

## Section 2: Expectations and Guidelines for Volunteer Ministers

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\*\*Please note that the page numbers in this document correlate to where this section fits in the full and original Called, Gifted & Sent document.

## GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR VOLUNTEERS

The backbone of all our ministries and outreach programs is the many volunteer ministers who by their involvement answer their baptismal call, and who by their dedication and actions, promote the Kingdom of God. It is the responsibility of each faith-community to ensure that volunteers are well equipped to carry out their ministries. The overall goal of *Called, Gifted & Sent* is to enhance the support, training, and formation of our volunteer ministers and to ensure the safety of vulnerable people. In answering our baptismal call, we are sharing our gifts with one another and with the world. It is important that we assure the right gifts are shared in the right way, at the right time, by the right people. We fulfill our mission more effectively when we make every effort to ensure a richer, stronger, more vibrant, and more secure community of faith.

The *Called, Gifted & Sent* program provides a volunteer screening process designed to create and maintain a safe environment within all parishes as well as the offices and departments within the Diocese of London. This process involves identifying any volunteer ministry position, which could put children, youth, or other vulnerable persons at risk of being harmed. A *Safe Environment Policy for the Diocese of London, Revised 2021* is intended to inform clergy, employees, and volunteers about their obligations and serves to ensure that they comply with civil, canonical, diocesan, and other appropriate standards of conduct. *Called, Gifted & Sent* is the procedural program that supports the maintenance of a safe environment in the Diocese of London.

<https://dol.ca/volunteering>

## SAFE ENVIRONMENT POLICY FOR THE DIOCESE OF LONDON (REVISED 2021)

### Planning Responsibilities of Volunteer Ministers

The following is expected of all volunteers:

- Ensure that minors and vulnerable people in your care are appropriately supervised at all times.
- Plan all activities on the basis that more than one adult is always present.
- Ensure that the physical environment is safe and, where minors are involved with adults in a regular activity, physical structures should be reviewed and where necessary changed.
- Dressing areas for minors shall be gender specific and segregated from adult areas.
- Obtain appropriate consent from a parent/guardian.
- At the conclusion of activities, release minors or vulnerable persons only into the care of a parent/guardian or the person with express permission of the parent/guardian.
- Anyone taking a minor or vulnerable person home at the end of an activity must ensure that a parent/guardian has given consent, and that as a general rule, one is not alone with the minor or vulnerable person.
- Keep completed medical forms during activity including an individual management plan.
- Educate minors or vulnerable persons in safe and responsible internet practices; the same principles that apply to relationships and conduct generally apply to online situations.

In addition, all volunteers are required to:

- Attend as scheduled and to be punctual; to absent themselves only for good and sufficient reason, and to notify the necessary person of anticipated absences.
- Perform duties and to discharge responsibilities safely, effectively, and with proper regard for time and material.
- Be courteous and cooperative in their relations with other volunteers and with the parish community.
- Conduct themselves, at all times, in a manner that reflects credit to their parish and/or ministry; to dress appropriately.
- Demonstrate an awareness of, and respect for sexual, cultural and physical differences in their relationships with participants, other volunteers and the whole parish.

## CODE OF CONDUCT AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR VOLUNTEERS (REVISED 2023)

Priests, Deacons, Lay Ecclesial Ministers, Volunteers shall:

