

The Archdiocese of Keewatin-Le Pas Policy for Protection of Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults

This policy is our Church's response to the need to protect those most vulnerable in our church and our society. In our society and indeed in the church itself, sad experience has shown the need for vigilance and awareness to provide safe space and practices, so all may feel and be at peace in a safe environment.

This policy strives in a pro-active way to promote protection for:

- ❖ Children, youth, and vulnerable adults.
- ❖ The ministries provided and those who minister: clergy, employees, and church volunteers.

The Archdiocese of Keewatin-Le Pas expects those who minister in the name of the church or under church auspices will exhibit a profound respect for all. First respecting the law of the Gospel, the Archdiocese also respects and abides by the laws of our civil society.

The Archdiocese of Keewatin-Le Pas wishes to provide a safe, secure, and respectful environment for all persons partaking in church activities. Trusting in the good will of all, this policy applies to all employees and volunteers involved with children, youth, and vulnerable adults. It is the responsibility of the pastors, the Allegations of Misconduct Committee and the Chancellor, Fr. Shantha Gandamalla MSFS, of the Archdiocese of Keewatin-Le Pas to inform all of these employees and volunteers of this policy, who then must ensure that this policy is put into effect in their particular ministries or services. The goal is the prevention of abuse and the elimination of potentially compromising circumstances in order to protect children, youth and vulnerable adults.

Definitions

Vulnerable Persons

A vulnerable person is anyone of any age or gender who may easily be exploited by another. This would include children, youth, and some adults. These people are at a disadvantage as they may be unable to fully protect themselves due to age, disability, or personal circumstances (such as emotional distress due to crisis or trauma).

They may have personal handicaps and could be:

- ❖ Cognitively challenged
- ❖ Emotionally susceptible
- ❖ Physically challenged

Others may be socially isolated, and

- ❖ Desperately in need, socially or materially
- ❖ Lack the ability to communicate adequately because of speech or hearing difficulties
- ❖ Have an inability to understand, speak and read the language in use
- ❖ Living in fear, real or perceived
- ❖ In fear or awe of certain roles or authority figures

While not an exhaustive description, a vulnerable person is one who has difficulty protecting him or herself from harm either temporarily or permanently.

Sexual Harassment / Harassment

Sexual harassment is any unwanted or inappropriate sexual conduct or language with others. This conduct may entail unwelcome sexual advances, request for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual

nature. Harassment may be interpreted as the behavior the victim perceives as offensive.

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.

The Archdiocese of Keewatin-Le Pas will not tolerate sexual harassment. Employees, volunteers, and parishioners should feel secure and respected at all church activities. In a spirit of common mission, all involved in the church must be alert to even the beginnings of harassment and eliminate it.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse is comprised of contact or interaction between a child and an adult when the child is being used as an object for the sexual gratification of the adult. A child is abused whether or not this activity involves explicit force, whether or not it involves genital or physical contact, whether or not it is initiated by the child, and whether or not there is a discernible harmful outcome. Sexual abuse can also be with adults. In the context of this policy, the Archdiocese of Keewatin-Le Pas would apply the term equally when the victim is any vulnerable person.

Grooming

The vulnerable may be particularly susceptible to a process referred to as grooming.

Grooming includes a wide variety of behaviors designed to establish a special bond of trust and affectionate understanding between the groomer and the person who is the object of his or her attention. Examples of this may be spending large amounts of time with a particular person, affording special privileges, or providing gifts, trips and other expressions of special attention. Grooming behavior can also lead the person to feel indebted to the groomer for these kindnesses. Once this bond of trust and indebtedness is established, the stage may be set for sexual advances.

Because the pattern of a groomer is made up of observable behaviors, these behaviors need to be challenged or reported. Grooming, whether intentional or not, is by its very nature seductive behavior. As well as being a signal of possible abusive behavior, grooming is in itself inappropriate. Everyone must be alert to signs of grooming in all church related activities involving the vulnerable.

