

Our Plan to Protect Children, Youth, and Staff Parkway Road Pentecostal Church

Everyone who teaches, helps or cares for children under the auspices of Parkway Road Pentecostal Church is required to follow the guidelines and procedures as defined in this document. The Church Board reviewed and adopted them as official policy on September 16, 2003, to be effective March 1, 2004. The Church Board revised and updated this policy on February 17 and May 25, 2004, and again on October 23, 2014

Adapted from:

A Plan to Protect

The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada

Canadian Ministries Department

2450 Milltower Court

Mississauga ON, L5N 5Z6

Based on material originally produced by the Christian and Missionary Alliance in
Canada and Evangel Tabernacle, Kelowna, BC and
Parry Sound Pentecostal Tabernacle, Parry Sound, ON

WHO SHOULD READ THIS MANUAL

Paid Staff

All paid staff of Parkway Road Pentecostal Church must read and be familiar with the complete manual.

Ministry and Department Coordinator

All Ministry and Department Coordinators (including those who do not work directly with children) must read and be familiar with the complete manual.

Volunteers

All volunteers who work directly with children must be familiar with Chapters 1, 2 and 4 and the related appendices (B, C, E, L, M , N, and O)

Chapter 1 - Understanding the Need

- Why does our church need a written policy?

Chapter 2 - Our Child Protection Procedures

- How do I help in preventing abuse in our church?

Chapter 4 - Incident Reporting Procedures

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction - The Spiritual, Moral and Legal Responsibility of the Church -----pg.5

Chapter 1 - Understanding the Need-----pg.6

- A. Definition of Child Abuse
- B. Symptoms of Abuse and Molestation
- C. The Effects of Child Sexual Abuse
- D. The Profile of a Child Molester
- E. Reducing the Risk of Child Sexual Abuse
- F. It Can Happen in Any Church
- G. Impact
- H. Why Churches are Susceptible
- I. The Civil and Legal Liability of the Church

Chapter 2 - Our Procedures -----pg.11

- A. Our Commitments
- B. Child Security
- C. General Classroom Staffing and Supervision Guidelines
- D. Washroom Guidelines
- E. Proper Display of Affection
- F. Special Events and Overnight Policies

Chapter 3 - Recruitment of Paid Staff or Volunteers-----pg.17

- A. Volunteer Application Form
- B. Reference Check
- C. Interview
- D. Reasons for Disqualification
- E. Our Plan to Protect Training
- F. Approval Process

Chapter 4 - Incident Reporting Procedures-----pg.21

- A. Responding to the Child
- B. Discuss Suspicious Behavior Immediately
- C. Incident Reporting

Chapter 5 - Implementation and Monitoring Procedures -----pg.26

- A. Presenting this Policy
- B. Monitoring of Policy
- C. Educating Workers and Volunteers

Glossary of Terms -----pg. 28

Policies and Procedures Manual

Appendices:-----pg.30

- A Volunteer Clearance Checklist
- B Waiver & Medical Release Form [Field trips and Special Events]
- C Waiver & Medical Release Form [Overnight]
- D Volunteer Application Form
- E Ministry Covenant Form
- F Jr Application
- G Jr Ministry Covenant
- H Post Interview Form
- I Confidential Record of References
- J Quiz
- K Transportation Waiver
- L Accident Report
- M Initial Report Form of Suspected Abuse
- N Follow-Up Report Form of Suspected Abuse
- O Key Contact information

Bibliography

INTRODUCTION

The Spiritual, Moral and Legal Responsibility of the Church

In the church, we recognize that we are a reflection of God's love to those in our care and we take our responsibility to them seriously. In our ministry to children we must follow carefully what the scriptures teach.

Parkway Road Pentecostal Church stresses the sanctity of human life and the importance and worth of each individual as a child of God. We have a spiritual, moral and legal obligation to provide a secure environment for children participating in church programs that are under the auspices and authority of our church. Child abuse is a criminal act as well as a violation of human conscience and dignity. It is a violation of God's moral law within the trusted context of relationship. It is criminal behavior that causes emotional, physical and spiritual trauma to victims, and has destructive consequences for abusers. The devastating effects on the individuals involved, the credibility of our church's ministry and the name of Christ make it essential that the church take all appropriate steps to prevent abusive incidences from occurring.

These guidelines therefore set forth to provide a safe and nurturing environment where the love of Christ can be extended to children and youth. We view ourselves as partners with parents / guardians, seeking to provide quality care and instruction in our ministry to the family. All of our guidelines are designed to protect and promote growth in God for each child and adult involved.

CHAPTER 1: UNDERSTANDING THE NEED

A. Definition of Child Abuse

Child Abuse is characterized as follows:

- It can be physical, emotional, or sexual.
- All child abuse involves the misuses of power
- Misuse of power takes place when people take advantage of the authority or power they have over vulnerable people. Vulnerable people include adults with physical or mental disabilities and children.
- In Ontario, a 'child' is defined by the *Child and Family Services Act* as a "person under the age of eighteen years."¹

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

In 97% of reported cases of physical abuse, parents are the abuser. The abuser is also approximately 1.5 times more likely to be male than female. (Wolfe, 1987).²

Emotional Abuse is a pattern of hurting a child's feelings to the point of damaging their self-respect. It includes verbal attacks on the child, insults, humiliation or rejection. A child or youth who is emotionally harmed may demonstrate severe anxiety, depression, withdrawal, self-destructive or aggressive behavior.

