



# CHILD AND YOUTH PROTECTION MANUAL



**MENNONITE**  

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**MUTUAL**



## CHILD & YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY - SAMPLE

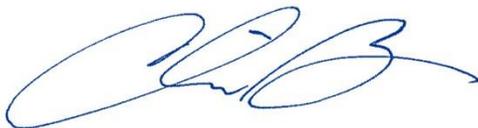
We encourage you to use this “Child & Youth Protection” manual as a resource. The manual has been developed to assist churches as a tool in the effort to prevent sexual abuse and to help churches prevent it from happening within their congregation. The primary goal of this publication is to help you establish a policy and procedural manual to assist in dealing with this growing issue.

Jeff Hanna, a former detective, pastor and recognized church safety and risk management expert served as the author of “Child & Youth Protection” on behalf of Mennonite Mutual Insurance Company.

Please keep in mind that this publication is only a guide for your use. Your church is responsible for complying with all laws; state and federal. All materials should be reviewed by independent counsel prior to implementing a policy or procedures.

If your church is interested in hosting a workshop to help educate your congregation, please let us know, someone on our team would be happy to help.

Feel free to visit our website, [www.mennonitemutual.com](http://www.mennonitemutual.com), for other helpful information and resources. Helping you protect your ministry is our mission.



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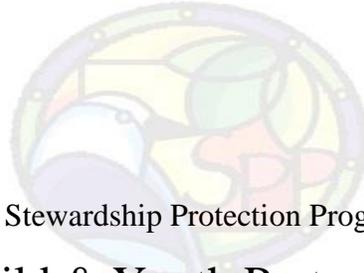


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The Stewardship Protection Program<sup>SM</sup>

## Child & Youth Protection

### I. Introduction from Mennonite Mutual Insurance Company

Mennonite Mutual Insurance Company is committed to partnering with our faith-based insureds to provide resources to assist in establishing guidelines to prevent claims and protecting our children and youth. Mennonite Mutual Insurance Company provides liability coverages once a claim has occurred, but the goal is prevention before a claim actually occurs. The following manual is meant to serve as a resource or point of reference only. It is highly recommended that you have your own set of guidelines reviewed by independent legal counsel.

### II. Child & Youth Protection: A New, Faithful Perspective

#### The Changing, Tragic Reality

*An Ohio church had a fast-growing after school program for children. Needing more volunteers, they appealed to their congregation. Several new volunteers emerged. Two of them were young men who were in high school. All seemed to be going well until an allegation emerged that numerous children had been violated under the care of the two older youth. As a result of the investigation, nearly 100 cases of abuse were uncovered. The church was sued for millions, and the membership went from the thousands to the low hundreds. And sadly, many children and their families will forever be scarred by those two young volunteers.*

It is estimated that 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 6 boys will have experienced an episode of sexual abuse while younger than 18 years. The majority of those cases are at the hands of a known offender.<sup>1</sup> While some churches have stepped up to the task of protecting their children, leaders, and congregations, far too many still lag behind, leaving their church and its people at an increased level of risk.

The most common reluctance to do something is shared in the excuse, “We know our people. They would never do something like that.” This is just not true. In their book, “Helping Victims of Sexual Abuse”, Lynn Heitritter and Jeanette Vought discuss the wide variety of offenders. They are: adolescent offenders, the experimenter, the loner, the boy next door, the aggressor, the group offender, the adolescent female offender, adult fixated offenders, and regressed adult offenders.<sup>2</sup> Who would have thought that at least 20% of offenders today are other minors and a growing number are females? The notion that an offender is easily identifiable just does not have merit.

Scripture reminds us, “Discretion will protect you, and understanding will guard you.” (Proverbs 2:11). We are called to be diligent, use discretion, and be at peace, trusting God will bless our efforts to care for the least of these.

<sup>1</sup> Botash, Ann, MD, *Pediatric Annual*, May, 1997

<sup>2</sup> Heitritter, L. & Vought, J. (1989). *Helping Victims of Sexual Abuse: A Sensitive, Biblical Guide for Counselors, Victims and Families*, 92-99



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### A Better Response

Most people who attend church are trusting, caring, and loving people. They want to welcome new people who attend their church. To think someone in their midst, especially those they have known for some time, could be a child molester or convicted pedophile is often beyond their comprehension. When you couple this elevated sense of trust with the belief that even the worst offenders can be rehabilitated or transformed by God, in many cases, this provides a fertile opportunity for offenders. As a result, unfortunate, heartbreaking, and often disastrous consequences could have a congregation of good and godly people embroiled in a long, painful process that they may never recover from. How does a church balance being trusting and accepting with protecting the children, youth, church and resources God has entrusted to their care? Is a balance possible that does not limit ministry growth and yet allows a church to do everything within its power to take care of the least of these? We believe it is possible, but a new approach is necessary. That approach is based upon the principle of stewardship.

Instead of focusing only on the people involved in this critical issue, a church should have solid, well-planned, written practices and procedures that focus on protecting the people, resources, and ministries God has entrusted to their care. They can be confident that ministries will thrive and everyone involved will be protected and free to live out their faith in a safe, caring environment.

Unfortunately, should a congregation not have good policies in place to protect its children, youth, leaders, and church, when something does emerge, the church can count on a long, arduous, divisive process that may decimate the congregation for many years to come. The courts no longer accept that a church doesn't have a policy in place. The judgments against congregations and individuals are often in the millions of dollars.

While adequate insurance coverage may help pay in such events, a comprehensive, followed set of practices and procedures can often minimize the risk to a church. They will also provide a safe, loving ministry environment that allows the church and its people to survive and even thrive.

Mennonite Mutual Insurance Company's desire is to provide the coverage and resources necessary for you to do ministry with confidence and in a way that will allow you to protect everyone entrusted to your care. In this booklet you will find the rationale, guidelines, and samples needed to provide your church and congregation with a safe environment.

### III. Policy Components

As you look at child and youth protection policies from around the country there is a wide variety ranging from a couple of pages to volumes. We recommend that you review other church policies from congregations in your denomination, online, or from a host of great organizations that specialize in church safety, security, and risk management. Do not simply change the name of the church to your church's name. Not only is it lazy, but it could have some detrimental effects should your church ever have an incident that lands you in court. We have included a sample policy at the end of this manual. Further, it is available electronically on our website at:

[www.mennonitemutual.com](http://www.mennonitemutual.com). What you find in most good policies are tried, true, and tested components that address the key issues that will protect your church. Let's be clear, no policy can protect you completely. Bad things can still happen. However, if you have done your homework and taken the time to craft a solid policy that is followed, you will prevent many incidents from ever occurring. Secondly, you will have a much better case in court should the unthinkable happen. As you can see, we are using the terms "child and youth" and "children and youth" in this booklet. Those terms encompass all minors from birth to the age of eighteen.

So what are the key components to a good child and youth protection policy?



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### a. Rationale

Every policy should open with a paragraph sharing the rationale of why this policy is important. The desire is to speak to those reading the manual (volunteers, staff, etc.), writing it in a way that shares not only the cultural rationale of the issue but also the scriptural basis for why you feel compelled to have such a policy.

### b. Terms

For the sake of the reader, it is wise to define terms that may have more than one meaning or are unique to your particular church. Terms such as “sexual misconduct”, “child abuse”, “mandatory reporter”, “neglect”, etc. should be taken from your state’s revised code. These terms are defined differently in each state. Further, internal terminology such as “staff”, “board”, “pastor”, “committee”, etc. should be clearly defined. These terms may seem clear to those who have been in your church awhile, but are not automatically identifiable to a newer person or volunteer. Any term from your policy that could be misunderstood should be included and defined on these pages.

