

Faith Baptist Church Great Village, NS

Protection Policies Manual

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Protection Policies Manual

A Plan to Protect CHILDREN, YOUTH, and WORKERS

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SECTION ONE: PURPOSE

The church has a spiritual, moral and legal obligation to provide a secure environment for children participating in church programs which are under the auspices and authority of the church.

At the same time, we are concerned about the safety and reputation of the adults and teens who volunteer to make these ministries possible.

Child abuse is a violation of God's moral law within the context of trusted relationships. It is criminal behaviour that causes emotional, physical and spiritual trauma to victims and has destructive consequences for abusers. Devastating effects on the credibility of the church's ministry and the name of Christ make it essential that this church take all appropriate steps to prevent abusive incidents from occurring.

1. It Can Happen in Any Church

Incidents of abuse can occur in any church - including ours. Churches have traditionally accepted the services of anyone expressing an interest in working with children or youth. Churches can be trusting and unsuspecting institutions. Asking sensitive questions of those who are giving their time and talent can be seen as distasteful by church leaders. No one wants to offend potential workers, especially long time church members with a history of good service. These qualities can make a church susceptible to incidents of child abuse.

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

Such incidents often result in massive media attention, sometimes on a national scale. Television stations conduct live interviews from church property on the evening news. Front page stories hit the local paper. Community residents begin to associate the church with the incident of abuse. 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.

2. Understanding the Church's Vulnerability

a) Why Churches are Susceptible

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

b) Access

The Boy Scouts, Big Brothers, and similar organizations have instituted comprehensive programs to reduce the risk of child abuse. Child abusers are attracted to an institution in which they have immediate access to potential victims in an atmosphere of complete trust.

c) 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.

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 abuse who have sued a church often allege that the church was negligent in not adequately screening applicants or for not providing adequate supervision.

3. Understanding the Church’s Legal Responsibility

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 the 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.
- The church was negligent in the supervising or monitoring of its personnel or membership.

4. Understanding & Reducing the Risk

The Faith Baptist Church (hereinafter known as FBC) has a mandate to minister to individuals, families, adults, youth and children. In that context, the FBC stresses the sanctity of human life and the importance and worth of each individual in the eyes of God.

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 the FBC. We feel compelled to establish guidelines for the prevention of child abuse. We recognize that formal guidelines and procedures will help prevent the opportunity for abuse to arise.

We believe that childhood innocence is a gift given by God. Children readily place their faith in adults who care for them. It is our task as a church to safeguard that trust.

- The gospel of Mark records that when people brought little children to Jesus, He took them in His arm’s, put His hands on them and blessed them. As a church, it is our desire to bring children to Jesus, too.

- 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:
 - Avoid every kind of evil. (I Thess. 5:22) But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. (Eph. 5:3)
 - But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea. (Matt. 18:6)
 - If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan. (Matt 18:15-17)

SECTION TWO: EDUCATIONAL INFORMATION

1. 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:

a) Appropriate Touch

- Bending down to the child's eye level and speaking kindly; listening to him or her carefully.
- Taking a child's hand and leading him or her to an activity.
- Putting an arm around the shoulder of a child who needs quieting or comforting.
- Taking both of the child's hands as you say, "You did such a good job!" or "I'm so glad to see you. We've missed you!" etc.
- Patting a child on the head, hand, and shoulder or back to affirm him or her.
- Holding a child by the shoulders or hand to keep his or her attention while you redirect the child's behavior.
- Gently holding a child's chin to help him or her focus on what you are saying. (important for children with attention deficit disorder)
- Holding a preschool child who is crying

b) Inappropriate Touch

- Kissing a child, coaxing a child to kiss you, extended hugging and tickling.
- Touching a child in any area that would be covered by a bathing suit (except when assisting a child with toileting as outlined on page 9).
- Carrying older children or having them sit on your lap.
- Being alone with a child.
- Prolonged physical contact.
- Opposite sex piggyback rides.
- Seductiveness or suggestive contact.
- Any physical contact of any kind that is done for the pleasure or satisfaction of care providers.
- Any touching used to express power or control over a child.

2. Discipline and Classroom Management

a) Proactive Classroom Management

- Create a loving, caring atmosphere.
- Arrange your environment for children and for learning.
- To gain respect you must grant respect.
- Establish and communicate realistic expectations for the children.
- Be sure the activities that you provide are meaningful and age-appropriate.

