

Screening Policy and Procedures for Students, Volunteers and Staff

1 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to help create a safe environment for all vulnerable people, by providing requirements and guidelines for screening procedures for students, learning facilitators, vocational mentors, and staff with the Centre for Christian Studies.

2. Background

“Duty of Care” is a legal principle that identifies the obligations of individuals and organizations to take reasonable measures to care for and protect the interests of the other, especially those who are vulnerable. CCS could be deemed, through the courts, to hold vicarious liability for the actions of those who function on its behalf.

Screening intends to create and maintain a safe environment for all. This involves assessing risk in the applicant and the work/learning situation, clarifying appropriate ethical and legal boundaries and regular supervision, evaluation and reporting and when necessary, dismissal or denial of admission or employment. Ongoing screening is conducted through activities like, facilitation, mentoring, peer feedback, probationary periods, performance reviews and self-evaluation.

3. Policy

CCS screens students, volunteers and staff to ensure to the extent possible the safety of vulnerable people.

Screening may include written applications, confidential references which provide input from sources familiar with the person, their background and context, an interview, orientations and/or a Vulnerable Sector (level 2) Police Records Check (PRC) and Child Abuse Registry Check (CARC).

A Vulnerable Sector (level 2) Police Records Check and Child Abuse Registry Check issued within the previous 12 months must be obtained by the student and staff applicant at his/her expense. CCS will accept only an original of the Vulnerable Sector (level 2) Police Records Check and Child Abuse Registry Check. The PRC and CARC are the property of the student or staff and will not be kept on file by the Centre after being viewed. The Centre will document receipt, review, acceptance and return of the PRC and CARC.

Refusal to provide a PRC and CARC will disqualify the applicant.

All those who participate in the screening processes, and especially those who have access to documentation such as Vulnerable Sector (level 2) Police Records Check (PRC) and Child Abuse Registry Check (CARC), applications and references are bound by confidentiality. Inappropriate release of sensitive information is a serious violation of trust and responsibility.

4 Screening Processes for Students

4.1 Assessment of Risk

CCS students gather primarily in two types of community: the gathered community of co-students and staff, meeting together in Learning Circles; and the learning community which includes field placements in church or community settings. Risk is high in field settings where students may be vulnerable and may be interacting with vulnerable people and relatively low in Learning Circles where most of the work takes place in the presence of staff and other students.

4.2 Summary of Screening Process for Leadership Module, Diploma and Year Long Certificate Students at Admission

1. Because it is relatively low risk, no specialized screening process will be in place for the Leadership Development Module. If cautions are raised by a student's application a screening interview may be held with the applicant to address those issues.
2. The application process for students into the Diploma or Year Long Certificate Program involves a narrative application form and confidential written references. If cautions are raised by the application a screening interview may be held with the applicant to address those issues.
3. Students will be accepted into the Diploma or Year Long Certificate Program pending viewing of a Vulnerable Sector (level 2) Police Records Check and Child Abuse Registry Check issued within the previous 12 months at his/her expense. This must happen for full acceptance into the program and must be done before a student can begin a field placement, attend a Learning Circle or take any courses as part of their CCS work. CCS will accept only an original of the Vulnerable Sector (level 2) Police Records Check and Child Abuse Registry Check. The Principal will document receipt, review, acceptance and return of the PRC and CARC. If the applicant is at a distance that makes it difficult for the original to be seen by the Principal, certification on a form provided by CCS of seeing the original can be sent with a copy of the PRC and CARC by the United Church Presbytery Education and Students Convener (or equivalent) or the Bishop of the Diocese in which the applicant lives or the applicant can send a copy notarized by a Notary Public.
4. If the Vulnerable Sector (level 2) Police Records Check and Child Abuse Registry Check reveals prohibiting factors the applicant is disqualified from admission. If the assessment reveals possible prohibiting factors a decision on admission is made by the Review Team. (See Appendix 1)
6. Students will receive orientation to CCS policies and standards regarding issues like harassment, abuse and misconduct and will sign a document acknowledging the receipt of these policies and agreement to comply with them.

