



**COVENANT OF CARE**

**&**

**SEXUAL ABUSE AND MISCONDUCT PROTOCOL**

*October 31, 2012*  
*Revised December 1, 2016*





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## 1. INTRODUCTION

In our society and indeed in the church itself, experience has shown the need for vigilance and awareness to ensure that all, especially the most vulnerable, may feel and be at peace in a safe environment.

The *Covenant of Care* is a code of conduct designed to create safe and respectful church communities and healthy ministerial relationships, and to protect people from abuse and the harm that results. The *Covenant of Care* protocol strives to provide proactive protection for:

- children, youth and vulnerable adults, and
- those who minister, including clergy, employees and church volunteers.

The *Sexual Abuse and Misconduct Protocol* is designed to ensure that allegations of sexual abuse and other misconduct are handled responsibly, transparently and with all due care and attention.

Together these two parts form the *Covenant of Care & Sexual Abuse Misconduct Protocol*, the present version of which is dated October 31, 2012, providing authoritative directives for all who minister within and on behalf of the Diocese of Saskatoon.

The Diocese of Saskatoon expects that those who minister in the name of the church or under church auspices will exhibit a profound respect for all. By first respecting the law of the Gospel, this diocese also respects and abides by the laws of our civil society. Our goal is the prevention of actual abuse, misconduct, compromising and scandalous circumstances, and false accusations.

While trusting in the good will of all, this protocol shall apply to all persons involved in service to children, youth and vulnerable adults. It will be the responsibility of the pastors, parish life directors and heads of diocesan offices to inform all clergy, employees and volunteers of this protocol. They are to ensure that this protocol is put into effect in their particular parishes and ministries.

## 2. COVENANT OF CARE

The Diocese of Saskatoon is responsible to provide a safe, respectful and secure environment for ministry. The *Covenant of Care* is the code of conduct for all employees and volunteers, including clergy, religious and lay people. In providing ministry, employees and volunteers are placed in situations where they may have access to highly sensitive and confidential information. The specialized nature of church work in many cases can place providers and recipients of pastoral services in a vulnerable situation; individuals are dependent upon the honesty and integrity of all employees and volunteers associated with the Church. This calls for responsibility and places the burden of adhering to the *Covenant of Care* on each employee and volunteer.

1. Employees and volunteers assume full responsibility for establishing and maintaining clear, appropriate boundaries in all ministerial situations, especially those involving children, youth and vulnerable adults. Employees and volunteers are expected to provide ministry that is free of verbal and physical abuse, grooming or exploitative behaviours.
2. All physical contact between employees or volunteers and children, youth or vulnerable adults must be appropriate to the ministerial relationship and absent of inappropriate, exploitative, harassing and/or abusive sexual contact.
3. Employees and volunteers who learn of information indicating clear and imminent danger to a child, youth or vulnerable adult must act to protect the safety, health and well-being of the vulnerable parties by disclosing necessary information and communicating such disclosures to their immediate superior and/or other appropriate person(s), including the police, as outlined in the *Sexual Abuse and Misconduct Protocol*.
4. At least two adults are to be present for all recreational activities, catechetical programs and pastoral care outreach. Situations where a minister is alone with a vulnerable person are particularly sensitive and conducive to abuse or allegations of abuse; every effort should be made to prevent both. When one to one meetings are necessary, they must take place in rooms and locations that are open to public view. For example, windows in doors should never be covered, and two adults (in addition to the person receiving communion) will be present when bringing communion to those at home.
5. Employees and volunteers shall not engage in corporal punishment of children, youth or vulnerable adults in their care. Discipline problems will be handled in coordination with the immediate supervisor and the parents/care providers.
6. Employees and volunteers will not dispense medications without written consent from a parent or legal guardian.
7. Employees and volunteers will never be alone with a child, youth or vulnerable adult in a residence, sleeping facility, locker room, rest room, dressing facility, or other closed room or area that is inappropriate to a ministerial relationship. Overnight trips, special events, and care due to illness, disability or emergency require the utmost attention and planning of leadership. Any off-site or overnight events with children or youth require a **Parental Consent Form** (Appendix E).

8. No diocesan employee or volunteer is permitted to be alone in his or her living quarters or motor vehicle with a child, youth or vulnerable adult whose relationship has been established through a ministerial relationship.
9. No employee or volunteer is permitted to take personal trips or vacations with a child, youth or vulnerable adult whose relationship has been established through a ministerial relationship.
10. All employees and volunteers working with vulnerable persons will sign that they have read and will adhere to this *Covenant of Care* and will follow diocesan guidelines concerning requisite screening processes, criminal record checks and ongoing education.

Within ministerial relationships, the Diocese of Saskatoon will not tolerate physical, verbal or sexual harassment or abuse among its employees and volunteers. In a spirit of common mission, all who work together on behalf of Christ's church must be alert to even the beginnings of abuse or misconduct and work to prevent and eliminate both. Investigations which result in the confirmation of allegations of misconduct or abuse will result in disciplinary measures against the perpetrator of abuse or harassment which may include suspension, dismissal and/or the reporting of the incident to secular authorities.

Violations of the *Covenant of Care* are dealt with according to the *Sexual Abuse and Misconduct Protocol* of the Diocese of Saskatoon.

## A. Implementation Procedures for the *Covenant of Care*

1. The Bishop will appoint a Diocesan Coordinator of Care (DCC), who will oversee all training, reporting and investigation procedures.
2. All employees (including the Pastor and Parish Life Director) will participate in initial and annual diocesan training sessions on the *Covenant of Care & Sexual Abuse and Misconduct Protocol*.
3. All employees will submit a *Criminal Occurrence Security Check* (police record check) at the beginning of their employment (at the expense of the employee) and every five years following (at the expense of the employer). These are to be sent to and securely stored by the Diocesan Coordinator of Care (DCC).
4. Having read the *Covenant of Care & Sexual Abuse and Misconduct Protocol*, all employees will sign a **Covenant of Care Form** (Appendix C), which is to be kept on file at the parish for the duration of their employment and sent to the diocesan archives if and when employment ceases.
5. The Pastor (and Parish Life Director, if applicable), ideally with parish council, will appoint a lay person as Parish Coordinator of Care, and publicize this appointment within the parish. The Parish Coordinator of Care receives reports and/or allegations of breaches of the *Covenant of Care* in the event that someone is unable or unwilling to make their report to the Pastor and/or Parish Life Director. The Parish Coordinator of Care may also assist in the implementation and maintenance of the *Covenant of Care & Sexual Abuse and Misconduct Protocol*.
6. All volunteer positions will be classified as 'low' or 'high' risk positions.

