



## **Screening in Faith – Frequently Asked Questions**

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

- Clergy, parish employees
- Churchwardens, treasurers, envelope secretaries, youth leaders, Sunday School teachers, pastoral care visitors
- 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 children require less.

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

The Churchwardens with the Incumbent are responsible for screening. Wardens may choose to appoint a Screening Coordinator for support 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.

### **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 Canon Pastor 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 Diocesan webpage [reporting an incident](#) . In some instances, the best response is to call the police of 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 interviewer a feeling about how well this person may be suited for a particular job or ministry.

**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 suitable 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 three 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.

**Who will have access to the information generated in a PRC, and how will it be used?**

The PRC will remain the property of the individual. Through XpressChek, the Diocesan Executive Officer (DEO) receives the PRC and forwards a copy to the individual. For PRCs completed through a local police department, a copy will be made and forwarded to the DEO. Copies will also be retained by an appropriate supervisory person in the parish. Confidentiality of all information will be given highest consideration.

**Could I be held personally liable if I become involved in screening and something goes wrong?**

The Diocesan insurance policy provides coverage for "any employees, unpaid officials and church workers doing volunteer work...while acting within the scope of their duties."

**How does this process affect the work of nominating committees and nominations from the floor of vestry?**

It is important that the people being voted into office at congregational vestry meetings be willing and able to meet the requirements of the position, as set out in the job description. When a person is approached about letting their name stand for the office, either by an individual parishioner or by a nomination committee, it is important that they see the job description, so they are fully aware of the entire scope of the position, including the screening requirements. Voting or appointing a person to a specific ministry must be conditional on their ability to meet the screening requirements.

**How do parishes reduce 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.

