

**SAMPLE POLICY FROM A CANADIAN CHRISTIAN  
REFORMED CHURCH (SPCCRC)**

**ONTARIO, CANADA**

**POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

**FOR PREVENTING CHILD/YOUTH & SENIOR ABUSE**

**AND**

**RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS**

**OF CHILD/YOUTH & SENIOR ABUSE**

**(SAFE CHURCH MINISTRY)**

**Revised & Approved by Council  
November 12, 2019**

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Each time a child is baptized we are reminded of these words of Jesus Christ: “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.” (Mark 10:14) As the congregation of (SPCCRC) we respond to the following question: “Do you, the people of the Lord, promise to receive these children in love, pray for them, help instruct them in the faith, and encourage and sustain them in the fellowship of believers?” by answering: “We do, God helping us.” (Form for Baptism of Children)

Child abuse... it's a sensitive issue. An emotional issue. It's an issue that we would rather not think about, or at least not believe that we would have to face in a Christian organization. Unfortunately, we must. Society – even the church – has become tainted by the presence of child abuse, and most of us have heard stories or experienced first hand what happens to a congregation when abuse is discovered in church. Worse, children's lives have been severely and permanently damaged as a result of abuse.

That reason alone compels us to be on guard at all times, working to prevent child abuse before it occurs, and to respond to it properly if it does.” (Child Abuse Handbook, the Calvinist Cadet Corps)

The protection of children is a matter of fundamental concern, and any abuse of these children and the members of the Friendship Club under the supervision of church volunteers, staff and leaders will not be tolerated.

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to reduce the risk of abuse, be it physical, sexual, or emotional, in the church by creating an awareness of it and providing insights and tools for the prevention of it for volunteers, staff and leaders in child and youth programs of the church. The necessary procedures for reporting it are also included.

## II. DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE

The following definitions are given to further assist the church in understanding the types of behaviours which might constitute ungodly conduct, misuse of power, sexually inappropriate behaviour, and so forth:

**a. Physical Abuse** is any act or omission which results in a non-accidental trauma or physical injury being inflicted on another person. It is sometimes a single event but more often a chronic pattern of behaviour. It may result from severe punishment. Physically abusive acts include

slapping, pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, biting, choking, severe spanking, beating, hitting with an object, burning, stabbing, and shooting.

**b. Physical Neglect** is not doing what one is supposed to do to meet the physical needs of those (especially children) in his or her care.

**c. Sexual Abuse** is exploitation of a person regardless of age or circumstances for the sexual gratification of another. Child sexual abuse can refer to taking advantage of a child who is not capable of understanding sexual acts or resisting coercion such as threats or offers of gifts. Sexual abuse may or may not involve sexual contact. Examples of non-physical sexual abuse include people exposing themselves, displaying pornographic material, photographing a child for pornographic materials, obscene telephone calls, “Peeping Toms,” and requests to engage in sexual activity (where no physical contact occurs). Examples of sexual abuse involving physical contact includes fondling of body parts such as breasts, crotch, buttocks, or sexual organs; intercourse; oral and anal sex.

**d. Emotional Abuse** is harm or threatened harm to a person’s welfare or well being, a chronic or intentional pattern of deprivation; manipulative threats, words or action; harassment; or unnecessary and excessive attempts to control a person’s behaviour or thoughts.

### **III. VOLUNTEERS / STAFF / LEADERS SCREENING PROCEDURE**

The church will rely on personal information forms, interviews, references and police record checks in the screening process for volunteers, staff and leaders (hereafter referred to as “Applicants”) who will be working as leaders in child and youth programs, Friendship Club or the persons under 18 years of age in a supervisory or leadership position, and who conduct frequent or lengthy one-to-one meetings with the children, as well as directors of children and youth programs, pastors, ordained staff and professional staff.

Such procedures assist the church in attempting to maintain the safety and well being of the individuals entrusted to its care. These procedures will be implemented once an Applicant has been approved in principle by the Executive.

#### **A. Personal Interview**

An interview shall be conducted with all Applicants to assist in assessing the Applicant’s supervisory and/or leadership skills. Whenever possible, the individual who will supervise the Applicant should conduct the interview. The interviewer will recommend the names of suitable Applicants to the Executive or the Abuse Prevention Team (APT).

#### **B.. Personal Information Form**

All applicants will be required to complete and submit the approved Personal Information Form to the Abuse Prevention Team (APT).

### C. References

First-time applicants are required to provide names of **three** references. References can be obtained from previous employers, friends and colleagues. All **three** references will be contacted by the APT.

### D. Police Record Check Process

1. Purpose of the police record check (PRC): to help ensure that those who are responsible for teaching and leading those under 18 years of age, the Friendship Group **or** Church Seniors do not have a previous history of abuse.