### c. Practices and Procedures

Possibly the most important part of your policy deals with your practices and procedures. How will this policy be implemented in the day-to-day function of your children and youth ministry areas? We’ll briefly discuss each of these areas.

#### i. Selection and Screening

Just who do we ask to give supervision and oversight of our children and youth? Few churches have too many volunteers in this area. Therefore many leaders seek a breathing, warm body to care for their children. This approach is dangerous. A clear, followed approach to selection, though sometimes difficult at first, will, over time, provide you with the best people possible to care for the children and youth in your church.

Before a person should ever be considered as a volunteer, they should regularly attend the church for at least six months. This six-month rule allows you to get to know the person, their character, and see how they interact with others. Once you have gotten to know them and wish to use them in your children’s or youth area, it’s time to start the application process. Simply put, you need to know as much as possible about every person who has access to children, which means every staff member and any volunteer with direct contact with children and youth. A simple but complete written application, interview process, reference checks and background checks should be mandatory.

Your application does not need to be extensive but should be complete. You want to know as much about the person whom will be working with or have access to your children and youth. Seek to gather current and previous employers, references, and something that asks why they want to and feel qualified to work with minors.

Reference checks are seeking to know this person’s character. Call the references they put down and ask hard questions. One of the best questions to ask is, “Given the chance to hire (or re-hire) this person yourself, would you do so?” Listen for hesitations and coded answers. If you have reservations or concerns, go with your gut. Seek other names from those references to dig a little deeper and learn more. Background checks, on the other hand, seek to determine if the person has a criminal record that might keep them from fulfilling their duties in regards to working



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with children and youth. Some offenses may not necessarily keep them from serving. If they had a “disturbing the peace” charge while they were in college 15 years ago, that probably won’t prevent them from serving. However, if they have a “drunk and disorderly” charge from a year ago, further questions must be asked. Certain crimes may always prevent someone from serving. Violent crimes, sexual crimes, and other crimes involving minors should be red flags for the selection team. One final note: anytime you run a background check on a person you must get their written permission to do so.

We often hear and do believe God can restore people. However, according to mental health authorities and other professionals, pedophilia does not have a cure. People who have a propensity toward intimate relationships with children and youth should be loved and affirmed, but a church should not allow such a person to connect with minors. However, other less offensive sexual crimes might not keep someone from serving. A “public indecency” crime for urinating in public is classified a sex crime in some states. Regardless, a church should always look at the severity of the crime, how long ago it occurred, and how the person’s life has been lived since. Do not be afraid to discuss the issue with the applicant. Seek input from leaders and pray for the right answer.

### ii. Training

Courts have consistently indicated their displeasure with organizations that do not train their employees and volunteers. If you look at nearly every successful child-serving organization, not only is there good screening, but ongoing training. It is simply not enough for a volunteer or staff person to read the rules and then start working, never to be trained again.

Therefore, your policy should indicate the training that will be required moving forward. We recommend annual training events. Regardless of how often, they should be consistent and mandatory. It is important to have this requirement in your policy and follow it closely. Take attendance at your training events. It would be easy for a volunteer if they did something outside the guidelines and reported to the court that they had not attended training for several years. This would not be good for the church.

Training is critical to cover new internal guidelines, remind people of your policies and share what constitutes a bad practice or criminal behavior. As a side note, it’s a great time to affirm and thank your staff and volunteers for the important work they do.

#### **Suggested sites to assist in training:**

Stop It Now!: [www.stopitnow.com/index.html](http://www.stopitnow.com/index.html)

Darkness 2 Light: [www.darkness2light.org](http://www.darkness2light.org)

National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect:

[www.happinessonline.org/LoveAndHelpChildren/p7.htm](http://www.happinessonline.org/LoveAndHelpChildren/p7.htm)

Reducing the Risk: [www.reducingtherisk.com](http://www.reducingtherisk.com)

### iii. Supervision

Many churches have concluded that if they do background checks then they are covered should an incident ever occur. Simply stated, this is shallow thinking. Yes, we know that many pedophiles have been arrested and will be detected with a background check. However, thousands more have never been caught and are checking the landscape for what we would call the “path of least resistance.” By that we mean they are seeking opportunities to prey upon children in places that do the least amount of checking and supervising.



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In the example shared in the introduction, all the background checks and references in the world would not have stopped the teenage boys from being detected. They were well thought of and had no record. So what was missing? Supervision.

Your policy should clearly state what behavior is appropriate and what is not. For instance, while it may be appropriate for a male youth leader to sit at a table, in sight of other youth and leaders, while he talks to a young female group member, it would not be appropriate for him to invite her to come to youth group early to counsel her if no one else was in the building.

Further, while some churches may believe that they know a particular lady in the church who is great with children, she still should not be in a class alone with a child or youth. So what areas are important to include in the supervision section a policy?

1. No Child or Youth Alone with an Adult: If this is emphasized and enforced, many children and youth would be protected and scores of churches would not find themselves in trouble. In the past there was something called the “two-adult rule.” This meant there always had to be at least two adults with children. While this would be ideal and is still acceptable, it often is not possible due to the number of volunteers. Further, it is less probable that an adult would violate a minor when there are other children and youth around. Pedophiles thrive on isolation.

Therefore, the Triangle Rule should be followed. If you can visualize a triangle, that helps you understand that at least two children and adult, or two adults and a child should be present in the room for the policy to be followed. Should there be a teacher in a room with one child, the door should be open and the adult should be visible to anyone walking by until more children or another adult arrives. However, should there only end up being one child arrive, there should be a plan whereby another adult enters or that class is combined with another on that day. Also, anytime isolation increases (a camp, outing, etc.), the number of adults should also increase.

2. Use of Children and Youth as Volunteers: Just how old should someone be before they should be allowed to work with other, younger children? We probably know eleven year olds who are responsible and sixteen year olds that are not. Most churches use children and youth to work alongside the adults in the nursery.

While there is not a clear age that will guarantee that nothing bad will happen, most states have an age of accountability around twelve or thirteen years old. In other words, a child could be left alone after school or in the evening once they reach junior high school. However, a church would be wise to build into their policy some procedures for utilizing minors. For instance, they should not be left alone with a child, but should only serve when an adult is present. Further, some churches have required that any minor serving in this area must have gone through a training course, such as is offered by many local YMCA’s in the area of childcare and babysitting.

Sadly, more and more cases of minor-to-minor abuse are being reported. This often involves an older child or youth violating a younger child. Therefore, all volunteers, whether children and youth or not, should read and adhere to all policies and be asked to step down when they are not followed.

3. Counseling: Counseling is an important aspect to any ministry. However, it is a real concern when it comes to abuse, especially when it comes to children and youth. Many well



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intentioned youth leaders have gone astray once they found themselves in the position of isolation while counseling. Any time a leader needs to meet with a child or youth apart from scheduled activities, it should be scheduled (on a calendar), done with permission of the parents, and take place in a visible location. This may mean in the corner of a large room or in an office with a window. At no time should a leader of one sex meet alone with a minor of the opposite sex. Further, with the increase of male/male and female/female incidents, meeting alone with children and youth of any sex is a bad practice. One other comment should be made. While most of the time nothing illegal or offensive may be happening, leaders should ask themselves, "Could what I am doing be construed as inappropriate by someone who sees me and does not have all the facts?" For instance, a male leader and a minor female may be coming out of the woods. They may be looking for firewood, but someone may wonder what they were doing alone in the woods in the first place.

