

GRACE UNITED CHURCH, Caledonia

Policy and Procedure Manual

Policy Title	VULNERABLE SECTOR	Policy Number	PPM-G5.1
Date of Approval by Council	October 17, 2018		
Revision Dates		Date of next Review	October 2021

SECTION I: Child & Youth Safety Policy

PURPOSE:

Grace United Church is committed to our children and we strive to provide fun and safe programs from Nursery through Youth that encourage our children to grow in Christ. We believe that the church must maintain the highest standards for both its programs and for the people who staff those programs. Accordingly, our goal is to protect the children and youth of our church from incidents of abuse, misconduct or inappropriate behavior. We also seek to protect our staff and volunteers from false accusations.

POLICY STATEMENT:

1. Scope

This policy applies to all Child & Youth ministries of Grace United Church and all activities, sponsored and offered, by Grace United Church. Child & Youth are defined as persons under the age of 18. Sponsors/facility renters of non-Grace United Church events (example Girl Guides of Canada) using Grace United Church facilities are responsible for their own oversight of children's protection.

2. Child & Youth Program Leader and Volunteer Screening process

All adult Child & Youth program leaders and volunteers (hereafter referred to as Child & Youth workers) must complete the screening process outlined in the Screening Policy PPM-G4.1. Child & Youth workers include both employees and volunteers.

3. Standards for Relationships

3.1 Child & Youth workers will normally seek to establish personal relationships with those whom they teach and lead. Physical contact is one part of normal communication in such relationships. Thus, for instance, a hug or the placing of a hand on one's arm or shoulder is normally acceptable. However, any touching in intimate areas is never acceptable, nor is any un-welcomed touching which makes the young person uncomfortable.

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3.2 It is recognized that holding/carrying is basic to the care of infants and small children. Also, infants and small children must sometimes be physically restrained from hurting themselves or others. However, when more than brief restraint is needed, the parent or guardian should be brought into the situation.

3.3 Children of any age will not be spanked, shaken or struck in any way by a Child & Youth worker.

3.4 Child & Youth workers are to readily share challenges incurred while supervising the child or youth with their parents or guardian.

4. Two (2) Person Rule

Whenever possible, Child & Youth workers shall observe the "two-person rule". The "two-person rule" requires that Child & Youth workers shall make every reasonable effort to avoid situations where a Child & Youth worker is alone with children without a partner. In the event the "two-person rule" cannot be met, the Child & Youth worker shall observe strict transparency as outlined in 6. Transparency/Open Door Policy (below) and the Procedures for Child & Youth Ministries and Volunteer Training Manual.

Additionally, one of the two Child & Youth workers must be at least 18 years old; and wherever possible the two Child & Youth workers should not be related.

Where occasional volunteers are assisting Child & Youth workers and in all circumstances, there must be at least one Child & Youth worker who has completed the screening process and has a current police check on file.

5. One to One Interactions

One to one interactions must only occur within a public visible setting occupied by other nearby adults.

One to one formal counseling may only occur with parental/guardian and Ministerial written concurrence. The parent/guardian must drop off and pickup the child or youth. The Transparency /Open Door policy will be observed and at no time will the door be locked. The session should be conducted at a time when others are nearby, even if they are not within listening distance.

6. Transparency/Open Door Policy

Child & Youth workers shall observe the "open door policy" at ALL times. The "open door policy" requires that rooms where children are located in the Sunday School Room or Nursery have the door or the top half door open at all times or that transparent glass be in the door (such as the Fellowship Hall). In the event that the Child & Youth worker is alone with children in a room, the Child & Youth worker shall attempt to position himself or herself in the room such that other adults passing in the hallway can see the worker.

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7. Personal Information Documentation and Confidentiality

For each child or youth, a Personal Information Documentation Form shall be submitted. This document outlines such aspects as, dismissal authorization, restroom authorization, allergies, significant medical information and/or behavioral issues that may arise while the person is participating in the program or event. These documents must be readily available to the supervising Child & Youth worker. The documents are stored in a safe and secure location and available on a need to know basis.

