

ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF NELSON

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A SAFE AND RESPECTFUL CHURCH ENVIRONMENT

PART I: THE DIOCESAN POLICY FOR PROTECTION OF CHILDREN, YOUTH AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

INTRODUCTION:

1. This policy is our Diocesan Church's response to the need to protect those most vulnerable in our church and 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 in order that all, especially the most vulnerable, may feel and be at peace in a safe environment.
2. 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, religious, staff and church volunteers
3. The Diocese of Nelson expects those who minister in the name of the church or under church auspices will exhibit a profound respect for all. While first respecting the law of the Gospel, this Diocese also respects and abides by the laws of our civil society. Misconduct is a sin, a scandal and in some cases can be criminal.
4. While trusting in the good will of all, this policy shall apply to all persons involved in service to children, youth and other vulnerable persons. It will be the responsibility of the pastors, parish and school administrators and heads of diocesan offices and services to inform all employees and volunteers of this policy. They are to ensure that this policy is put into effect in their particular ministries or services. Its goal is the prevention of actual abuse or falling into compromising circumstances and false accusations.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

5. Sexual Harassment is any unwanted or inappropriate sexual conduct or language with others. This conduct entails unwelcome sexual advances, request for sexual favors, or 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, or when it interferes with an individual's performance or when it creates intimidation, and a hostile or offensive environment. Harassment may even be interpreted as the behaviour the **victim** perceives as offensive.

6. Harassment is contrary to basic respect due to all persons. In this case the victims may be employees or others who feel obliged to respond to the advances and 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.

7. The Diocese of Nelson will not tolerate sexual harassment in the workplace, among its employees, volunteers or parishioners. People should feel secure and respected at all church activities. In a spirit of common mission all who work together in the church must be alert to even the beginnings of harassment, and eliminate it.

SEXUAL ABUSE

8. Sexual abuse is comprised of contacts or interactions between a child and an adolescent or adult when the child is being used as an object of sexual gratification for the adolescent or adult. Abuse can be physical or verbal. 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 instituted by the child, and whether or not there is discernible harmful outcome. In the context of this policy, we would apply the term equally when the victim is any vulnerable person.

9. The Diocese of Nelson has zero tolerance for sexual abuse by anyone involved in church activities, whether employed or volunteer.

VULNERABLE PERSONS

10. A “vulnerable person” is anyone of any age who might easily be exploited by another. This would include children, youth and some adults. These people are at a disadvantage and are unable to fully protect themselves. This vulnerability may be caused by anything that limits mature judgment and free activity. Vulnerable persons may be of any age or gender. They may have personal handicaps and could be:

- Mentally 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
- Inability to understand, speak and read the language of the area
- Living in fear, real or imagined
- 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/herself from harm temporarily or permanently, and is at risk because of age, disability, handicap or circumstances such as emotional distress due to extreme crisis or trauma.

GROOMING

11. Vulnerable persons may be particularly susceptible to what is called “Grooming”. Grooming includes a wide variety of behaviors, such as spending large amounts of time with a particular person, affording special privileges or providing gifts, trips and other expressions of special attention. These behaviours are often designed to establish a special bond of trust and affectionate understanding between the groomer and the person who is the object of his/her 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 or financial exploitation.

12. Because the pattern of a groomer is made up of observable behaviours, these behaviours need to be challenged and documented. Grooming, whether unintentional or not, is by its very nature seductive behaviour. As well as being a signal of possible future sexual activity or other abusive behaviours, grooming is in itself inappropriate. Everyone should be alert to signs of grooming, either among church personnel or others in caring for the vulnerable.

HIGH RISK LEVEL CRITERIA

13. Participant

- a child under 19 years of age
- a physically/mentally/emotionally vulnerable person
- non-able-bodied senior

14. Setting

- isolated place (including tents, cabins, private homes, etc.)
- a room without any windows
- motor vehicle
- one-on-one setting

15. Activity

- visits in a home, nursing home, hospital
- overnight activity
- directly handles money and/or funds
- has control over parish property (including being entrusted with a key to parish buildings)
- has access to highly confidential information (person/medical/financial)

16. Supervision

- little or no supervision
- no documentation of meetings/events

HIGH RISK MINISTRIES

17.