- Never be alone with a minor, or vulnerable person unless an open and supervised environment is maintained.
- Conduct in a group format any activity which by their very nature give rise to one-on-one minor/adult encounters (such as the sacraments of Penance, first Communion, and Confirmation).
- Take care not to touch a child in an inappropriate or unnecessary fashion.
- Take care not to form inappropriate relationships; it is the responsibility of the adult to set appropriate boundaries.
- Not invite a child or vulnerable person on personal trips or vacations.
- Not give or show favouritism to any minor or vulnerable person; for instance, through gifts or continually showing greater attention than is given to others.
- Not spend time alone with, or arrange to meet minors or vulnerable persons, outside of parish or diocesan activities.
- Not contact minors or vulnerable persons through social-networking sites or through mobile phones (such as texting).
- Not “friend”, “follow” or “like” a minor or vulnerable person for whom one has a duty of care on social network sites using a personal account; only use parish or diocesan accounts.
- Only initiate contact with minors or vulnerable persons using parish or diocesan social-networking sites and email (not personal accounts) or through mobile phones using software apps that record your interactions.
- Direct a minor or vulnerable person who initiates contact using a personal social-media account, to send further communication to a parish or diocesan account.
- Ensure the presence of another adult in circumstances where it is necessary to provide assistance of a personal nature to a minor or vulnerable person whose development level is such that he or she requires such assistance.
- Implement the following guidelines for overnight sleeping arrangements:
  - Depending on the ages of the children, but always in the case of teenagers or vulnerable adults, males and females should sleep in separate rooms.
  - If supervising adults are to sleep in the same room, more than one adult should always be present.
- Not use offensive language and avoid speaking in a manner that may embarrass or humiliate.
- Restrict access to personal living quarters and/or motor vehicles.

## EXPECTATIONS AND GUIDELINES WHEN WORKING WITH OTHER PEOPLE'S CHILDREN

The following expectations and guidelines are found in *A Safe Environment Policy for the Diocese of London*. It is a good practice to print and distribute this page to your volunteers.

### *Expectations*

- All children and youth who are participating in parish events without their parents must have a completed Parent/Guardian Consent Form and Liability Waiver on file. It is the responsibility of the Ministry Leader to ensure this form is completed.
- Volunteers are not to be alone with a vulnerable person and should always stay in view of others.
- Access to personal motor vehicles should be restricted unless the volunteer has parent/guardian permission and has informed the pastor/ministry leader.
- Volunteers should not spend time alone with, or arrange to meet minors or vulnerable persons, outside of parish or diocesan activities.
- Only initiate contact with minors or vulnerable persons using parish or diocesan social-networking sites and email (not personal accounts) or through mobile phones using software or apps that record your interactions.
- On overnight trips or retreats the following guidelines should be implemented.
  - Depending on the ages of the children, but always in the case of teenagers or vulnerable adults, males and females should sleep in separate rooms
  - If supervising adults must sleep in the same room, more than one adult should always be present.
- First-aid or emotional comfort should be given by someone of the same gender as the youth requiring attention.
- Physical forms of discipline must never be used.
- Provide adequate supervision. Maintain appropriate adult-to-youth ratios for all activities and age. The following ratios must be adhered to:

<b><i>NOTE: The Diocese of London adheres to the two-deep rule, meaning that there must always be at least two adults present when supervising young people to protect both the children and the supervising adults.</i></b>			
Age group	Adult to child ratio	Minimum Adults	Additional Adults
Children aged 3 – 5	1:6	2 for up to 12 children	1 for every additional 1-5 children
Children aged 6 – 8	1:10	2 for up to 20 children	1 for every additional 1-9 children
Children aged 9 – 11	1:15	2 for up to 30 children	1 for every additional 1-14 children
Youth aged 12 – 18	1:20	2 for up to 40 youth	1 for every additional 1-19 youth
Overnight any age*	1:10	2 for up to 20 children	1 for every additional 1-9 children
*In overnight situations please ensure that there are enough adults of each gender to properly supervise.			

Confidentiality needs to be respected except in the following situations when the Ministry Leader should immediately be informed of the situation:

- When a person threatens suicide.
- When a youth aged 16 or under reports physical, sexual, or verbal abuse.
- When someone's life is in danger.
- When someone's physical well-being is threatened.
- When someone exhibits some form of mental illness.
- A situation that is beyond your own experience and expertise.

Please refer to page 28 for instructions on reporting concerns.

