces the possibility of repetition of abuse to a minimum. At this stage, the Focolare members in charge (CO.BE.TU. or Zone Commission) shall not start any formal internal investigation (unless the circumstances make it necessary), to avoid possible overlapping with the judicial authority.

54. This type of cooperative attitude also entails the willingness of the accused to leave, at least temporarily, any tasks entrusted to him or her, and to avoid participating in public events and conferences organized by the Focolare Movement.

55. It is necessary to be cautious in making public statements and it is desirable to appoint a spokesperson for the Focolare Movement, if needed.

56. Where necessary, the accused shall be helped to find a lawyer of his/her own choosing, on the understanding that criminal responsibility is a personal issue.

57. In case of simultaneous pending criminal proceedings and internal proceedings, the CO.BE.TU. may suspend the latter until the end of the pending criminal proceedings. In this case, the internal proceedings suspended may be reactivated within 120 days of receipt of a judicial decision, even if this decision is not final.

58. Within the sections and branches making up the Focolare Movement, some members have received Holy Orders and the legal status of “cleric”²⁸. Others have made vows and have the legal status of “men/women religious,” and others have juridical status as “lay people” with vows or promises or spiritual commitments.

59. The members of the Focolare Movement who are ordained priests may belong to the Men Focolarini, the Diocesan Priest and Permanent Deacon Focolarini branch, the Diocesan Priest and Permanent Deacon Volunteers branch, the “Gen’s” branch, or the Male Religious branch.

Procedure for clergy, deacons, male religious, and consecrated women²⁹

60. In canonical penal law, as well as in civil law, sexual abuse of a minor committed by a cleric is considered a crime.

61. In the event of a disclosure of alleged sexual abuse, violence or maltreatment regarding minors, committed by a cleric who is a member of the men Focolarini, the priest Focolarini branch, the priest Volunteers or the Diocesan Permanent deacons, whether Focolarini or Volunteers, the Co-President of the Focolare Movement shall inform the Bishop of the diocese where the cleric or the deacon who is accused is incardinated, and the bishop shall follow the procedure indicated by Canon Law.

62. In the case where the accused person is a cleric, a non-cleric male religious belonging to the branch of male religious, or a consecrated woman belonging to the consecrated women branch, the Focolare delegate in the zone, or the Co-President, when the accused is entirely at the service of the Focolare Movement, shall inform the Superior General of the Institute of Consecrated Life or the Society of Apostolic Life to which the accused belongs, in order to enforce the legal penal procedure for the members of Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life.

63. While the investigation carried out by the Church and/or State authorities is pending, the Superior of the accused person must remove that person from the tasks in which they are in contact with minors, directly or indirectly, and give that person a different role where there is no such risk.

64. The Superior shall also use his/her authority to encourage the accused person to undergo a psychological evaluation or to obtain medical and/or legal advice.

²⁸ Cleric: one who is constituted in sacred ministry in the Church; clerics are divided into deacons, priests and bishops.

²⁹ The terms ‘male religious’ and ‘consecrated women’ refer to members of Institutes of Consecrated Life, Societies of Apostolic Life and new forms of consecrated life (cf. Can. 605 of the CIC).

65. In proven cases of sexual abuse of minors or vulnerable adults, the accused person cannot be elected to positions of responsibility.

66. Based on the outcome of the canonical process, the internal procedure will be initiated against the accused person, following the procedures provided in the Regulations of the section or branch to which he/she belongs at the time of the disclosure.

Procedures regarding lay members who are members of the General Council, and men and women Focolarini

67. The internal procedures for handling allegations against a focolaina or focolarino are specifically stipulated in this policy and are in accordance with Canon Law. To ensure the freedom and independence of the internal investigation, a commission (CO.BE.TU.), independent from the positions of governance, is entrusted with the investigation.

68. If the President or the Co-President of the Focolare Movement receives a notification stating that a man Focolarino or a woman Focolarina, whether single or married, and even if they are still in their period of formation³⁰, is accused of alleged abuse of minors, they must immediately submit to the CO.BE.TU. - within 10 days of receipt of the notification – a written request to begin the preliminary investigation according to the procedures set out in these guidelines – for the purpose of verifying whether the facts in the disclosure are true.

69. In the event that the report reaches the CO.BE.TU. directly, the latter shall immediately inform the President and the Co-President, as well as the Section to which the accused person belongs and the Delegate of his/her zone, as well as the International Center of the branch to which the accused belongs.

70. In this phase, it may be necessary, and duty bound to take precautionary measures to allow the investigation to proceed in complete freedom, and first and foremost in order to prevent further abuse as well as to avoid scandal.

71. For this reason, those responsible for the accused person, while waiting for the investigation's outcome, shall forbid that person to have any type of contact with minors, so that he/she shall not undertake any activity that may put minors at risk.

72. In communicating this precautionary measure and in order to satisfy the above noted objectives, the person responsible for the accused person shall avoid referring to the content of the disclosure, the victim, and the names of any other

³⁰ The period of formation is as stated in the Regulations of the Sections of the Men and Women Focolarini.

people involved. He/she shall only state that the precautionary measure is justified due to a “safeguarding concern involving a minor”.

Preliminary investigation and internal procedures

73. Upon receipt of the notification, the CO.BE.TU. coordinator shall appoint, in writing, two people, a man and a woman, to be chosen preferably from among the members of the CO.BE.TU. or among the members of the commission of the zone in which the alleged abuse was committed.

74. At the beginning of the preliminary investigation, the two people in charge shall determine whose statements should be heard during the investigation and shall assess on a case-by-case basis what is necessary in order to achieve the aims of the investigation.

75. At this stage, it may be necessary to interview the presumed victim (this shall happen only in exceptional cases if he/she is still a minor, and with the help of a psychologist) in order to determine the facts, as well as to interview any witnesses indicated by the victim (above all to verify that the allegations are well founded).

76. In cases where the facts are in themselves clear and certain, it is preferable, instead, to proceed directly to the next step³¹.

77. At the end of the preliminary investigation, the alleged perpetrator of the abuse must be summoned, with a notice of at least ten days, and informed of the charges against him or her, so that they can prepare their defense, assisted if they wish by a lawyer of their own choosing. An internal member from the same section or branch or from the corresponding men or women section or branch may not act as a defense counsel either on behalf of the accused person or on behalf of the alleged victim.

78. It must be ensured that the accused person and his/her lawyer have access to the relevant files in order to prepare their defense.

79. In the event of a serious and real impediment, and maintaining the possibility of filing a written plea, the alleged perpetrator of abuse may request that the hearing in his/her defense is postponed. The hearing can be postponed only once, in which case there should be a corresponding extension of the deadline for the conclusion of the preliminary investigation.

80. If deemed relevant for the purposes of the decision, the exculpatory evidence indicated by the accused person, as well as any other official documents issued by the court, shall be admitted.

³¹ This may be the case, for example, where the victim has submitted a detailed written report or attached a complaint to the judicial authority.

81. The acquisition of the admitted evidence shall take place during the cross-examination of the parties (injured party and accused person) with the assistance of their defense lawyers, if appointed.

82. The preliminary investigation must be carried out within 90 days of receipt of the documentation by the two people in charge; before the deadline, for justified reasons, they may request that the CO.BE.TU. grant an extension for a maximum of 60 days.

83. At the end of the preliminary investigation, those who conducted the investigation must send the documents to the CO.BE.TU., along with their own Report in which they set out the investigative measures taken, the choices made in this regard, and the results obtained.

84. The CO.BE.TU., having received the Report, depending on the outcome of the activity carried out in the preliminary investigation, shall issue a Reasoned Opinion within 60 days on the decision to be taken against the accused.

