



A Plan to Protect  
Children, Youth and Ministry Personnel

*“Do to others as you would have them do to you.” (Luke 6:31)*

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## SECTION 1 - POLICY

It is the policy of Chalmers Community Church to provide a safe environment for everyone involved in any church-related activity.

To create this safe environment, we will...

- Guard against all forms of abuse, having zero tolerance towards abuse.
- Screen and train all ministry personnel working with children and youth.
- Protect our ministry personnel from false allegations of abuse.
- Report any allegations or suspicions of abuse to the appropriate authorities.

## SECTION 2 - DEFINITIONS

### *GENERAL DEFINITIONS*

<b>Ministry Personnel:</b>	An adult, paid or volunteer, who leads or assists in ministry to children or youth.
<b>Child:</b>	A person from conception to age 12
<b>Youth:</b>	A person from the ages of 13 to 17
<b>Adult:</b>	A person 18 years and older
<b>Child abuse:</b>	Defined by law, but generally includes non-accidental physical injury, sexual contact or exploitation, neglect, and/or emotional distress
<b>Church:</b>	Chalmers Community Church and its related ministries
<b>Liability:</b>	Legal responsibility, often resulting in monetary damages
<b>Negligence:</b>	A failure to exercise reasonable care
<b>Policy:</b>	A rule which describes or structures the proper working behaviour of a church staff member or volunteer
<b>Reasonable care:</b>	The care that would be exercised by an ordinarily prudent person under the same or similar circumstances
<b>Unrelated:</b>	A person who is not married to or 1 <sup>st</sup> relations to the other person (parent, sibling).

## **DEFINING ABUSE**

### **ABUSE**

Any action causing undue physical, emotional, or sexual harm, which includes the misuse of power by anyone in authority.

### **PHYSICAL ABUSE**

“Physical abuse is any deliberate physical force or action that results, or could result, in injury to a child. It can include punching, slapping, beating, shaking, burning, biting or throwing a child. It is different than what is considered reasonable discipline.” (The Children’s Aid Society of London and Middlesex, 2007)

### **SEXUAL ABUSE**

“Sexual abuse occurs when a child is used for the sexual gratification of an adult or an older child. Coercion (physical, psychological or emotional) is intrinsic to sexual abuse. This is what distinguishes it from sexual exploration with peers.

It is against the law to touch a child for a sexual purpose; to encourage or force a child to touch another person in a sexual way; encourage or force a child to participate in any sexual activity; tell a child to touch him or herself for an adult’s or older child’s sexual purposes.

Sexual abuse of Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults can take many forms. This includes sexual intercourse, exposing private areas, indecent phone calls, fondling for sexual purposes, watching the individual undress for sexual pleasure, allowing a child to look at, or perform in pornographic pictures or videos, or engage in prostitution.” (The Children’s Aid Society of London and Middlesex, 2007)

### **EMOTIONAL ABUSE**

“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 also includes failure by a parent or caregiver to provide their children with love, emotional support, and guidance.” (The Children’s Aid Society of London and Middlesex, 2007)

### **NEGLECT**

“Neglect is the failure to meet a child's basic needs for food, clothing, shelter, sleep, medical attention, education, and protection from harm. This can occur when parents do not know about appropriate care for children, when they cannot adequately supervise their children or when they are unable to plan ahead.” (The Children’s Aid Society of London and Middlesex, 2007)

## **SYMPTOMS OF ABUSE**

Church members and ministry personnel should recognize and report physical, behavioural, and verbal signs that may be manifested as a result of abuse, especially sudden unexplained changes, including but not limited to the following common signs:

### Physical signs may include:

Lacerations or bruises inconsistent with play  
Unexplained irritation, pain or injury to the private areas  
Discomfort when sitting  
Nightmares

### Behavioral signs may include:

Anxiety when approaching church or nursery area  
Nervous or hostile behaviour toward adults  
Sexual self-consciousness  
The “acting out” of sexual behaviours

### Verbal signs may include the following statements:

“(name) does things to me when we’re alone”  
“I don’t like to be alone with (name)”

## **SECTION 3 - GENERAL PREVENTION PROCEDURES**

### **MINISTRY PERSONNEL APPROVAL PROCESS**

#### **GENERAL**

Chalmers Community Church provides a safe and loving place where children and youth can feel comfortable in a learning atmosphere.

Events involving children and youth are always supervised by an adequate number of trained leaders. Direct supervision is maintained for the full duration of any event.

