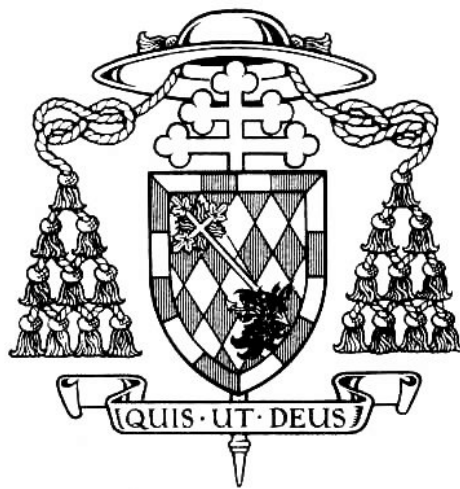


# *Strengthening the Caring Community Parish Volunteer Screening Program*



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This manual is prepared for Parish Volunteer Screening Committees, Parish community leaders, volunteers, participants, and all members of the various Parish communities in the Archdiocese of Toronto.

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This manual was prepared by the Archdiocese of Toronto (Ontario).

A portion of this manual is compiled from the Screening in Faith manual developed by Volunteer Canada, which acts as a reference manual for these procedures. It is to be noted that Volunteer Canada and the Archdiocese of Toronto do not share pastoral responsibilities or duties and are not legally bound to each other.

We wish to thank Volunteer Canada, the national voice for volunteerism in Canada, for their excellent work and for providing us with great resources.

This document is a work in progress and is therefore subject to change.

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## Cardinal's Message

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July 18, 2005

My dear friends,

Within the Roman Catholic Community, we have a long history and tradition of recognizing the gifts of our people and encouraging the use of these gifts to help those in need. Our parishes have been assisting people in a wide range of activities and services since the earliest times.

The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Toronto is intent on offering appropriate, helpful and safe programs to the community. We must ensure that volunteers understand the limits of their position, knowing how to carry out their work without exploiting their authority. Even well meaning people may unwillingly violate the boundaries of a vulnerable person.

We ought to protect those who minister in our parishes through the development, adoption and implementation of thorough, appropriate, consistent and on-going screening measures for all our paid staff and volunteers according to established procedures. The screening process will be a permanent feature of our operations.

Our goal at all times is the protection and safety of our vulnerable people, our volunteers, our paid staff, and our Church.

Since 2001, the Archdiocese has had in place a policy that we screen all parish positions, paid or volunteer. Each Parish has had the responsibility to create a Parish Volunteer Screening Committee. The fundamental role of the committee is to ensure that all volunteers within the parish are appropriately screened.

The Archdiocese of Toronto continues to support the Volunteer Screening Committee by providing training and support material. This is accomplished via the Coordinator of the Volunteer Screening Program and the Human Resources Department.

I wish to take this opportunity to thank all those involved in the Volunteer Screening Program. I am grateful to everyone who participated in making this initiative a viable part of our parish structure.

The new manual is a revised version of the original. Updates have been made to facilitate its implementation, and its content summarizes the original version which went into greater detail.

Sincerely yours, Archbishop of Toronto

## Purpose of this Manual

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Every parish offering services and programs owes a duty of care to protect its parishioners, its staff members (paid and unpaid) and the community-at-large.

Effective and appropriate management of staff and volunteers is essential to the safe delivery of services and programs. The management of volunteers is as important as the management of paid staff and requires the allocation of appropriate human and financial resources.

This manual provides the parishes in the Archdiocese of Toronto (Ontario) with guidelines and ready-to-use forms for the screening and supervision of volunteers. It is the policy of the Archdiocese of Toronto that these procedures be followed in all of the parish communities under its jurisdiction in order to ensure the protection of volunteers, staff, parishioners and the Archdiocese of Toronto.

## Terminology

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### Duty of Care

A general principle in civil law that identifies the obligations of individuals and organizations to take reasonable measures to care for and protect its participants and deliver its programs in a safe and well-managed manner. Canadian courts will hold parishes accountable on the basis of “neglect” if appropriate screening has not been conducted and some incident has occurred.

