

Church of the Redeemer Screening Protocol for Those Working in High-Risk Ministries

Creating and supporting an environment of safety and trust is paramount in carrying out ministry work. The Church of the Redeemer is committed to building and sustaining such an environment within the requirements of Diocesan policy. The following protocol outlines expectations and procedures for screening staff and volunteers who are working in high risk ministry areas including those that involve working with vulnerable individuals at the Church of the Redeemer. Developed as a supplement to the document “Creating a Safe Environment” (originally developed in 2000 and updated in 2011 as the “Safe Environment Guideline”), the protocol describes steps in the screening process and training regarding the Diocesan sexual misconduct policy to ensure, to the extent possible, the safety of our most vulnerable members and to demonstrate transparency and accountability in church business and ministry. The protocol aims to meet the requirements of Diocesan policy and should be seen as a companion to the various documents and tools that are available on the Diocesan website (<http://www.toronto.anglican.ca/parish-administration/sexual-misconduct-policy/>).

Responsibility for adherence to the Diocesan policy lies with the Joint Boards. While accountability for specific tasks related to screening may reside with particular individuals, the responsibility for creating and sustaining a safe environment lies with all members of the church community. Two key elements in creating a safe environment are screening for those working in high risk ministry areas and training regarding the Diocesan sexual misconduct policy. These are described more fully below.

1. Screening for those involved in high risk ministries

- High risk ministry areas refers to work with vulnerable individuals including children and youth; pastoral care; and work involving access to the Church’s financial resources or sensitive/confidential information relating to the Church ¹. Moreover, residential or offsite ministries with children or vulnerable adults are always ranked high risk.

¹ **High Risk Ministries:** Ministry duties and responsibilities that permit opportunities for a person to be alone with a child or vulnerable adult or permit access to significant amounts of financial resources or sensitive and confidential information. These ministries are positions of authority or the positions that allows a person to establish long-term relationships of trust. The following are always ranked high risk: residential or off-site ministries with children or vulnerable adults, parish employees, churchwardens, and organists. Examples: camp leader, Christian education coordinator, church musician, Churchwarden, clergy, counselor, home visitor, organist, parish employee, parish nurse, server instructor, Sunday school teacher, youth leader. (See <http://www.toronto.anglican.ca/parishadministration/screening/screening-process/assessing-risk/>)

- Vulnerable individuals include but are not limited to children, youth, individuals receiving pastoral care, and those who are vulnerable by virtue of personal circumstances.¹
- High risk ministries are a priority for screening. Individuals working in high risk areas are required to have a police record check every three years.
- While the Incumbent and Wardens are accountable for ensuring that screening and training occur, coordination and day to day responsibility of the work is delegated to a designated clergy or staff person within the Redeemer and supported by a lay individual(s), one of whom is identified as the screening coordinator. The screening coordinator is a Member at Large of the Advisory Board. Both individuals work together to ensure compliance with the Diocesan policy and church protocol.
- Members of the Board of Management and Advisory Board require screening (police record check and training in the sexual misconduct policy) if they are involved in high risk ministry areas. The responsible clergy/staff coordinates police checks for board members (the board chairs, vice chairs and Treasurer).

Steps in the Screening Process:

- The screening coordinator and responsible clergy/staff work with ministry coordinators to ensure that screening of volunteers working in high risk ministry areas occurs in a timely manner. The screening coordinator and/or responsible volunteer also coordinate and deliver training in the Diocesan sexual misconduct policy.
- The responsible clergy/staff identifies those staff and individuals who work with vulnerable persons that require screening and training; ensures the required documentation is completed and stored securely; and reports directly to the Incumbent regarding all issues related to screening and training. Requirements for screening are based on an assessed level of risk for all individuals involved in working with vulnerable persons based on Diocesan Guidelines.
- While the responsible clergy/staff coordinates and administers staff screening, issues of a sensitive nature involving staff are the responsibility of the Incumbent.
- The screening coordinator liaises with ministry area coordinators to ensure the screening is carried or is in progress prior to participation in ministry.
- Ministry area coordinators are responsible for informing the screening coordinator of new members to their committee who may require screening and participation in the sexual misconduct policy training. The screening coordinator sends the volunteer and police record check forms to ministry leads for new volunteers to complete;
- The ministry area coordinator, with the support/assistance of the screening coordinator, identifies the individuals who require screening and will