Sexual Abuse occurs when a child or youth is used by somebody else for sexual stimulation or gratification. Sexual activity between children and 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.

Child sexual abuse includes both touching and non-touching behavior.

Touching includes:

- Fondling
- Oral, genital and anal penetration
- Intercourse
- Forcible rape

Non-touching includes:

¹ Child and Family Services Act. R.S.O. 1990, Chapter C.11.

² Wolfe, David. *Child Abuse: Implications for Child Development and Psychopathology*. Newbury Park, California: Sage, 1987. p. 20.

- Verbal comments
- Showing pornographic videos/ photographs
- Obscene phone calls / text messages & social media interactions
- Exhibitionism
- Allowing a child to witness sexual activity

B. Symptoms of Abuse and Molestation

Church workers and staff should be alert to the physical signs of abuse and molestation, as well as to behavioral and verbal signs that a victim may exhibit.

A one-time event would not necessarily constitute a potential abuse case; sudden unexplained changes, however, would warrant investigation by a professional. Some of the more common signs are summarized below:

Physical Signs

- Lacerations and bruises
- Nightmares
- Irritation, pain or injury to the genital area
- Difficulty with urination
- Discomfort when sitting
- Torn or bloody underclothing
- venereal disease

Behavioral Signs

- Anxiety when approaching church, classrooms or nursery area
- Nervous or hostile behavior toward adult
- Sexual self-consciousness
- “Acting out” sexual behavior
- Withdrawn from church activities and friends

Verbal Signs

- I don't like (*names a 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

C. The Effects of Child Sexual Abuse

Child sexual abuse robs children of their childhood and can potentially scar its young victims for life. Too often in the past, the effects of abuse were minimized or dismissed. Children were viewed as resilient. Recent research has shown that children can suffer significant pain from even a single abusive incident. Church members must be aware of the pain and long term suffering that can accompany such abuse. Abused children can display a wide range of negative symptoms in the aftermath of abuse. Abuse can result in abnormal fears, post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), aggressive behavior, sexual "acting out", depression, diffused sexual identity, and poor self-esteem.³ The incidence of sexually transmitted disease is also a possible outcome.

D. The Profile of a Child Molester

Who is the typical child molester? Some church leaders assume that molesters are "strangers wearing trench coats" or "dirty old men". These stereotypes not only are inaccurate, but they dangerously contribute to a false sense of security. Researchers in the field of child sexual abuse currently indicate that no one profile fits the various perpetrators of abuse. Church leaders can become preoccupied screening stereotypes, while not suspecting the real molester could be an active adult or teen in the church.

If abuse occurs in our church, a respected member will most likely be the molester. Emphasis upon "stranger danger" will leave our church ill prepared. While it's uncomfortable even to consider this, the most likely assailants include Sunday School teachers, religious educators, nursery or pre-school workers, teachers in a church operated school, camp counselors, scout leaders, 'concerned' adults who volunteer to transport children to church, and clergy. Trusted adults - male or female - can easily mislead children and most incidents of child sexual abuse take place in context of an ongoing relationship between the abuser and the child.

E. Reducing the Risk of Child Sexual Abuse

The disturbing and traumatic rise of physical and sexual abuse of children has claimed the attention of our nation and society. Unfortunately, churches that have children's programs are not insulated from this alarming trend. In response to this trend, it is our commitment to provide reasonable protective care to all preschoolers, children and youth attending any programs sponsored by *Parkway Road Pentecostal Church*. We feel compelled to establish guidelines for the prevention of child abuse.

Although *Parkway Road Pentecostal Church* has been fortunate in never having any substantiated incidents of child abuse or molestation happen in the church, we

³ K. A. Kendall-Tackett, L.M. Williams, and D. Finkelhor, "Impact of Sexual Abuse on Children: A Review and Synthesis of Recent Empirical Studies," *Psychological Bulletin*, 113 (1993):164-180.

recognize that formal guidelines and procedures will help prevent the opportunity for abuse to arise in the future.

We believe that childhood innocence is a gift given by God. Children are naturally trusting. Children readily place their faith in adults who care for them. It is our responsibility as a church to safeguard that trust. Childhood innocence is a gift that we must **Plan to Protect** within our church.

F. It Can Happen in Any Church

Incidents of molestation can occur in any church - including ours. In the past, churches have traditionally accepted services of anyone expressing an interest in working as a volunteer with children or youth. Churches are by nature trusting and unsuspecting institutions. Asking sensitive questions of those who are giving their time and talent is difficult. No one wants to offend potential workers, especially longtime church members with a history of good service. But a church can still be susceptible to incidents of child molestation. There are a few topics that create more emotion than that of child abuse, especially if it is sexual in nature.

G. Impact

A single incident of child molestation can devastate a church and divide a congregation. Members become outraged and bewildered. Parents question whether their own children have been victimized. The viability of the church's youth and children's programs is jeopardized. Church leaders face blame and guilt for allowing the incident to happen.