85. Therefore, the CO.BE.TU. shall adopt the following measures, alternatively:

- a. If the truthfulness of the reported facts can be excluded or the information acquired is insufficient, they shall propose the closure of the case;
- b. If the suspect has admitted guilt or the complaint was found to be justified, they shall write their written opinion with the proposal of a disciplinary measure to be imposed on the accused.

86. Exceptionally, where there is a need for evidential integration, the above must be carried out in public discussion by the parties, within 30 days of the request.

87. The opinion of the CO.BE.TU. shall be immediately communicated to the section or branch to which the accused person belongs, to the President and Co-President of the Focolare, as well as to the persons in charge of the procedure, if they are not members of the CO.BE.TU.

88. The central delegate of the section with his/her council, having taken note of the reasoned opinion of the CO.BE.TU., shall adopt immediately, and in any case in no later than 30 days, the final decision under the respective Regulations. The measure adopted by the section or branch to which the accused belongs must be communicated immediately, and in any case no later than 10 days after its adoption, and at the same time to the CO.BE.TU., to the accused person and his/her lawyer, and to the person who is currently in charge of the zone where the accused lives.

89. The notification to the accused person must indicate the time limits and procedures for appeal as in # 88 to #91.

90. The CO.BE.TU. shall immediately inform those in charge of the “little town”, the zone, or region in which the abuse happened, so that, if the conditions are met, they can immediately file a complaint with the relevant judicial authority.

91. Subsequently, having ascertained the communication of the measure to the above subjects, the CO.BE.TU. shall ensure that the victim is informed. In cases where the victim is still a minor, his/her parents or guardians shall be informed.

92. The violation of the terms and provisions for the internal procedure, without prejudice to the eventual responsibility of the subjects to which it is attributable, does not determine the withdrawal of the same or the invalidity of the sanction imposed, provided that the right of defense of the accused person is not irrevocably compromised.

Appeal

93. An appeal against the final decision may be lodged within 30 days of the measure’s acknowledgement.

94. The request for withdrawal or modification must be addressed in the first instance to the President. This appeal automatically brings about the suspension of the sanction. The President shall decide within 30 days of the appeal.

95. If the answer is negative or considered unsatisfactory, despite the President having corrected the decision or not having taken any action, it is possible to make a hierarchical appeal to the Vatican Dicastery for the Laity, the Family, and Life, within 30 days of acknowledgement of the new decision or after the 30th day in the case of a failed decision.

96. If the outcome of this initiative remains similar to the initial decision, i.e. unsatisfactory for the plaintiff, the latter may make administrative recourse to the Supreme Tribunal of the Apostolic Signatura.

Reopening of procedures and revision of the previously adopted decision.

97. If the internal procedure, which is not suspended, ends with the imposition of a sanction and the criminal procedure is defined with an irrevocable sentence of acquittal, the President, at the request of the person concerned, shall reopen the internal procedure to modify or confirm her decision in relation to the outcome of the criminal proceedings. The request must be submitted within 120 days of the irrevocable criminal verdict.

98. If the internal procedure ends with a dismissal and the criminal trial ends with an irrevocable judgement of conviction, the President shall request the

reopening of the internal procedure to adapt its final decision to the outcome of the criminal trial. The internal procedure shall also be reopened if the irrevocable conviction results in a lesser penalty than that which has been applied.

99. In the cases referred to above, the internal proceedings shall be resumed or reopened, respectively, by renewal of the charge, within 120 days of receipt of the new evidence or of receipt of the request for reopening. The proceedings shall be conducted with a full new time frame, as envisaged, for their conclusion.

100. The appearance of new and significant facts not known at the time of the decision shall entitle the parties concerned to submit to the President, at any time, a request to reopen the internal proceedings within the time limits and in the manner set out in the preceding paragraphs, with a petition for revision of the decision already taken. The decision shall be taken by the President, after a preliminary investigation, if she deems it necessary, and after hearing the opinion of a competent trustworthy person.

Procedures regarding other lay members.

101. The Zone Commission for safeguarding minors shall adopt the regulations and procedures for reporting cases concerning members of the General Council, men and women Focolarini, with the necessary adaptations and as far as applicable, for cases within their competence concerning other lay members of the Focolare (Volunteers, Gen 2, Gen's, members of the youth sector of the branch of men religious and consecrated women, people who belong to the wide ranging movements, adherents, and sympathizers).

102. The zone or subzone commissions shall inform the CO.BE.TU. regularly and without delay of the outcome of the various phases of the procedure, and they shall follow its instructions.

103. In the case of disagreement and dissent from these indications, the zone or subzone commissions shall communicate their reasons.

104. In the case of irreconcilable and enduring conflict, the CO.BE.TU. shall take over the management of the case, taking the necessary measures to complete the internal procedure.

105. This shall also be the case in the event of serious irregularities committed by the zone or subzone Commissions for the Safeguarding of Minors, in conducting cases submitted for their attention.

Procedures for minors participating in Focolare Movement activities.

106. The Focolare Movement - recalling the commitments made in the introduction to these Guidelines – encourages a culture of respect and esteem for others among children and young people who participate in the activities of the Movement.

107. For this reason, it is committed to developing activities directed towards prevention and combatting all forms of child abuse, taking an approach that is educational and not punitive.

108. If there is a disclosure that a minor has committed alleged sexual abuse, violence, maltreatment, or acts of bullying towards another minor, in accordance with the laws in force in the country where they live, while waiting for the Zone Commission's internal investigation, the suspect minor, by notification to the parents or legal guardian, shall be suspended from any task and any activities that may pose risks to his/her peers.

109. The verified criminal guilt of a minor is incompatible with the requirements for participating in the life and the activities of the Movement in which minors participate.

110. If conditions allow, in collaboration with the family, the minor shall be helped to start a process to make him/her aware of the gravity of the acts he/she carried out, which shall allow him/her to participate again in the Focolare activities.

111. If during the course of an event (congress, summer camp, workshop, Mariapolis...), a minor behaves in a way contrary to the principles contained in these Guidelines and if the conduct is not so serious as to deem it necessary to initiate the internal procedure, the persons in charge of the event, in an open and sincere dialogue with the minor, shall immediately try to shed light on what has happened and shall help the minor become aware of his/her behaviour - inviting them to accept responsibility for their actions. The parents of the child shall be immediately informed of what has happened.

112. If, despite the above efforts by the persons in charge, the minor's negative attitude persists, the initiation of an internal investigation by the Zone Commission shall be evaluated, according to the rules contained in these Guidelines.

Guarantees

113. During the internal investigation, defendants must be assured of their ability to exercise their right of defense.

114. During this phase, where the conduct of that person is not known, all appropriate caution must be taken to avoid measures that may endanger the good reputation of the accused. In particular, it shall not be necessary to make known the motives for the measures taken, unless there is good reason to do so.

115. It remains true and possible – for all those who have a real and relevant interest - to request information about the outcome of the internal investigation. However, the evaluation of this request is at the exclusive discretion of the commission responsible for managing the case.

116. If the internal member who is considered the author of the illicit behaviour is transferred to another location, the new person in charge shall be informed of any proceedings regarding that member.

117. Copies of all documents produced and used in the internal proceedings must be kept in a confidential file room kept by the CO.BE.TU. and by the zone or subzone commission.

X. DEFINITIONS

(1) **Abuse:** any physical, verbal, emotional, or sexual behavior by a person which causes another person to fear for his or her physical, psychological, or emotional safety and well-being

(2) **Abuse of a minor:** physical, mental or emotional injury to a minor that results in an observable and material impairment in the minor's growth, development or psychological functioning

(3) **Physical abuse of a minor or vulnerable adult:** non-accidental injury that is intentionally inflicted upon a minor.

