

Springhill Baptist Church  
Child and Worker  
Protection Policy  
Updated: March 2016

(Removal of CAR requirement)



# MINISTRY WORKER VOLUNTEER REFERENCE FORM

(INFORMATION RECEIVED IS HANDLED IN A CONFIDENTIAL MANNER)

**Springhill Baptist Church**  
**47 Church St. Springhill N.S. BOM 1X0**  
Phone: 597-2252

In our desire to reduce the risk of abuse within our church ministries, we believe this information is necessary to **protect** our **children** and to **protect** our **volunteers**. Thank you in advance for your understanding.

Personal Information				
Full Name		Male	Female	
Phone No. (Res.)				
Address				
Email address				
Single	Married	Engaged	Separated	Divorced
Common Law	Widow/Widower		Date of Birth	
Spouse's name				
Occupation and/or Employer				
Hobbies, Interests or Skills				

## Spiritual History

How long have you attended Springhill Baptist? \_\_\_\_\_

When did you accept Christ as your Saviour?

---

---

---

Have you been baptized by immersion?

Yes

No

## Church Attendance Background

Churches I have attended in the last five years are as follows:

1. Name of Church \_\_\_\_\_ Phone No \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Dates Attended \_\_\_\_\_ Member or Adherent \_\_\_\_\_

2. Name of Church \_\_\_\_\_ Phone No \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Dates Attended \_\_\_\_\_ Member or Adherent \_\_\_\_\_

### Lifestyle

*In order to provide a safe and secure environment for our children, we believe it is necessary to include the following questions as part of our application process. All information will be handled in a confidential manner. Answering "yes" to any of the questions may mean **a meeting will be arranged with a Pastor so that you may discuss the circumstances.** Thank you in advance for your understanding.*

**If any of the following circumstances apply to you, please check here \_\_\_\_\_**

Have been convicted of a criminal offense involving children?

Have been convicted of a sexually related crime?

Have been convicted of an abuse related crime?

Have been hospitalized or treated for alcohol or substance abuse?

Have any communicable disease?

Have been in treatment for any form of mental illness?

Do you have any physical conditions that would prevent you from performing certain types of activities (lifting children, playing sports)? If so, please explain.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## References

Please provide the names of two individuals, excluding relatives, who could provide a reference for you. If you are a minor, you may use the name of a parent and/or teacher. If possible, include only one reference from inside the church.

Name of Reference \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Reference \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship \_\_\_\_\_

## Ministry Profile

In answering the following, please don't be too humble as the purpose of this section is for you to declare your strengths so that your gifts will be put to the best use possible.

*Mark the areas in which you are most interested in being a part of:*

	Nursery		Junior High (Grades 7&8)
	Preschool		Senior High (Grades 9-12)
	Junior Church		Discipleship/Mentoring
	Preteens (Kix 5/6)		Intergenerational Ministry (D&D)
	Behind the scenes		Other:

*Do not hesitate to mark more than one area. You can show your preference by placing sequential numbers beside your top few with Number 1 being your top choice.*

## Related Experience

Please describe any previous paid or unpaid work experience related to children's ministry.

(Position, Time Period, Responsibilities)

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Applicant's Statement

I hereby acknowledge that the information contained in this application for ministry is correct to the best of my knowledge. I authorize any references or churches listed in this application to give you any information they may have regarding my character and fitness for children's ministry. I understand that Springhill Baptist Church will keep all the information contained in this form, as well as accompanying documents, confidential. I further agree to adhere to the Child Protection Policy as adopted by *Springhill Baptist Church* and to conduct myself in a godly manner.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Applicant's Name -Please PRINT)

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

**PLEASE RETURN IN A SEALED ENVELOPE  
TO THE OFFICE OR TO THE PASTOR**

\* How we handle in a confidential manner:

1. Please place reference forms in sealed envelope.
2. Return directly TO THE OFFICE OR TO THE PASTOR.
3. After review form will be placed in a locked file cabinet.



## CHILD & WORKER PROTECTION POLICY

We acknowledge that the abuse of children (sexual, physical, and emotional) can happen anywhere, including in this Church or in other facilities used by our church in children's and youth ministry, and we understand that the effects of such abuse have a profound short-term and long-term impact on the victim.

We understand that, as members of this Church, we must seek to ensure that children and youth, who participate in any programs offered through our church, may do so without fear of abuse and at the same time protect the safety and reputation of the adults and teens who work to make this ministry possible.

We understand that any abuse, or allegation of abuse, can seriously compromise our witness for Christ within our community and beyond.

We the members of this Church, solemnly agree to adopt the following Policy for Child & Worker Protection, for the safety of the children and families we serve, to uphold the good reputation of our church and staff, and to protect ourselves from lawsuits and criminal penalties, and effective immediately and dated this \_\_\_\_ Day of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ .

---

(Pastor)

---

(Board of Christian Education Chair)

---

(Board of Management Chair)

---

(Board of Deacons Chair)



## **POLICY FOR CHILD & WORKER PROTECTION**

1. All persons desiring to work with children/youth through any ministry (current or future) of this church, must first meet the following qualifications:
  - a. Be a member or an adherent who has regularly attended an evangelical church for at least six months;
  - b. Complete a volunteer reference form;
  - c. Obtain a police check. A record involving any abuse of children will, in all cases, disqualify the individual from working with children or youth through this Church;
  - d. Read the Policies and Procedures Child/Worker Protection Manual;
  - e. Upon request, be interviewed by the Pastor.
2. At no time will young children be left in an individual's care behind closed doors or in an isolated and private location. During bathroom visits with very young ones, the bathroom door should be left open approximately 1 foot while an adult is assisting a child.
3. When teens, under the age of 16, are involved as a helper in children's or youth ministry, they will be supervised and will always meet with children in a classroom or area equipped with a window or open door.
4. All classrooms will be modified so that, if there is no other way to view the room easily, a window will be installed in the classroom door.
5. Efforts will be made periodically (and at least on an annual basis) to inform the congregation of the dangers of child abuse and to remind them of the importance of strict adherence to this policy.
6. Individuals who work with children and youth must attend at least 1 training workshop or complete the training kit to reduce potentially compromising situations in which an allegation of abuse could be made.
7. We will strive to ensure that parents are made aware of the precautions being taken to protect their children.
8. Parental consent forms will be used for all special activities or events occurring off church property, and for any event which requires an overnight stay.
9. In the event that any allegation of abuse of a child or youth is made, it will be reported immediately to the appropriate police authorities and to the pastor. The process will be carefully documented, including dates, times, and content of all conversations pertaining to the alleged abuse.
10. Any incident in which there is a concern for the safety or well being of a child under the care or

supervision of our Church will be taken seriously and may be investigated.

11. This policy will be posted in the Church.

---

Date

---

(Pastor)

---

(Board of Management Chair)

---

(Board of Deacons Chair)

---

(Board of Christian Education Chair)

## **A. Introductory Remarks**

The mobilization of workers for ministry is essential to a healthy, growing church. Scripture teaches that God has equipped every believer for ministry in, or through, the Church. When everyone in a church is doing his or her part, a church normally grows spiritually and numerically (Ephesians 4: 16). Therefore, a healthy church utilizes a large number of workers in a variety of ways both within and outside the church.

Encouraging believers to get involved in church ministries is a spiritual service. Church leaders have been given the assignment "to encourage one another to love and good deeds."

The following Scriptures must be kept in mind as the following paper is read:

I Thessalonians 5:22 - "Avoid every kind of evil. "

Ephesians 5:3 - "But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality..... because these are improper for God's holy people."

Matthew 18:6 - "But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea."

Matthew 18: 15-17 -"If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the Church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector."

The Springhill Baptist Church is concerned for the safety of the children and families we serve. At the same time we are concerned about the safety and reputation of the adults and teens who work to make this ministry possible. There will be some, however, who may come in with impure motives. We have therefore developed the following procedures to prevent the possibility of abuse occurring.

In this document the term "children/child" refers to children, youth and persons with special needs.

## **A1. Why do we have these policies and procedures?**

This manual was written to help us provide a safe and secure environment for the children who attend our church and participate in our ministry programs. Our main objective is to lead children into a dynamic personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Providing a safe and secure church environment will help us win the trust of children and parents so we can work together to reach our ministry goals.

Many people already have a good understanding of how to care for children. We require our workers to read our child care manual anyway so they can understand our specific expectations. It is important for every member of our team to know the rules. This can help prevent misunderstandings and make our ministry experience an enjoyable one.

We also have these policies to uphold the good reputation of our church and staff, to protect ourselves from lawsuits and criminal penalties.

## **A2. How can someone become a worker in the Ministry to Children, Youth or Developmentally Disabled Persons?**

To be an approved church worker with children, workers must:

1. Be a member or an adherent who has regularly attended an evangelical church for at least six months;
2. Complete a volunteer reference form;
3. Obtain a police check. A record involving any abuse of children will, in all cases, disqualify the individual from working with children or youth through this Church;
4. Read our Policy & Procedures Child/Worker Protection Manual.
5. Upon request, be interviewed by a personnel committee comprised of a pastor and at least two individuals holding leadership positions within the Church.

## **B. Recruitment & Supervision Guidelines**

As Christians who are called into the ministry, our purpose is to provide a safe and fun environment in which we can reach, teach and challenge girls and boys for Christ. We will accomplish this by equipping and supporting God's people in these ministries in partnership with Christian parents, under the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit.

### **B1. Recruitment of Workers**

The recruitment of ministry workers will be done by Ministry Leaders, who may be either pastoral staff or lay leadership helping in the administration of a particular program.

#### **1. Screening**

Potential workers will either be members or adherents who have regularly attended an evangelical church for at least six months. If the Pastors, Church Board Members or Ministry Leaders know of reasons why a person may not be suitable for a worker position, further investigation could take place and a final approval, or denial, of the prospective worker could be made.

