

# **In His Care**

## **Resource Manual**

A Program for the Protection of Children,  
Youth and Vulnerable Persons (CY&VP)

**We, at Emmanuel Baptist Church, are committed to providing a safe place with excellent ministry programs, led by qualified and caring staff, to train our children to love God and embrace His Word.**

**Emmanuel Baptist Church  
1636 Acadia Drive  
Saskatoon, SK S7H 5H7  
(306) 477-1234**

# IN HIS CARE

A Program for the Protection of Children,  
Youth and Vulnerable Persons (CY&VP)

This Manual is intended to be a resource for all leaders within Emmanuel Baptist Church Ministries and Programs. While we have attempted to anticipate situations that may arise within our Ministries and Programs, the manual itself is not intended to supplant the good judgment and common sense of leaders.

It is intended to encourage responsible and compassionate practices, exercised with love and respect for all Ministry/Program participants and leaders.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## **Chapter 1**

Introduction

- A. Zero Tolerance Policy

## **Chapter 2**

Purposes

- A. In His Care Protection Program

## **Chapter 3**

The Need - for Protection

- A. Social Context
- B. What is Child Abuse or Neglect?
- C. What are the signs that a child may be abused or neglected?
- D. How can I help stop child abuse and neglect?
- E. If I make a report - what happens then?
- F. Definitions of Abuse
  - i. Physical
  - ii. Emotional
  - iii. Sexual
  - iv. Neglect
- G. The Church Environment
- H. The Church's - Spiritual Responsibility
- I. The Church's - Civil and Legal Responsibility

## **Chapter 4**

### In Need of Care

- A. Need of Care
- B. Obligation to Report
- C. Reporting Procedures
- D. Responding to...
  - i. The alleged victim
  - ii. The alleged perpetrator
- E. Public Exposure
  - i. Spokesperson
  - ii. Position Statement

## **Chapter 5**

### Recruitment

- A. Paid Child Care Workers and Ministry Volunteers
- B. Ministry & Program Management
- C. Screening Staff & Volunteers

## **Chapter 6**

### Orientation & Training

- A. General Ministry Orientation
- B. Orientation Content
- C. Ongoing training

## Chapter 7

### Health & Safety Guidelines

- A. General Safety Practices
- B. General Responsibilities
- C. Guidelines for Behavior
- D. Proper Displays of Affection
- E. Special Events & Activities
  - i. Field Trips
  - ii. Overnight Events
- F. Hygiene Practices
- G. Minor Incident Procedure
- H. Major Injury or Illness
- I. Fire procedures

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### A. Zero Tolerance Policy

Emmanuel Baptist Church has a **ZERO TOLERANCE FOR ABUSE** and takes all allegations of abuse seriously. Emmanuel Baptist Church will cooperate fully with the authorities to investigate all cases of alleged abuse. Abuse of minors or vulnerable adults is grounds for immediate dismissal and possible criminal charges.

*"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*

In this plan we address the needs for safety and love of children, youth and individuals who are otherwise vulnerable to abuse and misuse in our community and our church fellowship. Unless otherwise specified, the use of the terms children, youth or vulnerable persons/individuals may be applied inter-changeably. However, the intent to apply the same principles and values to all "vulnerable" people must not compromise in any way its application to the safety of children, or minors.

Generally, "vulnerable people" are individuals who are at greater risk of being harmed than the general population, because of age, disability or handicap (physical, developmental, emotional, social or other), or other circumstances, whether temporary or permanent.

We have a **moral obligation** to respect and protect individuals of all ages in our ministries and programs. We have a **legal obligation** to report the abuse or neglect of children to the appropriate authorities.

Our children, especially, are a trust from God, ours to nurture and to protect, to grow into a knowledge of and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. To accomplish this we will provide them with a safe environment, one in which they can explore, question and seek truth.

Abuse of vulnerable people, especially children and minor youth, is a violation of their dignity. Abuse of children specifically is a criminal act and a violation of human conscience and dignity. The effects of abuse can be devastating on children and their families, on the integrity of the church - and on the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

# Chapter 2

## Purposes

### **A. In His Care Protection Program**

1. Provide a safe and secure environment for all participants in our Ministries and Programs, especially our children, youth and vulnerable persons (CY&VP).
2. Provide standards for the planning and implementing of ministries and programs, to ensure that issues related to abuse and safety are considered
3. Provide guidelines for the recruitment and training of staff and volunteers who will work with CY&VP.
4. Provide training on abuse and the legal responsibility to report
5. Protect our staff and volunteers from unfounded allegations of abuse
6. Protect the credibility and integrity of the church and the name of Jesus Christ
7. Be reviewed yearly with an ongoing awareness to those involved in working with children and youth.

