



RESPONSIBLE MINISTRY POLICY DIOCESE OF CORNER BROOK AND LABRADOR

The Diocese of Corner Brook and Labrador is committed to giving witness to the gospel values of compassion and justice in its ministry and service. For this reason the Diocese has put in place a two-fold safeguarding policy and established a Diocesan Safeguarding Committee. This committee is an advisory committee appointed by the Bishop and has the responsibility for making sure all Parish/Missions within the Diocese know and follow Diocesan policies on safeguarding and reporting. It implements and oversees this Responsible Ministry Policy in all Parish/Missions and at the Diocesan level.

This Responsible Ministry Policy is aimed at protecting the vulnerable and the clergy, directors of Parish/Mission life, employees and volunteers who serve them. The Diocese has also put in place a Sexual Misconduct Policy and Procedures for a responsible intervention whenever sexual misconduct is alleged to have occurred.

This Responsible Ministry Policy outlines training and support procedures for those who work/volunteer with children, youth and vulnerable adults and the procedures for reporting any incidents of abuse to the appropriate authorities.

1. DISSEMINATION OF POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Members of the clergy, directors of Parish/Mission life, paid employees and volunteers involved in Diocesan activities are required to become fully informed about the Diocesan policies for maintaining a safe environment. The Responsible Ministry Policy and the Sexual Misconduct Policy shall be published and made available through Parish/Missions and on the Diocesan web site at <https://rcchurch.ca/> All members of the clergy, directors of Parish/Mission life, paid employees and volunteers involved in a ministry in which they will have regular contact with persons under the age of 18 or vulnerable adults are to sign a form stating that they have read the Diocesan Responsible Ministry Policy and understand its content. These signed forms shall be sent to the Bishop's office for filing.

2. DEFINITIONS

- a) **Bishop** means the Roman Catholic Bishop of the Diocese of Corner Brook and Labrador or, in his absence or incapacity, the lawful administrator of the Diocese according to canon law.
- b) **Bishop's Delegate** is a person appointed on a bi-annual basis by the Bishop to coordinate and implement the Diocesan Policy on sexual misconduct.
- c) **Bullying** is "characterized by acts of intentional harm, repeated over-time, in a relationship where an imbalance of power exists. It includes physical actions (punching, kicking, biting), verbal actions (threats, name calling, insults, racial or sexual comments), and social exclusion (spreading rumours, ignoring, gossiping, excluding)". (*Public Safety Canada*)
- d) **Child** means a person who is or who appears to be under the age of eighteen (18) years.
- e) **Child Pornography** means:
 - 1. photographic, film, video or other visual representation, whether or not it was made by electronic or mechanical means:
 - i. that shows a person who is, or is depicted as being, under the age of eighteen (18) years and is engaged in, or is depicted as engaged in, explicit sexual activity, or
 - ii. the dominant characteristic of which is the depiction, for a sexual purpose, of a sexual organ or the anal region of a person under the age of eighteen years, or
 - 2. any written material, visual representation, or audio recording that advocates or counsels inappropriate sexual activity with a person under the age of eighteen (18) years, or
 - 3. any audio recording that has as its dominant characteristic the description, presentation, or representation, for a sexual purpose, of sexual activity with a person under the age of eighteen years.
- f) **Child Sexual Abuse** means the sexual involvement or attempted sexual involvement with a young person under the age of eighteen (18) years.
- g) **Clergy** means bishops, priests and deacons under the jurisdiction of the Diocese of Corner Brook and Labrador.
- h) **Diocese** means the Diocese of Corner Brook and Labrador
- i) **Diocesan Safeguarding Committee** means a group of persons responsible for ensuring the implementation and on-going supervision of the Responsible Ministry Policy and the Sexual Misconduct Policy and Procedures within the Diocese.
- j) **Employee** means a person paid by the Diocese, its Parish/Missions or by a religious order in respect of its activities in the Diocese, but does not include independent contractors or others who are not employees of the Diocese.

- k) **Grooming** includes 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 attention. The behaviours can also lead the person to feel indebted to the groomer for these kindnesses. Once this bond of trust and indebtedness is established, the state may be set for sexual advances and/or financial exploitation. Vulnerable Persons are particularly susceptible to Grooming.

Grooming, whether unintentional or not, is by its very nature seductive behaviour. As well as being a signal of possible future sexual activity or other abusive behaviours. Grooming is in itself inappropriate. Because the pattern of a groomer is made up of observable behaviours, these behaviours need to be challenged and documented.

- l) **Harassment** means any unwanted physical or verbal behaviour that offends, threatens or humiliates a person. Harassment may persist over time or be a one-time incident.
- m) **Leader** means a person of at least 19 years of age who has completed the screening process and who has gone through a time of orientation and training in order to hold a leadership position.
- n) **Misconduct** means wrongful, improper, or unlawful conduct motivated by premeditated or intentional purpose or by obstinate indifference to the consequences of one's acts.
- o) **Parish/Mission Responsible Ministry Committee** means two or more lay Parishioners working collaboratively with the priest or director of Parish/Mission life to ensure that the Responsible Ministry Policy is implemented and adhered to within the Parish/Mission.
- p) **Police Records Check** is a criminal records check, as well as a search of the records in a national database. It can reveal if an individual has been investigated for an incident. (See **Appendix 11** for more information)
- q) **Program (ministry)** means a structured series of similar activities governed and run by the Parish/Mission which spans a period of weeks or months and in which the level of risk is expected to remain constant.
- r) **Sexual Exploitation** means the use of one's position of power, authority or trust, to have sexual contact or attempted sexual contact with another person.
- s) **Sexual Harassment** means unwanted sexual 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.

