



Diocese of Prince George

Developing a Safe Parish & Community

(Available for download at www.pgdiocese.bc.ca)

Introduction

The Diocese of Prince George upholds and promotes

- The values expressed in the Gospel of Jesus Christ
- The teachings and laws of the Roman Catholic Church
- The fundamental goodness of all that God has created



- And a stance of deep respect for the dignity of all persons and a commitment to their well-being



Through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, all humanity has been redeemed, lifted up and transformed. At the same time, we are deeply aware of the continuing weakness of human beings and the sinfulness present in humanity.



The Diocese acknowledges that we must take seriously the possibility of misconduct, even among our own clergy, religious, employees, and volunteers.

In response, the Diocese has put in place the Developing a Safe Parish & Community Policy.

The policies and procedures outlined in Developing a Safe Parish & Community are designed to create and maintain a safe environment for our parish and diocesan ministries.

The process involves:

- identifying ministry positions which could put children, youth or vulnerable adults
- implementing procedures to prevent their harm

The goal at all times is
the protection and
safety of

- our people
- our volunteers
- our staff
- our Church



Developing a Safe Parish & Community Policy reflects existing federal and provincial laws and current canonical norms ... and ... **it applies to all clergy, religious, employees and volunteers of the Diocese, its parishes and institutions**



It is designed to compliment the Diocese of Prince George existing policies:

1. Guidelines in Cases of Alleged Sexual Abuse by a Representative of the Diocese
 2. Catholic Independent Schools of Prince George
- Policy Manual

Mandatory Screening Procedures for all who Minister in the Diocese

Clergy & Religious

- Candidates preparing for ordination to the priesthood or permanent diaconate are required to undergo a rigorous screening process
- Priests from another Diocese or priests who are members of a Religious Order must obtain permission of his Bishop or Religious Superior who will submit a letter providing full disclosure attesting to his good character and history



- Religious Brothers and Sisters must obtain permission of his or her Superior who will submit a letter providing full disclosure attesting to his or her good character and history

All clergy and Religious Brothers and Sisters must:

- Complete a Criminal Record Check and it indicates children, youth, vulnerable adults and finances are not at risk
- Attend a mandatory orientation session:
Developing a Safe Parish & Community
- Sign and submit the Safe Parish & Community Pledge



Visiting priests, religious and lay persons



Before a priest, religious brother or sister or a lay person from another diocese is invited to minister, for any length of time, permission must be obtained from the Bishop

The following is also required:

For 1-30 days:

- Letter of suitability
from their
(arch)bishop or
Religious superior
(Form 6, 7 or 8 as appropriate)



* The letter of suitability for lay persons may be signed by the person in charge of the safe environment policy for their (arch)diocese.

For more than 30 days:

- Letter of suitability from their (arch)bishop or Religious superior
(Form 6, 7 or 8 as appropriate)
- Complete a Criminal Record Check and it indicates children, youth, vulnerable adults and finances are not at risk
- Attend a mandatory orientation session: “Developing a Safe Parish & Community”
- Sign and submit the “Safe Parish & Community Pledge”



Employees

In addition to their particular employment requirements, employees must

- Complete a Criminal Record Check and it indicates children, youth, vulnerable adults and finances are not at risk
- Attend a mandatory orientation session: Developing a Safe Parish & Community
- Sign and submit the Safe Parish & Community Pledge



Volunteers

- Those who volunteer regularly must satisfy the requirements of the risk level of their position(s)
- Those who volunteer at an annual one or two-day event must, if they have not already done so, sign the Safe Parish & Community Pledge and, if ministry/service is categorized high risk, complete a Criminal Record Check and it indicates children, youth, vulnerable adults and finances are not at risk
- There are no requirements for those who offer “on the spot” help while at an event, but they are not to take a supervisory role

Volunteers for General Risk Ministry

- Complete a Volunteer Application form and provide two references from parish members
 - The pastor or parish staff may serve as references for a long-time parishioner who has volunteered previously in the parish
 - Named references complete and submit a Ministry Letter of Reference form to the pastor
- Pastor or his delegate follows up any concerns raised by references
- Volunteer reads and signs Safe Parish & Community Pledge
- Pastor approves volunteer for service or ministry

Volunteers for High Risk Ministry



- Complete requirements for the General Risk category
- Complete a Criminal Record Check and it indicates children, youth, vulnerable adults and finances are not at risk
- Attend a mandatory orientation session: Developing a Safe Parish & Community

