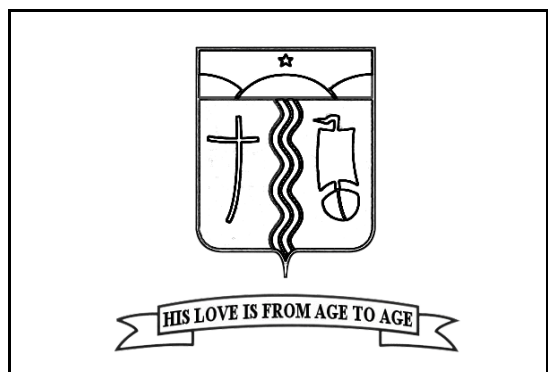


Code
of Behaviour
for
the Protection of Minors and Vulnerable
Persons
in the Diocese of Edmundston



June 2012

BISHOP'S MESSAGE

Dear sisters and brothers,

On behalf of the Diocesan Advisory Committee on Prevention, I am pleased to present the updated version of our "Code of Behaviour for the Protection of Minors and Vulnerable Persons in the Diocese of Edmundston".

This document will be revised and updated as needed. Our goal is to provide a safe environment for all the persons we serve and also to ensure the integrity, the security and the reputation of our volunteer workers, our employees and the members of our clergy.

Our aim is to pursue the Church's mission of proclaiming the Reign of God inaugurated by Jesus, and this through the commitment of so many baptised in need of training, support and appreciation, for carrying out their baptismal mission.

I express my sincere gratitude to all those involved in the Church who have accepted to implement these procedures.

In solidarity to the mission task that is ours, I remain,

Devotedly yours,

+ Claude Champagne O.M.I.

^ Claude Champagne, O.M.I.
Bishop of Edmundston

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1. PURPOSE OF THE CODE

To prevent abuse of children/youth/adults at risk. Prevention includes having good processes in place in order to prevent opportunities for abuse, neglect, or harm from arising.

To protect all persons at risk in our midst. The protection of all children, youth and adults at risk is everyone's responsibility.

To train and support our employees and volunteers.

To report all incidents of abuse, neglect, or harm. Such incidents, wherever and whenever they are encountered, will be reported immediately to the appropriate authorities.

To protect members of our clergy, employees and volunteers against false allegations of wrongdoing.

2. TERMINOLOGY

- Person at risk: a person who, because of his/her age, a disability or other circumstances, whether temporary or permanent, is in a position of dependence on others or is otherwise at a greater risk than the general population of being harmed by a person or persons in positions of authority or trust relative to him/her.

- Participant: a person who participates in programmes or receive services from the diocese or the parish.

- **Child/youth:** a person who is under 16 years of age, according to the Provincial Law.

- **Situation of confidence :** situation in which an adult at risk is in confidence with a volunteer.

- **Leadership position:** a leadership role undertaken by clergy, religious or lay persons in which there is expected to be direct interaction with children, youth or adults at risk. Examples: such positions as catechist, youth group leader, altar server coordinator, pastoral care worker, visitor to shut-ins. The individual could either be a paid employee or a volunteer.

- **Volunteer:** a volunteer is an individual:

- Who chooses to undertake a service or activity, someone who voluntarily accept to do this activity;
- Who does this activity in service to an individual or an organization, or to assist the community-at-large;
- Who does not receive salary or wage for this service or activity.

- **Volunteer helper:** a lay person who is involved peripherally in programmes with children, youth or adults at risk but has chosen not to become a leader. Examples include: someone who delivers cookies to a children's programme, someone who collects and presents socks to homeless people at a shelter, or someone who collects and distributes food bank items to families.

- **Programme (ministry):** a structured series of similar activities or events directed and operated by the pastoral unit which spans a period of weeks or months and in which the level of risk is expected to remain constant. Examples: catechism classes; pastoral visitations at a hospital or nursing home, home visitations; youth meetings; nursery or day care work.

- **Event:** one-time or occasional events sponsored by a parish community. Examples: a yearly concert, tea or picnic.

- **Responsibility of other's doings:** that is a group's responsibility for acts committed by persons who work in its name.

- **Diocesan responsible ministry committee:** a group of persons responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented within the diocese.

- **Parish responsible ministry committee/coordinator:** a person or group of persons responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented within the pastoral unit.

- **Risk assessment:** the process by which programmes are rated according to risk factors. High risk ministries require special attention.