*[Note: this does not “ensure” there is no previous history of abuse. Rather, it will help discharge the church’s obligation to make its best efforts to protect the children in its care]*

2. All Applicants, age 18 and over, will be informed by the program leader at the time of inquiry, that it is the policy of the church to receive a PRC prior to approving appointment, and thereafter, every **five** years. For a complete list of positions requiring a screening, see Section XV.

(Note: A PRC will not be requested of the Applicant until such time as the church is satisfied that the Applicant is otherwise acceptable for the position)

3. The Abuse Prevention Team (APT) for the church is responsible for facilitating the PRC process and ensuring that the Applicant understands the type of information being requested and the process to be followed.

4. The APT will be responsible for safeguarding the information received. The APT shall take all reasonable precautions such that the information will only be used for the purpose of screening volunteers and employees who work with the child and youth ministry programs, Friendship Program, Church Seniors and will not be disseminated to any other person or agency.

*[Note: The information in the check should not be disclosed to anyone other than the Applicant because it will contain information from the Pardoned Sexual Offender Database. That information is only legally available to certain individuals. It should only be disclosed to third parties under court order or after consultation with legal counsel]*

5. The APT will advise each Applicant that the presence of information provided by the police service may not necessarily mean a disqualification from the position, but that the APT will decide on the acceptability of the applicant based on the impact of the information.

6. **First time applicants** will be provided with the LE220E (Ontario Provincial Police Vulnerable Sector Clearance Request- see section XVII, or the police jurisdiction in which they reside.

## **RE-CHECKS: (5 Year Renewals)**

**Volunteers or employees who have been continuously working within our church since the original Vulnerable Sector Search was done will only require a Criminal Record Check by whatever police service jurisdiction the applicant resides, providing that any gap in service or membership does not exceed 5 years. Positive identification is no longer an issue.**

*(This will eliminate the need to fingerprint again an applicant who has the same Date of Birth as someone who has a criminal record on file. Remember, a person with a criminal record can change his name but not his Date of Birth to avoid detection. Positive identification can only be assured through an original Vulnerable Sector Check).*

7. The Applicant shall personally attend at the County OPP Detachment, (or the office of the police authority in the community where he or she lives) to apply for the PRC. The Applicant will need to fill out the appropriate application forms as listed in # 5 above and present two pieces of identification. When completed, the OPP will **mail** the PRC to the address provided by the Applicant. If the Applicant resides in County, volunteers will get a police check at no cost, whereas a police check for a paid position will be **\$30.00** (subject to change). Applicants living in other police jurisdictions (eg: Hamilton Police Service) will need to apply by following the procedures in place within that jurisdiction.

8. After receiving the completed PRC, the Applicant **must personally** deliver it to the designated member of the APT. The applicant has the right to withhold the information; however, this will be appropriate grounds for refusing the Applicant's request for a volunteer, staff, or leadership position in the child and youth programs.

***[Note: By having the individual obtain the PRC by himself (or herself), it will help protect the church from any allegations that information was inappropriately disclosed and/or lost]***

9. The APT will review each PRC and decide if it discloses any information which would make the Applicant inappropriate for the position. The names of successful Applicants are forwarded to Council Executive. It is recommended that volunteers/staff/leaders in child and youth groups, as well as Friendship Group, who have already been approved in principle by Council, and who have submitted a clear PRC to the APT, may begin serving as leaders in their programs without waiting for further word from Council Executive.

10. If the PRC is not clear, the circumstances of the information may be discussed with the Applicant. If the APT decides that the Applicant is not appropriate, the Applicant is informed and the process ends.

11. If the APT decides that the Applicant is not appropriate, the original PRC will be returned to the Applicant, and the expense incurred will be reimbursed by the church (for paid employees only). The APT will keep a copy of this record check on file as proof the PRC was done and as backup should anyone question the suitability of an Applicant. If the Applicant is approved, the member of the APT who receives the PRC shall be responsible for making sure that the

original PRC be kept confidentially and in perpetuity and stored in a locked file with limited access.

*[Since a major part of the reason that an organization is collecting screening information is in order to demonstrate due diligence in hiring and appointing children's and youth ministry workers and since there is no statute of limitations with respect to individuals who may seek civil action in the future as the result of actual or alleged abuse they may have suffered as children, it is kept confidentially and in perpetuity, in order to provide a legal defense for the organization and its directors and other leaders.]*

12. The APT will review the list of volunteers, staff and leaders in child and youth programs on a yearly basis to see who is up for their **5 year renewal** PRC.

#### **IV. VOLUNTEER REQUIREMENTS:**

1. All volunteers are urged to participate in Yearly Training/Information sessions. Volunteers must do a mandatory yearly review of the Policy and Procedures for Preventing Child Abuse and Responding to Allegations of Child Abuse, as amended from time to time.