# Chapter 3

## The Need - for Protection

### A. Social Context

1. Abuse, especially sexual abuse, can have horrific impact on the lives of victims - unbounded by race, social background or age.
2. Abuse violates the basic values of our Christian faith; it is a mis-use and abuse of power, by one person taking advantage of another in a relationship characterized by a power imbalance.
3. Abuse of children is a **criminal act** under Canada's Criminal Code, for which we have a moral and legal obligation to report suspicions of such behavior to legal authorities.
4. Our church, as a Christian fellowship, while planning for a safe environment for nurturing and growth, may be susceptible to incidents and/or disclosure of abuse.

### B. What is Child Abuse or Neglect?

There are many forms of child abuse. Generally, abuse means anything that may be harmful to a child's physical, emotional or psychological health or that takes advantage of a child.

- **Physical abuse** — any action, including discipline, which causes injury to the child's body.
- **Sexual abuse** — any action to involve a child in a sexual activity including sexual touching, exposure, using a child in the making of/or viewing pornography, and/or involving a child in prostitution.
- **Emotional mistreatment** — expecting a child to be able to do things he or she cannot do, embarrassing or insulting a child, making hurtful comments about a child's appearance, intelligence, size, ability, etc.
- **Neglect** — failing to provide a child with enough good food, proper clothing, shelter, health care, or supervision.

### **C. What are the signs that a child may be abused or neglected?**

There are usually signs that a child is being abused or neglected. The signs may be physical which means it is possible to see them. In other cases, the child's behaviour 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. The following chart lists a number of physical signs and types of behaviour which might suggest abuse or neglect.

### **D. How can I help stop child abuse and neglect?**

If you have reason to believe a child is being abused or neglected, it is important to remember that **it is NEVER the child's fault.**

If you have reason to believe a child may be neglected or abused, you have a legal responsibility under The Child and Family Services Act to report your concerns. You may report them to the Department of Community Resources, the police, or a First Nations Child and Family Services agency.

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 wish to discuss it with a child protection worker or the police.

### **E. If I make a report — what happens then?**

All reports of abuse or neglect are investigated by trained, professional staff. They will usually discuss the situation with the family and decide what would be the best plan for the child and the family.

As noted above, everyone has a responsibility to report a situation where they believe a child may be in need of protection. Sometimes, though, a person may make a false report out of spite, anger, revenge or a desire to cause problems for a parent. Any person who does this may have legal action taken against them by the person against whom the false report is made.

#### **Child Protection Offices**

Saskatoon - 933-5961

Prince Albert - 1-800-487-8603

#### **After Hours Crisis Services**

Saskatoon - 933-6200

Prince Albert - 764-1011

## **F. Definitions of Abuse:**

### **i. Physical Abuse**

#### *Physical Indicators:*

- Injuries (bruises, cuts, burns, bite marks, fractures, etc.) that are not consistent with explanation offered (e.g. extensive bruising to one area)
- Presence of several injuries over a period of time
- Any bruising on an infant
- Facial injuries in preschool children (e.g. cuts, bruises, sores, etc.)
- Injuries inconsistent with the child's age and development

#### *Behavioural Indicators:*

- Cannot recall how injuries occurred or offers an inconsistent explanation
- Wary of adults or reluctant to go home, absences from school
- May cringe or flinch if touched unexpectedly
- May display a vacant stare or frozen watchfulness
- Extremely aggressive or extremely withdrawn
- Wears long sleeves to hid injury
- Extremely compliant and/or eager to please
- Sad, cries frequently

### **ii. Emotional Abuse**

#### *Physical Indicators:*

- Bedwetting and/or diarrhea which is non-medical in origin
- Frequent psychosomatic complaints: headaches, nausea, and abdominal pain
- Child fails to thrive

Rarely is any one indicator conclusive proof that a child has been harmed. In most instances, children present a cluster of behavioural and physical indicators.

*Behavioural Indicators:*

- Extreme withdrawal or aggressiveness, mood swings
- Overly compliant; too well-mannered; too neat and clean
- Extreme attention-seeking behaviours
- Displays extreme inhibition in play
- Poor peer relationships
- Severe depression, often suicidal
- Running away from home
- Constantly apologizes

**iii. Sexual Abuse**

*Physical Indicators:*

- Unusual or excessive itching in the genital or anal area
- Torn, stained or bloody underwear (observed if the child requires bathroom assistance)
- Pregnancy or venereal disease
- Injuries to the vaginal or anal areas (e.g. bruising, swelling or infection)

While the above are not conclusive indicators of sexual abuse, one or more could be a sign that a child needs help.

