



SAFE CHURCH POLICY

Anglican Diocese of Edmonton

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Rationale

This Safe Church Policy is the means by which the Diocese of Edmonton responds to our call to offer the best to those we serve. It is necessary that we discern the gifts and determine a person's suitability for a ministry position. The Diocese of Edmonton has many gifted clergy, employees and volunteers who offer their gifts and talents. It is essential that we ensure that those we place in positions of power and trust be selected, trained and supported so that their ministries may be life-giving.

This policy complements and strengthens the commitment of this Diocese to strive to ensure that all places of work and all of our congregations are free from sexual misconduct. It will be applied, without exception, across our Diocese: in parishes, Diocesan ministries and programs as well as in our buildings.

To ensure the swift and comprehensive implementation of this Policy across the Diocese, we have appointed a Diocesan Safe Church Coordinator, the Rev. Armand Mercier, whose job it will be to equip and support Safe Church coordinators at the parish level, receive parish documentation and police record checks and follow up with parishes and individuals who need extra support.

In order to ensure the implementation of this policy at the parish level, each parish is required to appoint a Safe Church Coordinator. This individual will ensure all of the volunteers and staff in their parish are trained and screened accordingly and in a timely manner. This individual may be a clergy member or warden or another individual with a high level of competence and discretion in your parish.

The Safe Church Policy includes several steps each parish must take to screen all staff, volunteer and clergy. Ministries have been categorized and the level of screening needed for each position has been assigned. You have been provided with a sample of job descriptions for volunteer and staff roles. There is also a training video required for viewing by all volunteers in high risk categories of ministry.

If you currently hold police checks in your parish files you are asked to mail them into the Diocesan Office immediately.

Thank you,
The Venerable Susan Oliver

Application

This policy applies to all employees or volunteers, both lay and ordained, who work under the Bishop of Edmonton, who by virtue of their ministry or work are in positions of trust. It is a requirement that this policy be implemented in all parishes, ministries or related groups which:

1. Are part of the Diocese of Edmonton
2. Function on behalf of the Church (whether on or off its premises)
3. Are a third party organization such as: Scouts, Child Care, other congregations are expected under the 'Terms of Use of parish facilities' to conform to the standards of the Diocese of Edmonton.

It is the parish leadership's responsibility to ensure that the organization has screening training in place and that it meets the minimum requirements of our Diocesan Safe Church Policy. Proof of insurance by the outside groups must be provided to the parish. (A "Certificate of Insurability" / "Certificate of Insurance", covering both liability insurance and damage insurance, addressed to the parish, from the insurance broker of each outside group, is acceptable.)

A copy of our Safe Church Policy will be given to each outside organization who uses our facilities.

Appropriate representatives must meet with each community group using your facilities to explain the abuse policy. The community group may have their own safety / protection policy. If they cannot produce evidence of a policy to the committee, ask them to take a copy of your protocol to the hierarchy of their organization and ask for implementation of a similar policy

This Safe Church Policy establishes a minimum standard for the screening of employees and volunteers in this Diocese. Any parish or organization may develop more comprehensive policies of their own provided that such policies at least meet the minimum standard of protection contained in this Policy and do not contravene the Alberta Human Rights Act or any other applicable legislation. These screening standards must be consistently applied to all appropriate ministries.

Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the parish leadership (rector, priest-in-charge, deacon-in-charge, lay-reader-in-charge, interim priests, corporation) to ensure on an annual basis that the Safe Church Policy is implemented in the parish, organization, or ministry. Non-compliance will result in remedial or disciplinary proceedings. The Bishop serves as supervisor of the clergy. For the purposes of this policy, the corporation are equally accountable regarding all screening issues.

Vulnerable Person

The term "vulnerable person" includes children, youth, the elderly, hospital patients, people with mental and physical disabilities, but also adults who become vulnerable due to a sudden change in life circumstances such illness, loss of work or etc. Such circumstances include, but are not limited to, those grieving the death of a loved one, those experiencing job loss or career difficulties, those facing illness in themselves or others, and those facing other uncertainties. It is most important to acknowledge that all people may be vulnerable to varying degrees at some stage in their lives.

Implementation of Safe Church Policy

Screening Steps

1. List all the ministry activities and positions in your parish/organization
2. List all the duties and responsibilities for each ministry, activity, or position
3. Categorize duties based on low, medium and high
4. Reduce the risk for potential harm
5. Implement Screening Standards
6. Apply the screening standards
7. Establish Training and Supervision.
8. Make a Selection Decision Based on the Screening Information.
9. Evaluate and enforce the screening standards

Step 1: List All the Ministry Activities and Positions

Each parish or organization shall make a list of all positions associated with the church or organization, whether short-term, long-term, formally or informally established, paid or volunteer, involving laity or the ordained, taking place on Sunday or during the week, on church premises or off-site.

Step 2: List All the Duties and Responsibilities for Each Activity or Position

Sample Job descriptions available in the appendix. Position descriptions are vitally important; they communicate to everyone, whether paid or unpaid, what is expected of them, what skills or experience may be needed, how the organization will provide orientation and training for the task, and what support they can expect to receive.

Step 3: Categorize Ministry Roles By Risk

Ministry roles can be categorized by the level of inherent risk the position holds. For example, there is a greater risk for positions that deal frequently interact with vulnerable populations than a role that works primarily alone or with other, nonvulnerable adults. A list of potential examples of these roles can be found in the appendix.

Step 4: Reduce the Risk for Potential Harm

Once the risks associated with a given position have been assessed, all reasonable measures shall be taken to mitigate them. This can be accomplished by such measures as changing the size of a group being ministered to, the number of leaders required, the location and visibility of the ministry, the level of supervision or the degree of authority associated with the position. When working with vulnerable people or handling money, volunteers should work in pairs. Groups and outings should be team led when at all possible.

Here are some suggestions for reducing risk:

- Follow a two-person policy whenever possible – during any program, have at least two adults present. Where possible, the two adults should be unrelated.
- Require two volunteers/staff to transport children / youth / vulnerable adults in an

organization vehicle

or in a volunteer's vehicle.

- Visit frail seniors with a partner.

