

## Archdiocese of Ottawa

# A Culture of Safety

Newsletter from the Diocesan Safe Environment Office (DSEO)

## Message from the Archbishop

### Special points of interest:

- Archbishop's Message
- Safety Equation
- SE Presentation

*"If one member suffers, all suffer together with it."* (1 Cor. 12:26)

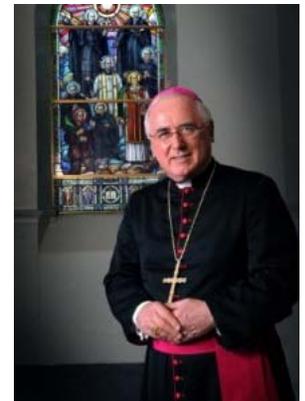
Over the past few months, we have heard and read the distressing news of clerical sexual abuse in the U.S., Canada and other parts of the world. Our hearts ache for those who have suffered and experienced the betrayal of bishops, priests and others in positions of leadership in the Church. We offer prayers for them, their family members, as well as all the faithful and non-believers who are struggling with these revelations.

Pope Francis, in his recent Letter to the People of God wrote: "The pain of the victims and their families is also our pain, and so it is urgent that we once more reaffirm

our commitment to ensure the protection of minors and vulnerable adults."

In December 2017, with the opening of our Diocesan Safe Environment Office (DSEO), our Archdiocese marked a significant milestone in our quest for a safer, just, accountable and transparent Church. The DSEO leads our collective effort to protect all persons in our care, and builds on policies and procedures established more than a decade ago.

The first priorities of the DSEO have been to review and update our codes of conduct and policies, and our procedures for safe screening, supervising, monitoring, reporting and investigating claims,



Archbishop Terrence Prendergast, S. J.

as well as preparing an extensive program of training and education.

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## DSEO GOALS EXPLORED

The DSEO has established five goals to creating a culture of safety:

- 1) Standardize and strengthen policies and processes, and centralize services;
- 2) Promote "Safe Environment" practices, raise awareness and teach prevention skills throughout the Archdiocese;
- 3) Respond to and manage abuse claims responsibly and effectively;
- 4) Create strong working partnerships with internal and external groups, to learn and inform;
- 5) Most importantly – proactively help to protect all members of our community, especially those who are most vulnerable.

In this edition of our newsletter, we will briefly explore goal #1.

See the heading "Policies" for more details.



Creating a Culture of Safety

## Archbishop's message (cont.)

The DSEO, by means of this newsletter published periodically during the year, will provide updates on developments, information on tools and resources, and insights on how we can foster a renewed culture of safety and accountability, together.

We count on your cooperation and support for the DSEO and in implementing our new Safe Environment initiatives for the benefit of the local Catholic Church and the many people we encounter and serve as disciples of Jesus Christ.

I thank my Auxiliary Bishop Christian Riesbeck and Michèle Clermont, our DSEO Administrator, for their leadership in this important endeavour.

Sincerely in Christ,

Terrence Prendergast, S.J.  
Archbishop of Ottawa  
Bishop of Alexandria-Cornwall

*“The pain of the victims and their families is also our pain, and so it is urgent that we once more reaffirm our commitment to ensure the protection of minors and vulnerable adults.” Pope Francis*

## SAFETY EQUATION ® - by Praesidium

Since the founding of the DSEO, we have worked closely with Praesidium, an internationally-acclaimed team of experts that has helped more than 4,000 organizations improve their abuse prevention practices.

Praesidium has identified 8 organizational operations crucial to the prevention and detection of sexual abuse, which is their Safety Equation.

With their assistance, we are re-vamping our safe environment policies and programs, standardizing protocols, centralizing services and implementing best practices in our procedures based on these eight functions of the Praesidium Safety Equation.

In each issue of our newsletter, we will introduce you to a function of this equation. The first function is Policies.



*Policies define the bandwidth of acceptable behavior in an organization*



## POLICIES

Policies define the bandwidth of acceptable behaviour in an organization.

When members of a community can identify policy violations, they are able to better interrupt and report them.

The mere act of interrupting a policy violation can:

- Prevent false allegations
- Put offender on notice that rules apply to all
- Signal violations are not tolerated

Policies define appropriate and inappropriate interactions.

Policies demonstrate the Archdiocese's commitment to responding to inappropriate behaviors and allegations of abuse.

**New policies related to Safe Environment will be coming out soon!**

## Spotlight: Safe Screening—new process for police record checks

This summer, more than 200 clergy and diocesan staff of the Archdiocese of Ottawa completed their Enhanced Police Information Check (E-PIC) -- a comprehensive Canadian criminal product offered through Sterling Talent Solutions. It offers the largest scope of conviction and non-conviction information.

The E-PIC involves a search of adult convictions held within the RCMP National Repository of Criminal Records and a Local

Police check – a search of additional information which may be relevant within both national and local police data sources.

The E-PIC is becoming the new standard of security checks, used by police departments across Canada and the U.S. The Archdiocese has implemented this new procedure as part of its Safe Screening Policy, which is currently being updated.

Our goal is to centralize screening information, update records

more regularly and obtain information at the click of a mouse -- in a safe and confidential way. This new process employs best practices in the area of employment screening and also simplifies the application and record keeping process.

This new system improves on current practices and is also consistent with best practices, and is compliant with recent applicable privacy and human rights guidelines.

There is no need to visit a police station. Completing your E-PIC on-line is straightforward. The online process takes approximately 15 uninterrupted minutes. The results are sent to you by e-mail within 24 hours. The confidential results are only available to you and the Archdiocesan Safe Environment Office.

This new E-PIC program will be extended to parish staff and volunteers soon.

*Training will be provided when we launch this new program with our parishes.*

## Creating a Culture of Safety, where:

- Standards are Clear.
- Standards are Enforced.
- Everyone Knows Safety is Part of their Ministry.
- Everyone Takes Warning Signs Seriously.
- Personnel Report Their Concerns.
- Morale is High.
- Quality is Institutionalized.

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*Everyone knows that safety is part of their ministry*

*Everyone takes warning signs seriously*

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## Up Ahead...

### Thursday, October 11

At the next Pastoral Day, October 11, Bishop Christian Riesbeck and Michèle Clermont will deliver a two-hour presentation on new Safe Environment (SE) programs and upcoming changes related to policies and procedures.

Priests, deacons, secretaries and administrative assistants, high school chaplaincy leaders and especially the parish representatives for safe environment/responsible ministry are encouraged to participate for the full 2-hr presentation.

The day begins with Mass at 9 a.m

The SE Presentation will be from 11 a.m. to noon; and from 1:15 to 2:30 p.m.

RSVP by Oct. 4 for lunch: <https://www.catholicottawa.ca/pastoral-day-lunch-rsvp>

### SE Presentation

Thursday, October 11, 2018

*Parish representatives for safe environment/responsible ministry are encouraged to participate*

RSVP by Oct. 4, 2018



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## SEXUAL ABUSE : The scope of the problem

- ⇒ 1 in 4 Girls
- ⇒ 1 in 6 Boys
- ⇒ 10% of School Children
- ⇒ 300% Increase in Peer-to-Peer Abuse
- ⇒ 50% of Abuse Perpetrated by Youth



### DID YOU KNOW?

Only 20% of abuse cases are reported.

*We believe abuse can be prevented and  
that everyone is responsible for preventing abuse.*

We need to hear from everyone who witnesses abuse or inappropriate conduct.

Reporting is a critical step toward a culture of safety and zero tolerance.

## Reporting Sexual Abuse and Misconduct

We are all responsible for the safety of the persons we serve. Each of us has a legal and ethical obligation to report suspected sexual abuse of any person, especially when it involves a minor, a frail or other vulnerable person. A sexual assault is any unwanted sexual activity, sexual exploitation or voyeurism. It can include touching, kissing, hugging, or molestation.

If faced with such a situation, remember to:

**RESPOND IMMEDIATELY** – for example, interrupt the behaviour if possible/applicable; reassure the alleged victim that the abuse was not his or her fault; protect the alleged victim from intimidation, retribution or further abuse.

Then, **REPORT** the incident:

For claims involving minors (under 18 yrs of age), contact:

#### **Children's Aid Society**

Prescott-Russell: 1-800-675-6168

Ottawa: 613-747-7800

Renfrew County: 613-735-6866

For claims involving other vulnerable persons, contact:

#### **Ottawa Police Services**

613-236-1222 for non-emergency reports

911 for emergencies

When abuse is perpetrated by a member of our clergy, our staff or a parish volunteer, please also contact:  
**Diocesan Safe Environment Office (DSEO)**

Phone: 613-738-5025, ext. 257

E-mail: [safeenvironment@archottawa.ca](mailto:safeenvironment@archottawa.ca)