4.3 Summary of Ongoing Screening Process for Students

1. Documented peer and staff assessment.
2. In the field placement setting, regular facilitation meetings, written assessments, including input from volunteers/co-workers, staff contact with field placement volunteers/staff.
3. Periodic examination of CCS policies and standards regarding issues like harassment, abuse and misconduct.
4. Student self-reflection on curriculum topics such as ethics, power, boundaries and abuse.
5. Normally, only one initial Vulnerable Sector (level 2) Police Records Check (PRC) and Child Abuse Registry Check (CARC) will be required for students. The majority of students will complete the three field placements in a period of 3 to 4 years. If a student takes longer than four years to complete the program, a refreshed PRC and CARC will be required before the beginning of a fifth year in the program, ONLY if there is a field placement to be completed.

4.4 Prohibiting Factors to Admission or Continuance as a Student

Normally, a student would be prohibited from entering or continuing in the program if there is any conviction, in criminal or civil court, within the past five years, for any violent crime, sex related crime, child abuse.

In the case of other convictions (for example, drug or alcohol related crimes, theft, disturbing the peace) or for convictions for any violent crime, sex related crime or child abuse that are more than 5 years old, the case will be reviewed and a decision will be made as to whether these convictions constitute prohibiting factors.

4.5 Assessment of Prohibiting Factors for students by the Review Team

If the admission or ongoing screening process reveals a criminal record with convictions constituting prohibiting or possible prohibiting factors, the applicant/student will be informed by the Principal that prohibiting factors may disqualify them from the program. If a record is disclosed, the student may be required to provide further documentation detailing the actual conviction(s) and its disposition from the courts.

The applicant/student will meet with a Review Team, consisting of the Principal and the Chair of the Program Committee or their designate, to discuss the convictions to determine the circumstances, evidence of remorse, steps taken to remedy the situation or make restitution and rehabilitative treatment undertaken. The applicant/student may choose, or have appointed, a support person for this process. The Review Team will

determine if the convictions constitute prohibiting factors or not and document their decision. The decision of the Review Team will be final. The Review Team will give attention to the pastoral care needs of the applicant/student and may make an appropriate referral for pastoral follow-up.

4.6 Record Storage and Access for students

The Vulnerable Sector (level 2) Police Records Check and Child Abuse Registry Check submitted by the applicant/student are the property of the student and will be returned to the student.

Any decisions made by a Review Team will be documented for the student file. Supporting documentation will be stored in a sealed envelope in the applicant/student's file. This documentation will be destroyed when a student graduates from the Centre.

5 Screening Processes for Learning Facilitators and Vocational Mentors

5.1 Assessment of Risk

Learning Facilitators and Vocational Mentors work with students directly, often in close one-on-one relationships. Facilitators and Mentors are involved (along with others) of assessing the student's completion of their field placement and making recommendations to staff for decisions. Both parties are adults and students have primary Program Staff people to whom they relate. Because the risk is low in these relationships, the screening process for Learning Facilitators and Vocational Mentors is not complex.

5.2 Summary of Screening Process Learning Facilitators and Vocational Mentors

1. A personal interview with staff and orientation session to the work of CCS and their roles, normally done by a CCS staff member.
2. Orientation to CCS policies and standards regarding issues like harassment, abuse and misconduct and a signed document acknowledging the receipt of these policies and agreement to comply with them.

5.3 Summary of ongoing screening for Learning Facilitators and Mentors

1. Direct contact from staff through out the year.
2. Staff inquiring for confidential input from students and/or volunteers.
3. Periodic examination of CCS policies and standards regarding issues like harassment, abuse and misconduct.

5.4 Record Storage and Access for Learning Facilitators and Mentors

The Centre will retain a copy of any relevant documentation for as long as that Facilitator/Mentor is acting in that role. If the Facilitator/Mentor is deemed ineligible the

decision and rationale will be kept in a confidential file related to potential Facilitators/Mentors for five years and then destroyed.

6. Screening Processes for Volunteers Who Sign Cheques and Legal Documents

6.1 Assessment of Risk

Signers of cheques and legal documents have access to documents and processes that could be manipulated for personal gain so are medium risk. Refusal to participate in any of the screening process will disqualify the potential signer.

