

First Baptist Church Vernon BC

Safe Ministries Policy

A Policy for the Protection of Children, Youth and Vulnerable Persons

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Part One – Preamble

The children, youth and vulnerable persons* in the care of First Baptist Church Vernon BC (hereinafter called “the Church”) are a trust from God. The Church’s responsibility is to nurture and to protect them, enabling them to grow into a knowledge of and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. To accomplish this, the Church has the responsibility to provide a safe environment for them to learn, explore, question and seek truth.

“And whoever welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me. 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.”
Matthew 18:5-6

This Policy is intended to be a resource for all leaders within First Baptist Church ministries and programs, but is not intended to take the place of good judgment and common sense. It is intended to encourage responsible and compassionate practices, exercised with love and respect for all ministry/program participants and leaders.

The Church, recognizing that even within a church setting the potential for abuse exists, has created this Policy to enable its workers to prevent, recognize, stop and report abuse against children, youth and vulnerable persons, within its ministries.

The Church recognizes a moral and legal obligation to respect and protect individuals of all ages in our ministries and programs and will tolerate no abuse. The Church will take any allegations of abuse seriously and will cooperate fully with the appropriate authorities to investigate any cases of alleged abuse. Abuse of children, youth or vulnerable persons is grounds for immediate dismissal and possible criminal charges.

This Safe Ministries Policy will be audited internally at least every two years resulting in a report to the Church Council.

The Safe Ministries Policy has been implemented to:

1. provide a safe and secure environment for all participants in our ministries and programs, especially our children, youth and vulnerable persons,
2. provide standards for the planning and implementing of ministries and programs, to ensure that issues related to abuse and safety are recognized and considered,
3. provide guidelines for the recruitment and training of the staff and volunteers who will work with children, youth and vulnerable persons,
4. ensure all staff and volunteers undergo mandatory training on abuse and the legal responsibility to report,
5. protect our staff and volunteers from unfounded allegations of abuse, and
6. protect the credibility and integrity of the Church and the name of Jesus Christ.

*Vulnerable persons are defined as those persons who are mentally, physically and/or emotionally disabled, and also the frail elderly.

Part Two – Recruitment and Training of Staff & Volunteers

A. Recruitment of Staff and Volunteers

The Pastoral Staff and Commission Chairpersons responsible for a program must ensure that recruiting, orientation and ongoing training and supervision of staff and volunteers is completed according to the following guidelines.

1. Screening of Staff and Volunteers

- a) All staff and volunteers wishing to work in ministry with children, youth and vulnerable persons, will:
 - i. be born again believers in Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior,
 - ii. be members or regular adherents at First Baptist Church **for at least six (6) months** (A reduced period of time may be approved if the individual comes with adequate references from another church or Christian ministry.),
 - iii. submit a completed Ministry Volunteer Application form to the Senior Pastor or appropriate commission Chairperson,
 - iv. have completed a Criminal Record Check, including CPIC (Canadian Police Information Centre) and VSV (Vulnerable Sector Verification) (**re-check every 4 years**), and
 - v. be interviewed by the Senior Pastor or appropriate commission Chairperson.
- b) The Senior Pastor or Chairperson of the appropriate commission will:
 - i. ensure the Ministry Volunteer Application form is complete,
 - ii. contact references, using the Past Ministry Check and Reference Check forms,
 - iii. interview the applicant using the Ministry Volunteer Interview form,
 - iv. determine the suitability of the applicant on the basis of all information provided or collected,
 - v. if approved, complete the Application Approval Form,
 - vi. advise the applicant if he/she is approved or not,
 - vii. if approved, advise the applicant to whom she/he will be responsible and accountable in ministry and the process of supervision and annual review of performance,
 - viii. file all information related to the application in a permanently maintained confidential file, and
 - ix. review with the applicant the “SAFE MINISTRIES POLICY”.

B. Training of Staff and Volunteers

1. Requirement to Be Trained

All staff and volunteers who will work with children, youth and vulnerable persons will be required to attend a Safe Ministries Orientation session and read the “SAFE MINISTRIES POLICY”.

Exceptions – Parents or guardians, helpers and others who only periodically assist with children, youth and vulnerable persons ministries:

- a) will not be required to submit an application or participate in the Ministry Orientation session,
- b) will be members or regular adherents at First Baptist Church for at least six (6) months (A reduced period of time may be approved if the individual comes with adequate references from another church or Christian ministry), and
- c) will be required to work in the presence of an approved ministry volunteer or staff.

2. Orientation

The Safe Ministries Orientation session will include information about:

- a) First Baptist Church and its ministries,
- b) identification of ministry leaders,
- c) our obligation to protect our children, youth and vulnerable persons from abuse and harm,

- d) an understanding of child abuse, as a criminal act, and its impact on its victims,
- e) our “SAFE MINISTRIES POLICY” to prevent and respond to abuse in our ministries,
- f) the process for reporting allegations of abuse,
- g) what we can do to ensure a safe environment for children, youth and vulnerable persons,
- h) fire safety, evacuation and missing child procedures,
- i) use of safety equipment, and
- j) ongoing ministry monitoring and supervision.

3. Ongoing Training

Ministry volunteers are required to attend an annual refresher session on the Safe Ministries Policy as required by our liability insurance policy.

Part Three – Health and Safety Guidelines and Procedures

A. General Safety Guidelines

1. Each small group must be supervised by an approved ministry staff person or volunteer.
2. The Senior Pastor, ministry directors and team members will have open access to all areas where adults are working with children, youth and vulnerable persons.
3. All church work areas will have doors with windows in them (or split doors where the top is left open) so supervision can occur without interrupting the group session.
4. At no time will doors be locked to prevent entrance to an area while a program is running.
5. There will be sufficient lighting in place, both inside and outside the building, while programs are running.
6. Parent(s) or guardian(s) are welcome to check on their children, youth and vulnerable persons at any time.