*Behavioural Indicators:*

- Age-inappropriate sexual play with toys, self, others (e.g., replication of explicit sexual acts)
- Age-inappropriate, sexually explicit drawings and/or descriptions
- Bizarre, sophisticated or unusual sexual knowledge
- Promiscuity
- Prostitution
- Seductive behaviours directed toward members of the opposite sex
- Fear of home, excessive fear of men or women
- Depression

#### **iv. Neglect**

*Physical Indicators:*

- Abandonment
- Unattended medical or dental needs
- Consistent lack of supervision
- Consistent hunger, inappropriate dress, poor hygiene
- Persistent conditions (e.g. scabies, head lice, diaper rash or other skin disorder)
- Developmental delays (e.g. language, weight)

*Behavioural Indicators:*

- Regularly displays fatigue or listlessness, falls asleep in class
- Steals food, begs from classmates
- Reports that no caretaker is at home
- Frequently absent or late
- Self-destructive
- School drop-outs (adolescents)

<http://www.dcre.gov.sk.ca/services/famyouth/ChildProt/index.html>

#### **G. The Church Environment**

As a Christian environment, we want the church to be characterized as:

- a trusting place; a safe place
- a place where individuals will encounter Jesus Christ and become His fully devoted followers
- a place in which individuals continue to grow in their faith and commitment to Jesus Christ, as their personal Lord and Savior
- a place where people of all ages and backgrounds will feel loved and valued, as children of God

- a place where individuals of all ages can mix freely and be enriched by the opportunities to engage one another in programs and ministries
- a place where people care for one another, with a spirit of servanthood
- a place where, or from where, individuals can exercise their God-given gifts and talents in service to others

To ensure that Emmanuel Baptist Church is the kind of environment we know God would want it to be, we have developed policies, procedures and guidelines that will:

- prevent abuse within our facility(s) and ministries
- respond appropriately to allegations of abuse, disclosed within our ministries and programs
- guide the reporting of allegations of abuse to the legal authorities
- Minister to the needs of victims and perpetrators, as we are able.

## **H. The Church's - Spiritual Responsibility**

God treasured His children. He championed their safety. He gave clear direction about the church's and society's obligation to protect them, to nurture them, to raise them into His kingdom.

- "...among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality... because these are improper for God's Holy people." (Ephesians 5:3)
- "...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)
- "... let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these... And He took the children in his arms, put His hands on them and blessed them." (Mark 10:14,16)

These guidelines will protect and promote growth for each child and adult involved in our ministries and programs.

## **I. The Church's - Civil and Legal Responsibility**

Increasingly, the church is being held accountable for the actions of its staff, volunteers and adherents - even when the church and/or its leaders are not aware of actions or complicit in them. Civil suits are alleging that:

- the church is vicariously liable for the acts of its personnel, whether paid or volunteer
- the church has been negligent in the recruitment of personnel, whether paid or volunteer
- the church has been negligent in the training and/or supervision of its personnel, whether paid or volunteer
- the church has not been compassionate in its response to victims of abuse

# Chapter 4

## In Need of Care

### A. Need of Care

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

In addition, Leaders in our Support Group Ministry and Shekinah Ministry may become aware of situations in which abuse may be disclosed/suspected.

**You must** inform an Officer of the Department of Community Resources and/or a Peace Officer if ...

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

### *How do I know if a child is being abused or neglected?*

In Saskatchewan, *The Child and Family Services Act* defines abuse and neglect. Child abuse is defined under section 81 as:

- Physical injury;
- Substantial impairment of a child's mental or emotional functioning;
- Exploiting a child or treating a child cruelly;
- Contacting a child for sexual purpose; and
- Allowing or encouraging a child to engage in prostitution.

Section 11 of the *Act* addresses child neglect, which includes:

- Not providing enough food, clothing, shelter or healthcare for the child; and
- Leaving a child alone or without proper supervision or care

The law also protects children who may suffer physical or emotional harm because of family violence.

## **B. Obligation to Report**

In Saskatchewan, under the Saskatchewan *Child & Family Services Act*, everyone is obligated to report suspected abuse/neglect of children to an Officer of the Department of Community Resources or a Peace Officer.

### ***Child & Family Services Act***

#### Interpretations

Sec. 2(1) d) “**child**” means, except where a contrary intention is expressed [in the *Act*], an unmarried person actually or apparently under 16 years of age.”

