



# Diocese of Prince George

## **Developing a Safe Parish & Community**

(Available for download at [www.pgdiocese.bc.ca](http://www.pgdiocese.bc.ca))

# Introduction

The Diocese of Prince George upholds and promotes

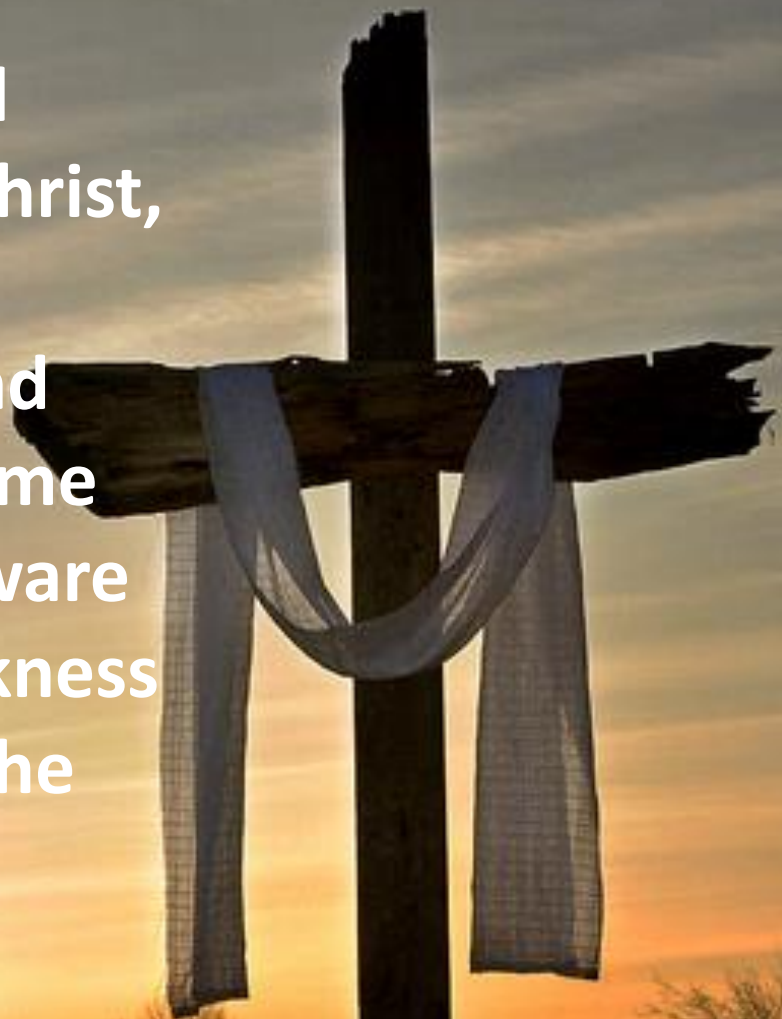
- The values expressed in the Gospel of Jesus Christ
- The teachings and laws of the Roman Catholic Church
- The fundamental goodness of all that God has created



- 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.

