

**Implementing the Anglican Communion Safe Church Charter  
In the Anglican Church of Canada**

**A Guide for Review of Policy and Practice**

## *Preface*

General Synod Resolution A-128 committed the General Synod to:

1. Adopt *The Anglican Communion Charter for the Safety of People* and the *Protocol for the Disclosure of Ministry Suitability Information between the Churches of the Anglican Communion*;
2. commend the *Charter* to dioceses and other bodies of The Anglican Church of Canada for use in the revision and creation of policies and training materials for safeguarding and right conduct;
3. direct Council of General Synod to review the policy base of the General Synod in light of the *Charter*, reporting back to the General Synod of 2022 on developments and with revised policies;
4. offer its gratitude to the Anglican Communion Safe Church Commission for its work in creating the *Charter for the Safety of Persons* and its *Protocols*; and
5. direct the Council of General Synod to include discussion of safe church policy and practice in the agenda of each triennium.

This resource is intended to supplement the commendation (clause #2) to dioceses by providing an orientation to the *Charter* from the perspective of the context of the Anglican Church of Canada.

In the Anglican Church of Canada, the jurisdiction and authority for the development of conduct policies belongs to dioceses. The role of the General Synod with respect to this area of work is two-fold: to ensure that its own policy base is in harmony with the *Charter*, and to encourage dioceses in the development of their own policies and practices by promoting helpful resources.

What follows is a presentation of the Anglican Church Safe Church Charter and Guidelines noting areas in which our context differs from that presumed by the Anglican Communion's Safe Church Commission, and offering commentary from existing agreed statements of the General Synod. These comments reference several important historical – yet still very pertinent – documents, including:

- *A Call to Human Dignity: A Statement of Principles for the Anglican Church of Canada on Dignity, Inclusion, and Fair Treatment*. Adopted by Resolution #A130 of the General Synod 2001;
- *We will, with God's Help: A Guide to Codes of Ethics for those authorized to practice ministry in the Anglican Church of Canada*. Adopted by Resolution # A221 of the General Synod 2007;

## ***Introducing the Anglican Communion Safe Church Charter***

*The Charter for the Safety of People within the Churches of the Anglican Communion upholds the following commitments:*

### ***Pastoral support where there is abuse***

*1. We will provide pastoral support for the abused, their families, and affected parishes and church organizations by:*

- 1. (a) listening with patience and compassion to their experiences and concerns;*
- 2. (b) offering spiritual assistance and other forms of pastoral care.*

### ***Effective responses to abuse***

*2. We will have and implement policies and procedures to respond properly to allegations of abuse against clergy and other church personnel that include:*

- 1. (a) making known within churches the procedure for making complaints;*
- 2. (b) arranging pastoral care for any person making a complaint of abuse;*
- 3. (c) the impartial determination of allegations of abuse against clergy and other church personnel, and assessment of their suitability for future ministry;*
- 4. (d) providing support for affected parishes and church organizations.*

### ***Practice of pastoral ministry***

*3. We will adopt and promote by education and training standards for the practice of pastoral ministry by clergy and other church personnel.*

### ***Suitability for ministry***

*4. We will have and implement policies and procedures to assess the suitability of persons for ordination as clergy or appointment to positions of responsibility in the church including checking their background.*

### ***Culture of safety***

*5. We will promote a culture of safety in parishes and church organizations by education and training to help clergy, other church personnel and participants prevent the occurrence of abuse.*

## *Guidelines to the Implementation of the Anglican Communion Safe Church Charter*

### *-developed by the Anglican Communion Safe Church Commission*

In 2019 the Anglican Consultative Council (at ACC-17) recommended these guidelines for implementation by the provinces of the Anglican Communion. They are intended to enhance the safety of all persons, especially *children, young people* and *vulnerable adults*, within the provinces of the Anglican Communion. They are also intended to enhance existing practices for the safety of people in provinces, which are called by different names such as ‘*safe church*’ practices in some provinces and ‘*safeguarding*’ practices in other provinces.

The guidelines provide a practical means for provinces both to prevent the occurrence of *abuse by church workers* and to respond to those who have been abused through the implementation of:

- the *Charter for the Safety of People within the Churches of the Anglican Communion*, and
- the *Protocol for disclosure of ministry suitability information between the churches of the Anglican Communion*.

If the behaviour and practices outlined in the guidelines are followed, churches throughout the Anglican Communion will be places of enhanced safety for everyone, where:

- church workers act with integrity;
- victims of abuse receive justice;
- church workers who commit abuse are held accountable; and
- church leaders do not conceal abuse.

The focus of these guidelines is on ministry in the church. Church workers undertake ministry in the church in a variety of forms including the provision of spiritual advice and support, education, counselling, and assistance in times of need, and in a variety of situations including in a church community. In their ministry relationships church workers must act in the best interests of those to whom they minister rather than meeting their own needs.

### ***Implementation***

Each Province<sup>1</sup> should have a code of conduct or appropriate framework that encompasses these guidelines. The governing body of the Province may implement the

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<sup>1</sup> Refers to the national or regional self-governing Churches who are members of the Anglican Communion. The Anglican Church of Canada is one such “Province” of the Anglican Communion.

guidelines by taking action at a provincial level, or by adopting measures to ensure that each diocese in the province implements the guidelines. Implementation may be undertaken in stages.

In many cases rules and policies will need to be developed by people with appropriate expertise in areas such as canon law, training for ministry and pastoral care. It may be necessary to change the words and expressions used in these guidelines to be compatible with the words and expressions used in the rules and policies of the province or the applicable diocese. These rules and policies once adopted should be made known and implemented consistently throughout the Province.

## Theological foundations

As set out in the *Charter* the witness of Scripture recognises and affirms God's love for all members of the human family and the priority given in Jesus' ministry to children and the vulnerable of society.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Reverend and Right Honourable Justin Welby, in his evidence before the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse in England and Wales in March 2018, gave the following three-fold answer as to his understanding of a theology of safeguarding:

“The theology is this: that God made us, and we bear in ourselves the image of God. Therefore we are infinitely precious. And Christ died for us on the cross, and that shows the love that God has for us. And any action that does not demonstrate that extreme of sacrificial and creative love is wrong.

Secondly, that the example we have in Jesus, whom we understand and believe to be God himself, is that Jesus came and lived a fully human life taking in all the vulnerability of being a small child in a war torn area; that his parents protected him, those around him protected him. He grew up needing protection and that example of Jesus calls us to protect all those who need protection.

And, thirdly, his own teaching says very clearly, when talking about children, that those who do them harm would do better to have a millstone put around their neck and be thrown into the sea rather than face the judgment God will give them.”

God's love for all people, the protection of the vulnerable and accountability of abusers, which are the three themes of Scripture expressed by the Archbishop of Canterbury, are foundational to these guidelines.

The implementation of these guidelines in each province will need to be undergirded by a theology of safe church or safeguarding which prioritises the safety of children, young people and vulnerable adults in the mission of the church.

## *Canadian Anglican Theological Foundations*

*Excerpts from: WE WILL, WITH GOD'S HELP: A Guide to Codes of Ethics for those authorized to practice ministry in the Anglican Church of Canada.*

*Adopted by General Synod Resolution A221, 2007*

*A Ministry Code of Ethics:*

- *Is rooted in our baptismal and ordination vows*
- *Is grounded in scriptural perspectives*
- *Adheres to Christian doctrine*

### *1. Rooted in baptismal and ordination vows*

*"So natural is the union of Religion with Justice, that we may boldly deny there is either, where both are not." Richard Hooker, Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity, V, 1.2.*

*As Anglicans we place a high value on justice. We all promise at baptism to "strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being (BAS, p. 159)." Those in ordained ministry promise to pattern their lives after Christ's teachings (deacons and presbyters) and "be merciful to all, show compassion to the poor and strangers and defend those who have no helper" (bishops, BAS, p. 637). We make these promises before God and each other and call upon God to help us keep them. Love of God and neighbour means extending fair treatment and ethical conduct to all whom we encounter in every aspect of ministry, whether lay or ordained, formal or informal, within church buildings or without.*

*Wherever the church's ministers live out our ministry, opportunities arise to do great good or great harm. The high degree of trust that people have in the church's ministers often encourages them to reveal deeply sensitive and important aspects of their lives, making them more vulnerable and less alert to boundary violations than they would otherwise be. At the same time, those to whom such trust, authority and power are given may use them inappropriately, blind to their own wrongdoing. Knowing ahead of time how to avoid and/or handle risky situations keeps the vulnerable safe, the ministers trustworthy and the effective integrity of God's church intact....*

