

Grace Christian Fellowship of Fergus

PLAN TO PROTECT® POLICY and PROCEDURES:

A Protection Plan for Children, Youth and Adults

Board Approval on September 8, 2022

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Grace Christian Fellowship of Fergus PLAN TO PROTECT® POLICY and PROCEDURES

(Replaces policy dated December 15, 2008)

1.1 PREAMBLE

One of the clear priorities of *Grace Christian Fellowship of Fergus* (GCF) is to reflect the Father heart of God and to protect those He loves. We fulfil this priority by ensuring that our church is a place of safety for everyone. A place where they can be loved, affirmed, and grow in their faith.

We live in a world with such uncertainty, chaos, and fear. Our church offers an invaluable gift to a broken and hurting people. Some people are more vulnerable to harm than others, i.e. children, youth, individuals experiencing distress, new immigrants, individuals with disabilities, and the elderly. We do not want anything to hinder individuals in our community from knowing and loving God, nor do we want to be a source of suffering or pain. Therefore, with a desire to create a strong community of faith, we declare we have zero tolerance for any form of abuse, neglect, sexual misconduct, harassment, or discrimination.

We must also protect those who serve at GCF. Our Ministry Personnel need the security of knowing that they are working in a setting where processes and procedures are in place to minimize any possibility of an erroneous accusation.

The purpose of this policy and procedure manual is to set out our protocols for creating a safe church community. In this document you will find our policies, procedures, and the parameters for engaging in ministry at *Grace Christian Fellowship of Fergus*.

The following policies and procedures apply to all clergy, staff, and volunteers in a position of trust, who will collectively be referenced as "Ministry Personnel" throughout this document (see Definitions).

1.2. UNDERSTANDING THE CHURCH'S RESPONSIBILITY

We believe it is the responsibility of *Grace Christian Fellowship of Fergus* to provide a safe environment for Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults who are in attendance at *Grace Christian Fellowship of Fergus*' facilities or who participate in *Grace Christian Fellowship of Fergus*-sanctioned activities and programs wherever they may be carried out.

1.2.1. THE SPIRITUAL AND MORAL RESPONSIBILITY OF THE CHURCH

We recognize that we are a reflection of God's love to those in our care and we take our responsibility seriously.

Micah 6:8 presents this challenge, "He has shown all you people what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God." (TNIV)

Micah suggests that the Lord requires three things of us:

To act justly - we must work for justice, seeking to promote the truth and speak out on behalf of the vulnerable.

To love mercy - compassion needs to be the bedrock of all our work.

To walk humbly with our God - every area of our lives need to be marked by humility and righteousness. To act always with integrity.

The Bible outlines our spiritual responsibility to Children and Youth:

"If anyone causes one of these little ones - those who believe in me - to stumble, it would be better for them if a large millstone were hung around their neck and they were drowned in the depths of the sea." (Matthew 18:6 TNIV)

“People were bringing little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, ‘Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.’ And he took the children in his arms, placed his hands on them and blessed them.” (Mark 10:13-16 TNIV)

“Avoid every kind of evil.” (1 Thessalonians 5:22 NIV)

“For we are taking pains to do what is right, not only in the eyes of the Lord but also in the eyes of others.” (2 Corinthians 8:21 TNIV)

1.2.2. THE ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITY OF THE MINISTRY

“The U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child is the most ratified of all the United Nations Human Rights treaties. The treaty affirms and describes the fundamental human rights of all children (all human beings below the age of 18), and the governments that have ratified it have legally agreed to fulfill its provisions. The CRC forms the most comprehensive and well-established international standard for children’s rights.”

The protection of children and youth is one of four themes throughout the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), which entered into force as international law on 2 September 1990. To date, 193 countries have ratified the UNCRC and have included it in their own laws. These countries include every country in the world, except for the USA and Somalia.

“The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child ... requires us to provide special protection and assistance to children to enable them to reach their full potential as adults. While parents are primarily responsible for ensuring a child’s rights are upheld, government and community also have an important role to play in protecting children.”

All articles in the UNCRC apply to all children and youth of all backgrounds. A fundamental philosophy behind the convention is that children have the same inherent value as adults and are their equals.

1.2.3. THE CIVIL AND LEGAL RESPONSIBILITY OF THE CHURCH

We recognize that providing a safe place for Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults is also a legal requirement. We have a legal responsibility to ensure that a plan for protecting Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults is in place and is diligently followed.

Our legal responsibility includes being accountable for the actions of our employees and volunteers, that as an organization we could be held vicariously liable for their actions.

This policy and the guidelines contained within it are to help us in fulfilling our responsibilities to provide as safe and nurturing environment as possible for Children, Youth and Vulnerable adults. In partnership with Parents, we, as a church, seek to provide quality care and instruction to families and in this way, promote spiritual growth at every age level.

1.3 DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this Policy, the following terms shall have the following meanings:

Abuse	Abuse is categorized as being physical, sexual, or emotional, involving neglect, harassment, improper touching and improper discipline. Abusers can be family members, friends, staff or individuals in positions of trust or authority.
Accused:	A person against whom a complaint of abuse or sexual exploitation is made pursuant to the terms of this Policy.
Board:	The Board of Elders/Deacons/Directors, the highest functioning authority of the church.
Child:	A person under the age of 18 years; see also Youth.
Child and Family Services Act:	The province of Ontario Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017, S.O. 2017, c. 14, Sched. 1 (the "Act").
Complainant:	A person who makes a complaint of child abuse or sexual exploitation under this Policy.
Designated Screening Personnel:	An individual, or group of people, designated and trained to screen Prospective Ministry Personnel. Tasks include processing applications, reference checks, conducting interviews, requesting Criminal Record Checks, and maintaining Ministry Personnel Files.
Hall Monitors:	Ministry Personnel whose role is to walk hallways for surveillance and to randomly visit rooms to protect against false allegations.
Liability Shield (Waiver):	Contractual documents used to mitigate liability and manage risk, such as waivers, releases, disclaimers, indemnity agreements, informed consent and permission forms.
Ministry Lead/Director:	Individuals who have successfully completed the recruitment and screening process and who have been given the responsibility to give direction to programs or ministries for Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults. The term includes volunteer and all full-time, short-term or contract staff members receiving a salary.
Ministry Personnel:	An individual who has successfully completed the recruitment and screening procedures of this Plan to Protect® Policy and who can be put in a Position of Trust with Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults. Ministry Personnel include screened volunteers, full-time, short-term or contract staff and pastoral staff whether or not they receive a salary.
Ministry Personnel File:	A permanent record kept on each Ministry Personnel which includes the application form, record of Criminal Records Checks, record of reference checks and interview, and other documents related to the recruiting and supervision of Ministry Personnel.

Occasional Observer:	Unscreened individuals who visit/observe ministry activities on rare occasions. This term includes Parents assisting their own Children. Their access to minors will be limited and they will never be asked to assume responsibility or placed in a position of trust with Children who are not their own.
Offender:	A person convicted of Abuse of a Vulnerable Person.
Parent:	The natural or adoptive Parent(s) or legal guardian(s) of a Child or Youth.
Plan to Protect® Committee:	A committee reporting to the Board responsible for the oversight and leadership of Plan to Protect® within the church. Members will be screened and trained and have signed a confidentiality agreement.
Position of Trust:	A Position of Trust is any position that requires its holder to enjoy the trust of those who elected or chose the holder. It includes any role wherein parents and or guardians have entrusted their loved one to your care i.e. teachers, helpers, assistants, supervisors, directors, leaders, caregivers, sponsors, drivers, etc. Violation of Position of Trust, in legal terms, refers to a situation where one person holds a position of authority over another person and uses that position to their advantage to commit a crime or to injure the victim in some way. Liability for abuse of a Position of Trust is not limited to criminal prosecution, in some cases a civil lawsuit may be brought as well.
Prospective Ministry Personnel:	Individuals associated with the church awaiting approval to become Ministry Personnel.
Student:	Children or Youth registered to attend your programs.
Vulnerable Adult:	A person who is 18 years of age or older, and who, because of their age, a disability or other circumstances, whether temporary or permanent, is in a position of dependence on others or is otherwise at a greater risk than the general population of being harmed by a person or persons in Positions of Trust or authority relative to them.
Youth:	Means a Child aged 11 to 17 years

1.4. UNDERSTANDING ABUSE

It is critical for us to have a clear understanding of abuse, to be familiar with the definitions used when referring to it.

