
Protection Plan Policy



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1.0 Introduction

The Church has a spiritual, moral and legal obligation to provide a secure environment for children participating in church programs that are under the auspices and authority of the church. Child abuse is a criminal act as well as a violation of human conscience and dignity. It is a violation of God's moral law within the trusted context of relationship. It is criminal behaviour that causes emotional, physical and spiritual trauma to victims, and has destructive consequences for abusers. The devastating effects on the credibility of the church ministry and the name of Christ make it essential that the church take all appropriate steps to prevent abusive incidents from occurring.¹ The Church must provide an environment in which there is "zero tolerance" for abuse, harassment or neglect, alongside a commitment to protect our children's and youth ministry workers, employees and volunteers from false or wrongful allegations.

In order to meet this obligation, Westheights Community Brethren in Christ Church (Westheights) has adopted these policies and supporting procedures. These are based on two reference documents provided by the Canadian Conference of the Brethren in Christ Church: the "Children and Youth Ministry Guidelines" and the "Children and Youth Ministry Resources Guide"².

These policies shall apply to all workers³ entrusted with providing care to children and/or youth under eighteen years of age in conjunction with the children's/youth programs or events⁴ of Westheights. These policies shall apply to both new applicants and those currently working with children/youth. (There are currently no Westheights programs or events during which we provide care for vulnerable adults.) Training on the policies will be provided to workers during the screening process. In addition, the Children's Director and Youth Director will collaborate with the Protection Plan Coordinator⁵ to provide ongoing refreshers to all workers at least annually.

¹ Based on material originally produced by the Christian and Missionary Alliance in Canada and Evangel Tabernacle, Kelowna, BC

² As approved by the Canadian Conference of the Brethren in Christ Church at AGM, 2003.

³ The term "workers" refers to volunteers, paid childcare providers, and paid staff, age 16 and older, who work with and/or care for children and youth within the context of Westheights' programs or events. (See footnote 4.) All subsequent references to the term "worker(s)" may be understood to pertain to this group.

⁴ "Programs" or "events" refers to the gatherings or meetings implemented at Westheights--either as part of ongoing programs, or as a one-time event or "series" of events--and which involve either express ministry to children or youth, or Westheights-sponsored childcare. "Programs or events" does not refer to gatherings not officially sponsored by Westheights, personal hospitality, or events for which adults choose to arrange shared babysitting for their own convenience. These criteria may be applied to all subsequent references to "programs or events."

⁵ See Section 2.1 Roles and Responsibilities, Protection Plan Ministry Leaders and Protection Plan Coordinator.



2.0 Children and Youth Ministry Policies

2.1 Roles and Responsibilities

In order to properly administer these policies, the Church Board needs to ensure that a "Protection Plan Coordinator" is appointed. In addition, this policy sets out additional responsibilities for individuals within the church.

Protection Plan Coordinator: The Church Board must appoint a single individual in the church to act as the Protection Plan Coordinator. This person can be a staff person or a layperson, but he or she must be trustworthy since he or she handles all the Police Record Checks as well as the administration of the policy. A complete job description is found in the Ministry Job Descriptions section of the Governance Policies and Procedures. For the remainder of this document, this person will be called "the Coordinator."

Protection Plan Ministry Leaders: The Children's Director and the Youth Director have special responsibilities. For the purposes of these policies, the Children's Director is the individual responsible for the children's ministries of the church, whether staff or layperson; similarly, the Youth Director is the individual responsible for the youth ministries of the church, whether staff or lay person. For the remainder of this document, these people will be called "Ministry Leaders." If desired, the Coordinator may be one of the Ministry Leaders.

2.2 Delegation Policy

In some cases, it may not be possible for the Coordinator or a Ministry Leader to fulfill his or her responsibilities due to absence, incapacity or conflict of interest. In these cases, the Senior Pastor, the chair of the Church Board and the chair of the Deacons Board are approved to act as delegates to fulfill these responsibilities.

A conflict of interest occurs when an individual has personal obligations or interests that would make it difficult for him or her to carry out his or her responsibilities fairly. This is certainly the case when those responsibilities involve the evaluation or investigation of an immediate family member, but may arise in other situations as well.

