

# Plan to Protect

**Policies and Procedures Manual  
for  
Children, Youth, and Leaders**

**[updated February 22, 2011]**

The Charlottetown Bible Chapel has a spiritual, moral and legal obligation to provide a safe environment for children participating in chapel programs that are under the auspices and authority of the Charlottetown Bible Chapel. Child abuse is a criminal act as well as a violation of human conscience and dignity. It is a violation of God's moral law within the trusted context of relationship. It is criminal behavior that causes emotional, physical and spiritual trauma to victims, and has destructive consequences for abusers. The devastating effects on the credibility of the chapel ministry and the name of Christ make it essential that the Charlottetown Bible Chapel take all appropriate steps to prevent abusive incidences from occurring. The Elders are the spiritual leaders at the Charlottetown Bible Chapel and the Trustees are responsible for the physical and financial assets of the Charlottetown Bible Chapel.

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## INTRODUCTION

**Everyone who teaches, helps, or cares for children and/or youth under the auspices of the Charlottetown Bible Chapel is required to follow the guidelines and procedures as defined in this document. The Trustees and Elders of the Charlottetown Bible Chapel have reviewed and adopted these guidelines and procedures as official policy.**

**This plan is designed to assist church leaders in their recruiting of volunteers and, to the greatest extent possible, provide for the safety of the children served by these volunteers.**

## Chapter 1

# Understanding the Need

## Reducing the Risk of Child Sexual Abuse

The Charlottetown Bible Chapel has a mandate to minister to individuals, families, adults, youth and children. In that context, the Charlottetown Bible Chapel stresses the sanctity of human life and the importance and worth of each individual.

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

Although the Charlottetown Bible Chapel has been fortunate in never having any incidents of child abuse or molestation happen in the chapel, we recognize that formal guidelines and procedures will help prevent the opportunity for abuse to arise in the future.

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

## It Can Happen in Any Church

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

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There are few topics that create more emotion than that of child abuse, especially if it is sexual in nature.

Ed begins attending First Church. After a few weeks, he volunteers to work with the youth group. Church staff members do not know Ed, but they are delighted to have another worker. He is put to work immediately. The youth group has an overnight activity a few months later. Following the activity, two minors report that they were sexually molested by Ed. The parents of one of the minors contact a lawyer, and a \$3 million lawsuit is brought against Ed, the church and the church board. The parents claim that the church (and the church board) acted negligently by not doing any background investigation before using Ed as a volunteer worker.

### Impact

A single incident of child molestation can devastate a church and divide the congregation. Those in fellowship become outraged and bewildered. Parents question whether their own children have been victimized. The viability of the church's youth and children's programs is jeopardized, and church leaders face blame and guilt for allowing the incident to happen. Such incidents often result in massive media attention, sometimes on a national scale. Television stations conduct live interviews from church property on the evening news. Front page stories hit the local paper. Community residents begin to associate the church with the incident of molestation. But far more tragic is the emotional trauma to the victim and the victim's family, and the enormous potential legal liability the church faces. If a trial ensues, the issue stays alive in the media for months, sometimes even years.

In making sure the Charlottetown Bible Chapel is a safe place, we will be:

- a) Safeguarding children and youth from abuse.
- b) Protecting the chapel and volunteer workers from potential allegations of sexual abuse
- c) Limiting the extent of legal risk and liability due to any such sexual abuse.
- d) Declaring zero tolerance for abuse, harassment or neglect.

## Chapter 2

# Understanding Child Abuse

## Definition

“Child abuse” is defined as follows:

- It can be physical, emotional or sexual.
- All child abuse involves the misuse of power.
- Misuse of power takes place when people take advantage of the authority or power they have over vulnerable people.
- Vulnerable people include adults with physical or mental disabilities and children. (Note: “child” means a person actually or apparently under the age of sixteen, and includes a disabled person actually or apparently under the age of nineteen.)

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

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

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

The Law Reform Committee of Canada defines child sexual abuse as “Exposure of the child to sexual stimulation inappropriate for his age and role- the sexual exploitation of a child who is not developed mentally, capable of understanding or resisting the contact; or a child or adolescent who may be psychologically or socially dependent upon the perpetrator.”