### Full Disclosure

Volunteers have the right to know and to be informed from the outset of all screening procedures that will be used with respect to any position for which they apply.

### Participants

Those who participate in programs or who receive services from ministries. The word participant is used as a generic terms for these people.

### Position of Trust

1. Situations in which someone has a significant degree of:
  - Authority or decision-making power over another
  - Unsupervised access to another person and to her/his property
  - Conduct with vulnerable individuals.
2. Situations where the success of the service depends on the development of a close, personal relationship between the individuals as in mentoring, counselling or home visiting programs.

### Risk Management

A process of assessing potential problems and developing strategies for solutions to minimize the risk. In other words; it involves looking at the possibilities of loss or injury that might arise in programs, activities and services and taking steps to stop, minimize, prevent or eliminate them. Screening is an exercise in risk management.

### Volunteer

A person who:

- chooses to undertake a ministry position, service or activity;
- does this ministry activity in service to an individual, or to assist the parish or diocesan community-at-large;
- is not coerced or compelled to do this activity;
- does not receive a salary or wage for this service or ministry activity.

### Vulnerable Person

One who has difficulty protecting herself or himself from harm temporarily or permanently and is at risk because of age, disability, handicap or circumstances such as emotional distress due to extreme crisis or trauma.

## Statement of Purpose

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It is the purpose of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Toronto:

**1. To safeguard, in all respects, all of those, but most especially the vulnerable, to whom we minister.**

- We have an obligation to protect everyone whom we serve. However, when vulnerable people participate in our programs, we have a much higher obligation to ensure their protection than if they were able-bodied adults who could take care of themselves. This means screening, very thoroughly, people who are going to work with them.

**2. To ensure the integrity, safety and reputation of our volunteers.**

Our volunteer management program ensures that:

- volunteers are working in an organized, structured environment;
- policies and procedures outline the volunteers' rights as well as responsibilities, and how they will be supported when an incident occurs;
- position descriptions, interviews and supervision of the volunteer is placed in a position that is best suited to her/his abilities and interests;
- by doing a risk assessment, we take into consideration the personal safety of all involved. The risk assessment ensures that we are not placing a volunteer in a dangerous location (i.e. unsafe equipment or working alone at night) or placing an inexperienced volunteer alone.

**3. To ensure, that, as a faith community, we fulfill all our obligations.**

- The development of screening policies and procedures is intended to meet our legal obligations, but even more importantly adequate screening measures will fulfill our ethical, moral and spiritual responsibilities to promote wholeness, accountability, trust and care in our ministries.

## The Screening Process

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Screening begins long before any person offers herself for volunteering and ends only after the person leaves the ministry. The Ten Safe Step process, developed by Volunteer Canada, is divided into three sections: before selecting volunteers, the selection process and managing the volunteers.

### **Ten Safe Steps of Screening**

Before selecting volunteers

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

The selection process

4. Volunteer Information Form
5. Interviews
6. Reference Check
7. Criminal Record Check

Managing the volunteers

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

## Ten Safe Steps of Screening ~ Detailed

### **Step 1 - Determine the Risk**

The nature of the ministry and the inherent level of risk involved dictate the degree of screening required. The greater the risk, the greater will be the degree of screening applied. Factors that will help determine the level of risk include: the participant, the setting, the nature of the activity required and the level of supervision. *(See Appendix 1)*

Volunteers and employees who are active in more than one ministry will be screened for the position with the highest level of risk. When a person moves from a position with a general level of risk to a position of high risk, the other screening steps will be carried out for the new high risk position.

### **Step 2 - Ministry Position Description**

There will be a role description for every volunteer ministry position. *(See Appendix 2)*  
It is imperative to describe each ministry position and define its inherent risk. This description defines the tasks of the positions and sets the ground rules for all involved. By documenting the role, these descriptions provide greater protection for the person being ministered to, the volunteer and the Parish/Archdiocese.