Ministry personnel are approved based on their ability, past performance and demonstrated godly walk. Ministry personnel are accountable to their supervisors, pastoral staff and Board of Elders and are expected to show spiritual fruit. Ministry personnel show courtesy, respect, and honesty to those under their care but at the same time use controlled discipline to maintain decency and order.

#### **AGE OF MINISTRY PERSONNEL**

Ministry personnel are those who are 18 years and older.

Youth assistants are those between the ages of 12 to 17 who have been accepted by a Ministry Team Leader or pastoral staff for the position they serve in. Youth assistants are responsible to the ministry personnel that they work with.

### **QUALIFICATIONS OF MINISTRY PERSONNEL**

Applicants must fulfill the following requirements in order to be approved as a ministry personnel:

- Attend Chalmers Community Church for at least six months
- Be trained in the *Plan to Protect* procedures
- Provide two references (references must be other than family members)
- Be interviewed by one of the pastoral staff
- Provide a clear police records search including vulnerable sector screening
- Sign the Ministry Covenant
- Be accepted by the Board of Elders
- Sunday School Leaders must be members of Chalmers

#### **THE SIX-MONTH RULE**

Individuals wanting to work with children or youth must be members of Chalmers Community Church or have regularly attended the church for six months. NOTE: The six-month rule does not apply to pastoral staff who have gone through a hiring process that includes police records search and references.

## **POLICE RECORDS SEARCH**

A police records search including a vulnerable sector screening is mandatory for all adults in leadership positions.

The report issued by the OPP will be kept as a confidential record permanently. Only the pastoral staff and the Board chairperson have access to the report. Information from the police records search is shared only with Board members and pastoral staff, only on a need-to-know basis.

A police record search is to be renewed every two (2) years.

Where a potential ministry personnel has a criminal record, the Board will take the following into account when evaluating the applicant for ministry:

- 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

NOTE: If the offense is related to abuse of children or of a sexual nature, the volunteer is excluded from ministry with vulnerable persons.

## **TRAINING**

All ministry personnel are trained with respect to the *Plan to Protect*. Training is given before ministry personnel assume their duties. Mandatory refresher training is provided each year for ministry personnel.

## **INTERVIEW**

An interview will be conducted by a member of the pastoral staff. The interview is to assess the character of the potential ministry personnel, including spiritual maturity and appearance of spiritual fruit in their life.

NOTE: Adult survivors of abuse are not automatically disqualified from serving but as there is a higher risk of abuse among adult victims, special care must be taken during the interview process to ensure a low probability of the person committing abuse. In this case the Pastor and the Board chairperson shall make a determination on the suitability of the applicant before placement. If the person is to serve under the direction of another leader, that leader will also have the right of refusal.

## **GENERAL CHILD AND YOUTH PREVENTION PROCEDURES**

### **MINISTRY PERSONNEL / CHILD RATIOS**

One Ministry Personnel to every 4 infants or toddlers (birth to 3 years)

Two Youth Assistants to every 8 infants and toddlers (birth to 3 years)

One Ministry Personnel to every 6 preschoolers (3 years to 4 years)

One Ministry Personnel to every 10 elementary age children (4 years to grade 8)

One Ministry Personnel to every 14 high school student (grade 9 and up)

Ratios for off-site trips is half of recommended classroom ratios stated above

### **TWO-WAY COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS/GUARDIANS**

Ministry personnel working with children or youth are encouraged to introduce themselves to parents and to explain their role of ministry. Ministry personnel encourage parents to discuss any concerns they have. Ministry personnel will address any concern or refer it to the appropriate person or persons for action. Chalmers Community Church's intent is to promote two-way communication so that all participants feel involved, part of church life, informed of the ongoing work of the church, and free to voice any concerns, and that all concerns are addressed. Parents are also asked about any special needs or peculiarities their children have that may need special attention.

### **NEVER ALONE**

Whenever possible, a ministry personnel will not be alone with a child/youth. If a ministry personnel needs to meet with a child/youth privately, they are to do so in a place where they are visible to other adults (room with open door, parking lot, hallway, etc.) This does not pertain to nursery leaders changing a young child's diaper. In the event that a leader **MUST** be alone with a child/youth, the leader will have received permission from the parents beforehand. In the event of an emergency where a leader has to be alone with a child/youth and cannot reach the parents, the leader will let the Lead Pastor or the Board chairperson know of the situation immediately after. If there is only one ministry personnel present in a room, windowless doors to rooms are left open.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

When planning off-site activities, parents are to be encouraged to drop off and pick up their children and youth at the event location.

Our first concern in transportation is the safety of all passengers. Drivers must obey all the rules of the road including the speed limits. Reckless or unsafe driving will not be tolerated.

