

# GRACE UNITED CHURCH, Caledonia

## Policy and Procedure Manual

<b>Policy Title</b>	<b>SCREENING</b>	<b>Policy Number</b>	<b>PPM-G4.1</b>
<b>Date of Approval by Council</b>	February 18, 2015		
<b>Revision Dates</b>	June 20, 2018; May 16, 2024	<b>Date of next Review</b>	May 2027

**Definitions within This Policy: See Addendum #1.**

### **PURPOSE:**

Grace United Church desires to maintain a safe environment where all feel secure that they and their loved ones will be well-treated, cared for and protected.

### **POLICY STATEMENT:**

Grace United Church will require all persons listed in this policy to obtain an appropriate police background check in order to be in positions of trust.

Additional screening may be required based on the position, results of the police check, and length of history with Grace United Church.

Persons are required to complete and keep current a Volunteer Registration Form that will be kept on file in the Church Office. (See Addendum #2)

### **Persons Requiring Police Checks:**

- Ministry personnel (refer to *The Manual 2024*, J2.2; J7) (or annual attestation to the Region, per the United Church of Canada – note “The regional council is responsible for oversight of the community of faith and is one of the parties to the pastoral relationship.” J.7.3)
- Employees
- Persons with signing authority
- Persons supervising those under 18 years of age
- Persons having one-to-one contact with disabled persons or infirm seniors
- Persons making one-to-one home visits
- Persons acting as a mentor, personal counselor or spiritual advisor

### **Persons Exempt From Police Checks:**

Those who are involved *only* in food preparation, catering, and fund-raising activities are exempt from requiring police checks.

### **Responsibilities:**

- Chairs of Christian Development and Pastoral Care Committees, and other appropriate group leaders, will annually ensure the Administrative Assistant is aware of the names of those requiring police checks as defined in this policy.

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- Administrative Assistant will monitor the level and frequency of all police checks.
- Individuals will obtain relevant police checks as required, sponsored by Grace United Church as appropriate.
- Ministry and Personnel will perform periodic audits (minimum two year frequency) for compliance.

### **Criteria For Police Checks:**

- All individuals taking on positions of trust must complete (at minimum) a Criminal Record & Judicial Matters Check at least every six years.
- All individuals over age 18 taking on a role involving one-on-one contact with vulnerable individuals must complete a Vulnerable Sector Record Check every 3 years.
- Volunteers who are in the process of obtaining the appropriate police check and have submitted the proper documentation may volunteer provided that a screened person is present at all times.

### **Issues Arising From a Police Check**

Any concerns, raised through the screening process, will be reviewed by the Ministry & Personnel Committee using the United Church Police Records Check policy as a reference to determine if the concerns are relevant to the proposed volunteer position. Based on this evaluation and an interview with the individual, a decision will be made on whether the volunteer position is appropriate.

### **Violation of Trust:**

A potential breach of trust by employees or contracted individuals should be reported immediately to the Ministry and Personnel Committee which must take steps to ensure potential victims are safe, and convene an in-camera meeting to deal with the allegation within three days of the report.

All other alleged breaches of trust should be reported to the minister or Chair of Council who will consult with the Ministry & Personnel Committee to follow the same procedure as outlined above.

Reports can be made in person, by mail, by e-mail, or by telephone.  
All reports must be recorded in writing and signed by the complainant.

The report of any breach of trust will be handled by the Ministry & Personnel Committee who will then report to the Executive of Grace United Church Council and the appropriate committee chair. Ministry & Personnel will report to the Horseshoe Falls Regional Council Executive Minister as necessary.

### **POLICY REVIEW:**

**Time Frame:** Every three years

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**Committee Responsible:** Ministry & Personnel

All policy revisions require Council approval.

June 20, 2018 update:

- Responsibilities updated and added as separate header
- Updated references
- Changed requirement to vulnerable sector check instead of police information check every three years after initial vulnerable sector check

May 16, 2024 update:

- Updated references
- Clarification of responsibility for Ministry Personnel Manual J.7.3

### CROSS REFERENCES:

- United Church of Canada. *Police Records Checks*. January 2019
- United Church of Canada. *Faithful Footsteps: Screening for Positions of Trust and Authority in the United Church Of Canada*. 2000.
- Ontario Provincial Police. *Criminal Records Checks & Police Checks (2023)*  
<https://www.opp.ca/index.php?id=147&lng=en>
- Hamilton Police. *Obtain a Records Check (Sept 2022)*  
<https://hamiltonpolice.on.ca/how-to/get-background-check>
- United Church of Canada, *The Manual 2024*, J2.2, J2.3, J7

### ADDENDUM 1: DEFINITIONS

*Vulnerable Person*: defined in Section 6.3 of the *Criminal Records Act*, as a person who, because of age, a disability, or other circumstances, whether temporary or permanent are (a) in a position of dependence on others or (b) otherwise at a greater risk than the general population of being harmed by a person in a position of authority or trust relative to them.

*Police Record Check*: (Police Record Checks Reform Act, 2015, S.O. 2015, c. 30, revised April 2022) A police record check, also known as a 'background check', is a search of police records on an individual completed through the police service in charge of the area where the applicant resides.

These checks are often used as part of a screening process for employment or volunteering. In Ontario, when a police record check is requested, consent must first be granted by the individual being checked.

In Ontario, the [Police Record Checks Reform Act](#), sets the standards that govern how police record checks are conducted and what is included in the check. The act authorizes three different types of police record checks.

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A **criminal record check** includes:

- applicable criminal convictions
- findings of guilt under the federal [Youth Criminal Justice Act](#)

A **criminal record and judicial matters check** includes:

- applicable criminal convictions
- findings of guilt under the federal [Youth Criminal Justice Act](#)
- absolute and conditional discharges
- outstanding charges, arrest warrants and certain judicial orders

A **vulnerable sector check** includes:

- the same type of information that is disclosed in a criminal record and judicial matters check
- applicable findings of:
  - not criminally responsible due to mental disorder
  - record suspensions (pardons) related to sexually-based offences
  - in certain circumstances, non-conviction charges related information, when a strict test is met

*Safe Environment:* is one where all proper measures are in place to protect all persons from potential physical, verbal, emotional, or sexual harassment or abuse.

### ADDENDUM 2: VOLUNTEER INFORMATION FORM

**GRACE UNITED CHURCH**

174 Caithness St. E.,  
Caledonia ON N3W 1C2

**VOLUNTEER INFORMATION FORM**

POSITION: \_\_\_\_\_

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

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

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

\_\_\_\_\_

Two people (in the local area) who know you:

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

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

Police Check required? Yes ☐ No ☐ Vulnerable Sector? Yes ☐ No ☐

Photocopy of current driver's licence, passport or utility bill (showing address) required.

I certify that the above is accurate to the best of my knowledge.

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

*Reviewed by* \_\_\_\_\_