- Be fair and consistent with all children.
- Be sure your focus is on positive actions.
- Be aware of children with special needs.

b) Remedial Discipline

- Try to deal with the problems individually.
- Explain to the child why the behavior is unacceptable.
- Redirect the child to positive action.
- Explain the consequences of unacceptable behavior by defining the correct way to behave as well as the result of the wrong behavior.
- Offer choices that are acceptable to both you and the child.

c) Classroom Rule Suggestions

- One voice talking at a time.
- Quiet hands get answered.
- Use “indoor” voices.
- Obey directions the first time.
- Use good manners.
- Keep your hands and feet to yourself.
- Respect each other.
- Be friendly.
- Visit the washroom before class begins.
- Remember – life isn’t fair.

d) Some Examples of *Appropriate Discipline* within the Ministry Setting

- Praising the specific behaviors you want to see in your group (i.e. “good listening”, “thank you for waiting”)
- A firm gentle voice addressing and redirecting the behavior (i.e. “you are running; walk please”)
- Confidential parental discussion when necessary.
- Age appropriate “time outs” or withdrawal from activity.

e) Some Examples of *Inappropriate Discipline* within a Ministry Setting

- Corporal punishment of any kind.
- Any words or tone that would cause a child to think he or she is the “problem” rather than a specific behavior being addressed (e.g., screaming at a child)
- Any words that could cause feelings of condemnation or shame in a child about any aspect of their person—including sarcastic references to anything physical, emotional, mental, or position (or station) in life, such as saying, “Are you a strong boy? Strong boys don’t cry” or “Shame on you.”

3. Understanding Child Abuse

a) Abuse Definitions & Behaviours

“Child Abuse” is defined as follows:

- It can be physical, emotional or sexual.
- All child abuse involves the misuse 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.

I. Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is the use of physical force or action that results, or could result, in injury to a child or youth. It is more than reasonable discipline. Sometimes injury is caused by over-discipline. Injuring a child or youth is not acceptable, regardless of differing cultural standards on discipline. **Note:** *Within the context of the church, it is not permissible to strike a child.*

II. Emotional Abuse

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, and self-destructive or aggressive behaviour.

III. Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse occurs when a child or youth is used by somebody else for sexual stimulation or gratification. Sexual activity between children or youth may also be sexual abuse if older or more powerful children or youth take sexual advantage of those who are younger or less powerful.

Child sexual abuse includes behaviour that involves touching and non-touching aspects.

Types of sexual abuse that involve touching include (but are not restricted to):

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

Types of sexual abuse that do not involve touching include (but are not restricted to):

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

The full extent of child sexual abuse in North America is not known. Current conservative estimates suggest that from 500,000 to over 1,500,000 children are sexually abused each year.

IV. Neglect

Neglect is the failure of those responsible for the care of the child to meet the physical, emotional or medical needs of a child to an extent that the child's health & development or safety is endangered. (Reference: Inter-ministry Child Abuse Handbook Province of British Columbia, 1988, pages 10 & 11)

b) Symptoms of Abuse

Church workers and staff should be alert to the physical signs of abuse, as well as to behavioural 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.

Some of the more common signs are summarized by:

*** Physical signs may include (but are not excluded to):**

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

*** Behavioural signs may include (but are not excluded to):**

- anxiety when approaching church or nursery area
- nervous or hostile behaviour toward adults
- sexual self-consciousness

- “acting out” sexual behaviour
- withdrawal from church activities and friends

* Verbal signs may include the following statements (but are not excluded to):

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

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 being 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 behaviour, sexual “acting out”, depression, diffused sexual identity, and poor self-esteem. (Ksendall-Tackett, Williams, and Finkelhor, 1991) The incidence of sexually transmitted disease is also a possible outcome.

The degree of damage depends upon several factors including the intensity, duration and frequency of the abuse. In addition, the relationship of the perpetrator to the child matters. If the abuser is a known and trusted authority figure in the child's life, the degree of impact increases dramatically.

Consequences of child sexual abuse can plague victims into adulthood. Outcome studies of adult survivors of child sexual abuse suggest the following effects: sexual dysfunction, eating disorders, substance abuse, promiscuity, disassociation from emotions, and possible perpetration of sexual abuse on others. When church leaders, pastors, and respected congregational workers perpetrate the abuse, lifelong religious confusion and deep feelings of enmity toward God and the church can occur.

d) Myths of a Child Abuser

Who is the typical child abuser? Some church leaders assume that abusers 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 abuser could be an active adult or teen in the church.

Consider the following:

If abuse occurs in our church, a respected person who attends our church, member or adherent will most likely be the abuser. 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 preschool workers, teachers in a church operated school, camp counsellors, 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 the context of an ongoing relationship between the abuser and the child.