- **Advisory committee:** besides his delegate, the bishop appoints at least three persons, priests or lay people of the diocese (preferably people of both sexes) to the Advisory Committee. The diocese shall ensure that the committee members have or are given appropriate training beforehand as well as throughout their mandate, along with any other help needed to carry out their task.

- **Abuse:** an act made by a person in situation of trust in relation with a person at risk and violates such person on the physical or mental plan.

- **Physical abuse:** physical abuse may consist of a single incident, or it may occur repeatedly. This involves the deliberate use of force against a person in a manner such that the person is injured or is likely to be injured. By violence, we mean:

- beating, hitting, shaking, pushing, choking, biting, burning, kicking or assaulting a person with a weapon;
- holding a person under water;
- any other dangerous or harmful use of force, restraint or punishment.

- **Emotional abuse:** emotional abuse involves harming a child's or vulnerable adult self esteem. It includes acts (or omissions) that result in, or place a child or vulnerable adult at risk of, serious behavioral, cognitive, emotional or mental health problems. for example:

- verbal threats, social isolation, intimidation and exploitation;
- routinely making unreasonable demands;
- terrorizing a child or vulnerable adult or exposing them to violence.

- **Sexual abuse and exploitation :** sexual abuse and exploitation involves using a person for sexual purposes. Examples of sexual abuse against a person include:

- fondling, the invitation to touch or be touched sexually;
- intercourse, rape, incest, sodomy;
- exhibitionism, or involving a person in prostitution or pornography.

- **Financial abuse :** defined as an act by which a person in a position of confidence obtains in an inappropriate or illegal way, money or financial resources belonging to an adult at risk.

3. GUIDELINES APPLICABLE TO PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

WITH CHILDREN, YOUTH AND PERSONS AT RISK

A) Safety of the employees, volunteers and participants

To ensure everyone's safety, the following guidelines must always be observed:

- a) Maintain a two-person policy for any programme, having at least two unrelated adults present.
- b) Where the two-person policy cannot be used, require that one-to-one contacts between an employee/volunteer and child or youth take place in a public area either inside or outside the church where both people can be seen by others.
- c) When transportation of children/youth is needed for an activity, all drivers must have a valid driver's license for at least five (5) years, valid automobile insurance and must be screened volunteers or paid staff. The number of persons per vehicle must never exceed the number of seat belts or car seats. Whether the automobile belongs to the parish, the diocese or the volunteer, the two unrelated employees/volunteers must be observed.
- d) All employees/volunteers working with children or youth must wear name tags.
- e) Parent/guardian/caregiver contact information must be carefully maintained.

- f) Appropriate steps must be put in place to ensure children under ten years of age are picked up by an authorized parent/caregiver.
- g) No child should be dropped off without a leader being present.
- h) No parents or adults should enter a classroom without permission.
- i) In-home activities (for example: catechism instruction) are subject to the same rules.
- j) At the beginning of each youth group or catechism session, attendance should be recorded and the attendance book or sheets should be picked up and taken to a central location. Those records are to be forwarded to the diocese for permanent storage by the end of December and of June of each year.

B) Leader and participant ratios

The activity and age of children/youth/adults at risk affect the required ratio of leaders/volunteers. The management of the programme as well as concern for safety, care and social interaction are some of the factors taken into account when we established the ratios set out in the sections below. If there are not enough leader and adult volunteers, the programme or activity should not be held.

C) Ratios of leaders/volunteers to children/youth/adults at risk

Two **unrelated** adults are required to be present for any programme involving children, youth and/or adults at risk. While the rule of having two adults at all times in a group is encouraged, there are occasional times when only one leader is present. The orientation session held at the beginning of the year should outline steps to be taken when one adult finds himself/herself alone. Any leader/teacher under 18 years of age should be accompanied by a screened and trained adult.

Here are the required ratios of leaders/volunteers to children/youth/adults at risk in a regular programme:

0 – 18 months:	2 adults to 6 children
19 months – 2 years:	2 adults to 10 children
Ages 3 –5:	2 adults to 12 children
Ages 6 – 18	2 adults to 15 children
Adults at risk:	2 adults to 10 adults at risk

D) Day trips and overnight outings

Here are the required ratios of leaders/volunteers to children/youth/adults at risk for day excursions and overnight outings:

AGE	DAY TRIPS	OVERNIGHT OUTINGS
5 or under	2 adults per group of 10	Not allowed
Ages 6 - 8	2 adults per group of 12	Not allowed
Ages 9 -10	2 adults for every 15 children	Not allowed
Ages 11-14	2 adults for every 15 children	2 adults for every 10 children
Ages 15-18	2 adults for every 15 youth	2 adults for every 10 youth
Adults at risk	2 adults for 10 adults at risk	2 adults for 10 adults at risk