#### **2. Recruitment**

##### **(a) Ministry Worker Reference Form**

In cases where children are to be supervised by workers, the Ministry Worker Application Form must be submitted by the worker before final approval is considered. The Ministry Worker Application Form is critical in protecting the church from legal action if a case of child abuse occurs in which a church worker is involved. To be protected from liability, the church must show evidence that it has taken reasonable action in screening and supervising the workers involved in any of these ministries.

The courts will look for a process by which the church screens workers before engaging them in service. A court can find the church liable if it is less than systematic and therefore negligent in screening workers. By having every worker fill out a Ministry Worker Reference Form, keeping these forms on file and updated, the church greatly reduces its potential liability.

This confidential Ministry Worker Reference Form will be reviewed only by the Pastor and Ministry Leaders. This form will be filed in a secure location.

#### (b) Interview and Reference Check

When an interview is required, it will be conducted by the Pastor. This interview provides the Pastor with the opportunity to review the important items from the Ministry Worker Reference Form in a personal setting, to ask follow-up questions and to enhance knowledge of the applicant. The interview will also allow the potential worker the opportunity to ask questions about various ministries and the reasons behind our protection procedures.

Two personal references are requested for new workers on the Ministry Worker Reference Form. These references should exclude relatives and include at least one reference from outside the church. Both of these references will be contacted and asked to affirm the appointment of the worker. The person making contact, the date and a summary of the reference's comments will be recorded. This will become part of the Children's Ministry File and is considered confidential.

#### (c) Conviction or Criminal History Check

Each worker applicant will be required to pursue a Criminal Records Check with either the Police and/or the RCMP. A record check is necessary for any approved workers to accept a ministry position. All records secured are placed in the Children's Ministry File and are considered confidential. Criminal records checks are to be updated at the discretion of Ministry Leaders and/or the Senior Pastor.

#### (d) Child Protection Policy Training

All workers will be equipped with training regarding safety and abuse prevention. Each approved worker must sign a record indicating they have been trained and have read through the materials. This record will be kept in the Children's Ministry File.

## **B2. Staffing and Supervision Guidelines**

Adults and teens that are not officially approved to work in these ministries in our church are not permitted in children's groups unless they are supervised by an approved ministry worker.

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

Our desire is to provide a safe, loving classroom where the child feels comfortable and learning can take place. Therefore we recommend the following guidelines:

### **1. Two Leaders (The Buddy System)**

When possible, there will be a minimum of two leaders in any room with children.

Incidences or accusations of child abuse rarely occur in church groups. When abuse has occurred, it has usually happened when a worker was left unsupervised and/or alone with children. To prevent incidences of child abuse and/or false accusations against workers, children will be cared for in the company of two or more approved workers ("Buddies") at church sponsored activities or while using church facilities.

Workers will have a buddy with them especially when they are with children in private places (for example):

- Assisting young children with "toilet time".
- Chaperoning overnight activities, field trips or camp-outs.
- Meeting with children in homes.
- Meeting with children in a secluded or private church room.

An alternative to the two leader guideline is the open door policy.

## 2. Open View

All rooms will have windows or window doors that will allow ministry supervisors to look in occasionally without interrupting the teaching process.

## 3. Minimum Age Expectation

It is important to have at least one worker who is 16 years of age or older with any group of children. When possible, all programs will be staffed with at least one member of each sex as an adult worker.

## 4. Supervisory Staff

The supervisory staff (Director of Children's Ministry or other) will make regular visits to the classroom to make sure the class is properly staffed and supervised.

## 5. Youth Activities

- a. Counselling of young people should not be done one-on-one with a person of the opposite sex unless it is in full view of other leaders and/or young people.
- b. Activities, whether formal or informal, should not be conducted in a closed room unless there are at least three people in the room. When this is not possible, then the open door policy should be followed and there should be someone assigned to monitor the room(s).
- c. At events with a large attendance, the adult leaders will make rounds throughout the building or site.



## **C. Caring for Jesus' Loved Ones**

### **C1. Participant Information Forms**

Springhill Baptist Church recognizes the need to maintain child security.

The names and addresses of parents and children will be carefully maintained.

#### **A. Registration Forms**

Children who regularly attend children's programs will be registered. Registration forms are available to record a child's name, address, phone number, birth date, grade level, and parents' names.

Pertinent medical information will be completed by a parent (or guardian) for each person participating in ministries. A copy will be taken on events and can be helpful to medical professionals in emergency situations when a child's parents cannot be reached.

#### **B. Permission Forms**

An official permission form will be completed by a parent (or guardian) for each person attending a special event (parties, field trips, camps, etc). This assures our staff that a parent is aware of our event, and approves of their child's attendance.

