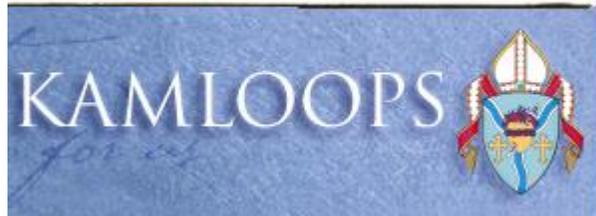


Creating a Safe, Protected and Accountable Parish Community



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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The Diocese of Kamloops prepared this manual.

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This document is a work in progress and is therefore 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, employees, 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 employees, 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/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, employees, religious and clergy.

Our management program ensures that:

- Volunteers/employees and clergy/religious are working in an organized, structured and safe environment.
- Policies and procedures outline volunteers and employees' 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 persons 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 as well as clergy and religious, employees and volunteers in order to 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, employee, religious or clergy abuse. It will support volunteers, employees, religious and clergy who are found to be victims of false allegations and uphold their right to a good reputation.

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 civil authorities.

Other concerns about the safety, well-being or welfare of vulnerable adults may be referred to the Misconduct Policy Administrator (Alternate) of the Diocese of Kamloops.

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.

The Screening Process

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, as developed by Volunteer Canada.

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

Step 1 – Determine the Risk

The nature of the ministry and the inherent level of risk dictate the degree of screening required. The greater the risk, the greater the degree of screening applied. Factors that help determine the level of risk include: the participant, the setting and the nature of the activity, as well as the level of supervision.

Volunteers and employees who are active in more than one ministry are screened for the position with the highest level of risk. When a person moves from a position of general risk to a position of high risk, the balance of the screening steps will be carried out for the new High Risk position.

Step 2 – Ministry Position Description

There is a position description for every volunteer ministry position. (Appendix 6) By documenting the role, the position descriptions provide greater protection for the person being ministered to, the volunteer and the parish/diocese. Each ministry position will be described and its inherent risk defined. The description defines the tasks of each position and sets the ground rules for all involved.

Step 3 – Recruitment Process

All recruitment for volunteers and employees will be done in a formal public process. Requests for volunteers and employees are done in a public way through notices printed in parish bulletins, church newsletters or other forms of communication. The notice is to be accompanied by a “Description of the Ministry” and notice that an “Information Form” needs to be completed. High Risk positions require a Police Information Check and, if needed, a Vulnerable Sector Check. In this way prospective volunteers and employees are notified that a screening process is in place. It is hoped that this process prompts people to reflect on the seriousness of their call to ministry before any formal interview. Recruiting materials clearly indicate that the faith community takes its responsibility towards participants seriously and screens all applicants.

Not every prospective volunteer/employee who applies to a parish is necessarily accepted.

Step 4 – Volunteer/Employee Information Form

A Volunteer/Employee Information Form must be completed for all ministry positions. (Appendix 5) The completion of an Information Form is intended to ensure that adequate records are kept. It further demonstrates the seriousness of the commitment being asked of the volunteer/employee or clergy/religious and provides a paper trail that protects the applicants, the parish and the diocese. There are two forms for General Risk (Appendixes 5a & 5b) and one form for High Risk (Appendix 5c).

Step 5 – Interview

The pastor and/or parish screening person(s) will conduct an interview for all High Risk ministry positions.

The interview provides an opportunity to talk with the applicant about his/her background, gifts, talents, skills, interests and availability. It allows an opportunity to explore any concerns the parish may have about the suitability of this person for the ministry position applied for to ensure a 'good fit' between the person and the ministry. The interview includes questions that are directly related to the specific concerns for the position being applied for: i.e. interpersonal style with children or vulnerable adults, history working with money, etc.

Step 6 – Reference Check

Two (2) references must be completed for all High Risk ministry positions. (Parish Administration Package)

It is made clear that the individual is being considered for a position of trust i.e. with children, youth, other vulnerable people, with money, etc. Reference forms are kept in the volunteer's file.

A reference check is an important and effective screening step during the selection process. Reference will confirm the background, gifts, talents and skills of the applicant and provides an outside opinion on the suitability of the person for the ministry. The Diocesan Reference Check Form should be used. (Parish Administration Package)

Step 7 – Police Information Check

A Police Information Check and Vulnerable Sector Check report must be received for all High Risk volunteer ministry and employee positions working with vulnerable persons. (Appendix 7)

The police record check signals in a very public way, concern about the safety of participants. The applicant follows the procedure for Police Information Check according to the RCMP detachment in his/her town. If the Criminal Record Information form shows that a conviction 'may or may not exist', the applicant will be asked to provide details and give permission for the Pastor and/or Protocol Administrator to confirm details. In such cases, the pastor must immediately contact the Diocesan Protocol Administrator. The Diocese follows a similar procedure for clergy/religious.

Step 8 – Orientation and Training

It is essential that orientation and training are provided in fairness to the volunteer and employee to ensure that the individual is able to perform his/her ministry effectively and is clear on the expectations and lines of communication and accountability.