6.2 Summary of Screening Process for Volunteers Who Sign Cheques and Legal Documents

1. A personal interview with staff or with a member of the Council Recruitment and Development Committee.
2. Vulnerable Sector (level 2) Police Records Check (PRC). CCS will accept only an original of the Vulnerable Sector (level 2) Police Records Check. The Principal will document receipt, review, acceptance and return of the PRC.
3. If prohibiting factors are revealed, the potential volunteer is disqualified. If the assessment reveals possible prohibiting factors, a decision is made by the Review Team.
4. Orientation to CCS policies and standards regarding issues like harassment, abuse and misconduct and conflict of interest and a signed document acknowledging the receipt of these policies and agreement to comply with them.

6.3 Summary of ongoing screening for Volunteers Who Sign Cheques and Legal Documents

1. Direct contact from staff through out the year.
2. Use of two signers for transaction of business.
3. Periodic examination of CCS policies and standards regarding issues like harassment, abuse and misconduct and conflict of interest.

6.4 Prohibiting Factors for Volunteers Who Sign Cheques and Legal Documents

Normally, volunteer would be prohibited from serving as a signer of cheques and legal documents if there is any conviction, in criminal or civil court, within the past five years, for any violent crime, theft, or corruption crime.

In the case of other convictions (for example, drug or alcohol related crimes, disturbing the peace) or for convictions for any violent crime that are more than 5 years old, the case will be reviewed and a decision will be made as to whether these convictions constitute prohibiting factors.

6.5 Assessment of Prohibiting Factors for Volunteers Who Sign Cheques and Legal Documents

If the selection or ongoing screening process reveals a criminal record with convictions constituting prohibiting or possible prohibiting factors, the volunteer will be informed by a staff person that prohibiting factors may disqualify them from signing cheques. If a record is disclosed, the volunteer may be required to provide further documentation detailing the actual conviction(s) and its disposition from the courts.

The volunteer will meet with a Review Team, consisting of any two of the following; Principal, Chair of the Finance Committee, or their designate or member of the Finance Committee; to discuss the convictions to determine the circumstances, evidence of remorse, steps taken to remedy the situation or make restitution and rehabilitative treatment undertaken. The volunteer may choose, or have appointed, a support person for this process. The Review Team will determine if the convictions constitute prohibiting factors or not and document their decision. The decision of the Review Team will be final. The Review Team will give attention to the pastoral care needs of the volunteer and perhaps make an appropriate referral for pastoral follow-up.

6.6 Record Storage and Access for Volunteers Who Sign Cheques and Legal Documents

The Police Record Check submitted by the volunteer are the property of the volunteer and will be returned to them. The Centre will retain a copy of the documentation resulting from a Review Team decision for as long as that signer is acting in that role. If the signer is deemed ineligible the decision and rationale will be kept in a confidential file related to potential cheque and legal signers for five years and then destroyed.

7. Screening Process for Other Volunteers

CCS will assess the risk for other volunteers and apply a screening process based on the principles in this policy appropriate to the risk.

Volunteers having on-going direct interaction and involvement with students of CCS are normally required to provide a current Vulnerable Sector (level 2) Police Records Check (PRC).

8 Screening Processes for Staff

8.1 Definition of Staff

For purposes of this screening process staff means those in permanent full time or part time employment, contracted or temporary staff that have direct interaction and involvement with students for a period of more than two weeks or contracted or temporary staff who have access to financial systems for more than six months. Any accounting firms contracted by CCS for financial services must be bonded, and therefore it would not be necessary to follow the specific procedures outlined in this document for

such contracts. CCS may utilize these procedures with other kinds of staff if the assessment of risk deems it necessary.

9.2 Assessment of Risk

Among CCS staff there are those who work directly with students, those who have direct access to the CCS financial management system and finances and, those involved with soliciting financial support from people, including the elderly. Because of the small nature of the CCS staff almost all the staff are engaged in at least one of these activities. Because of this, and to ease administration in a volunteer organization, the same screening procedure will be used for all staff.

