



Diocesan Policy On Safe Environments

Updated on August 21, 2025

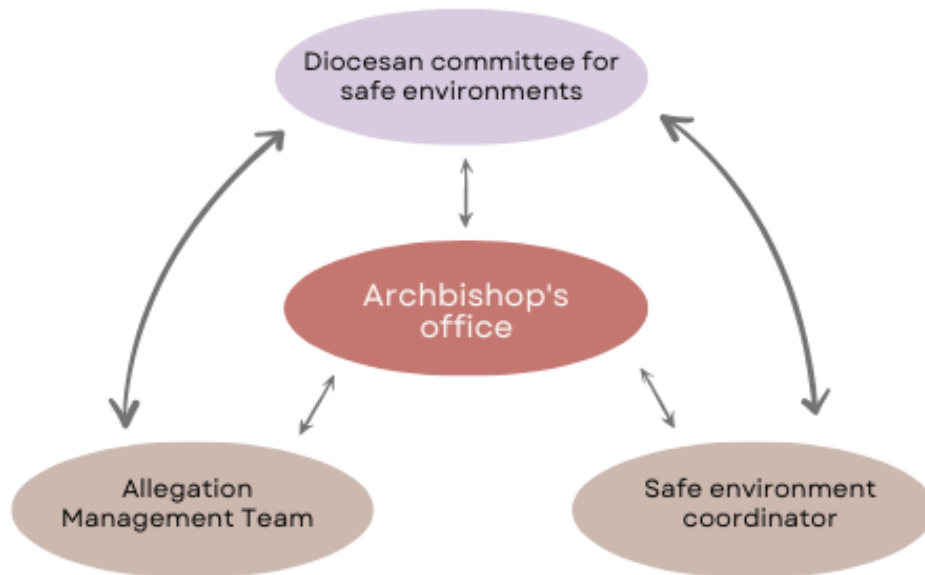
In July 2023, the Archbishop of Gatineau reorganised the structures for prevention and handling of allegations of sexual delicts, psychological harassment in the workplace and other forms of offences related to the Code of Ethics and Conduct.

This reorganization was motivated by the following elements:

- the benefit of having an integrated and holistic view of prevention and management of reported incidents in the diocese;
- the need for a unified and simple structure;
- the knowledge, awareness and expectations of all parishioners regarding ethical conduct;
- the need to revise policies to integrate best practices and comply with current legislation, both civil and canonical;
- the need for effective tools;
- the requirements of transparency and accountability;
- fair and prompt handling of reports;
- optimization of volunteer time;

Since that time, a Diocesan council for Safe Environments oversees an Allegation Management Team and the Safe Environment Coordinator.

The following organizational chart and related explanatory notes present the structure and roles of these organizations, as well as the relationships between them.



1. DIOCESAN COUNCIL FOR SAFE ENVIRONMENTS

Membership:

This council consists of

- a lay chairperson (not employed by the diocese or parishes);
- the Archbishop (who may be replaced by the Vicar General if necessary);
- at least three members of the diocese appointed by the Archbishop, one of whom chairs the meetings of the Allegation Management Team.
- the safe environment coordinator who acts as secretary to this committee.

Mandate:

- Regularly update reference documents to comply with legislative and regulatory requirements and emerging best practices.
- Ensure transparency in all communications with members of the diocese, its communities and movements, as well as the broader public.
- Ensure the application of diocesan policies/guidelines decrees on safe environments by accompanying the Allegation Management Team and the Safe Environment Coordinator.

- Receive reports from the chair of the Allegation Management Team and provide advice, opinions or recommendations on current issues.
- Identify and respond to its own training needs.
- Maintain the necessary links with the CCCB, the AÉCQ and any other relevant body.

The committee meets at least twice a year.

