

Guidelines for Parish Volunteers and Lay Employees



THESE GUIDELINES, WHICH ARE PART OF THE
SCREENING IN FAITH PROGRAM,
ARE DERIVED FROM THE
SAFE ENVIRONMENT POLICY
OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF KINGSTON

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Preamble

Volunteers and lay employees in our parishes must uphold Christian values and conduct as they minister to, or work with, the People of God. Imitating Christ, the servant-leader, all who serve in these ministries must employ practices that meet the needs of God's people and promote the highest respect for the dignity of individuals, especially the most vulnerable members of our community.

All who minister within our Church family must be aware that their public and private conduct can inspire others, and that their misconduct can lead to scandal which could seriously undermine the faith of the people they serve. With the help of the Holy Spirit, they must be constantly aware of the responsibilities that accompany their role in the Church.

This document will provide clear directives to volunteers and lay employees to protect them and those individuals with whom they interact.

Reason for the Program and these Guidelines

Since the earliest days of the Church, we have come together to worship and to live out our faith. As followers of Jesus, we are called to show love to one another and to the world, as well as to share our gifts and resources. We continue that tradition today. We reach out to those in need; we counsel, help, and teach. Each of us brings unique gifts to share.

Volunteer and lay employees are the lifelines of our parishes. Without their time, effort, and gifts, the Church would not be able to fulfill its ministry to help those in need. We recognize and appreciate their invaluable contribution.

Given the importance of our call, through the Sacrament of Baptism, to share our gifts with one another and with the world, it is essential that we, as a community, do all we can to ensure that the right gifts are shared in the right way, at the right time, by the right people. We fulfill our mission more effectively when we make every effort to foster a richer, stronger, more vibrant, and safer community of faith.

Screening in Faith is a program designed to create and maintain a safe environment in our parishes. The goal at all times is the protection of vulnerable people, volunteers, lay employees, and Church resources. The program also ensures that the most appropriate match is made between a volunteer or lay employee and a position in parish ministry. It is now a permanent policy of the Archdiocese of Kingston to screen all parish volunteers and lay employees.

These *Guidelines for Parish Volunteers and Lay Employees* are designed to assist you in performing your ministry. They are adapted from the *Code of Conduct for Priests, Deacons, Seminarians, Employees, and Volunteers Engaged in Ministries and Services in the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Kingston*.

**“What does the Lord require of you but to do justice,
and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?” Micah 6:8**

Responsibilities of Parish Volunteers and Lay Employees

The letters of St. Paul to Timothy and Titus show that, from earliest times, ministry was expected to be marked by love that overflows into service, stewardship, trust, and exemplary personal conduct. The call and commitment to serve God involves accepting certain responsibilities as individuals and as members of our communities.

(PARTICIPANTS: A generic term used to describe those who participate in programs or who receive services from ministries.)

Volunteers and Lay Employees in the Church are expected to:

- ❖ be Christian witnesses and models of Christian living: being honest, speaking the truth in love, and carrying out all tasks with integrity;
- ❖ be courteous and cooperative in their relations with other members of their parish community;
- ❖ attend training and orientation sessions;
- ❖ provide a safe and caring environment for activities through their actions and words;
- ❖ be reliable, following through with commitments, arriving on time and being prepared;
- ❖ provide adequate notice to their ministry leader/pastor if they are unable to perform their duties;
- ❖ report any changes in address and telephone number to the parish team or ministry leader;
- ❖ inform the parish team and/or ministry leader if they have any concerns for the well-being of the participants, other volunteers and lay employees, or the Church;
- ❖ minister within the agreed guidelines of the Ministry Position Description for which they have been mandated;
- ❖ respect the confidentiality of the participants, other volunteers, and lay employees.

Confidentiality does not need to be respected in the following situations:

- when a person threatens suicide;
- when a child/youth under 16 reports physical or sexual abuse; (*see pages 11-12*)
- when someone's life is in danger;
- when the volunteer's or someone else's well-being is threatened;
- when the situation is beyond the experience or expertise of the volunteer or lay employee;
- when someone exhibits psychotic behaviour or some other form of mental illness.

In these situations, it is appropriate for the person to share the information with the coordinator/leader of the ministry and the pastor.