Abuse is categorized as being physical, sexual, or emotional, involving neglect, harassment, improper touching and improper discipline.

Abusers can be family members, friends, staff or individuals in positions of trust or authority.

1.4.1. DISCRIMINATION

Discrimination is differential treatment based on a personal characteristic which has an adverse impact on an individual or group. Examples of personal characteristics include race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, faith or creed, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, family status or handicap.

Discrimination robs people of their dignity and their ability to fulfill their capabilities. It is important to note that any person or group can discriminate, and any person or group can be the target of discrimination.

1.4.2 HARASSMENT

Harassment can be physical, sexual, verbal and visual, against an individual or a group. Whether intentional or not, harassment demonstrates a lack of respect for the dignity and character of its targets. There is no requirement that the victim formally object to the behaviour before it is considered a violation.

The defining features are that the behaviour is unwanted by the recipient (except in the case of children who cannot consent, by virtue of their age), unwarranted by the relationship, and it would be regarded as such by any reasonable person.

Harassment, victimization, and bullying may include:

- comments that are known, or ought to be reasonably known, to be unwelcome,
- uninvited and unwanted sexual attention and other verbal, visual or physical conduct of a sexual nature by a person who knows or ought to know that it is unwelcome,
- reprisals or threats of reprisals,
- derisory remarks, verbal abuse, insults and threats,
- display of offensive materials such as racist or sexist pictures,
- offensive verbal or practical jokes,
- offensive graffiti or insignia,
- physical attack consisting of hitting, punching, pulling someone's clothing or hair, which is unwanted by an individual.

1.4.3. SPIRITUAL ABUSE

Spiritual Abuse is the use of spiritual or religious language and/or beliefs to unduly influence and exert control over individuals, exploiting them for the apparent benefit of the organization or those in positions of greater authority.

1.5. CHILD ABUSE

“Child abuse refers to an act committed by a parent, caregiver or person in a position of trust (even though he/she may not care for the child on a daily basis) which is not accidental and which harms or threatens to harm a child’s physical or mental health, or a child’s welfare.” (Faith Trust Institute, 2006)

1.5.1. EMOTIONAL ABUSE

“Emotional abuse is a pattern of behaviour that attacks a child’s emotional development and sense of self-worth. It includes excessive, aggressive or unreasonable demands that place expectations on a child beyond their capacity. Emotional abuse includes constantly criticizing, teasing, belittling, insulting, rejecting, ignoring or isolating the child. It may also include exposure to domestic violence.” (Ontario Association of Children’s Aid Societies, 2017)

1.5.2. EXPOSURE TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Children who live in homes where a parent or caretaker is experiencing abuse are commonly referred to as “child witnesses” or “children who are witnessing” domestic violence. Children’s exposure to domestic violence typically falls into three primary categories: hearing a violent event; being directly involved as an eyewitness, intervening, or being used as a part of a violent event (e.g., being used as a shield against abusive actions); and or experiencing the aftermath of a violent event.

Children’s exposure to domestic violence also may include being used as a spy to interrogate the adult victim, being forced to watch or participate in the abuse of the victim and being used as a pawn by the abuser to coerce the victim into returning to the violent relationship. Some children are physically injured as a direct result of the domestic violence. Some perpetrators intentionally physically, emotionally, or sexually abuse their children in an effort to intimidate and control their partner. In addition to being exposed to the abusive behaviour, many children are further victimized by coercion to remain silent about the abuse, maintaining the “family secret.”

1.5.3. NEGLECT

“Neglect occurs when a caregiver fails to provide basic needs such as adequate food, sleep, safety, education, clothing or medical treatment. It also includes leaving a child alone or failing to provide adequate supervision. If the caregiver is unable to provide the child with basic needs due to financial inability, it is not considered neglect, unless relief has been offered and refused.” (Ontario Association of Children’s Aid Societies, 2017)

1.5.4. PHYSICAL ABUSE

“Physical abuse is any deliberate physical force or action, by a parent or caregiver, which results, or could result, in injury to a child. It can include bruising, cuts, punching, slapping, beating, shaking, burning, biting or throwing a child. Using belts, sticks or other objects to punish a child can cause serious harm and is also considered abuse.” (Ontario Association of Children’s Aid Societies, 2017)

1.5.5. SEXUAL ABUSE

“Sexual abuse occurs when a child is used for the sexual gratification of an adult or an older child. The child may co-operate because he or she wants to please the adult or out of fear. It includes sexual intercourse, exposing a child’s private areas, indecent phone calls, fondling for sexual purposes, watching a child undress for sexual pleasure, and allowing/forcing a child to look at or perform in pornographic pictures or videos, or engage in prostitution.” (Ontario Association of Children’s Aid Societies, 2017)

1.6. VULNERABLE ADULT ABUSE

Vulnerable adult abuse is the mistreatment of Vulnerable Adult by someone they should be able to rely on ... a spouse, a child, another family member, a friend or a paid caregiver.

Abuse of Vulnerable Adults is sometimes described as misuse of power and a violation of trust. Vulnerable Adult abuse can take place in the home, in other residential settings, or in the community.

1.6.1. EMOTIONAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE

Psychological Abuse is the systemic destruction of a person's self-esteem or sense of safety, often occurring in relationships where there are differences in power and control. It includes threats of harm or abandonment, humiliation, deprivation of contact, isolation and other psychologically abusive tactics and behaviours. A variety of terms are used interchangeably with psychological abuse, including emotional abuse, verbal abuse, mental cruelty, intimate terrorism, and psychological aggression. Also, when the abuse occurs in a residential care setting, it is often called systemic or institutional abuse. (Follingstad, D. & DeHart, D., 2000; Doherty, D. & Berglund, D., 2008)

“Emotional and Psychological abuse is any action, verbal or non-verbal, that lessens a person's sense of identity, dignity and self-worth.” (Elder Abuse Ontario, 2018)

Emotional and Psychological Abuse may include:

- excessive, aggressive or unreasonable demands that place expectations on someone beyond their capacity,
- constant criticizing, teasing, belittling, insulting, rejecting, ignoring or isolating,
- or threats of withdrawal of services or of institutionalization.

1.6.2. FINANCIAL ABUSE

Financial abuse is the illegal or unauthorized use of someone else's money or property. It includes pressuring someone for money or property. (Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministers Responsible for Seniors Forum, 2010)

In the case of an elderly person, or an individual without cognitive capacity, “financial abuse is the misuse of an individual's funds and assets without that person's knowledge and/or full consent, or in the case of an older Adult who is not mentally capable, not in that person's best interest.” (Government of Ontario, n.d.)

Examples of financial abuse can include pressuring, forcing or tricking an individual into:

- Lending or giving away money, property or possessions,
- Selling or moving from their home,
- Making or changing a will or power of attorney,
- Signing legal or financial documents that they don't understand,
- Working for little or no money, including caring for Children or Grandchildren,
- Making a purchase one does not want or need,
- Providing food and shelter to others without being paid.

(Elder Abuse Ontario, 2018)

1.6.3. NEGLECT

“Neglect is not meeting the basic needs of the older person/Vulnerable Adult;

Active (intentional) neglect: the deliberate withholding of care or the basic necessities of life to an older adult/Vulnerable Adult for whom they are caring.