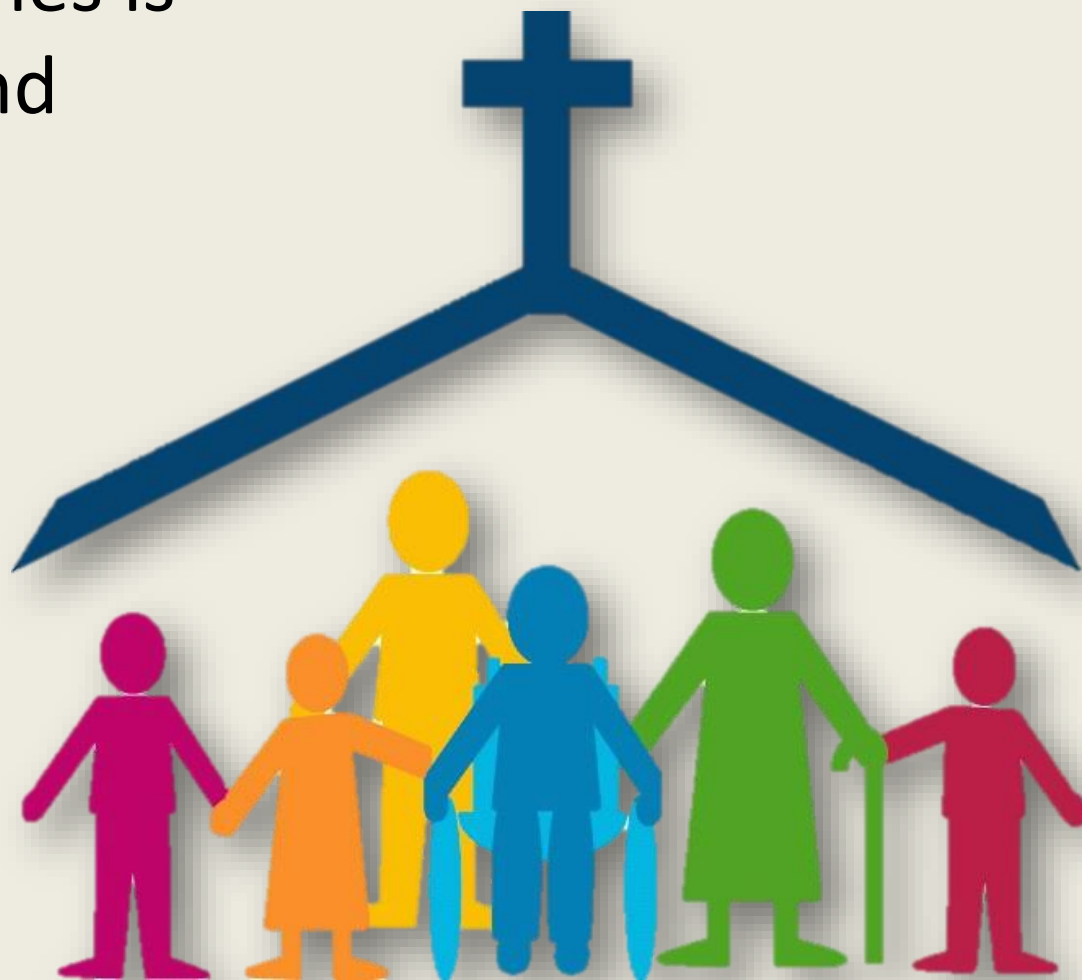
The policies and procedures outlined in Developing a Safe Parish & Community are designed to create and maintain a safe environment for our parish and diocesan ministries.

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

- Have at least two adults present for a ministry or program.
- Where possible, the two adults should be unrelated.

- All rooms used for these purposes should have clear glass windows or doors or the door should be left open when the room is in use.





- Have all one-on-one meetings with a child, youth or vulnerable persons in a public area either in a parish or organization's facilities, where both people can be seen by others.

- Notify and ask permission of a parent before any proposed one-to-one meeting with a child/youth, e.g., in a mentoring relationship.

# Overnight trips, camps, parish picnics and socials





- Have two adults transport children, youth or vulnerable persons in a vehicle, ensuring the driver has a valid driver's license and insurance, liability insurance coverage of at least \$2 million.
- Have a volunteer leader or office, parish, camp staff member present when a child is dropped off at a ministry or program location.

- The child must be picked up by the parent/guardian or their designate. If a child is not picked up within a short or reasonable period after the scheduled end of the activity, the volunteer leader or staff will first contact the parent/guardian, and if no contact can be made, he or she is authorized to contact the appropriate children's services agency.



- Encourage parents/guardians to participate with their children in a ministry or program. Any other adult wishing to be present needs the permission of the volunteer leader or staff.
- Have any changes to a ministry or program be approved by the pastor, director or volunteer leader.