**Your policy should have clear, easily followed guidelines in the area of counseling and isolation.**

4. Ratios: How can you know what proper ratios are for supervision? According to the National Association for the Education of Young Children the following guidelines can help.

Recommended Staff/Child Ratios Within Group Size											
Age of Children	Group Size										
	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	30
Infants (birth to 15 mos.)	1:3	1:4									
Toddlers (12 to 28 mos.)	1:3	1:4	1:4	1:4							
21 to 36 mos.		1:4	1:5	1:6							
2 1/2- 3-year olds (30-48 mos.)					1:7	1:8	1:9	1:10			
4-year olds						1:8	1:9	1:10			
5-year olds						1:8	1:9	1:10			
Kindergartners								1:10	1:11	1:12	

As an example, if you have a group size of 12 toddlers, the ratio should be one adult to every four children. However, these ratios are meant for general gatherings in the church setting. Any time isolation (such as camping) or potential danger increases (like rappelling), the ratio should also be adjusted to provide more supervision.



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5. Restrooms/Diaper Changes: We often see a great deal of confusion in this area. While little ones often need help with their clothing to use the restroom, it can open one up to issues they do not desire. Some churches simply tell a child who needs to use the restroom to “go and hurry back.” This also can lead to problems. Ideally, a connected restroom to classrooms works well. But if this is not possible, what are you to do when you are the only adult in the classroom and someone needs to use the restroom (another good reason for two adults). Ideally a designated assistant or a superintendent of sorts is a viable option. If there is a qualified, screened person who can act as a rover for the various classrooms, this helps. Regardless of how you work it out, the best approach is for the adult to stand in or near the restroom doorway and listen and talk to the child as they take care of their business. Again, preventing isolation is the key. Some churches only allow females to change diapers. Others allow any adult to do so. Once again, however you do it, not doing it in isolation can prevent many potential issues from emerging.

### iv. Allegation Response Plan

What should you do if someone makes an accusation or raises a suspicion of some form of abuse or misconduct? Your policy should include clear guidelines as to how a concern will be shared and what the church’s response will be. Sadly, too many churches feel they have the ability to investigate and discern the best response to an allegation. Realistically they usually do not have that ability. Each state has clear laws that must be followed. More than one church leader has made the mistake of determining they will handle the situation internally by talking to the victim and the suspect. While that may feel like that is the caring thing to do, it may violate the law and also provide an opportunity for the perpetrator to continue doing harm. For everyone’s sake, responses should be left to the professionals.

### v. Response to a Known Sexual Offender in Church

Should you become aware of a known offender who is attending your church, it is important to have a specific plan in place to respond in a way that respects the individual and yet creates a safe environment. Recognizing there is a wide variety of crimes that are termed sexual in nature, your response should be appropriate to the seriousness of the crime and take into consideration when the crime occurred.

### d. Job Descriptions

Most churches have defined job descriptions for staff members but fall short for volunteers. Job descriptions are necessary for you to make sure children and volunteers are protected. How can we correct a person when they do something inappropriate when we have never told them what is expected from them? Job descriptions do not have to be long, but they should be clear as to what kind of behavior is expected and forbidden. These job descriptions should be read and signed by volunteers acknowledging they understand them. Further, using them during training events, posting them in the classrooms, and referring to them often will add to a sense of volunteers knowing their job.

### e. Transporting Children and Youth

Safe transportation should be a topic you take seriously either as part of your Child and Youth Protection Policy, or as part of your overall church Safety and Security Policy. Hundreds of church and youth and



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child-serving organizations are involved in accidents that can cause serious injury and death. Churches should take intentional steps, using the forms and sample policy, to protect the church and those children and youth they are transporting to and from events.

### f. Summary

Your policy should close like it opens. Summarize why you believe it is important to have a policy in place and share expectations of those who will read the policy and follow it. Also include in your summary what the consequences are of failing to comply with the policy. Share how engaging in such practices and procedures are really a stewardship issue that you are confident your employees and volunteers will want to embrace. Make sure everyone who is on staff or works specifically with minors acknowledges that they have read, understand and will follow the policy. An acknowledgement form is included in the forms portion of this booklet, or at [www.mennonitemutual.com](http://www.mennonitemutual.com).

### g. Forms

The following forms will assist you in your efforts to become a church that is safe for children and youth. As states and municipalities have a variety of laws that should be included in your policy, we recommend that you have independent legal counsel review your entire policy to make sure it satisfies your local and state laws. The following forms are meant to serve as a guide, Mennonite Mutual Insurance Company is not liable for any errors or omissions within these documents and resources.

Form A:	Youth and Child Protection Evaluation Checklist
Form B:	Youth and Children's Staff/Volunteer Worker Application
Form C:	Consent to Participate and Consent to Treat Form
Form D:	Health History Information and Emergency Contact Form
Form E:	Accident/Allegation/Incident Report Form
Form F:	Acknowledgement of Receipt
Form G:	Authorization/Release for the Obtaining of an Investigative Report
Form H:	Church Transportation Program Checklist
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Form K:	Motor Vehicle Accident Report
Form L:	Pre-Trip Safety Briefing
Form M:	Vehicle Inspection and Maintenance Form



## CHILD & YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY - SAMPLE

### Form A: Youth & Child Protection Evaluation Checklist

The following form should be completed by a staff member or program administrator. It is designed to evaluate where you are in protecting your children, youth and ministry. If you answer “no” to any of the items, corrective action should be taken.

Item	Yes	No	Comments/Corrective Actions
<b>Hiring, Selection, &amp; Screening</b>			
Do we have written policies and procedures for child and youth protection?			
Do we utilize written applications for all employees and volunteers?			
Do we conduct interviews with all applicants?			
Do we conduct reference checks on all applicants?			
Do we conduct background checks on all employees and those who work a significant amount of time with minors?			
Do we have job descriptions for all positions?			
Are all drivers screened and checked for driving record and insurance?			
<b>Oversight and Supervision</b>			
Do we conduct and document ongoing training?			
Do we post the mandatory reporting rules from our state?			
Do we follow all procedures and do we comply with all reporting laws for our state?			
Do we follow the recommended adult/child ratios?			
Do we comply with the six-month waiting rules for volunteers?			
Do we have side window or door glass on all child/youth rooms or leave doors open?			
Do we adhere to the no-adult-alone-with-a-child rule?			
Do we train leaders in all extreme or at-risk activities?			
Do we have parents sign a permission slip for any activity involving travel or physical activity?			



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Do we have a consent to treat and health form signed for each minor participant engaged in travel or physical activity?			
Do we have a written process and forms for reporting accidents, allegations incidents, and injuries?			
Do we inspect equipment, grounds, and activity areas prior to beginning an activity?			
Do we conduct a safety briefing with leaders and participants prior to travel or before engaging in a physical activity?			
Do we plan on having proper first-aid and emergency equipment on hand for travel or physical activities?			
Are all vehicles used to transport inspected for safety and maintenance issues?			