4. Disqualifications from Children’s/Youth Ministries

A criminal conviction for a sexual offence involving a minor would certainly disqualify an applicant. In the case of paedophilic behaviour (abuse of a pre-adolescent child) such a conviction should disqualify an individual no matter how long ago it occurred (because of the virtual impossibility that such a condition can be “cured”). Other automatic disqualifiers would include incest, rape, assaults involving minors, murder, kidnapping, child pornography, sodomy, and the physical abuse of a minor.

Some crimes would not be automatic disqualifiers, because they would not necessarily suggest a risk of child abuse. Some property offences would not be included in this list, particularly if the offence occurred long ago and the individual has a long history of impeccable behaviour.

5. Religious Conversion

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 the FBC. 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 another incident of abuse occur. A defence – that the abuser claimed to have been converted – would likely be viewed with derision by a civil court. Putting a known child abuser in a position involving access to children is taking a huge risk.

6. Definitions

Abuse

In relation to a child, means physical, mental, emotional, or sexual mistreatment of a child.

Adult

Means an individual aged 18 years or over.

Minor

Recognizing that the age of majority for Alberta is 18 years, a minor is any person between 0 and 18 years.

For the purposes of this policy or document the following terms apply:

- Infant - Individual from birth to two years of age.
- Child - Individual over 2 years and below 15 years.
- Youth - Individual over 15 years and under 18 years.

One-On-One

Refers to situations where a leader or volunteer has the potential of being alone with a child during a church-offered program for children, including transportation within such a program, or between the child's home and place of meeting.

Parent

In relation to a child, this means the natural mother or father or legal guardian who has custody of the child.

Program or Ministries for Minors

Includes all programs offered under the auspices of our church for infants, children and youths as defined above.

Two Adult Rule

This rule provides that no fewer than two adults will be present during any minors' activity in order to increase the safety of each minor.

Visibility Rule

Means that, when a minor(s) is/are in a room, if there is no corridor window into that room the door(s) or upper half of a split door will be kept completely open and all those in the room will be in a clearly visible location. All rooms used for Children's/Youth Ministries at FBC are to have corridor windows or open doors.

SECTION THREE: POLICIES, PROCEDURES & PROTOCOLS

1. Screening, Recruiting and Training

a) Screening Committee

A screening committee comprised of a minimum of three, *maximum of five*, individuals to include the Senior Pastor, Associate Pastor of Family Ministries, and three members of the church body. This committee is to be responsible for screening all workers, employees and volunteers, recruited to work with minors, and to include:

- Coordinating annual policy awareness and training sessions;
- Conducting interviews, reference checks and completing the associated paperwork;
- Soliciting criminal record searches;
- Maintaining a master list of individuals accepted for children's/youth ministry at FBC
- Ensuring completed ministry application forms, records of training undertaken by those working with minors, and related documents are stored securely in perpetuity in a central registry file;
- Maintaining the confidentiality of personnel ministry records; and
- Handling incidents of abuse as they are reported, including communications with the police and media.

b) Records

- All screening records, including the initial CRC and Child Abuse Registry Check, will be sealed in an envelope on completion of the screening process and placed in the individual's confidential screening file.
- Information pertinent to the supervision or involvement with age groups other than that initially screened will be transferable to other ministries involving children or youth if approved initially by screening committee.
- Screening records will be maintained in a locked cupboard or cabinet in the church administration offices.
- Only members of the Screening Committee and the individual themselves will be permitted access to their personal screening file.
- Screening files should be kept for seventy-five (75) years.

c) Worker Requirements (paid & volunteer)

All workers, paid staff and volunteers, serving in children's/youth ministries will be required to:

- Complete an application form prescribed by the screening committee (see Appendix "A");
- Sign and submit a Child Abuse Register – Request for a Search;
- Request and submit a criminal record check from the local RCMP detachment (minors under 14 years are exempt from CRC); completed every two years.

- Participate in seminars or workshops as prescribed by the screening committee directed at issues of child abuse, identification and reporting obligations;
- Read resource material as prescribed by the screening committee directed at issues of child abuse and safety.
- Sign a Ministry Covenant/acknowledgement of having read this policy and related guidelines and agreeing to comply with church policies and guidelines. (Appendix B)

d) Screening Process

All paid staff not involved in working with minors, will submit to a screening process as prescribed by the Church Board. This process will include criminal records checks, minimally every two years, for their own and the church's protection.

e) Past Abuse History/Questionable References

Individuals with a known history of having committed abuse as defined in this document or anyone with questionable references will not be permitted to work with minors.

f) Six-Month Rule

We will follow the "Six-Month" rule (an adult or youth who has been an adherent, in good standing, of our congregation for a period of at least six months) for purposes of recruiting personnel for our children's/youth ministries.

g) Only Members are Leaders

Only members of FBC will be leaders of ministries. All other volunteers will be helpers.