Criteria for High Risk Ministry or Service



If any one of the following applies the ministry or service is considered High Risk:

Participant

- A child under 19 years of age
- A physically/mentally/emotionally vulnerable person
- A non-able-bodied senior



Setting

- An isolated place (private home, cabin, tent, etc.)
- A room without windows
- An automobile
- A private one-on-one setting



Activity

- Visits in a home, hospital or nursing home
- Overnight events
- Activity that is of high physical or emotional intensity



- Direct handling of money
- Access to church buildings, offices, computers, files or property (those with keys)
- Access to confidential information

Supervision

- Little or no direct supervision
- No documentation of meetings or events



Teens under the age of 16 are not given tasks that would categorize their ministry or service as High Risk. As volunteers or employees they are **ALWAYS** under supervision and therefore categorized as General Risk.



Ministerial and Procedural Guidelines for Creating a Safe Parish & Community

- Religious instruction of children and youth must be
 - Done in a public, group format
 - With at least two adults present
- One-on-one instruction in a private place (including home) is to be avoided



- One-on-one counselling, interviews and discussion are to be conducted in a space visible to others
- Sacrament of Reconciliation with children is to take place in a space visible to others or in traditional confessional



Rooms used for religious instruction of children and youth and for counselling and interviews should have clear glass windows in doors or the door left open when room in use.

Overnight trips, camps, parish picnics and socials



- Plan carefully to ensure privacy, modesty and safety
- Ministers and volunteers are never to be alone with children and youth during overnight trip - always work as teams of at least two adults
- Parents to be closely involved with preparations, planning and execution of all overnight trips and camps
- Sufficient quorum of employees, volunteers and/or parents to be present to ensure child safety
- Segregated change and sleeping areas provided for males and females



Ministers, employees, volunteers:

- Are not to be alone with a child, youth or vulnerable adult in a rectory, vehicle or private living quarters
- Do not seek out opportunities to spend off-site time with children to whom they minister
- Will set and keep appropriate boundaries – the adult is responsible for exercising due discretion
 - Hugs and kisses and physical “rough-housing” should be appropriate and occur in public
- Do not routinely help children with toileting without explicit permission from parents/guardians
 - When necessary, toileting is undertaken by two adults

- Shall not take money or property in return for ministry apart from contractual salary or approved stipend
- Shall use appropriate language and show no bias based on:



- gender, ethnic background, skin color, intelligence, age, religion, sexual orientation or social-economic status
- Shall respect others

Use of Social Media by Employees & Volunteers

Social media is defined as any form of online publication or presence that allow end users to engage in multi-directional conversations in or around the content of the website. It includes but

is not restricted to
Facebook, MySpace, Nigh,
Twitter, Second Life,
YouTube, blogs, wikis, social
bookmarking, podcasts,
forums, content
communities, email and
messaging.





In an online world
the lines between
public and private,
personal and
professional,
can become blurred.



- Even when clergy, religious, employees and volunteers are social networking on their own time, they may be identified as working for, and sometimes representing, the Diocese

in their online communications.

- Misuse of social media by clergy, religious, employees and volunteers, even if inadvertent, has potential to put at risk the reputation of the Diocese, its employees and volunteers.

Code of Conduct

General Procedure

- Use good judgement. Think about the type of image or information you want to convey.
- As role models - representatives of the Diocese and/or your parish - ensure your use of social networking, even on personal time
 - Does not reflect negatively on your reputation or that of your parish or the Diocese
 - Is not contrary to the teaching of our Church

Use only appropriate sites and tools when communicating on Church related matters

- all communication should be courteous and respectful

Respect the law when communicating online

- Protect the confidentiality of parishioners and their families
- Comply with copyright requirements
- Do not make comments defamatory of others



Specific Procedures

- Avoid impulsive, inappropriate or heated postings.

