

Children and Youth Protection Policy & Procedure Manual

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UNDERSTANDING THE NEED

Winnipeg Evangelical Free Church believes that our church leaders have a spiritual, moral and legal obligation to provide a secure environment for children, youth and volunteers who participate in church ministries.

Child abuse is a criminal offense as well as a violation of human conscience and dignity. We believe it is a violation of God's moral law. The emotional, physical and spiritual trauma to victims, the destructive consequences for abusers and the devastating effects on the credibility of the church ministry and the name of Christ make it essential that the church take all appropriate steps to aid in the prevention of abuse.

The purpose for this policy and procedure manual is to prevent harm to children and youth in the church's programs as well as to protect our staff and volunteers from false and wrongful allegations.

UNDERSTANDING THE CHURCH'S RESPONSIBILITY

The Spiritual and Moral Responsibility of the Church

In the church, we recognize that we are a reflection of God's love to those in our care and we take our responsibility to them seriously.

The Scriptures say:

"People were bringing little children to Jesus to have him touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, 'Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it'. And he took the children in his arms, put his hands on them and blessed them."—Mark 10:13-16

"Avoid every kind of evil."—1 Thessalonians 5:22

"But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality... because these are improper for God's holy people."—Ephesians 5:3

"But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to stumble, it is better for him that a heavy millstone be hung around his neck and that he be drowned in the depth of the sea."
—Matthew 18:6

"Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. ...Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ."—Galatians 6:1-2

Therefore, these guidelines are set forth to provide a safe and nurturing environment in which we can bring our children and youth to the Savior. We view ourselves as partners with parents and guardians, seeking to provide quality care and instruction in our ministry to the family.

The Civil and Legal Liability of the Church

Increasingly and often more dramatically, churches and their personnel (i.e. staff, directors or elders, officers and ministers) are being held accountable for the acts of individual abusers within the church even though neither the church, nor its leaders were aware of the abuse or condoned it. Churches are being sued in Civil Courts for damages sustained by victims and their families. Those victims and their families are attempting to hold churches accountable by alleging that:

1. The church is vicariously liable for the acts of its personnel, be they paid staff or volunteer staff, regardless of whether the church was itself negligent or even knew of the abuse.
2. The church was negligent in its hiring or accepting personnel, whether paid or volunteer.
3. The church was negligent in the supervising or monitoring of its personnel or membership.

Organizations operating in good faith and providing valuable services to the community are being held to a high standard of accountability in this area, even to the point of being 'guarantors' of conduct of volunteers or employees.

RECRUITMENT OF MINISTRY VOLUNTEERS

'Plan to Protect' is designed to assist our church leaders in their recruitment of volunteers and, to the greatest extent possible, provide protection strategies for all age levels as well as the volunteers who serve. The spirit of this document is not intended to restrict ministry but rather to safeguard all who are involved.

A recruitment process is critical in protecting the church from legal action should a case of abuse occur where a church volunteer is involved. To be protected from liability, the church must show evidence that it has taken reasonable action in screening and supervising the volunteers involved in any ministry with minors. The courts will look for a process by which the church has screened volunteers before engaging them in service. A court can find the church legally liable if it is less than systematic and therefore negligent in screening volunteers.

All children and youth ministry staff and volunteers shall be screened to a degree that is considered appropriate in the circumstances considering the level of interaction with children and youth in the church's care.

No person shall be permitted to serve as a volunteer in the church with the children and youth ministries where that person has the opportunity to be alone with any children, youth or vulnerable persons, or who has power or a position of trust over children, youth or vulnerable persons without first having been approved as a volunteer by the designated pastoral staff following the successful processing of an application for Children and Youth worker.

1) The Recruitment Process

- a) All volunteers should be church members in good standing or adherents who support the doctrines and direction of the church. Volunteers shall be part of the life of the church for at

least three months prior to being given any ministry/volunteer assignments involving children or youth.

- b) The names of prospective volunteers should be brought to the elders before they are approached regarding a ministry/assignment. If the pastor or elders know of reasons why a person may not be suitable for a volunteer position, further investigation should take place.
- c) The final decision on recruitment of ministry volunteers will be done by the Board of Elders.
- d) Those who have been accused or convicted of child abuse shall be directed to ministries which do not involve direct contact with children and youth.

2) Ministry Volunteer Application Form

Properly screening potential volunteers in the first line of defense in protecting our children and youth.

- i) The Ministry Volunteer Application Form must be completed for all positions involving ministry to children and youth. Volunteers need to be reminded to have their signature witnessed. (*Appendix 1*)
- ii) A Separate Volunteer Application Form has been designed for youth who work with younger children. Teenage volunteers should include the Youth Director if applicable as a reference. (*Appendix 2*)

A full application will be completed by new volunteers. Volunteers who will be continuing to serve in Children's Ministry will be required to fill out a "Returning Volunteer Form." (*Appendix 4*).

3) Background Checks

The Ministry Volunteer Application Form includes a statement that grants permission to pursue a Police Information Check with the local police or RCMP and a Child Abuse Registry Check with Child and Family Services. (*Appendix 1a*)

These record checks must be completed for ALL volunteers and any attendant costs borne by the church.

4) Supervision of Volunteers

An important step in providing a safe and secure ministry environment is the supervision of volunteers. This can be done by checking through classroom windows to ensure that things are going well, planned formal and informal visits to the classrooms and by simply making rounds. Supervision provides you as a leader with opportunities to give direction, assist those who may be struggling or frustrated, as well as reinforcing and encouraging positive classroom management.

In order to refute false accusations, your supervision of volunteers must be intentional. The courts will look for a systematic process by which the church supervises its volunteers.

5) Program Maintenance

The task of implementing 'Plan to Protect' into the life of the church is an ongoing process. At the beginning of each ministry year, new volunteers should be properly screened and appraised of Plan to Protect guidelines and procedures.

For volunteers who have been approved and are serving in ministry, records should be updated every three years through submitting a new Children's Ministry Application. For the years in between, the Returning Volunteer Form should be submitted and added to the Volunteer's file.

CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES

Safety and security are primary concerns for the children and families who attend the Winnipeg Evangelical Free Church. At the same time, we are also concerned for the adults and youth that volunteer to minister to children. We need to work towards providing a safe environment for effective ministry to children and youth. In light of this goal, we have developed these procedures for the protection of our children, youth and volunteers.

1) Classroom Staffing and Supervision Guidelines

Our desire is to provide a safe, loving classroom where the child feels comfortable and learning can take place.

a) Two Adults/Helpers

Where possible, two adults/helpers should be present in any room with children. Couples must have at least one other trained volunteer who is both over the age of 16 and not an immediate family member.

There must always be at least 1 adult female volunteer in each room.

b) Open Access

Classrooms will have windows or windows in doors that will allow ministry supervisors to look in occasionally without interrupting the teaching process. In classrooms where the door or room does not have a window, the door should remain open during the class.

2) Adult/Child Ratios

Adequate staffing is necessary to provide effective care and teaching. Recommended ratios are:

One adult for every 3 infants (birth – 12 months).

One adult for every 4 toddlers or preschoolers.

One adult for every 7 -10 elementary children.

3) Age Expectation

The use of adult volunteers over the age of 18 is desired. However, when necessary, the church will permit the use of volunteers between the ages of 12 and 18 to act as helpers of adult volunteers.

In the Nursery, children of volunteers are permitted to help their parents out, even if they are under the age of 12. However, the following restrictions apply:

Children are not permitted to change or carry other people's babies. They are permitted to play with the babies, but not carry them to reduce the risks of accidentally dropping or harming the child.

4) Supervisory Staff

The supervisory staff will make regular visits to classrooms to monitor the class for proper staffing and supervision.

5) Child Security

The church understands the need to maintain child security. When parents bring their children to our classrooms, the church assumes some responsibility for their safety and security until they are once more in the care of the parent. Children should attend the class designed for their age, grade or developmental level.

6) Volunteer Identification and Registration

Volunteers MUST check-in before entering into their classrooms.

All volunteers working with children shall wear approved clothing and a nametag which identifies them to parents and newcomers.

7) Registration of Children

A registration form will be completed by the parents of all children participating in our programs outlining their responsibilities (ie: washroom guidelines, notification of location if they are not in the sanctuary during service) and requesting information of any special needs.

8) Receiving and Releasing of Children

Parents will use Check-Ins to check their family into the various rooms that make up the Children's Ministry Department. They should receive a nametag for each child & a security code. Parents should be instructed to hang onto this security code for check-out.

a) Preschool/Nursery

i) Preschool and nursery children should only be released into the care of the child's parent or designate. The release of children should be done only on the basis of their security code or a valid piece of identification.

ii) Parents of preschoolers should not enter the classroom when picking up their child unless requested or invited to do so. This enables the staff to maintain order and provide a better level of security.

iii) In the Nursery, nursing mothers are free to come and go from the Nursing Room as they need, but for picking up children, parents should only be entering upon invitation.

- b) Elementary
 - i) For grades 1-3 and for newcomers, children should stay in the classroom until the parent or designate picks them up.
 - ii) As the grade 4 and 5 children are dismissed, volunteers should ask on an informal basis whether the child knows where to find his or her parent. If the child seems uncertain, the child should be kept in the classroom.

9) Washroom Guidelines

- a) Nursery - Preschool
 - i) Parents should be urged to take their children to the washroom prior to each class or service. This request should be communicated to parents at the beginning of each new ministry year and throughout the year to newcomers in the previously described registration letter.
 - (1) We have a bathroom in the Preschool room for the Preschool kids, if needed. Likewise, for the Nursery. For the 2's and 3's, they can feel free to use the Preschool bathroom or the Nursery bathroom. Volunteers in the 2's and 3's area can call Kids Welcome Desk workers over to help in bringing the children to the appropriate bathroom.
 - (2) Regardless of the bathroom, the stall door should never be completely closed, isolating the volunteer with the child.
 - ii) Female volunteers are to be the ones to assist any child in this age range with bathroom needs.
 - iii) If it proves necessary, a class may take a schedule washroom break.
 - iv) If just one child must go to the washroom, an adult volunteer should escort the child to the washroom.
- b) Elementary
 - i) Elementary kids in grades 1-3 who need to use the washroom must be accompanied by an adult volunteer. Said volunteer should not enter the washroom with the child.
 - ii) Elementary kids in grades 4-5 who need to use the washroom can be sent to do so on their own, provided they know where the washroom is located. If a child seems unsure, send an adult volunteer to accompany them.
 - iii) A volunteer or worker should never be alone with a child in an unsupervised washroom and should never go into the cubicle with a child and shut the door.

10) Architectural Precautions

- a) Windows and Doors
 - Door windows and interior windows allow for easy viewing by parents and supervisors. Sight lines through these windows should remain unobstructed at all times.

11) Nursery Facilities

- a) Nursery change tables should be in full view.

- b) At least one volunteer should always be at the Kids Welcome Desk, to monitor people entering/exiting through the door.
- c) Children sleeping in the Nursery sleeping rooms should be monitored via digital monitor. Where this isn't available, and open door policy with frequent check-ins by a volunteer is the suggested course of action.
- d) All electrical outlets in areas where small children are or have access should be covered with outlet plug covers.

12) Health and Safety Guidelines

- a) Sick Children
 - i) A child who is ill and could therefore expose other children and workers to illness should not be received into the nursery or classroom.
 - ii) If a child is already received and falls ill, the child should remain away from the other children and their parents contacted to come pick up the child.
- b) Medications
 - i) Generally, volunteers are not to give or apply any medication. If a child needs medication, the parent or guardian should administer it except in emergency cases.
 - ii) Medication should not be left in the classroom. If medication is brought with the child, it should be left with the ministry supervisor.
 - iii) In extreme cases where Epi-pens and puffers are needed for allergies or asthma, arrangements should be made between the parent or guardian and an adult volunteer who should obtain written instructions from the parent.
 - iv) The application of baby powder and ointments during diaper changing should be used only when instructed to do so by the parents or guardian.

13) Special or Off-Site Events and Overnight Policies

For special, off site or overnight events, the following precautions should be taken.