Wherever there is a reference to duties or responsibilities of the Coordinator or the Ministry Leaders in these policies, procedures and associated forms, it should be assumed that those duties or responsibilities may be fulfilled by an approved delegate.



2.3 Screening and Selection Policy

Any potential worker 16 years of age or older must be screened before he or she begins working with children or youth at Westheights. Workers younger than 16 who are already serving must undergo the screening process as soon as possible once they turn 16.

An inactive worker who wishes to begin working with children or youth again at Westheights should be rescreened if, since the last time that he or she was screened, he or she has not been in regular attendance at Westheights for a period of two years or longer.

The following staff and volunteers must be subject to mandatory screening: all volunteers and paid caregivers working with children and youth; all staff including paid and unpaid ministers and lay pastors; all board members, elders, deacons, trustees, directors and officers; designated monitors, those greeters and care staff who work in support of children's and youth ministry.

To protect the church from legal liability and for the protection of all workers, workers who were serving before the adoption of the Screening and Selection Policy are not exempt. The screening and selection process must include a formal application, a police reference check and training on these policies and procedures. Interviews and reference checks are also part of the process, although under certain conditions an interview or reference check may be waived. The screening and selection process is described fully in the Procedure for Screening Workers.

2.4 Responsibilities and Supervision of Workers Policy

All Children's and Youth Ministry programs or events will adhere to the following requirements:

- During children's and youth ministry programs or events, all room doors will contain windows, or the door without windows will be left open to ensure visibility. Rooms and closets identified as "not in use" for events or programs should remain locked.
- Adequate lighting should be maintained, both inside and outside the building(s), for programs or events held on our premises.
- Physical contact with children must be age and developmentally appropriate. (Examples of appropriate and inappropriate contact are listed in Appendix I.) Corporal punishment (e.g. slapping, hitting, pushing) is strictly prohibited.
- Ideally, during programs or events on premises, a minimum of two workers (with one at least 18 years of age) should be present with children/youth.
- Because they could lead to allegations of abuse or harassment, activities



such as unsupervised Internet access by children or youth, and individual photography of children or youth by supervising workers should be avoided.

- When off premises, all participating adult and youth supervisors must be fully screened and a minimum two unrelated-adults rule maintained.
- Signed parental permission and informed consent must be obtained for each participant prior to participation in any higher risk (i.e., overnight, involving out-of-town travel, high-risk recreational, etc.) off-premises program or event.
- When transportation is arranged as part of the program or event, all drivers must have valid G licenses (full G licenses, not G1 or G2) and insurance. The number of passengers in any vehicle must not exceed the number of seatbelts.⁶
- Parents are encouraged to drive or arrange transportation for their own children to and from home or other event locations. In the case where that is not possible, there must be a minimum of two unrelated, screened adult supervisors in a vehicle with minors at all times, or one screened adult plus at least 2 other minors in the vehicle at all times.
- A minimum 25 years of age is recommended for drivers, however exceptions can be considered for mature young adults, including paid staff, Ministry Leaders or other screened adults considered by the supervising Ministry Leader to be trustworthy. Such considerations should be made by Ministry Leaders and not other workers, and must be cleared in advance by the Coordinator or the Senior Pastor.
- Any activity or retreat involving an overnight period should be cleared in advance with a paid staff member, or with the appropriate Church Board member or Ministry Leader. Parental consent forms must be received and kept on file.
- During any overnight activity or retreat involving both sexes there should be both male and female workers present, as well as separate designated sleeping areas for each sex. The minimum two-unrelated-screened-adults rule applies to sleeping areas. Within designated sleeping areas, doors between rooms should remain open if at all possible.

All Children's Ministry programs or events will also adhere to the following requirements:

- When it is not possible to have two workers present, the room(s) in which

⁶ This requirement does apply to workers arranging rides home from events (either by placing youth with parents or other youth, or by providing transportation themselves.) This requirement does not imply that the workers must regulate the private arrangements that parents and youth have made for transportation. E.g. a boyfriend and girlfriend may come and go together, on the assumption that they have parental permission; one sibling with a G-2 license could drive an older sibling home, on the assumption that they have parental permission.



the program or event takes place must have a window in the door, or the door must be open at all times. This will allow ministry supervisors or designated monitors to look in occasionally without interrupting.