t) **Sexual Misconduct** includes:

- i) any act of a sexual nature deemed an offence according to the Code of Canon Law, the Criminal Code of Canada, and/or the laws of the province or territory concerned;
- ii) the possession or distribution of child pornography;
- iii) sexual exploitation;
- iv) child sexual abuse; and
- v) sexual exploitation of a vulnerable adult.

u) **Volunteer** means a person who undertakes some task of ministry or assistance with the sanction of the Diocese, clergy, or staff. Volunteers do not include self-appointed individuals who operate without the sanction or direction of the Diocese, clergy, or staff.

v) **Vulnerable adult** is a person who is defined as an adult by civil statutes (eighteen years or older), who lacks an adult mental or emotional capacity or who, by reason of advanced age, physical illness, mental disorder or disability at the time the alleged abuse occurred, was, or might be, unable to protect himself or herself from harm or exploitation. Therefore, an adult who habitually lacks the use of reason is considered incapable of personal responsibility and is to be considered equivalent to a minor according to Canon Law.
(see CIC/c 99 and CCEO/c 909).

w) **Vulnerable Sector Check** allows the police agency, with the applicant's consent, to search for all pardoned sex offences. (See **Appendix 11** for more information)

x) **Youth** means a person who is 16 years of age or older, but is under the age of majority which in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador is 19 years of age.

PART 1: PREPARATION

Establish a Responsible Ministry Committee in each Parish that is responsible to the Diocesan Safeguarding Committee

Each Parish will appoint a Parish Responsible Ministry Committee comprised of two or more lay Parishioners working collaboratively with the Priest or Director of Parish Life to ensure that the policy is properly implemented at the Parish/Mission level.

Evaluate Risk Factors and Reduce Risk

The Parish Responsible Ministry Committee will determine how much risk there is in current programs and reduce risk for any categories that are checked “yes” in Appendix 1. The Risk Assessment Guide (**Appendix 1**) must be completed by volunteers for programs and activities. If there is any change in leadership, structure, location or element of a program a new Risk Assessment is required. If a new element is introduced into a program for children, youth or vulnerable adults, the amount of risk for that specific change must be determined and submitted in writing to the Parish Committee for review prior to implementation.

The same procedure should also be followed for any special event undertaken in the Parish/Mission.

Completed risk assessments must be dated, signed and filed in a locked metal filing cabinet.

Risk Assessment Guide (Appendix 1)

The Parish/Mission must reduce risk for any categories that are checked “Yes”.

How to Reduce Risk

- **Transfer the Liability** – Have a service or program offered by someone with professional expertise that would have their own insurance in place.
- **Modify the Program or Event** – Make changes as to how the activity is carried out to ensure the greatest degree of safety possible.

Basic Principles for Reducing Risk

- Always follow a two-person policy for any program involving children, youth or vulnerable adults. The two volunteers must be unrelated and possess a current Police Records Check (PRC) and a Vulnerable Sector Check (VSC).
- Always require two volunteers with their PRC and VSC when transporting children/youth/vulnerable adults in a church or volunteer’s vehicle.
- Always visit frail seniors with a partner who has a PRC and a VSC.
- When the two-person policy cannot be used, require that one-to-one contacts between a volunteer /staff and a child/youth/vulnerable adult take place in a public area where both people can be seen by others.
- Have a window in the door of each room or leave the room door open.
- Parent/guardian/caregiver contact information must be carefully maintained.
- Appropriate steps must be put in place to ensure children are picked up by an authorized parent/guardian/caregiver.

- No child should be dropped off without 2 leaders/volunteers present.
- No in-home activities by Parish volunteers (including catechism instruction) are permitted for children/youth/vulnerable adults.
- Except for Liturgy of the Word with Children, attendance and leaders' names must be recorded. Those records should be sent to the Diocese at the end of June each year.

Write or Adapt Position Descriptions

All volunteers and employees are required to have position descriptions. Templates are available from the Diocesan office. These may be adapted to accurately reflect the positions within a particular Parish/Mission.

Appendix 2 has positions classified according to the degree of risk.

Covenant of Care

All leaders and volunteers must sign a Covenant of Care (see **Appendix 4**).

Duty to Report Suspected Abuse

If a person has reasonable grounds to suspect that a child/youth/vulnerable adult is or may be in need of protection, the person is legally required to promptly report the suspicion and the information on which it is based to an appropriate protection agency or police. (See **Appendix 13** for more information)

Safety and Prevention Issues

- **Transportation**
A leader/volunteer who drives children/youth/vulnerable adults must have a valid driver's license and valid insurance and one seatbelt per person in the vehicle. The two-person policy must be followed.
- **Ratios of Children/Youth/Vulnerable Adults to leader/Volunteers**
The management of the program, as well as concern for safety, care and social interaction, are some of the factors to take into account when establishing adequate ratios. If there are not enough leaders/volunteers, the program or activity must not be held. The standard ratio is 2 adults for every 12-15 children/youth/vulnerable adults depending on the age of the participants and the nature of the activity. The orientation session held at the beginning of the year must outline steps to be taken when one leader/volunteer finds him/herself alone with a group of children/youth/vulnerable adults.
- **Day Excursions, Off-site Activities and Overnight Outings**
Overnight excursions are not permitted with children under the age of 8. The standard ratio applies for day excursions.
 - It is a requirement that parents/guardians/caregivers be notified prior to the outing and an Activity Waiver and Medical Release Form (see **Appendix 6**) be obtained for each participant.
 - A leader/volunteer must assess the risk involved and submit that assessment in writing to the Parish Responsible Ministry Committee for approval prior to the activity.

