



# Freedom In Christ

Pentecostal Assembly

## **Abuse Prevention Plan for Children, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults.**

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The purpose of this policy is to prevent harm to the children, youth and vulnerable adults in our programs and to protect our staff and volunteers from false and wrongful allegations.

# INDEX

## SECTION I

### **POLICY on PROTECTION PROCEDURES**

#### **1.01 Ministry Personnel Recruitment and Screening (pg. 1-5)**

- Process
- Qualifications for Ministry
- Ministry Application Form
- Reference Checks
- Interview
- Police Records Checks (Canadian Police Information Clearance)
- Training
- Approval
- Exception to Six Month Waiting Period for New Volunteers
- Supervision of Ministry Personnel

#### **1.02 Child Protection Procedures (pg. 6-13)**

- Ministry Personnel / Child Ratios
- Supervision of Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults
- Occasional Observers
- Ministry Personnel Identification
- Child Registration & Compliance with the Personal Information Protection Electronic Data Act (PIPEDA)
- Receiving and Releasing Children
- Attendance
- Washroom Guidelines
- Architectural Precautions
- Proper Display of Affection
- Discipline & Classroom Management
- Lost of Missing Child

#### **1.03 Youth Protection Procedures (pg. 14-16)**

- Youth Ministry Personnel Standards
- Lifestyle
- Contacting Opportunities
- Open Door Policy
- Physical Contact
- Dating
- Youth Ministry Programming
- Ministry Personnel / Student Ratios
- Supervision of Ministry Personnel
- Youth Ministry Authorization and Consent Forms & Compliance with the Personal Information Protection Electronic Data Act (PIPEDA)
- Planning for Safety

#### **1.04 Off-Site Activities, Overnight Events and Transportation (pg. 17-19)**

- Off-Site Activities
- Retreats and Overnight Events
- Billeting and Hosting
- Transportation

#### **1.05 Vulnerable Adult Protection Procedures (pg. 20)**

- Planning for Safety
- Supervision of Vulnerable Adults
- Personal Care

#### **1.06 Health, Safety and Sanitation Guidelines (pg. 21-24)**

- First Aid
- Illness
- Medications
- Dealing with Cuts or Injuries Involving Blood
- Blood-Borne Pathogens and Infectious Diseases
- Emergencies
- Toy Cleaning

#### **1.07 Bullying Among Peers (pg. 25)**

- Procedures for Dealing with Bullying

#### **1.08 Social Media, Online Forums and Communications (pg 26-27)**

- Social Media/Text Messaging
- Photographing and Video Recording

## **SECTION II**

### **POLICY ON REPORTING AND RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS AND SUSPICIONS OF ABUSE**

#### **2.01 Reporting Procedures (pg. 28-30)**

- Hearing of an Allegation or Suspicion of Abuse
- Reporting an Allegation or Suspicion of Abuse
- Assessing and Investigating an Allegation or Suspicion of Abuse

#### **2.02 Response to Allegations (pg. 31-32)**

- Spiritual Response and Counsel for the Victim
- Biblical Response and Discipline for the Accused or Convicted
- Media Relations
- Ongoing Investigation

#### **2.03 Response to Church Attendees Convicted of Child Abuse (pg. 33)**

#### **2.04 Talking to a Potentially Abused Child (pg. 34-36)**

- When a Child Discloses Abuse or Neglect
- When There are Indicators of Abuse or Neglect
- Questioning Techniques

## **SECTION III**

## **POLICY REVIEW (pg. 37)**

### **3.01 Abuse Prevention Program Maintenance**

### **3.02 Policy Review**

## **SECTION IV**

## **DEFINITIONS (pg. 38-39)**

### **4.01 Occasional Observer**

### **4.02 Position of Trust**

### **4.03 Abuse**

### **4.04 Types of Abuse**

Physical

Sexual

Emotional

Neglect

### **4.05 Harassment**

### **4.06 Inappropriate Touch**

## **SECTION V**

## **FORMS (pg. 40-83)**

Confidentiality Statement

Electronic Communication Consent Form

Incident Report

Letter of Informed Consent for Special Events

Letter of Informed Consent for Transportation

Life Style and Morality Standards

Medication Consent Form

Ministry Application for Youth Working with Children

Ministry Application Form- Adults working with children, youth and Vulnerable Adults

Ministry Personnel Reference Form

Ministry Personnel Agreement Form and Covenant of Care

Ministry Personnel Driver Agreement

Ministry Personnel Driver Contract

Offenders Covenant

Suspected Abuse Report Form

Training Sign-Off - In Person

Training Sign-Off - Reading Policy

Trips and Off-Site Travel Form

Volunteer Driver Agreement and Contract

Yearly Kids Ministry Authorization and Informed Consent

Yearly Youth Ministry Authorization and Informed Consent

## **SECTION VI**

Edits, Changes, and Additions to Policy (pg. 82)

**SECTION I**  
**POLICY on PROTECTION PROCEDURES**

**1.01 Ministry Personnel Recruitment and Screening**

**Screening**

The following staff and ministry personnel are subject to mandatory screening:

- All staff including paid and unpaid Pastors, Directors, Administrators and Custodians.
- All Ministry Personnel working with children, youth, and vulnerable adults/seniors.
- All board members, (deacons) and officers that work with or come in contact with children, youth or vulnerable adults/seniors.
- Designated monitors and care staff.

**Process**

1. A Pastor, Program Director or Ministry Lead determines if an individual is a suitable or potential candidate for ministry with vulnerable persons.
2. Prospective Ministry Personnel are to submit to the recruitment and screening process managed by the Ministry Lead. Individuals will submit and complete the following:
  - Be members of the church or have regularly attended worship services and/or participated in church life or small groups for at least six months
  - Complete the Ministry Personnel Application Form (~~Appendix 1~~)
  - Reference Checks
  - Interview
  - Vulnerable Sector Check
  - Lifestyle and Morality Standard Form (Ministry personnel 18 years of age)
  - Confidentiality Statement
  - Training
  - Final Approval from a Pastor, Program Director, or Ministry Lead
3. Ministry Personnel must complete the recruitment and screening process before being placed in a position of trust.
4. All screened Ministry Personnel must have a personnel file kept with church records. These files are to be kept permanently.

## **Qualifications for Ministry**

1. Individuals wanting to work with children, youth and vulnerable adults must be members of the church or have regularly attended the church (worship services and/or participated in a small group) for at least six months. Exceptions can be made where prospective Ministry Personnel have transferred from another church in Canada of the same denomination (being the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada) in which they have been members and children's and/or youth ministry workers in good standing for a minimum of one year. Reference checks must be received from at least three individuals, including one from their previous pastor.
2. Ministry Personnel serving children, youth and vulnerable adults are members or adherents in good standing who support the vision, values and constitution of the church. They also support and are submissive to the leadership of the Pastors and Board of the church.
3. Individuals who have been accused, or convicted, or are under the suspicion of crimes against children and/or youth, or who have been convicted of violent crimes or other relevant crimes will not have any involvement in ministries or programs where children, youth or vulnerable adults participate.