Such incidents often result in massive media attention, sometimes on a national scale. Front page stories hit the local paper. Community residents begin to associate the church with the incident of molestation. But far more tragic is the emotional trauma to the victim and the victim's family, and the enormous potential legal liability the church faces. If a trial ensues, the issue stays alive in the media for months, sometimes even years.

H. Why Churches are Susceptible.

Churches have unique features that can make them susceptible to incidents of child molestation. The risk increases dramatically for overnight activities.

Access: Child molesters are attracted to an institution in which they have immediate access to potential victims in an atmosphere of complete trust.

Need: Most churches struggle to get adequate help for children and youth programs. Recruiting nursery workers, for example, can become an unending effort. Turnover among volunteer workers is also high. A willing volunteer worker provides welcome relief.

I. The Civil and Legal Liability of the Church

Churches need to understand the extent of their liability. Churches are not 'guarantors' of the safety and well-being of children. They are not absolutely liable for every injury that occurs on their premises or in the course of their activities. Generally, they are responsible only for those injuries that result from their negligence. Victims of molestation who have sued a church often allege that the church was negligent in not adequately screening applicants for not providing adequate supervision.

Increasingly and often more dramatically, the church and its personnel (i.e. staff, directors, officers, and ministers) are being held accountable for the acts of individual abusers within the church even though neither the church, nor its leaders were aware of the abuse or condoned it. Churches are being sued in civil courts for damages sustained by victims and their families. Those victims and their families are attempting to hold churches accountable by alleging that:

- the church is vicariously liable for acts of its personnel, be they paid staff or volunteer staff, regardless of whether the church was itself negligent or even knew of the abuse,
- the church was negligent in its hiring or accepting personnel, whether paid or volunteer, and
- the church was negligent in the supervising or monitoring of its personnel or membership.

(Church and the Law Update, June 1994)

CHAPTER 2: OUR CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES

A. Our Commitments

Parkway Road Pentecostal Church is committed to the following:

1. We take our policies to prevent sexual abuse seriously and will see that they are enforced.
2. We will screen and interview all paid employees, including ministerial staff, and volunteers who work with children. Anyone convicted of a criminal offense involving children, or of a sexually related crime, will not be permitted to work with children.
3. We will train all of our paid staff and volunteers who work with children to understand the nature of sexual abuse, and how to carry out our policies to prevent sexual abuse, including our clearly defined reporting procedures for suspected incidents.
4. All workers will sign a ministry covenant, agreeing to comply with church policies and guidelines.
5. We have adopted a "Two-Adult" rule. Such a rule says that two adults should be present during any children's activity. This rule reduces the risk of child molestation, and also reduces the risk of false accusations of molestation by individuals seeking a quick legal settlement.
6. We will follow the "6 month" rule. Volunteers will be permitted to work with children only after they have been adherents/members of *Parkway Road Pentecostal Church* for a period of six months. Such a policy gives the church an additional opportunity to evaluate applicants and volunteers, and will help to repel persons seeking immediate access to children. (This provision may be waived where 3 positive references are provided in total, which includes 1 from the volunteer applicant's previously attended church.)

B. Child Security (for preschool aged children)

1. Programs for preschool aged children must provide a sign-in sheet. An accurate sign-in procedure would include each child's name, parent's name, parent's location during that period of time, and any special needs. Preschool children should not be received into the classroom until properly signed in.
2. A child will only be released to the child's parent/guardian or teenaged sibling.

3. Children are never to be dropped off in the nursery or classroom without a teacher/caregiver present. If only one teacher/caregiver is present, the door must be left open.
4. Doors are to be supervised so that children are not able to exit alone. The parent/guardian are not to take their child from the room without a worker's knowledge.
5. Parent's/ guardians are not to enter the nursery or classroom when picking up their child unless requested to do so. This better enables the childcare staff to maintain order and provide the level of security that parents/guardians would expect.
6. Pagers: The pager system is used so that volunteers can contact parents and/or supervisors can be contacted immediately.

C. General Classroom Staffing and Supervision Guidelines

Workers should always conduct themselves in a godly manner, being an example of obedience, respect and honesty to those in their care. Programs that involve children must always include adequate supervisory personnel. Supervision should also be maintained before and after the event until all children are in the custody of their parents or legal guardians. Our desire is to provide a safe, loving classroom where the child feels comfortable and learning can take place. Therefore, we recommend the following guidelines:

1. Two Leaders

As a general rule there must be a minimum of two leaders in any room with children, except in the event of an emergency situation. Smaller classes could use high school students or have parents/guardians help out on a rotational basis. A temporary alternative to the two adult guideline is the open door policy.

2. Open Doors

When it is necessary that only one adult volunteer be in a closed room with children (e.g., leader leaves room to take children to the washroom; a small class where there is one teacher for a class or three children), the door of that room should remain open. We have recommended that the class rooms have windows or window doors that will allow ministry supervisors to look in occasionally without interrupting the teaching process.

3. Obtain Parental Permission

Generally there should be no one-on-one adult-child (children under 14) meetings on or off site. What about situations where an adult has a legitimate reason to be alone with a child? Church staff or volunteers must obtain the consent of the child's parent or guardian before going out alone with that child, or spending time with the child in an unsupervised situation. Volunteers must also notify an appropriate church leader of such meetings in advance. Children must also have parental permission for involvement in church-sponsored field trips or overnight events.