All ministry personnel drivers transporting children or youth during Chalmers activities must complete the following prior to the event:

- Be pre-approved by the Ministry Team Leader
- Provide a copy of their valid driver's license
- Provide a copy of their current automobile insurance policy, and
- Have a minimum of three (3) years driving experience (G2 or above) in good standing

The number of occupants in vehicles transporting children and youth during Chalmers sponsored activities must not exceed the number of seat belts and each child must be in age appropriate safety restraints. Seat belts must be worn by everyone and remain fastened at all times the vehicle is in operation.

Ministry personnel should not be alone in a vehicle with one unrelated child or youth. If a ministry personnel must drive an unrelated child or youth, the parents of that child or youth must be notified in advance and give verbal permission.

## **DISCIPLINE & CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT**

The following forms of punishment will not be permitted:

- corporal punishment of a child by a ministry personnel
- deliberate harsh or degrading measures that would humiliate a child or undermine a child's self respect
- deprivation of a child of basic needs
- lock or confine a child in a room separate from other children or adults

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

**Preventive Discipline:**

- Create a loving, caring atmosphere
- To gain respect, you must grant respect
- Model self-discipline and structure in your own life
- Prepare exciting and interesting activities with short transitions in between
- Arrange your environment for children and for learning
- Establish and communicate realistic expectations for the children
- 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 and reward positive behaviour
- Be aware of children with special needs and bring their needs to the attention of the Ministry Team Leader

**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

Group rules will be established to clearly communicate the expectations required of children.

Some suggested rules are:

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

**HEALTH AND SAFETY GUIDELINES****SICK CHILDREN**

A child who is ill and could therefore expose others to illness, should not be brought into the nursery. It is the parents' responsibility to determine if their children have such a condition and act accordingly. Nursery personnel may also refuse to accept a child if it is felt there would be a health hazard to those already in the nursery.

## **MEDICATIONS**

Medications for children are to be given only by parents. Medications are not accepted by anyone including ministry personnel. In extreme cases (i.e. peanut allergies, ventilators, etc.) arrangements are made which include written instructions, signed by parent or guardian.

## **FIRST AID**

The church Board is responsible for ensuring a first aid kit is available, is in an identified location, and is kept stocked. The kit is sufficient to treat minor cuts and injuries and includes a supply of protective gloves.

## **SPECIAL PRECAUTIONS FOR INJURIES INVOLVING BLOOD**

Separate the injured child from the other children.

Isolate the area where any blood may have fallen on carpet, toys, etc.

Put on protective gloves, apply first aid measures, and notify parents.

If other children have had contact with the blood from a cut or injury, their parents are informed by the persons treating the injury.

All blood is cleaned up using a solution of one part bleach to ten parts water.

All disposable materials contaminated with blood including protective gloves are bagged in plastic and disposed of in a secure manner.

Anyone who has been in contact with the blood will wash the affected area with soap and water.

## **CLEANLINESS**

The nursery area is cleaned weekly. Toys and other materials used in nursery are inspected for cleanliness before being put away each week. Twice a year all toys and materials used in the nursery and Sunday School areas are inspected and are either cleaned or discarded.

## **EXITS**

Main exit and hallway have emergency lighting. All ministry personnel are familiar with exits and how to reach them in an emergency. Main exit is not locked during meetings.

## **ELECTRICAL SAFETY**

Where ministry to children occurs, all electrical outlets are to be kept covered when not in use.

## **PARENTAL PERMISSION**

### **GENERAL**

Chalmers Community Church notifies parents/guardians of special events such as class parties, field trips, and overnight events. For regular events or day events within an 80km drive, verbal notification is all that is required. For overnight events or special events, written permission by the parent or guardian is required (see Appendix 5).

The ministry personnel of events have at their disposal the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of parents or guardians plus alternate emergency contact numbers.

## **EVENTS WITHIN 80KM RADIUS / RECURRING EVENTS**

An approved adult supervising an event involving youth or children is responsible for verbally informing the parents or guardians of such an event. Times, places, and travel arrangements are included in the notification.

For regularly held events such as youth group meetings, only one notification is required at the commencement of the series. The youth are responsible for notifying parents or guardians if changes are made to the schedule or the location of the event.

