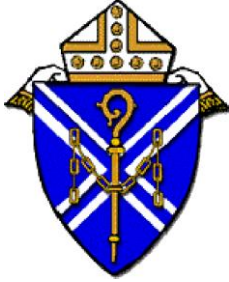


Caring for the Faith
Community
A Protocol for Responsible
Ministry

Diocese of Antigonish
Nova Scotia

October 2010



Office of the Bishop

Diocese of Antigonish

168 Hawthorne Street, P.O. Box 1330

Antigonish, NS B2G 2L7

Chancery 902-863-3335 / Fax 902-863-0037

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The Diocese of Antigonish has a responsibility to provide a safe and caring environment of respect and dignity for its faith community. It is our commitment to ensure that behaviour which puts individuals or families at risk will not be tolerated. The diocese recognizes a duty of care to all in the faith community to minimize risk and to provide a safe environment in an open, transparent and accountable manner.

The Protocol for Responsible Ministry provides guidelines and direction for the screening and supervision of volunteers and staff. It is the policy of the diocese that the protocol be carried out in all parishes in order to ensure support and safety for all the faithful.

Within the diocese, each parish will be required to appoint a person to coordinate the implementation and management of the protocol within the parish. A diocesan coordinator will be appointed to oversee the implementation and management throughout the diocese and to liaise with the parish coordinators.

This Protocol of Responsible Ministry is an overall risk management program for the faith community. With the cooperation of each parish to implement the protocol and to oversee its management, the diocese as a whole will strive to promote accountability, trust and care in our ministries.

This manual is a work in progress and will have additions and be subject to change.

Sincerely in Christ,

Brian Joseph Dunn

Bishop of Antigonish

Table of Contents

Introduction

1. Administrative Structure.....	1
2. Standards of Behaviour - Covenant of Care.....	3
3. Terminology.....	5
4. Staff and Volunteers	9
4.1 Responsibilities	9
4.2 Screening Police Criminal Record Check & Vulnerable Sector Check	10
4.3 Evaluation of Results.....	10
4.4 Management of Files	11
4.5 Consent to release information.....	12

Appendices

Appendix I	Staff/Volunteer Request for Information Form.....	13
Appendix II	Youth Volunteer Permission Letter	16
Appendix III	Acknowledgement and Receipt of Responsible Ministry Protocol and Covenant of Care	17
Appendix IV	Helpful Information on Police Criminal Records Check	18
Appendix V	Helpful Information on Understanding Child/Youth/Vulnerable Adult Abuse.....	20
Appendix VI	Protocol for Risk Levels.....	23
Appendix VII	Sample Letter Requesting Information.....	25
Appendix VIII	Volunteer Reference Letter	26

Administrative Structure

- a)** Diocesan Coordinator - Responsible for the overall design, implementation and management of the Responsible Ministry Protocol. The coordinator will be the diocesan contact person in all matters relating to the protocol and will liaise with coordinators within parishes. The diocesan coordinator will be responsible for safeguarding records. All files relating to staff and volunteers will be kept in a secure and central location.
- b)** Parish Coordinator – Pastors in each parish will appoint a coordinator to be accountable and responsible for day-to-day administration of the protocol. She/he will work closely with the diocesan coordinator. The parish coordinator will
- provide orientation and education on the protocol to parishioners
 - manage the processing of documents for screening staff and volunteers and send documents on to the diocesan coordinator
 - assist in problem solving and evaluation of the Responsible Ministry Protocol
 - ongoing training of staff and volunteers
- c)** Advisory Committee For Responsible Ministry
The Advisory committee is appointed by the Bishop and chaired by the Diocesan Coordinator

Purpose of Committee:

- To provide strategic advice and direction to the diocesan coordinator
- To oversee the implementation of the protocol at the diocesan and parish level including monitoring and evaluation
- To advise and provide communication regarding the protocol and its implementation
- To support the diocesan and parish coordinators in meeting the protocol goals and objectives, timelines and reporting requirements

d) The committee meets at least three times a year

Membership:

Chair – Diocesan coordinator

Two parish coordinators

Two parish representatives

One youth ministry representative

One member with background in Insurance Industry,
policing or helping professions

Standards of Behaviour:

Covenant of Care

The Covenant of Care makes clear the expectations of behaviour for staff and volunteers. The Diocese of Antigonish is responsible to provide a safe and secure environment for ministry. In providing religious support services, the staff and volunteers are placed in situations where they may have access to highly sensitive and confidential information. The specialized nature of Church work in many cases can place providers and recipients of pastoral services in a vulnerable situation as individuals are dependent upon the honesty and integrity of all staff and volunteers associated with the Church. This calls for responsibility and places the burden of adhering to the Covenant of Care on each staff and volunteer.

