

Society of Saint Vincent de Paul Policy # 14

Greater Toronto Central Council

Policy: Membership – Vincentians, and Guidelines for Perspective Members under the age of 18

Policy # 14 **Number of Pages:** 2

Approved By: Board of Directors, Management

Date of Review: February 13, 2023

Date of Approval: August 2003

References: Vulnerable Reference Check Policy #7
Member Screening and Risk Management Policy #15

Statement:

The Society of Saint Vincent de Paul Greater Toronto Central Council is committed to ensuring that volunteer members known as “Vincentians” are properly screened, trained and oriented. All persons who interact with Neighbours in Need, attend meetings and participate in Conference activities must successfully complete all aspects of the screening process. For the purpose of this policy, the term “member” and “Vincentian” can be used to describe one and the same.

Member or Vincentian:

A **member or Vincentian** of the Society is defined as a person who:

- has met all screening requirements including the Application, Interview, Service Covenant, Criminal Reference Check, and completed the Orientation sessions as referenced in the Screening and Risk Management Policy;
- continues to abide by the Risk Management Rules as described in the Screening and Risk Management Policy;
- is a member of a conference, committee or the Board of Greater Toronto Central Council;
- participates in Conference meetings, events, and opportunities for learning sessions, workshops, and special meetings;
- abides by the policies of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul Greater Toronto Central Council, and continues to work in the best interests of those in need and the Society;
- must be over 16 years of age, but members who are 16 or 17 years old must abide by the Guidelines for Members under 18 years of Age below.

Documentation:

Maintenance of Vincentian Membership files:

A membership file for each Vincentian will be maintained securely at the Greater Toronto Central Council head office. Any member wishing to review their file will make appropriate arrangements with the Executive Director. Conferences do not maintain Vincentian files, beyond current contact information for the purposes of serving in their local Conference.

The file will include:

- an original letter from a local police services indicating that there is no information on file with regard to a completed Vulnerable Sector police records check; or an appropriate entry on the Application/Information form regarding the decision of the Executive Director related to a positive police check;
- a copy of the Member Information or Application for Membership form;
- a signed Service Covenant;
- references and any correspondence related to the person's membership status;
- a signed Vulnerable Sector Declaration as requested, from time to time.

The file may include:

- other relevant information or documents included with the member's permission.

Guidelines for Members Under 18 Years of Age:

Where a young person under 18 years of age wishes to apply for membership, the decision to approve membership rests with the Conference president. However, the Conference president is asked to follow these guidelines, which have been designed to serve the best interests of those being served, the Conference and the member themselves.

- An applicant under age 16 will not be considered for membership.
- In most cases, a 16 or 17-year-old person will only be considered for membership if a close family member is currently an active member of that Conference.
- The young applicant will meet all the requirements for membership (as listed in this Membership Policy), except for obtaining a Police Records Check (which is not available for people under the age of 18).
- The President and Interviewer must be convinced that the applicant has the appropriate maturity and motivation to serve those in need.
- The young member will be accompanied by the Vincentian family member on all home visits.
- Before accompanying the family member on home visitations, that member will verify that the families being visited are not known to the young person through school or work.
- The family member will ensure that the young person fully appreciates the importance of keeping all information about the persons we serve, in confidence.

This membership requirement is in no way meant to prevent or discourage young people from service to Neighbours in Need through activities of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul as general volunteers. We continue to welcome and value the involvement of young people in activities such as Bundle Weekends and Christmas assistance programs.