Code of Conduct for Those Who Minister to All Vulnerable Persons

1. All volunteers and church employees eighteen years and older involved with vulnerable persons must read and agree to abide by all Archdiocese of Keewatin-Le Pas Safe Environment policies and protocols. A signed Acknowledgement Form (Appendix #1) must be completed to show they have read, understood, and agree to abide by these policies.

The Archdiocese of Keewatin-Le Pas Safe Environment policies include:

- a) This document, **The Archdiocese of Keewatin-Le Pas Policy for the Protection of Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults** which includes **The Archdiocesan Response to a Complaint of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Volunteers or Employees**
- b) **The Archdiocese of Keewatin-Le Pas Protocol on the Prevention of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Members of the Clergy & The Pastoral Response to Abuse Complaints.**

A copy of this signed Acknowledgement Form must be submitted to the Diocesan Office. All volunteers and church employees eighteen years and older involved with vulnerable persons (children, youth, vulnerable

adults) are obligated to have a Criminal Record Search with Vulnerable Sector. This record checks are to be submitted to the Diocesan Office and kept in a confidential file in the parish office. Registry checks are valid for five years.

2. All new volunteers and new employees eighteen years and older involved with vulnerable persons (children, youth, or vulnerable adults) must fill out an application form and submit the name and contact information for a minimum of two references. A minimum of two reference checks must be completed prior to employees or volunteers beginning their employment or ministry work. Copies of this documentation must be kept in a confidential file in the parish office. A Reference Check template and Application Form template can be found in the Appendix section (#2 & #3).
3. Two adults, unrelated to each other, should be present when involved with all vulnerable persons (children, youth or vulnerable adults). In instances where two unrelated adults are not present, doors to classrooms and meeting rooms must remain open or a window providing clear visibility into the room is required.
4. Appropriate child, youth, vulnerable adult–adult physical boundaries are to be respected at all times. Physical contact between adults and children, youth or vulnerable adults must occur in public. Any sexual attention towards a child, youth or vulnerable adult is strictly forbidden (this can include jokes or comments).
5. Qualified adults must be present and monitor the leadership techniques used by junior catechists and youth leaders to ensure that Archdiocese of Keewatin-Le Pas policies are followed. A qualified adult is defined as a person who has been approved to work with children, youth and vulnerable adults by heads of the Archdiocesan office and pastor.
6. Each parish or Archdiocesan office must provide adequate adult supervision at all church sponsored youth activities. These activities could be as diverse as
 - ❖ Catechetical,
 - ❖ recreational,
 - ❖ devotional or
 - ❖ service projects.
7. There are to be no off-site activities with a child or group of children without the express permission of the parent, guardian, and the appropriate pastor. A minimum of two adults, unrelated to each other, must be present at all off-site activities.
8. During overnight events, no child is permitted to sleep in the same room as a teen or adult, other than with his or her own parent or guardian. However, adults and minors may share a large sleeping space (for example: a dormitory, classroom, or gym) if at least two qualified adults, not related to each other, are present at all times.
9. If help with toileting is required, permission must be given by the parent or guardian before toileting or changing help is given. Two adults, unrelated to each other, must be present if help with toileting is required.
10. Discipline of children and youth will be done constructively reflecting Christian values. Ridicule, shame, corporal punishment, and abusive language are prohibited.
11. Hazing and harassment are prohibited in any church activity.
12. At all church sponsored events every effort must be taken to respect the privacy of children, youth and adults.

13. Scrupulous attention should be given to the confidentiality of personal information given by or about persons being ministered to.
14. As employees and volunteers are generally not qualified to counsel, counselling relationships are discouraged. Referral to professional assistance is recommended and should be done with the consultation of the pastor and Chancellor. Employees and volunteers should not delay in making referrals to suitable professionals as required.
15. All concerns regarding people not following this code of conduct must be reported to the priest and the Diocesan Office immediately. Where appropriate, the priest and Diocesan Office will involve the Allegations of Misconduct Committee.

