

CALVARY BURLINGTON



Best Practices

FOR WORKING WITH CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

2023

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1 INTRODUCTION AND GENERAL PROGRAM GUIDELINES

RESPONSIBILITY OF CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH BURLINGTON

Calvary Baptist Church Burlington (CBCB) has a vision to “make disciples who make disciples who love God, love people and serve our world.” Within that vision, CBCB has a mandate to minister to people of all ages. CBCB stresses the sanctity of human life and the importance and worth of each individual as a child of God.

At CBCB, we recognize that we are a reflection of God’s love to those in our care and we take our responsibility to them seriously. We believe that childhood innocence is a gift given by God. Children are naturally trusting. Children, youth and vulnerable adults readily place their faith in adults who care for them. It is our responsibility as a church to safeguard that trust.

These guidelines are set forth to provide a safe and nurturing environment in which we can bring children and youth to the Saviour. We view ourselves as partners with parents and guardians, seeking to provide quality care and biblical teaching to those in our care. All of our guidelines are designed to protect and promote growth in God for each child and adult involved.

PROGRAM MAINTENANCE

This program will be reviewed each year to ensure that training, the updating of files and the physical environment are compliant with the policy. The Best Practices administrator should be advised if permanent changes to the programs are warranted.

RECORDS MAINTENANCE

A permanent file has been established for the maintenance of all records pertaining to the implementation and administration of this program including but not limited to:

- Ministry personnel applications for serving
- Police Records Checks
- Reference interview notes
- Participant registration forms
- Attendance records
- Completed injury and accident report forms
- Suspected or actual abuse related documentation

COMPLIANCE WITH THE PERSONAL INFORMATION PROTECTION ELECTRONIC DATA ACT (PIPEDA)

The names and address of children and their parents or guardians will be carefully maintained, updated annually or earlier if applicable, and kept permanently in a central file.

A release and permission statement will be included on all registration forms releasing the church from unforeseen and accidental damages along with contact information in case of an accident.

DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

Accused: Shall mean a person against whom a complaint of child abuse or sexual exploitation is made pursuant to the terms of this Policy.

Board / Elders / Elder Team / Directors: Means the Board of Elders

Child: Means a person under the age of 18 years; see also **Youth**.

Event(s): Occasions that happen outside of Sunday morning ministry or regular midweek Student Ministry meetings. Events may include but are not limited to: Going off-site; a special occasion where a speaker is brought in; parties; socials; any occurrence when children newborn to grade 5 are left in the care of ministry personnel whether at the church or off-site.

Ministry Lead: Individuals who have successfully completed the recruitment and screening process and who have been given the responsibility to give direction and oversight to programs or ministries at CBCB. Ministry Lead is accountable to the Senior Pastor and Elder Board. This term applies to the person most responsible in any ministry setting, whether the individual is paid or unpaid.

Ministry Personnel: Individuals who are age 16 and older who have successfully completed the recruitment and screening process, and who have been given the responsibility to give direction to programs or ministries for Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults. Ministry Personnel are accountable to the Ministry Lead, the Senior Pastor and Elder team. The term includes volunteers, as well as full-time, short-term or contract staff members receiving a salary.

Ministry Personnel File: A file kept on each Prospective Ministry Personnel which includes the ministry application form, record of police records check, record of reference checks, and other documents related to the recruiting and supervision of Ministry Personnel.

Occasional Observer: Individuals who visit, observe and assist Ministry Personnel with ministry activities on rare occasions. This term includes Parents assisting their own children. Occasional Observers do not need to be screened and trained, however, their access to minors will be limited and they will never be placed in a position of trust with Children who are not their own. That means that they will not be asked to assume responsibility for Children and they will not be allowed or asked to take Children to the washroom.

Parent: Shall mean the natural or adoptive Parent(s) or legal guardian(s) of a Child.

Positions of Trust: The role wherein Parents or Guardians have entrusted their children or youth or vulnerable adults to the care of ministry personnel.

Prospective Ministry Personnel: Youth or adults associated with the church congregation either by membership or regular attendance as an adherent, and awaiting approval to become Ministry Personnel.

Student Personnel: Individuals who are 11–14 years of age who have successfully completed the recruitment and screening process and have been given the responsibility to *assist* in the direction of ministries for children and/or youth and/or vulnerable adults. Student Personnel work under the leadership of the Ministry Lead and the Ministry Personnel whom they are assisting. Student Personnel are eligible to serve once they have aged out of a particular program; serve on Sunday mornings once the student has graduated from grade 8, and serve mid-week once the student is too old to attend the program.

Youth: Means a program participant aged 11 to 17 years. For the purpose of Best Practices we have differentiated between a Youth (program participant), and a Student Personnel. Recognizing that all youth are still children, this term primarily relates but is not limited to those participating in ministry outside of regular Sunday morning ministry to children.