Refusal to participate in any of the screening process will disqualify the applicant.

9.3 Summary of Screening Process for staff at hiring

1. Written application.
2. Confidential written or oral references.
3. A personal interview.
4. A recommendation to hire is made by the Search Committee or Principal pending viewing of the Vulnerable Sector (level 2) Police Records Check (PRC) and Child Abuse Registry Check (CARC). The PRC and CARC will be seen by two members of the Human Resources Committee prior to the recommendation going to Central Council. The Committee will indicate that the PRC and CARC have been seen by 2 committee members. The originals will be returned to the staff person or contractor.
5. If the PRC or CARC reveals prohibiting factors the applicant is disqualified from employment. If the assessment reveals possible prohibiting factors, then a decision regarding recommendation for hiring is made by the Search Committee or Principal.
6. Orientation to CCS policies and standards regarding issues like harassment, abuse and misconduct and a signed document acknowledging the receipt of these policies and agreement to comply with them.

9.4 Summary of ongoing screening for staff

1. Probationary period of employment.
2. Regular performance reviews, including confidential input from staff peers, students and/or volunteers.
3. The PRC and CARC must be renewed every three (3) years from the date of the last issue. It is the responsibility of the staff person or contractor to provide a new PRC and CARC prior to the expiry date of the previous documents.
4. Periodic examination of the CCS policies and standards regarding issues like harassment, abuse and misconduct.

9.5 Human Resources Committee

1. The Human Resources Committee shall make notation on the employee's file, or in the case of a contractor, on the CCS copy of the contract the date on which the PRC and CARC were provided and the dates of expiry of the PRC and CARC. Except as specified

elsewhere in this document, no other documentation concerning the PRC and CARC shall be recorded.

2. The staff person or contractor will sign a form provided that will indicate that the PRC and CARC have been witnessed by representatives of Human Resources Committee and that the staff person or contractor has signed that the PRC and CARC have been returned to them.

3. Confidentiality: Human Resources Committee members must not disclose the contents of any person's Police Records Check, Child Abuse Registry Check, or certificate of conviction to any individual outside the Human Resources Committee and only to committee members during scheduled meeting for the specific purpose of screening.

9.6 Prohibiting Factors for Staff

1. The following shall be deemed prohibiting factors:
 - a. any conviction, in criminal or civil court, within the past five years, for any violent crime, sex related crime, or child abuse, or
 - b. any conviction, in criminal or civil court, within the past five years, for fraud, theft, or breach of trust.
2. The following shall be deemed potential prohibiting factors;
 - a. any conviction, in criminal or civil court, for a violent crime, sex related crime or child abuse which is more than five years old, or
 - b. any conviction, in criminal or civil court, for fraud, theft, or breach of trust, which is more than five years old, or
 - c. any conviction, in criminal or civil court, for disturbing the peace.

9.7 Assessment of Prohibiting Factors for Staff

1. Applicants in the Search Process:

If the search or ongoing screening process reveals a criminal record with convictions constituting prohibiting or possible prohibiting factors, the applicant/staff will be informed by the Chair of the Search Committee or their designate, or the Chair of the Human Resources Committee, or their designate, as appropriate, that prohibiting factors may disqualify them from employment or continued employment. If a record is disclosed, the applicant/staff may be required to provide further documentation detailing the actual conviction(s) and its disposition from the courts.

The applicant/staff will meet with a Review Team, consisting of Chair of the Search Committee or their designate, and the Chair of the Human Resources Committee or their designate and another member of the Human Resources Committee, as appropriate, to discuss the convictions to determine the circumstances, evidence of remorse, steps taken to remedy the situation or make restitution and rehabilitative treatment undertaken. The applicant/staff may choose, or have appointed, a support person for this process. The Review Team will determine if the convictions constitute prohibiting factors or not and

document their decision. In the case of a potential employee, the decision of the Review Team will be final. In the case of an existing employee, if the decision of the Review Team is for termination of the employee, the decision of the Review Team will be presented to the Central Council or its Executive for ratification. The Review Team will give attention to the pastoral care needs of the applicant/staff and perhaps make an appropriate referral for pastoral follow-up.

