

Sunnyside Wesleyan Church Protection Policy as approved by the Local Board of Administration on 14/05/2019

Sunnyside Wesleyan Church has a spiritual duty, and a moral and legal obligation to provide a secure environment for children and at-risk adults participating in its programs. We undertake all appropriate measures to prevent abuse of any kind from occurring at the church or in any church- sponsored activity.

In order to protect the vulnerable from abuse—and also to protect church staff and volunteers from false accusation—everyone who teaches, helps, cares for children and/or youth, or serves in any capacity around vulnerable persons under the auspices of Sunnyside Wesleyan Church, is required to follow the SWC Protection Policy guidelines and any/all procedures adopted by the Church Board and outlined in this document.

A. General Definitions

For the purpose of this manual, including its accompanying policies and guidelines:

1. **“Child”** means “a person younger than 18.”
(Ref. Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017, Sec. 2 (1))
2. **“Youth”** referred to as “young person” in CYFSA, 2017, Sec. 2 (1) means “a person who is or, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, appears to be 12 or older but younger than 18.”
3. **“Vulnerable Adult”** means “a person who depends on others to meet every day needs because he/she has a mental illness or developmental disability, or requires long-term or indefinite care due to age or medical condition.”
(Ref. Ontario’s Policing Standards Manual, 2000)
4. **“Ministry Leader”** means the person with overall authority for a particular avenue of ministry (e.g., Youth Pastor, Family Ministries Pastor, etc). Ministry Leaders are accountable to the Senior Pastor.
5. **“Volunteer”** means a person a person approved under this policy who is not a Sunnyside employee and who is helping with a particular children’s, youth or pastoral care ministry. Volunteers are accountable to the appropriate Ministry Leader (Youth Pastor, Family Ministries Pastor, or Pastoral Care Leader).

6. **“Parent”** means the natural or adoptive parent or legal guardian of a child, or any individual designated to act *in loco parentis* either formally on an ongoing basis or informally for specific purposes such as dropping off or picking the child up at church or church activities. This may include a grandparent, mature sibling or other relative, babysitter, or adult given responsibility by the parent(s).
7. **“Abuse”** includes, but is not limited to, physical, emotional and sexual abuse and/or neglect.

B. Definitions of Abuse (Children and Youth)

According to the Ontario Association of Children’s Aid Societies:

“Child abuse” includes physical, emotional and sexual abuse and/or neglect. It also addresses a pattern of abuse and risks of harm. Some definitions include:

“Physical abuse” is any deliberate physical force or action, by a parent or caregiver, which results, or could result, in injury to a child. It can include bruising, cuts, punching, slapping, beating, shaking, burning, biting or throwing a child. Using belts, sticks or other objects to punish a child can cause serious harm and is also considered abuse.

“Neglect” occurs when a caregiver fails to provide basic needs such as adequate food, sleep, safety, education, clothing or medical treatment. It also includes leaving a child alone or failing to provide adequate supervision. If the caregiver is unable to provide the child with basic needs due to financial inability, it is not considered neglect, unless relief has been offered and refused.

“Emotional abuse” is a pattern of behaviour that attacks a child’s emotional development and sense of self-worth. It includes excessive, aggressive or unreasonable demands that place expectations on a child beyond his or her capacity. Emotional abuse includes constantly criticizing, teasing, belittling, insulting, rejecting, ignoring or isolating the child. It may also include exposure to domestic violence.

“Sexual abuse” occurs when a child is used for the sexual gratification of an adult or an older child. The child may co-operate because he or she wants to please the adult or out of fear. It includes sexual intercourse, exposing a child’s private areas, indecent phone calls, fondling for sexual purposes, watching a child undress for

sexual pleasure, and allowing/forcing a child to look at or perform in pornographic pictures or videos, or engage in prostitution.

(Ref. Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies, <http://www.oacas.org/childrens-aid-child-protection/what-is-abuse/>, accessed May 4, 2019.)

Indicators of child abuse can be found in Appendix A at the end of this document.

C. Definitions of Abuse (Vulnerable Adults)

According to Kerry's Place Autism Services, the following constitutes abuse of vulnerable adults:

“Physical Abuse” Any act of violence or rough treatment that causes injury or physical discomfort, such as:

- Slapping, pushing, pulling, kicking.
- Injury with an object or weapon.
- Deliberate exposure to severe weather.
- Inappropriate use of restraint.

“Neglect” Any situation where the basic needs of a person are not being met by themselves or others, such as:

- Food, water, shelter, heat, clothing, hygiene or safety;
- Proper medical, dental or psychiatric treatment.

Neglect can be the result of action or inaction, and may be intentional or unintentional.