B. General Responsibilities

All team members will:

1. be responsible for the personal health and safety practices of their group
2. follow safe operating procedures, standards of behavior and modest dress
3. refrain from the use of damaged furniture, equipment or fittings
4. give clear instructions and warnings as often as necessary

C. Recording Attendance, Receiving and Releasing Children, Youth and Vulnerable Persons

All persons who are leading, helping, or participating in a program or event for children, youth and vulnerable persons are to be recorded in an Attendance Record maintained at a location at the first point of contact with the program venue. This would typically be in the hallway adjacent to the large teaching room on the upper floor. Attendance Records are to be kept in a permanent file in the Church Office.

1. The Attendance Record will include the following:
 - a) Full names of all staff and volunteers involved.
 - b) Full name of each child, youth or vulnerable person.
 - c) Name of the parent or guardian for each child, youth or vulnerable person.
 - d) Signature of the parent or guardian and time that the child was dropped off.
 - e) Signature of the parent or guardian and time that the child was picked up.
 - f) Children in Grade 1 or above do not require parent or guardian signatures.
2. Parent(s) or guardian(s) are to be instructed that the following requirements apply to the dropping off and picking up of children under Grade 1.
 - a) No child is to be dropped off at a ministry program venue or event unless an approved ministry staff person or volunteer is present.
 - b) No child will be released by the staff or volunteers to anyone other than their parent or guardian unless the parent or guardian has indicated beforehand that another named person will be picking them up.

D. Guidelines for Behavior

Leaders are required to ensure that expectations and boundaries for behavior are clearly communicated to children, youth and vulnerable persons.

1. It is reasonable to expect that children, youth and vulnerable persons and adults will:
 - a) “Do to others what you would have them do to you.” Matthew 7:12 NIV,
 - b) listen well and think about the impact of their personal behavior on others,
 - c) do their best,
 - d) make wise choices,
 - e) be responsible for themselves, for their feelings, actions and belongings, and
 - f) handle conflicts as graciously as possible and inform the leader.

2. Leaders will not use corporal punishment or harassment as a means of discipline.
“**Corporal Punishment**” means the infliction of physical injury on someone as an attempt to correct bad behavior.
“**Harassment**” means any objectionable conduct, comment or display by a leader that:
 - a) is directed at a child, youth or vulnerable person under our care;
 - b) is made on the basis of race, creed, religion, color, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, family status, disability, physical size or weight, age, nationality, ancestry or place of origin; and
 - c) constitutes a threat to the health or safety of the child, youth or vulnerable person under our care.
3. Consequences for Inappropriate Behavior:
 - a) should be logical and proportionate, in relation to the prompting behavior,
 - b) may consist of non-verbal cues such as use of eye contact, headshake, moving nearer to the person,
 - c) may consist of verbal cues – e.g. asking the child, youth or vulnerable person to correct his/her action. The child, youth or vulnerable person will be made aware of his/her actions by being asked, “What are you doing? What should you be doing? Please do it.”,
 - d) may consist of “time out” – the child, youth or vulnerable person may be given the choice of following expectations or sitting out for a time. (A child, youth or vulnerable person will be asked to move to a designated area inside the program area, within full view of the leader, for a certain amount of time.)
 - e) in the case of persistent non-compliance, the ministry supervisor will be informed and the child, youth or vulnerable person’s parent(s) or guardian(s) will be contacted. A suitable plan of action will be developed with the parent(s) or guardian(s).
 - f) in the event of a serious incident and if there is a likelihood that a child, youth or vulnerable person could be a danger to themselves or to others, the ministry supervisor will be sent for.
4. God is a loving God as well as a God of order and discipline. Leaders will demonstrate this to children, youth and vulnerable persons by:
 - a) being well prepared and forward thinking enough to be able to spot potential difficulties and intervene before they occur,
 - b) being consistent in their attitudes and behavior and in helping their group to uphold group rules,
 - c) taking control and responsibility in a situation,
 - d) being firm but loving,
 - e) giving clear, understandable instructions,
 - f) using a voice that is firm, that shows you expect to be obeyed. Leaders will not raise their voice to children, youth and vulnerable persons in irritation or anger, and
 - g) not attempting to grab or restrain a child, youth or vulnerable person physically.
5. Consequences for Appropriate Behavior Include:
 - a) smiles
 - b) verbal praise
 - c) handshake, thumbs up, pat on the back
 - d) reward sticker
 - e) written note of praise
 - f) phone call to or discussion with parents or guardians
 - g) opportunity to share and celebrate success with group
 - h) opportunity to be a leader

E. Guidelines for Proper Displays of Affection

Touch is an essential responsibility in nurturing lives. Team members need to be aware of and sensitive to the differences in sexual development, culture, family backgrounds, individual personalities and special needs. Physical contact with children, youth and vulnerable persons should be age and developmentally appropriate. The following guidelines are recommended as pure, genuine and positive displays of God’s love.

1. **Appropriate Touch Guidelines** – team leaders are encouraged to:

- a) bend down to the child, youth or vulnerable person's eye level and speak kindly,
- b) listen to him/her carefully,
- c) take a child, youth or vulnerable person's hand and lead him/her to an activity,
- d) put an arm around the shoulder of a child, youth or vulnerable person who needs comforting,
- e) take both of the child, youth or vulnerable person's hands as you say "You did such a good job!", etc.,
- f) pat a child, youth or vulnerable person on the head, hand, shoulder or back to affirm him/her,
- g) hold a child, youth or vulnerable person by the shoulders or hand to keep him/her attention while you redirect their behavior,
- h) gently hold a child, youth or vulnerable person's chin to help him/her focus on what you are saying (important for children, youth and vulnerable persons with ADD or ADHD).

If a child, youth or vulnerable person needs to have a private conversation with a leader, the two will separate themselves from the others, but stay in view of the group. In all things respect the integrity of the child, youth or vulnerable person. Use common sense and good judgment to guide you in protecting the personal space of the child, youth or vulnerable person in your care.