- When the two-person policy cannot be used, notify a parent before a proposed one-to-one contact

with a child / youth (e.g. in a mentoring relationship) and ask permission to meet.

- Where the two-person policy cannot be used, require that one-to-one contacts between a volunteer / staff and child / youth / vulnerable adult take place in a public area either inside or outside the

organization's facilities, where both people can be seen by others.

- Add a window in the door of each classroom / activity room, or always leave the door open.

- All staff / volunteers working with children / youth / vulnerable adults should wear name tags.

- Parent / caregiver contact information should be carefully maintained.

- Parents of nursery-aged children should be assigned Identification numbers, which must be given

before the child will be released.

- No child should be dropped off without a leader present.

- No parents or adults should enter a classroom / activity room without permission.

Step 5: Implement Screening Standards to each Ministry Position

Low Risk Ministries

All people in these ministries shall:

- Receive a Ministry Description of the position.
- Be trained for the ministry.
- Meet regularly with their supervisor who will provide support, feedback, mentoring and information about the nature and duties of the ministry.

Medium Risk Ministries

It is required that all people in these ministries:

- Are known to the organization or be a regular church attender for at least 12 months or have a reference from another parish which they regularly attended for a minimum of 12 months before they are assigned to the ministry.
- Fill out an Application Form
- Receive a Ministry Description for the position
- Be trained for the ministry.
- Receive a copy of the safe Church policy/sexual misconduct Policy.
- Watch the 'Safe Church' training video at the beginning of the ministry and every three years thereafter. A record of this training will be logged at the Diocesan Office.
- Meet regularly with a supervisor who will provide support, feedback and mentoring.

High Risk Ministries

It is required that all people in these ministries must have the following completed *before* beginning their new role:

- Be known to the organization or be a regular church attender for at least 12 months or have a reference from another parish which they regularly attended for a minimum of 12 months before they are assigned to the ministry.
- Fill out an Application Form and provide a list of two references. Sign the release on the Application Form allowing for reference checks. The senior person responsible for the ministry will ensure the reference checks are completed.
- Receive a Ministry Description of the position.
- Be trained for the ministry.
- Watch the ‘Safe Church’ training video at the beginning of the ministry and every three years thereafter.
- Receive a copy of the Screen in Faith policy.
- Document all one-on-one visits or meetings that occur with children or vulnerable adults.
- All off-site activities involving children under the age of 16 shall require a parental consent form signed by parents or legal guardians.
- Meet regularly with a supervisor who will provide support, feedback and mentoring.
- Complete a current police record check through the approved background checking service at the beginning of the ministry and every three years thereafter.

Step 6: Apply the Screening Standards.

All screening standards must be applied equitably and consistently. Do not lower the standards and do not skip steps. It is the nature of the position not the nature of the person holding the position which determines the standard. It is the responsibility of the parish, ministry or organizational leadership: bishop, churchwardens, incumbent, priest-in-charge, deacon-in-charge, lay-reader-in-charge, to ensure that screening standards are implemented.

Once you have established a list of those who need a police check, please securely email it to the Diocesan Safe Church facilitator.

Step 7: Establish Training and Supervision.

Clear lines of supervision must be established for all ministry positions. All individuals ministering in positions of authority should have regularly scheduled meetings with a supervisor in order to discuss the ministry, ensure that their actions remain appropriate, and that participants are benefiting from the ministry. The Diocese shall supply training resources to assist the parishes with this responsibility – see appendix.

Step 8: Make a Selection Decision Based on the Screening Information.

To make the selection decision:

- Review the documented material.
- List the screening standards and where concerns were raised, if any.
- Obtain more information, if needed, e.g. a second interview.

- Assess the information based on the nature of the ministry, services and activities provided; the degree of vulnerability of the participant; the relevant ethical and spiritual principles associated with the ministry and the potential risk for harm.
- Assess the information objectively and consistently.
- If the information obtained through the screening procedures does not raise any concerns then the applicant can be accepted into the ministry position. If a decision is made not to accept the person for a ministry position, they must be informed. Those implementing the screening process and making the selection decisions may be the corporation, incumbent, organizational leader or individual who directly oversees the ministry. The selection decision is not communicated to the individual being screened until the incumbent or organizational leader ratifies the decision and signs the Screening Checklist. If there are concerns raised in the screening process, then the incumbent or organizational leader should immediately be consulted.
- If the police information check comes back to the Diocese and is flagged for concern, the Bishop, in consultation with DART, will make a decision about the suitability for ministry for the volunteer who will be notified by the Bishop.

The signing of the Screening Checklist is the responsibility of the incumbent or corporation or organizational leader.

Step 9: Evaluate and Enforce the Screening Standards.

The screening process does not stop when the individual is accepted for a ministry. Ongoing training, supervision and evaluation will be required. This policy is designed to assist parishes, ministries and organizations to implement a screening program appropriate to their context.

Frequently Asked Questions

What if I am in doubt about whether an action is inappropriate?

When an individual is in doubt about appropriate or inappropriate courses of action, or is in doubt about the vulnerability of a particular group or individual, or when he or she believes a boundary may have been crossed in the course of a ministry, he or she *must* report the situation to the supervisor and seek advice on how to proceed. If the supervisory person is unable, unwilling or unavailable to assist, advice should be sought from another qualified individual. It is important that the supervisory or advisory person be identified in advance so that there is no question about whom to contact should it become necessary.

What if a volunteer is active in more than one ministry?

If volunteers/ employees are active in more than one ministry position, they need to be screened for the position with the highest level of risk. If volunteers/ employees change positions, the extent of the screening used for the previous position needs to be appropriate for the new one. If not, conduct additional screening as necessary.

How do I know my information will be kept protected?

