



PLAN OF PROTECTION:
Children's Ministry Policies and Procedures

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Section I – Rationale

Introduction

We must exercise caution and diligence in the selection and supervision of persons involved with children's and youth ministries. This is necessary not only to protect the children and youth who have been entrusted to our care, but also to protect the witness and ministry of the local church.

Children are very vulnerable to the abuse of power and position. We recognize these conditions may exist within the context of church ministries. We acknowledge that the sexual, physical or emotional abuse of children and youth can happen as easily in a church environment as in the secular environment. No organization and no church is immune.

We understand that there are people who prey on children and they do not look different than anyone else. There are also people who simply are not suited for work with children or youth who may respond to everyday situations inappropriately. In either case, the church has a responsibility to protect the children and youth to whom it ministers and to offer an environment that is consistent with the Word we are proclaiming.

As societal standards and expectations concerning the proper discipline of children change, those who work with children and youth must understand their role, including its associated boundaries, very clearly.

The Church as a Target for Predators¹

"Churches can be vulnerable places because they are...places of trust, often lack the necessary screening for volunteers and provide opportunity for predators to be in contact with children." (McCormick and Mitchell 1999) Churches are natural targets for sexual predators. They have large numbers of children; a shortage of willing workers, and a culture of trust that assumes no Christian could be suspect of such exploitation." (Harvey 2002) For this reason, it is essential that the church develop "...clear policies and procedures that will serve to protect not only the children and youth, but also those who work with them and the church as a whole." (McCormick and Mitchell 1999)

The Need for Policies and Procedures

Policies and procedures regarding child safety are vitally important; every reasonable effort must be made to make the church facilities and church programs places of safety for all children. It cannot be overstated that clear policies and procedures will serve to protect not only the children and youth, but also those who work with them and the church as a whole.

The devastation that follows an allegation of abuse is multi-layered, regardless if allegations prove to be true. Clearly, prevention is the best defense! However, in the event an abusive situation occurs—despite every effort to prevent it—the existence of, and adherence to clear policies and procedures will be an important factor in determining if due diligence was exercised.

¹ As Quoted from Carol Wiebe, Melodie Bissell, and Jane Cates, *Plan to Protect: Children and Youth*, 3rd ed. (Toronto: The Christian and Missionary Alliance in Canada, 2007), 21

Child Protection Policies

A Child Abuse Prevention Policy will assist in:

- Protecting children/youth from abuse;
- Protecting church staff and volunteer workers from any false allegations of abuse;
- Informing the congregation about child abuse and its devastating consequences (thus providing possible avenues of service and ministry to victims);
- Limiting the extent of a church's legal risk and liability due to allegations of child abuse.

Developing a Child Protection Policy for New City Church

Following is a summary of the key points:

- Child abuse can happen in our church;
- One incident (or even one allegation of an incident), can devastate a child, a family, and the church and negatively affect its mission and ministry;
- The legal liabilities can be enormous;
- Church leaders may be held liable; and
- A prevention program can reduce risk through relatively simple procedures.

Elements included in the Child Protection Policy

- Authorization for a police check (upon request) for anyone working directly with children/youth;
- An interview with a designated ministry leader;
- Candidate must have been in regular attendance for at least six months prior to working with children/youth;
- Character references should be required and consulted;
- To reduce the likelihood of an adult working alone with children/youth, a team approach should be implemented.
- Sensitivity to gender issues should be considered;
- At no time should an individual worker be alone in a totally enclosed space with a child or youth (i.e there should be a window or an open door permitting surveillance of the room);
- Necessary adjustments should be made to the physical structures within which Children's/Youth ministries occur to reduce the risk of abuse (ie. all classrooms or other areas should have a window and/or the door must remain open);
- The Church should have appropriate parental consent forms for use with the Children's/Youth ministries and such forms should be used diligently.

What Happens if an Allegation is Made?

The unfortunate reality is child abuse does happen and has happened for generations. It is a crime, which has often gone undetected, yet has left tremendous hurt and pain in its wake. When an allegation of abuse is made, and proves to be true, the church may be in a position to reach out to the victim and his or her family at a critical time. When dealing with abuse issues, one should be prepared for the possibility that one allegation may lead to others, perhaps extending back in time.

Any allegations of the abuse of a child or youth must be taken seriously. Once an allegation has been made, the onus is on the church (through its representatives) to respond appropriately to all parties involved: the accused, the alleged victim, and his or her family. This requires wisdom and sensitivity, and quite possibly, resources beyond the local church. The whole situation should be bathed in prayer, as the church navigates its way through very turbulent waters!

In Canada, individuals have both a moral and legal obligation to report any suspected incidents of child abuse. It is important to understand this legal obligation is based on “reasonable grounds” and that the individual making the report in good faith will not be punished or held accountable for making a report, even if the conclusion is that no abuse occurred. If there is an allegation of the abuse of a child or youth, it must be reported immediately to the appropriate police authorities. If the allegation involves someone other than the pastor(s), the pastor(s) should also be informed immediately and will most likely be involved in any subsequent investigation.

Once an allegation of abuse has been made, meticulous care should be given in documenting all discussion and intervention. The pastor(s) should either do this himself, or delegate this responsibility to someone who understands the importance of this task. It is necessary and prudent to contact the Church’s insurance company and seek legal counsel.

Section II – Philosophy of Children’s Ministry

Vision & Mission

The Children's Ministry at New City Church Toronto seeks to help children know Jesus personally and live gospel-centred lives at home and in the city.