**2. An individual in a position of trust and working with children/youth or vulnerable adults needs to be fully screened. This applies to all volunteers and employees working within the church.**

*This means that anyone volunteering with our church must go through a proper police clearance check (Vulnerable Sector Check initially and if in continuous service for 5 years, a Criminal Record Check every 5 years thereafter) and if worshipping with us for less than 5 years, provide at least 3 character references before they are allowed to volunteer. This eliminates the issue of membership and allows us to use people who worship with us on a regular basis (at least 6 months) but not wishing to become full time members. The application process must be completed and filed through our church.*

3. If a person is a **known sex offender**, then never will he/she be able to volunteer with any of the child or youth programs in the church.

4. If a person is suspected of child abuse, then he/she must take a leave of absence from their role until an investigation has been completed. If, after an investigation has been concluded, it is determined that the person has been involved in abuse of a child, the person will be immediately dismissed from his/her current role.

5. A volunteer or church leader removed or dismissed from their position or office should not be considered for re-entry or reinstatement without the advice of legal counsel (ties in with 4 & 5).

6. Sexual, physical or emotional abuse of a parishioner by a volunteer or church leader will not be tolerated.

(Definition of an Adult: someone who has reached the age of **18** years).

#### **V: DISCIPLINE POLICY:**

1. Corporal punishment is not permitted. Corporal punishment includes, but is not limited to, slapping, hitting, pushing and touching in an aggressive manner.
2. Abusive verbal discipline is not permitted. Abusive verbal discipline includes, but is not limited to, yelling, hurling insults, verbally embarrassing a child and threatening a child expressly or by implication.
3. Parent(s) are to be informed and involved whenever a child/youth misbehaves beyond minor correction or if a pattern of misbehaviour increases.
4. Concerns about a child's behaviour or the appropriate response to a child's behaviour should be reported to the program supervisor.
5. An aide or a parent should be involved weekly in classrooms where misbehaviour is an ongoing problem.
6. Expectations of children's/youth's behaviour must reflect their age and level of comprehension. Similarly, discipline must reflect their age and level of comprehension.
7. Children are to be reminded of the kind of behaviour that is acceptable for the setting. Older children and youth may benefit from having these expectations in written form.
8. Appropriate forms of discipline are to be reviewed with volunteers/staff before church-sponsored programs begin a new season. Then periodic reminders are to be given as needed.
9. All volunteers/staff must sign a ministry covenant confirming they have read, understand and are willing to comply with policies and procedures.

## **Policies for Specific Child/Youth Programs**

### **VI. NURSERY PROGRAMS: (Including Mom to Mom)**

1. Minors may volunteer for service, provided that an adult (director, head nursery attendant (**mother in charge**) is present. Minors may not care for child (ren) without this adult supervision.
2. A **minimum** of two adult attendants must be in the infant and toddler nursery with no more than ten infants or toddlers before an additional attendant is required (**ratio of 2-10**). In any case, the ratio of adults to children must never exceed the above. **If this occurs or is expected to occur, steps must be immediately taken by the attendant(s) on duty to bring in additional help. If additional help is required, only persons who have been formally approved by the church may be utilized. It is the responsibility of the scheduled attendant(s) to make a written note of the names and times of attendance of additional help on a sign-in sheet/record sheet.** The "Two Adult Rule" will apply whenever nursery is scheduled.



*[Note: it is important to have a record of who was in attendance should an allegation of abuse be filed at a later date].*

3. Adult attendants may take children from the nursery only for good reason, such as to use the bathroom or in case of illness. Any significant medical problem should be reported immediately to the child's parent(s). For children who do not require assistance in the bathroom, the adult attendant must remain outside the bathroom. For children who require assistance, the adult attendant must assist the child with the bathroom door ajar.
4. Only one adult member of a family should serve in the nursery at any given time. A couple (husband and wife) should **not** serve in the nursery at the same time.
5. An adult or minor who is not scheduled as a nursery attendant for that particular service may **not** spend time in the nursery room(s) during or after the service. The only exception would be a nursery attendant called in to assist with unexpected children and keeping the ratio of at **least two adults to ten children and their attendance recorded.**
6. The Disciple Policy applies to nursery programs.
7. Nursery doors must have a window or an unobstructed view of the room.
8. No one may take a child from the nursery without the consent of the parents except as outlined in # 3 above.
9. The parent(s) of any child requiring medical attention must be notified as soon as possible.
10. **Diapering of infants or toddlers must take place in the nursery room with another adult attendant within sight.** Basement bathrooms are not to be used to change diapers.
11. Completed attendance records for nursery attendants and children must be turned in to the APT for filing at the end of each fiscal year.

**Nursery - Dec 31.**

**Mom to Mom (Nursery) - May 31.**

**Mom to Mom (Little Lambs) – May 31.**

## **VII. SUNDAY SCHOOL AND SUMMER WORSHIP:**

1. Only one adult member of a family should serve in a classroom at any given time. A couple (husband and wife) should **not** serve together in children's worship or in church school in the same classroom.
2. Whenever children's worship or church school is in session, two volunteers/staff, including at least **two adults**, should be present.