4. Age Expectation

Since parents/guardians may not know the volunteer, it is important to have at least one volunteer who is 18 years of age or older. In some cases where volunteers and parents/guardians are known to each other, volunteers between the ages of 12 and 18 may supervise a group of children. When these younger volunteers are used, the open door policy is to be enforced.

5. Preschool Classes (generally age 3)

All preschool rooms are to be staffed with at least one female adult worker to better facilitate observance of the washroom guidelines (see Section D).

6. Supervisory Staff

The supervisory staff and head usher must make regular visits to the children's rooms to make sure they are properly staffed and supervised.

7. Family Protection

Family ministry teams work well together and should be encouraged as a method of staffing. However, for the protection of this family unit, we recommend the presence of at least one other volunteer not related to the family.

D. Washroom Guidelines

Parents/guardians are to be encouraged to take their children to visit the washroom prior to each class or service. Parents/guardians should be told this at the beginning of each new school year, and throughout the year to newcomers.

1. Nursery Children (generally, two years old and under)

As a general rule, staff in the nursery will not be expected to change diapers. However in the event that this becomes necessary, the following rules will apply:

- Diaper changing must always take place in such a way that another nursery worker can see the child that is being changed, as well as the other children and workers in the room.
- Children must be 12 years of age or older, with appropriate and recognized training (at the discretion of the nursery coordinator) before being permitted to change an infant's diapers.

2. Preschool and Kindergarten Children (generally, ages 3-5)

Since children at this age level usually need help going to the washroom parents/guardians are expected to take their children themselves. Should this not be possible, the following guidelines come into effect:

- Two adults will escort a group of children to the washroom. Where we do not have two adults available to take children to the washroom, hallway or safety monitors (preferably female) will be appointed to assist with washroom and security duties.
- If just one child must go to the washroom, the adult volunteer should escort the child to the washroom and prop the main outside door open. The volunteer should then remain outside the washroom door and wait for the child before escorting him/her back to the classroom. The volunteer should call the child's name if they are taking longer than seems necessary.
- Never be alone with a child in an unsupervised washroom and never go into a washroom cubicle with a child and shut the door.
- When preschool and kindergarten children need assistance in the washroom, an adult may enter the washroom cubicle to assist only when a second adult is within visual contact. If this is not possible, inform another adult when taking a child to the washroom and when returning.
- In light of the fact that most abusers are male, and for the protection of our male volunteers, it would be wise for men to avoid assisting boys or girls of any age in the washrooms. We suggest the women's washroom be used for preschool and kindergarten children, where no unisex washroom is available.

3. Grades One and Two (generally, ages 6 to 7)

- Children in this age group should not be sent to the washroom alone, but should be sent in student pairs **or** accompanied by a volunteer.
- The adult volunteer should escort the child to the washroom, and prop the door open to make sure that everything is in order. The volunteers should then remain outside the washroom door and wait for the child before escorting him/her back to the classroom.
- The volunteer should call the child's name if they are taking longer than seems necessary.

- Never go into a washroom cubicle with a child/youth and shut the door.
- In light of the fact that most abusers are male, and for the protection of our male volunteers, it would be wise for men to avoid assisting boys or girls of any age in the washrooms. We suggest that the women's washroom be used for age 5-7 children, where no unisex washroom is available.

4. *Grade Three and Higher (generally, ages 8-17)*: They may go unaccompanied to the washroom.

E. Proper Display of Affection

Touch is an essential responsibility in nurturing lives. Volunteers need to 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. The following guidelines are recommended as pure, genuine and positive displays of God's love:

1. Appropriate Touch

Love and caring can be expressed in the following appropriate ways, by:

- Bending down to the child's eye level and speaking kindly; listening to him/her carefully.
- Taking a child's hand and leading him/her to an activity.
- Putting an arm around the should 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.)
- Patting a child on the head, hand, shoulder or back to affirm him/her.
- Holding a child by the shoulders or hand to keep his/her attention while you redirect the child's behavior.
- Holding a preschool child who is crying.
- Removing a child who is hurting another child or you.

2. Inappropriate Touch

You must avoid:

- Kissing a child, coaxing a child to kiss you, extended hugging, pinching and tickling of any kind.
- Touching a child in any area that would be covered by a bathing suit (except when assisting a child with toileting as outlined previously).
- Carrying older children (5 & up) or having them sit on your lap.
- Being alone with a child. Touching in any manner when alone with a child.
- Giving or receiving massages.

F. Special Events and Overnight Policies

Volunteers may have special group activities in their homes, plan social activities and involve their children in field trips and service projects. The following precautions need to be taken with these activities:

1. Field Trips and Special Events

- Activities conducted away from the church property should be preapproved by a paid staff.
- Parents/guardians should be notified at least one week prior to the outing.
- Proper written consent and medical release forms are required for each child participating in field trips and special events (see Appendix B).
- All trips and outings must be supervised by a minimum of two adult leaders.
- The church will provide a rented bus for groups.
- Alternatively, a transportation waiver is required if a volunteer uses own vehicle. (See Appendix L)

2. Overnight Events

Church sponsored overnight activities may be permitted as long as the following guidelines are met:

- All overnight activities must be approved by the church staff.
- Proper written consent and medical release forms are required for each child participating in overnight events (see Appendix C).
- All overnight activities must be supervised as follows:
 - **Ages 5 to 8:** A minimum of three adults, with the ratio of adults to children at least one adult for every six children.
 - **Ages 9 to 12:** A minimum of two adults, with the ratio of adults to children at least one adult for every eight children.
 - **Ages 13-17:** A minimum of two adults, with the ratio of adults to youth at least one adult for every ten youth.
- When only two adult volunteers are required, they must be unrelated.
- Each adult volunteer should have an assigned group of children for whom they will be responsible during each overnight event.
- All adult volunteers must have Plan to Protect process fully completed and will be added to the volunteer's Placement File.