2. Inappropriate Touch Guidelines – team members will avoid:

- a) kissing a child, youth or vulnerable person, coaxing him/her to kiss you, or engaging in extended hugging or tickling,
- b) touching a child, youth or vulnerable person in any area that would be covered by a bathing suit, or
- c) carrying an older child, youth or vulnerable person or having them sit on your lap

F. Social Networking and Internet Use Guideline

The use of social networking and the Internet by staff, volunteers and participants in any program where children, youth and vulnerable persons are involved will be monitored by the leaders in order to ensure that there is no use or display of inappropriate content or materials.

G. Photography and Video Recording Guidelines

In all activities and programs involving children, youth or vulnerable persons, permission must be secured from the parent(s) or guardian(s) prior to photographing or video recording of participants. No photographs of children, youth or vulnerable persons will be taken without prior written approval.

No photographs of children, youth or vulnerable persons, will be posted on websites, the internet, Facebook, MSN or any other online social networks, or posted in public places without written permission from their parents or guardians.

The name of any child, youth or vulnerable person who has been photographed or videoed may not be attached to the photo or video if posted by the Church in any public place, including bulletin boards, newsletters, websites, and/or church bulletins.

Only those photographs and video recordings of children, youth or vulnerable persons for which written parental or guardian permission has been obtained may be filed or archived for future use. Any filed or archived photos or video recordings that are filed must be cross-referenced with the written parental or guardian permission forms, which must be kept permanently on file.

H. Special Events and Activities Guidelines

Group activities and group outings outside regularly scheduled classes or childcare **must be pre-approved** by the Senior Pastor or Chairperson of the commission responsible for the respective ministry program.

1. Field Trips

- a) Generally, two volunteers or staff (unrelated) will be present at all times – including when driving a child, youth or vulnerable person home. When this is not possible or practical, the child, youth or vulnerable person's parent(s) or guardian(s) will be advised and him/her permission will be sought beforehand.

- b) A Medical Release and Waiver Form will be completed by each participant's parent(s) or guardian(s) and returned to the staff member or volunteer responsible for the event. Failure to do so will prohibit the child, youth or vulnerable person from participation in the event.
- c) All drivers will have a valid driver's license, not a Learner or Novice status.
- d) All vehicles will have valid insurance and liability coverage.
- e) The number of riders in a vehicle will not exceed the number of working seatbelts in the vehicle. The driver will ensure that all riders are wearing seatbelts while the vehicle is moving.

2. Overnight Events

All guidelines for Field Trips apply to Overnight Events, plus the following:

- a) Leaders must be approved in accordance with the "SAFE MINISTRIES POLICY" or supervised by an approved leader of at least 18 years of age.
- b) There must be a minimum of one leader for each ten (10) participants with a minimum of two leaders at the event.
- c) Events with mixed gender participants must be supervised by both male and female staff and volunteers (unrelated).
- d) Youth are to be billeted in groups of the same gender.

I. Hygiene Guidelines

- 1. Hand washing should be practiced by children, youth or vulnerable persons and team members before eating and handling of food, after going to the bathroom or assisting in toileting or diapering, and after contact with body fluid (mucus, blood, vomit, etc.).
- 2. A disinfecting solution will be used for wiping up all spills, cleaning, cleaning play equipment and the cleaning of tabletops, chairs and play areas.

J. Washroom Guidelines

- 1. Younger children, youth or vulnerable persons will have washrooms which are closely located to their program area.
- 2. A leader shall not be alone with a child, youth or vulnerable person in a washroom. The leader will remain outside the washroom and wait for him/her before escorting him/her back to the program. The leader will call the child, youth or vulnerable person's name if they are taking longer than seems necessary and will call another leader if needed to assist the child, youth or vulnerable person from the washroom.

K. Minor Incident Procedures

- 1. First Aid Kits are located in the kitchen. One is for use in the building and the other is for field trips and events away from the church property.
- 2. Children, youth or vulnerable persons or workers with symptoms of an infectious illness will not attend group sessions as this exposes others to illness.
- 3. Care must be taken in the assessment of incidents that seem trivial, e.g. a knock on the head can produce serious consequences, as can an untreated cut.
- 4. For cuts and bruises, tap water on a piece of cotton or Kleenex is sufficient.
- 5. Treatment of any nature to a child, youth or vulnerable person must be recorded on an Incident Report Form and reported to the ministry director. Parent(s) or guardian(s) shall be informed of the incident when the child, youth or vulnerable person is picked up.
- 6. A child, youth or vulnerable person who is unable to continue participation in an activity, due to illness or injury, should be returned to him/her parent(s) or guardian(s), if present. If the parent(s) or guardian(s) is not present, a leader will call to advise them of the circumstances and request that the child, youth or vulnerable person be picked up.

L. Major Injury or Illness Procedures

- 1. Leaders are not to give or apply any medication. If a child, youth or vulnerable person needs medication, the parent(s) or guardian(s) must give it. No medication will be left in the program area or with a worker or child, youth or vulnerable person.
- 2. In extreme cases (e.g. peanut allergies, ventilators, etc.) the parent(s) or guardian(s) must make arrangements to handle the situation safely through written instructions for the leaders or the presence of a person qualified in dealing with the situation.

3. For more serious incidents, when the recipient of aid requires attention beyond first aid, the following procedure applies:
 - a) Stop all group activity.
 - b) Make sure the area is safe.
 - c) Move the other participants away from the area.
 - d) Alert the program leader.
 - e) Summon an ambulance.
 - f) Contact the parent(s) or guardian(s).
4. Make arrangement for the other children, youth or vulnerable persons to be properly supervised.
5. Complete an Injury or Illness Incident Report as soon as possible.

M. Procedures for Injuries Involving Blood

1. Put on latex gloves (available in the first aid kit).
2. Separate the injured person from the others.
3. Isolate the area where any blood may have dropped.
4. Send someone to inform the parent(s) or guardian(s) of the injured person.
5. Check to ensure that no other people had contact with any of the blood from the cut or injury.
6. Bandage the injury, avoiding contact with mouth, eyes, and ears.
7. Immediately clean up and disinfect any blood soiled surfaces.
8. Remove blood stained bandages, patches or cloths and discard in a sealed plastic bag into the garbage dumpster.
9. Remove and properly dispose of latex gloves.
10. Wash hands and any body parts that contacted the injured person or their blood carefully with sterilizing soap (available in the first aid kit).
11. Never delay emergency action.
12. Complete an Injury or Illness Incident Report as soon as possible.