- At least one leader/volunteer must have a cell phone and the phone numbers where parents can be contacted. This person must have a copy of the completed consent forms with him/her.
 - With the exception of a parent/guardian/caregiver, no adult should be alone with a single child/youth/vulnerable adult.
 - If a day excursion includes a trip to a swimming pool, or lake, all municipal/provincial/federal regulations regarding safety and supervision must be observed.
 - At least one leader/volunteer must have First Aid training.
 - Pre-established codes of conduct should be signed by the parent/guardian/caregiver and the child/youth/vulnerable adult. (See Appendix 7)
 - If the group is comprised of both genders, then there must be two leaders/volunteers of both genders.
 - Leaders/volunteers shall have an assigned number of the group for whom they are responsible during an overnight event.
 - All facilities in which an overnight function is housed must be equipped with smoke detectors and inside release doors. All members of the group must be made aware of the fire exits and fire procedures as required.
 - Should an accident or incident occur **Appendix 8** must be completed.
 - Billeting in private homes is discouraged. However, if that happens the following applies:
 - Billeted persons must be over the age of 14
 - Children shall be billeted in pairs.
 - The people offering billeting must be known, trusted Parishioners and must have a PRC and a VSC.
 - The contact information (telephone number, address) of the individual with whom the youth will be billeted must be obtained.
 - Billeted persons should have leader's cell phone number.
- **Behaviour, Language and Physical Contact of Leaders/volunteers**
 - Do not engage in any behaviour which can be perceived as grooming.
 - Do not show any signs of favouritism
 - Do not engage in any overt or covert sexual language or behavior
 - Do not use any form of corporal punishment under any circumstances.
 - It is important to distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate touching, and to be sensitive to differences in interpretation based on gender and culture.
 - Inappropriate behaviours might include
 - Initiating hugging, kissing
 - Hand holding except for prayer circle or safety reasons
 - Having others sit on your lap
 - Extended cuddling
 - Have well-prepared sessions and an engaging program.
 - Provide clearly stated consequences for inappropriate behavior. Stop inappropriate behavior immediately. Be fair, consistent and reasonable, matching consequences to the age and ability of the child/youth/vulnerable adult.

- If it is necessary to speak to a child/youth/vulnerable adult in private, move to a quiet place in view of others.
 - Provide a “time-out” space for younger children until they are ready to rejoin the group.
 - Inform the parents/guardians/caregivers of any problems and work co-operatively with them.
- **Washroom procedures**
Determine the washroom procedure that will be followed at the time of determining risk. Here are a few guidelines:
 - Ask parents of younger children to take their child to the washroom before class begins.
 - Escort a child who is younger than 6 to the washroom and check for safety. **Aside from parent/guardian/caregiver, no one is ever to be in a closed washroom or cubicle with a child.** The leader/volunteer who accompanies the child should be positioned in plain view.
- **Health**
While Parishes cannot always avoid having ill children/youth/vulnerable adults in their programs, several measures can be taken to promote good health and reduce infection.
 - **Allergies** – Inquire about allergies and post any pertinent information so that it will not be overlooked. Avoid foods identified as serious allergens such as peanut butter, chocolate and nuts of any kind.
 - **Injury** – If an injury occurs arrange for medical attention. If there is bleeding protect yourself and all others from contact with the blood. For all injuries, even if the person does not need medical attention, a General Incident Report (Appendix 13) must be completed and the incident reported to the injured person’s parent/guardian/caregiver. General incident reports should be stored in a locked metal cabinet at the Parish/Mission and a copy sent to the Diocesan office.
 - **Infectious diseases** – Ask parents/guardians/caregivers to not let their charges attend Parish/Mission programs if they have symptoms and diseases which are known to be infectious

Checklist for Part I

Task	Y or N	Improvement plan
Has a Parish Responsible Ministry Committee been appointed?		
Has the Committee listed all the programs currently offered in the Parish/Mission?		
Has risk been assessed for each program?		
Have steps been taken to reduce risk where possible?		
Has the Committee written or adapted position descriptions?		
Has a presentation been made to the Parish/Mission leader/volunteers?		
Have the necessary Covenants of Care been signed ?		

Part II: Working with Leaders/Volunteers/Staff

When Leaders/Volunteers /Staff in High Risk Ministry have provided the documentation listed below, and it has been submitted to the diocese, and they have completed the orientation and training outlined below, written confirmation and approval will be submitted to the parish by the diocese.

Visiting Clerics and Religious

- When someone is advised that a Cleric/Religious will be ministering in the Diocese on a temporary basis, the person must provide the Diocese with the name and contact information of the Cleric/Religious who will be visiting.
- The Cleric/Religious must not minister until the Diocese provides written approval.

Required Documentation for Staff

All staff are considered to be in High Risk Ministry as at any time they may have interaction with children/youth/vulnerable adults, as well as having physical access to the physical/monetary assets of the Parish/Mission. As such the required documentation is:

- Covenant of Care (**Appendix 4**)
- Volunteer Information Parts I and 2 (**Appendix 9**)
- Reference Checks (**Appendix 10**)
- Police Record Check
- Vulnerable Sector Check

Required Documentation for All Leaders/Volunteers

The documentation required for persons in various ministries is dependent upon the level of risk associated with each ministry.