### **Step 3 - Recruitment Process**

All recruitment for volunteers and staff will be done in a formal public process. *(See Appendix 3)*

Requests for volunteers should be done in a public way through notices printed in parish bulletins, church newsletters or other forms of communication. The notice should be accompanied by a "Description of the Ministry" and notice that an "Information Form" will need to be completed. These two items are powerful screening tools in themselves and prompt people to reflect on the seriousness of their call to this ministry even before any formal interview. Recruiting materials will clearly indicate that the faith community takes its responsibility towards participants seriously and screens all applicants.

Do not leave people with the impression that everyone who applies will be accepted. Be very clear that you are extremely careful about selecting those who work in ministry and do not apologize for that fact.

#### **Step 4 – Volunteer Information Form**

An application form must be completed for all ministry positions. *(See Appendix 4)*

The completion of an application form is intended to ensure that adequate records are kept. In addition, as with the use of a ministry position description, asking individuals to complete an application form demonstrates the seriousness of your commitment to screening and provides a paper trail that will protect both the applicant and the parish/Archdiocese. There is one form for adults and one form for those under 18 years of age. Use only originals of the official Archdiocese of Toronto forms.

#### **Step 5 - Interview**

An interview will be conducted for all high risk ministry positions. *(See Appendix 5)*

The interviews will be carried out with at least two interviewers. The interview provides you with an opportunity to talk with the applicant about her/his background, gifts, talents, skills, interests and availability. It also allows an opportunity to explore any concerns you may have about the suitability of this person for the ministry position in question and to ensure there will be a "good fit" between the person and the ministry.

The interview includes questions, which are directly related to the specific risk concerns for the position being applied for: i.e. interpersonal style with children or vulnerable adults, history working with money, and so on. Notes from the interview will be kept in a secure parish file, administered by the Parish Volunteer Screening Program Coordinator. Use only the official Archdiocese of Toronto forms.

#### **Step 6 - Reference Check**

Three (3) Reference letters must be collected for all high risk ministry positions. *(See Appendix 6)*

It should be made clear to the referee that the individual is being considered for a position of trust i.e. with children, with other vulnerable people, with money, etc. Returned reference letters must be kept in the person's file.

A reference check may be the most effective screening step during the selection process. References will confirm the background, gifts, talents and skills of the applicant and will provide an outside opinion on the suitability of the person for the ministry. Use only the official Archdiocese of Toronto forms.

### **Step 7 – Criminal Record Check**

A Criminal record check report must be received for all high risk ministry positions. (*See Appendix 7*)

The police record check signals, in a very public way, our concern about the safety of our people. The candidate will be asked to provide a copy of her/his police report. If any conviction appears, the candidate will be asked to provide details and give permission for the Pastor to confirm their nature with the police. It is not only important to know if someone has been convicted of a crime, but also to know the nature and severity of the crime.

The Limitations of Criminal Record Checks

- The report is only good up to the checking day.
- A recent conviction may not show yet.
- There are time lags in sending records from one country to another.
- The individual may be using an alias so only fingerprint checks will be accurate.
- The person may have obtained a “pardon” and therefore is no longer on the list.
- OR, the person may never have been caught!

We must NOT rely solely on Criminal Record Checks, to do so would be dangerous.

However, despite the limitations of Criminal Record Checks, they do signal, in a public way, that we are concerned about the safety of our participants, particularly in those cases (high risk volunteer ministry positions) where the faith group is committed to a full and complete screening process.

### **Step 8 - Orientation and Training**

Appropriate orientation and training will be provided along with guidelines for working with the vulnerable for all ministry positions. (*See Appendix 8*)

In fairness to volunteers, it is essential that orientation and training be provided to ensure that the individual is able to perform her/his ministry effectively.

Applicants are required to sign a form stating that they have read the position description and the screening policy and that they understand and will comply with them, and that they have attended the required training/orientation. Use only the official Archdiocese of Toronto Ministry Covenant Form.