¹ A more complete definition is found in the Diocesan policy. The term “vulnerable person” includes not only people typically recognized as vulnerable such as children, youth, some of the elderly, hospital patients, the mentally and physically disabled, but also to those otherwise healthy adults who become vulnerable because of personal circumstances. Such circumstances might 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 important to recognize that all people are vulnerable to varying degrees at different stages in their lives. (See <http://www.toronto.anglican.ca/parish-administration/screening/screening-process/assessing-risk/>).

- Explain the need for screening, describe the screening process, and provide background material as appropriate.
- Ensure the volunteer completes the required documentation (volunteer ministry form and police check application).
- The screening coordinator is responsible for ensuring all required documentation is collected from ministry leads. The coordinator, with the responsible clergy/staff, prepares a list of individuals who require police record checks (staff, board members, and volunteers); compiles completed police record check forms of those requiring a cheque along with copies of two pieces of identification, and submits the documentation to the church executive assistant who then prepares the cheques for payment.
- The Church of the Redeemer covers the cost of police record checks. Forms submitted to the executive assistant (Shirley), are sent to the police with payment.
- A list of those who require screening and a status update is kept securely within the church office. Wardens meet with the Incumbent (and responsible clergy/staff and screening coordinator if necessary), to receive a status update on the screening prior to signing the parochial return.
- The Diocesan Office will receive and store all information from police checks. The police record check will be sent to the Diocesan Human Resources Department where it will be processed and filed. In order to protect the privacy of information in the document, the police record check will be stored centrally at the Diocesan Centre and not in the parish. All information associated with this process will be handled in a confidential manner consistent with the [Diocesan Privacy Standards Policy](#).
- The individual and the parish will be sent confirmation that the individual is permitted or not to serve in a position ranked High Risk. Such information must be stored securely and is the responsibility of the responsible clergy/staff. The parish will not receive detailed information contained in the police record.²
- No one is required to disclose the results of his/her police check or the reason the check is positive (i.e. there is a report of an offence). In the event of a positive police check, the individual has an opportunity to discuss the matter with the Diocesan screening coordinator including relevant circumstances that may influence decision making. With the individual's permission, the Diocesan screening coordinator speaks with the Incumbent to gather any further information. Should that permission not be granted, the process is complete and the Incumbent is notified that the individual has been withdrawn from the process and is not eligible to serve in high risk ministry.
- If permission to speak with the Incumbent is given, the process continues. The Diocesan Police Record Check Review Committee reviews relevant information and makes a recommendation about suitability to serve in high risk ministry. Their recommendations are suitable (the normal clearance letter is sent), not suitable, or restricted from certain ministry activities.
- A copy of the letter is sent to the individual and the Incumbent.
- The Incumbent and Churchwardens will then make a decision about the individual serving in ministry taking into account other factors that the parish needs to consider. For example,

² <http://www.toronto.anglican.ca/parish-administration/sexual-misconduct-policy/>

if the candidate is deemed suitable or suitable with restrictions based on the police record check, the Incumbents and Church Wardens may still deem the individual not suitable. However, if the Diocese has deemed the individual not suitable, then that person may not serve in a high risk ministry position.

- All decisions regarding positive outcomes on the police record check are made on a case-by-case basis within Diocesan policy and determined by safety considerations.
- Strict confidentiality must be observed at all times within the law. Documentation relating to this protocol must be stored securely in accordance with Section 4 and any applicable Diocesan policies. Screening, and ministry coordinators and staff commit to protecting privacy and confidentiality of information and sign a confidentiality agreement. The responsible clergy/staff ensures the agreements are signed and filed.
- No volunteer or staff person will have access to confidential files, except those volunteers and staff designated in this policy to have access to these files. Any issues that arise in discussion with the screening coordinator or ministry leads should be directed to the Incumbent of responsible clergy.