#### Duty to Report

Sec 12(1) Subject to subsections (2) and (3), every person who has reasonable grounds to believe that a child is in need of protection shall report the information to an officer [of the Department of Community Resources] or peace officer.

## **C. Reporting Procedures**

- **CONFIDENTIALITY** - all information about an alleged incident of abuse/neglect and the people involved will be treated in confidence.
- On a "need to know" basis - it is important for the protection of a child/children in question and the alleged perpetrator, that the "suspicion of abuse" be reported only to those needing to know;
- Those who will assure the child's safety,
- Those who will investigate to determine the present and future risk and
- Those who will pursue founded allegations.
- Any allegation of abuse disclosed by a child will be treated in confidence and with great respect, assuming that the information given is reliable.
- Due diligence will be exercised in all actions taken following an allegation, causing concern about abuse/neglect.
  
- **Any person participating in Emmanuel Baptist Church ministries and programs, who has reason to believe that a child has been abused or is need of protection, will immediately report such to an Officer of the Department of Community Resources or a Peace Officer.**

- **Phone Numbers for reporting:**

|                                   |          |
|-----------------------------------|----------|
| Department of Community Resources | 933-6077 |
| Saskatoon Police Service          | 975-8300 |

- Coincidentally, or immediately following, the report to the Department or Peace Officer, the incident will be reported to the Ministry Director or Pastor of the Ministry/program.

The Ministry Director or Pastor, so advised, will:

- Take whatever steps are necessary to protect the child from further risk.
- Ensure that the allegation is reported to an officer of the Department of Community Resources or the Police Service.
- Report the allegation to the Senior Pastor, or Senior Associate Pastor in his absence.
- Ensure completion, by the adult reporting the allegation, of the "Report Form - Suspected Child Abuse" - available from the Pastoral staff or the church office.
- Investigate and complete the "Follow-up Report - Suspected Child Abuse" and forward to the Senior Pastor or Senior Associate in his absence.

The Senior Pastor, or Associate Pastor in his absence, will advise the Chair of the Board

- Where a Pastor is the alleged abuser, the report will be made as soon as is practical to another Pastor or to the Chair of the Board (or his designate, in his absence), as seems most appropriate.
- The Chair of the Board, or his designate, in his absence will advise the Church's legal counsel as well as report the incident to our insurance company.

## **D. Responding to...**

### i. The alleged victim

#### *DO....*

- Take reports of abuse seriously
- Believe the child. As soon as the child has started to disclose – you must interrupt and advise them that you need to call someone who can help. Call Community Resources or after hours Mobile Crisis to take over.
- Be calm and non-judgmental in any response to the child
- Acknowledge the child's feelings
- Assure the child that the incident(s) was not her/his fault
- Record information as accurately as possible. Simply record the child's comments in his/her own words. **Don't ask leading questions, provide opinions or judgments.**
- Keep all information confidential and secure.

**Remember** - the care and safety of the alleged victim is the first priority.

#### *DO NOT....*

- Ask leading questions
- Show horror or anger
- Promise to keep disclosure confidential
- Provide opinions or judgments
- Promise that things will get better
- Launch your own investigation – the more times a child tells their story, the more likely the investigation will be contaminated.

- ii. The alleged abuser/perpetrator
  - treat her/him with dignity and respect
  - until the investigation is completed and a decision of further action, is made:
  - If a church volunteer worker, immediately relieve her/him of her/his ministry/program duties.
  - If a paid staff, suspend from duties immediately.
  - offer what support seems appropriate
  - Remember, s/he is still one of God's loved children, too.

**Formal contact** with investigators, on behalf of Emmanuel Baptist Church, will be through the Senior Pastor or legal counsel for the church. Do not advise of the report – this is the job of child protection.

#### **E. Public Exposure**

- i. Spokesperson
  - Generally, the Senior Pastor, or designate, will be the spokesperson for the church; in some cases the church Board Chair or legal counsel may be designated as the spokesperson.
  - Only one person will be the identified primary contact and authorized to speak on behalf of the church.
  - All media contact will be directed to the Senior Pastor, or designate.
- ii. Position Statement
  - Do not admit liability
  - Keep all information in strict confidence
  - Speaking out on child abuse is an opportunity to influence public opinion positively by emphasizing:
    - An awareness of the problem of child abuse - that we take the issue very seriously

- A concern for victims and their families
- Steps that have been taken at Emmanuel Baptist Church to provide a safe environment for children
- Responsible action
- Our extensive plan and practices to ensure safety
- Our training of staff and volunteers to maintain a safe environment

"It is always tragic when children are abused or exploited. Emmanuel 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 accusations 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 (insert name of appropriate agencies and authorities)."