‘And they were bringing children to him that he might touch them, and the disciples rebuked them. But when Jesus saw it, he was indignant and said to them, “Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.” And he took them in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands on them.’ (Mark 10:13-16, ESV)

Core Values and Beliefs

Children are a gift from God. They are precious and need protection, love, and guidance. We want children to learn and play in a safe environment, which is clean and adequately staffed with qualified volunteers, many of them parents themselves and educators.

Children need the gospel. Children, like all of humanity, are weak and flawed and are in need of a loving Savior. We believe that children are unable to do good to please God and avoid wrongdoing, but Jesus lived and died for them so that they may become children of God. We want to articulate this gospel in ways children can understand, so that they can receive it and have faith in what Jesus has done, and live as becoming of God's children. We believe Jesus welcomes children to his Kingdom.

Children can grow in grace and live a life that is pleasing to God. We believe that spiritual growth happens as children understand the implications of the gospel for them more and more. We believe that children are called to obedience to their parents and to honour them because parental love and authority is the context through which the gospel is often first realized. We believe that the church exists to support parents in the nurturing of their children.

Children and their families can serve and engage the city. We want to encourage parents to raise their children in the city by engaging their neighbours and schools.

Section III – Policy Statement

It is the policy of New City Church Toronto that Sexual Misconduct as defined herein, will not be tolerated. The Church will deal with Sexual Misconduct swiftly, decisively, and as confidentially as possible. This policy applies to all pastoral staff, session, ministry leaders, members and volunteers serving the church. In the event charges of Sexual Misconduct against any person are substantiated, such person will be subject to discipline. In the case of pastor(s), discipline will be administrated according to the Eastern Canada Presbytery and the PCA Church following *The Book of Church Order* for the Presbyterian Church in America. In the case of employees, such discipline may include termination of employment. Both employees and volunteers may be restricted or prohibited from engaging in further activities on church property or in any activity sponsored by the church organization. The intent of this policy is to assure that the church's response to an allegation or instance of Sexual Misconduct will be just and compassionate for all involved.

In order to provide as safe and secure environment as possible for our ministry participants, and to minimize the ministry's and worker's vulnerability to unwarranted accusation, the following procedures have been adopted and will be strictly enforced.

In its ministry to children, New City Church Toronto is committed to the spiritual teaching, emotional nurture, and physical care and protection of each child entrusted to our care. We function in the context of a large family model with mutual accountability, shared responsibilities, with many occasions for interaction with many different caregivers. This is both our strength as an expression of the Body of Christ and our weakness in terms of risk management. In response to the increased risk to our children, our caregivers and our church in this day, we will begin implementation of the following policies and procedures immediately.

Section IV – Definitions

“**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.”²

Physical Abuse is using physical force or action that results, or could result in injury to a child or youth. It is more than reasonable discipline. Sometimes injury is caused by over-discipline. Injuring a child or youth is not acceptable, regardless of differing cultural standards on discipline.

Emotional Abuse “is a pattern of behavior that attacks a child’s emotional development and sense of self-worth. It includes excessive, aggressive and unreasonable demands that place expectations on a child beyond his/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.”³

Sexual Abuse occurs when an individual is used by someone else for sexual stimulation or gratification. Sexual activity between children or youth may also be sexual abuse if older or more powerful children or youth take sexual advantage of those who are younger or less powerful. Coercion (physical, psychological or emotional) is intrinsic to sexual abuse.

Child sexual abuse can take many forms:

Types of abuse that involve touching include:

- Fondling
- Oral, genital, and anal penetration
- Sexual Intercourse
- Forcible Rape

Types of sexual abuse that do not involve touching include:

- Verbal comments
- Pornographic Videos
- Obscene phone calls
- Exhibitionism
- Allowing children to witness sexual activity

The Law Reform Committee of Canada defines child sexual abuse as

“Exposure of the child to sexual stimulation inappropriate for his age and role – the sexual exploitation of a child who is not developed mentally, capable of understanding or resisting the contact; or a child or adolescent who may be psychologically or socially dependent upon the perpetrator.”

“**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

² Faith Trust Institute (2006), as quoted in *Plan to Protect*, 19

³ The Children’s Aid Society of London and Middlesex (2006), as quoted in *Plan to Protect*, 20

appropriate care for children, when they cannot adequately supervise their children or when they are unable to plan ahead.”⁴

For the purpose of this Manual, **Sexual Misconduct** is defined as follows:

- Sexual abuse or sexual molestation of any person, including but not limited to, any sexual involvement or sexual contact with a person who is a minor or who is legally incompetent; or
- Sexual harassment in a situation where there is an employment, mentor or colleague relationship between the persons involved, including but not limited to, sexually oriented humor or language; questions or comments about sexual behavior or preference unrelated to employment qualification; undesired physical contact; inappropriate comments about clothing or physical appearance; or repeated requests for social engagements; or
- Sexual exploitation, including but not limited to, the development of or an attempt to develop a sexual relationship between a pastor, employee or volunteer and a person with whom he/she has a pastoral relationship, whether or not there is apparent consent from the individual.

For purposes of this policy, **Pastoral Relationship** means: A relationship between a pastor, employee or volunteer and any person to whom such pastor, employee or volunteer provides counseling, pastoral care, spiritual direction or spiritual guidance, or from whom such pastor, employee or volunteer has received a confession or confidential or privileged information.

⁴ Ibid.

