

POLICY No. 40
SCREENING PROCESS FOR A HEALTHY AND SAFE ENVIRONMENT
SERVING THE PEOPLE OF GOD

1. Intent of the directive

It is the intent of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Sault Ste. Marie to ensure that, as a faith community, we fulfil our obligations to those we serve, especially our children and the vulnerable, and to ensure the integrity, safety and reputation of our employees and volunteers.

2. Policy

A. General Protocol

All employees and volunteers, who are hired, appointed, named, called or mandated to serve the faithful of a Parish or of the Diocese of Sault Ste. Marie must complete the "*Personal Information Form*". The parish or Chancery office of the Diocese is responsible for providing this form with a "service description", or "job description". Every person, whether an employee or a volunteer, must receive appropriate orientation and training. Ongoing supervision and evaluation is also required.

B. Screening Criteria for Youth Volunteers aged 14 to 17 years old

The screening criteria for youth volunteers aged 14 to 17 years old, is the same as for adults with the exception of a Police Record Check. Youth volunteers are not required to complete a Criminal background check because they are not yet of age to receive these checks. When a youth volunteer becomes eighteen (18) years of age, he or she is considered an adult and is required to obtain a Criminal background check.

C. Protocol for different ministries and/or services

The Roman Catholic Diocese of Sault Ste. Marie, in keeping with our desire to create a healthy and safe environment for all the faithful and to ensure that we do not impede upon the aspiration of those who wish to serve, has established two groups of volunteers. All volunteers are essential and no group is more important than the other. **For the purpose of screening, employees are members of the second group.**

1. **Service Volunteers** (to be of service)

The first group, hereinafter called "**Service Volunteers**", is for all volunteers whose services do **not implicate or call them** to:

- a) participate in activities dealing specifically with children, youth and those who are vulnerable; and/or

Revision # : 2.1	Revision Date : MAY 1, 2021	Original Issue Date: OCT 2003
------------------	-----------------------------	-------------------------------

POLICY No. 40
SCREENING PROCESS FOR A HEALTHY AND SAFE ENVIRONMENT
SERVING THE PEOPLE OF GOD

- b) one on one situations such as interviews and home visitation; and/or
- c) positions involving continued handling of parish or diocesan funds; and/or
- d) any other position or situation designated by the pastor and the parish screening team as a second grouping.

2. Certified Volunteers

The second group, hereinafter called "**Certified Volunteers**", is for all ministry or services in which the employee or volunteer is called to:

- a) participate in activities dealing specifically with children, youth and those who are vulnerable; and/or
- b) one on one situations such as interviews and home visitation; and/or
- c) positions involving continued handling of parish or diocesan funds; and/or
- d) any other position, function or situation designated by the pastor and the parish screening team as being in this grouping.

D. The ten steps of the screening process

All persons who are hired, appointed, called, named or mandated to serve the faithful within the Diocese of Sault Ste. Marie are to be evaluated and supervised using the following steps.

1. "Service Description"

A written description of each service, function or position is to be created and maintained (job description for each position; i.e. lector, leader of children's liturgy, usher, etc...). A service description of every parish position must be written and available in every parish. This description must define the tasks of the service, establish the ground rules for those involved and set appropriate guidelines.

2. Determine the Group

As a matter of policy, all services, functions or positions are to be studied and evaluated to establish the proper grouping, "Service Volunteers" or "Certified Volunteers".

Revision # : 2.1	Revision Date : MAY 1, 2021	Original Issue Date: OCT 2003
------------------	-----------------------------	-------------------------------

POLICY No. 40
SCREENING PROCESS FOR A HEALTHY AND SAFE ENVIRONMENT
SERVING THE PEOPLE OF GOD

3. Recruitment Process

Whether requests for volunteers or employees are done publicly, through notices printed in parish bulletins, church newsletters, announcements or other forms of public communication or through a personal invitation, a "*Service Description*" is to be made available.