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### Symptoms of Abuse and Molestation

Chapel workers and staff should be alert to the physical signs of abuse and molestation, as well as to behavioral and verbal signs that a victim may exhibit. A one-time event would not necessarily constitute a potential abuse case; sudden unexplained changes, however, would warrant investigation. Some of the more common signs are summarized below:

#### Physical signs may include:

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

#### Behavioral signs may include:

- anxiety when approaching chapel or nursery area
- nervous or hostile behavior toward adults
- sexual self-consciousness
- “acting out” sexual behavior
- withdrawal from chapel activities and friends

#### Verbal signs may include the following statements:

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

## The Effects of Child Sexual Abuse

Child sexual abuse robs children of their childhood and can potentially scar its young victims for life. Too often in the past, the effects of abuse were minimized or dismissed. Children were

”The personal violation of child sexual abuse causes the victim to experience many losses... including loss of childhood memories, loss of healthy social contact, loss of the opportunity to learn, loss of bodily integrity, loss of identity and self-esteem, loss of trust, loss of sexual maturity, and loss of self-determination. All of these personal violations mean that victims of child sexual abuse lose the child's right to a normal childhood. In adulthood it may also mean the loss of the capacity to appreciate sexual intimacy as nurturing, holy and loving.”  
(The Report of the Winter Commission, 1990, Vol.1, p.118)

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viewed as being resilient. Recent research has shown that children can suffer significant pain from even a single abusive incident. Chapel members must be aware of the pain and long term suffering that can accompany such abuse. Abused children can display a wide range of negative symptoms in the aftermath of abuse. Abuse can result in abnormal fears, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), aggressive behavior, sexual “acting out”, depression, diffused sexual identity, and poor self-esteem. (Ksendall-Tackett, Williams, and Finkelhor, 1991) The incidence of sexually transmitted disease is also a possible outcome.

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

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

### The Profile of a Child Molester

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

Bob sat dejectedly before the church board. His broad shoulders slumped as he tearfully retold his story. Bob has been sexually molesting his thirteen year old daughter for the last two years. This activity may have gone undetected except that Bob tried to abuse his daughter’s girlfriend while chaperoning a Sunday School activity. The young girl reported the incident to her parents and Bob was apprehended. The church leaders hearing this confession sat in disbelief. How could Bob, a successful businessman, husband, father of three children, and respected church worker commit such actions?



Consider the following:

Over eighty percent of the time, the abuser is someone known to the victim.

Most abuse takes place within the context of an ongoing relationship.

1 in 3 females and 1 in 6 males in Canada experience some form of sexual abuse before the age of 18.

If abuse occurs in our chapel, a respected member will most likely be the molester. Emphasis upon “stranger danger” will leave our chapel ill prepared. While it’s uncomfortable even to consider this, the most likely assailants include Sunday school teachers, religious educators, nursery or preschool workers, teachers in a chapel operated school, camp counselors, scout leaders, “concerned” adults who volunteer to transport children to chapel, and clergy. Trusted adults – male or female – can easily mislead children and most incidents of

child sexual abuse take place in the context of an ongoing relationship between the abuser and the child.

## Chapter 3

# The Church's Legal Vulnerability

### Why Churches are Susceptible

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

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

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

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

### The Civil and Legal Liability of the Church

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

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

## Chapter 4

# Child Protection Procedures

The Charlottetown Bible Chapel is committed to the following:

1. We will screen all volunteers who work with children or youth.
2. All volunteers are required to have their own criminal record checks done, for any position involving work with children or youth. Anyone with criminal abuse violations will not be allowed to work with children or youth.
3. Where possible two adults should be present during any children's activity. This rule reduces the risk of child molestation, and also reduces the risk of false accusations of molestation by individuals seeking a quick legal settlement.
4. We will follow the "Six Month" rule. Volunteers will be permitted to work with children or youth only after they have been attending the Charlottetown Bible Chapel for a period of six months. Such a policy gives the chapel an additional opportunity to evaluate applicants and volunteers, and will help to repel persons seeking immediate access to children. (This provision may be waived where the person is transferring in from another chapel and has a letter of recommendation signed by Elders of that chapel)
5. All volunteers who work with children or youth, regardless of age, are required to read and sign this Plan to Protect policy.

"Is screening important? Ask any member of a church in which an incident of sexual abuse has occurred."

Reducing the Risk of  
Child Sexual Abuse  
in Your Church

These safeguards are not only to protect our children, but also our workers

## Child Security

1. The names and addresses of parents and children must be carefully maintained.
2. Children are never to be dropped off in the nursery without a caregiver present. Doors are to be supervised so that children are not able to exit alone and/or a parent cannot take them from the room without a worker's knowledge.