Section V – Ministry Selection and Screening Procedures

A) Recruitment and Screening process

1. Each volunteer in our ministry is required to complete an application process:
 - Children’s Ministry Application Form
 - Face-to-face interview
 - Reference checks
 - Police record checks
 - Training
 - Final approval from church leadership

B) Qualifications for Ministry

1. No adult will be used in any capacity involving custody or supervision of minors unless he or she has been in faithful attendance of the church worship services and a positive promoter of the ministry of the church for at least a year.
 - Exceptions can be made in circumstances where prospective volunteers have attended church worship services for at least six months and a recommendation can be provided either from an attendee of the church for over a year, or a ministry member of another church in which they have been long-time members.
2. “Ministry personnel serving in children’s and youth ministry are members or adherents in good standing who support the doctrines, direction and by-laws, or constitution of the church.”⁵
3. All primary volunteer workers must be 18 years of age or older. Younger persons may assist adults, but may not take the place of adult workers. The church may employ responsible teens (under the age of 18) only in positions with and under the direct supervision of an approved adult worker.

C) Children’s Ministry Application Form

1. Prospective ministry personnel must complete a Ministry Application Form, which includes a verifiable witness signature, at least two references, and a recent photo. See *Appendix 1* for this Ministry Application Form.
2. Ministry Application Forms are to be kept confidential and available only to the Children’s Ministry Committee. Application Forms are to be kept in a secure location and are to be kept on file permanently.

D) Face-to-Face Interview

⁵ This section quoted from *Plan to Protect*, 39

1. All applicants must be interviewed for suitability as a volunteer. This interview will be conducted by the pastor of the church and two members of the Children's Ministry Committee, one of whom must be female. Church policy concerning prevention and response to child abuse and neglect must be discussed during the interview.

E) Reference Checks

1. A member of the Children's Ministry Committee must check at least two references for each prospective ministry personnel. References may be checked by phone, email, or in person.
 - References should be "...drawn from a broad cross section of individuals who've known the applicant for many years and in many settings - personal, educational, and professional."⁶
 - Information gained in these checks should be noted directly on the application along with the date that the information was obtained.⁷
 - "The person making the calls will be checking on the person's work habits, moral qualities, and overall character in working with children and youth, and must ask specifically if there is any reason or cause why this individual should not be left alone to care for a child, youth, or vulnerable person."⁸
2. An additional reference is required from prospective ministry personnel who have been attending the church for less than a year. This reference must be an attendee of the church for over a year, or a ministry member of another church in which they have been long-time members.

F) Police Record Checks

1. A Vulnerable Sector Screening shall be required for all persons accepted as volunteers. "Individuals that 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 or youth participate."⁹ Background checks will be kept confidential with access afforded only to appropriate church leadership on a need-to-know basis.
2. Police record checks are to be renewed every 3 years.
3. Police record checks are to be conducted on all ministry personnel 16 years of age or older and are to be kept on file permanently.

G) Training

1. All volunteers will attend a minimum of one hour of initial training on abuse education and prevention in church settings. Volunteers subject to this paragraph shall receive such training within six months after assuming their duties.

⁶ Crislip (2006), as quoted in *Plan to Protect*, 41

⁷ *Plan to Protect*, 42

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ *Plan to Protect*, 37

2. All volunteers working will participate in an annual orientation workshop for instruction and practice regarding ministry policies and procedures. These would include:
 - Instruction on the importance of policies and procedures in child-youth ministry
 - Education on issues of child abuse prevention and education
 - Incident recording and reporting
 - Supervision expectations and supports
3. Attendance should be taken at training courses and noted in the personnel file for each individual.
4. Efforts will be made periodically (and at least on an annual basis) to inform the congregation of the dangers of child abuse and to remind them of the importance of strict adherence to this policy.
5. We will strive to ensure that parents are made aware of precautions being taken to protect their children.
6. This policy will be posted in the Church.

H) Approval Process¹⁰

1. All ministry personnel are to be approved by church leadership upon completion of recruitment and screening process. Approval must be signed and dated.
2. The recruitment and screening process must be completed within a 3 month period of time. Workers in process of completing the recruitment and screening process will not be placed in a position of trust.
3. While the Child Protection Policy is being implemented, those individuals who have been serving retroactively and who have not yet completed the recruitment and screening process must submit to and complete all requirements within a 3 month period of time. If their service is required, they will be placed in ministry settings with approved ministry personnel. Only approved ministry personnel will accompany children to the washroom and assume the responsibility for their care.¹¹

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ This section quoted from *Plan to Protect*, 50

Section VI – Child Protection Policies

A) Requirements of Ministry Personnel

1. Each volunteer in our ministry is required to complete a formal application process through the Children's Ministry screening procedures.
2. In the event that there are last minute volunteers who have not been screened, they will be approved by a member of the Children's Ministry Committee and be laced with a volunteer who has completed the application process.

B) Ratio of Ministry Personnel to Children

1. A reasonable ratio of adults to children should be maintained at all times involving supervision of children. If necessary, age groups will be combined to maintain appropriate ratios. Established rations are: 1:7-10 for elementary-age children, 1:4-5 for toddlers and preschool children and 1:3 for infants (birth to 17 months). The Ministry lead, however, shall be primarily responsible for setting and maintaining a reasonable ratio of workers to children giving due regard to all factors present, including the number and age of the participants, the nature of the activities and the location where the activities are taking place.