- a) Field Trips and Special Events
 - i) Off-campus activities should be pre-approved by the Senior Pastor, Youth Pastor, Children's Pastor and/or Elders or designated church leadership. Parents should be notified at least one week prior to the outing.
 - ii) Proper written consent and medical release forms are required for each child participating in field trips and special events. Forms must be kept in the leader's possession or control during trips and events. (Appendix 6)
 - iii) All trips and outings shall be supervised by a minimum of two approved adult leaders, preferably male and female. The correct ratios as laid out previously must be followed.
 - iv) All drivers transporting children or youth during an activity must have a valid driver's license and off probation and with current automobile insurance. No one under the age of 18 shall

transport children and/or youth. The number of occupants in the vehicle should not exceed the number of seat belts. Seat belts must be worn.

- v) When planning local special events, it is recommended that our bus be used, or a commercial carrier.
- vi) Any one-on-one appointments with children or youth should be conducted in a public place with parents dropping the children and youth off and picking them up.

b) Overnight Events

Church sponsored overnight activities may be permitted as long as the following guidelines are met:

- i) All overnight activities must be pre-approved by the church leadership.
- ii) Proper written consent and medical release forms are required for each child participating in overnight events. Forms must be kept in the leader's possession or control during trips and events. (Appendix 6)
- iii) All overnight activities should have a minimum ratio of two leaders for every ten children. Leaders should have an assigned group of children for whom they will be responsible during the overnight event.
- iv) All trips and outings shall be supervised by a minimum of two approved adult leaders, preferably male and female.

14) Proper Display of Affection

a) Appropriate Touch

Physical touch is an important element in the communication of love and care. Volunteers need to be aware of, and sensitive to, differences in sexual development, cultural differences, family backgrounds, individual personalities and special needs. Physical contact with children should be age and developmentally appropriate. The following guidelines are generally considered appropriate as genuine and positive ways of displaying God's love.

- i) Speak to the child or youth at eye level and listen with your eyes as well as your ears.
- ii) Hold the child or youth's hand when speaking, listening or walking him or her to an activity.
- iii) Put your arm around the shoulder of a child or youth when comforting or quieting is needed.
- iv) Pat a child or youth on the head, hand, shoulder or back to affirm him or her.
- v) Gently hold the child or youth's shoulder, hand or chin to keep his or her attention while you redirect the child's behaviour.
- vi) Hold a preschool child who is crying.
- vii) All touch should be done in view of others.

b) Inappropriate Touch

The following types of touch are generally inappropriate and should be avoided:

- i) Kissing or coaxing a child to kiss you.
- ii) Extended hugging and tickling.
- iii) Touching a child or youth in any area that would be covered by a bathing suit except when assisting a child with toileting as outlined previously.
- iv) Carrying older children and youth or having them sit on your lap.
- v) Being alone with a child or youth.
- vi) Any prolonged physical contact.

15) Discipline and Classroom Management

God's definition of discipline is outlined in Hebrews 12:7-11.

Discipline is something you do for a child or youth. Discipline means training that molds character, behaviour and values. Rather than seeking to merely maintain control or keep children quiet, our goal in managing children's attitudes should be to shape their character in such a way that they will become disciples of Jesus Christ.

Any and all forms of Corporal Punishment are prohibited and no staff person or volunteer acting in a supervisory or custodial role in any of the children's ministries shall use any form of corporal punishment.

a) Preventative Discipline

- i) Create a loving, caring atmosphere.
- ii) Arrange your environment for children and for learning.
- iii) To gain respect you must grant respect.
- iv) Establish and communicate realistic expectations for the children and youth.
- v) Be sure the activities that you provide are meaningful and age-appropriate.
- vi) Be fair and consistent with all children and youth.
- vii) Be sure your focus is on positive actions.
- viii) Be aware of children and youth with special needs.

b) Remedial Discipline

- i) Try to deal with the problems individually.
- ii) Explain to the child or youth why the behaviour is unacceptable.
- iii) Redirect the child or youth to positive action.
- iv) Explain the consequences of unacceptable behaviour by defining the correct way to behave as well as the result of the wrong behaviour.
- v) Offer choices that are acceptable to both you and the child.

c) Classroom Rule Suggestions:

- i) One voice talking at a time.

- ii) Quiet hands get answered.
- iii) Use inside voices.
- iv) Obey directions the first time.
- v) Use good manners.
- vi) Keep your hands and feet to yourself.
- vii) Respect each other.
- viii) Be friendly.
- ix) Visit the washroom before class begins.

16) Policy on Photography

No staff person or volunteer shall take individual photography pictures of any child without the knowledge and approval of his/her parent or guardian. Photos of children in group settings may be appropriate depending on the circumstances and should only be permitted in consultation with the ministry leader or pastor.

YOUTH MINISTRY GUIDELINES

In this section, unique issues related to youth ministry will be addressed. These guidelines are only part of the whole process of protection for your youth and those who work with them. This should not be considered as a stand-alone section. You also need to be aware of the following sections in 'Plan to Protect':

- Recruitment of Ministry Volunteers
- Reporting Procedures
- Response to Allegations of Abuse
- Appendices

Staff Expectations

1) Modeling and Mentoring

When we become involved in ministry our lives become models. No one person can 'pastor' a large group of youth. When modeling and mentoring are shared responsibilities, it multiplies and enhances the spiritual care given to the students. Therefore, as a leader, you are committing to maintain a consistent spiritual life including prayer, Bible reading, attendance at youth events, planning meetings and worship services.

Youth staff members are expected to refrain from activities that are illegal or could be considered morally and Biblically questionable. The issue of integrity is critical in both modeling and mentoring.

2) Contacting Opportunities

It is recommended that in your contacting opportunities, you meet with two to three students at a time. Any one-on-one lunch appointments or similar contacting opportunities with

students should only be made if separate transportation is used or parental permission is granted. Meeting in a public place is required. Inform the Youth Pastor or Youth Leader prior to meeting with the student as to where and when you will be meeting.

3) Staffing Requirements

- a) For Junior High in-house events, the staff-to-student ration should be no more than 1:7. For Senior High in-house events, the staff-to-student ratio should be no more than 1:10.
- b) In all youth activities there must be at least two leaders, preferably male and female.
- c) Overnight events with mixed genders must be accompanied by both male and female leaders.

