
1 The Program

1.1. Preamble:

The Roman Catholic parish of St. Philip Church, Richmond, and St. Clare Mission, Dwyer Hill, is intent on offering appropriate, helpful and safe programs in the community.

Our faith community can better protect those who minister in our parish through the development, adoption and implementation of thorough, appropriate, consistent and on-going screening measures, for volunteers and paid staff.

At all times the goal—protection and safety of our people, our volunteers, our paid-staff and our church—will guide our intentions and actions.

1.2. Statement of Purpose:

The purposes of the responsible ministry program of the parishes of St. Philip Church and St. Clare Mission are to:

- safeguard, in all respects, all of those to whom we minister, but most especially the vulnerable;
- ensure the integrity, safety and reputation of our volunteers and paid staff;
- ensure that, as a faith community, we fulfill all of our Responsible Ministry obligations.

2 Practices

All volunteers and paid staff, both those presently serving and those seeking to do so, are to be screened according to the forms and procedures in the Archdiocese of Ottawa's *Responsible Ministry Program* (2008), and the *Code of Pastoral Conduct* with local details given in this document.

Screening for assigned clergy will be handled by the archdiocese.

St. Philip Church and St. Clare Mission are to have Responsible Ministry programs, involving a screening committee which oversees the implementation of these documents.

3 Ministry Descriptors/Sensitivity Levels

A ministry position Descriptor outlines the responsibilities of, and constraints on, the volunteers or paid staff, as well as the screening measures to be applied.

Position Descriptors are to be reviewed as required when changes occur, ideally at least every two years.

All positions within a given ministry, both volunteer and paid staff, are to be assessed for the level of trust involved and hence also the level of risk and 'sensitivity' associated with the position.

These correspond to the level of risk for potential harm to the participants, the vulnerable, or the church resources through the position, and are assigned one of three levels:

- Low sensitivity—volunteers who participate in a group setting, who have minimal or no contact with children or other vulnerable people, and who have minimal access to confidential information.
- Medium sensitivity—volunteers who participate in activities that may involve contact with vulnerable people or in the handling of funds, either on a more regular basis or in a private

setting but in the presence of another volunteer; this may include volunteers who have a greater access to confidential information.

- High sensitivity—volunteers who participate in ministries that involve an on-going, intensive or one-on-one interaction or influence with vulnerable people, such as seniors, youths (those under the age of 18) and the handicapped; this may include volunteers who have access to confidential records, money and the physical premises of the parish office.

The level of screening of a volunteer or staff position must meet the level of sensitivity assigned to that ministry and role.

When there is doubt as to the evaluation of a position, the position should be deemed high sensitivity.

Position descriptors for volunteer ministries that involve finances are to follow the *Protocol for Parish Financial Administration* of the Archdiocese of Ottawa.

Volunteers who are active in more than one ministry are to be screened for the position with the highest level of sensitivity.

When a volunteer moves from a low-sensitivity position to one of medium or high sensitivity, they must undergo required additional screening for the higher level.

On-the-spot volunteers are permitted to assist without screening, provided: their service occurs among many people; the role has an assigned low sensitivity; the job or function is temporary (as at a single or rare event).

The volunteer should register for participation in the particular ministry if he or she wishes to continue in the role.

Some ministry role descriptions reduce sensitivity by having participants work with one or more fellow volunteers.

If a volunteer finds himself or herself without a second screened individual to accompany them, (such as a fellow volunteer being absent because of illness), another suitable person must be found, or the duties postponed.

4 Screening Process

The Ministry Directors, as members of the parish screening committee, are responsible for the screening of volunteers.

Ministry Directors must ascertain that individuals have been screened at the proper sensitivity level before allowing them to serve within their ministry.

Once a volunteer has been screened in a position at a given level of sensitivity, he/she can volunteer in any other ministry **at the same level of sensitivity** by simply signing the *Additional Ministry Information Form* to be added to his/her file.

However, if he/she wishes to volunteer in a ministry at a higher level of sensitivity, then he/she must undergo **the additional screening requirements** for that level and sign a new *Covenant Form*.

A person screened at the high-sensitivity level can volunteer in all ministries.

The low-sensitivity level requirements plus two reference checks meets the medium-sensitivity level requirements, and adding an interview and a police check meets the higher-sensitivity level requirements.

4.1 Volunteer Application Form (all ministries):

An information form obtained from the parish office, or at the entrance of the church is to be duly completed by the potential volunteer and placed for consideration in the box at the back of the church..

It will be forwarded to the appropriate Ministry Director who will contact the individual for further information and screening.

4.2 The Covenant Form (all ministries):

The volunteer establishes a covenant with the church whereby he/she agrees to carry out his/her responsibilities as indicated in the ministry descriptor of each ministry in which he/she is volunteering.

4.3 The Additional Ministry Member Information Form:

This form is to be used only for new members who have already been **screened** in another ministry either at a **higher or same level of sensitivity**.

4.4 The Volunteer Guidelines (medium and high-sensitivity level ministries):

These guidelines provide clear rules for behavior so that volunteers understand what is expected of them to ensure the safety of our most vulnerable participants, the integrity of our programs and the well-being of our volunteers.

4.5 Reference Checks Form (medium and high-sensitivity level ministries):

At least two reference checks are to be conducted by the director/supervisor responsible for screening for all volunteers and paid staff in medium and high-sensitivity positions.