### **Step 9 - Supervision and Evaluation**

All ministry positions will be appropriately supervised. *(See Appendix 9)*

The intensity and nature of the supervision will vary with the risk involved in the position. This entails a more “senior or experienced” person in the ministry spending time with the incumbent to observe, support and give feedback on their gifts, skills, style, strengths and challenges. In the case of high risk ministries the supervision should be systematic and recorded.

There will be a Self-Review on a regular basis. By instituting a formal supervision and evaluation process, the volunteer can be observed "on the job" and their ministry can be monitored on an ongoing basis. Use only the official Archdiocese of Toronto form.

### **Step 10 - Participant Follow Up**

Supervisors will monitor all high risk ministry positions by checking from time to time on participant satisfaction. *(See Appendix 10)*

Regular ongoing contact with program participants and family members helps to ensure that programs remain relevant and of high quality. Such monitoring can also act as an effective deterrent to someone who might otherwise do harm and go undetected. It is vital that the parish let all volunteers know that regular contact with program participants and families is part of the parish’s risk management procedures and that this practice is not personal. Use only the official Archdiocese of Toronto forms.

If a volunteer and a participant are usually alone together, it would be appropriate for someone to conduct random spot checks by visiting the location where they are together.

## Screening Protocol for Each Risk Level

The nature of particular ministry positions and the level of risk involved will determine the intensity of the screening process employed.

### I. Protocol for General Risk Ministry Positions

General Risk Parish Volunteer Positions within our Archdiocese will use the following steps:

- Determine the Risk
- Ministry Position Description
- Volunteer Information Form
- Orientation and Training
- Supervision and Evaluation

### II. Protocol for High Risk Ministry Positions

High Risk Parish Volunteer Positions within our Archdiocese will use ALL of the “Safe Steps of Screening”.

- Determine the Risk
- Ministry Position Description
- Appropriate Recruitment Process
- Volunteer Information Form
- Interview
- Reference Check
- Criminal Record Check
- Orientation and Training
- Supervision and Evaluation
- Participant Follow-Up

## Checklist for GENERAL Risk Volunteer Positions

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- Ensure that the person receives a copy of the Ministry Position Description.
- Have the Volunteer Information Form completed, all of pages 1 and 2.
- For those under 18 years of age, ensure that the appropriate Volunteer Information Form is used and that the Parent/Guardian signs the Consent.

Once the completed Volunteer Information Form is returned.

- Provide the person with a copy of the Strengthening the Caring Community Guidelines for Parish Volunteers.
- Provide the contact information of the Ministry Coordinator/Supervisor.
- Have the person complete the Ministry Covenant form.

The person will then be able to begin their parish volunteer ministry position.

- Create a file for the person.
- Put the following documents in the file;
  - Ministry Position Description
  - Volunteer Information Form
  - Ministry Covenant form.

## Checklist for HIGH Risk Volunteer Positions

- Ensure that the person receives a copy of the Ministry Position Description.
- Have the Volunteer Information Form completed in its entirety; all sections.
- For those under 18 years of age, ensure that the appropriate Volunteer Information Form is used and that the Parent/Guardian signs the Consent.
- Conduct the Interview in-person, with two members of the Parish Volunteer Screening Committee and using the appropriate Strengthening the Caring Community forms.
- Conduct three personal reference checks using the appropriate Strengthening the Caring Community forms.

For those 18 years old and older; once the Interview and Reference Checks have been conducted.

- Give the necessary details for getting the Criminal Record Check report.
- Provide the Pastor with a list of persons for whom he will receive a Criminal Record Check report.
- At this point the person will obtain the results of the Criminal Record Check from the Police Department and give the original report to the Pastor.
- The Pastor will take any necessary action and then notify the Parish Volunteer Screening Committee about whether or not they may continue with the Orientation of the person to this position. The Pastor is responsible for keeping this information strictly confidential and for ensuring that it is confidentially prepared for filing.

