

Sample Bulletin Inserts

Here are a number of sample bulletin inserts; please also use the materials from the Manual and the booklets in deciding what to include in your Parish Bulletins.

The History of the Ontario Screening Initiative and the Archdiocese of Toronto

In 1999 the Government of Ontario initiated a project called the Ontario Screening Initiative. This project is directed at all organizations within the Province, which work in any way with volunteers, in an effort to establish procedures designed to protect, as much as possible, those who are vulnerable among us.

All Church groups within the Province as well as all sports groups and other community organizations have been invited to participate in this new initiative. Along with the Anglican, the United and the Unitarian Churches within the Province, the Ontario Conference of Catholic Bishops has agreed to participate. Thus, in cooperation with the OCCB, and in union with the other Bishops in the Province, Cardinal Ambrozic is mandating this project within the Archdiocese of Toronto.

Our goal at all times is the protection and safety of our vulnerable people, our volunteers, our paid staff, and our Church. This goal will guide our actions as we implement the “Strengthening the Caring Community” initiative in the Archdiocese of Toronto.

What is Screening?

Screening is simply a process designed to create and maintain a safe environment. This process involves identifying any activity of a ministry position, which by virtue of the position could put children, youth or other vulnerable persons at risk of being harmed.

The screening process also ensures the most appropriate match is made between the volunteer and the position. Screening involves assessing the risk level of the ministry position; writing ministry position descriptions, discerning the suitability of an individual for the position; training, supervising and evaluating those involved. This is what any Human Resources Office would call smart risk management.

While screening is a relatively new concept for us to consider in our parishes, it is now an everyday practice for both staff and volunteers in most other organizations.

The Purpose

The Purpose of the Strengthening the Caring Community Programme is to safeguard, in all respects, all of those, but most especially the vulnerable, to whom we minister. To ensure the integrity, safety and reputation of our volunteers. And to ensure, that, as a faith community, we fulfil all our obligations.

Volunteer

A volunteer is a person who; chooses to undertake a ministry position, service or activity; does this ministry activity in service to an individual, or to assist the parish or diocesan community-at-large; is not coerced or compelled to do this activity; does not receive a salary or wage for this service or ministry activity.

Vulnerable Person

One who has difficulty protecting her or himself from harm temporarily or permanently and is at risk because of age, disability, handicap or circumstances such as emotional distress or uncertainty.

Risk Management

Risk Management is a process of assessing potential problems and developing strategies for solutions to minimize the risk. In other words, it involves looking at the possibilities of loss or injury that might arise in programs, activities and services and taking steps to stop, minimize, prevent or eliminate them. Screening is an exercise in risk management. The nature of the ministry and the inherent level of risk involved dictate the degree of screening required. The greater the risk, the greater will be the degree of screening applied. Factors that will help determine the level of risk include: who is the participant, what is the setting, what is the nature of the activity required and what is the level of supervision that existed in the ministry.

The Ten Safe Steps of Screening

Before selecting volunteers

1. Determine the Risk
2. Ministry Position Description
3. Recruitment Process

The selection process

4. Volunteer Information Form
5. Interviews
6. Reference Check
7. Criminal Record Check

Managing the volunteers

8. Orientation and Training
9. Supervision/Evaluation
10. Participant Follow-Up