- To prevent the abuse of children by other children, supervision should be maintained before and after programs or events until children are in the custody of their parent, legal guardian, or caregiver.
- If there are people present at a program or event (e.g., youth, siblings, parents, support workers) who are not approved workers, then the approved workers must take appropriate precautions to prevent inappropriate contact between these people and the children—e.g., ensure screened workers are present at all times, maintain visibility, stay in public areas, no closed doors, etc.
- Infant and Toddler Care must include an identification procedure which clearly identifies child and parent. Children should be released to a properly identified and pre-authorized person only.
- Workers providing Infant and Toddler Care should be trained in hygiene and safety procedures such as safe and sanitary diaper changing, handwashing, and the safety/sanitization of surfaces, toys and linen. Training should include protocol for illnesses, infections and emergencies.
- Parents/guardians/caregivers are encouraged to change their own infant/toddler's diapers and/or to take their own pre-Grade 1 age-children to the washroom, but may give supervising workers express permission to do so in their absence. Both diaper-changing and accompanying pre-Grade 1-age children to the washroom should be done by screened workers in the presence of at least one other unrelated screened worker. Washroom doors should be propped open at all times, and a worker who is called to help a child inside the stall must keep the stall doors propped open as well.
- Grade 1 to Grade 5 school-age children should be accompanied to the door of the washroom by a screened worker. After the worker has checked to ensure that no one is loitering in the washroom, he or she should wait outside the washroom door in the hallway.
- Assistants under the age of 16 should not be authorized to take children to the washroom unaccompanied by a screened adult worker.
- If a screened worker is unavailable to accompany them, elementary-aged children (SK-Grade 5) may go for washroom breaks using the buddy system.
- Hallways and washrooms should be checked regularly (every 15 to 20 minutes) by a screened hall monitor who is trained regarding prevention measures such as what to look for in terms of suspicious activity.

All Youth Ministry programs or events will also adhere to the following requirements:

- If only one worker is present, he or she should ask one or more parents to



stay until a second worker arrives.

- To prevent the abuse of youth by other youth or adults, supervision should be maintained before and after events, once youth begin to arrive, until all youth have left.
- If there are people present at a program or event (e.g. former youth, parents) who are older than 18 and are not approved workers, then the approved workers must take appropriate precautions to prevent inappropriate contact between these people and the youth. These are the same precautions taken to safeguard youth from other youth (e.g., maintain visibility, stay in public areas, no closed doors, etc.).
- If youth leaders from another church are providing care to Westheights' youth in a cooperative event, the other church must have adopted a screening policy that includes a police record check and the other church's youth leaders must have been successfully screened according to that policy.
- Ministry Leaders must regularly assess sponsored one-on-one activities by:
 - a) requiring ongoing written parental consent before any mentoring relationships can occur and/or continue,
 - b) maintaining checks and balances such as spot checks and regular follow-up interviews with each parent, child and mentor, and
 - c) requiring detailed notes for each meeting
- Twice a year (at an agreed upon and consistent interval, such as after each school semester) Ministry Leaders must submit to the Coordinator a checklist reviewing their assessment of current mentoring relationships.

Under exceptional circumstances, when a program or event cannot meet these guidelines, special permission may be sought from the Church Board to deviate from the guidelines upon presentation of an alternate guideline.

If anyone observes a person violating any of the above supervision requirements and/or demonstrating inappropriate behaviour, he or she should confront and discuss the behaviour immediately with the person in question, making sure to also alert the respective Ministry Leader, or an appropriate paid staff ministry leader. If necessary, the appropriate leader should ensure action is taken in accordance with the Conflict Resolution and Discipline Manual of the Canadian Conference of the Brethren in Christ Church.

2.5 Reporting Policy

All allegations or complaints of abusive or unhealthy behaviour must be responded to in an appropriate manner, including the appointment of a person or team to deal with allegations in the following manner:

- Completing the Report Form for Suspected Child Abuse (CA-1) and Follow-up



Form for Suspected Child Abuse (CA-2).

