



Child Protection Policy

Policies and Guidelines

Faith Community Church strives to provide a safe and secure environment for both the vulnerable sector and the volunteers that serve them. We desire to inspire confidence within the community to care for and the vulnerable sector of children and youth. (Matthew 18:1-6). We will exercise all appropriate steps to keep children, youth and volunteers safe through training, and by following policy guidelines.

Volunteer Requirements to be considered a Screened Volunteer

- Attend the church regularly for 6 months (or transferring in from another church with reference from Pastor)
- Complete a Volunteer Application Form.
- Provide a current Police Background Check and Vulnerable Sector Search (required at age of 16 and renewed every 5 years unless you report a change in your police check status)
- Provide 2 references who will be contacted by form of e-mail or phone call
- Complete a conversation related to – why you want to volunteer and other matters deemed appropriate with the leader responsible for the area you will volunteer

Please Note:

No person who has been convicted of a sexual offence, or convicted of an assault in which the victim is under the age of eighteen AND at least two years younger than the accused, or has been a custodial parent of a child for which there has been a finding that the child is in need of protection, shall work with children/youth even though such person has since become a Christ follower.

Volunteers will

- Submit to the teaching and instruction from leaders of the church
- Be open to ongoing training and attend meetings related to their volunteer area(s)

Supervision & Classroom Guidelines

- Doors without windows must remain open at all times.
- There must be 2 unrelated screened workers present (with at least 1 over the age of 18 – if workers are related a 3rd volunteer must be present).
- Parents or caregivers are responsible to notify the church, and specifically the leaders of the appropriate ministry, of any allergies, or severe reaction symptoms.
 - Should a child have an anaphylactic allergy, that child's picture, a list of their symptoms and instructions to follow in the event of an emergency must be posted in the room they attend (see appendix A for an example).
- Children must be signed in and out of all children's ministry activities from birth up to Gr. 5.
 - A sign-in process can be done through attendance sheet.
 - Children must be picked up by a parent or guardian only, unless the sibling is over age 18.
 - Parent pick-up must be done through a sign-out process by signing an attendance paper which is kept as a permanent record.
- Should a child's parent need to attend class with the child:
 - They need to be identified as a Visitor to the class
 - They may not be given a position of trust or authority while visiting the class
- First aid kits are kept in the storage room.
- Don't put yourself at risk unnecessarily in a situation that could become compromising.

Appropriate Supervision Ratios

Infants (birth-age 3) 1:3

Toddlers (age 3-5) 1:5

Elementary (SK-Gr.5) 1:8-10 (Overnight events 1:5)

Youth (Gr. 6-12) 1:15 (Overnight events 1:10)

Washroom Specifics

- Be sure to receive signed permission to toilet or diaper any child under grade 1 – otherwise notify the parent when a child needs to use the washroom.
- If you need to take a young child to the bathroom:
 - A male volunteer may not take a girl to the washroom.
 - A volunteer under the age of 16 may not take a child to the washroom.
 - If you need to take a young child to the bathroom make sure a gender appropriate person can do so.
 - If there isn't a gender appropriate person available, stand outside the bathroom door and wait for the young child.
 - If the door does not have a window, prop the door open, use discretion when assisting children with buttons, snaps, belts, zippers, etc.
 - **Kindergarten through grade 6:** Adults may not be alone with children in bathroom. Only enter in emergency. If there is a behaviour problem, get another adult to go into the bathroom with you. Encourage children to use washroom prior to beginning of Sunday school.
 - If you are not comfortable, ask for the parent to come and take their child to the bathroom.
- For health and sanitation reasons, wash your hands thoroughly with soap after every washroom trip.
- Monitors (or Ushers) should be checking the halls and washrooms, during Sunday school and during the service, looking for suspicious activity, people lingering in the halls or washrooms.

Nursery Guidelines

- Only screened Nursery volunteers are to be in the nursery. The only exceptions are nursing mothers or a parent changing a diaper (if no other space is created for diapering). They are not to stay after nursing or diapering. A Volunteer should know where they are and when they leave.
- Upon a child being checked in to the nursery:
 - Parent is to sign them onto a weekly sign-in sheet.
 - **ONLY** the parents/guardian will pick up the child.
- Have parent sign permission to diaper and toilet each child on the sign-in sheet.
- For health and sanitation reasons, use the gloves and wash hands thoroughly when finished.

