

# **SAMPLE POLICY AND PROCEDURES MANUAL**

## **ANY BAPTIST CHURCH**

### **SUBJECT: CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION AND SAFETY POLICY**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The main objective of this policy is to provide a safe environment for the children (newborn through age seventeen) entrusted to the Church. In seeking to accomplish this objective, two other important objectives are being accomplished: the protection of the Church's workers from false allegations as well as the reduction of the Church's risk and liability exposure.

To accomplish the above, the Church must implement the Prevention Policy and then proceed to monitor its effectiveness. Accordingly, those in leadership within the Church, must regularly, consistently and without exception, ask the following questions:

- (1) Has every paid and volunteer worker involved in any manner within nursery/children/youth ministry on behalf of this Church been trained regarding this policy and has each such worker fulfilled the corresponding requirements? If not, immediate steps need to be taken to remedy the situation.
- (2) Are all workers following the required policies? If not, what obstacles still exist which are holding back the required level of cooperation? How can full cooperation of every worker be achieved?
- (3) Is every new member of this Church being introduced to the policies and procedures that have been established? If not, copies of the policies must be distributed and their contents communicated accordingly.

**This policy must always be monitored.** If not, the risk of child abuse and personal injury is likely to increase, along with the Church's legal liability

An integral part of implementing this policy is ensuring that the Church's insurance policy provides coverage for liability arising from abuse situations.

## **1.0 Screening and Selection of Workers**

1.01 During the screening process, the Church shall use its best efforts to maintain confidentiality.

1.02 The screening and selection policy shall apply to all paid and volunteer workers involved in any manner with child/youth ministry on behalf of this Church. The policy applies to new applicants and to those who are currently working with minors (newborn through age seventeen).

1.03 Before a person can be selected to serve in child ministry, the following steps are necessary:

- (a) review of the completed application form
- (b) completion of required interview
- (c) completion of reference checks
- (d) completion of a Police Check, when required. See section 5.00, page 3, for details.

## **2.0 Application**

2.01 Everyone who is involved in any form of ministry with those up to and including the age of seventeen (17) shall fill out an application. Applications and supporting documents are to be kept in a locked cabinet.

2.02 Copy of the Application Form is attached, marked Appendix "A".

## **3.00 Interviews**

3.01 An interview is required for everyone who is to be involved in any form of ministry with those up to and including 17 years of age.

3.02 Interviews will be carried out by a minimum of 3 Church Members.

3.03 All interviews will be conducted in the church. Those conducting the interviews will focus on the qualifications and interests of the applicant and other matters as deemed appropriate.

3.04 A record of the interview showing name, date, time and subjects discussed shall be recorded. The notes compiled during the interview will become part of the applicant's file.

#### **4.00 Reference Checks**

4.01 Churches, Organizations, and Personal References listed on the application form may be contacted by a member of the interview group. It is recommended that a minimum of two (2) references be contacted.

4.02 When a reference is contacted, a "Reference Contact Form" must be completed by the contacting person and the form becomes part of the applicants file.

4.03 Copy of "Reference Contact Form" is attached, marked Appendix "B".

#### **5.00 Police Checks**

5.01 Police checks will be required for all workers who have the opportunity of being **alone** with children/youth. This will include the following positions:

Sunday School Superintendent  
Sunday School Teachers  
Children/Youth Group Leaders  
Pastor(s)  
Music Director/Organist  
Janitor  
Other positions as conditions and activities change.

5.02 The cost of Police Checks will be at the expense of Any Baptist Church.

#### **6.0 Additional Screening Safeguards**

6.01 Applications may be accepted from Church Members. Applications may also be accepted from Adherents if they have attended on a regular basis for a minimum of 6 months. Exceptions may be granted, at the discretion of the Board of Deacons, following careful review of the volunteer's application and reports of references contacted.

