

DIOCESE OF EDMONTON – SCREENING POLICY

[Revised February 2002]

A. **RISK CATEGORIES**

In our ministry in the Diocese of Edmonton, many people, clergy and lay, paid and unpaid, work in positions of trust. By this we mean work that gives individuals access to money, or to vulnerable people, including but not limited to children, youth, seniors, people with disabilities, and people in crisis.

In order to ensure as far as possible the safety and security of those to whom we minister, as well as that of volunteers and employees, screening procedures appropriate to particular ministries need to be implemented.

In determining the level of screening required, the following guidelines for types of ministry will be used.

Extremely High Risk: Ongoing, intensive or lone interactions with vulnerable persons, e.g. Clergy, Youth Leaders, Directors of Children's or Youth choirs, Trainers and Supervisors of young servers.

High Risk: Access to vulnerable persons: access to money or confidential records: e.g. Sunday School teachers, Parish Visitors, Parish Secretary, Treasurer, Envelope Secretary, Wardens.

Medium Risk: Ministries with able bodied adults involving meetings: e.g. Adult choir or music group, Study groups, Baptismal preparation leaders, Support groups.

Low Risk: Sunday morning ministries with adults and other adult meetings: e.g. Greeters, Vestry, Adult Sunday School.

B. **GUIDELINES**

The following guidelines apply to all parishes and church organizations:

1. One year rule: A prospective volunteer should have been an active member of a parish for at least one year prior to undertaking a ministry involving vulnerable persons.
2. When a prospective volunteer has moved from another parish, that parish will be contacted as part of a reference check.
3. When working with vulnerable people or handling money, volunteers should work in pairs. The wisdom of a husband and wife team counting the offering has been questioned.
4. Groups and outings should be team led when at all possible.

5. Written consent of a parent or guardian is required for all activities that involve children overnight.
6. All meeting spaces should be open and accessible for unscheduled visits by parents or supervisors.
7. Independent and sponsored organizations meeting on church property are required to show proof of their own insurance.
8. Wherever practicable, advertisements for positions within a parish should indicate if security clearance is required.

C. PROCEDURES

In each Parish of the Diocese, the following procedures will be implemented:

1. A Screening Committee will be established, consisting of the Rector and at least two additional members.
2. For those in extremely high risk ministries, a job or ministry description will be provided to potential candidates, and a completed application will be required. The application form will indicate what will be required in terms of references, police checks, and child welfare checks. The form will also include an acknowledgement that the prospective volunteer has read and understood the Diocesan policy on sexual abuse and sexual harassment.
3. Templates for job descriptions and application forms will be provided by the Diocesan Response Group through the Diocese. The application form and supporting documentation of successful candidates will be filed in a secure place. All documentation of unsuccessful candidates is to be destroyed unless retained with the candidate's permission.
4. If Police or Child Welfare checks are required, the Diocesan policy for obtaining these will be followed.
5. Interviews will be conducted with at least two members of the parish screening committee.
6. Appropriate training and a probationary period will be a routine part of any new volunteer's tenure in a ministry.
7. Regular supervision and evaluation will be provided, giving appropriate feedback to assist volunteers to build on their gifts and skills.

D. IMPLEMENTATION

- Extremely high risk personnel were to have completed police security and child welfare checks by Advent, 2001. Extremely high risk personnel are considered to be those who have **ongoing, intensive or high risk interactions with vulnerable persons**: e.g. clergy, youth leaders, directors of children's or youth choirs, trainers and supervisors of young persons.
- Parish vestries are to conduct a risk evaluation of their other personnel and premises beginning in January 2002.
- Parish vestries are to appoint Screening Committees, prepare job descriptions and begin to make use of application forms (and security clearances as required) beginning in September 2002.
- Regional Deans will be requested to supervise and facilitate implementation of this process.
- The Diocesan Response Group will distribute copies of the Screening Policy and templates of application forms and job descriptions to each parish.