N. Fire Procedures

Your first duty is to prevent injury or loss of life. Get people to safety before contemplating salvaging things. Be sure you are acquainted with the locations of fire alarm “pulls”, fire extinguishers, escape routes from your ministry/program area and the assembly points to be used in the event of evacuation.

- 1.) If you are the first to discover a fire:
 - a) Ensure that everyone is removed from the immediate vicinity of the fire.
 - b) Take reasonable steps, not causing undue risk to yourself or others, to put out the fire. If the fire cannot be extinguished, pull the nearest fire alarm.
 - c) Immediately advise the ministry director, Senior Pastor or designate, of the fire, its whereabouts, nature and risk. Then, proceed with evacuation. The ministry director, Senior Pastor or designate will call “911”, if necessary.
- 2.) When a fire alarm sounds:
 - a) Take the Attendance Register with you.
 - b) Escort all persons in your charge from the building by the nearest fire exit, without diversion, or collecting personal belongings.
 - c) Group leaders are responsible for ensuring that their group remains calm and orderly. **Running is absolutely not allowed.**
 - d) Close all doors, through which you pass, behind your group.
 - e) Assemble your group in the designed “assembly area” of the parking lot outside the building.
 - f) Check your register to ensure that all group members are present. Notify the ministry director, Senior Pastor or designate of any children, youth or vulnerable persons who should be with your group but are not.
 - g) The ministry director, Senior Pastor or designate is responsible for checking the toilet stalls on the way through the building and will ensure that all people are evacuated.
 - h) All leaders and children, youth or vulnerable persons will remain in the designated “assembly area” of the parking lot until the ministry director, Senior Pastor or designate gives direction to re-enter the building.

O. Missing Child, Youth or Vulnerable Person Procedures

If a child, youth or vulnerable person is reported to be missing during a ministry program at the church building, the following procedure is to be followed:

1. The person leading the program is to be informed immediately.
2. If a child, youth or vulnerable person is reported missing during a Sunday worship service, the Head Usher is to be informed immediately.
3. The Head Usher or person leading the program will perform a lock down of the building. Reliable persons will be deployed to lock all outside doors, and will guard those doors to prevent any person from leaving the building.
4. A thorough search of the building will be made by adults working in pairs.
5. The lock down will not be lifted until the child, youth or vulnerable person is found or is determined to be safe at another location.
6. If the child, youth or vulnerable person is not found or determined to be safe elsewhere then the parent(s) or guardian(s) are to be notified and the RCMP contacted.
7. The lockdown will continue until RCMP members arrive and take control.

Part Four – The Need for Protection

A. Social Context

The Church is accountable for the actions of its staff, volunteers and adherents in the context of its ministries to children, youth and vulnerable persons.

Abuse, especially sexual abuse, can have horrific impact on the lives of victims. It violates the basic values of our Christian faith; it is a misuse and abuse of power by a person taking advantage of another in a relationship characterized by a power imbalance. Abuse of children, youth or vulnerable persons is a criminal act under Canada's Criminal Code and we have a moral and legal obligation to report suspicions of such behavior to legal authorities.

B. Definitions of Child Abuse and Neglect

There are several forms of child, youth and vulnerable person's abuse. Generally, abuse means actions by a person in a position of trust that may be harmful to a person's physical, emotional or psychological health.

1. **Physical abuse** – any deliberate action which causes injury to a child, youth or vulnerable person's body.
2. **Sexual abuse** – any deliberate action that involves a child, youth or vulnerable person in a sexual activity including sexual touching, exposure, using a child, youth or vulnerable person in the making or viewing of pornography, or involving a child, youth or vulnerable person in prostitution.
3. **Emotional abuse** – harassing, embarrassing or insulting a child, youth or vulnerable person, pressuring them to do things he/she cannot or should not do, making hurtful comments about their appearance, intelligence, size, ability, race, etc.
4. **Neglect** – failing to provide a child, youth or vulnerable person with basic needs for food, clothing, shelter, health care, education, and protection from harm.

C. Indicators of Abuse

There are usually signs that a child, youth or vulnerable person is being abused or neglected. The signs may be physical which means it may be possible to see them. In other cases, the child, youth or vulnerable person's behavior may lead to concerns about abuse. **Often, one sign is not enough to suggest abuse or neglect, but several signs or a pattern of signs make it more likely that abuse or neglect may exist.**

1. Physical Abuse

Physical Indicators:

- a) injuries (bruises, cuts, burns, bite marks, fractures, etc.) that are not consistent with explanation offered (e.g., extensive bruising to one area)
- b) the presence of several injuries over a period of time
- c) any bruising on an infant
- d) facial injuries in preschool children (e.g., cuts, bruises, sores, etc.)
- e) injuries inconsistent with the child, youth or vulnerable person's age and development

Behavioral Indicators:

- a) cannot recall how injuries occurred, or offers an inconsistent explanation
- b) wary of adults or reluctant to go home, absences from school
- c) may cringe or flinch if touched unexpectedly
- d) may display a vacant stare or be extremely withdrawn
- e) wears long sleeves to hide injury
- f) extremely compliant and/or eager to please
- g) sad, cries frequently

2. Emotional Abuse

Physical Indicators:

- a) bedwetting and/or diarrhea which is non-medical in origin

- b) frequent psychosomatic complaints: headaches, nausea, abdominal pain
- c) child, youth or vulnerable person fails to thrive

Behavioral Indicators:

- a) extreme withdrawal or aggressiveness, mood swings
- b) overly compliant; too well-mannered; too neat and clean
- c) extreme attention-seeking behaviors
- d) displays extreme inhibition in play
- e) poor peer relationships
- f) severe depression, often suicidal
- g) running away from home
- h) constantly apologizes

