

## CHAPTER 140.

## BAPTISMS AND BURIALS REGISTRATION.

[No. I of 1843.]

[21st January, 1843.]

Short title.

1. This Ordinance may be cited as the Baptisms and Burials Registration Ordinance.

Interpretation.

2. In this Ordinance, unless the context otherwise requires,—

“ officiating minister ” means a clergyman of any religious denomination;

“ chapel ” means any place of religious worship.

*Original registers of baptisms and burials.*

Registers of baptisms and burials and form thereof.

3.—(1) From and after the commencement of this Ordinance, registers of public and private baptisms and burials solemnized and performed according to the rites of the Church of England, the Church of Scotland, the Dutch Reform Church, the Lutheran Church, and the Roman Catholic Church, and of any dissenting congregations in the colony, shall be made and kept by the rector, vicar, curate, or officiating minister for the time being of every parish or chapelry where the ceremonies of baptism and burial have been usually, and according to law may be, performed, in books of parchment strongly bound or of good and durable paper, to be provided out of public funds as occasion requires.

(2) In those books shall be printed upon each side of every leaf the heads of information herein required to be entered in the register of baptisms and burials respectively, and each entry shall be numbered progressively from the beginning to the end of each book, the first entry to be distinguished by number one; and each entry shall be divided from the entry next following by a printed line, according to forms 1 and 2 in the schedule hereto; and every page of each book shall be numbered with progressive numbers, the first page being marked with number

Schedule ; forms 1 and 2.

one in the middle of the upper part of the page, and every subsequent page being marked in like manner with progressive numbers from number one to the end of the book.

4. A printed copy of this Ordinance, together with one book so prepared as aforesaid and adapted to the form of the register of baptisms prescribed in form 1, and also one other book so prepared as aforesaid and adapted to the form prescribed for the register of burials in form 2, shall, as soon as conveniently may be after the commencement of this Ordinance, be provided and transmitted to the rector, vicar, curate, or officiating minister of the several parishes and chapelries in the colony, who shall use and apply them in and to the purposes of this Ordinance, and from time to time procure other books of similar form and quality for the like or other necessary purposes whenever they are required.

Register books.

5. The registers shall be kept in the separate books aforesaid, and every rector, vicar, curate, or officiating minister shall, as soon as may be practicable after the solemnization of every public or private baptism, or burial respectively, record and enter, in a fair and legible handwriting, in the proper register book the several particulars described in forms 1 and 2; and the rector, vicar, curate, or officiating minister making the entry shall affix his name thereto in words at length.

Recording baptisms and burials in separate register books.

6.—(1) Whenever the ceremony of baptism or burial is performed in any place other than the parish church or churchyard of a parish, or the chapel or chapelyard of any chapelry providing its own distinct register, and that ceremony is performed by any minister who is not the rector, vicar, curate or officiating minister of that parish or chapelry, the minister who performs the ceremony shall, as soon as practicable thereafter, transmit to the rector, vicar, curate, or officiating minister of that parish or chapelry a certificate of the baptism or burial; and the rector, vicar, curate, or officiating minister of that parish or chapelry shall thereupon enter the baptism or burial, according to the certificate, in the book to be kept pursuant to this Ordinance for the purpose of that entry, and shall add to the entry the following words:— “ According to the certificate of the Reverend \_\_\_\_\_ dated \_\_\_\_\_

Certificates in cases of baptism or burial performed in other place than parish church or churchyard.

transmitted to me on the \_\_\_\_\_  
 day of \_\_\_\_\_ 1 .”

(2) The rector, vicar, curate, or officiating minister receiving the certificate shall write upon the form thereof his Christian name and surname, with the words—" This is the certificate of the Reverend \_\_\_\_\_ referred to in the foregoing entry;" and the original certificate shall be annexed either to the same or to the next succeeding leaf of the book wherein the entry referring thereto is made.

Custody of  
register  
books.

7.—(1) The several books wherein such entries as aforesaid are respectively made shall be deemed to belong to each parish respectively, and shall be kept by and remain in the power and custody of the rector or other officiating minister of that parish or chapel, and shall be by him safely and securely kept in a dry chest, to be provided and repaired as occasion may require at the expense of the public.

(2) The chest containing the books shall be constantly kept locked in some dry, safe, and secure place within the church or chapel; and none of the books shall be taken or removed from the chest at any time, or for any cause whatever, except for the purpose of making the aforesaid entries therein, or for the inspection of those desirous to search them or to obtain copies from or out of them, or to be inspected as to their state and condition, or for some of the purposes of this Ordinance; and immediately after making the respective entries, or producing the books respectively for the purposes aforesaid, they shall be forthwith again safely and securely deposited in the chest.

*Duplicate registers of baptisms and burials.*

Duplicate  
register  
books.