To protect the privacy of information in the document, it will be stored at the diocesan office. All information will be handled in a confidential manner consistent with the Alberta Personal Information Protection Act (PIPA) on which the Diocesan Privacy Policy is based. In the parish, all screening documents (excluding the Police Records Check) must be stored in a locked and secured filing cabinet for an indefinite period of time. Access to the cabinet shall be limited to the incumbent, corporation, and the parish administrator. Those who have access to the files have a moral obligation to do everything within their power to maintain confidentiality. The location of the locked filing cabinet may or may not be at the parish. However, if it is not at the parish, it must be in a location mutually agreed upon by those who have access to the files. Files must never be left out in the open or in a readily accessible location. People being screened should know who has access to their file. Although this type of record keeping and storage may be a difficult adjustment for some parishes, maintaining appropriate documentation is key to a meaningful screening program and is required as proof of implementation of the screening

Do long time, experienced and trusted members need to go through the same training and screening procedures as new recruits?

Yes. We cannot make exceptions to these policies; all clergy, staff, and volunteers must keep up to date with all of the screening steps and training.

What happens if an individual holds multiple positions within the parish?

Individuals who hold more than one position within the parish or organization are to be screened in a manner consistent with the position that holds the highest level of risk and has the most stringent screening requirements.

What are the Screening Standards for Parish Employees?

Many of our church employees are given authority, by virtue of their position, and perform their work/ministry with little supervision in places where they could have access to children. Therefore, all paid positions in the church will be ranked as a high risk ministry and the screening standards of this risk level are to be applied to it. Exceptions to this norm should be documented and kept with the ministry description for this position.

What are the screening standards for other clergy in our parish?

Other clergy in the parish, such as deacons, lay readers, honorary assistants, curates etc. must be screened the same as anyone in *high-risk ministry* positions. As these are often unpaid positions, these clergy can be submitted as volunteers, and therefore require a letter and a vulnerable sector check. A new Police Information Check with a Vulnerable Sector Check must be completed every three years, and is required to hold a license and be active in ministry in the Diocese of Edmonton.

Police Information Checks and Vulnerable Sector Checks

Those in high and medium risk ministries and all employees of the Diocese must have a Police Information Check. Those who are employees and in high risk ministries must also include in their check a vulnerable sector check. These must be updated every three years. All checks must be submitted directly to the Diocesan office and held there. They WILL NOT be returned to or kept at, the parish.

Compliance with Safe Church Policy:

Compliance with this Policy is mandatory. Minor changes may be made, from time to time, to the guidelines and procedures as they develop. It is the responsibility of the parish leadership (corporation, incumbent) to ensure that screening standards are implemented in the parish. The parish leadership is required to send in, annually, with the parochial reports, the "**Screening Compliance Parish Report**" which confirms that the parish has met compliance indicators:

- All ministry activities of the congregation are listed and categorized for risk (low, medium or high)
- All persons in medium and high risk positions have completed Safe Church training (video) at the beginning of the ministry and every three years thereafter.
- All persons in a high and medium risk positions have submitted a records check and vulnerable records check to the Diocesan Office, at the beginning of the ministry and every three years thereafter.

Appendix

How To Obtain A Police Information Check/Vulnerable Sector Search

Diocesan and Parish Employees (both lay and ordained) who reside in the Greater Edmonton Area are able to obtain a Police Information Check and Vulnerable Sector Search in three ways:

- Through batch submission: this must be done in person at the Synod Office. You will need to bring two pieces of ID, one of which must be valid government issued photo ID. This method will result in the completed information check being paid for by and returned directly to the Synod Office. Please make an appointment so that the appropriate person is there to help you.
- Police Information Checks/Vulnerable Sector Searches can now be completed and paid for online at: <https://www.edmontonpolice.ca/CommunityPolicing/OperationalServices/PoliceInformationCheck/VulnerableSectorChecks>

Checks completed **online** will be emailed to the person who completed the check and will then need to be forwarded to the assistant to the bishop at the Synod Office. Please note that this requires immediate payment, so please retain the receipt so you can request reimbursement from the Diocese or Parish who employs you.

- Police Information Checks/Vulnerable Sector Searches can be completed in person at the Police Information Check Section at #108, 14315-118 Avenue Nexus Business Park, Edmonton. These forms will be returned to the person who completed it and will need to be brought to the Synod Office. Payment is due at the time of the check and cannot be billed to the Diocese, so please keep your receipt and submit it to your employer for reimbursement

Volunteers and Unpaid Clergy who reside in the Greater Edmonton Area may obtain a Police Information Check and Vulnerable Sector Search can be obtained in two ways. Both online and in person applications will require a signed letter from your parish leadership indicating you are a volunteer with the organization.

- Police Information Checks/Vulnerable Sector Searches can now be completed and paid for online at: <https://www.edmontonpolice.ca/CommunityPolicing/OperationalServices/PoliceInformationCheck/VulnerableSectorChecks>

Checks completed **online** will be emailed to the person who completed the check and will then need to be forwarded to the Safe Church Coordinator at the Synod Office. Please note that this requires immediate payment, so please retain the receipt so you can request reimbursement from the Diocese or Parish who employs you.

- Police Information Checks/Vulnerable Sector Searches can be completed in person at the Police Information Check Section at #108, 14315-118 Avenue Nexus Business Park, Edmonton. These forms will be returned to the person who completed it and will need to be brought or mailed to the Synod Office. Payment is due at the time of the check and cannot be billed to the Diocese, so please keep your receipt and submit it to your employer for reimbursement

Police Checks for Those Who Reside Outside of the Greater Edmonton Area:

If you live outside the greater Edmonton area, please go to your local RCMP / Police station with your two pieces of ID. Volunteers require will require a signed letter from your parish leadership indicating you are a volunteer with the organization.

Please return your completed check to the Safe Church Coordinator, care of the Synod Office. If your check is not clear, and you still wish to apply for the volunteer position, please submit your check with a letter indicating that you would like Bishop to contact you.

Please retain your receipt and submit to your employer or parish for reimbursement.

How do I fill out the forms?

Information important to include on each form:

All Police Checks:

Be sure to sign any areas involving the “vulnerable sector”, as this informs the police that you will be working with children/vulnerable people. Also, be sure to check that both sides of the form are completed, and signed where indicated. Read all areas carefully to ensure that the form is complete.

If I had a check done for another agency, may I use it for the Diocese?

If you have had a check done by another agency we will accept this check done provided it is:

- a current check (within the past three years) and;
- includes a vulnerable sector search if the position with the Diocese of Edmonton requires it

Who will see the completed forms?