Vulnerable Adult: A person who 18 years of age or older, because of his/her age, a disability or other circumstances, whether temporary or permanent, is in a position of dependence on others or is otherwise at a greater risk than the general population of being harmed by a person or persons in Positions of Trust or authority relative to him/her.

DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE

It is critical for us to have a clear understanding of abuse, to be familiar with the definitions used when referring to it.

“Child abuse refers to an act committed by a parent, caregiver or person in a position of trust (even though he/she may not care for the child on a daily basis) which is not accidental and which harms or threatens to harm a child’s physical or mental health, or a child’s welfare.” (Faith Trust Institute, 2006)

Categories of Abuse Include but are not limited to:

Physical Abuse: “Physical abuse is any deliberate physical force or action (usually by a parent or caregiver) resulting, or possibly resulting, in injury to a child. It is different from what is considered reasonable discipline.” (The Children’s Aid Society of London and Middlesex, <https://bit.ly/3K0UDOi>. Date Accessed: March 22, 2023)

Sexual Abuse: “Sexual abuse is when a child is used for the sexual gratification of an adult or an older child. Coercion (physical, psychological or emotional) is intrinsic to sexual abuse. This is what distinguishes it from sexual exploration with peers.” (The Children’s Aid Society of London and Middlesex, <https://bit.ly/3K0UDOi>. Date Accessed: March 22, 2023)

Emotional Abuse: “Emotional abuse is when an individual attacks a child’s emotional development and sense of self-worth. It includes excessive, aggressive or unreasonable demands beyond the child’s capacity.” The Children’s Aid Society of London and Middlesex, <https://bit.ly/3K0UDOi>. Date Accessed: March 22, 2023)

Neglect: “Neglect is when a parent or caregiver fails to meet a child's basic needs.” (The Children’s Aid Society of London and Middlesex, <https://bit.ly/3K0UDOi>. Date Accessed: March 22, 2023)

Spiritual Abuse: “Spiritual abuse is defined as the use of psychological and emotional manipulation, characterized by a systematic pattern of using coercive and controlling behavior within the teachings of religion” (christianity.com, <https://www.christianity.com/wiki/church/what-does-spiritual-abuse-within-a-church-look-like.html>. Date Accessed: March 22, 2023)

Harassment: Repeated subtle or overt action, particularly by a person in a position of trust, which causes the recipient to feel attacked, demeaned, intimidated or manipulated.

Discrimination: Discrimination is differential treatment based on a personal characteristic, which has an adverse impact on an individual or group. Examples of personal characteristics include race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, faith or creed, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, family status or handicap. Discrimination robs people of their dignity and their ability to fulfill their capabilities. It is important to note that any person or group can discriminate and any person or group can be the target of discrimination.

Financial Abuse: “Financial (or economic) abuse involves acting without consent in a way that financially benefits one person at the expense of another. This may include: stealing from someone; keeping someone from making their own financial decisions; withholding money for things someone needs (food, housing or medical treatment); pressuring someone to share their home or their car, or baby-sit their grandchildren when they don't want to; making frequent requests for money; failing to repay loans; taking someone’s money or cashing their cheques without permission; pressuring someone to sign over their house or property or to sign legal documents that they don't understand; overcharging for services.” (Elder Abuse is Wrong, Department of Justice Canada, 2015)

Exposure to Domestic Violence: Children who live in homes where a parent or caretaker is experiencing abuse are commonly referred to as "child witnesses" or "children who are

witnessing" domestic violence. The child's exposure to domestic violence typically falls into three primary categories: hearing a violent event; being directly involved as an eyewitness, intervening, or being used as a part of a violent event (e.g., being used as a shield against abusive actions); and/or experiencing the aftermath of a violent event. Some children are physically injured as a direct result of the domestic violence. Some perpetrators intentionally physically, emotionally, or sexually abuse their children in an effort to intimidate and control their partner. In addition to being exposed to the abusive behaviour, many children are further victimized by coercion to remain silent about the abuse, maintaining the "family secret." (*Not Alone: You are not alone!* <http://www.enotalone.com/article/9996.html>)

2 MINISTRY LEAD AND MINISTRY PERSONNEL REQUIREMENTS

LIFESTYLE OF MINISTRY LEAD AND MINISTRY PERSONNEL

Ministry Personnel are to be committed to maintaining a consistent spiritual life including prayer, Bible reading, and regular attendance at child/youth events, planning meetings and worship services.

Ministry personnel are expected to be role models of integrity and Christian living at all times. Ministry personnel are to refrain from activities that are illegal or could be considered morally and biblically questionable.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR MINISTRY

Ministry Personnel serving in a teaching role must be a born-again believer. Except as noted elsewhere in this section, all personnel serving in children's and student ministry must be members or regular attendees who have signed the Statement of Faith, and who accept the oversight of the Board of Elders.

