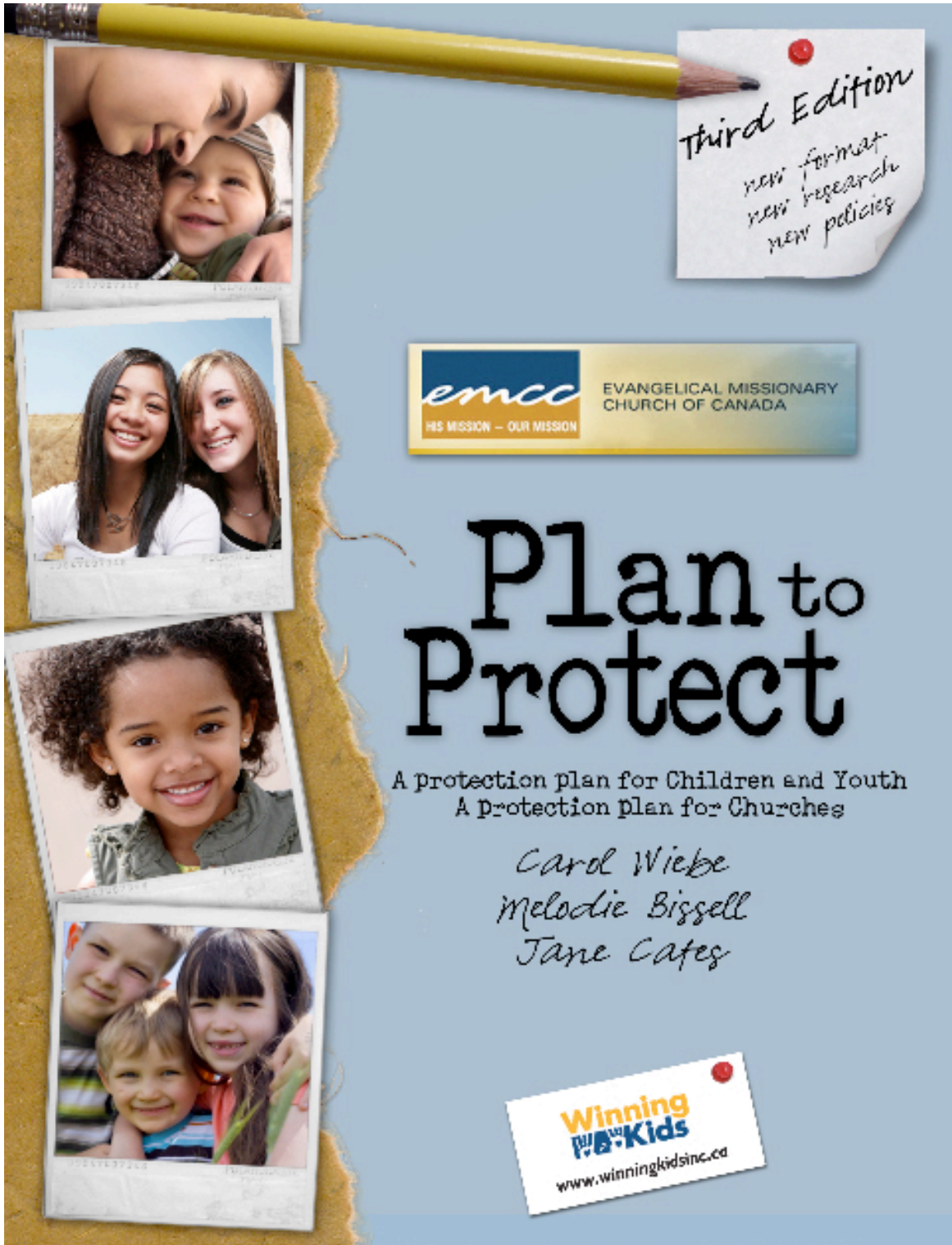


# Child Protection Policies



## Child Protection Policies

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# Recruitment and Screening

### Application Process

Overview:

The Church has implemented a multi-step process to recruit youth ministry volunteers that possess the high Christian moral standards on which this Church is based. The program is designed to protect not only the youth (anyone under eighteen (18) years old) from abuse but also our leaders from false allegations and the Church's assets from litigation. Individuals age seventeen (17) or older (12 - 16 years old for a Junior Youth Leader) who wish to work with the Church's youth will first have to attend a short training session. Following this training, an application form along with references and a police record check must be submitted to a member of the Personnel Committee. The Personnel Committee will review the applicant's application, contact the references and interview the applicant. The Personnel Committee will then decide if the applicant will be allowed to partake in youth ministries.