## **EVENTS OUTSIDE 80KM RADIUS / OVERNIGHT EVENTS**

The person in charge of such an event is responsible for:

- Notifying the Lead Pastor or Board chairperson and receiving approval for the activity
- Seeing all drivers are licensed and insured
- Ensuring at least two unrelated adults are present for supervision and that the ratio of youths to adults never exceeds seven to one
- Ensuring that permission forms are filled out and signed for each participant (see Appendix 5)

## **PREVENTION PROCEDURES SPECIFIC TO CHILDREN'S MINISTRY**

### **RECEIVING AND RELEASING CHILDREN**

#### **For Children Birth to SK (up to and including age 5):**

- The receiving and releasing children under the age of 6 will be closely monitored. A mandatory sign-in and sign-out form is to be used for all programs.
- Children are not to be dropped off or left in a ministry area without a ministry personnel present.
- Children will only be released into the care of the child's parent or designate utilizing a signature.

#### **For Children Grade 1 to 5 (ages 6 and up):**

- Children are received in the designated area by ministry personnel. Children are not to be dropped off or left in a room without a ministry personnel present to receive them.
- Children may be released on their own or be picked up by a parent.

## **WASHROOM GUIDELINES**

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

### **For Infants and Toddlers:**

- Diaper changing is to be done with parent's permission.

### **For Preschool Children:**

- Preschool children are not to go to the washroom alone.
- A ministry personnel will escort the child to the washroom. If the child needs help in the washroom (pulling down pants, getting onto the toilet, washing hands, etc.) a ministry personnel may assist but is to keep the door to the washroom open.

### **For Elementary Children:**

- Elementary boys and girls are not to be sent to the washroom alone but should be accompanied by a buddy or ministry personnel.
- Ministry personnel will escort the children to the washroom and remain outside the washroom door and wait for the children before escorting them back to the room.

## **FOOD GUIDELINES**

Due to food allergies, ministry personnel will not serve food to children in their care. Parents are encouraged to ensure their child has been fed. Pre-made infant bottles or tap water may be given to children. Ministry personnel who wish to give the children food to take home must give it to them in a sealed container when their parents sign them out.

NOTE: This does not pertain to Grade 6-8 Youth Events.

## **PROPER DISPLAY OF AFFECTION**

### **GENERAL**

Physical contact with children and youth should be age and developmentally appropriate. Touch is a natural part of normal human interaction but being overly affectionate with children is inappropriate. Showing affection beyond what would be done in the parents' presence is inappropriate.

### **APPROPRIATE TOUCH**

Love and caring may be expressed by:

- Bending down to the child's eye level and speaking kindly
- 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
- Brief hugs
- Holding a child by the shoulders or hand to control inappropriate behavior
- Holding a preschool child who is crying

### **INAPPROPRIATE TOUCH**

Tickling or prolonged hugging

Touching a child in any area that would be covered by a bathing suit, with the exception of a child being changed or assisted in the bathroom

Carrying older children (age 8+) or having them sit on your lap

## **PREVENTION PROCEDURES SPECIFIC TO YOUTH MINISTRY**

### **PHYSICAL CONTACT FOR YOUTH**

#### **APPROPRIATE TOUCH**

Ministry personnel must be made aware of what constitutes appropriate touch:

- One arm hugs
- Shoulder to shoulder hugs
- Touch on the back or shoulder

Ministry personnel must refrain from inappropriate touch at all times:

- Chest-to-chest hugging
- Extended hugging
- Over exuberant affection
- Lap sitting
- Kissing
- Touching of thighs, knees, back rubs or inappropriate spots of the body

Ministry personnel must be cognizant of conduct that could be misinterpreted:

- Horseplay
- Tickling
- Backrubs

#### **DATING**

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

### **OVERNIGHT EVENTS**

- All retreats and overnight events must be pre-approved by the Board of Elders.
- Proper written consent and medical release forms utilizing the Parental Consent Form (Appendix 5) are required for each child or youth participating in overnight events. Forms must be kept in the Ministry Team Leaders possession during trips and events and a copy given to the Lead Pastor or Board Chairperson. The originals are to be kept on file permanently.
- All overnight activities must be supervised by at least two (2) unrelated opposite gender ministry personnel. There must be a minimum ratio of two (2) ministry personnel for every fourteen children or youth. Ministry personnel are to be assigned a specific group of children or youth for whom they are responsible to supervise.
- Youth attending retreats and overnight events will not be allowed to leave the event. Any exceptions must be added to the permission form signed by the parent.
- If there are separate rooms/tents available for sleeping purposes, female and male youth are not allowed in each other's rooms or tents for any reason during retreats and overnight events. If there is only one sleeping area, female and male youth will be separated by a barrier.