Individuals who have been accused, or convicted, or are under the suspicion of crimes against children and/or youth, and/or vulnerable persons, or who have been convicted of violent crimes or other relevant crimes are not permitted to have any involvement in ministries or programs where children or youth participate. It is the right and responsibility of the Board Elders to determine if any accusations, suspicions or convictions of an individual are of such a nature to prohibit the individual from serving in children or student ministries.

3 RECRUITMENT AND SCREENING PROCESS

Anyone, including employees, ministerial staff, church leadership and lay volunteers (members or adherents) will undergo a screening process before working with preschoolers, children, youth or vulnerable persons. The recruitment and screening process will include the following:

1. Ministry Application Form
2. Six month waiting period
3. Face-to-face interview
4. Reference checks

5. Recent police record check AND Vulnerable Sector Screening (VSS)
6. Completion of the Best Practices Training Program
7. Sign the Covenant of Care
8. Sign the Confidentiality Agreement
9. Sign the Statement of Faith
10. Final approval from the Elder team.

1. Ministry Application Form

Prospective Ministry Personnel are to complete a Ministry Application Form. Student Personnel are to complete the Ministry Application Form for Youth Working with Children. Individuals who transfer from another congregation unknown to the church leadership must include contact information or reference from a pastoral staff member of their previous church.

Ministry Application Forms will be kept confidential and are available only to the Ministry Lead, Pastoral Team, Elders, and those designated with the responsibility for overseeing the protection plan.

2. Six Month Waiting Period

The six-month waiting period can be waived by the Elders when the individual is transferring from another church and has a letter of recommendation signed by the pastor of that church and a letter of recommendation by a director or coordinator of children or student ministry. The six-month waiting period can also be waived by the Elders if the individual is well-known by a member of the Calvary leadership team and a letter signed by the recommending member of the leadership team attesting to the individual's character and suitability for the ministry role is provided and filed in the applicant's file.

3. Face-to-face Interview

The Ministry Lead will conduct face-to-face interviews, or an individual approved by the Senior Pastor and/or Elders Board. The results of the interview will be recorded and filed in the applicant's file along with the signature of the interviewer

4. Reference Checks

Designated screening personnel will conduct reference checks on all Prospective Ministry Personnel. The references must fit within the acceptable categories for adults and for youth who work with children. The reference checks are generally conducted by telephone to confirm the suitability and appointment of Prospective Ministry Personnel. A written copy of the notes taken during a verbal reference check must be signed by the screening personnel and placed on the applicants file.

5. Criminal Screening Checks

Police Records Checks (PRCs) must be conducted on all Ministry Personnel 16 years of age or older who serve children, youth and/or vulnerable adults. PRCs are to be renewed every three (3) years and are to include a Vulnerable Sector Screening.

PRCs are to relate to the applicant's intended ministry involvement at CBCB. A copy of a PRC relating to another organization or church can be used on a temporary basis until the original document for CBCB is available. The original PRC document – not a copy - is to be kept permanently on file by CBCB. On request, the program administrator will provide the individual with a copy of the PRC. The original will always remain with the church.

If the PRC and/or Volunteer Sector Screening indicates that the individual **does** appear in the National Repository of Criminal Records, and/or the Vulnerable Sector Screening returned information that the person **is** recorded in the database, the prospective candidate will be asked to submit to fingerprinting verification.

Should the results from fingerprint verification confirm that the individual has a criminal record, they will be asked to do one of the following:

1. Disclose to the Elder Team the crimes committed of which he/she has been convicted, and submit to verification by the police. The Elder Team would then make a final decision as to the person's ability to serve with children and/or youth and/or vulnerable adults.
2. Withdraw their application from serving in a position of leadership with Children, Youth or Vulnerable Adults.

Volunteers currently serving who require fingerprint verification to renew their PRC will be asked to step out of their volunteer ministry role until such time as they have been cleared. This requirement does not apply to Elders, Pastors or paid staff because of the high level of accountability and supervision built into their roles.

6. Completion of the Best Practices Training Program

Abuse prevention education and training is required for all Ministry Personnel serving with children, youth and vulnerable adults. It must be completed within three months of being approved to work with children, youth and vulnerable adults. Training by designated trainers is to include a review of the Best Practices Policy and procedures. Ministry Personnel will be educated about their legal obligation to report suspected abuse and to recognize and identify the symptoms of abuse and molestation.

All Ministry Personnel, Pastors, and Ministry Leads are required to attend training sessions at least once a year. Attendance is to be taken at training courses and noted in the personnel file for each Ministry Personnel. Because Best Practices Training is offered only at certain times, personnel may serve temporarily provided the other steps have been completed. Best Practices Training would have to happen at the next available instance.

7. Signing the Covenant of Care

By signing the Covenant of Care document, the Prospective Ministry Personnel acknowledges that they have read and they understand the Best Practices Policies and Procedures. They agree to follow the procedures outlined, and they will treat all participants and leaders with unbiased respect.