Passive (unintentional) neglect: the failure to provide proper care to an older adult/Vulnerable Adult due to lack of knowledge, experience, ability or through being unaware of how to access local services.

Neglect can be:

- Withholding care or denying access to necessary services (home care, nursing) or medical attention
- Leaving a person in an unsafe place
- Improper use of medication – i.e., over/under medicating
- Not providing food, liquids, proper clothing or hygiene
- Failure to assist with activities of daily living
- Abandonment
- Denial of a senior’s basic rights”
(Elder Abuse Ontario, 2018)

1.6.4. PHYSICAL ABUSE/ASSAULT

“Physical abuse is any act of violence or rough handling that may or may not result in physical injury but causes physical discomfort or pain. Physical abuse can be: punching, kicking, shoving, shacking, hitting, slapping, poking, burning, pulling hair, biting, pinching, arm twisting, spitting at someone, confining or restraining a person inappropriately.”
(Elder Abuse Ontario, 2018)

“This may include the inappropriate and/or unwarranted use of physical or chemical restraints.” (Ontario Seniors’ Secretariat, 2015)

A person commits an assault when:

- without the consent of another person, they apply force intentionally to that other person, directly or indirectly;
- they attempt or threaten, by an act or a gesture, to apply force to another person, if they have, or cause that other person to believe on reasonable grounds that they have, present ability to effect their purpose; or
- while openly wearing or carrying a weapon or an imitation thereof, they accost or impede another person or begs. (Canadian Criminal Code, 1985, c. C-46)

1.6.5. SEXUAL ABUSE AND MISCONDUCT

Sexual abuse, often also known as sexual misconduct, is defined as an act or assault of a sexual nature that violates the sexual integrity of the victim. The Supreme Court of Canada held that the act of sexual assault does not depend solely on contact with any specific part of the human anatomy but rather the act of a sexual nature that violates the sexual integrity of the victim. When investigating sexual abuse, there are certain relevant factors that the police will consider:

- The part of the body touched
- The nature of the contact
- The situation in which the contact occurred
- The words and gestures accompanying the act
- All other circumstances surrounding the act
- Any threats that may or may not be accompanied by force
(Edmonton Police Service, n.d.)

In the case of an elderly person or a person without cognitive capacity, sexual abuse occurs “without that person's full knowledge and consent; it includes coercing an older person through force, trickery, threats or other means into unwanted sexual activity. Sexual abuse also includes sexual contact with seniors who are unable to grant consent and unwanted sexual contact between service providers and their clients.” (Elder Abuse Ontario, 2018)

In the case where there is abuse of power of authority involving sexual activity, this too would constitute as sexual misconduct or sexual abuse.

1.7. GENERAL GUIDELINES AND PRINCIPLES FOR REDUCING THE RISK OF ABUSE

The following are general guidelines and principles reflected in this document:

1.7.1. WHEN RISK INCREASES, SUPERVISION SHOULD ALSO INCREASE.

For the protection of our Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults, supervision of all Ministry Personnel will be intentional and will take place through formal and informal visits to classrooms and programs by Ministry Leads;

1.7.2. RISK INCREASES AS ISOLATION INCREASES.

- a) Avoid Isolation and being alone with a minor!
- b) Where possible, all meetings with Vulnerable Persons are to be with a group or in pairs rather than be alone.
- c) It is preferable to have more than one Screened Adult present when working with Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults. If the other adult cannot be in the same room, it is best to have them close by in the same building and aware of your meeting, acting in the role of a Hall Monitor.
- d) Your objective should be to meet in an open, public space rather than a closed, private space. A hallway is better than a secluded room. An office is better than a person's home. A public restaurant is better than a shopping mall.
- e) When meeting, an open door is better than a closed door; a door with a window is better than a solid door.

1.7.3. RISK INCREASES AS ACCOUNTABILITY AND ADHERENCE TO POLICIES DECREASE.

- a) At all times (where possible) make others aware of your activities and your whereabouts, particularly when meeting with Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults.
- b) A strategy for program maintenance will be developed and reviewed at the beginning of each ministry year (September) to ensure training, the updating of files, and the physical environment are compliant with this policy.
- c) Regular meetings with a Ministry Lead are to be arranged to discuss the ongoing nature and actions of the ministry.
- d) If a person is involved in a situation where a boundary is violated, or something occurs that is out of the ordinary or could be misinterpreted, or where such a violation or occurrence is alleged, they should immediately report it and discuss it with a supervisor. If the Ministry Lead is unwilling, unable, or unavailable for discussion they should seek out a Board Member or Lead Pastor to discuss the issue. Such incidents should be immediately reported to the insurer if appropriate.

- e) Activities that could easily lead to allegations of abuse or harassment, such as allowing unsupervised internet access to Children or Youth on computers, vehicle transportation by Ministry Personnel alone with an unrelated Child or Youth, or improperly supervised sleepovers, are prohibited without express written permission of at least one Parent of the Child or Youth and the Program Lead.
- f) All local Health and Safety Standards must be adhered to.

1.7.4. RISK INCREASES WHEN THERE IS AN IMBALANCE OF POWER, AUTHORITY, INFLUENCE AND CONTROL BETWEEN A POTENTIAL ABUSER AND POTENTIAL VICTIM.

- a) Never lose sight of the power differential in the role that you serve. Avoid all forms of abuse of power!
- b) Corporal punishment is prohibited.
- c) Report all allegations and suspicions of Vulnerable Person maltreatment.

1.7.5. KEY TO DEMONSTRATING DUE DILIGENCE IS BY RETAINING DOCUMENTATION.

- a) Registration forms, Letters of Informed Consent wherein, Parents give written permission for their Children or Youth to participate in off-site group activities, and attendance records will be gathered and kept on file.
- b) Incident reports will be written and submitted on all accidents and injuries.
- c) All documents may be scanned, saved as a PDF or saved on the cloud in a secure format that cannot be easily manipulated. A secure backup of documentation will be retained, and files will not be overwritten.
- d) Documentation mentioned within this policy should be retained permanently.

2. POLICY ON PROTECTION PROCEDURES

2.1. PLAN TO PROTECT® COMMITTEE

A Plan to Protect® committee will oversee the implementation of Plan to Protect® including, but not limited to, the screening and training of all Ministry Personnel. (See Appendix 30)

The P2P Committee includes the Process/Facilities Manager, Youth Pastor, Children's Pastor and a Member at Large.

The Plan to Protect® committee reports to the Board and will provide an annual report to the Board and congregation.

The report should include the following:

- Members of the Plan to Protect® Committee
- Number of active Ministry Personnel screened and trained serving in a Position of Trust
- Status of abuse insurance coverage
- Number of Trainings held
- Highlights of the past year
- Goals for the upcoming year
- Items of praise and prayer requests

2.2. MINISTRY PERSONNEL RECRUITMENT AND SCREENING

2.2.1. Human Rights and Discrimination

Grace Christian Fellowship of Fergus is committed to treating people fairly, with respect and dignity, when hiring and recruiting, in accordance with applicable provincial human rights law.

Ministry Personnel will conduct their hiring and recruiting practices in line with applicable provincial human rights laws and will avoid asking questions that violate applicable provincial human rights legislation in interviews and when checking references.

GCF will be transparent about how applicable provincial human rights law permits religious organizations in certain circumstances to give preference in hiring persons or to hire only persons who are members of the same religious group or meet a creed-based qualification.

2.2.2. RECRUITMENT AND SCREENING PROCESS

All ministry departments engaging the vulnerable sector must adhere to this recruitment and screening process. Church Leadership or the Ministry Lead determine if an individual is a suitable or potential candidate for ministry. Individuals in a Position of Trust of confidential information must sign a Confidentiality Agreement (Appendix 28).