1. Staff and volunteers assume full responsibility for establishing and maintaining clear, appropriate boundaries in all ministry situations involving children, youth and vulnerable adults.
2. All physical contact between staff or volunteers and children, youth or vulnerable adults must be completely non-sexual and based only on the individual's needs. Physical contact when alone with a child or youth will be avoided.
3. Staff and volunteers who learn of information indicating clear and imminent danger to a child, youth or vulnerable adult must act to protect the safety, health or wellbeing of the parties by disclosing the necessary information and must communicate such disclosures to their immediate superior.
4. Staff and volunteers must not engage in the corporal punishment of children, youth or vulnerable adults in their care. Discipline problems will be handled in coordination with the immediate superior and the parents/care providers.
5. A degree of vulnerability exists when staff and volunteers minister alone with a child, youth or vulnerable adult, therefore a team approach of at least two unrelated adults or persons to manage activities involving them must ordinarily be used. For example there must be two persons present in addition to the communicant when bringing communion to those at home.
6. Staff and volunteers will never be alone with a child, youth or vulnerable adult in a residence, sleeping facility, locker room, rest room, dressing facility, or other closed room or area that is inappropriate to a ministerial relationship. When one to one

- meetings are necessary they must take place in rooms and locations that are open to public view. Examples of activities for church groups include catechism instruction and, youth group gatherings. In-home catechism instruction is not permitted.
7. Staff and volunteers will never take photographs of a child, youth or a vulnerable adult while they are unclothed or dressing.
 8. Staff and volunteers will never provide a child, youth or vulnerable adult with alcohol, tobacco, drugs or anything prohibited by law/nor administer medication of any kind without written parental/care giver permission.
 9. Staff and volunteers will not allow a single child, youth, or vulnerable adult who is not a legal relative, to stay overnight in their private accommodations or residence. Special precautions such as these are necessary when overnight trips and other special events occur and require the planning and care of leadership.

Terminology

1. Staff and Volunteers – All clergy, religious and lay persons whether paid or unpaid acting on behalf of the Diocese of Antigonish, a parish or a program or service of the diocese.

2. Misconduct

Misconduct could be failure to provide responsible ministry. This includes such serious performance issues such as alcohol abuse, misappropriation or negligent handling of church funds, lack of response to community needs, and other inappropriate behaviours.

All of these terms listed below will be included in the use of the term “misconduct” as referred to in this document.

3. General Harassment

Harassment is behaviour that a reasonable person would know to be unwelcome by the recipient(s) of the behaviour. It is a form of discrimination and is prohibited by law.

Harassment takes many forms, including any unwanted physical or verbal behaviour that offends, intimidates, or humiliates another person in the course of employment or in the provision of a service. Harassment is discrimination on the basis of personal characteristics such as race, national or ethnic origin, color, religion, age, sex, marital status, family status, disability, irrational fear of contracting an illness or disease, or political belief or activity.

Harassment between clergy, employees and volunteers can occur at or away from the workplace. Harassment between a staff or volunteer and a non-employee can occur within the course of employment, in the provision of goods, services or facilities or at Church functions.