- altar server coordinator
- bereavement team member
- catechumenal catechist of children's initiation
- children's liturgy of the Word teacher/volunteer
- custodian/maintenance person
- extraordinary minister of Communion to homes/institutions
- lay pastoral visitor
- religious education coordinator/catechist/volunteer
- volunteer driver
- youth ministers

HIRING AND SCREENING PROCEDURES FOR STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

18.

- All volunteer and staff applicants are required to complete a written application form which includes a release of liability to conduct reference checks.
- All staff and volunteer applicants are required to produce physical evidence of a clean police background check.
- All staff and volunteer applicants must be interviewed by a senior staff member.
- All staff and volunteer must undergo formal training on child protection.
- Permanent records must be kept which include: application forms, declarations, references, criminal record checks and protection training.

POLICY FOR ALL WHO ARE IN HIGH RISK MINISTRIES OR WHO MINISTER TO VULNERABLE PERSONS

19. All Vulnerable Persons

1. All volunteers and church employees nineteen years and older involved with vulnerable persons (children, youth, vulnerable adults) are obliged to have a criminal record check and submit this to the pastor, parish or school administrator or head of the appropriate diocesan office. A copy of this is to be kept in the parish or diocesan office. All criminal record checks must be renewed every five years.
2. All staff and volunteers are to be informed of the diocesan policy and receive adequate information and orientation of this policy as it applies to them and their particular circumstances.
3. Only roadworthy passenger vehicles may be used for church related transportation, in compliance with all civil laws, and having the minimum diocesan required liability insurance.
4. In the event of **any concern** of misconduct or abuse the diocesan protocol applies, which may include obligation to report to appropriate civil authority. In cases of doubt, the concern should be referred to the pastor, parish or school administrator or department head **immediately**.
5. Volunteers under 19 years of age must be supervised.

20. Vulnerable Adults

1. Scrupulous attention should be given to the confidentiality of personal information given by or about persons being ministered to.
2. Church staff and volunteers are not to act as financial advisors or to take on responsibility for power of attorney for a person they care for. Also, church staff and volunteers are not to be involved in the drawing of a will nor serve as a witness for a will.
3. All gifts or benefits (eg. loans) given by someone to whom a priest, employee or volunteer is ministering, in excess of \$250.00, must be reported in writing to the Bishop of Nelson Diocese.
4. Recognizing limits to their own competencies, staff and volunteers should not delay in making referrals to proper suitable professionals as required for spiritual, financial or health issues.

21. Children and Youth

1. Each parish or diocesan office must ensure that adults engaged in work with children or youth have met current diocesan training/orientation standards.
2. Adult leadership is essential for safe and effective ministry. “Qualified adult” is defined as a person who has been approved to work with children and youth by heads of a diocesan office, pastors or parish life directors. Junior catechists and youth peer leaders must receive appropriate formation and mentoring. Qualified adults must monitor and guide the leadership techniques used by junior catechists and youth peer leaders to ensure that diocesan policies are followed.
3. Each parish or diocesan office must provide adequate adult supervision at all church sponsored child or youth activities. Two adults must be present when supervising children, and the doors to rooms are left open if one of those adults has to leave the room temporarily. These activities could be as diverse as: catechetical, recreational, devotional or service projects.
4. Alcoholic beverages and illegal drugs are strictly prohibited at all youth/child events or activities.
5. Appropriate child-adult physical boundaries are to be respected at all times. Flirtatious behaviour is strictly forbidden.
6. There are to be no “off site” activities with a child or group of children without the explicit permission of the parent, guardian and the appropriate minister.
7. Since catechists and youth ministers are generally not qualified to counsel person, ongoing counseling relationships are to be discouraged. In serious matter, referral to professional assistance is recommended. This should be done with consultation with the pastor, parish life director or supervisor.
8. Hazing or harassment is prohibited in any church activity.
9. In all church sponsored events every effort must be taken to respect the privacy of children, youth and adults.
10. During overnight events no child is permitted to sleep in the same room as a teen or adult, other than with his/her own parent or guardian. Adults and minors may share a large sleeping space (i.e.: a dormitory, classroom or gym) if at least two qualified adults are present.
11. Discipline of children and youth will be done constructively reflecting Christian values. Ridicule, shame, corporal punishment and abusive language are prohibited.

