



ALLISTON CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

MANUAL

**HARVEST
BIBLE
CHAPEL**

Child Protection Policy

7 George St, Barrie, Ontario L4N 2G5

Phone: 705.739.8613

www.harvestbible.ca



I. INTRODUCTION

A. God has blessed our church family with many wonderful children and young people whom we love dearly. We are committed to providing excellent ministry programs led by qualified staff in order to train our children and youth to love God and His Word. As part of our commitment to them, we have developed these policies because:

1. Child sexual abuse can affect children from every social background, race, and age, and the results are devastating in the life and development of the children;
2. Sexual abuse can happen in any church or school – including ours;
3. Profound spiritual and legal obligations exist to reduce the possibility of child sexual abuse from ever occurring;
4. Churches/schools have unique features that can make them susceptible to incidents of child abuse/molestation;
5. Hundreds of churches have been sued as a result of the sexual molestation of minors by church workers;
6. There are legal obligations regarding reporting to the authorities any allegations of child abuse and sexual abuse.

B. The Harvest Bible Chapel Family Ministry policies have been implemented so that our church can:

1. Provide a safe and secure environment for our children, youth, and vulnerable adults;
2. Protect our volunteer workers from potential unfounded allegations of misconduct, negligence, child abuse, or sexual abuse;
3. Minimize the liability to the church/school due to misconduct, negligence, child abuse, or sexual abuse.

C. This policy and additional guidelines provide the written standards and implementation method related to the four major aspects of this program:

1. The selection of those working with minors (children and youth ministry workers);
2. The training and supervision of workers who have ministry with minors;
3. The reporting obligations of our church, staff, and workers;
4. Our response to allegations of child abuse.

II. TYPES OF ABUSE

Recognizing that the entire subject of abuse has many legal ramifications, of which legal counsel should be obtained, this policy is not to be considered legal advice. More accurately, it is the Church's summary policy; it is designed to state our position as Christians on the subject of abuse and to give general operating guidelines of how the Church will respond

when involved with situations of abuse. In this instance, 'abuse' is not to be construed as a legal term, but rather a collective term used by a lay person to describe what the popular press would call: child abuse, child neglect, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, physical abuse, spiritual abuse, elder abuse, and so forth.

This document is written primarily to those who act on behalf of the Church in some official manner; however, it is considered to be part of the church governing documents, to which all members must subscribe.

III. IMPORTANCE OF A CHURCH DEALING WITH THE SUBJECT

With the increasing occurrence of reports of physical abuse, sexual abuse, and harassment in a church setting, all religious workers must clearly understand their responsibilities in relating not only to one another, but also to those who have been entrusted to their care and/or ministry. Certain guidelines must be followed in order to protect the congregation.

IV. THE CHRISTIAN POSITION ON SEXUAL ABUSE AND HARASSMENT

According to the Christian perspective, sexual abuse and harassment are wrong and disqualify a person from ministry at that time for the following reasons:

- A. By making unwanted sexual (whether verbal or physical) advances on a person, the perpetrator acts in an unloving manner and abuses his or her power (Mark 10:42-45).
- B. Sexual abuse and harassment are against the law and therefore a violation of biblical principles concerning submitting to the laws of the land (Romans 13:1-7).
- C. They are associated with covetousness and lust—that is, desiring that which is not rightfully one's to want (1 Corinthians 10:6-8).
- D. Even in a difference of perspective between perpetrator and victim, the perpetrator could still be accused of being insensitive to the individual and practicing care or ministry in a way that could be misinterpreted (1 Thessalonians 5:22).
- E. Even in a difference of perspective, the perpetrator could be accused of being unwise, foolish, and unprepared for ministry because of the abundance of media coverage, the emphasis on this subject, and the perpetrator's lack of understanding of and sensitivity to such issues (1 Timothy 3:6; Acts 6:3).
- F. It is hypocritical and selfish to use one's opportunity for ministry to instead satisfy one's own cravings (1 Samuel 1:22-25).
- G. There is no such thing as consent when one person is in a position of spiritual authority over another person, regardless of age or circumstance (Matthew 18:6-10).