Volunteers and Lay Employees in the Church can expect to:

- ❖ be treated with respect;
- ❖ receive the training and orientation necessary to perform their duties;
- ❖ receive support and guidance;
- ❖ work in ministries that are compatible with their interests and skills;
- ❖ be appreciated for their contributions.

The pastor is responsible for creating and maintaining an environment that fosters mutual respect among individuals. This includes ensuring that volunteers and lay employees are not subject to retaliation as a result of making a complaint or participating in an investigation of a complaint.

Liability

Liability Policy of the Archdiocese of Kingston

The Archdiocese and its parishes have a Liability Policy that covers anyone acting on their behalf. This includes volunteers and lay employees ***with this proviso***: that they are acting “**within the scope of their duties**” and on behalf of the parish/Archdiocese. The liability policy does not cover a volunteer or lay employee if an incident occurs when he or she is acting outside of a parish ministry, activity, or event.

Public Use of the Parish Name

Without the specific permission of the Pastor or his delegate, parish volunteers and lay employees should never make any public pronouncement in the name of the parish.

It is recognized that volunteers and lay employees are also private citizens, and, as such, they have the freedom as individuals to speak out on matters of public concern; however, in so doing, they should make it clear that they are speaking as private citizens and not with the authority of the parish.

General Directives

The following guidelines are intended to provide a general overview of how volunteers and lay employees should interact with one another and with the vulnerable. It is recognized that unforeseen circumstances can and may occur. Guidelines help to provide rules for behaviour and boundaries so that volunteers and lay employees understand what is expected of them.

Volunteers and lay employees are expected to develop transparent and trustworthy relationships with children, youth, and other vulnerable persons, while maintaining clear, professional boundaries.

Particular care and attention must be taken in dealing with vulnerable persons.

A vulnerable person is anyone of any age or gender who might easily be exploited by another. Children, youth, and some adults fall into this category of individuals. Some may be physically or mentally challenged, or emotionally susceptible. Others may be socially isolated, in need socially or materially, or unable to communicate adequately, or even unable to understand or speak the languages of our area. Others may live in fear, real or imagined, or be in awe of authority figures. Others, such as immigrants and refugees, may be disadvantaged in a variety of ways.

Work Environment and Boundaries

- ❖ Volunteers and lay employees shall maintain a professional work environment that is free from physical, sexual, psychological, written, or verbal intimidation or harassment.
- ❖ Volunteers and lay employees are responsible for establishing and maintaining clear, appropriate boundaries in all pastoral relationships.
- ❖ 'One-on-one' private meetings must be held in an area with glass openings, offering unobstructed vision, or in a room with the door open.
- ❖ Illegal possession and/or illegal use of drugs are prohibited at all times.
- ❖ Use of aggressive, profane, humiliating, threatening, intimidating, sexist, or racist language and conduct is always unacceptable.

Proximity

- ❖ Physical contact of any kind can be misconstrued. It is to occur only when it is clearly nonsexual and otherwise appropriate, and never in private. Physical discipline such as spanking, shaking, or slapping is prohibited.
- ❖ Discussions of a sexual nature must occur only in response to a specific question, and only if necessary. Any such discussion must use appropriate and professional language.
- ❖ Should one discover an inappropriate attraction or attention being shown to him or her in a pastoral relationship, one must make every effort to defuse the situation. One must cease the relationship if the attraction or attention continues.

- ❖ No conversation of a personal nature should ever be recorded (either digitally or by audiotape or videotape).
- ❖ In order to avoid confusion about the nature of the relationship, sessions (e.g., interviews and formal or informal conversations) must be conducted in appropriate settings at appropriate times that ensure accountability. One must also be concerned about the number and frequency of such sessions to avoid possible inappropriate attachments.

Financial Directives

- ❖ Ministry is part of pastoral service, and one must not ask for, nor expect, financial compensation other than that outlined in other diocesan policies and protocols.
- ❖ It is forbidden for anyone to solicit, in any way, directly or indirectly, by word or action, any personal gift, bequest, or endowment from a person with whom he or she has, or has had, a pastoral relationship.
- ❖ It is forbidden for anyone to request or obtain a personal loan, or other financial benefit or consideration, from a person with whom he or she has, or has had, a pastoral relationship.
- ❖ While acting in one's capacity as a parish volunteer or lay employee, one must not act as a financial advisor or take on the responsibility for power of attorney for any vulnerable person. Similarly, drawing a will, or serving as the executor or witness for a will, for these individuals is also forbidden.
- ❖ Volunteers and lay employees who are involved in the financial administration of a parish must review and know the contents of the Archdiocesan Protocol for Parish Financial Administration, which can be found in the Archdiocesan Financial Guidelines.