Completed by: \_\_\_\_\_

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



# CHILD & YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY - SAMPLE

## Form B: Youth & Children's Staff/Volunteer Worker Application

Position being applied for: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Please list any other names you have had: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Work phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Home phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

How long have you been at this address? \_\_\_\_\_ How long have you lived in this state? \_\_\_\_\_

Sex: \_\_M \_\_F Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Driver's License Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Social Security Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you a member of this church? \_\_\_\_\_ Since when (month/year) \_\_\_\_\_

If not, where are you a member? \_\_\_\_\_

Employer name: \_\_\_\_\_ Employer address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please list residences and churches attended for the last 10 years:

Address	City	State	Church Attended
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Please list any work done in a church, volunteer work, or any work involving minors.

Include type of work, supervisor's name and contact number.

Dates	Organization	Type of Work	Supervisor's Name	Phone
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Any other employers in last five years:

Dates	Organization	Type of Work	Supervisor's Name	Phone
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____





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**Form C: Consent to Participate and Consent to Treat Form - Minor**

Planned Activity: \_\_\_\_\_

Location of activity: \_\_\_\_\_

Date(s) of activity: \_\_\_\_\_ Group/Activity leader name: \_\_\_\_\_

Other adults accompanying group: \_\_\_\_\_

Details of activity: \_\_\_\_\_

Method of Transportation: \_\_\_\_\_

Cost: \_\_\_\_\_ Payment deadline: \_\_\_\_\_

What to bring: \_\_\_\_\_

**Detach this portion and return**

+++++

Name of Child: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Parent(s) or Guardian(s) (printed): \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Date of Birth: \_\_/\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Child's Social Security Number \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_

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

My child, \_\_\_\_\_ has my permission to participate in (activity)

List any activities the child is not permitted to engage in): \_\_\_\_\_

**CONSENT TO TREAT:**

While my child is attending this function, I hereby authorize the adult(s) in charge, or in his/her absence or disability, any adult accompanying or assisting him/her, to consent to the following medical treatment for said minor:

- (i) provide for, approve and authorize any health care at any hospital, emergency room, doctor's office or other institution;
- (ii) employ any physicians, dentists, nurses or other person whose services may be needed for such health care;
- (iii) review and, if necessary, disclose the contents of any confidential medical records; and,
- (iv) execute consent forms required by medical, dental or other health authorities incident to the provision of medical, surgical or dental care to the child.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of parent or legal guardian)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)



**CHILD & YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY - SAMPLE**

**Form D: Health History Information and Emergency Contact Form**

(The following information is confidential and will be used only in case of emergency)

Name of child: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_ Child's Social Security Number: \_\_\_-\_\_\_-\_\_\_

Is your child prone to (check those that apply):

- cold       sore throat       fainting spells       bronchitis
- cramps       convulsions       allergies (list below)

Does your child have or has ever had (check those that apply):

- asthma       heart trouble       lung trouble       sinus trouble
- hernia       appendicitis       appendix removed

Is your child currently under any type of medical treatment?     yes  no

Is there any history of behavioral disorders or emotional disturbances?     yes  no

Has your child been under the treatment of a psychiatrist in the past three years?     yes  no

Date of last tetanus shot: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

Please list any prescriptions or over-the-counter medications currently being taken:

Name of medication	Dosage	Times to be taken

What medications may we administer? \_\_\_\_\_

Please list any drug interaction concerns, food or other allergy concerns: \_\_\_\_\_

Does your child have any physical disabilities or disorders that may affect their participation in activities?

Are there any special instructions or comments relating to the questions above or to your child's health and their participation in any activities?

**Emergency Contact Numbers:**

(Contact order)

\_\_\_ Father's name: \_\_\_\_\_ work phone: \_\_\_\_\_ cell phone: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Mother name: \_\_\_\_\_ work phone: \_\_\_\_\_ cell phone: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_ relationship: \_\_\_\_\_ phone number(s): \_\_\_\_\_



**CHILD & YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY - SAMPLE**

**Form E: Accident/Allegation/Incident Report Form**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Name of preparer: (printed) \_\_\_\_\_

Please circle which is being reported:

Accident Allegation Known incident Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of incident/accident/allegation: \_\_\_\_\_

Place of incident/accident/allegation: \_\_\_\_\_

Date and time incident was first reported: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_ :\_\_\_AM PM

Who made you aware of the incident/accident/allegation: \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) of children/youth involved: \_\_\_\_\_

Please describe the incident/accident/allegation as you saw it or as it was reported:

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

Did anyone else witness the incident/accident/allegation (list names)? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Describe any visible physical injuries observed: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

If injuries were treated, describe treatment and by whom? \_\_\_\_\_

Was anything said by the victim, witnesses, or accused (describe): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Were parent(s)/guardian(s) notified? \_\_\_ When? \_\_\_\_\_ By whom? \_\_\_\_\_

Was the incident/accident/allegation reported to authorities? \_\_\_ yes \_\_\_ no

If so, who was contacted (list details): \_\_\_\_\_

Was the insurance company notified? \_\_\_ yes \_\_\_ no

What other aspects of the incident/accident/allegation need to be shared? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_



**CHILD & YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY - SAMPLE**

**Form F: Acknowledgement of Receipt**

**Acknowledgement of Receipt of the**

\_\_\_\_\_ CHURCH CHILD AND YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY

I have been given a copy of the \_\_\_\_\_ Church CHILD AND YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY and have read and understand this document. Further, I understand that my services as an employee or volunteer at \_\_\_\_\_ Church is dependent on my strict adherence to these policies.

Name (please print):

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature:

\_\_\_\_\_

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



**CHILD & YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY - SAMPLE**

**Form G: Authorization/Release for the Obtaining of an Investigative Report**

Authorization/Release for the Obtaining of an Investigative Report

I \_\_\_\_\_ authorize the \_\_\_\_\_ **Church** to have the following background check screening reports processed through the agency contacted by the church and/or its agent or representative for employment or volunteer purposes: Application Verification, National Criminal Report, Sexual Abuse Registry and County Court Report.

I am aware that this background check is only a screening tool and I may be asked to provide additional information or my fingerprints to resolve issues discovered during the screening.

I am aware that the background check screening report I consent to have prepared may include information obtained from a variety of sources, including but not limited to government agencies, and others. I am aware that if I choose, I may obtain a complete disclosure of the nature and scope of any report prepared about me if I make a written request to the \_\_\_\_\_ Church within a reasonable time after I execute this authorization.

I understand that a photocopy or facsimile of this signed document shall be considered as valid as an original.

**PLEASE PRINT**

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Social Security No. \_\_\_\_\_

All other names that have been used (ex: Maiden Name) \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ County: \_\_\_\_\_

**DATE APPLICANT'S SIGNATURE**

By submitting this application: You understand that if your background check identifies a pending adjudication or conviction for any prescribed offense(s), approval to work or volunteer in the church may be withheld or revoked. You acknowledge that the church may withhold, suspend, or revoke a credential if you have ever, as an adult or a juvenile, been convicted, adjudicated or placed on term of probation or parole for any felony-level crime or offense. You hereby consent to the release by the church of the fact of your approval or non-approval by the church. You hereby release the contracted agency, as custodian of such records, and such agency employees or personnel, both individually and collectively, from any and all liability for damages of whatever kind, which may at any time result to you, your heirs or assigns, family or associates because of compliance with or release of information pursuant to this authorization, except in the case of gross negligence. You acknowledge that you have read the foregoing release, understand it and agree to the terms and conditions therein.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



## CHILD & YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY - SAMPLE

### Form H: Church Transportation Program Checklist

#### CHURCH TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM CHECKLIST

This survey is intended to guide you in the best practices that will make your transportation program safe. People rely on you to keep them safe and you should do everything you can to protect them and keep your ministry from being exposed to concerns and higher premiums.