- Satisfying statutory reporting obligations by reporting all cases of suspected abuse to police authorities and/or child protective agencies.
- Without admitting liability, expressing concern to the complainant and assuring the complainant of a commitment to assist in the investigation.
- Assuring confidentiality for the benefit of both the alleged victim and the alleged perpetrator.
- Suspending the alleged perpetrator from children/youth ministry duties, without presuming guilt, pending the outcome of the investigation.
- Refraining from admitting liability or from making public statements (to the media or from the pulpit) without consulting legal counsel.
- Contacting the insurance agent or broker to report the incident in order to satisfy the statutory conditions of the liability policy, and to avoid jeopardizing legal defense and any available coverage response.

Any person, paid or volunteer, who has reasonable grounds to believe that a child is in need of protection is legally required to report the matter to a social worker at the local office of the Ministry for Children and Families. A person who knowingly fails to report in these circumstances is in violation of the law and may be found to have committed an offense. Those who work with children and youth should receive the information and training needed to report suspected incidents of abuse.

2.6 Privacy Policy for Requested Information

Police Records Check

The Police Record Check gathered as Westheights enforces the Policies and Procedures for Children and Youth Ministries is used for the sole purpose of determining the fitness of the applicant to work in children's and youth ministries at Westheights. During the screening process, the Coordinator will review the Police Record Check. At the sole discretion of the Coordinator, it may also be reviewed by the Senior Pastor and/or Ministry Leaders. After the screening process is complete, the Police Record Check will be kept on file in a secure location accessible only to the Coordinator.

The Police Record Check may be disclosed in order to investigate, or cooperate with an investigation of, suspected or alleged inappropriate, unhealthy, abusive or unlawful activities, or to participate in, settle, defend, contest or conform to a legal order or proceeding, or as otherwise approved by the Church Board.

Because of the potentially sensitive nature of a Police Records Check, it should be restated that in the case of absence, incapacity or conflict of interest, the above responsibilities and rights of the Coordinator may be assigned to an approved



delegate as described in the Delegation Policy (Section 2.2).

Other Information

Except for the Police Record Check, the other information gathered as Westheights enforces the Policies and Procedures for Children and Youth Ministries is used for the sole purpose of determining the fitness of the applicant to work in children's and youth ministries at Westheights, and for maintaining a non-confidential list of the approved workers. During the screening process, the Coordinator and the Ministry Leaders will review this information. After the screening process is complete, this information will be kept on file in a secure location accessible only to the Coordinator.

This information may be disclosed in order to investigate, or cooperate with an investigation of, suspected or alleged inappropriate, unhealthy, abusive or unlawful activities, or to participate in, settle, defend, contest or conform to a legal order or proceeding, or as otherwise approved by the Church Board.

General

This privacy policy may be revised from time and time by the Church Board. Acceptance of this privacy policy shall also be deemed to be acceptance of any such subsequent Church Board approved revisions to it.

3.0 Procedure for Screening Workers

This procedure describes how Westheights will screen workers for children's and youth ministry. It is important to note that there is one screening process for all ministries. An approved worker is able to work with both children and youth.

3.1 Components of the Screening Process

Ministry Application Form

The Ministry Application Form (Form SC1) is critical in protecting the church from legal action if a case of alleged child abuse occurs in which a church worker is involved. To protect our children and to be protected from corporate liability, the church must take reasonable action in screening and supervising those working with children or youth within the context of Westheights programs or events. (A court can find the church legally liable if it is less than systematic and therefore negligent in screening workers). By having everyone fill out these forms and keeping them on file, the church greatly reduces the potential for child abuse and the resultant liability.

Reference Check

Three personal references are requested on the Ministry Application Form.



Examples of preferred references include the following:

- Former pastor
- Parents (for minors) - qualifies as one reference
- School Teacher (for minors)
- Other volunteer member (who has sufficient strength of relationship to comment on the individual's personal habits and character)
- Employer

In preparation for the interview (i.e., ideally, before the interview) at least two of these references will be contacted and asked to affirm the appointment of the worker. The person making the contacts, the date, and a summary of the references' comments will all be recorded; this will become part of the personnel file. Use the suggested "script" for Telephone Follow-up (Form SC5) when screening applications.

Interview

An interview conducted by at least one of the Coordinator and/or the Ministry Leaders provides an opportunity to review the important items from the Ministry Application Form in a personal setting. This allows the interviewer to ask follow-up questions and to enhance his or her knowledge of the applicant. The interview will also allow the potential worker the opportunity of asking questions about various ministries and about the reasons behind our child protection procedures.