*The need for ethical standards in ministry is based as much on the inevitability of human error as it is on the inevitability of human confusion. We make our baptismal and ordination vows in a context of community prayer and celebration. We keep them, or not, in a complexity of community need, conflict and power imbalance.*

*Ethical reflection is neither a theological luxury nor a managerial burden in these circumstances, it is a pastoral necessity. It enables us to respond appropriately and in practical ways to both God's calling and our promises. This is not easy work, so it is not remarkable that we need God's help in doing it.*

## 2. Based in Scripture

*“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.” Jn15:12 (NRSV).*

*... The ethics of Christian ministry begin with the teachings of the Bible. Most of us point to the Ten Commandments and the Summary of the Law as divinely derived mandates for all human behavior and relationships, guides in all our doings. Both Hebrew Scripture and the New Testament contain numerous injunctions and provisions about behavior, many of which have a particular relevance in their application to codes of ethics for ministry. It is important, however, to think of Scripture in ethics, rather than ethics in Scripture. In other words, we seek the biblical perspective in the context of both historical and current worshipping communities rather than proof-texting for rules.*

*Ethics professor[4] and Episcopalian Stephen Holmgren offers a way to search for biblical perspectives with his description of how Scripture is a mirror, a restraint and a map for Christian ethics.[5] Scripture reflects our actions back to us and gives us an image of righteousness with which to compare our own deeds. Psalm 15: 2-4 provides such an image:*

*Those who walk blamelessly, and do what is right,  
And speak the truth from their heart;  
Who do not slander with their tongue  
And do no evil to their friends,  
Nor take up a reproach against their neighbours;  
In whose eyes the wicked are despised,  
But who honor those who fear the Lord;  
Who stand by their oath even to their hurt; (NRSV)*

*The prophet Amos also gives us a looking glass with which to bring ourselves into conformity with God’s will for us, “Seek good and not evil, that you may live; and so the Lord, the God of hosts, will be with you, just as you have said. Hate evil and love good, and establish justice in the gate;” (Amos 5: 14-15, NRSV).*

*As a restraint, Scripture provides several lists of do’s and don’ts, the Ten Commandments being the major example. But Scripture is more than a catalogue of prohibitions. Paul, for example, urges continual self-discipline and self-evaluation. “Examine yourselves to see whether you are living in the faith. Test yourselves. . . .” (2 Cor. 13:5a, NRSV). The First Letter of Peter likewise offers caution, specifically to those in ministry leadership. “Do not lord it over those in your charge, but be examples to the flock . . . . And all of you must clothe yourselves with humility in your dealings with one another. . . .” (1 Pet. 5: 3, 5b, NRSV).*

*Scripture presents broad ethical guidance in its capacity as a map. The Summary of the Law (Mk. 12: 28-31) provides the basic coordinates: love of God and love of neighbour. Jesus’ consistent attention to the poor, the marginalized and the vulnerable are all the compass points in between those coordinates. Our behavior toward the least among us, the location where much of our ministry takes place, is the measure of our relationship with Christ (Mt. 25: 37-40).*



### 3. Adheres to Christian Doctrine

*Theology and ethics are more than abstract academic topics. In concrete and practical ways, Christians engage in them all the time. First Nations authors Paul Schultz and George Tinker define theology as “people talking about what they are doing when they pray.”[6] Christian ethics, then, is people talking about what they are doing, period. When ministry is the context for theological and ethical reflection, as it is in the preparation of a code or guide, several Christian doctrines and ethical concepts are particularly relevant.*

*The doctrine of human nature holds that humans are created in the image of God. This means that humans as moral actors are to keep their actions in line with God’s mandate to be holy as God is holy (Lev. 11.45). It also means that we view each person we encounter as bearing the same image of God we do. This doctrine also acknowledges that, although fallen short of the divine ideal, we have the continuous responsibility to live into it. Holiness in ministry means that respect, thoughtfulness and love are part of our every act.*

*The doctrine of salvation explains how our human fallen-ness is not a permanent barrier to our doing good because of Christ’s saving action in history and in each individual life. A new self is ours, “which is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of its creator. . . . In that renewal . . . Christ is all and in all.” (Col. 3: 10-11, NRSV). We are capable of acting appropriately, with God’s help and Christ’s saving power in our lives.*

*The theology of forgiveness also enters into the preparation of ethical codes because it reminds us to include provision for reconciliation when mistakes occur. Recent church history tells us that impropriety, especially involving sexual misconduct in pastoral situations, has been a blight on church life in some places. Putting matters right involves not just restitution, but rehabilitation and the opportunity for a repentant wrongdoer’s re-entry into the community.*

*The theology and ethics of virtue also have a bearing on ministry behavior standards. Christian virtues are those character traits consistent with the Christian life.[7] In the New Testament, faith, hope and love stand out as named virtues, but in the field of ministry we can add justice, respect, humility and trustworthiness. Reference to and definition of virtuous conduct can provide a positive foundation for ministry ethics codes and transform them from a list of regulations into a means of deepening ministry formation.*

# Anglican Communion Safe Church Charter

## Commitment 1: Pastoral support where there is abuse

*We will provide pastoral support for the abused, their families, and affected parishes and church organizations by: a) listening with patience and compassion to their experiences and concerns, and b) offering spiritual assistance and other forms of pastoral care.*

### 1.a. Background information

#### The nature of abuse

*Abuse*, which occurs in families and in the community as well as in the church, encompasses a wide variety of conduct towards *children, young people and vulnerable adults*. Abuse is behaviour which causes harm to another person or is undertaken with the intention of causing harm to another person, or which may place another person at the risk of harm. Types of abuse include, but are not limited to, *bullying, concealment of abuse, cyber abuse, emotional abuse, financial abuse, gender-based violence, harassment, neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse and spiritual abuse*. There is an explanation of each of these types of abuse in Schedule 1.

A person can be subject to abuse at any stage of their life. Abuse of a child or young person is commonly called 'child abuse'. Abuse of a vulnerable adult can take many forms. Abuse in a family or domestic context is commonly called 'family violence' or 'domestic violence'.

When abuse occurs more than one form of abuse can be involved. In the church, other forms of abuse can be accompanied by spiritual abuse. Church workers sometimes silence their victims by misusing their spiritual authority, such as by threatening punishment by God or exclusion from the church if the abuse is disclosed.

Abuse often occurs and continues because of the unequal power relationship between the abuser and their victim. Victims will be afraid to disclose abuse where there is a culture of silence in the community and the church. Even when victims disclose abuse, no effective action will be taken where community and church leaders have believed the alleged abuser rather than the victim.

Sometimes church workers experience abuse within the church from other church workers or members. This arises where other church workers or members misuse their power over another.

In the case of sexual abuse there are generally additional factors present. Abusers may assert or believe that the victim is a willing participant. They may deny, justify, minimise or excuse their abuse by claiming it was an expression of love, was caused by stress, alcohol or other substances, or by blaming the victim. They are often repeat offenders.

A variety of social and cultural factors can contribute to a person's vulnerability to abuse, such as the poverty, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, and physical or intellectual disability of the victim. Vulnerability may also be due to a combination of these factors. In some cases abuse occurs in the context of human trafficking.

Sometimes church workers in one Province of the Anglican Communion<sup>2</sup>, who are known or suspected of abuse, are moved to and become authorised for ministry in another such Province, a diocese within the same Province, or in another church tradition, without disclosure of this information to the appropriate church authority. This practice allows them to continue to abuse people in their new location.

### **The harmful effects of abuse**

The harm done to both *primary victims* and *secondary victims* of abuse, and the failure to protect them from abuse and to respond properly where abuse occurs, can be far reaching and deeply destructive. A majority of primary victims have been women and children. Men can also be primary victims. There can be many secondary victims of one primary victim. These may include family members of the primary victim, family members of the abuser, other church workers and members of the church.

The harmful effects of abuse vary according to a range of factors including the closeness of the relationship between the victim and the abuser, the role of the abuser in relation to the victim, the duration of the abuse, and whether the victim receives family or other support. Additional factors in the case of physical abuse and sexual abuse are the degree of the invasiveness of the abuse and the degree of force used in committing the abuse. Primary and secondary victims may be affected in the way they view themselves, their relationships with others and their faith.

Harmful emotional and psychological effects of abuse on victims include:

- guilt when they believe they are responsible for the abuse;
- shame when they believe they have been abused because they are unworthy, unlovable and unacceptable, or missed 'warning signs' of abuse; and

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<sup>2</sup> "Province" refers to the autonomous national and regional churches that are members of The Anglican Communion. The Anglican Church of Canada is such a "province." The Church of England and the Anglican Church of Australia, for example, are others amongst the 46 member Churches. See <http://www.anglicancommunion.org>

- disempowerment through being unable to stand up for themselves.