4. Personal Information Form & Code of Conduct

A "*Personal Information Form*" is to be completed by all employees and volunteers and the original copy is to be kept in the "*Confidential Parish Volunteer or Employee File*" which must be kept at the parish or diocese. This is essential.

All persons who wish to work or volunteer in a parish or at the diocesan level must receive a copy of the "*Diocesan Code of Conduct*". Once they have read the code of conduct, they must sign an "*Acknowledgment Form*" stating that they will comply with it. This form will be added to their "*Confidential Parish Volunteer or Employee File*".

5. Interview – Certified Volunteers

Interviews are to be carried out by at least two interviewers for all "Certified Volunteers". The interview is to address questions about a person's background, skills, interests, and availability. Concerns about the suitability of a candidate for the service in question are to be addressed by the pastor or Diocesan Financial Administrator. **Care must be taken in all interviews not to antagonize those wishing to be a volunteer.** Notes from the interview are to be placed in the confidential parish volunteer/employee file along with the "*Personal Information Form*" and the service description.

Nota Bene: In the event that a person changes parishes and he/she wishes to serve in his new parish, he/she can request that his/her file be transferred to his/her new parish. All work completed - police check, interviews, etc... - must be inspected by the pastor who is to decide if further screening is necessary.

6. Reference Checks – Certified Volunteers

Reference checks are recommended for volunteers who are in the "Certified Volunteers" group. References will be asked questions regarding the background and skills of the person wishing to serve the parish or diocese. It is to be made clear to those providing references that the individual is being considered for a specific position; i.e. with children, with other vulnerable people, with money, etc. Reference check results are to be documented and kept

Revision # : 2.1	Revision Date : MAY 1, 2021	Original Issue Date: OCT 2003
------------------	-----------------------------	-------------------------------

POLICY No. 40
SCREENING PROCESS FOR A HEALTHY AND SAFE ENVIRONMENT
SERVING THE PEOPLE OF GOD

in the "*Confidential Parish Volunteer or Employee File*".

In the case of Youth Volunteers, the parents or guardian(s) of the youth are to be contacted.

7. Canadian Criminal Background Check – Certified Volunteers

A Canadian criminal background check is necessary for all persons who have been designated as belonging to the "Certified Volunteers" group, with the exception of Youth Volunteers. The Diocese of Sault Ste. Marie has entered into an agreement with Sterling Talents Solutions (MyBackCheck), a third party who specializes in a complete background checks (E-PIC). A guideline has been provided to all parishes.

8. Orientation and Training

Appropriate orientation and training including guidelines for working as a volunteer or employee is to be provided by the parish or diocese. They will also be required to sign the "*Training and Orientation Form*" indicating that they have attended the required training/orientation. The person providing the orientation and training must also sign this form.

9. Supervision and Evaluation

The nature of supervision will vary according to the position held. In the case of "Certified Volunteers", supervision and evaluation are to be recorded. A written record of the evaluation is to be kept on file and shared with the volunteer or employee. Evaluations are to occur at least once a year. The frequency and type of appraisal would vary according to the service offered and at the discretion of the pastor or the parish screening team.

10. Participant Feedback

Regular and ongoing contact with the faithful who take part in an activity, ministry or program ensures the parish or diocesan programs remain relevant and of high quality. It is vital that pastors and program coordinators inform those involved in an activity, ministry or program that regular supervision and evaluations are conducted as part of our desire to maintain a healthy and safe environment.

Revision # : 2.1	Revision Date : MAY 1, 2021	Original Issue Date: OCT 2003
------------------	-----------------------------	-------------------------------

POLICY No. 40
SCREENING PROCESS FOR A HEALTHY AND SAFE ENVIRONMENT
SERVING THE PEOPLE OF GOD

E. Other strategies in establishing a healthy and safe environment

When a position or service is classified in the "Certified Volunteers" grouping, efforts will be made to manage or reduce any misconduct by applying one or more of the following strategies:

1. Eliminate the service

Activities or programs should be discontinued if they are seen or perceived as being inappropriate.