“Psychological/Emotional Abuse” Any act which may lessen the sense of identity, dignity or self-worth of a person, such as:

- Confinement.
- Physical and social isolation.
- Verbal assault, harassment, humiliation or intimidation.
- Denial of information, privacy, visitors, or religious worship.

- Coercion.

“Sexual Abuse” Any act involving unwanted touching/activity of a sexual nature or a situation in which an adult consents or submits to sexual activity because a person in a position of trust or with authority has used that trust/authority to gain that consent. Such acts include:

- Sexual assault.
- Sexual harassment.
- Any act designed to use the vulnerable person for the perpetrator’s sexual gratification.

“Financial Abuse/Exploitation” Any act that involved the misuse/abuse of funds and/or assets belonging to a vulnerable adult, such as:

- Obtaining property and funds without the person’s knowledge or consent, or by using undue influence.
- Where a person is not mentally competent, not acting in the person’s best interest.

(Ref. “Initiative to Increase Safeguards for Adults Who are Vulnerable to Abuse and Neglect.” Developed by the Vulnerable Adults Project sponsored by Kerry’s Place

Autism Services, with the support of the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services © May 2011,

<http://www.vulnerableadultscwr.org/what-you-need-to-know.html>, accessed May 4, 2019.)

Indicators of abuse of vulnerable persons can be found in Appendix B of this document.

D. Screening and Training of Employees

All pastoral staff, full-time and part-time, must undergo Level 3 Vulnerable Sector Criminal Records Check clearance.

All pastoral staff must adhere to the Articles of Religion (The Discipline of the Wesleyan Church, para. 210-250), Membership Commitments (para. 260-268), and

Elementary Principles (260-268). According to the Wesleyan Discipline, “Disregard of the principles embraced in these Membership Commitments subjects all credentialed ministers and any member serving in an elected leadership capacity to Church discipline” (para. 260). Pastoral staff must uphold a lifestyle in keeping with the Special Directions (para. 400).

E. Screening and Training of Volunteers

All volunteers who work with children or youth, or who serve with the pastoral care team, must complete a standard screening process and a minimum level of training. This will require that prospective volunteers:

- Complete a Ministry Volunteer Application Form.
- Provide the names and contact information for two personal references.
- Adhere to the Articles of Religion (The Discipline of the Wesleyan Church, para. 210-250) and uphold a lifestyle in keeping with the Special Directions (para. 400).
- Attend a personal interview with the appropriate Ministry Leader as specified by the Local Board of Administration.
- Undergo a Level 3 criminal records check to work with the vulnerable sector.

Anyone with criminal convictions involving violence or abuse will not be allowed to work with children or youth, or with vulnerable adults. Costs associated with the security check will be reimbursed by the church. Volunteers under age 18 are exempt from the criminal check requirement. Criminal record checks from other organizations will be accepted if they are current, i.e., performed within 3 years of the present date.

- Attend and sign a form to confirm attendance at annual training provided by the church to better understand child abuse and how to carry out these policies including our required reporting procedure for suspected incidents of abuse. Failure to complete training will result in individuals foregoing their role in ministry unless and until full training is completed.

Records will be kept in a locked confidential personnel file.

F. General Rules and Procedures

1. "Two-Adult" rule. Two adults will be present during any children's activity. The second adult may be a "Rover."
2. The Rover's role is, while formal children's programming is being held, to:
 - Circulate through children's programming areas to observe classrooms, which will either have doors open or an unobstructed view through a window.
 - Monitor restroom visits, standing outside the door while another adult volunteer accompanies pre-school children, or standing in the area outside the restrooms while school-age children use them independently.
 - Discourage and disallow loitering of any person not involved with children's programming in either the nursery or downstairs areas. "Downstairs" includes all spaces beyond the first set of doors at the bottom of the main stairs, including the area near the restrooms and in the Wesley room. Downstairs also includes the Grosvenor room, all areas from the bottom of the Grosvenor house stairs through to the basement, and the stairwell leading to the emergency exit door at the south-west corner of the basement.
3. All individual ministry to, or meeting with, children or youth will take place in an open space where others are present, or could be passing through at any time.
4. "Four Month" rule. Volunteers will be permitted to work with children, youth or vulnerable adults only after they have been adherents/members of Sunnyside Wesleyan Church for a period of four months. (This provision may be waived upon provision of personal references acceptable to the senior pastor.)
5. All ministry leaders and volunteers, when working with the children, must wear a nametag or approved clothing, which identifies them accordingly.
6. Exit doors are to be supervised so that children are not able to exit alone and/or cannot be taken from the room without a worker's knowledge.
7. The following procedures for drop-off and pick-up must be observed:
 - Nursery: When an official nursery volunteer is on duty, parents should drop off infants and indicate both the time of drop-off and pick up. An infant may only be picked-up from the nursery by a parent. If no official nursery volunteer is available then parents are free to care for their own children in the church nursery.
 - Preschool (including Kindergarten) up to grade 2: The teacher/leader will be responsible for the care of the child from the time the class/activity begins, and will not release the child from supervision in the Sunday School area until the child is picked up by a parent.