DISCLOSURE PAPERS FOR ALL PRIESTS DOING ANY MINISTRY IN THE DIOCESE

22. All priests who are doing any ministry within the Diocese, whether long term, short term or for a single event, must complete the application form and the follow-up disclosure forms must be completed and approved prior to permission being granted. This does not apply to priests who are traveling within the Diocese and whose only function will be to concelebrate Mass with the Pastor.

Allegations of Abuse or Misconduct

23. In any case of suspected abuse of a child or of a child at risk the Diocesan protocol is to be followed. It is an obligation to report to the appropriate authority any child at risk. A full explanation is given in the [Diocesan Protocol and Policy for Dealing With Allegations of Sexual Abuse](#).

Conclusion

24. The Roman Catholic Diocese of Nelson wishes to provide a safe, secure and respectful environment for all persons partaking in church activities. It is with this expectation that all providing service whether they be clergy, religious, laity, employees or volunteers are expected to adhere to this policy.

SUMMARY OF CODE OF CONDUCT

For ministers and volunteers in contact with young children, adolescents and vulnerable adults.

1. The preparation of children for the celebration of the sacraments of first reconciliation, first communion and confirmation is to be done in a group format with at least two adults present. One-on-one instruction is to be avoided.
2. The celebration of the sacrament of reconciliation with children is to be done in an open space that allows the penitent and the priest to be in full view of others, or in a traditional confessional.
3. The location of reconciliation rooms is to be in a high traffic area of the church building. Any new construction or renovation of reconciliation rooms is to provide for clear glass openings.
4. Two adults are to be present for all recreational and catechetical programs. No adult shall be alone in a washroom with a child. In case of special needs, agreement shall be made between the parents or guardian and the Diocesan employee or volunteer.
5. One-on-one counseling is to be conducted in a space with clear glass openings.
6. Access to rectories is to be restricted. Any Diocesan employee (any priest, religious sister, brother, deacon, or lay person in a ministry agreement with the Diocese) is not to be alone with a child, an adolescent or a vulnerable adult in his or her living quarters or motor vehicle.
7. A Diocesan employee is not to take a person under 19 years of age on personal trips or vacations.
8. The Diocesan employee will set appropriate boundaries in his or her relationships with others. It is not up to the person coming for help to set the boundaries, but the Diocesan employee must set the appropriate boundaries. Eg. A Diocesan employee is not to be alone with a child in a washroom. Requests for one on one counseling at unusual times or situations are redirected to appropriate times and situations, etc.
9. Expensive gifts are not to be given to or accepted from a child, an adolescent or a vulnerable adult.
10. Signs of affection are to be discrete and culturally appropriate, preferably in view of others. A deacon or priest is not to kiss a parishioner who is not a family member.

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A SAFE AND RESPECTFUL CHURCH ENVIRONMENT

PART II: THE DIOCESAN PROTOCOL AND POLICY FOR DEALING WITH ALLEGATIONS OF SEXUAL ABUSE

INTRODUCTION

1. One of the most painful situations to confront the Church has been the scandal of sexual misconduct by clergy, religious and church personnel. The issue has taken on particular dimensions because of a number of factors: these include a greater awareness on the part of society of the pernicious effects of child abuse, criminal prosecution and civil litigation, and in some instances, the lack of experience on the part of church authorities in handling such cases.
2. In 1990 a policy to deal with sexual abuse by church personnel was approved and a committee was established to deal with the various aspects of the policy. Bishop John Corriveau has requested that the policy be updated to meet today's standards and expectations.
3. These are presented in the spirit of the Lord Jesus who came, not to condemn, but to save. Whether one is a victim of abuse, a person accused of abusing, or a concerned family member or parishioner, abuse, especially of a child, reaps a devastating bounty that requires skilled and caring assistance and the healing touch of the Divine Physician. In a limited way, this policy and protocol express the concern of the Diocese of Nelson for all who have been affected by the evil of sexual abuse.
4. The immediate purposes of the policies and the protocol expressed in these procedures are:
 1. To protect any person at risk and provide a quick response to any allegation of abuse.
 2. To protect the reputation of an accused cleric, religious or lay person employed by the Church and ensure that their rights are not impaired, remembering that innocence is presumed until proven otherwise.
 3. To protect the integrity of the Church in showing that allegations are taken seriously and the Church is taking credible appropriate action to care for both victim and accused.