While the following is not an exhaustive list, harassment may include:

- Verbal abuse or threats
- Unwelcome remarks, jokes, innuendos or taunting about a person’s body, attire, age, marital status, ethnic or national origin, religion, or gender
- Displaying of pornographic, racist or other offensive or derogatory material

- Practical jokes causing awkwardness or embarrassment
- Intimidation
- Unwelcome invitations or requests, whether indirect or explicit
- Leering or other gestures
- Condescension or paternalism, which undermines self-respect
- Unnecessary physical contact such as touching, patting, pinching, or punching (which may be considered assault in some instances)
- Physical assault
- Demands for sexual favours or sexual assault

For the purpose of this protocol, retaliation against an individual will be considered harassment. Any staff or volunteer found to have engaged in retaliation will be subject to disciplinary measures. Retaliation may occur for having:

- Invoked this protocol (on behalf of him or herself or another individual)
- Participated or cooperated in any investigation arising out of this policy
- Been associated with the person who was involved in this protocol or has participated in these procedures

4. Abuse

Abuse is the violation of the physical or psychological integrity or trust of another person. Abuse may consist of just one incident or it may happen repeatedly.

5. Child Abuse

The Children and Family Services Act of Nova Scotia imposes a legal obligation on all residents of the Province with respect to reporting child abuse. The Act defines a "child" as a person under the age of sixteen. The abuse referred to would include physical, emotional as well as sexual abuse and neglect.

6. Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse is the sexual involvement or attempted sexual involvement with a person identified by the local jurisdiction as a minor, understood in Nova Scotia as a person younger than 16 years of age.

7. Sexual Exploitation

Sexual exploitation is use of one's position of power or trust to have sexual contact or attempted sexual contact with another person. Sexual exploitation includes but is not limited to such activity as intercourse, kissing, touching of breasts or genitals, dating during the course of a counseling relationship, verbal suggestions of sexual involvement, or demeaning sexual comments. The apparent consent of a possible victim does not determine whether there has been sexual exploitation, because the imbalance of power between the pastoral care giver and the person in a pastoral relationship undermines the validity of an apparent consent.

8. Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is unwanted sexualized conduct or language with others. This conduct entails unwelcome sexual advances, request for sexual favours, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when submission to or rejection of this conduct explicitly or implicitly affects an individual's status such as employment, when it unreasonably interferes with an individual's performance, or when it creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment.

Sexual harassment includes but is not limited to - sexually oriented humour or language, questions or comments or gestures about sexual behaviour or preference, unwelcomed or undesired physical contact, inappropriate comments about clothing or physical appearance, or repeated requests for social engagement in a situation where there is an employment relationship or a collegial relationship.

9. Grooming

Grooming is a wide variety of behaviours, such as spending large amounts of time with a particular person, affording special privileges, or providing gifts, trips and other expressions of special attention. These behaviours are often designed to establish a special bond of trust and affectionate understanding between the groomer and the person who is the object of his/her attraction. These behaviours can also lead the person to feel indebted to the groomer for all these kindnesses. Once this bond of trust and indebtedness is established, the stage may be set for sexual advances. Because the pattern of grooming is made up of observable behaviours, these behaviours need to be challenged or reported. Grooming, whether intentional or not, is by its very nature seductive behaviour. As well as being a signal of possible future sexual activity, grooming is in itself inappropriate.

10. Pornographic Offence

Pornographic offence is the possession, creation or distribution of any photographic, film, video, or other visual representation that shows a person who is depicted as engaged in or is engaged in inappropriate sexual activity; and any written material that advocates or counsels inappropriate sexual activity.

11. Public Misconduct

Public misconduct is misconduct that becomes public or known. This could include actions that are considered to be crimes, such as indecent exposure or lewd activity. It might also include immoral actions, that may not be crimes but which become known.

12. Vulnerable Adult Abuse

The Adult Protection Act of Nova Scotia imposes a legal obligation on all residents of the province with respect to reporting vulnerable adult abuse. The Act defines " a vulnerable adult" as a person sixteen years of age or older in the premises where he resides, and (i) is incapable of protecting himself therefrom by reason of physical disability or mental infirmity, and refuses, delays or is unable to make provision for his protection therefrom, or (ii) is not receiving adequate care and attention, is incapable of caring adequately for himself by reason of physical disability or mental infirmity, and refuses, delays or is unable to make provision for his adequate care and attention. Abuse is any act or failure to act that endangers the health and/or well being of the older person. Such action or inaction is especially harmful when it occurs within a relationship where there is an expectation of trust. The abuse referred to would include physical and financial as well as sexual abuse.