2. Recruitment of Paid Staff and Volunteers

a) Screening

To protect minors in our care and to be protected from liability, the church must take reasonable action in screening and supervising the workers 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 having everyone fill out an application form and keeping them on file, the church greatly reduces the potential for child abuse and the resultant liability. Our staffing and child protection policies and guidelines also serve to protect workers from accusation.

b) Interim Approval

The Children's/Youth Ministry Application Form should be submitted by the worker before interim approval is considered as it is critical in protecting the church from legal action if a case of child abuse occurs in which a church worker is involved.

- The ministry coordinator(s) should ensure the applicant has received approval from the Screening Committee prior to scheduling the individual to serve.

c) Ministry Lists of Workers

- Each ministry should keep a list of workers approved to serve in their ministry.

3. Reference Check

a) Three Personal References

Three personal references are requested on the application form. Please try to avoid using relatives. Suggested references are:

- Former pastor
- Other individuals who have served with the individual in children's/youth work and who have sufficient strength of relationship to comment on the individual's personal habits and character
- Try to include one reference from inside the church

b) Reference Contact

At least two of these references will be contacted and asked to affirm the appointment of the volunteer. The person making the contact will use a suggested 'script', and the name of this individual, the date, and a summary of the reference's comments will all be recorded. (See Appendix C)

4. Interview

An interview provides the screening committee with the opportunity to review the important items from the application form in a personal setting. This allows them to ask follow-up questions and to enhance their knowledge of the applicant. The interview will also allow the potential worker the opportunity of asking questions about various children's ministries and the reasons behind our child protection procedures. The interview will be conducted by a minimum of two members of the screening committee. (See Appendix D)

5. Criminal Record Check & Child Abuse Registry

- Each approved worker who has been screened will be required to provide the Screening Committee with a Criminal Record Check and a Child abuse Registry form.
- 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 documentation requested by the FBC will be borne by the church. Tracey will ask Steve about cost and availability of notary.

- Minors under 14 years of age are exempt from the Criminal Record Check. Tracey will clarify age.
- Criminal Record Checks are required, minimally, every two years. The worker will be notified by the screening committee when an update is required.
- New workers may begin working for the church after the Criminal Record Check and Child Abuse Registry form has been submitted to the screening committee.
- The forms are to be submitted to the church office in an envelope marked 'confidential' with their name on the outside, to the attention of the screening committee.
- If there is no criminal record of any sort, the volunteer may be considered for ongoing service in the church.

- If there is a record or information that raises some concern, a member of the screening committee and ministry coordinator will meet to discuss the matter.

- If the offence is other than child or sexual abuse, the volunteer may proceed with ministry in the church provided both the member of the screening committee and the ministry coordinator involved agree. 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 offence
 - the length of time between past criminal activity and the present
 - the conduct and circumstances of the individual since the offence
 - the likelihood of the individual repeating the offence

*If the offence is related to abuse of minors or of a sexual nature, the worker may not be involved in ministry with minors on behalf of the FBC.

6. Staffing, Supervision, Security & Identification

a) Two-Adult Rule

We will follow a basic "Two-Adult" rule which says that two adults (individuals aged 18 years of age or over) are to be present during any children's/youth ministry program. This rule reduces the risk of child abuse, and also reduces the risk of false accusations of abuse by individuals seeking a quick legal settlement. Where more than one room is being used for a program, a minimum of one adult worker, or two youth workers aged 16+, are to be present in each room.

b) Lines of Sight & Storage Access

All classrooms, offices and hallways have windows or doors with windows, allowing for easy viewing by parents and supervisors. Sight lines through these windows are to remain unobstructed at all times. All storage and utility areas are to be kept locked and made accessible only to those who have a need for access.

c) One-on-one Situations

Workers are to avoid one-on-one situations with children/youth, except in parentally pre-approved one-on-one situations where the adult has a legitimate reason to be alone with a child.