C) Ministry Personnel Staffing

1. A "Two-Adult" rule is in place for all classrooms. There will always be two adults (one of whom must be a woman) present while children are there. This is to protect the children from possible abuse as well as the adults from false accusations. In the rare event in which there is only one adult because the other had to step out, the door to the room will remain open.
2. At no time will young children be left in an individual's care behind closed doors or in an isolated and private location.
3. Ministry personnel under the age of 18 may be assigned to work alongside other ministry personnel over the age of 18, but cannot take their place. It is recommended that there be at least a 5 year gap between ministry personnel and the children they serve.¹²

C) Ministry Personnel Identification

1. All ministry personnel will be identified with a name tag to identify them to parents and children.

D) Child Registration¹³

1. The names and addresses of children and their parents or guardians will be maintained, updated annually, and kept permanently in a central file.

¹² *Plan to Protect*, 85

¹³ This section quoted from *Plan to Protect*, 92

2. 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.

I/We, the parents or guardians named above, authorize the ministry staff of New City Church Toronto to sign and consent for medical treatment and to authorize any physician or hospital to provide medical assessment, treatment or procedures for the participant(s) named above.

I/We, named above, undertake and agree to indemnify and hold blameless the ministry staff, New City Church Toronto, its pastors and the Board of Elders from and against any loss, damage or injury suffered by the participant as a result of being part of the activities of New City Church Toronto, as well as of any medical treatment authorized by the supervising individuals representing the church. The consent and authorization is effective only when participating in or travelling to events of New City Church Toronto.

3. The inclusion of "liability shields" on permission forms has been considered for activities that involve a level of risk.
4. A statement will be included on all registration forms which stipulates the purpose and extent for collecting personal information of children and youth.

Purposes and Extent:

New City Church Toronto is collecting and retaining this personal information for the purpose of enrolling your children in our programs, to assign the student to the appropriate classes, to develop and nurture ongoing relationships with you and your child, and to inform you of program updates and upcoming opportunities at our church. This information will be maintained permanently as it is a requirement of our insurance company and legal counsel. If you wish New City Church Toronto to limit the information collected, or to view your child's information, please contact us.

5. Registration forms will be available for all programs where parents do not attend with their children. 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 visiting child, the parent bringing the child will be considered the guardian for the evening and the registration form must be sent home at the conclusion of the first program. All effort must be made to keep registration forms updated and current. Registration forms are to be filed and kept permanently. This registration form can be found in *Appendix 2*.

E) Health and Safety Guidelines

1. It is the responsibility of all persons having contact with children participating in church programs to promote the emotional and physical safety of all participants giving regard to all factors and circumstances known to them. If, in their opinion, an unsafe condition exists; such persons shall immediately take appropriate precautions under the circumstances to protect all children. Nothing contained in any other church policy, procedure or instruction shall be construed to relieve persons having contact with children from this responsibility.
2. Individuals are encouraged to become certified and trained in first aid.
3. Individuals certified in first aid are posted in the ministry journal.
4. Children or youth having severe allergies will have the information brought to the attention of ministry personnel and the information will be written on their registration form and in the ministry journal.
5. Toys will be sanitized monthly and the dates this was done will be written in the ministry journal.

Illness:¹⁴

1. "Persons who are ill and could therefore expose others to illness will not be permitted to participate in any ministry activity. Factors and symptoms to consider are:
 - Fever, unusual fatigue, irritability, coughing, sneezing, runny nose and eyes, vomiting, diarrhea, inflamed mouth and throat
 - Children with a known communicable disease
2. If ministry personnel are ill, a suitable substitute (who has been approved as a volunteer worker through the above screening process) must take the place of worker who is ill.
3. Participants should be returned to their parents or guardian as soon as illness is discovered. If this is not possible, then the person who is ill should be isolated in a manner that will allow supervision to continue until the person can be returned to their parent or guardian."

Medications:

1. Ministry personnel are not to administer any medications. Parents must administer all medications. **Exception:** Written instructions are to be provided by the parent or guardian for children who may require the administration of an Epi-pen or inhaler by ministry personnel. These requests should be signed, dated and filed permanently.
2. If children bring medication, it is to be kept with the ministry lead or his/her designate. No medications will be kept in the classroom.
3. Diaper creams are only to be used when instructed and provided by the parent or guardian.

Dealing with Cuts or Injuries Involving Blood:¹⁵

1. "Policies on dealing with blood pathogens will be posted in the ministry journal for all classes.
2. When a child or youth is injured, the individual should be isolated. Ministry personnel should ensure that no other children have contact with the blood. The area where the injury occurred (including any areas or objects that have come into contact with blood) should also be isolated.
3. Non-latex gloves should be worn by anyone bandaging an injury and care should be taken to avoid contact with the eyes, ears and mouth.
4. Extreme care will be taken in cleaning up all blood and bandages and they will be disposed of safely and securely.
5. Hands must be washed carefully and thoroughly following clean-up."

Emergencies:¹⁶

1. "Emergency evacuation procedures outlining the route to the nearest exit(s) will be posted in all classrooms.
2. First Aid kits will be kept with each Ministry Journal.

¹⁴ This section quoted from *Plan to Protect*, 101

¹⁵ This section quoted from *Plan to Protect*, 101

¹⁶ This section quoted from *Plan to Protect*, 102

3. Any ministry personnel who becomes aware of an injury to a worker or participant will take steps to ensure proper medical attention is given to the injured person.
4. Persons who have received an injury, which is obviously minor, should be given first aid as needed at the time of injury. The person's parent or guardian should be notified of the injury.
5. Any injury, which may require medical treatment beyond simple first aid should be given immediate attention. The parent or guardian of the injured person should be immediately notified, along with the Ministry Lead. An ambulance should also be called immediately if warranted by the injury.
6. A written incident/notice of injury report should be prepared by ministry personnel when an injury occurs during a ministry function. The incident report will be forwarded to the Ministry Lead promptly upon completion." See *Appendix 3* for this incident report.