- **Low Risk: ministry that does not involve interaction with children/youth/vulnerable adults or allow access to the physical/monetary assets of the Parish/Mission.**
Required documentation is:
 - Covenant of Care (**Appendix 4**)
 - Volunteer Information Part I (**Appendix 9**)
- **High Risk ministry that allows access to the physical/monetary assets of the Parish/Mission, but does not involve interaction with children/youth/vulnerable adults.**
Required documentation is:
 - Covenant of Care (**Appendix 4**)
 - Volunteer Information Parts I and 2 (**Appendix 9**)
 - Reference Checks (**Appendix 10**)
 - Police Record Check
- **High Risk ministry that involves interaction with children/youth/vulnerable adults.**
Required documentation is:
 - Covenant of Care (**Appendix 4**)
 - Volunteer Information Parts I and 2 (**Appendix 9**)
 - Reference Checks (**Appendix 10**)
 - Police Record Check
 - Vulnerable Sector Check

Handling the Information

- **Low Risk**
All documentation remains in the Parish/Mission, filed and stored in a locked metal cabinet
- **High Risk/Staff**
All documentation remains in the Parish/Mission.
See **Appendix 3** for copies that are to be sent to the Diocese.

Any change in ministry may necessitate a change in required documentation. Consult **Appendix 2**.

It is important that this information be handled with strict confidentiality. The individual should retain the original PRC and VSC for their own personal records.

Police Record Checks and Vulnerable Sector Checks must be updated every five years.

Volunteer Screening

Screening is a process to ensure that the right person fills a position. Part of that screening includes, where required, reference checks and police checks.

- **Reference checks** – these references (see **Appendix 10**) ensure the suitability of the applicant for a particular ministry.
- **Police Record Check (PRC)** – A PRC is a criminal records check, as well as a search of the records in a national database. It can reveal if an individual has been investigated for an incident. This may or may not be revealed by the police. PRCs do have limitations, and that is why they are only one part of the larger screening process. (See **Appendix 11** for more information)
- **Vulnerable Sector Check (VSC)** – A VSC allows the police agency, with the applicant's consent, to search for all pardoned sex offences. (See **Appendix 11** for more information)

Prospective volunteers can receive these checks at no charge by obtaining a letter on Diocesan letterhead, signed by the Bishop, indicating they are applying in a volunteer capacity.

Procedure for obtaining a PRC/VSC

1. Obtain a copy of the letter on Diocesan letterhead, signed by the Bishop, stating that you are applying for a volunteer position in the Parish/Mission. (This eliminates the provincial government fee.)
2. **RNC** applications must now be completed online. Instructions are found at <https://www.rnc.gov.nl.ca/services/certificate-of-conduct/>
3. Name of Organization requesting Criminal Records Screening is:
Diocese of Corner Brook and Labrador
469 Curling Street
Corner Brook, NL, A2H 3K8
Contact Person: Nicanor Escalona Jr. / Phone: 709-639-7073 ext. 227

4. **For RCMP,** obtain the Court Check at the local Court, bring it along with the completed PRC and VSC (if necessary) applications to the local RCMP detachment. Have 2 pieces of photo ID with you. Check with the detachment as to whether they will mail the completed checks to you or if you must pick them up.

Orientation and Training for Leaders/Volunteers

Orientation for all volunteers is very important and is best timed to coincide with the start of most Parish/Mission programs.

This session should cover such things as:

- A review of position descriptions
- A review of the Responsible Ministry Policy
- Instructions on who to inform of absence of a leader/volunteer and how to find a replacement
- How to access supplies and equipment
- Attendance sheet for the session
- Opportunities for on-going support
- High risk circumstances that require a heightened level of awareness.
 - Settings
 - Isolated places
 - Rooms without windows, particularly confessionals and offices
 - Motor vehicles
 - One-on-one situations
 - Setting appropriate boundaries with people
 - Giving and receiving monetary gifts from the vulnerable
 - Activities
 - Visiting homes, nursing homes, hospitals
 - Overnight activities
 - Directly handling money, cheques or banking information
 - Accessing highly confidential information
 - Avoiding invitations to act as financial advisor, power of attorney, or assist in drawing up a will for those we serve
 - Supervision
 - Little or no supervision
 - No documentation of meetings/events

Checklist for Part II

Task	Date	Who is responsible
Have all completed an Information Form?		
Have all volunteers for high risk ministry provided two references?		
Have the above two references been checked?		
Have all in high risk ministry obtained a Police Record Check and a Vulnerable Sector Check (if needed)?		
Have all signed a Covenant of Care?		
Have all leaders/volunteers (new and experienced) been part of an orientation session?		
Is someone in authority providing on-going supervision and support for leaders/volunteers?		

Part III: Evaluation, Monitoring and Reporting

Evaluating the Policy and Reporting to a Supervising Body

Yearly, the priest or director of parish life, in collaboration with the Parish Responsible Ministry Committee, should evaluate how the Policy is functioning in their Parish/Mission. In addition position descriptions and risk assessments should be reviewed. Any comments/suggestions should be forwarded to the Diocesan Safeguarding Committee.

Collect and Store Necessary Documents

Personal information is gathered to insure that the policy is properly administered, is confidential and used for that purpose only. It must be safely stored in a locked metal cabinet and accessible only to those who administer the policy.

Monitoring Compliance

Once a year, a list will be provided of the employees and volunteers that are on file at the Diocese. The Parish Committee is responsible for contacting those whose Police Records check and Vulnerable Sector Check is expiring within the year, and that they are not authorized to work/volunteer once these Checks expire. The Diocese should be informed of those who are no longer active in High Risk Ministry.

Once a year, the Diocesan Office will send a questionnaire to all Pastors, Administrators and Parish committees for completion within a two week period. The results will be compiled and a written report provided to the Bishop of the Diocese.