All forms are confidential. Completed Police Checks will come to the Synod Office will be kept in a locked filing system.

What happens if a check is not clear?

Those wishing to continue in volunteer or paid ministry who have an unclear check are required to submit it to the Synod Office. The Bishop will contact each person who returns an unclear check. The Bishop, in consultation with DART, will review the results of unclear checks if the person wishes to continue the application for a position.

List of Ministries

A list of ministries that may be considered high, medium, or low risk. Please note that many parishes have roles that may vary in title, role, or responsibility; these examples are to act merely as a guide. Should you have any questions about the risk level of a position, please reach out to the Safe Church Coordinator for clarity. This list includes but is not limited to:

High Risk: Ongoing, intensive or lone interactions with vulnerable persons,

- Clergy
- Youth leaders
- Directors of children's or youth choirs
- Trainers and supervisors of young servers.
- Sunday school teacher
- Assisting people with disabilities
- Lay reader
- Home visitor
- Nursery coordinator/attendant
- Seniors home visitor

Medium Risk: Leaders in ministries with adults involving meetings:

- Adult choir or music group
- Study group leaders
- Baptismal preparation leaders
- Support groups leaders
- Wardens
- Envelope secretary
- Treasurer or those with access to money and confidential records

Low Risk: Sunday morning ministries with adults and other adult meetings:

- Greeters/sidespeople
- Vestry member
- Adult Sunday School
- Arrangers of coffee fellowship
- Audio-visual controller
- Bulletin folder
- Readers
- Janitor /cleaner
- Deanery Representative
- Musician

- Wedding/external event coordinator

Sample Sunday School Job Description

Sample ministry job description for primary school age (ages 6-12) church school teacher / leader

Title of the Position: Church School Teacher for ages 6-12
Responsible to: Church School Superintendent/Coordinator
Responsible for: 15 children in a grade 4-6 class
Main Goal: *(Insert your mission statement here)*

General summary: The Church School Teacher will oversee and facilitate the teaching of the curriculum in such a way that lives are changed and growth is seen in the children. This will include preparations of classroom activities and ensuring all necessary supplies are available for classroom time. The teacher will be responsible for record keeping, care of the children and encouraging children in their education.

Roles, Responsibilities and Tasks: *(list the expectations of this position)*

- Plan and teach a weekly lesson
- Maintain a vital spiritual life
- Maintain confidentiality unless the child is in danger
- Participate in events and activities that develop leadership skills
- Maintain accurate records of attendance
- Attend bimonthly teachers' meetings
- Advise the church school superintendent of his/her absence and find a suitable replacement
- Ensure that the safety issues presented in orientation are followed

Skills, Experience, and Qualities: *(list all that are necessary for this task)*

- Gift of teaching, time management and organizational skills
- Compassion for children and experience working with them
- Patience and sensitivity to the needs of children
- Creativity in sharing stories and personal experiences

Screening Procedure: In accordance with the Diocese of Edmonton Safe Church Policy regarding the screening of all adults involved in programs with children and youth, this procedure includes completing a teacher/leader application form, and, in the case of prospective teachers/leaders, an interview by the parish leadership team, a reference check, and a Police Records Check/Vulnerable Sector Check.

Orientation and Training: *(list all training courses)*

- Mandatory Diocese of Edmonton Safe Church program
- Bimonthly teacher's meetings *(or whatever your training will be)*

Support, Supervision and Evaluation: As a support to all adults/youth engaged in children/youth/vulnerable adult programs, *(insert name of organization)* will provide monthly visits by the church school superintendent, self-evaluation opportunities at training events, and regular support.

Schedule and Commitment: *(insert duration and terms of contract)*

Sample ministry job description for youth teacher/leader

(Insert your Organization name here and adapt as needed)

Title of the Position: Youth Teacher/Leader

Responsible to: Church School Superintendent/Coordinator

Responsible for: 12 youth between the ages of 12 and 18

Main Goal: *(Insert your organization's mission statement here)*

General Summary: The youth leader will oversee and facilitate the teaching of the curriculum in such a way that lives are changed and growth is seen in the youth. This will include preparation of classroom and social activities and ensuring all necessary supplies and arrangements are made for learning, social and service opportunities. The leader will record attendance, care for the youth and encourage them in their religious education.

Roles, Responsibility and Tasks: *(list the expectations of this position)*

- Plan and teach a lesson and/or social activity and/or service opportunity
- Maintain a vital spiritual life
- Maintain confidentiality, unless a youth is in danger
- Participate in events and activities that develop leadership skills
- Maintain accurate records of attendance
- Attend teachers' meeting
- Advise the church school superintendent of his/her absence and find a suitable replacement
- Ensure that the safety issues presented in orientation are followed

Skills, Experience and Qualities: *(list all that are necessary for this task)*

- Gift of teaching, time management and organizational skills
- Compassion for youth and some experience working with them
- Patience and sensitivity to the needs of youth
- Creativity in sharing stories and personal experiences

Screening Procedure: In accordance with the Diocese of Edmonton Safe Church Policy regarding the screening of all adults involved in programs with children and youth, this procedure includes completing a teacher/leader application form, and, in the case of prospective teachers/leaders, an interview by the parish leadership team, a reference check, and a Police Records Check/Vulnerable Sector Check.

Orientation and Training: *(list all training courses)*

- Mandatory Diocese of Edmonton Safe Church program
- Bimonthly teacher's meetings *(or whatever your training will be)*

Support, Supervision and Evaluation: As a support to all adults/youth engaged in children/youth/vulnerable adult programs, *(insert name of organization)* will provide monthly visits by

the church school superintendent, self-evaluation opportunities at training events, and regular support.

Schedule and Commitment: *(insert duration and terms of contract)*

Sample Ministry Job Description for Pastoral Visitation Program for Seniors

(Insert your church's name here and adapt as needed)

Title of the Position: Visitor for Seniors

Responsible to: Session Coordinator

Responsible for: 22 elderly people who are members and adherents of *(name of organization)*

Main Goal: *(Insert your organization's mission statement here)* or something more activity-specific like, "To walk faithfully with the seniors of our congregation, offering comfort, hope and encouragement."