3. Only adults may assist children with bathroom needs. Bathroom assistance is conducted as in the nursery policy. Children will be encouraged to use bathroom facilities before and after class.
4. Children should not leave the worship center or classroom except for illness, to use the bathroom or other compelling reasons.
5. Whenever children's worship or church school is in session, the worship center or classroom door must allow for an unobstructed view of the room.
6. Appropriate display of affection is often a part of conveying support and encouragement to one another. Displays of affection between teacher and student should be limited to such actions as a brief hug, an arm around the shoulder, an open handed pat on the back, a handclasp or handshake, or a light touch on the forearm. Displays of affection should be restricted to public areas. A student's or teacher's right to refuse any of these will be respected.
7. The Discipline Policy applies to Sunday School and Summer Worship programs.
8. Completed attendance records for teachers/volunteers/children must be turned in to the APT for filing at the end of each fiscal year.

**Sunday School – (June 30)**

**Summer Worship – (Sept 30)**

### **VIII. VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL & SPRING BREAK SCHOOL:**

1. All Vacation Bible & Spring Break School classes and activities will be conducted with at least **two adult** volunteers/staff, Volunteers/staff should not meet alone with a child without another adult or leader nearby to observe.
2. Volunteers/staff ordinarily should not physically restrain a child in their care. Leaders should ask for assistance if a child behaves in a manner that seems to require restraint. If the leader determines that restraint is needed, the child's parent will be notified immediately and the child may be removed from the class until the parent arrives.
3. Children should not leave their classroom except for illness, to use the bathroom or other compelling reasons.
4. Classrooms held in off-site facilities such as a parsonage, activity building, or school should adhere to the same safety considerations as classrooms in the church building. Children should not meet in a confined space or without adequate supervision.
5. **Church volunteers or staff transporting a child in a church vehicle must have parental permission to do so.**
6. In the event that church members use their homes/yards for neighbourhood Vacation Bible or Spring Break School, a child's parent must give consent for the child to meet in the home/yard.

**At least two adult** volunteers/staff must conduct in-home programs. Children attending in-home programs must be able to use bathroom facilities without assistance. Children attending in-home programs should be able to walk to the home. If transportation is needed, it should be provided according to number 5 above.

7. The Discipline Policy applies to VBS programs.

8. Completed attendance records for supervisors/volunteers are to be turned over to the APT for filing at the end of each **school session**.

**Spring Break School – (March 31)      Vacation Bible School – (July 31)**

### **IX. CADETS AND GEMS:**

1. Club leaders should establish a written policy to identify and discourage abusive behaviour among minors in their program. They should also establish a plan on how to deal with abusive behaviour. Both the written policy and plan must be approved by the APT.

2. Counsellors should provide adequate supervision of the counsees. Each club function should be supervised by **at least two adult leaders**.

3. Counsellors and counsees may meet privately once or twice and thereafter only with the permission of a parent. Any such meeting should occur in a public place.

4. If a child needs significant medical attention, the counsellor(s) must take all reasonable steps to notify the parent(s) immediately.

5. Club members should not arrive more than ten minutes before the start of class, nor should they stay longer than ten minutes after the class.

6. Churches that plan club activities away from the church facility, out of town, or overnight should conduct them in general compliance with aforementioned policies.

7. While the appropriate display of affection between club counsellors and their counsees is often part of conveying support and encouragement to one another, such displays can be misinterpreted. For that reason, displays of affection should be limited to such actions as a brief hug, an arm around the shoulder, an open-hand pat on the back, a handclasp, or a light touch to the forearm. A counsellor's or counsee's right to refuse any of these will be respected.

8. The Discipline Policy applies to club programs.

9. Sleepovers, camping or other overnight events should only be allowed when **all** supervisors and volunteers are fully screened

10. **Must obtain signed parental consent and permission** for off-premises or overnight events. **Two adult rule** applies at all times.

11. Completed attendance records for supervisors/volunteers are to be turned over to the APT for filing at the end of each season.

**(April 30)**

## **X. HIGH SCHOOL MINISTRY**

1. Each year youth group leaders should sponsor a class about abuse for members of the youth group. Topics for this class might include date violence, biblical guidelines for dating relationships, awareness of the signs of abuse, a teenager's response to a teenage victim or abuser, or prevention of abuse.

2. Youth group leaders may meet privately with a youth group member once or twice and thereafter only with the permission of a parent. Any such meeting should occur in public.

3. Regardless of the relative ages, it is never appropriate for a youth group leader and a youth group member to date each other. Similarly, a youth group leader should not date the close friend of a member of the youth group.

4. Youth group leaders may be single or they may be married couples, although only one spouse need attend a youth group function.

5. In the context of group activities, youth group leaders should provide supervision of the youth in their care. Youth group leaders should not hold a youth group function without appropriate or sufficient supervision. Youth group functions must be under the supervision of at least **two adult youth leaders**. These guidelines also apply to activities away from the church site.

