

Creating a Safe, Protected and Accountable Parish Community



This material is prepared for Clergy, Religious, Parish Volunteer Screening Committees, Parish volunteer leaders, volunteers, participants and all members of various parish committees and communities in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Kamloops

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Acknowledgements

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The material is compiled from the training and orientation manual created for the Diocese of Kamloops – *Creating a Safe, Protected and Accountable Parish Community*. Some of the material is compiled from the on-line Volunteer manual developed by Volunteer Canada. *Safe Steps: A Volunteering Screening Process*. It has served as a reference manual for the outlined procedures. It is to be noted that Volunteer Canada and the Diocese of Kamloops do not share pastoral responsibilities or duties and are not legally bound to each other.

Some other sections of the material are borrowed from various dioceses and procedures from across Canada and other parts of the world.

Creating a Safe, Protected and Accountable Parish Community is a work in progress and therefore the website material is subject to change.

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Bishop's Message



DIOCESE OF KAMLOOPS
BISHOP'S OFFICE

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ:

I am grateful to all who have contributed to this manual prepared for Parish Leadership, committees, volunteers and members of parish communities within the Diocese of Kamloops.

The purpose of the manual is to provide steps and guidelines in creating a safe environment for all who are entrusted to our care and to effectively screen all who are working in our faith community to specifically prevent any incidents of sexual or physical abuse.

It is my hope and prayer that the protocols contained within this manual, which is a summary version of the official document, will be a mechanism in which and by which we can be truly active in "Creating a Safe, Protected and Accountable Parish Community for the Diocese of Kamloops."

First and foremost, the gift of our lives belongs to God. Each of us is created in the Image and Likeness of God. Each of us has an inalienable dignity as a Son or Daughter of the Most High. Each of us has been baptized into the Body of Christ and thereby shares in the promise and the hope of the Pascal Mystery. As we celebrate and proclaim this truth, we must also live and maintain this truth in our relationships with one another. This manual offers structures and directives towards this.

As your Bishop, I am entrusted with the care of those entrusted to me. Through this manual, I am calling upon all of Christ's Faithful to care for one another

We are all responsible to and for each other. As Jesus told His apostles, "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you" (John 15:12).

The implementation of our Diocesan Protocols will be an opportunity for all of us to share in the shepherding role of Jesus.

Thank you for your generous response.

Yours in Christ,

+ David J. Monroe

Most Reverend David J. Monroe
Bishop of Kamloops

Purpose

All the parishes in the Diocese of Kamloops offering programs and services owe a duty of care to provide a safe environment to parishioners, staff members, volunteers, clergy, religious and the community at large.

Effective and appropriate management of everyone at the parish level is essential to the safe delivery of services and programs. The management of volunteers is as essential as the management of paid staff, clergy and religious.

It is the purpose of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Kamloops:

1. To safeguard, in all respects, all those to whom we minister, especially a vulnerable person.

A vulnerable person means a child or young person up to the age of 19 in British Columbia or an adult person who has difficulty protecting himself or herself from harm temporarily or permanently and is at risk because of age, disability, handicap or circumstances such as emotional distress due to extreme crisis or trauma.

2. To ensure the integrity, safety and reputation of our volunteers, staff, religious and clergy.

Our management program ensures that:

- Volunteers, staff and religious are working in an organized, structured and safe environment.
- Policies and procedures outline staff and volunteers' rights as well as responsibilities, and how they will be supported when an incident occurs.
- Clergy are working in a supported and safe environment.
- Policies and procedures outline clergy's canonical and civil rights and obligations and how they will be supported when an incident occurs.

3. To ensure that, as a faith community, we fulfill our legal and canonical obligations.

The development and implementation of screening policies and procedures is intended to meet our legal and canonical obligations, but more importantly adequate screening measures will fulfill our ethical, moral and spiritual responsibilities to promote trust, credibility, wholeness, accountability and care in our ministries.

Policy Statement

The Diocese of Kamloops recognizes the personal dignity and rights of children and vulnerable adults towards whom it has a special responsibility and duty of care.

The Diocese of Kamloops undertakes to do everything in its power to create a safe environment for minors and vulnerable adults and prevent their physical, sexual or emotional abuse.