F) Appropriate Displays of Affection

Appropriate Touch:¹⁷

1. Children need appropriate displays of affection that reflect pure, genuine and positive displays of God's love. Appropriate touch with children will be age and developmentally appropriate. We encourage ministry volunteers to:
 - Hold a preschool child who is crying,
 - Speak to a child at eye level and listen with your eyes as well as your ears,
 - Hold a child's hands when speaking, listening or walking him or her to an activity,
 - Gently hold the child's shoulder or hand to keep his or her attention while you redirect 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 should be done in view of others.

Inappropriate Touch:¹⁸

3. In an effort to protect children, ministry leaders will be made aware that the following actions are deemed inappropriate and will not be permitted:
 - Do not kiss a child or coax a child to kiss you,
 - Do not engage in extended hugging and tickling,
 - Do not hold a child's face when talking to or disciplining the child,
 - Do not touch a child in any area that would be covered by a bathing suit (strictly prohibited except in case of assisting preschoolers as outlined in washroom policies),
 - Do not carry older children or allow them to sit on your lap,
 - Avoid prolonged physical contact with any child or youth.

¹⁷ This section quoted from *Plan to Protect*, 106

¹⁸ Ibid.

4. Ministry personnel are not to be left alone with a child or a youth.

G) Discipline and Management¹⁹

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

Preventative Discipline:

- Create a loving, caring atmosphere,
- Model self-discipline and structure in your own life
- Prepare exciting and interesting classes with short transitions between activities,
- Establish and communicate realistic expectations for the children,
- Be sure that activities that you provide are meaningful and age appropriate,
- Be fair and consistent with all children
- Be sure your focus is on positive actions and affirm 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 in how to do it correctly,
 - Every effort will be made to redirect the child to positive action,
 - Every effort will be made to explain the consequences of unacceptable 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 you and the child.
2. Classroom rules will be established to clearly communicate the expectations required of children.
 3. Ministry personnel are never to spank, hit, grab, slap, or otherwise physically discipline anyone.
 4. Disciplinary problems should be reported to the Children's Ministry Committee and the parent or guardian

H) Bullying Among Peers

1. Children have a right to a caring and safe church environment where they feel safe and are able to encounter the love of God. All ministry personnel will clearly communicate that bullying among peers is unacceptable and will not, in any form, be tolerated. They will try to

¹⁹ This section quoted from Plan to Protect, 108

prevent it, teach against it and appropriately assist and support children who are being bullied.

I) Social Networking Policy

1. Volunteers and ministry staff are forbidden to post any picture or video or audio recording of the children/youth program in action on any social networking media on the internet.

Section VII – Children’s Ministry Procedures

A) Scheduling

1. Volunteers will communicate with the scheduling coordinator in the Children’s Ministry Committee concerning the schedule.
2. Once the schedule is set by the Children’s Ministry Committee, any changes should be made by switching with a team member. It is the volunteer’s responsibility to be sure they are replaced with another team member and to notify the scheduling coordinator as soon as possible. Team members’ contact information will be provided by the ministry coordinator.
3. In case of an emergency causing the volunteer to be late or unable to serve on Sunday morning, it is imperative that the volunteer notify the scheduling coordinator or a member of the Children’s Ministry Committee as soon as possible.
4. When a volunteer can no longer serve with the Children’s Ministry, a notice of four weeks is needed to find a replacement.

B) Arrival and Set-up

1. Volunteers will arrive on Sunday morning a minimum of 30 minutes before the service begins to help set-up.
2. Upon arrival, volunteers will pick up their nametag and wash their hands.
3. Volunteers must ensure that all other volunteers are accounted for. In the case that a volunteer does not show up, volunteers must inform a member of the Children’s Ministry Committee.
4. Volunteers must ensure that each nursery contains the following:
 - Sign-in and sign-out forms
 - Ministry journals
 - Incident reports
 - Security labels

C) Record-Keeping

1. A mandatory sign-in and sign-out form is to be used in all children’s programming. Sign in will include: Child and Parent’s Names, a record of any special concerns of the parent (eg. allergies or conditions which could impact the child’s active participation in programming).
2. All volunteers will “log in” and record briefly in a ministry journal each time they work with children. Ministry journals will be conveniently located in each location used for children’s ministry, and will be kept on file permanently.

D) Receiving and Releasing Children

1. A two-part label system will be used for check-in check-out procedures.
 - When parents arrive at church, they will be required to fill out their children's information on the labels provided by volunteers. One portion goes on the child's back with his/her information, and one portion remains with the parents. Parents will need this portion to pick-up their child at the end of the service.
 - Every parent is required to have a security label to enter the children's area. This is a security measure so that people who are not authorized do not come into the rooms and play with or hold the children.
 - Children are only released to parents or guardians who have the security tag. If someone other than a parent or guardian is allowed to pick-up the child, parents must inform the volunteers beforehand and a note will be made on the child's label. Note: Anyone picking up the child must still have the security tag that matches the child's label.
2. Parents can drop off children at the children's area directly before the worship service begins, or their child may stay with them until the sermon.
 - If the children's area is within close proximity to the worship service, parents may take their children to this area themselves at any time during the service.
 - If the children's area is farther away, volunteers will be available to bring children from the worship service to the children's area.
3. Parents are responsible for picking up their children from the children's area after the worship service with the corresponding security tag. Ministry personnel will ensure that each child stays in the children's area until the parent or designate returns to pick them.