8. Confidentiality Agreement

Prospective Ministry Personnel will sign a confidentiality agreement; this document will remain on file in the office. By signing, the Ministry Personnel agree to uphold confidentiality toward the people whom the church serves, colleagues, applicants, and any sensitive situations arising within the church. The Prospective Ministry Personnel agrees that information will not be shared with others unless there is a threat of danger to an individual, or the Ministry Personnel is compelled by law to release information.

9. Signing the Statement of Faith

Prospective Ministry Personnel will sign the Statement of Faith; this document will remain on file in the office. By signing, Prospective Ministry Personnel are committing to lead and teach others in accordance with its principles. If changes are made to the Statement of Faith, those serving with children, youth and vulnerable adults agree to sign the updated document in order to continue serving in these areas.

10. Final Approval

Names of those who have completed steps 1–8 will be submitted to the Elders Board for final approval before beginning to serve as part of a ministry team.

4 POLICIES REGARDING ATTENDANCE AND REGISTRATION

MAINTAINING RECORDS FOR ALL PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS; NEWBORN – GRADE 12

Attendance is taken each time a classroom or program is in session; Sundays and mid-week. In case an evacuation is required, it is important that attendance be taken at the start of a program or as the children are entering so that there is an accurate count of children and workers. These attendance records are kept on file permanently. The record will include the names of Ministry Personnel on duty in each classroom or program. This record will be maintained with the record of attendance and kept on file permanently.

PARTICIPANT REGISTRATION FOR CHILD/STUDENT MINISTRY PROGRAMS (NEWBORN–GRADE 12)

Registration forms need to be completed for activities that happen on-site and off-site because we require a record of all children and students who participate in events and programs. At a *minimum*, Ministry Personnel should record participants' names and phone numbers (and home address if possible). **A completed registration form including parents' names and contact information is preferred when staying on-site, and is required if going off-site.**

All effort must be made to keep registration forms updated and current. Registration forms can be electronic or hard copy. They are to be filed in the church office and kept permanently. It is the responsibility of the Ministry Lead or Ministry Personnel to ensure that forms are completed and submitted for all participants.

In the case of a child visiting a program that requires registration, the adult bringing the child will be considered the guardian of the child for the night. A registration form must be sent home at the conclusion of the first program for the parents to complete and return.

Program participants who are 18 years old, such as a High School student who has reached the age of majority but is still involved as a participant, may sign their own consent and waivers; emergency contact information is still required for program participation.

5 POLICIES REGARDING SUPERVISION, STAFFING, EVENTS & TRANSPORTATION

This section covers policies and procedures that apply to all child and student ministries.

TEACHER / STUDENT RATIOS

Classroom and ministry settings must comply with established ratios for adults and children at all times. This includes off-site activities and trips. Minimum established ratios are:

- Birth – 23 months: One Ministry Personnel for every 3 infants
- Toddlers / pre-schoolers: One Ministry Personnel for every 5 children
- Children ages 5–10: One Ministry Personnel for every 7 – 10 children
- Children ages 11–13: One Ministry Personnel for every 7 children
- Children ages 14–17: One Ministry Personnel for every 10 children/youth
- Overnight/Off-Site events: Minimum of two unrelated Ministry Personnel, and then a ratio of at least one Ministry Personnel for every 7 children/youth

STAFFING CONSIDERATIONS

When the number of students in a classroom does not warrant having an additional Ministry Personnel present, it is permissible to have a single adult present providing the room has windows offering clear visibility at all times from the hallway, or the door is left open. There must be at least two Ministry Personnel present at all events.

Related Ministry Personnel can be involved in ministering together providing that there are other qualified Ministry Personnel around and there is clear visibility into the ministry area. Both male and female Ministry Personnel must accompany overnight events when both male and female students attend the event.

STUDENT PERSONNEL

Student Personnel must be assigned to work alongside other Ministry Personnel or Ministry Leads who are age 16. Ministry personnel must be 16 years of age or older to work alone in a classroom. It is *recommended* that there be at least a three-year gap between Ministry Personnel and the children they serve.

OCCASIONAL OBSERVERS

Occasional observers who join a class will have their attendance recorded and kept on file with the classroom attendance for that day. Occasional Observers will be clearly identified and if they have not been screened and approved, they will not be placed in a position of trust with children who are not their own.

PERMISSION & SUPERVISION FOR OFF-SITE EVENTS

All off-site activities will be pre-approved by the Ministry Lead with parents being notified at least one week prior to the outing. This should include the exact location of the event, emergency phone numbers and a list of Ministry Personnel attending the event. Consent and medical release forms are required for each child participating off-site events. Both digital and written consent forms are valid. If written, **original** consent forms must be kept in the Ministry Lead's possession during trips and events with a photocopy of the completed forms left in the church office. The originals are to be returned to the church at the conclusion of the event and kept on file permanently in the church office. The copies are shredded.