(4) **Sexual abuse of a minor or vulnerable adult:** the involvement of a minor in sexual acts with or without physical contact that occurs between a minor and an adult or when a more powerful minor imposes his/her will on a weaker minor. This includes any activity with a minor which is meant to arouse or gratify the sexual desires of the adult or more powerful person.

(5) **Clear, imminent danger:** any attitude or behavior with a high probability of leading to physical or emotional harm to a person. This includes the possibility of child abuse, the use of dangerous illegal drugs et al.

(6) **Consecrated men and women Focolarino/a:** a person who has taken vows of poverty, chastity and obedience or a person who is preparing to take vows of poverty, chastity and obedience in accordance with the respective regulations for men Focolarini or women Focolarine.

(7) **Event:** Physical in person event or online event of the Focolare Movement involving minors such as a meeting, a convention, a weekend retreat or a school for Gen or other youth, or larger events such as a Genfest, a Mariapolis, a Supercongress, the Week for a United World, participation in a World Youth Day with the Focolare Movement, or a Youth Day or any other event organized or hosted by the Focolare Movement.

(8) **Exploitation:** taking advantage of a relationship of official authority or responsibility for the benefit of the person holding this authority or responsibility.

(9) **Focolare center:** the home of a community of consecrated men Focolarini or the home of a community of consecrated women Focolarine which is a gathering place for the members of the Focolare Movement. It is subordinate to a regional center.

(10) **Member of the Focolare Movement:** persons, including consecrated men Focolarini and women Focolarine, belonging to one of the movement's branches and committed to living its spirit.

(11) **Minors:** anyone under 18 (or under the age of majority per the laws of the state province, or territory), and for the purpose of this policy, adults who would be considered uniquely vulnerable to abuse because of physical or mental disabilities.

(12) **The Focolare movement's worldwide central offices** based at:
Via Frascati, 306
00040 Rocca di Papa (Roma)
Italy

(13) **Private conversation:** a conversation between a member of the Focolare Movement and a person seeking advice or understanding about the Focolare's Gospel spirituality in which the person seeking advice or understanding shares his/her experience, and the member listens and may offer reflections or suggestions to enable the person seeking advice or understanding to live the spirituality more fruitfully. It is distinct from, and not a substitute for, confession or psychological counseling.

(14) **Program:** a scheduled series of related, ongoing events such as the Gen 3 program of meetings and activities over a 3-month period in a particular city.

(15) **Scandal:** an attitude or behavior which leads another to do evil. It damages virtue and integrity.

(16) **Supervisor:** any person acting on behalf of the Focolare Movement who is at least 21 years of age or older who was given and accepted the main responsibility for direct supervision of minors at a Focolare event. A supervisor may be assisted by someone under the age of 21 but the helper must at least be of the age of majority in the state, province or territory where the event is taking place and they must have conducted training and a background check in accordance with this policy.

(17) **Visual contact:** being in a position to directly see and be seen by another.

(18) **Regional center:** the Focolare center where the regional director resides. It is a gathering place and headquarters for the members of the Focolare Movement in a designated Region.

(19) **Regional directors:** persons responsible for the Focolare Movement in the Region in the zone of North America.

(20) **Focolare Zone of North America:** Consists of the countries of USA, Canada and Haiti.

(21) **Zone center:** the Focolare center where the zone delegate resides. In the case of the Zone of North America, the zone delegates - one male, one female - are responsible for the whole Focolare Movement throughout the United States, Canada and Haiti. The zone center is a gathering place and headquarters for the members of the Focolare Movement in the zone.

(22) **Zone delegates:** persons responsible for the Focolare Movement in the Zone of North America.

(23) **Vulnerable Adult.** A person over the age of 18 (or age of majority in the state, province or territory) who because of impairment of mental or physical functions, or deprivation of personal freedom, effectively, and even occasionally, is unable or unlikely to report abuse or neglect without assistance. In addition, such a person due to their impossibility to understand, desire or in any event, resist the offense, lacks the capacity to give consent.

(24) **The Focolare Movement** (Work of Mary) is an international organization, a private association of pontifical right with legal status. At its core is a Gospel-centered spirituality, Christian love as a way of life, and has unity and universal brotherhood as its goals. It is a religious and civil organization involving people from every culture, language, race, and religion, spread throughout the world.

(25) **Helper.** Any person who assists a youth supervisor participating in a youth event or activity.

(26) **Bullying.** Psychological or physical oppression repeated over time, by a person or group of “more powerful” people towards another person who is labelled as the “Weaker”.

Appendix 1

THE FOCOLARE MOVEMENT'S CODE OF CONDUCT WITH REGARD TO SUPERVISION OF MINORS AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

A. Supervisors should conduct themselves in accordance with the Catholic Church's moral teaching. On this basis, all persons, but particularly supervisors and minors, should not engage in the following conduct at Focolare programs or events:

1. Immoral conduct: that is conduct contrary to the discipline and teachings of the Catholic Church, which may result in scandal.
2. Procurement or participation in the procurement of abortion, encouraging suicide or committing homicide or euthanasia.
3. Possession or distribution of sexually explicit or pornographic material.
4. Adultery, flagrant promiscuity or illicit cohabitation.
5. Abuse of alcohol, drugs or gambling.
6. Stealing or any other form of theft.
7. Sexual harassment, exploitation³² or abuse.
8. Physical assault, bullying and fighting except in the case of self-defense.

B. Supervisors will not use corporal punishment in any way for behavior management of minors. This includes spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, or any other physical force as a retaliation or correction for inappropriate behavior by minors.

C. Appropriate affection between supervisors and minors is important for a child's development. It also constitutes a positive part of the Focolare Movement's work with youth. The following forms of affection are normally regarded as appropriate examples of affection in public settings at most Focolare programs and events:

1. Side-to-side, shoulder-to-shoulder or temple hugs.
2. Pats on the shoulder or back.
3. Handshakes.
4. "High-fives" and hand slapping.
5. Verbal praise.
6. Touching hands, shoulders and arms of minors.
7. Arms around shoulders.
8. Holding hands while walking with children under age 7 (or in cases where a physical disability renders it advisable).
9. Kneeling or bending down for hugs with small children.
10. Holding hands during prayer.
11. Pats on the head.

³² See definition of "Exploitation" in part X of this document, # 8

D. Adults have used some forms of physical affection to initiate inappropriate contact with minors. In order to maintain a safe environment, supervisors should avoid unnecessary physical contact with minors if and when they are alone. The following are examples of affection not to be used towards minors or vulnerable adults in Focolare programs and events:

1. Lengthy embraces.
2. Kisses on the mouth.
3. Holding minors over four years old on the lap.
4. Touching buttocks, chests or genital areas.
5. Showing affection in isolated areas such as bedrooms, closets or other private rooms.
6. Touching knees or legs of minors over 4 years of age.
7. Wrestling with minors.
8. Any type of massage given by a minor to an adult.
9. Any type of massage given by an adult to a minor, with the exception of first aid treatment in the case of an injury.
10. Any form of unwanted affection.
11. Compliments that relate to physique or body development.
12. Supervisors should not meet privately with minors in rooms where activity and interaction is not readily visible to others.

E. Supervisors should refrain from inappropriately using sexually explicit language or telling sexually explicit jokes at any time.

F. Sexually explicit or pornographic topics, music, recordings, films, games, web sites, computer software or entertainment should never be present at an event nor should it be on computers owned and operated by supervisors. Such material should never be introduced to minors.