- For Sunday School classes from grades three and above, the teacher/leader will be responsible for the care of the child from the usual time the class or activity begins until the usual time the class or activity ends.
- For midweek or special youth activities, the teacher/leader shall be responsible for the care of children from the time they arrive (no earlier than fifteen minutes prior to the scheduled start of a meeting or event) until children are either picked up after the event or begin to follow their approved “way home” plan. If a youth chooses to leave prior to the official end time, every effort will be made to inform a parent that the child has left the group.

G. Appropriate and Inappropriate Display of Affection

Physical contact with children should be age and developmentally appropriate. While touch is often a way to communicate pure, genuine and positive displays of God’s love, ministry leaders and volunteers at Sunnyside are specifically urged to avoid any situation or action which creates even the suggestion of impropriety.

Examples of inappropriate actions include:

- Kissing a child/youth or coaxing a child/youth to kiss you.
- Extended hugging or tickling.
- Touching a child/youth in any area that would be covered by a bathing suit.
[Exception: when diapering or assisting a young child with toileting if the parent is unavailable.]
- Carrying older children/youth or having them sit on your lap.
- Prolonged physical contact.
- Piggyback rides.
- Seductive or suggestive contact.
- Any physical contact of any kind that is done for the pleasure or satisfaction of ministry leader/volunteers.

H. Classroom Management and Discipline

Teachers are encouraged to prevent discipline problems so much as possible by creating a loving atmosphere, treating all children with respect, establishing realistic, age appropriate expectations, and acting in a fair and consistent manner. In some

cases remedial discipline will be necessary. However, volunteers must at all times refrain from the following:

- Corporal punishment of any kind.
- Any words or tone that would cause a child to think he or she is the “problem” rather than a specific behaviour being addressed (e.g., screaming at a child).
- Any words that could cause feelings of condemnation or shame in a child about any aspect of his or her person.

Assume the best in each child that you lead. Always remind a child of the expectations and in so much as you are able, find mutually agreed upon solutions to the negative behaviour.

I. Plan of Care

In some circumstances to best facilitate the care of a child/youth in our programs it may be decided upon to create a Plan of Care with the parents’ consent, e.g., if a child runs away and for their safety they need to be physically restrained.

Plans of Care will be kept in a locked confidential file and will only be shared with the volunteers who need to know.

J. Special Events and Overnight Policies

1. Special Outings

While teachers are encouraged to have special activities such as field trips and service projects, the following precautions should be observed:

- Activities conducted away from the church property should be pre-approved by the responsible pastor and the Senior Pastor.
- All children participating in the activity must obtain express written permission from a parent prior to the beginning of the event.
- All trips must be supervised by a minimum of two approved adult leaders.
- When the transportation 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, and children under age 12 should not ride in a front seat equipped with an airbag.

2. Overnight Events

Church sponsored overnight activities may be permitted as long as the following guidelines are met:

- All overnight activities for children must be pre-approved by the responsible pastor and the Senior Pastor.
- Written and prior parental consent to participate in the activity and a medical release form must be obtained for each child participating in overnight events.
- All overnight activities must have a minimum of two leaders at all times, and further maintain a ratio of one leader per five children. If the group includes both male and female participants, then at least one male and one female leader must be present.
- Each leader should have an assigned group of children for whom they will be responsible during the overnight event.
- All supervising adults must be either church staff or approved volunteers.

K. Incident Reporting Procedures

1. Principles

The following principles will guide the response of Sunnyside Wesleyan Church staff and volunteers to allegations of abuse:

- All allegations are to be taken seriously and protecting vulnerable individuals should be our paramount consideration.
- 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 our church lawyer.