PIPEDA

PIPEDA, the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act, became effective in Canada in January 2004. Most religious organizations are not subject to PIPEDA because the organization does not collect, use or dispose of commercial goods.

Checklist for Part III

Task	Date	Details
Conduct yearly meetings between Parish/Mission leaders/ volunteers and the Parish Responsible Ministry Committee		
Collect and store necessary documents		

Appendix 1 (page 1 of 1)

Risk Assessment Guide

Risk Category	Risk Factor	Yes; true	No; not true
Degree of Isolation	The leader/volunteer may be alone with person being served.		
Degree of Supervision	The leader/volunteer has limited or no supervision.		
	The activities of leader/volunteer are in a place where activities are not observed or monitored.		
Access of Property	The leader/volunteer has access to personal property or money of persons served.		
Vulnerability of Persons Served	Persons served have language or literacy barriers.		
	Persons served are immobile.		
	Persons served have challenges that contribute to their vulnerability (e.g. physical, psychological, and situational).		
Degree of Physical Demands	The activity involves potential danger to person served (e.g. rock climbing, using a stove).		
	Activity involves potential stress for participants and leaders/volunteers.		
Degree of Trust	The leader/volunteer develops close, personal relationships with persons served.		
	The position involves transportation of persons served.		
Degree of Inherent Risk	The activity exposes the person served to operation or handling of potentially dangerous equipment (e.g. lawnmower).		

Appendix 2 (page 1 of 2)

Positions Having a Low Degree of Risk:

- Adult Altar Server (no children/youth/vulnerable adults involved)
- Bereavement Team Member (assisting with prayer/liturgy services)
- Choir Member
- Usher
- Collector
- Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion at daily/Sunday Masses
- Members of Parish/Mission Committees not designated as High Risk in Appendices 2b and 2c

The documentation needed is the signed Covenant of Care and the Information Form (Part 1). This documentation is to be kept at the Parish office.

Positions Having a High Degree of Risk but DO NOT involve Children/Youth/Vulnerable Adults

- Collection Counter
- Collection Counter Coordinator
- Sacristans
- Persons with keys to any Parish/Mission facilities

The documentation needed is the signed Covenant of Care, Information Form (Parts 1 and 2), Reference Checks, Police Record Check and Vulnerable Sector Check (if needed). Copies are to be attached to Appendix 3 and sent to the Diocesan Office.

Please see **Appendix 3** for a check list of required documentation and where it must be stored.

Appendix 2 (page 2 of 2)

Positions having a High Degree of Risk if involving children/youth/vulnerable adults (Not all Parishes have all ministry positions)

- Adult Altar Server (when children/youth/vulnerable adults are involved)
- Altar Server Coordinator (when children/youth/vulnerable adults are involved)
- Bereavement Team Coordinator
- Bereavement Team Member (when dealing directly with the bereaved family)
- Catechist
- Catechist Coordinator (when children/youth/vulnerable adults are involved)
- Children's Liturgy of the Word Coordinator
- Children's Liturgy of the Word Leader/volunteer
- Choir Director (when children/youth/vulnerable adults are involved)
- Employees (anyone receiving a T4)
- Extraordinary Minister of Communion to Homes/Institutions
- Lay Pastoral Visitor
- Lay Pastoral Visitor Coordinator
- Outreach Program Coordinator
- Outreach Program Volunteer – meal delivery, St. Vincent de Paul Society, Food Bank Volunteer, etc.
- Parish/Mission Social Ministries (when children/youth/vulnerable adults are involved)
- Parish/Mission Volunteer Screening Coordinator
- Prayer Group Coordinator
- Sacramental Preparation Coordinator
- Sacramental Preparation Team Member (when children/youth/vulnerable adults are involved)
- Volunteer Driver (when children/youth/vulnerable adults are involved)
- Youth Ministry Coordinator
- Youth Ministry Leader/Volunteer

Please see **Appendix 3** for a check list of required documentation and where it must be stored.

Appendix 3 (page 1 of 1)



Documentation Check List

Parish/Mission/Community: _____

Name: _____

Volunteer/Staff Position: _____

Initial Orientation:

Date _____ Person giving orientation _____

DOCUMENTATION CHECK LIST:

Low Risk (Keep in Parish/Mission)

<u>Title of Document</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Person verifying information</u>
Covenant of Care	_____	_____
Volunteer Information (Part 1)	_____	_____

High Risk (Originals kept in Parish/Mission. Copies of all documentation sent to Diocesan office)

<u>Title of Document</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Person verifying information</u>
Covenant of Care	_____	_____
Volunteer Information (Part 1)	_____	_____
Volunteer Information (Part 2)	_____	_____
References checked		
1. _____	_____	_____
2. _____	_____	_____
Police Record Check (Original kept by applicant)	_____	_____
Vulnerable Sector Check (Original kept by applicant)	_____	_____

Date submitted to Diocesan Office: _____

Appendix 4 (page 1 of 1)



Corner Brook Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation

Covenant of Care for _____ Parish/Mission

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

- *Following all of the directives in the Responsible Ministry Protocol (RMP) for the Diocese of Corner Brook and Labrador;*
- *Complying with the information given in my training orientation;*
- *Using appropriate language;*
- *Treating all persons with respect, regardless of gender, ethnic background, skin color, intelligence, age, religion, sexual orientation or socio-economic status;*
- *Respecting confidentiality and privacy, unless a child, youth, or vulnerable adult is in danger, then I will report to a child protection agency or the police.*
- *Allowing my confidential information to be accessed by the Parish/Mission and Diocesan Responsible Ministry Committees.*

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Witnessed by: _____

Date: _____

(Parish/Mission Priest or Director of Parish/Mission Life)

Appendix 5 (1 of 1)



Volunteer's Checklist

Task	Y or N	Improvement plan
Are steps/stairs free of all impediments?		
Are exits clearly marked?		
Are pathways to exits clear of all impediments?		
Are exit doors unlocked from the inside?		
Can exits be released from the inside?		
Does the arrangement allow for a single volunteer to be clearly visible to others?		
Can all volunteers access a well-stocked first aid kit?		
Do all volunteers know the location of fire extinguishers?		
Do all volunteers know how to use a fire extinguisher?		
Are there emergency escape maps in each room?		
Has there been a practice escape drill this year?		
Is there a list of individuals who may need assistance in the event of an emergency?		
If transporting participants by car, are there seat belts for each person, including the two volunteers?		
Are there booster seats for those who may need them?		