1. The Church Personnel Committee will determine if an individual is suitable to become a Youth Leader.
2. Prospective Youth Leaders must submit to the Recruitment and Screening process as follows:
  1. Fill out a Youth Leaders Application form
  2. Adhere to a six (6) month waiting period
  3. Sign a Statement of Faith
  4. Reference Checks
  5. Police Check (to be completed every three (3) years)
  6. Attend a training session
  7. Interviewed by the Personnel Committee
3. Youth Leaders must complete the Recruitment and Screening process before they will be allowed to work with youth.
4. All records from the Recruitment and Screening process will be kept confidentially on file in the Church Office.
5. The Recruitment and Screening process must be completed within a three month time period.
6. Individuals undergoing the Recruitment and Screening process will not be allowed to work with youth until they are approved by the Personnel Committee.

## **Child Protection Policies**

### **Qualifications Required for Application**

1. A minimum of six (6) months waiting period is required before individuals are allowed to work with youth. All prospective Youth Leaders must have regularly attended the Church for the previous six months
  - Exceptions can be made where an individual transfers from another Church of the same denomination in which they have been long time members and children ministry workers in good standing. They will have to provide a reference from their former Pastor and also undergo the approval process (with the exception of the six month rule).
2. Youth Leaders shall be members or adherents in good standing and support the doctrines, direction, by-laws and constitution of the Church.
3. Individuals that have been convicted or under the suspicion of crimes against youth, violence crimes or other relevant crimes will not be allowed to become Youth Leaders.
4. Youth Leaders must be seventeen (17) years of age to apply. A Junior Youth Leader ages 12-16 may also apply and serve as an assistant to the Youth Leader.

### **Child Protection Procedures**

#### **Identification and Attendance**

Parents will fill out a Child Registration form at the beginning of each school year.

Attendance for each youth activity will be taken. It shall include the date, event, location, Youth Leaders, visitors and children. These records shall be kept on file.

Youth Leaders will be identified with a name tag which identifies them to parents, youth and visitors.

Occasional visitors will be identified as a person who has not completed the screening process. Their name and reason for the visit will be recorded and they will not be placed in a position of trust with children.

#### **Supervision of Youth Leaders**

The ushers or other Church leaders will make regular and random visits through out the areas where youth activities are taking place. These visits will be recorded on the daily attendance form.

#### **Teacher / Student Ratios**

- One Youth Leader for every three infants (birth - 17 mo.)
- One Youth Leader for every 4-5 toddlers or preschoolers
- One Youth Leader for every 7-10 elementary age children

## **Child Protection Policies**

### **Classroom Staffing**

One of the following must be in place.

- A minimum of two unrelated Youth Leaders must be present except in the event of an emergency.
- One Youth Leader is present in a room with windows or an open door giving a clear field of vision.

Junior Youth Leaders between the ages of 12 and 16 must work along side another Youth Leaders over the age of 16. Youth Leaders must be 17 years or older to work alone with children. It is recommended that there be at least a five (5) year gap between Youth Leaders and the children they serve

### **Receiving and Releasing Children**

#### **Nursery**

Nursery children must be signed in and out of the nursery by their parent or guardian. At least one Youth Leader must be present in the nursery before a child may be signed in. Children will only be released to the parent or guardian who signed them in.

#### **Preschool and Elementary**

Children shall be escorted to and from their classes as a group by the Youth Leaders. Alternatively, a parent may drop off and pick-up their child at the class. Teachers should aim to have the children returned to the sanctuary five minutes before Church is dismissed.