Attendance of all Ministry Personnel and youth must be recorded on the **Trip and Off-Site Travel Forms**. A copy goes with the group when they leave the property; the original travel form must be maintained and filed in the church office. Forms will be kept on file permanently. It will include the following information:

- Names of all occupants of the vehicle
- Emergency contact and health information of all participants
- Location of event and contact numbers
- Drivers and vehicles involved

All trips and outings will be supervised by a minimum of two approved, unrelated adult Ministry Personnel. Any outing that includes female children must include at least one approved female ministry person. A trip or outing involving male youth of grade 7 or above requires at least one male Ministry Lead or Ministry Personnel.

PERMISSION & SUPERVISION FOR OVERNIGHT EVENTS

All overnight activities must be pre-approved by the Senior Pastor, or in the absence of a Senior Pastor, the Board of Elders. Written communication regarding retreats and overnight events should be available to families at least one week prior to the event. Include the exact location of the event, emergency phone numbers and a list of adult Ministry Personnel attending the event.

Proper consent and medical release forms are required for each child or youth participating in overnight events. Original forms must be kept in the Ministry Lead's possession during trips and events and a photocopy filed in the church office. The originals are to be returned to the church and kept on file permanently in the church office. The copies are shredded.

All overnight events must be supervised by a minimum of two approved, unrelated adult Ministry Personnel. Related personnel can be involved in such a ministry providing there are also other qualified personnel involved who are not related to the related individuals.

On overnight events, Ministry Personnel will be assigned a specific group of children or youth for which they are responsible. Policies for Ministry Personnel staffing will be followed. Female Ministry Personnel will be assigned responsibility for female youth and male Ministry Personnel will be assigned responsibility for male youth.

For the safety of the participants, the exterior doors must be locked at 11pm for all overnight events taking place at the church.

Youth attending retreats and overnight events will not be allowed to leave while the event is in progress. Any exceptions must be added to the permission form signed by the parent (i.e. the student needs to leave for an appointment)

Female and male youth are not allowed in each other's rooms or tents for any reason during retreats and overnight events, and they are not permitted to sleep in mixed company. Married couples who are supervising youth events will bunk with students and not with their spouse.

TRANSPORTING CHILDREN, YOUTH & VULNERABLE ADULTS

When planning local special events that are located off-site, it is preferred that parents drop off and pick up their children at the event location.

When an off-site event is to be held out-of-town, every reasonable effort should be made to use commercial carriers if it is practical.

The safety of participants is our primary concern in the transportation of children or youth to an off-site event. Drivers must obey all the rules of the road including the speed limits and the prohibition of cell phones and other communication devices. Reckless or unsafe driving will not be tolerated.

All Ministry Personnel serving as a driver during church activities must meet the following qualifications:

- Have a Class G license or higher
- Be pre-approved by the Ministry Lead
- Provide a copy of their valid driver's license prior to the event
- Provide a copy of their current automobile insurance policy prior to the event

Notwithstanding the above listed qualifications, the Ministry Lead or church leadership may decline the involvement of a ministry person in serving as a driver if for any reason they feel that the individual is not suitable for the responsibility.

The number of occupants in the vehicle will not exceed the number of seat belts. Seat belts must be worn by everyone and remain fastened at all times when the vehicle is in motion.

A Trips and Off-site Travel Form will accompany the group with the original left in the church office and filed permanently.

Children will never be left unattended in a vehicle. Ministry personnel should not be alone in a vehicle with a child/youth. Two unrelated people may transport the child/youth. If this is not possible the personnel should drive with an open line of communication (i.e. the child uses a cell phone to talk with the parent for the duration of the car ride, or the Ministry Personnel talks with another unrelated adult via Bluetooth).

BILLETING AND HOSTING CHILDREN, YOUTH & VULNERABLE ADULTS

For the protection of ministry participants, it is required that all reasonable steps be taken to ensure their safety and security. This includes:

- Obtaining a list of all adults who will be residing in the home where the billeted youth are staying and their relationship to the host
- Obtaining a letter of approval from the pastor of the family where the billeted youth will be staying
- Obtaining clarification of the sleeping arrangements to be followed
- Ensuring that the host family clearly understands and is in agreement with the expectations for care of the youth and the acceptable standards of behaviour
- Information guidelines distributed to host homes no less than one week in advance of the youth arriving at their home.
- Any allergies and medications for youth should be communicated to the host home prior to arrival, with clear directions on how to manage allergies and/or medications.
- Youth must always be billeted in teams or small groups of the same gender.
- Youth should have distinctly separate sleeping arrangements from the other household members and should not be left alone with household members.
- Curfews of 11:00pm should be enforced when youth are being billeted unless pre-arranged with both the parent/caregiver of the program participant, the Ministry Lead, and the Elder Board.
- All youth staying in host homes will be informed of and in agreement with proper etiquette and curfew guidelines.

6 DISPLAYS OF AFFECTION

ACCEPTABLE DISPLAYS OF AFFECTION

Recognizing that children, youth and vulnerable adults need appropriate displays of affection that reflect pure, genuine and positive displays of God's love, appropriate touch with participants based on the age and development of the individual is to be encouraged.