## **COMMUNICATION VIA SOCIAL MEDIA, EMAIL AND TEXT MESSAGING**

Social Media, such as MSN Messenger, Facebook, Twitter, Myspace, Skype, etc., as well as email and texting, will be used to improve communication, to promote and advertise church activities and to arrange face-to-face meetings.

Communication with children 12 years of age and under is prohibited with the exceptions as stated below.

- Ministry personnel may communicate with children via email only through a parent or family email address.

Communication with Youths 13 years of age and older via Social Media, telephone and texting is permitted under the following conditions:

- Ministry personnel will limit their online communication with youth via Social Media to daytime hours (8:00am-11:00pm). If an emergency call or text is received outside of these hours, the ministry personnel will immediately let the Lead Pastor know.
- Online communication will not involve video messaging (Facetime, Skype, etc) in any form, unless it is a training post or group conference call approved by the Youth Pastor.
- Ministry Personnel will ensure that all online communication with Youth is done in view of other people (group pages, wall-to-wall).
- In the rare occasion that a conversation with a youth moves beyond communication of information, ministry personnel will request the youth to continue the conversation in person in a public place.
- Church members, adherents and ministry personnel are encouraged to demonstrate and model purity, integrity, transparency and accountability with all communications including those noted above.

## **SECTION 4 – REPORTING AND RESPONDING TO ABUSE**

### **REPORTING AN INCIDENT OF ABUSE**

#### **HEARING AN ALLEGATION OF ABUSE**

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

- For the protection of our children, youth and vulnerable adults, all allegations and/or suspicions of abuse against children, youth and vulnerable adults will be taken seriously.
- Immediately upon hearing of potential abuse or allegations of abuse to a child or youth, the ministry personnel must complete a Confidential Reporting Form documenting all pertinent information (Appendix 3). The victim should not be asked leading questions nor should the accused or any other parties be contacted at the point of completing the Confidential Reporting Form.
- All forms must be kept permanently by the Lead Pastor unless otherwise directed by legal counsel.
- When hearing an allegation of child abuse, or having a suspicion of abuse, it is your responsibility, by law, to report it to Child and Family Services.
- Ministry personnel are requested to notify the Lead Pastor that they will be making a report to Child and Family Services (Children’s Aid).

#### **REPORTING AN ALLEGATION OR SUSPICION OF ABUSE**

- According to the Child and Family Services Act, any person with a reasonable suspicion of child abuse has a legal responsibility to immediately report the matter to child protection authorities (Children’s Aid) or the police. Reporting must be done by telephone or in person promptly at the point of observing signs of abuse or receiving a report of abuse. The reporting must be immediate, a direct report, and an on-going report. The report may be done with support by pastoral staff.
- A person who knowingly fails to report in these circumstances is in violation of the law and may be found to have committed an offence and may be subject to discipline action by Chalmers Community Church.
- Chalmers requests that when a ministry personnel reports a suspicion of abuse or an allegation of abuse to authorities, that they also notify the Lead Pastor that a report has been made. It is understood that the report is to be kept confidential.
- If the suspected abuse happened in the context of Chalmers ministries or was committed by a church member or attendee...
  - the parents of the victim must be notified by the Lead Pastor or Board chairperson.
  - The Lead Pastor or Board chairperson must notify Chalmers insurance provider and seek legal counsel upon hearing of a suspected child abuse case.
  - Outside of the person who reported, the Lead Pastor and the Board Chairperson, the identity of the victim and the accused will remain confidential, on a need-to-know basis.

## **ASSESSING AND INVESTIGATING AN ALLEGATION OR SUSPICION OF ABUSE**

- No persons, including Pastors and Board members, are to assume the function of assessing, substantiating or investigating the need for intervention or interpretation of suspected child abuse.
- There must not be any undue interference when a report of child abuse has been filed with child protection authorities or the police. The Lead Pastor or Board chairperson should ask the child protection authorities how they can assist in helping and supporting the investigation and the hurting child or youth and their family. The Lead Pastor or Board chairperson should maintain frequent communication and supportive relationships with those accused of child abuse as long as these persons exhibit a willingness to listen, change and look to Christ for help. This does not exclude the need for hurting individuals to receive professional counselling.