4) Open Door Policy

At no time should anyone working with youth have a one-on-one meeting behind closed doors. For your protection and for the safety of the youth, keep the door at least partially open or meet in a room with a window in the door.

5) Physical Contact

We don't want to have a 'hands off' approach to ministry, however, leaders need to be aware of the difference between appropriate and inappropriate touch. A good rule of thumb is to use your common sense and ask yourself whether or not you would be comfortable doing this in the presence of other adults. One-arm hugs or shoulder-to-shoulder hugging may be appropriate. Avoid chest-to-chest hugging, extended hugging, over exuberant affection, lap sitting and kissing. There should be no touching of thighs, knees or inappropriate spots. Be aware that some conduct may seem innocent to you but may be taken the wrong way by the person involved or those watching (e.g. horseplay or extended back rubs).

6) Dating

At no time should anyone working with teens pursue a dating relationship with a student. Staff should always be cautious regarding students with 'crushes'.

Safety Precautions

1) Youth Ministry Authorization and Consent Forms

At the beginning of each school year, parents should be provided with a Youth Ministry Authorization and Consent Form. Parents should sign and return the form to the youth leadership. These forms will accompany the youth staff at all outings in case emergency medical assistance is required and the parent cannot be notified. It is recommended that this consent be supplemented with specific consents and authorizations for activities that may involve an element of risk.

2) Activity Planning

As you are planning your activities, games and room set up, you need to look at the plan through the eyes of parents. This will help you to think through safety issues. If cautions or warning flags arise, you may need to adjust your plan.

3) Procedures for Dealing with Injuries

If an injury does occur at a youth event, the following steps should be followed:

- a) Do not move the student if they are not moving on their own. If the student is moving, lead them out of the activity area. One or two witnesses as well as a leader should remain with the student for assistance, comfort and to confirm information on the incident report (Appendix 7).
- b) If the injury is severe and time is of the essence:
 - i) Immediately call an ambulance.
 - ii) Contact the student's parent or guardian and make them aware of the situation.
 - iii) If the decision is to transport the student to the hospital, a leader should accompany the injured student to the hospital whether by ambulance or given ride.
 - iv) When the parents arrive at the hospital, the leader should:
 - (1) Introduce him/herself and his/her role in their child's life.
 - (2) Explain the situation and the injury (being careful to admit no fault on any part).
 - (3) Return to the event (unless there is a good reason to stay).
 - (4) Have parents call the youth pastor/leader at the church in the morning if they have any questions or concerns (about the injury, insurance, etc.).
 - v) If the parents cannot be reached, follow the instructions given on the consent form.
 - vi) Complete the incident report and advise the youth pastor or church leadership of the incident and determine whether the church insurance company needs to be notified.

Trips and Off-Site Activities

1) Event Planning

All trips and off-site activities must be approved by the youth leadership. Parents or guardians should be given written information regarding the exact location of the event, emergency phone numbers and a list of adult staff attending the event. If there is travel involved or any element of risk in the activity, parents should be asked for further signed authorization.

2) Supervision

Sufficient adult supervision is necessary to ensure protection and safety for all involved.

The leader:student ratio is:

1:7 for Junior High

1:10 for Senior High

3) Consent Forms

The Youth Ministry Authorization and Consent Form for each student should be kept on hand at each event. (Appendix 6)

4) Transportation

- a) All drivers transporting youth during an activity must have a valid driver's license and current automobile insurance. The number of occupants in the vehicle must not exceed the number of seat belts and seat belts must be worn.
- b) When planning local special events, it is preferred that parents drop off and pick up their youth at the event location. For out of town events it is recommended that you hire a commercial carrier.
- c) For church related activities, it is not permitted that students drive their cars with other students as passengers. All drivers transporting children or youth during an activity must have a valid driver's license, off of probation and with current automobile insurance. No one under the age of 18 shall transport children and/or youth.
- d) Seat belts must be worn. The number of occupants in the vehicle should not exceed the number of seat belts.
- e) The student's safety is our first concern. Reckless or unsafe driving will not be tolerated. Drivers must not drive above the speed limits.
- f) A completed travel form should be left in the church office consisting of:
 - i) Names and numbers of all participants
 - ii) Location and contact numbers
 - iii) Drivers and vehicles involved
 - iv) Departure and arrival times (Appendix 8)

5) Retreats and Overnight Events

- a) It is expected that young people attending overnight event/retreats will not leave the event while it is going on. Exceptions must be specifically added to the permission slip.
- b) Guys and girls should not be allowed in each other's rooms or tents for any reason during youth group overnight events.
- c) Guys and girls shall not be permitted to sleep in a mixed group.
- d) Leader:Student Ratio remains the same at 1:7 for Junior High and 1:10 for Senior High at minimum.

Discipline of Inappropriate Behaviour

Youth pastors acknowledge it is impossible to spell out an exhaustive list of misbehaviours and the expected discipline. However, behaviour that includes intentional violation of stated rules (including no use of alcohol, drugs, and/or tobacco during youth ministry events, use and other forms of unacceptable behaviour) will be referred to the Youth Pastor or designated youth leader. Parents shall be notified. Any and all forms of corporal punishment are strictly forbidden.

Counseling Teens

Christian counseling involves both giving counsel and care. This kind of care involves healing, guiding and reconciling people to God and each other. It is our desire to help our youth become whole people. This involves the mental, physical, social, emotional and spiritual aspects of their lives. Our goal must be to deal with the underlying problem, not just the symptoms. It must also be viewed as a team effort between God, you and the person (Romans 15:1; Galatians 6:2).

1) “Ethics in Counseling”

- a) Respect the person’s dignity and worth. See them and respond as God would.
- b) Live, act and counsel in accordance with godly values.
- c) Work towards their best interest, not yours.
- d) Don’t force your help on anyone. Be sure not to manipulate or use guilt in your counseling.
- e) Fully inform them of where you are leading them.
- f) Never exploit trust or dependency.
- g) Share the bounds of confidentiality at the outset.
- h) If feelings of attraction begin in either party, terminate counseling immediately.
- i) If the relationship is destructive to you, terminate counseling immediately.
- j) Never counsel if the person is under the influence of alcohol, drugs or illness.
- k) Never create false expectations of favorable results.
- l) Keep information confidential unless the person’s welfare is at stake. As a general rule, only share information if the person consents.
- m) If you identify a need for, or are in a situation that requires professional counseling, be ready to admit it and refer.