E) Off-site activities, overnight events and billeting

Special precautions must be taken for off-site activities, overnight events and billeting. “Activity program waiver and medical release” (**Form 6**) for the activities must be obtained for each participant. The following guidelines must be observed:

F) Day trips

- a) A leader must assess the risk of the activity and submit that assessment in writing to the parish coordinator or committee for approval prior to the activity.
- b) Parents/guardians/caregivers must be notified prior to the outing.
- c) An “Activity program waiver and medical release” (**Form 6**) is required for each child/youth/adult at risk participating in activities/events outside the diocese.
- d) One leader should have a cell phone and the phone numbers of where the parents of the children/youth can be contacted during the excursion. The leader should have a copy of the completed consent forms with them.
- e) All day trips must be supervised by a minimum of two leaders. Additional support workers might be necessary to accompany adults at risk.
- f) When transportation of children/youth/adults at risk is needed for an activity, all drivers must have a valid driver’s license for at least five (5) years, valid automobile insurance and must be screened volunteers or paid staff. The number of persons per vehicle must never exceed the number of seat belts or car seats.
- g) At least one leader must have First Aid training.

G) Overnight activities/events

- a) Follow all requirements listed in daytime trips above.
- b) Each child/youth/adult at risk is required to follow pre-established codes of conduct signed by the parent/guardian/caregiver and the child/youth/adults at risk.
- c) If the group is comprised of children/youth/adults at risk of both genders, leaders of both genders must be present.
- d) Each leader should have an assigned group of children/youth/adults at risk for whom they will be responsible during the overnight event.
- e) All facilities in which an overnight function is housed must be equipped with smoke detectors and inside release doors. All members of the group should be made aware of fire exits and fire procedures as required by provincial/regional standards.

H) Registers - children, youth and adults at risk

Appropriate registers must be maintained:

- a) Contact information (telephone number, address) of each child or the person visited;
- b) Date and time of arrival and departure;
- c) Presences (use the example provided by the Diocese);
 - i. Note the name of each child or the person visited
 - ii. Note the name of each volunteer
 - iii. Maintain the files up to date, at all times
 - iv. Note the names of the visitors

Contact information of the parent/guardian/caregiver must be carefully maintained. Note the name and degree of relationship to the person present.

The Register of Presences must be maintained in a central place. The parish coordinator of the diocesan policies will then forward these archives to the Diocese at the end of the months of June and December of each year.

I) Billeting youth in private homes

Billeting reduces costs and allows youth to meet new people. Here are some things to keep in mind when billeting youth:

- a) Children under 14 years of age are not to be billeted.
- b) The people offering billeting within the diocese must be known, trusted parishioners and must have a Police Record Check and At Risk Sector Check.
- c) The contact information (telephone number, address) of the individual with whom the youth will be billeted must be obtained by the group leader.

J) Physical contact

It is essential to be careful regarding behaviour, language and physical contact when working with children or youths:

- a) Do not show favoritism. Show a similar level of affection and kindness to all.
- b) Avoid off-colour jokes, and do not behave in a way that promotes sexual exploitation of others.

- c) Provide clearly-stated consequences for inappropriate behaviour. Stop inappropriate behaviour early. Be fair, consistent and reasonable, matching consequences to the age and ability of the child or youth.
- d) Do not use corporal punishment such as hitting, spanking or strapping.

K) Appropriate and inappropriate touching

A touch can convey a multitude of positive messages and communicate care, comfort and love; however, it is important to distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate touching. It is also important to be aware of, and sensitive to, differences in interpretation to touching based on sex, culture or personal experience.

Some examples of appropriate touching:

- a) Holding or rocking an infant who is crying;
- b) Affirming a participant with a pat on the hand, shoulder or back;
- d) Bending down to the child's eye level and placing a hand gently on the child's hand or forearm;
- d) Putting your arm around the shoulder of a person who needs comfort;
- e) Taking a child's hand and leading him/her to an activity;
- f) Holding hands for safety when changing locations;
- g) Shaking a person's hand in greeting;
- h) Holding a child gently by the hand or shoulder to keep his/her attention as you redirect behavior;
- i) Holding hands in a circle for prayer or song;
- j) Offer first aid treatment.