6.02 Board of Deacons must approve all applicants before a position is assigned.

6.03 A person, who has been guilty of abuse, may not work with children who are seventeen years old or under.

- 6.04 If there is a medical reason(s) a potential volunteer may not be suitable as a leader, he/she may be considered for a “helper position” and paired with a leader but never left alone with the children.
- 6.05 From time to time, parent volunteers are needed to assist in a particular program’s event. When a parent is not an active participant in the Church congregation group of volunteers, he/she is to be screened by the coordinator of the program and teamed with an approved leader. Under no circumstances is a parent volunteer to be left alone with a child or a group of children and out of the sight of the other leader(s).
- 6.06 Appropriate adjustments to the screening process may be implemented for paid staff positions.

## **7.0 Child Abuse: Prevention and Procedures**

### **7.01 Definitions**

#### **Physical Abuse**

This is the use of physical force by the caregiver (parent/guardian, babysitters, or foster parent) of the child. This injury is sometimes described as a non-accidental injury by health professionals.

#### **Physical Neglect**

This is the chronic or episodic withholding of necessary or essential physical care from the child with resulting injury or damage to the child. Necessary physical care can include food, nutrition, shelter, clothing, medical care, safety, supervision.

#### **Emotional Abuse**

This is the acting out by the parent or caregiver of the child of their negative or ambiguous feelings towards the child, resulting in some degree of emotional damage to the child. This kind of behaviour may consist of constant chastising, belittling, verbal tirades, ridicule, humiliation, or the out and out rejection of the child’s sense of self-worth and dignity.

#### **Emotional Neglect**

This is the chronic or episodic withholding of necessary emotional care and support of the child which results in some degree of emotional damage to the child. This kind of neglect might consist of withholding affection and love from the child; it might also include the withholding of affirmations of the child's self-worth, trust and belongingness. In extreme forms, emotional neglect can involve the complete withdrawal of any verbal and/or non-verbal interactions with the child, manifesting the complete rejection of the child.

### **Sexual Abuse**

This is the sexual exploitation of a child by a caregiver or other family member, or any adult, resulting in damage or injury to the child sexually, either psychologically or physically. Forms of sexual exploitation include behaviour of a sexual nature, touching of a sexual nature and sexual intercourse.

## **7.02 The Responsibility To Report**

### **Why Should We Report**

- As individuals, we have a legal responsibility. Each person who believes, on reasonable grounds, that a child is or may be in need of protection must report the matter to The Children's Aid Society of Grey County.
- As a congregation we have a responsibility. We must ensure our workers are trained to identify inappropriate behaviour with minors. If a person sees inappropriate behaviour, the person shall immediately report the incident to the Board of Deacons and/or the Pastor. The Church leaders shall ensure appropriate action is taken in accordance with this policy.
- We have a Spiritual Obligation: God has given everyone the responsibility to care for children and to develop and maintain a safe environment for them.

### **How Should We Report**

- The Children and Family Services Act requires that each person who believes on reasonable grounds that a child is or may be in need of protection shall promptly report the belief and the information upon which it is based, to The

Children's Aid Society of Grey County. In addition, the person shall also report the occurrence to the Board of Deacons and the Pastor.

- Each person who has reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is or has suffered abuse shall promptly report the suspicion and the information on which it is based to the Board of Deacons or the Pastor. The Children and Family Services Act requires the Pastor or the designate from the Board of Deacons to promptly report the occurrence to The Children's Aid Society of Grey County.
- No investigation is to be conducted by Church officials or volunteers, in circumstances where a report has been made to The Children's Aid Society of Grey County, until civil authorities authorise such action.

### **7.03 Responding to an Abuse Allegation**

Should an allegation of abuse be received, based on reasonable grounds, the Church leadership, consisting of the positions listed below shall review and respond, in accordance with the following guidelines:

- (a) Positions: Chairs of - Board of Deacons, Board of Trustees, Board of Finance and Administration, Church Clerk and the Pastor. This group will appoint a Chair for each occasion.
- (b) Allegations must be taken seriously and handled promptly with due respect for privacy and confidentiality of all persons involved. Do not engage in denial, minimization, or blame. Do not be accusatory.
- (c) Document all efforts in handling the allegation and ensure the records are kept up to date and confidential.
- (d) Ensure reporting, to required local authorities, (i.e. Police, Children's Aid Society, etc.) has been carried out.
- (e) Do not handle the allegation without professional assistance. Report the matter immediately to the Church's Lawyer and Insurance Company. Do not attempt an in-depth investigation, as this needs to be left to professionals who are familiar with these cases.
- (f) Obtain legal advice to determine the obligation to notify parents.
- (g) Do not confront the accused until the safety of the victim is secured. Police should be available to deal with this situation.