The following questions should be asked in relationship to any transportation activity your church engages in. If the answer to a question is "no," comments and corrective action should be taken and noted.

Question	Yes	No	Comments/Actions
Do we have a written transportation policy?			
Is someone (or a committee) designated to oversee the transportation ministry?			
Are all vehicles (both private and church-owned) inspected prior to every trip?			
Do we have a list of pre-selected and approved drivers?			
Are minors prevented from driving on church-sponsored trips?			
Are motor vehicle records checks completed on all drivers?			
For those driving private vehicles, is their insurance coverage verified?			
Are pre- and post-trip vehicle inspections completed and documented?			
For church-owned vehicles, is there a regular and documented maintenance schedule?			
Are all vehicles equipped with seatbelts and is their use required?			
Is there an accident reporting form in every vehicle?			
Is there a safety kit in every vehicle being taken on an extended trip?			
Are phones or other communication devices available in each vehicle?			
Are occupants given a safety briefing prior to taking extended trips?			
Has the church confirmed with their insurance agent that they have adequate transportation coverage?			
Is there up-to-date insurance information in every church-owned vehicle?			
Have all drivers been adequately trained in all vehicles they will be driving?			



## CHILD & YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY - SAMPLE

Has the leadership been informed on the safety issues concerning 15passenger vans and has alternative transportation been considered?			
Are drivers transporting minors required to complete a background check?			
Have we checked with our insurance carrier to determine if they have specific driver, vehicle, and training requirements?			

I have completed this inspection and certify that the above checked items were evaluated and any concerns noted below.

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**CHILD & YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY - SAMPLE**

**Form I: Driver's Application**

DRIVER'S APPLICATION (Please Print)

Name of applicant: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of application: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of birth: \_\_\_\_\_ SSN#: \_\_\_\_\_

Driver's license number: \_\_\_\_\_ State issued: \_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever been refused a license (or suspended)? \_\_\_\_\_

In the last three years, have you ever been:

Cited for DWI? \_\_\_\_ Cited for speeding? \_\_\_\_

Involved in an auto accident? \_\_\_\_\_ License suspended? \_\_\_\_\_

(If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, provide details on reverse side).

What types of vehicles have you been trained or certified to drive? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have any special licenses to do so? \_\_\_\_\_ If so, which ones? \_\_\_\_\_

Is there any reason you should not work with or around children or youth? \_\_\_\_Yes \_\_\_\_No

Please list two references:

1. Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ How long have you known this person? \_\_\_\_\_

2. Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ How long have you known this person? \_\_\_\_\_

Will you give us your permission to run a motor vehicle records check and/or a criminal records check as needed? \_\_\_\_Yes \_\_\_\_No

I affirm that all the information provided above is accurate to the best of my knowledge.

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

Application: ( ) Approved ( ) Disapproved Driver's test: ( ) N/A ( ) Passed ( ) Failed

Approved by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## CHILD & YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY - SAMPLE

### Form J: Driver review and Training Checklist

#### DRIVER REVIEW AND TRAINING CHECKLIST

The following questions are designed to determine whether a driver should be renewed as a preferred driver. An annual review for each driver (of private and church-owned vehicles) is recommended. All “no” answers should be commented on or acted upon.

Question	Yes	No	Comments/Actions
Did this driver complete an application prior to being permitted to drive?			
Was a motor vehicle records check completed on this driver?			
Was a background check completed (for those transporting minors)			
Was the driver’s insurance information verified?			
Did this driver receive a basic safe driver’s course prior to being permitted to drive?			
Has the driver received any driver training since being hired?			
Has the driver been trained on how to do a pre and post trip inspection and complete the form?			
Has the driver been trained in all vehicles that they have driven or been asked to drive?			
Has the driver been free of complaints since last review?			
Has the driver been free of any personal or church-related accidents since last review?			
Has the driver been free of any medical condition since the last review that may impact driving?			
Is the driver above 24 and below 70 years of age?			
Should this driver be renewed for another year?			

I have completed this inspection and certify that the above checked items were checked and any concerns noted.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

(Record should be retained in file)



# CHILD & YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY - SAMPLE

## Form K: Motor Vehicle Accident Report

### MOTOR VEHICLE ACCIDENT REPORT

(A copy of this should be in every vehicle used for transporting)

To get better information in the event of an accident, the following information should be gathered as quickly as possible after an accident by the driver or other adult. Complete as much information as possible.

<b>Accident Date:</b>	<b>County of Accident</b>	<b>City or Town:</b>	<b>Mile Marker:</b>
<b>Time:     :     AM   PM</b>	<b>Address or Intersection:</b>		<b>Landmarks at Scene:</b>
<b>Vehicle #1</b>		<b>Vehicle #2 (or Pedestrian)</b>	
<b>Driver's Name</b> (last, first, middle)		<b>Driver's Name</b> (last, first, middle)	
Address (no. and street)		Address (no. and street)	
City:	State:	Zip:	City:           State:           Zip:
Work #:	Home #:	Work #:                   Home #:	
Date of birth:		Date of birth:	
DL number:	State:	DL number:	State:
<b>Vehicle Owner's Name:</b>		<b>Vehicle Owner's Name:</b>	
Address (no. and street)		Address (no. and street)	
City:	State:	Zip:	City:           State:           Zip:
Make and type of vehicle:		Make and type of vehicle:	
Year:	License plate #:	Year:	License plate #:
Name of insurance company:		Name of insurance company:	

**Accident Description:**

(To the best of your ability briefly describe the details of the accident).

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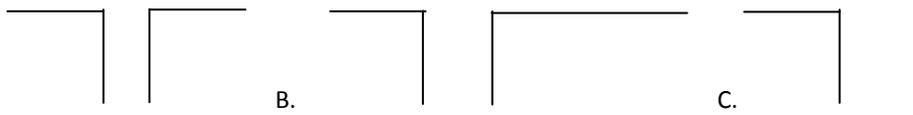


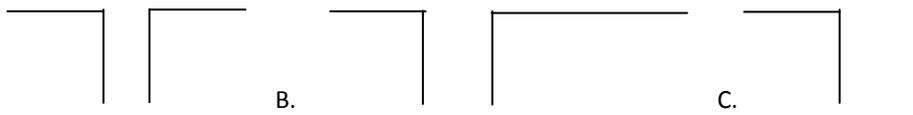
# CHILD & YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY - SAMPLE

## Accident Diagram:

(To the best of your ability, sketch the locations of the vehicles/pedestrians.)

A. 

B. 

C. 

D. (Draw)

## Injured Persons: (List any persons claiming injuries)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Injuries: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Injuries: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Injuries : \_\_\_\_\_



## CHILD & YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY - SAMPLE

**Witnesses** (Locate immediately, and obtain witness information)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Was a **police report** filed?      \_\_\_ Yes    \_\_\_ No      If yes, with what department? \_\_\_\_\_

Officer's name: \_\_\_\_\_ Contact information: \_\_\_\_\_



## CHILD & YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY - SAMPLE

### Form L: Pre-Trip Safety Briefing

#### PRE-TRIP SAFETY BRIEFING

The following is a checklist for drivers/leaders to communicate to the passengers on the trip. This list should be discussed with everyone and each minor occupant should sign that they understand and will follow the guidelines.