CHAPTER 3: RECRUITMENT OF PAID STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

To protect our children and to be protected from liability, Parkway Road Pentecostal Church must take responsible action in screening and supervising the volunteers involved in any children's work. (A court can find the church legally liable if it is less than systematic and therefore negligent in screening volunteers). By complying with the following procedures, the church greatly reduces the potential for child abuse and the resultant liability. It is essential that our church keep an accurate record of each person involved in child/youth ministry and their status in the application process.

A. Volunteer Application Form

All individuals who are new to the church, and who wish to be involved in ministry to children or youth, must fully complete the Volunteer Application Form found in Appendix D. New paid staff must also complete the Volunteer Application Form in full. Those individuals who are already known by the church leadership, and who wish to be involved in ministry to children or youth, must only complete Part II of the Volunteer Application Form. The completion of this form is critical in protecting the church from legal liability if a case of child abuse occurs in which a church volunteer is involved.

B. Reference Check

Three personal references are requested on the Volunteer Application Form. References that are acceptable are limited to the following:

- Former pastor
- Parent/guardian (for volunteers who are minors) –qualifies as one reference
- Teacher (for volunteers who are minors)
- Other volunteer member (who has sufficient strength of relationship to comment on the individual's personal habits and character).
- Employer
- Coach
- Volunteer Organization

These references will be contacted and asked to affirm the suitability of the volunteer for ministry to children or youth. The person making the contacts, the date, and a summary of the reference's comments will all be documented on the form (Confidential Record of References, Appendix I). This document will be added to the volunteer's Placement File.

C. Interview

A formal or informal interview with the applicant provides ministry leaders with the opportunity to discuss the volunteer position and questions they may have from the

application. As well to enhance their knowledge of the applicant and gives the opportunity to complete the Post Interview Form (Appendix H). The interview held in confidentiality will also allow the potential volunteer the opportunity to ask questions about various children's ministries and the reasons behind our child protection procedures.

D. Reasons for Disqualification

A person could be disqualified for ministry to children or youth depending on the type of information that comes to light during the application process.

1. Criminal Activity

All individuals who are presently working with children, as well as all new individuals applying to work as volunteers with children, will be provided with the application for a Police Record Check (hereafter referred to as 'PRC'), along with the instruction sheets describing how and where the forms are to be processed. All paid staff will also submit a PRC for their own protection and for the protection of the church. Minors are exempt from the PRC. All records will be placed in the volunteer's Placement File set up for that purpose in the church office and will be considered confidential. Any individual who will not submit to this procedure will be ineligible to be involved with children on behalf of the church. The cost for any PRP's requested by Parkway Road Pentecostal Church will be borne by the church.

If a PRC meets with negative results (no match), the application must be submitted to the church to the attention of the church office indicating "Negative Record (not confirmed by fingerprints)". The applicant may then be considered for ongoing service in the church.

Should there be a "Possible Hit" on the query of the name, the applicant will have to follow the procedures to be fingerprinted by the Ottawa Provincial Police (OPP) for confirmation. The findings of the OPP's search will be forwarded directly to the applicant. It will then be the applicant's responsibility to disclose the results to the church office at the applicant's discretion.

If the offense is other than child or sexual abuse, the volunteer may proceed with ministry in the church based on board approval. The following are criteria to consider when evaluating the information:

- The number and type of convictions
- The age and circumstances of the offender at the time of the offense
- The length of time between past criminal activity and the present
- The conduct and circumstances of the individual since the offense
- The likelihood of the individual repeating the offense

A criminal conviction for a sexual offense involving a minor would certainly disqualify an applicant from ministry with children on behalf of Parkway Road Pentecostal Church. In case of pedophilic behavior (molestation of a pre-adolescent child) such a conviction should disqualify an individual no matter how long ago it occurred. Other automatic disqualifiers would include convictions for incest, rape, assaults involving minors, murder, kidnapping, child pornography, sodomy, and the physical abuse of a minor.

Other crimes would strongly indicate that a person should not be considered for work with minors in our church. Some crimes would not be automatic disqualifiers, because they would not necessarily suggest a risk of child abuse or molestation. Some property offenses would not be included in this list, particularly if the offense occurred long ago and the individual has long since had a long history of impeccable behavior.

Should religious conversion make a difference for a youth worker who has been guilty of child molestation in the past?