Medical professionals do not require a parent's permission to help a child in a life-threatening situation. In situations that are less than life-threatening, a hospital will usually not treat a child until they contact the parent and discuss the child's medical needs. Therefore, the most important information is the location and phone number of parents or guardians while children are in our care.

## **C2. Receiving and Releasing Procedures**

### **1. Receiving and Releasing of Nursery Aged Children (0-3 years)**

Children will attend the class at their age, grade, or developmental level.

- a. Programs for nursery children will provide a sign-in sheet for parents/guardians. An accurate sign-in procedure will include each child's name and the name of the parent dropping the child off. Space is provided for parents to list any special needs. Nursery children will not be received into the room until properly signed in. As each worker enters the nursery, they should read the sign-in sheet to be familiar with the children and their needs.
- b. Children will never be dropped off in a classroom without a teacher present. If only one teacher is present the door must be left open.
- c. We recommend that security precautions be taken for all children admitted to a nursery program. A child will be released to a parent or approved representative.

### **2. Releasing of Young Children at the End Of Children's Programs**

- a. A child will not be released until a parent or a representative picks the child up at the classroom. The exception to this may be Sunday School as there is limited time between programs. At parents' discretion, children may be released until the time of the morning service.
- b. Occasionally parents will need to drop off a child and leave the building. Parents should alert workers when this is going to happen and give the program leader an emergency phone number where they can be reached.

### **C3. Health and Safety Guidelines**

#### **1. Sick Children**

A child, who is ill, according to the good health guidelines posted in each classroom, will not be received into the classroom. Any child with a known communicable disease will not be received into a classroom.

Any child or worker on antibiotics must have taken them for at least 24 hours.

If a child becomes ill while participating in a program, the parent will be notified promptly.

#### **2. Snacks**

With the increasing number of children with fatal allergies, we request that "outside" foods not be brought into the classrooms unless previously arranged.

Children with food allergies are permitted to bring food for their own use.

#### **3. Emergencies**

- a. Workers are not to give or apply any medication. If a child needs medication, the parent must give it. No medication will be left in the classroom or with a worker or child. In extreme cases (i.e. peanut allergies, ventilators, etc.) arrangements will be made with written instructions and permission of the child's parent.
- b. Procedures for fire emergencies will be reviewed semi-annually. These procedures are posted in a visible place in each classroom, stating the planned route of escape to the nearest fire exit.
- c. A first aid kit is kept on hand. All workers are to review the location and contents regularly.

#### 4. Procedures for Dealing with Cuts or Injuries Involving Blood

- a. Separate the injured child from the other children. Isolate the area where any blood may have dropped on carpet, toys, etc. Send someone to locate the parents at this time.
- b. Check to ensure that no other children had contact with any blood from the cut or injury.
- c. Put on latex gloves (available in the first aid kit) and bandage the injury, avoiding contact with mouth, ears and eyes.
- d. Carefully wipe up all blood and bloody bandages and dispose of immediately.
- e. Properly remove and dispose of latex gloves. Wash carefully with sterilizing soap (available in first aid kit).

### **C4. Good Behaviour in the Classroom**

#### Why Children Misbehave

Children most often misbehave when they are bored, frightened, need attention, have clinical problems (including attention deficit disorder and hyperactivity), or other personal problems (worries, parents divorced, etc).

#### Why Good Behaviour is Needed

Good behaviour is needed so children can have fun, learn well and avoid injuries. Good behaviour among Christian children is a strong testimony of the reality of Jesus living in their hearts. It also makes working with children a joy instead of a job.

#### Who is Responsible for a Child's Behaviour

Our goal is to help children become responsible for their own behaviour. Informing a child about our rules/expectations and correcting poor behaviour (according to our guidelines) is the responsibility of the children's worker who is in charge of the children in a particular group. Some suggestions include:

##### 1. Prepare for Good Behaviour

The best way to maintain good behaviour is for workers to be well prepared to teach and lead children. ("If you don't put on a show for them, they will put on a show for you!") Last minute

preparation is not acceptable for our workers because it demonstrates a lack of care and love. Children who feel loved, are having fun and learning will usually not present very many serious discipline problems.

## 2. Communicate Expectations

The purpose of rules is to help children learn how to behave appropriately. Rules will be posted and/or reviewed on a regular basis. Children will regularly test the rules to see how securely their boundaries have been placed. A firm set of appropriate behaviour guidelines can help make children feel loved and secure. Too many rules will be avoided (use no more than 3 to 5 basic rules). Leaders should be consistent and realistic. Leaders will reinforce positive behaviour with rewards by catching children being "good" and not just responding to them when they are "bad".

## 3. Sample Rules for the Classroom

- a. **Be a good listener.** Teachers may use a signal for "quiet" such as dimming the lights, clapping a rhythm or counting to three.
- b. **Keep your hands to yourself.** Teachers may instruct children not to hit, kick or poke others, and not to touch others property.
- c. **Stay in your seat.** This is a good rule for a teaching time unless group participation is part of the lesson.