3. Sexual Abuse

Physical Indicators:

- a) unusual or excessive itching in the genital or anal area
- b) torn, stained or bloody underwear (observed if the child or vulnerable person requires bathroom assistance)
- c) pregnancy or venereal disease
- d) injuries to the vaginal or anal areas (e.g., bruising, swelling or infection)

Behavioral Indicators:

- a) age-inappropriate sexual play with toys, self, others (e.g., replication of explicit sexual acts)
- b) age-inappropriate, sexually explicit drawings and/or descriptions
- c) bizarre, sophisticated or unusual sexual knowledge
- d) promiscuity
- e) prostitution
- f) seductive behaviors directed toward members of the opposite sex
- g) fear of home, excessive fear of men or women
- h) depression

4. Neglect

Physical Indicators:

- a) abandonment
- b) unattended medical or dental needs
- c) consistent lack of supervision
- d) consistent hunger, inappropriate dress, poor hygiene
- e) persistent conditions (e.g., scabies, head lice, diaper rash or other skin disorder)
- f) developmental delays (e.g., language, weight)

Behavioral Indicators:

- a) regularly displays fatigue or listlessness, falls asleep in class
- b) steals food, begs from classmates
- c) reports that no caretaker is at home
- d) frequently absent or late
- e) self-destructive
- f) school drop-outs (adolescents)

Part Five - Responding to Abuse

A. When a Child, Youth or Vulnerable Person Confides in You

Children and Youth group leaders often build close relationships with children, youth or vulnerable persons in their care. As the child, youth or vulnerable person begins to see their group leader as a trusted adult, she/he may choose to confide in them details about his/her life, friends, school and family. It is quite possible at some stage that a child, youth or vulnerable person may choose to disclose an experience of abuse in which she/he is or has been involved.

B. Reporting Procedures

1. When to Report

If you have reason to believe a child, youth or vulnerable person is being abused or neglected, it is important to remember that **it is NEVER the fault of the suspected victim**.

- a) If you are suspicious at any time that a child, youth or vulnerable person may have been abused or neglected, or
- b) If you think a child, youth or vulnerable person may be in danger and in need of protection, or
- c) If a child, youth or vulnerable person has disclosed any information to you that you find worrying . . .

. . . then you **must** contact a Child Protection Social Worker at the Ministry of Children and Family Development or the local RCMP, or the First Nations Child Welfare Agency if the child, youth or vulnerable person is of First Nations descent, so that appropriate action can be taken.

Reporting instructions may be found on the Ministry of Children and Family Development's website at: http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/child_protection/reportabuse.htm.

The suspected situation of abuse or neglect is also to be reported to the Senior Pastor or the Chairperson of the Church Council.

You are asked to report your suspicions. You are not expected to figure out who may have caused the abuse or neglect.

If you are not sure whether or not you should report a particular situation, you may want to discuss it with a Child Protection Social Worker or the RCMP.

A person may make a false report of abuse or neglect out of spite, anger, revenge or a desire to cause problems for a parent or guardian or worker. Any person who does this may have legal action taken against them by the person against whom the false report is made.

2. Confidentiality

All information about an alleged incident of abuse or neglect and the people involved will be treated in confidence on a "need to know" basis only by:

- a) those who will assure the child, youth or vulnerable person's safety
- b) those who will investigate to determine the present and future risk
- c) those who will pursue founded allegations

Due diligence will be exercised in all actions taken following an allegation of abuse or neglect.

3. Follow Up

The Senior Pastor or Chairperson of the Church Council, when informed about a suspected situation of abuse or neglect, will:

- a) take whatever steps are necessary to protect the child, youth or vulnerable person from further risk,
- b) advise the parent(s) or guardian(s), if the reported abuse has not implicated them, and extend to the family whatever pastoral support may be appropriate,
- c) ensure that the allegation has been reported to a Child Protection Social Worker of the Ministry of Children, and Family Development or the RCMP,
- d) seek legal counsel for the Church as well as report the incident to the Church's insurance company,
- e) ensure completion, by the adult reporting the allegation, of the "Report of Suspected Child Abuse" form, available from the church office, and
- f) complete the "Follow Up Report of Suspected Child Abuse" form.

Formal contact on behalf of the Church with investigators will be through the Senior Pastor or legal counsel for the church.

Where the Senior Pastor is the alleged abuser, the report will be made as soon as is practical to the Chairperson of the Church Council, or designate, in his/her absence.

C. Responding to the Alleged Victim

DO ...

1. take reports of abuse seriously, believe the alleged victim, and say, “I believe you and I believe something has happened to you”,
2. find a quiet place in which to listen carefully to their account,
3. listen without interruption, assuring them that he/she can continue or stop at any time,
4. be calm and non-judgmental in any response to them,
5. acknowledge their feelings,
6. assure them that the incident(s) was not his/her fault,
7. say, “I’m glad you were able to tell me. I will help you as best I can”,
8. record information as accurately as possible, recording their comments in his/her own words, and
9. keep all information confidential and secure.

Remember – the care and safety of the alleged victim is always the first priority.

DO NOT ...

1. ask leading questions, provide opinions or judgments,
2. interrupt their account,
3. show horror or anger,
4. promise to keep disclosure confidential,
5. tell them what the next steps will be,
6. promise that things will get better, or
7. launch your own investigation.

D. Responding to the Alleged Perpetrator

1. treat him/her with dignity and respect,
2. if it is a church volunteer worker – immediately relieve him/her of their ministry program duties,
3. if it is a paid staff member – suspend from duties immediately,
4. offer what support seems appropriate, and
5. remember, he/she is still loved by God.

