

# OUR COMMITMENT - to create relationships and environments where the most vulnerable (children, youth and adults at risk) feel safe and are cared for appropriately.

## RECRUITMENT AND SCREENING

**“As a volunteer in my parish, I understand that screening is not about me - it’s about the ministry I’m involved in and the level of risk associated with that ministry.”**  
(Volunteer Canada 2006)

### WHY SCREEN?

We screen to protect our program participants, our staff, and our volunteers. We also want to ensure that the appropriate people are assigned to the correct ministries. Screening begins long before any person offers to volunteer and ends only after the person leaves the ministry.

### TEN SAFE STEPS OF SCREENING

#### Before selecting employees and volunteers:

1. Determine the risk
2. Ministry Position Description
3. Recruitment Process

#### The selection process:

4. Application Form
5. Interviews
6. Reference Checks
7. Criminal Record Check

#### Managing the employees and volunteers:

8. Orientation and Training
9. Supervision and Evaluation
10. Participant Follow-up

Volunteers will be asked to sign a Covenant of Care affirming their partnership in committing to protect those at risk.

**“They will live in safety and no one will make them afraid.”**  
(Ezekiel 34-28)

## AWARENESS AND TRAINING

There are various kinds of abuse, from harassment to aggression. It can be sexual, physical, or psychological. Abuse can be caused by actions or by omission (cases of neglect).

An abusive situation can exist between two diocesan employees (priest / deacon, pastoral agent or lay employee); between a diocesan employee and a church volunteer or a member of the community; or between a church volunteer and a member of the community.

### There are many different forms of abuse

- Sexual abuse: abuse or aggression towards a child is defined as any contact between a child and an adult, when the child serves as an object of sexual gratification for the adult. A child younger than 16 (or younger than 19, if handicapped) is victim of sexual aggression independently of the fact that he has or has not been apparently forced to participate, whether or not there has been physical or genital contact, whether or not the activity was instigated by the child, and whether or not there are apparently harmful effects (Cf. Winter Report [French text], Vol. 11, page A-20).
- Physical abuse : physical abuse is defined as any act which is not accidental, causing bodily harm. The harm can be marks on the body, cuts, burns, fractures, or inner injury. There is abuse where there is force which is neither acceptable nor reasonable.
- Psychological abuse: psychological abuse can include excessive criticism or demands, due to a person’s age and ability. It can also include intimidation or all other behaviour or remarks leading to psychological discomfort.

### We shall provide training to volunteers, leaders and staff.

#### The training will cover topics including:

- Abuse Awareness
- Legal Requirements for reporting and responding to abuse
- Protection Procedures

## PROCEDURES AND RAPID RESPONSE

The diocese has established policies and procedures:

- Supervision and oversight by the Diocesan Responsible Ministry Committee
- Evaluating and monitoring risk
- Avoiding isolation
- Limiting in-home activities
- Guidelines for off-site trips and events
- Definitions of appropriate and inappropriate touch
- Partnering with parents and caregivers
- Emergency response
- Documentation
  - Incident report
  - Registration Forms
  - Letters of Consent
  - Attendance Records

### We shall adhere to legal requirements and rapidly respond to allegations of abuse by:

- Immediately reporting them to the police or Department of Social Development (Child Protection Service)
- Adhering to an on-going responsibility to report
- Supporting the investigation with civil authorities and temporarily relieve the accused from their role until the investigation is complete
- Maintaining confidentiality of the victim and the accused
- Ensuring the care and the support of the persons involved