Appendix 6 (page 1 of 2)



Activity Program Waiver and Medical Release

Note: Before an activity, the leader/volunteer stores a copy of this waiver in a safe storage area and takes another copy on the outing.

Parish/Mission Name: _____

Description and location of Activity: _____

Departure date: _____ Returning date: _____

Full Name of participant: _____
First Last

Birth date (N/A for adult): _____

Full Address: _____

Parent/guardian/caregiver name(s): _____

Circle the number where parent/guardian may be reached when trip is taking place.

Home/resident phone: _____ Cell phone: _____ Work phone: _____

Does a participant have any severe allergies or other medical condition that leader/volunteers should be aware of? (Please Circle)

Yes No

If yes, please list and explain: _____

All reasonable precautions for the safety and health of the participant will be taken. He/she will be properly supervised in activities. In the event of accident or sickness, _____ its staff and volunteers are released from any liability Name of Parish/Mission/community

In the event of injury requiring medical attention, I authorize treatment for the participant and understand that reasonable attempts will be made to contact me should such a situation occur.

In the event that travel or activities take place outside this province, I understand that any medical costs incurred involving the participant are my responsibility.

The participant must be covered by provincial health insurance or equivalent medical coverage.

Participant's Health card number: _____

Participant's Family Physician: _____ Phone: _____

Contact person (not parent) in case of emergency and parents/guardians/caregivers cannot be reached:

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

If the trip is **out of province**, please give insurance provider and policy number:

Insurance provider: _____

Insurance Policy Number: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Parent/Guardian Name (PRINT): _____

Date: _____

Witnessed by: _____ Date: _____

(Parish/Mission Priest or Director of Parish/Mission Life)

Appendix 7(1 of 1)

Behaviour Agreement

I, _____, agree to follow the behaviour guidelines* established
by _____ for this outing/trip to _____

I realize that if my behaviour is not in accordance with the established rules my
parent/guardian/caregiver will be notified and I may be asked to leave.

Participant _____

Parent/Guardian _____

Contact number(s) _____

Date _____

*Guidelines from the parish are attached.

Appendix 8 (page 1 of 2)



General Incident Report

Parish/Mission

Name _____ Community: _____

CONFIDENTIAL

Report date: _____ Time of report: _____

Full Name of child/youth/adult: _____ Age: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Gender: M F

Full Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Name of Parent/Guardian (for child/youth) or caregiver (for adult): _____

Notified: Y N If yes, date/time of notification: _____

Address: _____
(If different from above)

Phone number: _____
(If different from above)

Date/time and location of incident: _____

Description of incident: _____

Names/contact information of witnesses: _____

Description of injuries sustained: _____

Description of action taken: _____

Additional information you think is relevant: _____

Direct quotes from the person: (Note: If this is an abuse allegation, do not interview the person but report only the comments they share with you.)

Signature: _____ (Name and position of person who received above information)

I hereby confirm that the information provided in this report is accurate to the best of my knowledge.

Name of Person making report (please print): _____

Phone/Address: _____

Signature of Person making report: _____ Date: _____

The person must file this report with the Parish/Mission who in turn will forward it to the Diocese.

Note: If this is an allegation of abuse, it must be reported to a protection agency or police. (See Appendix 13.)

Appendix 9 (page 1 of 4)



Parish/Mission/Community _____

VOLUNTEER INFORMATION Part 1
(To be completed by all volunteers)

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Province: _____

Postal code: _____ Home Phone: _____

Work Place: _____ Work Phone: _____

E-Mail: _____

<p>Please provide a Contact in case of an Emergency:</p> <p>Name: _____</p> <p>Phone: (Home) _____ (Other) _____</p>

Have you held a volunteer position with another organization/Parish/Mission? Yes No

If **Yes** describe: _____

How long have you been a member of this Parish/Mission community? _____

Ministry position(s) for which you are volunteering or are currently involved in:

If this ministry is not available, would you consider a different ministry? Yes No

If yes, which other ministries might interest you?

I certify that the information provided on this Volunteer Information Form is true and complete. I understand that this information will remain confidential and is the property of the Parish/Mission and the Diocese. As well, I understand that my name and phone number will be given to the appropriate Ministry Coordinator/ Leader/volunteer so that she/ he may contact me.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Witnessed by: _____ Date: _____
(Parish/Mission Priest or Director of Parish/Mission Life)

VOLUNTEER INFORMATION PART 2

Please Complete This Page for HIGH RISK Ministry Positions Only

References

Please provide two references that can describe your suitability for this ministry.

(E.g. Friends, neighbors, other Parishioners, work associates, etc.)

Please remember to notify these people that the Parish/Mission will be contacting them.