In one-on-one situations, a second adult should be in the immediate area with the door open to the room. (For protection of the family unit, we recommend the second cannot be an immediate family member.)

d) Name Tags

All those serving in nursery/preschool and primary elementary (grades 1 to 4) children's programs must wear name tags provided by the church or approved clothing, which identifies them with the ministry or program.

e) Children Signed In & Out

Children age five and under, must be signed-in and released only to those authorized by the parent(s). Doors are to be supervised to ensure children are not able to exit alone and/or cannot be taken from the room without the adult worker's awareness. (See Appendix F)

f) Special Concerns & Arrangements

Names and addresses of parents and children/youth, the name(s) any alternate approved by the parent and any special concern (e.g. allergies) will be carefully maintained.

7. Field Trips, Special Events & Transportation

a) Pre Approval

Activities conducted away from the church property are to be pre-approved by the pastoral staff. All activities and content thereof, held inside or outside the church building, conducted as an activity sanctioned by FBC, must be transparently conducted and the content must meet with pastoral approval.

b) Notification & Written Consent

Parents are to be notified at least one week prior to the outing and proper written consent/medical release forms are required for each child participating in the event.

c) Adult Ratios

All trips and outings must be supervised by a minimum of two approved adult workers. Overnight events should have a minimum ratio of 1 approved adult worker for every 5 (age 2 – 12 years) children with a

minimum of 2 workers at all times. If only two workers are required, they must *not be* an immediate family member.

d) Vehicle and Driver Requirements

When the transporting of children is involved in an activity, all drivers must be at least 18 years of age, have a valid driver's license, and current automobile insurance. The number of persons per car must never exceed the number of seat belts. All drivers will be asked to submit a copy of their driver's license and vehicle insurance to the screening committee prior to transporting any children or youth.

8. Child Protection Guidelines

a) Child Security

- Programs for nursery and pre-school aged children must provide a sign-in sheet and maintain an accurate sign-in procedure including child's name, parent's (or alternate's) name and location during that period of time and any special needs.
- Parents of nursery-aged children will be provided with an I.D. # at the time the child is brought to the nursery.
- A child will be released to a parent or approved alternate only on the basis of personal identification, a signature or in the case of a nursery child, the bearer of the I.D. #.
- Children are never to be dropped off in the nursery or classroom without a teacher/caregiver present.
- Doors are to be supervised so that children are not able to exit alone and/or a parent cannot take them from the room without a worker's awareness.

b) Staffing & Supervision Guidelines

Programs that involve children and youth 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.

c) Ratios/Age Expectations

At FBC, ministry programs will have a minimum of at least one volunteer who is 18 years of age or older in each classroom supported by volunteers ages 12 and up.

- As a general rule there is to be a minimum of two workers in any room with nursery, pre-school and elementary children, except in the event of an emergency situation.

- Ideally, there will be a minimum of one worker for every 4-6 pre-school children and one for every 8-10 children in grades 1-4.
- Pre-school classrooms - to facilitate observance of washroom guidelines:
 - Ideally during activities when the adjacent areas are in use (e.g. during Sunday School) the classroom may be staffed with one adult and one youth 14 years or older.
 - Ideally during activities when the adjacent areas are not in use (e.g. during Junior Church) the classroom should be staffed with a minimum of three workers - one adult and one youth 14 years or older. The third worker may be a youth 12 years or older.
- All preschool rooms are to be staffed with at least one adult worker to better facilitate observance of the washroom guidelines.
- The nursery may be staffed with one approved adult because of its large picture window with high visibility to the church sanctuary, provided a 1:4 ratio is maintained and there are no children who are not yet walking. Children, age 12 and up, who have been cleared by the screening committee, may serve as a second worker in the nursery, up to a maximum of 8 children. If there are more than 8 children, a second adult must be brought in. Non-walking infants should not be accepted into the nursery unless sufficient adult workers are available to have a 1:2 ratio.

d) Parental Permission

Church staff or volunteer workers must obtain the consent of the child's parent or guardian before spending one-on-one time with that child. Workers must also notify an appropriate church leader of such meetings in advance and the meeting should occur in a public place with parents dropping the child off and picking the child up.

- Children/youth must also have parental permission for involvement in church sponsored field trips or overnight events.

9. Discipline and Classroom Management

Discipline is not something you do to a child. It is something you do for a child. The word discipline does not mean punishment. It comes from the root word disciple, which means training that molds character, behavior and values. Rather than seeking to merely maintain control or keep children quiet, our goal in managing children's behavior should be to shape their character in such a way that they will become mature.

a) General Guidelines

- Every ministry working with children or youth should have clearly defined rules and discipline procedure. Children may help establish some rules; teenagers should be involved in setting rules for their classes.
 - Children and parents should be made aware of established rules and discipline procedure.
 - Ongoing problems in discipline are to be brought to the attention of the ministry coordinator.
 - The following procedures will be used when disciplining children at FBC:
 - Warnings
 - Time Outs
 - Meeting with the Ministry Leader
 - Confidential parental/guardian meeting
 - Missing of the activity
- * For details involving these disciplinary steps, see Section 2#2.