- (h) Reach out to the victim and the victim's family, as adequate care must be shown for the well being of the victim. Be careful not to pre-judge the situation.
- (i) Treat the accused with dignity and support. If the accused is a worker, that person should be suspended from any duties or responsibilities in the nursery/children/youth ministry pending the outcome of the investigation. If the accused is a paid employee, arrangements should be made to either maintain or suspend his/her income as directed by our legal counsel.
- (j) Use a prepared statement, as directed by legal counsel, when providing information to the media and the congregation. The privacy and confidentiality of all those involved must be safeguarded.

## **10.00 Safety Procedures**

### **10.01 Training**

Each new paid and volunteer worker, involved with children, must receive training on this policy. The policy should also be reviewed with all volunteers on an annual basis to refresh their awareness of the contents. The Video - "REDUCUNG THE RISK" should be viewed by all new volunteers as part of their initial training and by all volunteers on an annual basis.

### **10.02 Teaching Classes**

There will be a minimum of 1 adult teacher for every Sunday School class. If an additional volunteer is required he/she will be selected from the Sunday School supply list. Whenever there is only one adult leader in a classroom with children, the door will remain slightly open or a window should be available allowing anyone passing to look in without interrupting the teaching process.

### **10.03 Junior Church**

A minimum of one adult leader assisted by a helper to be present at all sessions. The helper could be a Church member, member of the Youth Group or an Usher who would be available to go for assistance if needed, ensure children remain in the group setting, outside doors are secure, etc. The helper must not be left alone with the children. The leader will record the names of the children in attendance and sign the record sheet. Records to be maintained as outlined in the section "Record Keeping" - page 8. If an adult leader, or a helper, is not available, Junior Church will be cancelled and the children returned to their parents.

### **10.04 Nursery/Toddler Rooms**

The Church nursery is an important aspect of our children's ministry and as such we seek to provide the best care for our children. The following guidelines are in place to make the nursery/toddler area a safe place for young children.

There will be a minimum of two adults in the nursery. When there are more than 3 infants or 5 toddlers, additional helpers are to be recruited to assist in the care of the children. When there is only one baby/toddler in the nursery there will be a minimum of two volunteers, one of which must be an adult. The second nursery worker may be a teenager or an adult.

When there are two workers in the nursery, preferably they will not be from the same family.

Children using the nursery/toddler area must be signed in and signed out of the area by the same adult or a pre-authorized adult. When the child is being signed in, the worker must record any particular medical information that is needed for the child. (i.e. asthma, food allergies, etc.) Also refer to the "Record Keeping" section later in this policy. ( page 8)

The nursery/toddler facilities are designed for children age 3 and under. Parents are requested not to send children over the age of 3 to the nursery/toddler rooms. This will allow the area to be kept clean and safe for younger children.

Workers observing the toddlers must ensure that activities and toys appropriate only for toddlers are kept out of the reach of infants.

Workers must ensure children remain in their controlled area at all times.

When toddlers require trips to the bathroom, a nursery worker must supervise the children in the washroom. To lessen the workload of the nursery volunteers, parents of children who use the washroom are encouraged to take their child(ren) to the washroom prior to leaving them in the nursery.

The change table must be located where the child being changed can be easily seen by another nursery worker, or two workers should be present in the room where the change table is located.

The Christian Education Committee is responsible for the following:

- (a) Scheduling the required number of volunteers for the regular Sunday Services and on other occasions when the nursery facilities are required.
- (b) Inspection of toys and for the repair or replacement of toys that are damaged. Toys should be cleaned at regular intervals. All toys in these rooms must be approved for infants and toddlers.

- (c) Ensure the furniture is appropriate for infants and toddlers.
- (d) Bedding and furniture must be cleaned at regular intervals in addition to when they appear dirty.