In any case, we cannot respond by:

- Denying the incident, despite clear evidence to the contrary
- Acknowledging the incident, but minimizing it with comments like - "It only happened once" or "It wasn't that serious."
- Attributing blame to the victim or the victim's family
- Making accusatory statements

# Chapter 5

## Recruitment

### A. Paid Childcare Workers and Ministry Volunteers

The Pastoral Staff under whose portfolio a ministry/ program falls will be responsible to ensure that recruiting, orientation and ongoing training and supervision of staff and volunteers for those ministries/programs is done according to these guidelines.

### B. Ministry & Program Management

It is the role of the respective pastoral staff to:

- Ensure that children are introduced into a secure and accepting environment within church ministries and programs
- Ensure safe practice in all work with children
- Maintain good discipline and order in ministries and programs

To ensure our effectiveness at protecting our children and vulnerable people:

- All staff and volunteers (those who will work directly with children and vulnerable people) will be thoroughly screened and trained before engaging in ministry
- Each will be monitored and supervised by a more "senior" designated person.

The *Pastor/Director of Children's Ministries*, the *Pastor of Youth Ministries* and the *Minister of Special Care* will ensure adequate training and supervision of all who work with children and vulnerable persons within their respective Ministry portfolios, providing feedback to team members and encouraging reflective and evaluative practice.

### **Ministry Directors**

Ministry Directors are accountable to the Pastor(s) of the ministry/program and are responsible for overall supervision of ministry/program leaders and of issues pertaining to general facility use when their program is in operation.

i. **Children's Ministry and Youth Ministry Directors**

- Will have a role description, which sets out areas of responsibility and the nature of tasks to be undertaken
- Will distribute and discuss with each team member, group leader and helper the IN HIS CARE Protection Program
- Will make all workers with children and youth (and vulnerable persons) aware of their duties to:
  - Child protection
  - Appropriate action on discovery or disclosure of abuse
  - Ensure health and safety within the ministry(s)
- Make clear to all workers the expectation to conduct themselves in a Godly manner, being an example of obedience, respect and integrity to young believers

**C. Screening Staff & Volunteers**

All staff and volunteers wishing to work in ministry with children and vulnerable persons will:

- i. Believe in Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior
- ii. Be members or regular attenders at Emmanuel 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.
  - For paid child care workers and volunteers in ministries which EBC partners with other churches or Christian organizations, membership and/or attendance at EBC may not be required.
- iii. Submit a completed application form to the Pastor responsible for the ministry area in which service is being sought
- iv. Submit with the application form three references related to her/his personal character and previous experience working with children and vulnerable persons
- v. Agree to and have completed a Police Record Check
- vi. Report any previous commission of acts or charges of sexual or other misconduct, if any, in one's past
- vii. Report any personal experience of sexual abuse victimization that may affect one's ability to serve in ministry - either positively or negatively
- viii. Be interviewed by the Pastor into whose ministry portfolio the applicant wants to serve.

**The Pastor or Designate will:**

- Ensure completeness of the information on the application form
- Review the ministry expectations for the position(s) for which the applicant may be suitable
- Review with the applicant the "IN HIS CARE" Program for Child Protection
- Contact references, using a prescribed format for questioning and record reference comments
- Determine the suitability of the applicant on the basis of the application, references, Police Record Check, and interview.
- Record such decision and file all information related to the application in a "confidential file", to be maintained by the Pastor, or designate.
- Advise the applicant of her/his suitability
- Communicate with applicant:
  - Placement into ministry
  - Person to whom she/he will be responsible and accountable in ministry
  - Process of supervision and six-month review of performance

# Chapter 6

## Orientation & Training

### A. General Ministry Orientation

General Ministry Orientation sessions will be coordinated by the Pastors of Children's Ministry and Youth Ministry or designates and will be held twice annually - or as needed

- All staff and volunteers will be encouraged to participate in a General Ministry Orientation session
- Staff and volunteers who have completed an application form may, with the approval of the Pastor or Ministry Director, engage in ministry prior to completion of the General Orientation.
- Volunteers/staff so approved will, however, complete the next scheduled General Orientation Session. Failure to do so may result in their being asked to discontinue Ministry until the General Orientation has been completed.
- Parents, helpers and others who only periodically assist with children's ministries will not be required to submit an application form or participate in the General Ministry Orientation session. However, they will be required to work in the presence of an approved ministry volunteer or staff.