## **Ministry Application Form**

1. Prospective Ministry Personnel are to complete a Ministry Personnel Application Form.
  - A verifiable witnessed signature is required for the protection of all parties.
  - Individuals who transfer from another church unknown to the Church Leadership must include contact information or a reference from a pastoral staff member of their previous church.
  - In accordance with the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA) regulations, the Ministry Personnel Application Form must include the reason for which the information is being collected.
2. Ministry Personnel Application Forms are to be kept confidential and available only to the Ministry Lead, Pastors or Designated Screening Personnel.
  - Completed Ministry Personnel Application Forms are to be kept on file permanently and in a secure location.

## **Reference Checks**

1. Designated Screening Personnel will conduct reference checks on all prospective Ministry Personnel (See Forms Section).
  - Prospective Ministry Personnel must sign a liability release before reference checks are conducted.

- References provided must fit with the acceptable categories for adults and for youth who want to work with children.
- Reference checks may be conducted by telephone, in person or by email to confirm the suitability and appointment of prospective Ministry Personnel

### **Interview**

Interviews will be conducted by the a Pastor, Program Director, or Ministry Lead.

### **Police Records Checks (Canadian Police Information Clearance)**

1. Vulnerable Sector Checks (aka Police Record Checks) must be conducted on all adult ministry personnel serving children, youth and vulnerable adults.
  - Police records checks are to be renewed every five (5) years.
  - Police records checks are to be conducted on all Ministry Personnel 18 years of age and older and are to be kept on file permanently.
  - The original copy of the Vulnerable sector check must be kept on file.
2. If a prospective Ministry Personnel has had a history with Children's and Family Services, a request may be made by a Pastor for the individual to sign consent for a Child Welfare Check.
3. If a Vulnerable Sector check is returned "NOT CLEAR" the prospective candidate will be asked to do one of the following:
  - a. Submit to a Criminal Record Check with fingerprinting verification and submit to disclosure and verification of the crimes committed that he/she has been convicted of; or
  - b. Withdraw their application from serving in a position of leadership or a position of trust with children, youth or vulnerable persons.

Note: Without verification of convictions and a clear vulnerable sector scan individuals cannot be placed in a position of leadership or trust with children, youth and vulnerable adults.

### **Training**

1. Abuse prevention education and training are required for all Ministry Personnel serving children, youth and vulnerable adults and must be completed before ministry placement.
2. Training by designated trainers (to be determined by Lead Pastor) is to include a review of the Abuse Prevention Policy and procedures. All Ministry



Personnel are to affirm that they have read the Abuse Prevention Policy and that they understand it and the procedures that pertain to their area of ministry. Ministry Personnel will be educated about their legal obligation to report suspected abuse and to recognize and identify the symptoms of abuse and molestation.

3. All Ministry Personnel, Pastors, Program Directors, and Ministry Leads' are required to have refresher training at least once a year. The refresher training is to read the Freedom Abuse Prevention Policy and review any new information since their last training. Personnel must sign that they have read and understood this policy. Every 5 years, a training session (in person or virtual) must be completed.
4. Attendance is to be taken at training courses and noted in the personnel file for each Ministry Personnel. All Ministry Personnel must sign a ministry agreement form confirming they have read, understood and are willing to comply with the Abuse Prevention Policies and procedures annually.

### **Approval**

1. All Ministry Personnel are to be approved by a Pastor, Program Director or Ministry Lead upon completion of the recruitment and screening process. It is preferred that the staff member assigned to that ministry department be the one responsible for approving volunteers once their file has been completed. Approval should not be granted unless the screening process is complete and carefully reviewed.
  - Approval must be signed and dated.
2. The recruitment and screening process must be completed within 3 months.
  - Applicants who have not fully completed the recruitment and screening process will not be placed in a position of trust.
  - Access to children, youth and vulnerable adults will be limited until final approval is received.

### **The Exceptions to Six Month Waiting Period for New Volunteers**

New Ministry Personnel are exempt from the six-month waiting period under the following circumstances:

1. Transferring from another church of the same denomination in which he/she is a member and Ministry Personnel in good standing. The Ministry Personnel must be fully screened, including a Vulnerable Sector check (age 18 and older) and background references from at least three individuals, including one from their previous church's Pastor or Board and to whom they have been well known for at least one year.
2. New and returning volunteers in seasonal ministries such as summer camp can only be approved if they are fully screened by FREEDOM IN CHRIST ASSEMBLY, including a Vulnerable Sector check (age 18 and older) and

background references from at least three individuals, including at least one from their current home church or the Executive Director at an organization where they previously served in children's/youth ministry and to whom they have been well known for at least one year.

- A Principal, Vice Principal or the person that oversees the parent volunteers at a school can be used as a reference in place of a member from their home church or Executive Director of a Christian organization.

### **Supervision of Ministry Personnel**

For the protection of our children, youth and vulnerable adults, supervision of all Ministry Personnel will be intentional and will take place through formal and informal visits to classrooms and programs by any fully screened team member.

## **1.02 Child Protection Procedures**

The following procedures are in place for ministries including but not limited to Nursery, Kids Church, Midweek Programs and all other children's ministry programs designated for children birth to age 12 (grade six).

### **Ministry Personnel / Child Ratios**

Room settings must comply with established ratios for Ministry Personnel and children at all times. This includes off-site activities and trips. Established ratios are:

- One Ministry Personnel for every 3 infants (birth to 15 months old)
- One Ministry Personnel for every 5 toddlers and pre-schoolers (15 months old to 5 years of age)
- One Ministry Personnel for every 10 elementary-age children (6-year-olds to age 12/ grade 6)

### **Supervision of children, youth and vulnerable adults**

1. To provide adequate supervision of children, youth and vulnerable adults, one (1) of the following must be in place:
  - A minimum of two (2) unmarried Ministry Personnel are present for supervision, except in the event of an emergency OR;
  - One Ministry Personnel is present with an open door or a closed door with clear glass and hall monitors circulating periodically from room to room
  - Married couples count as one Ministry Personnel. A second Ministry Personnel or regular checks by a hall monitor must be in place to meet supervision and ratio procedures.
2. Ministry Personnel between the ages of 12 and 17 may assist only under adult Ministry Personnel supervision. Ministry Personnel under the age of 17 must never be alone with younger children or allowed to take them-outdoors, off-premises or in public places without other screened adult Ministry Personnel supervising at all times.

### **Occasional Observers**

Occasional observers (see definition section) who join a group of children will have their attendance recorded and kept on file with the group attendance for that day. Visitors will be identified and if they have not been screened and approved, they will not be placed in a position of trust with children.

## **Ministry Personnel Identification**

All Ministry Personnel, when serving, are to wear a nametag that identifies them to parents/guardians, children and others.

## **Child Registration & Compliance with the Personal Information Protection Electronic Data Act (PIPEDA)**

1. Yearly Kids Ministry Authorization and Consent Form (See Forms section) will be available for all children's ministry programs. A release and permission statement will be included on all consent forms releasing the Church from unforeseen and accidental injuries along with contact information in case of an accident. A statement will be included on all consent forms which stipulates the purpose and extent of collecting the personal information of children. The Yearly Kids Ministry Authorization and Consent form will be for activities on site of the church and adjacent park areas.
2. Forms are to be copied and the copies taken to all off-site events in case emergency medical assistance is required and the parent cannot be notified. Original forms are to be filed and kept permanently in a secure location.
3. The Kids Ministry Authorization and Consent Form will not replace specific consent and authorization forms for activities that involve an elevated level of risk like offsite or overnight trips. It is the responsibility of the Ministry Lead and their teams to ensure that the required forms are completed and submitted for all participants. A reasonable effort is to be made to keep registration information updated and current.
4. It is the responsibility of Ministry Leads and their teams to ensure that forms are completed and submitted for all participants. A reasonable effort is to be made to keep registration information updated and current.