Staff and Volunteers

The diocese of Antigonish is responsible to provide a safe and secure environment for ministry. Staff and volunteers are screened to ensure a high level of quality in our services and the record of a prospective cleric, volunteer or employee may be relevant in assessing the suitability of a person for a particular assignment. The extent of the requirement for each new volunteer or staff will be determined by their level of risk in the parish (see appendix VI).

1. Responsibilities:

Staff and volunteers are to complete the following:

- a) An information form will be completed which includes a request for two names of persons for references, a consent to contact these people and an agreement to comply with the criminal record check and vulnerable sector check(See appendix 1 and V111) Under age 18 applicants will be required to have a permission form completed (See appendix II)
- b) The staff and volunteers will then undergo a Criminal Record Check and Vulnerable Sector Check. The Criminal Record Check and Vulnerable Sector Check are to be renewed for every five years of service
- c) The Covenant of Care makes clear the expectations of behaviour for staff and volunteers. Responsibility for adherence to the Covenant of Care rests with each staff and volunteer. During orientation staff and volunteers will be asked to sign a form to indicate that they have received the Covenant of Care and have agreed to comply with it. (See Appendix III) An individual whose actions are not in conformity with the Covenant of Care will be subject to remedial action by their immediate superior. Corrective action may take various forms from a verbal warning to removal from the ministry.
- d) The parish or diocesan coordinator will provide general job descriptions for all new and existing staff and volunteers. They will also provide orientation and training of staff and volunteers on the Responsible Ministry Protocol, its policies and procedures.
- e) Staff and volunteers in the Diocese of Antigonish must maintain confidentiality in all matters that come to their attention as a result of their activities. They are not to disclose confidential matters during their church work or after termination unless specifically released from this obligation by the Bishop.

Volunteers who violate confidentiality will be ineligible for continuing their assignment

CF. Canon 220. The Code of Canon Law

“No one may unlawfully harm the good reputation which a person enjoys, or violate the right of every person to protect his or her privacy.”

2. Screening: Criminal Record Check and Vulnerable Sector Check (determined by level of risk)

All prospective staff and volunteers offered an assignment will be required to consent to Police Criminal Record Check as a condition of their offer of assignment. As well, those prospective staff and volunteers who are assigned to working with children 16 years and younger will be required to consent to a Vulnerable Sector Check. Results of the checks are to be sent to the Diocesan Coordinator. The onus will be on the staff and volunteers to complete this process with follow-up from the respective Diocesan Coordinator or Parish Coordinator.

3. Evaluation of Results

The Diocese of Antigonish recognizes that a candidate's record may or may not be relevant to the prospective staff or volunteers proposed assignment. Each record will be evaluated in relation to the prospective assignment. Consideration will be given to:

- The nature of the conviction
- The number of convictions
- The currency (prevalence or commonness) of convictions
- The risk

If the decision is made to contract a staff or volunteer with a criminal record or accept a volunteer with a criminal record for work, the Church will require that the staff or volunteer apply for a pardon and extinguish any record they may have. However, appropriate accommodative measures will be considered on a case-by-case basis where circumstances warrant such measures.

4. Management of Files and Confidential Information

The purpose of collecting personal information is a necessary measure to ensure the Responsible Ministry Protocol with its policies and procedures are properly administered. Records that are of a personal confidential, nature will be kept in a central location monitored by the Diocesan Coordinator. The collected information is confidential and will only be used for the purpose for which it was collected, that is implementing and monitoring this Protocol.

Files

The Diocese of Antigonish maintains a confidential file for each staff and volunteer, under the sole control and care of the Diocesan Coordinator who ensures that the files are in a secured area. This file contains documents such as:

1. Information Form
2. References
3. Current Criminal Record Check and Vulnerable Sector Check
4. Acknowledgement of Receipt of a copy of the Protocol and reading of the diocesan Responsible Ministry Protocol, Policies and Procedures
5. Correspondence between the staff or volunteer and the parish and the Diocese of Antigonish
6. List of items (such as keys) provided to the person during his or her church assignment

The originals of these documents are to be held in a safe secure place by the Diocesan Coordinator. The Parish Coordinator may maintain copies of all items with the exception of results of the Police Criminal Record Check and Vulnerable Sector Check. Copies of files held in the parish must also be held in a safe secure place within the parish facility.