## Washroom Guidelines

### 1. Nursery Children

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

- Diaper changing must always take place in such a way that another nursery worker can easily see the child that is being changed, as well as the other children and workers in the room.

### 2. Age 3 and Up

- Volunteers should be aware of when a child leaves and returns. Children should be given a 5 minute rule making very clear that they are expected to have returned to class within 5 minutes or the volunteer will go to check on them following the above procedures.
- When preschool children need assistance in the washroom, an adult may enter the washroom cubicle to assist only when a second adult is within visual contact. If this is not possible, assist the child with the cubicle door open so you are visible to another person entering the washroom.

# Classroom Staffing and Supervision Guidelines

Workers should always conduct themselves in a godly manner, being an example of obedience, respect and honesty to those in their care.

## Personnel

Programs that involve children and youth must always include adequate supervisory personnel. Supervision should also be maintained before and after the event until all children are in the custody of their parents or legal guardians.

## Obtain Parental Permission

What about situations where an adult has a legitimate reason to be alone with a child? Chapel staff or volunteer workers must obtain the consent of the child's parent or guardian before going out alone with that child, or spending time with the child in an unsupervised situation. Workers must also notify an appropriate chapel leader of such meetings in advance. Children must also have parental permission for involvement in chapel sponsored field trips or overnight events.

### **Example:**

Recently, drugs were discovered in the possession of a fourteen year old male member of the youth group while he was at school. Stan, the youth pastor, offers to pick him up after school on Tuesday with the hope of providing the boy adult support. This conduct violates the parental permission rule. Stan must first gain permission from the student's parents before a private meeting can occur. He should also notify the senior pastor of his intentions in advance.

## Example:

A female member of the youth group explains she has a problem she cannot share with her parents and wants to meet the youth pastor alone after school to discuss it. She insists that the youth pastor not tell her parents. This meeting violates the parental permission rule. The youth pastor can meet with the student if a second, preferably female, volunteer worker is present.

## Open Doors

When it is necessary that only one adult leader be in a room with one child the door of that room must remain open.

## Proper Display of Affection

Touch is an essential responsibility in nurturing lives. Volunteers need to be aware of, and sensitive to, differences in sexual development, cultural differences, family backgrounds, individual personalities, and special needs. Physical contact with children should be age and developmentally appropriate. The following guidelines are recommended as pure, genuine and positive displays of God's love:

### 1. Appropriate Touch

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

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

2. Inappropriate Touch

**You must avoid:**

- Kissing a child, coaxing a child to kiss you, extended hugging and tickling.
- Touching a child in any area that would be covered by a bathing suit (except when assisting a child with toileting as outlined previously).
- Being alone with a child.

## Special Events and Overnight Policies

All children/youth attending field trips, special and overnight events must have a Waiver & Medical Release Form as per Appendix C, Completed prior to the event.

For leaders/teachers planning chapel social activities, field trips and service projects the following precautions need to be taken with these activities.

A. Field Trips, Special and overnight Events

- Activities conducted away from the chapel property should be approved by the chapel leadership.
- All trips and outings must be supervised by a minimum of two approved, adult leaders.
- When the transporting of children is involved in an activity, all drivers must have a valid driver's license and current automobile insurance. The number of persons per car must never exceed the number of seat belts.

## Chapter 5

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

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



## Chapter 6

# Incident Reporting Procedures

If you have any concerns regarding the safety of a child, you should report to your program leader.

Any person who has reasonable grounds to believe that a child (or children) is in need of protection is legally required to report the matter to a social worker in the local office of the Child Protection Department of Family and Community Services . A person who knowingly fails to report in these circumstances is in violation of the law and may be found to have committed an offense. (Please refer to the “Understanding Child Abuse” section earlier in this document.)

Abuse or neglect need not have already occurred for a child to be in need of protection; it is not necessary to wait until a child has been harmed to intervene. When abuse or neglect can be reasonably anticipated and there are reasonable grounds to believe a child is in need of protection, the legal obligation to report applies.

Historical abuse or neglect, that is, abuse or neglect which occurred in the not very recent past, must be reported wherever there are reasonable grounds to believe that a child may be in need of protection. If the alleged offender is in regular contact with a child or children, irrespective of whether it is the same child or children abused in the past, there may be grounds to believe that the child or children are at risk based on the offender’s past behavior. It is particularly vital to report these cases where the alleged abuser is in a position of trust concerning children, such as a teaching position.