## **RESPONDING TO AN INCIDENT OF ABUSE**

### **SPIRITUAL RESPONSE AND COUNSEL FOR THE VICTIM**

- For the protection of our children, youth and vulnerable adults, all allegations and/or suspicions of abuse will be taken seriously and handled with the utmost care. The suspected victims will be treated with dignity and respect. The child will be assured that they have done the right thing in reporting, but will not be given assurance that the event will not be shared with others.
- During the process of reporting and response, all ministry personnel will be committed to prayer and strive to remain calm and hopeful.
- Situations of abuse must be handled forthrightly with due respect for people's privacy and confidentiality. Discretion must be observed and details of the suspected abuse must not be shared among the church community. Information should be shared on a need-to-know basis, expanding only as individuals are drawn into the response and investigation. Confidentiality for the victim must be protected.
- Pastors will seek opportunities to provide individual care and counsel both for the abuse victim and their family. Pastors will determine the need for professional assistance and evaluate and designate resources as needed and able.

## **BIBLICAL RESPONSE AND DISCIPLINE FOR THE ACCUSED**

- The accused is to be treated with dignity and respect. If the accused is a paid ministry personnel, that person will be relieved temporarily of his or her duties until the investigation is completed with arrangements made to either maintain or suspend his or her income until the allegations are cleared or substantiated.
- It is the responsibility and right of Pastors and the Board to exercise and practice church discipline as outlined in Matthew 18 and as stipulated in Chalmers' Church Discipline and Conflict Management policy.
- Pastors will seek opportunity to provide individual care and counsel both for the accused and their family. Pastors and the Board will determine the need for professional assistance and evaluate and designate resources as needed and able.
- Anyone accused of abuse to children or youth will be prohibited from having access to children or youth until they are cleared of any and all charges. Clear written guidelines will be provided to the individual with restricted activities and areas of the church property that they are not permitted to use or be in.
- Anyone convicted of child abuse will be prohibited from having access to children or youth. Pastors may designate an individual to be responsible to be informed whenever the convicted person attends church activities and to accompany the convicted person while on church property. Clear written guidelines will be provided to the individual listing restricted areas and access points on the church property.

## **MEDIA RELATIONS**

- It is the responsibility of the Lead Pastor or Board Chairperson to speak on behalf of Chalmers to media and to the public in relation to a suspected child abuse case. All inquiries should be directed to this person and comment should not be made by other individuals unless given permission to do so.
- Public statements must be well prepared and presented under the guidance of legal counsel.

## **ONGOING INVESTIGATION**

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

## **SECTION 5 - RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **RESPONSIBILITY FOR PROTECTION**

Safeguards are in place to protect children, youth, members, ministry personnel, and the reputation of the church. The administration, implementation, monitoring, review, and revision of this *Plan* are the duty of the church Board. It is the responsibility of all members and ministry personnel to be familiar with this *Plan* and to live by its conditions. All ministry personnel sign a Ministry Covenant (see Appendix 1) indicating their responsibility to conform to the standards of this *Plan*.

Chalmers Community Church, under the direction and administration of the Board of Elders, will:

- Screen all those in positions of leadership. Those considered to be in positions of leadership are: the pastoral staff, Board of Elders, and ministry personnel. Youth assistants will also be screened and made familiar with this policy.
- Check references and do police records search on all ministry personnel. Youth assistants will not require a police records search. Anyone with criminal abuse violations will not be allowed to work with children, youth, or vulnerable people.
- Train all ministry personnel to understand the meaning of abuse, its signs, and how to deal with it when it occurs. Training will include a complete study of this *Plan*.
- Ensure by periodic monitoring that the Policy and Procedure parts of this *Plan* are implemented and enforced.
- Ensure all ministry personnel agree with and sign the Ministry Covenant.
- Ensure there is always one approved ministry personnel present at any church activity whether it be on church property or off.

EXCEPTION: The nursery coordinator may designate two senior teens (ages 16 -17) to supervise the nursery as long as a ministry personnel is available to support if necessary.

### **TRAINING AND EDUCATION**

#### **GENERAL**

The pastoral staff and the church Board are responsible for implementing a training program for Chalmers Community Church, which includes:

- General information on the *Plan to Protect* to all youth and adult regular attendees of church functions
- Information on the *Plan* during membership classes for prospective new members of Chalmers Community Church

Once each year a meeting of ministry personnel will be held during which the *Plan* and compliance with it are reviewed. Feedback from the ministry personnel is encouraged and any concerns raised will be addressed.

## **CHURCH ATTENDEES**

The *Plan to Protect* is a public document, available for anyone. It will be made available on the Chalmers website or a hard copy upon request.

General information on the *Plan* is announced during church services and congregational meetings when appropriate.

## **MINISTRY PERSONNEL**

All ministry personnel are instructed in all parts of the *Plan* and sign a Ministry Covenant.

## **YOUTH ASSISTANTS**

Youth assistants are given a copy of the *Plan* and instruction by their Ministry Team Leader in the basic principles of the *Plan*. Youth assistants always work under the supervision of a ministry personnel.