Occasionally, such persons freely admit to a prior incident, but insist that they have since had a conversion experience and that they now present no risk whatsoever. The safest course would be to encourage such an individual to work in the church, but in a position not involving access to children or youth. This is a reasonable accommodation of the individual's desire to serve Parkway Road Pentecostal Church. Any church that permits such an individual to work with children or youth, on the basis of the professed religious conversion, will have a virtually indefensible position should there be another incident of molestation occur. A defense- that the molester claims to have been converted- would likely be viewed with derision by a civil court. Putting a known child molester in a position involving access to children is taking an enormous risk and therefore cannot be allowed.

2. Physical or Mental Health Issues

A person's physical and mental health may affect their actions at the present. If any of the following circumstances apply, the person should talk with a pastor of Parkway Road Pentecostal Church, in full confidentiality in this regard:

- They have been hospitalized or treated for alcohol or substance abuse;
- They have any communicable disease ; or,
- They are or have been in treatment for any form of mental illness, relevant to their ministry role at Parkway Road Pentecostal Church

E. “Our Plan to Protect” Training

All persons involved in ministry to children or youth will be equipped through training regarding child safety and child abuse prevention. Each person must read through the required Our Plan to Protect materials, complete an open book quiz (Appendix J), and sign the Ministry Covenant (see Appendix E). The tear-off portion of that document will be kept in their Volunteer Placement File.

F. Approval Process

Once a volunteer or paid staff has successfully completed the required screening process, as outlined above, s/he will be considered clear to serve in Children’s Ministries at *Parkway Road Pentecostal Church*. All completed forms will be treated as confidential and kept indefinitely in the person’s file in a locked cabinet.

CHAPTER 4: INCIDENT REPORTING PROCEDURES

No prevention strategy is 100 percent effective. Child abuse may occur in any church. At *Parkway Road Pentecostal Church*, we encourage our staff and volunteer workers to be ever vigilant and report any suspicious behavior immediately. Should an allegation of child abuse occur, our premeditated response strategy listed below recognizes the following underlying principles:

- All allegations are to be taken seriously.
- Situations must be handled forthrightly with due respect for people's privacy and confidentiality.
- Full co-operation must be given to civil authorities under the guidance of our church lawyer.
- Adequate care must be shown for the well-being of all who are affected by the alleged abuse (e.g., primary victims and alleged abusers, as well as secondary victims such as family members and friends).
- The victim should not be held responsible in any way.

A. Responding to the Child

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

B. Discuss Suspicious Behavior Immediately

Any inappropriate conduct or relationships between adult volunteer workers and a youth or a child must be confronted immediately and investigated. Prompt warnings must be issued when appropriate, and the situation monitored very closely. The adult worker's services should be terminated immediately for continued violation of sufficient gravity. Ministry Coordinators should note when a youth or child appears aloof or withdrawn, or exhibits a marked personality change. This may indicate a problem that deserves attention.

C. Incident Reporting

Every incident of abuse must be reported to CAS immediately. Any person who has reasonable grounds to believe that a child or child(ren) is in need of protection is legally required to report the matter. The following is what to do if a volunteer suspects abuse.

*If you **suspect** abuse either within or outside of The Church...*

If a volunteer has any concerns regarding the safety of a child, they should report this concern to their Ministry Coordinator, who will then report this to the Lead Pastor. If the Ministry Coordinator is involved in the abuse, the volunteer should report directly to the Lead Pastor. If the Lead Pastor is involved in the abuse, the volunteer should report to a deacon member who will then contact the district superintendent. An **Initial Report Form Suspected Child Abuse** (Appendix M) must be completed at this point. The pastoral staff and/or designate reserves the right to suspend any volunteers while they investigate allegations.

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 a child is in need of protection, the legal obligation to report applies. No action would be taken against a staff member making a report unless it is made maliciously or without reasonable grounds for the belief.

*If you are **told** of abuse either within or outside of The Church ...*

If a child tells a volunteer that they are being abused, that volunteer should report this concern to their Ministry Coordinator, who will then report this to the Lead Pastor. If the Ministry Coordinator is involved in the abuse, the volunteer should report directly to the Lead Pastor. If the Lead Pastor is involved in the abuse, the volunteer should report to a deacon member who will then contact the district superintendent. An **Initial Report Form Suspected Child Abuse** (Appendix M) must be completed at this point. The pastoral staff and/or designate reserves the right to suspend any volunteers while they investigate allegations.

When the child first approaches a volunteer, the individual should take his or her word seriously. They should not deny the problem, but stay calm and listen to the child. They should give emotional support, reminding the child that he or she is not at fault. The child should be assured that he or she was right in telling the staff member about the problem. Staff can **NEVER** promise the child they will not tell anyone.

If you **witness** abuse either within our outside *The Church* ...

If a volunteer witnesses any inappropriate conduct or relationships between adult volunteer workers and a youth or a child, they shall report to their Ministry Coordinator, who will then report this to the Lead Pastor. If the Ministry Coordinator is involved in the abuse, the volunteer should report directly to the Lead Pastor. If the Lead Pastor is involved in the abuse, the volunteer should report to a deacon member who will then contact the district superintendent. An **Initial Report Form Suspected Child Abuse** (Appendix M) must be completed at this point. The pastoral staff and/or designate reserves the right to suspend any volunteers while they investigate allegations.