G. The use of drugs, alcohol or tobacco should be prohibited at any event for minors.

H. Supervisors should never be under the influence of alcohol or drugs while supervising minors or vulnerable adults.

I. Supervisors should report any suspected child abuse to civil authorities and the Zone Commission. A supervisor can telephone the Zone Commission phone number: (240) 468-7027 or email to protectminors@focolare.us or protectminors@focolare.ca .

J. If a supervisor were to discover confidentially that there is a serious threat to the welfare of a minor or vulnerable adult, and that communication of confidential information to a parent or legal guardian or other appropriate person is essential to the minor's or vulnerable adult's health and well-being, the information necessary to protect the minor's or other vulnerable adult's health and

well-being (and only that information) should be communicated to the appropriate person/authorities.

K. Supervisors should not disclose information which could damage another's reputation nor share information with persons who have no valid right to know such things.

L. Supervisors should not post, disclose nor discuss such serious matters with the media, but should allow the Focolare Movement's designated representatives to deal with media relations.

M. Supervisors should simply tell the truth in the course of an investigation and fully cooperate with the local authorities. Any possible negligence or liability is to be determined afterwards solely by properly qualified persons on the basis of the results of the investigation.

N. Supervisors should never exploit nor engage in sexual intimacies with any persons in their care. Exploitation can occur if a supervisor were to take advantage of a relationship with a minor in his/her care for the interest, including sexual arousal or gratification, of the supervisor. Sexual intimacies consist of consensual physical contact, forced (non-consensual) sexual physical contact or sexually explicit conversations except those conversations in the context of the formation offered by the Focolare Movement.

Appendix 2

**FOCOLARE MOVEMENT CERTIFICATION FOR PROTECTION OF MINORS
AND VULNERABLE ADULTS**

I, _____, hereby attest and certify that I have never been convicted of nor pled guilty to any abuse of minors including sexual abuse, gross sexual imposition, voyeurism, public indecency, or any existing or former offense that is substantially equivalent to any of the above offenses, nor have I ever actually committed any of these crimes. I further certify that I have never been discharged from any position because of any activity covered by the foregoing statutes.

I hereby authorize any present or former employer, person, firm, corporation, physician, or government agency to answer any and all questions regarding my character and fitness for work with minors and vulnerable adults, and to release or provide any information within their knowledge or records, and, in consideration of my position at the Focolare event, I agree to hold any and all of them harmless and free of any liability for releasing any information that is within their knowledge and records. I further authorize the Focolare Movement to conduct a check of my police criminal records.

I have read and agree to abide by the Focolare Movement's Code of Conduct with regard to Supervision of Minors and Vulnerable Adults.

I hereby attest and certify that the information provided by me here is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

First Name & Last Name (please print) _____

Date of Birth: _____

Street Address: _____

City, State/Province/Territory, Zip/Postal Code

Signature _____ **Date:** _____

Witness: _____ **Date:** _____

Appendix 3

REFERENCE FORM

This form, to be kept in a confidential file in the Focolare Regional Center, should be compiled as a part of the routine initial background verification of anyone being considered as a candidate to be a supervisor of minors at Focolare events.

Name of the candidate to be a supervisor (candidate)

Name of the person conducting the interview

Name of the person to be interviewed (interviewee)

Date

Format of interview: Personal _____ Telephone _____ Correspondence _____

Interviewee's relationship with the candidate _____

Date interviewee first met candidate _____

Duration of interviewee's relationship with candidate _____

Did the interviewee raise any concerns or misgivings about the possible safety of minors upon learning that the candidate may be placed in a position to supervise minors? Did the interviewee recall the candidate's past experience with minors as being problematical in any way, e.g. excessive discipline et al.? What was the general content of his/her comments?

Appendix 4

PRIESTS' VERIFICATION FORM

This is to verify that _____ is a priest in
(name of priest)

good standing of the _____.
[name of diocese or religious order (and province)]

I have carefully reviewed our personnel and other records which we maintain, and I have consulted with those who served with him in the tasks he has been assigned under our authority. Based on these inquiries and personal knowledge, I am able to assure you that _____ is a person of good moral

(name of priest)

character and reputation, and is qualified to serve in an effective and suitable manner as a priest in the events of the Focolare Movement in the zone of North America. I am able to certify without qualification that he has:

1. no criminal records, nor have criminal charges ever been brought against him
2. manifested no behavioral problems in the past that would indicate he might not deal with people, including minors, in an appropriate manner.
3. never been involved in an incident which called into question his fitness or suitability to fulfill the responsibilities and duties of his priestly ministry due to alcohol, substance abuse, sexual misconduct or other causes.

I hereby grant him permission to engage in pastoral ministry in events of the Focolare Movement in the zone of North America from

_____ until _____
(beginning date) (ending date)

(date) (signature)

Bishop or superior of _____
[diocese or religious order (and province)]

Appendix 5 Permission Forms

Included in this appendix are sample copies of permission forms for parents/guardians to authorize permission for their child to attend and participate in a Focolare event. There are **5** types of approved “**Templates of Permission Slips**” to use by the Focolare Movement in N.A. The current versions of the forms are dated March 1, 2021. Note: All previous versions of permission forms are obsolete.

1. The Annual Permission form may be completed by a parent and will satisfy permissions and release of liability for regular meetings of youth, online activities and general meetings.
2. The Event Permission form should be used for an activity that is a special event such as a Gen Congress, any event that involves International Travel, or involves activities that are higher risk or for any youth that has not completed an annual permission form.
3. Single versions of permission forms are included in cases where they are needed for a special case that requires specific permission or release from liability such as a media release for an activity.
4. Guidance regarding the use and record keeping of permission slips for minors:
 - a. Permission forms are accessible for use by Focolares and Youth Leaders online. Each one of these templates has a “**Google form**” version. As much as possible, we will use the google form format. It is easier to send to parents and guardians, and it is a very effective and simple way to collect information needed for each minor.
 - b. Event coordinators and youth leaders should complete the heading of the permission form with the appropriate name and address of the Focolare before sending the form to the parent/guardian.
 - c. Each Region and each Focolare Center will receive the 5 google form templates. The forms should be saved in a shared **google drive** (not a personal one): associated with the Focolare center’s email address or to the email address used exclusively for communications with minors and parents. The forms should not be stored in a folder associated with a personal email address.
 - d. It is **important** that all communications to and from minors and their parents/guardian (and so, also the google form with the permission slip) are sent/received through an email address that is not private (for example, the youth leader should not use his/her personal email address). It should be an official email address of the Focolare center (which the focolarini of that Focolare all have access to), or a specific Focolare.us or Focolare.ca email address created exclusively for communications with minors and parents, (an email address the youth supervisors working with those minors can have access to). These youth supervisors with access to that

email address are selected, trained, screened, and approved to be youth leaders in accordance with the NA Zone Policy for Safeguarding Minors and Vulnerable Adults. This is not only for protection of the minor, but also for protection of the youth leaders.