2. Training- Diocesan Sexual Misconduct Policy

- The screening coordinator, or designate(s) is responsible for organizing and delivering the training for volunteers at least once a year.
- Ministry area coordinators identify volunteers who require the training session. Staff, those involved in working with vulnerable individuals, and Churchwardens must attend the training. Attendance by other volunteers (e.g. with access to financial resources) will be decided on a case by case basis.
- Volunteers, staff, and those in positions of leadership (lay and clergy) need to attend training every three years.
- Staff training will be coordinated through the responsible clergy/staff.

3. Updating of the Safe Environment Guideline and Protocol

Overall responsibility for ensuring that the guidelines for creating a safe environment and this protocol are effectively followed lies with the Board of Management and Advisory Board. Specifically the boards will:

1. Monitor the implementation of the protocol through the various programs in the Church; ensure that adequate training is provided to all staff and volunteers; and that the document is disseminated through the community to all who need knowledge of it.
2. Ensure that the guidelines are brought to the notice of all new employees of the Church as part of their hiring process, and that they provide a signed acceptance of the guidelines before their appointment takes place. This signed acceptance will be kept confidentially on file along with any other employment-related documents.

3. Review the protocol on an annual basis thereafter. The Boards may choose to charter a working group to review the protocol and report back. Any revisions to the Diocesan Sexual Misconduct Policy must be taken into account when reviewing the guidelines.
4. Ensure that every staff member, board member, screening coordinator, and ministry area coordinators sign a confidentiality agreement in the form (attached).

4. Record Keeping

- Information forms, lists of volunteers, Church school membership lists, and any other forms or information required by this protocol and Diocesan policy, including criminal record check letters from the Diocese, will be kept by the Church office in a secure manner. Application forms will remain confidential, and other information will be provided only when the requestor has a specific program-related reason for obtaining the information.
- Paper work, including criminal record check letters from the Diocese, will be shredded in accordance with direction from the Diocese.
- If a person is accepted as a volunteer, based on recommendation from the Diocesan Police Record Check Review Committee and sanctioned by the Incumbent and Church Wardens, then a note explaining the process followed and recommendation from the Diocese will be kept confidentially by the clergy while the person is a volunteer. After that, the information will be shredded. [This is subject to direction from the diocese.]

VOLUNTEER MINISTRY INFORMATION FORM

Thank you for your interest in the Church of the Redeemer. We want to provide a safe environment for all, and it is our practice to ask the following questions of those who have agreed to help with our ministries.

Name:

(Surname)

(First Name)

(Second Name)

Current Address:

(Number and Street)

(Unit Number)

(City and Province)

(Postal Code)

Telephone Number:

(Home)

(Work – only if it is okay to call)

Please indicate the area of ministry in which you are interested:

Church School Young People Pastoral Care Visitors Other

Please share briefly the experience and gifts you bring:

If you have been a member of the Church of the Redeemer for fewer than five years, please provide the details of any other churches/organizations to which you have belonged:

START AND
FINISH DATE

NAME OF ORGANIZATION

CONTACT PERSON
AND POSITION

Please provide two personal references, known to you for at least three years, and state the nature of their relationship to you:

NAME

ADDRESS

PHONE NUMBER

The Diocese of Toronto requires that all persons applying to be in a position of trust have a police criminal record check done before being allowed to participate. All information gathered would be held in the strictest confidence.

Are you prepared to consent to a criminal record check? Yes_ No

Please feel free to talk with the clergy if you have any concerns.

Thank you for taking the time to provide this information. It is our goal to provide a safe and secure environment for our children and other vulnerable individuals.

DATED:

SIGNED:

CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT³

I, _____, will comply with the policies and guidelines of the Church of the Redeemer regarding confidentiality.

In addition to any other confidentiality obligations I owe out of my position with Church of Redeemer, I will not communicate or divulge confidential information which I may acquire in connection with or arising out of the Church of the Redeemer Screening Protocol for Those Working in High-Risk Ministries as long as I am employed by or serving in a volunteer capacity with Church of the Redeemer, or at any time thereafter.

Date

Name

³ To be signed by every staff member, board member, screening coordinator, and ministry and area coordinators in connection with the Church of the Redeemer Screening Protocol for Those Working in High-Risk Ministries dated September 7, 2013.