### A **low-risk position**:

- Does not require close contact with children, youth or vulnerable adult,
- Is supervised directly or indirectly at all times, and
- Does not handle money, food or driving.

Low-risk positions include altar serving, music ministry and proclamation of the Word.

### A **high-risk position** involves:

- Working in an unsupervised setting where money, food, or transportation could be provided to children, youth and/or vulnerable adults,
- Being alone, unsupervised or having access to confidential information, and/or
- Being entrusted with control of keys and property.

High-risk positions include but are not limited to priestly ministry, employed lay ministry, children's liturgy leadership, altar serving leadership, bookkeeping, Eucharistic ministry to the sick and shut-ins, youth ministry, and volunteer driving.

7. Activities that cannot be carried out in accordance with the *Covenant of Care* are not permitted under any circumstances.
8. All volunteers working in high-risk positions will:
  - Participate in training on the *Covenant of Care* before they begin ministry with vulnerable persons.
  - Submit a *Criminal Occurrence Security Check* (police record check) at the beginning of their volunteer ministry and every five years following. Parishes can send the volunteer for their check with a **Volunteer Letter** (Appendix A). *Criminal Occurrence Security Checks* are to be opened and screened by the Pastor and/or Parish Life Director. The parish and volunteer ministry are to be written on them before they are sent to and securely stored by the Diocesan Coordinator of Care (DCC), who is available for consultation regarding conversations that flow from the checks, if needed.
  - Complete a **Volunteer Screening Form** (Appendix B) and a **Covenant of Care Form** (Appendix C). Both are stored at the parish for the duration of their ministry and sent to the diocesan archives if and when they are no longer serving.
  - Discuss their Volunteer Screening Form and suitability for a particular ministry with the supervisor of that ministry.
9. A **Volunteer Driver Form** (Appendix D) must be completed and kept on file any time that volunteer drivers are needed in programs supporting vulnerable persons.
10. Any time that a child or youth is participating in an off-site or overnight event or activity, a **Parental Consent Form** (Appendix E) is required. Parents must also be provided with the **Covenant of Care Reference Sheet** (Appendix F), for their information.

### 3. SEXUAL ABUSE AND MISCONDUCT PROTOCOL

#### A. Personnel Responsible for the *Covenant of Care & Sexual Abuse and Misconduct Protocol*

**Bishop:** The Bishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon will ensure the *Covenant of Care & Sexual Abuse and Misconduct Protocol* is implemented and adhered to across the diocese. The Bishop will appoint the Diocesan Coordinator of Care (DCC), the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC), and the Media Relations Spokesperson. He will ensure that the names and contact information of the DCC and the chairperson and vice-chairperson of the DAC are made public.

**Diocesan Coordinator of Care (DCC):** The DCC oversees all training, reporting and investigation procedures for the *Covenant of Care & Sexual Abuse and Misconduct Protocol*. When the DCC is away from the office, the Bishop will designate an alternate to fill the role. The DCC:

- Provides assistance with implementation, maintenance, reporting and investigations,
- Maintains the long-term, confidential storage of documentation at the Chancery office.
- Oversees training and education efforts at a diocesan level and is available to support training at the parish level.

**Pastors and Parish Life Directors:** Pastors (and their canonical equivalents) and Parish Life Directors will ensure that the *Covenant of Care & Sexual Abuse and Misconduct Protocol* is implemented and adhered to within their assigned parishes. They will also appoint a lay person as Parish Coordinator of Care (PCC), ideally in consultation with the Parish Pastoral Council, and ensure this person is made known in the parish community.

**Parish Coordinator of Care (PCC):** The Parish Coordinator of Care receives reports and/or allegations of breaches of the *Covenant of Care* in the event that someone is unable or unwilling to make their report to the Pastor and/or Parish Life Director. The PCC may also assist in the implementation and maintenance of the *Covenant of Care & Sexual Abuse and Misconduct Protocol*.

**Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC):** The Diocesan Advisory Committee is appointed by the Bishop and will consist of at least five members. The DAC will include: a chairperson; a vice-chairperson who will act as delegate in the absence of the chairperson; a priest; a lawyer; a person experienced in the treatment of persons who have been the subject of sexual abuse, as well as in the treatment of persons who suffer from disorders related to pedophilia or other similar illnesses; and any other person(s) who in the opinion of the Bishop can act as resource person(s). The DAC will meet annually with the Bishop and assess the *Covenant of Care & Sexual Abuse and Misconduct Protocol* and its implementation. The committee will be called together promptly if an investigation is needed.

The DAC is responsible to meet with the investigators and make recommendations to the bishop or appropriate person on actions to be taken before and after the completion of the investigation. Actions recommended might include the temporary or permanent suspension of the priest, religious, employee or volunteer from their duties or positions.

**Media Relations Spokesperson:** The Media Relations Spokesperson is appointed by the Bishop. This person is responsible for all public communication surrounding investigations.

## B. Definitions

**Child:** A person less than 16 years of age.

**Youth:** A person who is 16 or 17 years of age.

**Vulnerable Adult:** A person 18 years of age or older who might, because of circumstances, be easily exploited by another.

A vulnerable adult is at a disadvantage to fully protect himself or herself. An adult may be vulnerable, for example, as a result of by being mentally or physically challenged, being emotionally susceptible or socially isolated, being in a situation of social or material need, having difficulty understanding language or culture, or be fearful or blindly trusting of authority figures. It is noted that though refugees and immigrants might not have been considered vulnerable in their home countries, some may fall under this term as they transition into our community. A state of vulnerability may be permanent, such as a person with a disability, or temporary, as in the case of a person who is grieving.