Remember: postings are easily circulated and may be permanent

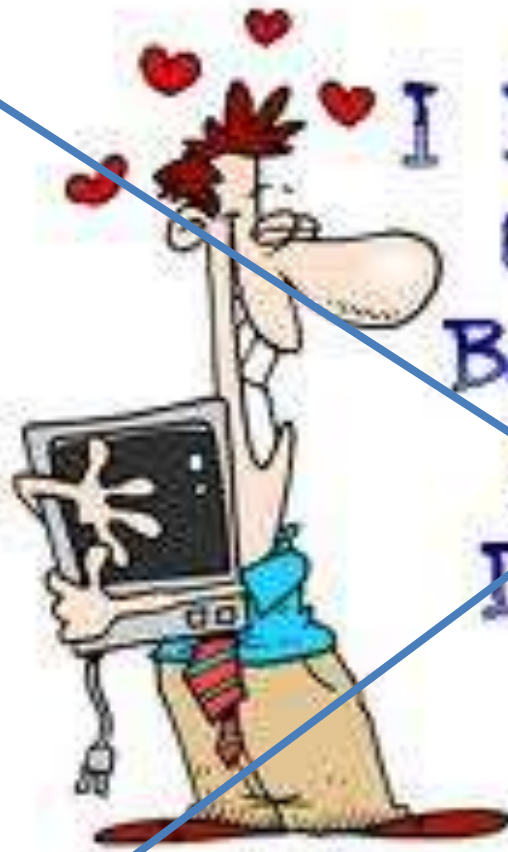


- Monitor all content you or others post to ensure it is consistent with your role in the Church
 - Remove inappropriate material
- Online activities must not interfere with the performance of your job or effectiveness as an employee or volunteer

- Online communications should reflect principles of honesty, respect, responsibility and consideration of others
- Do not disclose confidential or personal information about parishioners or their families
 - Do not post photographs or videos of children without the written permission of their parent/guardian
- Never criticize parishioners, fellow employees and volunteers, your parish or the Diocese



- Do not request or accept any current or former minor parishioners (person under 19 years) as “friends” on social networking sites
- Do not exchange personal phone numbers, email addresses or photographs with students or minor parishioners except when they are your own relatives
- Ask friends not to tag you in photos or videos without your permission – remove anything inappropriate to your role in the Church



I LOVE My
Computer
Because My
Friends
Live In It



Developing a Safe Parish & Community

For **clergy, religious and employees** of the Diocese of Prince George (including its parishes, schools and institutions):

contravention of this policy may result in discipline, up to and including dismissal

For **volunteers** in the Diocese of Prince George (including its parishes, schools and institutions):

contravention of this policy may result in removal from all ministries and services

End of Presentation



The following slides describe

Administrative Procedures



Responsibilities and Requirements

Diocese is responsible for:

- Overseeing compliance with the Safe Parish & Community Policy
- Developing and distributing orientation session materials to parishes, institutions and organizations in the Diocese
- Safe and confidential storage of Criminal Record Checks and Safe Parish & Community Pledges
- Reviewing the Screening Requirements Reports and notifying parishes if changes are needed
- Notifying parishes and organizations when CRCs and Pledges for people under their jurisdiction are due for renewal

Pastors are responsible for ensuring the Safe Parish & Community Policy is followed in their parish. They may appoint a delegate to undertake this task.

The Board of Directors of camps and other autonomous institutions/organizations in the Diocese are responsible for ensuring the Policy is followed. They may appoint a delegate to undertake this task. What applies to parishes also applies here.

Parishes are required to:

- Ensure all volunteers
 - Are screened and approved for ministry
- Ensure all clergy, employees and volunteers serving in High Risk category under their jurisdiction
 - Attend an orientation session
 - Read and sign a Safe Parish & Community Pledge
 - Complete a Criminal Record Check and it indicates children, youth, vulnerable adults and finances are not at risk
- Ensure all volunteers serving in General Risk category under their jurisdiction
 - Read and sign a Safe Parish & Community Pledge

Parishes are also required to

- Undertake a Ministerial Risk Assessment in their parish and submit a Screening Requirements Report to the Diocese at the beginning of each calendar year (by Jan. 15th)
- Send signed Safe Parish & Community Pledges and completed Criminal Record Checks to the Diocese
- Provide safe and confidential storage for
 - Volunteer Applications and Ministry Reference Letters
 - All documentation pertaining to the Safe Parish & Community Policy

Approval to Minister

- Approval to minister is renewed automatically each year for five years unless circumstances dictate otherwise in particular cases
- Safe Parish & Community Pledge is renewed every five years
- Criminal Record Check must be undertaken every five years
- Approval to minister may be transferred to another location within the Diocese of Prince George

Forms

Volunteer Application

- File in a locked file cabinet in the parish office

Ministry Letter of Reference

- File in a locked file cabinet in the parish office

Safe Parish & Community Pledge

- Send to Diocesan Office

Criminal Record Check

- Send to Diocesan Office

Ministerial Risk Assessment for Parishes

- Use to assess ministries in your parish

Screening Requirements Report

- Revise annually and send to Diocesan Office



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