### B. Orientation Content

The General Ministry Orientation session will include information about:

- Emmanuel Baptist Church and its Ministries
- Identification of Ministry Leaders
- Obligation to protect our children and vulnerable persons from abuse and harm
- Awareness of child abuse as a criminal act and its impact on its victims
- Our church **IN HIS CARE Program** to prevent & respond to abuse in our ministries
- Process for reporting allegations of abuse
- Providing a safe environment for children - so that our children and vulnerable people **feel safe and secure** in our ministries and programs, to include but not be limited to:
  - Fire safety procedures
  - Evacuation procedures
  - Use of equipment
- Ongoing ministry monitoring and supervision

Following the General Orientation Session, each participant will be required to acknowledge:

- Having participated in the session
- Having read and understood the IN HIS CARE program booklet by signing the "**Release of Information and Declaration of Intent**" form.

### **C. Ongoing training**

The Pastoral, Ministry Directors or Ministry Coordinators may plan ongoing training for Ministry Volunteers within their respective Ministry/Program areas - either:

- General training for a group of volunteers or
- Training specific to the needs of an individual.

**Efforts will be made to ensure that all staff and volunteers have adequate training in areas that are critical to their ministries/programs.**

# Chapter 7

## Health & Safety Guidelines

### A. General Safety Practices

Group leadership:

- There will always be **at least two** adults assigned to each small group (wherever possible a male and female team member). Please work with your ministry director to insure that age appropriate ratios are maintained.

Leadership access:

- Pastors, ministry directors and team members have open access to all areas where adults are working with children.
- All church work areas have doors with windows in them in order that supervision can occur without interrupting the group session.
- At no time will doors be locked to prevent entrance to an area while a program is running.
- There will be sufficient lighting in place, both inside and outside the building, while programs are running
- Parents/guardians are welcome to check on their children at any time.

### B. General Responsibilities

All Team members will:

- Be immediately responsible for the personal health and safety practices of their group
- Personally follow safe operating procedures, standards of behavior and dress.
- Not, and not allow others to climb on tables, chairs or other furniture, equipment or fittings.
- Not, and do not allow others to, lift or carry heavy weights or unstable objects.
- Use all equipment in accordance with manufacturer's instructions and to seek advice if you are unsure.
- Wear protective clothing where appropriate and to ensure that dress is suitable for the task.
- Report:
  - Any damage to furniture, fittings or equipment to their ministry leader who will report it to the church administrator.
  - Any suspect electrical equipment or loose or damaged plugs or sockets must be reported immediately. Never attempt to service or repair broken equipment.

- Ensure good lighting and ventilation. Poor provision in these can result in hazards to health and safety.
- Give clear instructions and warnings as often as necessary.

**Note:** The Church Administrator is responsible for all on site repairs or servicing work. Please leave notice for him/her about any servicing/repairs required.

### **C. Guidelines for Behavior**

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

- Good discipline is essential; it gives clear direction and parameters for behavior to ministry participants. It will help to shape their maturing into responsible and caring adults.
- For children and youth, effective discipline shows a loving, caring attitude and helps them to feel secure.
- Good discipline is also honoring to the Lord.
- We should be able to set good but reasonable standards for the behavior of children in our care. We should set standards for behaviors that are worthy and attainable.

It is reasonable to expect that children and adults will:

- Do to others what you would have them do to you.
- Listen well and think about the impact of your personal behavior on others.
- Do their best.
- Make wise choices.
- Be responsible for oneself, for one's feelings, actions and belongings.
- Handle conflicts proficiently – ask the person to stop, ignore/move away, and inform the leader.

*Leaders will not use corporal punishment or harassment as a means of discipline.*

### **Corporal Punishment**

“Corporal Punishment” means the infliction of physical injury on someone as an attempt to correct bad behavior.

## Harassment

“Harassment” means any objectionable conduct, comment or display by a leader that is:

- Directed at a child or youth under our care
- Made on the basis of race, creed, religion, colour, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, family status, disability, physical size or weight, age, nationality, ancestry or place of origin
- A threat to the health or safety of the child or youth under our care

## Consequences for inappropriate behavior:

- Should be logical and proportionate, in relation to the prompting behaviour
- Non-verbal cues - such as use of eye contact, headshake, moving nearer to the person may be used to respond to behaviors
- Verbal cues - e.g. asking the child to correct his/her action. Child will be made aware of his/her actions by being asked, “What are you doing? What should you be doing? Please do it.”
- Time out - Child may be given the choice of following expectations or sitting out for a time.
- Child 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
- Return to activity - Every opportunity will be extended to the child to choose to behave appropriately and return to the activity/group
- Persistent non-compliance
  - the Ministry Director or Children’s Pastor will be informed
  - she/he may contact the child's parents
  - A suitable plan of action will be developed with the parents
- In the event of a serious incident and if there is a likelihood that a child will be or is being a danger to themselves or to others, the Program Director or Children’s Pastor will be sent for
- Leaders and helpers will not attempt to grab or restrain a child physically. Neither will they verbally put a child down or threaten a child with words or physical gestures