General Guidelines for all Activities with Children, Youth, and other Vulnerable Persons

Volunteers and lay employees are expected to observe the following directives:

- ❖ Respect the dignity of children, youth, and vulnerable persons. Exercise good judgment and common sense when working with them.
- ❖ Adults who form a relationship with children through parish activities should not seek out opportunities to spend time with a child "off site".
- ❖ Written permission and appropriate waivers are to be obtained from the parents or guardian for all off-site activities.
- ❖ In those instances where adults are alone with children overnight (e.g., camping or field trips), every effort must be made to protect the child's privacy. Girls and boys should not change clothes together, and adults must change clothes separately. Adults should not sleep in close proximity to children.

- ❖ Avoid potentially compromising situations by ensuring that at least two adults are in attendance while supervising or accompanying children and youth. This is intended to prevent potential abuse and allegations of abuse.
- ❖ Do not use vulgar or inappropriate language when working with children and youth. Do not shout, swear, or call children names.
- ❖ Adequate supervision must be provided. Maintain adult to child and youth ratios which are appropriate for the activities and the age group. The following are permissible ratios:
 - 2 adults with one or more children
 - 2 youth with one or more children
 - 1 adult and one youth with one or more children
 To be avoided:
 - adult or youth alone with a child, unless the adult is the child's parent
- ❖ Never hit or strike a child even in so-called "play". Do not use physical punishment of any kind.
- ❖ Realize that bullying, neglect, physical, verbal, or cultural abuse, sexual harassment, or any other type of abuse is unacceptable conduct.
- ❖ Be alert to children at risk, know the signs of abuse, and be approachable to children in need. If abuse is suspected, it is your responsibility under law to report it. (*See Obligation to Report, page 11.*)

Specific Guidelines when dealing with Children, Youth and other Vulnerable Persons

Ministerial Environment and Boundaries

- ❖ Meetings, wedding rehearsals, liturgical training and other such activities must take place in groups, in a public setting, such as the church or parish hall, and be supervised by at least two adults who are not related.
- ❖ One must never provide overnight accommodation for children, youth, or other vulnerable persons where there is not another, unrelated adult present and actively engaged in supervision. Under no circumstances shall such accommodation be provided in the residential part of church property.
- ❖ Where an adult chaperone occupies a sleeping facility with a group of children, youth, or vulnerable persons, the chaperone must always sleep in a separate bed.
- ❖ While in the presence of children, youth, or other vulnerable persons, one shall refrain from the use of alcohol, drugs, and tobacco products.
- ❖ One must never purchase or provide access to alcohol, drugs, tobacco products, inappropriate videos, media, or reading material for children, youth, or other vulnerable persons.
- ❖ Transportation of minors or other vulnerable persons may take place only with the written permission of a parent or guardian and in the presence of another adult. Everyone should be aware of the exclusion clauses in his or her personal insurance policy, which may affect coverage in such cases. Every consideration should be given to the use of public transportation or rented vehicles, especially when dealing with groups.

Proximity

- ❖ One must never be alone with children, youth, or other vulnerable persons. A parent or other adult must always be present or in close vicinity. Use a team approach to managing activities.
- ❖ One must not accept gifts from individual children, youth, or other vulnerable persons. Similarly, one must not buy gifts for individual children, youth, or other vulnerable persons.
- ❖ One shall not take overnight trips alone with children, youth, or other vulnerable persons. An appropriate number of adult chaperones are to accompany participants in such activities organized through the parish or diocese.
- ❖ Topics of a sexual nature that could not be comfortably discussed with parents or other adults must not be discussed with children.
- ❖ In order to protect children, and also to protect volunteers from any form of false accusation, volunteers must agree to the following rule when accompanying children to the washroom: a child must be accompanied by two adult volunteers, or by a parent of the child.