E. Media Relations

1. Spokesperson

The Senior Pastor or designate will be the spokesperson for the church; in some cases the Chairperson of the Church Council or legal counsel may be designated as the spokesperson. In any case, only one person will be the identified spokesperson and authorized to speak on behalf of the church and all attempted contacts by the media will be directed to that spokesperson. **No other person from the Church should attempt to contact the media regarding the case, or discuss the case with anyone else outside those who are immediately and necessarily involved in the case.**

2. Position Statement

- a) Do not admit liability.
- b) Keep all information in strict confidence.
- c) Speaking out on abuse is an opportunity to influence public opinion positively by emphasizing:
 - i. an awareness of the problem of abuse – that we take the issue very seriously.
 - ii. a concern for victims and their families.
 - iii. the steps that have been taken at First Baptist Church to provide a safe environment for children, youth or vulnerable persons.
 - iv. that we have acted responsibly.
 - v. that we have in place a Safe Ministries Policy to ensure the safety of our children, youth or vulnerable persons.
 - vi. that we train our staff and volunteers to maintain a safe environment.

3. Suggested Wording for an Official Statement to the Media

“It is always tragic when children, youth or vulnerable persons are abused or exploited. First Baptist Church is aware of the ever-growing problem of abuse in society. We have taken careful precautions to protect the children, youth or vulnerable persons entrusted to our care. We are distressed by any accusations of 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 authorities.”

Part Four - Forms

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Date

Dear

Thank you for your interest and desire to serve our Lord at First Baptist Church Vernon BC.

The church has a spiritual and moral responsibility to provide a secure environment for those participating in its programs. To meet this objective, we are required to screen those to whom we entrust the care and nurturing of our children, youth or vulnerable persons.

In order to fulfill this task, we need you to complete the enclosed Ministry Volunteer Application form. You are also to complete the enclosed Criminal Record Check forms, both CPIC and VSV, and submit them to the local RCMP office.

Please return the completed forms to _____,
Chair of the _____ Commission.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the above named Chair.

In Kingdom Service,

Signature: _____

Name: _____

The Church Council of First Baptist Church Vernon BC

MINISTRY VOLUNTEER APPLICATION FORM
For
MINISTRIES TO CHILDREN, YOUTH OR VULNERABLE PERSONS

We recognize that this form is extensive. We wish we did not have to ask these questions. However, in our desire to reduce the risk of abuse within our church ministries, we believe this information is necessary to protect our children, youth and vulnerable persons and to protect our volunteers. Thank you in advance for your understanding.

Personal Information

Full Name _____
Male _____ Female _____

Address: _____ Postal Code _____

Phone Number (Home) _____ (Work/Cell) _____

Email Address: _____

Driver's License No.: _____ Date of Birth: Day _____ Month _____
Year _____

Spouse's Name (if applicable) _____

Is your family supportive of your ministry involvement? If not, please explain.

Personal History:

Elementary/Secondary School Grade Completed: _____ Post-Secondary Years Completed: _____

Degree/Diploma Received: _____

Occupation and/or Employer: _____

Hobbies, Interests or Skills: _____

Spiritual History:

How long have you attended First Baptist Church Vernon BC? _____ year(s)

Are you a member of this Church? Yes _____ No _____

If not, are you willing to attend a membership class? _____

Do you regularly attend (2 or more services a month)? _____

Have you been baptized? Yes ____ No ____ If not, are you willing to attend a baptismal class? Yes ____ No ____

In a brief paragraph, please outline your spiritual journey:

Area of ministry you are interested in:

Have you taken any courses or received any training that would equip you for Christian ministry? Explain:

Have you identified your spiritual gifts? Please list.

Ministry Information:

Churches I attended in the last five years are as follows.

1. Name of church _____ Phone number:

Address:

Email Address:

Dates Attended: _____ Member _____ or Adherent _____

2. Name of church _____ Phone number:

Address:

Email Address:

Dates Attended: _____ Member _____ or Adherent _____

3. Name of church _____ Phone number:

Address:

Email Address:

Dates Attended: _____ Member _____ or
Adherent _____

Indicate any experience you have had working with children, youth or vulnerable persons in the last 5 years:

1. Name of Church/Organization:

Dates and description of ministry

Position/major responsibility/type of work:

Pastor or ministry supervisor _____ Phone Number

Email Address:

2. Name of Church/Organization:

Dates and description of ministry

Position/major responsibility/type of work:

Pastor or ministry supervisor _____ Phone Number

Email Address:

3. Name of Church/Organization:

Dates and description of ministry

Position/major responsibility/type of work:

Pastor or ministry supervisor _____ Phone Number

Email Address:

Check all of the ministry positions listed below in which you have previous experience; and **circle** those that interest you (no experience necessary).

Teaching

- Preschool
- Grade 1-3
- Grade 4-6
- Youth
- Adult
- Camp Counselor

(specify) _____

Helping

- Baby-sitting
- Nursery
- Preschooler
- Children
- Youth Worker
- Other

Other

- Music- instrument
- Music- vocal
- Storytelling
- Crafts
- Games

Do you have a criminal record or have you ever been convicted of a criminal offense involving children, youth or vulnerable persons or assaults? Yes No If yes, please explain on a separate sheet all such convictions.

Have you had any painful experience (personal abuse in any form) that has better equipped you or may hinder you from a productive ministry with children, youth or vulnerable persons? (You may wish to discuss this with the Senior Pastor confidentially rather than fill out this question on the form). Yes

No

If yes, please explain:

Are there circumstances involving your lifestyle or background that would call into question your ability to work with children, youth or vulnerable persons?

Have you ever been convicted for the use or sale of drugs? Yes No

Have you ever been accused, arrested or convicted for any sexually related OR OTHER crimes?

_____ Yes _____ No

If you have answered yes to any of the above questions, please explain.

Do you have any physical condition that would hinder or prevent you from performing certain types of activities or working with children, youth or vulnerable persons (lifting children, youth or vulnerable persons, playing sports or verbally interacting with children, youth or vulnerable persons)? _____ Yes _____ No. If yes, please explain: _____

Any other information about you that we should know: _____

References:

Please provide the names of three individuals, excluding relatives, who could provide a reference for you. Include at least one reference from outside the church.

1. Name of Reference:

Address: _____ Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

In what capacity known? _____ How long? _____

2. Name of Reference:

Address: _____ Phone Number: _____

Email Address:

In what capacity known? _____ How long?