V. THE CHURCH'S RESPONSE TO A VICTIM OF ANY TYPE OF ABUSE

If someone claims to have been assaulted, abused, or harassed (sexually or otherwise) by anyone (whether staff or volunteer) acting on behalf of the Church, he or she will report the incident(s) to the Elders, including specific names and offenses, where:



- A. Every report will be given immediate and serious attention;
- B. Every report will be thoroughly documented in writing;
- C. The victim's satisfaction as to how the Church handles the issue will be given major consideration;
- D. The Church will take responsibility in dealing with the alleged perpetrator by considering all of the following variables, which are not listed in any specific order or priority:
 - 1. Satisfaction of the victim
 - 2. Seriousness of the alleged incident
 - 3. Response of the perpetrator
 - 4. Federal and provincial law
 - 5. The lessening of hurt to others
 - 6. Biblical principles
 - 7. Social mores and expectations with regard to Christian testimony
 - 8. Employment laws
 - 9. Values and procedures as outlined in official Harvest Bible Chapel documents
- E. All allegations involving a person under the age of 16 will be reported to the proper authorities, submitted to the handling of a professional counselor, and/or as required by law;
- F. The Church will offer free counseling to all involved.

VI. THE CHURCH'S RESPONSE TO A PERPETRATOR OF ANY TYPE OF ABUSE
(Ephesians 4:15; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; 13:1-13)

- A. Guilt: An individual guilty of such charges will be removed from all ministries, and a rehabilitation plan will be instituted. Any future recommendation for ministry will depend on the success of the rehabilitation as determined by the Elders and the counselors involved. Any person having ever been found guilty of sexual charges involving children or youth, whether inside the church or not, will be barred from children and youth ministry indefinitely. An individual guilty of these charges will also be dealt with according to church discipline procedures while he or she is a member of Harvest Bible Chapel. An individual guilty of these charges, if employed by the Church, will be terminated for cause.
- B. Community Accountability: It is the Church's responsibility to assure the general populace that this behaviour will not be repeated under its auspices, thus actions like lateral transfers within the organization, transfers to different locations, and so forth will not be allowed without disclosure and full accountability. It is considered a violation of the law of love to allow a non-rehabilitated perpetrator to escape the consequences of his or her actions and be given an opportunity to repeat them in the lives of others.
- C. Publication: To minimize the amount of damage to the victim, the victim's family, the perpetrator's family, the Church organization, and the name of God as a whole, the leadership involved in handling such matters will maintain the following values in dealing with the Church congregation as a whole and the general public:
 - 1. Openness - Openness will only be limited if it is deemed to be the most loving direction for all concerned. Limiting of openness applies only to those involved in the direct knowledge of the events, as the organization holds the perpetrator fully responsible for his or her actions.



2. Honesty - Honesty requires that nothing be covered up or hidden from view in the processing of the problem by those who are responsible for such actions. Honesty does not require a full disclosure to anyone who wants to know the information.
 3. Integrity - Integrity requires the organization and the perpetrator to take whatever responsibility for the actions that have been done.
 4. Love - Love applies to all parties involved, including anyone who could be adversely affected by the perpetrator and/or the "news" of the event, the victim's privacy and the privacy of the victim's family, the perpetrator's privacy and the privacy of his or her family, the Church and those who benefit from it and their privacy.
- D. The Lead Pastor of the Church, or his Board-appointed designate, will be the only one who can make official statements on behalf of the organization to legal authorities, the media, and so forth.

VII. GENERAL CHURCH GUIDELINES OF PROTECTION

- A. All workers with children and youth are required to read and agree in writing to be governed by the membership policies of Harvest Bible Chapel and any and all policies formed from time to time.
- B. All workers (aged 19 and over) with children and youth are required to submit a recent police check, including vulnerable sector verification screening. All workers with children and youth are required to submit a volunteer application.
- C. All persons involved in ministry must be fully aware of the implications of any physical contact, no matter how minimal, with any person at any time. They must also be fully aware of the implications of any form of sexual language, including written communication.
- D. Only individuals who are authorized by the Church to provide counsel will be considered as counselors for the Church.
- E. Additional guidelines will be presented by the various ministries as necessary, all of which are considered part of this policy (see section VIII.).