6. While the appropriate display of affection is often part of conveying support and encouragement to one another, such displays can be misinterpreted. Therefore, displays of affection between youth leader and youth group member should be limited to such actions as a brief hug, an arm around the shoulders, an open-hand pat on the back, a handclasp or handshake, or a light touch to the forearm. Restrict these displays to a public area. A youth group leader's or member's right to refuse such a display of affection will be respected.

7. No gifts, phone calls, or letters of a personal nature should be directed to a youth group member by a youth group leader, unless done with the approval of the APT.

8. Sleepovers, camping or other overnight events should only be allowed when **all** supervisors and volunteers are fully screened

9. **Must obtain signed parental consent and permission** for off-premises or overnight events. **Two adult rule** applies at all times.

10. Completed attendance records for supervisors/volunteers are to be turned over to the APT for filing at the end of each season

**(June 30).**

## **XI. Transportation Policy**

This policy applies to **adults**, while servicing in ministry to youth, who may transport non-related youth in the course of church-sponsored programs.

1. At least two of the following procedures must be in place:
  - A. Two adults are present and seated in the front of the vehicle when transporting youth
  - B. At least two youth are present in the vehicle
  - C. Youth are seated in the back seats of the vehicle
  - D. Drivers log-in each pick-up and drop off; logs are turned into program Supervisor
2. Adults must have a valid driver's licence and proof of insurance before transporting youth; drivers who routinely transport youth will have their driving record reviewed prior to the beginning of each church year.
3. Drivers need to abide by state and provincial requirements for car seat use, seatbelt use and air bag safety.
  - A. Youth are to wear seat belts whenever the vehicle is in service. Drivers may not transport more youths than available seatbelts.
  - B. Where required by law, car seats must be available for younger children.
  - C. For safety, youth under the age of 12 may not sit in the front seat if there is a passenger-side airbag.

Adults or minors who transport **related** youth to church-sponsored events are not subject to this policy.

The transportation policy does not extend to parents or guardians who request or give permission for a minor with a valid driver's licence to transport non-related youth.

## **XII. FRIENDSHIP:**

1. The parent(s) or legal guardian(s) must be informed about the place of an outside function, the name of the driver, time of pickup and the time of return.
2. All one-on-one sessions must be held in a public place in full view of others.

3. Hugs must only be given in the presence of others, be brief, appropriate, and only when consented to by the other party.
4. In the event of a violent act, restraint must be non-violent physical intervention. Should the victim fall to the ground, restraint must be released immediately. Call 911 if the situation is warranted.
5. If assistance is required in toileting, the washroom door should be kept slightly ajar or another leader should be informed.
- 6. At least two adults will be in attendance at all times.**
7. Completed attendance records for supervisors/volunteers/friends must be turned in to the APT for filing at the end of each season.

**(May 31).**

### **XIII. PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE:**

1. Volunteers, staff and leaders in child and youth programs of the church shall be trained to recognize the signs and symptoms of abuse. Training will also include learning how to respond to abusive situations.
2. When volunteers, staff or leaders observe signs and symptoms of abuse or have an incidence of abuse reported to them, they shall immediately report this to the police and Children's Aid Society ("CAS"). Any member of a church community is subject to the civic duty to report under the Child and Family Services Act, Section 72 (1) which states that if a person has reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is or may be in need of protection, the person must promptly report the suspicion and the information upon which it is based to a Children's Aid Society. **The APT must also be notified as soon as possible.**

There are special responsibilities imposed on professionals and officials by Section 72 (4), (6.2) which states that professional persons and officials have the same duty as any member of the public to report a suspicion that a child is in need of protection. The Act recognizes, however, that persons working closely with children have a special awareness of the signs of child abuse and neglect, and a particular responsibility to report their suspicions, and so makes it an offence to fail to report.

#### Phone Numbers:

County OPP Services:

Administration (8:30 am-4:00pm Monday-Friday)

\*\* Calls for Service (24 hours)  
Children's Aid Society: (24 hours)

3. Volunteers, staff and leaders aware of possible child abuse (whether it be in a church program or outside of church), or knowing about abuse by any church volunteer, staff, leader or any other person, must report the matter to their immediate supervisor or leader unless that person is the suspected abuser. In that case only, they will report to another supervisor or church leader. This should be done **within 24 hours**.

4. Volunteers, staff or leaders should never attempt to interview the child in question about any signs or symptoms and must never suggest to the child that they have been abused.

5. The person who made the report to the police and CAS should also inform the Abuse Prevention Team, as soon as possible. The reporter must keep the information confidential. An incident report form (see Section XVI) will be filled out and kept on file.

**Response Duties by the Abuse Prevention Team include:**

a) Meet with any volunteer or staff who has questions about a possible report of child abuse.

b) Notify pastor of any reports the APT receives.

c) Notify the church's insurance agent and legal counsel whenever a reasonable suspicion of child abuse is reported to police officials and the CAS.

d) Assign a member of the committee who will deal with media enquiries arising in any way from the report of child abuse to police officials and the CAS.