3. Name of Reference:

Address: _____ Phone Number:

Email Address:

In what capacity known? _____ How long?

RELEASE OF INFORMATION AND DECLARATION OF INTENT

I hereby give First Baptist Church Vernon BC permission to contact persons named as references to ascertain my suitability for volunteer ministry. I AUTHORIZE ANY REFERENCE OR CHURCHES LISTED IN THIS APPLICATION TO GIVE YOU ANY INFORMATION THEY MAY HAVE REGARDING MY CHARACTER AND FITNESS FOR MINISTRY WITH CHILDREN, YOUTH OR VULNERABLE PERSONS. I release all such references from liability for any damage that may result from furnishing such evaluations to you.

I will provide to First Baptist Church Vernon BC a personal criminal records check.

I understand that if my character or morals should be inappropriate and/or criminal at any time during my volunteer service, First Baptist Church Vernon BC will be entitled to terminate my assistance without expressed cause or prior notice regardless of any other oral or written statements by First Baptist Church Vernon BC prior to, at, or following the date of volunteer service.

I understand that First Baptist Church Vernon BC is responsible for the welfare of any person or persons entrusted to my care, and thus I will cooperate fully with the staff in the fulfillment of my duties. If at any time I find that for any reason I am unable to support the policies, procedures or doctrine of First Baptist Church Vernon BC, I will respectfully resign my volunteer position. If my supervisors find that I am in conflict with any of the policies, procedures or doctrines, and we are not able to resolve the issue, I will respectfully resign my volunteer position.

I agree to abide by the Safe Ministries Policy of First Baptist Church Vernon BC.

I hereby acknowledge that the information contained in this application for volunteer ministry is correct to the best of my knowledge. If it is discovered at a later date that the information I have provided was false in any way, I may be dismissed from working with children, youth or vulnerable persons at First Baptist Church Vernon BC.

Applicant's Name

Applicant's Signature

Date

Adopted September 15th, 2013.

MINISTRY VOLUNTEER INTERVIEW FORM

Name of Applicant: _____ Position Applied for:

Have you completed the Ministry Volunteer Application Form? Yes ___ No ___

What prompted you to be interested in the ministry which you identified on your Ministry Volunteer Form?
(Indicate the ministry they showed interest in.)

Would you be willing to attend the training session associated with that ministry? Yes ___ No ___

Have the applicant review their spiritual journey. Compare responses with those indicated on the Spiritual History of the Ministry Volunteer Application Form. Note any significant omissions or questions which arise.

Ask the applicant about their relationship with each reference listed on the Ministry Volunteer Application Form.

Ask the applicant for clarification of any parts of the application form which are not clear to you.

On what date would you be available? _____

What is the minimum length of your commitment? _____

Name of Interviewer: _____

Signature: _____ Date:

MINISTRY VOLUNTEER APPLICATION APPROVAL FORM

Name of Applicant: _____

1. Ministry Volunteer Application Form:
Date Received: _____ Reviewed By: _____ Date Reviewed:

2. Interview (when deemed necessary) Interviewed by: _____
Position: _____ Date: _____

Interviewer's comments:

3. References contacted by: _____ Date:

Interviewer's comments:

4. Criminal Record Check Received: _____ Date: _____

5. Completed Safe Ministries Training: _____ Date: _____

The Ministry Volunteer Applicant, _____, has been approved for ministry based on the information provided by the applicant, his/her references and a recent Criminal Record Check. If it is discovered at a later date that the information provided was false in any way, the applicant may be dismissed from their position at First Baptist Church Vernon BC.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Adopted September 15th, 2013.

(Chair of _____ Commission)

PAST MINISTRIES CHECK

Name of Applicant:

Name of Church/Ministry indicated on application form:

NOTE: If the person who first answers your call does not know the applicant, please try to get the name and number of someone who can help you.

Hello, this is _____ . I serve on the Christian Education Commission of First Baptist Church in Vernon, BC. Like many churches today, we have a screening policy for all of the people who volunteer to work with our children, youth or vulnerable persons. I am calling your church because _____ (Name of Applicant):

1. ...indicated on his/her application form that he/she had attended your church in _____ and they indicated they were involved in:

Can you verify this information? _____ If not, why?

2. How long have you known him/her?

3. Have you ever worked together with this person in ministry? _____ Yes _____ No

Comments:

Would you welcome this person back to work with you? _____ Yes _____ No

4. What are the person's strengths and abilities as related to this position?

5. Would you have any reservations about this person working with children, youth or vulnerable persons? If yes, please explain: _____

6. Additional comments regarding suitability for ministry?

7. Do you affirm this person for ministry with children, youth or vulnerable persons?

Yes No

Thank you very much for your help.

Checked By: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

REFERENCE CHECK

For: _____ Proposed Position:

(Name of Applicant)

Reference Name: _____ Phone :

Email Address:

My name is (reference checker). I am calling from First Baptist Church Vernon BC to obtain a reference check for (volunteer's name) who has expressed an interest in the volunteer position of _____ at First Baptist Church. He/she has given us your name as someone who would be familiar with his/her qualifications for this position.

1. What is your relationship to this person (friend, work, social, volunteer, etc.?)

2. How long have you known him/her?

3. Have you worked together with this person in ministry? ____ Yes ____ No
Please specify:

4. What are the person's strengths and abilities as related to this position?

5. Do you have any concerns relating to this person being involved in this ministry?

6. Additional comments regarding suitability for ministry _____

7. Do you affirm this person for ministry? ___ Yes ___ No

Checked By: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

REPORT OF SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT

Date: _____ Name of Child: _____

Address: _____ Phone: _____

Name of Person Filing Report: _____

Position of Person Filing Report: _____

Nature of suspected abuse: (Physical, Sexual, Emotional, Neglect)

Indicators of suspected abuse:
(Including facts, physical signs and course of events where necessary)

Action taken: (Including date and time)

Any worker or volunteer who has reasonable grounds to believe that a child is in need of protection shall immediately report the matter to a Child Protection Social Worker at the Ministry of Children and Family Development or the local RCMP, or the First Nations Child Welfare Agency (if the child is First Nations), and to the Senior Pastor or Chairperson of the Church Council.