### *Best Practices*

1. Don't play favourites. Show a similar and appropriate level of affection for all the young people in your care.
2. Volunteers should not normally help children with toileting. For younger children who cannot manage alone, parent/guardian permission must be given before toileting or changing help is permitted.
3. In some cases, physical contact between adults and participants is appropriate in a retreat setting such as COR. This should always occur in public and be in keeping with the nature of the retreat or activity. Leaders must be conscious of appropriate boundaries when it comes to games with youth and allow children to back away from your well-intentioned affection.
4. Do not permit abusive activities or language from other adults or among the youth. (e.g., initiation ceremonies, ridiculing, bullying).
5. Ministry leaders/volunteers should provide parents/guardians of children enrolled in programs with an outline and the expectations of the program when asked. Clear communication with parents/guardians is always expected.
6. For further information click on the website [dol.ca/volunteering](http://dol.ca/volunteering)

## PUBLIC USE OF A PARISH'S NAME OR THE DIOCESE OF LONDON'S NAME

Volunteers are reminded that without explicit authorization from the pastor/ministry leader or appointed representative, they should refrain from publicly addressing sensitive theological or moral matters on behalf of the parish or the Diocese of London. This includes any actions that could be interpreted as speaking with the authority of the parish or diocese. While volunteers maintain their rights as private individuals to hold personal beliefs, it is crucial that, when representing the ministry, they uphold and convey the official teachings of the Catholic Church. This responsibility applies across all forms of communication, including social media platforms.

## LIABILITY POLICY FOR THE DIOCESE OF LONDON

The Diocese of London has a "liability policy" that covers anyone acting on their behalf. This includes ordained, lay ministers, and volunteers with this proviso: that they are acting "within the scope of their duties" and on behalf of the parish/diocese (this includes planned and or advertised programs or events). If someone were charged, regardless of fault, the Diocese would pay for defence costs by a lawyer chosen by the Diocese of London. Neglect is determined if a lack of care were demonstrated and in such an event the diocesan liability policy would cover damages awarded.

Those things not covered:

An ordained minister, lay minister, or volunteer would not be covered by diocesan liability insurance if the accident occurred when he/she was acting outside of a parish ministry activity or event (e.g., a volunteer who spontaneously decided to take a few kids to the beach one day, and one drowned).

Due diligence practices for ensuring proper care:

- Diocesan approved [Parent/Guardian Consent Form and Liability Waiver](#) should be used for each program or event.
- When possible, have a registered nurse present at events with a lot of physical activity or with large numbers of people attending.
- Arrange CPR, safety, and first-aid training for volunteer ministers.
- Follow the *Called, Gifted & Sent* protocol for selecting individuals who will be working with children/youth/vulnerable adults.
- Ensure that volunteers do not provide service until a proper screening is fully complete.
- Volunteers who are driving need to have a valid driver's license and adequate liability car insurance (\$1,000,000 recommended) and must have a completed volunteer driver form on file.
- There is no substitute for common sense and good judgment.

## HARASSMENT

“Harassment means engaging in a course of vexatious comment or conduct that is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome.” (Ontario Human Rights Code, R.S.O., 1990, Chapter H.19, section 10.)

(1) No volunteer shall be allowed to harass another or any member of the general public by exhibiting behaviour including, but not limited to, the following:

- Verbal Harassment – is any kind of communication (email, texts, social media posts included) that is hostile, offensive or derogatory and is directed at an individual or group. It can include offensive and/or derogatory comments, jokes, insults, name-calling, making rude or threatening remarks, spreading rumors and gossip about someone, yelling or screaming at someone. Verbal harassment often creates an intimidating, hostile work environment.
- Visual Harassment – can take many forms including: staring at someone in a leering or intimidating manner, making obscene or suggestive gestures with hands, body or face, the display of offensive or degrading images such as posters, cartoons, or objects in a workspace.
- Physical Harassment – can include any type of unwanted touching or groping, unwelcome hugs or kisses, spitting or throwing objects at someone, blocking someone’s movement, pushing, pulling on, hitting, kicking of someone and/or making threatening gestures of a physical nature (i.e. shaking a fist in the air at someone) and/or physically intimidating someone.

## Reporting Harassment

The Diocese will promptly investigate any allegation of harassment, and if it is determined that harassment has occurred, appropriate action will be taken. All allegations will be investigated in a confidential and professional manner.

