

Record Keeping

Procedures for creating, securing, and removing parish records

We are a community with which love, justice truth, peace, and self-discipline are nurtured and valued.

The overall aim for the Screening in Faith policy is to ensure that there is a safe environment in every parish, ministry, and activity. This includes children, seniors, any who are physically, emotionally, or spiritually vulnerable, and those who are ministering in our Church.

Screening in Faith is designed to exclude any who are unsuitable or likely to offend. It will make our programs safer.

We must morally, legally, and spiritually do all that we can to make sure our church, clergy, paid, and lay workers and the participants in our church-sponsored activities are as safe as possible.

In the Diocese of Ottawa, we have in place many policies and procedures to ensure that we are keeping clear records of how, when, and why a person has been screened.

Creating Records

A separate file should be created for each volunteer and this file should contain, at least:

- position description
- application form
- results of and/or records created during interviews
- authorization to contact references
- results of Police Records Check
- letter of appointment
- notes of a supervisor or evaluative nature
- original, signed written consent of a person who has been screened on the occasion of his/her records are copied and forwarded to another parish or ministry
- and any other pertinent information

Storing Records

Any documents created in connection with a screening activity should be stored in a secure manner. This could be a locked filing cabinet in a locked room. Access to the files should be limited to the parish corporation or, in the case of a larger parish, the corporation and screening team.

Under no circumstances should files be left out in the open, stored on the corner of a desk, or placed where “just anyone” could have access to them.

In the case of a Community Ministry or a non-parochial ministry, the records of any volunteer should be regarded as personnel files and treated in the same manner as the files of salaried staff.

Receiving Records

Records may be copied and sent to another parish upon receiving the original signed consent (no fax or email) of the person being screened. The original must be retained in the files of the parish where it was created.

Upon a person's completion of their term in ministry, the screening records should be sealed in an envelope and kept in their file. This will help to maintain the security of the file while it is held in a parish. Such files must be maintained in the parish until after the death of the individual.

If a parish is concerned about their ability to store any files safely, these files may be deposited in the Diocesan Archives.

Diocesan Archives

Upon the dissolution of a parish or ministry, screening-related files should be sealed, labelled appropriately, and safely transmitted to the Diocesan Archives.

Following the death of the individual or after the person has ceased to be active in a non-parochial ministry, records should be sealed and appropriately labelled with the name of the person, parish, and date of transmission, then safely transmitted to the Diocesan Archives,

"Sealed" means that the record has been placed in a closed and sealed envelope prior to transmission. "Safely" means that a sealed file has been hand delivered or sent via registered mail to the Archives.

This policy has been prepared with the help of a coalition of faith partners and reflects a shared commitment among the Anglican, Roman Catholic, Unitarian Universalist and United Churches, and the Pentecostal Assembly. It also reflects that church coalition's cooperation with Volunteers Canada, Scouts Canada, Sports & Recreation Canada, and other caring partners.