## **PROSPECTIVE MINISTRY PERSONNEL**

Prospective ministry personnel may serve in a capacity similar to youth assistants up till the time they complete their six month regular attendance period. Prospective ministry personnel receive training on the *Plan* culminating in their signing the Ministry Covenant if they wish to serve in this capacity.

## **RECORDS**

Records are kept of who received training and what the training consisted of. Ministry Covenants and training records are kept by the Lead Pastor as permanent records.

## **ACCOUNTABILITY**

### **LEAD PASTOR AND BOARD CHAIRPERSON**

The Lead Pastor and the Board chairperson are accountable to Chalmers Community Church for:

Overseeing the implementation of the *Plan*

Maintaining and storing confidential records

Monitoring the *Plan* on an ongoing basis through systematic verification

Acting as spokespersons and sole contacts with those outside the church

Acting as liaison between regulatory agencies and the National Office

## **CHURCH BOARD**

The church Board is accountable to Chalmers Community Church for:

- Developing the *Plan*
- Training the congregation and leaders
- Keeping records of who received what training
- Seeing that the *Plan* is distributed to the appropriate persons
- Dealing with abuses, resolving complaints and allegations
- Conducting periodic inspections to see that all aspects of the *Plan* are implemented and adhered to
- Reviewing and revising the *Plan* on a periodic basis
- Keeping the congregation informed of matters pertaining to the *Plan*
- Ensuring there is adequate liability insurance coverage to the satisfaction of the National Office

## **MINISTRY PERSONNEL**

Ministry personnel are accountable to Chalmers Community Church for:

- Knowing and following the requirements of the *Plan to Protect*
- Abiding by the Ministry Covenant
- Supervising and monitoring their areas of responsibility for signs of abuse
- Reporting abuse and keeping the Board aware of any potential problems

## **YOUTH ASSISTANTS**

Youth assistants are accountable to Chalmers Community Church for:

- Assisting ministry personnel
- Reporting any abuse or suspected abuse to their adult supervisor

## **DEALING WITH A VIOLATION OF THE *PLAN TO PROTECT***

All involved in ministry leadership are held to a high standard. Anyone who violates the *Plan* is subject will be corrected according to the Church Discipline and Conflict Resolution policy of Chalmers Community Church. If the ministry personnel is willing to abide by the *Plan*, and the violation did not involve abuse, they may stay in their role. If the ministry personnel continues to violate the *Plan*, they will be asked to step down from their position.

**APPENDIX 1**  
**MINISTRY COVENANT**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ am in essential agreement with the Constitution of Chalmers Community Church, and freely enter into the following Covenant of Ministry, accepting it as part of my personal commitment to Jesus Christ.

Having been led to repentance for my sins, with faith in Jesus Christ; our Lord and Saviour, I solemnly enter into this covenant with the body of Christ.

I covenant, by the aid of the Holy Spirit:

To abide by the guidelines and requirements of the *Plan to Protect*; to walk circumspectly in the world and endeavour to seek the best over all whom I have care and influence;

To be aware of situations as outlined in the *Plan to Protect* where vulnerable persons may experience physical, sexual or emotional abuse and act to prevent such occurrences;

To communicate clearly, and promptly report to the leadership any concerns or situations dealing with the abuse of any persons for whom I provide guidance or care in my ministry in Christ Jesus;

To comply with any instructions from either the church or civil leadership regarding the care of those to whom I minister.

Amen

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

THIS DOCUMENT IS CONFIDENTIAL AND IS STORED AS SUCH

As part of the Ministry Covenant would you please supply the following information:

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Marital Status: \_\_\_\_\_

How long have you attended Chalmers Community Church? \_\_\_\_\_

The following two persons may be contacted as references:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have any communicable disease that could pose a threat to anyone you contact during ministry?

\_\_\_\_\_

Areas of ministry I'm interested in (e.g. nursery, Sunday School leader, youth leader, etc.)

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature Of Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Accepted By Church Board: Y/N

Signature Of Board Chairperson \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX 2**  
**CHALMERS COMMUNITY CHURCH**  
**STATEMENT OF FAITH**

**WE BELIEVE THAT:**

**GOD** is the only true God who, through divine mystery, exists in three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

**GOD THE FATHER** is the Creator of heaven and earth, provider of all things, our eternal heavenly Father, holder of all covenants, and the final Judge of mankind.