#### **Older Children**

The child may walk on their own to and from class if the teacher assesses that the child knows how to locate their parents and that there is little risk in allowing the child to proceed. If any doubt exists as to the child's ability to walk to their parents, then they must be escorted to their parents.

# Child Protection Policies

## Washroom Guidelines

### **Nursery**

It is strongly recommended that the parent be called to change the diaper.

When the parent is not available, then one Youth Leaders must change the child within view of a second Youth Leaders (two (2) Youth Leaders are required for a diaper changing). The following must also be followed:

- Wash your hands
- Place baby on a clean surface
- Follow parents instructions regarding powders or lotions
- Dispose of soiled diaper and wipes in a plastic bag
- Clean changing surface
- Wash your hands

### **Preschool**

Children in this age group are not to go to the washroom alone.

The following procedures must be followed when escorting children to the washroom.

1. Two Youth Leaders will escort children to the washroom
2. The Youth Leaders will stand outside the washroom with the door open
3. If a child needs assistance, one female Youth Leader will assist the child and the other Youth Leader will stand at the open door and maintain a line of sight on the Youth Leader assisting the child.
4. Female Youth Leaders can assist children inside a washroom.
5. NEVER be alone in the washroom with children. ALWAYS have TWO Youth Leaders and the DOOR OPEN.

### **Elementary**

1. Children in this age group are not be sent to the washroom alone but may go with a buddy of the same age group.
2. One Youth Leader will check that the washroom is safe and then wait outside the washroom for the children to finish.
3. Male Youth Leaders are not allowed to escort female youth to the washroom.
4. NEVER be alone in the washroom with children.

### **Older Children**

Older children may go to the washroom with a buddy of the same sex and age group.

## **Child Protection Policies**

### **Day and Overnight Trips**

#### **Field trips and Special Events**

1. All off site activities will be approved by Pastor and the parents will be notified at least one week prior.
2. Written consent is required from the parents. These will be kept on file permanently.
3. All trips will have a minimum of two unrelated Youth Leaders, preferable both male and female.
4. It is preferable that parents drop off and pick up their children.

#### **Overnight Events**

1. All off site activities will be approved by Pastor and parents will be notified at least one week prior.
2. Written consent is required from the parents. These will be kept on file permanently.
3. All overnight activities will have a minimum of two (2) Youth Leaders for each ten (10) children. Only female Youth Leaders can supervise female children.
4. At least two (2) female Youth Leaders will sleep with the female youth and two (2) male Youth Leaders will sleep with the male youth.
5. Youth may sleep in a tent without a leader provided the following conditions are met:
  - At least three (3) youth must be in each tent.
  - The tents must be arranged in a circle with the Youth Leader tent having a clear field of view of the doors to the youth tents.
  - Male and female tents will be located in separate areas.

## **Child Protection Policies**

### **Drivers**

1. At least one Youth Leader must be in each vehicle.
2. Young children (under 9 years) must have at least two adults (one of which is a Youth Leader) in the vehicle. Older youth (9 years or older) may be transported by a single Youth Leader provided there are at least 3 youth in the vehicle.
3. All persons transporting children shall meet the following conditions
  - Provide the Church with a copy of their valid drivers license.
  - Provide the Church with a copy of their valid insurance policy.
  - Have five (5) years driving experience.
4. The number of occupants will not exceed the number of seat belts. All children will be in age appropriate safety restraints. Seat belts will be worn by everyone in the vehicle when ever it is in motion.
5. Children are never to be left unattended in a vehicle.

### **Contacting Opportunities**

1. A contacting opportunity is an informal get together out side of regular Church activities.
2. Ministry personnel are encouraged to meet with youth in small group settings and in teams.
3. The Pastor must pre-approve the conducting of any one-on-one mentoring with the information being documented and filed.
4. One-on-one mentoring must be done in public settings and only under the following conditions:
  - The Pastor is informed of the time and place of the meeting prior to the meeting, and,
  - Parental permission is granted, and,
  - Separate transportation is arranged.