Prospective Ministry Personnel are to submit to the recruitment and screening process managed by the Process/Facilities Manager. The recruitment and screening process includes:

- Ministry Personnel Application Form (Appendix 2)
- Adherence to six month waiting period
- Signing the Statement of Faith
- Reference checks
- Face-to-face interview
- CPIC Criminal Record Clearance check and Vulnerable Sector Search
- Training
- Final approval from Church Leadership

Ministry Personnel must complete the recruitment and screening process prior to being placed in a Position of Trust and must have a Ministry Personnel file kept with church records. **These files are to be kept permanently.**

Current and active Ministry Personnel who have been serving at *GCF* as of January 1, 2020 will be grand-parented into the screening process as it relates to interviews and reference checks. Current and active Ministry Personnel must be in good standing with *GCF*. They are required to have current Criminal Record Checks on file that have been completed on behalf of *GCF* (not dated before June 1, 2022) and are required to attend a Plan to Protect® Orientation Training.

2.2.3. QUALIFICATIONS FOR MINISTRY

A minimum six-month waiting period prior to serving is required for individuals wanting to work in ministries serving the vulnerable sector. All prospective Ministry Personnel will have regularly attended *Grace Christian Fellowship of Fergus* for the previous six months.

Exceptions can be made in circumstances where the Ministry Personnel have transferred from another church of the same denomination in which they have been long-time members and are ministry workers in good standing or they are being employed by the church. In these circumstances, reference checks must be received from at least three individuals, including one from their previous minister or children's ministry director.

Ministry Personnel serving in a Position of Trust or leadership are members or adherents in good standing who support the doctrines, direction and by-laws or constitution of *GCF*.

Individuals that have been accused, or convicted, or are under the suspicion of crimes against Children or Youth, or who have been convicted of violent crimes will not have any involvement in ministries or programs where Children or Youth participate until such time as they have been found innocent or the accusation has been found unsubstantiated.

2.2.4. MINISTRY APPLICATION FORM

Prospective Ministry Personnel are to complete a Ministry Personnel Application Form (Appendix 2). Youth wanting to volunteer as leaders are to complete the Ministry Personnel Application Form for Youth Working with Children (Appendix 3).

- A verifiable witnessed signature is required for the protection of all parties
- Individuals who transfer from another congregation unknown to the Church Leadership must include contact information or a reference from a pastoral staff member of their previous church
- In accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. F.31* regulations, the Ministry Personnel Application Form must include the reason for which the information is being collected.
- Ministry Personnel Application Forms are to be kept confidential and available only to the Ministry Lead, Church Leadership or Designated Screening Personnel (Process/Facilities Manager).
- Completed Ministry Personnel Application Forms are to be kept on file permanently and in a secure location
- Reference Checks

The Screening Committee will conduct at least two qualitative reference checks on all prospective Ministry Personnel (Appendix 4).

- Prospective Ministry Personnel must sign a liability release before reference checks are conducted
- References provided must fit with the acceptable categories for those who want to work with Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults
- Individuals who transfer from another church unknown to *Grace Christian Fellowship of Fergus* Leadership must include contact information or a reference from a pastoral staff member of their previous church
- Reference checks may be conducted by telephone or in person to confirm the suitability and appointment of prospective Ministry Personnel

2.2.5. REFERENCE CHECKS

The Process/Facilities Manager will conduct at least two qualitative reference checks, including one from their previous pastor, on all prospective Ministry Personnel (Appendix 3).

- Prospective Ministry Personnel must sign a liability release before reference checks are conducted
- References provided must fit with the acceptable categories for those who want to work with Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults
- Individuals who transfer from another church unknown to *GCF* Leadership must include contact information or a reference from a pastoral staff member of their previous church
- Reference checks may be conducted by telephone or in person to confirm the suitability and appointment of prospective Ministry Personnel

2.2.6. INTERVIEW

Face-to-face interviews will be conducted by the Process/Facilities Manager. (Appendix 6)

2.2.7. CRIMINAL RECORDS CHECKS (CPIC - CANADIAN POLICE INFORMATION CLEARANCE)

Criminal Record Checks must be conducted on all Ministry Personnel serving Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults.

- If it applies, the first check done on an individual should be a Vulnerable Sector Scan/Search.
- Criminal Records Checks are to be renewed every three (3) years
- Criminal Records Checks are to be conducted on all Ministry Personnel 18 years of age and older and are to be kept on file permanently.
- If a prospective Ministry Personnel has had a history with the Child Welfare Agency, a request may be made by the Church Leadership for the individual to sign consent for a child welfare check.

If a CPIC check or Vulnerable Sector Check is returned “NOT CLEAR” the prospective candidate will be asked to do one of the following:

- a) either submit to a Criminal Record Check with fingerprinting verification and to submit to disclosure and verification of the crimes committed that they have been convicted of; or
- b) withdraw their application from serving in a position of leadership or a Position of Trust with Children, Youth or Vulnerable Persons.

Note: Without verification of convictions and without a clear Criminal Record Check, individuals cannot be placed in a Position of Trust with Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults.

2.2.8. SCREENING OF YOUTH

Minors who apply to work and volunteer shall complete the same screening requirements as Adult Ministry Personnel with the following exceptions:

- No Criminal Record Check is required for applicants under the age of 18. When an active Youth volunteer turns 18, they will submit a Criminal Record Check within 3 months to continue volunteering.

2.2.9. RED FLAGS AND DISQUALIFIERS

The Process/Facilities Manager is to be trained on identifying red flags during the screening process and are to be alert to any red flags that may disqualify prospective Ministry Personnel from working with the vulnerable sector. When a red flag is identified, Screening Personnel are to bring the red flag to the attention of the Lead Pastor or their delegate.

Screening Personnel are to keep information confidential and information regarding red flags and disqualifiers will only be shared on a need to know basis.

The following red flags are to be automatic disqualifiers:

- Violent crimes wherein a weapon was used
- Any convictions of crimes against Children, Youth or Vulnerable Adults or violent crimes, including but not limited to:
 - o Child abuse (sexual or otherwise), abduction, murder/manslaughter, incest, rape, sexual assault

The Lead Pastor and the Board are to make a decision to disqualify or not to disqualify someone from a Position of Trust due to one or more red flags. Depending on the severity of the red flag, the decision may be made in conjunction with legal counsel and the insurance company. Their decision, reasoning, and steps taken to mitigate any potential risks are to be documented and kept permanently. No exceptions are to be made for convictions that fall under automatic disqualifiers.

Documentation is to be maintained permanently for all prospective Ministry Personnel applying to be Ministry Personnel. If someone does not qualify for a Position of Trust, the reason for disqualifying the candidate is to be kept confidential but is to be included on their personal record which is to be kept under lock and key.

2.2.10. PLAN TO PROTECT® TRAINING

An initial Orientation training on abuse prevention education is required for all Ministry Personnel. This applies to all employees, Board Members, Screening Personnel, Leaders and Volunteers, and anyone else in a Position of Trust.

Training must be conducted by a qualified trainer. The training must include a review of the Plan to Protect® Policy and all safeguarding procedures. Ministry Personnel are to be educated about their obligation to report suspected abuse and on how to recognize and identify the symptoms of abuse and molestation.

All Ministry Personnel are required to attend Orientation training prior to placement. All Ministry Personnel are required to attend annual Refresher training sessions thereafter.

Attendance is to be taken at all training events and noted in the Ministry Personnel file for each individual present. All Ministry Personnel must sign an agreement form (Appendix 2d) confirming they have read, understood and are willing to comply with the Plan to Protect® policies and procedures.