**Vulnerable Person:** A child, youth or vulnerable adult.

**Misconduct:** Any breach of the *Covenant of Care* that is not sexual in nature.

**Allegation:** A claim suggesting that abuse or misconduct may have occurred.

**Employee:** Any person who is paid to provide ministry within and/or on behalf of the Diocese of Saskatoon. Employees include priests, deacons, religious, and lay people.

**Volunteer:** Any person providing ministry within and/or on behalf of the Diocese of Saskatoon who are not receiving monetary compensation for their ministry. Volunteers can include priests, deacons, religious and/or lay people.

**Ministerial Relationship:** A relationship between an employee or volunteer (clergy, religious or lay) and another person that is founded in the ministry provided on behalf of the Church. Examples of ministry include, but are not limited to, youth ministry, religious education, counselling, spiritual guidance, the celebration of the sacraments, and pastoral care in prisons, hospitals, nursing homes and private residences.

**Physical Abuse:** The use or threat of force or power to control, injure or abuse another person. Physical abuse also includes the intentional restriction of movement. Physical abuse does not have to leave a mark or a bruise.

**Verbal Abuse:** The use of language to manipulate, control, ridicule, insult, humiliate, belittle, vilify, or show disrespect or disdain to another. It may or may not use expletives. It may also be in written form, which includes electronic media. Such abuse includes but may not be limited to: bullying, ridiculing, trivializing, harassing, accusing, blaming, denying, insulting, taunting, putting down, discounting, threatening, name-calling, yelling or raging.

**Sexual Abuse:** Any inappropriate, unwanted and/or non-consensual sexual contact. For the purpose of this protocol, sexual abuse is comprised of contacts or interactions between an employee or volunteer and a vulnerable person (child, youth, vulnerable adult) when the vulnerable person is being used as an object of sexual gratification. A vulnerable person can be abused whether or not this activity involves explicit force, whether or not it involves genital or physical contact, and whether or not there is discernible harmful outcome. In the context of this policy, any inappropriate sexual interaction between an employee or volunteer and vulnerable person with whom he or she has a ministerial relationship is considered sexual abuse.

**Sexual Exploitation:** The use of one's position of power or trust to have sexual contact or attempted sexual contact with another person. Sexual exploitation includes but is not limited to such activity as intercourse, kissing, touching of breasts or genitals, dating during the course of a ministerial relationship, verbal suggestions of sexual involvement, or demeaning sexual comments. The apparent consent of a possible victim does not determine whether there has been sexual exploitation, because the imbalance of power between the pastoral care giver and the person in a pastoral relationship undermines the validity of an apparent consent.

**Sexual Harassment:** Any unwanted or inappropriate sexual conduct or language with others. This conduct entails unwelcome sexual advances, request for sexual favours, other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when submission to or rejection of this conduct explicitly or implicitly affects an individual's status (such as employment), when it interferes with an individual's performance or when it creates intimidation and a hostile or offensive environment.

Harassment is contrary to the basic respect due to all persons. Victims may be employees or others who feel obliged to continue in their present circumstance. Perpetrators are often the ones in power and may or may not be aware of their abuse of power and the discomfort it causes the victim. It is essential, due to power imbalances and the potential for harassment to go unreported, that all members of church ministry environments are attentive to the possibility of harassment and its elimination.

**Grooming:** Any behaviour designed to establish a special bond of trust and affectionate understanding between a person in a position of power and the person who is the object of his/her attention. Vulnerable persons may be particularly susceptible to grooming. Grooming can include a wide variety of behaviours, such as spending large amounts of time with a particular person, affording special privileges or providing gifts, trips and other expressions of special attention. The behaviours can also lead the person to feel indebted to the groomer for all these kindnesses. Once this bond of trust and indebtedness is established, the stage may be set for sexual advances.

The pattern of a groomer is made up of observable behaviours. These behaviours need to be challenged or reported. Grooming, whether unintentional or not, is by its very nature manipulative behaviour. As well as signaling possible future sexual activity or other abusive behaviour, grooming is in itself inappropriate. Everyone should be alert to signs of grooming, including church personnel and those who care for the vulnerable.

**Exploitation of a Ministerial Relationship:** Any abuse of power, betrayal of trust or exploitation of the power imbalance that is inherent in a relationship between an employee or volunteer of the Diocese of Saskatoon and a person with whom she or he has a ministerial relationship. Due to the imbalance of power between the person offering ministry and the person to whom the ministry is offered, the apparent consent of a possible victim does not in itself determine whether or not there has been an abuse of power, a breach of trust or an act of exploitation.

## C. Reporting and Handling Misconduct

Misconduct, as defined by this policy, includes a wide variety of potentially problematic behaviours, from unintentional behaviours which warrant apology and correction to serious, habitual physical abuse. The protocol for reporting and investigating misconduct is designed to both evaluate the nature of the breach and ensure an appropriate response for all involved.

Recognizing the good will of the vast majority of employees and volunteers, the Diocese of Saskatoon strives first to prevent abuse through education, and secondly through naming and eliminating misconduct. Wherever possible, misconduct is to be addressed at the local level. Any time that misconduct involves a Pastor or Parish Life Director, the PCC will carry out the Pastor or Parish Life Director's role in the protocol, in conversation with the DCC. Assistance and support is available at any time from the DCC, and is required in some circumstances, as outlined below.

Any exploitation, harassment or abuse that is sexual in nature is considered serious and will be reported immediately to the DCC, as per section 3D of this protocol.

The aim of an investigation of misconduct is to stop potentially harmful or abusive behaviours before harm or abuse occurs. When an allegation of misconduct is reported, the Pastor or Parish Life Director will:

1. Contact the person making the report to gather details of the alleged misconduct.
2. Assess whether or not misconduct has occurred.
3. Communicate to the person who has made the report as to what action will be taken.
4. Follow up on misconduct according to the protocol below.