## **C5. Positive Discipline**

### 1. Solving Behaviour Problems

All children have problems. Church workers can often gain the trust of children and be a helpful advisor. It is important for workers to be better listeners than lecturers. Children will often realize their own mistakes and come up with their own solutions if they have a chance to discuss their behaviour with a caring adult.

While children may be encouraged to ask/pray for forgiveness, church workers will not over spiritualize a discipline problem or make children feel they have failed God. Church workers will respect a child's need for privacy, but workers will never promise to keep a secret about illegal or dangerous situations. Serious problems will be reported to the CE Board so professional help can be obtained.

## 2. How to Discipline a Child

Minor problems that commonly occur in class can be dealt with in three steps (when children are old enough to understand):

**REMIND** the child of the rule being broken and attempt to stop the cause of a problem.

- Inform a child they are talking out of turn.
- Teach a child to share toys instead of fight.

**REMOVE** an appropriate privilege.

- Move a child who is talking during the Bible Lesson to a seat away from friends.
- During play time, have a child sit in a "time-out" seat for 3-5 minutes for hitting.

**REFER** the child to your supervisor for additional help.

- Supervisor may give further appropriate discipline.
- Supervisor may discuss a child's behaviour with parents.

A child who displays repeated discipline problems (such as biting or fighting) or a very serious problem (such as vandalism or bringing a weapon to church) can be suspended by the children's program director from all children's activities for a set period of time. Readmission to the church would require a conference with the parties involved, and may require the parents to attend their child's activities for a time.

## 3. How NOT to Discipline a Child

Discipline for poor behaviour does not include: abuse, depriving a child of sleep or food, placing a child alone without any supervision, or subjecting a child to ridicule, threat, corporal punishment (i.e. spanking, hitting or excessive physical exercise.) Staff members must submit a written report of any unusual or often repeated behaviour problems to the Ministry Leader.

### **D. Preventing Abuse**

#### **D1. Diaper Changing**

- a. Diaper changing will always take place in such a way that another nursery worker can easily see the child that is being changed, as well as the other children and workers in the room.
- b. Latex gloves are mandatory when changing diapers. Properly remove and dispose of the latex gloves.
- c. Children under the age of 14 who are assisting in the nursery will not change diapers.

## **D2. Washroom Procedures**

We strongly recommend that parents take their children to visit the washroom prior to each class or service. This recommendation could be communicated to parents at the beginning of each new school year, and throughout the year to newcomers.

### Preschool (3-5 years)

- a. For preschool children, we recommend that two workers escort a group of children to the washroom at a scheduled washroom break.
- b. If just one child has to use the washroom, the worker will escort the child to the washroom and prop the outside door open. The worker will then remain outside the washroom door and wait for the child before escorting him or her back to the classroom. The worker will call the child's name if they are taking longer than seems necessary.
- c. Never be alone with a child in an unsupervised washroom and never go into a washroom cubicle with a child and shut the door.
- d. If preschool children need assistance in the washroom, a worker may enter the washroom cubicle to assist, however the worker must leave the cubicle door open, and alert another worker.

### Grades 1-6 (6-12 years)

- a. The classroom workers will monitor the length of time an individual child is gone to the washroom and act appropriately.
- b. When a child needs to be escorted to the washroom by a worker the same procedure as outlined for preschoolers will be utilized.
- c. Never be alone with a child in an unsupervised washroom and never go into a washroom cubicle with a child and shut the door.

### **D3. Proper Display of Affection**

#### **1. Appropriate Touch**

Love and caring can be expressed in the following appropriate ways, only when agreed upon by the child or initiated by the child in a public area.

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

#### **2. Inappropriate Touch**

##### **You must avoid:**

- a. Kissing a child, coaxing a child to kiss you, extended hugging, and tickling.
- b. Touching a child in any area that would be covered by a bathing suit (except when assisting a child with toiletries as outlined previously).
- c. Forcing a child to be held on to, or to have them sit on your lap.
- d. Being alone with a child.



#### **D4. Transportation Guidelines**

You may be the only vehicle which will enable a child to come to a meeting. In order to keep this opportunity safe for both the driver and child we have established the following policies.

- a. Safe Driving - Children are precious cargo, so drivers will exercise great caution when transporting children to/from church events. Traffic laws must be followed and control of the passengers must be maintained. When several vehicles are transporting children, drivers will strive to remain within visual range of each other.
- b. Parents are responsible to make arrangements for their child's pick up and drop off from children's programs. When children are being transported by leaders, it should be arranged so that leaders/drivers are not alone in a vehicle with a young person. Parents should be notified if a situation comes up where a leader may be alone in a vehicle with a leader.
- c. Drivers are encouraged to carry adequate insurance coverage to carry children on the occasional basis, as prescribed by their own insurance company.

#### **D5. Special Events and Overnight Policies**

Teachers are encouraged to have special class activities in their homes, plan social activities and involve their pupils in field trips and service projects. The following precautions need to be taken with these activities.