Fire Protection Procedures

- Volunteers will be trained and reminded annually, how to get children out of the building safely in case of an emergency.
- Area leaders (Sunday School teachers, Nursery leaders etc.) will take attendance of the children once they are out of the building and safely away.
- Be sure to talk through a Sunday morning exit strategy.
- Greetors – check washrooms and assist people out as needed.

Overnight Policies & Off-site Trips

- All off-site day trips and over-night activities must be pre-approved by Pastoral leadership AND must have written parental consent for each child/youth.
- Screened volunteers who are gender specific volunteers must be present for the duration of the event (if both male and female students are attending, both male & female screened supervisors are required).
- For privacy and safety, leaders should not change in front of the students; they should use the washroom or other private room to change. The students should be presented with the option of changing in another room as normal and acceptable.
- When at a pool or aquatic facility, leaders must change inside a stall and not in front of the students. You can encourage the students to do so as well.
- In a sleeping environment (tent, hotel room, cabin):
 - A volunteer must not sleep in the same bed or sleeping bag as a student.
 - No tent or room will have just one leader and one student.
 - Each sleeping environment should have one of the following arrangements:
 - 2 screened workers with 2 or more students.
 - OR just students that leaders supervise (in hallways or outside) until all are asleep.
 - If possible, an adjoining room is ideal.

Driving Guidelines

- When the transporting of children or youth is involved for an activity, all drivers must have a valid driver's license and current automobile insurance. The number of persons in the car must be the same as the number of seat belts.
- A person with numerous driving infractions should not transport children or youth (sometimes known through police check).
- A person under the age of 18 or who doesn't have a G license should not be driving other children or youth without parental permission expressed by those they are transporting. A person under the age of 18 will not be asked by a church leader to drive for an event or outing.
- When driving a child or youth, do your utmost not be alone with a student of the opposite sex. If there are no other options, call parent for permission to drive their child/youth and have them sit in back seat.

Injury/Accident Plan

- Each ministry area must have a strategy to deal with the injury of a child or a leader:
 - Train volunteers where the First Aid kits are located
 - Basic first aid training is helpful
 - Who to call for help (perhaps a medically trained parishioner) and 911
- An injury or accident must be reported to parent/guardian
- An injury or accident must be documented in written form (See forms in back of document)

Proper Displays of Affection

All volunteers should be familiar with and trained on proper displays of affection – appropriate and inappropriate touch. Be aware of, and sensitive to, differences in sexual development, cultural differences, family backgrounds, individual personalities, and special needs. Physical contact with children should be age and developmentally appropriate.

Appropriate Touch

- Bending down to the child's eye level and speaking kindly and listening to them.
- Taking a child's hand and leading him or her to an activity.
- Putting an arm around the shoulder of a child who needs quieting or comforting.
- Taking both of the child's hands as you say, "You did such a good job!" (or "I'm so glad to see you. We've missed you!" etc.)
- Gently patting a child on the head, hand, shoulder or back to affirm him or her.
- Holding a preschool child who is crying.

Inappropriate Touch and Must Be Avoided

- Kissing a child, coaxing a child to kiss you, extended hugging and tickling.
- Touching a child in any area that would be covered by a bathing suit (except when assisting a child with toileting in which case, following the guidelines previously listed).
- Carrying older children or having them sit on your lap.
- Prolonged physical contact, seductiveness or suggestive contact.
- Physical contact of any kind that is done for the pleasure or satisfaction of the care providers.
- Any touching used to express power or control over a child.

Teach children and adults that they have the right to say "NO" when they are uncomfortable with what is being suggested and how to flee when danger is sensed. Encourage them to tell when they have been violated in some way and provide confidence that they will be protected and believed.