## **Child Protection Policies**

### **Proper Displays of Affection**

#### **Appropriate Touch**

Recognizing that children need appropriate displays of affection that reflect pure, genuine and positive displays of God's love, appropriate touch with children will be age and developmentally appropriate. We encourage Youth Leaders to:

- Hold a preschool child who is crying.
- Speak to a child at eye level and listen with your eyes as well as your ears.
- Hold a child's hand when speaking, listening or walking to an activity.
- Gently hold the child's shoulder or hand to keep their attention while you redirect the child's behavior.
- Put your arm around the shoulder of a child when comforting or quieting is needed.
- Pat a child on the head, hand, shoulder or back to affirm them.

All touch must be done in the view of others.

#### **Inappropriate Touch**

Recognizing that the innocence of children must be protected, Youth Leaders will be made aware that the following actions are deemed inappropriate and will not be permitted:

- Do not kiss a child or coax a child to kiss you.
- Do not engage in extended tickling or hugging.
- Do not hold a child's face when talking to or disciplining the child.
- Do not touch a child in any area that would be covered by a bathing suit.
- Do not carry older children and do not allow them to sit on your lap.

Avoid prolonged physical contact with any child or youth.

## Child Protection Policies

### Discipline and Classroom Management

All discipline and classroom management will be conducted in a loving and caring environment. All attempts will be made to prevent discipline problems from arising and to avoid the need for remedial discipline. All attempts are to be taken to adhere to the following:

#### **Preventative Discipline:**

- Create a loving, caring atmosphere.
- To gain respect, you must grant respect.
- Model self-discipline and structure in your own life.
- Prepare exciting and interesting classes with short transitions between activities,
- Arrange your environment for children and for learning, Establish and communicate realistic expectations for the children,
- Be sure the activities that you provide are meaningful and age-appropriate,
- Be fair and consistent with all children, Be sure your focus is on positive actions and reward positive behavior,
- Be aware of children with special needs and bring their needs to the attention of the ministry lead.

#### **Remedial Discipline:**

- Every effort will be made to deal with problems individually,
- Every effort will be made to explain to the child why the behavior is unacceptable and instruct them in how
- to do it correctly,
- Every effort will be made to redirect the child to positive action,
- Every effort will be made to explain the consequences of unacceptable behavior by defining the correct
- way to behave as well as the result of the wrong behavior,
- Every effort will be made to offer choices that are acceptable to both you and the child.

Classroom rules will be established to clearly communicate the expectations required of children. Some suggested rules are:

- One voice talking at a time,
- Use inside voices,
- Use good manners,
- Respect each other,
- Visit the washroom before class
- Quiet hands get answered,
- Obey directions the first time,
- Keep your hands and feet to yourself,
- Be friendly,
- Remember – life isn't fair, but God is good.

## **Child Protection Policies**

### **Harassment and Discrimination**

1. Our church is committed to fostering an environment that is free of discrimination and harassment and one in which all individuals are treated with respect and dignity. Every member of our church community has a right to equal treatment with respect to ministry placement and with respect to the receipt of services and facilities without discrimination or harassment based on the following prohibited grounds: race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, age, marital status, family status, or disability.
2. A right to freedom from discrimination and harassment is also applicable where someone is treated unequally because she/he is in a relationship, association or dealing with a person or persons identified by one of the prohibited grounds of discrimination.
3. Every member of our church community, especially screened ministry personnel, is responsible for creating an environment which is free of discrimination and harassment. Those found to have engaged in such conduct will be subject to discipline.

## **Child Protection Policies**

### **Health and Safety**

1. Children with contagious diseases will not normally be admitted to youth activities.
2. Parents and caregivers are responsible for notifying the church of any known allergies which their children have. This information is to be noted on their registration form.
3. The notification of severe allergies will be posted in the child's classroom for high visibility, including a picture of the child, a list of his or her allergies and typical signs of reaction. Youth Leaders assigned to care for the child must be made aware of the allergy and the treatment required if a reaction occurs.
4. Leaders shall normally not administer medications. In extreme cases such as puffers for asthma, parental permission and written instructions must be obtained.
5. In recognition of individuals with severe peanut allergies, we recommend that churches consider the value of establishing a peanut-free policy for their facility.