If the process is to continue (for youths and adults);

- Provide the person with a copy of the Strengthening the Caring Community Guidelines for Parish Volunteers.
- Provide the contact information of the Ministry Coordinator/Supervisor.
- Have the person complete the Ministry Covenant form.

The person will then be able to begin their parish volunteer ministry position.

- Create a file for the person
- Put the following documents in the file
  - Ministry Position Description
  - Volunteer Information Form
  - Interview forms
  - Reference Letters
  - Criminal Record Check report which the Pastor has placed in a sealed envelope and is marked 'confidential' (for those 18 years old and older)
  - Ministry Covenant form.

## List of High Risk Parish Volunteer Positions

- ❖ All Volunteer Positions connected with children or youth.  
For example;
  - Altar Server Coordinator
  - Children's Liturgy Teacher/Coordinator/Helper
  - Sunday School Director/Teacher/Assistant
  - Catechumenate Catechist for Children/RCIA for Children
  - Youth Group Director/Assistant/Leader
  - Choir Director/Member – Child/Youth
  - Sports Coach
- ❖ All Volunteer Positions connected with home or institutional visits.  
For example;
  - Minister of Communion to Persons at Home
  - Minister of Communion to Persons in Hospitals/Nursing Homes
  - Lay Pastoral Visitors
  - Friendly Visitors
  - Meals on Wheels
  - Outreach Activities
- ❖ All Volunteer Positions connected with money and financial decision-making.  
For example;
  - Finance Council Chairperson
  - Collection Counter
  - Collection Counter Coordinator/Head
  - Money Depositor
  - Treasurers – All Parish Committees, Councils, Ministries, etc.
  - Religious Book/Article Vendor
  - Any position that requires having a KEY to the building or ALARM codes

**Note: List is not exhaustive.**

- ❖ Please note that all Paid Positions at the Parish are High Risk such as Secretary, Lay Pastoral Associate, Religious Coordinator, Cook/Cleaner/Janitor/House Keeper, Property manager, Hall Events Coordinator.

## Strategies for the Management of Risk

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When a position is classified as high risk, an effort will be made to manage or reduce the risk by applying one of the following strategies:

1. Eliminate the risk

There may be activities that have risks and consequences so great that they should be discontinued.

For example: a parish may decide an overnight camping trip with altar servers is an activity with unacceptable risks.

2. Modify the activity

Change the location and the activity

For example: all home visitations to the sick could be done with at least two volunteers. Youth group leaders could have at least one other adult volunteer present. Meet in a public location rather than a person's home.

3. Transfer or Share Liabilities

Involve other organizations or service groups, which are better prepared to handle the specific risk issue.

For example: transportation of youth or vulnerable adults, such as seniors, could be arranged through a local bus or taxi company.

4. Assume the risk but minimize it wherever possible

Design all volunteer tasks with risks in mind. Ensure that volunteers are screened appropriately using the Strengthening the Caring Community; Parish Volunteer Screening Program. Ensure everyone gets a copy of the Guidelines for Working with Children and the Guidelines for Volunteers found in this document.

## Guidelines for Volunteers

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The following guidelines are intended to provide a general overview of how ministry interaction should occur. It is recognized that unforeseen circumstances can and will occur. The important safeguard for both our vulnerable participant and ourselves is full disclosure. If you find yourself alone with a participant for any significant amount of time, or in a situation of emotional intensity, every effort should be made to inform the ministry leaders as quickly as possible under the circumstances.

- Volunteers should not spend extended time alone with vulnerable care-seekers without consent and knowledge of the ministry leader/supervisor.
- When, and if, programming requires a volunteer to be alone with a vulnerable care-seeker every effort must be made to protect the person's privacy.
- Volunteers should not take others in their vehicle without letting the ministry leader/supervisor know that this occurred.
- Any physical contact between adults should occur in "public" and be sanctioned by the ministry leader/supervisor.
- Volunteers should not take any money or property from a care-seeker for their volunteer ministry.
- Volunteers must not act outside the set boundaries of their Ministry Position Description.