Reference #1

Name: _____ Relationship to applicant: _____

Address: _____ Community: _____

Postal Code: _____ Phone Number: _____

Reference #2

Name: _____ Relationship to applicant: _____

Address: _____ Community: _____

Postal Code: _____ Phone Number: _____

Consent

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

Committee of _____ to contact the references that I have
(Name of Parish/Mission)

listed on this Volunteer 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:** _____

Police Record Check/Vulnerable Sector Check

- I agree to comply with obtaining a Police Record Check (and Vulnerable Sector Check if required) before I can participate in a high-risk ministry position. I understand that this information may be accessed by the Parish/Mission and Diocesan Responsible Ministry Committees.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

I am aware of the responsibilities and the limits of this ministry position and agree to meet them. I understand that I represent this Parish/Mission as a volunteer only when I am functioning as described in the Ministry Position Description. I agree to keep confidential any information that I may come across regarding the affairs of this Parish/Mission, its clergy, other volunteers, and Parishioners, unless otherwise directed by law or by authorities from the Diocese of Corner Brook and Labrador.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Witnessed by: _____ Date: _____
(Parish/Mission Priest or Director of Parish/Mission Life)

Appendix 10 (page 1 of 1)



Volunteer Reference Check

Applicant's Name: _____

Reference's name _____

Date _____

References are required for all high risk ministries. A member of the Parish/Mission Responsible Ministry Committee will conduct the phone reference by asking the questions on this form.

Suggested procedure for telephone

Call the reference, introduce yourself, and explain to them that you are calling as they have been identified as a reference. You may use the following statement:

Hello, my name is _____. I am calling on behalf of _____ Parish/Mission. _____ is interested in volunteering in the ministry of _____. (Give a brief description of the ministry.) Would you have time to answer a few questions to help us determine if _____ is suitable for this ministry?

Reference check questions:

1) What is your relationship to the person indicated above? How long have you known this person?

2) How would you describe her/his skills and suitability for this position?

3) Would you feel comfortable having a member of your family be part of a group led by this person (Why?/Why not?) _____

4) Would you recommend _____ for this ministry? _____

Reference check conducted
___ By phone or ___ in person
Date: _____
Conducted by: _____

Appendix 11 (1 of 3)

Police Record Check (PRC) and Vulnerable sector Check (VSC)

How is a Police Records Check carried out?

To conduct a PRC, 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 Prohibition 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 PRC. Note that a PRC cannot be conducted without the individual's written consent. In some cases the PRC 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 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 leader/volunteer 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 PRCs?

There are some limits, but the fact still remains: PRCs can be a positive deterrent in discouraging nefarious individuals from applying for leader/volunteer or volunteer positions with children, youth and vulnerable adults. Here are some of the limitations of PRCs:

- 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.

Vulnerable Sector

(Source: <http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/news-nouvelles/2010/04-23-vu-eng.htm#tphp>)

Vulnerable sector checks are an integral part of suitability pre-screening practices. All volunteer organizations are strongly encouraged to continue in this practice. Vulnerable sector screening may be required for the following types of positions: teacher, social worker, day-care worker, sport coaches, etc. *It is required that the organization self-identify that the position entails that the applicant will be working or in the care of vulnerable individuals.*

A vulnerable person is defined in section 6.3 of the *Criminal Records Act*, as a person who, because of age, a disability, or other circumstances, whether temporary or permanent are (a) in a position of dependence on others or (b) are otherwise at a greater risk than the general population of being harmed by a person in a position of authority or trust relative to them. There are measures in place to ensure people convicted of sexually-based offences do not work with the vulnerable sector.

If a pardon has been granted, the criminal history information about an individual convicted of a sexually based offence is retrievable by law enforcement only for the purposes of a Vulnerable Sector search.

(Source: <http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/news-nouvelles/2010/04-23-vu-eng.htm#tphp>)

The following outlines, generally, the Vulnerable Sector search process:

- As prescribed by the *Criminal Records Act*, any person undergoing a vulnerable sector search must first consent to that search being done.

(Page 3 of 3)

- The criminal history information about an individual convicted of a sexually based offence is retrievable by law enforcement after a fingerprint search has been conducted only for the purposes of a vulnerable sector search, even if that person has been granted a pardon.
- Under the *Criminal Records Act*, any information related to a pardoned file must be kept separate and apart from active files.
- If a police agency conducts a vulnerable sector search, for which the pardoned individual must consent to, the police are then permitted to query, using the subject's name, date of birth and sex, against all pardoned sex offences.
- It will allow a possible "hit" to be provided to the police service requesting that the subject submit fingerprints so that a comparison may be made. If the subject's fingerprints are certified to the flagged file, then the information will be provided to the Minister of Public Safety for his consent as to whether the subject's pardoned files will be disclosed, in whole or in part, or not.
- If the Minister of Public Safety consents to the disclosure of information, the information is then provided to the police service that conducted the search. The individual must then further consent to allow disclosure to the organization that requested the search to be done in the first instance.
- If the individual declines, then the police service will notify the organization that they were unable to complete the subject's request for a vulnerable sector search.

Appendix 12 (page 1 of 3)

Types of Abuse

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 adults 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 (clergy or lay) who has reasonable grounds to suspect that a child/youth is or may be in need of protection must report that suspicion to a protective agency or police. Anyone who hears an allegation of abuse must report it to the appropriate authority such as the police or a child protection agency and should inform the Diocese by calling the Diocesan abuse phone line (709)639-6461.