- n) All workers and volunteers are legally obligated to report physical abuse or neglect or a minor to the Child and Family Services. Anyone who does not comply with this law may be subject to a fine and/or sanction.
- o) If you're unsure of your legal or moral obligations, ask your supervisor.

"Identifying and Responding to Suspected Abuse Situations"

1) Identifying Potential Abuse Situations

- a) Ask questions about bruises, cuts or unusual marks.
- b) Do not ask leading questions like: 'Did your parents do this?'
 - i) Note that they may try to protect loved ones
 - ii) They might fear retaliation
 - iii) They might distrust you too
 - iv) They are under stress and anxiety
 - v) They may fear you and answer you the way they think you want them to
- c) Be aware of the signs.
- d) Watch for a fear of relationships or close physical proximity.

2) Procedures for Responding

- a) Comfort the student first (if needed) – without physical contact.
 - i) They need your calm
 - ii) Keep communication open
 - iii) Move away from the crowd
- b) Get basic information and be clear on what happened.
- c) Contact your leader
- d) Keep information confidential – on a need-to-know basis only.

Suicide

1) Responding to the Threat of Suicide

Occasionally, we may encounter a person who threatens suicide. The first thing to remember is that you should always take suicide statements seriously and respond accordingly. Keep in mind that most suicide threats are a cry for help and for someone to listen. The individual will unusually tip you off by making statements like: "Sometimes I just want to end it all." "Life just isn't worth living anymore." If a person commits suicide, do they go to hell? Most people don't want to kill themselves ... they just want to end the pain that they are feeling.

Each year, youth leaders will avail themselves to suicide intervention training.

Crisis Intervention

1) Determine the Need for Professional Assistance

If the situation is dangerous or you sense that it is beyond your ability, refer it to a professional sooner rather than later. Counseling takes time, energy and resources to deal effectively with certain situations.

REPORTING PROCEDURES

1) Obligation to Report

Any person who has reasonable grounds to believe that a child is, or might be in need of protection is legally required to report the matter to a department of Child and Family Services.

Included with this manual is a copy of sections 17 and 18 of the Child and Family Services Act.

Social workers who receive reports are trained to assess and investigate the need for intervention. Other professionals must not assume this function. A professional who does so and fails to report commits an offense. The Child and Family Services Act protects an individual when a report is made.

2) Who Must Report

All volunteers and paid staff who are involved in ministry to children or youth should immediately communicate any items of concern to the ministry head and the Senior/Lead Pastor, Youth Pastor/Director, or Children's Pastor/Director.

They will work together with you in contacting the Department of Social Services. If there is an allegation against a ministry volunteer, it may be advisable to contact a lawyer and the church's insurer. Subsequent to these steps of reporting, the Winnipeg Evangelical Free Church District Office should be informed of the situation.

3) What to Report

All volunteers and paid staff need to report any matters relating to child abuse or neglect of which they have knowledge or have observed within the scope of their duties. It is not the responsibility of the reporting person or the paid staff to substantiate any allegations or suspicions.

A child needs protection under the Child and Family Services Act if he or she:

- a) Is without adequate care, supervision or control
- b) Is in the care, custody, control or charge of a person:
 - i) Who is unable or unwilling to provide adequate care, supervision or control of the child.
 - ii) Whose conduct endangers or might endanger the life, health or emotional well-being of the child.

- iii) Who neglects or refuses to provide or obtain proper medical or other remedial care or treatment necessary for the health or well-being of the child or who refuses to permit such care or treatment to be provided to the child when the care or treatment is recommended by a duly qualified medical practitioner.
- iv) Is abused or is in danger of being abused.
- v) Is beyond the control of a person who has the care, custody, control or charge of the child.
- vi) Is likely to suffer harm or injury due to the behaviour, condition, domestic environment or associations of the child or of a person having care, custody, control or charge of a child.
- vii) Is subjected to aggression or sexual harassment that endangers the life, health or emotional well-being of the child.
- viii) Being under the age of 12 years, is left unattended and without reasonable provision being made for the supervision and safety of the child.
- ix) Is the subject, or is about to become the subject, of an unlawful adoption under *The Adoption Act* or of a sale under section 84.

Abuse or neglect need not have already occurred for a child to need protection; it is not necessary to wait until a child has been harmed to intervene. When abuse or neglect can be reasonable anticipated and there are reasonable grounds to believe a child needs protection, the legal obligation to report applies.

Historical abuse or neglect, that is, abuse or neglect which occurred in the not very recent past, must be reported wherever there are reasonable grounds to believe that a child may be in need of protection. If the alleged offender is in regular contact with a child or children, irrespective of whether it is the same child or children abused in the past, there may well be grounds to believe that the child or children are at risk based on the offender's past behaviour. It is particularly vital to report these cases where the alleged abuser is in a position of trust.

4) Confidentiality

It is extremely important in these matters to keep the information confidential at all times. Any suspicions of abuse should be directed immediately to the ministry head and the Senior Pastor, Youth Pastor, or Children's Pastor, upon learning of an incident that should be reported, shall be responsible for ensuring that the matter is reported to Child and Family Services, the parent or guardian, and the church's insurer when appropriate. In this way the reporter would have an opportunity to collaborate with a staff member or supervisor in submitting the report so that the communication is done wisely and succinctly and on a timely basis. Having said this, if the child is in immediate danger and the Senior, Youth, or Children's Pastor are unavailable, the staff person or volunteer may consider it necessary to report the concern directly, and immediately.

The only claim of confidentiality that overrides the legal duty to report is solicitor-client privilege. Therefore physicians, pastors and others who consider their professional relationships confidential for certain purposes are not exempt from the duty to report child abuse or neglect. Staff and volunteers should be aware that section 18.1(2) and 18.3(c) prohibits anyone from disclosing the identity of the reporter without his or her consent.

5) Responding to the Child or Youth

When the child first comes to you, be sure to take his or her word seriously. Don't deny the problem, but stay calm and listen. Give emotional support, reminding the child that he or she is not at fault and was right to tell you about the problem. Do not promise the child you will not tell anyone.