1. The driver (or designated leader) is responsible for the trip and their instructions are to be followed at all times.
2. All occupants must wear their seatbelts any time the vehicle is moving.
3. Nothing hazardous may be brought inside the vehicle at any time.
4. All occupants should keep arms, legs, and other objects inside the vehicle at all times.
5. Excessive noise and loud music is not permitted.
6. Do not put anything in front of a window or in a position where the view of the driver is obstructed.
7. In the event of an accident or an emergency, follow the driver/leader's instruction.  
Exit the vehicle on the passenger (or curb) side of the vehicle only after instructed.
8. Violation of these rules may result in the termination of the trip for the individual or the entire group.
9. Report any concerns or hazards you observe.
10. Aid and assist the drivers and others to make this a safe trip.

(Minors only)

I have read and understand these rules and affirm that I will follow them.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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



## CHILD & YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY - SAMPLE

### Form M: Vehicle Inspection and Maintenance Form

#### VEHICLE INSPECTION AND MAINTENANCE FORM (For drivers and supervisors)

The following form may be used for both church-owned vehicles and privately owned vehicles that will be used for longer trips.

Inspector's name:		Date of inspection:	
Vehicle make and model:		Year:	
Current mileage:			
Item	Passed	Failed	Action needed or taken
Tires condition, tread & pressure (+ wheels and lugs)			
Brakes			
Gauges			
Heater/defroster			
Air-conditioning			
Fluid Levels			
Windshield and windows			
Mirrors (side and rear-view)			
Shocks and struts			
Battery			
Headlights, turn signals, and brake lights			
Emergency kit, First-aid, Flares/signs			
Emergency supplies			
Body exterior			
Wiper and washer condition and operation			
Horn			
Belts and hoses			
Recent lube, oil, filter			
Muffler and exhaust system			
Other:			

Is this vehicle safe to use at this time? \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

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



## CHILD & YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY - SAMPLE

### IV. Insurance

Having a great program in place to protect your children and youth is the single most important step you can take to protect your church from experiencing an incident. However, despite the very best program, excellent supervision, and the desire to protect children, incidents can still happen. That's why it is extremely important that you have the best insurance possible.

Mennonite Mutual Insurance Company's agents are very knowledgeable and can help direct you through the various aspects of coverage availability. In the area of sexual misconduct, you can get basic coverage for up to \$500,000. Eligibility for any limit is contingent on receipt of a completed Sexual Misconduct Supplemental Questionnaire or completed section in a loss control report, by a representative of Mennonite Mutual Insurance Company.

However, you should recognize that many judgments often exceed this amount. Higher limits are strongly recommended. To be eligible for sexual misconduct coverage in excess of \$500,000 through Mennonite Mutual Insurance Company, a congregation must be willing to implement the following guidelines:

- 1) Written procedure requiring background check and a signed application for all staff members, mentors, drivers and volunteers leading or participating in child/ youth activities.
- 2) Require a six month waiting period for all new volunteers before being eligible to lead or participate in child/youth activities.
- 3) Written guidelines regarding counseling including:
  - A. Provide counseling only in rooms where there is a side window, or door having a window, or keep door open at all times.
  - B. Never counsel or meet one-on-one at someone's house.
- 4) Door windows required in every room where children or youth meet for activities.
- 5) Maintain proper student/ teacher ratios including:
  - A. A goal of having a minimum of two unrelated adults in attendance for all child/ youth activities. (The Triangle Rule mentioned previously in this booklet will satisfy this requirement)
  - B. A written policy regarding off-premises activities including transportation exposure, overnight stays, parent/guardian permission, etc.
- 6) Written procedure detailing how the organization is to respond when they learn a sexual offender is attending service.
- 7) Written procedure detailing the steps taken by the church in the event an allegation of physical, sexual, or emotional abuse has taken place.

Included in this booklet are forms that will assist you in reaching these requirements. In addition, you may go online at [www.mennonitemutual.com](http://www.mennonitemutual.com) for electronic versions of these forms as well as a sample policy.



## CHILD & YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY - SAMPLE

### **V. Conclusion**

The objective for having a sound policy and following it is to create an environment that accomplishes at least three objectives.

First and foremost, by doing these things well, you will create an environment that will be safe for those children who have been entrusted to your care. Such an environment is not only good for them, but is expected by the parents who bring their children to your church. Given a choice of a church that does not make children and youth safety a priority and one that does, every parent will choose the one that takes such things seriously.

Secondly, by having a standard that your staff and volunteers can follow will actually take the burden off of their shoulders and create an environment they will want to work in. By affirming them for following the policies and procedures you have in place and creating a safe environment you will more easily retain your good volunteers.

Finally, by having solid, followed guidelines that are clear to everyone in your congregation, you will create an environment that will be very unattractive to someone whose intention it is to prey upon children. They will always seek the path of least resistance. If your church has enough barriers in place they will seek to go elsewhere to a place that is easier to get access to minors. You may never know just how much prevention you have accomplished by having these sound practices and procedures in place.

God's Word says, *"Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these."* (Mark 10:14). We should do all in our power, as leaders of the church and caregivers of our children, to do all that we can to protect the "least of these." It is possible to do so and at the same time be free to do ministry in a way that honors God.



## CHILD & YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY - SAMPLE

### VI. Child & Youth Protection—Sample Policy (pages 33-40)

The following sample policy is a basic policy to cover sexual abuse issues in your church. To receive limits in excess of \$500,000 the following guidelines from Mennonite Mutual Insurance Company must be included and followed:

- 1) Written procedure requiring background check and a signed application for all staff members, mentors, drivers and volunteers leading or participating in child/youth activities.
- 2) Require a six month waiting period for all new volunteers before being eligible to lead or participate in child/ youth activities.
- 3) Written guidelines regarding counseling including:
  - A. Provide counseling only in rooms where there is a side window, or door has a window, or keep door open at all times.
  - B. Never counsel or meet one-on-one at someone's house.
- 4) Door windows required in every room where children or youth meet for activities.
- 5) Maintain proper student/ teacher ratios including:
  - A. A goal of having a minimum of two unrelated adults in attendance for all child/youth activities. (The Triangle Rule mentioned previously in this booklet will satisfy this requirement)
  - B. A written policy regarding off-premises activities including transportation exposure, overnight stays, parent/ guardian permission, etc.
- 6) Written procedure detailing how the organization is to respond when they learn a sexual offender is attending service.
- 7) Written procedure detailing the steps taken by the church in the event an allegation of physical, sexual, or emotional abuse has taken place.



## CHILD & YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY - SAMPLE

### CHILD & YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY – SAMPLE

\_\_\_\_\_ (Name of Church /Organization)

#### *I. Purpose*

To ensure that all \_\_\_\_\_ Church staff, clergy, volunteer teachers, children’s and youth workers affirms this goal and do all in their power to assure that it is achieved. As a witness of the commitment, individuals serving in these capacities will attest in writing that they have read and understand the material provided herein, where appropriate, individuals serving in these capacities agree to cooperate in obtaining independent affirmation of their ability to serve God in such a way that our goals are achieved.

The \_\_\_\_\_ Church must be a place where, above all, everyone is safe. People should be safe from unwanted sexual advances and safe from unfounded accusations. The Christian community always includes physical touching as an expression of affection and as a vessel for healing. But we also recognize that evil can corrupt even the holiest of gifts. Therefore, we restrict our touching and affection to those public activities commonly held appropriate throughout the history and worship of the church.