VIII. SOME QUALIFICATIONS

- A. Democratic Rule: Our democratic rule of law states that a person is innocent until proven guilty. In the event that an employee or volunteer is accused of any form of abuse and denies the allegations, the Church will consider this individual innocent until such time as the court rules otherwise or the individual admits to being guilty. Recognizing that such allegations cause extreme emotional distress and conflict, it is considered wise and in the best interests of both the accused and the Church that the accused be given a leave of absence from ministry until the matter is resolved. This leave of absence is in no way a statement on the behalf of the organization as to the accused's guilt or innocence.
- B. False Accusations: The Church also recognizes that unfounded, malicious accusations do occur; as such, the Church will do all within its power to ascertain the truth of any allegations.



IX. ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES

Children's and Youth Ministries' Workers Basic Qualifications

Harvest Bible Chapel affirms that child abuse (whether sexual, physical, emotional, or verbal) is both sinful and criminal behaviour. It is our desire to provide a safe and healthy environment for all who participate in our ministries. It is our policy to screen and train all workers in our children's and youth ministry departments in order to ensure this end. We have established reporting policies for incidences of child abuse, and these policies include cooperating with local authorities in the investigation of alleged incidents.

All persons who participate in our children's and youth ministry departments must meet the following requirements:

- A. They are regular attendees of Harvest Bible Chapel. All persons working with minors have been placed by means of a screening process and a training component dealing with the issues of child abuse. In certain circumstances, persons who do not attend Harvest may volunteer after having been subjected to the screening process described in this document.
- B. Persons who are known to have committed previous acts of sexual or other misconduct (viz., pedophilia, rape, incest, assaults involving minors, murder, kidnapping, child pornography, and/or the physical abuse of a minor) will not be allowed to work with minors.
- C. Police record checks are required for all adults 19+ with minors beginning January 1, 2007.

X. A DEFINITION OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

Child sexual abuse, in general, includes any form of sexual contact or exploitation in which a minor is being used for the sexual stimulation of the perpetrator. In a common sense, child sexual abuse is "any sexual activity with a child – whether in the home by a caretaker, in a day care situation, a foster/residential setting, or in any other setting, including on the street by a person unknown to the child. The abused may be an adult, an adolescent, or another child, provided the child is four years older than the victim" (National Resource Centre on Child Abuse, 1992). Child sexual abuse may be violent or non-violent. All child abuse is an exploitation of a child's vulnerability and powerlessness in which the abuser is fully responsible for the actions. Child sexual abuse is criminal behaviour that involves children doing sexual acts that they are neither personally, socially, nor developmentally ready for. Child sexual abuse can involve touching and non-touching aspects.

A. Types of Abuse

Types of abuse that involve touching include:

- Fondling;
- Oral, genital, and/or anal penetration;
- Intercourse;
- Forcible rape.

Types of sexual abuse that do not involve touching include:

- Verbal comments;
- Pornographic materials;
- Obscene phone calls;
- Exhibitionism;
- Allowing children to witness sexual activity.

Note: These lists are not exhaustive, only representative.

B. Criminal Code

In addition, the Criminal Code of Canada includes other sexual offences against children and minors (that is, young people under 18 years of age). They include, but are not limited to, the following:

Sexual interference - It is a crime for anyone to touch a young person under the age of 14 for a sexual purpose;

Invitation to sexual touching - It is a crime to encourage a child under the age of 14 to touch his or her own body or someone else's body for sexual purpose;

Sexual exploitation - It is a crime for a person in a position of trust or authority over a young person 14 years of age but under 18, or a person upon whom a child in this age group is dependent, to engage in sexual activity with the young person.