E) Architectural Precautions

1. Doors to classrooms will remain open. For younger children's safety, child safety gates will be placed across the opening.
2. If doors must be closed due to noise issues, all classrooms will be modified so that, if there is no other way to view the room easily, a window will be installed in the classroom door.
3. All electrical outlets in the nursery will be covered with outlet plug covers.

F) Washroom Guidelines

1. Communication with parents has happened that encourages them to deal with their baby's toileting needs and to take their children to the washroom prior to each class or service.

For Nursery:

2. Diaper changing will be done by the child's parent.

For Preschool Children:²⁰

3. Preschool children will not be sent to the bathroom alone.

²⁰ This section quoted from *Plan to Protect*, 97

4. One of the following will be adhered to when accompanying preschool children to the washroom:
 - Two ministry personnel will escort a group of children to the washroom, or,
 - One ministry personnel will escort a group of children to the washroom with one hall monitor appointed to assist with washrooms and security duties.
 - No ministry personnel will ever be alone with a child in an unsupervised washroom and they are never to go into the cubicle with a child and shut the door.
5. When a preschool child needs assistance in the washroom, ministry personnel may enter the washroom cubicle to assist utilizing the following guidelines:
 - Female ministry personnel will assist both girls and boys in the washroom
 - The outside washroom door must be propped open and the adult must stand in an open cubicle doorway,
 - Ministry personnel will take into consideration the privacy of the child.

For Elementary Children:

6. Elementary boys and girls are not to be sent to the washroom alone but should be accompanied by a buddy and ministry personnel.
7. Ministry personnel will escort the children to the washroom and prop the door open to make sure that everything is in order. Ministry personnel should then remain outside the washroom door and wait for the children before escorting them back to the classroom.
8. Ministry personnel are not to be alone with children in an unsupervised washroom and are never to enter into the cubicle with a child and shut the door.
9. Male ministry personnel are not to accompany female children to the washroom.

Section VIII – Reporting and Responding to Alleged Child Abuse or Neglect

A) Hearing of an Allegation or Suspicion of Abuse

1. No allegation and/or suspicion of abuse against children will be treated frivolously. Any incident in which there is a concern for the safety or well-being of a child under the care or supervision of our Church will be taken seriously and must be investigated.
2. Ministry personnel who become aware of any injury, abuse or molestation connected with any ministry activity will immediately complete a Suspected Abuse Report Form. The accused should not be contacted at this point.
3. The ministry personnel should inform their Ministry Lead of the alleged injury, abuse, or molestation. The Coordinator will immediately inform the Pastor.
4. Any allegations of abuse or a child or youth must be reported to the proper authorities. This reporting should be done in conjunction with the senior pastor.

B) Reporting an Allegation or Suspicion of Abuse

1. Any person who has reasonable grounds to believe that a child is in need of protection is legally required to report the matter to the Department of Social Services or the police. Reporting should be done over the telephone or in person.
2. The senior pastor or his designate will seek a written opinion from legal counsel within 24 hours of becoming aware of a suspected abuse case. The attorney's advice will be followed.
3. The Senior Pastor or his designate will contact the ministry's insurance carrier (general or professional liability) promptly as well as any organizational entity (i.e. Presbytery) to whom the organization has a duty to report such allegations. The church will work with denominational leadership in all cases of suspected child abuse that has happened in the context of church ministry.
4. If the suspected abuse happened in the context of church ministries or was committed by a church member or attendee, the Senior pastor or his designate will ensure that the victim's parents or guardians are immediately informed that possible abuse or molestation has occurred.
5. The above process will be carefully documented, including dates, times, and content of all conversations pertaining to the alleged abuse. Abuse cannot be identified, but in no case shall the identity of the victim or the accused person be disclosed except as required by law.

C) Internal Investigation

2. No persons, including church leadership shall attempt to conduct a detailed investigation through examination or interrogation of the child, the accused person or a witness. It is acceptable to obtain a reasonable amount of information to have cause to believe a child has been abused or neglected. Interviews shall be conducted only by authorized officials of the agency to whom the suspected crime has been reported, or, when appropriate, by legal counsel or persons representing the church in an official capacity. All employees and volunteers of the church shall cooperate with the official investigation as requested.

D) Confidentiality

1. During the process of reporting and response, all ministry personnel will be committed to prayer.
2. All reports of child abuse or neglect shall be held in absolute confidence. No person shall communicate any information concerning the alleged event to any person except as necessary to cooperate with any official investigation. Any breach of this confidentiality by an employee of the church shall be cause for immediate dismissal. The pastor, in consultation with the official conducting the investigation may authorize limited additional disclosure on need-to-know basis if necessary to protect other children from harm. As much as possible, confidentiality for the suspected victim and the accused must be protected.

E) Ministerial Care

1. The suspected victims will be treated with dignity and respect. All persons shall act towards the child, the parents and the accused in accordance with the principles of Christianity at all times.
2. The ministerial staff shall encourage and assist the child and parents in securing appropriate counselling, care and support. In the event the abuse or neglect involves a member or employee of the church, the staff shall encourage the individual to secure appropriate pastoral care and support, including third party counseling, being mindful of the potential for a conflict of interest.