God is a loving God as well as a God of order and discipline. Leaders will demonstrate this to children by:

- Being well prepared and forward thinking enough to be able to spot potential difficulties and intervene before they occur
- Being consistent in their attitudes and behavior and in helping their group to uphold group rules
- Taking control and responsibility in a situation. Being firm but loving. Giving clear, understandable instructions
- Using a voice that is firm, that shows you expect to be obeyed. Leaders should not raise their voice to children in irritation or anger.

## **Consequences for appropriate behavior:**

- Smiles
- Verbal praise
- Handshake, thumbs up, pat on the back
- Reward sticker
- "Happygram"
- Phone call to or discussion with parents
- Positive referral to Children's Pastor
- Opportunity to share and celebrate success with group
- Opportunity to be a leader

## **D. Proper Displays of Affection**

Touch is an essential responsibility in nurturing lives. Team members need to be aware of and sensitive to differences in sexual development, culture, 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.

### **Appropriate Touch**

Appropriate touch should be considered by every team member to be of the highest integrity. Love and caring can be expressed in the following appropriate ways:

- 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 comforting
- Taking both of the child's hands as you say "You did such a good job!" etc
- Patting a child on the head, hand, 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

If a child needs to have a private conversation with you, remove yourselves the necessary distance from the others, but stay in view of the group or leave a door slightly ajar. In all things respect the integrity of the child. Allow a child to back away from your well-intentioned affection if he/she wishes. Ask the child if he/she feels OK about being touched. Abused children are often fearful or distrustful of any physical contact. Most of us sense the difference between positive and caring intentions and those that are meant to exploit us. Use your common sense and good judgment to guide you in protecting the personal space of the children in your care.

## **Inappropriate Touch**

- Kissing a child, coaxing a child to kiss you, extended hugging or tickling
- touching a child in any area that would be covered by a bathing suit (except when assisting the toileting/ changing, as outlined previously)
- Carrying older children or having them sit on your lap

## **E. Special Events and Activities**

### **i. Field Trips**

- Group activities and group outings outside regularly scheduled classes or childcare must be pre-approved by the Pastor or Ministry Director for the respective ministry/program.
- Generally, two volunteers/staff will be present at all times - including when driving a child/youth home. When this is not possible or practical, the child's/youth's parent(s) will be advised and her/his permission will be sought beforehand.
- A Waiver and medical Release Form will be completed by each participant's parent(s) and returned to the Pastor of the Ministry, or designate. Failure to do so will prohibit the child/youth from participation in the event.
- All drivers will have a valid driver's license.
- 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.

### **ii. Overnight Events**

- All such events will be approved by the Ministry Pastor
- Completed written consent and medical release forms will be required for each child/youth participating.
- Leadership for the event:
- Must be "certified" leaders within the IN HIS CARE Program or supervised by a certified leader of at least 18 years of age.
- Recommend minimum one leader for each ten (10) participants.
- Minimum two leaders; not be related by blood or marriage.
- Each leader will have her/his/their assigned group for which s/he is responsible.
- As much as is practical, leaders will not be alone with a child/youth.

## **F. Hygiene Practices**

- Hand washing should be practiced by children 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.)
- Clean-up - A disinfecting solution of 1 part bleach to 9 parts water will be used for wiping up all spills, cleaning, washing hands, cleaning play equipment and the cleaning of tabletops, chairs and play areas.

## **Washroom Guidelines**

- Younger children have washrooms, which are closely located to their program area.
- If a child is escorted to the washroom (preferably by a female leader)
- The leader will remain outside the washroom stall and wait for the child before escorting him or her back to the program.
- The leader will call the child's name if they are taking longer than seems necessary.
- If possible, the leader should try not to be alone with the child in an unsupervised washroom, and the leader will never go into a washroom with a child and shut the door.

## **G. Minor Incident Procedure**

**First Aid kits** are located in:

- The kitchen
- The photocopy room
- The Children's and Youth Pastors' offices
- The upstairs storage room.
  
- A child or youth who is not feeling well should not attend the group session as this exposes others to illness.
  