Liturgical Training:

In addition to the guidelines included under “Ministerial Environment and Boundaries” (*pg. 8*), volunteers and lay employees are expected to observe the following directives:

- ❖ Parents or guardians should be invited to be present for instruction sessions.
- ❖ Meetings and rehearsals should take place in a public setting, e.g., church or hall.
- ❖ ‘One-on-one’ training sessions should be held in a ‘professional’ setting, only in the presence of at least two adults, not related.
- ❖ Transportation of minors should be done only with the permission of the parents or guardians and in the presence of at least two adults, not related.
- ❖ Written permission and appropriate waivers are to be obtained from the parents or guardians for all off-site activities.
- ❖ Dressing and trying on albs in the sacristy or rectory should be done in the presence of at least two adults, not related.

Examples of Good Conduct When Working with Children and Youth Under the age of 18

SITUATION	DIFFICULTY	POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS
Holding a private conversation with a child or youth	By placing yourself in a one-on-one situation out of sight or hearing range, you can leave yourself open to allegations of abuse.	Keep the office door open. Use an office with a window.
Disciplining a child or youth away from the group	By placing yourself in a one-on-one situation out of sight or hearing range, you can leave yourself open to allegations of abuse.	Step away from the group, but remain visible. You may remove the child or youth from view, but the volunteer must remain visible to others.
Driving or walking home a child or youth	By placing yourself in a one-on-one situation out of sight or hearing range, you can leave yourself open to allegations of abuse.	Take along a friend of the child or another volunteer. Call the parents before you leave, and tell them when to expect you. Tell a colleague where you are going and when you expect to return.
A child is injured, and staff must remove clothing in order to treat injury	You must decide between safety and modesty.	Get another volunteer or a friend, preferably the same sex as the injured child, to help.

Creating and Sustaining a Safe Environment

The Archdiocese is committed to preventing misconduct by all possible means and to ensuring that all volunteers and lay employees are aware of their duty to report. In order to achieve this goal, information, training, and educational materials about this Archdiocesan policy will be provided on a regular basis.

Obligation to Report

Since the Archdiocese of Kingston holds sacred the sexual integrity of all persons within its sphere of influence and ministry, it is important that all suspicion of sexual misconduct be reported. All cases, however old, should be reported in order that healing may commence and future incidents may be prevented.

In the case of the sexual abuse of a minor who is under the age of sixteen:

All volunteers and lay employees of the Archdiocese who suspect an offence, or receive an allegation, concerning a minor who has suffered or may be suffering from sexual abuse who is, or appears to be under the age of 16 years, must comply with the legal obligation to report by informing immediately the Children's Aid Society (*Family and Children's Services – see Appendix 1*). They must also immediately inform the Archbishop's Delegate at 613-548-4461, if the alleged perpetrator is a member of the clergy, a religious or lay employee, or a volunteer of the Archdiocese.

In the case of sexual misconduct involving minors age sixteen and older:

All of those mentioned above who have reasonable grounds to suspect sexual misconduct or who receive an allegation of sexual misconduct by a member of the clergy, a religious or lay employee, or a volunteer of the Archdiocese, must immediately report it to the Archbishop's Delegate, who, after consulting legal counsel, will follow the norms of civil law regarding the notification of civil authorities. The Delegate shall also immediately advise the Archbishop.

There is a legal obligation to report suspected abuse of a minor who is a Crown Ward (under the care of a Children's Aid Society) and who has not yet reached the age of eighteen.

Protection from Liability CFSA (Child and Family Services Act) s.72(7)

If a civil action is brought against a volunteer or lay employee who made a report, that person will be protected unless he or she acted maliciously or without reasonable grounds for his or her suspicion.

Confidentiality: When to Seek Help or Report Abuse ¹

Confidentiality does not need to be respected in the following situations:

- ❖ when the child or youth threatens suicide.
- ❖ when the well-being of the volunteer or someone else is threatened.
- ❖ when the situation is beyond the volunteer's experience or expertise.

In the above situations, it is appropriate to seek help and advice from the ministry leader, the pastor, or the Parish Screening Team.

¹ See page 4 for complete guidelines governing confidentiality.

Reporting Abuse and/or Inappropriate Conduct

Everyone has a responsibility for the welfare of children, seniors, and other vulnerable persons. We also have a responsibility to other volunteers, our parishes, and ourselves. If you discover an instance of abuse involving a member of the faith community, you have the responsibility to report it according to the reporting procedures listed below:

Reporting Procedures

A. In the case of a child or youth under 16 years of age, there are two steps to follow:

Step 1: Contact the local Children's Aid Society (CAS) and report the abuse, as required under the Ontario Government's ***Child and Family Services Act (CFSA) Section 72 – Reporting Requirements***.