XI. STEPS FOR REPORTING AN INCIDENT OR RESPONDING TO AN ALLEGATION

An accusation or allegation is defined as first hand contact, either written or verbal, by a parent, agency, authorities, or child that implicates a person who is believed to be involved in child abuse as defined by this document. If an accusation/allegation of abuse occurs or if you observe/suspect abuse, the following steps must take place:

- A. Report the incident/observation immediately to the Pastor or Director over the respective ministry area (i.e. Youth, Children).
- B. Every report, whether taking place in or out of the church context, will be given immediate and serious attention and may require legal consultation.
- C. The reported incident will then be thoroughly documented and reported to the Children's Ministry Director or the Executive Pastor, who will then report to the Lead Pastor. The satisfaction of the victim as to how the Church handles the issue will be given major consideration.
- D. All incidents that involve a person under the age of 16 will be reported to the proper authorities (i.e. Family & Children Services or other agencies), and/or submitted to the handling of a professional counselor, or as required by law.
- E. All incidents will be reported to our insurance company.
- F. The church will offer free counseling to all involved.
- G. All accusations/allegations that involve a staff member/children's worker/member of Harvest Bible Chapel will be handled as follows:
 - 1. All who are accused will immediately be required to meet with the Elders and be confronted with any and all accusations/allegations.
 - 2. Unless an admission of guilt is made, all will be considered innocent until proven guilty.
 - 3. If the accused makes an admission of guilt and/or the court reaches a guilty verdict, the accused's employment by and/or ministry position in Harvest Bible Chapel will be immediately terminated. Also, the church will take appropriate disciplinary actions.

4. An admission of innocence will result in either a ministry reassignment within Harvest Bible Chapel that does not involve children or suspension of employment and/or ministry with or without pay at the discretion of the Elders of the church.

XII. ABUSE PREVENTION POLICY

A. Guidelines

The following list outlines practical guidelines that limit the potential for abuse in children's and youth ministries at Harvest Bible Chapel:

1. Implement and enforce supervisory policies and procedures in your ministry area. Staff and volunteers working in all church ministries must be regular attendees or members of Harvest Bible Chapel.
2. Child and youth ministry areas should follow the "two-adult" rule for all church activities where children are being taught or supervised by adults. In the church ministry setting, situations where only one adult is present should be avoided. If it is not possible to have two adults, then children will be assigned in small groups to work with a volunteer. This rule reduces both the risk of both sexual molestation and the risk of false accusations of molestation by individuals seeking a quick legal settlement.
3. Each room being used for children's ministry of any type should have a door with a window. Leave classroom doors open if possible or keep windows uncovered. Make sure students are never taken behind dividers or screens individually.
4. Obtain parental permission before taking minors on an activity away from the church or school. Also, the two-adult rule must still be followed.
5. Keep parents informed of what activities are taking place. If students are taken off school grounds, permission and notification must take place.
6. All adult chaperones for overnight activities must be approved by church leadership. They must be regular attendees or members of Harvest Bible Chapel. Chaperones and leaders must never be in a position where a tent or bed is shared. If supervision is required for a setting where children or youth will be spending the night, the two-adult rule must be followed.
7. Younger children need to be released to a parent or designated guardian if proper permission is obtained in advance.
8. Staff members/volunteers should be aware of implications of suggestive speech and teasing in the classroom.
9. In tutoring or volunteer instruction situations, instruction should be provided, if possible, to small groups of students rather than to individuals.
10. Avoid keeping single students in the classroom after the others have been dismissed.

11. Teachers/aides and leaders should not drive alone with students. Parental permission must be given for student excursions of any type.
12. Have a second adult present when reprimanding a student and keep a record of events.
13. Always have a second adult present when administering first aid to a child.
14. Avoid physical contact with children. One should take into consideration age and gender appropriateness for physical contact.
15. Always discourage "crushes" and attractions of adolescent and pre-adolescent students.
16. Always refrain from teasing and suggestive play.
17. Encourage emotional growth and independence. Do not encourage clinginess and emotional dependence.
18. Keep detailed records of contentious issues that may arise for your own protection. If children or youth become angry or upset for some reason during a class or ministry situation, the details should be recorded.
19. Teachers and leaders should seek immediate help for emotional or psychological needs. These needs may lead to dependent relationships and further complications.
20. Children should only be released to properly identified and pre-authorized adults according to our check-in and check-out procedures.
21. Discuss suspicious behaviour, allegations, and/or symptoms of child abuse immediately with your supervisor. Any inappropriate conduct or relationships between an adult worker and a minor should be reported to your supervisor, confronted immediately, and investigated.
22. Any non-sponsored off-premises activity with children and youth is discouraged.