Acceptable displays of affection are as follows:

- Holding a preschool child who is crying,
- Speaking to a child at eye level and listening with your eyes as well as your ears,
- Holding a child's hands when speaking, listening or walking him or her to an activity,
- Gently holding the child's shoulder or hand to keep his or her attention while you redirect the child's behaviour,
- Putting your arm around the shoulder of a child or youth when comforting or quieting is needed,
- Patting a child, youth or vulnerable adult on the head, hand, shoulder or back to affirm him or her.
- Note: It is strongly recommended that all touch be done in view of others.

UNACCEPTABLE DISPLAYS OF AFFECTION

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

- Kissing a child or coaxing a child to kiss you,
- Engaging in extended hugging and tickling,
- Holding a participant's face when talking to or disciplining them.
- Touching a child, youth or vulnerable adult in any area that would be covered by a bathing suit (strictly prohibited except in cases of diapering and assisting preschoolers as outlined in washroom policies),
- Carrying older children and youth, and / or allowing them to sit on your lap,
- Having prolonged physical contact with a participant

7 DISCIPLINE & 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.

ACCEPTABLE PREVENTIVE DISCIPLINE

The following are examples of acceptable preventive discipline:

- Creating a loving, caring atmosphere
- Granting respect to gain respect
- Modelling self-discipline and structure in your own life
- Preparing exciting and interesting classes with short transitions between activities
- Arranging your environment for children and for learning
- Establishing and communicating realistic expectations for the children
- Ensuring that the activities that you provide are meaningful and age-appropriate
- Being fair and consistent with all children
- Ensuring that sure your focus is on positive actions and on rewarding positive behaviour
- Being aware of children with special needs and bringing their needs to the attention of the Ministry Lead

REMEDIAL DISCIPLINE

The following are examples of acceptable remedial discipline:

- Making every effort to deal with problems individually
- Explaining to the child why the behaviour is unacceptable and instructing them in how to do it correctly
- Redirecting the child to positive action
- Explaining the consequences of unacceptable behaviour by defining the correct way to behave as well as the result of the wrong behaviour
- Offering choices that are acceptable to both you and the child

8 YOUTH PROTECTION POLICIES

YOUTH MINISTRY AUTHORIZATION AND CONSENT FORMS

At the beginning of every ministry year, all youth are to submit a fully completed Youth Ministry Authorization and Consent Forms. Forms may be written or electronic. Youth joining a ministry during the year are to be provided with a copy of the forms/link to the form to be completed by their parent/guardian to be returned by the next gathering of the ministry. The originals of these forms are to be filed permanently in the church office. The Youth Ministry Authorization does not replace specific consent and authorization forms for activities that take place off-site and/or overnight.

CONTACTING OPPORTUNITIES

Ministry Personnel are encouraged to meet with youth in small group settings, teams and one-on-one discipleship. The Ministry Lead must pre-approve the conducting of any one-on-one discipleship, with the information being documented and filed.

One-on-one discipling must be done in public settings; if in a private home, the Ministry Personnel should ensure that someone else is available and able to have a direct line of sight to the participants. Parents should be made aware of the discipleship time, and the Ministry Lead informed of the time and place of the meeting prior to the meeting.

OPEN DOOR POLICY

Ministry personnel working with youth will not have a one-on-one meeting behind closed doors. It is required that the door remains open or that the meeting take place in a room with an unobstructed window in the door.

9 PHYSICAL CONTACT / DATING

DATING

Ministry Personnel working with youth may not pursue a dating relationship with a student who is a) under the age of 18 and/or b) a participant in a program for which they give leadership.

APPROPRIATE TOUCH

One-arm hugs, shoulder-to-shoulder hugs, touch on the back or shoulder

INAPPROPRIATE TOUCH

Chest-to-chest hugging, extended hugging, over exuberant affection, lap-sitting, kissing, touching of thighs, knees or inappropriate spots of the body, horseplay, tickling, extended backrubs / shoulder massages.

10 BULLYING AMONG PEERS

Our children and youth have a right to a caring, respectful and safe church environment where they will encounter the love of God in action. An anti-bullying policy will therefore be in effect at all times and will be clearly communicated and enforced among the children and youth. All Ministry Personnel will take action to prevent bullying, teach against it, and assist and support children and youth who are being bullied. Bullying in any form will not be tolerated.

11 HEALTH & SAFETY GUIDELINES

ALLERGIES

Children or youth having severe allergies are to have the information brought to the attention of the Ministry Lead and noted on their registration form. The information will be posted in the children and youth departments for easy access and Ministry Personnel who have the child in their care will be informed.

ILLNESS

A child who is ill and could therefore expose others to illness is not to be received into the nursery or classroom. Factors and symptoms to consider are: fever, unusual fatigue, irritability, coughing, sneezing, runny nose and eyes, vomiting, diarrhoea, inflamed mouth and throat. Children with a known communicable disease are not to be received into the nursery or pre-schooler area.