The Archdiocesan Response to a Complaint of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Volunteers or Employees

Response to Abuse

Any individual receiving a disclosure regarding abuse of a minor by an employee or volunteer of the Archdiocese of Keewatin-Le Pas, or any individual witnessing the abuse of a minor by an employee or volunteer of the Archdiocese of Keewatin-Le Pas must immediately inform the Chancellor of the Archdiocese of Keewatin-Le Pas, Fr. Shantha Gandamalla MSFS of the Archdiocese of Keewatin-Le Pas, and file a report with Child and Family Services.

Contacts:

Chancellor of the Archdiocese of Keewatin-Le Pas
Fr. Shantha Gandamalla MSFS at 204-623-6152 extension 3

Allegations of Misconduct Committee Chair-Person
Dave Mancini at 204-682-7073

Executive Assistant of the Archdiocese of Keewatin-Le Pas
Nicole Helstrom at 204-623-6152 extension 1

The Archdiocesan Response to a Complaint of Abuse

All allegations of abuse of minors by employees or volunteers will be dealt with utilizing the **Archdiocese of Keewatin-Le Pas Protocol on the Prevention of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Members of the Clergy & The Pastoral Response to Abuse Complaints** as a reference. The following principles will be recognized:

1. In the case of an allegation of abuse involving a person who is presently a minor, the Archdiocese will, according to the laws of Manitoba and/or Saskatchewan, immediately report the allegation to civil authorities. The report will include the name of the complainant and the name of the alleged offender. The complainant will be informed of this procedure and will be reminded of their obligation to report to civil authorities.
2. In cases where allegations have been reported to the proper civil authorities, such as police and child protection agencies, the Archdiocese will cooperate with the civil authorities in their investigation.
3. When an allegation of abuse of a minor by an employee has been received, the employee will be suspended pending the completion of the investigation. In the case of volunteers, the volunteer will be removed from situations where the problems could continue, pending the completion of any investigation.

4. The Archdiocese will respond and take immediate action if it receives an allegation of sexual abuse of a minor even if the abuse occurred long ago and the alleged victim is no longer a minor.
5. All complaints will be handled in confidence. The Archdiocese of Keewatin-Le Pas will not disclose the identity of any parties involved, or the circumstances of the complaint, except where necessary for the purpose of investigation or corrective action, where required by law, or for the protection of individuals. Similarly, employees and volunteers interviewed as part of an investigation under this policy must treat all information in a confidential manner.

Safe Environments Roles and Responsibilities

1. The office of the Archdiocese of Keewatin-Le Pas' Chancellor is responsible for providing support for ongoing education and assuring compliance of the Archdiocese of Keewatin-Le Pas' Safe Environment policies.
2. All new volunteers and new employees who work with children, youth or the vulnerable must fill out an application form and submit the name and contact information for a minimum of two references. The pastor is responsible for assuring that a minimum of two reference checks have been completed prior to new employees or volunteers beginning their employment or ministry work. Documentation of the completed reference checks and the completed application form must be maintained in a confidential file in the parish office.
3. It is the responsibility of all new employees and volunteers 18 years of age and over who work with children, youth or the vulnerable to obtain and submit a current Criminal Record with Vulnerable Sector Search. A person with current completed checks (within the last year) may use these forms for the purpose of employment or for volunteer positions. These checks are valid for five years.

All existing employees and volunteers, who are not in possession of a Criminal Record Search with Vulnerable Sector are responsible to obtain and submit these checks to the Diocesan Office.

The pastor is to assure that the originals of these documents are received and kept in a confidential file in the parish office. A copy of these checks should also be sent to the Diocesan Office.

