

## **POLICY 5.1.1 Responsible Ministry Policy**

### **SUMMARY**

1. Members of clergy, employees and volunteers in pastoral, administrative and liturgical ministries are all required to complete a screening process before ministering in the Archdiocese.
2. Ministries are assessed for the level of risk: high, medium, and low or none.
3. Archdiocesan and Parish Coordinators of Responsible Ministry are responsible for collecting the required screening documents as described in this policy.
4. The screening documents include Vulnerable Sector Checks, child welfare checks, and several archdiocesan forms.
5. Vulnerable Sector Checks and child welfare checks must be periodically renewed.
6. Archdiocesan and Parish Coordinators are responsible for ensuring that the screening records for clergy, employees and volunteers are current and complete.

### **FORMS**

- 5.1.a Personal Information Form
- 5.1.b Covenant of Care
- 5.1.c Code of Conduct Acknowledgement
- 5.1.d Personal Reference Check
- 5.1.e Checklist for Volunteer Screening

### **RELATED POLICIES**

- 5.1.2 Safe Environment Policy

The Responsible Ministry Policy of the Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan provides for a screening process for clergy, employees and volunteers who minister in the parishes, quasi-parishes and missions of the Archdiocese. The principal objective is to safeguard minors and vulnerable adults, and all members of our communities.

#### **1. The ministries**

The Archdiocese has three categories of ministry: liturgical, pastoral and administrative.

##### **a. 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.

Most liturgical ministries do not require screening for their volunteers, except those involving children, adolescents, and vulnerable adults.

##### **b. Pastoral ministries**

## Policy 5.1.1 Responsible Ministry Policy

---

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 pastoral ministries 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.

Most pastoral ministries require screening for their volunteers, except those involving only adults.

### c. 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 includes Catholic organizations operating in parishes when identifying ministries, in particular, the Knights of Columbus and the Catholic Women’s League.

Most administrative ministries require screening for their volunteers.

## 2. The level of risk

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

### a. 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 minors (children and 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.

<p>*<b>Vulnerable adult</b>: 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.</p>
---

### b. 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 comply with the policies in Section 3 of the *Policy Manual*, especially Policy 3.1.1.

### c. Low- or no-risk ministries

## **Policy 5.1.1 Responsible Ministry Policy**

---

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

### **3. Mitigating the risks**

In the Archdiocese, and for the purposes of this policy, there are three categories of people who perform ministry:

- clergy (priests and deacons)
- employees
- volunteers.

A certain amount of personal information has to be collected from the people performing ministry to ensure that all risks of harm are identified and mitigated. The Archdiocese respects that this information is personal and this policy provides for the protection of that information (see below 6. Coordinators of Responsible Ministry).

The screening results for people in high- and medium-risk ministries are reviewed by delegated people in the parish and the chancery.

The purpose of the screening is **not** to exclude people from ministry. It is to ensure that any risk of harm to people and goods is mitigated.

### **4. Screening Process**

#### **a. For new members of clergy**

Priests who come to the Archdiocese from abroad will have provided to Immigration Canada proof that they do not have a criminal record. The issuance of a Visitor Record to these priests is considered to meet the requirements of this policy.

After three years of ministry in the Archdiocese, priests from abroad will complete a Vulnerable Sector Check and a Child Welfare Intervention Record Check (see 5. Screening Documents, below). They will then enter the normal application of this policy.

Priests and deacons who come from Canada or who have completed studies in Canada will be screened as new employees of the Archdiocese.

#### **b. For new archdiocesan and parish employees and archdiocesan volunteers**

The person responsible for engaging new archdiocesan or parish employees, or volunteers in the Archdiocese will inform the Archdiocesan Coordinator of Responsible Ministry (Archdiocesan Coordinator). The Archdiocesan Coordinator will provide the responsible person or the applicant for employment or volunteer position with instructions for completing the required screening documents and a letter to the local RCMP detachment for the appropriate criminal record check certificate.

Employees are charged a fee for a vulnerable sector check. The applicant can submit a receipt for the charge to the Archdiocese or parish, which will reimburse the amount paid.

#### **c. For new parish volunteers**

The person responsible for engaging new volunteers in the parish will inform the Parish Coordinator of Responsible Ministry (Parish Coordinator). The Parish Coordinator will provide the responsible person

## Policy 5.1.1 Responsible Ministry Policy

or the volunteer with instructions for completing the required screening documents and a letter to the local RCMP detachment for the appropriate vulnerable sector check certificate.

All of the required screening documents must be submitted to and reviewed by the appropriate screening coordinator **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.