2. ALLEGATION MANAGEMENT TEAM

Membership:

This team consists of:

- a lay chair (not an employee of the archdiocese or its parishes) who chairs the meetings and coordinates and facilitates them and reports back to the *Diocesan Council for Safe Environments*;
- the bishop's delegate responsible for the process as set out in the *Treatment Protocol for Allegations of Sexual Delicts with a Minor in an Ecclesial Context* and the *Treatment Protocol for Allegations of Sexual Delicts with a Vulnerable Adult in an Ecclesial Context*;
- the archdiocesan human resources technician, responsible for managing allegations of workplace harassment as set out in the *Treatment Protocol of Breaches of the Code of Ethics and Conduct, including Workplace Harrassment*;
- the Vicar General, responsible for managing allegations of any other offences related to the archdiocesan *Code of Ethics and Conduct* as set out in the *Treatment Protocol of Breaches of the Code of Ethics and Conduct, including Workplace Harrassment*;;
- the bursar;
- the chancellor;
- a civil lawyer;
- one or two parishioners of the diocese;
- a spokesperson, who may be chosen among the other members of the team.

The archbishop will designate a secretary from among the members of the team. If necessary, the team can add members on an *ad hoc* basis to deal with specific cases.

Mandate:

- Receive training on established procedures regarding the treatment of allegations.

- Propose revisions to policies/guidelines and other documents as required.
- Develop the resources necessary for optimizing procedures regarding the handling of allegations.
- Ensure the dissemination of reference documents and procedures regarding the handling of allegations.
- In accordance with reference documents (protocols and policies), receive and process allegations relating to
 - sexual delicts or misconduct,
 - psychological harassment in the workplace,
 - other offences related to the *Code of Ethics and Conduct*.
- Advise the archbishop of their recommendations following the analysis of allegations.
- Identify the procedures for archiving reports, analyses and recommendations made for each complaint.
- Offer support as needed to parish leaders (priests, respondents for safe environments, volunteer managers, etc.) as they treat allegations of psychological harassment or other offences related to the *Code of Ethics and Conduct*.

The team meets according to the needs of its mandate or each time an allegation is reported.

3. SAFE ENVIRONMENT COORDINATOR

The Safe Environment Coordinator is named by the Archbishop.

Mandate:

- Act as secretary of the Diocesan Councils for Safe Environments
- Ensure the ongoing implementation of “*For the Sake of the Little Ones... Protect Minors and Vulnerable Adults*” and the *Policy for the Prevention of Psychological Harassment in the Workplace* in parish environments.
- Set up an advisory committee for implementation; convene it when necessary and chair it.
- Collaborate with parish respondents for safe environments to identify needs and ensure the relevance of tools for implementing safeguarding measures.
- Coordinate the on line formation offered by the Canadian Centre for the Protection of Children and maintain a registry of participants;
- Direct the search of criminal records according to established practices and maintain an up-to-date register;

- Prepare training workshops according to the needs expressed and the objectives pursued, for employees, volunteers, priests and committees.
- Participate in the regular revision of policies and prepare relevant resources;
- Ensure that documents pertaining to the implementation of diocesan policies is published on the diocesan website.

4. THE ARCHBISHOP'S OFFICE

According to the structures of canon and civil law, the archbishop bears ultimate responsibility for the safety of the environment and the sound management of allegations. However, he cannot carry out this responsibility in isolation; he needs other members of the diocese who, each according to his or her skills, make an indispensable contribution in this area. The Archbishop works in collaboration with the Diocesan Council for Safe Environments, the Allegation Management Team and the Safe Environments Coordinator in a spirit of solidarity, transparency and shared responsibility.

While the bishop himself is instrumental in creating within his diocese or eparchy a culture of safety, he exercises this ministry in cooperation with others by respecting secular laws and civil authorities and by virtue of his communion with the universal Church, his fellow bishops, and the faithful entrusted to his pastoral care. (CCCB, *Protection minors from Sexual Abuse*, p. 65)

Paul-André Durocher, Archbishop of

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