

POLICY 5.1.1 Responsible Ministry Policy

Preamble

In the last forty years, the Church in Canada and around the world has been rocked by accusations and convictions of clergy for criminal abuse and exploitation of vulnerable people, especially children. The legal proceedings have also exposed unexpected levels of personal and institutional failings by clergy and laity to act on and address complaints made to them, by victims and witnesses.

This painful period has shown us how important transparency and accountability are to protect people and to safeguard temporal goods. We believe that having good policies, what we call “responsible ministry” and “safe environment”, will effectively contribute to preventing abuse of any kind and, most importantly, protect children, adolescents, and vulnerable adults when they are being ministered to in the Church.

The Responsible Ministry Policy of the Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan provides for the collection of personal and background information (a screening process) from all who minister in the Archdiocese and its parishes, quasi-parishes and missions. The process is mandatory for the specified ministries (*cf.* Appendix 1), and anyone who refuses to comply will not be able to serve in the Church.

The Safe Environment Policy (*cf.* Policy 5.1.2) provides for the prevention of abuse by establishing an archdiocesan-wide understanding of what constitute unacceptable behaviours and establishing operational and other approaches to best protect vulnerable people from anyone who would exploit them.

The Archdiocese also has a Misconduct Policy (*cf.* Policy 5.2.1 and Policy 5.2.2) which has procedures to respond to complaints of abuse and harm by clergy, employees and volunteers in the Archdiocese and its parishes, quasi-parishes and missions.

The four policies, together, are to be considered the Archdiocese’s Physical and Sexual Abuse Protocol.

Responsible Ministry Policy - the screening process

The screening process is the principal component of the responsible ministry policy. It requires that the Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan:

- identify the ministries of the Church here;
- determine who is carrying out the ministries;
- assess the level of risk attached to each ministry;
- determine the personal and background information necessary to mitigate the risks; and,
- describe the coordinator roles in the Archdiocese and parishes, for review and safeguarding of the information provided by clergy, employees and volunteers.

❖ The ministries

The Archbishop and Curia have identified three categories of ministry: liturgical, pastoral and administrative.

Liturgical ministries

The liturgical ministries are those ministries performed at Mass, including: presider or celebrant, concelebrant, homilist, sacristan, Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion, gift bearer, music ministry, commentator, and lector.

Pastoral ministries

Pastoral ministries are those ministries which “build the parish as a living Christian community.” (*The Parish Pastoral Council: Guidelines for the Development of Constitutions*. CCCB. Conacan, Inc., 1984.) The most common in the parishes, quasi-parishes and missions of the Archdiocese are: taking Holy Communion to the sick, altar server trainer, liturgy of the word with children, hospital ministry, sacramental preparation, adult faith formation and RCIA, youth ministry, and prayer groups.

Administrative ministries

Administrative ministries are those ministries concerned with the stewardship of the temporal goods of the Church. The most common are: collection counter, usher, key holder, maintenance and facilities management.

In addition to the above-named ministries, the Archdiocese also included common Catholic organizations when identifying ministries, in particular, the Knights of Columbus and the Catholic Women’s League.

❖ The people

These ministries are all and each fulfilled by one or more of the clergy, consecrated religious and laity in the Archdiocese. Clergy and employees, of the Archdiocese and parishes, including consecrated religious, often perform more than one ministry. They are also the most visible and public face of the Church.

❖ The level of risk

In making assessments of risk level of ministries, the Archbishop and Curia identified three levels: high risk, medium risk and low or no risk. (See Appendix 1 for a complete list.)

High risk ministries

High risk ministries are those where any potential for harm to an individual being ministered to is present. In particular, high risk ministries are those which:

- minister directly to children, adolescents, and/or vulnerable adults*;
- have opportunities for developing relationships of trust that can be carried over to other locations or interactions; and/or,
- have an inherent power imbalance, whether real or perceived, between the minister and the person ministered to.

***vulnerable adult**: a person 18 years of age or older who, because of 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.

Medium risk ministries

Medium risk ministries are those with any potential for financial loss or other mishandling of temporal goods. In addition to screening of ministers, parishes must also ensure that they are in compliance with the policies in Section 3 of the *Policy Manual*, especially Policy 3.1.1.