*Parkway Road Pentecostal Church is **required by law to immediately report** to the Children's Aid Society (CAS) and their insurance company any suspected case of **child abuse** to individuals **under the age of sixteen**. This is not a breach of confidence between The Church's staff and the child involved. As church staff, we are accountable to God to protect His little ones. Although it is our desire to protect the parents as much as legally possible from undue interference by outside authorities into their family, the protection of children from abuse is even more important. We want to follow the principles of submitting to governing authorities (Romans 13:1) while at the same time helping parents to exercise child discipline that is consistent with the Scriptures, and in the best interest of the children.*

The Investigation

As part of a child protection investigation, social workers are required under the Child, Family and Community Services Act to assess:

- the child's current state of health;
- their sense of safety and their views of abuse
- previous abuse, neglect or harm; and
- the ability of the parent(s) to care for and protect the child.

The social worker will talk to people who have contact with the child and family. They may request records or other types of information. They are entitled to whatever information is needed to complete an investigation. If denied access to a record, they can seek a court order.

When a volunteer receives a request from CAS for information regarding a child attending our facility, the volunteer should contact the Ministry Lead or Pastoral Staff that they completed the initial reports with. Together the individuals will follow the process below to assure the health and safety of the child in our care.

Policies and Procedures Manual

- Any request from a child protection social worker should be in person and the protection worker should carry and show you photo identification.
- On the occasions where there is urgency and the child protection social worker is unable to visit the facility and show photo identification, the child protection social worker may telephone you from their office.
 - The social worker is to identify him/herself.
 - They are to explain the information they are requesting and the process you are to follow. They WILL NOT ask for information at this time. You are NOT to give information over the phone.
 - The social worker will give you their name and their office phone number.
 - You will check the number given with the phone number of the local offices.
 - You will then call the number given by the social worker. At that time the social worker will ask for the information needed.
 - You and the pastoral staff together will provide the necessary information.
 - You will then ask to be informed of what happens. This is very important. It becomes extremely important if the child continues to attend *The Church* during the investigation.

It is possible that a protection social worker may call from their cell phone. This is the least acceptable form of requesting information from a staff member. You should follow the exact same process as a request by telephone with one additional stipulation:

If it is after hours and the office cannot be contacted or the cell number confirmed, the staff member and pastoral staff are not to give out any information. They can request the social worker appear at *Parkway Road Pentecostal Church* with photo identification.

No information is to be given out if the request is from a pay phone, or for any other type of request.

The Church's Response to an Allegation

The Church realizes that no practical prevention strategy is 100 percent effective. An accusation of child sexual abuse may occur in any church. *The Church* has a premeditated plan or strategy to respond to sexual abuse allegations. Wrong actions can multiply the pain and liability inherent in an abuse case.

- The pastoral staff must complete a **Follow Up Report Form Suspected Child Abuse** (Appendix N) that outlines all measures taken after the suspicion of abuse was stated.
- *The Church's* pastoral staff and/or district office will take charge in the investigation in co-ordination with CAS. A staff member or volunteer should NEVER speak about the allegation to anyone at anytime for any purpose (especially the media).

The only claim of confidentiality that overrides the legal duty to report is solicitor-client privilege. Thus physicians, clergymen and others who consider their professional relationships confidential for certain purposes are not exempt from the duty to report child abuse or neglect.

- *The Church's* pastoral staff is committed to take the allegations seriously and reach out to the victim and the victim's family showing care and support to help prevent further hurt. Care and safety of the victim is our first priority. In some situations, organizations have responded in a negative or non-supportive manner to the alleged victim. This can increase the anger and pain of the victim and the victim's family. Future reconciliation will be more difficult. This also increases the possibility of damaging litigation.
- *The Church's* pastoral staff is committed to treating the accused with dignity and support. The staff member may be relieved temporarily of his or her duties until the investigation is finished. If the person is a paid employee, arrangements should be made to either maintain or suspend his or her income until the allegations are cleared or substantiated.

The Lead Pastor of *The Church* or his/her designate will be the spokesperson. He/she will speak to the media and the congregation regarding the matter in a discreet, informed, truthful and diplomatic way. (Often, the media interviews several staff who have never given any consideration to responding to such inquiries. In such cases, conflicting and contradictory statements can abound, and the public will develop a negative impression of *The Church*. This is avoided when only one person is designated to speak for *The Church* in such cases).

The Lead Pastor may issue a statement, after consultation with legal counsel that states the clear position of *The Church* regarding child sexual abuse, our policies and established safeguards and whatever else may be considered appropriate. Having a carefully prepared statement is far superior to making no comment. This is an opportunity to influence public opinion positively by emphasizing an awareness of the problem of child abuse, a concern for victims, and the extensive steps *The Church* has taken to reduce the risk and provide a safe environment for children. It lets the media know that *The Church* takes the risk of child abuse seriously, and that we have acted responsibly.

CHAPTER 5: IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING PROCEDURES

The topic of child abuse and this Prevention Plan will create a variety of reactions among congregational members. Many will be in favour of the concept. Others will have questions and reservations. It is important for leadership to provide prospective leaders and vested interest groups with the rationale for such a policy, then give them opportunities for providing feedback. The topic will be presented in Leadership Seminars and during Sunday and mid-week Adult classes. Staff members or other Ministry Leaders will be available to answer concerns and provide specific answers about this particular aspect of church policy.