A signed and dated record of the interview will be retained as part of the applicant's personnel file.

Police Record Check

For their own protection and for the protection of the church, all workers, including paid staff working with children and/or youth, will submit to a Police Record Check (PRC). All records will be placed in the personnel file set up for that purpose in the Administration Department and will be considered confidential, accessible only to the Coordinator. Any individual who will not submit to this procedure will be ineligible to be involved with children or youth on behalf of the church. The cost for any PRC's requested by Westheights will be reimbursed by the church upon request. Minors under 16 years of age are exempt from the PRC. Police record checks must be refreshed at least once every five years.

The PRC's are to be sent to the church to the attention of the Coordinator. If there is no criminal record of any sort, the worker may be considered for ongoing service at Westheights.

If there is a record or information, which raises some concern, the Coordinator, the Ministry Leaders and the Senior Pastor will meet to discuss the matter. Because an



approved worker can work in any ministry area with children and youth, it is important that all Ministry Leaders participate in the discussion.

If the offence is other than child or sexual abuse, and provided that the Coordinator, the Ministry Leaders, and the Senior Pastor are in agreement, the worker may proceed with ministry at Westheights. If such a worker is allowed to proceed with ministry, this decision process must be documented and kept on file. The following are criteria to consider when evaluating pertinent information:

- the number and type of convictions;
- the age and circumstances of the offender at the time of the offence;
- the length of time between past criminal activity and the present;
- the conduct and circumstances of the individual since the offence; and
- the likelihood of the individual repeating the offence.

No person shall work with children or youth if he or she

- has been convicted of a sexual offence, or
- has been convicted of an assault in which the victim was under the age of eighteen and was at least two years younger than the accused, or
- has been a custodial parent of a child for which there has been a finding that the child is in need of protection, even though such person has since become a Christian.

The information contained in the PRC's is considered strictly confidential. Only the Coordinator, the Ministry Leaders and the Senior Pastor shall be privy to this information.

3.2 Screening Checklist

A person is approved to work with children and youth at Westheights when the following steps are completed:

- The applicant demonstrates regular attendance at Westheights for at least six months. This condition may be waived if the applicant is an employee or a paid childcare worker.
- The applicant is provided with a copy of the Policies and Procedures for Children and Youth Ministry.
- The applicant completes and submits the Ministry Volunteer Application Form.
- The Ministry Volunteer Application Form is reviewed and approved.
- An interview and reference checks are completed as described above.
- The Coordinator reviews and approves the Police Record Check (consulting with the Ministry Leaders as necessary).
- The Coordinator signs the Screening Checklist (SC4).



4.0 Procedure for Maintaining Records

4.1 Personnel Files

The original application, the Police Record Check, and notes and comments from the reference checks and the interview process will be kept in a file labelled with the name of the applicant. The file will be stored in a secure location, accessible only to the Coordinator. The Coordinator may add to the file at any time if appropriate.

In case of a Coordinator change, the incoming Coordinator should review the files to ensure that he or she is aware of any pertinent history.

All personnel files will be active as long as an individual continues to regularly attend Westheights, and for a period of two years beyond that point. After that, the applicant's permission to work with children and youth is considered to have lapsed. All personnel files should be retained as a permanent record.

4.2 List of Eligible Workers

At the beginning of each year, the Coordinator will review and update the master list of screened workers. An individual should be dropped from the list if he or she has not been in regular attendance at Westheights for a continuous period of at least two years.

The Coordinator will update the list whenever a new applicant is approved.

If the list is lost or is out of date, the Coordinator must recreate the list from the confidential personnel files.

4.3 Worker Lists

At the beginning of each year, the Ministry Leaders will review and update the complete list of those who are working in children's and youth ministries. They will compare that list against the list of screened workers to ensure that all active workers have been fully screened.

If individuals on that list are younger than 16 years of age, their birthdate should be recorded, so that the Ministry Leaders know when a screening is required.

During the year, as new workers are needed in various ministries, it is the responsibility of the Ministry Leader to ensure that workers are properly screened.



The Ministry Leaders must ensure that they are also gathering the required information from children's and youth ministries at Westheights, even those that are managed by other committees or groups.

