

VOLUNTEER SCREENING POLICY
OF
THE DIOCESE OF PETERBOROUGH

In the Diocese of Peterborough, many volunteers serve in positions of trust. The screening of volunteers helps to create and maintain a safe environment for all volunteers as well as those to whom they minister. In order to ensure that all concerned are protected, the following policies are to be observed.

Implementation

1. The Catholic Bishops of Ontario have asked that screening be initiated in every diocese in the province. Therefore, the Bishop has mandated that the screening of volunteers be implemented in every parish in the Diocese of Peterborough (hereafter the Diocese).
2. All volunteers, both those presently serving and those seeking to do so, are to be screened.
3. All volunteers are to be screened according to the procedures and instructions presented in the Diocesan manual.
4. Standardized forms, provided by the Diocese, are to be used in the implementation of a uniform screening process.
5. Pastors are to establish volunteer screening committees. A screening committee ranges from a minimum of two to a maximum of five people.

Position Descriptions

6. A position description outlines the responsibilities and duties of the volunteer as well as the screening measures to be applied.
7. The basic outline for position descriptions is to follow the same format across the Diocese. Position descriptions are to be reviewed at least once a year. A

comment section is available to clarify minor changes to the role description. If there is a major change to the position description, the revision of the position description should be made in consultation with the Diocesan Screening Committee.

8. Position descriptions for ministries that involve youth under 18 must include under Skills and Qualifications ‘knowledge, understanding and compliance with the Child, Youth and Family Act 2017’, and comply with the reporting abuse procedures outlined in the “Responsible Faith Ministry, Volunteer Guidelines”.

Determining the Risk

9. All positions within a given ministry are to be assessed for the level of risk involved. The level of screening of a volunteer position must meet the level of risk associated with that ministry. When there is doubt as to the level of risk, the Parish Volunteer Screening Committee should consult with the Diocesan Screening Committee.
10. All ministries that involve children and youth under 18 are to be considered high risk.
11. Volunteers who are active in more than one ministry are to be screened for the position with the highest level of risk. When the volunteer moves from a low risk position to a higher risk level, he or she is to be screened again according to the higher risk level.

Forms

12. Each volunteer is to complete a volunteer information form.
13. For low risk ministry positions, the ministry leaders or coordinators of the particular ministry are to be responsible for the completion and collection of these forms.

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14. For medium and high risk positions, the screening committee is responsible for the completion and collection of all applicable forms.
15. All forms are to be maintained in a confidential file in the parish.

Interviews

16. An interview is to be conducted for all volunteers in medium and high risk positions.
17. A minimum of two people from the screening committee conduct the interview.
18. A record of the interview is to be documented and kept in the volunteer's confidential file.

Reference Checks

19. At least two reference checks are to be conducted by the Parish Screening Committee for all volunteers in medium and high risk positions.
20. The volunteer is to sign a consent form permitting the Parish Screening Committee to contact the references. Only the person's named as references are to be contacted.
21. The result of a reference check is to be documented and kept in the volunteer's confidential file.
22. In situations where a doubt arises as to the suitability of a person for a ministry, the pastor is to make the final decision.

Police Records Checks

23. An Enhanced Police Information Check (EPIC) is required for all those volunteering in high risk positions.

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24. The Enhanced Police Information Check (EPIC) must be an original and requested by the parish.
25. The Enhanced Police Information Check (EPIC) are to be reviewed by two people, the pastor and a member of the screening committee.
26. If the volunteer decides not to agree to an Enhanced Police Information Check (EPIC), the parish cannot accept this volunteer for a high-risk position.
27. A criminal conviction does not automatically exclude an applicant from volunteering in a particular ministry. Only convictions which would be directly relevant to the position applied for would prevent the applicant from volunteering in the position.
28. If an Enhanced Police Information Check (EPIC) is read as NOT CLEAR the Diocesan Screening Committee will request that the volunteer obtain a Police Records Check from their local police department. The volunteer must present a recent (within 60 days) original Police Records Check to the Volunteer Screening Committee. The Volunteer Screening Committee will consult with the pastor before the volunteer is accepted into a position.
29. The parish will assume the cost of conducting an Enhanced Police Information Check (EPIC).
30. A volunteer who leaves the ministry for one year or longer is required to provide a new Enhanced Police Information Check (EPIC).
31. Offence Declarations are to be completed every year for volunteers involved in high risk ministries. They are to be treated as confidential and stored with the police records check.
32. A current Enhanced Police Information Check (EPIC) will be requested of a volunteer every 5 years.

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Record Keeping and Confidentiality

33. Personal information obtained either verbally or in writing will be kept confidential.
34. Information gathered for the purpose of screening is accessible only to the volunteer applicant, the pastor and the parish screening committee members. Information is to be kept in a secured filing system in the parish.
35. The list of current volunteers in each ministry is to be updated at least once a year.
36. The files of current volunteers should be reviewed annually to find out if the information is correct. The volunteers or the ministry leaders are responsible for informing the screening committee of any changes in personal information and changes in ministry.
37. The files of the volunteers that are no longer volunteering, are to be pulled from the active files, dated as to the day they left active ministry (or as close to it as possible) and stored in a confidential inactive file. This record is to be maintained in perpetuity.

Orientation and Training

38. All current and new volunteers must participate in an orientation session. The sessions are to be offered at least once a year.
39. All volunteers are to receive a copy of the Responsible Faith Ministry Volunteer Guidelines 2019). The screening committee is responsible for providing every volunteer with a copy.
40. Volunteers are to be given appropriate training to perform their duties without putting themselves or others at risk.
41. When orientation and training have been completed, the screening committee will document this on the volunteer's file on Form 1010 (Yellow).

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Supervision and Evaluation

42. The level of supervision is to be based on the level of risk involved in the volunteer position.
43. The screening committees will work with the ministry and group leaders to assess the level of supervision currently in use in each medium and high-risk ministry or group and determine what supervision will be used where none exists.
44. Evaluations are to be performed once a year for high risk positions. Copies of the evaluation are to be filed in the volunteer's file.
45. When supervision and evaluation has been completed, the screening committee will document this in the volunteer's file in Form 1010 (Yellow).

Participant Follow-up

46. Participant follow-up is to be a regular occurrence for high-risk ministries.

Volunteers

47. Screened volunteers who transfer from one parish to another parish within the Diocese of Peterborough are to be re-screened to the appropriate level. For high and medium risk screening, one of the references is to be from the previous pastor.
48. Screened volunteers, who volunteer in more than one parish at the same time, are to submit Form 1150 Diocese of Peterborough, Volunteer Screening Form – Volunteers Working in More Than One Parish, in lieu of additional screening.