## Confidentiality

In these matters it is important to keep the information restricted to those who need to be advised, therefore, all suspicions of abuse should be directed only to the leader/director of that department, who will then contact an Elder. It is then the responsibility of the informant in conjunction with the Elder or his designate to contact the appropriate authorities, who are best equipped to handle such issues..

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

## Discuss Suspicious Behavior Immediately

Any inappropriate conduct or relationships between adult volunteer workers and a youth or a child must be confronted immediately and investigated. Prompt warnings must be issued when appropriate, and the situation monitored very closely. The adult worker's services should be terminated immediately for continued violation of sufficient gravity.

*Some conduct just deserves an initial comment.*

**Example.** The chapel youth group is having a picnic at a local lake. Following a volleyball game, one of the male chaperones begins to massage the shoulders of one of the female youth members. They are seated at a picnic table surrounded by other students. A second adult chaperone discretely pulls the first one aside and comments, "You probably weren't aware, but giving massages falls outside of proper volunteer conduct."

**Note:** If a worker observes another worker not following policy, ie. One on one, or observes an action that makes them feel uncomfortable or that could be misconstrued by others, they should bring it to the other person's attention.

*Other conduct requires reporting.*

**Example.** Same facts as the preceding example, but the volunteer worker walks the student to an isolated location and massages her shoulders while laying down on the ground next to her. A second volunteer sees what is happening and immediately reports it to the adult in charge.

**Example.** A male youth volunteer is seen kissing a female member of the youth group. The action is immediately reported to the pastor.

## Chapter 7

### When an allegation occurs

In the case of an actual allegation, follow these guidelines:

- The Program leader will work with the informant to document the concern, noting all efforts at handling the incident. This report will be delivered to an Elder immediately (preferably within the hour).
- The program leader and the Elder will assess the incident to determine if it requires reporting (remember: some conduct deserves counsel and advice from a supervisor while other conduct requires reporting). A follow up report will be completed. Both this and the initial report will be required if the incident is reportable.
- Where an Elder is involved in suspicious behavior or allegation, another Elder is to be immediately advised.
- In conjunction with the Elder, the informant will contact the Child Protection Department of Family and Community Services.

#### **IMPORTANT:**

As soon as possible after the incident comes to your attention:

- Contact the Child Protection Department of Family and Community Services 902-368-6868 (day), night emergency 1 800-442-9799. Do not attempt an in-depth investigation. This should be left to professionals who are familiar with these cases.
- Report incident to our insurance company and if deemed necessary contact a lawyer.
- Do not prejudge the situation, but take the allegations seriously and reach out to the victim and the victim's family. Showing care and support help to prevent further hurt. Extend whatever pastoral resources are needed. Remember that the care and safety of the victim is the first priority. In some situations, churches have responded in a negative or non-supportive manner to the alleged victim. This can increase the anger and pain of the victim and the victim's family. Future reconciliation will be more difficult. The possibility of damaging litigation increases.
- Treat the accused with dignity and support. If the accused is a chapel volunteer, that person should be relieved temporarily of his or her duties until the investigation is finished.

## Responding to the Child

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

## Protection from Liability

Chapel personnel are obligated by law to immediately report to the child welfare personnel at local office of the Minister of Family and Community Services any suspected case of child abuse. It is not a breach of confidence between chapel personnel and the child involved. No person is personally liable for anything done or omitted in good faith in the exercise of this responsibility. As chapel leaders, we are accountable to God to protect His little ones. Although it is our desire to protect the parents as much as is legally possible from undue interference by outside authorities into their family, the protection of children from abuse is even more important. We want to follow the principles of submitting to governing authorities (Romans 13:1 ff) while at the same time helping parents to exercise child discipline that is consistent with the Scriptures, and in the best interest of the children.

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

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

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

*When a Program Leader receives a request for information regarding a child attending our facility the following process should be followed at all times to assure the health and safety of the child in your care.*

- A. Any request from a child protection social worker should be in person and the protection worker should carry and show you photo ID.*
- B. On the occasions where there is urgency and the child protection social worker is unable to visit the facility and show photo ID, the protection social worker may telephone you from their office.*