5.0 Procedure for Monitoring Compliance

In addition to maintaining the records as described above, the Coordinator and the Ministry Leaders must review the policy and procedures annually ensuring that they are being followed. If other committees or groups are managing children's or youth ministries, the Coordinator must obtain a written statement that confirms compliance.

During the first quarter of every year, the Coordinator must submit a report to the Church Board indicating the status of the Protection Plan program, listing any areas of non-compliance and outlining steps necessary to become compliant. The report should include the list of eligible workers.

6.0 Procedure for Changing these Policies and Procedures

These policies and procedures are controlled by the Church Board of Westheights and can be amended at any time by an official action by that Board.



Appendix I: Appropriate Physical Contact and Verbal Interaction

Appropriate Physical Contact

Touch is an essential responsibility in nurturing lives. Children's and youth ministry workers need to be aware of, and sensitive to, differences in sexual development, cultural differences, family backgrounds, individual personalities, and special needs. Physical contact with children should be age and developmentally appropriate. The following guidelines are recommended as pure, genuine and positive displays of God's love:

Appropriate Touch

Love and caring can be expressed in the following appropriate ways, by:

- Bending down to eye level and speaking kindly; listening carefully to a child/youth.
- Giving side hugs, handshakes, or high-fives.
- Taking a child's hand and leading him or her to an activity.
- Putting an arm around the shoulder of a child/youth who needs quieting or comforting.
- Taking both of the child's hands as you say, "You did such a good job!" (or "I'm so glad to see you. We've missed you!" etc.)
- Patting a child/youth on the head, hand, shoulder or back to affirm him or her.
- Holding a child/youth by the shoulders or hand, for example, to keep his or her attention while you redirect behaviour.
- Gently holding a child's chin to help him or her focus on what you are saying. (This can be important for children who have disorders affecting attention centre functions.)
- Holding a preschooler who is crying.

Inappropriate Touch

Workers must avoid:

- Kissing a child/youth, coaxing a child/youth to kiss you, and tickling.
- Touching a child/youth in any area that would be covered by a bathing suit (except when assisting a child with toileting, in which case, doors should be left open, and where possible, another adult should be within visual contact).
- Carrying older children/youth or having them sit on their lap; piggyback rides



with youth.

- Touching a youth's knees or legs.
- Prolonged physical contact, including horseplay, male/female and/or one-one-one wrestling, and massage.
- Seductiveness or suggestive contact.
- Any physical contact of any kind that is done for the pleasure or satisfaction of the worker(s).
- Any touching used to express power or control over a child.
- Any form of affection unwanted by the child/youth.

Discipline and Classroom Management

God's definition of discipline is outlined in Hebrews 12:7-11. Discipline is not something you do to a child. It is something you do for a child. The word discipline does not mean punishment. It comes from the root word disciple, which means training that molds character, behaviour and values. Rather than seeking to merely maintain control or keep children quiet, our goal in managing children's behavior should be to shape their character in such a way that they will become disciples.

Corporal punishment (slapping, hitting, pushing) is strictly prohibited.

Appropriate Verbal Interaction

Love and caring can be expressed in the following appropriate ways, with:

- positive reinforcement
- appropriate jokes
- encouragement and praise

Inappropriate Verbal Interaction

Workers must avoid:

- any form of name calling
- having sexually-oriented conversations of a personal nature (without immediate connection to curriculum) with children/youth
- involving youth in the personal problems of workers
- having secret elements of any relationship with children/youth
- compliments related to physique or body development
- cursing
- off-colour or sexual jokes
- shaming, belittling, derogatory remarks or harsh language that may frighten, threaten or humiliate



Appendix II: List of Forms

These forms can be obtained from the Westheights Office. Soft copies should be stored on the church server.

Screening

- SC1 – Ministry Application Form
- SC2 – Record of Reference Check
- SC3 – Ministry Volunteer Interview Form
- SC4 – Screening Checklist
- SC5 – Suggested Script for Reference Checks
- SC6 – Interview Waiver

Child Abuse Reporting

- CA1 – Report Form for Suspected Child Abuse
- CA2 – Follow-up Form for Suspected Child Abuse



Appendix III: Approval Guidelines

What kinds of criminal convictions disqualify an individual for children's or youth-ministry?