8.—(1) Every rector, vicar, curate, or officiating minister, in the several parishes throughout the colony, in the month of January in each and every year, shall make, or cause to be made, in strong and well bound books of good and durable paper, duplicate books of the registries of baptisms and burials which have been celebrated in the parish or chapelry in which he resides; and the duplicate books shall contain entries of all the entries of baptisms and burials which have been entered in the original registers required by this Ordinance to be kept, with duplicates of the certificates, if any, contained in the original books of registry of baptisms and burials which have not been performed by the rector, vicar, curate, or officiating minister, of the particular parish or chapelry.

(2) On the completion of the duplicate books, the rector, vicar, curate, or officiating minister of the parish or chapelry who has transcribed them shall, on or before the first day of March in each and every year, transmit them to the parish for which they have been compiled, if that parish be situate in Berbice to the clerk in charge of the New Amsterdam branch of the deeds registry, or if that parish be situate in the county of Demerara or Essequibo to the registrar of deeds, to be on their receipt deposited by those respective officers in the archives of the registry.

Custody.

(3) Each rector, vicar, curate, or officiating minister shall, before their transmission aforesaid, verify the contents of the duplicate books according to form 3 in the schedule hereto; and that form shall be written in the duplicate book and signed by the rector, vicar, curate, or officiating minister, of the parish or chapelry from which the duplicate register is so transmitted.

Verification.  
Schedule;  
form 3.

(4) The duplicate books when so transmitted shall be deemed to be in legal custody, and upon payment of the sum of fifty cents for every search therein and for every certified extract therefrom, anyone shall be entitled to search them at any time between the hours of ten o'clock in the morning and four o'clock in the afternoon; (Sundays, Christmas Day, and Good Friday excepted), and to obtain from the officer having their custody a certified extract therefrom.

Searches and  
extracts.

(5) The officer having the custody of the duplicate books shall certify every extract therefrom delivered by him by signing the extract, or causing it to be signed, either himself or by his lawful deputy, and shall cause the extract to be sealed or stamped with the seal of his office.

Certifying  
extracts.

(6) The extract purporting to be so stamped, shall be received as evidence, in all civil cases, of the contents thereof, without the production in evidence by the officer of the duplicate book.

#### *Miscellaneous Provisions.*

9.—(1) If a rector or an officiating minister in any parish or chapelry in the colony discovers any error to have been committed in the form or substance of any entry in the register book of baptisms or burials in his parish, he shall, as soon as practicable after the discovery of the error, alter and correct it in the presence of a majority of the vestry of the parish in which he is resident, and the majority of the vestry of that parish shall be present at and shall attest the correction of the error.

Correction  
of error in  
register  
book:

(2) The erroneous entry shall be corrected according to the truth of the case and the correction made by entry, in the margin of the register book wherein the erroneous entry has been originally made without alteration or obliteration of the original entry, and the rector or the minister shall sign the entry in the margin of the book wherein the correction is made, and add to his signature the day and month of the year when it is made.

(3) The rector or officiating minister, within one week thereafter shall transmit to the officer aforesaid of the county in which the rector or minister resides a duplicate of the entry correcting the error in the original register, and that officer shall on receipt thereof forthwith enter or cause to be entered that entry in the duplicate register book directed by this Ordinance to be transmitted to him and shall sign the entry in the duplicate book :

Proviso.

Provided that, before any alteration is made, the rector or minister of the particular parish or chapelry shall give notice in writing of the alteration and correction to the person or persons or their relatives interested in the baptism or burial.

Minister neglecting to perform duty prescribed by the Ordinance.

10. If a rector, vicar, curate or officiating minister of any parish or chapelry in the colony, or other person, refuses or neglects to perform any act by this Ordinance required to be performed by him, or commits a breach or violation of any of the regulations and duties by this Ordinance enjoined upon him for which no specific penalty has been provided, he shall, upon conviction thereof before the Supreme Court in its criminal jurisdiction, be liable to a penalty of not less than fifty or more than two hundred and fifty dollars.

Penalty.

SCHEDULE.

FORM 1.

(Section 3.)

*Register of Baptisms.*

Baptisms solemnised in the parish of \_\_\_\_\_ in the year \_\_\_\_\_ .

When baptised.	Child's Christian name.	Parents' names.		Abode.	Quality, trade, or profession.	By whom the ceremony was performed.
		Christian.	Surname.			

FORM 2.

(Section 3.)

Register of Burials.

Burials in the parish of

in the year .

Name.	Abode.	When and where buried.	Age.	By whom the ceremony was performed.

FORM 3.

(Section 8.)

Certificate verifying Duplicate Register Book.

I, *A.B.*, rector [*or as the case may be*] of the parish [*or chapelry*] of \_\_\_\_\_ in the county of \_\_\_\_\_ in the colony of British Guiana, do solemnly and sincerely testify and declare that the several entries in this book contained are correct duplicate entries of the several entries contained in the several register books of baptisms and burials of the parish [*or chapelry*] aforesaid from the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 1\_\_\_\_, to the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 1\_\_\_\_, and that no other entry during that period is contained in those register books respectively.

(Signed)

*A.B.*