Volunteers who feel they have been subjected to harassment of any kind (including sexual harassment) should:

1. Make their disapproval known to the person whose behaviour is in question.
2. Keep a written record of the date(s), time(s), the unacceptable behaviour(s), any witnesses to the incident(s).
3. Speak to the pastor or ministry leader. If necessary, contact the Human Resources Department of the Diocese of London.
4. The pastor/ministry leader may provide support to the volunteer (if comfortable in doing so) and/or refer the volunteer to the Human Resources Department of the Diocese of London so that an investigation can be made.

The person who has received the initial contact from the volunteer should promptly report the matter confidentially to the Human Resource Department of the Diocese of London.



## Reporting Protocol: Abuse/Inappropriate Conduct

In the case of the discovery of abuse by or against a volunteer or employee, the person who has uncovered this information has the responsibility to report it in the following manner.

In the case of a person who is under 16 years of age:

- Recognizing the laws of the province of Ontario, there is a legal obligation for anyone who has even a suspicion of abuse of a minor who is under the age of 16 to report such directly to the Children's Aid Society. No clergy, nor diocesan employee, nor volunteer can absolve themselves from this duty to report directly to the Children's Aid Society by rationalizing that they have no "first-hand information", that the information is "Hearsay", or that someone else will make the report. The provincial legislation governing the responsibility to report is *Duty to Report Child in Need of Protection – Section 125 Child, Youth, and Family Services Act, 2017*.

The duty to report has been expanded to include the following:

- The expansion of the revised act relates to children who are 16 or 17.
- Reporting is mandatory in relation to children under the age of 16.
- Reporting is not mandatory for children ages 16 and 17, but for those children it is advisable to make a report to the appropriate Children's Aid Society, so that the Society can determine whether or not they should investigate a given situation.
- For Church-related situations, in addition to your legal responsibility, one must report abuse/inappropriate conduct to the pastor and/or ministry leader.
- If the allegation is against a volunteer or a staff member, the pastor will notify that person and remove him or her from the ministry until further notice. The Pastor will then notify the Director of Human Resources for the Diocese of London.
- If the allegation is against a priest, that person will report this to the ministry leader, who in turn will report the allegation to the Bishop's Delegate (see *Safe Environment Policy for the Diocese of London*)
- All allegations should be kept in confidence and reported only to the pastor or ministry leader.

## SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

*“Emails, text messages, social networks and chats can also be fully human forms of communication. It is not technology which determines whether communication is authentic, but rather the human heart and our capacity to use wisely the means at our disposal. [...] Access to digital networks entails a responsibility for our neighbour whom we do not see but who is nonetheless real and has a dignity which must be respected. The internet can be used wisely to build a society which is healthy and open to sharing. [...] This is a gift of God which involves great responsibility.”*

Message of his Holiness Pope Francis for the Fiftieth World Communications Day. January 24, 2016

### 1.0 Policy Statement

Social media platforms developed by the Diocese, its parishes or institutions are available to virtually everyone and must be used in a safe and responsible manner, and in keeping with our Catholic mission to share the Good News, baptize, and teach the people “to observe all the commands I gave you” (Matthew 28: 19 – 20).

The Diocese of London recognizes the internet and digital media as powerful tools to be used in a responsible, respectful and professional manner respecting Gospel values, the teachings of the Church and our commitment to meaningful and ethical interactions. The obligation to maintain a safe environment in social media is the same as in face-to-face communications and interactions with clergy and staff.

### 2.0 Intent of Policy

The intent of this policy is to promote the use of social media for the greater good, while discouraging the hazards that may harm the user, the recipients, or the Diocese. The policy fits within the larger framework of *A Safe Environment Policy for the Diocese of London, 2021*.

### 3.0 Definitions

**Social Media Platform:** any web-based application which facilitates interactive information sharing. Examples of platforms include Facebook, LinkedIn, X (Twitter), YouTube, Pinterest, TikTok and Reddit.

**Social Media Network:** The collection of individuals with whom one has a relationship through a social media platform. Typically, a social media network is entirely driven by content of its members, who are said to be engaged in “social networking.” Individuals are allowed flexibility in privacy settings, in posting text, photos, video, links and other information with other members.