As a means to help clerics, religious and laity in the Diocese of Nelson the following is presented in order that all may know the expectations of the diocese in this matter as well as the procedures that must and will be followed should any allegation of sexual abuse of a child, youth or vulnerable adult be received.

5. This policy and protocol are intended to deal with all cases of sexual abuse in the diocese. In some respects, they reflect the state of existing law, and in others, they reflect the moral or legal duty of the person who receives the complaint. The policies are in all respects subject to Canon Law of the Catholic Church including the inviolability of the sacramental seal.

6. The first two sections discuss complaints of sexual misconduct against adults and children respectively. The third section outlines some special procedures that must be followed when the complaint is made against a priest or member of a religious order by a child, or an adult for concerns while that person was a child. The fourth section deals with complaints against employees or volunteers in a parish or diocesan ministry.

7. Once these procedures are established, they shall be provided to the priests and employees of the diocese so all are aware of their responsibility for consequences relating to their actions.

1. COMPLAINTS OF SEXUAL ABUSE OF ADULTS

8. The appropriate response in the case of complaints of sexual misconduct against adults will depend on whether the complaint is made by the victim or by a third party.

9. Since an adult victim is able to report the matter to the civil authorities if he or she wishes, there is no legal obligation on the recipient of the information to do so. The person receiving the report may however wish to discuss the option of reporting the matter with the victim, or the party making the complaint. In some cases the person receiving the report will feel morally obliged to report the matter, especially if that seems to be the only way of preventing recurrence.

10. Where the complaint is made by a third party, the person receiving the report can discreetly invite the alleged victim to discuss the matter. The third party should be reminded of their duty to report to the appropriate authorities if a child continues to be at risk. Care must be taken not to make allegations of misconduct unless there is reasonable proof that it actually occurred.

11. In all cases it is open to the person receiving the report of abuse to take the following action:

- a. to assist the victim in withdrawing from a situation that invites further abuse
- b. to refer the victim to a professional social agency
- c. to refer the victim to a professional, such as a psychiatrist, psychologist, lawyer or doctor

II. COMPLAINTS OF SEXUAL ABUSE OF CHILDREN

12. Because children are not in a position to protect themselves from abuse, the law provides special protection for them. Essentially, every person who is aware of abuse of a child has a legal duty to report it to a peace officer or a social worker.
13. Fresh or Recurring Complaints. If it is clear from the information received that the abuse is recent or may reoccur, the duty to report is clear. Mere suspicion or rumor does not raise an obligation to report. However, if an adult receives a direct report of abuse from a child, an initial inquiry must be made presuming the information is true and factual.
14. Adults Abused as Children. When an adult reports that he or she was abused as a child, there is no duty to report the matter since there is no longer a “child in need of protection”. Adult victims can of course report the incident themselves if they choose.
15. Reports by the Offender. In some cases the offender himself or herself will report the child abuse to a person within the Church community. In these cases the duty to report the matter arises as discussed above, so care must be taken in giving unqualified undertakings of confidentiality to persons who want to discuss undefined “problems”. If no child is in immediate danger, it is permissible to give the offender a chance to turn himself or herself in to the appropriate authorities. The person receiving the information should advise the offender of the recipient’s obligation to report, and should give the offender a reasonable time (usually three business days) to consult a lawyer and report to the authorities. At the expiration of the time given, the person who received the report from the offender must make an independent report to the civil authorities.
16. Ongoing Involvement. Once the instance of child abuse has been reported, the person who received the information will have discharged his or her legal duties.
17. Special Procedures are Required. When the allegation of sexual abuse is made against a priest or religious by a child or while the person was a child, as well as the requirement of the law a report must be made to the Bishop’s delegate, which is the priest who chairs the Abuse Committee, at the earliest possible date.
18. Information Received in the Confessional. The confessional seal is inviolable despite the requirement of the civil and criminal law. The penitent must be encouraged to make disclosure outside the confessional.