General Summary: The Visitor for Seniors will regularly visit elderly people, offering conversation, reading and conducting prayer as requested, and bringing news from the church. The Visitor for Seniors may gather and bring articles of interest to the elderly person, will keep a record log of visits, and treat conversation with confidential care.

Roles, Responsibility and Tasks: *(list the expectations of this position)*

- Maintain a vital spiritual life
- Plan a visiting schedule that fits with the needs of the elderly person
- Maintain confidentiality, unless an elderly person is in danger
- Participate in events and activities that develop geriatric leadership skills
- Maintain accurate records of visits
- Advise the team leader of an expected absence and find a suitable replacement
- Ensure that the safety issues presented in orientation are followed

Skills, Experience and Qualities: *(list all that are necessary for this task)*

- Gift of time management and organizational skills
- Compassion for seniors and some experience working with them
- Patience and sensitivity to the needs of seniors
- Good listening skills
- A willingness to share stories and personal experiences

Screening Procedure: In accordance with The Diocese of Edmonton Safe Church Policy, screening of adults involved in ministry with vulnerable adults includes completing an application form, an interview by the parish leadership team, a reference check, view the Safe Church video, and a Police Records Check.

Orientation and Training: *(list all training courses)*

- Mandatory orientation program
- Awareness for fire, safety and emergency procedures
- Additional training specifically for seniors

Support, Supervision and Evaluation: As a support to all adults/youth engaged in children/youth/vulnerable adult ministry, *(insert name of organization)* will provide regular check-ins at session meeting, self-evaluation opportunities at training events and regular prayer support.

Schedule and commitment: *(insert duration and terms of contract)*

Generic Position Description Template

Position Description for Volunteers and Employees in the Diocese of Edmonton

Date

Position Description

Overview of position: *(one or two or three sentence 'big picture' summary)*

Tasks/Responsibilities

Qualifications Required: *(skills/ knowledge, education experience/ current Police Record Check with Vulnerable Sector Check within the last 12 months/ references)*

Accountability *(external: legal accountability to profession; internal: to parish)*

Reporting Relationship: *(to whom, how, how frequently)*

Time required: *(full-time, part-time, hours per week)*

Term of Office: *(length of time, nature of contract)*

Orientation/Training provided:

Other Resources/Support: *(finances, equipment, etc./ Canons and Constitution including Regulations/The Policy Manual/ Treasurer's Manual/Warden's Handbook)*

Benefits: *(employment benefits, leave, sick leave, statutory holidays, continuing education, reward & recognition, learning opportunities)*

Compensation: *(salary, expenses)*
According

Code of Conduct: *(confidentiality etc./ Resources: professional organization's guidelines, i.e. for Treasurer's position Safe Church Policy)*

Safe Church Screening Checklist

For Medium and High Risk Positions

Risk: High/Medium

Ministry Position:

Applicant's name:

Address:

Home Phone:

E-mail:

Work Phone:

- One year in parish or former parish reference
- Application Form Completed
- Position Description provided
- Interview with organizational leader/parish leader
- Video watched
- Safe Church Policy read/signed
- Position-specific training (ie. Nursery, pastoral visiting etc)

Police Information Check with Vulnerable Sector Check

Date of acceptance:

Reason for refusal:

Police Records Check/VSC

Refusal discussed with Incumbent/ Organization Leader:

Yes

No

Refusal discussed with others:

Yes

No

If yes, print name(s) and give reason:

I acknowledge that these screening standards were completed and I agree with the decision to proceed or refuse this candidate's ministry in the position stated above.

Incumbent:

Signature:

Instructions: Place this completed document in the applicant's file in a locked filing cabinet in the parish.

Volunteer Ministry Application Form

(parish name, address, logo etc.)

Name:

Address:

Email address:

Cell #:

Ministry Position for which you wish to apply:

Start Date:

List any ministries in which you would like to serve. *(The parish may list all the ministries for which people may volunteer and the candidate will check off all that are of interest.)*

Why do you want to serve in these ministries?

How do you hope to benefit?

How do you hope to be of benefit to the church community?

Describe your faith and experience of church

List the qualifications and skill that you bring to these ministries.

Relevant Volunteer Experience:

Church Experience:

Employment/Training Background:

Employer

Position/Major Responsibility

Dates of service (yy/mm)

From:

To:

Please read carefully. A check in each box indicates agreement.

- I understand that ministry is a privilege, not a right, and that my desire to serve must, at all times, be affirmed by the church/organization through its screening process.
- I understand that an appointment to a high risk ministry position requires that I acquire a Police Records Check with Vulnerable Sector Check as part of the screening process.
- I understand that in accepting a ministry position, I am committing myself to act in compliance with the beliefs, values, policies and processes of this church/organization.
- I have received a copy of the ministry position description and training for the position and understand the responsibilities associated with it.
- I understand that training and accountability are key support for my position. Therefore, I will attend training, as required by the position, and meet regularly with the leader responsible for the ministry to which I am being appointed.

- I know that the parish will maintain a file on persons filling medium and high risk positions in compliance with the diocesan Safe Church Policy. This information is private and will be kept in a secure location. Upon request, I shall be given access to that information.

Signature of Applicant

Date

Ministry Guidelines: Nursery Care Givers, Church School Teachers, Youth Workers

Children are naturally trusting and readily place their faith in adults who care for them and they often do not have the skills, knowledge, or experience to distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate behavior in the adults who care for them. This leaves children particularly vulnerable to abuse. The following guidelines address some of the special considerations that need to be undertaken when working with children and youth. While it is acknowledged that some parishes may have difficulty with implementation, these guidelines protect both the young people and those who work with them. Every effort must be made to follow them as closely as possible.

Children should be supervised at all times. When Church School is over, children should be escorted to meet their parents or remain under supervision in the classroom until they are picked up. Parishes with large numbers of children in the Nursery or Church School should implement a more formalized sign in and out procedure, particularly where visitors or infrequent attendees may not be known to the staff.