Confidentiality Assurance/Access

The actual records obtained by the Church pursuant to the Criminal Record Check will be kept locked, with access only by the Diocesan Coordinator. The information in the external file (e.g. parish) shall be limited to whether the staff or volunteer was approved, approved with conditions, or declined for consideration for particular assignment.

All files are considered confidential and the property of the Diocese of Antigonish for the purpose of their own administration. Records and files will be made available only to those persons authorized by the Bishop of Antigonish with the consent of the person involved.

All staff and volunteers have the right to review their own file within the presence of the Diocesan Responsible Ministry Coordinator. When a staff or volunteer retires, resigns, or is terminated, the file will be retained in current files for seven years from the individual's departure date, and then held in archived files for a length of time in accordance with legislation.

It is the responsibility of staff and volunteers to advise the Diocese of Antigonish of any change to his or her address, or other information pertinent to the proper maintenance of records.

5. Consent to Release Information

Protection of all staff and volunteers' personal information is of primary importance to the Diocese of Antigonish. Information will never be sold or traded. Short of legal requirements, a staff's or volunteer's personal information will not be released to any third party without the person's expressed written consent of the staff or volunteer.

Appendix I

Staff/Volunteer Request for Information Form

Parish Name and Location: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/Town: _____ Province: _____ Postal Code: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

Email: _____

Please provide a Contact in case of an Emergency:

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Relationship: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Have you held a staff or volunteer position with another organization/Parish?

Yes No If Yes describe:

How long have you been a member of your parish community?

Ministry assignments in which you may like to serve in or are currently involved in:

(For those not currently engaged in ministry) If the ministry requested is not available, would you consider a different ministry?

Yes No

If yes, which other ministry might interest you:

I certify that the information provided in this document is true and complete. I understand that this information will remain confidential and is property of the Diocese of Antigonish. As well, I understand that my name and contact information will be given to the appropriate Responsible Ministry Coordinator in the Diocese/Parish so that she/he may contact me.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

References

Please provide two persons who can describe your suitability for this ministry.
(E.g. Immediate superior, friends, neighbors, other parishioners, work associates, etc.)

Please remember to notify these persons that they will be contacted.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/Town: _____ Province: _____ Postal Code: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/Town: _____ Province: _____ Postal Code: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Consent

I, _____, authorize the Responsible Ministry Coordinator
(Name of applicant)

of _____ to contact the references that I listed on this
(Name of diocese/parish and location)

Staff and volunteers Information Form, in order to collect the information that is appropriate to the position. I understand that the information obtained will be confidential.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parish Name and Location

FOR PARISH USE ONLY

For all Staff and Volunteers

Police Criminal Record Check and Vulnerable Sector Check

I agree to comply with obtaining a Police Criminal Record Check and a Vulnerable Sector Check before I can participate in an assignment. I understand that only the Diocesan Responsible Ministry Coordinator will review this information.

Please return completed form to Diocesan Responsibility Ministry Coordinator.

Please check (☑) that the following have been received and read:

- The assignment description
- The Code of Conduct for staff and volunteers
- The contact information for my immediate superior

I am aware of the responsibilities and the limits of this assignment and agree to meet them. I understand that I represent this Diocese /Parish as a staff/volunteer only when I am functioning as described in the Diocese/Parish Assignment Description. I agree to keep confidential any information that I may come across regarding the affairs of this parish, its clergy, other volunteers, and parishioners, unless otherwise directed by law or by authorities of the Diocese:

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Witness: _____ Date: _____

DRMC Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix II

Responsible Ministry Protocol
Diocese of Antigonish
Youth Volunteer Permission Letter

To: Diocesan Responsible Ministry Coordinator
 Diocese of Antigonish

I, _____ parent/legal guardian of _____

give permission for _____ to be involved in

ministry in the Parish of _____

as _____. I am aware and have

reviewed the Responsible Ministry Protocol of the Diocese of

Antigonish. I agree to conform to the requirements of that Protocol.