### **10.05 Record Keeping**

Complete records are to be kept for each Sunday School class, Junior Church, Nursery/Toddler or other group activities. These records are to include the names and ages of children, addresses, telephone numbers and parent name(s). Parental permission must be sought to allow the Church to record health card numbers and any other pertinent medical information such as allergies, asthma, etc. that leaders should know. As well, an emergency contact person(s) should be recorded if possible.

To maintain confidentiality these records are to be stored in a locked file in a safe designated location, preferably in the Sunday School meeting area, to allow quick access. There will be a maximum of four (4) people with access to these files, namely, Sunday School Superintendent, Chair of Christian Education Committee, Chair of Board of Deacons and the Pastor(s). It shall be the responsibility of these four (4) people to ensure that all teachers, leaders and helpers are aware of any pertinent information relating to any children, youth, etc., who are participating in their respective programs. The members, in the positions previously mentioned, should also be familiar with the **Privacy Policy of Any Baptist Church**.

An accurate sign-in procedure will be maintained for each child in the Nursery/Toddler department. The child's name, parent name (s) and parent location during the service or meeting shall be recorded. Special needs of a child should be noted on the sign-in sheet.

Attendance records for Nursery/Toddler area, Junior Church, Sunday School classes and other group activities are to be maintained and signed by the person recording the information. The names of the leaders/volunteers are also to be listed for each occasion.

At the end of each season all records will be transferred to the office files in their **ORIGINAL** form. These files will be kept for a period of 30 years.

### **10.06 Restrooms**

Parents are encouraged to take their children to the washroom prior to the beginning of the service. Should a child need to go to the washroom during the service, parents/guardian are encouraged to go with the child. If parents/guardian believe the child is old enough to go to the washroom without an adult they should send two older children together. Parents/Guardians must take the responsibility of monitoring their children.

Sunday School teachers and group leaders of children under the age of 10 are encouraged to have the whole class stop at the washroom on the way to the class/meeting room. Teachers/Leaders of children over the age of 10 are asked to send the children in pairs to the washroom when washroom visits are required.

#### **10.07 Group Activities (On Church Property)**

There will be no less than 2 adult leaders present in all group activities for children. Because of the nature of the programs and the diversity in activities that may be happening at one time, it is suggested there be additional adult volunteers for special activities when required.

Programs for junior and senior high school youth will have a minimum of 2 adult volunteers. Additional volunteers should be obtained as the group grows to spread the needs of the program over a greater number of volunteers.

If required Leaders are not present the scheduled event must be cancelled.

Record of attendance must be maintained as outlined in the section "Record Keeping" - page 8.

#### **10.08 Off Church Property Activities (field trips, parties, hiking, sports, etc.)**

Programs encourage groups to go outside of the Church building to enhance the curriculum being taught. When these events are planned, additional supervision considerations are required.

- (a) Groups where children are all of the same gender must have a minimum of 2 leaders of the same gender as the children.
- (b) Groups, which are co-ed, must have adequate adult supervision. This would include regular leaders, other approved leaders and/or parents of the children - a minimum of 2 adult female and 2 adult male supervisors is suggested. Supervisors should not be from the same household. Parents helping with the event are not required to complete the Children' Ministry Information Form. (Also see section 6.05 above, page 3)

- (c) For Church activities off the property, a notice will be printed in the Church bulletin two (2) weeks prior to the event and/or notices mailed or sent to homes. Children who attend unaccompanied by an adult shall be asked for their phone numbers for contact in case of an emergency.
- (d) When outings involve transportation out of the city, consent forms are required from a parent/guardian for all children under the age of 15 years. The leaders are required to post a list of the drivers' names, vehicle licence number and the names of children in each vehicle. This information is to be posted on a bulletin board in the Church Fellowship Hall until everyone has returned to the city. Once a child has been assigned to a vehicle, he/she is not to switch vehicles. Copy of Consent Form is attached, marked appendix "D".
- (e) Parties held in homes must provide additional non-related adult supervision while the children are present in the home.

#### **10.09 Sick Children**

Children who are not feeling well should not be received into the nursery/toddler area or classrooms. Signs of illness are unusual fatigue or irritability, coughing, sneezing, runny nose and eyes, vomiting, diarrhoea, complaining of sore ears or throat, evidence of a rash, etc. Children with these or similar symptoms should be returned to their parent(s) or guardian.