Those who entrust their children to the care of \_\_\_\_\_ Church have a right to expect that due attention has been given to the recruiting, hiring, training and supervision of persons in charge of \_\_\_\_\_ Church programs. We, as the Christian community, believe that children should be safe and well cared for, and consider it to be our pastoral responsibility to strive to provide a loving, secure environment for children in our congregation by being advocates for children, and establish clear defined safeguards, procedures, and policies for their pastoral care and protection.

This policy was drafted in cooperation between the \_\_\_\_\_ Church, staff members, and \_\_\_\_\_ Board. No changes may be made to this policy with approval of each of those entities.

**Matt. 10:14** - Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.”



## CHILD & YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY - SAMPLE

### *II. Abuse Defined*

According to the National U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Child Welfare Information Gateway, **Abused Child** includes any child who:

- (A) Is the victim of sexual activity as defined under Chapter 2907 of the Ohio Revised Code, where such activity would constitute an offense under that chapter, except that the court need not find that any person has been convicted of the offense in order to find that the child is an abused child;
- (B) Is endangered as defined in section 2919.22 of the Ohio Revised Code, except that the court need not find that any person has been convicted under that section in order to find that the child is an abused child;
- (C) Exhibits evidence of any physical or mental injury or death, inflicted other than by accidental means, or an injury or death which is at variance with the history given of it. Except as provided elsewhere in this section, a child exhibiting evidence of corporal punishment or other physical disciplinary measure by a parent, guardian, custodian, person having custody or control, or person in loco parentis of a child is not an abused child under this division if the measure is not prohibited under section 2919.22 of the Ohio Revised Code.
- (D) Because of the acts of his parents, guardian, or custodian, suffers physical or mental injury that harms or threatens to harm the child's health or welfare.
- (E) Is subjected to out-of-home care child abuse.

**Sexual Misconduct** refers to sexual abuse or sexual molestation of any person, including but not limited to, any sexual involvement or sexual contact with a person who is a minor or who is legally incompetent; sexual harassment in a situation where there is an employment, mentor, or colleague relationship between the persons involved, including but not limited to, sexually-oriented humor or language; questions or comments about sexual behavior or preference unrelated to employment qualifications, undesired physical contact, inappropriate comments about clothing or physical appearance, or repeated requests for social engagements, or sexual exploitation, including a sexual relationship between a clergy person, employee or volunteer and a person with whom he/she has a pastoral relationship, whether or not there is apparent consent from the individual.

**Physical Abuse** is any non-accidental injury or pattern of injuries to a child. Signs in the child's appearance include unusual bruises, welts, burns, cuts and frequent injuries explained as accidental. The child may exhibit extreme behavior, e.g., very aggressive or self-controlled or withdrawn, have a poor self-concept, hurt others, or avoid physical contact with them.

**Sexual Abuse** includes exhibitionism, voyeurism, sexual exploitation, and genital contact. Signs in the child's appearance include stained or bloody underclothes, injuries in the genital or anal areas, evidence of sexually transmitted diseases, or pregnancy. Behavioral signs that may be noted in the child include difficulty in walking or sitting, excessive masturbation, seductive behavior or an unusual degree of knowledge about sex. The child may also appear withdrawn or anxious or relate poorly to peers.

**Emotional Abuse** involves verbal assaults and excessive demands on a child resulting in a negative self-image and, often-disturbed behavior. Physical signs of emotional abuse are not always present but may include eating or speech disorders, developmental delays or flat or bald spots on an infant's head. Behavioral signs include excessive biting, rocking, sucking or scratching of self. The child may act older or younger than his/her age. He/she may be withdrawn, hyperactive, aggressive or submissive.

**Endangering** No person, who is the parent, guardian, custodian, person having custody or control, or person in loco parentis of a child under eighteen years of age or a mentally or physically handicapped child under twenty-one years of age, shall create a substantial risk to the health or safety of the child, by violating a duty of care,



## CHILD & YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY - SAMPLE

protection, or support. It is not a violation of a duty of care, protection, or support under this division when the parent, guardian, custodian, or person having custody or control of a child treats the physical or mental illness or defect of the child by spiritual means through prayer alone, in accordance with the tenets of a recognized religious body.

**Neglect** is defined as inadequate food, clothing, and shelter to ensure the child's health and physical safety and the provision by a child's parent or parents of specialized services warranted by the child's physical or mental needs. Therefore, neglect may also include a child who is left unattended in potentially dangerous circumstances or when a parent, guardian or custodian fails to be available to provide adequate support for a specified time.

**Bullying:** *A person is bullied when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other persons, and he or she has difficulty defending himself or herself."*

A. This definition includes three important components:

1. Bullying is aggressive behavior that involves unwanted, negative actions.
2. Bullying involves a pattern of behavior repeated over time.
3. Bullying involves an imbalance of power or strength.

B. Types of Bullying

Bullying can take on many forms:

1. Verbal bullying including derogatory comments and bad names
2. Bullying through social exclusion or isolation
3. Physical bullying such as hitting, kicking, shoving, and spitting
4. Bullying through lies and false rumors
5. Having money or other things taken or damaged by students who bully
6. Being threatened or being forced to do things by students who bully
7. Racial bullying
8. Sexual bullying
9. Cyber bullying (via cell phone or Internet)

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** The appropriate statutes for your state should be obtained and placed in this section. They may be obtained from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Child Welfare Information Gateway site at:

[http://www.childwelfare.gov/systemwide/laws\\_policies/statutes/define.cfm](http://www.childwelfare.gov/systemwide/laws_policies/statutes/define.cfm)

### III. Application Process

The following steps are necessary in the application process:

- Application completed for every staff member (including permission to do background check)
- Application completed for every volunteer worker that is working with or around minors (including permission to do background check)



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- Interview by staff member or committee
- Reference checks conducted on all applicants
- Criminal background checks completed on all staff members and those volunteers that have regular contact with minors
  - (Note: background checks will be conducted by a designated staff member or church official. Results of the background and reference checks will only be shared with those making the decision on whether to place the applicant into a ministry position)
  - Those offenses that would keep an applicant from being hired or selected would include all crimes of violence, abuse, or felonies against people, especially children. Other crimes revealed will be reviewed by the staff.
- Volunteers applying for a position must adhere to the 6-month waiting rule prior to being placed in direct contact with minors (meaning they must have been coming to the church or be a member for at least six months)
- No teens under the age of 14-years-old may be placed in charge of other minors. Those between 14 and 18-years-old must do so only under the direct supervision of an adult
- All applicants must sign and affirm that they have read and understand all policies prior to being placed in the position they are applying for

### IV. Job Descriptions

Applicants for any position will be required to read the job description applicable to the position they are applying for. The description should include all physical requirements necessary to perform the job. It is up to the applicant to read the description and reveal any issues they may have with performing the job.

### V. Training

In addition to the initial required training, children and youth workers will be required to attend at least one complete training session annually. Attendance will be taken at each training event at the close of the session. Completion of related outside training experiences may (at the discretion of a staff member) be considered as an appropriate substitute for annual training (e.g. teacher or volunteer receiving child abuse training in their school or workplace). A copy of their completion certificate will need to be turned in.