Signature

Date

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/Town: _____ Province: _____ Postal Code: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

email address: _____

cc: Parish Responsible Ministry Coordinator

_____ Parish

Appendix III

Acknowledgement and Receipt of Responsible Ministry and Safe Environment Protocol Including Covenant of Care for the Diocese of Antigonish

or
_____ **Parish** _____, **N.S.**

I acknowledge the paramount importance of safeguarding, in all respects, all of those to whom we minister, especially children, youth and vulnerable adults, by:

- Following all the directives in the Responsible Ministry and Safe Environment Protocol, Policies and Procedures for the Diocese of Antigonish including the Covenant of Care;
- Complying with the information given in my orientation;
- Using appropriate language;
- Within our ecclesiastical mandate show no bias on account of gender, ethnic background, skin colour, intelligence, age, religion, or socio-economic status, or level of education;
- Respecting confidentiality and privacy, unless a child, youth, or vulnerable adult is in danger, then I will report in the case of a child/youth to a child protection agency or the police and in the case of a vulnerable adult then I will report to the Department of Health.

I have included:

my completed and signed Staff/Volunteer Request for Information Form

my completed information on references and signed consent to contact them

my agreement to comply with obtaining the Police Criminal Record Check and a Vulnerable Sector Check

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Witnessed by: _____ Date: _____

Appendix IV

Helpful Information on Police Criminal Records Check

How is a Police Criminal Records Check carried out?

To conduct a PCRC, the local police query the Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC) database. CPIC was an initiative of the RCMP, who maintains the network. Individual policing regions maintain their own information within the system and have access to the entire database. From this database police can determine if a person has outstanding charges or convictions. Information collected in the CPIC database includes individuals who:

- Have a criminal record for any Criminal Code or other Federal Statute offence and/or
- Have been judged not criminally responsible for an offence because of mental disorder and/or
- Have federal and/or provincial charges pending and/or
- Are on probation or subject to a Probation Order.

In addition, police agencies compile information, when warranted, about all complaints they receive. Examples of complaints include:

- Abuse of children.
- Allegations of offences where charges were not laid.

These may or may not be revealed by police in a PCRC. Note that a PCRC cannot be conducted without the individual's written consent. In some cases the PCRC must be obtained in person. Since 2001, as a result of amendments to the Criminal Records Act, Criminal records of pardoned sex offenders can be identified and made available to organizations that work with vulnerable people. A search of the CPIC database for pardoned sexual offences cannot be conducted without the individual's consent.

What if you have a criminal record?

If the information obtained by the police indicates that you have a criminal record, does that mean you cannot volunteer? Not necessarily. Organizations may look at the following factors when considering your application:

- The nature of the organization and its work.
- The nature of the offence.
- The relevance of the criminal record to the position you are applying for. Sometimes it will be deemed wise to deny the individual a leadership position with children/youth/vulnerable adults. Sometimes it will be deemed wise to urge the person to

accept a position that indirectly supports children/youth/vulnerable adults. Sometimes it will be deemed wise to always have an individual working with another adult.

Are there limits to PCRCs?

There are some limits. PCRCs can be a positive deterrent in discouraging nefarious individuals from applying for leadership or volunteer positions with children, youth and vulnerable adults.

However, the fact still remains that limitations exist of PCRCs:

- They are only good up to the day of checking and based on the information provided.
- A person may use a false name, driver's license, or birth date, so there are no matches found in their record.
- If a conviction occurred when the person was a youth, the information is protected under the Youth Criminal Justice Act; therefore, you will not have access to this information after a certain time period.
- Some sex offenders and abusers have never been charged or convicted of a crime, so there will be no record to review.

Procedure for Applicants Applying for a Police Check

In the case of the RCMP and most Police Agencies: present two (2) pieces of personal identification, i.e. passport, driver's license, student ID, credit card (Provincial Health Card and SIN Card will not be accepted) along with a letter from the Parish or Diocese specifying that the individual needs the Criminal Record Check for their volunteer work or environment.

Application for disclosure of CRC Information at the appropriate Police Agency:

Applicants complete the form "Consent for Disclosure of Criminal Record Information" in person at the same time as they are completing the Consent for Criminal Record Check form.

Although the same Consent is present on the RCMP forms, they prefer that the applicant themselves, once they pick up the completed Criminal Record Check, return it to the respective place where they are applying to volunteer.