Low or no-risk ministries

Low risk ministries are those with minimal potential for harm to individuals or for mishandling of temporal goods.

❖ Mitigating the risks

The Archbishop and Curia have determined that a certain amount of personal information has to be collected from all clergy, all employees, and volunteers in high and medium risk ministries, for review by delegated people in the parish and the chancery. The purpose is **not** to exclude people from ministry. It is to ensure that any risk of harm to people and goods is minimal.

The principal documents that will be required from people seeking to or agreeing to minister in the Church are:

- a personal information form (Form 5.1.a), or a curriculum vitae that provides at least the same data;
- a Covenant of Care form or a Code of Conduct Acknowledgement form (Form 5.1.b or Form 5.1.c), as required by the risk level;
- a Criminal Record Check or a Vulnerable Sector Check, as required by the risk level; and,
- a Child Welfare Intervention Record Check, for high risk ministries involving children and youth.

	Form 5.1.a	Form 5.1.b	Form 5.1.c	Criminal Record Check	Vulnerable Sector Check	Child Welfare IRC	Form 5.1.d (by Parish Priest)
Clergy	•	•			•	•	
Employees	•	•			•	•	•
High risk	•	•			•	•	•
Medium risk	•		•	•			
Low and no-risk	•		•				

Clergy

All members of the clergy ministering in the Archdiocese are required to provide a criminal record check (including a vulnerable sector check) before they begin their ministry. If they are from outside of Canada, they must provide copies of the criminal record certificates submitted in support of their application to Immigration Canada for a visitor visa. If they do not provide such information in the visa

application, they must submit to the Archdiocese, before entry to Canada, criminal record certificates from every country they have resided in since their 18th birthday.

[For more information about the process of selecting clergy to serve in the Archdiocese, contact the Vicar General.]

Employees

At the time of accepting employment at the Archdiocese or a parish, employees are required to provide:

- a completed personal information form (Form 5.1.a)
- a completed Covenant of Care form (Form 5.1.b)

Within three months of commencing employment at the Archdiocese or a parish, employees are required to provide:

- a criminal record check (including a vulnerable sector check) from every country of residence since their 18th birthday; and,
- a Child Welfare Intervention Record Check from Alberta and any other province or country of residence since their 18th birthday where such a check is available.

Should these certificates not be provided within three months of beginning employment, the employment will have to be terminated.

Volunteers

Before commencing their ministry, **all volunteers** in high risk and medium risk ministries must provide:

- a completed personal information form (Form 5.1.a)

All volunteers in **high risk ministries** must also provide:

- a completed Covenant of Care form (Form 5.1.b);
- a criminal record check (including a vulnerable sector check) from every country of residence since their 18th birthday; and,
- for those serving children and adolescents, a Child Welfare Intervention Record Check from Alberta and any other province or country of residence since their 18th birthday where such a check is available.

All volunteers in **medium risk ministries** must also provide:

- a completed Code of Conduct Acknowledgement form (Form 5.1.c); and,
- a criminal record check from every country of residence since their 18th birthday.

All of the above-named documents must be submitted and reviewed by the appropriate delegate (see below) before the person begins to serve in ministry. Provision of all of the above-named documents is mandatory. Nobody in the Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan has the authority to waive any of these requirements for any clergyman, employee or ministry volunteer.

NOTE: All clergy, employees, and volunteers in high risk ministries are required to provide a vulnerable sector check **every five years**. In addition, all clergy and employees, and all volunteers working directly with children and adolescents are required to provide a child welfare intervention record check **every three years**.

Reference checks

For parish employees and volunteers, the parish priest is responsible for completing checks with the three references provided by the applicant (Form 5.1.d).

For the Archdiocese, the person responsible for the hiring process is also responsible for completing checks with the three references provided by the applicant.

NOTE: The Archdiocese recognizes that the majority of its clergy, employees, and volunteers have been serving the Church already for many years without benefit of these checks and without incident. However, everyone in ministry is requested to provide the appropriate and relevant documents, in accordance with this policy.