### VI. Supervision

To guard against the potential of abuse or injury, it is important that all of those working with minors understand the necessity for proper supervision. The following ratios are to be followed:

	GROUP SIZE									
AGE OF CHILDREN	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24
Infant (birth to 15 months)	1:3	1:4								



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12-28 months	1:3	1:4	1:4	1:4						
21-36 months		1:4	1:5	1:6						
2.5-year-olds - 3-year-olds (30 - 48 months)				1:6	1:7	1:8	1:9			
4-year-olds						1:8	1:9	1:10		
5-year-olds						1:8	1:9	1:10		
Kindergarten								1:10	1:11	1:12

In addition, the following guidelines must also be followed:

- No adult will be permitted to be alone with one child at any time
- When in a room with children, if there is no window glass, the door must not be closed
- Adults should not be alone with children in the restroom. Trips to the restroom should be with at least two children. Where possible, the adult should be in the doorway and not in direct, physical contact with the child
- Any children participating in dangerous, hazardous or unusual behavior must be corrected and reported to the staff person in charge
- All injuries or suspected abuse should be reported to \_\_\_\_\_(name or position)
- It is preferred that women change the diapers of infants and children
- All off-site activities will be pre-approved and will include at least two adults. When boys and girls are present for off-site or overnight events, at least one adult of each gender will be present. It is recommended that the two adults be unrelated.
- Behavior that is disruptive to the group will be handled with positive verbal instruction defining behavioral expectations and/or time outs. Physical discipline, isolation and abusive verbal correction is prohibited
- Never allow yourself to be involved in a situation that could give rise to the perception or appearance of inappropriate behavior
- Any physical contact with a person of the opposite sex should be done in a public area and be done modestly and in moderation

### *VII. Accident, Allegation, Incident Response and Reporting*

As an adult leader, you are responsible to respond to and report all acts of physical, emotional or spiritual abuse and any accidents or incidents that could have or did cause injury.

**Emergencies:** You may be called upon to respond to an emergency (illness, injury, accidents, etc.). Render whatever aid that you can on the spot. Remove them from immediate harm. Unless you are trained in first-aid, it is best not to move the victim. Keep them calm and call for help immediately. An Accident, Allegation, Incident Report Form should be completed.



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**Abuse:** Abuse is a complex issue. New trends are emerging. It is reported that up to 25% of abuse is at the hands of other children. Further, the category of women offenders is also growing. Therefore, a broad understanding of violators and victims is required to recognize abuse. Training should be completed in this area.

**ALL** abuse or suspected abuse should be reported to the staff person in charge using the appropriate form. A report should be written and reviewed by the senior staff as to who will report and how it will be reported to the authorities.

The following procedures will be followed when confronted with an abuse allegation or incident:

1. Immediately ensure the safety of the child or youth.
2. Report the event immediately to \_\_\_\_\_ (name and position of person designated) but do not leave the child alone while doing so.
3. Make notes as appropriate as to what was seen or heard.
4. Do not discuss the event with anyone other than \_\_\_\_\_ (same as above).
5. Do not confront the alleged perpetrator.
6. Any employee or worker accused of abuse will be removed immediately from contact with children until an investigation by authorities is concluded. The results of the investigation will determine if the person is reinstated or released.
7. The appropriate staff member (or his/her designee) will:
  - a. Notify the child's parent(s) or guardian(s)
  - b. Complete the Accident, Allegation, Incident Report Form
  - c. Contact the appropriate authorities

**(Editor's Note: list the agency in your area or state that is to be contacted)**
  - d. Notify the church's legal counsel and insurance carrier
  - e. Determine appropriate communication necessary to church and media

### *VIII. Response to a Known sex Offender in Church*

When the senior pastor, or any member of the church board, is informed that a registered sex offender is attending the church, the following steps will be taken to manage risk. These include the following:

1. Obtain a record of the sex offender's prior criminal convictions by conducting a national criminal records check. The church must be fully informed regarding the sex offender's criminal background.
2. If the sex offender is on probation, identify his or her probation officer and ascertain the conditions that have been imposed. In some cases, sex offenders are not even allowed to attend church. If the probation officer says that the offender is free to attend church, ask the officer if he or she would



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recommend that the offender be allowed to attend church, and if so, under what conditions. Obtain this information in writing, or, if that is not possible, make a detailed written account of the officer's response.

3. Condition the sex offender's right to attend church services and activities on his or her signing a "conditional attendance agreement" that imposes the following conditions:
  - The sex offender will not work with minors in any capacity in the church.
  - The sex offender will not transport minors to or from church, or any church activity.
  - The sex offender will not attend any youth or children's functions while on church property, except for those involving his or her own child or children, and only if in the presence of a chaperone (see below).
  - The sex offender will always be in the presence of a designated chaperone while on church property. This includes religious services, educational classes, activities, and restroom breaks. The chaperone will meet the sex offender at the entrance of the church, and accompany the sex offender on church premises until returned to his or her vehicle.
  - A single violation of these conditions will result in an immediate termination of the sex offender's privilege to attend the church.
  - The conditional attendance agreement option will not be available unless the church's insurer is informed and confirms that coverage will not be affected.
4. In some cases, exclusion of the offender from church is the only viable option. This option is advisable if (1) for any reason the conditional attendance option is not feasible or enforceable; or (2) if the offender's crimes are so frequent or heinous that exclusion is the only appropriate option; or (3) one or more of the offender's victims attends the church. This will be a judgment call made by the pastor and board.
5. It is often desirable to draft a short policy addressing the church's response to registered sex offenders attending the church, and have it adopted by the congregation during an annual or special business meeting. This would allow the membership to discuss this issue in a rational manner.
6. Seek legal counsel in formulating the church's response. \*

\*Adapted from ChurchSafety.com. © 2010. Used with permission of Christianity Today International. For a comprehensive training resource please see "Sex Offenders in the Church" from Christianity Today International at <http://store.churchlawtodaystore.com/sexofinch.html>.

### *IX. Transporting Children and Youth*

To do our very best to protect the children, youth, leaders, and the church in regards to safely transporting people to and from events, the following policy is to be followed.

#### **A. DRIVERS**

An approved drivers list will be compiled by the youth ministry leader. All people selected as drivers will meet the following criteria before permitted to drive anyone to and from an event:

- Complete a Driver's Application



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- Have a motor vehicle records check completed
- Verification of insurance information
- Have a background check completed (if transporting minors)
- Completion of the driver's training materials
- Be above 24 years of age and below 70 years of age

### B. PASSENGERS

All passengers will be required to wear seatbelts at all times. Any unsafe behavior will be reported to the event/ministry leader.

### C. AUTOMOBILES

All autos being used on trips will be inspected for safety, utilizing the vehicle inspection form. If needed, a designated mechanic will be utilized.

### D. PRE and POST-TRIP BRIEFINGS

Before and after any trips, a briefing will be conducted by the event leader for all drivers covering safety issues, route, emergency plan, etc.

### E. ACCIDENTS

An accident report must be completed by the driver in the event of any accident. All accidents will be reported immediately to the ministry leader who will report to a ministerial staff member. The church insurance provider will also be notified immediately.

### F. MINOR DRIVERS

Minors may drive to and from an event or meeting only if permitted by their parent/guardian. However, no minor driver may transport another minor to any meeting or event without written permission/hold harmless agreement from all parents involved.

### *X. Policy Violations*

Any employee or child/youth worker that does not follow these policies will be notified of their actions. If the violation is considered to be major (as determined by the staff or committee) the person will be terminated from their position immediately. Pending an investigation and/or review he/she may be reinstated. Minor violations will be placed in the worker's file. Multiple violations may result in termination.