#### **10.10 Emergencies**

Workers/volunteers are not to give or apply any medication to children except for bandages for minor cuts/abrasions or ice packs for bumps. If a child needs medication, the parent must administer it. No medication will be left in the nursery/toddler area or classroom with the following exception: children who carry inhalers for asthma or medication for serious allergies.

In the event an older child (over the age of 12) who is diabetic requires sugar, hard candies will be kept on hand in the appropriate area and one candy may be given to the diabetic child while the parent/guardian is called.

Emergency procedures in the event of a fire will be reviewed semi-annually and when new volunteers come on board. Volunteers will be trained in these procedures. Evacuation procedures are to be posted in each meeting/classroom area.

First Aid boxes will be kept on hand and all volunteers are to review their locations and contents in the early fall and early spring. Volunteers for summer activities will review the locations and contents of the First Aid kits as part of their program preparation.

### **10.11 Volunteer Behaviour**

Volunteers should always be above reproach in their words and conduct. They are to behave in a Godly manner, demonstrating Christian conduct, respect, honesty and trustworthiness.

All volunteers must fill out and keep up-to-date a Any Baptist Church “Application For Service” Form. (i.e. address, phone number, etc.) These forms are to be reviewed annually by the Christian Education Committee.

Workers must not be involved in any of the following activities with older children: extended hugging, kissing, sitting on lap, be alone with a child or inappropriate touching.

In the event a child approaches an adult leader with the intent to hug or kiss, or unexpectedly does so, the adult leader should accept the affection, but should quickly as possible, in a non-rejecting manner, encourage a more appropriate form of physical contact. Appropriate expressions for ages 0-3 include picking up the child, comforting the child, holding the hand of the child. Appropriate physical contact for ages 4+ could include a handshake, pat on the back, quick hug of encouragement with hands on the shoulder area and a ‘high five’.

Workers must model kindness, be calm, set age-appropriate limits and teach children to solve problems with words. Under no circumstances may children be humiliated, neglected, slapped or spanked.

Volunteers who are not feeling well should not lead a group of children. Notification to the Sunday School Superintendent or an alternate leader on the spare list, should be made as soon as possible so a replacement is on duty to assist in the supervision and/or instruction of children. If advance notification is not possible last minute adjustments will be required by the Sunday School Superintendent or other available leaders. It may be necessary to have the group meet in a high traffic area where others can check on the group without interrupting the session.

### **11.12 Staff and Volunteer Support**

It is our goal, not only to provide for safety of our children and youth, but also to support and provide, to the best of our ability, a system of procedures that will protect the staff and volunteers from being falsely accused of wrongful acts. This is accomplished by:

- (a) Screening potential leaders to determine where a volunteer would be best suited to use their gifts, abilities, interests, and experiences.
- (b) Providing leadership development that will further prepare the volunteer for leadership within a group or class.
- (c) Adhere to the Procedures in section 10.0 to 10.11 - Safety Procedures.
- (d) Maintaining the records of groups and classes for a period of 30 years in their **ORIGINAL** form. Refer to Any Baptist Church Privacy Policy.
- (e) Providing coverage for all staff and volunteers under the Any Baptist Church Insurance Policy with periodic reviews to ensure the Policy covers all the areas of our Church Ministry.

## **12.0 Reporting Accidents/Injuries**

Occasionally during the course of programs, both in the Church or off-site activities, injury(s) can occur. These may be minor or major in nature. After appropriate assistance has been given to the injured child or leader, a written "Accident Investigation Report" is to be completed by the group leader or appropriate person from the Church leadership staff. A description of the accident, contributing factors and treatment given should be noted. Witnesses to the accident should be listed with addresses and phone numbers for follow-up purposes.

The Christian Education Committee should review the "Accident Investigation Report". A member(s) of the C. E. Committee should be appointed to investigate the accident and bring recommendations back to the C.E. Committee to prevent, as much as possible, a reoccurrence of the accident. These files are to be kept in the Church office for future reference. A copy of the "Accident Investigation Report" is attached. See Appendix "C". Blank forms are to be kept in a location that is always accessible.