### **Injuries and Emergencies.**

1. Fire escape routes must be posted and reviewed by the leaders on an annual basis.
2. A first aid kit must be available and at least one adult should be proficient in first aid.
3. Parents must be contacted immediately if their child is involved in an accident.
4. If the parent is not available and the child needs to go to the hospital, then a leader must accompany the child and wait at the hospital until the parents arrive.

## **Child Protection Policies**

### **Lost Children**

The Missing Child Policy is designed to give guidance to Church staff immediately following the discovery that a child is missing. The aim is to cover the entire building in a methodical manner while maintaining good communication and structure. In all cases a co-ordinated and timely response is essential.

Whoever notices that a child is missing will immediately spread the news to all other available adults. An adult will be sent directly to inform the child's parents. If Church is in session then the Security Person will be informed by the most efficient means. The Security person will interrupt the service and call for volunteers to do an initial search. The volunteers will proceed to the meeting location outside of the Church Office (this procedure requires one Security Person / Leader and nine Searchers).

The Security Person (or other Church Leader in their absence) will become the designated Leader and delegate the following tasks to the Searchers. The Security Person will remain at this Meeting Point and all reports will come through this location.

### **Staff Expectations**

#### **Modelling and Mentoring**

The youth leaders will have a great deal of influence on the moral and spiritual development of a child. Leaders must refrain from illegal activities and strive to present themselves in a manner that casts a positive light on the Church and its teachings. Leaders must be good Christian role models for the youth.

#### **Dating**

At no time must anyone working with youth pursue a dating relationship with a youngster. Leaders must be cautious about dealing with youth who develop crushes. Should a youth make an inappropriate comment to a leader, the situation must be resolved in private with another leader in the room.

# Reporting Procedures

## Obligation to Report

Any person who has reasonable grounds to believe that a child is in need of protection is legally required to report the matter to the Children's Aid Society or the local police. A person who knowingly fails to report is in violation of the law. The pastor and elders are available if you require counsel in this difficult situation.

### 1. How to Make a Report:

Any person who has reasonable grounds to believe that a child is in need of protection must make a report to Children's Aid Society or the local police. A second report must also be immediately made to the Pastor or a member of the Board. The Pastor or the Board will inform the District office, the Church lawyer and the insurance company.

### 2. When to Report:

A child is in need of protection if:

- a. You suspect that the child has suffered physical or sexual harm.
- b. You suspect that the child has been harmed due to lack of adequate care.
- c. You suspect that the child has been abandoned.
- d. You suspect that the child has been harmed emotionally.
- e. You suspect that the child is at risk to suffer sexual, physical or emotional harm.
- f. You suspect that the caregiver is unable to protect the child.
- g. You suspect that the caregiver has a problem that interferes with their ability to parent. (drug or alcohol abuse, mental illness)
- h. You suspect that the caregiver lacks adequate parenting skills.
- i. A child under 12 commits a serious act such as assault or excessive damage to property.

## Child Protection Policies

Signs that a child may have been abused are:

Physical signs may include:

- lacerations and bruises
- recurring nightmares
- irritation, pain, regular discomfort, or injury to the genital area
- difficulty sitting
- torn or bloody underclothing
- venereal or sexually transmitted disease

Behavioral signs may include:

- anxiety when approaching a child care area
- nervous, hostile, or rejecting behavior toward one or more adults
- sexual self-consciousness
- acting out of sexual behaviors or other expressions of sexual knowledge beyond that appropriate for the child's age
- withdrawal from church, school, or sports activities
- withdrawal from friends and family

### Protection From Liability and Confidentiality

The Child and Family Services Act provides protection from civil action to an individual who makes a report on reasonable grounds. Protection is not offered if the report was made in malice.

The Child and Family Services Act requires all individuals to report all cases where there are reasonable grounds to believe that a child is in need of protection. Only attorney-client privilege is exempt from this. Pastors and Doctors do not have confidentiality and are required to make reports.