

## Screening in Faith (FAQs)

### **Who must be screened?**

- churchwardens, treasurers, envelope secretaries, youth leaders, Sunday School teachers, pastoral care members
- all volunteers working with vulnerable people

For all others, assess each job description, to determine the level of risk.

### **Do we need to screen everyone, even occasional helpers in the nursery?**

Nursery supervisors should be fully screened, while occasional helpers who are never alone with the children require less.

### **Are there special requirements for pastoral care visitors?**

All pastoral care visitors must be carefully trained before engaging in pastoral ministry within the parish or community and receive ongoing supervision from the incumbent or someone delegated by the incumbent. Online training is available from the Pastoral Care Training Course at <https://ottawapastoralcare.com/>

### **Who does the screening?**

The Incumbent and churchwardens are responsible for screening. A parish may choose to set up a screening committee for support and to track progress.

### **Can you ask if someone has a police record?**

No.

### **What about records from other groups such as Scouts?**

Recent Police Record Checks, within six months, are acceptable.

### **How do we screen those who are under 18?**

A detailed job description, references and an interview will help screen youth, even without a Police Records Check.

### **How are types of abuse other than sexual, e.g. abuse of authority, to be checked?**

Do not consider a parishioner for a high-risk ministry until they are well known to the community. Interview for attitude, appropriate and inappropriate behavior, and make sure that the volunteer's training and evaluation are ongoing.

### **What is our responsibility re judgement calls?**

Better to be safe than sorry. If we offer a program, we must fulfil our Duty of Care.

### **What is our Duty of Care?**

This is a legal concept, which identifies the obligation of individuals and organizations to take reasonable measures to care for and protect their participants. Failure to meet the Duty of Care can result in an accusation of negligence.

### **What should we do if there is a 'Safe Church' concern involving something or someone in our parish?**

The appropriate response depends on the seriousness of the situation as well as the particulars of the concern. In most cases it is best to first consult the incumbent and churchwardens so that the situation is dealt with on the parish level. They have the authority to adjust the procedures of the ministry in question as well as discipline and/or remove a person who is creating an unsafe environment.

If necessary, the Executive Archdeacon can be consulted in addition to or instead of the incumbent and churchwardens. They might recommend that a parishioner or employee submit a complaint via the Workplace Violence and Harassment policy. Of course, in some cases the best response is to call the police or the Children's Aid Society.

### **What is the benefit of interviewing volunteers?**

An interview provides the ministry leaders with the opportunity to review important items about the job description and the volunteer's application form. Additionally, it gives the interview team a feeling about how well this person may be suited for a particular job or ministry.

### **Are the churchwardens and clergy liable if there is an offence in a parish?**

Anyone who sues will sue the Diocese or the parish. The Diocese carries insurance for this.

### **How useful is a Police Records Check?**

It is only one tool. It may discourage an inappropriate person from applying for ministry. It is not a substitute for the other steps of screening.

### **How long is a Police Record Check valid?**

The Diocesan standard is that a police check should be renewed every 3 years. If a person is taking on a new, more sensitive, or higher risk ministry, then that person may require a new police check.

### **Can I submit a Nexus card instead of a Police Record Check?**

No, a Nexus card does not meet our standard of screening.

### **How do parishes reduce the risk?**

- have a buddy system (two adults for youth related activities)
- have a third-party present in any situation where there is a chance that safety may be compromised, or a conflict arise
- One on one? Leave doors and blinds open.