**Administrator:** A person who manages a social network site, monitors it regularly, and can post content, moderate comments before they are published, and delete inappropriate content.

**Diocesan User:** includes anyone who works for or on behalf of the Diocese of London, including but not limited to diocesan staff, parish staff, clergy, and volunteers.

**Code of Conduct and Responsibilities:** The Diocese of London has set this Code of Conduct and Responsibilities to create a safe and secure environment for minors and vulnerable adults participating in ministry activities in the parishes of the Diocese. The Code of Conduct and Responsibilities provides guidelines for planning and for behaviour, with the goal of preventing and managing the risk of harm and abuse to minors and/or vulnerable adults, as well as parish staff and volunteers.

The intent of this policy is to ensure that all use of computers and the Internet (including social media) is consistent within the expectations of the Code of Conduct as found in *A Safe Environment Policy for the Diocese of London, 2021*.

The following expectations for the use of social media are found in Articles 12.1 and 12.2 of the Safe Environment policy.

12.1 (b) Plan all activities on the basis that more than one adult is always present.

12.1(e) Obtain appropriate consent from a parent/guardian (Appendix 3 Sample Parent/Guardian Consent form and Liability Waiver and Parent/Guardian Consent Form and Liability Waiver for Virtual Meetings).

**12.2 Priests, Deacons, Lay Ecclesial Ministers, Volunteers shall:**

12.2(i) Not contact minors or vulnerable persons through social-networking sites or through mobile phones (such as texting).

12.2(j) Not “friend”, “follow” or “like” a minor or vulnerable person for whom one has a duty of care on social networking sites using a personal account. Only use parish or diocesan accounts.

12.2(k) Only initiate contact with minors or vulnerable persons using parish or diocesan social-networking sites and email (not personal accounts) or through mobile phones using software/apps that record interactions.

12.2(l) Direct a minor or vulnerable person who initiates contact using a personal social-media account, to send further communication to a parish or diocesan account.

**Application and Scope:** Protection of the Vulnerable – every correspondence between a minor or vulnerable adult will have a second adult present and/or electronically copied.

Expectation of Good Judgement – The Diocese of London has an expectation of good judgment in the application of this policy. Consider the following.

- Will words or images be received in the way they are intended?
- Will words or images be in keeping with the mission of the Church?
- Can information posted be used or misused by a reporter or blogger without permission?
- Is time being spent on social media that should be spent on personal encounters, ministry or work obligations, or personal needs such as adequate sleep?

## Monitoring and Maintaining Social Accounts

- Every parish or office undertaking a social media profile must take responsibility for regular monitoring.
- Pages or accounts for an office or ministry should be clearly named and operated as such.
- Review online “friend” profiles before approving them and review their comments regularly.
- Set and maintain privacy settings in every social media platform.
- Right to review – The Diocese of London reserves the right to review the organizational, personal, and social networking sites of any personnel.
- Right to revise – The Diocese of London reserves the right to revise this policy at any time and at its sole discretion. A parish or ministry office may choose restrictions or parameters in addition to those described. These restrictions or parameters must not contradict this policy or *A Safe Environment Policy for the Diocese of London, 2021*.
- The website of the Diocese of London is [www.dol.ca](http://www.dol.ca) and no other website may claim to represent the Diocese or its Bishop.
- Every computer or device should be password-protected.

## Expected Outcomes

- Social media is used as a complement to other communications and within an overall communications strategy.
- Use of social media should be deliberate.
- Communication on behalf of the Diocese of London or one of its parishes should take place only after receiving express permission from the Moderator of the Curia, the Bishop’s Office, or the Director of Communications.
- Communication with visitors to any site should always be done through official diocesan email.

## Resources

- Social Media Policy of the Diocese of London, 2014
- Social Media Policy of the Archdiocese of Edmonton
- Bill 15, Helping Volunteers Give Back Act, 2016 (Province of Ontario)
- Duty to Report Child in Need of Protection – Section 125 Child, Youth, and Family Services Act, 2017