Misconduct falls under the following three categories, and the protocol for each immediately follows:

- 1. Unintentional misconduct where no harm has been perceived by another person or has actually occurred.**
  - a. The employee or volunteer is to be made aware of their misconduct. They are to have a discussion with their immediate supervisor and/or the pastor about the circumstances of the misconduct and identify an action plan to prevent repeat misconduct.
  - b. If a second misconduct of the same type occurs, the incident is to be recorded in written form including a preventative action plan, and filed with the signed **Covenant of Care Form** (Appendix C).
  - c. A third misconduct of this type will result in disciplinary action appropriate to the misconduct, which may include removal from the ministry. Action taken on a third misconduct of the same type must be written up by the pastor and submitted to the DCC.

**2. Unintentional misconduct where harm has been perceived by another person and/or where harm has allegedly or actually occurred.**

- a. The employee or volunteer is to be made aware of their misconduct. They are to have a discussion with their immediate supervisor and/or the pastor about the circumstances of the misconduct and identify an action plan to prevent repeat misconduct.
- b. Provided that the misconduct does not pose present or future risk to vulnerable persons, warranting the end of employment or volunteer ministry, the incident is to be recorded in written form, including a preventative action plan, and filed with the employee or volunteer's completed **Covenant of Care Form** (Appendix C).
- c. If the misconduct and/or the harm it caused jeopardizes the employee or volunteer's suitability for ministry, ministry may be terminated. The DCC and/or Diocesan Human Resources Consultant must be called upon in such circumstances.

**3. Intentional and/or illegal misconduct.**

- a. Intentional misconduct on the part of an employee or volunteer is a violation of the individual's agreement to abide by the *Covenant of Care*. Regardless of whether or not harm is perceived or actual, intentional misconduct is to be reported to and dealt with in collaboration with the DCC.
- b. Illegal activity or allegations of illegal activity on the part of an employee or volunteer in the context of a ministerial relationship must be reported to the DCC. Reporting and investigation will follow the protocol outlined in sections 3D and 3E of this protocol.

In every category of misconduct, repeat misconduct is to be considered an adequate reason for questioning an employee or volunteer's suitability for ministry. In some cases, it may be necessary to suspend or modify the services or duties of the accused until such time as the Pastor/Parish Life Director and/or Diocesan Coordinator of Care is assured of compliance with the *Covenant of Care*. In cases where there is not a willingness to comply with the expectations outlined within the *Covenant of Care*, the individual(s) may be asked to resign from their position or their employment/volunteer ministry may be terminated.

## D. Reporting Sexual Abuse

The reporting requirements outlined in this section are intended to deal with sexual abuse and misconduct within the Diocese. These reporting requirements apply to the actions of all clergy, religious, employees and volunteers within the Diocese. Reporting should be done by any person in the Diocese who has reasonable evidence or disclosure that sexual abuse or misconduct has occurred. An employee or volunteer receiving an allegation of sexual abuse is expected to report it to the DCC.

These reporting requirements are intended to outline employee and volunteer responsibilities and legal obligations of individuals under the laws of the Province of Saskatchewan. Clergy and religious members of the church will be subject to Canon Law in addition to the laws of the Province of Saskatchewan.

The reporting processes exist to allow for due investigation of any and all allegations of abuse or misconduct. The requirements are to be followed to protect victims from further abuse and the accused from the damage of false accusation.

### 1. Reporting Sexual Abuse of a Child

- a. *The Child and Family Services Act* of the Province of Saskatchewan stipulates that any person who has reasonable grounds to believe that a child is in need of protection has legal duty to report the information a peace or police officer.
- b. In addition to following the legal duty to report as outlined in the paragraph above, employees or volunteers who are aware of sexual abuse of a child by a priest, deacon, religious, employee or volunteer of the church are also expected to report the allegation of abuse to the DCC.

### 2. Reporting Sexual Abuse of a Youth or Vulnerable Adult

- a. Legally, youth and adults over 16 years of age must make their own report of abuse to police or social authorities.
- b. Pastorally, the Diocese of Saskatoon desires to know about and respond to any alleged sexual abuse of an employee or volunteer ministering on behalf of the diocese.
- c. If an employee or volunteer receives a disclosure of the sexual abuse of a youth or vulnerable adult, he or she will report it to the DCC and must communicate this requirement to the youth or vulnerable adult as early in the disclosure as possible, to respect the possibility that the youth or vulnerable adult does not want to report to the DCC.
- d. If an employee or volunteer is suspicious or becomes aware of the sexual abuse of a youth or vulnerable adult, he or she will report it promptly to the DCC.
- e. If the person reporting sexual abuse is unable or unwilling to contact the DCC, they should contact the Bishop's designate to the DCC or a member of the DAC.

## E. Investigations of Sexual Abuse

The diocese will follow all obligations to report as outlined in the *Child and Family Services Act* of the Province of Saskatchewan. Diocesan investigations do not begin or continue if or when a legal investigation is underway. Ecclesiastical process will proceed, regardless of the outcome of the civil investigation.

When an allegation of abuse is reported to the DCC, and provided there is no legal investigation, a diocesan investigation will begin promptly. At least two people (in addition to the victim, accused or others) are to be in the room at all times during investigation interviews. The following steps will be followed:

1. The DCC will conduct a preliminary investigation within 2-3 business days and prepare a written report of the allegation. If the situation involves the breaking of civic laws, the DCC will call on the diocesan lawyer and inform the victim of any rights to report to secular authorities, such as the police and/or social services. During the preliminary investigation, the DCC will assist the (alleged) victim to:
  - a. Withdraw from a situation of further abuse,
  - b. Provide for a support group for the victim and/or family, and offer such support if it is appropriate and desired.
  - c. Seek support through Catholic Family Services or another professional social agency, and/or
  - d. Find any required professionals, including police, psychiatrists, psychologists or lawyers.
2. The DCC will submit the report to the Bishop, the Chair of the DAC, and two assigned investigators. There will be a minimum of two investigators. (Under most circumstances, they will be the judicial vicar, or in his absence the vicar general, and the human resources consultant, or their designates.)
3. The DCC will ensure that there will be no contact between the (alleged) victim and the accused during the course of the investigation.
4. The investigation process begins within 24 hours after the DCC's report. The investigators will meet with the person making the report and the accused separately. In some cases an additional investigator may be named in order to respond to a potential conflict of interest or to provide/accommodate gender balance.
5. The investigators will report to the Bishop and the chair of the DAC that the process has begun. Ideally, this should occur before interviews are conducted. After listening to the allegation, the investigators will offer the services of counselling and other support to the individual(s).
6. The investigators will meet with the person or persons making the allegation, with the accused person and with any other person as may seem appropriate.
7. The team of investigators will investigate whether there may be substance to the allegation, and will report the results of the investigation to the DAC as soon as possible. Where the DAC determines that the allegation is without substance, the chair will report this to the Bishop, and the concerned person/s will be so advised.
8. The DCC, in consultation with the Bishop and DAC, will be responsible to report allegations or claims to the insurance company at the appropriate time.