19. This procedure is intended to fulfill the requirements of the Canon Law of the Catholic Church, the pastoral responsibilities of the Church, and the obligations of individuals under the laws of the Province of British Columbia, and of Canada. It outlines the manner in which the Bishop will normally exercise his authority and is subject to the Canon Law of the Catholic Church in all respects, including the inviolability of the sacramental seal.
20. The Bishop will appoint a Committee which will be responsible to investigate all complaints and make recommendations to the Bishop or appropriate authority on actions to be taken before and after the completion of the investigation, including the suspension of the priest or religious.
21. The Procedure will be followed in all cases where the office of the Bishop, the delegate or the Advisory Committee receives information which has at least the semblance of truth about an offence alleged to have been committed by a person over whom the Bishop has jurisdiction. In cases involving children, the person receiving the report from the child will presume the child is telling the truth.
22. The Committee will meet with and counsel the parents, child, parishioners and others who have been affected by the allegations, after proper consents, if required, have been obtained, in order to provide the opportunity to receive maximum support and, if necessary, counseling and therapy services.
23. The Bishop shall designate a media relations spokesperson to be used by the Committee. This person would be responsible for all relations with the media and others as follows:
- a. provide information that would protect the rights of the accuser and priest, religious, church employee or volunteer
 - b. ensure that the right to a fair trial is not reduced.
 - c. create a positive approach by providing as much information of a general nature as is possible.
 - d. be available to respond to appropriate request for information.
 - e. respond to the members of the parish involved on all matters of concern.
24. The bishop will provide the name of the delegate to all parishes in order that these policies may be carried out.

III. PROCEDURE TO BE FOLLOWED

25. The recipient of an allegation to which this Procedure applies will immediately refer it to the delegate, or other member of the Committee.

26. If the allegation is made against a religious, the Bishop and the Superior will decide whose procedures will be applied. Either one will be informed of the progress by the one implementing the procedure. While the process continues, the Bishop may suspend the religious from activities within the diocese.

Investigation

27. The delegate will begin a preliminary investigation immediately as a matter of urgent priority. The delegate will inquire carefully about the facts and circumstances of the offence. The delegate may authorize any person on the Committee to conduct the investigation. It is recognized that all investigations will be undertaken in consultation with a lawyer representing the diocese and all reports are prepared in preparation for litigation.

28. If any member of the Committee 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.

29. The delegate or Committee member involved shall keep a written record of the investigation from the time the matter is referred to him/her until a final report is written.

30. The delegate will meet with members of the Committee as may be advisable to keep them informed of all aspects of the investigation in order that the Committee can perform its function of advising and recommending appropriate action.

31. The delegate will determine his/her own procedure but normally will meet with the person or persons making the allegation, with the accused person, and with any other person as may seem appropriate.

32. The delegate will investigate whether there may be substance to the allegation, and will report the results of the investigation to the Committee as soon as practicable. Where the Committee determines that the allegation is without substance, the delegate will report this to the Bishop, and the concerned persons will be so advised.

33. Where a child is involved, the delegate will ensure that reports are made as required in paragraph 17.

34. The delegate and Committee **may**, after a complaint is received **or** in any report to the Bishop, including the final report, recommend:
- a. that 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. that in the case of a cleric or religious, an appropriate residence be assigned pending the completion of any legal actions.
 - c. that where authority is exercised under the above two subsections, pending the favorable outcome of the Procedure 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. that in the case of a cleric, the faculty to preach be removed, and the faculty for the priest to hear Confessions also be removed.
 - e. that the delegate instruct the accused person to have no further contact, direct or indirect, with a named individual.
 - f. that the accused person seek legal advice.
 - g. that counseling and pastoral services be made available to the victim, parents, siblings, or such other persons as subject to the recommendation of the Committee.
 - h. that the convicted person be offered one or more of the following choices:
 - i. to submit the allegation to an Arbitral Tribunal appointed by the Bishop for adjudication.
 - ii. to resign from a particular ministry
 - iii. to retire from active ministry
 - iv. if a cleric, to petition to be returned to the lay state.
35. In addition to all of the above, the Committee may convene a meeting with the delegate to determine whether it is appropriate to recommend to the Bishop that a canonical penal trial be commenced against the accused person, where:
- a. the accused person refuses to co-operate with the delegate in caring out his or her respective responsibilities under the Procedure.
 - b. the accused person refuses to exercise the choice offered under paragraph 34h.
 - c. it is required to commence the canonical trial in order to preserve jurisdiction because of time limitations.
 - d. in the opinion of the Committee there is another sufficient ground.
- In all cases where criminal proceedings are involved, the canonical trial will be delayed until the criminal proceedings have been completed in order to protect the rights of accused persons.
36. After considering the report, if the Bishop feels there is merit to the complaint, he may ask the whole or part of the Committee to meet with the accused person to recommend professional counseling and/or psychological evaluation and assessment.