2.2.11. CODE OF CONDUCT AND COVENANT OF CARE

Upon completion of screening and training, Ministry Personnel must sign a Covenant of Care and Code of Conduct attesting that they will abide by the Plan to Protect® policies, procedures and training.

The Covenant of Care and Code of Conduct is to be signed on an annual basis.

2.2.12. APPROVAL PROCESS

The Board is to appoint an individual that is to approve candidates that have completed the screening process. All Ministry Personnel are to be approved by Church Leadership upon completion of recruitment and screening process.

- Approval must be signed and dated,
- The recruitment and screening process must be completed within a three month period of time,
- Workers in process of completing the recruitment and screening process are not to be placed in a Position of Trust,
- Access to Children are to be limited until final approval is received.

2.3. DOCUMENTATION MANAGEMENT

2.3.1. PLAN TO PROTECT® PROGRAM MAINTENANCE

A strategy for program maintenance will be developed and reviewed at the beginning of each ministry year (September) to ensure training, the updating of files, and the physical environment are compliant with this policy.

2.3.2. DOCUMENTATION

Registration Forms, Attendance Records, and Letters of Informed Consent must be collected and kept on file.

Incident Reports must be written and submitted on all accidents and injuries. Suspected Abuse Report Forms must be written for all suspicions, allegations and disclosures of abuse.

Documentation on screening and involvement of Ministry Personnel will be compiled in Ministry Personnel files.

All documents will be scanned, saved as a PDF or saved on the cloud in a secure format that cannot be easily manipulated. A secure backup of documentation will be retained, and files will not be overwritten.

Documentation mentioned within this policy must be retained permanently.

2.3.3. DOCUMENTATION STORAGE AND RETENTION

As there is no statute of limitations for child abuse in Canada, and extended statute of limitations for crimes and personal injury related to Vulnerable Adults in Canada, all documentation pertaining to program activities involving Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults shall be kept and stored permanently following *Grace Christian Fellowship of Fergus'* document retention procedures, and in compliance with the areas below.

Wherever possible, forms must be legible, include the date, location and full names of everyone present or involved, and include any explanatory notes which provide context. The individual who completed a form must be identifiable.

This policy applies to all documentation created and gathered in relation to Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults. The documentation to be retained includes, but is not limited to:

- All documentation gathered during Recruitment, Screening, Training of Ministry Personnel
- Ministry Personnel files
- Files created during the planning, supervision, and implementation of program activities
- Insurance policies
- Registration Forms
- Attendance Forms
- Disciplinary memos of Ministry Personnel
- Letters of Informed Consent (Releases and Waivers)
- Transportation records
- Rental agreements
- Incident Forms
- Suspected Abuse Forms
- Any follow-up or additional information attached to such forms as is necessary to provide a clear picture of *Grace Christian Fellowship of Fergus'* activities, participants, and supervision

Documentation storage and backup

All documents and files pertaining to *Grace Christian Fellowship of Fergus'* activities, participants and supervision will be stored in a locked cabinet accessible only to authorized Ministry Personnel. A backup will be maintained, containing copies of all documents.

Physical backup will take place off-site, in a fire and water resistant location.

Backups of all documents will be made weekly, and added to the physical back-up on a monthly basis.

An online backup of all files will be maintained, hosted on a server located off-site.

Online storage will be password protected and secure (preferably encrypted). All information stored on the server will be done in an unalterable format (i.e., PDF or password protected) where possible, and the ability to delete items be removed.

Scans of all documents will be made weekly, and added to the online storage on a monthly basis. Where possible, use software that tracks all changes to stored information.

Access to archived documentation

Archived documentation may be needed from time to time, to verify someone's past history, for audit purposes, or to ensure accuracy. In all cases where the archived, stored information must be accessed, care will be taken to adhere to a transparent process. Individuals accessing archived files must have a clear, articulated reason, and always do so under the supervision of at least one other authorized Ministry Personnel.

2.3.4. PERSONAL INFORMATION AND PRIVACY

The protection of personal information is all of our responsibility. Therefore, it is the responsibility of everyone serving to ensure that personal information provided is kept confidential according to this policy.

All Ministry Personnel that have access to personal information must sign a Confidentiality Agreement.

The collection of personal information is limited to what is necessary for the identified purposes and will be collected by fair and lawful means. Personal information must only be used and disclosed for the purposes for which it was collected, except with consent or as required by law. It will be retained only as long as it is necessary to fulfill those purposes. In most cases, information that relate to minors and Ministry Personnel serving with minors will be retained permanently as there is no statute of limitations on child abuse in Canada.

Personal information must be as accurate, complete and up-to-date as is necessary. Personal information must be protected by adequate safeguards. Information about a church's privacy policies and practices must be readily available to individuals upon request.

An individual has the right of access to personal information about themselves and has the right to seek correction. Both these rights are subject to some exceptions as specified in each statute. *Grace Christian Fellowship of Fergus* must provide the means for an individual to challenge their compliance with the above principles. Please refer anyone requesting information to the Church Office Administrator.

2.4. GENERAL PROTECTION PROCEDURES

The following procedures are in place for all programs for Children, Youth or Vulnerable Adults, or where Children, Youth or Vulnerable Adults are in attendance.

2.4.1. PLANNING FOR SAFETY

All Ministry Personnel must ensure a safe environment in their planning and evaluating of all activities. Safety precautions are to be posted and highly visible for Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults.

2.4.2. SUPERVISION OF MINISTRY PERSONNEL

For the protection of our Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults, supervision of all Ministry Personnel will be intentional and will take place through formal and informal visits to classrooms and programs by Ministry Leads or a Pastor.

2.4.3. LIFESTYLE

For the protection of everyone, Ministry Personnel are to be committed to maintaining a consistent spiritual life including prayer, Bible reading, attendance at relevant events, planning meetings and worship services.

Ministry Personnel are to be role models of integrity at all times. Ministry Personnel are to refrain from activities that are illegal or could be considered morally and biblically questionable.

2.4.4. MINISTRY PERSONNEL IDENTIFICATION

Ministry Personnel are clearly identified with a nametag or approved clothing which identifies them to Parents, Vulnerable persons and newcomers.

2.4.5. REGISTRATION AND COMPLIANCE WITH PIPEDA

At the beginning of every ministry year, all Children and Youth are to submit completed Registration and Medical Consent Forms, (Appendix 10) signed by their Parent. These forms are to be photocopied and originals maintained and filed permanently. The photocopies should be taken on all off-site trips and outings in case emergency medical assistance is required and the Parent cannot be notified.

The Registration and Medical Consent Form will not replace specific Letter of Informed Consent Forms for activities that involve an elevated risk or for overnight trips.

The inclusion of 'liability shields' on permission forms has been considered for activities that involve a level of risk.

A release and permission statement will be included on all Registration Forms releasing *Grace Christian Fellowship of Fergus* from unforeseen and accidental damages:

I/We, the parents or guardians named above, authorize the Ministry Personnel of *GCF* to sign a consent for medical treatment and to authorize any physician or hospital to provide medical assessment, treatment or procedures for the participant named above.

I/We, named above, undertake and agree to indemnify and hold blameless the Ministry Personnel, *GCF*, its Church Leadership and Board from and against any loss, damage or injury suffered by the participant as a result of being part of the activities of *GCF* as well as of any medical treatment authorized by the supervising individuals representing the church. This consent and authorization is effective only when participating in or traveling to events of *GCF*.

A statement will be included on all Registration Forms which stipulates the purpose and extent for collecting personal information of Youth:

Grace Christian Fellowship of Fergus is collecting and retaining this personal information for the purpose of enrolling your Child in our programs, to assign the Student to the appropriate classes, to develop and nurture ongoing relationships with you and your Child, and to inform you of program updates and upcoming opportunities at our church. This information will be maintained permanently as it is a requirement of our insurance company and legal counsel. If you wish *GCF* to limit the information collected, or to view your Child's information, please contact us.