The volunteer or employee is to sign a permission form permitting the director/supervisor to contact the references.

Only the persons named as references (who cannot be relatives) are to be contacted.

The result of the reference check is to be documented and kept in the volunteer's confidential file.

4.6 Interviews Form (high-sensitivity level ministries):

An interview is to be conducted for all volunteers and staff in high-sensitivity positions, conducted by the director/supervisor responsible for screening and at least one additional interviewer.

A record of the interview is to be documented and kept in the volunteer/employee's confidential file.

In the case of certain positions of high sensitivity, a final one-on-one interview with the pastor or his delegate may be required.

4.7 Police Records Checks (high-sensitivity level ministries):

A police records check (PRC) is required for all volunteers in high-sensitivity positions.

It must be renewed every two years. (Letter from the pastor is available to exempt application charges).

The PRC must be a valid original. The original must be presented to the office administrator if copy is desired.

The PRC result is to be reviewed by the pastor and a witness, preferably a deacon of the parish, to assess and confirm the suitability of the person for the particular parish role(s);

Once the PRC has been reviewed, the results are recorded on form I, Record Check Confirmation, which is kept in the volunteer's confidential file.

The original or a certified photocopy of the PRC is sealed in an envelope and is also kept in the volunteer's confidential file.

If the volunteer or employee decides not to present a PRC report, or if the review results of the latter are negative, the parish cannot accept this individual for a high-sensitivity position.

A person who leaves a high-sensitivity ministry for one year or longer is required to provide a new PRC upon his/her return.

5 Record Keeping and Confidentiality

Personal information obtained will be kept confidential.

Information gathered for screening is accessible only to the volunteer or staff applicant, the pastor and the parish screening committee members.

Where doubt arises as to the suitability of a person for a ministry, the pastor will make the final decision.

Should the pastor and/or members of the screening committee have serious concerns or a difference of opinion about a volunteer or staff member's acceptance, or should a conflict of interest arise, the archdiocese must be consulted to assist with the deliberative process.

6 Volunteer Support

6.1. Orientation and Training:

Volunteers and staff are to be given appropriate Responsible Ministry training by the ministry directors/supervisors so as to be able to perform their duties without putting themselves or others at risk.

All current and new volunteers should participate in an orientation session based on the specific requirements of the ministry position descriptor.

These orientation sessions are to be offered as required.

Youths attending training are to be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

Volunteers involved in medium- and high-sensitivity roles and employees are to receive a copy of volunteer guidelines.

All volunteers sign an initial ministry *Covenant form* at screening and an *Additional Ministry Information* form when joining other ministries at the same or lower level of sensitivity.

Individuals who wish to volunteer in a ministry at a higher level of sensitivity must undergo **the additional screening requirements** for that level and sign a new *Covenant Form*.

Completed orientation and training is to be documented on the covenant and new member information forms for each individual.

6.2. Supervision and Evaluation:

The level of supervision is to be based on the level of risk and sensitivity involved in the volunteer or employee position.

Evaluations are to be performed as required for positions of high sensitivity. Copies of the evaluation are to be given to the volunteer or employee, with a copy for their confidential file.

7 Facilities for Responsible Ministry Management

7.1. Data/Archives:

The St Philip and St Clare Responsible *Ministry Volunteer and Staff Registry* is password-protected. The Register information is available only to director/pastor, assistant and office administrator.

Master copies of all responsible ministry computer data files as well as paper copies of screening documents are kept in a secure and archived system by the parish office administrator.

7.2. Documents: Master copies maintained by the parish office administrator.

Type	Description	On web site?
Program guide	This document	Yes
Program brochure	Program summary on a folded pamphlet, available at church entrances	No
Forms	A. volunteer and participant information (signed by parent or guardian for youth), available at church entrances	yes
	B. reference check	
	C. interview	
	D. ministry covenant	
	E. new member information	
	F. support and feedback	
	G. ministry descriptor template	
	H. police record check authorization template	
	I. police record check confirmation (completed form can be seen by the responsible ministry committee)	
Descriptors	<p>For volunteer ministry roles</p> <p>Low sensitivity: 200th anniversary committee; altar linen caretaker; altar server – child, youth (under the age of 18); choir member, musician; extraordinary minister of the Eucharist; flower bed caretaker; hospitality coordinator, worker; lector/reader, commentator; liturgical committee; liturgical decorator; musical director, adult choir; office assistant (volunteer); parish pastoral council; parish web site administrator; pro-life committee; sacristan; sacristan director (head sacristan); usher-greeter; welcome committee</p> <p>Medium sensitivity: collection counter; collection handler; RCIA coordinator; RCIA organizer-catechist; RCIA sponsor; responsible ministry reference check solicitor; responsible ministry committee; temporal affairs council</p> <p>High sensitivity: altar server – adult; altar servers coordinator; archivist (volunteer); cemetery committee; children’s liturgy coordinator; children’s liturgy leader-instructor, helper; collection counting coordinator; ministry to the sick and shut-ins; musical director, children’s choir; youth ministry coordinator; youth ministry assistant (age 18 and over)</p>	Yes
	<p>For staff roles</p> <p>Medium sensitivity: bookkeeper</p> <p>High sensitivity: bartender, maintenance coordinator, office administrator</p>	No
Screening aid	Responsible Ministry Screening Guide	No
Training	Volunteer Guidelines for Medium and High Sensitivity Roles	Yes
Parish web site	Program overview	yes