9. The investigators will present their findings to the DAC in a timely fashion. It is preferred that all investigators be present to facilitate discussion with the DAC. The DAC will provide recommendations to the Bishop in writing. The Judicial Vicar and /or DAC chair (or their designate) will be responsible to communicate the report to the Bishop verbally in addition to the written submission.
10. If any member of the DAC for any reason, including conflict of interest, feels unable to act, they will advise the Committee immediately and not take part in any investigation or recommendations.
11. The DCC and the DAC chair shall keep a written record of the investigation from the time the matter is referred to them until a final report is written. These records shall be stored permanently within the diocesan secure files.
12. The DCC and the assigned investigators shall meet with members of the Diocesan Advisory Committee from time to time to provide updates as to the progress of the investigation, action taken along the way and be informed of the final outcome. The DAC will provide input and advice throughout this time.
13. After the report of sexual abuse is received, the DAC may recommend to the Bishop one or more actions listed below:
  - a) After being advised of the allegation, the accused person be given an immediate leave of absence and suspension pending the completion of any legal actions,
  - b) In the case of a cleric or religious, an appropriate residence be assigned pending the outcome of the investigation or legal action,
  - c) Where authority is exercised under the above two subsections, pending the outcome of the investigation or legal action, the accused person whether cleric or religious, not be returned to the ministry or employment where he or she was assigned,
  - d) In the case of a cleric, the faculty to preach be removed, and the faculty for priests to hear confessions also be removed. Clerics or religious may choose to resign from a particular ministry or retire from active ministry,
  - e) The DCC or investigators instruct the accused person to have no further contact, direct or indirect, with a named individual,
  - f) The accused person seek counselling, legal advice and canonical council, where applicable,
  - g) Counselling and pastoral services be made available to the victim, parents, siblings, and/or spouse, and
  - h) Other recommendations are considered and recommended as deemed appropriate by the DAC.
14. Once the investigation into the abuse is concluded, the DCC will meet with the DAC. Together this team will provide recommendations to the Bishop as to an appropriate response to outcome of the investigation.
15. The Diocese of Saskatoon and the DAC will not use geographical boundaries to limit our commitment to care for the safety and protection of vulnerable persons. Both canon law and other ecclesiastical norms mandate restrictions and penalties placed on a cleric guilty of sexual abuse of a child, youth or vulnerable adult. Such restrictions and penalties are imposed by the local bishop or other Church authorities primarily to ensure that a guilty cleric is not enabled to continue abusive behaviour by transferring to another Church jurisdiction.

## F. Additional Information

1. In the case of sexual abuse allegations, a written record will be kept of all steps taken from the moment the allegation is first received. The record may be required to prove that the rights of the accused person were fully respected in the event they have recourse to the Holy See against the action of the bishop or of the persons involved. Care is to be taken to protect the confidentiality of such documentation. All parts of the investigation will be done in consultation with the diocesan lawyer in preparation and contemplation of litigation.
2. At no time will the Bishop, his delegate or any priest involved in an investigation hear the sacramental confession of an accused person.
3. Only the Media Relations Spokesperson will make any public statements during and after reporting and investigations.
4. The DCC, the investigators or the DAC may at any time make use of such consultants as may be considered necessary, including medical doctors, psychologists, mental health professionals, social workers, canonists, and the diocesan lawyer.
5. Employees and volunteers carrying out any aspect of this protocol will cooperate with legal authorities and investigations, mindful of the inviolability of the sacramental seal (see Canons 983-984).
6. At the conclusion of an investigation, feedback will be provided to the reporting individual and to the (alleged) victim.
7. It is important that the DCC, the investigators and the DAC act quickly and thoroughly to protect the interests of all parties involved in the investigation. Steps are to be taken to resolve the reported problem and prevent a repetition of the sexual abuse.

## G. Sharing Allegations of Either Serious Misconduct or Abuse

1. Informing Partners
  - a. Allegations of serious misconduct and/or abuse (including and not limited to sexual, physical, financial, emotional abuse) made to the Diocesan Coordinator of Care will be shared with our partner institutions such as schools, hospitals, prisons, care homes or any other venue where the individual against whom the allegations are aimed is engaged in active volunteer or remunerated ministry.
  - b. The information will be shared only with the institution's most senior person who shall be expected to disclose this information exclusively on a need to know basis.
  - c. Once the investigation is completed, the Diocesan Coordinator of Care will communicate a brief summary of the conclusion to the partner institutions via the same senior responsible person.

## 4. CONCLUSION

When Jesus came among us, he came as an infant, vulnerable yet of infinite value. In his teaching, he gives special prominence to children, telling his disciples that whoever welcomes a child in his name welcomes him personally (Mt. 18:5). His direct identification with children, as with those who are hungry or thirsty, sick or imprisoned or without clothing (Mt. 25:31-46), leaves us with an imperative to provide care, protection and nurturing for all who are vulnerable and in need.

The privilege of being called on in life's most vulnerable moments is one of the greatest gifts of being Church. Together, we are invited to be God's presence of love, mercy and compassionate healing. If we want to welcome God among us, we will do so in significant part by welcoming each and every one of God's people. Jesus saves one of his most serious warnings for those who mislead or harm the "little ones" (Mt. 18:6).

The *Covenant of Care & Sexual Abuse and Misconduct Protocol* asks much of us. But let us be clear: we take up this responsibility and corresponding preventative and reporting requirements not only because of incidents of abuse in our Church, but primarily because the protection and care of those most in need is at the heart of the Gospel we proclaim and in the heart of the God who gives us life. May the legacy of the Diocese of Saskatoon be transparent faithfulness to the heart of Jesus, that all of God's people might find love, mercy and tender care in the arms of the Church.

## **5. APPENDICES**

Appendix A – **Criminal Occurrence Security Check Volunteer Letter**

Appendix B – **Volunteer Screening Form**

Appendix C – **Covenant of Care Form**

Appendix D – **Volunteer Driving Form**

Appendix E – **Parental Consent Form**

Appendix F – **Covenant of Care Reference Sheet**



**ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF SASKATOON**  
**CATHOLIC PASTORAL CENTRE**

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Phone: 306.242.1500  
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Toll Free: 877.611.5005

**CRIMINAL OCCURRENCE  
SECURITY CHECK  
Volunteer Letter**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

To Whom it May Concern:

This letter is to advise local police that \_\_\_\_\_ has volunteered to provide ministry with children, youth and/or vulnerable adults within or on behalf of the Diocese of Saskatoon.

The Diocesan of Saskatoon requires *Criminal Occurrence Security Checks* for all volunteers working in high-risk positions, and we are grateful to police services who provide this service to volunteers at no cost.

Our *Covenant of Care & Sexual Abuse and Misconduct Protocol* follows the requirements of Bill C 7:

*“If your company or organization is responsible for the well-being of one or more children or vulnerable persons and if the position is a position of authority or trust relative to those children or vulnerable person and to whom or to which an application is made for a paid or volunteer position, you should know that new legislation allows for a search to be made to determine if the applicant has received a pardon for a sexual offence. Consent is necessary.”*

We require both a Vulnerable Sector Screen and a search in the Pardoned Sexual Offenders Database.

If you have any questions about this volunteer, please contact \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_.  
If you require further information about the screening processes of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon, please contact the Diocesan Coordinator of Care at 306.242.1500.

Thank you for your assistance.



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ATTEN: 100

**VOLUNTEER SCREENING FORM**

<b>Full Name of Applicant:</b>			
<b>Contact Information</b>	Street Address	City/Province	Postal Code
	Daytime	Evening	Cell
	Email Address		

<b>Current Parish/Organization:</b>			
<b>Ministry/Program:</b>			
<b>Position Title(s):</b>			
<b>Previous Related Experience</b>	Title		
	Employment/Volunteer Organization	Position	From-To (month/year)
	Title		
	Employment/Volunteer Organization	Position	From-To (month/year)

<b>References</b>		
<p>Please provide the names of three people who can speak to your suitability for this ministry.</p> <p>References should be informed that they might be contacted prior to receiving a phone call.</p>	Name of Reference	
	Relationship	Phone
	Name of Reference	
	Relationship	Phone
	Name of Reference	
	Relationship	Phone

<b>In Case of Emergency</b>			
<b>Contact Information</b>	Full Name		Relationship
	Daytime	Evening	Cell

<b>OFFICE USE ONLY</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Covenant of Care Form Received	<input type="checkbox"/> Police Record Check Received & Sent to Diocese	<input type="checkbox"/> Reference(s) Called
	<input type="checkbox"/> Screening Discussion Complete	<input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer Driver Application & Authorization Received OR <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Approved for Ministry OR <input type="checkbox"/> Not Suitable at This Time: _____		
	Name of Supervisor	Signature	Date



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**COVENANT OF CARE FORM**

Full Name:	
Parish/Organization:	
Ministry/Role:	

In signing below, I confirm that:

- I have read the *Covenant of Care* of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon and understand what the *Covenant of Care* asks of me and have been given an opportunity to ask any questions that I may have,
- I agree to abide by the *Covenant of Care* in my ministry, both in my actions and in promoting adherence among those with whom I minister, and
- I am aware of the *Sexual Abuse and Misconduct Protocol* that outlines the processes of reporting and investigating misconduct and sexual abuse. I agree to abide by this protocol in the event that I breach the *Covenant of Care* myself, or become aware of a violation of the *Covenant of Care* in the context of ministry within or on behalf of the Diocese of Saskatoon.

Further, I understand that an allegation of abuse will result in my immediate suspension from ministry, pending an investigation, and that violations of the *Covenant of Care* may result in being permanently released from ministry or program responsibilities.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee or Volunteer Name (Printed)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Employee or Volunteer

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date (day/month/year)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Supervisor/Volunteer Leader

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Supervisor/Volunteer Leader

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date (day/month/year)



In addition to the other forms, volunteers who drive vulnerable persons in the context of a ministerial relationship must complete this form. Drivers must be 18 years of age or over and hold a valid Class 5 driver license with Graduated Driver License notice removed.

<b>Full Name of Driver:</b>			Email Address
Contact Information	Street Address		City/Province
	Postal Code		
Driver's License Information	Daytime	Evening	Cell
	License No.	Province of Issue	Expiry Date: Day/Month/Year

<b>Vehicle</b>	Make	Model	License Plate No.	Seating Capacity incl. Driver
<b>Vehicle Insurance</b>	Company		Policy No.	
<b>Name of Owner:</b>	(If different from Driver)		Email Address	
Contact Information	Street Address		City/Province	Postal Code
	Daytime	Evening	Cell	
Signature of Owner (If Other than Volunteer Driver)				

**Insurance Information**

- The Diocese requires that the vehicle owner maintain, at all times, valid automobile Third Party Liability Insurance of a minimum of \$2,000,000 in respect of liability for injury or death of any passengers in the vehicle the volunteer is operating. In addition the vehicle owner will have a standard Endorsement Form 44 which provides additional coverage in the event the third party does not have insurance or is under insured.
- In the case of an insurance claim (i.e. third party damage and/or personal injury) the vehicle owner's automobile liability insurance applies before that of the Diocese.
- Additional automobile liability insurance protection is provided under the Diocese's comprehensive general liability insurance policy for authorized drivers transporting parishioners, clients and Diocese/parish employees on approved activity. This insurance is **only for an amount in excess of the limit of liability provided by the vehicle owner's liability insurance policy.**
- Damage to any vehicle, including the owner's, is the responsibility of the volunteer driver and not the diocese/parish.

**Commitments**

By submitting this application to become a volunteer driver:

- I undertake to ensure that the vehicle used to transport passengers is in safe operating condition.
- I agree to:
  - Operate the automobile referred to herein in safe manner.
  - Abide by all applicable laws at all times while I am transporting passengers in the line of my volunteer duties.
  - Limit the number of passengers to the number of useable seatbelts (or required child seats).
  - Require proper use of occupant restraint systems (seatbelts, head restraints, airbags, seat position).
  - Comply with the directions of the director, pastor or leader of the diocesan office, parish, camp or organization.
  - Have another adult accompany me when driving a child, youth or other vulnerable person.
- I undertake to report to the director, pastor or leader all accidents and any suspension of my license or change in my insurance status which may occur after the date of this authorization while it remains in force.
- I undertake to maintain, at all times, appropriate personal liability and indemnity insurance.
- I am in good physical condition and mental state to make good driving decisions.
- I am not currently taking any medications that would affect my judgment and, if prescribed any medications that may affect my judgement or my ability to drive safely I will not drive until I am no longer taking the medications.

I certify that all the information on this application is truthful and completely accurate. I agree to notify the Diocesan office, parish, camp or organization within 14 days of any changes in any of the above information. I understand that false statements on this application will constitute grounds for immediate dismissal from my volunteer driver position.

By signing, I agree to abide by safety procedures as established by the Diocese/Parish and abide by all laws.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Volunteer Driver

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date (Day/Month/Year)



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**PARENTAL CONSENT FORM**  
 (Page 1 of 2)

Any off-site or overnight events with children or youth require a parental consent form. This form is to be accompanied by

- a copy of the **Covenant of Care Reference Sheet** (Appendix F) for the information of the parent(s), and
- written communication outlining the details of the event, including the planned activities, duration, location, method of transportation, sleeping arrangements, participants, supervision, and contact information for the leader(s) at all times during the event.

Filled out, this form is confidential, and will be used only by event leaders.

<b>Full Name of Child/Youth:</b>			
Contact Information	Street Address	City/Province	Postal Code
	Phone Number(s)		
Medical Information (Please append additional pages if needed.)	Health #	Family Doctor	Phone
	Allergies		
	Illnesses		
	Medications		
	Dietary Restrictions		
<b>Full Name(s) of Parent(s)/Guardian(s):</b>			
Contact Information Parent/Guardian 1 (if different from above)	Street Address	City/Province	Postal Code
	Email	Home Phone	Cell/Work
Contact Information Parent/Guardian 2 (if different from above)	Street Address	City/Province	Postal Code
	Email	Home Phone	Cell/Work
<b>In the event that I/we are unavailable, I/we designate the following alternate contact(s) to speak for me/us:</b>			
<b>Full Name(s):</b>			
Contact Information	Street Address	City/Province	Postal Code
	Email	Home Phone	Cell/Work
Relationship to Child:			

The Diocese of Saskatoon requires all employees and volunteers to abide by the enclosed *Covenant of Care*. We acknowledge and affirm that the parents are the primary educators of their children and encourage parents to educate their children according to their age and maturity about the *Covenant of Care* that their leaders will be following.

(Please complete page 2...)

**PARENTAL CONSENT FORM**

(Page 2 of 2)

<b>Parish/Organization</b>	
<b>Event/Activity</b>	

I/we grant permission for \_\_\_\_\_(name) to participate in the above event/activity and take responsibility for arranging for transportation to and from the event/activity.

In signing below, I/we hereby acknowledge that sufficient information has been provided by the event coordinators with respect to the planned activities, duration, location, method of transportation, sleeping arrangements, participants and supervision. I understand that I am welcome to attend or drop in at any time during the event/activity.

I/we understand that parents/guardians of all children and youth are responsible for transportation to and from events, unless shared transportation details have been provided. Youth with licenses will drive themselves/others only with my/our approval. No employee or volunteer working within or on behalf of the Diocese of Saskatoon will ever ask or give consent for a youth with a driver's license to drive another child or youth.

I/we have provided the following medications and give consent for them to be dispensed at the request/need of my/our child: \_\_\_\_\_

In the event that I/we are unavailable, I/we do hereby give consent for all emergency medical care (including surgery, if deemed necessary and recommended by at least two attending physicians) prescribed by a duly licensed physician for my child in the event of injury or illness during the above-named event/activity. This emergency medical care may be given under whatever conditions are deemed necessary, so as to preserve and protect life, limb, health and well-being of my child.

I/we assume all risks and hazards incidental to or attendant with my child's participation in the above-named event/activity, and in each phase of it.

---

Name of Parent/Guardian (Printed)	Signature of Parent/Guardian	Date (day/month/year)
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If a second signature is required by a joint-custody or other legal agreement, please fill out below:

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Name of Parent/Guardian (Printed)	Signature of Parent/Guardian	Date (day/month/year)
-----------------------------------	------------------------------	-----------------------



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**COVENANT OF CARE**  
**REFERENCE SHEET**  
(Page 1 of 2)

*The Diocese of Saskatoon is responsible to provide a safe, respectful and secure environment for ministry. The Covenant of Care is the code of conduct for all employees and volunteers, including clergy, religious and lay people. In providing ministry, employees and volunteers are placed in situations where they may have access to highly sensitive and confidential information. The specialized nature of Church work in many cases can place providers and recipients of pastoral services in a vulnerable situation; individuals are dependent upon the honesty and integrity of all employees and volunteers associated with the Church. This calls for responsibility and places the burden of adhering to the Covenant of Care on each employee and volunteer.*