##### **1. Field Trips and Special Events**

- a. Out of town events need to be pre-approved by the Director of Children's Ministry or Senior Pastor. Parents will be notified at least 1 week prior to the outing.
- b. Proper written consent and liability release forms are required for each child participating in field trips and special events.
  - i) A description of the activities that will take place during the special event will be made available to the parent, including: specific activity (i.e. video selection), projected time lines, food, transportation and supervision arrangements
- c. If possible, all trips and outings will be supervised by a minimum of two approved, unrelated adult leaders.

- d. When the transporting of children is involved in an activity, all drivers must have a valid driver's license and current automobile insurance. The number of persons per car will not exceed the number of seat belts.

## 2. Overnight Events

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

- a. All overnight activities must be pre-approved by Leadership.
- b. All overnight activities will have a minimum ratio of two leaders for every ten children. Each leader will have an assigned group of children for whom they will be responsible during the overnight event. If there are children or youth of both sexes, there must be chaperones of both genders present.
- c. All supervising adults must be approved workers.
- d. Perusal of the church insurance policy is needed to be sure that liability coverage includes the off-premise activity.

## **E. Helping the Abused**

U.S.A. Abuse Statistics - Over 1 million children are abused and neglected each year and 2,000-5,000 children die each year due to physical abuse (1 every 4 hours). One out of five children will be sexually abused by the age of 18. Eighty to ninety percent of sex offenders are known by the child victim. More than one-third of child sexual abuse involves children 5 years old and younger. (Summarized from Royal Rangers Leaders Manual, pages 234-250 - copyright 1993 from Northville Christian Assembly Children's Ministries Manual).

### **El. Definitions**

Abuse means physical, sexual or emotional maltreatment of a person. Some definitions of terms follow:

Physical abuse means any physical force or action which results in or may potentially result in a non-accidental injury to a child and which exceeds that which could be considered reasonable discipline.

Sexual abuse means any sexual exploitation of a child whether consensual or not. It includes touching of a sexual nature and sexual intercourse, and may include any behaviour of a sexual nature toward a child. In determining whether behaviour is of a sexual nature, one will ask whether a reasonable observer, looking at the behaviour in its context, would conclude that it is. This would exclude normal affectionate behaviour towards children and normal health or hygiene care.

Sexual activity between children may constitute sexual abuse if there is significant difference in age or power between the children. This would exclude developmentally appropriate sexual activity between children where there is no significant difference in age or power between the children.

Emotional abuse means acts or omissions of those responsible for the care of a child which are likely to produce long term and serious emotional disorders. This might include effects such as non-organic failure to thrive; developmental retardation; serious anxiety, depression or withdrawal; or serious behavioural disturbance.

Child abuse is defined as a non-accidental physical or mental injury or mistreatment caused by the acts or omissions of the child's parents or caretakers.

Along with the above aspects child abuse may also include neglect.

Neglect means the failure of those responsible for the care of the child to meet the physical, emotional or medical needs of a child to an extent that the child's health development or safety is endangered.

## **E2. Recognizing Abuse**

Recognizing abuse is essential to helping children who are being abused. This section briefly defines several different kinds of abuse, and gives some possible indicators that may signal abuse is occurring. Children may exhibit some apparent indications of abuse without actually being abuse victims, so children's workers will proceed with care when deciding whether or not to report abuse. We need to keep our eyes open to recognize actual cases of abuse, but we don't want to be so actively looking for possible signs of it that we find ourselves on a "witch hunt" for child abusers.

### **Emotional Abuse/Neglect**

Definition of Emotional Abuse - Chronic pattern of belittling, humiliating or ridiculing a child.

#### Emotional Abuse Indicators:

- Habit disorders (biting, rocking, thumb sucking by an older child).
- Poor peer relationships.
- Behavioural extremes (overly aggressive and compliant).
- Self-destructive behaviour.

Definition of Emotional Neglect - Consistent failure of parent or caretaker to provide a child with appropriate support, attention, and affection.

#### Emotional Neglect Indicators

- Height/weight significantly below age level.
- Inappropriate clothing for weather, poor hygiene.

### **Physical Abuse**

Definition of Physical Abuse - Any non-accidental injury to a child under the age of 18 by a parent or caretaker.

#### Physical Abuse Indicators

- Unexplained bruises and welts often found on the face, torso, buttocks, back or thighs.
- Many times the bruises will reflect the shape of an object used to cause injury.

- Broken bones, burns, etc.
- Behavioural indicators may include requests for punishment, afraid to go home, behavioural extremes (overly shy or aggressive), gives unbelievable explanations for injuries.

## **Sexual Abuse**

Definition of Sexual Abuse - Children need to be touched in good ways that show love, acceptance, and respect. Some examples of good touching are a handshake, a hug with one arm around their shoulders or a gentle pat on head. Some examples of questionable touching (especially for older children) are sitting on laps, back rubs, bear hugs, patting buttock and kissing. Touching offenses which are illegal and abusive include: fondling, oral, genital or anal stimulation, nonviolent intercourse, incest, rape, assault, and murder.