2.4.6. ATTENDANCE

Attendance must be taken each time a classroom or program is in session. These attendance records are kept on file permanently.

A record will be kept of Ministry Personnel on duty in each classroom or program. This record will be maintained with the record of attendance and kept on file permanently.

Attendance records must include the date, time, and classroom and everyone present (including visitors) during the program.

2.4.7. OUTSIDE USER GROUPS (RENTERS AND SERVICE PROVIDERS)

For *GCF* to be a safe space for all users, the following policies apply to all groups who use the space, whether they have a connection to the church or not:

All Service Providers, Visitors* and Renters must sign-in upon arrival at the front desk and sign-out when they leave. The individual's name, the date and the time is to be clearly noted. This information is to be kept on file in the Activity Log for that day and kept permanently.

*Note: This does not apply to individuals joining public events as attendees.

If Service Providers are onsite when programming is happening for Children, Youth or Vulnerable Adults, the Service Providers are to be clearly identified with a uniform or a nametag and are to always be accompanied and supervised by Ministry Personnel.

The criteria for Renters or outside user groups to use *Grace Christian Fellowship of Fergus'* facility include:

- Renters must complete a Rental Agreement which must be approved by the Board or by a Ministry Lead.
- Renters must provide a certificate of insurance, with no less than \$2,000,000 Commercial General Liability coverage and *GCF* be named as additional insured.

- Renters must provide evidence that they have a strong abuse prevention policy and protocol in place*, including but not limited to screening and training of staff and volunteers, and minors may not be left unsupervised.
- They must abide by the following for all activities where Children, Youth or Vulnerable Adults are present:
 - o Two Screened Workers providing oversight; or
 - o One Screened Worker providing oversight where Parents accompany their Children, or Caregivers accompany Vulnerable Adults.

*Note 2: If these individuals and groups lack an Abuse Prevention Policy, we are not to provide them with one, rather, we will refer them to Plan to Protect® to secure their own copy of the Plan to Protect® manual.

In the case that *GCF* partners with other churches, agencies or community groups for the delivery of a joint activity or event with Children, Youth or Vulnerable Adults in attendance, Church Leadership requires that their insurance agent be consulted during the planning stage, to determine risks, insurance coverage and shared liability. A Ministry Lead is required to obtain written opinion from the insurance agent acknowledging the status of insurance coverage for these joint activities.

2.4.8. MISCONDUCT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Ministry Personnel are to refrain from all forms of misconduct.

It is the responsibility of the Board, Lead Pastor and Ministry Leads to hold each other and their direct reports accountable. Every member of a church must be accountable for their actions that could impact the reputation of *GCF*, no one is exempt. This flows both up and down in reporting concerns. For example: Ministry Personnel are to be supervised and held accountable by Ministry Leads, Ministry Leads are to be supervised and held accountable by Staff Members, Staff Members are to be supervised and held accountable by the Lead Pastor, and the Lead Pastor is to be supervised and held accountable by the Board as a collective body.

As a community of faith, we reserve the right and freedom to bring to the attention of individuals anything we believe is compromising their integrity, walk with God, or could bring harm to the reputation of the church and cause of Christ. Individuals with concerns must follow Matthew 18 when confronting an individual unless they feel unsafe to do so. Matthew 18 calls for individuals to confront the individual alone first, and if they do not feel that the concern has been taken seriously, they are to bring in another. In the case of *GCF*, they must then bring in the individual's Supervisor, followed by the Church Board. If a person does not feel safe to confront the individual (i.e., in the case of abusive behaviour), they must follow the Whistleblower Policy.

When traveling, Ministry Personnel are to avoid meetings in hotel rooms of another individual other than an immediate family member.

With reasonable cause, Church Leadership reserves the right to look at staff computers, cell phones, and tablets that are primarily used for ministry purposes. This includes but is not limited to photographs and communication. Upon request, these devices must be turned over immediately. Staff Members must provide their passwords for their primary ministry electronic devices to the Office Administrator upon request.

All petty cash and expenses must be accounted for.

If a person is involved in a situation where a boundary is violated, or something occurs that is out of the ordinary or could be misinterpreted, or where such a violation or occurrence is alleged, they must immediately report it and discuss it with a Supervisor. If the Ministry Lead is unwilling, unable, or unavailable for discussion, they must seek out a Board Member or the Pastor to discuss the issue.

2.4.9. DISCIPLINARY ACTION OF MINISTRY PERSONNEL

When a Policy or Procedure of *Grace Christian Fellowship of Fergus* has not been adhered to (i.e. refusal to attend Refresher Training, not completing Incident Reports, tickling a child), the following progressive disciplinary actions should be taken, depending on the nature of the offence. There is zero tolerance for serious offences such as physical or sexual abuse, assault and/or theft – please see step 3 and 4.

Step 1: VERBAL WARNING

Ministry Personnel will be:

- Given a verbal warning regarding the unacceptable behaviour/action.
- Given an explanation of when and how the undesirable behaviour/action took place, including the reason why the behaviour/action was unacceptable.
- Given an opportunity to explain the situation and their actions. This will be their opportunity to give their side of the story.
- Given a description of the desirable and/or acceptable behaviour or actions and reminded that their behaviour goes against a policy and/or the training they received.
- Reminded that they signed a Covenant of Care affirming they would abide by the Policy and Procedures of *Grace Christian Fellowship of Fergus*. A copy of this should be given to them.
- Informed that further disciplinary action, up to and including termination, will follow if unacceptable behaviour continues.
- Notified that the incident will not go into their file, but that it will be taken note of in order to follow up on possible further disciplinary incidents.

NOTE: Some examples of reasons for verbal warnings would include: Not completing an Incident Report, tickling a Child, being alone in a classroom with a Child with the door shut.

Step 2: WRITTEN WARNING

Ministry Personnel will be:

- Given a written warning regarding their unacceptable behaviour/action in the event that the behaviour/action had either been discussed in a previous verbal warning or was considerably severe in nature.
- Given an explanation of when and how the undesirable behaviour/action took place, including the reason why the behaviour/action was unacceptable.
- Given an opportunity to explain the situation and their actions. This is their opportunity to give their side of the story.
- Given a description of the desirable and/or acceptable behaviour/actions.
- Provided with a copy of the written warning, with the original placed in their Ministry Personnel file and shared with the Board/leadership.
- Reminded that they signed a Covenant of Care affirming they would abide by the Policy and Procedures of *Grace Christian Fellowship of Fergus*. A copy of this should be given to them.
- Asked to sign the copy of the written warning as proof that they have received it.
- Notified that future disciplinary problems will be addressed with further progressive disciplinary actions up to and including termination.

At this point, the individual should be asked to take additional professional development training in the area of the infraction (e.g. Social Media) or attend Plan to Protect® Orientation or Refresher Training again. See www.plantoprotectschool.com.

NOTE: Some examples of reasons for written warnings are: inappropriate or rude interaction with Youth or a Parent, a raised voice, inappropriate jokes or comments, impatience, prolonged hugging or touching, or driving alone in a vehicle with Youth without written Parental permission.

STEP 3: SUSPENSION

Ministry Personnel will be:

- Given written documentation regarding the suspension in relation to the unacceptable behaviour/action in the event that the behaviour/action had either been discussed in a previous verbal or written warning, or it was considerably severe in nature.
- The documentation will include information on the offence, the reason for the suspension, and the length of the term of suspension.
- Given an explanation of when and how the undesirable behaviour/action took place, including the reason why the behaviour or action was unacceptable.
- Given a description of the desirable and/or acceptable behaviour/actions.
- Provided a copy of the suspension, with the original placed in their Ministry Personnel file, and shared with the Board/Leadership.
- Asked to sign the notice of suspension as proof that they have received it.
- Notified that future disciplinary problems will be addressed with further progressive disciplinary actions up to and including termination.