**JESUS CHRIST** is the only Son of God, was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of a virgin, led a sinless life, was willingly crucified as atonement for the sins of man, rose from the dead, ascended into heaven, will return to rule the earth with justice, mercy, and truth, and is the only mediator between God and man.

**THE HOLY SPIRIT** is the comforter sent by Jesus, dwells within Christian believers, bestows spiritual gifts, guides into all truth, draws people to Christ, and directs Christians to live a godly life.

**MAN** was created by God in His image, was created innocent but fell through disobedience, is now born with a sinful nature, and can only be reconciled to God through faith in Jesus Christ.

**SATAN** is a fallen angel, rules the forces of evil, is the father of lies, has come to earth to steal, kill and destroy, and is subject to God and the name of Jesus.

**THE BIBLE** consisting of the Old and New Testaments is God's revelation to man, is divinely inspired, infallible, and is our sole guide and final authority in all matters of faith and practice.

**SALVATION** of man is solely by God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ, is bestowed on those who accept Christ as Saviour and Lord, and results in the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and the gift of eternal life and resurrection.

**THE CHURCH** is the body and bride of Christ, and is made up of all those who believe and have accepted Christ as their Lord and Saviour.

**THE FAMILY** is a unit ordained by God, sanctified by marriage, and blessed by Jesus Christ.

**MARRIAGE** is a lifelong covenant and union of one man and one woman

**WE ALSO BELIEVE IN:**

**THE SACRAMENTS** of baptism and the Lord's Supper.

**THE FRUIT AND GIFTS** of the Holy Spirit.

**THE RESURRECTION AND JUDGEMENT** of all people after the second coming of Christ.

**THE POLITY** of the Congregational Christian Churches in Canada.

**APPENDIX 3  
CONFIDENTIAL REPORTING FORM  
FOR SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE**

DATE ABUSE OBSERVED: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE REPORTED: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME OF CHILD: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS OF CHILD: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE NUMBER OF CHILD: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME OF PERSON FILING REPORT: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME OF PASTORAL STAFF RECEIVING REPORT: \_\_\_\_\_

INDICATIONS OF SUSPECTED ABUSE (NOTE: be specific about what you said and what the child said, write as much as possible. Include facts, physical signs and dialogue where applicable):

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

ACTION TAKEN (including date and time):

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Person Reporting)

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Board Chairperson)

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Lead Pastor)

The information contained in this report is kept strictly confidential and is shared only with authorities and the Board, only on a need-to-know basis.

**APPENDIX 4**

**FOLLOW-UP REPORT (FOR BOARD USE)  
FOR SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE**

NAME OF CHILD: \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS OF CHILD: \_\_\_\_\_  
PHONE NUMBER OF CHILD: \_\_\_\_\_  
NAME OF PERSON FILING INITIAL REPORT: \_\_\_\_\_  
NAME OF PERSON RECEIVING REPORT: \_\_\_\_\_  
RESULTS OF INVESTIGATION:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

ACTIONS TAKEN (including date and time):

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

The information contained in this report is kept strictly confidential and is shared only with authorities and the Board, only on a need-to-know basis.

**APPENDIX 5  
PARENTAL or GUARDIAN CONSENT FORM  
FOR  
TRIPS OUTSIDE 80KM RADIUS OR ANY OVERNIGHT EVENT**

ACTIVITY: \_\_\_\_\_  
LOCATION: \_\_\_\_\_  
DATE/S: \_\_\_\_\_  
PERSON IN CHARGE: \_\_\_\_\_  
PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

This activity has received approval from the Board chairperson. All drivers are licensed and insured. There will be at least one approved ministry personnel for supervision and the ratio of youths to adults is kept at or below the ratio of seven to one.

Name of youth or child: \_\_\_\_\_  
Age: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Alternate Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Emergency Contact:  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Does this child or youth have any medical, physical or mental conditions (e.g. food or drug allergies, diabetes, seizures, asthma, etc.) that the person in charge should know of?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Are any of these conditions potentially life threatening? \_\_\_\_\_  
Will this child or youth be bringing any medications to this event? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**NOTE: THE LEADER OF THIS EVENT WILL NOT LOOK AFTER OR GIVE ANY MEDICATIONS.**

Precautions are taken for the safety and health of your child, but in the event of accident or illness, *Chalmers Community Church*, its staff, and its volunteers are hereby released from any liability. In the event that your child requires hospitalization, special medication, X-rays or treatment, the parents/guardians will be notified as soon as possible.

Your child must be covered by Provincial Health Insurance or equivalent medical insurance.

Provincial Health Insurance Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Family Physician: \_\_\_\_\_ Physician's Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_