MEDICATIONS

Ministry Personnel are not to give or apply any medications. Parents are to be contacted and should administer all medications.

Medication is not to be left in a classroom. When a child brings medication, the medication is to be kept in the possession of the Ministry Lead or their designate.

In cases when Epi-pens and puffers are needed for allergies or asthma, written instructions are to be provided by the parent or guardian to the Ministry Lead. Requests should be written, signed, dated and filed permanently.

Should treatment be given, Ministry Personnel will document the date, time, name of Ministry Personnel present, and any other relevant information. This information will be filed permanently with the main office.

Inform the parent/guardian any time Epi-Pens or puffers were administered.

Topical medications for diaper changing purposes are to be used only when instructed and provided by the parent or guardian.

DEALING WITH INJURIES

In case of an injury at a youth event, the following steps must be followed:

- The student must not be moved unless they can stand up and walk on his/her own.
- If student can move on his/her own, lead him/her out of the activity area.
- One or two witnesses as well as the Ministry Personnel must remain with the injured youth for assistance, comfort and to confirm information for the incident report.

DEALING WITH CUTS OR INJURIES INVOLVING BLOOD

When a child is injured, the individual is to be separated from others. The area where the injury occurred or where any blood may have dropped on the floor or toys is also to be isolated. Ministry personnel need to ensure that no other children have contact with any of the blood from the cut or injury.

Non-latex gloves are to be used when bandaging the injury.

Ministry personnel, avoid touching your mouth, ears and eyes when administering aid. Extreme care will be taken in cleaning up all blood and bloody bandages and the safe and secure removal of waste and disposal of gloves to a secure waste removal container. Hands are to be washed carefully.

An incident report will be completed and kept in a permanent file for every injury whether there is an issue of blood or not. Parents are to be notified of any cuts or injuries involving blood.

WHEN TO CALL 911

Trust your instincts. It is better for EMS to come and find out they are not needed than not to come in an emergency when they were needed.

You should call 911 in cases of:

- Danger to you or others
- Unconsciousness or an altered level of consciousness
- Difficulty breathing or no signs of breathing
- Persistent chest pain or pressure

- Significant bleeding (500ml)
- Seizures, severed headaches, or slurred speech
- Injuries to the head and/or spine
- Blood in the vomit, urine or stool
- Imminent childbirth

If 911 is called for a minor or vulnerable adult, their guardians will also be notified. If the decision is made to transport the individual to the hospital, the Ministry Lead should accompany the injured person to the hospital. When the guardians arrive at the hospital, the Ministry Lead should:

- Introduce yourself and your role in the ministry
- Explain the situation and the injury, being careful not to admit fault or assign blame
- Return to the event unless the guardians ask you to stay

FIRST AID KITS

First aid kits will be kept in prominent areas in the teaching and activity areas of the church. These kits will be checked every six months to ensure that they are properly equipped. At a minimum, each kit will contain two pairs of disposable non-latex gloves, disinfectant towelettes, two or three 4" x 4" gauze pads for blood absorption, small scissors and Band-Aids. In addition to the first aid kits in each classroom, a master first aid kit will be available in the church building and in any church-owned vehicle.

INCIDENT & ACCIDENT REPORTING

A parent or guardian will be contacted immediately when a serious injury, accident or medical emergency occurs.

When an injury occurs that is considered minor in nature and not requiring the immediate attention of a parent or guardian, the parent or guardian will be advised of the nature of the injury when the child is picked up.

Incident reports are to be completed for any and all accidents or emergency situations. The report must include a brief explanation of the events causing the injury / accident, the steps taken to deal with the issue, and a list of the witnesses. A copy of the incident report is to be kept permanently in the church office.

Injuries are to be reported to the Ministry Lead at the earliest opportunity after the event. Ministry leads will follow up with the injured person or their guardian within 48 hours. If the injury is severe and requires EMS the Ministry Lead will follow up within 24 hours.

12 ABUSE: REPORTING AND RESPONSE

HEARING OF AN ALLEGATION OR SUSPICION OF ABUSE

The following policies outline the recommended procedure and sequence for reporting suspected abuse cases:

- All allegations and/or suspicions of abuse against children, youth and vulnerable adults will be taken seriously.
- Upon hearing of potential abuse or allegations of abuse to a child or youth, the Ministry Personnel should complete a Suspected Abuse Report Form documenting all pertinent information. The victim should not be asked leading questions nor should the accused or any other parties be contacted at the point of completing the Suspected Abuse Report Form. All forms must be kept permanently unless otherwise directed by legal counsel.
- Any allegations of abuse to a child or youth must be reported to the proper authorities.
- Ministry Personnel are requested to notify the Lead Pastor that they will be making a report to Child and Family Services (Children's Aid).