Suspecting, Identifying and Reporting Child Abuse or Neglect

There may be times when a volunteer's interaction with a child or youth indicates or suggests some type of abuse or neglect. In Ontario, it is the law that any type of child abuse or neglect be reported the Children's Aid Society. Please refer to Appendix B to help you identify abuse and how to proceed.

Discipline and Classroom Management

The best way to manage a classroom environment is being proactive

- Create a loving, caring atmosphere.
- Arrange your environment for children and for learning.
- To gain respect you must grant respect.
- Establish and communicate realistic expectations for the children (4-5 rules)
- Be sure the activities that you provide are meaningful and age-appropriate.
- Be fair and consistent with all children.
- Be sure your focus is on positive actions.
- Be aware of children with special needs.

Remedial Discipline

- Try to deal with problems individually.
- Explain to the child why the Behaviour is unacceptable and what will need to happen if the Behaviour continues.
- Redirect the child to positive action.
- If disruptive Behaviour persists after two warnings, have a volunteer notify parent in the service and ask them to take their child out of class until they have calmed down.
- If the Behaviour is a consistent problem, talk with the Children's Ministry director or supervisor
- If the disruptive Behaviour is a threat to students or leaders, contact parent immediately and request that they remove the child completely. At this point, notify the appropriate coordinator of the event.

Physical punishment (slapping, hitting, pushing) is strictly prohibited.

Wise Words

DO

- Ask questions if you're uncertain about a situation or circumstance
- Meet in public places if you are mentoring a student
- Advise other staff of your activities (who, where, when) – Be accountable
- Keep physical contact to a minimum
- Keep groups together, use the buddy system for older children

DON'T

- Meet one-on-one with minors behind closed doors
- Hold "secret" meetings with minors, especially of the opposite sex
- Check a minor for injuries under clothing without another adult present or without permission of parent
- Exchange kisses with children or youth
- Pursue a dating relationship with a child or youth. Be sensitive to student "crushes"

If you're hesitating about whether something is appropriate, the hesitation is often your answer!

Child's Name

ANAPHYLAXIS EMERGENCY PLAN

Name:

Age:

ALLERGY TO:

Asthma:

Concurrent medications, if any:

Child's SYMPTOMS

(list what is appropriate)

SKIN itching, hives, redness, swelling

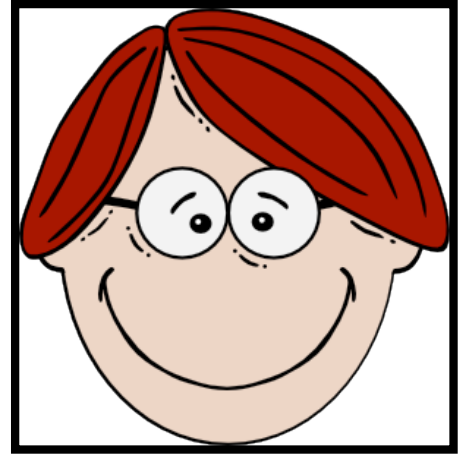
GUT vomiting, diarrhea, cramps

LUNG* shortness of breath, cough, wheeze

MOUTH itching, swelling of lips and/or tongue

THROAT* itching, tightness/closure, hoarseness

HEART* weak pulse, dizziness, passing out



Insert picture of child

Only a few symptoms may be present. Severity of symptoms can change quickly.

****Some symptoms can be life-threatening! ACT FAST!***

1. INJECT EPINEPHRINE IN THIGH USING: Med Name it will be around Child's waist in a pouch
2. CALL 911
3. Send volunteer to get Parents from either Sunday School class or Sanctuary

IMPORTANT: ASTHMA PUFFERS AND/OR ANTIHISTAMINES CAN'T BE DEPENDEN ON IN ANAPHYLAXIS!

