

GRACE BIBLE CHAPEL

The Prevention and  
Reporting of Child  
Abuse Operational  
Procedure Manual

February, 2015

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## 1. Introduction

The Elders and indeed the entire assembly of Grace Bible Chapel have a legal and moral responsibility to provide a safe environment in order to prevent any exploitation of children and youth through the implementation of effective volunteer screening procedures, training and supervision procedures, reporting and response to allegations of suspected child abuse procedures and a clear nursery procedures protocol.

The doors of all basement rooms which are used for children's activities and Sunday School and the Nursery door have been modified so that there is a window in each. This action reflects the insistence that all dealings with children and youth be open and public. An ongoing maintenance program provided by the Deacons under the direction of the Elders ensures a consistently safe lighting level in all areas inside and outside the chapel used for child and youth programs.

The Elders will designate a volunteer Coordinator of Child Abuse Prevention and Reporting (Coordinator) on an annual basis. This designate will be responsible to the Elders for the continued implementation of the following procedures. The Coordinator is responsible for the control, collection and confidential filing of all forms prescribed by the procedures. All original documents filed are to be retained and filed indefinitely in a secure and fireproof/waterproof location on the premises of Grace Bible Chapel and at the discretion of the Coordinator backed up and stored in a digital form off premises. (Appendix 1 to 7)

The Child Abuse Prevention and Reporting Policy and Operational Procedure Manual implementation will be reviewed and revised as made necessary or by a biennial independent implementation audit completed by a designate of the Elders. The designated auditor can be a member of fellowship at Grace Bible Chapel, but should be independent of the child and youth programs for the years (September to August) being audited. The auditor will present a written report to the Elders in person at a duly scheduled meeting of the Elders in the month of November every second year.

## 2. Behavioral Guidelines

2.1 Touch is essential in nurturing lives. Workers need to be aware of and sensitive to differences in sexual development, culture, backgrounds, personalities and special needs.

2.2 Any touch of a sexual nature is totally inappropriate and will not be tolerated.

2.3 Physical contact with children should be age and developmentally appropriate.

2.4 Appropriate touching should only be done in the presence of other adults in an open area.

2.5 Examples of love and caring being expressed in an appropriate way are as follows:

Taking a child's hand and leading him or her to an activity.

Putting an arm around a child who needs comforting or quieting

Patting a child on the shoulder or back to affirm a job well done

Bending down to a child's eye level and speaking or carefully listening

Holding a child by the shoulders or hand to keep his or her attention while you redirect the child's behavior

Using appropriate force to break up a fight or restrain a child who may be engaged in an activity that endangers himself or herself or others

2.6 Examples of inappropriate touching, which are to be avoided, are as follows:

Kissing a child

Coaxing a child to kiss you

Hugging a child for an extended period of time

Tickling a child

Touching a child in any area that would be covered by a bathing suit

2.7 Conversations between children and adults should occur in an open and public setting.

2.8 Yelling, name calling and the belittling of children are behaviors that are never acceptable.

2.9 All forms of corporal punishment are strictly prohibited.

2.10 Children or youth are never to be dealt with alone behind closed doors. A child requiring personal attention or correction is to be taken aside in an open and public setting in the view of others present. A team approach should be taken in all youth ministry work.

2.11 When volunteers are transporting children or youth who are not their own children in a motor vehicle there must be two trained, screened and unrelated adults present at all times. Parents or guardians are responsible for driving or arranging for a ride for their child to and from the chapel or any other locations announced as the start or end of the program.

2.12 Written parental permission must be received before any child is transported to and from chapel activities which begin from the chapel or any other agreed upon location in addition to any over night or special event. (Appendix 1 or Appendix 8)

2.13 Child and Youth Attendance Forms must be kept for every meeting of any children's or youth programs. This will include Sunday School, the Nursery and Kids Club. (Appendix 2) .

2.14 All children under the age of six (6) must be signed in and out of all activities by the parent or guardian. The sign in and sign out signature forms will be submitted to and filed by the Coordinator. (Appendix 3)

2.15 "Out of program" or "off premises" contact between volunteers and children and youth is discouraged.