10. Washroom Guidelines

Parents are to be encouraged to take their children to visit the washroom prior to each class or service. This recommendation is to be communicated to parents at the beginning of each new school year, and throughout the year to newcomers.

a) Nursery

As a general rule, parents will be called in to change diapers - nursery workers 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 easily see the child that is being changed, as well as the other children and workers in the room.

b) Preschool

For preschool children, an adult will escort children to the washroom. Where we do not have two adults available to take children to the washroom, hallway or safety monitors (preferably) will be appointed to assist with washroom and security duties.

If just one child must go to the washroom, the adult worker will escort the child to the upstairs washroom, inform the usher at that door that a child is being escorted by the adult to the washroom and prop the

outside door open. The volunteer should then remain outside the washroom door and wait for the child before escorting him or her back to the classroom. The volunteer should call the child's name if they are taking longer than seems necessary. The volunteering adult will inform the same usher when they are returning to the classroom. When preschool 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.

Never be alone with a child in an unsupervised washroom and never go into a washroom cubicle with a child and shut the door.

c) Kindergarten and Up

If washrooms are isolated from the area(s) of activity, (e.g. downstairs room is being used), children under 7 years should not be sent to the washroom alone and above procedures for preschoolers utilized.

If an older child seems to be gone longer than necessary, an adult worker should check on them, following the procedure outlined above.

11. Health and Safety Guidelines

a) Sick Children

A child who is ill and could therefore expose other children and workers to illness should not be received into the nursery. Some signs of illness are unusual fatigue or irritability, coughing, sneezing, runny nose and eyes, fever, vomiting, diarrhea, inflamed mouth and throat. Any child with a known communicable disease should not be received into the nursery or a classroom.

b) Emergencies

- FBC workers are not to give or apply any medication. If a child needs medicating, the parent must give it. No medication will be left in the classroom or with a worker or child. In extreme cases (i.e. peanut allergies, ventilators, etc.) arrangements should be made with written instructions and the permission of the child's parent.
- Procedures will be reviewed semi-annually for fire/evacuation emergencies. These procedures are posted in each classroom/area and state the planned route of escape. Weather permitting, a fire drill will be held each fall.
- First aid boxes are located in the kitchen above the fridge, in the copier room and in the nursery. Ministry coordinator is to be notified when supplies used so that they may be restocked. Contents are to be reviewed annually by the screening committee.

c) Cuts or Injuries Involving Blood

- Separate the injured child from the other children. Isolate the area where any blood may have dropped on carpet, toys, etc. Apply first aid measures and send someone to locate the parents.
- If other children have had contact with any of the blood from the cut or injury, their parents should be informed.
- Put on latex gloves (available in each classroom and the first-aid kit) and bandage the injury, avoiding contact with mouth, ears and eyes.
- Carefully wipe up all blood and bloody bandages and remove to a secure, inaccessible waste removal receptacle.
- Any blood on the floor or toys must be washed away using a solution of one part bleach to ten parts water.
- Remove and properly dispose of latex gloves. Wash carefully with sterilizing soap (available in classroom and in first-aid kit).

d) Cleanliness

- Sanitize the childcare areas weekly.
- Regularly clean all surfaces, toys, tables, trays, bedding, bibs and doors.
- Clean toys used by children with colds with special solution provided by your Nursery Coordinator.
- Area carpets in nursery and pre-school classrooms will be cleaned quarterly or as required.

e) Nursery Facilities

- Nursery change tables should be in full view.
- Nursery doors should be secured from the inside to prevent anyone from entering unnoticed.
- Electrical outlets must be covered or out of reach of children.
- Cribs and toys must meet safety standards.

12. Special & Overnight Events

Teachers are encouraged to have special class activities in their homes, plan social activities and involve their pupils in field trips and service projects. Special precautions need to be taken with these activities and workers should consider how they can achieve the desired benefit to the children while ensuring both the children and themselves are not at risk.

- Approval, parental notification, supervision and staffing ratios as stated in our policies, Section Two, Article 3 are to be followed. (See Appendix G, H)
- If pastoral staff have question(s) regarding content or structure of activity, these question(s) will go before the board.