Have a sufficient quorum of employees and/or volunteers:

- 0-18 months 2 adults to 6 children
- 19months-2 yrs 2 adults to 10 children
- 3-5 yrs 2 adults to 12 children
- 6-14 yrs 2 adults to 15 children/youth
- 15-18 yrs 2 adults to 15 youth
- Vulnerable persons 19+  
2 adults to 10 vulnerable persons

- Ensure the design of facilities can protect children, youth or vulnerable persons.
- Segregated change rooms and washroom facilities should be provided for males and females.
- Ensure fire Extinguishers and Emergency exits are known to volunteer leaders or staff.



## **Ministers, employees, volunteers:**

- Should not be alone with a child, adolescent, or vulnerable adult in a rectory, automobile or other private spaces.
- Should not spend off-site time alone with children/youth.
- Will set and keep appropriate boundaries with those to whom they minister.
- Should not help children with toileting. Toileting assistance for children should be taken care of by a parent or guardian.

- Should not accept any money or property in return for their ministry apart from contractual salaries or approved stipends.



- Shall use appropriate language and show no bias based on sex, ethnic background, age, religion, sexual identity 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

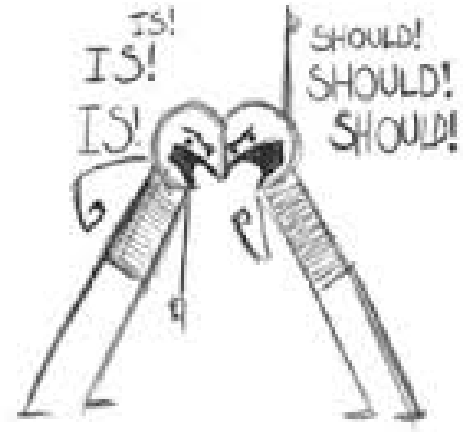
- Protect the confidentiality of parishioners and their families
- Comply with copyright requirements
- Do not make comments defamatory of others



# Specific Procedures

- Avoid impulsive, inappropriate or heated postings.

Remember: postings are easily circulated and may be permanent



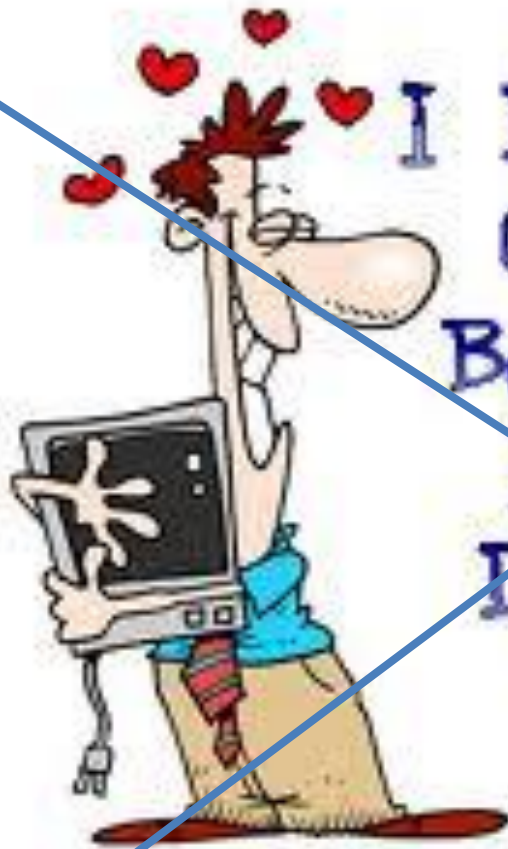
- Monitor all content you or others post to ensure it is consistent with your role in the Church
  - Remove inappropriate material
- Online activities must not interfere with the performance of your job or effectiveness as an employee or volunteer

- 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. 15<sup>th</sup>)
- 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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