Children must be supervised by adults or responsible teenagers. While all Church School teachers need a supervisor to whom they can regularly report, teens should have the opportunity to check-in with a responsible adult before or after each lesson. While it is not necessary that an adult be present in every classroom at all times, at least one clearly identified adult should be readily available each Sunday to handle any emergencies or extraordinary situations that may arise. Periodic check-ins in each classroom by the supervising adult are recommended.

There shall be at least two leaders supervising a group of children. In order that a single teacher not be alone with a group of children, establish either a schedule whereby parents take turns assisting the teacher each week or designate one person (perhaps one of that Sunday's greeters / sidespeople) to roam among all the classrooms each week, checking on each class, and supplying assistance when and where necessary.

Many guidelines suggest a leader to child ratio of 1:5 for infants and toddlers (under 2 and a half years old), 1:8 for older preschool children (2 and a half to 6 years old), and 1:10 for school age children (over 6 years old). Churches are not bound by these ratios, however, where leader-to-child ratios consistently exceed the suggested numbers, the parish should attempt to recruit more Church School Teachers. The strategies mentioned above, in point 3, may prove useful when recruiting additional help.

It is best that Church School Classes and Youth Group Meetings take place in public spaces. The church is better than a private home; a church hall is better than a secluded room. An open door is better than a closed door; a door with a window is better than a solid door.

Special events or field trips off church premises must be pre-approved by church leadership. Parents must be notified well in advance of the outing and written parental approval must be obtained for every participant, without exception. If using private vehicles, additional releases maybe needed. At

least two adults shall be available to supervise the event and leaders of both genders should be available if working with a co-ed group.

If an event requires that a leader drive children or youth, the leader must hold a valid driver's license and be adequately insured. Seat belts must be available for all passengers. When driving young children, approved child restraints or car seats must be available and used as required by law. The same holds true for any vehicle offered by parents/care-givers for transporting children. Leaders must not have any alcohol or drugs in their system when driving. Leaders should avoid being alone with a single child in the car unless under extreme circumstances, such as driving a child home in an emergency.

Church School Teachers and Youth Workers should avoid one-on-one interaction in an isolated setting with children and youth. If a child or adolescent requests to speak privately with an adult, it should be done out of earshot but within view of another adult or in a public place. It is inappropriate for a Church School Teacher or Youth Worker to suggest a private meeting with an individual child.

Encourage parents of young children to take them to the washroom before Church School. If a child needs to use the washroom during Church School, he or she should be escorted by an adult. It is best if the adult remain outside the washroom with the door open. An adult should not enter a cubicle with a child and close the door. If a very young child or a child who has a disability or who is ill requires more toileting assistance, a second adult must be present in or at the door of the washroom.

In general, physical contact should occur only at the child's initiation and never without the child's permission. Any physical contact with children or youth must be of a non-sexual nature and appropriate to the situation.

Appropriate contact includes:

- bending down to the child's eye level, speaking kindly, and listening attentively
- Gaining permission before hugging a child and respecting his or her right to refuse a hug
- Taking a child's hand and leading him or her to an activity
- Comforting a child by placing an arm around his or her shoulder and giving a gentle squeeze from the side
- Praising or welcoming a child by holding the child's two hands in yours
- Patting the child on the head, hand, back, or shoulder in affirmation
- Holding a preschool child who is crying, provided that he or she wants to be held.

Inappropriate contact includes:

- Kissing, or coaxing a child to kiss you
- Extended hugging or tickling
- Touching any area of the body normally covered by a bathing suit, specifically the buttocks, thighs, breasts or groin areas
- Carrying older children, having them sit on your lap, or having them rub up next to you.

Physical or verbal force should not be used to discipline children. Gentle physical restraint is appropriate only if a child is in danger of causing damage or injuring themselves or others.

Sexual contact of any type with a child or youth is always inappropriate regardless of who initiates it. If a youth initiates inappropriate physical or sexual contact with a leader, it is the responsibility of the leader to stop such contact immediately, explain the necessary boundaries to the youth, then re-establish and maintain the appropriate boundaries. **Any interaction in which a boundary may have been crossed shall be documented and reported to a supervisor.** Note that it is far less likely that inappropriate physical or sexual contact will occur when others are present. To avoid any inappropriate contact, or allegations of inappropriate contact, leaders must try to avoid being alone with a child or youth at all times.

Jokes, innuendoes, or compliments of a sexual nature are always inappropriate and strictly forbidden. Be cautious when children or youth are asking questions or seeking advice around topics of a sexual nature. This is particularly true when some may deliberately draw the leader on. As a guideline, do not say or do anything you would not want to see reported in the newspaper or on TV. Do not say or do anything that you would not want your family to find out about, and do not say or do anything that you would not want the participant's family to find out about.

In overnight situations, no adult/leader should sleep in the same space as a participant. Sleeping and changing areas should be segregated by gender. Leaders and participants should change in separate areas so that one is never naked in the presence of the other.

There may be times when a Church School or Youth Group Leader suspects that a child has been a victim of parental abuse or neglect, or is at risk of being subject to abuse or neglect, or where a child or youth discloses such abuse to the leader. In these situations, the leader is required by law to report the case to the local Child Intervention Services office. This requirement cannot be delegated to anyone else. The person who becomes aware of abuse or neglect or who suspects that the risk for abuse or neglect is present must call the Child Intervention Services or the police.

If a child discloses neglect or abuse the following steps should be followed:

1. Believe in the child and take his or her disclosure seriously.
2. Listen openly and calmly to the child but do not ask leading questions.
3. Reassure the child that you will do your best to get the right kind of help.
4. Record the facts. Write down the child's name, address, telephone number, the time and place of the conversation, and what the child told you in his or her own words.
5. Report the disclosure to Child Services or to the police.
6. Tell your supervisor and the clergy that you have made such a report.

Ministry Guidelines: Conducting Pastoral Care

In times of crisis or uncertainty, people will often turn to the Church for support and understanding. Pastoral Care represents an important and rewarding ministry for those involved. However, it is important to recognize that in times of crisis, people become more vulnerable than they would otherwise be and that a pastoral caregiver may potentially have a great deal of influence over an individual's attitude and behavior. Pastoral caregivers in these circumstances must be particularly aware of their own biases and, regardless of their intentions, must do their best not to unduly influence the person seeking pastoral care.