2. Reporting

a) The Ontario Children, Youth and Family Services Act (2017) establishes the following legal obligations:

125 (1) Despite the provisions of any other act, if a person, including a person who performs professional or official duties with respect to children, has reasonable grounds to suspect one of the following, the person shall immediately report the suspicion and the information on which it is based to a society, e.g., the Children's Aid Society:

1. The child has suffered physical harm inflicted by the person having charge of the child or caused by or resulting from that person's,
 - i. failure to adequately care for, provide for, supervise or protect the child, or
 - ii. Pattern of neglect in caring for, providing for, supervising or protecting the child.
2. There is a risk that the child is likely to suffer physical harm inflicted by the person having charge of the child or caused by or resulting from that person's,
 - i. failure to adequately care for, provide for, supervise or protect the child, or
 - ii. pattern of neglect in caring for, providing for, supervising or protecting the child.
3. The child has been sexually abused or sexually exploited by the person having charge of the child or by another person where the person having charge of the child knows or should know of the possibility of sexual abuse or sexual exploitation and fails to protect the child.
4. There is a risk that the child is likely to be sexually abused or sexually exploited as described in paragraph 3.
5. The child requires treatment to cure, prevent or alleviate physical harm or suffering and the child's parent or the person having charge of the child does not provide the treatment or access to the treatment, or, where the child is incapable of consenting to the treatment under the *Health Care Consent Act, 1996*, refuses or is unavailable or unable to consent to, the treatment on the child's behalf.

6. The child has suffered emotional harm, demonstrated by serious,
 - i anxiety,
 - ii depression,
 - iii withdrawal,
 - iv self-destructiveness or aggressive behaviour, or
 - v delayed development,and there are reasonable grounds to believe that the emotional harm suffered by the child results from the actions, failure to act or a pattern of neglect on the part of the child's parent or the person having charge of the child.
7. The child has suffered emotional harm of the kind described in subparagraph 6 i, ii, iii, iv or v and the child's parent or the person having charge of the child does not provide services or treatment or access to services or treatment, or, where the child is incapable of consenting to treatment under the Health Care Consent Act, 1996, refuses or is unavailable or unable to consent to, treatment to remedy or alleviate the harm.
8. There is a risk that the child is likely to suffer emotional harm of the kind described in subparagraph 6 i, ii, iii, iv or v resulting from the actions, failure to act or pattern of neglect on the part of the child's parent or the person having charge of the child.
9. There is a risk that the child is likely to suffer emotional harm of the kind described in subparagraph 6 i, ii, iii, iv or v and the child's parent or the person having charge of the child does not provide services or treatment or access to services or treatment, or, where the child is incapable of consenting to treatment under the Health Care Consent Act, 1996, refuses or is unavailable or unable to consent to, treatment to prevent the harm.
10. The child suffers from a mental, emotional or developmental condition that, if not remedied, could seriously impair the child's development and the child's parent or the person having charge of the child does not provide the treatment or access to the treatment, or where the child is incapable of consenting to the treatment under the Health Care Consent Act, 1996, refuses or is unavailable or unable to consent to, treatment to remedy or alleviate the condition.
11. The child's parent has died or is unavailable to exercise custodial rights over the child and has not made adequate provision for the child's care and

- custody, or the child is in a residential placement and the parent refuses or is unable or unwilling to resume the child's care and custody.
12. The child is younger than 12 and has killed or seriously injured another person or caused serious damage to another person's property, services or treatment are necessary to prevent a recurrence and the child's parent or the person having charge of the child does not provide services or treatment or access to services or treatment, or, where the child is incapable of consenting to treatment under the Health Care Consent Act, 1996, refuses or is unavailable or unable to consent to treatment.
 13. The child is younger than 12 and has on more than one occasion injured another person or caused loss or damage to another person's property, with the encouragement of the person having charge of the child or because of that person's failure or inability to supervise the child adequately."

b) Note that the Act requires that any person who has reasonable grounds to suspect harm or abuse (as above) and who has a duty to report this must personally do so directly and not rely on anyone else to report on their behalf.

c) When a report has been made, the one who made the report should notify the Senior Pastor and/or the Vice Chair of the Local Board of Administration.

d) The church leadership should consult with legal counsel and require that legal counsel be present for any questioning by police or social services agents.

e) Any staff member or volunteers with direct knowledge of an incident which may, in their view, necessitate an investigation of abuse, should prepare an Incident Report written in non-erasable ink and submit a copy to the Senior Pastor or LBA Vice-Chair.

f) The Senior Pastor or LBA Vice-Chair shall notify the church's insurance company of any report of suspected child abuse being made to the Children's Aid Society either on behalf of a child or against church personnel.

g) Public Response: The senior pastor or their designate will be the sole spokesperson for the church. He or she will speak to the media and the congregation in a discreet, informed, truthful and diplomatic way.

L. Allegations and Discipline

When a report is made alleging that any volunteer has abused or threatened to abuse a child; or when the Senior Pastor receives information about any volunteer whereby a child might be placed at risk, such volunteer shall immediately be suspended from any duties, responsibilities or leadership in ministry, pending the outcome of an investigation by means of internal church undertaking, CAS or the police.