The Diocese of Kamloops will work and communicate closely with civil ministries and agencies to ensure that any allegations of abuse are promptly and fairly dealt with and perpetrators are held accountable.

The Diocese of Kamloops will support victims of volunteer, staff, religious or clergy abuse. It will support volunteers, staff, religious and clergy who are found to be victims of false allegations and uphold their good reputations.

Any person who has reasonable grounds to suspect that a vulnerable person is or may be in need of protection must report that suspicion to appropriate authorities and the Bishop's Misconduct Policy Administrator.

Other concerns about the safety, well-being or welfare of vulnerable persons are referred to the Misconduct Policy Administrator.

If a child is in immediate danger, call 9-1-1 or local RCMP.

If abuse of a minor is suspected call the Children's Help Line: 310-1234 – any time night or day, call is free. No area code required.

Overview of The Screening Process

A Criminal Record Check and, if needed, a Vulnerable Sector Check are required for any person applying for a High Risk position.

Any organization that provides programs to vulnerable persons has a moral, legal, and spiritual obligation to appropriately screen those who work for them, including volunteers. Screening is not only the right thing to do it is legally required under the principle of "Duty of Care."

Screening begins long before any person comes forward to volunteer or work in a paid position and ends only after the person leaves the ministry or the paid position. *The Ten Safe Steps* process, developed by Volunteer Canada, is divided into three sections:

1. Before selecting volunteers,
2. The selection process and
3. Managing the volunteers. Although this process is specifically developed for volunteers, the same process applies to paid staff.

The information gathered for the purposes of screening will be kept in the strictest of confidence. Information gathered will be accessible only to the volunteer applicant, the Pastor or other designated representatives.

Ten Safe Steps of Screening

Before selecting volunteers

1. Determine the Risk
2. Ministry Position Description
3. Recruitment Process

The selection process

4. Volunteer Information Form
5. Interviews
6. Reference Check if required
7. Criminal Record Check if required

Managing volunteers and Paid staff

8. Orientation and Training
9. Supervision/Evaluation
10. Participant/Staff Follow-Up

The Criminal Record Check and Volunteer Sector Check must be submitted in original form, or certified copy from the RCMP or proof of application from the RCMP before a person in a High Risk position starts his/her ministry or paid position.

Screening of clergy is also mandatory prior to working in the Diocese. Any clergy or religious applying to work in the Diocese of Kamloops may only do so with the full disclosure of his Bishop or his/her Superior regarding any allegation of misconduct in the candidate's past and attesting to the candidate's good character.

Candidates for the priesthood and the religious life are screened early in their formational seminaries and novitiates to determine their suitability according to human, moral, intellectual and spiritual criteria.

General and high risk paid and volunteer positions are identified at the diocesan level.

Checklist for High Risk Positions

Criminal Record Check/Vulnerable Sector Check if required

- Complete the Volunteer/Employee Information Form
- Ensure person receives a copy of Volunteer/Employee Position Description
- Interview with Pastor and/or Parish Screening person (s). Interview is documented
- Conduct and document two personal reference checks
- Person completes Orientation and training session at the Parish
- Give person a copy of *Creating a Safe, Protected and Accountable Parish Community*
- Give person contact information for appropriate volunteer ministry coordinator at the parish

For those 19 years and older, once the interview and reference checks are completed satisfactorily, the pastor and/or parish screening person(s) will:

- Direct the individual to obtain a Criminal Record Check (CRC) and Vulnerable Sector Check if required. These documents need to be renewed every 5 years
- The Pastor maintains a list of persons requiring a CRC and (if needed) persons requiring a Vulnerable Sector Check
- Pastor receives the CRC and Vulnerable Sector Checks
- Pastor reviews and confirms that checks are satisfactory
- Pastor places satisfactory CRC and Vulnerable Sector Check in a sealed envelope, signs the back of the envelope and marks it "Confidential"
- Any non-satisfactory Criminal Record Checks and Vulnerable Sector Checks are referred to the Protocol Administrator
- Pastor keeps this information strictly confidential and provides secure storage
- Pastor informs Volunteer Screening person (s) about whether the person may proceed with Ministry and orientation and training

The person will then begin their parish volunteer ministry/employee position and receive:

- A copy of the Volunteer Ministry (Ministries) Position Description

The Parish Screening Committee or person will:

- Create a file for the person
- Put the following documents in the file:
 - Volunteer Ministry Position Description (or list of Volunteer Ministries involved in)
 - Volunteer Information Form
 - Interview forms
 - Reference forms
 - Criminal Record Check report (for those 19 years old and older)
 - Signed Code of Conduct Form for Volunteers/Employees signed by the volunteer/employee
 - Signed Code of Conduct for Clergy/Religious is sent directly to Diocese of Kamloops

Here is a sample but not an exhaustive list of high risk volunteer/paid positions: i.e. catechists/assistants teaching vulnerable person, children liturgy of the word leaders, choir directors involving vulnerable persons in the choir group, youth groups, money counters, parish staff, any groups involving vulnerable persons,

Clergy and religious occupy positions of High Risk based on their service and contact with vulnerable persons. All clergy and religious are expected to follow the same process as volunteers/employee in high-risk positions, as supervised by the Bishop.

It is the responsibility of the pastor to ensure that all groups meeting on church property follow Diocesan Protocols and have adequate liability insurance coverage for all their activities.

Checklist for General Risk Positions

- ❑ Complete the Volunteer/Employee Information Form
- ❑ For those under 19 years of age, ensure that the appropriate Volunteer/Employee Information Form is used and that the Parent/Guardian signs the consent
- ❑ Ensure that the person receives a copy of the Ministry Position Description
- ❑ Ensure the person attends an orientation and training session at the Parish
- ❑ Provide the person with a copy of the Guidelines for *Creating a Safe, Protected and Accountable Parish Community*
- ❑ Provide contact information for appropriate Volunteer Ministry Coordinator at the parish

Once the checklist is complete the person is able to begin their parish volunteer ministry position.

The Volunteer Ministry Coordinator will:

Keep a record that the above checklist is completed and keep personal contact information updated.

Here is a sample but not an exhaustive list of general risk volunteer/paid positions: i.e. all liturgical functions such as readers, music, ushers, greeters and hospitality, parish pastoral council and finance committees.

It is the responsibility of the pastor to ensure that all groups meeting on church property follow Diocesan Protocols and have adequate liability insurance coverage for all their activities.

Strategies for Risk Management

When a position is classified as high risk, based on the participant, the setting, the activity and the level of supervision, every effort will be made to manage or reduce the risk by applying one of the following strategies:

1. Eliminate the risk

There may be activities that have risks and consequences so great that they should be discontinued.

2. Modify the activity

Change the location and the activity.

3. Transfer or Share Liabilities

Involve other organizations or service groups, which are better prepared to handle the specific risk issue.

4. Assume the risk but minimize it wherever possible

Design all volunteer tasks with risk management in mind. Ensure that volunteers, staff and clergy/religious are screened appropriately using the guidelines in the parish training and orientation manual *Creating a Safe, Protected and Accountable Parish Community*. Ensure that everyone receives a copy of the parish Training and Orientation manual: *Creating a Safe, Protected and Accountable Parish Community*.

Complaint Resolution Procedure

The Diocese of Kamloops is committed to open and on-going communication. It is anticipated that most complaints involving volunteers or staff will be resolved within the parish. Individuals always maintain the canonical right of recourse to competent ecclesiastical authority.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is a serious issue. The Diocese is aware of potential legal liability if personal information is made public and could constitute an invasion of privacy, which might give rise to a lawsuit.

All volunteers and employees have the right to expect that any personal information will be kept confidential. It is important that these guidelines on the maintenance and confidentiality of records be explained to all volunteers, employees and volunteer applicants so that they know who has access to their information. It should be made clear to them that they can examine their file at any time and may insert documentation of their own if they so desire (such as certificates or awards). However, the file remains the property of the parish/diocese.

Transfer/Move to New Parish Procedures

If a volunteer moves and would like to volunteer at another Parish within the Diocese of Kamloops, the new Parish will screen the volunteer as appropriate. A reference may be asked from their former pastor to the new pastor stating that the volunteer left the Parish in good standing and the new pastor may also request a copy of the volunteer file to assist with the new Parish's screening process.