- **No child or worker with any symptom of an infectious illness may attend any class.**
  
- Team members are warned to be careful in their assessment of what is trivial e.g. a knock on the head can produce serious consequences, as can an untreated cut.
- Group leaders should be able to deal with minor injuries.
- For cuts and bruises, tap water on a piece of cotton wool or Kleenex is sufficient.

- A team member giving treatment of any nature to a child/youth should ensure that this is recorded on an **Incident Report Form** and that the ministry director is informed.
- Parents should be informed of the incident when the child is picked up.
- A child who is unable to continue participation in an activity, due to illness or injury, should be returned to her/his parents, if present. If the parent(s) is not present, a leader will call to advise them of the circumstances and request that the child be picked-up, if necessary.

**Note: team members are not qualified to give drugs or medicines. Parents must be on hand to give these at the appropriate time.**

### **H. Major Injury or Illness**

- Team members are not to give or apply any medication. If a child needs medication, the parents must give it. No medication will be left in the program area or with a worker or child.
- In extreme cases (i.e. peanut allergies, ventilators, etc.) arrangements have been made and written instructions appear on the attendance register.
- For incidents of a more serious nature, if in the opinion of the person applying first aid, the recipient of aid requires attention beyond first aid, the following procedure applies:
  - All activity for that group must be stopped. Alert the Program Director.
  - Contact Parents.
  - Summon Ambulance.
  - Make arrangements for other children/youth to be properly supervised.
  - Complete an Incident Report as soon as is practically possible. Give clear information about:
    - how the accident occurred,
    - who was involved and what action was taken.
    - The response to the incident
  - Be sure to note if contact is made with parents, recording time of contact

### **Procedures for Dealing with Cuts or Injuries Involving Blood**

- Put on the latex gloves (available in the first aid kit)
- Separate the injured child/youth from the others.
- Isolate the area where any blood may have dropped.
- Send someone to **phone or fetch the parents** at this time.
- Check to ensure that no other people had contact with any of the blood from the cut or injury. If others have contact with blood or other body fluids, see the appendix attached Re: **Exchange of Body Fluids**
- Bandage the injury, avoiding contact with mouth, eyes, and ears
- Immediately clean up blood soiled surfaces, and disinfect with fresh solutions of at least 1 part bleach and 9 parts water.

- remove blood stained bandages/patches/cloths and discard in a sealed plastic bag into the waste dumpster at the back of the building.
- Remove and properly dispose of latex gloves.
- Wash hands and any body parts that contacted the child and/or blood carefully with sterilizing soap (available in the first aid kit).
- Wash your hands for 30 seconds after contact with blood and other body fluids contaminated with blood.
- Never delay emergency action.
- Complete an Incident Report as soon as is practically possible. Give clear information about:
  - how the accident occurred,
  - who was involved and what action was taken.
  - The response to the incident
  - Be sure to note if contact is made with parents, recording time of contact

## **I. Fire Procedures**

**Your first duty is to prevent injury to or loss of life. Remember! People are priceless.** Things can be replaced. Get people to safety before contemplating salvaging things.

### **i. Acquaint yourself with:**

- Locations of fire alarms "pulls" and fire extinguishers
- All fire escape routes from your ministry/program area.
- assembly points to be used by your ministry/program, in the event of evacuation.

### **ii. If you are the first to discover a fire:**

- Ensure that all children & others are removed from the immediate vicinity of the fire
- 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
- Immediately advise the Ministry Director or Pastor in charge, or their designate, of the fire - of its whereabouts, nature and risk
- Then proceed with evacuation, as follows....
- The Ministry Director, Pastor, or designate will call "911", if necessary

### iii. When a fire alarm sounds:

- Close all windows
- Pick up your attendance register
- Escort all persons in your charge from the building by the nearest fire exit, without diversion, or collecting personal belongings
- Group leaders are responsible for ensuring that their group remains calm and orderly
- Running is absolutely not allowed
- Close all doors, through which you pass, behind your group
- If there is a child from your group in the toilets when the alarm sounds, and there are two leaders in your group, one leader will proceed to the washroom to find the child and escort her/him out safely.
- The other leader will proceed normally with the rest of your group out of the building.
- Assemble your group in the designated "assembly area" of the parking lot outside the building
- **Check your register to ensure that all group members are present**
- Notify the Ministry Director or Pastor, or designate, of any children who should be present with your group but who are not.
- Wait quietly with your group for further instructions.
- The Ministry Director or Pastor is responsible for checking the toilets on his/her way through the building and will ensure that all people are evacuated from them.

All Leaders and Children will remain in the designated "assembly area" of the parking lot (or other, as may be designated) until the Pastor in charge or Ministry Director gives direction to re-enter the building.