



COVENANT OF CARE

November 2020

UPDATED APPENDIX A – September 2023

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1. PURPOSE

The purpose of the Covenant of Care is to establish 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;

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.

- those who minister, including clergy, employees and church volunteers.

2. SCOPE

The scope of the *Covenant of Care* applies to all employees and volunteers, including clergy, religious and lay people.

Bishop: The Bishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon will ensure the *Covenant of Care & Serious Misconduct Protocol* are implemented and adhered to across the diocese. The Bishop will appoint the Serious Misconduct Investigator (SMI). He will ensure that the name and contact information of the SMI is made public.

Diocesan Coordinator of Care (DCC): The DCC oversees all training, reporting and investigation procedures for the *Covenant of Care & Allegations of Serious 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.

Diocesan Safeguarding Committee (DSC): The Diocesan Safeguarding Committee is appointed by the Bishop and will consist of at least five members. The DSC should 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 DSC will meet annually with the Bishop and assess the *Covenant of Care & Allegations of Serious Misconduct Protocol* and its implementation.

The DSC may be consulted by the Bishop regarding options and/or further actions that may be taken after the completion of an investigation. Such 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 an investigation.

Intake Officer (IO) – The IO is one of several persons named to receive allegations and/or complaints about serious misconduct (including sexual abuse) by any member of the church: (clergy, religious, employee, volunteer).

Pastors: Pastors, and where relevant with the Parish Life Directors, will ensure that the *Covenant of Care* 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 name of the PCC should be made public. The PCC may also assist in the implementation and maintenance of the *Covenant of Care & Allegations of Serious Misconduct Protocol*.

Serious Misconduct Investigator (SMI): The SMI oversees all reporting and investigation procedures for the *Covenant of Care & Allegations of Serious Misconduct Protocol*. When the SMI is away from the office, the Bishop will designate an alternate to fill the role. The SMI:

- Provides assistance with implementation, maintenance, reporting and investigations,
- Ensures the compilation of investigations and findings, and where relevant, prepares a report with findings and recommendations.

Victim Support Coordinator (VSC): One of several persons named to provide support and assistance to persons who bring forward allegations of serious misconduct, including sexual abuse.

3. 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.

Together the *Covenant of Care & Allegations of Serious Misconduct Protocol*, provide authoritative directives for all who minister within and on behalf of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon.

The Roman Catholic 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.

COVENANT OF CARE

The Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon is responsible to provide a safe, respectful and secure environment for ministry. 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, child pornography 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 free of inappropriate, exploitative, harassing and/or sexual contact.
3. Employees and volunteers who learn of information indicating clear and imminent danger to a child, youth or vulnerable adult must act immediately 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 *Allegation of Serious 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 may be conducive to misconduct or allegations of serious misconduct; every effort must 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 Roman Catholic 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 potential for abuse or misconduct and work to prevent and eliminate both. Investigations that confirm 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 *Allegations of Serious Misconduct Protocol* of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon.

A. Implementation Procedures for the *Covenant of Care*

1. The Bishop will appoint a **Diocesan Coordinator of Care (DCC)**, who oversees all training and support of the *Covenant of Care* policy.
2. All employees will participate in diocesan training sessions on the *Covenant of Care and Allegations of Serious Misconduct Protocol*.

Drawing from the experience of victims and the growing field of human, psychological, and social services, the Diocese will work to ensure members of the clergy and employees are well informed on the nature and effects of sexual abuse.

The Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon will provide opportunities for holistic, ongoing formation – spiritual, intellectual, human, and pastoral – recognizing increasingly complex needs, and emphasizing the human dimension. Training and formation related to the Protocol will include

sensitizing members of the clergy and employees to the nature of sexual abuse and its effects, and learning how to walk and work with victims.

In compliance with the CCCB document, *Protecting Minors from Sexual Abuse (2018)*, the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon will ensure that training will address matters such as the experience of victims, the impact of abuse on families and communities, detection of abuse, ministry to survivors, and relevant laws (both secular and canon). Efforts will be undertaken in the diocese to foster attitudes and behaviours necessary for inspiring compassion for victims, correcting myths, overcoming stigmas associated with being a victim of sexual abuse, and for long-term safeguarding against sexual abuse.

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 Serious Misconduct Investigator (SMI).
4. Having read the *Covenant of Care and Allegations of Serious 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 in conjunction 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 and Allegations of Serious 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 adults,
- Is supervised directly or indirectly at all times, and
- Does not include handling 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 the forms before they are sent to and securely stored by the Serious Misconduct Investigator (SMI), 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.
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.

4. CONCLUSION

When Jesus came among us, he came as an infant, vulnerable yet of infinite value. In his teaching, Jesus 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 upon 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 and Allegations of Serious Misconduct Protocol* 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 Roman Catholic 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.

6. 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**

**CRIMINAL OCCURRENCE
SECURITY CHECK
Volunteer Letter**

Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon

123 Nelson Road
Saskatoon, SK S7S 1H1
Website: rcdos.ca

Phone: 306.242-1500
Fax: 306.244.6010
Toll free: 877.661.5005



SAMPLE LETTER TO DRAFT REQUEST

FILLABLE PDF VERSION FOUND AT: <https://rcdos.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/APPENDIX-A-Request-for-Vulnerable-Sector-Search-Volunteers-Fillable-Sample.pdf>

(Date)

To: Royal Canadian Mounted Police/Saskatoon Police Service

Request for Vulnerable Sector Check – (Insert Volunteer Name)

This is to confirm that **First Name and Last Name** is being considered for a volunteer position as **a/an insert role** at **Name of Parish** of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon. Specifically, this role involves the following: **insert specific activities or circumstances that involve working with children, teens, the elderly, or other vulnerable persons**. Within the context of Catholic ministry, they will encounter and/or work with a diversity of people, including vulnerable persons.

To volunteer across the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon, volunteers performing **insert role in detail** must obtain a clean Criminal Record Check and Vulnerable Sector Search.

We kindly request your cooperation in this matter. If you have any questions or require clarification, please contact me, or speak with the Diocesan Safeguarding Coordinator, whose office can be reached at 306-659-5831.

Sincerely,


Name: Signatory's Name

Role: Signatory's Role

Parish: Name of Parish

Email: Signatory's Parish or Diocesan Email

Phone: Parish phone number, with Signatory's extension (if applicable)

 In all things we are *rooted in Christ*,
in His desire to bring God's love to all peoples.

VOLUNTEER SCREENING FORM

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

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

References		
<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

In Case of Emergency			
Contact Information	Full Name		Relationship
	Daytime	Evening	Cell

OFFICE USE ONLY	<input type="checkbox"/> Covenant of Care Form Received	<input type="checkbox"/> Police Record Check Received & Sent to Diocese	<input type="checkbox"/> Reference(s) Called
<p>If assistance is required with volunteer screening, please contact the Diocesan Coordinator of Care at 306.262.1500.</p>	<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

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 *Allegations of Serious 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 an allegation is raised about myself, or I become aware of a violation of the *Covenant of Care* in the context of ministry within or on behalf of the Roman Catholic 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)

VOLUNTEER DRIVING FORM

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.

Full Name of Driver:			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

Vehicle	Make	Model	License Plate No.	Seating Capacity incl. Driver
Vehicle Insurance	Company		Policy No.	Expiry Date
Name of Owner:	(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)

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 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.

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

The Roman Catholic 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...)**

Parish/Organization	
Event/Activity	

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 Roman Catholic 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:

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