The guidelines shown below should be followed when conducting pastoral care:

- Pastoral caregivers should be aware of their own level of competence and avoid working in areas for which they are unqualified.
- Pastoral caregivers should never allow any form of sexual or intimate contact with those to whom they offer pastoral care regardless of invitation or consent. This includes, but is not limited to, all forms of overt or covert seductive speech, gestures and behaviors as well as intimate or explicitly sexual contact.
- Pastoral care relationships are for the benefit of the person being cared for. They should be entered into only with agreement from the person seeking care, and should be continued only as long as it is reasonably clear that the person is gaining some benefit from the pastoral relationship.
- If the pastoral caregiver becomes unable or unwilling to continue the relationship, he or she should endeavor to arrange for the person to see another pastoral caregiver.
- Pastoral caregivers must treat all information and communications obtained in meetings as strictly confidential and should not disclose them to anyone except where required by law or where given written consent by the individual(s) involved.

Ministering to the Elderly

The following should be kept in mind while working with elderly individuals. Under the category of elderly people we must keep in mind that some elderly individuals are vulnerable:

- Approach each person as an individual with dignity and respect. Do not prejudge an elderly person's interests or abilities. Physical difficulties may not be indicative of interest or mental acuteness.
- Elderly people often hold clergy and other church personnel in extremely high regard, particularly if they were taught at an early age not to question the Church. Extra caution must be used not to exert undue influence in these situations, particularly in the area of financial giving.
- It is recommended that all donors should seek independent financial and legal counsel before making any significant contributions to the Church. Elderly people should also be encouraged to speak with their family before making significant contributions in order to avoid allegations of undue influence or abuse of trust.
- Be aware of signs that an elderly person may not be caring for him or herself as he or she should, and may require additional community resources or assistance. Signs of personal neglect include, but are not limited to: a decrease in personal hygiene, wearing the same clothes all the time, particularly if they are stained or soiled, and periods of confusion, disorientation, or loss of memory.
- If you become concerned about the well being of an elderly person, speak to your supervisor about trying to initiate contact with a family member in order to discuss the situation and recommend possible courses of action.
- When meeting elderly people in their homes, be sure to arrange the visit in advance and do not overstay your **welcome**.
- People visiting elderly people should be aware of their own level of competence and avoid working in areas for which they are unqualified.

Ministry Guidelines: Conducting In-Home Visits

There are a wide variety of reasons and circumstances that make meeting people in their own homes a necessary part of the Church's ministry. When visiting shut-ins, preparing people for baptism, welcoming newcomers, conducting stewardship or planned giving campaigns, or responding to pastoral crises, it is often necessary and desirable to go to someone's home.

However, visiting people in their own homes presents its own set of challenges. Homes, by their nature, are private environments. A person tends to be more comfortable and relaxed in his or her own environment, and this increased degree of relaxation may, in fact, make him or her more vulnerable. Conversely, because the person being visited is better able to control the situation in his or her own environment, he or she may hold a higher degree of power than the visitor. Visitors should be aware that they are potential victims of abuse when visiting someone's home and should take the necessary steps to protect themselves.

The following guidelines are meant to protect both parties in these situations - the visitor and the visited.

- Always arrange the visit in advance. Establish a starting time and approximate ending time, as well as a clear purpose for the visit so that the individual knows exactly what to expect.
- Make another person (secretary, friend, colleague) aware of where you are going and when you can be expected to return.
- Be respectful of people's time and do not overstay your welcome. When visiting a shut-in or someone who is ill, be particularly conscious of how they are feeling and avoid over-tiring them.
- Keep the pastoral purpose of your visit in mind at all times. Do not attempt to unduly persuade or influence the person, particularly if he or she seems confused. Never offer advice about medication or medical treatment, and avoid arguing with, or agitating the person you are visiting.
- Stay in the most public areas of the home – the living room, family room, or kitchen. Avoid entering a person's bedroom unless a 3rd party is present in the home.
- Choose a seat at a comfortable distance from the person you are talking to, avoid sitting next to them on a couch or sofa. Do not invite, initiate, or tolerate any unwanted or inappropriate physical contact.
- Visitors should never engage in any form of sexual impropriety with those whom they are visiting. Sexual impropriety includes, but is not limited to, all forms of overt or covert seductive speech, gestures and behaviors as well as explicitly sexual contact.
- Do not agree to meet anyone in his or her own home if you sense your own personal safety may be compromised or if you feel that there is the potential that a boundary may be crossed. If a person whom you do not know well asks for a meeting and you are at all suspicious, arrange to meet him/her at the church offices, a coffee shop or a restaurant until you know him/her better.
- When first arriving at a person's home, assess the situation for anything that may be out of the ordinary. Do not continue if the person is inappropriately dressed, under the influence of alcohol or drugs, or if a person or animal acts in a threatening or aggressive manner, or if the animal is not properly restrained.