This means that, if a volunteer or lay employee suspects abuse, he or she must report it to the CAS personally and promptly. He or she may ask for assistance but is not to rely on anyone else to make the call.

Step 2: Fill out an incident report according to the instructions outlined in the following section, '*Documentation of Suspected Abuse and/or Inappropriate Conduct*'. Contact the Archbishop's Delegate at 613-548-4461. Give the Delegate a copy of the incident report you have prepared as soon as possible. The Archbishop's Delegate will contact/inform all necessary parties and proceed according to current Archdiocesan policies and regulations related to misconduct.

B. In all other situations of abuse or misconduct related to vulnerable persons over the age of 16:

Contact the Archbishop's Delegate at 613-548-4461. The Delegate will contact/inform all necessary parties and proceed according to current Archdiocesan policies and regulations related to misconduct.

Documentation of Suspected Abuse and/or Inappropriate Conduct

Document any observations of abuse or inappropriate behaviour (and any related statements or conversations) as soon as possible. Describe the incident or situation and include the date, time, and location the event took place. Include the names of anyone who may have witnessed the event and what actions were taken by you or by them. (i.e. contact with Children's Aid Society, other parties involved, medical care provided, individuals spoken with, etc.) **A sample incident report form is provided on page 13.** Keep these documents strictly confidential, and pass them on to the Archbishop's Delegate as soon as possible.

INCIDENT REPORT FORM

Date: _____

Name of Person Reporting Incident: _____

Location of Incident: _____

Parties Involved in Incident: _____

Summary of Incident:

Action Taken and/or Follow-up Necessary:

APPENDIX 1

CONTACT INFORMATION FOR THE ARCHDIOCESE OF KINGSTON AND CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETIES WITHIN THE ARCHDIOCESE

Archdiocese of Kingston

Archbishop's Office and Pastoral Centre (Archbishop's Delegate)

390 Palace Road
Kingston, ON K7L 4T3
Tel. (613) 548-4461 Fax: (613) 548-4744

Hastings County and Prince Edward County:

Belleville, Marmora-Madoc, Tweed-Stoco, Frankford-Stirling-Batawa, Trenton,
Marysville-Read-Deseronto, Flinton-Ardoch, and Picton:

Highland Shores Children's Aid
363 Dundas St. W.
Belleville, Ontario K8P 1B3
(800) 267-0570 or (613) 962-9291
www.highlandshorescas.org

Frontenac County, City of Kingston, and Lennox and Addington County:

Kingston, Kingston-Mills, Bedford-Sharbot Lake, Eastern part of Railton (Sydenham
area), East of Deseronto, Amherstview-Bath, Railton (western part)-Odessa,
Enterprise-Centreville-Erinsville:

Family and Children's Services of Frontenac, Lennox and Addington
817 Division Street
Kingston, Ontario
K7R 3Y5
(613) 545-3227
www.facsfla.ca

Lanark County and Leeds and Grenville County:

Perth, Smiths Falls, Carleton Place, Lanark-Stanleyville-Bathurst; Brockville,
Prescott-Cardinal, Kemptville, Spencerville-North Augusta, Toledo-Athens,
Lansdowne-Rockport, Elgin, Westport

Family and Children's Services of Lanark, Leeds and Grenville
438 Laurier Blvd.
Brockville, Ontario K6V 6C5
Monday – Sunday (24 hours)
1-855-667-2726
FAX 613-498-2109
(613) 264-9991 (Perth)
www.fcslg.ca

Ottawa-Carleton Area

The Children's Aid Society of Ottawa
1602 Telesat Court
Ottawa, Ontario K1B 1B1
(613) 747-7800 www.casott.on.ca

Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry Counties:

Chesterville-South Mountain, Morrisburg and Iroquois

The Children's Aid Society of the
United Counties of Stormont, Dundas, and Glengarry
150 Boundary Road
Cornwall, Ontario K6H 6J5
(613) 933-2292 or (866) 939-9915
www.cassdg.ca

The Prayer of Saint Francis of Assisi

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
and where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master,
grant, that I may not so much seek
to be consoled, as to console;
to be understood, as to understand;
to be loved, as to love.

For it is in giving, that we receive;
it is in pardoning, that we are pardoned;
and it is in dying,
that we are born to eternal life.