

Church to dismiss members implicated in child abuse

BY DAMALI MUKHAYE

KAMPALA. The Kampala Archdiocese has announced a new child protection and safeguarding policy that requires the immediate suspension and possible dismissal of any clergy, religious, staff member, or volunteer found guilty of abusing or endangering a child.

The new Child and Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding and Protecting Policy states that the Church will “regard very seriously any form of mistreatment, exploitation, neglect, or injury inflicted upon children and vulnerable adults,” warning that offenders will face consequences under both canon and civil law.

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Launching the policy at Pope Paul Memorial Centre in Rubaga, the Archbishop of Kampala, Most Rev Paul Ssemwogerere, said the guidelines reaffirm the Church’s commitment to safeguarding vulnerable children in its schools.

According to the document seen by the *Daily Monitor*, once a complaint is received, the Archdiocesan Safeguarding Officer will launch a formal investigation and notify the accused, who will be allowed to submit relevant records or statements.

For lay staff and volunteers, internal disciplinary measures will be applied

where civil law permits. The policy also emphasises that an accused person may be temporarily suspended or relieved of their duties to protect victims and prevent further harm while investigations continue.

When necessary, cases will be referred to law enforcement and child protection authorities for proceedings.

Fr Ronald Kigozi said although frameworks such as the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the African Charter on Child Protection, and Uganda’s 2020 Child Protection Policy provide broad guidance, many dioceses have lacked their own operational documents.

The Church has repeatedly faced reports of corporal punishment, sexual harassment, emotional abuse, and neglect in Catholic schools, yet lacked standardised procedures for addressing these cases.

The Uganda Martyrs University Vice Chancellor, Prof Patrick Edrin Kyamanywa, praised the initiative, saying schools have long struggled to protect vulnerable learners.

Mr Joseph Kawuma Ddamulira, the head teacher of St Augustine College Wakiso, welcomed the guidelines, saying they will help schools manage misconduct among teachers and learners.