## **Receiving and Releasing Children**

For Children Birth to Senior Kindergarten (up to and including age 5):

1. The receiving and releasing of children under the age of 6 will be closely monitored. Mandatory sign-in and sign-out either by use of a computer program or a form are to be used for all programs.
2. Children are not to be dropped off or left in a room without adult Ministry Personnel present.
3. Children will only be released into the care of the child's parent or designate utilizing a signature, security number or identification card.
4. parents/guardians and visitors are not to enter the nursery or preschool area when picking up their child unless requested to do so.

For children ages 6 to 7 (grades 1 to 2):

1. Children are to be received in the designated room by adult Ministry Personnel. Children are not to be dropped off or left in a room without adult Ministry Personnel present to receive them.
2. Children are to remain in the room until the parent or designate arrives to pick them up and the child demonstrates recognition of the parent or designate.

For Children aged 8 to 10 (grades 3 to 5):

1. Children are received in the designated room by adult Ministry Personnel. Children are not to be dropped off or left in a room without Ministry Personnel present to receive them.
2. Children may be released on their own or be picked up by a parent.

### **Attendance**

1. Attendance of children is to be taken each time a group or program is in session. These attendance records are to be kept on file permanently.
2. A record will be kept of all Ministry Personnel on duty in each group or program. This record will be maintained with the record of attendance and is to be kept on file permanently.

### **Washroom Guidelines**

Parents/guardians are to be encouraged to deal with their child's toileting needs before the start of each program or worship service.

For Nursery:

1. Diaper-changing procedures are to be posted in the nursery diaper-changing area.
2. If possible, it will be strongly encouraged that diaper changing be done by the child's parent.
3. Diaper changing is to be done only by designated adult Ministry Personnel and must be conducted within the view of another unrelated Ministry Personnel.

### **Diaper Changing Procedure:**

Parents/guardians, are encouraged ~~you to help us~~ to keep the Nursery clean and sanitized. The following are recommend the following when diapering:

1. Wash your hands.
2. Put on gloves.
3. Place the baby on a clean, disposable surface.
4. Remove the soiled diaper and place it in a plastic bag.

5. Clean the diaper area with wipes and place them in a plastic bag.
6. Remove the disposable cover from the changing table and spray the area with bleach solution.
7. Remove gloves, place them in a plastic bag and dispose of the plastic bag.
8. Wash your hands.

For Preschool Children:

1. Preschool children are not to go to the washroom alone.
2. One of the following will be adhered to when accompanying preschool children to the washroom:
  - Two (2) Ministry Personnel will escort a group of children to the washroom OR
  - One (1) Ministry Personnel will escort a group of children to the washroom with one (1) hall monitor appointed to assist with washroom and security duties.
3. Ministry Personnel will escort the children to the washroom, ensure the washroom is not occupied, prop the door open, remain outside the door and wait for the children before escorting them back to the room.
4. Ministry Personnel are never to be alone with a child in an unsupervised washroom and they are never to go into a cubicle with a child and shut the door.
5. When a preschool child needs assistance in a washroom, adult Ministry Personnel may only enter the washroom cubicle to assist by following these guidelines:
  - The outside washroom door must be propped open and the adult Ministry Personnel must stand in an open cubicle,
  - Ministry Personnel will take into consideration the privacy of the child.

For Elementary Children:

1. Elementary children are not to be sent to the washroom alone but should be accompanied by a buddy and Ministry Personnel that is a minimum of 16 years of age.
2. Ministry Personnel will escort the children to the washroom, ensure the washroom is not occupied, prop the door open, remain outside the door and wait for the children before escorting them back to the room.

3. Ministry Personnel are not to be alone with children in an unsupervised washroom and are never to enter into a cubicle with a child and shut the door.

### **Architectural Precautions**

Recognizing that there are many storage areas within the church, elevated precautions will be taken to monitor these areas. Storage closets and doors must be locked at all times during programs except when in use. When doors are unlocked, additional hall monitors will be on duty to monitor these areas.

1. All windows and doors in children's program areas are never to be covered in any way, so clear sightlines into rooms, must be maintained.
2. Washroom facilities in the preschool area are for the sole use of children.
3. All electrical outlets are to be kept covered when not in use.
4. Doors of rooms and closets must be locked when not in use during children's programs.

### **Proper Display of Affection**

#### **Appropriate Touch:**

1. Recognizing that children need appropriate displays of affection that reflect pure, genuine and positive displays of God's love, the appropriate touch of children will be age and developmentally appropriate. We encourage Ministry Personnel to:
  - Hold a preschool child who is crying,
  - Speak to a child at eye level and listen with their eyes as well as their ears,
  - Hold a child's hand when speaking, listening or walking with him or her to an activity,
  - Gently hold a child's shoulder or hand to keep his or her attention while redirecting the child's behaviour,
  - Put an arm around the shoulder of a child when comforting or quieting is needed,
  - Pat a child on the head, hand, shoulder or back to affirm him or her.
2. All touch must be done in view of others.

#### **Inappropriate Touch:**

1. Recognizing that the innocence of children must be protected, Ministry Personnel 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 child's face when talking to or disciplining them,
  - Touching a child 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 procedures),
  - Carrying older children or allowing them to sit on your lap,
  - Prolonged physical contact with a child.
2. Ministry Personnel are not to be left alone with a child.

### **Discipline & Classroom Management**

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

#### Preventive Discipline:

- Create a loving, caring atmosphere.
- Be respectful toward everyone.
- Model self-discipline and structure.
- Prepare exciting and interesting activities with short transitions in between.
- Arrange the environment for children and for learning.
- Establish and communicate realistic expectations for the children.
- Be sure the activities provided are meaningful and age-appropriate.
- Be fair and consistent with all children.
- Be sure to focus on positive actions and reward positive behaviour.
- Be aware of children with special needs and bring their needs to the attention of the Ministry Lead.

#### Remedial Discipline:

- Every effort will be made to deal with problems individually.
- Every effort will be made to explain to the child why the behaviour is unacceptable and instruct them on how to do it correctly.



- Every effort will be made to redirect the child to positive action.
  - Every effort will be made to explain the consequences of unacceptable behaviour by defining the correct way to behave as well as the result of the wrong behaviour.
  - Every effort will be made to offer choices that are acceptable to both the Ministry Personal and the child.
2. Group rules will be established to communicate the expectations required of children.

Some suggested rules are:

- One voice talking at a time, and always use inside voices.
- Use good manners.
- Respect each other.
- Quiet hands get answered.
- Obey directions the first time.
- Keep your hands and feet to yourself.
- Be friendly.

### **Lost or Missing Child**

The safety of all children will be given our highest priority. This Policy is designed to be put into place swiftly and effectively for actions to be taken to locate any missing child and to notify and involve parents/guardians and the authorities at every point. If a child is missing, time is of the essence. Conduct a preliminary search.