Scripture directs us to be "above reproach." There is a cost in protecting our children. However, when compared to the impact that one case of sexual abuse would have on the lives of individuals involved and on our overall ministry, this cost is well justified.

-PROCEDURES-

I. INJURY

Always report any injury, even minor injuries, to the parent. This may include small scrapes, cuts, etc. Typically, the injury can be treated with a little loving attention, ice, and/or a Band-Aid. Fill out an Incident Report after you have finished treating the child.

Serious injury involving seizure, head or eye injury, broken bones, loss of consciousness, excessive bleeding, allergic reaction, etc., should be treated in the following way:

- A. Keep calm and keep the child as calm as possible. Remove other children from the immediate area.



- B. Do not move the injured child. Send another volunteer to find a staff member or, depending on the severity of the injury, call 911 immediately.
- C. A staff member will phone 911 if necessary and page the parents/guardians of the child.
- D. If the parents/guardians cannot be found and the child needs to be transported to the hospital, a staff member must accompany the child.
- E. All volunteers and staff members involved in the emergency must fill out Incident Reports immediately after the emergency.
- F. Staff members will follow up with the parents/guardians of the child.

II. ILLNESS

- A. Do not admit an obviously sick child. A child with green or excessive discharge from the nose, a troubling cough, and/or indications of a fever should not be admitted to the classroom. Check with the parent during the sign-in process to make sure the child is well enough to attend. Please let the Children's Ministry Director know if you have any concerns or questions.
- B. If a child becomes ill in class, contact a staff person to notify the parents/guardians. Be sure to separate the child from the rest of the class.
- C. If a child has a contagious condition (e.g. chicken pox, hand foot mouth disease, pink eye, head lice), he/she will not be permitted in a children's program. If symptoms are noticed while in attendance at a children's program, parents will be notified immediately.

III. EMERGENCY

EMERGENCY EVACUATION

FROM HARVEST KIDS

If an emergency occurs within the 7810 Hwy #89, Alliston facility during Harvest Kids that requires children to be evacuated (fire, electric sparks, pipes bursting, etc.), the following procedure will be followed:

- A. Remain calm.
- B. If you see smoke or fire, pull the nearest fire alarm. For other emergencies, send a volunteer to find the Children's Ministry Director, Executive Pastor, or their designate.
- C. Children will follow the direction of their teacher/leader and proceed outside through the nearest exit, according to the maps posted in the rooms. Teachers/leaders must be familiar with the exit maps in their classrooms.
- D. Teachers/leaders will take the attendance clipboard, as well as any blankets or coats to protect the children from cold weather.
- E. Children and volunteers should all meet at the upper parking lot at the northeast corner.
- F. The Children's Ministry Director or their designate will check the classrooms and washrooms to ensure that there are no children or volunteers still in the building, turning off lights and closing doors.



- G. Once outside, teachers/leaders will account for every child in their class and keep the children together as a group. If someone is missing, teacher will notify the Children's Ministry Director or designate with a description and where the person was last seen. During inclement weather, children may be placed in warm vehicles under the supervision of 2 HK volunteers or staff.
- H. The Children's Ministry Director will check with each teacher to ensure that every child is accounted for. The Executive Pastor, Lead Pastor, or their designate will then be notified.
- I. Parents will not be permitted to retrieve their children inside the building. Parents in the worship centre or other parts of the building will be expected to exit at the nearest exit. They can check on the status of their children once outside the building.
- J. If a parent arrives for his/her child while outside the building, parents and teachers/leaders will follow the standard sign-out procedures. At no point should a child be released to a parent without the child an official parent receipt.
- K. Upon return to the classrooms, teachers/leaders will account for every child in their class/group. If a child is not accounted for, the teacher will immediately notify the Children's Ministry Director or their designate.