Harmful effects on victims' relationships with others include their becoming:

- aggressive and extremely angry at those in authority, including church workers;
- tentative when among people they know, and wary when meeting new people, because of their fear of rejection or disapproval;
- compliant in their relationships with authority figures, whether in the community or in the church; and
- 'rescuers' who care for others but fail to care for themselves.

Victims commonly experience spiritual difficulties. They may:

- believe that God, who remained silent throughout the abuse, is cruel, impotent or uncaring;
- believe that they are being punished by God;
- be angry with or feel abandoned by God;
- be alienated by the thought of God as Father. For some the only father they have known is their own father or a male member of the clergy who has betrayed them, and abused his position of trust;
- find it difficult to experience God's love and grace because what they have experienced is a perversion of love, trust, hope, and faith; and
- feel betrayed by church leaders.

People who become aware of the abuse and the harmful effects experienced by the primary victim can often themselves suffer harm and experience overwhelming sadness and anger. They are secondary victims. They may then experience changes in their relationships, including in their church community, because there is a lack of trust, secrecy (where they are unable to talk openly about the abuse), stigma, and questions to which they do not have answers. Sometimes they are ostracised from their church community. Sometimes there has been a division in a church community with some siding with the primary victim and others siding with the alleged abuser.

### **Care of victims of abuse**

The way in which the church cares for victims must be centred on the victim's needs.

Some victims of abuse do not trust the community in which they were abused, and leave. The church should respect the choice to leave and yet be willing to provide care at any time.

Some victims choose to stay in church communities. They may be struggling to cope because of the harmful effects of the abuse and are looking for help. Sometimes when

the abuse has been kept secret, they are afraid to disclose the abuse in the church community and, as a result, continue to suffer in silence. Sometimes where the abuse is known the church has not provided them with care. Churches should be safe places where primary and secondary victims can speak about the abuse, and find healing from its harmful effects. For this to happen, church communities must listen to victims, and offer them spiritual assistance and other forms of care. Victims may need help beyond the care that the church can provide, such as specialised care and victim support services.

## **Forgiveness**

Forgiveness is one of the most difficult issues faced by victims and church workers who minister to victims and abusers.

Victims often find themselves under pressure to forgive the abuser. The pressure may be:

- external – when someone says ‘Just put it behind you’, ‘Forgive and forget’, ‘Forgive and move on’ or ‘You will feel better if you forgive’; and
- internal – when the victim’s own understanding is that they themselves need to be forgiven and for that to happen, they must first forgive their abuser.

Victims must never be pressured by church workers to forgive their abuser. Further harm can be caused to a victim through pressure to forgive, and re-establish their relationship with, their abuser. They may condemn themselves and believe they are condemned by others if they are not willing or able to forgive. They may see themselves as ‘not being Christian’, and beyond the forgiveness of God.

A victim, independent of any request, may wish to forgive their abuser: for example, when their abuser does not repent, or is dead, or is no longer in contact. Forgiving their abuser is multi-layered, complex in nature, and can be very difficult for victims to do. It is rarely a single event, but usually a process which often occurs over an extended period of time and in stages.

Sometimes the abuser may ask to be forgiven. When this happens, the three requirements expressed in Scripture for forgiveness, which together are commonly called ‘repentance’, are:

- confession, involving the abuser fully acknowledging the abuse and harm caused, which may include an unconditional apology by the abuser to the victim for the abuse and its effects;
- contrition and a commitment to amendment of life, involving the abuser taking full responsibility for the abuse with a willingness to bear any

consequences, which may include reporting the abuse to the *civil authority* or disciplinary action within the church; and

- reparation, involving the abuser offering to the victim to make amends for the abuse, where this is appropriate.

Where these requirements are satisfied, a member of the clergy may pronounce God's forgiveness. The victim may choose to forgive their abuser in a conversation, or without any contact, especially where this is necessary for the victim to feel safe.

Where an abuser is forgiven by God or their victim, this does not mean:

- the victim should minimise the abuse or excuse the abuser or forget their abuse;
- the church should appoint or re-appoint the abuser to a ministry role or trust the abuser with the care of children, young people or vulnerable adults;
- the abuser should avoid punishment for the abuse; and
- the victim and the abuser should be reconciled, in the sense of a return to the relationship as it existed before the abuse occurred.

Sometimes forgiveness may not be possible. A victim may not be prepared to forgive their abuser.

## **Anglican Communion Safe Church Charter**

### **Commitment 1: Pastoral support where there is abuse**

*We will provide pastoral support for the abused, their families, and affected parishes and church organizations by: a) listening with patience and compassion to their experiences and concerns, and b) offering spiritual assistance and other forms of pastoral care.*

#### **1.b. Guidelines for Policy Development and Practice**

##### **Support for those providing care to victims of abuse**

Those who provide care to primary and secondary victims of abuse require support in their ministry. It is often not realised that caring for victims can be emotionally and spiritually draining, especially where care is provided for a long period of time. Support of those providing care helps to sustain them in this ministry.

##### **Care for victims of abuse**

1.1 Each province should have a system for providing care for primary and secondary victims of abuse, whether the victims have been abused by church workers or by other persons. People offering care should normally be of the same sex as the primary victim, particularly in cases of sexual abuse.

1.2 Enough people should be trained so that, where practicable, there is at least one man and one woman in each church community who can offer care to victims of abuse. Where this is impractical, enough people should be trained so that there is at least one man and one woman who is located within a reasonable distance of a group of church communities. Suitable people for training are those who can maintain appropriate ministry boundaries and confidentiality and, if they themselves have experienced abuse, have recovered sufficiently to provide care to other victims of abuse. People who receive training may be clergy or lay workers. Accurate records should be kept of the people receiving the training.

1.3 The training for providing care to victims of abuse should include the following topics:

- the theology of care in the context of abuse;

- the recognition of observable signs of abuse;
- the importance of listening to victims of abuse with empathy, patience and compassion;
- the harmful effects of abuse on primary and secondary victims of abuse;
- the importance of confidentiality and the limits to confidentiality;
- appropriate responses where there is a disclosure of abuse;
- the limitations of the role of carer (such as respect for the wishes of the victim and not attempting to provide specialised care);
- the circumstances in which, and when, the church should offer victims of abuse referral for specialised care and victim support services, and information about people who can provide specialised care (such as doctors, psychologists and counsellors) and any organizations which can provide victim support services (such as advocacy groups);
- the nature and practice of forgiveness and the harmful effects on victims of abuse if pressured to forgive before they are ready; and
- forms of practical care available for victims of abuse, such as regular inquiries about their welfare, prayer support, financial assistance, relocation to a safe place to live, and assistance to report the abuse to the civil authority where it constitutes a criminal offence.

1.4 Refresher training of people to provide care to victims of abuse should be required at regular intervals of between three and five years.

### **Support for those providing care to victims of abuse**

1.5 Each Province or Diocese<sup>3</sup> should have a system for providing support for people who are providing care to primary and secondary victims of abuse. Where practicable, people providing this support should themselves have training and expertise in providing care to victims of abuse. This support should consist of regular contact with those providing care and help to deal with any issues that have arisen in their provision of care.

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<sup>3</sup> The Commission's original language refers only to Provinces. In the case of the Anglican Church of Canada, the jurisdiction for safeguarding and conduct policy that affects parishes is held at the level of the diocese. For clarity, we have added the word "Diocese" to each of these references, where appropriate.



## **Commitment 2: Effective responses to abuse**

*We will have and implement policies and procedures to respond properly to allegations of abuse against clergy and other church personnel that include:*

- a) making known within churches the procedure for making complaints;*
- b) arranging pastoral care for any person making a complaint of abuse;*
- c) the impartial determination of allegations of abuse against clergy and other church personnel, and assessment of their suitability for future ministry;*
- d) providing support for affected parishes and church organizations.*

### **2.a. Background information**

#### **Misuse of power and authority by those who abuse**

Church workers have power and authority by virtue of their role and are therefore in a position of trust. Some are unaware of their power and unconsciously exercise it in abusive ways to achieve their desires. Others intentionally use their power to overcome the resistance of their victims. In the case of sexual abuse of children, young people and vulnerable adults, abusers have commonly used their power to groom their victim and others close to the victim. Church workers who misuse their power and authority by abusing others have betrayed the trust conferred on them and should be held accountable for their conduct.

#### **Concealment of abuse in the church**

Church leaders who have covered up allegations against other church workers to protect the church's reputation have by this concealment abused their power, failed to act with integrity and acted unjustly. This covering up has occurred by ignoring complaints or minimising their seriousness, or by moving the respondent to another position. Victims of abuse have been further harmed by the failure of the church to act upon their complaints. The reputation of the church has been further damaged where its covering up of abuse by church workers has been publicly disclosed.

#### **Procedures to determine the truth of allegations in complaints**

Where there are complaints against church workers, accountability requires procedures to decide fairly upon the truth of the allegations. These procedures need to be made known within the province.

Some primary victims are afraid to make a complaint because they have been threatened with reprisals. The procedures for making a complaint should permit a complaint to be made on their behalf (such as where the victim is deceased). Many years may pass before some complainants, particularly those who were abused as a child, are ready to make a complaint. The passing of time since the abuse is alleged to have occurred should normally not be a barrier to the consideration of a complaint. However, a barrier is appropriate where the passing of time has made it impossible to deal fairly with the complaint. Where the alleged abuser is deceased it will be important to determine the truth of the complaint and the appropriate redress.

Where a complaint is made, support needs to be provided during the process both to the complainant and the respondent.

### **Outcomes of complaints**

Where there is a decision that the respondent committed the abuse or concealed the abuse, their suitability for future ministry must be assessed. This assessment should include whether or not they are fit to remain in their current position, or to be appointed to any other position. It should also include whether or not they are temporarily or permanently unfit to remain in ministry and, if temporarily unfit, the conditions for restoration to ministry. In the case of clergy, this assessment should also include whether they are fit to continue to exercise ordained ministry and, if so, under what conditions.

All complainants, whether or not the complaint is substantiated, should be offered care. Where the complaint is substantiated, the church should offer to provide redress to the victim. The offer of redress should always include a direct personal response in the form of an apology by a church leader, and may include steps such as counselling and other forms of practical assistance to respond to the harm suffered.

All respondents, whether or not the complaint is substantiated, should be offered care. Where the complaint is substantiated and the respondent remains in ministry or otherwise participates in the life of a church community, there should be a system of accountability to ensure the respondent does this without compromising the safety of people.

A process for the communication of the outcome of the complaint, including any findings, to the complainant, the respondent, the church and, where appropriate, the public, will help to ensure that the outcome is accurately reported.

### **Support for church communities affected by complaints**

When a complaint is made, the church communities connected with the primary and secondary victims, and the respondent, often experience a profound sense of betrayal, anger and disillusionment. Sometimes there may be division in the church community.

These consequences will often increase if there is any subsequent decision that the respondent committed the abuse. They may even continue where the complaint is substantiated because of the belief by some that the respondent is innocent. Affected church communities will need ongoing support. This support includes being given appropriate information that will not cause harm to the complainant or prejudice the fair determination of the allegations, but will help to minimise speculation and the spreading of rumours.

## **Commitment 2: Effective responses to abuse**

*We will have and implement policies and procedures to respond properly to allegations of abuse against clergy and other church personnel that include:*

- a) making known within churches the procedure for making complaints;*
- b) arranging pastoral care for any person making a complaint of abuse;*
- c) the impartial determination of allegations of abuse against clergy and other church personnel, and assessment of their suitability for future ministry;*
- d) providing support for affected parishes and church organizations.*

### **2.b. Guidelines**

#### **Dealing fairly with complaints**

2.1 Each Province or Diocese should have a system for dealing fairly with complaints. The system should include the following elements:

- an easy to use and accessible means for victims, or people on their behalf, to make complaints to a designated person;
- where a complaint involving an alleged criminal offence is made, a mechanism for helping the complainant report the abuse to the civil authority, other than in situations where the church itself is required by law to report the complaint;
- protection of the complainant and any whistleblower associated with the complaint from any reprisal by a church worker;
- capacity for the church authority in appropriate circumstances to suspend respondents from their current position until the conclusion of the process for dealing with the complaint (such as where people including the victim will be placed at risk of harm and/or the reputation of the church will be damaged if the respondent continues in their current position);
- consideration of the complaint no matter how long ago the abuse is alleged to have occurred, except in circumstances where the passing of time has made it impossible to deal fairly with the complaint;

- disclosure of the complaint and the identity of the complainant to the respondent, except when to do so would jeopardise the safety of the complainant;
- opportunity for the respondent to respond to the complaint;
- where the allegations are denied or not admitted by the respondent, a formal process for an impartial person or group of people to investigate the allegations and determine their truth or otherwise;
- where the allegations are admitted by the respondent or found to be true, a process for determining the suitability of the respondent for continuing ministry and, if so, whether subject to any conditions;
- maintenance of accurate records of the action taken by the church authority giving effect to the assessment of the suitability for ministry of the respondent;
- vindication of the respondent where the complaint is found to be false;
- maintenance of confidentiality, including determining the amount of information and to whom information should be provided; and
- communication of the outcome of the complaint to the complainant, the respondent, the church and, where appropriate, the public.

### **Support for complainants and respondents**

2.2 Each Province or Diocese should have a system for providing a support person for the complainant and for the respondent throughout and after the process of dealing with the complaint. People should be trained to undertake this role and accurate records should be kept of the people receiving the training. The training should include the following topics:

- the importance of listening to complainants and respondents with empathy, patience and compassion;
- the nature of abuse and its effects on victims; and
- the assistance which may be given to complainants and respondents (such as explaining the process for dealing with complaints, and being present during interviews when the complaint is being investigated or any hearing where the truth of the allegations is being determined).

The support person for the complainant and for the respondent should not have any role in the process of investigating or making a decision about the complaint.

### **Support for affected church communities**

2.3 Each Province of Diocese should have a system for providing support for church communities affected by complaints and the outcome of their determination. People should be trained to undertake this role and accurate records should be kept of the people receiving the training. The training should include the following topics:

- the impact upon people and church communities of complaints of abuse and their outcome;
- the information that is appropriate to be provided to the affected people and church communities about complaints of abuse and their outcome, and the person who makes that decision; and
- strategies to facilitate the healing of people and church communities affected by complaints of abuse and their outcome.

Any person providing support for affected people and church communities should not have any role in the process of investigating or making a decision about the complaint.

## *Canadian Anglican Guides to Good Procedures*

### ***Excerpts from: A Call to Human Dignity: A Statement of Principles for the Anglican Church of Canada on Dignity, Inclusion, and Fair Treatment*** *adopted by General Synod Resolution A130, 2001*

*The following guidelines are designed to enhance the sense of dignity, inclusion, and fair treatment, experienced by individuals in their dealings with our church...*

#### *1. Transparency of decision making.*

*Assumptions, expectations, and obligations concerning employees and volunteers within our church must be clear and openly shared. Our church must also work to achieve clarity about the ways in which decisions are reached and carried out.*

#### *2. Intentional listening.*

*When relationships become fractured, our church must provide an appropriate forum in order to ensure that the complainant has the opportunity to be heard when seeking a solution to his or her complaint. Our church must respect and facilitate the individual's opportunities to be heard.*

#### *3. Sympathetic Companionship.*

*We are one body; all are affected when one part is being wounded or destroyed. All issues and situations have an impact on the community as a whole. Therefore, systems must be in place to offer support and companionship to those who are wounded.*

#### *4. Clear and prescribed avenues for challenging decisions.*

*In responding to those who feel wronged or wounded, we should keep in mind what Jesus taught his disciples. In addressing conflict within the Church, Jesus highlights the importance of beginning with face to face encounter and hearing the evidence. If this is unsuccessful, a wider group is involved. Only as a last resort is the whole community engaged and the breaking of fellowship entertained. (Matthew 18: 15-17)*

*Bearing in mind this teaching of Jesus, clearly prescribed guidelines for hearing grievances must be available at all levels of our church, so that due process is always observed.*

*[Footnote] 3 Each parish and diocese will establish, review and make known such a process, the details of which may vary depending on the unique circumstances within each region.*

*Such a process should consider:*

- *Opportunities for hearing grievances.*
- *A clear complaints procedure.*
- *Opportunities for mediation.*
- *An impartial complaints committee.*
- *Availability of ombudsperson(s).*

*5. Assurance of response.*

*Such a process will offer assurance of timely response to all legitimate complaints with a commitment to a clearly expressed outcome from those in a position to effect an outcome, such as apology, face to face meeting, or severance.*

*6. Accessibility.*

*This process is to be known, available, accessible and affordable throughout all levels of our church.*

*\*\*\**

*Our church must ensure that individuals responsible for creating and facilitating such a process will receive adequate training. The commitment of time, human resources, and expertise will reflect our church's acknowledgement of the continued need for healing.*

*With this affirmation and the suggested guidelines in mind, we join hands and continue on our journey. We know that all within Christ's body have been welcomed by God.*

*We accept the daunting challenges which lie ahead and are sustained by the Holy Spirit living within us. Therefore we step out as a church with commitment to express dignity and fair treatment for all.*



## Anglican Communion Safe Church Charter

### *Commitment 3: Practice of pastoral ministry*

*We will adopt and promote by education and training standards for the practices of pastoral ministry by clergy and other church personnel*

#### **3.a. Background information**

##### **Ministry in the church**

Church workers undertake ministry in the church in a variety of forms including the provision of spiritual advice and support, education, counselling, care and assistance in times of need. Such ministry can happen in a variety of settings including in a church community. In their ministry relationships church workers should always act in the best interests of those to whom they are ministering.

##### **The imbalance of power in ministry relationships**

There is an intrinsic imbalance of power in a ministry relationship between the church worker and those to whom they minister. This arises because the church worker has spiritual authority over others, specialised knowledge and expertise, or access to the leaders and resources of the church. It is always the responsibility of the church worker to maintain appropriate boundaries in their ministry relationships.

##### **Standards for the practice of ministry in a code of conduct**

Clear standards for the practice of ministry should be contained in a code of conduct. All church workers should be bound to observe the standards in the code of conduct. They will need regular education and training about these standards of behaviour to help them to maintain appropriate boundaries in their ministry relationships. It is particularly important to ensure that church workers who have moved from another *province* or church tradition receive this education and training. The adoption of and training on a code of conduct will mean that church workers cannot plead ignorance of the appropriate standards for the practice of ministry.

##### **The importance of ministry support for church workers**

A system of ministry support for church workers is a practical method to help ensure ethical ministry practices by them, and to help them prevent and respond to the abuse of power by other church workers or members.

## **Anglican Communion Safe Church Charter**

### ***Commitment 3: Practice of pastoral ministry***

***We will adopt and promote by education and training standards for the practices of pastoral ministry by clergy and other church personnel***

#### **3.b.Guidelines**

##### **A code of conduct for the practice of ministry**

3.1 Each Province or Diocese should have a code of conduct containing standards for the practice of ministry to be observed by church workers. The code of conduct should address the following areas of conduct:

- the nature of ministry relationships and how power is to be used in the best interests of those being ministered to;
- the maintenance of confidentiality of information received in ministry and the limits of confidentiality, such as where disclosure is required by law;
- communications in ministry including the use of language, gesture and images, the use of technology, and the location and conduct of meetings, interviews and conversations;
- appropriate boundaries in ministry relationships including emotional, financial, physical and sexual boundaries;
- ministry to children and young people including avoiding where practicable working alone or in isolation with them;
- ministry to vulnerable adults; and
- reporting known or suspected abuse by another church worker to the church authority, or civil authority where required.

##### **Training in the code of conduct**

3.2 Each Province or Diocese should have a system for providing the satisfactory completion of training in the code of conduct by:

- candidates for ordination prior to their ordination as a deacon; and
- church workers prior to their appointment or, exceptionally, within three months of their appointment, and thereafter at intervals of between three and five years.

Accurate records should be kept of the training.

### **Ministry support**

3.3 Each province should have a system for providing ministry support to church workers to help ensure ethical ministry practices by them which:

- for clergy and authorised and employed lay workers, should include supervision of their ministry and, where available, other forms of support such as mentoring, professional supervision, peer support and ministry review; and
- for lay workers who are volunteers, should include supervision of their ministry.

*Canadian Anglican Guides for the Practice of Pastoral Ministry*

*Excerpts from: We Will, With God's Help: A Guide to Codes of Ethics for those authorized to practice ministry in the Anglican Church of Canada.*

*Adopted by General Synod Resolution A221, 2007*

***Ministry Areas Requiring Ethical Guidelines:***

*1. Pastoral Care and Counseling*

- *Definitions and clarifications about appropriate interpersonal boundaries*  
*Confidentiality standards*
- *Power differential understanding*
- *Human sexuality awareness – advisable to require training in abuse prevention*
- *Knowledge of competence limits – when to make referrals*
- *Definitions of conflict of interest and when to declare them*
- *Compliance with requirements of civil law and criminal law*

*2. Financial Responsibility*

- *Personal loans from parishioners – set dollar amount limit or prohibit altogether*
- *Compliance with tax and pension rules*
- *Standards for charging fees*
- *Define appropriate non-monetary remuneration*
- *Advise on personal debt management*
- *Policy for being heir and/or executor of parishioners' estates*

*3. Employment Practices*

- *Fairness in hiring or appointing*
- *Workplace propriety and safety*
- *Fair compensation for staff*
- *Treatment of volunteers*
- *Clarity of tasks for partially- or non-stipendiary clergy*
- *Clear job descriptions*
- *Periodic evaluations*

*4. Education*

- *Fulfillment of continuing education obligations*

*5. Health*

- *Self-care, emotional and physical*
- *Care for family*
- *Substance abuse avoidance*

*6. Administrative Integrity*

- *Responsible organization and record keeping*
- *Task follow-through*
- *Reasonable delegation*
- *Honesty and truth-telling*

## *7. Empowerment of Others' Ministries*

- *Sharing appropriate information with appropriate laity*
- *Sharing tasks and responsibilities*
- *Making education opportunities available for others*

## *8. Collegiality and Cooperation*

- *Clear process in place for consideration of call to another parish*
- *Confidentiality*
- *Canonical obedience*
- *Representing the church in the community*
- *Support and respect for other pastors*
- *Behavior after leaving one parish for another or at retirement*

## ***Suggested Diocesan Process to Maximize Local Design, Relevance, and Ownership***

1. *Identify a committed working group, e.g., clergy, laity, ethicist, lawyer, teacher, counsellor, physician, nurse social worker*
2. *Convene the group and ask them first to consider prayerfully the biblical, theological and practical underpinnings for a code of ministry ethics.*
3. *Ask them next to consider the mission and vision of the diocese.*
4. *Identify and state why an ethics code is important to the diocese.*
5. *Consider how the code can reflect the character of the diocese, keeping in mind especially the needs and protocols of other cultures. For example, some First Nations have cleansing feasts or other methods to reintegrate an offender back into the community.*
6. *Consider adapting and/or adopting a code in use by another diocese.*
7. *Frame the consequences of misconduct clearly. Some may want to include them in diocesan canons. It may be advisable to sequence violations with warnings, temporary removal, rehabilitation requirements, permanent removal, loss of license.*
8. *Make ample and clear provisions for pastoral care for all parties involved in alleged code violations.*
9. *Allow time for diocesan consultation with lay and ordained ministers.*
10. *Consider language clarity and accessibility.*
11. *Provide educational workshops for clergy, staff and volunteers.*
12. *Provide a method of ratification and periodic review and revision of the code.*

## ***Other Recommendations***

*Make assent to the code's provisions a requirement for ordination and licensing.*

**Anglican Communion Safe Church Charter**  
***Commitment 4: Suitability for Ministry***

***We will have and implement policies and procedures to assess the suitability of persons for ordination as clergy or appointment to positions of responsibility in the church including checking their background.***

**4.a. Background information**

**Abuse where there has been no background checking**

Sometimes church workers with a prior history of abusing others have been appointed to positions, and in the case of clergy have entered the process leading to ordination, without any checking of their background and have subsequently committed abuse in their ministry. Abuse has been committed both by clergy and lay workers. In some cases this has occurred where church workers have moved between Provinces, between Dioceses within a Province, or from another church tradition.

**The importance of background checking**

Assessment of a prospective church worker's suitability for ministry will include background checking. The purpose of background checking is to identify any information which indicates that the person may pose a risk to the safety of others. This information should be taken into account in assessing whether the person is suitable to undertake ministry in the church. All clergy should be screened. Priority should be given to background checking of lay workers whose ministry involves contact with vulnerable people such as children, young people and vulnerable adults. Background checking is an important means to prevent abuse in the church, as past conduct is an important indicator of behaviour in both the present and the future.

For church workers moving between Provinces<sup>4</sup>, background checking will require the co-operation of both Provinces through the implementation of the *Protocol*.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> As in the case of previous uses of "Province" in this document, the word refers to national or regional autonomous churches of the Anglican Communion, such as The Anglican Church of Canada, as one "Province," or the Scottish Episcopal Church as another. Therefore, the transfers of clergy under discussion refers to movements from one church, usually in one country, to another, in another country.

<sup>5</sup> The *Protocol* refers to the *Anglican Communion Safe Church Commission's Protocols for the Transfer of Clergy from one Province to Another*. This can be found on [page...](#)

For church workers moving between Dioceses within a Province, background checking will require the co-operation of both Dioceses within the Province<sup>6</sup>. For church workers moving from another church tradition, background checking will require the provision of information to the other church tradition and co-operation of both the other church tradition and the Diocese.<sup>7</sup>

### **Circumstances in which a risk assessment is required**

Where a person has abused in the past, it will be necessary to carry out a risk assessment of the likelihood of the prospective church worker abusing others in the future. This should be carried out before they are ordained or appointed to a position. Where feasible, an experienced professional such as a psychologist should carry out the risk assessment. In cases of abuse such as those involving sexual abuse of children it will not be appropriate for the person to be ordained or appointed to a position involving ministry.

### **4.b. Guidelines**

#### **Assessment of the suitability of persons to be church workers**

1. 4.1 Each Province and Diocese should have a system for the background checking of prospective church workers. They should be screened before their appointment and, in the case of clergy, before entering a process that may lead to their ordination. The background checking should include the following elements:
  - completion by the person of an application form which includes provision for disclosure of prior abusive behavior;
  - verification of identity;
  - checking with the civil authority for any criminal record where available and where the applicant is an adult;
  - an interview with the person making the appointment or their delegate;
  - obtaining references from persons with knowledge of the applicant, including from within the church and/or their previous employment;
  - where the person was an authorised church worker in another Province or another Diocese within the Province or had an equivalent role in another church tradition, requesting ministry suitability information from the church authority of the other Province or Diocese or the equivalent authority of the other church tradition; and

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<sup>6</sup> The guides for these transfers are located in General Synod Canon XVII on The Licensing of Clergy

<sup>7</sup>Original document uses “Province” here, whereas the Canadian practice would be of Dioceses.

- in the case of candidates for ordination, where feasible, a psychological assessment to identify any condition which may pose a risk to the safety of others.

Records should be kept of background checking.

4.2 Each Diocese<sup>8</sup> should have a system for assessing the suitability of prospective church workers before their appointment, and in the case of priests and (permanent) deacons<sup>9</sup> before their ordination as a deacon. The assessment of suitability should include the following elements:

- consideration of the people to whom the person will minister and their vulnerability;
- consideration of the information obtained from background checking; and
- where a person has abused in the past, carrying out a risk assessment of the likelihood of the person abusing others in the future.

Records should be kept of assessments.

4.3 Each Diocese<sup>10</sup> should have a system which maintains the confidentiality of its records of background checking, including ministry suitability information, except where their disclosure:

- is required by law;
- is reasonably believed to be necessary to protect any person from the risk of being harmed by the church worker;
- is necessary for undertaking the assessment of whether the church worker is suitable to undertake authorised ministry in the province; or
- is necessary for undertaking any disciplinary action against the church worker.

## **Disclosure of information about suitability for ministry**

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<sup>8</sup> Original document refers to this as Provincial responsibility, whereas in Canada it is a Diocesan responsibility

<sup>9</sup> Original document used the word “clergy.” The careful naming of priests and deacons is more suitable to the Canadian context.

<sup>10</sup> As above, in footnote 7.



4.4 Each Diocese<sup>11</sup> should have a system regarding ministry suitability information which ensures:

- request and receipt of ministry suitability information about a person who is or was a church worker from the church authority of another Province or Diocese within the Diocese
- prompt provision of ministry suitability information about the person to the church authority or the equivalent authority of the other church tradition, except where disclosure of the ministry suitability information is unlawful.

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<sup>11</sup> As footnote 7.

## *Canadian Anglican Guides for Ministry Suitability*

### *Excerpts from: Competencies for Ordination to the Priesthood in the Anglican Church of Canada*

*Adopted by General Synod Resolution A-140R1, 2013*

*Ye are called, "to be messengers, watchmen, and stewards of the Lord." BCP*

*"Will you undertake to be a faithful pastor to all whom you are called to serve, labouring together with them and with your fellow ministers to build up the family of God?" BAS*

*A priest is one who has the capacities to provide effective leadership in the communities we are called to serve. In order to exercise this ministry effectively and faithfully, he or she:*

- *Demonstrates an understanding of and capacity for shared leadership:*
- *Shows willingness to work with the bishop in the leadership of the diocese.*
- *Demonstrates the capacity for effective collaborative leadership and an ability to work in teams in a range of settings, including ecumenical.*
- *Discerns the gifts of others and equips them to lead and to serve.*
- *Demonstrates an awareness of the church's role and opportunities in public life, and a capacity to collaborate in a well informed way with ecumenical partners, other faith communities and secular agencies.*
- *Shows a capacity to be able to maintain healthy interpersonal relationships in order to form community within and outside the church.*
- *Demonstrates the capacity to understand and consent to the promises and affirmations in the ordinal.*
- *Leads congregations in their calling to make disciples.*
- *Is prepared to submit his or her leadership to the discipline of those in authority over them as provided for in canon.*
- *Exercises leadership in a manner that reflects good pastoral practice.*
- *Demonstrates gifts and capacity to provide pastoral care.*
- *Demonstrates the character of one able to develop a creative pastoral presence as leader and caregiver.*
- *Understands the principles that support effective administration including stewardship of resources, prioritization, collaborative working, finance and accountability.*

*Competency alone is not enough. Passion in ministry is an essential ingredient. Charism, call and character, those gifts assessed through the ACPO process, are the foundations, and need to be brought into dialogue with what is offered here in the Competencies. While competency without passion, character and call is ineffective, passion without competence can be destructive. These two parts of ministerial formation are intended to be brought together in every step in the life of ministry.*

**Anglican Communion Safe Church Charter**  
***Commitment 5: A Culture of Safety***

*We will promote a culture of safety in parishes and church organizations by education and training to help clergy, other church personnel and participants prevent the occurrence of abuse.*

**5.a. Background information**

**The culture of the church has contributed to abuse**

Aspects of the culture of the church have contributed to an environment where church workers have abused children, young people and vulnerable adults.

In different ways, aspects of culture have allowed abuse and the silencing of victims. In some cases:

- the protection of the church's reputation has been placed above the interests of victims;
- the church has focused on extending forgiveness and compassion to abusers rather than holding them accountable and properly considering the needs of victims;
- where a member of the clergy has engaged in abuse, clericalism (clergy encouraging and taking advantage of deference to them) has been a factor in the occurrence of abuse, and has also caused inadequate responses where there have been complaints; and
- where abuse has been recognised, it has often been seen as a moral failing which can be overlooked rather than misconduct which has caused harm to the victims and, in the case of some types of abuse, a criminal offence.

**Ineffective governance in the church has contributed to abuse**

Aspects of this culture have been reinforced by the structure and governance of the church. In some cases:

- there has been inadequate selection, background checking and training of church workers;

- where complaints of abuse have been made there have been inadequate processes to determine fairly the truth of the allegations and the suitability for future ministry of the church workers involved;
- church leaders have failed to manage conflicts of interest between their pastoral and disciplinary roles;
- church leaders have not been, or have appeared not to be, impartial because of their relationship with respondents; and
- church leaders have concealed abuse in different ways, including moving an alleged abuser to another church community.

### **The challenge of known and suspected abusers in the church**

People who are known or suspected of abuse may seek to participate in the life of a church community. They include those charged with or convicted of criminal offences involving sexual abuse. While ministry to them is to be encouraged, this should not compromise the safety of others, especially children, young people and vulnerable adults.

Generally, those known or suspected of abuse should not be permitted to participate in a leadership role, such as providing care, leading any youth or other group, directing the music in services, reading the Bible or leading prayers. It is important to recognise that people who exercise a leadership role will be perceived as trustworthy.

### **The creation and maintenance of a culture of safety in the church**

Creating and maintaining a culture of safety in the church requires the involvement of all who participate in the life of church communities, not just church workers.

Training to prevent the occurrence of abuse should be part of the formation and ongoing development of clergy. Participants in the life of church communities should receive education to prevent the occurrence of abuse.

Creating and maintaining a culture of safety in the church requires more than the adoption of safe church or safeguarding rules and policies. They will need to be effectively implemented, and their implementation monitored. The church should demonstrate integrity by making public the results of this monitoring. Rules and policies will also need to be undergirded by a theology of safe church or safeguarding which prioritises the safety of all those who participate in the life of the church. Church leaders have an important role to play in creating and maintaining this culture of safety.

Complaints about the effectiveness or fairness of safe church or safeguarding rules and policies should be reviewed so that identified weaknesses and failures may inform continuous improvement. Safe church or safeguarding rules and policies should otherwise be reviewed regularly so that they continue to be effective. This will help ensure the church is a safe environment for all people especially children, young people and vulnerable adults.

## **5.b. Guidelines**

### **Formation and ongoing development of church workers to include training to create and maintain a culture of safety**

5.1 Each Diocese should have a system<sup>12</sup> for the formation and ongoing development of church workers that includes training which addresses the following topics:

- the theology of safe church or safeguarding which prioritises the safety of all who participate in the life of the church;
- the importance of effective leadership and self-awareness in creating and maintaining a culture of safety in church communities;
- the proper exercise of their power and authority;
- boundaries in ministry relationships;
- the responsibility to act when they become aware of or reasonably suspect abuse by another church worker;
- actions to take when they become aware of or reasonably suspect abuse by another church worker;
- safe ministry practices;
- the provision of care to victims of abuse;
- the requirements under civil law to report abuse to the civil authority;
- the impact of abuse on victims, including affected church communities; and
- the creation and maintenance of safe church environments.

### **Education of church communities to create and maintain a culture of safety**

5.2 Each Diocese<sup>13</sup> should have a system for the education of the participants in church communities in safe ministry practices and the prevention of abuse. This education should be age appropriate. In the case of schools and other organizations providing

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<sup>12</sup> The training, education and formation may be the responsibility of a theological college or of a diocese's own training program for ministerial education and formation.

<sup>13</sup> As footnote 7, the original document assigns this responsibility to Provinces

ministry to children and young people, it should extend to their parents and carers. In the case of organizations providing ministry to vulnerable adults it should extend to their family members and carers. It should address ways of raising awareness of the commitment to safe church or safeguarding, and creating and maintaining a safe environment for children, young people and vulnerable adults and include the following topics:

- the nature of abuse and its effects;
- the recognition of the signs of abuse;
- grooming techniques in the case of sexual abuse;
- practical ways to reduce the risk of abuse; and
- the reporting of known or suspected abuse to the civil authority and the church authority.

### **Ministry to those known or suspected of abuse**

5.3 Each Diocese<sup>14</sup> should have a system for ministry to those known or suspected of abuse who are currently participating or seek to participate in the life of a church community. The system should include the following elements:

- a process for assessing whether the participation of the person is or will be a risk to the safety of others;
- where the outcome of the assessment is that the person may participate in the life of the church community with restrictions, a process to ensure they abide by these restrictions such as a safety agreement or a group who monitors compliance with the restrictions;
- where the outcome of the assessment is that the person may not participate in the life of the church community, the offer to provide alternative ministry to the person (such as individual ministry to the person by a church worker); and
- where the person is known to have moved to a new church community in the Diocese or in another Diocese of the Province or in another church tradition, the disclosure of relevant information about the person to the leaders of that church community.

### **Monitoring compliance with safe church or safeguarding rules and policies**

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<sup>14</sup> As above.

5.4 Each Diocese or Ecclesiastical Province<sup>15</sup> should have a system for monitoring compliance with safe church or safeguarding rules and policies which should include the following elements:

- preparation of a report by a responsible and, where feasible, independent person at intervals of at least five years about the adoption and implementation of rules and policies that give effect to these guidelines; and
- publication of the report on the website of the province or the diocese, or otherwise making the report publicly available.

### **Review of safe church or safeguarding rules and policies**

5.5 Each Diocese or Ecclesiastical Province<sup>16</sup> should have a system for the review by a responsible and, where feasible, independent person, of their safe church or safeguarding rules and policies that give effect to these guidelines which should include the following elements:

- a report to the governing body of the province about the adequacy, and any recommendations for the enhancement of, safe church or safeguarding rules and policies, at intervals of at least every five years; and
- where there are complaints about the effectiveness or fairness of safe church or safeguarding rules and policies, a report to the governing body of the Diocese of Ecclesiastical Province about their adequacy and any recommendations for their enhancement.

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<sup>15</sup> As above. In Canada, the responsibility could be held within a Diocese or could feasibly be extended to Ecclesiastical Provinces.

<sup>16</sup> As above

## *Canadian Anglican Foundations to a Culture of Safety*

### *From: A Call to Human Dignity: A Statement of Principles for the Anglican Church of Canada on Dignity, Inclusion, and Fair Treatment*

*Adopted by Resolution #A130 of the General Synod 2001*

*We, as brothers and sisters in the Anglican Church of Canada, affirm God's call to a new humanity in Christ, a humanity that exists as one body with many parts, embracing every people, nation and language. We affirm our call to live as one body in a household where the doors are always open, and all are welcome and safe.*

*As further affirmation of our new humanity, we remember the covenant we made in our vows of baptism to:*

- Believe in God the Father, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and God the Holy Spirit;*
- Continue in the apostle's teaching and fellowship, the breaking of bread and prayers;*
- Resist evil, and whenever we fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord;*
- Proclaim the good news of God in Christ;*
- Seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving our neighbour as ourselves;*
- Strive for justice and peace and respect the dignity of every human being. <sup>1</sup>*

*While committing ourselves to these vows, we acknowledge that keeping them is difficult and requires costly sacrifice on our part.*

*Confronted by the sins and omissions of our past, we are ashamed that we have wandered from the way and rebelled against God. We have failed to proclaim the good news. We have fallen short in service to God and to our neighbours. The church is one body; when one part is wounded, the whole body suffers. Christ took on human flesh and made us one with him. When we hurt another human being, we hurt him. Yet we know that, just as he was one with us in his suffering, we are one with him in his resurrection. We receive God's forgiveness in all its richness and rejoice in God's gifts of healing and reconciliation; we are empowered by the Holy Spirit for fullness of life.*

*We have a responsibility to treat everyone in a way that is faithful to our call as a Christian people. Jesus sums up the commandments when he says to us, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbour as yourself." (Matthew 22:37-39)*

*All persons seeking spiritual care and nurture, as well as those pursuing employment and those people employed by our church shall be treated with courtesy, compassion, fairness and integrity by our church and its representatives or officials, without discrimination on the basis of age, sex, sexual orientation, family or marital status, race, colour, ethnic (or place of) origin, ancestry, disability, creed or social-economic status.*



## Definitions

**abuse** means behaviour which causes harm to another person, or is undertaken with the intention of causing harm to another person, or may place another person at the risk of harm. Types of abuse include:

- bullying;
- concealment of abuse;
- cyber abuse;
- emotional abuse;
- financial abuse;
- gender-based violence;
- harassment; neglect;
- physical abuse;
- sexual abuse;
- and spiritual abuse.

Abuse of children and young people is commonly called 'child abuse'. Abuse of a vulnerable adult can take many forms. Abuse in a family or domestic context is commonly called 'family violence' or 'domestic violence'.

**age of consent** means the age at which a person can legally consent to sexual activity. The age of consent varies in different countries. In some countries a person cannot legally consent to sexual activity unless they are married.

**allegations** means the allegations which are the subject of the complaint.

**authorised** means authorised by a licence or other similar authority.

**bullying** occurs where a church worker engages in behaviour directed to a person which is repeated, unreasonable (such as where it is victimising, humiliating, intimidating or threatening), and creates a risk to the person's health and safety. It includes:

- making derogatory, demeaning or belittling comments or jokes about someone's appearance, lifestyle, background, or capability;
- communicating in an abusive manner; spreading rumours or innuendo about someone or undermining in other ways their performance or reputation;
- dismissing or minimising someone's legitimate concerns or needs; inappropriately ignoring someone, or excluding someone from information or activities;
- touching someone threateningly or inappropriately;
- teasing someone, or playing pranks or practical jokes on someone;

- and displaying or distributing written or visual material that degrades or offends.

It does not consist of conduct of a church worker carried out in a reasonable manner, such as:

- disagreeing with or criticising someone's beliefs or opinions or actions in an honest and respectful way;
- giving information about inappropriate behaviour in an objective way to the person or people concerned and to any other person with a proper reason for having that information;
- setting reasonable performance goals, standards or deadlines;
- giving information about unsatisfactory performance in an honest and constructive way;
- and taking legitimate disciplinary action.

'**Cyberbullying**' is a form of bullying which involves the use of technology such as sending text messages and emails.

**Charter** means the *Charter for the Safety of People within the Churches of the Anglican Communion* which the Anglican Consultative Council adopted by resolution 15.09 passed in 2012, and the text of which is set out in Schedule 2.

**child** means anyone who under the applicable law has not attained their majority. In many countries a child is anyone under the age of 18 years. In some countries, where a distinction is made between children and young people, a child is anyone under the age of 16 years.

**church authority** means a diocesan bishop or a person or body having authority to ordain, license, elect, appoint, dismiss or suspend a church worker.

**child pornography** describes or depicts a person who is or who appears to be a child engaged in sexual activity, or in a sexual context. It can include any film, printed matter, electronic data, computer image and any other depiction.

**church community** means a parish or church organization in which ministry is undertaken.

**church workers** means clergy and lay workers.

**clergy** means bishops, priests and deacons of the church.

**clericalism** means clergy encouraging and taking advantage of deference to them.

**complainant** means a person who makes a complaint that they were abused or a person making a complaint on behalf of the primary victim.