1. Ministry Lead must be notified immediately and told where and when the child was last seen. If a parent/guardian is on-site, the Ministry Lead should notify the parent/guardian about the missing child at this time. (If a parent/guardian is not on site, the steps should resume in the order below)
2. Assemble all remaining children in a central safe location, enabling as many screened leaders as possible to search for the missing child. Appoint a few screened Personnel to supervise the remaining children, keeping the children together and providing a low-risk activity. This group should wait for further instructions from leadership. Do not send any minors to search for lost children.
3. Remaining Leaders and Personnel, (as many as possible without putting the remaining children at risk) will begin by searching the immediate area and then move to less immediate areas. Search both inside the building and outside the building. Search the following: cupboards, washrooms, closets, stairwells,

classrooms, offices. Search outside locations: parking lot, nearby streets, parks, playgrounds, and ravines, etc.

4. At the 10-15 minute point of searching (maximum 20 minutes), notify the police/emergency officials of the missing child, their age, physical description, and possible whereabouts in the building/community where the child went missing. If possible provide a photograph of the Child.
5. Notify the Parents / Guardians immediately after notifying the police/emergency officials If they are not on site.
6. Continue the search, cooperating with the police and local authorities.
7. Once the missing child is found, administer first aid as needed.
8. Complete an incident report, and keep the report on file permanently.
9. If the media arrives on the scene, only the Senior Pastor or Designate should speak to the media.

### **1.03 Youth Protection Procedures**

The following policies and procedures are in place for ministries including but not limited to: Youth Group, Youth Retreats, Youth Mission Trips, church-coordinated Youth concerts and sports activities and all Youth ministry programs designated for youth 11 – 18 years of age.

#### **Youth Ministry Personnel Standards**

##### **Lifestyle**

1. For the protection of our youth, Ministry Personnel are to be committed to growing in every area of their lives through engaging in various practices and experiences that keep them connected to God and becoming more like Christ.
2. Ministry Personnel are to be role models of integrity at all times. They are to refrain from activities that are illegal or could be considered morally and biblically questionable.

##### **Contacting Opportunities**

1. Ministry Personnel are encouraged to meet with youth in small group settings and teams, not alone.
2. The Ministry Lead must pre-approve Ministry Personnel that do one-on-one mentoring.
3. One-on-one mentoring sanctioned by the church must be done in public settings and only under the following conditions:
  - The Ministry Lead is informed of the time and place of the meeting before the meeting, and;
  - Parental permission is granted with written documentation, and;
  - When separate transportation is arranged;
  - Documentation will be maintained and filed including written permission from parents and notification to Ministry Lead.

##### **Open Door Policy**

Ministry Personnel working with youth must not have one-on-one or small group meetings behind closed doors. It is required that the door remain open or that the meeting take place in a room with an unobstructed window in the door.

## **Physical Contact**

1. Ministry Personnel must be made aware of what constitutes appropriate touch:
  - One arm hugs
  - Shoulder-to-shoulder hugs
  - Touch on the back or shoulder
2. Ministry Personnel must always refrain from inappropriate touch at all times:
  - Chest-to-chest hugging
  - Extended hugging
  - Over-exuberant affection
  - Lap sitting
  - Kissing
  - Touching of thighs, knees, back rubs or inappropriate spots on the body
3. Ministry Personnel must be cognizant of conduct that could be misinterpreted:
  - Horseplay
  - Tickling
  - Extended backrubs

## **Dating**

Ministry Personnel working with youth may not pursue a dating relationship with a student.

## **Youth Ministry Programming**

### **Ministry Personnel / Student Ratios**

1. Programs for youth must comply with established staffing ratios as follows:
  - “Jr. High” ages 11-14 (grade 6 to 8) – one Ministry Personnel for every 8 students
  - “Sr. High” ages 14-18 (grade 9 to 12) – one Ministry Personnel for every 10 students

2. There must be at least two (2) unmarried Ministry Personnel at all events. Events with mixed genders must be supervised by both male and female Ministry Personnel.
  - Married couples count as one Ministry Personnel. A second Ministry Personnel or regular checks by a hall monitor must be in place to meet supervision and ratio procedures.
3. There must be at least a one (1) year age difference between Ministry Personnel and the youth they supervise.

### Supervision of Ministry Personnel

The supervision of Ministry Personnel will be intentional and will take place through formal and informal visits to rooms and programs by Ministry Leads.

### **Youth Ministry Authorization and Consent Forms & Compliance with the Personal Information Protection Electronic Data Act (PIPEDA)**

1. At the beginning of every ministry year (September), all youth are to submit a completed Yearly Youth Ministry Authorization and Consent Form (See Forms section) signed by their a parent or guardian. A statement will be included on all forms which stipulate the purpose and extent for collecting personal information of children.
2. Forms are to be copied and the copies taken to all off-site events in case emergency medical assistance is required and the parent/guardian cannot be notified. Original forms are to be filed and kept permanently in a secure location.
3. The Youth Ministry Authorization and Consent Form Form will not replace specific consent and authorization forms for activities that involve an elevated level of risk like offsite or overnight trips. It is the responsibility of the Ministry Lead and their teams to ensure that the required forms are completed and submitted for all participants. A reasonable effort is to be made to keep registration information updated and current.

### **Planning for Safety**

All Ministry Personnel must ensure a safe environment in the planning and evaluating of all activities. Safety precautions are to be communicated to students.

## **31.04 Off-Site Activities, Overnight Events and Transportation**

### **Off-Site Activities:**

1. All off-site activities must be pre-approved by the Ministry Lead with parents being notified at least one (1) week before the outing utilizing the Letter of Informed Consent (See Forms section)
2. The proper written consent and medical release forms are required for each child/youth participating in off-site events. Forms must be kept in the Ministry Lead's possession during off-site activities with a copy of the completed forms filed in the Church office. The originals are to be kept on file permanently. (See Forms section)
3. All off-site activities are to be supervised by a minimum of two (2) unrelated adult Ministry Personnel. Off-site activities with mixed genders must be supervised by at least two (2) unrelated, adult Ministry Personnel of the opposite gender.

### **Retreats and Overnight Events:**

1. All retreats and overnight events must be pre-approved by the Ministry Lead.
2. The proper written consent and medical release forms utilizing the Letter of Informed Consent (See Forms section) are required for each child/youth participating in overnight events. Forms must be kept in the Ministry Lead's possession during trips and events and a copy filed in the main office at the Church. The originals are to be kept on file permanently (See Forms section).
3. All overnight activities with mixed genders must be supervised by at least two (2) unrelated, adult Ministry Personnel of the opposite gender. There must be a minimum ratio of two (2) Ministry Personnel for every ten children or youth. Ministry Personnel are to be assigned a specific group of children or youth for whom they are responsible to supervise. Female Ministry Personnel will be assigned responsibility for female children/youth and male Ministry Personnel will be assigned responsibility for male children/youth.
4. Youth attending retreats and overnight events will not be allowed to leave the event. Any exceptions must be added to the permission form signed by the parent.
5. 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.

## **Billeting and Hosting**

1. For the protection of our children/youth, it is required that all adults residing in the home where billets are provided must complete the following screening process before hosting. Screening includes:
  - Recommendation from a pastor, and;
  - Vulnerable Sector Check
2. Information guidelines are to be distributed to host homes no less than one week in advance of the youth arriving at their home.
3. Any allergies and medications for children/youth should be communicated to the host home before arrival, with clear directions on how to manage allergies and/or medications.
4. Children/youth must always be billeted in teams or small groups of the same gender.
5. Children/youth should have distinctly separate sleeping arrangements from the other household members and should not be left alone.
6. Curfews of 11:00 p.m. should be enforced when children/youth are being billeted.
7. All children/youth staying in host homes will be informed of proper etiquette and curfew guidelines.