2.16 All activities that could lead easily to allegations of abuse are discouraged. These activities include, but are not limited to, individual photography of children, unsupervised internet access, transporting children or youth alone or improperly supervised sleepovers.

2.17 Age appropriate and adequate trained and screened adult supervision must be present for all outside and in public activities such as, but not limited to, visiting parks, playgrounds, libraries and amusement parks. Very special care as regards Article 2.20 as follows will be taken during the use of public washrooms or change rooms .

2.18 During children's or youth programs, unused rooms and closets should be kept locked.

2.19 Volunteers under the age of 18 may assist only trained and screened adult supervision.

2.20 Pre-Grade One aged children should only be taken to the washroom or infants have their diapers changed by a parent or guardian. If this is not possible, then the screened worker should do so in the presence of at least one other unrelated screened worker.

School aged children requiring assistance should be accompanied to the door of the washroom, which the worker should open to make sure no one is hanging around in the washroom and then wait outside the door in the hallway in case they are called for help or hear anything suspicious.

Helpers under the age of 16 should ***not*** be authorized to take children to the washroom unaccompanied by a screened adult worker.

Older children may go on washroom breaks using the buddy system unaccompanied by a supervisor if the washrooms are visible from the activity area in use, otherwise a screened and trained adult should monitor the visit from a discreet distance. In the case of a public washroom a trained and screened worker will accompany any children or youth and remain as near as common sense and safety demand.

2.21 All health, safety and sanitation issues are to be reported to the Coordinator in order for appropriate measures to be taken to address the problem.

2.22 Texting between adult volunteers or underage helpers and children or youth under the age of 18 is to be used with great care. Texting for informational purposes such as meeting announcements is appropriate.

2.23 “Friending” or “following” or similar social media actions between children and youth and adult volunteers are just two examples of internet social media that should be used with great care. Allowing access to children and youth for informational purposes such as meeting announcements is appropriate. All other access through social media should reflect the spiritual ideals of communication at Grace Bible Chapel. Such communication will be devoid of gossip, defamation,

harassment, personal information or talk about any of the children or youth in programs sponsored by Grace Bible Chapel. Adult “friending” or “following” of children and youth is discouraged.

### 3. Screening Procedures

3.1 All positions of trust and responsibility in the chapel shall be assessed on an annual basis according to the following hierarchy of risk.

High Risk positions include those who have direct responsibility for programs or who could potentially find themselves alone with children. This would include those in charge of children's or youth programs including the Coordinator and Assistant Coordinator of Child Abuse Prevention and Reporting, Sunday School leaders/teachers, nursery volunteers and elders.

Medium Risk positions include those who would normally never potentially be alone with children, but have some direct contact by virtue of some level of responsibility. This would include those young people who help with children's or youth programs, work outside the Sunday School classrooms or volunteer to help trained volunteers in the nursery.

Low Risk positions include those in attendance who by virtue of familiarity or some level of responsibility could potentially build and subsequently abuse trust. This would include any who hold positions of responsibility outside the children's or youth programs and indeed extends to all who are in attendance.

3.1.1 An Assistant Coordinator may be appointed by the Elders to specifically monitor and collect information as it applies to the screening procedures that follow. The Assistant Coordinator will report directly to the Coordinator of Prevention and Reporting of Child Abuse and may be delegated other duties as mutually agreed.

3.2 High Risk and Medium Risk screening procedures will include:

Prospective volunteers must submit a Volunteer Application Form (Appendix 4)

Prospective volunteers must provide a criminal background check as completed by The Timmins Police Service or other (acceptable to the Elders) law enforcement agency.(Appendix 4). The screening will consist of a CPIC (Name based criminal record check done through the Canadian Police Information Centre known locally as a PCRC Police Criminal Record Check) AND a VSV (Vulnerable Sector Verification including query of Local Police Indices and National Pardoned Sex Offenders database known locally as a PVSC Police Vulnerable Sector Check).

Existing volunteers must provide a criminal background re-check every five years consisting of a PCRC Police Criminal Record Check and a PVSC Police Vulnerable Sector Check OR a F.I.P. Firearms Interest Police query known locally as a PIC Police Information Check.

Initial criminal record checks for applicants under the age of twenty-five (25) years may be done by means of a PCRC and a PIC in lieu of a PCRC and a PVSC.

Helpers under the age of sixteen (16) are not required to obtain a criminal record check provided that two references are included in their application package if they have less than five years of active involvement in programs at Grace Bible Chapel.

### **Summary:**

New applicants require a Police Criminal Record Check and a Police Vulnerable Sector Check.

Existing volunteers require a Police Criminal Record Check and a Police Vulnerable Sector Check OR a Police Information Check as requested by the Assistant Coordinator or the Coordinator.

Applicants or existing volunteers under the age of twenty-five (25) require a Police Criminal Record Check and a Police Information Check.

Applicants or existing volunteers under 16 years of age require no criminal record check.

Expenses incurred by volunteers providing the proper criminal record checks will be reimbursed by Grace Bible Chapel upon the submission to the Coordinator of an official receipt(s).

Criminal record checks that result in the disclosure of a criminal charge or conviction will be referred to the Elders for consideration. A decision by the Elders to refuse to approve a volunteer will be final.



Incumbent volunteers must sign and submit an Annual Offense Declaration Form on an annual basis including every fifth year of service when a criminal record re-check is necessary. (Appendix 5)

All volunteers must signify in writing that they have received, read and understand "The Prevention and Reporting of Child Abuse Manual" (Appendix 4)

Before their duties commence, all volunteers must be approved in writing by the Elders (Appendix 4)

All volunteers must signify in writing that they have completed a Child Abuse Prevention and Reporting Training Module provided by the chapel. (Appendix 4)

After a maximum six month waiting period, the actual length of which is at the discretion of the elders, those applicants with less than one year of active involvement in the meetings and programs at Grace Bible Chapel must fill in a Volunteer Application Form, consent to two references from their former local church (if applicable), provide a Police Criminal Record Check and a Police Vulnerable Sector Check from the Timmins Police Service and submit to an interview by a committee of at least two elders or their designates. (Appendix 4)

Trained and screened volunteers placed on the Retired Volunteers List for reasons of absence or incomplete documentation on file may resume voluntary duties by updating their Annual Retraining Quiz, Annual Declaration of Criminal Record and Police Criminal Record Check and a Police Vulnerable Sector Check as deemed necessary by the Coordinator.

3.3 Low Risk screening procedures will include:

All those in attendance at Grace Bible Chapel will be directed from time to time to a copy of The Prevention and Reporting of Child Abuse Policy as posted on the chapel website. The Prevention and Reporting of Child Abuse Procedure Manual will also be made available on the Grace Bible Chapel website.

#### 4. Training/Supervision Procedures

4.1 The Coordinator or designate will develop and implement a Child Abuse Prevention and Reporting Training and Evaluation Module on the chapel website which will consist of orientation to all of the policy and procedures and an evaluation of information learned.

4.2 The Child Abuse Prevention and Reporting Training and Evaluation Module will be offered to all volunteers who are designated as high or medium risk as per Section 3.

4.3 No prospective volunteer may begin their voluntary duties until such time as they have completed the Child Abuse Prevention and Reporting Training and Evaluation Module.

4.4 Annually, a Refresher Child Abuse Prevention and Reporting Training and Evaluation Module will be made available on the chapel website to all incumbent volunteers for the purpose of retraining, the completion of which will be monitored and recorded by the Coordinator.

4.5 All volunteers must make special effort to supervise washroom breaks either by groups or individual children or youth on an age appropriate basis.

4.6 Program leaders are responsible to monitor the activities under their leadership by circulating and supervising from time to time in order to ensure that all child abuse prevention procedures are followed and to protect against false allegations. Appropriate behavior of volunteers is to be encouraged at all times through reminders and constructive criticism when necessary.

4.7 Critical incident report forms are to be filled out in the case of accidental injury or indeed any situation that signals a departure from normal procedures or behavior. (Appendix 7).

4.8 The Coordinator will be responsible to the Elders for the ongoing supervision of and record keeping for the implementation of the Child Abuse Prevention and Reporting Policy and Procedures. The Assistant Coordinator works under the supervision of the Coordinator in order to specifically handle screening procedures and recording and any other duties as requested by the Coordinator.

Reporting and Responding to Allegations of Suspected Child Abuse or Critical Incidents Procedures

5.1 Any person who believes on reasonable grounds that a child is or may be in need of protection has the duty to forthwith report the belief and information upon which it is based to the North Eastern Ontario Family and Children's Services. Certain designated professional persons have the same duty as any member of the public to report a child's need for protection; however, legislation gives these people a particular reporting responsibility. This professional duty applies, amongst others, to elders in an assembly.

5.2 While it is important to respond quickly in any case of suspected child abuse, one must remember that allegations of this nature are explosive. Gossip is morally wrong and slander is legally actionable.

5.3 Discovering or suspecting that a child is a victim of child abuse is an unpleasant experience. Children are often cautious when disclosing abuse and will generally give a few hints rather than the full story. If alleged abuse is disclosed by a child to a volunteer, it is very important that the volunteer receiving the disclosure not carry out an investigation as this may jeopardize the investigation of the proper authorities and indeed the case in a court of law. Whether the alleged incident occurred at the Chapel, home, school or any other location, the volunteer must pay very close attention to what he or she is being told.

5.4 It is important that the volunteer believe the disclosure by a child or youth. Victims often believe that they are responsible for the abuse and may be hesitant to talk about it.

5.5 If possible the volunteer should take the child or youth to an open but quiet place and be attentive to the words and the emotions of the child. The volunteer must give full attention to the child or youth while setting aside his or her own feelings of anger, frustration or pain. The child must be allowed to tell what happened in his or her own words. The child is not to be pressed for detail or interviewed.

5.6 The volunteer should be supportive and affirming. The child or youth should be informed that the disclosure must, by law, be reported to the proper authorities, that what happened is not their fault and that they are doing the right thing by reporting the alleged incident. The volunteer must not offer opinions as to what will happen to the alleged abuser or to the child.

5.7 The volunteer should record in writing, as soon as possible, the substance of what the child has disclosed. He or she should attempt to recall and record the child's own words while avoiding the interpretation of what the child has disclosed.

All information should be recorded no matter how insignificant it may seem to the volunteer.

5.8 The alleged incident is to be reported by the volunteer receiving the disclosure to the North Eastern Ontario Family and Children's Services. An elder or elders are to be informed as soon as possible thereafter. The alleged abuser, even if they are the parent or guardian or an elder, are not to be informed. With the exception of an elder, provided the elder is not the alleged abuser, the disclosure should not be discussed with anyone else.

5.9 If the allegation of abuse is made against a volunteer at Grace Bible Chapel, that person will be suspended from further contact with children or youth until such time as the investigation by the North Eastern Ontario Family and Children's Services and/or the police is complete.

5.10 A Reporting of Suspected or Alleged Child Abuse Report Form should be completed as soon as possible by the volunteer receiving the disclosure and given to the Coordinator for written disclosure to the North Eastern Ontario Family and Children's Services and confidential filing. (Appendix 6)

5.11 One elder will be designated by his peers to be the sole spokesman should response to the media or other agencies become necessary. This spokesman should only proceed to fulfill this responsibility after obtaining formal legal counsel.

5.12 The Elders will express the concern felt by all involved to the complainant and their commitment in assisting in the investigation and in addition the Elders will offer appropriate counseling resources as necessary to the complainant.

5.13 The Elders will express the concern felt by all to the alleged abuser and their commitment in assisting the investigation while keeping in mind the fact that no one is guilty until an allegation is proven.

5.14 The Elders will inform the appropriate insurance company, broker or agent to report the incident as soon as possible.

5.15 Any accident resulting in injury or any incident of noteworthy behavior or outcomes is to be duly recorded on a Critical Incident Report form and given to the Coordinator for possible action and confidential filing. This form is ***not*** for use for reporting suspected or alleged child abuse. (Appendix 7)

## 6.Nursery Protocol Procedures

6.1 It is recognized that for reasons of safety, cleanliness, the exercise of due diligence and smooth operation of the Nursery Program, that the following procedures be well known to volunteers and parents.

6.2 The washroom in the nursery is to be used only by those in the nursery. It is not a washroom for general traffic because of the need to maintain the appropriate level of cleanliness and availability for the children in the nursery.

6.3 As there is no practical means of disposal, changed and discarded diapers are to be returned home by the parents in a plastic bag.

6.4 All drinking or food containers and diaper bags must be labelled with the child's name. Labels are available in the nursery.

6.5 Parents wishing to check on their child should look through the window on the door of the nursery rather than opening the door and causing some children to react because they think their mother has returned to retrieve them. If items are needed from the nursery, parents are asked to ensure that they do not have to return to get them by opening the door.

6.6 Women will staff the nursery with the only exception being, if made necessary by special circumstances, a father accompanied by his wife.

6.7 The nursery is intended for the use of children under two years of age.

6.8 Only designated and approved volunteers should be in the nursery.

6.9 Children are not to be left unattended for any reason.

6.10 Volunteers will make use of the Under Six Years of Age Sign In and Sign Out Form / Nursery Single Use Attendance Form to ensure that children are placed in the care of their parent or guardian at the end of the meeting as well as recording attendance for the session.(Appendix 3)

## 7.0 Prologue to Appendices

The following appendices are the working forms that must be carefully and legibly completed. All are documentation that must be preserved on file for many years. Care and attention are to be shown to each of the eight forms.

Of special concern are the attendance forms Appendix 2 and Appendix 3.

### 7.1 Appendix 2: Child and Youth Attendance Form

Appendix 2 is to be used to record the attendance of children six years of age and older. It must be used and filed with the Coordinator on a monthly basis.

Attendance forms must be filed for each month and forms spanning more than one month are not permitted. As an example, one form for January and February makes it difficult to properly file the original.

The correct month and year as well as the subsequent specific dates are to be entered on the form.

The Grace Bible Chapel Program is to be placed on the space provided. Please note that the program Open Sunday School should be written on this line rather than across the top of the form. Current programs are Sunday School, Open Sunday School, the 6,7 and 8 Club, Kids Klub, Youth Group, Teens and Tweens, September Classic, Tuesday Ladies Bible Study and Nursery.

The full names (first and last) of the children should be printed legibly in the left hand column.

The full name(s) of the volunteer (s) must be printed in the proper spaces at the bottom of the form. There is space there for six volunteer names.

Any Appendix 2: Child and Youth Attendance Form that has been modified by a volunteer for any reason must be approved by the Coordinator before it is used. All of the fields must be present. The use of the Appendix 2 attendance form as approved by the elders is recommended.

All attendance forms are to be placed in the mail slot of the Coordinator by the 10th of the month following the recorded information. As an example, January attendance forms should be placed in the Coordinator's slot by February 10th.

Attendance forms should not be collected over a period of time which increases the chance of losing forms.

## 7.2 Appendix 3: Under 6 Years of Age Sign In and Sign Out Form / Nursery Attendance Form

Appendix 3 is to be used to record the attendance of children under six years of age. It must be used and filed with the Coordinator on a weekly basis. It also provides a method to have parents sign their children in and then out when they come back to pick up their child.

Attendance forms as well as sign in and sign out component must be filed for each occurrence and forms spanning more than one day are not permitted.

The correct day, month and year are to be entered on the form.

The Grace Bible Chapel Program is to be placed on the space provided. Please note that the program Open Sunday School should be written on this line rather than across the top of the form. Current programs are Sunday School, Open Sunday School, the 6,7 and 8 Club, Kids Klub, Youth Group, Teens and Tweens and Nursery.

The full names (first and last) of the children should be printed legibly in the left hand column.

Volunteers are asked to supervise the sign in and sign out process to ensure that the full name of the parent or guardian is legibly printed and followed by their signature.

The full name(s) of the volunteer (s) must be printed in the proper spaces at the bottom of the form. There is space there for six volunteer names.

Any Appendix 3 : Under 6 Years of Age Sign In and Sign Out Form / Nursery Single Use Attendance Form that has been modified by a volunteer for any reason must be approved by the Coordinator before it is used. All of the fields must be present. The use of the Appendix 3 attendance and sign in and sign out form as approved by the elders is recommended.

All attendance forms are to be placed in the mail slot of the Coordinator by the 10th of the month following the recorded information. As an example, January attendance forms should be placed in the Coordinator's slot by February 10th.

Attendance forms should not be collected over a period of time which increases the chance of losing forms as well as delaying the filing process.