These guidelines are not intended to hamper relationships between volunteers and participants. More importantly they are not designed to introduce suspicion into these relationships. In all cases a certain amount of discretion rests with the volunteer, based on her/his knowledge and preparation. Important steps that help to ensure the safety of our most vulnerable, the integrity of our programs, and the well being of our volunteers are 1) to be "transparent" with the Ministry Coordinator when the relationship becomes closer or when more time is spent alone; 2) to review all incidents with the Coordinator; and 3) to record these incidents.

## Guidelines When Working With Children

The following guidelines are intended to provide a general overview of how adult-child interaction should occur. It is recognized that unforeseen circumstances can and will occur. The important safeguard for our children is full disclosure. If an adult finds himself or herself alone with a child for any significant amount of time, or in a situation of emotional intensity, every effort should be made to find another adult or at least inform the child's parent or guardian as quickly as possible under the circumstances.

- Volunteers over 16 years of age should not spend extended time alone with children without consent of the child's guardian and the knowledge of the ministry leader/supervisor.
- When, and if, programming requires an adult to be alone with children (overnight camps for example, field trips) every effort must be made to protect the child's privacy. Girls and boys must not change together and adults must change separately from the children. Adults should not sleep in proximity to children. Supervision must be gender appropriate.
- Adults who form a relationship with children through our faith community's activities should not seek out opportunities to spend time with the child "off site". If off site interactions occur the appropriate people should be informed (as above).
- If help with toileting is required permission must be given by the parent or guardian before toileting or changing help is given.
- Children should not be taken in an adult's vehicle without parent/guardian permission and the knowledge of the ministry leader/supervisor.
- Any physical contact between adults and children should occur in "public" and be sanctioned by the ministry leader/supervisor and the parent/guardian. For example hugs and kisses for younger children or physical 'rough housing' with older kids.
- Parents/guardians of children enrolled in programs should be encouraged to ask questions and stay abreast of the nature of the adult/child interaction. Where they feel comfortable they should be encouraged to talk with their children about the programs and the volunteers and staff they encounter.

These guidelines are not intended to hamper relationships between adults or children. More importantly they are not designed to introduce suspicion into adult/child relations. In all cases a certain amount of discretion rests with the adult, based on their knowledge and the nature of the relationship, the setting and the activities. Talking to parents, being transparent when the relationship becomes closer or more time is spent alone, reviewing any incidents with 'supervisors' – these steps will ensure the safety of our children, the integrity of our programs and the well being of our volunteers.

## Abuse/Inappropriate Conduct Reporting Protocol

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In the case of the discovery of abuse by or against 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 THERE ARE TWO (2) STEPS:**

Step 1: Contact the local Children's Aid Society (CAS) to report an abuse. \* This means that if a person suspects abuse, they must report this to the Children's Aid Society personally. They are not to pass the information to the Pastor with the expectation that he will report it.

Legislation states that if a person, including a person who performs professional or official duties with respect to children, has reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is or may be in need of protection on the grounds outlined in this section of the Act, shall forthwith report the suspicion and the information on which it is based directly to the Children's Aid Society and not rely on any other person to report on her/his behalf.

*(Child & Family Service Act, R.S.O. 1990 s.72)*

*A person who makes a report about a child to the Children's Aid Society in accordance with this section is protected from legal action, unless the report was made maliciously or without reasonable grounds for the suspicion. (Child & Family Service Act, R.S.O. 1990 s.72(7)).*

Step 2: Contact the Pastor to update him on the situation. The Pastor will notify the volunteer that she/he is to immediately withdraw from her/his ministry until further notice. The Pastor will then notify the Manager of Human Resources at the Catholic Pastoral Centre.

**IN THE CASE OF A PERSON, 16 YEARS OF AGE AND OLDER:**

Contact the Pastor to update him on the situation. He will in turn notify the Manager of Human Resources at the Catholic Pastoral Centre.

Documentation of Suspected Abuse/Inappropriate Conduct:

Document all statements, conversations and observations as soon as possible. Keep these documents strictly confidential and only pass them on to the Pastor.

*Report will Include;* Dates, Times, Name of Persons Involved, Locations, a clear and complete Summary of Incident, Situation or Warning Signs.

## Complaint Resolution Procedure

The Archdiocese of Toronto is committed to open and on-going communication between Volunteers and their Supervisors. It is anticipated that most issues will be resolved within the Parish at the personal level. Volunteers should feel free to discuss any concerns they may have with their Pastor.

When there is a complaint or a disagreement, misunderstanding or expressed dissatisfaction on the part of a Volunteer relating to the conditions of their ministry position, the purpose of these procedures is to provide Volunteers with a uniform process for a prompt and equitable resolution when a complaint or dispute exists.

The complaint resolution process is not intended to be adversarial in nature. The objective of this process is to resolve disputes in a cooperative Christian atmosphere. Volunteers are assured freedom from restraint, interference, coercion, discrimination or reprisal in their pursuit of resolution through the complaint resolution process. Retaliation, of any kind, is absolutely prohibited.

If a Volunteer believes that any volunteer condition or the application of any policy is unjust or inequitable, and has been unable to resolve the issue through discussion with the Pastor, the following process should be used:

### Steps 1:

The Volunteer will set forth his/her complaint in writing, stating the nature of the complaint, all relevant details, and the desired remedy. The written complaint must be submitted to the Pastor within ten (10) working days after discussion of the complaint with the Pastor. The Pastor will investigate the complaint and reply in writing within ten (10) working days after receipt of a written complaint.

*Incident Report will Include:* Dates, Name of Person Reporting Incident, Location of Incident, Parties involved in incident and their roles, a clear and complete Summary of Incident and the Desired Remedy.

### Step 2:

If the complaint was not resolved in Step 1, the Volunteer may, within ten (10) working days of receipt of the Pastor's written response, present his/her written complaint to the Manager of Human Resources. The Manager of Human Resources will investigate the complaint and reply in writing within ten (10) working days after receipt of the written complaint with appropriate recommendations. The Manager of Human Resources' decision on the matter shall be final.

## Criteria for Rejecting a Volunteer Applicant

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Grounds include;

- They pose a danger to others.
- They are not able to dedicate the necessary time commitment.
- They do not have the skills to carry out the responsibilities as outlined in the Ministry Position Description.
- Other Ministry Position Description requirements cannot be met.
- The Pastor has some information that would prevent the applicant from participating.


The information that a volunteer applicant has been rejected must never be made public. If there is uncertainty about selecting a person, the Pastor must be consulted.

## Notifying Unsuccessful Volunteer Applicants

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When a person is believed to be unsuitable for the position for which they applied, this information must never be made public; this information is CONFIDENTIAL. Report your findings only to the Pastor and provide him with the relevant information needed.

- When you feel you have an inappropriate candidate, assess the reasons for your reaction. Is there a clear lack of qualifications or is there something less tangible that is making you cautious? Just as in the hiring of employees, when screening volunteers all the techniques of personnel management should be used.
- The potential need to turn someone down is why it is so important to make it clear as you recruit that candidates must undergo the entire screening process. It is so much harder to turn someone down if you have implied that everyone will be accepted.
- Prior to calling an unsuccessful applicant, review the interview notes for their positive qualifications as well as those areas, which needed further development. Avoid giving negative feedback especially if you are not asked for feedback, but do find a positive way to make your suggestion if it is appropriate.
- It is vital, however, not to evade turning someone down by saying “we’ll call you” and then not doing so. If you must turn any applicants down, be clear about it. You can still be supportive in their search for the right volunteer placement for them. There may well be general risk ministry positions that would work for this person.

 Often, when a parish develops the reputation of setting standards and not accepting every candidate who wishes to volunteer, you make being *accepted* to serve others as a gift and privilege. This is a big boost to your ongoing recruitment efforts!