- If the person acts strangely, says or does things that make you feel unsafe or uncomfortable, or initiates inappropriate physical contact, tell them to stop, then, re-establish and maintain appropriate boundaries. If the behavior continues, excuse yourself and leave, document what happened, and report it to your supervisor. Do not stay in a potentially dangerous or compromising situation!
- Do not take the person away from the home for a walk or in your car unless specifically arranged in advance as part of the visit and approved, in advance, by your supervisor. If driving a person to appointments or errands is part of the stated ministry, drivers must hold a valid driver's license and insurance. Seat belts must be available for all passengers. Drivers must not have any alcohol or drugs in their system when driving. If possible, driving ministries should be team ministries to avoid being alone in a car with a vulnerable person.
- Visitors must treat all information and communications obtained while visiting as strictly confidential and should not disclose them to anyone except where required by law or where given written consent by the individual(s) involved. When discussing the details of a particular situation with a supervisor, the identity of the people involved must be protected.
- Except where the stated purpose of the visit is stewardship or planned giving, it is best not to accept gifts or donations when making in-home visits. Encourage the person to make his or her donation using the offering plate or by mailing it directly to the Church. If the person insists on giving you something while you are there, provide a written receipt. Explain that the church will issue an official receipt at the appropriate time.
- It is recommended that all donors should seek independent financial and legal counsel before making any significant contributions to The Church. People should also be encouraged to speak with their family before making significant contributions in order to avoid allegations of undue influence or abuse of trust.
- Be aware of signs that a person may not be caring for him/herself as he or she should, and may require additional community resources to assist him or her. Signs of personal neglect include, but are not limited to: a decrease in personal hygiene, wearing the same clothes all the time, particularly if they are stained or soiled, and periods of confusion, disorientation, or loss of memory.
- If you become concerned about the well being of a person whom you are visiting, speak to your supervisor about trying to initiate contact with a family member in order to discuss the situation and recommend possible courses of action. Keep in mind that a conversation of this nature with a family member may be perceived by the person whom you are visiting as a betrayal of trust and breach of confidentiality. Care and discretion must be exercised in such situations.
- Persons who make in-home visits to the same person on a regular basis should be aware of their own level of competence and avoid working in areas for which they are unqualified.

Ministry Guidelines: Conducting Hospital or Care Facility Visits

People in a hospital or nursing home may be in unfamiliar surroundings. They may be experiencing considerable pain, uncertainty, or fear over their condition. They may be affected by anesthesia or another medication. People in these situations become more vulnerable because they may not be completely themselves.

Additional care must be taken when ministering to them, as outlined below:

- Upon arrival at the hospital or nursing home, check with a nurse or attendant to determine if the person is able to receive visitors and to make them aware of your presence.
- Find out about institutional rules and procedures and follow them closely. For example, some hospitals may require the use of security badges for regular visitors. Some areas of the hospital may have strict hand washing or other policies in place.
- If you are a regular hospital visitor and your hospital has an on-site chaplain, make yourself known to this person. Use this person as a resource when appropriate. The hospital chaplain will be aware of any procedures or issues specific to his or her hospital.
- Be prepared to listen to the situation or diagnosis with the individual you are visiting but refrain from giving opinions or advice. Never pass judgment on the nature or quality of medical care being provided. However, in some extraordinary circumstances it may seem the patient needs an advocate. Such action can only be done with the patient's permission.
- Be prepared to meet with friends or family members who may be visiting at the same time as you are. Keep in mind that these people may or may not hold the same religious beliefs as the person you are visiting.
- Discussions with a patient, their family, or friends should be held in strict confidence. Visitors must treat all information and communications obtained while visiting as strictly confidential and should not disclose them to anyone except where required by law or where given written consent by the individual(s) involved. When discussing the details of a particular situation with a supervisor, the identity of the people involved must be protected.
- If a nurse or doctor comes to engage the patient in discussion or treatment, excuse yourself to a waiting area until the conversation is finished, unless specifically requested to remain by the patient or the health care professional.
- If a patient requires assistance to use the washroom, or to get out of bed, seek the help of a nurse or orderly. Never attempt to help the person on your own.
- Do not take the person away from the hospital or nursing home for a walk or in your car unless specifically arranged in advance as part of the visit and approved, in advance, both by your supervisor and the appropriate authorities at the hospital or nursing home. If driving a person to appointments or errands is part of the stated ministry, drivers must hold a valid driver's license and insurance. Seat belts must be available for all passengers. Drivers must not have any alcohol or drugs in their system when driving. If possible, driving ministries should be team ministries to avoid being alone in a car with a vulnerable person.
- People making hospital or nursing home visits should be aware of their own level of competence and avoid working in areas for which they are unqualified.

Sample Acceptance Letter For a ministry position in the parish

[please edit to fit your situation]

Church letterhead

Dear:

I am delighted to confirm that you have been [*accepted appointed*] to the position of [*name of the position*] beginning (*start date*) for a period of [*length of time*].

I for the name of the leader(s) of the [*name the ministry*] will be in touch with you to review training and meeting times. Each year [*I/ name of head of the ministry*] will meet with you to review and evaluate your experience with the [*ministry or Committee*].

Should you have any questions about your responsibilities, the person to contact is [*name*]. [*I/He/She*] will answer any questions you might have about the position and will ensure that you have the information and resources you need. [*My/ her/ his*] contact information is included below.

We are looking forward to our ministry together and pray God's blessing on you as you use your gifts to serve our community of faith.

Sincerely,

*(ministry
leader and
rector)*

Sample Refusal Letter For a Ministry Position in the Parish

[please edit to fit your situation]

(Parish Letterhead)

Date

Thank you for offering to minister in the position of *[name of position]*. We appreciate the time and effort you took to go through our selection/discernment process.

Acceptance in ministry is not automatic. It involves an assessment of the parishioner's *(volunteer's)* ability and skills, positions available and outcome of the screening process. In following that process, and to follow up with our recent conversation, *[I/we]* regret to inform you that we are unable to accept your ministry in the position of *(name of position)*.

The *Anglican parish of/ agency name* is blessed with gifted and committed people, like you, who offer their talents. We encourage you to explore other forms of ministry within the *[Anglican parish of...]* *(if this is true)*. Please contact *me or name of another* so that *I/we* can help you discern suitable ministry opportunities.

Thank you again for your presence among us and for your willingness to serve.

Yours faithfully,

Note to Parish Leaders: The appropriate person to sign the letter is, normally, the one who lead the screening process for the candidate. Each church will need to have a discussion and set guidelines.

The Incumbent may not be the best person to sign such a letter, as it may make it difficult to pastor the candidate afterwards. However, possibilities to consider include the Incumbent, Ministry Leader, Parish Volunteer Coordinator or Warden or a combination of two people.

The Diocese of Edmonton Safe Church Policy has been created using some materials from The Diocese of New Westminster, The Diocese of Montreal and The Diocese of Toronto along with materials from our own 'Red Book'. We are grateful to those individuals who helped put together this material, always with the goal of caring for the most vulnerable in our midst. Thank you for your patience and cooperation in implementing this policy. If you need further guidance please don't hesitate to contact the Diocesan Office.