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 wellbeing. 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 of, 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 them
 - Intentionally frightening them
 - Making them fear that they will not receive the food or care they need
 - Lying to them
 - Failing to check allegations of abuse against them

- **Financial abuse** encompasses financial manipulation or exploitation including theft, fraud, forgery, or extortion. It includes using older adults' money or property in a dishonest manner, or failing to use older adults' 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 their money, pension cheques or other possessions
 - Selling their homes or other property without their permission
 - Wrongfully using a Power of Attorney
 - Not allowing them 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

- **Sexual abuse**
 - See page 33 for explanation and examples

- **Spiritual abuse** is using religion or religious practices, (or threatening to withhold such practices) as a means to gain advantage, dominate or exercise control over others.

Appendix 13 (page 1 of 3)

Reports of Abuse

Dealing with Reports of Abuse

There is a separate Diocesan policy to deal with the response to reports of allegations of abuse of children, youth and vulnerable adults. This is the “Sexual Misconduct Policy and Procedures”

Allegations of physical and/or sexual misconduct towards children/youth/vulnerable adults must be reported to the police and should be reported to the Diocesan phone number (709) 639-6461 immediately. This is a dedicated phone line specifically for reporting such matters. All voice mails will go directly to the Bishop’s delegate.

When a child, youth or vulnerable adult is upset or distressed about a situation, he/she may turn to a trusted adult for support and advice. Often, though, they may be hesitant and shy about discussing what has happened. Feelings of guilt or shame are common. The leader/volunteer should help the child/youth/vulnerable adult feel safe and understand that they can talk about what happened. A vulnerable adult, disabled or confined, may not be able to tell anyone, so leader/volunteers or visitors need to be sensitive and aware of any change in appearance/emotion.

A listening adult should be supportive and pay attention to what is said. Be cautious about asking questions. Asking question can invalidate future statements to police or child welfare authorities and can cause a case to be dismissed in court. Accept the child/youth/vulnerable adult’s story; do not dispute it. Investigating the incident is the responsibility of the protection agency or police. Although it is difficult, be calm, supportive and hopeful.

It is important not to make promises that you cannot keep, such as promising to stop the abuse, punish or remove the offender. Do not promise not to report the incident to the authorities. If you have inadvertently promised to keep what the child/youth/vulnerable adult says confidential, tell him/her that you must tell someone who can help you both.

Note: Any person who has reasonable grounds to suspect that a child/youth/vulnerable adult is or may be in need of protection must report the suspicion to a protective agency or police. Clergy and other professionals have special responsibility to report allegations of abuse. A leader/volunteer who hears an allegation of abuse should also notify the Bishop’s Delegate(639-6461) who shall, in turn, notify our insurer.

Reporting to a Protection Agency

If a person has reasonable grounds to suspect that a child/youth/vulnerable adult is or may be in need of protection, the person is legally required to promptly report the suspicion and the information on which it is based to an appropriate protection agency or police.

Professional persons, such as clergy, and officials have the same duty as any member of the public to report a suspicion that children/youth/vulnerable adults are in need of protection.

Procedure to follow when contacting a Protection Agency

When one calls a protection agency that person should prepare notes on why he/she is calling.

- Ask for an intake screener.
- Give your name and location, or you may remain anonymous.
- State that you are making a report of a person you believe to be in need of protection.
- Give your relationship to the person and/or family
- Indicate what you heard from the child/youth/vulnerable adult or what you observed.
- Offer facts such as dates, descriptions of the child/youth/vulnerable adult and identifying facts about people who were involved.
- Share knowledge of other agency or community involvement if known.
- Provide any relevant background information.

Procedure if Contacted By a Protection Agency

1. Any request from a child protection worker (see photo ID or badge to verify identity) should normally be made in person. The worker will want to speak with the person filing the suggested abuse report and, if a different person, to the person to whom the child/youth spoke. If the matter is urgent and those investigating cannot do a personal interview, the investigator may telephone you from his/her office.
2. The child protection agent should identify himself/herself and give his/her work contact phone number. Record the worker's first and last name.
 - Do not give any information at this time. The investigator will explain the process to follow and what information he/she is seeking.
 - It is your responsibility to verify that this is indeed a child protection agent. Simply say, "I need to move to another phone. May I phone you back in 30 seconds?" Move to a phone where you can ensure confidentiality.
 - When you return the call, provide the necessary information.
 - Ask what is to happen next. This is critical, as a court order may be warranted and restraining order put in place. The organization should be aware of this. Details do not need to be given. Ask when the organization can expect a final report on the case if further information will be required.
 - Make clear written notes about what you reported, date, time, phone number and name of investigator. Place in a confidential, locked, metal file cabinet.

Pastoral Response to a Report of Abuse

Disclosure of an incident of alleged abuse is an emotionally charged experience. When an individual discloses that he/she is a victim of alleged abuse, it is important to:

- Assure him/her that he/she will be listened to and be provided with support throughout the process

(Page 3 of 3)

- Take the allegations seriously
- Keep emotions in check; when disbelief or horror is shown, it may result in the individual becoming withdrawn or unwilling to share the experience with you
- “Listen more, talk less”
- Remind him/her that he/she is in no way at fault for the abuse
- Affirm that it is always appropriate to tell someone that he/she has been abused
- Remind him/her that your first priority is his/her protection
- Ask him/her if it is okay to pray with them
- Reassure him/her that ongoing care will be provided for him/her and his/her family
- Provide pastoral support to him/her; give reassurance that he/she has done the right thing in reporting this incident.

Do not:

- Promise him/her that you will not tell anyone. Some secrets should not be kept secret. Assure the individual that this information is to be restricted to those who need to be advised.
- Prejudge the situation
- Defend the alleged perpetrator or make comments like, “I can’t believe they did that.”

Response to the Media

All contact with the media should be handled through the Office of the Bishop.