F) Biblical Response and Discipline for the Accused or Convicted

1. The accused is to be treated with dignity and respect. Any employee of the ministry who is subject of an investigation will be temporarily removed from their position and all church related duties involving children, with arrangements made to either maintain or suspend his or her income, pending completion of the investigation (unless the employee has admitted to the abuse or molestation, in which case they will be terminated in accordance with the church's employment practices).
2. Any volunteer worker who is the subject of the investigation will be removed from their position and all church related activities involving children pending completion of the investigation.
3. In an instance where child abuse is confirmed, the church will immediately dismiss the worker from their position. Termination will be considered appropriate in the circumstances.
4. In instances where evidence is inconclusive, the church should take action with the advice of legal counsel in consultation with law enforcement officials depending on the strength of the evidence available after consideration of the victim and the victim's family's requests.
5. "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 they are not permitted to use."²¹

²¹ *Plan to Protect*, 162

6. "Anyone convicted of child abuse will be prohibited from having access to children or youth. Church leadership 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."²²
7. The pastor, in consultation with legal counsel, will determine the amount of information he believes is appropriate to relate to the congregation. Usually commenting in detail on an ongoing investigation is not wise.

G) Liaison with the Community and Media

1. The pastor, or his appointed agent, will serve as the church's sole access to the media. All enquiries should be directed to this person and comment should not be made by other individuals unless given permission to do so.
2. The church should emphasize to the public its position on child abuse, its concern for the victim and the extensive steps being taken to address the safety of all children.
3. Public statements should be well prepared and should be presented only after consultation with legal counsel.

H) Violation of Policy or Procedures

1. Workers must promptly notify their coordinator/supervisor of any activity undertaken on their own behalf or by others which violates this policy or procedures.
2. Any coordinator/supervisor or ministry leader who becomes aware of violation of the policy or procedures will take all necessary steps to ensure future compliance with the policy and procedures by all workers; and will remove workers from their position if such removal is warranted, or if the worker poses a potential threat to others.

²² Ibid.

Appendix 1 – Children’s Ministry Application Form

The completion of this application is requested of individuals involved in the supervision of minors at New City Church Toronto. We recognize this form is extensive. We believe this information is necessary to protect our children, to protect for volunteers, and to effectively place our volunteers in ministry positions. Thank you, in advance, for your partnership.

Personal Information (PLEASE PRINT)

Male Female

Full Name _____ Date of Birth _____

Present Address _____ Postal Code _____

Telephone (H) _____ (C) _____

Email _____

Marital Status (Please check) Married Single

Name of Spouse (if applicable) _____

Name and ages of children (if applicable) _____

In what area (s) of children’s ministry are you interested? (Please check)

Nursery

Toddler

Children’s Church

Personal History

Occupation and/or Employer _____

Hobbies, Interests or Skills _____

Spiritual History

How long have you attended New City Church Toronto? _____

Do you regularly attend (2 or more services a month)? Yes No

Are you a member of New City Church Toronto? Yes No

When did you accept Christ as your Saviour? _____

If you are not a member of New City Church Toronto, briefly outline in the space provided your personal testimony, spiritual journey, and present relationship with Jesus Christ.

What abilities and experience do you bring/offer to this ministry, if any? (e.g. Gifts, skills, training, education or other qualifications)

List the churches you have attended regularly during the last five years:

1. Name of Church _____ Phone Number _____
 Address _____
 Dates Attended _____ Member? Yes No

2. Name of Church _____ Phone Number _____
 Address _____
 Dates Attended _____ Member? Yes No

My present and previous ministry experience is as follows:

1. Name of Church/Organization _____
 Dates and Descriptions of Ministry _____
 Pastor or Ministry Supervisor _____ Phone Number _____

2. Name of Church/Organization _____
 Dates and Descriptions of Ministry _____
 Pastor or Ministry Supervisor _____ Phone Number _____

Are you willing to attend training/meeting/workshops to prepare and equip you for this ministry?

(Please check) Yes No

If No, explain briefly: _____

Confidential Information

In order to provide a safe and secure environment for our children and youth, we believe it is necessary to include the following questions as part of the application process. All information will be kept confidential by the church leadership (police may access this record under warrant). Answering yes to any of the following questions may not necessarily preclude your involvement in ministry. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

1. Are there any circumstances involving your lifestyle or background that would call into question your ability to work with children or youth? (ie. Pornography, use of illegal substances, etc...) Yes No
2. Have you ever been accused or convicted of impropriety with children? Yes No
3. Have you ever been convicted for the use or sale of illegal drugs? Yes No

4. Have you ever been through treatment for alcohol or substance abuse? Yes No
5. Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offense (excluding minor Traffic violations)?
Yes No
6. Have you ever been arrested or convicted for any abuse related crimes? Yes No
7. Have you ever been investigated by the Child Welfare Agency for suspected child abuse?
Yes No
8. Have you ever been the subject of a civil lawsuit involving sexual misconduct, sexual harassment, or other immoral behaviour or conduct Involving children, youth or adults?
Yes No
9. Have you ever been the subject of any disciplinary action, transfer or dismissal, or been named as a defendant in a civil or criminal lawsuit as a result of an accident or mishap involving children or youth? Yes No
10. Have you ever been subjected to expulsion, reprimand, or other discipline by a church, denomination, or other religious organization? Yes No
11. Have you ever been the subject of any disciplinary action (including discharge) or investigation by a church, religious or other organization or by an employer? Yes No
12. Do you have any health concerns of which we should be aware? (ie. Medical, psychiatric)
Yes No

References

Please provide the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of TWO individuals not related to you who could provide a reference for you (e.g. pastor, council member, friend). At least one should be from outside New City Church Toronto.

Name: _____
 Address: _____
 Telephone Number: _____ Email: _____
 Nature of relationship: _____

Name: _____
 Address: _____
 Telephone Number: _____ Email: _____
 Nature of relationship: _____

If you have been attending New City Church Toronto for LESS than one year, please provide the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of one additional individual who could provide a reference for you. This reference must either be a current attendee of New City Church Toronto for over a year, or a ministry member from a previous church.