**Refer to disclosure policy on pages 151-152 in *Preventing Child Abuse*.**

e) Assign members of the congregation to a pastoral care team for the individuals and families who are party to the allegations. This should only occur after careful consultation with legal counsel.

*[Note: there is a recent case where a church and its elders were found to be negligent because of the way an allegation of abuse was handled. In that particular case, the church encouraged the abused person to confront her father (the alleged abuser). The court found that as a result of the way it was handled there was further emotional damage caused to the abused individual. Be very careful.]*

f) If deemed necessary, the APT will assign members to conduct an independent investigation of charges of child abuse against an appointed volunteer or compensated staff only. Allegations **outside** of the church programs and facilities are not the domain of the APT.

g) Determine whether the APT or the first-hand reporter maintains a liaison with police officials or the CAS.





**XIV. SPCCRC**  
**PERSONAL INFORMATION FORM**

This form must be completed by all applicants of any employment or volunteer position where that position involves working as a leader in the Friendship Club or with persons under 18 years of age in a supervisory or leadership position.

**A. PERSONAL DATA:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Business Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have a valid Drivers License? Yes  No

If no, please explain:

\_\_\_\_\_

**B. POSITION APPLYING FOR:**

Please indicate the type of program in which you are interested: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate the date you would be available: \_\_\_\_\_

What is the minimum length of commitment you can make? \_\_\_\_\_

**CHURCH MEMBERSHIP:**

How long have you attended York CRC? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you presently a member of York CRC? Yes  No

List other churches you have attended regularly during the past five years:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**D. CHURCH WORK HISTORY:**

Please list previous church work experience:

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**E. REFERENCES: (only required for members less than 5 years)**

It is the policy of this church to contact references. Please provide the names, positions and phone numbers of three people we may contact as a reference.

Examples include employers (past or present), friends, colleagues and previous pastor – but not a relative.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

---

2. \_\_\_\_\_

---

3. \_\_\_\_\_

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The information I have provided is accurate and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Applicant's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

I have read and understand the policies and procedures of a volunteer with the (SPCCRC). In the event that my application as a volunteer is approved, I agree to comply with all policies and procedures as outlined in the Abuse Prevention Policy.

Applicants Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**XV. LIST OF THOSE WHO ARE REQUIRED TO PRODUCE A POLICE RECORD CHECK**

<b><u>Program</u></b>	<b><u>Require Police Check</u></b>
Nursery	Director, Mother in Charge, Attendants 18 and over
Sunday School	Director, Teachers, Helpers 18 and over
Gems	Director, Counsellors, Helpers 18 and over
Cadets	Director, Counsellors, Helpers 18 and over
Catechism	Director, Teachers
Friendship	Director, Teachers, Helpers 18 and over
Vacation Bible School	Director, Teachers, Helpers 18 and over, Church appointed drivers
Spring Break School	Director, Teachers, Helpers 18 and over, Church appointed drivers
Summer School	Director, Teachers, Helpers 18 and over, Church appointed drivers
Teen Group	Director, Teachers, Youth Elder, Helpers 18 and over
Young People	Leaders, Teachers, Youth Elder, Helpers 18 and over
Coffee Break	Nursery, Story Hour, Little Lambs, Mom to Mom, Teachers, Paid Staff, Helpers 18 and over
Church Staff	Pastors, Professional staff, Ordained staff, Custodians
Board Members (Council)	Elders & Deacons who may work with vulnerable persons

**Adult helpers must be fully screened as a child can not differentiate between adults who are in a position of trust and fully screened and those who are not.**

**The “Two Adult” Meeting Rule-means at least two screened adult leaders.**

**A Criminal Record Check or Vulnerable Sector Clearance Check must be original copies viewed within 60 days of issuance by police services.**

### *Under 18 Helpers*

On November 1, 2018, the new **Police Record Checks Reform Act of Ontario** came into effect and only effects criminal record check protocol in Ontario.

Specifically this change effects Disclosure of Youth Records including police no longer conducting criminal record checks for volunteers under the age of 18.

These volunteers must still be fully screened with just the exception of a Criminal Record Check for 16 & 17 year olds. The underlying principle remains demonstrating **due diligence** to the extent possible (no criminal record check available).

To comply with this screening requirement, all Helpers under age 18 will be interviewed by the Program Director or Leader to determine their suitability. If approved, the Helper must complete the application process and reference checks (SPCCRC) York Under 18 Helper Registration Form). When completed, this Registration Form will be filed with the designated member of the APT. Once approved by the APT and Executive, the Helper may assist within a nursery, classroom or other on premises setting, but only while being supervised by screened adult workers.

The request and release of any information concerning the applicant must of course be based on the consent of both the minor applicant and parents/guardians. This process is valuable in satisfying the **due diligence** requirements of the sponsoring organization.