Cautions about Sexual Abuse - Avoid all forms of sexual conversation. Leaders will receive training in appropriate methods of addressing issues of sexual morality and sexual safety.

- Non-touching offenses which are illegal and abusive include: sexually stimulating conversation, obscene phone calls, indecent exposure, peeping in windows/doors, and causing or allowing a child to witness adult sexual relations.

## **Sexual Abuse Indicators**

- Strong reluctance (fear) to be with a certain person, chronic run-away.
- Bed wetting (when not before).
- Nail biting (when not before).
- Chronic physical ailments ("My stomach hurts," or "It hurts when I go to the bathroom").
- Abrupt mood changes (ie:used to be happy).
- Unusual fixation or interest with sexual acts or terms.
- Sleep patterns are broken or irregular (when not before).
- Taking frequent warm baths (of their own free will).
- "French kissing" (this is a "learned" activity, not normal or natural with children).
- Sudden total lack of self-esteem.

## **Substance Abuse**

Drug abuse affects all segments of society. Although a child may have made a decision never to use drugs, he is still vulnerable and the opportunities are always present. Children and teens may not feel comfortable talking with parents about drugs, but they may confide in a trusted church worker. Children need to learn

how to identify various drugs, understand the special effects of drugs and how to resist drug use.

### Drug Abuse Indicators

- Possession of drug-related paraphernalia or drugs.
- Odour of drugs Identification with drug culture: clothing, conversation, bedroom decorations.
- Signs of physical deterioration: memory lapses, short attention span, unhealthy appearance, indifference to hygiene and grooming.
- Chronic dishonesty, possession of large amounts of money.

### Major Kinds of Drugs Used

The most popular drugs used today include alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, cocaine and inhalants.

### Misconduct

Misconduct, as defined in this policy, is negative conduct towards children which would be judged inappropriate. It is less severe than abuse but has damaging effects on the physical, mental, social or emotional well-being of children. These effects may or may not be intended.

### Examples of Misconduct:

- Behaviour which would objectively be considered offensive or insulting, exceeding reasonable limits of discipline. This includes comments, conduct or displays which demean, belittle, or cause unfair disadvantage.
- Behaviour which may not necessarily be directed at anyone in particular but creates a hostile or offensive atmosphere.
- Making sexual gestures or inappropriate comments or jokes.
- Attempting to pursue, isolate or see children individually without valid reason.

### Inappropriate Behaviour Management

Inappropriate behaviour management refers to an approach to dealing with children or behaviour which is counterproductive to learning. It reflects poor judgement or limited behaviour management skills. It is not abuse or misconduct as defined by this policy. It must be treated by program leaders as a personnel issue and a written report filed.

### Examples of Inappropriate Behaviour Management

- Personal attacks on character rather than dealing with behaviour.
- Continuous use of sarcasm.
- Undue, non-constructive criticism in dealing with children.
- Habitual uncontrolled temper.

### Examples of Appropriate Behaviour Management

- Physical force or restraint not exceeding that required for the protection of an orderly learning environment, personal safety, the protection of others or the protection of property.
- Compliments which respect an individual's dignity.
- Patting the back, holding the hand, or hugging to comfort a child as appropriate to the situation and the physical or developmental age of the child.
- Assist with toiletries or personal care to the extent that a child is not able to perform these tasks without assistance, as outlined earlier.

### **E3. Counselling Children of Abuse**

Here are some recommendations for staff members if/when a child discloses that they are being abused, or if abuse is suspected based upon observation:

- Find a private place to talk with the child (not in seclusion but with another adult present if possible.)
- Avoid using leading questions such as "Tell me what happened. Did Joe touch you here?"
- Do not panic or express shock.
- Express belief in the child. Take them seriously. Trust your gut instincts.
- Reuse the child's own vocabulary and be sure you understand how they are defining their words.
- Reassure the child that it's okay to tell on someone who's hurting them, and "It's not the child's fault".
- Do not promise to keep illegal or dangerous information a secret.
- Let the child know what you might do to help them (i.e. talk to the pastor).
- If you're not sure the child is telling the truth give the child the benefit of the doubt.

To protect all involved parties, any disclosures are to be reported in absolute confidence to the correct authorities only.

## **E4. The Complaint Process**

### Definitions

**Complaint:** The following must be treated as a complaint:

Any information received by any means from any named or anonymous source, either in person or recorded, which suggests that a child is being, or has been, subjected to abusive behaviour or misconduct by an adult in the children's program. Complaints received anonymously must be acted upon the extent possible given the amount of information provided. This is consistent with the application of the Family Services Act.

**Complainant:** In this policy, complainant will refer to a child who alleges to be, or is alleged to have been, subjected to abusive behaviour or misconduct.

**Respondent:** Respondent will refer to the person or persons against whom allegations are made under this policy.

### Obligation to Report

Any person in the children's programs who witnesses or suspects abusive behaviour or misconduct as defined under this policy is obliged to report such conduct in accordance with this policy and the Child Victims of Abuse Protocols if applicable.

### Step 1 – The Complaint Process

Complaints may be made **in writing** by a child directly or by another person on a child's behalf to the Pastor and/or Chairperson of the Deacons Board. When a Pastor is named as the respondent, complaints should be directed to the Area Pastor. Complaints should be communicated to and investigated by at least 2 of the above.

### *Complaints Involving Abuse*

Any person in a children's program who witnesses or suspects abusive behaviour as defined under the policy must report it to the Pastor(s) and/or the Chairperson of the Board of Deacons as soon as possible. They, in turn will contact Child Protection Services and/or the police if it appears to be a criminal matter. Under section 30(1) of the Family Services Act, "any person who has information causing him/her to



suspect that a child has been abandoned, deserted, physically or emotionally neglected, physically or sexually ill-treated or otherwise abused shall inform Child Protection Services of the situation without delay.”

### *Complaints Involving Misconduct*

These complaints do not allege abuse as defined under the Family Services Act, the Criminal Code or this policy. They are, nevertheless, behaviours which are known, or ought reasonably to be known, to be unwelcome or uninvited and are damaging to children. Complaints in this category must also be reported to the Pastor and/or Chairperson of the Board of Deacons by any adult in the program who is aware of or suspects such conduct. All will be forwarded to the Pastor's office in writing.

### Step 2 – Complaint Summary

The Pastor and/or Chairperson of the Board of Deacons will complete a Complaint Summary and make reasonable efforts to have it signed by the complainant. If applicable, the Complaint Summary must indicate that a report was made to Child Protection Services and/or the police, by whom and when.

The Pastor and/or Chairperson of the Board of Deacons must determine the type and seriousness of the complaint and take appropriate action. This includes verifying that complaints under section 30 of the Family Services Act have been reported to Child Protection Services.

A copy of every Complaint Summary must be maintained in a confidential file by the Pastor and/or Chairperson of the Board of Deacons at the office. The summary must be preserved regardless of the outcome of any subsequent investigation. Access to these files should be limited to the Pastor and/or Chairperson of the Board of Deacons.

### Church Follow-Up and Discipline

While the church's relationship with the member accused or confirmed to have committed child abuse shall focus on repentance and restoration (Matthew 18:15-17), the safety of our children and the confidence of our families in the ministry leaders of our church is paramount.

In the event that a member of the church is being investigated for alleged child abuse within a ministry of the church or community, that person shall be relieved of his/her ministry position with children or youth

immediately and for the duration of the investigation. The suspected member shall not be permitted to associate with the alleged victim until such time as the case is resolved. In the event that a member of the church has been found to have committed child abuse, with the incident reported to the Child Protection Agency, investigated and any criminal proceedings engaged, the church will immediately dismiss the worker from their position. Termination, in the case of a paid staff member, will be considered appropriate in the circumstances.

In instances where evidence is inconclusive, the church should take action with the advice of legal counsel in consultation with law enforcement officials depending on the strength of the evidence available and after consideration of the victim and the victim's family's requests. This action may include a dismissal from any ministry with children/youth for a period of time (one year or longer, pending review), or continued participation with restriction (supervision, limited association, or other limits to involvement). The pastor, in consultation with legal counsel, will determine the amount of information he believes is appropriate to relate to the congregation.

#### **F. A Word of Encouragement**

After reading this manual, some might think twice about volunteering in our children's ministry. Our intention is not to offend or scare potential workers, but to create a set of high standards for quality child care. Guiding the spiritual lives of people is the greatest mission we could possibly undertake. The results of our work will last forever so it is imperative that we do our best.

Our main focus is ministry to children, but we are also very conscious about how we care for our workers. Jesus did not just use His partners in ministry to help Him do His work, He also used His work to train and develop His partners so their ministries would be effective and personally fulfilling. We have a great team of children's ministry workers and welcome the opportunity to work with many other people. We invite you to complete an application and consider joining our team!

## **Bibliography**

1. Suggested Policy for Associated Gospel Churches on Child Safety and Abuse Issues. August 1998
2. The Christian and Missionary Alliance in Canada. May 1996
3. Northville Christian Assembly Children's Ministries 1995
4. Nursery Smart Pages, Gospel Light 1997
5. Carruthers Creek Community Church 1999
6. Department of Education - Child Protection Policy 1997
7. Family Services Act

**Springhill Baptist Church**

# **Checklist for Completing the Child Protection Policy Application for Ministry Workers**

- Attend a training session on Policies and Procedures.
- Fill out the Ministry Worker Volunteer Reference Form.
- Confirm you are a member or adherent who has regularly attended an evangelical church for the last six months.
- Get a Criminal Record Check done at your local detachment and return it to the church office.
- Read through the complete Springhill Baptist Church Child and Worker Protection Policy.