A. Presenting this Policy

The following key points should be made:

- Child sexual abuse can happen in our church.
- One incident can devastate a child, a family and the church.
- The legal liabilities can be enormous.
- Church leaders may be held liable.
- A prevention program can reduce risk through relatively simple procedures.

It is important to periodically inform the congregation of the key issues pertaining to child abuse and why a decision was made to establish a prevention plan. This will continue to nurture an emotional commitment within our membership to maintain a safe church environment for all children and youth.

The climate in these presentations should not be of somber reflection but of hope. We want the people to realize that *Parkway Road Pentecostal Church* is taking action to minister to this need. Our focus is on the great responsibility God has given to us to care for our children. Key Scripture passages that apply are the following: Psalm 78:1-6; Psalm 127; Psalm 46: 1, 6; 2 Samuel 13; Matthew 18:1-6; Matthew 18:10; Luke 18:15-17; Ephesians 5:11-13.

B. Monitoring of Policy

Department Heads and/or ministry leaders will thoroughly review these policies and procedures as part of their pre-Fall program planning.

After the initial emphasis on the program wanes, workers may begin to ignore basic polices. For example, the Two Adults Rule may become routinely neglected. Attention will be given to periodic monitoring that examines the following:

- Has each department trained its workers regarding these policies?
- Are works following the required policies and guidelines?

Policies and Procedures Manual

- What obstacles exist in complying with the policies?
- What is the level of cooperation?
- Do sufficient materials exist for training and information?
- Are the policies printed and available?

Each Policy and procedure will be thoroughly discussed with our department heads and/or ministry leaders. We will work through all concerns. If problems exist in the policies, they will be brought to the attention of the Lead Pastor or his/her designate. Revisions will be considered, but changes must not sacrifice the integrity of the program. We want to work at developing a sense of unity before educating workers and volunteers.

C. Educating Workers and Volunteers

Routines will be established for the training of all new volunteers who serve the church. Volunteer nursery workers fall into a category that we will train separately.

1. Future Workers

Often, new workers begin together as a group at the start of a new quarter or educational period. Sometimes, however, a new worker becomes active after a program has already begun. A plan will exist to provide training for all workers, regardless of when they begin. Being with a new member orientation class. All church members should be aware of basic policies concerning working with children. Group training will occur at the start of each new program year. Individuals who begin at a later date should meet with a designated person to review the policies and procedures and to complete the screening form. These workers should be enrolled in the next scheduled training class.

2. Annual Training/ Additional Classes

A regularly scheduled annual training program will be offered each Autumn as school begins and church programs gear up for the year. Additional classes will be scheduled as required.

3. Nursery

Special training sessions will be conducted for all volunteer nursery workers outlining nursery policy and procedures, behavioral guidelines, and where to find supplies.

Glossary of Terms

Adherent: One who consistently attends weekly Sunday and/or mid-week services, ignoring time away due to education or travel.

Adult: A person over the age of seventeen years.

Adult Volunteer: A person over the age of 17 years and has fully completed the Plan to Protect Procedures and has been approved.

Child: A person under the age of eighteen years.

Child abuse: Defined by law, but generally includes (1) non-accidental physical injury, (2) sexual contact or exploitation, (3) neglect and (4) emotional distress.

Child sexual abuse: Generally any sexual contact with or exploitation between an adult or caregiver and a child or adolescent even if the victim gives consent.

Children: In general, persons who are under the age of eighteen years. In some instances, however, the term refers to persons under the age of thirteen years only.

Church: *Parkway Road Pentecostal Church* and its related ministries.

Exhibitionism: Sexual perversion marked by a tendency of indecent exposure.

Guarantor: A person or organization that is legally responsible for the actions or debts of another.

Leader: A person who volunteers with leadership in a ministry and is in process or completed the Plan to Protect procedures.

Liability: Legal responsibility, often resulting in monetary damages.

Member: A person who has been accepted into membership by the Board of Deacons and has voting privileges at any duly-called business meeting of the church.

Minor: A person under the age of eighteen years.

Molestation: Improper sexual advances or activity with a child.

Negligence: A failure to exercise reasonable care.

Perpetrator: A person who commits an act of child sexual abuse.

Policies and Procedures Manual

Policy: A rule which describes or structures the proper working behavior of a church staff member or volunteer.

Prospective Volunteer: Children or adults associated with *Parkway Road Pentecostal Church*, either by regular attendance (adherent), or membership, and awaiting approval for volunteer service.

Reasonable care: The care that would be exercised by an ordinary prudent person under the same or similar circumstances.

Staff: A paid employee of Parkway Road Pentecostal Church

Volunteer: An individual who has fully completed the Plan to Protect procedures and has been approved.

Volunteer Application Form: An application form which has been approved by the Board of Deacons which is consistently used in the screening of prospective volunteers. Completed application forms are to be kept confidential and used only by the pastoral staff and church leadership.

Volunteer Placement File: A file kept on each prospective volunteer which includes the Ministry Application Form, record of criminal security check, record of reference checks, spiritual gift evaluation (of available), past areas of service, and a record of the interview by church leadership.

Worker: A person who volunteers in a ministry and is in process or completed the Plan to Protect procedures.

Youth: A person who is between 13-18 years of age.

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