**XVI. INCIDENT REPORT FORM (Injury or Suspected Abuse)**

**CONFIDENTIAL**

**(SPCCRC) Abuse Prevention Team – Incident Report**

*This report form is for the purpose of recording any incident of injury or suspected abuse reported to the Abuse Prevention Team (APT).*

Name of person making report:

\_\_\_\_\_

Position:

\_\_\_\_\_

Date of Report: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Incident: \_\_\_\_\_

Description of incident: (time of occurrence, what occurred, who was involved, location, etc.)

Names of any other potential witnesses:

Action taken (note dates):

Signature of person making report:

\_\_\_\_\_

Name of APT member receiving this report: \_\_\_\_\_

Date received: \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\*Church Letterhead\*\*\*\*\*

**XVII. VULNERABLE SECTOR SCREENING REQUEST**

**for VOLUNTEER / EMPLOYMENT (circle one)**

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**To:** Ontario Provincial Police County Detachment

As the authorized representative of a person or organization that is responsible for the well-being of one or more children or vulnerable persons, as defined in Section 6.3 (1) of the Criminal Records Act.,

I hereby request that the Ontario Provincial Police, conduct a Vulnerable Sector search for our candidate

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Candidate's Name)

**For the position of**

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Name of Position)

**whose duties include but are not limited to**

\_\_\_\_\_  
(List Duties)

**Yours truly**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**(Signature of Agency's Authorized Contact)**

Abuse Prevention Coordinator

*And whatever you do, whether in word or in deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him. Colossians 3:17*

\*\*\*\*\*Church Letterhead\*\*\*\*\*

**XVIII. REQUEST FOR CRIMINAL RECORD CHECK (CRC)**

**to VOLUNTEER** (fee waived)

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**To:** Ontario Provincial Police- County Detachment

\_\_\_\_\_ **Conduct a Non-VS Criminal Record Check (Level 2)**

I hereby request that the Ontario Provincial Police, conduct a basic Criminal Record Check (Level 2) search for our candidate,

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Candidate's Name)

**For the position of**

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Name of Position)

**whose duties include but are not limited to**

\_\_\_\_\_  
(List Duties)

**Yours truly**

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of Agency's authorized contact)

Abuse Prevention Coordinator

*And whatever you do, whether in word or in deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him. Colossians 3:17*

\*\*\*\*\*Church Letterhead\*\*\*\*\*

**XIX. VULNERABLE SECTOR SCREENING REQUEST**

**for VOLUNTEER / EMPLOYMENT (circle one)**

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**To:** Hamilton Police Service

As the authorized representative of a person or organization that is responsible for the well-being of one or more children or vulnerable persons, as defined in Section 6.3 (1) of the Criminal Records Act.,

I hereby request that the Hamilton Police Service, conduct a Vulnerable Sector search for our candidate

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Candidate's Name)

**For the position of**

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Name of Position)

**whose duties include but are not limited to**

\_\_\_\_\_  
(List Duties)

**Yours truly**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**(Signature of Agency's Authorized Contact)**

Abuse Prevention Coordinator

*And whatever you do, whether in word or in deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him. Colossians 3:17*



\*\*\*\*\*Church Letterhead\*\*\*\*\*

**XX.      REQUEST FOR CRIMINAL RECORD CHECK (CRC)**  
**to VOLUNTEER**

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**To:** Hamilton Police Service

\_\_\_\_\_ **Conduct a Criminal Record and Judicial Matters Check**

I hereby request that the Hamilton Police Service, conduct a Criminal Record and Judicial Matters Check search for our candidate,

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Candidate's name)

**For the position of**

\_\_\_\_\_  
(name of position)

**whose duties include but are not limited to**

\_\_\_\_\_  
(list duties)

**Yours truly**

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of Agency's authorized contact)

Abuse Prevention Coordinator

*And whatever you do, whether in word or in deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.      Colossians 3:17*

## **APPENDICES**

### **A. WARNING SIGNS OF ABUSE:**

#### **WHAT TO LOOK FOR WHEN ABUSE IS OCCURRING**

##### **Physical Abuse:**

Physical abuse often leaves marks, and can be easier to identify than sexual or emotional abuse or neglect.

##### **Physical Indicators:**

Unexplained bruises and welts are the most frequent evidence found:

- often of the face, torso, buttocks, back, or thighs;
- can reflect shape of object used (electric cord, belt buckle);
- may be in various stages of healing.

Unexplained burns:

- often on palms, soles, buttocks, and back;
- can reflect pattern indicative of cigarette, cigar, electrical appliance, immersion or rope burn.

Other unexplained injuries:

- lacerations, abrasions, human bite marks or pinch marks;
- loss of hair/bald patches;
- retinal hemorrhage;
- abdominal injuries.

##### **Behavioural Indicators:**

Requests or feels deserving of physical punishment;  
Afraid to go home and/or requests to stay in school, day care etc.;  
Overly shy, tends to avoid physical contact with adults especially parents;  
Displays behavioural extremes (withdrawal or aggression);  
Suggests that other children be punished in a harsh manner;  
Cries excessively and/or sits and stares;  
Reports injury by parent;  
Gives unbelievable explanations for injuries.