### 5. Screening Documents

The principal screening documents are:

- Personal Information Form (Form 5.1.a)
- Covenant of Care form (Form 5.1.b) **OR** Code of Conduct Acknowledgement form (Form 5.1.c)
- Vulnerable Sector Check (from the RCMP or other relevant police agency)
- Child Welfare Intervention Record Check (from Alberta Child and Family Services)
- Confidential Character &/or Performance Reference Checks (Form 5.1.d) **except:** volunteers who have been members of the parish for at least five years.

	Form 5.1.a	Form 5.1.b	Form 5.1.c	VS	IRC	Form 5.1.d
Clergy	•	•		•	•	
Employees	•	•		•	•	•
High risk	•	•		•	•	•
Medium risk	•		•	•		
Low and no-risk	•		•			

#### a. Personal Information Form (Form 5.1.a)

The personal information collected on this form will be used only to meet the insurance and organizational requirements for verifying the identity and contact information of volunteers. Members of clergy and employees already provide this information in other formats.

Every volunteer in every ministry in a parish is to provide a completed Form 5.1.a to the Parish Coordinator. “Every ministry” means high-risk, medium-risk, and low- and no-risk ministries.

#### b. Covenant of Care form (Form 5.1.b)

As a church community, at the archdiocesan and parish levels, we are obliged to meet certain standards of behaviour in that community. The Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan’s Code of Conduct provides minimum standards (cf. Policy 5.1.2) that must be met by everyone. Those who minister to minors and vulnerable adults are asked to provide further assurances of their suitability to provide this ministry.

## **Policy 5.1.1 Responsible Ministry Policy**

---

Every member of clergy, employee, and volunteer in high-risk ministry is to provide a Form 5.1.b to the Parish or Archdiocesan Coordinator of Responsible Ministry. The cleric, employee or volunteer completes and signs the form after reading the Code of Conduct (cf. Policy 5.1.2).

### **c. Code of Conduct Acknowledgement form (Form 5.1.c)**

As a church community, at the archdiocesan and parish levels, we are obliged to meet certain standards of behaviour in that community. The Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan's Code of Conduct provides minimum standards (cf. Policy 5.1.2) that must be met by everyone.

Every volunteer in medium- and low and no-risk ministry is to provide a Form 5.1.c to the Parish Coordinator of Responsible Ministry. The volunteer completes and signs the form after reading the Code of Conduct (cf. Policy 5.1.2).

### **d. Vulnerable Sector Check (VS)**

The Vulnerable Sector Check is a specialized Police Information Check provided by Canadian police agencies, which provides information about any records of sexual and violent offences.

Every member of clergy, employee, and volunteer in high-risk ministry will provide a Vulnerable Sector Check from the RCMP. The Archdiocesan or Parish Coordinator of Responsible Ministry, or the parish priest, in some parishes, will give the volunteer a letter of request (see Appendix 2 - Letter Template). The volunteer uses the letter to make the application at a local detachment of the RCMP.

The volunteer must provide the certificate before beginning ministry. This certificate must be updated every five (5) years.

**For all clergy, employees and volunteers joining ministry after the effective date of this policy:** A Criminal Record Check must be provided from every place of residence outside of Canada since the 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.

### **e. Child Welfare Intervention Record Check (IRC)**

The Child Welfare Intervention Record Check provides information about any history of intervention by provincial agencies for child welfare.

## **Policy 5.1.1 Responsible Ministry Policy**

---

Every member of clergy, employee, and volunteer in high-risk ministry involving minors will provide a Child Welfare Intervention Record Check from Child and Family Services in Alberta. The application must be made in person at a local office of Child and Family Services.

The certificate must be updated every three (3) years.

**For all clergy, employees and volunteers joining ministry after the effective date of this policy:** A Child Welfare Intervention Record Check, or equivalent, must be provided from every place of residence within Canada and outside of Alberta, since the 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.

### **f. Standard Form for Confidential Character &/or Performance Reference Checks** (Form 5.1.d)

Reference checks are to be completed by the parish priest when they are required. They are required for people whose identity is not well-established in a parish. The Parish Coordinator will prepare the Form 5.1.d, using the names of references provided by the volunteer. The parish priest completes the checks and returns the forms to the Parish Coordinator.

## **6. 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 Coordinators of Responsible Ministry have a two-fold mandate:

- To ensure that all ministry personnel have provided the required personal information and background screening documents for review before beginning ministry; and,
- To ensure that the personal information collected on the forms of this policy and in the background screening documents is protected in compliance with archdiocesan norms and the *Personal Information Protection Act of Alberta*.