All information about an alleged incident of abuse or neglect and the people involved is to be treated in strict confidence on a “need to know” basis only by:

1. those who will assure the child’s safety
2. those who will investigate to determine the present and future risk
3. those who will pursue founded allegations

Signed: _____

Date:

(Signature of Person Reporting Incident)

FOLLOW UP REPORT OF SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT

Date of incident: _____ Name of Child: _____

Address: _____ Phone: _____

Name of Person Who Filed Initial Report: _____ Date filed: _____

Check List – the Church has taken the following action:

- Protected the child from further risk.
- Advised the parent(s) or guardian(s), if the reported abuse has not implicated them, and extended to the family whatever Senior Pastoral support resources may be appropriate.
- Ensured that the allegation has been reported to a Child Protection Social Worker of the Ministry of Children and Family Development or the RCMP.
- Sought legal counsel for the Church.
- Reported the incident to the Church’s insurance company.
- Ensured completion by the adult reporting the allegation of the “Report of Suspected Child Abuse” form.

Other Action Taken: (Including dates and times)

All information about an alleged incident of abuse or neglect and the people involved will be treated in confidence on a “need to know” basis only by:

1. those who will assure the child’s safety
2. those who will investigate to determine the present and future risk
3. those who will pursue founded allegations

Signed: _____ Date: _____

(Senior Pastor or Chairperson of Church Council)

Adopted September 15th, 2013.

MEDICAL RELEASE FORM
Day or Overnight Events

Event:

Date(s): _____

Name of Child: _____ Gender: _____
Age: _____

Primary Contact (Parent/Guardian):

Address: _____ Phone: _____

Email: _____

Alternate Contact #1: _____ Phone: _____

Alternate Contact #2: _____ Phone: _____

Does your child have any allergies? (Bee stings, food, medications, etc.) Yes _____ No _____

Please explain:

Does your child have any severe or life-threatening allergies? Yes _____ No _____

Please explain:

Is your child bringing any medication with him/her? (Antibiotics, ventilator, Ritalin, etc.) Yes _____ No _____
Please explain any instructions for staff regarding these medications. **Please Note: THE CHURCH AND ITS WORKERS & VOLUNTEERS ARE NOT RESPONSIBLE AND DO NOT ASSUME ANY RESPONSIBILITY FOR MONITORING AND ENSURING THAT A CHILD PROPERLY TAKES HIS/HER MEDICATION.**

Does your child have any physical, emotional, mental or behavioral concerns or limitations that our staff should be aware of? Yes _____ No _____

Please explain:

Check if your child currently, or within the last three months, has had any of the following:

Appendicitis Ear Infection Hay Fever Mumps Asthma
 Epilepsy Hepatitis Severe Stomach Ache Bedwetting Diabetes Measles
(Red)
 Measles (German) Sinusitis Chickenpox Fainting Tonsillitis

Other:

Date of last Tetanus Shot: _____

Child's Medical Care Card No.: _____

Name of Family Physician _____ Phone _____

In the event that your child requires special medication, x-rays or treatment, the parent(s) or guardian(s) will be notified immediately.

Permission:

I/We hereby give permission for our child, _____, to participate in the day or overnight event, _____, at _____ as planned and carried out by the staff and volunteers of First Baptist Church Vernon BC.

In case of surgical emergency, I/We hereby give permission to the physician selected by First Baptist Church Vernon BC to hospitalize, secure proper treatment for, and to order injection, anesthesia or surgery for my/our child as named above.

Your child will be cared for as if he/she were our child. Every precaution will be taken for the safety and good health of your child, but in the event of accident or sickness, First Baptist Church Vernon BC, its staff, and its volunteers are hereby released from any liability.

Parent/Guardian's Signature _____

Parent/Guardian's Signature _____

Date: _____

INJURY OR ILLNESS INCIDENT REPORT FORM

Date: _____ Name of Child: _____

Name of second child (if more than one): _____

Name of Person Filing Report: _____ Position: _____

Nature of incident:

Injuries incurred (if any):

Action taken: (Including date and time)

Parent(s) or guardian(s) informed: _____ Yes _____ No

Signed: _____ Date: _____

(Signature of Person Reporting Incident)

Signed: _____

Date:

(Signature of Person Witness to Incident)

REGISTRATION/PERMISSION FORM

Program:

Date enrolled: _____

Name of Child: _____ Gender: _____
Age: _____

Primary Contact (Parent/Guardian):

Address: _____ Phone: _____

Email: _____

Alternate Contact #1: _____ Phone: _____

Alternate Contact #2: _____ Phone: _____

Does your child have any allergies? (Bee stings, food, medications, etc.) Yes _____ No _____
Please explain:

Does your child have any severe or life-threatening allergies? Yes _____ No _____
Please explain:

Please Note: THE CHURCH AND ITS WORKERS & VOLUNTEERS ARE NOT RESPONSIBLE AND DO NOT ASSUME ANY RESPONSIBILITY FOR MONITORING AND ENSURING THAT A CHILD TAKES HIS/HER MEDICATION PROPERLY.

Does your child have any physical, emotional, mental or behavioral concerns or limitations that our staff should be aware of? Yes _____ No _____

Please explain:

Permission:

I/We hereby give permission for our child, _____, to participate in the _____, as planned and carried out by the staff and volunteers of First Baptist Church Vernon BC.

Your child will be cared for as if (he/she) were our child. Every precaution will be taken for the safety and good health of your child, but in the event of accident or sickness, First Baptist Church Vernon BC, its staff, and its volunteers are hereby released from any liability.

I/We hereby give permission for our child, _____, to be photographed or video recorded within the normal conditions of the program and to be posted within the Church community.

Parent/Guardian's Signature _____

Parent/Guardian's Signature _____

Date: _____