A criminal conviction for a sexual offence involving a minor would certainly disqualify an applicant. In the case of pedophilic behaviour (molestation of a pre-adolescent child) such a conviction should disqualify an individual no matter how long ago it occurred, because of the virtual impossibility that such a condition can be "cured." Other automatic disqualifiers would include convictions for incest, rape, assaults involving minors, murder, kidnapping, child pornography, sodomy, and the physical abuse of a minor.

Other crimes would strongly indicate that a person should not be considered for work with minors in our church. Some crimes would not be automatic disqualifiers, because they would not necessarily suggest a risk of child abuse or molestation. Some property offences would not be included in this list, particularly if the offence occurred long ago and the individual has a long history of impeccable behaviour.

Should religious conversion make a difference for a worker who has been guilty of child molestation in the past?

Occasionally, such persons freely admit to a prior incident, but insist that they have since had a conversion experience and that they now present no risk whatsoever. The safest course would be to encourage such an individual to work in the church, but in a position not involving access to children or youth. This is a reasonable accommodation of the individual's desire to serve at Westheights. Any church that permits such an individual to work with children or youth, on the basis of the professed religious conversion, will have a virtually indefensible position should another incident of molestation occur. A defence – that the molester claimed to have been converted – would likely carry little weight in a civil court. Putting a known child molester in a position involving access to children is taking an enormous risk.



Appendix IV: Definitions

“Child abuse”⁷ is defined as follows:

- It can be physical, emotional or sexual.
- All child abuse involves the misuse of power.
- Misuse of power takes place when people take advantage of the authority or power they have over vulnerable people.
- Vulnerable people include adults with physical or mental disabilities and children.

Physical Abuse is using physical force or action that results, or could result, in injury to a child or youth. It is more than reasonable discipline. Sometimes injury is caused by over-discipline. Injuring a child or youth is not acceptable, regardless of differing cultural standards on discipline.

Emotional Abuse is a pattern of hurting a child’s feelings to the point of damaging their self-respect. It includes verbal attacks on the child, insults, humiliation or rejection. A child or youth who is emotionally harmed may demonstrate severe anxiety, depression, withdrawal, self-destructive or aggressive behaviour.

Sexual Abuse occurs when a child or youth is used by somebody for sexual stimulation or gratification. Sexual activity between children or youth may also be sexual abuse if older or more powerful children or youth take sexual advantage of those who are younger or less powerful.

Child sexual abuse includes behaviour that involves touching and non-touching aspects.

Types of sexual abuse that involve touching include:

- Fondling – This includes the suggestion that an adult should see and/or touch a child’s body to monitor development.
- Oral, genital and anal penetration
- Intercourse
- Forcible rape

Types of sexual abuse that do not involve touching include:

- Verbal comments
- Pornographic videos

⁷ Taken from “The Children and Youth Ministry Resource Guide” produced by Canadian Conference of the Brethren in Christ Church.



- Obscene phone calls
- Exhibitionism
- Allowing children to either hear about or witness sexual activity.

The full extent of child sexual abuse in North America is not known. Current conservative estimates suggest that from 500,000 to over 1,500,000 children are sexually abused each year.

“Child neglect”⁸: Child neglect is the most frequently reported form of child abuse (60% of all cases) and the most lethal. Child neglect is the failure to provide for the shelter, safety, supervision and nutritional needs of the child. Child neglect may be physical, educational, or emotional neglect.

Physical neglect includes refusal of or delay in seeking health care, abandonment, expulsion from the home or refusal to allow a runaway to return home, and inadequate supervision.

Educational neglect includes the allowance of chronic truancy, failure to enroll a child of mandatory school age in school, and failure to attend to a special educational need.

Emotional neglect includes such actions as marked inattention to the child's needs for affection, refusal of or failure to provide needed psychological care, spousal abuse in the child's presence, and permission of drug or alcohol use by the child.

“Harassment”⁹ covers a wide range of offensive behaviour. It is commonly understood as behaviour intended to disturb or upset. In the legal sense, it is behaviour which is found threatening or disturbing.

⁸ Taken from www.medterms.com

⁹ Taken from Wikipedia