### **a. Parish Coordinator of Responsible Ministry**

The Parish Coordinator will:

#### **i. Collect screening documents**

At the request of the parish priest, or other parish ministry coordinator, the Parish Coordinator will

- provide the appropriate forms (5.1.a and 5.1.b or 5.1.c, with a copy of the Code of Conduct) to volunteers to complete.
- provide the letter to the local RCMP detachment to do 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.
- instruct the volunteers to return the completed forms and checks only to the Parish Coordinator
- provide the parish priest with Form 5.1.d, which lists the names of the three references provided on Form 5.1.a, where reference checks are required (see above 4. Responsible Ministry Policy – the screening documents).

## **Policy 5.1.1 Responsible Ministry Policy**

---

### **ii. Review screening documents**

- receive the completed archdiocesan forms.
- receive the original Vulnerable Sector and Child Welfare Intervention Record Checks from volunteers.
- at the request of the person named in the Checks, the Parish Coordinator may return the originals after making copies. The Parish Coordinator signs and dates each copy, and indicates that the originals have been verified.
- review the information in the screening documents and bring to the attention of the parish priest any potential risk factors.
- receive the completed forms 5.1.d from the parish priest.

### **iii. Protect personal information**

- 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.

### **iv. Ensure completeness of screening process**

- compile a record of ministries and the volunteers in the parish and update it annually (Form 5.1.e).
- forward a copy of the Form 5.1.e each year to the Archdiocesan Coordinator.
- follow the instructions of the Archdiocesan Coordinator regarding any missing or incomplete information related to the volunteers listed on Form 5.1.e.

### **b. 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;

## **Policy 5.1.1 Responsible Ministry Policy**

---

- ensure those named on parish lists of volunteers have been properly screened for the ministry they are doing (Form 5.1.e).

Promulgated on 25 October 2016

Amended on 15 June 2020

Amended by the Council of Priests on 19 October 2023



### Personal Information Form for Volunteers for Ministry

Name	
Address	
Phone	
Email	
Date & Place of Birth	
Sex	<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female
Marital Status	

Position			
Risk level	<input type="checkbox"/> High risk	<input type="checkbox"/> Medium risk	<input type="checkbox"/> Low or no- risk

**For high-risk and medium-risk positions:** Please provide the names of three unrelated persons whom we can contact as personal references:

- 1) Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

I affirm that the above information is true and correct. I permit the collection of this personal information, including that provided by the reference checks solely for use in managing ministry in the parish and the Archdiocese.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature) \_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

Amended by the College of Consultors on 28 September, 2011  
Amended by the College of Consultors on 25 October 2016

### Covenant of Care

*This form is to be filled out by anyone employed by the Archdiocese or a parish, or as a volunteer in a high risk ministry (as defined in Policy 5.1.1 of the Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan's Policy Manual).*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Town/City: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

<p>Have you ever been <b>accused</b> of abuse or inappropriate behaviour with children, adolescents or vulnerable adults?</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/> No <span style="margin-left: 200px;"><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</span></p> <p>Have you ever been <b>charged</b> with abuse or inappropriate behaviour with children, adolescents or vulnerable adults <u>or with any other crime</u>?</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/> No <span style="margin-left: 200px;"><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</span></p>
--

I agree to abide by the Code of Conduct of the Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan (see attached or Policy 5.1.2) as my commitment to serve and to be seen to serve all persons with purity and unselfish love in a Covenant of Care that honors the intrinsic worth of each person, and I acknowledge that any breach of the Code of Conduct on my part will result in appropriate disciplinary action.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Amended by the College of Consultors on 25 October 2016

### Code of Conduct Acknowledgement

*This form is to be filled out by volunteers of the Archdiocese or a parish, to a ministry that is **not** considered to be a high risk ministry (as defined in Policy 5.1.1 of the Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan’s Policy Manual).*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Town/City: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

I have read and agree to abide by the Code of Conduct of the Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan (see attached) as my commitment to serve and to be seen to serve all persons with purity and unselfish love in a Covenant of Care that honors the intrinsic worth of each person, and I acknowledge that any breach of the Code of Conduct on my part will result in appropriate disciplinary action.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

### Standard Form for Confidential Character &/or Performance References

(Interview to be carried out by phone or in person and this form completed by the interviewer)

Volunteer or Applicant	
Name:	Position:

Reference	
Name:	Relationship:
Phone:	Other contact information:

*Where possible, the reference should be interviewed by telephone. Begin the interview by introducing yourself and explaining the purpose of the call. You should say something like:*

**[Name of Volunteer/Applicant]** has supplied your name as a reference. This position involves interaction with children, adolescents and/or vulnerable persons. Your frank confidential assessment of his/her suitability in the following categories is appreciated.

How well do you know the candidate:      well ( )    somewhat ( )    very little ( )
How would you describe his/her moral character?
Would you describe her/him as reliable?
How would you describe his/her ability to work with others?
Would you recommend this person for this position?