Appendix V

Helpful Information on Understanding Child/Youth/Vulnerable Adult Abuse

This policy has zero tolerance for abuse in any form. This includes abuse that happens to a child/youth/vulnerable adult by a staff member or volunteer. There is also a need for the adult in the place of worship to be sensitive to incidents of abuse that may be happening in the home or social life of a child/youth/vulnerable adult. Any person who has reasonable grounds to suspect that a child/youth is or may be in need of protection must report the suspicion to a protective agency or police. Clergy and other professionals such as physicians, nurses, social workers, psychologists and teachers have a special responsibility to report allegations of abuse. A professional who hears an allegation of abuse should confide this to a designated leader in the organization. A high ranking official in the organization should be identified as the contact for reporting all cases.

In order to understand and recognize child abuse, the following definitions and indications of emotional, physical and sexual abuse or neglect are listed. Some of the following also apply to vulnerable adults. A more complete description of abuse of vulnerable adults is found below.

What is Child/Youth Abuse?

(Source: Department of Justice Canada;
<http://canada.justice.gc.ca/en/ps/fm/childafs.html>)

The term "child abuse" refers to the violence, mistreatment or neglect that a child or adolescent may experience while in the care of someone they either trust or depend on, such as a parent, sibling, other relative, caregiver or guardian. Abuse may take place anywhere and may occur, for example, within the child's home or that of someone known to the child.

There are many different forms of abuse and a child may be subjected to more than one form:

- **Physical abuse** may consist of just one incident or it may happen repeatedly. It involves deliberately using force against a child in such a way that the child is either injured or is at risk of being injured. Physical abuse includes beating, hitting, shaking, pushing, choking, biting, burning, kicking or assaulting a child with a weapon. It also includes holding a child under water or any other dangerous or harmful use of force or restraint. Female genital mutilation is another form of physical abuse.
- **Sexual abuse** and exploitation involves using a child for sexual purposes. Examples of child sexual abuse include fondling, inviting a child to touch or be touched sexually, intercourse, rape, incest, sodomy, exhibitionism, or involving a child in prostitution or pornography.
- **Neglect** is often chronic, and it usually involves repeated incidents. It involves failing to provide what a child needs for his or her physical, psychological or emotional development and well being.

For example, neglect includes failing to provide a child with food, clothing, shelter, cleanliness, medical care or protection from harm. Emotional neglect includes failing to provide a child with love, safety, and a sense of worth.

- **Emotional abuse** involves harming a child's sense of self. It includes acts (or omissions) that result in, or place a child at risk or result in the child having serious behaviour, cognitive, emotional, or mental health problems. For example, emotional abuse may include aggressive verbal threats, social isolation, intimidation, exploitation, or routinely making unreasonable demands. It also includes terrorizing a child, or exposing them to family violence.

An abuser may use a number of different tactics to gain access to a child, exert power and control over them, and prevent them from telling anyone about the abuse or seeking support. A child who is being abused is usually in a position of dependence on the person who is abusing them. Abuse is a misuse of power and a violation of trust. The abuse may happen once or it may occur in a repeated and escalating pattern over a period of months or years. The abuse may change form over time.

Abuse of Vulnerable Adults

The most extensive body of literature on abuse of vulnerable adults can be found under "abuse of the elderly". While some factors may not apply to all vulnerable adults (e.g. the developmentally challenged), most characteristics are equally applicable to all vulnerable adults. A thorough explanation of older adult abuse is found at <http://www.justice.gc.ca/en/ps/fm/adultsfs.html>. Although individuals may be abused at virtually any life stage – childhood, adolescence, young adulthood, middle age or old age – the nature and consequences of abuse may differ depending on an individual's situation. Older adults' experiences of abuse, for example, may be related to their living arrangement (they may be living alone, with family members or others, or in an institution). Their experiences may also be linked to their level of reliance on others, including family members or other care providers, for assistance and support in daily living.

Abuse of older adults is sometimes described as a misuse of power and a violation of trust. Abusers may use a number of different tactics to exert power and control over their victims. Abuse may happen once or it may occur in a repeated and escalating pattern over months or years. The abuse may take many different forms, which may change over time.