2. Current Employees

Where the PRC or CARC presented by the staff person or contractor indicates prohibiting factors or potential prohibiting factors, as set out above, the individual will be required to meet with 2 members of the Human Resources Committee, or their designate, to discuss further actions to be taken.

Where the PRC or CARC indicated a prohibiting factor or possible prohibiting factors:

- a. the staff person or contractor will be informed by the Chairperson of the Human Resources Committee or their designate, that prohibiting factors may disqualify them from continuing employment;
- b. the staff person or contractor must immediately report to Human Resources Committee whenever they have been charged with any criminal offense, in any jurisdiction;
- c. the staff person or contractor may be required to provide further documentation detailing the actual conviction(s) and the disposition of the conviction(s) from the courts;
- d. the existence of a previous conviction may not cause automatic suspension, dismissal, discipline or other penalty. It does require explanation and conversation and, in some cases, verification.

3. A Review Team, consisting of the Chairperson of the Human Resources Committee or their designate and another member of the Human Resources Committee will be established ad hoc to deal with situations where a PRC or CARC indicates potential prohibiting factors.

4. The staff person or contractor will be required to meet with the Review Team to discuss the circumstances of the conviction, steps taken to remedy the situation or make restitution and rehabilitative treatment undertaken.

5. The staff person or contractor may choose, or choose to have appointed, a support person for this process at their own expense.

6. The Review Team will determine if the convictions constitute prohibiting factors, assess evidence of remorse, and document their decision.

7. Normally, a staff person or a contractor who works directly with students, or who solicits financial support, will be dismissed if there is any conviction, in criminal or civil court, within the past five years, for any violent crime, sex related crime, or child abuse.

8. Normally, a staff person or contractor who works directly with finances will be dismissed if there is any conviction, in criminal or civil court, within the past five years, for fraud, theft, or breach of trust.
9. In the case of other convictions, including but not limited to, drug or alcohol related crimes, theft, disturbing the peace, or for convictions for any violent crime, sex related crime or child abuse, fraud, theft or breach of trust, that are more than five years old, the case will be reviewed and a decision will be made to whether these convictions constitute prohibiting factors.
10. Where the decision of the Review Team is for termination of the employee or termination of the contract, the decision will be presented to the Central Council or its Executive for ratification.
11. The staff person or contractor will be suspended without pay for the period between the time the Review Team reaches its decision and the ratification by the Central Council. If the decision is not ratified, the individual will be reimbursed for the withheld benefits.
12. The Review Team will give attention to the pastoral care needs of the person or contractor.
13. Where the Review Team determines the conviction (s) do not constitute prohibiting factors, the staff person or contractor will be advised of the decision and no further action shall be required.

9.8 Records Storage and Access for staff

The PRC and CARC submitted by the applicant/staff are the property of the applicant/staff and will be returned to them.

All documentation pertaining to the action of the Review Team will be kept in the staff person/contractor's off-site employment file until such time as that file is discarded or archived, at which time the documentation will be shredded.

Appendix 1

Review Teams

When potential prohibiting factors are discerned a Review Team is constituted to determine the merit of the factors. The Review Team is to meet with the individual and

discuss the convictions to determine the circumstances, evidence of remorse, steps taken to remedy the situation or make restitution and rehabilitative treatment undertaken and make a decision/recommendation of action.

Students / Program Applicants

The applicant/student will meet with a Review Team, consisting of the Principal and the Chair of the Program Committee or their designate.

Volunteers

Cheque Signers

The cheque signing volunteer will meet with a Review Team, consisting of any two of the following; Principal, Chair of the Finance Committee, or their designate or member of the Finance Committee

Other Volunteers

The volunteer will meet with a Review Team, consisting of any two of the following; Principal, the co-chairs of Central Council, or their designate.

Staff / Job Applicants

The applicant/staff will meet with a Review Team, consisting of Chair of the Search Committee or their designate, and the Chair of the Human Resources Committee or their designate and another member of the Human Resources Committee, as appropriate.