Name: _____
 Address: _____
 Telephone Number: _____ Email: _____
 Nature of relationship: _____

Applicant's Statement

I authorize any references or churches listed in the application to give you any information regarding my character and fitness for children's and/or youth work. I release all such references from liability for any damage that may result from furnishing such an evaluation to you. I waive any right to confidentiality and of any right to pursue damages against the church caused by the reference's response. I also give my permission for New City Church Toronto to perform a personal criminal record check as perceived necessary for purposes of my protection against any false allegations and the protection of those I serve. I consent to such an investigation with the understanding that the results will be kept in strict confidence. I agree to adhere to the protection policies as adopted by this church.

I understand that if my character or morals are, at any time, deemed inappropriate and/or criminal during my volunteer service, New City Church Toronto will be entitled to terminate my assistance without expressed cause or prior notice regardless of any other oral or written statement by New City Church Toronto prior to, at or following the date of volunteer service.

I understand that New City Church Toronto is responsible for the welfare of any person or persons entrusted to my care. I will cooperate fully with the staff and Elders in the fulfillment of my duties and will keep all information I encounter in my role as volunteer confidential. If at any time I find that for any reason I am unable to support the policies, procedures or doctrine of New City Church Toronto, I will gracefully and quietly resign my volunteer position. If my supervisors find that I am in conflict with any of the policies, procedures, or doctrines and we are not able to resolve the issue, I will gracefully and quietly resign my volunteer position.

I acknowledge receipt of New City Church Toronto's Plan of Protection (available online <http://tinyurl.com/ncctcmp>).

I hereby acknowledge that the information contained in this application for volunteering in Children's ministry is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Applicant's Signature _____
Printed Name: _____ **Date** _____

Signature of Witness _____
Printed Name: _____ **Date** _____

Information received is confidential and is being gathered for the purposes of screening ministry personnel and placing them into ministry with children or youth at New City Church Toronto.

Appendix 2 – Children’s Registration Form

Personal Information (PLEASE PRINT)

Child’s Name _____ Male Female
 Present Address _____ Postal Code _____
 Date of Birth _____ Age _____ Grade _____

Are there any allergies/special concerns we need to be made aware of? If yes, explain below:

Parent’s Information

Name of Parent(s) or Guardian(s) _____
 Telephone (H) _____ (C) _____
 Email _____

Person to notify if parent or guardian cannot be reached:

Contact Name _____ Relationship _____
 Telephone (H) _____ (C) _____

Purposes and Extent

New City Church Toronto is collecting and retaining this personal information for the purpose of enrolling your children in our programs, to assign the student to the appropriate classes, to develop and nurture ongoing relationships with you and your child, and to inform you of program updates and upcoming opportunities at our church. This information will be maintained permanently as it is a requirement of our insurance company and legal counsel. If you wish New City Church Toronto to limit the information collected, or to view your child’s information, please contact us.

Release of Liability

I/We, the parents or guardians named above, authorize the ministry staff of New City Church Toronto to sign and consent for medical treatment and to authorize any physician or hospital to provide medical assessment, treatment or procedures for the participant(s) named above.

I/We, named above, undertake and agree to indemnify and hold blameless the ministry staff, New City Church Toronto, its pastors and the Board of Elders from and against any loss, damage or injury suffered by the participant as a result of being part of the activities of New City Church Toronto, as well as of any medical treatment authorized by the supervising individuals representing the church. The consent and authorization is effective only when participating in or travelling to events of New City Church Toronto.

Parent’s Signature _____

Printed Name: _____ **Date** _____

Appendix 3 – Incident Report

Please give the bottom portion of the form to the parent when they come to pick-up their child.
The top portion is to be given to the supervisor on duty.

Name of Child: _____ Classroom: _____
Parent's Name: _____

Explain in detail the incident and response:

Parent's response:

Name of person filling out form: _____
Date: _____

Above portion for supervisor – tear along dotted line

NEW CITY CHUCH TORONTO INCIDENT REPORT
FOR THE PARENT OF CHILD

Name of Child: _____

Explain in detail the incident:

Name of person filling out form: _____ Date: _____

Appendix 4a – Suspected Abuse Report Form

Date: _____

Name of Child: _____

Age: _____ Grade: _____ Birthdate: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Parents' Names: _____

Siblings' Names: _____

Name or Person Filing Report _____

Name of Pastor Filing Report _____ Name

or Social Worker (if applicable) _____ Ph. _____

Name of Alleged Perpetrator _____ M F

Relationship between suspected victim and alleged perpetrator _____

Nature of suspected abuse: physical sexual emotional neglect

Indications or suspected abuse (include facts, physical signs and/or course of events)

Action Taken (include time and date)

If the child is reporting, what did the child say? (Give quotes if possible).

What was your response?

Signature _____

Printed Name _____ Date _____

Pastor's Signature _____
Printed Name _____ Date _____

The above information will serve as a guide and will be necessary if a formal report is filed with the police or appropriate government agency. All information received is to be kept STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL.

Appendix 4b – Suspected Abuse Follow-Up Form

Date _____

Name of Student _____

Address _____

Phone Number _____

Name of Person who Filed Initial Report _____

Name of Pastor Receiving Report _____

Conclusions

Action Taken (include dates and times)

Pastor's Signature _____

Printed Name _____ Date _____

The above information will serve as a guide and will be necessary if a formal report is filed with the police or appropriate government agency. All information received is to be kept STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL.