



Safer Church, Stronger Communities

SAFEGUARDING ACTION PLAN

Our Commitments

NOTE: July 2021 updates are highlighted in yellow

OUTREACH & HEALING

1. We commit to a safe, respectful and compassionate intake process for victims to come forward.
2. We commit to listening to those who identify as victims of sexual abuse by others in the church, acting on their allegations with empathy and integrity and providing support through trustworthy and competent caregivers.
3. We commit to responding to abuse and the need for honesty and healing – including through prayer and liturgical opportunities.
4. We commit to cooperation in prosecuting those committing crimes of sexual abuse, while also committing to a strategy of treatment for perpetrators.
5. We commit to open and ongoing communication on safeguarding initiatives, including regular updates on our action plan.
6. We commit to a series of parish and/or deanery roundtable conversations regarding expanded safeguarding in the diocese.

PROCESS OF REPORTING AND ADDRESSING ALLEGATIONS OF SERIOUS MISCONDUCT AND SEXUAL ABUSE

7. We commit to an intake process that is clear, straight-forward and confidential.
 - a) *Intake Officers are available and contact information is listed at rcdos.ca/report-abuse. Male and female Intake Officers will always be available as contact options. We commit to an immediate response to allegations within 48 hours. We will work to implement a 24-hour hotline for those who wish to remain anonymous when reporting serious misconduct or sexual abuse.*
 - b) *we commit to report all allegations to police immediately in cases of alleged child sexual abuse.*
 - c) *To especially support those who come forward presenting allegations of abuse or seeking advice and support, we commit to reviewing and altering our existing intake and investigation processes to become more complainant-focused, simplified, and accessible.*
8. We have undertaken a review process of all historical files currently underway, led by a committee of qualified people who are independent of the bishop's office and the diocesan curia. The committee's historical case review included all clergy, past and present, including those who have died.
9. We commit to ongoing support and resources for the independent Victim Support Coordinator who has been appointed to provide healing support and guidance for those who identify as victims of sexual abuse.
10. We commit to rigorous record keeping and documenting allegations of any and all serious or sexual misconduct in the files of clergy members/ church employees and church volunteers.
11. We commit to establishing a clear process to address any reports of serious misconduct, including sexual abuse, by clergy and church employees — that addresses:
 - making the complaint or report
 - the evaluation
 - the conclusion and action or response
12. We commit to publicly identifying the names of clergy and church employees who have been found guilty of sexual abuse or other serious misconduct in a court of law or through the diocese's own safeguarding investigative process, subject to privacy laws and/or publication bans or privacy agreements. We commit to careful consultation with victims or representatives of victims prior to the public identification of names.
13. We commit to a victim-first approach when investigating and acting on allegations of serious or sexual misconduct, ensuring that no further trauma is caused to victims/survivors in the process.

"It is my goal to hold the bar very high in assuring that all our churches are safe and respectful communities, and that they are free from the evil of sexual abuse by clergy or anyone else in the church."

Most Reverend Mark A. Hagemoen,
Bishop of Saskatoon



"We are parishioners and people from every walk of life, strongly committed to making our churches safe for all and responding to those with allegations of sexual abuse with urgency, empathy, compassion and understanding."

Brenda FitzGerald,
Safeguarding Committee Chair



Safeguarding Committee as of July 2021: Brenda FitzGerald (Chair), Clint Berscheid, Fr. Gerard Dewan, Sarah O’Gorman, William Preston, Derwyn R., and Penny Volk.

POLICIES & TRAINING IN THE DIOCESE

14. We commit that our Policies and Protocols will:

- a) reflect the guidelines in the Canadian Catholic Conference of Bishops 2018 updated document *Protecting Minors from Sexual Abuse*
- b) undergo audits by an external auditor (at four-year intervals).

15. We commit that all clergy, church employees, and volunteers who interact with children and vulnerable adults will:

- a) receive regular and up-to-date training regarding safe-guarding and all features of our Covenant of Care safeguarding policies
- b) receive training that addresses what to watch for in terms of inappropriate behaviour
- c) review and sign a Code of Conduct
- d) be given clear direction about the obligation to report all serious misconduct (as defined in the diocesan policy found at rcdos.ca/safer-church), taking into account both civil and ecclesial (church) obligations

e) receive training regarding how to support victims, including crisis and trauma training for clergy and diocesan employees who work with youth/ vulnerable adults

f) identify individual clergy and laity as designated persons trained in trauma support and accompaniment. **We will make these resources available online at rcdos.ca as they become available.**

16. We commit to supporting a designated Parish Coordinator of Care for every parish, to serve as a liaison and contact person at the local level for issues related to safeguarding.

17. We commit to coordinating our efforts, and sharing our working practices, with major Catholic organizations in Canada, including:

- a) **The Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Saskatchewan**
- b) *the Assembly of Western Catholic Bishops*
- c) **the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops**

EXPANDING SAFEGUARDING CULTURE

18. We commit to the concept of an inter-diocesan body that oversees the development of norms and protocols for safe environment/ safeguarding and monitors compliance.

19. We commit to sharing with diocesan bishop and/or religious superiors all information in our files regarding clergy who have been convicted of sexual misconduct, or otherwise found guilty through the diocese’s own investigative processes.

20. We will continue to advocate for a culture of respect and safety – especially for young and vulnerable persons. We will seek to form innovative partnerships with schools, lay ministries, and other agencies to respond to the problems of exploitation and violence against human persons by providing tailored and ongoing education and awareness on:

- a) *parenting in a digital age*
- b) *children’s Internet and technology safety*
- c) **pornography exposure and addictions**
- d) **the dangers of clericalism**
- e) *moving from exploitation to a culture of respect and safety*