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- *The social worker is to identify him/herself*
  - *They are to explain the information they are requesting and the process you are to follow. They WILL NOT ask for information at this time. You are NOT to give information at this time*
  - *The social worker will give you their name and their office phone number*
  - *You will check the number given with the phone number of the local offices listed in this chapter to make sure they match*
  - *You may telephone the district supervisor of child protection to make sure this is a legitimate request.*
  - *You will then call the number given by the social worker. At that time the social worker will ask for the information needed.*
  - *You will provide the necessary information*
  - *You will then ask to be told what happens. This is very important. It becomes extremely important if the child continues to attend our facility.*
- C. *It is possible that a protection social worker may call from their cell phone. This is the least acceptable form of requesting information from a caregiver. The exact same process as a request by telephone with one additional stipulation:*
- If it is after hours and the office cannot be contacted or the cell number confirmed, the caregiver is not to give out any information. They can request the social worker appear at the chapel with photo ID.*
- D. *No information is to be given out if the request is from a pay phone, or for any other type of request.*

### Who Must Report

Any person who has reasonable grounds to believe that a child (or children) is in need of protection is legally required to report the matter as outlined in this document. A person who knowingly fails to report in these circumstances is in violation of the law and may be found to have committed an offense.

*For working definitions of abuse and neglect, see the “Understanding Child Abuse” section found in Chapter 2.*

Social workers designated to receive reports are trained to investigate and assess the need for intervention. Other professionals must not assume this function. A professional who does so and fails to report commits an offense. The Act protects an individual when a report is made. No action would be taken against a person making a report unless it is made maliciously or without reasonable grounds for the belief.

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### Report Follow-Up

A confidential written report (See Appendix 2B) with conclusions and action taken should always be made by the program leader and Elder following a child abuse report. These reports should be kept in a confidential personnel file.

### Response to Allegations of Abuse

#### Be Prepared in Advance

Realistically, no practical prevention strategy is 100 percent effective. An accusation of child sexual abuse may occur in any church. The Charlottetown Bible Chapel has a premeditated plan or strategy to respond to child abuse allegations. The chapel should not try to navigate a crisis situation without a compass to guide it. Wrong actions can multiply the pain and liability inherent in an abuse case.

#### **An effective response strategy recognizes the following underlying principles:**

- All allegations are to be taken seriously.
- Situations must be handled forthrightly with due respect for people's privacy and confidentiality.
- Full co-operation must be given to civil authorities under the guidance of a lawyer.
- Adequate care must be shown for the well-being of victims.

#### Records

Always have adequate records of workers' criminal records checks, any allegations of abuse, follow up reports, and signature that a worker has read this Plan to Protect policy. They should be up-to-date and accessible. Records should be kept at least ten years.

#### Spokesperson

The Trustees and Elders will choose a spokesperson for the chapel. He will speak to the media and the congregation regarding the matter in a discreet, informed, truthful and diplomatic way. (Often, the media interviews several church leaders who have never given any consideration to responding to such inquiries. In such cases, conflicting and contradictory statements can abound, and the public will develop a negative impression of the chapel. This is avoided when only one person is designated to speak for the chapel in such cases).

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### Position Statement

In an allegation of abuse, the statement below is to be used for a public response until all of the facts are uncovered and the case reviewed:

*“It is always tragic when children are abused or exploited. The Charlottetown Bible Chapel is aware of the ever growing nature of child abuse. We have taken careful precautions to protect the children entrusted to our care. We are distressed by any accusation of child abuse. We will do everything in our power to address any needs in this situation. For the welfare of those involved, all information has been directed to the (insert name of appropriate agencies and authorities).”*

This is a clear position statement of the Charlottetown Bible Chapel regarding child sexual abuse. The policies and established safeguards are included. Having a carefully prepared statement is far superior to making no comment.

This is an opportunity to influence public opinion positively by emphasizing an awareness of the problem of child abuse, a concern for victims, and the extensive steps the Charlottetown Bible Chapel have taken to reduce the risk and provide a safe environment for children. It lets the media know that the Charlottetown Bible Chapel takes the risk of child abuse seriously, and that we have acted responsibly. This is not the time for silence or “no comment.” We will not surrender the pulpit to those who will criticize and condemn the chapel. The Charlottetown Bible Chapel will not engage in denial, minimization, or blame.

Often when confronted with an allegation of abuse, a church may respond in one or more of the following ways:

- Deny that the incident occurred, despite clear evidence to the contrary
- Acknowledge that the incident occurred, but minimize it. For example, a chapel leader may say, “It only happened once,” or “It wasn’t that serious”.
- Blame the victim or the victim’s family.

***These responses are all inappropriate and are to be avoided.***

### Don’t be Accusatory

Avoid spelling out the details of an accusation in a public interview.