REPORTING AN ALLEGATION OR SUSPICION OF ABUSE

Anyone who has reasonable grounds to believe that a child is in need of protection is legally required to immediately report the matter to the Department of Social Services or the police. Reporting must be done orally by telephone or in person.

A person who knowingly fails to report in these circumstances is in violation of the law and may be found to have committed an offence and may be subject to discipline action in the church.

The Senior Pastor or a designated Director must notify the church's insurance provider and seek legal counsel upon hearing of a suspected child abuse case.

The Senior Pastor or a designated Director will notify and work in conjunction with Fellowship leadership in any and all allegations or suspicions of abuse that may have happened in the context of church ministry.

If the suspected abuse happened in the context of church ministries or was committed by a church member or attendee, the Senior Pastor or a designated Director must notify the parents/guardians of the victim.

ASSESSING AND INVESTIGATING AN ALLEGATION OR SUSPICION OF ABUSE

No persons, including Ministry Leads and Ministry Personnel, are to assume the function of assessing, substantiating or investigating the need for intervention or interpretation of suspected child abuse.

The church and its individuals must avoid any undue interference when a report of child abuse has been filed with the Department of Social Services or the police. The church should ask the Department of Social Services how it could assist in helping and supporting the investigation and the hurting individual and their family.

The church should maintain frequent communication and supportive relationships with those suspected of child abuse.

PROTECTING CONFIDENTIALITY AND DIGNITY OF THE VICTIM AND THE ACCUSED

During the process of reporting and response, all Ministry Personnel will be committed to prayer and strive to remain calm and hopeful.

Discretion must be observed and details of the suspected abuse must not be shared among the church community. Information should be shared on a need-to-know basis, expanding only as individuals are drawn into the response and investigation. Confidentiality for the suspected victim and the accused must be protected.

SPIRITUAL RESPONSE AND COUNSEL FOR THE VICTIM

All allegations and/or suspicions of abuse will be taken seriously and handled with the utmost care. The suspected victims will be treated with dignity and respect.

During the process of reporting and response, all Ministry Personnel will be committed to prayer and strive to remain calm and hopeful.

Situations of abuse must be handled forthrightly with due respect for people's privacy and confidentiality. Discretion must be observed and details of the suspected abuse must not be shared among the church community. Information should be shared on a need-to-know basis, expanding only as individuals are drawn into the response and investigation. Confidentiality for the victim must be protected.

The Senior Pastor and/or Elder Team will seek opportunities to provide individual care and counsel both for the abuse victim and their family. The Senior Pastor and/or Elder Team will determine the need for professional assistance and evaluate and designate resources as needed and able.

BIBLICAL RESPONSE AND DISCIPLINE FOR AN ACCUSED OR CONVICTED PERSON

The accused is to be treated with dignity and respect. If the accused is a paid Ministry Personnel, that person will be relieved temporarily of his or her duties until the investigation is completed with arrangements made to either maintain or suspend his or her income until the allegations are cleared or substantiated.

It is the responsibility and right of the Senior Pastor and/or Elder Team to exercise and practice church discipline as outlined in Matthew 18 and as stipulated in denominational guidelines.

The church should maintain frequent communication and supportive relationships with found guilty of child abuse as long as these persons exhibit a willingness to listen, change and look to Christ for help. This does not exclude the need for hurting individuals to receive professional counselling.

The Senior Pastor and/or Elder Team will seek opportunity to provide individual care and counsel both for the accused and their family. They will determine the need for professional assistance and evaluate and designate resources as needed and able.

Anyone accused of abuse to children or youth will be prohibited from having access to children or youth until they are cleared of any and all charges. Clear written guidelines will be provided to the individual with restricted activities and areas of the church that are they are not permitted to use.

Anyone convicted of child abuse will be prohibited from having access to children or youth. The Senior Pastor or a designated Director may designate an individual to be responsible to be informed whenever the convicted person attends church activities and to accompany the convicted person while on church property. Clear written guidelines will be provided to the individual listing restricted areas and access points on the church property.

MEDIA RELATIONS

It is the responsibility of the Elders/Directors to designate a spokesperson to speak on behalf of the church to media and to the public in relation to a suspected child abuse case. All inquiries should be directed to spokesperson, and other individuals should not make comments unless given permission to do so. Public statements must be well prepared and presented under the guidance of legal counsel.

ONGOING INVESTIGATION

Full cooperation must be given by all parties to civil authorities under the guidelines of legal counsel. At no time should church leadership or its individuals either engage in denial, minimization or blame, or admit responsibility that could prejudice the case or cause increased liability to the church. If there is a report of suspected abuse, a confidential follow-up report with conclusions and action taken must be documented by the Senior Pastor, Youth Ministry Lead or Children's Ministry Lead. This report should be placed in a confidential Ministry Personnel file and kept permanently. Directors and/or Senior Pastor will inform others of any ongoing investigation strictly on a need-to-know basis.