## **Transportation:**

1. When planning off-site activities, parents are to be encouraged to drop off and pick up their children and children/youth at the event location if possible.
2. Our first concern in transportation is the safety of our children/youth. Drivers must obey all the rules of the road including the speed limits. Reckless or unsafe driving will not be tolerated.
3. All Ministry Personnel drivers transporting children/youth during church activities must complete the following before the event:
  - Be pre-approved by the Ministry Lead,
  - Provide a copy of their valid driver's license,
  - Provide a copy of their current automobile insurance policy, and,
  - Be at least 21 years of age.
  - Complete the Ministry Personnel Driver Agreement form, which is to be updated yearly (See Forms Section)
4. The number of occupants in vehicles transporting children, youth and vulnerable adults during church-sponsored activities must not exceed the number of seat belts and each child must be in age-appropriate safety

- restraints. Seat belts must be worn by everyone and remain fastened at all times the vehicle is in operation.
5. A minimum of two (2) screened adult supervisors or one (1) screened adult plus at least 2 other minors must be in the vehicle at all times during church-sponsored events. Children, youth and vulnerable adults must never be left alone in a vehicle. It is preferred that there be two (2) unrelated screened adult supervisors in the vehicle.
  6. The 'Trips and Off-site Travel Form' (See Forms section) will accompany the group with the original left in the church office and filed permanently consisting of:
    - Names and phone numbers of all participants
    - Location of event and phone number(s)
    - Drivers and vehicles involved.



## **1.05 Vulnerable Adult Protection Procedures**

The following procedures are in place for programs where Vulnerable Adults are in attendance and/or for ministry opportunities where Vulnerable Adults are visited.

A Vulnerable Person is defined as a person who may need community care services because of mental illness, developmental disability or delay, other disability, age, illness or emotional disturbance and who is or may be unable to take care of himself or herself or unable to protect themselves against significant harm or serious exploitation.

Examples of vulnerable persons may include persons with autism, dementia, acquired brain injury, a tendency to wander, inability to communicate, aggression or other unusual social responses.

### **Planning for Safety**

All Ministry personnel must ensure a safe environment in their planning and evaluation of all activities with Vulnerable Adults. Safety precautions are to be communicated to the Vulnerable Adults and their caregivers and family members.

### **Supervision of Vulnerable Adults**

1. The best practice is to have at least two unrelated Ministry personnel at all events and for all visitations.
2. Programs for Vulnerable Adults must comply with established staffing ratios as follows:
  - On-site programs – one Ministry Personnel for every 10 Vulnerable Adults
  - Off-site trips and activities– one Ministry Personnel for every 5 Vulnerable Adults
3. Male and female Ministry Personnel must supervise events with mixed genders.
4. Caution and professional attitudes are to be observed in all interactions.
5. Counselling meetings should be limited to the professional section of the organization (i.e. office or board room) or in a public place (i.e. coffee shop).

### **Personal Care**

Personal Care should be the responsibility of caregivers and family members, not Ministry Personnel.

## 1.06 Health, Safety and Sanitation Guidelines

### First Aid:

1. There should be at least one Ministry Personnel that is certified and trained in first aid at all church events.
2. The names and contact information of individuals who are certified in first aid are to be posted in the children's and youth program areas, ~~for easy access~~ with a list kept in the First Aid Kits.
3. Ministry Leads must be informed of any children or youth who have severe allergies. The Ministry Personnel who have these children/youth in their care will be informed.

### Illness:

1. A child/youth who is ill and could 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, diarrhea, inflamed mouth and throat;
  - Children/youth with a known communicable disease.

### Medications:

1. Ministry Leads are not to give or apply any medications without written instructions provided by the parent or guardian through a completed Medication Consent Form. Requests should be written, signed, dated and filed permanently.
2. Medication is not to be left in a classroom. When a child/youth brings medication, the medication is to be kept in the possession of the Ministry Lead or their designate.
3. Topical medications for diaper-changing purposes are to be used only when instructed and provided by the parent or guardian.

### Dealing with Cuts or Injuries Involving Blood:

1. When a child/youth 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.
2. Ministry Personnel need to ensure that no other children/youth have had contact with any of the blood from the cut or injury.
3. Disposable gloves are to be used when bandaging the injury, avoiding contact with the mouth, ears and eyes.

4. Extreme care will be taken in cleaning up all blood and bloody bandages ensuring the safe and secure removal of waste and disposal of gloves in a secure waste removal container.
5. Hands are to be washed carefully with sterilizing soap available in the first aid kit.
6. When ministering to children/youth with HIV or AIDS, specific guidelines for the education and care of these children/youth will be developed and followed.

### **Blood-Borne Pathogens and Infectious Diseases**

The following is a compilation of guidelines on dealing with blood-borne pathogens (any microorganism or virus that can cause disease that is carried through the blood) and infectious diseases.

Studies of school and residential settings reflect a parallel between the inefficiency of transmission of bloodborne pathogens and the extent to which risk is adequately controlled by common hygienic measures. Children/youth who have blood-borne pathogen infections should not be excluded from children/youth ministry activities. There is no reason for excluding children/youth who do not exhibit aggressive behaviour and who do not have medication conditions facilitating transmission. The benefits of an unrestricted setting outweigh the risk of the child/youth acquiring harmful infections. The risk of transmitting the virus to others is almost nonexistent.

1. Common infectious diseases may be contracted from dirt and waste encountered in ministry areas. Wash your hands with soap and warm running water at regular intervals throughout the day.
2. All bodily fluids must be treated as though they are infectious, as blood-borne pathogens could be present in any child/youth. Confidentiality laws may prevent you from knowing those infected with the HIV (virus that causes AIDS) or AIDS virus. By treating all bodily fluids as infectious, you protect not only yourself but others.
3. Disposable gloves are required when handling any discharges from another person's body, particularly body fluids containing blood. Hands must be thoroughly washed with soap and running water when finished.

Ministry Personnel who are exposed to an infected child/youth's body fluids and excrement should know procedures to follow to prevent transmission. Disposable diapers should be used and soiled diapers should be placed in a plastic bag before discarding. Feces can be flushed down the toilet. Disposable gloves should be worn if open sores are present on the caretaker's hands. Any open sore on the infected child/youth should also be covered. Hands should be washed after exposure to blood and body fluids and before caring for another child/youth.