6) Report Form

Complete a Suspected Abuse Report Form. These forms may be obtained from your ministry head, the Senior Pastor, Youth Pastor, or Children's Pastor. Fill out the report form immediately and submit it to a member of the pastoral staff. (Appendix 10)

Protection From Liability

Church staff and volunteer personnel are required to immediately report to the Child and Family Services or a parent or guardian any suspected case of child abuse. It is not a breach of confidence between church personnel and the child involved. No person is to be held personally liable for anything done or omitted in good faith in the exercise of this responsibility if the person has reasonable grounds to believe the child is or might be in need of protection.

Report Follow-Up

A confidential follow-up report with conclusions and action taken should always be made by the Senior Pastor, Youth Pastor, or Children's Pastor following a child abuse report. This report should be kept in a confidential personnel file. (Appendix 11)

RESPONSE TO ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE

1. Creating a Response Plan
2. Maintain Adequate Records
3. Use a Reporting Procedure
4. Select a Spokesperson
5. Prepare a Position Statement
6. Don't Engage in Denial, Minimization or Blame
7. Use a Lawyer
8. Don't be Accusatory
9. Work with Your Denomination

Key Contacts:

Lawyer to be contacted: _____

Phone Number: _____

Insurance agent to be contacted: _____

Phone Number: _____

Designated spokesperson for the church: _____

Phone Number: _____

APPENDIX

- 1. Ministry Volunteer Application Form**
 - a. Release of Information and Declaration of Intent**
 - b. Statement of Faith of the Winnipeg Evangelical Free Church**
 - c. Ministry Volunteer Application Form Approval Process**
- 2. Youth Ministry Application Form for Youth Working with Children**
- 3. Confidential Record of Reference Checks**
- 4. Volunteer Worker Renewal Application Form**
- 5. Diaper Changing Procedures / Hand Washing Hints**
- 6. Authorization and Medical Consent Form**
- 7. Incident Report**
- 8. Trips and Off-Site Travel Form**
- 9. Suspected Abuse Report Form**
- 10. Suspected Abuse Follow-Up Report Form**

**MINISTRY VOLUNTEER APPLICATION FORM
FOR MINISTRIES TO CHILDREN AND YOUTH**

(Information received is strictly confidential)

We recognize that this Ministry Volunteer Application Form is extensive. We wish we did not have to ask these questions. However, in our desire to reduce the risk of abuse within our church ministries, we believe this information is necessary to protect our children and to protect our volunteers. Thank you in advance for your understanding.

Personal Information

Full Name _____

Male _____ Female _____

Address _____

Postal Code _____ Date of Birth _____

Phone Number (H) _____ (W) _____

Spouse's Name _____

Is your spouse supportive of your ministry involvement? If no, please explain

Personal History

Elementary and Secondary School: Grade Completed _____

College/University: Years Completed _____ Degree Received _____

Occupation and/or Employer

Hobbies, Interests or Skills

Spiritual History

How long have you attended the Winnipeg Evangelical Free Church? _____

Are you a member of Winnipeg Evangelical Free Church? Yes _____ No _____

If not, are you willing to attend a membership seminar? Yes _____ No _____

Do you regularly attend (2 or more services a month)? _____

When did you accept Christ as your Savior? _____

Have you been baptized? Yes _____ No _____

If not, are you willing to attend a baptismal seminar? Yes _____ No _____

Please write out an outline of your spiritual journey on a separate sheet.

Have you taken any courses or received any training that would equip you for Christian ministry?

What abilities and experience do you bring to this ministry? (i.e. spiritual gifts, talents and skills)
Have you identified your spiritual gifts: Please list.

Ministry Information

Churches I attended in the last five years are as follows:

Name of Church _____ Phone _____
Dates Attended _____ Member or Adherent _____

Name of Church _____ Phone _____
Dates Attended _____ Member or Adherent _____

Name of Church _____ Phone _____
Dates Attended _____ Member or Adherent _____

My present and previous ministry experience is as follows:

1. Name of Church/Organization _____
Dates and Description of Ministry _____
Pastor or Ministry Supervisor _____ Phone _____

2. Name of Church/Organization _____
Dates and Description of Ministry _____
Pastor or Ministry Supervisor _____ Phone _____

3. Name of Church/Organization _____
Dates and Description of Ministry _____
Pastor or Ministry Supervisor _____ Phone _____

Confidential Information

In order to provide a safe and secure environment for our children and youth, we believe it is necessary to include the following question as part of our application process. All information will be kept strictly confidential by the Church Ministries Committee. (Police may access this information, under warrant, if requested.) Answering yes to any of the questions may not necessarily preclude your involvement in ministry. Thank you in advance for your understanding.

Y / N Are there any circumstances involving your lifestyle or background that would call into question your ability to work with children or youth? (eg. Pornography, use of illegal substances, etc.)

Y / N Have you ever been convicted for the use or sale of illegal drugs?

Y / N Have you ever been through treatment for alcohol or substance abuse?

Y / N Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offense (excluding minor traffic violations)?

Y / N Have you ever been arrested or convicted for any abuse related crimes?

- Y / N Have you ever been the subject of a civil lawsuit involving sexual misconduct, sexual harassment or other immoral behaviour or conduct involving children, youth or adults?
- Y / N Have you ever been the subject of any disciplinary action, transfer or dismissal, or been named as a defendant in a civil or criminal lawsuit as a result of an accident or mishap involving children or youth?
- Y / N Have you ever been subjected to expulsion, reprimand, or other discipline by a church, denomination or other religious organization?
- Y / N Have you ever been the subject of any disciplinary action (including discharge) or investigation by a church, religious or other organization, or by an employer?
- Y / N Do you have any health concerns of which we should be aware? (eg. Medical, psychiatric)

If you have answered yes to any of the above questions, please explain:

References

Please provide the names of three individuals, excluding relatives, who could provide a reference for you. Include at least one reference from outside the church.