4. The Chancellor is to provide orientation and information on the Archdiocese of Keewatin-Le Pas' Safe Environment policies to all employees and volunteers who work with children, youth and the vulnerable. Refresher sessions are to be provided at a minimum of every two years. All employees and volunteers must sign the acknowledgement that they have read and understood these policies and must agree to abide by them. A copy of the signed acknowledgement is to be kept in a confidential file in the parish office.
5. It is the responsibility of the office of the Archdiocese of Keewatin-Le Pas to conduct an annual compliance review of the Safe Environment policies. It is the responsibility of the pastor at each parish to provide all requested documentation as part of this review.
6. In all instances where there is any concern regarding a potential claim, it is the responsibility of the Chancellor, through the office of the CFO of the Archdiocese of Keewatin-Le Pas, to notify the appropriate insurance carriers.

Acknowledgement

I, _____ have reviewed:

- 1) The Archdiocese of Keewatin-Le Pas Policy for the Protection of Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults, which includes The Archdiocesan Response to a Complaint of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Volunteers or Employees.
- 2) The Archdiocese of Keewatin-Le Pas Protocol Protecting Minors from Sexual Abuse and the Pastoral Response to Abuse Complaints.

I have read and understood the above and I agree to abide by them.

Signature _____ Date _____

New Employee/Volunteer Reference Form

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| Name of Applicant | |
| Name of Reference | |

As part of our ongoing commitment to Safe Environments at our parish, we ask our volunteers and employees to provide references. This is done to ensure the safety of the children, youth, vulnerable adults, volunteers and employees in our parish. The information gathered from this process stays in a confidential file in our parish and is not shared with any outside organizations or institutions.

The *applicant* is interested in working/volunteering at *this parish* in the role of _____ and has been asked to provide the name and contact information of references. This person has given us your name and contact information. Are you willing to participate in this process? _____

| | |
|--|--|
| What is your relationship to this person? | |
| How long have you known this person? | |
| How would you describe their suitability for the role previously stated? | |
| How would you describe the candidate's personality and temperament? | |
| What would you identify as this person's strengths? | |
| What, if anything, would you suggest may be areas for improvement? | |
| How well does this person work as part of a team? | |
| Would you recommend this person for this role in our parish? Please explain: | |

On a scale of **1-very little** to **4-very much**; how much does this person exhibit these traits? (*Circle one*)

| | | | | |
|--------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| Dependable | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Trustworthy | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Honest | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Deals well with stress | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Good team player | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Role model for others | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Emotional stability | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Dedicated | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Respects confidentiality | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Respects children/youth | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Respects the elderly | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Respects disabilities | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

Reference check completed by:

Name: _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____

Parish reference checks must be reviewed by the parish priest. Diocesan reference checks must be reviewed by the Diocesan Office. Review completed by:

Name: _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____

If you require more space, please use the back side of this form.

New Employee/Volunteer Application Form

(Please print)

| | | | |
|----------------|--|------------|--|
| First Name | | Last Name | |
| Street Address | | City | |
| Postal Code | | Email | |
| Home Phone | | Work Phone | |

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| Position Applying for | |
|-----------------------|--|

| | |
|---|--|
| How long have you been a member of this parish? | |
| How did you become aware of this position? | |

If you require more space, please use the back side of this form.

| Please list your most recent volunteer or work positions with other organizations | | | |
|---|------------|------|--------|
| Organization Name | Role/Title | Date | Duties |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

Please ensure a copy of your resume is attached to this application form.

| Please provide two references that can describe your suitability for this position: | |
|---|--|
| Reference Name | |
| Address | |
| Phone Number(s) | |
| Relationship to applicant | |
| | |
| Reference Name | |
| Address | |
| Phone Number(s) | |
| Relationship to applicant | |

I certify that the information provided on this form is true and complete. I understand that this information will remain confidential and is the property of the Parish and that the above information will be given to the appropriate parish contact.

Consent: I, _____ authorize the priest or Diocesan Office (or their delegate) to contact the above mentioned references.

Signature: _____ Date: _____