8. Bathroom Use/Diaper Changes

For the protection of all, Child & Youth workers must never be alone with a child in a bathroom with the door closed and never be in a closed bathroom stall with a child.

Sunday School/Nursery: During Sunday School/Nursery hours, those children who are noted as able to use the restroom unattended are permitted to do so (see Personal Information Documentation). A Child & Youth worker is to ensure the child's safety to and from the restroom.

Should any child, who requires assistance, need to use the restroom or a child in the nursery need a diaper change, parents/guardians will be alerted either in person by the Nursery staff if able, or an active duty Sunday School leader.

9. Transportation

Transportation of children and youth to and from church events will be the responsibility of the parent / guardians and is not subject to the control of the Church and thus not covered in this policy. Child & Youth workers supervising or directly and actively participating in the event may not transport children or youth in the worker's vehicle or any other vehicle.

10. Off-Site Trips and Events

Parent/Guardian Permission Forms and the Personal Information Document must be completed prior to all trips. The two-person rule must be followed throughout the trip with any foreseeable exceptions clearly stated and approved in advance by the parent or guardian. The total number of adults on each trip will be adjusted according to the requirements of the planned activities. Under no circumstances may one adult alone take or accompany minors on an overnight outing.

11. Fire Safety and Emergency Evacuation

Child & Youth workers shall be aware of all fire safety policies and ensure they are able to carry out the directions given in the policy, expected to be in place by January 1, 2019.

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12. Incident Management

In the event of any questionable or inappropriate activity involving a child or youth it is our policy to deal with that situation immediately and forthrightly following the Violence and Harassment Policy PPM-E4.1.

PROCEDURE: Refer to PPM-G5.2 *Grace United Church Procedures for Child & Youth Ministries and Volunteer Training Manual*

SECTION 2: Other Vulnerable Persons

PURPOSE:

Grace United Church is committed to a continuing relationship with its members, even though they may not be physically able to attend services. The intent is to connect through visitation by members of the Pastoral Care Committee, offering a positive and uplifting experience, and where appropriate, relay any concerns back to the committee as whole or to the Minister.

POLICY STATEMENT:

DEFINITION: “Vulnerable person” means a person who, because of their age, a disability, or other circumstances whether temporary or permanent are:

- a) In a position of dependence on others, or
- b) Are 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, pursuant to the Criminal Records Act.

1. Scope

This policy applies to all activities where members of Grace (whether a member of the Pastoral Care Committee or not) and acting on behalf of the Church, interact with vulnerable persons.

2. Volunteer Screening Process

All members of Grace acting on behalf of the Church and interacting with a vulnerable person must complete the screening process outlined in the Screening Policy PPM-G4.1.

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3. Standards For Relationships

Visitation or other interaction with the vulnerable person may lead to developing certain bonds and elevated levels of trust. This may lead to requests by the vulnerable person for advice or support beyond simple conversation. Should a vulnerable person require additional support in the form of banking advice, help with the washroom, etc., then the visiting adult is to speak to the Pastoral Care Committee as a whole to arrange further assistance. A visiting adult should not complete any tasks alone such as help with the washroom, banking, or physically demanding tasks that might put them or the Church at risk.

If the vulnerable person lives alone, consideration should be made to visit when another family member is present, or to have a second independent adult attend.

4. Documentation

Visitors will keep a log of their visits and note anything unusual.

5. Incident Management

In the event of any questionable or inappropriate behavior involving the vulnerable person it is our policy to deal with that situation immediately and forthrightly following the Violence and Harassment Policy PPM-E4.1.

POLICY REVIEW:

Time Frame: Every three years

Committee Responsible: Ministry and Personnel

Revisions to the Policy require Council approval.

CROSS REFERENCES:

Screening Policy PPM-G4.1

Violence & Harassment Policy PPM-E4.1

The United Church of Canada Workplace & Harassment Policy July 2017

Ontario Ministry of Community Safety & Correctional Services/Ontario Provincial Police (definition of vulnerable person)