## Confidentiality

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All information gathered either in writing or verbally must always be kept in the strictest of confidences in all circumstances except when;

- a person threatens suicide
- a minor (16 and under) reports physical or sexual abuse
- someone's life is in danger
- any person's physical well being is threatened (including your own)
- someone exhibits psychotic behaviour
- a situation occurs that is beyond your own experience and expertise.

In these situations it is appropriate for volunteers or parishioners to share the information with a Parish Volunteer Screening Committee Member and always notify the Pastor.

The information gathered for the purposes of screening will be accessible only to the volunteer applicant and to the Parish Volunteer Screening Committee Members and the Pastor.

Confidentiality is a serious issue. We must be aware of the potential legal liability if information about someone is made public. Even if something that is written or said is true, telling it to others or allowing them to see something written may still constitute an invasion of privacy, which might also give rise to a lawsuit.

All volunteers have the right to expect that any personal information will be kept confidential. It is important that these guidelines on the maintenance and confidentiality of records be explained to all volunteers and volunteer applicants so that they know who has access to their information. It should be made clear to them that they can examine their file at any time and may insert documentation of their own if they so desire (such as certificates and awards) however, the file remains the property of the parish/Archdiocese.

## Transfer/Move to New Parish Procedures

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If a volunteer moves and would like to volunteer at another Parish within the Archdiocese of Toronto, a copy of their volunteer file from their previous Parish must be given to the new Parish's Volunteer Screening Committee. Also, a letter from their former Pastor must be sent to the new Pastor stating that the volunteer left the Parish in good standing.

## Record Keeping Protocol

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<b>High Risk Volunteer Files must contain:</b>	<b>General Risk Volunteer Files must contain:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Volunteer Information Form</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Volunteer Information Form</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ministry Covenant</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ministry Covenant</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interview Notes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-Review based on length of term</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reference Letters (three)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any Letters of Praise/Appreciation, Awards, Certificates of Training, etc. that the volunteer may want added.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Envelope (sealed, marked 'confidential' and signed by the Pastor) containing the Criminal Record Check</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yearly Self-Review</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any Letters of Praise/Appreciation, Awards, Certificates of Training, etc. that the volunteer may want added.</li> </ul>	

Files are to be kept in a locked and secure filing system on Parish property, the files must be alphabetical by last name and clearly labeled. Mark the High Risk files so that they stand-out for easy recovery.

A copy of page one (1) of the Volunteer Information Form will be made and given to the parish secretary for the parish information database so that basic info and emergency contact information is easily accessible.

Criminal Record Check Reports: The pastor is the only person who will handle Criminal Record findings. To ensure that no one else has access to this document, the pastor will put the findings in an envelope, seal the envelope and sign the seal of the envelope. This is placed in the volunteer's secure file.

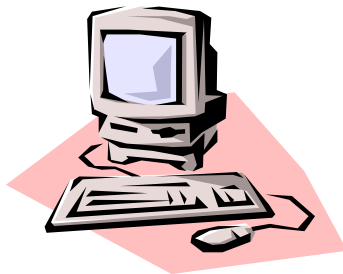
### How long must files be kept?

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All files will be kept and updated while the volunteer is in a ministry position at the Parish. For legal reasons data on screening and ongoing service should be kept on file at the Parish for seven (7) years after a person has ceased her or his ministry and then sent to the Archdiocese of Toronto, Catholic Pastoral Centre to be archived.

## Website

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**[www.archtoronto.org](http://www.archtoronto.org)**



- 1) Click on *CHURCH IN THE WORLD*
- 2) Click on *VOLUNTEER SCREENING PROGRAM*

The material in this Manual can be found on the Archdiocese of Toronto website.

Other related material and resources on this website include;

- Tips for Interviews
- Tips for Active Listening
- Sample bulletin inserts
- Reflections
- Sample Commissioning Service
- Articles
- Etc.

**\*\* NOTE \*\***

Please be sure to check the website regularly.  
Information and announcements are continually being added.