Appendix B

Identifying & Reporting Abuse

“Child abuse” includes physical, emotional and sexual abuse and/or neglect. It also addresses a pattern of abuse and risks of harm. Some definitions include:

- Physical abuse is any deliberate physical force or action, by a parent or caregiver, which results, or could result, in injury to a child. It can include bruising, cuts, punching, slapping, beating, shaking, burning, biting or throwing a child. Using belts, sticks or other objects to punish a child can cause serious harm and is also considered abuse.
- Neglect occurs when a caregiver fails to provide basic needs such as adequate food, sleep, safety, education, clothing or medical treatment. It also includes leaving a child alone or failing to provide adequate supervision. If the caregiver is unable to provide the child with basic needs due to financial inability, it is not considered neglect, unless relief has been offered and refused.
- 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 constantly criticizing, teasing, belittling, insulting, rejecting, ignoring or isolating the child. It may also include exposure to domestic violence.
- Sexual abuse occurs when a child is used for the sexual gratification of an adult or an older child. The child may co-operate because he or she wants to please the adult or out of fear. It includes sexual intercourse, exposing a child’s private areas, indecent phone calls, fondling for sexual purposes, watching a child undress for sexual pleasure, and allowing/forcing a child to look at or perform in pornographic pictures or videos, or engage in prostitution.

The Subtle Signs of Abuse

While a single sign listed below doesn’t necessarily mean abuse or neglect is occurring, it can be an indication that something is wrong. If multiple signs are being exhibited, the child may be at risk of abuse or neglect.

Physical abuse is when a child is injured or harmed by his or her caregiver, or when the caregiver fails to do something to protect the child.

- Child wears long sleeves/long pants even in warm weather
- Excessive crying
- Child seems anxious when other children cry
- Avoidance of physical contact with others
- Recurrent nightmares or disturbed sleep patterns
- Behaviour extremes—aggressiveness or withdrawal
- Poor self-concept
- Whispered speech
- Loss of appetite for no apparent reason, or excessive appetite

- Child is wary of adults
- Re-enactment of abuse using dolls, drawings or friends
- Clinging
- Delinquent behaviour
- Abrupt decline in school performance

Neglect is a pattern where a child's caregiver fails to provide basic needs such as food, sleep, safety, supervision, appropriate clothing or medical treatment.

- Missing key articles of clothing
- Over- or under-dressed for weather conditions
- Height and weight significantly below age level
- Consistent school absenteeism
- Persistent hunger
- Trouble concentrating
- Low self-esteem
- Body odour
- Child assumes adult responsibilities
- Always being dirty and severely unkempt
- Sleepiness/always tired
- Child steals food/lunch money from others

Emotional abuse is when a caregiver treats a child in an extremely negative way that damages self-esteem and the concept of self.

- Sudden change in self-confidence
- Headaches or stomach aches with no medical cause
- Destructive behaviour
- Abnormal fears, increased nightmares
- Failure to gain weight (especially in infants)
- Desperately affectionate behaviour
- Speech disorders (stuttering, stammering)
- Habit disorders (biting, rocking, head-banging)
- Argumentative or consistent temper tantrums
- Bullying tactics
- Being easily frustrated
- Behaviour extremes—disobedient or overly compliant

Sexual abuse is any sexual exploitation of a child by a caregiver or someone else.

- Frequent sore throats or urinary infections
- Constant sadness
- Re-enactment of abuse using dolls, drawings or friends
- Clinging
- Thumb-sucking

- Sudden fear of the dark
- Behaviour extremism—aggressiveness or withdrawal
- Recurrent nightmares or disturbed sleep patterns
- Loss of appetite for no apparent reason, or excessive appetite
- Bedwetting
- Avoidance of undressing or wearing extra layers of clothes
- Abrupt decline in school performance

(All above information is from Government of Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Services, www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/childrensaidthereportingabuse/abuseandneglect.aspx)

Symptoms of Abuse

Church Volunteers and staff should be alert to the signs of abuse that a victim may exhibit. A one-time event would not necessarily constitute a potential abuse case; sudden unexplained changes, however, would warrant investigation. Some of the more common signs are summarized below:

Physical signs may include:

- lacerations and bruises
- nightmares
- irritation, pain or injury to the genital area
- difficulty with urination
- bedwetting
- discomfort when sitting
- torn or bloody underclothing
- pregnancy
- venereal disease

Behavioural signs may include:

- anxiety when approaching church or nursery area
- nervous or hostile behaviour toward adults
- sexual self-consciousness inappropriate to the age of the child
- “acting out” sexual behaviour
- extreme withdrawal from church activities and friends

Verbal signs may include the following statements:

- I don't like (*names a particular person*)
- (*Particular person*) does things to me when we're alone
- I don't like to be alone with (*particular person*)
- (*Particular person*) fooled around with me.