**complaint** means a complaint of abuse against a church worker.

**concealment of abuse** means the failure without reasonable excuse to disclose known or suspected abuse by a church worker to the church authority or civil authority.

**civil authority** means the police or other authority to which a report of known or suspected abuse may or should be made.

**cyber abuse** occurs where a church worker engages in behaviour involving the use of technology which harms or threatens to harm a person socially, psychologically or physically. It can take place in various online spaces, like chat rooms, on social networking sites, through emails, messaging apps or on message boards. It includes a range of behaviours which are sometimes described as 'cyberbullying', 'cyberstalking', and 'image-based abuse'.

**emotional abuse** occurs where a church worker engages in behaviour directed to a person where the person suffers, or is likely to suffer, harm to their health and safety. It includes:

- making derogatory, demeaning or belittling comments, jokes or gestures about someone's appearance, lifestyle, background, or capability;
- ridiculing a person, including the use of insulting or derogatory terms to refer to them;
- and coercing, manipulating, threatening or intimidating a person.

It does not consist of conduct of a church worker carried out in a reasonable manner, such as:

- disagreeing with or criticising someone's beliefs or opinions or actions in an honest and respectful way;
- giving information about inappropriate behaviour in an objective way to the person or people concerned and to any other person with a proper reason for having that information;
- and taking legitimate disciplinary action.

**Emotional abuse** is commonly called 'psychological abuse'.

**financial abuse** occurs where a church worker seeks personal advantage or financial gain for themselves or their family from their position or from a ministry relationship, beyond their stipend or wage and recognised allowances. Where it involves theft it will

constitute a criminal offence. It includes soliciting a gift, whether monetary or otherwise, from a person with whom there is a ministry relationship.

**gender-based violence** means any act that is perpetrated against a person's will and is based on harmful gender norms and unequal power relationships. It encompasses threats of violence and coercion. It can be physical, emotional, psychological, or sexual in nature, and can take the form of a denial of resources or access to services. It inflicts harm on women, girls, men and boys.

**grooming** occurs where a church worker deliberately undertakes actions with the aim of engaging and influencing an adult or a child or young person for the purpose of sexual activity. In the case of a child or young person, the church worker may groom them and those close to them, such as parents, family members and other church workers, with the aim of having sexual activity with the child or young person. In the case of an adult, the church worker may groom the adult and those close to the adult such as family members, other church workers and church communities, with the aim of having sexual activity with the adult. Grooming commonly precedes other forms of sexual abuse and can involve contact involving the use of technology to build the relationship with the child or adult.

**harassment** occurs where a church worker engages in unwelcome conduct, whether intended or not, towards another person where the person feels with good reason offended, belittled or threatened. This behaviour may consist of a single incident or several incidents over a period of time. It includes:

- making unwelcome physical contact with a person;
- making gestures or using language that could reasonably give offence, including continual and unwarranted shouting; making unjustified or unnecessary comments about a person's capacities or attributes;
- putting on open display pictures, posters, graffiti or written materials that could reasonably give offence;
- making unwelcome communication with a person in any form such as phone calls, email, text messages; and stalking a person.

'Cyberstalking' is a form of harassment which involves the use of technology such as sending text messages and emails.

**image-based abuse** occurs where a church worker engages in the taking of, distribution of, or threat to distribute, intimate, nude and/or sexual images of another person without their consent. The images may be original and photoshopped photos, drawn pictures, and videos. It is called 'sexting' when technology is used to distribute the image. It is called 'sextortion' when the church worker tries to get sexual favours, money or something else, by threatening to reveal intimate images of the other person,

or requests money, additional images, or sexual favours for removing the images online.

**lay worker** means a lay person who:

- is authorised by the bishop of a diocese;
- is appointed, elected or employed by or on behalf of a church community;
- or as a volunteer, undertakes ministry in the church.

**ministry** means the work involved or the situation which exists when a church worker has responsibility as part of their role for the wellbeing of others.

**ministry relationship** means a relationship between a church worker and any person for the purposes of ministry.

**ministry suitability information** means a written statement by a church authority of a province about a church worker that discloses whether or not there has been, and, if there has, the substance of any allegation, charge, finding or admission of the commission of a criminal offence, or the breach of the province's rules regarding the conduct of church workers, including rules relating to sexual conduct and conduct towards children, young people and vulnerable adults.

**neglect** occurs when a church worker with responsibility for the welfare of another person fails without reasonable excuse to provide the basic necessities of life, so that the person's physical or mental health and development are placed at risk of harm. It includes being deprived of:

- food;
- clothing;
- shelter;
- hygiene;
- education;
- supervision and safety; and medical care.

Neglect can occur in a variety of situations such as a care home or day-care centre for vulnerable adults, a camp or residential facility or day-care centre for children and young people, a boarding house in a school, a hospital or a health clinic.

**physical abuse** occurs where a church worker commits an intentional or reckless act, uses force or threatens to use force causing injury to, or involving unwelcome physical contact with, another person. It includes:

- slapping;
- hitting;

- punching;
- shaking;
- choking;
- kicking;
- burning;
- shoving;
- and grabbing.

It does not include corporal punishment of a child where this is lawful.<sup>17</sup>

**primary victim** means the person who has been abused.

**Protocol** means the *Protocol for disclosure of ministry suitability information between the churches of the Anglican Communion* which the Anglican Consultative Council referred to in resolution 16.27 passed in 2016, and the text of which is set out in Schedule 3.

**province** refers to a member church of the Anglican Consultative Council., A national or local church which is under the direct metropolitan jurisdiction of the Archbishop of Canterbury is considered to be a province for the purpose of these guidelines.

**respondent** means a church worker against whom a complaint has been made.

**safe church** or **safeguarding** means policies and practices to promote the physical, emotional and spiritual wellbeing of all persons within the church, including children, young people and vulnerable adults.

**secondary victim** means other people who have suffered harm as a result of the abuse of the primary victim. They will be likely to include members of their family of the primary victim as well as members of the family of the abuser, other church workers and members of the church.

**sexual abuse** occurs where a church worker engages in any of the following conduct:

- grooming;
- image-based abuse;
- sexual assault;
- sexual exploitation;
- sexual harassment;
- or viewing, possessing, producing or distributing child pornography.

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<sup>17</sup> There are movements towards the criminalization of corporal punishment underway in Canada.

**sexual assault** occurs where a church worker engages in any intentional or reckless act, uses force or threatens to use force involving some form of sexual activity against a person without their consent, or with their consent in circumstances where consent is not a defence to such sexual activity under the applicable laws. Children who are under the age of consent, or any adult on their behalf, cannot consent to sexual activity. Sexual assault will normally constitute a criminal offence and includes:

- rape;
- touching a person in a sexual manner;
- and inviting, inducing, inciting or forcing a child, young person or vulnerable adult to touch themselves, the church worker or another person in a sexual manner.

**sexual exploitation** occurs where a church worker, who has a ministry relationship with an adult or child who is over the age of consent, invites them to engage in sexual activity, or engages in sexual activity with them with their consent. It does not matter that the adult or child made the invitation or initiated the sexual activity.

**sexual harassment** occurs where a church worker makes an unwelcome sexual advance, or an unwelcome request for sexual favours, to a person. It may consist of a single incident or several incidents over a period of time, and may involve different forms of communication such as phone calls, email, text messages and social media. It includes:

- asking for sex;
- making gestures, jokes or comments containing sexual references;
- and showing sexually explicit material.

**spiritual abuse** occurs where a church worker mistreats a person by actions or threats when justified by appeal to God, faith or religion. It includes:

- using a position of spiritual authority to dominate or manipulate another person or group;
- using a position of spiritual authority to seek inappropriate deference from others;
- ostracising a person from their church community;
- isolating a person from friends and family members;
- and using biblical or religious terminology to justify abuse.

**vulnerable adult** means an adult who by reason of an intellectual disability, mental illness or other impairment, age or other circumstance, has reduced capacity, whether permanently or temporarily, to protect themselves from abuse. This includes any adult who:

- is ministered to in their home;
- is dependent on one or more persons for support such as in the case of an accident, illness or birth of a child;
- experiences a life crisis or natural disaster, such as the death of a family member or loss of employment, or loss of home and possessions;
- and through poverty, war or civil strife, displacement, ethnicity, sexual orientation or gender, or other social and cultural factors has a diminished ability to protect themselves from abuse.

**young people** means people in a country where a distinction is made between children and young people who are not a child and have not attained their majority. In some countries they are people over the age of 16 years and under the age of 18 years.