1. Name of Reference _____
 Address _____ Phone _____
 Nature of Relationship _____
2. Name of Reference _____
 Address _____ Phone _____
 Nature of Relationship _____
3. Name of Reference _____
 Address _____ Phone _____
 Nature of Relationship _____

I have read the Policy and Procedure Manual called "Plan to Protect" established by the Winnipeg Evangelical Free Church and adopted as a policy of the Winnipeg Evangelical Free Church. I acknowledge and agree that these policies and procedures have been established to prevent harm to children and youth in the programs as well as to prevent staff and volunteers from false and wrongful allegations. I hereby covenant and agree to abide by these policies and procedures in all of my activities at the Winnipeg Evangelical Free Church.

 Signature

 Date

RELEASE OF INFORMATION AND DECLARATION OF INTENT

I hereby give the Winnipeg Evangelical Free Church permission to contact person’s names as references to ascertain my suitability for volunteer ministry. I release all such references from liability for any damage that may result from furnishing such evaluations to you.

I also grant my permission for the Winnipeg Evangelical Free Church to perform a personal criminal record check and child abuse registry check at any time(s) in the future, for purposes of my protection against any false allegations and for the protection of those I serve. I consent to such an investigation with the understanding that the results will be kept in extreme confidence, subject to disclosure according the law. Further, I agree to provide any requested identification documents and to sign/execute any additional waiver(s)/ release (s) / consent-permission forms(s), related to check(s) of the above type. I understand that if any initial check of my criminal record shows that I may have past entries on such record(s), the Winnipeg Evangelical Free Church or Child Abuse Registry is authorized to ask me to obtain a detailed transcript of my criminal or registry record. Accordingly, upon the making of such a request, I agree to fully cooperate with the Winnipeg Evangelical Free Church in personally obtaining all criminal records transcripts and registry information that the Winnipeg Evangelical Free Church should request (recognizing that I will not be compensated for my time spent in obtaining any transcripts), but that the Winnipeg Evangelical Free Church will give me reasonable compensation for any application fees related to obtaining my fingerprints and any transcripts so requested.

I understand that even though I may not be compelled to agree or consent to anything mentioned in the above paragraph, I do so willingly in support of the church’s intent to reduce the risk above within its church ministries.

I agree to adhere to the protection guidelines as adopted by this church. I understand that if my character or morals should be considered by the Senior Pastor or leadership to be inappropriate and/or criminal at any time during my volunteer service, the Winnipeg Evangelical Free Church will be entitled to terminate my assistance without expressed cause or prior notice regardless of any other oral or written statement by the Winnipeg Evangelical Free Church prior to, at, or following the date of volunteer service.

I understand that the Winnipeg Evangelical Free Church is responsible for the welfare of any person or persons entrusted to my care, and thus in the performance of my duties as a volunteer at the church I will cooperate fully with the staff in the fulfillment of my duties and will keep all information I encounter, in my role as a volunteer, confidential. If at any time I find that for any reason I am unable to support the policies, procedures or doctrines and we are not able to resolve the issue, I will gracefully and quietly agree to resign my volunteer position.

I hereby acknowledge that the information contained in this application for volunteer ministry is correct to the best of my knowledge.

Signature of Applicant _____ **Date** _____

Signature of Witness _____ **Date** _____

STATEMENT OF FAITH
Winnipeg Evangelical Free Church

1. We believe the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, to be the inspired Word of God, without error in the original writings, the complete revelation of His will for the salvation of men, and the divine and final authority for all Christian faith and life.
2. We believe in one God, Creator of all things, infinitely perfect and eternally existing in three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
3. We believe that Jesus Christ is true God and true man, having been conceived of the Holy Ghost and born of the virgin Mary. He died on the cross a sacrifice for our sins according to the scriptures. Further, He rose bodily from the dead, ascending into heaven, where at the right hand of the majesty on High, He now is our High Priest and Advocate.
4. We believe that the ministry of the Holy Spirit is to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ, and during this age to convict men, regenerate the believing sinner, indwell, guide, instruct, and empower the believer for godly living and service.
5. We believe that man was created in the image of God, but fell into sin and is therefore lost and only through regeneration by the Holy Spirit can salvation and spiritual life be obtained.
6. We believe that the shed blood of Jesus Christ and His resurrection provide the only ground for justification and salvation for all who believe, and only such as receive Jesus Christ are born of the Holy Spirit, and thus become children of God.
7. We believe that water baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances to be observed by the church during the present age. They are, however, not to be regarded as means of salvation.
8. We believe that the true church is composed of all such persons who through saving faith in Jesus Christ have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit and are united together in the body of Christ of which He is the heads.
9. We believe that only those who are thus members of the true Church shall be eligible for membership in the local church.
10. We believe that Jesus Christ is the Lord and Head of the Church, and that every local church has the right under Christ to decide and govern its own affairs.
11. We believe in the personal and pre-millennial and imminent coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and that this "blessed hope" has a vital bearing on the personal life and service of the believer.
12. We believe in the bodily resurrection of the dead; of the believer to everlasting blessedness and joy with the Lord, of the unbeliever to judgment and everlasting conscious punishment.

**MINISTRY VOLUNTEER APPLICATION FORM
APPROVAL PROCESS**

(For Office Use Only)

1. Ministry Interview Date _____

Name of Counselor _____

2. Reference Checked _____ Date Completed _____

3. Criminal Record Check _____ Date Completed _____

4. Child Abuse Registry _____ Date Completed _____

**MINISTRY VOLUNTEER APPLICATION FORM
FOR YOUTH WORKING WITH CHILDREN**

Personal Information

Name _____ Male ____ Female ____

Address _____ Postal Code _____

Date of Birth _____ Grade _____

Name of Parents _____ Phone _____

Are your parents supportive of your ministry involvement? _____

If no, please explain _____

Hobbies, Interests or Skills: _____

Volunteer Experience and Part-time Jobs

Spiritual History

How long have you attended the Winnipeg Evangelical Free Church? _____

Do you regularly attend (2 or more times a month)? _____

When did you accept Christ as your Saviour? _____

In a brief paragraph, please describe what your faith means to you: _____

Ministry Questionnaire

Describe why you would like to be part of our Children's Ministry Team:

What strengths or assets would you bring to our Children's Ministry Program?

What areas of concern do you have in working with children?

Do you see yourself as a team player? _____ How? _____

Please list the area of ministry in which you would like to serve.