During the suspension, the individual will be required to take additional professional development training in the area of the infraction (e.g. Social Media) and re-attend Plan to Protect® Orientation or Refresher Training again. See www.plantoprotectschool.com.

NOTE: Some examples of reasons for suspensions are: suspicion or allegation of abuse, inappropriate text messages, meeting a Child or Youth outside of program times without permission and knowledge of leadership, an incident of verbal abuse, or inappropriate touch.

See also Reporting and Response for suspicions or allegations of abuse

PLEASE NOTE: Ministry Personnel suspended due to suspicions or allegations of abuse should have no contact with vulnerable individuals and they should not be placed in a Position of Trust. The suspension should NOT be overturned unless they have been cleared of any and all allegations or suspicions of abuse. The Lead Pastor or Chair of the Board will contact *Grace Christian Fellowship of Fergus'* lawyer, insurance company and Child and Family Services prior to reinstatement.

Step 4: TERMINATION

Leadership should be consulted and notified when Ministry Personnel are to be terminated. Ministry Personnel will be:

- Given written documentation regarding their termination and the undesirable behaviour/action leading to and justifying the termination.
- Documentation should include information on the offence and any previous disciplinary communications with the Ministry Personnel.
- Given a description of when and how the unacceptable behaviour/action took place, including the reason why the behaviour/action was unacceptable.

- Given a description of the desirable and/or acceptable behaviour or actions.
- Provided with a copy of the termination notice, with the original placed in their Ministry Personnel file. Ministry Personnel file documentation is to be kept permanently, even after termination.
- Escorted from the location maintaining the dignity of the terminated Ministry Personnel by not making obvious to others that they have been terminated and for what reasons.

At the discretion of church leadership, the individual may be encouraged to attend services, bring their Children to programs, and participate in community events held at *Grace Christian Fellowship of Fergus*.

NOTE: Some examples of reasons for termination are: Conviction of Abuse, physical or sexual assault, theft, repeated unsuccessful disciplinary attempts.

2.5. PERSONAL INTERACTION PROCEDURES

2.5.1. OCCASIONAL OBSERVERS

Occasional Observers who join a class will have their attendance recorded and kept on file with the classroom attendance for that day. Occasional Observers do not need to be screened or trained. Occasional Observers will be clearly identified as guests and should be coached on proper protocols for guests. Since they have not been screened and approved, they will not be placed in a Position of Trust with Children who are not their own.

2.5.2. BULLYING

Our community members have a right to a caring, respectful and safe church environment. An anti-bullying policy will therefore be in effect at all times and will be clearly communicated and enforced among participants and Ministry Personnel. All Ministry Personnel will take action to prevent bullying, teach against it, and assist and support Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults who are being bullied. Bullying in any form will not be tolerated.

Bullying is defined as unwanted, aggressive behaviour that involves a real or perceived power imbalance and is repeated or has the potential to be repeated.

Types of Bullying:

- Verbal Bullying
- Social Bullying
- Physical Bullying
- Cyber Bullying
- Racial Bullying
- Homophobic Bullying
- Sexual Harassment

Procedure for Dealing with Bullying:

Any incidents, reports or suspicions of bullying will be acknowledged, reviewed and dealt with appropriately and immediately. All incidents, reports or suspicions will be reported immediately to the Ministry Lead.

Appropriate action will take place based on the situation. Possible action may include, but is not limited to:

- Complete an Incident Report (Appendix 12) after each incident
- Notify both sets of Parents after each individual incident
- Provide a warning that bullying will not be tolerated
- Suspension for one day/event if bullying persists
- Suspension for three days/events after next incident
- Prohibit the individual from participating if the bullying does not stop
- If necessary/appropriate, contact and consult with police.

All attempts will be made to work towards reconciliation and change of behaviour with the person who is bullying. Counseling and support will be recommended and if possible provided for the victim of bullying.

2.5.3. HARASSMENT AND DISCRIMINATION

Grace Christian Fellowship of Fergus is committed to fostering an environment that is free of discrimination and harassment and one in which all individuals are treated with respect and dignity. Every attendee of our church community has a right to equal treatment with respect to the receipt of services and facilities without discrimination or harassment based on the following prohibited grounds: race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, family status, or disability.

A right to freedom from discrimination and harassment is also applicable where someone is treated unequally because they are in a relationship, association or dealing with a person or persons identified by one of the prohibited grounds of discrimination.

Every attendee of the *Grace Christian Fellowship of Fergus* community, especially screened Ministry Personnel, is responsible for creating an environment which is free of discrimination and harassment. Those found to have engaged in such conduct will be subject to discipline.

2.5.4. DISCIPLINE & CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

The following form of punishment are not permitted:

- Corporal punishment by Ministry Personnel (Staff or Volunteer)
- Deliberate harsh or degrading measures that would humiliate someone or undermine their self-respect
- Deprivation of a person's basic needs
- Locking or confining a person in a room separate from others

All discipline and group management will be conducted in a loving and caring environment. All attempts will be made to prevent discipline problems from arising and to avoid the need for remedial discipline. All attempts to provide discipline are to adhere to the following:

Preventive Discipline:

- Create a loving, caring atmosphere,
- To gain respect, you must grant respect,
- Model self-discipline and structure in your own life,
- Prepare exciting and interesting activities with short transitions in between,
- Arrange your environment in an age-appropriate way and for learning,

- Establish and communicate realistic expectations for the class,
- Be sure the activities that you provide are meaningful and age-appropriate,
- Be fair and consistent with all participants,
- Be sure your focus is on positive actions and reward positive behaviour,
- Be aware of individuals with special needs and bring their needs to the attention of the Ministry Lead.

Remedial Discipline:

- Deal with problems individually,
- Explain to the individual why the behaviour is unacceptable and instruct them how to do it correctly,
- Redirect the individual to positive action,
- Explain the consequences of unacceptable behaviour by defining the correct way to behave as well as the result of the wrong behaviour,
- Offer choices that are acceptable to both you and the individual.

Group rules will be established to clearly communicate the expectations required of the class. Some suggested rules are:

- One voice talking at a time, and always use inside voices,
- Use good manners,
- Respect each other,
- Quiet hands get answered,
- Obey directions the first time,
- Keep your hands and feet to yourself,
- Be friendly.

2.5.5. CONTACTING OPPORTUNITIES

Ministry Personnel may meet with Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults only during the parameters of ministry programming.

Ministry Personnel are to avoid any activity that would involve isolation and meet in group settings with a team member.

Any requests for exceptions to this policy must be submitted in writing to Church Leadership. Permission must be granted in writing by both Church Leadership and Parents for each event utilizing a Letter of Informed Consent.

2.5.6. COUNSELLING AND PASTORAL CARE

Ministry Personnel are prohibited to counsel the vulnerable sector unless the counselling is approved by the Board, and then only by professional counsellors with appropriate insurance in place.

Church Leadership and Board members may engage in pastoral care but must refer clients to a professional counsellor if they show signs of being affected by the following, or if they require or request specific counselling to deal with any of the following:

- suicidal ideation,
- signs of mental illness,
- gender dysphoria,
- self-injury
- working through a history of substance abuse, or past trauma.

Pastoral care and counselling must be done in a church office during church office hours, when another Ministry Personnel is also on-site.