1. Employees and volunteers assume full responsibility for establishing and maintaining clear, appropriate boundaries in all ministerial situations, especially those involving children, youth and vulnerable adults. Employees and volunteers are expected to provide ministry that is free of verbal and physical abuse, grooming or exploitative behaviours.
2. All physical contact between employees or volunteers and children, youth or vulnerable adults must be appropriate to the ministerial relationship and absent of inappropriate, exploitative, harassing and/or abusive sexual contact.
3. Employees and volunteers who learn of information indicating clear and imminent danger to a child, youth or vulnerable adult must act to protect the safety, health and well-being of the vulnerable parties by disclosing necessary information and communicating such disclosures to their immediate superior and/or other appropriate person(s), including the police, as outlined in the *Sexual Abuse and Misconduct Protocol*.
4. At least two adults are to be present for all recreational activities, catechetical programs and pastoral care outreach. Situations where a minister is alone with a vulnerable person are particularly sensitive and conducive to abuse or allegations of abuse; every effort should be made to prevent both. When one to one meetings are necessary, they must take place in rooms and locations that are open to public view. For example, windows in doors should never be covered, and two adults (in addition to the person receiving communion) will be present when bringing communion to those at home.
5. Employees and volunteers shall not engage in corporal punishment of children, youth or vulnerable adults in their care. Discipline problems will be handled in coordination with the immediate supervisor and the parents/care providers.
6. Employees and volunteers will not dispense medications without written consent from a parent or legal guardian.
7. Employees and volunteers will never be alone with a child, youth or vulnerable adult in a residence, sleeping facility, locker room, rest room, dressing facility, or other closed room or area that is inappropriate to a ministerial relationship. Overnight trips, special events, and care due to illness, disability or emergency require the utmost attention and planning of leadership. Any off-site or overnight events with children or youth require a **Parental Consent Form** (Appendix E).
8. No diocesan employee or volunteer is permitted to be alone in his or her living quarters or motor vehicle with a child, youth or vulnerable adult whose relationship has been established through a ministerial relationship.
9. No employee or volunteer is permitted to take personal trips or vacations with a child, youth or vulnerable adult whose relationship has been established through a ministerial relationship.
10. All employees and volunteers working with vulnerable persons will sign that they have read and will adhere to this *Covenant of Care* and will follow diocesan guidelines concerning requisite screening processes, criminal record checks and ongoing education.

Within ministerial relationships, the Diocese of Saskatoon will not tolerate physical, verbal or sexual harassment or abuse among its employees and volunteers. In a spirit of common mission, all who work together on behalf of Christ's church must be alert to even the beginnings of abuse or misconduct and work to prevent and eliminate both. Investigations which result in the confirmation of allegations of misconduct or abuse will result in disciplinary measures against the perpetrator of abuse or harassment which may include suspension, dismissal and/or the reporting of the incident to secular authorities.

Violations of the *Covenant of Care* are dealt with according to the *Sexual Abuse and Misconduct Protocol* of the Diocese of Saskatoon.

## Reporting and Handling Misconduct

(Excerpt of Section 3C of the *Sexual Abuse and Misconduct Protocol*)

## COVENANT OF CARE REFERENCE SHEET (Page 2 of 2)

Recognizing the good will of the vast majority of employees and volunteers, the Diocese of Saskatoon strives first to prevent abuse through education, and secondly through naming and eliminating misconduct. Wherever possible, misconduct is to be addressed at the local level. Any time that misconduct involves a Pastor or Parish Life Director, the Parish Coordinator of Care (PCC) will carry out the Pastor or Parish Life Director's role in the protocol, in conversation with the Diocesan Coordinator of Care (DCC). Assistance and support is available at any time from the DCC, and is required in some circumstances, as outlined below.

Any exploitation, harassment or abuse that is sexual in nature is considered serious and will be reported immediately to the DCC, as per section 3D of the *Sexual Abuse and Misconduct Protocol*. The aim of an investigation of misconduct is to stop potentially harmful or abusive behaviours before harm or abuse occurs. When an allegation of misconduct is reported, the Pastor or Parish Life Director will:

1. Contact the person making the report to gather details of the alleged misconduct.
2. Assess whether or not misconduct has occurred.
3. Communicate to the person who made the report as to what action will be taken.
4. Follow up on misconduct according to the protocol below.

Misconduct falls under the following three categories, and the protocol for each immediately follows:

1. **Unintentional misconduct where no harm has been perceived by another person or has actually occurred.**
  - a. The employee or volunteer is to be made aware of their misconduct. They are to have a discussion with their immediate supervisor and/or the pastor about the circumstances of the misconduct and identify an action plan to prevent repeat misconduct.
  - b. If a second misconduct of the same type occurs, the incident is to be recorded in written form, including a preventative action plan, and filed with the signed **Code of Conduct Form** (Appendix C).
  - c. A third misconduct of this type will result in disciplinary action appropriate to the misconduct, which may include removal from the ministry. Action taken on a third misconduct of the same type must be written up by the pastor and submitted to the DCC.
2. **Unintentional misconduct where harm has been perceived by another person and/or where harm has allegedly or actually occurred.**
  - a. The employee or volunteer is to be made aware of their misconduct. They are to have a discussion with their immediate supervisor and/or the pastor about the circumstances of the misconduct and identify an action plan to prevent repeat misconduct.
  - b. Provided that the misconduct does not pose present or future risk to vulnerable persons, warranting the end of employment or volunteer ministry, the incident is to be recorded in written form, including a preventative action plan, and filed with the employee or volunteer's completed **Covenant of Care Form** (Appendix C).
  - c. If the misconduct and/or the harm it caused jeopardizes the employee or volunteer's suitability for ministry, ministry may be terminated. The DCC and/or Diocesan Human Resources Consultant must be called upon in such circumstances.
3. **Intentional and/or illegal misconduct.**
  - a. Intentional misconduct on the part of an employee or volunteer is a violation of the individual's agreement to abide by the *Covenant of Care*. Regardless of whether or not harm is perceived or actual, intentional misconduct is to be reported to and dealt with in collaboration with the DCC.
  - b. Illegal activity or allegations of illegal activity on the part of an employee or volunteer in the context of a ministerial relationship must be reported to the DCC. Reporting and investigation will follow the protocol outlined in sections 3D and 3E of this protocol.

In every category of misconduct, repeat misconduct is to be considered an adequate reason for questioning an employee or volunteer's suitability for ministry. In some cases, it may be necessary to suspend or modify the services or duties of the accused until such time as the Pastor/Parish Life Director and/or Diocesan Coordinator of Care is assured of compliance with the *Covenant of Care*. In cases where there is not a willingness to comply with the expectations outlined within the *Covenant of Care*, the individual(s) may be asked to resign from their position or their employment/volunteer ministry may be terminated.