- For programs that are essentially community-based, e.g. our Youth program, a release form for all regularly scheduled events is required prior to the start of the ministry year and as new youth become involved in the group.
- Each worker should have an assigned group of children or youth for whom they will be responsible while in the community and during an overnight event.
- A 1:8 ideal, or 1:10 maximum, adult to youth ratio should be maintained while in the community. A 1:5 ratio is required for overnight events.
- Special attention should be given to ensure that the group stays together and no worker or child is in an unsupervised one-on-one situation.
- Transportation to and from programs, should normally be provided by the parent(s). In the event that a church worker must provide transportation for a child, one-on-one child to adult ratios are to be avoided.
- In circumstances where a parent is not available and a one-one situation is unavoidable, the volunteering worker will phone the destination before leaving an activity with the child or youth with an approximate travel time and phone the activity base when they have dropped off the child or youth at the destination point.
- Where the church is providing the transportation, Policy 7 (d) Section Three will be followed.

SECTION FOUR: ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE & INCIDENT REPORTING PROCEDURES

*“Any person who has reasonable and probable grounds to believe and believes that a child is in need of protective services shall forthwith report the matter to a (Child Welfare) director.”
(Nova Scotia Children and Family Services Act)*

1. Reporting Concerns

If any person has any concerns regarding the safety of a child(ren) or it should be reported immediately to the Chairperson of the Screening Committee (or delegate).

a) Historical Abuse

Abuse or neglect that occurred in the past must be reported wherever there are reasonable grounds to believe that a child may be in need of protection. If the alleged offender is in regular contact with a child or children, irrespective of whether it is the same child or children abused in the past, there may be grounds to believe that the child or children are a risk based on the offender's past behaviour. It is particularly vital to report these cases where the alleged abuser is in a position of trust concerning children, such as in children or youth ministries.

b) Suspicious Behaviour

Some conduct just deserves counsel and advice from a supervisor while other conduct requires reporting. (See Incident Reporting Procedures)

- If any relationships between a ministry worker volunteer and a youth or child is observed the appropriate professionals will be contacted (Child Welfare or RCMP) by the Chairperson of the Screening Committee (or delegate) to seek their recommendation on how to proceed in handling the situation.
- Any violation of the policies and procedures of FBC will be addressed and corrected.
- Prompt warnings must be issued when appropriate, and the situation monitored very closely.
- Ministry workers 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. (See *Symptoms of Abuse* pg 12.)

2. Confidentiality

In these matters it is important to keep the information restricted to those who need to be advised. Suspicions of abuse should therefore only be reported to the Protection Policies Ministry Committee chairperson or designate. It is the responsibility of the person who received the initial report or that has

suspicions of abuse to contact the Truro Children's Aid Society. A member of the committee will be available to assist this person through the reporting procedure.

The only claim of confidentiality, which 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.

- Where a pastor is involved in the suspicious behavior or allegation, the board elder is to be immediately advised.
- In the event the board elder is a family member to the pastor, another non-related member of the board is to be advised.

3. When a Legitimate Allegation Occurs

- The screening committee chairman (or designate) will communicate the incident immediately to those who need to be informed within the church (the pastor and board elder).
- The screening committee chairman (or designate) is also responsible to ensure the incident has been reported to the local Child and Family Services Authority office; and to contact the church's lawyer - such an incident is not to be handled without outside professional assistance.
- Immediate suspension of duties shall result when a church worker is suspected of child abuse and reasonable evidence exists as to his/her alleged involvement until a complete investigation by Child Protection Services has been made.
- In the event of pastoral staff, the Church Board will make a decision to maintain or suspend his or her income until the allegations are cleared or substantiated

4. Response to the Child

- When the child first comes, be sure to take his or her word seriously. Do not deny the problem, but stay calm and listen to the child.
- Give emotional support, reminding the child that he or she is not at fault. Tell the child that he or she was right in disclosing the problem.
- Do not promise the child that no one will be told.
- Workers should never interview the child in detail or suggest to the child that they have been abused.