- e. Parents/guardians should know the **name and contact information of the youth supervisor** of their child and, of anyone who is authorized by the Focolare to be in contact with that minor.
- f. The answers to the google form “permission slip”, with the information and signature of the parent/guardian, should be stored in the google drive of the email address used to send the form to parents/guardians.
- g. Permission forms may also be printed by the youth leaders and hard copies completed by the parent or guardian.
- h. Event coordinators are responsible for ensuring all youth participants have completed the required permission forms prior to participating in an event.
- i. Permission slips will be retained on file at the Focolare that organized or hosted the event.
- j. When the parents/guardian send the form back, signed and filed in, there are some **important details** to check, to ensure its validity and legality:
 - i. The email used by the parent/guardian to send back the form has to correspond to the one we have on file for that parent/guardian (it verifies that it was him/her sending it).
 - ii. Make sure that all the important authorizations were granted.
 - iii. Check if in the signature box, the parent/guardian wrote his/her full name (as requested in the form). This makes the signature valid.
 - iv. Make sure that whatever the parent/guardian did not authorize is respected. Respond as soon as possible to the parent/guardian with any questions.
- k. If a parent/guardian does not want to submit a permission form online, and requires a hard copy of the form, the form may be printed and given to the parent/guardian to be completed and returned. Hard copy forms will be retained at the Focolare responsible for the event.
- l. **After the event**, one of the authorized youth supervisors will save all the forms received for the event in PDF format. Then he/she will save this PDF file in the N.A. Zone Sync.com under their Region and Focolare center folder.
- m. For each event, a folder needs to be created there, renamed with the date and name of the event. This folder should include for each event:
 - i. the PDF with the permission slips from google forms,
 - ii. the program of the event, with its date, time and location,
 - iii. The list of the youth supervisors. If other adults were present, as helpers or volunteers, list also their names.

- n. **Annual permission slips** should be saved in the zone Sync.com folder of the region and Focolare center, in a folder identified by the year the permission slip corresponds to.
- o. **Event permission slips** should be saved in a folder for a specific event and would have only the program, list of supervisors and volunteers and the permission slips of the minors without an annual one).
- p. **Permission slips that are expired** (either because they were for only 1 specific event or they were annual and the year ended), after making sure they are saved in the permanent file of the zone (Sync.com) should be permanently deleted from the google drive.
- q. It is recommended that each Focolare center or Region decide how to manage the record keeping by designating a person who is responsible for following this task. It is important that it is done in a systematic and organized way and by someone with the training, screening and approval as youth supervisor.

Focolare Movement

[ADDRESS OF FOCOLARE CENTER]

A. MINOR'S¹ GENERAL PERMISSION / RELEASE FORM

To be completed annually²

(A separate form for each child)

I, _____ (full name), parent/guardian of
_____ (child's full name), a minor (hereinafter referred to as
"Minor"³), by my own free will and choice, hereby give permission to the Minor to participate in
activities organized by the Focolare Movement. These activities include but are not limited to day
meetings, workshops, conventions, field trips, sleepovers, sports, retreats, and others. This
authorization is valid from ___ day of _____, 20___ to ___ day of
_____, 20___

Activities' locations include, but are not limited to:

1. **Transportation:** I understand that transportation to and from activities' locations are to be provided by the parent/guardian of the Minor.
 - a. In case I cannot provide transportation, the Minor can be released to a Focolare Movement supervisor for transportation to and from activities' locations.
 - b. In my absence, I give permission to a Focolare Movement supervisor to provide transportation to a Church, park, sport facility, museum, and other locations, if such transportation is required during the course of the activities.
2. **Activities:** I understand that while involved in the activities, the Minor will be under the control and care of a Focolare Movement supervisor, and/or other adults approved by them, and that, while the adult in charge of the group will take all reasonable care of the Minor, they cannot necessarily be held responsible for any loss, damage or injury suffered by the Minor during, or because of, the activities organized by the Focolare.
I understand the possibility of unforeseen hazards and know the inherent possibility of risk. I assume all risks involved with or that may arise out of the Minor's voluntary participation in the activities and transportation, whether before, during or after the activities.
I understand that I will be informed by the Focolare Movement's supervisor if any unsupervised periods are part of the program of the activities and that during those unsupervised periods the Minor is under my full responsibility and care.
3. **Minor's cooperation:** I agree to abide by, and to ensure that the Minor abides by, all activities' and Focolare Movement's rules and requirements and that the Minor will obey the supervisors in charge of these activities. I understand that any infraction of the rules may result in the immediate dismissal of the Minor from the activity or activities at my expense and without refund to me of the costs paid for the activity or activities.

¹ For all those under 18 years of age or the age defined as a minor in the state, province, or territory in which the event(s) is taking place.

² A permission/release form should be filled in and signed for each minor.

³ As used herein, the term "Minor" means any minor individual for whom the signing party maintains legal guardianship.

4. I certify that said minor has no physical or mental health problems which would render inadvisable his/her participation in the activities.
5. **Medication:** If I provide medication for my child to take during any of the activities, I hereby release and discharge the Focolare Movement, and/or a Focolare Movement supervisor, member, employee, agent, director, officer, or representative (hereinafter referred to as "the Released Parties",) from all claims for personal injuries or property damage that I or the Minor may suffer as a result of the administration of or lack of administration of, or assistance in or lack of assistance in the administration of said medication to the Minor, whether by the Minor and/or the Released Parties; unless the injuries or damage resulted from willful misconduct of the Focolare Movement, or the Released Parties.
6. **First-Aid / Emergency Treatment:** I further authorize the Focolare Movement, and the Released Parties, to administer first-aid to the Minor if deemed necessary and appropriate to preserve the life, or well-being of the Minor.
I understand that I will be notified in the case of a medical emergency. However, if reasonable attempts to contact me should fail:
 - a. I authorize the Focolare Movement, and the Released Parties to contact and engage medical personnel for emergency treatment of the Minor, including transportation, and I consent to that treatment for the Minor. I agree that I am financially responsible for such medical treatment.
 - b. I also authorize the medical facility to release any and all information required to complete insurance claims.

I knowingly and voluntarily on behalf of myself and my Minor do hereby agree to forever release, hold harmless and indemnify the Focolare Movement, and the Released Parties from any liability, claims, demands and causes of action arising out of or relating to any loss, damage or injury (including death) sustained in connection with or directly or indirectly arising out of the Minor's participation in the activity(ies), or my, or the Minor's, breach of this agreement.

In the event I later decide to not allow the Minor to attend the activity identified in this Permission/Release form, I understand I am required to notify the Focolare Movement in writing to the following email address: _____

I have read and understand all parts of this form. I understand that this is a LEGAL AGREEMENT binding upon myself, my heirs, executors, administrators, successors, and assigns. I acknowledge that by signing this agreement voluntarily, I am agreeing to abide by its terms, and I am waiving certain legal rights that the Minor or I may have.

Date:

Signature of parent/guardian:

This form can be submitted online and by entering my full name, I attest that this constitutes my legal electronic signature on it.

Digital Communication

B. Parent/Guardian authorization to Focolare Movement supervisor to communicate with Minor⁴

To be completed annually

I, _____, parent/guardian of _____, a minor (hereinafter referred to as "Minor"⁵), understand that the Focolare youth leaders may communicate directly with the Minor for Focolare Movement related topics by phone, text message or email.

I authorize the Focolare youth supervisor of the Minor to communicate directly with her/him by phone, text message and/or email to the cell phone number and email address indicated in part E of this document.

This authorization will remain in effect for the same period identified on page 1, A. of this document. It is up to me, the parent/guardian to update this information in the event that I change my mind.

Date:

Signature of parent/guardian:

This form can be submitted online and by entering my full name, I attest that this constitutes my legal electronic signature on it.

⁴ For all those under 18 years of age or the age defined as a minor in the state, province, or territory in which the event(s) is taking place.

⁵ As used herein, the term "Minor" means any minor individual for whom the signing party maintains legal guardianship.

**C. Parent/Guardian Consent Form for Conference Calls and Video Conference Calls with
minor**
To be completed annually
(A separate form for each child)

I, _____ (full name), parent/guardian of
_____ (child's full name), a minor (hereinafter referred
to as "Minor"⁶,) authorize his/her Focolare youth supervisor to contact and invite her/him to
online Focolare youth meetings/conference calls/video conference calls. This consent form
covers all forms of video conference calls.