Child Protection training is included in the orientation. (See p. 31-32 – Reporting Protocol for Allegation or Suspicion of Abuse, Neglect or Sexual Misconduct, Appendix 1 - Crisis Response and Intervention and Appendix 8 – When a Child Discloses Abuse)

Applicants in all positions are required to sign the Volunteer/Employee Information Form (Appendix 5a/5b/5c) stating that they have read and understand the position description and will comply with the position as described. All volunteers/employees are also required to sign the Code of Conduct expected during their volunteer/employee position: Code of Conduct for Clergy/Religious (p. 26-27), Code of Conduct for Volunteers/Employees (p. 28)

Step 9 – Supervision and Evaluation

All volunteer and employee positions will be appropriately supervised.

The nature of the supervision is the responsibility of the Pastor and will vary according to the risk involved.

Step 10 – Participant and Volunteer Follow Up

Volunteers and participants are not to be alone together. A two-adult norm is expected. If this is not possible, the setting allows for clear visibility through open doors.

Minors and vulnerable persons cannot be left alone without a screened adult. We have an obligation to protect everyone whom we serve.

Checklist for High Risk Positions

Police Information Check/Vulnerable Sector Check if required

Before recruiting a potential volunteer or employee to a High Risk position in the parish or diocese, the following checklist will guide the process for recruitment and selection:

- ❑ Complete the Volunteer/Employee Information Form (*Appendix 5c*)
- ❑ Ensure applicant receives a copy of Volunteer/Employee Position Description, which includes the contact information of the appropriate volunteer ministry coordinator at the parish.
- ❑ Interview with pastor and/or parish screening person(s). Document the interview using Volunteer/Employee Interview Form. (*Parish Administrative Package*)
- ❑ Conduct two personal reference checks using Volunteer/Employee Reference Check Form. (*Parish Administration Package*)
- ❑ Applicant completes Orientation and Training Session at the parish. These Orientation and Training Sessions must be offered on an annual basis for NEW volunteers and employees
- ❑ Applicant signs a Code of Conduct form.

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 Police Information Check (CRC) and Vulnerable Sector Check (VSC) if required. These documents need to be renewed every 5 years
- ❑ The Pastor maintains a list of persons requiring a Police Information Check and (if needed) persons requiring a Vulnerable Sector Check
- ❑ Pastor receives the Police Information Check and Vulnerable Sector Check
- ❑ Pastor reviews and confirms that both are satisfactory
- ❑ Pastor places satisfactory Police Information Check and Vulnerable Sector Check in a sealed envelope, signs the back of the envelope and marks it "Confidential"
- ❑ Any non-satisfactory Police Information 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 an Orientation and Training Session

Upon completion of the requirement the applicant begins his/her parish volunteer or employee position and receives:

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

Checklist for High Risk cont'd

The pastor or parish screening committee or person will:

- ❑ Create a file for the applicant
- ❑ Put the following documents in the file:
 - Completed Volunteer/Employee Information Form
 - Completed Interview Form
 - Completed Reference Check Form
 - Police Information Check and Vulnerable Sector Check (if required)
 - Signed Code of Conduct for Volunteer/Employee
 - Signed Code of Conduct Form for Clergy/Religious is sent directly to the Protocol Administrator
 - Protocol records for Clergy/Religious – originals sent to the Protocol Administrator and copies of these records are kept at the parish

Clergy and religious occupy positions of High Risk based on their service and contact with minors and vulnerable adults.

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 (*Appendix 5a*)
- ❑ Ensure the applicant signs the Code of Conduct form
- ❑ Ensure that the applicant receives a copy of the Ministry Position Description which includes the contact information of the appropriate volunteer ministry coordinator at the parish
- ❑ Ensure the applicant attends an Orientation and Training Session at the parish. These Orientation and Training Sessions must be offered on an annual basis for NEW volunteers and employees
- ❑ **For those under 19 years of age, ensure that the appropriate Volunteer/Employee Information Form is used and that the Parent/Guardian signs their consent (*Appendix 5b*) and parent/guardian signs the Code of Conduct for dependant and parent/guardian attends an Orientation and Training Session**

Once the checklist is complete the applicant is able to begin their ministry position.

The pastor or parish screening committee or person will:

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

Examples, but not an exhaustive list of General Risk Volunteer/Employee positions include: all liturgical functions such as readers, music, ushers, greeters and hospitality, parish pastoral council and finance committees.

Strategies for Risk Management

All positions in the Diocese of Kamloops classified as High Risk are based on the participant, the setting, the activity and the level of supervision. Risk can be modified by discontinuing the activity, modifying the activity, by changing the location of the activity, by involving other organizations which are better prepared to handle the specific risk or assume the risk and by following the protocols as outlined in the Master Document.

Complaint Resolution Procedure

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

Confidentiality

The Diocese of Kamloops will remain mindful concerning issues of confidentiality in all allegations. However, should the complaint or the circumstances surrounding it become public, the Misconduct Policy Administrator (Alternate) may, after consultation with the Bishop and Misconduct Advisory Committee, act as, or appoint a media spokesperson to represent and speak on behalf of the Diocese. The Misconduct Policy Administrator (Alternate) will then ensure that the media spokesperson:

- Has a copy of this policy
- Understands the sensitivity of the issues involved and the desire of the Diocese to be mindful of confidentiality
- Is kept apprised of any new developments in the case

Transfer/Move to New Parish Procedures

If a volunteer moves and would like to volunteer at another parish within the Diocese, the new parish will screen the volunteer as appropriate. A reference may be asked from his/her 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.