❖ Coordinators of Responsible Ministry

The delegated people for administration of this policy in the Archdiocese and its parishes are the Archdiocesan Coordinator of Responsible Ministry and each Parish Coordinator of Responsible Ministry (this includes all parishes, quasi-parishes, and missions). The coordinator ensures that the information requirements are met, that the documents are reviewed, that any issues or concerns that arise are addressed by the person with the appropriate authority, and that the records are complete and meet the requirements of the *Personal Information Protection Act of Alberta*.

Parish Coordinator of Responsible Ministry

The parish coordinator will:

- compile a record of ministries and the volunteers in the parish and update it annually (Form 5.1.e).
- provide the appropriate forms to volunteers to complete.
- provide volunteers with the letter to the local RCMP detachment to do either a criminal record check or a vulnerable sector check.
- provide the address of the appropriate office of Child and Family Services to volunteers who need a Child Welfare Intervention Record Check.
- collect the original police and CWIR checks. Make copies, date and sign them, and return the originals when requested to do so.
- provide the parish priest with Form 5.1.d, which lists the names of the three references provided on Form 5.1.a. [To comply with the PIPA, Form 5.1.a must be seen only by the Parish Coordinator and the Archdiocesan Coordinator.]
- maintain a simple record of the names of volunteers and which forms have been completed for each. (No other information is to be kept at the parish.)
- forward completed documents to the Archdiocesan Coordinator of Responsible Ministry as soon as they are received. Completed documents, whether original or copies, are **not** to be kept in parishes.

Archdiocesan Coordinator of Responsible Ministry

The archdiocesan coordinator will:

- ensure all members of clergy in the Archdiocese are properly screened, pursuant to this policy;
- ensure all archdiocesan and parish employees have provided the required forms and screening information;
- ensure that the reference checks have been completed for parish and archdiocesan employees and volunteers;
- provide information and support for parish training and orientation sessions related to this policy;
- ensure the safekeeping of the forms and documents forwarded by the Parish Coordinator in every parish;
- review all screening documents for parish and archdiocesan employees;
- ensure parish compliance with these policies and related requirements;
- keep informed on developments and changes to policies and practices related to Responsible Ministry-type programs in dioceses across Canada and make recommendations to the Archbishop and the College of Consultors on the basis of these;
- ensure adoption of and compliance with any changes required for complete coverage by liability insurers;
- ensure those named on parish lists of volunteers have been properly screened for the ministry they are doing.

Approved and promulgated by the College of Consultors on 25 October 2016

Appendix 1

List of Ministries and Risk Level

High risk ministries	
Ministry	Risk level - reason
Member of the clergy	Minister to children, vulnerable adults; opportunity to build relationships of trust; inherent power imbalance in relationships
Employee of the Archdiocese or a parish	Opportunity to build relationships of trust
Taking Holy Communion to the sick	Minister to vulnerable adults
Altar server trainer or coordinator	Minister to children
Liturgy of the Word with Children leader	Minister to children
Hospital ministry/pastoral visitor	Minister to vulnerable adults
Sacramental preparation leader or presenter	Minister to children
Youth ministry	Minister to children
Children’s choir leader	Minister to children
Bereavement team member	Opportunity to build relationships of trust
Spiritual director, retreat leader/facilitator	Opportunity to build relationships of trust; inherent power imbalance in relationships
Medium risk ministries	
Collection counter	Opportunity to mishandle temporal goods
Usher	Opportunity to mishandle temporal goods
Key holder	Opportunity to mishandle temporal goods
Maintenance and facilities management	Opportunity to mishandle temporal goods
Bookkeeper	Opportunity to mishandle temporal goods
CWL Officer (President, Treasurer)	Opportunity to mishandle temporal goods
Knights of Columbus Officer (equivalent of President, Treasurer)	Opportunity to mishandle temporal goods
Low or no-risk ministries	
Sacristan	No apparent risk related to this ministry
Extraordinary minister of Holy Communion (at Mass)	No apparent risk related to this ministry
Lector, commentator	No apparent risk related to this ministry
Music ministry	No apparent risk related to this ministry
Adult faith formation and RCIA	No apparent risk related to this ministry
Prayer groups	No apparent risk related to this ministry