2. Modify the activity

Change the location, length, timing, personnel or mode of delivery of the activity or program if it is seen or perceived as being inappropriate.

3. Transfer or Share Liability

Involve other organizations or service groups that may be better prepared to handle the specific service or program in question.

4. Tasks

Design all employee and volunteer tasks with the "healthy and safe community environment" in mind. Ensure appropriate screening, orientation and training of individuals. Incorporate ongoing supervision and evaluation of employees and volunteers.

F. Confidentiality and record keeping

The Diocese of Sault Ste. Marie abides by the "Information Access and Protection of Privacy" (IAPP) legislation. The very nature of screening employees and volunteers involves the collection, use, disclosure, and retention of sensitive personal information. The diocese and parishes are required to keep this information in a safe place with limited access. These records are to be kept permanently on file and they are to be updated annually as long as the person is involved in the parish or diocesan community.

Employees and volunteers have the right to access their personal and confidential file. To view their personal file, a written request must be made to the Pastor or the Bishop.

Revision # : 2.1	Revision Date : MAY 1, 2021	Original Issue Date: OCT 2003
------------------	-----------------------------	-------------------------------

POLICY No. 40
SCREENING PROCESS FOR A HEALTHY AND SAFE ENVIRONMENT
SERVING THE PEOPLE OF GOD

Prior to undertaking a review of their file, a "*Statement of Access to my Personal File*" must be signed. The pastor or a member of the finance committee must be present when an employee or volunteer reads his/her file. In accordance with this Policy, the employee or volunteer has a right to obtain a copy of his personal file. However, the diocese or parish may withhold information that relates to a third party.

Employees or volunteers may request that any inaccuracies or misinformation in their file be corrected by the diocese or parish. This is to be made in writing. If there is a disagreement regarding the information to be corrected, the Chancery office of the Diocese of Sault Ste. Marie is to be contacted.

G. Implementation

The screening process is a permanent feature of diocesan and parish operations. Everyone involved as a "Service Volunteer" or "Certified Volunteer" will be screened. One person from each parish and mission must be appointed to take on the role of administrator of the screening process. Where possible a screening committee would be created – larger parishes who have many volunteers.

3. Term definitions

Adult

Civilly, the age of majority is the legally defined age at which a person is considered an adult, with all the attendant rights and responsibilities of adulthood. It is also the age at which a person is liable for their own actions, such as contractual obligations or liability for negligence. In Ontario, the age of majority is eighteen (18) years old.

Children

For the sake of this document, it is anyone who has not attained the age of eighteen.

E-PIC

Enhance police information check

Infant / Youth

Canonically, it is a person who has not completed the seventh year of age and is considered

Revision # : 2.1	Revision Date : MAY 1, 2021	Original Issue Date: OCT 2003
------------------	-----------------------------	-------------------------------

POLICY No. 40
SCREENING PROCESS FOR A HEALTHY AND SAFE ENVIRONMENT
SERVING THE PEOPLE OF GOD

incapable of personal responsibility.

Minor

Canonically, a person who is presumed to have the use of reason, eight years old, and who has not completed their fourteenth year.

Service

A position to discharge a duty or function, to help persons, to be part of a ministry, to assist persons, to be of service.

Service description

Also known as a position description or job description. It is a document that states the essential requirements, duties and responsibilities attached to a ministry or service.

Screening

An appropriate and consistent process designed to create a safe and healthy environment for those who serve in our parishes or our diocese, whether as employee or as volunteers.

Vulnerable persons

The vulnerability of the person or persons must be taken into consideration when screening. Participants who have difficulty protecting themselves from harm, temporarily or permanently, are considered vulnerable. Those at risk because of age, disability, handicap, or other circumstances such as emotional distress or grief may also be vulnerable to a greater or lesser degree.

Revision # : 2.1	Revision Date : MAY 1, 2021	Original Issue Date: OCT 2003
------------------	-----------------------------	-------------------------------