Where the above action takes place and the evaluation recommends a program of treatment for the accused person, and that person consents, the Committee will:

- a. refer the accused person to a treatment service to begin the program of treatment, where the accused person is a priest
- b. refer the evaluation to the competent superior for action, where the accused person is a religious.

37. The Committee, after all steps have been taken, will report to the Bishop on the outcome of the procedure, including the implementation of the final recommendations of the Committee, to assist the Bishop in determining the matters referred to in c. 1718 (relating to the commencement of canonical procedures). If such procedure is initiated, there will be no further action by the Committee.

38. Any priest or lay person who has admitted to or been found guilty of sexual abuse will not be allowed ministry or employment with the Nelson Diocese.

Protocol

39. 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.

40. At no time will the Bishop, the delegate or any priest involved in the procedure hear the sacramental confession of an accused person.

41. During the investigation great care must be exercised in making public statements about the allegations. Only the Committee spokesperson or its delegate will be allowed to make any public statements, either during or after the report is prepared.

42. The delegate of the Committee 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.

43. Persons carrying out responsibilities under this procedure will, in consultation with the delegate, co-operate with criminal authorities carrying out statutory responsibilities, subject to the inviolability of the sacramental seal.

44. It is extremely important that the delegate and Committee act quickly and thoroughly to protect the interests of all parties involved in the process. They should take steps to resolve the reported problem and prevent a repetition of the misconduct.

IV. COMPLAINT OF SEXUAL ABUSE BY VOLUNTEERS OR EMPLOYEES IN THE DIOCESE

45. In the case of any allegation of sexual abuse by any person employed within the Diocese the following principles must be adhered to:
- a. that if the pastor, parish life director or department head is informed of an allegation in the case of a child, reporting is required.
 - b. that where the pastor, parish life director or department head determines that there is some merit to the accusation, the employee is suspended pending the outcome of the investigation.
 - c. that a person to deal with the questions of the parishioners and media should be appointed for the parish:
 - i. to protect the right of the accused and complainant.
 - ii. to preserve the integrity of the parish.
 - iii. to ensure that the policies of the parish, if they are established, are fully complied with.
 - d. that in the case of volunteers in the parish, the volunteer should be removed from situations where the problems could continue, pending the completion of any investigation that might take place either by the pastor, parish life director or department head.

V. CONCLUDING REMARKS

46. The tragedy of sexual abuse cannot and will not be ignored by the Diocese of Nelson. This policy and protocol attempts to manage incidents of sexual abuse in the fairest and most competent way possible for all parties concerned. Justice and equity will be normative in the application of these policies.
47. It is hoped that public awareness will lessen or ideally remove the incident of sexual abuse. When cases arise, however, each case will be unique and treated as such. Through charity, prayer and with divine guidance, it is also our hope that the people affected by the painful situation of sexual abuse will find healing and peace.

**MINISTRY SUITABILITY FORM FOR
EMPLOYEES, STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS
ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF NELSON**

This form is to be filled out by anyone engaged in paid or volunteer ministry with children, youth or vulnerable adults in the Diocese of Nelson or any of its parishes or agencies. The completed form will be kept on file at the Chancery Office.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Home Phone: _____ **Cell Phone:** _____

Have you ever been **accused** of abuse or inappropriate behaviour with children, youth or vulnerable adults? Yes No

Have you ever been **charged** with abuse or inappropriate behaviour with children, youth or vulnerable adults? Yes No

Please attach a recent criminal records check.

I have been supplied with a copy of the Diocesan Policy for Protection of Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults and of the Diocesan Protocol and Policy for Dealing With Allegations of Sexual Abuse. I have read them, and understand them, and I Agree to abide by them.

Signature

Date