Some examples of inappropriate touching:

- a) Kissing a child or youth or coaxing them into kissing you
- b) Extended cuddling
- c) Tickling
- d) Piggy-back rides
- e) Having others sit on your lap (except for babies/young toddlers)
- f) Touching anyone in any area covered by a bathing suit (except changing infant's diapers)
- g) Hand holding, except for the examples listed above
- h) Stroking a child or youth's hair
- i) Hugging, where an adult knows or ought to know that hugging is inappropriate.

L) Dealing with a participant's inappropriate behaviour

The best approach to dealing with inappropriate behaviour is thoughtful prevention. If a teacher/leader has been prepared adequately, makes clear statements about expectations and provides an engaging programme, inappropriate behaviour will be avoided or reduced. If, however, a child/youth behaviour is unacceptable, the following practices must be followed:

- a) Tell or remind the child or youth what is expected.
- b) If it is necessary to speak to a child or youth in private, move to a quiet place in view of others. Seek supervisory help if needed and if available.

- c) Keep children or youth from harming themselves or others.
- d) If necessary, engage another adult to help you remove the child or youth from the situation and to calm down.
- e) Discipline with children and youth must be limited to talking and “time out”.
- f) Provide a “time-out” space for younger children on one side of the room until they are ready to rejoin the group. The “time-out” should be no longer than one minute for each year of the child’s age.
- g) Inform the parent/guardian of the problem and work cooperatively with them. They may help you deal with particular situations.

Do not use corporal punishment
(such as hitting, spanking or strapping)
under any circumstances.

M) Washroom procedures

The following procedures must be followed for the use of washrooms:

- a) Ask parents of pre-school children to take their child to the washroom before class.

- b) Children under 6 who need to go to the washroom should be accompanied by a teacher/leader who escorts the child to the washroom and checks the bathroom for safety. No adult or teen helper is ever to be in a closed washroom or cubicle with a child. If another adult is not available, the adult who accompanies the child should position himself/herself in plain view at the open door of the washroom. A volunteer or teen helper may stay behind with the remaining children.
- c) Children 6 and over may go to the washroom with a “buddy.”
- d) If there is an emergency bathroom situation, the parent or supervisor should be notified immediately.

4. REPORTING PROCEDURES

In the case of the discovery of abuse by or against a member of the clergy, an employee or a volunteer, the person who has uncovered this information has the responsibility to report it in the following manner:

In the case of a child under 16 years of age:

First, contact the Social Development Ministry (Child protection department) to report an abuse at the following phone numbers:

Edmundston / Haut-Madawaska / Victoria Region:

1 866-441-4249

Restigouche Region:

1 866 441-4245

After hours - for all regions:

1 800 442-9799

A) Reporting of Children Victims of Sexual Abuse

The obligation to report cases of children victim of abuse/neglect to the Department of Social Development (Child Protection Services) is mandatory by the *Family Services Act* and applies to all persons who have any reasonable doubt that a child is victim of abuse/neglect.

Concerning the people who report such cases, no legal action can be taken against them, when their report is done in good faith. Moreover, the identity of the person reporting the case cannot be revealed without his or her consent, excluding exceptionally, in the event of legal procedures.

It is important to insist that neither an administrator, nor an administrative procedure, nor a treatment can dispense one from reporting an aggression. The assumption that someone else reported the case does not guarantee immunity in the event of a prosecution.

B) Age of the child

The obligation to report and the mandatory intervention in cases of probable sexual child-abuse are strictly applied to children less than 16 years of age and to physically or mentally challenged persons less than 19 years old. Parental consent is never required to report a presumed case of sexual abuse to the *Child Protection Services*.

C) Intervention framework

The diocese recognises that it is difficult to make a complaint of abuse, and that it (the diocese) must protect the confidential character regarding the plaintiff.

Second, every complaint shall be forwarded to the bishop or his delegate. The delegate shall bring the complaint to the committee established to undertake the necessary procedure. It shall also have the responsibility of keeping the bishop posted.

In order to protect the interest of the victims, of the accused, and of other persons reporting cases of abuse, the confidential character of the inquiry is to be ensured as much as circumstances allow.

The diocese will ensure confidentiality of complaint files, including minutes of meetings, interviews, results of investigations, and other pertinent documents, except if a disciplinary or judicial procedure requires the disclosure of pertinent information to appropriate people.

To contact the Bishop's Delegate, his Assistant or a member of the committee, dial the **1(506) 735-5578 Extension 224**.

In both cases, **Form 5 – General Incident Report form** must be completed and submitted to the Bishop's Delegate as soon as possible.