OTHER EMERGENCIES

LOST CHILD

There are strict measures in place to prevent a child from ever being unattended; however, in the event that a child leaves a classroom by his/herself and cannot quickly be located, inform the Children's Ministry Director immediately. Other staff members and the child's parents will be informed, and a search will ensue. If the child still cannot be located in a timely fashion, call 911 to initiate police support.

The above procedure will also be used if a child goes missing while in the care of his/her parents and staff has been notified.

KIDNAPPING OR NON-CUSTODIAL PARENT

Children's Ministry uses a check-in security system that guards against unauthorized pick-ups. However, in the event that a child is picked up by an unauthorized person, notify the Children's Ministry Director immediately. Call 911 to initiate police support.

IV. SEVERE ALLERGIES

While we cannot guarantee an environment completely free of anything that will trigger a severe allergic reaction, we are absolutely committed to providing the safest possible environment for our children. It is the responsibility of any volunteer or parent of a child who has a severe allergy to make this known to the Children's Ministry staff. Pertinent allergy information is located on each child's nametag. All volunteers are asked to be aware of any children and volunteers with a severe allergy. It is also imperative that volunteers and children, without the prior approval of the Children's Ministry Director, do not bring any food or anything that has come into contact with something containing nuts or anything latex into the Harvest Kids ministry.

V. CHANGING CHILDREN

Check the classroom sign in sheet to see if you have permission to change the child. If not, have the parents paged through the Welcome Desk volunteer. Only female adults can change the children. Please use the change table in the Nursery and ensure that there is one other volunteer present. Once the child is changed, add your name to the diaper sticker and place it on the child's back or the diaper.

VI. WASHROOMS

Children should only use the child only washrooms in the basement. All children must be accompanied to the washroom. Check the washroom quickly prior to the child entering to ensure no adults are using it but stand outside of the washroom after that.

Junior leaders and adult volunteers should use the accessible or adult washrooms upstairs, which are located at the top of the main stairs.

VII. DISCIPLINE POLICY

Two types of situations arise where it may be necessary to discipline a child: (1) willful disobedience and disruption in the classroom and (2) aggressive or unacceptable behaviour in the classroom.

We believe that an environment of safety in the classroom must be maintained at all times. When a child is aggressive or provoking in his/her behaviour, the safe and caring atmosphere of the classroom is threatened. If a child is behaving in this manner, implement the following techniques:

- A. Teachers should clearly define the rules and expectations for the classroom and clearly communicate them to the children.
- B. If a child is being disobedient or disruptive, your goal is to change the behaviour.
 - 1. Be prompt – speak directly to the child.
 - 2. Be clear – inform the child of the inappropriate behaviour and share the desired classroom behaviour.
 - 3. Be firm – let the child know the consequences of the wrong behaviour and what will happen if it continues. A second offense will require that the child is taken to the Service Director, who will work with the child to determine the cause for the behaviour, in hopes of repentance and returning to class. The child will be informed that a third offense will require removal from the class and parental intervention.
 - 4. Be consistent – this will help the children know the established boundaries.
 - 5. In the event of a second offense, an incident report should be filled out and the parent notified when the pick up the child, in a gracious and loving manner.
- C. NOTE: Discipline should never include:
 - 1. Placing a child alone without supervision;
 - 2. Subjecting a child to ridicule or threat;
 - 3. Subjecting a child to excessive restraint.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact:

Daniel Allard - Children's Ministry Director

dallard@harvestbible.ca

MINISTRY COVENANT

I have read the above document and understand and will adhere to the policies and procedures outlined for child and volunteer protection and safety at Harvest Bible Chapel in Alliston.

PRINTED NAME OF VOLUNTEER

DATE

SIGNATURE OF VOLUNTEER

(Please print this page and return to Children's Ministry Director)

For office use only:

Ministry: _____

Area: _____

Availability: _____

Member: (if teaching) _____

Application received: _____

Record check in process: _____

Record check complete: _____ Year of check: _____