Types of Abuse

Psychological abuse includes attempts to dehumanize or intimidate older adults. Any verbal or non-verbal act that reduces their sense of self-worth or dignity and threatens their psychological and emotional integrity is abuse. This type of abuse may include, for example:

- Threatening to use violence
- Threatening to abandon the person
- Intentionally frightening the person
- Making the person fear that they will not receive the food or care they need
- Lying to the person
- Failing to check the person's or someone else allegations of abuse against them

Financial abuse encompasses financial manipulation or exploitation including theft, fraud, forgery, or extortion. It includes using older adult's money or property in a dishonest manner, or failing to use older adult's assets for their welfare. Anytime someone acts without consent in a way that financially or personally benefits one person at the expense of another it is abuse. This type of abuse against an older adult may include, for example:

- Stealing the person's money, pension cheques or other possessions
- Selling the person's homes or other property without their permission
- Wrongfully using a Power of Attorney
- Not allowing the person to move into a long-term care facilities in order to preserve access to their pension income
- Failing to pay back borrowed money when asked

Physical abuse includes any act of violence – whether or not it results in physical injury. Intentionally inflicting pain or injury that results in either bodily harm or mental distress is abuse. Physical abuse may include, for example:

- Beating
- Burning or scalding
- Pushing or shoving
- Hitting or slapping
- Rough handling
- Tripping
- Spitting

There may also be sexual abuse.

What Are Some Potential Warning Signs of Abuse?

Some of the signs that may indicate an older adult is being abused include:

- Depression, fear, anxiety, passivity
- Unexplained, physical injuries
- Dehydration, malnutrition or lack of food
- Poor hygiene, rashes, pressure sores
- Over-sedation

Appendix VI

Protocol for Risk Levels

The level of risk involved in a position will determine the extent of the screening process.

1. For General Risk Positions:

Volunteers and staff will complete the following:

1. Volunteer Information Form with references
2. Orientation and Training
3. Review of the Responsible Ministry Protocol
4. Signing of the Covenant of Care
5. Obtain copy of job description

2. For High Risk Positions:

Volunteers and staff will complete the following:

1. Volunteer Information Form with references
2. Reference checks
3. Interview
4. Signing of the Covenant of Care
5. Criminal Record check
6. Orientation and Training
7. Obtain copy of job description
8. Supervision and evaluation
9. Review of the Responsible Ministry Protocol

Generally Identified High Risk Positions

- 1.** All volunteers connected with children or youth
 - Altar server coordinator
 - Children's Liturgy Teacher/coordinator/assistant
 - Sunday School Director/Teacher/Assistant
 - Catechists for children
 - Choir Director for Child/Youth

- 2.** All volunteers connected with home or institutional visits
 - Ministers of communion to persons at home
 - Ministers of communion to persons in hospital/nursing homes
 - Lay pastoral visitors
 - Meals on wheels
 - Outreach activities

- 3.** All volunteer positions connected with the handling of money and having access to valuables and/or highly confidential information
 - Collection counter
 - Money depositor
 - Treasurers for all Parish Committees, councils or ministries
 - Any position that requires having a key to the building

This is not an exhaustive list. Others pertinent to these categories may also be included.

Appendix VII
Request for Information

Date: _____

Address: _____

Parish: _____

Contact Numbers: _____

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is to certify that _____ will be helping as a volunteer in _____ Parish/Diocese and because of this she/he will need to complete a Criminal Record check.

Sincerely

Pastor or Authorized Person's Name and Title

Appendix VIII
RESPONSIBLE MINISTRY PROTOCOL
DIOCESE of Antigonish
VOLUNTEER REFERENCE LETTER

To: Diocesan Responsible Ministry Coordinator
 Diocese of Antigonish

I have known _____ for approximately ____ years. I am aware that _____ is involved in volunteer work at _____ Parish and that this work may involve working with children under 16 years of age, youth between 16 and 18, and/or vulnerable adults. To the best of my knowledge, _____ is a suitable person to be involved in such a ministry in their parish.

Signature

Date

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: Home: _____ Cell: _____

e-mail address (optional): _____

cc: Parish Responsible Ministry Coordinator

_____ Parish

cc: Parish Responsible Ministry Coordinator

_____ Parish