4. Contaminated disposable gloves and other contaminated materials should be disposed of in plastic-lined waste containers.
5. You need to develop an awareness of situations or dangers that may put you or others at risk. For instance, do not pick up broken glass with bare hands but use a brush and dustpan instead. You need to avoid punctures with objects that may contain blood from others. Carefully dispose of trash that contains sharp objects. Use containers that cannot be broken or penetrated.
6. Surfaces that have blood or other potentially infectious materials containing blood on them must be cleaned with an approved disinfectant or a 1:10 solution of liquid household bleach and water. This disinfectant must be mixed daily and sit on the surface for ten minutes before use.
7. An HBV (the virus causing Hepatitis B) vaccination should be pursued within 24 hours if you have had an 'exposure incident'. An 'exposure incident' is when there is blood contact through an open sore, injury by a contaminated sharp object or by a blood splash into your eyes, nose or mouth.
8. If you are responsible for administering first aid, it is strongly recommended that First aid procedures are current or Best practice. -For instance, the rescuer needs to use a resuscitation mouthpiece when administering CPR so that there is no direct mouth-to-mouth contact.
9. Individuals involved in the care and education of a child/youth infected with HIV, HBV, or HCV (the virus causing Hepatitis C) should be informed of the child/youth's infective status only if such knowledge is necessary to ensure proper care of the child/youth and to detect situations in which there is potential for transmission. Parental consent is required for the disclosure of a child/youth's infective status and should be made on a case-by-case basis respecting the child/youth's and family's right to privacy. Decisions about education and care for children/youth infected with the AIDS virus should be made by a team including the child/youth's physician, public health personnel, parents/guardians and church staff. The records of children/youth with AIDS should be kept confidential. Parental consent must be given to the agency releasing pertinent medical information to those administering care to the child/youth.
10. A more restricted environment is advised for infected preschool-age children, for children/youth who cannot control their bowels or bladder, for children/youth who display such behaviour as biting and scratching and for infected children/youth who have uncovered oozing sores. These children/youth should be cared for and educated in settings that minimize the exposure of other children/youth to their blood and body fluids.

Decisions regarding the vaccination of children, youth and Ministry Personal who have contact with the child/youth should be discussed with public health officials.

The hygienic practices of an infected child/youth may improve as the child/youth matures, or they may deteriorate if the child/youth's condition worsens. For these reasons, the need for a restricted environment should be re-evaluated regularly.

**Sources:**

Preventing the Transmission of Bloodborne Pathogens in Healthcare and Public Service Settings, Canada Communicable Disease Report – Supplement V23S3, May 1997  
Guidelines Regarding Children and Infants with AIDS, Love in Action, Annapolis, MD  
Universal Precautions, Alliance Academy, Quito Ecuador

**Emergencies:**

1. Emergency evacuation procedures will be reviewed semi-annually by Pastors. These procedures are to be posted in a visible place in each classroom stating the planned route of escape to the nearest exit.
2. A first aid kit will be kept in the kitchen and main office of the church and the kitchen of the farmhouse. Each kit will contain a pair of disposable non-latex gloves, disinfectant towelettes, two or three 4" x 4" gauze pads for blood absorption, small scissors and bandages.
3. A parent will be contacted when an injury, accident or medical emergency occurs. Incident Reports (See Forms Section) are to be completed for all accidents. Injuries are to be reported to the Ministry Lead.

**Room Cleaning and Sanitation**

All infant and toddler spaces are cleaned regularly by our custodial staff and Ministry Personal to maintain proper cleanliness and sanitation.

**Toy Cleaning**

Preschool/Nursery/Family Room

1. Toys are to be washed and sanitized using bleach or peroxide a minimum of once a month.
2. Must be sprayed with peroxide or sanitized after every use.

## 1.07 Bullying Among Peers

FREEDOM IN CHRIST ASSEMBLY is committed to providing a caring, respectful and safe environment for Children, Youth and Vulnerable adults. Therefore, an anti-bully policy and a zero-tolerance policy will always be in effect and will be clearly communicated and enforced among Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults. All personnel will take action to prevent bullying, teach against it, and assist and support Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults who are being bullied.

Bullying will be defined as unwanted, aggressive behaviour that involves a real or perceived power imbalance and is repeated or has the potential to be repeated.

Types of Bullying:

- Verbal Bullying
- Social Bullying
- Physical Bullying
- Cyber Bullying
- Racial Bullying
- Homophobic Bullying
- Sexual Harassment

### Procedure for Dealing with Bullying:

- Bullying, of any kind, will not be accepted or tolerated.
- Any incidents, reports or suspicions of bullying will be acknowledged, reviewed and dealt with appropriately and immediately.
- All incidents, reports or suspicions will be reported immediately to the Ministry lead.
- Appropriate action will take place based on the situation. Possible action may include, but is not limited to:
  - Complete incident report after each incident
  - Notify both sets of parents/guardians after each incident
  - Provide a warning that bullying will not be tolerated
  - Suspension for one day/one event if bullying persists
  - Suspension for three days/three events after the next incident
  - Removal from the program if the bullying does not stop
  - If necessary/appropriate, contact and consult with the police
- All attempts will be made to work towards reconciliation and change of behaviour with the bully or bullies.
- Counselling and support will be recommended, and if possible, provided for the victim of bullying.

## 1.08 Social Media, Online Forums, and Communications

Social Media, as well as email and texting, will be used to improve communication, promote and advertise church activities and to arrange face-to-face meetings. Ministry Personnel will refrain from using Social Media networks for relationship-building or counselling, particularly with children and youth.

1. Communication with children/youth 16 years of age and under is prohibited with the exceptions as stated below.
  - a. Ministry Personnel may communicate with children via email with written parental permission and copy parents/guardians on all emails.
  - b. Ministry Personnel will not initiate contact with children or youth under the age of 16 ~~43~~ via text or using Social Media.
  - c. Communication should also be copied to Ministry Lead or other Ministry personnel.
2. Communication with youth 16 years of age and older via social media, online forums, telephone and texting is permitted under the following conditions:
  - a. Communication with youth via email, text, social networks or other online forums will be monitored closely by Ministry Lead or other Ministry Personnel and only used with written parental permission. (See Forms Section)
  - b. Ministry Personnel may communicate with youth via email with written parental permission, agreeing to copy all emails to parents/guardians.
  - c. Ministry Personnel will not initiate contact with children or youth under the age of 16 via text or using Social Media. Ministry Personnel may contact youth aged 16-17 via text or Social Media with written parental permission and copying another leader on the text.
  - d. Ministry Personnel will limit their online communication with youth via Social Media to daytime hours (8:00 am 8:00 pm).
  - e. Online communication will not involve video messaging in any form unless it is a recorded training or group conference call approved by the Ministry Lead.
  - f. Ministry Personnel will ensure that all online communication with youth is done in view of other people (group pages, group texts, wall-to-wall) and/or copied to their parent/guardian. Communication should also be copied to the Ministry Lead or other Ministry Personnel.
  - g. Ministry Personnel will agree to allow the Ministry Lead or Pastoral staff access to their Social Media networks to facilitate regular supervision.
  - h. Church members, adherents and Ministry Personnel are encouraged to demonstrate and model purity, integrity, transparency and accountability with all communications including those noted above. If on the rare occasion, a

conversation moves beyond the communication of information, the Ministry Lead will be notified immediately and a copy of the conversation is to be printed and submitted to the Ministry Lead and Ministry Personnel file.

## **Photography and Video Recording**

- 1) With a desire to capture on film memorable moments at FREEDOM IN CHRIST ASSEMBLY, photography and video will be closely monitored by FREEDOM IN CHRIST Leadership. All departments and programs must abide by the following guidelines:
  - a. Photography and video recording will be done by designated Ministry Personnel who have been screened and trained in child, youth and vulnerable adults protection procedures;
  - b. For general public church activities including services where video recording will be done in the sanctuary and with the church family together, it is required that signage be posted notifying those in attendance that the service/activity will be recorded on video. Individuals can either stay out of the line of the camera or, if necessary, opt out of the activity/service.
  - c. For all Children and Youth ministry activities and programs, parent/guardian permission must be secured before taking photographs of children and youth. Parent/guardian permission will be secured on an annual basis on the registration forms;
    - i. No photographs of children or youth will be taken without prior written approval;
    - ii. No photographs will be posted on any online social network including but not limited to Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat and Twitter, without prior written approval;
  - d. No photographs will be tagged or labelled with the name of a child/youth at any time, including but not limited to bulletin boards, newsletters, websites, and/or church bulletins.
  - e. When archiving and filing photographs and video shots of children and youth, only those with written parental permission can be kept for future use. Written permission forms must be kept permanently on file in the church office.