I understand that the Minor's image may be transmitted during such video conference calls
and only during those calls.

I take full responsibility for her/his time using the internet during these meetings/conference
calls.

This authorization will remain in effect for the same period identified on page 1, A. of this
document. It is up to me, the parent/guardian to update this information in the event that I
change my mind.

Date:

Signature of parent/guardian:

***This form can be submitted online and by entering my full name, I attest that this constitutes my legal electronic
signature on it.***

⁶ As used herein, the term "Minor" means any minor individual for whom the signing party maintains legal guardianship.

**D. Media Release Form for Minor⁷
To be completed annually
(A separate form for each child)**

I, _____ (full name), parent/guardian of
_____ (child's full name), a minor, (hereinafter referred
to as "Minor"⁸), understand that during the course of a Focolare Movement activity, it is likely
that images of young people may be taken. Predominantly, these will be taken by camera
(photo) and/or video.

I also understand that the Focolare Movement may use these images or its likeness in
Focolare related media (magazines, website, or others).

I agree that the Focolare shall have the right, but not the obligation to use the Minor's
image on its website, magazines, and youth presentations at any time. The Minor's name will
not be used with the images.

This authorization will remain in effect for the same period identified on page 1, A. of this
document. It is up to me, the parent/guardian to update this information in the event that I
change my mind.

I authorize the Focolare Movement to use the minor's images according to the paragraph
above.

Date:

Signature of parent/guardian:

***This form can be submitted online and by entering my full name, I attest that this constitutes my
legal electronic signature on it.***

⁷ For all those under 18 years of age or the age defined as a minor in the state, province, or territory in which the event(s) is
taking place.

⁸ As used herein, the term "Minor" means any minor individual for whom the signing party maintains legal guardianship.

I understand that if during the current year the list of medications of the Minor changes, I shall inform the Focolare Movement or the Minor's supervisor at the following email:

- Inhaler and Epi-Pen: The Minor and his/her parents/Guardian have been instructed in self-administration and the Minor may carry an inhaler or Epi-Pen and self-administer.
Yes _____
No _____

- Other Medical Treatment: In the event that the Minor becomes ill with symptoms such as headache, vomiting, sore throat, fever, or diarrhea, do you grant permission for supervisors to give the Minor non-prescription medication, such as acetaminophen, throat lozenges, cough syrup, or antacid?

No _____, I wish to be contacted first.
Yes _____

- Insurance Information:
Policy holder: _____
Policy No.: _____
Health Insurance Group: _____
Group No.: _____

- Does the Minor have a physical handicap or illness that would prevent him or her from participating in normal rigorous activity?
No _____
Yes _____
If yes, please explain:

It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian of said Minor to update the information contained on these pages when it needs to be changed for any reason.

I confirm that I read and understand all the information in all the pages of this document.

Date:

Signature of parent/guardian:

This form can be submitted online and by entering my full name, I attest that this constitutes my legal electronic signature on it.

Focolare Movement

[ADDRESS OF FOCOLARE CENTER]

A. MINOR'S¹ PERMISSION / RELEASE FORM

To be completed before the activity/event²

(A separate form for each child)

I, _____ (full name), parent/guardian of
_____ (child's full name), a minor (hereinafter referred to as
"Minor³"), by my own free will and choice, hereby give permission to the Minor to participate in the
following activity(ies) organized by the Focolare Movement (event/date/time):

Activity(ies) location(s) is/are:

1. **Transportation:** I understand that transportation to and from activities' locations are to be provided by the parent/guardian of the Minor.
 - a. I will provide transportation to the Minor _____.
 - b. I cannot provide transportation to the Minor. He/she can be released to a Focolare Movement supervisor for transportation to/from and during the activity(ies), if necessary _____.

2. **Activities:** I understand that while involved in the activity(ies) above mentioned, the Minor will be under the control and care of a Focolare Movement supervisor, and/or other adults approved by them, and that, while the adult in charge of the group will take all reasonable care of the Minor, they cannot necessarily be held responsible for any loss, damage or injury suffered by the Minor during, or because of, the activity(ies) organized by the Focolare. I understand the possibility of unforeseen hazards and know the inherent possibility of risk. I assume all risks involved with or that may arise out of the Minor's voluntary participation in the activity(ies) and transportation, whether before, during or after the activity(ies).

I understand that I will be informed by the Focolare Movement's supervisor if any unsupervised periods are part of the program of the activity(ies) and that during those unsupervised periods the Minor is under my full responsibility and care.

3. **Minor's cooperation:** I agree to abide by, and to ensure that the Minor abides by, all activities' and Focolare Movement's rules and requirements and that the Minor will obey the supervisors in charge of the activity(ies). I understand that any infraction of the rules may result in the immediate dismissal of the Minor from the activity(ies) at my expense and without refund to me of the costs paid for the activity(ies).

¹ For all those under 18 years of age or the age defined as a minor in the state, province, or territory in which the event(s) is taking place.

² A permission/release form should be filled in and signed for each minor.

³ As used herein, the term "Minor" means any minor individual for whom the signing party maintains legal guardianship.

4. I certify that said minor has no physical or mental health problems which would render inadvisable his/her participation in the activity(ies).

5. **Medication:** If I provide medication for the Minor to take during the activity(ies), I hereby release and discharge the Focolare Movement, and/or a Focolare Movement supervisor, member, employee, agent, director, officer, or representative (hereinafter referred to as "the Released Parties",) from all claims for personal injuries or property damage that I or the Minor may suffer as a result of the administration of or lack of administration of, or assistance in or lack of assistance in the administration of said medication to the Minor, whether by the Minor and/or the Released Parties; unless the injuries or damage resulted from willful misconduct of the Focolare Movement, or the Released Parties.

6. **First-Aid / Emergency Treatment:** I further authorize the Focolare Movement, and the Released Parties, to administer first-aid to the Minor if deemed necessary and appropriate to preserve the life, or well-being of the Minor.
I understand that I will be notified in the case of a medical emergency. However, if reasonable attempts to contact me should fail:
 - a. I authorize the Focolare Movement, and the Released Parties to contact and engage medical personnel for emergency treatment of the Minor, including transportation, and I consent to that treatment for the Minor. I agree that I am financially responsible for such medical treatment.
 - b. I also authorize the medical facility to release any and all information required to complete insurance claims.

I, knowingly and voluntarily, on behalf of myself and my Minor, do hereby agree to forever release, hold harmless and indemnify the Focolare Movement, and the Released Parties from any liability, claims, demands and causes of action arising out of or relating to any loss, damage or injury (including death), including attorney's fees, sustained in connection with or directly or indirectly arising out of the Minor's participation in the activity(ies), as well as travelling to and from the activities, or my, or the Minor's, breach of this agreement.

I have read and understand all parts of this form. I understand that this is a LEGAL AGREEMENT binding upon myself, my heirs, executors, administrators, successors, and assigns. I acknowledge that by signing this agreement voluntarily, I am agreeing to abide by its terms, and I am waiving certain legal rights that the Minor or I may have.

Date:

Signature of parent/guardian:

This form can be submitted online and by entering my full name, I attest that this constitutes my legal electronic signature on it.

B. Media Release Form for Minor⁴
(A separate form for each child)

I, _____ (full name), parent/guardian of
_____ (child's full name), a minor (hereinafter referred
to as "Minor⁵"), understand that during the course of a Focolare Movement activity, it is likely
that images of young people may be taken. Predominantly, these will be taken by camera
(photo) and/or video. I also understand that the Focolare Movement may use these images or
its likeness in Focolare related media (magazines, website, or others).