Allegations of Abuse

Realistically, no practical prevention strategy is 100% effective in preventing abuse. An accusation of child sexual abuse may occur in any church.

All allegations are to be taken serious. False allegations of abuse made by children are relatively low.

All allegations must be handled immediately with respect for the privacy and confidentiality of both the victim and perpetrator.

Obligation to Report

Any person who has reasonable grounds to believe that a child (or children) is in need of protection is legally required to report the matter to the Children's Aid Society (CAS). A person who knowingly fails to report in these circumstances is in violation of the law and may be found to have committed an offense.

The Child and Family Services Act provides protection from civil action to an individual who makes a report on reasonable grounds. Protection is not offered if the report was made in malice.

The Child and Family Services Act requires all individuals to report all cases where there are reasonable grounds to believe that a child is in need of protection. Only attorney-client privilege is exempt from this. Pastors do not have confidentiality and ARE required to make reports.

Reasonable Grounds

Reasonable grounds are those which have a rational foundation. Any of the following would be considered:

- A complaint from the child
- Circumstantial evidence such as cries for help, unexplained physical injury
- A statement of credible eye witness or credible witness to a recent complaint
- A credible witness who corroborates the statement of another

However, the following would always be excluded as providing reasonable grounds:

- Gossip
- Unsubstantiated conclusions

In short, "reasonable grounds" have a rational basis. They are not based on intuition, feelings, emotion or the uncritical acceptance of another's view if they are unsupported by other facts.

When to Report

When to make a report:

A child is in need of protection if:

- You suspect the child has suffered physical or sexual harm
- You suspect the child has been harmed due to lack of adequate care
- You suspect the child has been abandoned
- You suspect the child has been harmed emotionally
- You suspect the child is at risk to suffer sexual, physical or emotional harm
- You suspect the caregiver is unable to protect the child
- You suspect the caregiver has a problem that interferes with their ability to parent (ie: drug or alcohol abuse, mental illness)
- You suspect the caregiver lacks adequate parenting skills
- A child under 12 commits a serious act such as assault or excessive damage to property

Abuse or neglect need not have already occurred for a child to be in need of protection; it is not necessary to wait until a child has been harmed to intervene. When abuse or neglect can be reasonably anticipated and there are reasonable grounds to believe the child is in need of protection, the legal obligation to report applies.

Historical abuse or neglect, that is abuse or neglect which occurred in the not very recent past, must be reported wherever there are reasonable grounds to believe that any child may be in need or protection from that same person.

Important to Note

As soon as possible after the incident comes to your attention, contact the appropriate people and/or agency. Do not attempt an in-depth investigation. This should be left to professionals who are familiar with these cases, and you may actually be hindering their investigation.

When a child first comes to you, be sure to take his or her word seriously. Don't deny the problem, but stay calm and listen to them. Give emotional support, reminding the child that he or she is not at fault. Tell the child that he or she was right in telling you about the problem. **Do not promise the child that you will not tell anyone.**

Do not prejudge the situation, but take the allegations seriously and reach out to the victim, showing care and support to prevent further hurt. Treat the accused with dignity and support. If the accuser is a church volunteer/employee, the person should be relieved of his or her duties until the investigation is finished.

How to Make a Report

Any person who has reasonable grounds to believe that a child is in need of protection must make a report to CAS. It is requested that you speak to the Pastor to get their assistance in the procedure and making sure that everyone concerned is notified – FACS, Police, SMARRT team, church lawyer and insurance company. They will assist in all paperwork that is associated with reporting, and give guidance on your responsibilities.

The Pastor will be the only spokesperson to deal with media and any information given to the congregation as a whole. They will also do this only on advice from legal counsel.

It is the stand of Faith to not deny, minimize, cast blame or accuse in allegations of abuse. These are not biblical or appropriate responses.