## **SECTION II**

### **POLICY ON REPORTING AND RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS AND SUSPICIONS OF ABUSE**

#### **2.01 Reporting Procedures**

##### **Hearing of an Allegation or Suspicion of Abuse**

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

1. For the protection of our children, youth and vulnerable adults, all allegations and/or suspicions of abuse against children, youth and vulnerable adults will be taken seriously.
2. Immediately upon hearing of potential abuse or allegations of abuse to a child or youth, the Ministry Personnel must complete a Suspected Abuse Report Form documenting all pertinent information (See Forms section). 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.
3. All forms must be kept permanently unless otherwise directed by legal counsel.
4. Ministry Personnel are requested to notify the Senior Pastor that they will be making a report to Family and Children's Services.

##### **Reporting an Allegation or Suspicion of Abuse**

1. According to the Child and Family Services Act, any person with a reasonable suspicion of child abuse has a legal responsibility to immediately report the matter to child protection authorities or the police. Reporting must be done by telephone or in person promptly at the point of observing signs of abuse or receiving a report of abuse. The reporting must be immediate, a direct report, and an ongoing report. The report may be done in conjunction with pastoral staff or the immediate Ministry Lead.
2. A person who knowingly fails to report in these circumstances violates the law, may be found to have committed an offence, and may be subject to disciplinary action in the Church.
3. FREEDOM IN CHRIST ASSEMBLY requests that when a Ministry personnel or staff in the line of duty reports a suspicion of abuse or an allegation of abuse to authorities, they also notify the Senior Pastor so that a report will be made. It is understood that the report is to be kept confidential.

4. The Senior Pastor or their designate must notify the Church's insurance provider and seek legal counsel upon hearing of a suspected child abuse case.
5. The Church will notify and work in conjunction with denominational leadership in any allegations or suspicions of abuse that may have happened in the context of church ministry.
6. If the suspected abuse happened in the context of Church ministries or was committed by a church member or attendee, the parents/guardians of the victim must be notified by the Senior Pastor.

### **Assessing and Investigating an Allegation or Suspicion of Abuse**

1. No persons, including Pastors, Program Directors, Board members, or Ministry Personnel are to assume the function of assessing, substantiating or investigating the need for intervention or interpretation of suspected child abuse.
2. There must not be any undue interference when a report of child abuse has been filed with child protection authorities or the police. The Senior Pastor or his their designate should ask the child protection authorities how they can assist in helping and supporting the investigation and the hurting child or youth and their family. The Senior Pastor or their designate should maintain frequent communication and supportive relationships with those suspected or guilty of child abuse if 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.

### **Responding to Vulnerable Adult Abuse**

1. Gain a relationship of trust and give opportunity for them to express concerns
2. Ask yourself:
  - Is this an emergency? If yes, immediately call 911
  - Is the individual able to report it? If not, you can make a report on their behalf
3. Is the victim ready to respond?
  - If this is not an emergency and if the person is cognitively able to make the report themselves, it is up to them to make the report
  - Encourage them to make a report
  - Offer to be with them when they report it
4. If they are resisting all efforts of intervention:
  - Express concerns for their well-being
  - Provide a number to call for help

- Inform them about abuse and that they are not alone
- Encourage them to consider what to do next time
- Arrange for follow-up visits
- Develop a safety plan

## **2.02 Response to Allegations**

### **Spiritual Response and Counsel for the Victim**

1. For the protection of our children, youth, and vulnerable adults, 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.
2. During the process of reporting and response, all Ministry Personnel will be committed to prayer and strive to remain calm and hopeful.
3. 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.
4. Pastors will seek opportunities to provide individual care and counsel both for the abused victim and their family. Pastors will determine the need for professional assistance and evaluate and designate resources as needed and able.

### **Biblical Response and Discipline for the Accused or Convicted**

1. 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 their duties until the investigation is completed with arrangements made to either maintain or suspend their income until the allegations are cleared or substantiated.
2. It is the responsibility and right of Pastors and the Board to exercise and practice church discipline as outlined in Matthew 18 and as stipulated in denominational guidelines.
3. Pastors will seek opportunities to provide individual care and counsel both for the accused and their families. Pastors and the Board will determine the need for professional assistance and evaluate and designate resources as needed and able.
4. Anyone accused of abuse to children, youth, or vulnerable adults will be prohibited from having access to children, youth, or vulnerable adults until they are cleared of all charges. Clear written guidelines will be provided to the individual with restricted activities and areas of the church property that they are not permitted to use or be in.
5. Anyone convicted of child abuse will be prohibited from having access to children or youth. Pastors 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**

1. It is the responsibility of the Board and Senior Pastor to designate a spokesperson to speak on behalf of the Church to the media and the public concerning a suspected child abuse case. All inquiries should be directed to this person and comments should not be made by other individuals unless permitted to do so.
2. Public statements must be well prepared and presented under the guidance of legal counsel.

### **Ongoing Investigation**

1. Full cooperation must be given by all parties to civil authorities under the guidelines of legal counsel.
2. At no time should Board members or Pastors either engage in denial, minimization or blame or admit responsibility which could prejudice the case or cause increased liability to the Church.
3. A confidential follow-up report with conclusions and action were taken must be documented by the Senior Pastor or their staff delegate following a report of abuse. This report should be placed in a confidential ministry personnel file and kept permanently.
4. It is critical to maintain confidentiality and strictly adhere to a need-to-know basis only.

## **2.03 Response to Church Attendees Convicted of Child Abuse**

### **Covenant Agreement**

When an individual attends FREEDOM IN CHRIST ASSEMBLY who is known to have abused children, youth, or vulnerable adults in the past, and/or has been convicted of crimes against children or youth, the Board and Senior Pastor are to enter into a covenant agreement (See Forms Section) with the individual if they wish to attend FREEDOM IN CHRIST ASSEMBLY regularly. The covenant agreement is to be written and signed by a Pastor, a representative of the Board, and the individual.

For the protection of children, youth and vulnerable adults and for the protection of those who are known to have a history of crimes against children, youth and vulnerable adults, the following parameters will be put into place restricting access to children and youth:

The Offenders Covenant should include the following:

- When he/she is on the premises there will be at least one (but preferably two) adult chaperones assigned to always keep an eye on him/her.
- Children and Youth ministry areas will be off-limits.
- They will refrain from attending small groups where families with minors participate, and from forging close friendships with families from the church with minors.
- They will not be allowed on the church property during special Children's events (such as mid-week Children's/Youth programs, etc.).
- They will not be allowed to take pictures while at church.
- When they leave the sanctuary, for example, to use the washroom, one of the chaperones will check the washroom to make sure there are no children in the washroom. If there is a child, youth or vulnerable adult in the washroom the chaperone will ask them to wait until the child, youth or vulnerable adult is done before they go in.

## 2.04 Talking to a Potentially Abused Child

### ***When a Child (someone that is 16 years old and younger) Discloses Abuse or Neglect***

Children who may have been abused or neglected are particularly vulnerable. It is critical that, in responding to their needs, we take every caution to avoid upsetting or traumatizing them any further.

*If the child is in immediate danger, call the police first.*

When talking to the child, be sensitive to his or her needs and follow the general guidelines below. Your primary role is to support the child, gather basic information and report it to a child welfare worker as quickly as possible.

1. ***Stay calm and listen.*** An abused or neglected child needs to know that you are calm and available to help. If you react with shock, outrage or fear, you might inhibit the child and make him or her feel more anxious or ashamed. A calm response supports the child to tell you what has happened. It also provides some reassurance that what the child is experiencing can be talked about and worked through together.
2. ***Go slowly.*** It is normal to feel inadequate or unsure about what to do or say when a child tells you about abuse or neglect. Do not let this discomfort rush you into asking questions. Remember to proceed slowly. Gentle questions, such as “Can you tell me more about what happened?” are helpful.
3. ***Be supportive.*** Reassure the child that he or she has not done anything wrong. Children need support and reassurance when discussing abuse or neglect. It is helpful to let children know that:
  - they are not in trouble with you, the child welfare worker or the police (if they are involved)
  - they are safe with you
  - you are glad that they have chosen to tell you about this
  - they have done the right thing in telling you about this
  - you are sorry that they have been hurt or that this has happened to them
  - you will do everything you can to make sure they get the help they need
  - you know others who can be trusted to help solve this problem.
4. ***Get only the essential facts.*** Once you have enough information and reason to believe that abuse or neglect has occurred, stop gathering facts and be supportive. The child may be interviewed in depth by a child welfare worker and, if there is a criminal investigation, by the police; to avoid the stress of multiple interviews, limit your discussion to finding out generally what took place. If you need more information, be sure to ask *how*, *when*, *who* and *what* questions.

Avoid using *why* questions. They can suggest indirectly that the child may have done something wrong and increase the child's reluctance to discuss the matter.

5. **Tell the child what will happen next.** Children who disclose their abuse feel anxious and vulnerable about what people think of them and what will happen next. Tell them only what you know (e.g., that they are not in trouble, and that you will help) and avoid making promises. For example, do not promise that the alleged perpetrator won't get into trouble. Provide only reassurance that is realistic and achievable. Discuss with the child what you think will happen next and who will be involved.
6. **Make notes.** As soon as possible after the child's disclosure, write down as much as you can of what the child told you. This will help ensure accuracy when reporting to the appropriate authority. (Direct disclosures may be admissible in court, so accuracy is important.)

### **When there are Indicators of Child Abuse or Neglect**

Children do not always tell us about their abuse or neglect, and sometimes the indicators are not obvious. When you see indicators and are talking to children about possible abuse or neglect, the following points may be helpful.

1. **Choose your approach carefully.** The child may be fearful or reluctant to talk about what happened.
2. **Be relaxed and casual.** If you appear anxious or exhibit strong feelings, the child may withdraw.
3. **Keep it private.** Make sure you have enough time and a private setting with little chance of interruptions. The child is more likely to confide in you in a place where he or she feels safe. (Section 1.02 for Architectural Precautions)
4. **Be neutral.** Express your concerns to the child neutrally and objectively and seek or ask for their explanation for the indicators you have observed.
5. **Be a good listener.** Pay attention and express your confidence in the child. This shows your genuine concern for his or her safety and well-being.

Reference: BC Handbook for Action on Child Abuse and Neglect (for Service Providers)

#### **Questioning techniques:**

Ask general, non-leading questions

- Do ask – “Do you want to tell me more about that?”
- Do not ask – “Why did this happen?”

State observations

- Observe – “I see you have bruises on your legs.”
- Do not ask – “Have you been beaten?”



### Validate feelings

- Validate – “I see that you are upset.”
- Don’t analyze – “You must hate your father for doing that!”

### Express concern

- Say – “I need to know that you are safe; let’s try to get you some help.”
- Don’t make promises – “Everything will be alright if you report this.”

Reference: Speak Out...Act Now: A Guide to Preventing and Responding to Abuse and Harassment for SportsClubs and Associations

## **SECTION IV**

### **DEFINITIONS**

#### **4.01 Occasional Observer**

An occasional observer is someone that is not screened but is attending a program for Kids, Youth or Vulnerable adults. This could be a parent or support worker for a child/Youth/Vulnerable adult that needs one-on-one care or a parent of a child that is upset or nervous to be in a program alone.

#### **4.02 Definition of Position of Trust**

A position of trust is any position that requires its holder to enjoy the trust of those who elected or chose the holder. It includes any role wherein parents and/or guardians have entrusted their loved one to your care, i.e. teachers, helpers, assistants, supervisors, directors, leaders, caregivers, sponsors, etc. A position of trust, in legal terms, refers to a situation where one person holds a position of authority over another person and uses that position to his or her advantage to commit a crime or to injure the victim in some way. Liability for abuse of this position is not limited to criminal prosecution, and in some cases, a civil lawsuit may be brought as well.

#### **4.03 Definition of Child Abuse**

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." (FaithTrust Institute)

Abuse categorizations: "Abuse is categorized as physical, sexual, emotional, and neglect."

#### **4.04 Definition of Types of Abuse**

##### **Physical**

Physical Abuse is any deliberate physical force or action that results or could result in injury to a child. It can include punching, slapping, beating, shaking, burning, biting or throwing a child. It is different than what is considered reasonable discipline.

##### **Sexual**

Sexual abuse occurs 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. It can take many forms. This includes sexual intercourse, exposing a child's private

areas, indecent phone calls, fondling for sexual pleasure, allowing a child to look at, or perform pornographic pictures or videos, or engaging in prostitution.

### **Emotional**

Emotional abuse is a pattern of behaviour that attacks a child's emotional development and sense of self worth. It includes excessive, aggressive, or unreasonable demands that place expectations on a child beyond his or her capacity. Emotional abuse includes constant criticizing, teasing, belittling, insulting, rejecting, ignoring or isolating the child. It also includes failure by the parent or caregiver to provide their children with love, emotional support and guidance.

### **Neglect**

Neglect is the failure to meet a child's basic need for food, clothing, shelter, sleep, medical attention, education and protection from harm. This can occur when parents do not know about appropriate care for children, when they cannot adequately supervise their children or when they are unable to plan ahead." (Positive Parenting, Children's Aid Society, 2006)

## **4.05 Definitions of Harassment**

Harassment is a form of discrimination. It includes any unwanted physical or verbal behavior that offends or humiliates someone. Generally, harassment is a behaviour that persists over time. Serious one-time incidents can also sometimes be considered harassment. (Canadian Human Rights Commission, [www.chrc-ccdp.gc.ca](http://www.chrc-ccdp.gc.ca))

## **4.06 Definition of Inappropriate Touch**

Any form of touch that makes an individual feel uncomfortable. Some examples of inappropriate touch are, being groped, being forced to sit on someone's lap, being forced to hug someone, or if someone touches an individual in an area that is considered private.

**SECTION III**  
**POLICY REVIEW AND MAINTENANCE**

**3.01 Abuse Prevention Program Maintenance**

A strategy for program maintenance will be developed and reviewed each ministry year to ensure training, the updating of files and the physical environment are compliant with this policy.

**3.02 Policy Review**

The Policy is to be reviewed and approved every three years by the Board to ensure procedures are updated and/or clarified as needed and the Policy maintains its relevance to applicable provincial child protection legislation.