### Use a Lawyer

Always have legal counsel present while answering any investigative questions from the police or social service agencies. The accused should follow the same procedure with their lawyer.

## Chapter 8

# Implementation Procedures

The topic of child abuse and this Prevention Plan will create a variety of reactions among congregational members. Many will be in favor of the concept. Others will have questions and reservations. It is important for leadership to continually provide prospective leaders and vested interest groups the need for such a policy then give them opportunities for providing feedback. The topic can be presented by the Trustees, who will be available to answer concerns and provide specific answers about this particular aspect of the chapel's policies.

### Presenting this Policy

The following key points should be made:

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

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

The climate in these presentations should not be one of sober reflection but of hope. You want the people to realize that the Charlottetown Bible Chapel is taking action to minister to this need. The focus should be upon the great responsibility God has given to us to care for our children. Scripture verses might be used such as the following: Psalm 78:1-6; Psalm 127; Psalm 46: 1, 6; 2 Samuel 13; Matthew 18:1-6; Matthew 18:10; Luke 18:15-17; Ephesians 5:11-13.

### Monitoring of Policy

Program leaders should thoroughly review these policies and procedures as part of their pre-fall program planning.

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

- Has each department trained its workers regarding these policies?



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

Thoroughly discuss each policy and procedure with your program leaders. Work through all concerns. If problems exist in the policies, they should be brought to the attention of the Trustees. Consider revisions, but changes must not sacrifice the integrity of the program.

## Chapter 9

# Accountability

If it is proven that a volunteer of the Charlottetown Bible Chapel has committed child abuse, the chapel should practice discipline according to Matthew 18:15-17 and other appropriate scriptures. The chapel must avoid any undue interference when a report of child abuse has been filed with the Child Protection Department of Family and Community Services. The chapel should ask the agency how it can assist in helping and supporting the hurting child and his or her family. The chapel should maintain supportive relationships with those suspected or guilty of child abuse as long as these persons exhibit a willingness to listen, change and look to Christ for help. This does not exclude the need for hurting individuals to receive professional counseling.

An accusation of child sexual abuse may occur in any chapel. Wrong reactions can multiply the pain and liability inherent in an abuse case.

Appendix A

INITIAL REPORT FORM

SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE

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

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

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

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

NAME OF PERSON RECEIVING REPORT:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Nature of suspected abuse: (physical, sexual, emotional, neglect):  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

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

Action taken: (including date and time):  
\_\_\_\_\_

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The above information will serve as a guide and will be necessary if a formal report is filed with the police or appropriate government agency. All information received is to be kept STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Person Reporting) (Elder)

Appendix B

FOLLOW-UP REPORT FORM

SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE

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

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME OF PERSON WHO FILED INITIAL REPORT: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME OF PERSON RECEIVING REPORT: \_\_\_\_\_

CONCLUSIONS:

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

ACTION TAKEN: (Include date and time):

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

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The above information will serve as a guide and will be necessary if a formal report is filed with the police or appropriate government agency. All information received is to be kept STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Person Reporting)

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Elder)

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

Appendix C

WAIVER & MEDICAL RELEASE FORM

Field Trips Special and overnight Events

Activity: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Chaperones: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Child/Youth: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ School: \_\_\_\_\_

Does your child/youth have any severe allergies? (bee stings, food, penicillin, other drugs)

YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_ If yes, explain:

\_\_\_\_\_

Does your child/youth have any life-threatening allergies?

YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_ If yes, explain:

\_\_\_\_\_

Is your child/youth bringing any medication with him/her? (Antibiotics, Ventilator, Ritalin)

YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_ If yes,

explain: \_\_\_\_\_

Does your child/youth have any physical, emotional, mental or behavioral concerns or limitations that our staff should be aware of?

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YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_ If yes,  
explain: \_\_\_\_\_

Check if your child/youth 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)	Sinusitis	
Chicken Pox	Fainting	Measles (German)	Tonsillitis	

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of last tetanus Shot: \_\_\_\_\_

Precautions are taken for the safety of your child/youth, but in the event of accident or sickness, the Charlottetown Bible Chapel , its volunteers are hereby released from any liability. In the event that your child/youth requires special medication, x-rays or treatment, the parents/guardians will be notified immediately.

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

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

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

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



# TRUSTEES

Henk Bondt: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Gerald MacLeod: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Alan Craswell: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Barry MacLeod: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Don Crozier: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_