I agree that the Focolare shall have the right, but not the obligation to use the Minor's
image on its website, magazines, and youth presentations at any time. The Minor's name will
not be used with the images.

This authorization will remain in effect for the same activity(ies) and period identified on
page 1, A. of this document.

I authorize the Focolare Movement to use the minor's images according to the paragraph
above.

Date:

Signature of parent/guardian:

***This form can be submitted online and by entering my full name, I attest that this constitutes my
legal electronic signature on it.***

⁴ For all those under 18 years of age or the age defined as a minor in the state, province, or territory in which the event(s) is
taking place.

⁵ As used herein, the term "Minor" means any minor individual for whom the signing party maintains legal guardianship.

C. Minor's General information

Minor

Full name:
Date of birth:
Home address:
Home phone number:

Parent/Guardian:

Parent/Guardian's full name:
Parent/Guardian's phone number:
Parent/Guardian's email address:

Relative/friend emergency contact name:
This person's relationship to the Minor:
This person's phone number:

Medical Information:

- Is the Minor presently being treated for an injury or sickness?
No Yes
If yes, please explain:

- Known allergies:

- Is the Minor presently in any medication?
No
Yes he/she is on the following medication:
- Inhaler and Epi-Pen: The Minor and his/her parents/Guardian have been instructed in self-administration and the Minor may carry an inhaler or Epi-Pen and self-administer.
Yes
No
- Other Medical Treatment: In the event that the Minor becomes ill with symptoms such as headache, vomiting, sore throat, fever, or diarrhea, do you grant permission for supervisors to give the Minor non-prescription medication, such as acetaminophen, throat lozenges, cough syrup, or antacid?

No , I wish to be contacted first.
Yes

- Insurance Information:
Policy holder: _____
Policy No.: _____
Health Insurance Group: _____
Group No.: _____

- Does the Minor have a physical handicap or illness that would prevent him or her from participating in normal rigorous activity?
No _____
Yes _____
If yes, please explain:

I confirm that I read and understand all the information in all the pages of this document.

Date:

Signature of parent/guardian:

This form can be submitted online and by entering my full name, I attest that this constitutes my legal electronic signature on it.

Sample

Focolare Movement

[ADDRESS OF FOCOLARE CENTER]

**A. Media Release Form for Minor¹
(A separate form for each child)**

I, _____ (full name), parent/guardian of _____ (child's full name), a minor (hereinafter referred to as "Minor"²), understand that during the course of a Focolare Movement activity, it is likely that images of young people may be taken. Predominantly, these will be taken by camera (photo) and/or video. I also understand that the Focolare Movement may use these images or its likeness in Focolare related media (magazines, website, or others).

I agree that the Focolare shall have the right, but not the obligation to use the Minor's image on its website, magazines, and youth presentations at any time. The Minor's name will not be used with the images.

This authorization will remain in effect from ____ day of _____, 20__ to ____ day of _____, 20__.

I authorize the Focolare Movement to use the minor's images according to the paragraph above.

Date:

Signature of parent/guardian:

This form can be submitted online and by entering my full name, I attest that this constitutes my legal electronic signature on it.

B. Minor's General information

Minor

Full name:

Date of birth:

Home address:

Home phone number:

Parent/Guardian:

Parent/Guardian's full name:

Parent/Guardian's phone number:

Parent/Guardian's email address:

¹ For all those under 18 years of age or the age defined as a minor in the state, province, or territory in which the event(s) is taking place.

² As used herein, the term "Minor" means any minor individual for whom the signing party maintains legal guardianship.

Focolare Movement

[ADDRESS OF FOCOLARE CENTER]

A. Parent/Guardian Consent Form for Conference Calls and Video Conference Calls with minor

**To be completed before the activity/event ¹
(A separate form for each child)**

I, _____ (full name), parent/guardian of
_____ (child's full name), a minor (hereinafter referred
to as "Minor"²), by my own free will and choice, hereby authorize his/her Focolare youth
supervisor to contact and invite her/him to the following online Focolare youth event/activity
(event/date/time):

I understand that the Minor's image may be transmitted during such video conference calls
and only during those calls.

I take full responsibility for the Minor's time using the internet during these
meetings/conference calls.

I agree to abide by, and to ensure that the Minor abides by, all activity/event and Focolare
Movement's rules and requirements. I understand that any infraction of the rules may result in
the immediate dismissal of the Minor from the activity/event and without refund to me of the
costs paid, if any, for the activity/event.

I certify that said Minor has no physical or mental health problems which would render
inadvisable his/her participation in the activity/event.

Date:

Signature of parent/guardian:

This form can be submitted online and by entering my full name, I attest that this constitutes my legal electronic signature on it.

¹ A permission/release form should be filled in and signed for each minor.

² As used herein, the term "Minor" means any minor individual for whom the signing party maintains legal guardianship.

**B. Media Release Form for Minor³
To be completed before the activity/event ⁴**

I, _____, parent/guardian of _____, a minor (hereinafter referred to as "Minor"⁵), understand that during the course of a Focolare Movement activity, it is likely that images of young people may be taken. Predominantly, these will be taken by camera (photo) and/or video.

I also understand that the Focolare Movement may use these images or its likeness in Focolare related media (magazines, website, or others).

I agree that the Focolare shall have the right, but not the obligation to use the Minor's image on its website, magazines, and youth presentations at any time. The Minor's name will not be used with the images.

I authorize the Focolare Movement to use the minor's images according to the paragraph above.

Date:

Signature of parent/guardian:

This form can be submitted online and by entering my full name, I attest that this constitutes my legal electronic signature on it.

C. Minor's General information

Minor

Full name:

Date of birth:

Home address:

Home phone number:

Parents/Guardians:

Parent/Guardian's full name:

Parent/Guardian's phone number:

Parent/Guardian's email address:

³ For all those under 18 years of age or the age defined as a minor in the state, province, or territory in which the event(s) is taking place.

⁴ A permission/release form should be filled in and signed for each minor.

⁵ As used herein, the term "Minor" means any minor individual for whom the signing party maintains legal guardianship.

Focolare Movement

[ADDRESS OF FOCOLARE CENTER]

Digital Communication

**A. Parent/Guardian authorization to Focolare Movement supervisor to communicate with Minor¹
(A separate form for each child)**

I, _____ (full name), parent/guardian of _____ (child's full name), a minor (hereinafter referred to as "Minor²ⁿ"), understand that the Focolare youth leaders may communicate directly with the Minor for Focolare Movement related topics by phone, text message or email.

I authorize the Focolare youth supervisor of the Minor to communicate directly with her/him by phone, text message and/or email to the cell phone number and email address indicated here below:

Cell phone: _____

Email address: _____

This authorization will remain in effect from ____ day of _____, 20__ until ____ day of _____, 20___. It is up to me, the parent/guardian to update this information in the event that I change my mind.

Date:

Signature of parent/guardian:

This form can be submitted online and by entering my full name, I attest that this constitutes my legal electronic signature on it.

B. Minor's General information

Minor

Full name:

Date of birth:

Home address:

Home phone number:

Parents/Guardians:

Mother/Guardian's full name:

Mother/Guardian's phone number:

Mother/Guardian's email address:

Father/Guardian's full name:

Father/Guardian's phone number:

Father/Guardian's email address:

¹ A permission/release form should be filled in and signed for each minor.

² As used herein, the term "Minor" means any minor individual for whom the signing party maintains legal guardianship.