## **Sexual Abuse:**

Unfortunately, many children do not report this form of abuse. They rely on adults to be aware of specific physical and behavioural indicators. A child who persistently shows several of the following characteristics may be experiencing sexual abuse. Remember, the most reliable indicator of child abuse is the child's verbal disclosure.

### Physical Indicators:

Somatic complaints, including pain and irritation of the genitals;  
Sexually transmitted disease;  
Pregnancy in young adolescents;  
Frequent unexplained sore throats, yeast infections, or urinary infections.

### Behavioural Indicators:

Excessive masturbation in young children;  
Sexual knowledge of behaviour beyond that expected for the child's age;  
Depression, suicidal gesture;  
Chronic runaway;  
Frequent psychosomatic complaints, such as headaches and stomach-aches;  
Drug or alcohol abuse;  
Avoidance of undressing or wearing excessive layers of clothing;  
Sudden avoidance of certain familiar adults or places;  
Marked decline in school performance.

## **Emotional Abuse:**

The signs of emotional abuse may be less obvious than other forms of maltreatment. Emotional abuse is suspected when a child exhibits impaired development, destructive behaviour, or chronic somatic complaints that cannot be explained medically or circumstantially. A child who persistently shows several of the following characteristics may be experiencing emotional abuse.

### Physical Indicators:

Eating disorders;  
Sleep disturbances, nightmares;  
Wetting or soiling by school-age children;  
Speech disorder, stuttering;  
Failure to thrive;  
Development lags;  
Asthma, severe allergies, or ulcers.

Behavioural Indicators:

Habit disorders, such as biting, rocking, head banging, thumb sucking in an older child;  
Poor peer relationships;  
Behavioural extremes (overly compliant or demanding, withdrawn or aggressive);  
Self-destructive behaviour, oblivious to hazards and risks;  
Chronic academic under-achievement;  
Irrational and persistent fears, dreads, or hatreds.

**Signs of Neglect:**

A child who persistently shows several of the following characteristics may be experiencing neglect. Keep in mind; however, that cultural standards which differ from those prevailing in a community are not necessarily neglect.

Physical Indicators:

Height and weight significantly below age level with no plausible explanation;  
Inappropriate clothing for weather;  
Poor hygiene, including lice, body odour, scaly skin;  
Child abandoned or left with inadequate supervision;  
Untreated illness or injury;  
Lack of safe, warm, sanitary shelter;  
Lack of necessary medical and dental care.

Behavioural Indicators:

Begging or stealing food;  
Assumes adult responsibilities;  
Falling asleep in school, lethargic;  
Repeated acts of vandalism;  
Poor school attendance, frequent tardiness;  
Chronic hunger;  
Dull, apathetic appearance;  
Running away from home;  
Reports no caretaker in the home.

## **B. ABUSE PREVENTION TEAM (APT)**

### **A. Accountability**

The Abuse Prevention Team (APT) is directly accountable to the Council of (SPCCRC) and shall provide regular reports to Council.

### **B. Membership**

The APT consists of three members appointed by Council to a **three-year term (renewable)**. Team members will designate a chairperson.

### **C. Mandate**

1. To facilitate ongoing mandatory education and training regarding abuse, abuse prevention, and best practices for volunteers, staff and leaders involved in child and youth programs in (SPCCRC) (CRC).
2. To be the designated representatives of (SPCCRC) with the County Police Services for the purpose of facilitating the criminal record check procedure.
3. To assist and be available as a resource to child and youth group leaders in the screening procedure.
4. To determine on an annual basis, those persons for whom documentation (police record checks, and signed Declarations of Agreement and Understanding) is required, and to maintain the documentation in a confidential manner.
5. To provide direction and support in abuse situations.
6. To ensure that reference materials concerning abuse issues are available in the church. They should be Christian in content, and Canadian if such is available. These should include copies of our Abuse Prevention Policy, our Handbook for Leaders, and a copy of Beth Swagman's Preventing Child Abuse: A Guide for Churches. The booklet Adult Protection is available through CRC Publications in Grand Rapids and should also be included.
7. To work toward ensuring that relationships be carefully and prayerfully restored if allegations of abuse are found to be groundless.
8. To ensure that the information being handled is maintained with extreme confidentiality.

**RESOURCES:**

**Bethel Christian Reformed Church – Dunnville, Ontario**

**Maranatha Christian Reformed Church – Woodstock, Ontario**

**Beth A. Swagman MSW, Director, Abuse Prevention  
Christian Reformed Church  
Grand Rapids, MI**

**Sean T. Jackson  
Ross & McBride Law Firm LLP  
Hamilton, Ontario**

**Canadian Council of Christian Charities (CCCC)  
Elmira, Ontario**

**Robertson Hall Insurance  
London, Ontario  
(Church Insurer)**

**Police Record Checks Reform Act (PRCA) Ontario  
Effective November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018**