References

List three adults that you've known for at least one year and who have a definite knowledge of your character and ability to work with children who would be able to provide a personal reference.

Name of Reference _____
Address _____ Phone _____
Nature of Relationship _____

Name of Reference _____
Address _____ Phone _____
Nature of Relationship _____

Name of Reference _____
Address _____ Phone _____
Nature of Relationship _____

Signature of Applicant _____ **Date** _____

Signature of Parent/Guardian _____ **Date** _____

CONFIDENTIAL RECORD OF REFERENCE CHECKS

Name of Volunteer _____

REFERENCE #1

Name of Reference or Church Contacted _____

Date of Contact _____

Person Contacting the Reference or Church _____

Method of Contact (telephone, letter, personal conversation) _____

Summary of Contact _____

REFERENCE #2

Name of Reference or Church Contacted _____

Date of Contact _____

Person Contacting the Reference or Church _____

Method of Contact (telephone, letter, personal conversation) _____

Summary of Contact _____

REFERENCE #3

Name of Reference or Church Contacted _____

Date of Contact _____

Person Contacting the Reference or Church _____

Method of Contact (telephone, letter, personal conversation) _____

Summary of Contact _____

RETURNING VOLUNTEER FORM

Name _____ Phone _____

Email _____

Address _____

In which room(s) will you be volunteering? _____

Confidential Information

In order to provide a safe and secure environment for our children and youth, we believe it is necessary to include the following questions as part of our application process. All information will be kept strictly confidential by the Church Ministries Committee. (Police may access this information, under warrant, if requested.) Answering yes to any of the questions may not necessarily preclude your involvement in ministry. Thank you in advance for your understanding.

Y / N Are there any circumstances involving your lifestyle or background that would call into question your ability to work with children or youth? (ie. pornography, use of illegal substances, etc.)

Y / N Have you ever been convicted for the use or sale of illegal drugs?

Y / N Have you ever been through treatment for alcohol or substance abuse?

Y / N Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offense (excluding minor traffic violations)?

Y / N Have you ever been arrested or convicted for any abuse related crimes?

Y / N Have you ever been the subject of a civil lawsuit involving sexual misconduct, sexual harassment or other immoral behaviour or conduct involving children, youth or adults?

Y / N Have you ever been the subject of any disciplinary action, transfer or dismissal, or been named as a defendant in a civil or criminal lawsuit as a result of an accident or mishap involving children or youth?

Y / N Have you ever been subjected to expulsion, reprimand, or other discipline by a church, denomination or other religious organization?

Y / N Have you ever been the subject of any disciplinary action (including discharge) or investigation by a church, religious or other organization, or by an employer?

Y / N Do you have any health concerns of which we should be aware? (ie. medical, psychiatric, etc.)

If you answered 'Yes' to any of the previous questions, please explain in detail:

Application Verification and Release

I recognize that the organization to which this form is being submitted is relying on the information contained herein. Accordingly, I attest and affirm that all of the information that I have provided is absolutely true and correct.

I agree to abide by all the policies and procedures of the organization and to protect the health and safety of the children and/or at all times.

Signature _____

Date _____

DIAPER CHANGING PROCEDURE

- Wash your hands.
- Put on gloves.
- Place baby on a clean, disposable surface.
- Remove soiled diaper and place in plastic bag.
- Clean diaper area with wipes and place in plastic bag.
- Follow parent's instructions regarding application of powder or lotion.
- Put clean diaper on baby.
- Remove disposable cover from change table and spray area with bleach solution.
- Remove gloves, place in plastic bag and dispose of plastic bag.
- Wash your hands.

HAND WASHING HINTS

- Wash hands with running water and soap.
- Wash front and back of hands – don't forget between the fingers.
- Wash hands for 15-30 seconds.
- Dry hands with disposable towel.
- Turn off faucet with disposable towel.

AUTHORIZATION AND MEDICAL CONSENT FORM

For the school year 20 ___ / 20___

Student Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Parents' Work _____

Date of Birth (M/D/Y) ____/____/____ Health Card # _____

Family Doctor _____ Phone _____

Allergies _____

Does your child have any physical, emotional, mental, behavioral concerns or limitations that our staff should be aware of? If yes, please explain.

Parents'/Guardian Name _____

In case of an emergency, contact _____

The safety of your child is our primary concern. Precautions will be taken for their well-being and protection.

I/we, the parents or guardians named above, authorize _____ or one of the Ministry Staff of Winnipeg Evangelical Free Church to sign a consent for medical treatment and to authorize any physician or hospital to provide medical assessment, treatment or procedures for the participant named above.

I/we, named above, undertake and agree to indemnify and hold blameless the Ministry Staff, Winnipeg Evangelical Free Church Pastors, staff, volunteer leaders, Board of Directors (Board of Elders) from and against any loss, damage or injury suffered by the participant as a result of being part of the activities of the Winnipeg Evangelical Free Church as well as of any medical treatment authorized by the supervising individuals representing the church.

This consent and authorization is effective only when participating in or traveling to events of the Winnipeg Evangelical Free Church.

Parent/Guardian Options (choose one of the following options):

I have read, understood and agree with the above and sign it to cover all Student Ministry activities for the program year effective as stated below.

Signature _____ Date _____

Effective from date signed through _____

I have read, understood and agree with the above and sign it to cover only the activity listed below.

Activity _____

Signature _____ Date _____

INCIDENT REPORT

The incident should be completed as soon as possible after the incident occurs one should include as detailed a description of the situation as possible.

Student Name _____ Phone # _____

Address _____

Nature of Injury/Incident

Incident Date _____ Incident Time _____

Incident Location _____ Event Time _____

All Leaders Present _____

What happened?

Why did it happen?

What action was taken?

*Contacted Parents Parent's Response

Leader's Name _____ Signature _____

Witness Name _____ Signature _____

TRIPS AND OFF-SITE TRAVEL FORM

Group _____

Location _____

Dates: Leave _____ Return _____

Contact # _____

Departure Time _____

Return Departure Time _____

Arrival at Location _____

Return Arrival Time _____

Transportation

Driver

Vehicle

Driver

Vehicle

Leaders

Name
#

Phone #

Name

Phone

Students

Name
#

Phone #

Name

Phone