Appendix 6

ZONE COMMISSION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

A. The Zone Commission (hereinafter “Commission”) is responsible for handling the case, carrying out the internal inquiry in accordance with this policy when cases of sexual abuse, violence, maltreatment, and bullying against minors or vulnerable adults are reported within the zone (except in cases of competence of the CO.BE.TU as referenced in Section IX). It is also responsible for engaging in effective collaboration with the local statutory authorities in charge of establishing the facts and ensuring the protection of victims, while in every case maintaining the relationship with the family of the minor or vulnerable adult involved (the parents or whoever has parental authority).

B. The Zone Commission or the Safeguarding Officers, after receiving the disclosure, have the task of ensuring - as far as possible - that the minor urgently receives all necessary assistance, and immediately inform the Delegates of the Focolare Movement in the zone, the CO.BE.TU., as well as the Co-President and will call for a meeting of the Zone Commission.

C. The Commission can be helped by other specialists, if necessary, with previous experience in this area, including people external to the Focolare Movement.

D. If a disclosure is reported regarding the members of the General Council of the Focolare Movement, the women and men single Focolarini who have taken perpetual vows, or the women and men married Focolarini who have taken promises, even if it is during their formation period, the CO.BE.TU. shall coordinate and manage the case having been given this specific mandate by the President of the Focolare Movement.

E. In this case, all of the disclosure must be sent to the Co-President who shall send it to the CO.BE.TU., asking them to begin the internal inquiry, or directly to the CO.BE.TU.

F. In the event that the accused person is a diocesan priest, a male/female religious, a deacon, or a consecrated person, no preliminary inquiry shall be undertaken, because it is the responsibility of the local Catholic Bishop according to the norms of Canon Law³³.

G. Specific Duties and Responsibilities:

1. Ensure that the Focolare Movement complies with all legally required notifications.

³³ See Focolare Movement Policy to Promote the Wellbeing and Safeguarding of Minors and Vulnerable Adults in the Zone of North America #57 to 63.

2. Manage all aspects of any allegation of abuse of minors or vulnerable adults in the zone (except in cases of competence of the CO.BE.TU) in accordance with this policy and in cases of competence of the CO.BE.TU, fully coordinate and cooperate with CO.BE.TU.
3. Review the Focolare Movement's response to the individual making an allegation and, as appropriate, to his/her family.
4. The Zone Commission, only in cases of its competence, may appoint a victim's assistance coordinator to work with the person making an accusation. The specific tasks for the victim's assistance coordinator will be outlined on a case-by-case basis in the letter of appointment from the Zone Commission.
5. Advise the Zone Delegates regarding their determination of a subsequent appropriate assignment and program of care for the accused.

H. Membership. The Commission shall be made up of a minimum number of 5 (five) members - the number of members must always be an odd number - nominated by the Zone Delegates. They shall all be people with proven experience and expertise in their respective professional fields. The coordination and representation of the Zone Commission shall be entrusted to a member chosen by the Zone Delegates.

I. Commission members may not be employees of or engaged in providing professional services to the Focolare Movement; they may be persons who are not members of the Focolare Movement. The commission shall be interdisciplinary and, insofar as possible, broadly representative of the following categories: victims' advocacy, parents, counseling, social work, medicine, law, law enforcement, protective services and ecclesial movements.

J. The role shall be assigned to the members of the Commission for a three-year period, renewable no more than three times and must be put in writing by the zone delegates³⁴.

K. Quorum: A quorum consists of at least three voting members. The program coordinator assists the Commission when necessary, but is not a member of the Commission.

L. Officers: The coordination and representation of the Commission shall be entrusted to a member chosen by the Zone Delegates.

M. Appointment and Removal of Members:

1. Vacancies created by the departure of Commission members during their term shall be filled in the usual manner. Commission members appointed to fill a vacancy before the expiration of a term shall serve for the

³⁴ <https://www.focolare.org/en/download/guidelines-for-the-protection-of-minors/>, #31 and Appendix B.

remainder of the unfinished term and may then be eligible for appointment to a full term.

2. A member of the commission may be removed at the discretion of the Zone Delegates in consultation with the commission Coordinator. Members will be informed in writing of such a decision by the Zone Delegates.

N. Record Keeping

1. All files of the Commission are the property of the Focolare Movement. The Zone Delegates, and all current Commission members shall have access to the commission's files which shall be housed in the offices of the Zone Delegates and secured to preclude access by unauthorized persons.
2. The commission shall create a file on each case or matter it considers. Each file, besides containing all the documentation and communications related to the case, shall also contain a brief written description of the matter presented to the commission and a written summary of the recommendation given by the commission to the zone delegates. The zone delegates will communicate with the Commission as to the action taken in light of the advice given by the commission. The file will contain a written summary of the action. There will also be any other information in the file which the commission may deem relevant to any future consideration of the case or matter by the commission.

O. Confidentiality

1. All records and other information received by the commission shall be treated as confidential, subject to the requirements of law and this policy. The commission's advice shall be confidential. The zone delegates may, at their discretion, disclose the recommendations they receive from the commission. The advice or positions taken by individual commission members shall not be disclosed and are not to be recorded in the commission files.
2. The zone delegates recognize that the commission may receive confidential and sensitive information that could be used to injure the reputations of individuals. At the same time, the zone delegates recognize that the commission's records may contain information relevant to civil and criminal law investigations.
3. It is the policy of the Focolare Movement to fully comply with all legal requirements and to cooperate with law enforcement agencies while, at the same time, respecting any applicable civil law rights and requirements of confidentiality and privacy.
4. The commission shall protect the confidentiality of all information it receives and reviews, in the way it appropriately releases information, fully complying with the law.

P. Operating Procedures

1. The commission may meet in person or by telephone or through other electronic means. If a victims' assistance coordinator were to have been

assigned to the case, the Commission shall consult and coordinate with the victims' assistance coordinator.

2. The commission's recommendation shall be put in writing for presentation to the zone delegates and CO.BE.TU. and a document shall be signed by the coordinator of the Commission on behalf of the Commission. A copy of the recommendation shall be maintained in the files of the Commission.
3. The Commission shall review this policy once each year and offer pertinent recommendations to the zone delegates.

Q. Conflicts of Interest

1. A Commission member who determines that he/she has a conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest with the Focolare Movement itself or with the Commission's work, shall inform the zone delegates and the Commission coordinator of the conflict and shall submit a letter of resignation from the Commission, to the zone delegates.
2. If the zone delegates or any member of the Commission determines they have a conflict of interest with regard to a case being reviewed he/she shall inform the Commission's coordinator and shall recuse himself/herself from any further participation in the specific case before the Commission.

R. Conditions of Membership

1. Commission members:
 - i. serve as *pro bono* volunteers;
 - ii. sign a confidentiality and conflict of interest agreement each year;
 - iii. agree to undergo a criminal records check.
2. The Focolare Movement shall reimburse all Commission members for reasonable expenses incurred to attend meetings of the Commission or otherwise perform their duties as members of the Commission.
3. The Focolare Movement indemnifies and holds harmless all Commission members for any and all claims, lawsuits, damages or other actions, including but not limited to, reasonable costs of defense, which may arise from their service on the Commission. However, the Focolare Movement does not indemnify Commission members for intentional tortious criminal acts.

Appendix 7

PROGRAM COORDINATOR

This person's task is to:

A. Support the Focolare Movement's mission, in implementing this policy in the zone of North America.

B. In collaboration with the zone delegates, coordinate all aspects of this policy's development and implementation, assuring compliance with its procedures and guidelines.

C. Serve as the Safeguarding Officer until such time as another person is appointed to the Safeguarding Officer position or until the Zonal Commission is formed.

D. Meet periodically with and prepare required reports for the zone delegates.

E. Review performance together annually with the zone delegates.