5. The Child Welfare Report

The person(s) receiving disclosure from a child or having a founded suspicion of child abuse is required to immediately report the information to the chairperson of the Screening Committee who will assist them in reporting to the local Children's Aid Society. (See Appendix I)

CONTENTS OF THE REPORT

Social workers designated to receive reports are trained to investigate and assess the need for intervention. It is important to remember the following factors:

- The Screening Committee and the ministry leaders must not attempt any investigation or intervention.
- An individual is protected when a report is made in good faith. No action would be taken against a person making a report unless it is made maliciously or without grounds for the belief.
- Reporting individuals can report anonymously.
- Any child making any allegations of abuse needs to be taken at face value. It is the responsibility of the Children's Aid Society to investigate the validity of the complaint.
- Do not prejudge the situation, but take the allegations seriously and reach out to the victim and the victim's family. Showing care and support help to prevent further hurt. Extend whatever pastoral resources are needed. Remember that the care and safety of the victim is the first priority. In some situations, churches have responded in a negative or non-supportive manner to the alleged victim. This can increase the anger and pain of the victim of damaging litigation increases.
- Treat the accused with dignity and support.

6. Church Follow-up and Discipline

- The church should protect parents as much as legally possible from undue interference by outside authorities into their family life.
- The church should ask the Children's Aid Society if it could assist in helping the hurting family.
- The church should maintain frequent communication and supportive relationships with those suspected or guilty 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 counseling.

- Should an allegation occur involving a volunteer or paid employee of FBC, that person will be asked to step down by the screening committee until the appropriate authorities have completed their investigation and cleared the volunteer or paid employee of any misconduct. Due to confidentiality and rights of the alleged victim and to maintain the integrity of any following investigation, the volunteer or paid employee will be given no particulars of the allegation; who, what, when, why, where or how.

7. Public Relations

- The Chairman of the Screening Committee (or designate) should serve as the ONLY spokesperson for any allegation.
- All those involved in child/youth ministries at FBC should be made aware of who the chairperson of the Screening Committee is, and they should then refer all media inquiries to that person. The chairperson of the Screening Committee will speak to the media and the congregation regarding the matter, if required, in a discreet, informed, truthful and diplomatic way.
- The following statement will be used and any further comments will be decided with legal counsel. A “No Comment” statement is not to be made. 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 taken by the church to reduce risk and provide a safe environment for children.
- Often when confronted with an allegation of abuse, a church may be tempted to:
 - Deny that the incident occurred, despite clear evidence to the contrary.
 - Acknowledge that the incident occurred, but minimize it; (“It only happened once,” or “It wasn’t that serious.”)
 - Blame the victim or the victim’s family.

* All these responses are inappropriate and are to be avoided.

It is always tragic when children are abused or exploited. Faith Baptist Church is aware of the ever-growing nature of child abuse. We have taken careful precautions to protect the children entrusted to our care. We are distressed by any accusation of child abuse. We will do everything in our power to address any needs in this situation. For the welfare of those involved, all information has been directed to the appropriate agencies and authorities.

SECTION FIVE: POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

1. Implementation Information

The topic of child abuse and our prevention policies 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 continually provide prospective workers and vested interest groups the need for such a policy then give them opportunities for providing feedback. The topic can be presented in worker's seminars and Sunday or mid-week adult classes. Our screening committee will be available to answer concerns and provide specific answers about this particular aspect of the church's policies.

2. Presenting the Policies

a) Key Points

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.
- Prevention program can reduce risk through relatively simple procedures.

b) Informing Church Body

It is important to periodically inform the congregation of the key issues pertaining to child sexual 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 one of sober reflection but of hope. You want the people to realize that the FBC is taking action to minister to this need. The focus should be upon the great responsibility God has given to us to care for the children/youth in our care.

3. Monitoring of Policy

a) Regular Review

Ministry leaders should 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 policies. For example, the Two Adult Rule may become routinely neglected. Attention must be given to periodic monitoring that examines the following:

- Have all workers been trained regarding these policies?

- Are workers following the required policies and guidelines?
- 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?

b) Collaboration and Revision of Policies

Thoroughly discuss each policy and procedure with ministry leaders. Work through all concerns. If problems exist in the policies, they should be brought to the attention of the Policy Review Committee. Consider revisions, but changes must not sacrifice the integrity of the program. Work at developing a sense of unity before educating workers.

c) Living Document

This present manual is a living document and as such will be reviewed on a yearly basis.

4. Educate Workers

a) New Workers

Routines must be established for the training of all new workers who serve the church.

b) Group Training

Group training will occur at the start of each new program year.

c) Individual Training and Review

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 view the video presentation, read the Children's/Youth Ministries policies, procedures and guidelines and meet with the committee chairperson or designate to review content, be given additional training and the opportunity to ask questions.

d) Screening Workers Already Serving

Those who have served in Children's/Youth Ministries at the FBC in the past for a minimum of two (ministry) years, will not be routinely interviewed or references checked. The final decision will be made on review of application. They will be required to complete the screening application form and obtain a criminal records check and Child Abuse Registry check.