*(Please use other side if you need more space)*

Name of interviewer: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of interview: \_\_\_\_\_

Amended by the College of Consultors on 25 October 2016

## Checklist for Parish Volunteer Screening

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

- This form is to be completed once a year by the Parish Screening Co-ordinator or Parish Priest.
- The original is to be submitted to the Archdiocesan Screening Coordinator.
- Be sure to put the year, the page number and the total number of pages at the bottom of each sheet.
- A copy of the **first page only** (1.) may be kept in the parish.
- A record of volunteer screening (2.) is to be completed **for each** of the volunteer ministries in the parish.

<b>Parish</b>		<b>Parish Priest</b>	
<b>Address</b>			
<b>Completed by</b>		<b>Date</b>	

**1. List of volunteer ministries in the parish**

<b>Ministry</b>	<b>Risk Level</b>

**1. List of volunteer ministries in the parish (continued)**

Ministry	Risk Level

**2. Record of volunteer screening, by ministry**

**Parish:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Ministry:** \_\_\_\_\_

Screening required for volunteers in this ministry?       Yes       No

*[Shaded area to be completed by the Archdiocesan Coordinator]*

Volunteers	Start date (if known)	Form 5.1.a	Form 5.1.b	Form 5.1.c	VSC	IRC

### 2. Record of volunteer screening, by ministry

Parish: \_\_\_\_\_ Ministry: \_\_\_\_\_

Screening required for volunteers in this ministry?  Yes  No

*[Shaded area to be completed by the Archdiocesan Coordinator]*

Volunteers	Start date (if known)	Form 5.1.a	Form 5.1.b	Form 5.1.c	VSC	IRC



**Appendix 1**

**List of Ministries and Risk Level**

<b>High risk ministries</b>	
<b>Ministry</b>	<b>Risk level - reason</b>
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
<b>Medium risk ministries</b>	
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
Music ministry	Opportunity to build relationships of trust
Adult faith formation and OCIA	Opportunity to build relationships of trust
Prayer groups	Opportunity to build relationships of trust
<b>Low or no-risk ministries</b>	
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

Amended by the Council of Priests 19 October 2023

[PARISH LETTERHEAD HERE]

Royal Canadian Mounted Police

[address of local detachment]

Date:

**Re: Request for a Vulnerable Sector Check**

As **pastor/volunteer screening coordinator** of the above-named Catholic parish, I am requesting

Vulnerable Sector check

for \_\_\_\_\_,

as a condition of employment with the parish as \_\_\_\_\_.

OR

who is applying to volunteer with the parish as \_\_\_\_\_.

This position will require working, either directly or indirectly, with:

children

adolescents

vulnerable adults.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

[Name of Priest/Screening coordinator]

Pastor of [Name of Parish]

### RCMP Detachments in the Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan

<b>Beaverlodge</b> 402 - 10 Street Beaverlodge	<b>Fox Lake</b>	<b>McLennan</b> 404 – 3 Avenue NE McLennan
<b>Chateh (Assumption)</b> ATCO Rd & Commercial Dr Chateh	<b>Grande Prairie</b> 10202 99 Street Grande Prairie	<b>Peace River</b> 9200 99 Street Peace River
<b>Desmarais</b> 861 Mistassiny Road Desmarais	<b>Grimshaw</b> 5002 50 Avenue Wilcox Road Grimshaw	<b>Red Earth Creek</b> 153 – Highway 88 Red Earth Creek
<b>Fairview</b> 10104 113 Street Fairview	<b>High Level</b> 10203 100 Avenue High Level	<b>Slave Lake</b> 1005 – 6 Avenue SE Slave Lake
<b>Faust</b> 13A 4th Street West Faust	<b>High Prairie</b> 5400 53 Avenue High Prairie	<b>Spirit River</b> 4501 50 Street Spirit River
<b>Fort Vermilion</b> 4302 45 <sup>th</sup> Street Fort Vermilion	<b>Manning</b> 304 – 6 Avenue NE Manning	<b>Valleyview</b> 4945 - 49 Avenue Valleyview

### Alberta Child and Family Services Offices in the Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan

<b>Fairview</b> 10209-109 Street Fairview	<b>Peace River</b> 9715-100 Street Peace River
<b>Grande Prairie Services for Children and Youth</b> 214 Place South, Suite 200, 10130-99 Avenue Grande Prairie	<b>Slave Lake</b> 108, 101-3rd Street SW Slave Lake
<b>High Level</b> 9814-101 Street High Level	<b>Valleyview Community Resource Centre</b> 5112-50 Avenue Valleyview
<b>High Prairie</b> 5226-53 Avenue High Prairie	