Any notice of suspension shall be given in such a way that any investigation by the CAS or Police shall not be jeopardized.

The suspension is not and shall not be seen or accepted as the "guilt" of the individual, but only of the priority to be given to our children. Any person who has been suspended, shall be subject to the discipline process of Sunnyside Wesleyan Church in accordance with such process or any other policies implemented to deal with the investigation of abuse allegations.

In the event the allegation pertains to an employee, there shall be recourse immediately to the current edition of The Discipline of The Wesleyan Church. Such employee shall be suspended from ministry responsibilities with pay during the investigation until otherwise notified by the LBA.

M. Implementation and Monitoring

A member of the Local Board of Administration will be appointed to oversee implementation of this policy and to monitor compliance.

As part of this oversight, the designated LBA member shall ensure that all ministry leaders and volunteers annually review the Protection Policy and sign a form attesting to this review. These forms shall be filed with the church secretary.

Ministry leaders are responsible for reviewing these policies and procedures as part of their annual program planning.

Ministry leaders are also responsible for monitoring compliance on a periodic basis.

A regularly scheduled annual training program will be offered each fall as school begins and church programs gear up for the new church year.

Additional training will be offered throughout the year as need arises.

Volunteers who assume duties after the training session should meet with a designated person to review the policies and procedures and to complete the screening form.

Appendix A

Signs of Child Abuse

The following signs of abuse are taken from an Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies brochure entitled "Child Abuse Prevention: Speak Up for Kids."

It is available at

<http://www.oacas.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Child-Abuse-Prevention-Brochure.pdf> (accessed May 4, 2019)

Neglect

Physical Indicators

- Poor hygiene.
- Unattended physical or medical needs (e.g., glasses, dental work).
- Consistent lack of supervision.

Behavioural Indicators

- Pale, listless, unkempt.
- Frequent absence from school.
- Inappropriate clothing for the weather, dirty clothes.

Physical Abuse

Physical Indicators

- Injuries that don't fit the explanation.
- Presence of several injuries that are at different stages.
- Facial injuries in infants and preschool children.
- Injuries don't fit with the child's age and developmental stage.

Behavioural Indicators

- Cannot recall how injuries occurred or offers an explanation that doesn't fit.
- Wary of adults.
- May cringe or flinch if touched unexpectedly.
- Infants may display a vacant stare.
- Extremely aggressive or extremely withdrawn.

Emotional Abuse

Physical Indicators

- Bed-wetting that is non-medical.
- Frequent psychosomatic complaints, headaches, nausea, abdominal pains.
- Child fails to thrive.

Behavioural Indicators

- Severe depression.
- Extreme withdrawal or aggressiveness.
- Overly compliant, too well-mannered, too neat or clean.
- Extreme attention seeking.
- Displays extreme inhibition in play.

Sexual Abuse

Physical Indicators

- Unusual or excessive itching in the genital or anal area.
- Torn, stained, or bloody underwear.
- Pregnancy.
- Injuries to the genital or anal areas (e.g., bruising, swelling or infection).
- Sexually transmitted disease.

Behavioural Indicators

- Age-inappropriate play with toys, self, or others displaying explicit sexual acts.

- Age-inappropriate sexually explicit drawing and/or descriptions.
- Bizarre, sophisticated, or unusual sexual knowledge.
- Seductive behaviours.

Appendix B

Indicators of Abuse of Vulnerable Adults

The following text is taken from a webpage entitled: "Protecting Vulnerable Adults--What You Need to Know" from the "Initiative to Increase Safeguards for Adults Who are Vulnerable to Abuse and Neglect." *Developed by the Vulnerable Adults Project sponsored by Kerry's Place Autism Services, with the support of the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services.*

<http://www.vulnerableadultscwr.org/what-you-need-to-know.html>, (accessed May 4, 2019)

What are Some General Signs of Abuse?

There are a number of general indicators that may alert you to the possibility of some form of mistreatment. These indicators are not necessarily proof of abuse, but they do warrant further investigation. These general indicators include:

- Recurring physical ailments with no apparent bodily cause.
- Eating disorders.
- Extreme, unusual behaviour, such as aggression, compliance, depression or withdrawal.
- Unusual fear of a particular person or persons.
- Sudden change in feelings about a particular person or place.
- Nightmares and sleep disturbances.
- Self-destructive behaviour, such as drug/alcohol abuse, self-mutilation or running away.
- Lack of attachment to caregivers.
- Compulsive lying and/or confusion regarding personal reality.
- Regression to infantile behaviour.

In addition to these general indicators, there are more specific indicators for each type of abuse.