2.5.7. GIFT GIVING

Grace Christian Fellowship of Fergus requires that all Ministry Personnel demonstrate our commitment to treating all individuals impartially. Ministry Personnel will demonstrate the highest standards of ethics and conduct in all matters when dealing with:

- Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults
- All vendors and suppliers, both existing and potential
- Employees, Volunteers and prospective Ministry Personnel
- Any individual or organization with whom they come into contact

To demonstrate our commitment to these standards and behaviour, all Ministry Personnel must abide by the following gift giving policy requirements:

- Ministry Personnel are to refrain from giving gifts to Children, Youth or Vulnerable Adults unless the gift is given to everyone in a class or group setting and is in no means in exchange for services or favours.
- No gifts of any kind, that are offered by vendors, suppliers, Parents, potential employees or volunteers, potential vendors and suppliers, or any other individual or organization - no matter the value - will be accepted by Ministry Personnel at any time, on or off the work premises if it is given as a means to receive benefit or a bribe including any business courtesy offered. This could include a product discount or any other benefit if the benefit is not extended to all Ministry Personnel, i.e., sale, special accommodation, registration spot, etc.
- Exempted from this policy are gifts such as t-shirts, pens, trade show bags and all other tchotchkes that employees or volunteers obtain, as a member of the public, at events such as conferences, training events, seminars and trade shows, that are offered equally to all members of the public attending the event. This includes:
 - o Food, beverages, and tchotchkes provided at events, exhibitor trade show floor locations, press events, and parties funded by conference or event sponsors.
 - o Cards, thank you notes, certificates, or other written forms of thanks and recognition.
 - o Food, beverages, moderately priced meals and tickets to local events that are supplied by and also attended by current customers, partners, and vendors or suppliers in the interest of building positive business relationships.
- When a gift is offered, and it does not fall under the exceptions policy, Ministry Personnel are required to professionally inform vendors, potential vendors and others of this policy and the reasons *GCF* has adopted the policy.

- Ministry Personnel will request that vendors respect our policy and not purchase and deliver any gift for our employees, a department, an office, or the church, at any time, for any reason.
- Certain gifts given to or received by Ministry Personnel may be appropriate given a context or situation outside of the scope of this policy. Church Leadership may make a written exemption to this policy detailing the reasoning and scope of their decision for any gift.

2.5.8. DATING

Ministry Personnel may not pursue a dating, emotional, or physically intimate relationship with a minor, or someone in a ministry in which they serve. Ministry Personnel are to immediately self-disclose to the Board any and all intimate (psychological or sexual) relationships that begin.

2.5.9. HOME VISITS

Ministry Personnel must secure permission in writing from the Ministry Lead to visit individuals that are deemed Vulnerable Adults in their home.

Ministry Personnel are never to visit a Child in a home without a Parent present at all times.

Ministry Personnel are to maintain and submit monthly communication/visitation logs.

Ministry Personnel are to abide by *GCF's* visitation procedures in order to protect both parties in these situations - the visitor and the visited.

2.5.10. HOSPITAL AND NURSING HOME VISITS

There must be at least two (2) unrelated Ministry Personnel at all events and for all visitation to hospitals and nursing centres, or the door must remain open with family members, nursing staff, or caregivers nearby or present.

When visiting Children or Youth in a hospital, a Parent or family member should be present, or visitation must be done with Parental permission and in teams of two Screened Adults. The door must remain open.

When visiting Vulnerable Adults in hospitals and nursing centres, a Family Member or Personal Caregiver must also be present or visitation must be conducted in teams of two Screened Adults. In hospitals and nursing centers, visitation must be conducted in teams of two or the door must be left open.

Ministry Personnel must avoid scenarios where they are left alone in a hospital room or nursing home room.

2.5.11. DISABILITIES AND PERSONAL SUPPORT WORKERS

On Registration Forms, Parents and Caregivers are encouraged to list known disabilities. Upon registration, Ministry Leads are to determine how best to provide inclusive programming for individuals with disabilities. Ratios will be adjusted to provide additional support needed.

Ministry Personnel are to receive training on accessibility for individuals with disabilities. If *GCF* is unable to provide accommodations and support for individuals with disabilities, personal support workers may accompany the individual to the program.

All personal support workers shall comply with *GCF's* screening and training process prior to taking responsibility over any individual.

If a personal support worker is personally hired and screened by a Child or Youth's Parents then the Parents will provide a signed form identifying the support worker as a private hire and provide copies of the criminal record check and references conducted.

A personal support worker who is not hired or screened by *GCF* may only take responsibility over the individual they were hired to support, but may not supervise any other participants in a program, activity, or event.

All documentation regarding personal support workers and their screening procedures will be kept on file permanently.

2.5.12. GENDER IDENTITY

In the beginning, God created humans as relational beings, the inherent design of male and female reflecting God's image. Sexuality, our maleness and femaleness, is a dimension of our embodied existence. Sexual difference and complementarity are thus good features of our identity. While identity, fulfillment, and the path to human flourishing are founded on a relationship with the Creator, in Genesis we learn that God made sex an expression of intimacy, love, and self-giving, to be experienced between one man and one woman in a lifelong covenant.

Given the inherent dignity of all persons, *GCF* will not tolerate the harassment, discrimination or any language of hate or loathing towards those who hold a differing view on human sexuality. Ministry Personnel, and members of *GCF* must treat all persons, regardless of gender, belief or sexuality, with respect and compassion. It is our desire to create a place of welcome and grace, and we are committed to creating a safe environment for all individuals. In light of this commitment, *GCF* will take every reasonable step to ensure that its learning, working and living environments are maintained free from harassment and discrimination.

Every individual has a right to equitable treatment without discrimination with respect to attending the activities of *GCF*. No person attending *GCF* shall be asked or required to 'prove' their gender (e.g., by providing a doctor's note, identity documents, etc.) in order to gain access to these opportunities.

Disclosing the gender status of an individual associated with the *GCF* community without explicit and directly expressed consent or in the absence of a "need to know" circumstance is generally known as "outing". Outing in any form is not supported by the leadership of *GCF* as it is recognized as a form of harassment that puts the individual's physical, emotional and psychological safety at risk.

2.6. PERSONAL INTERACTION PROCEDURES

2.6.1. HEALTH AND SAFETY GENERAL GUIDELINES

Ministry Leads and Ministry Personnel are encouraged to be certified and trained in first aid.

The names and contact information of individuals who are certified in first aid are to be posted in the Children's and Youth program areas for easy access, with a Master List maintained by the Office Manager.

Ministry Leads must be informed of any individual(s) having severe allergies. The information is to be posted in the Children's and Youth departments for easy access and Ministry Personnel who have the individual(s) in their care must be informed.

The cleaning and sanitation of toys and table surfaces must be done after each use.

2.6.2. ILLNESS

An individual who is ill and could therefore expose others to illness will not be received into the program room. Factors and symptoms to consider are:

- Fever, unusual fatigue, irritability, coughing, sneezing, runny nose and eyes, vomiting, diarrhea, inflamed mouth and throat
- Individual(s) with a known communicable disease

2.6.3. MEDICATIONS

Ministry Personnel are not to give or apply any medications (i.e., Tylenol, Polysporin, vitamins, etc.) without written authorization from either a parent, guardian or a physician.

Any prescription medication must be brought in the original container with the doctor's prescription, dosage and date clearly printed on the label. Parents must fill out a medication form and sign dosage instructions. Medication must be presented to the Ministry Lead or designate on duty in the Child's room and handed over at sign-in. (Appendices 15 and 16)

When medication is brought for a Child, the medication is to be kept in a locked box in the cupboard or refrigerator.

Dosage times must be recorded in the daily journal or Attendance Form for all staff to see. At dosage time, the Ministry Lead or designated health worker must double check the medication form and instructions, dispense medication to the Child and sign the form noting the amount and time medication was given.

In the extreme case where EpiPens and puffers are needed for allergies or asthma, written instructions are to be provided by the Parent or Guardian to the Ministry Lead. Requests should be written, signed, dated and filed permanently.

2.6.4. DEALING WITH CUTS OR INJURIES INVOLVING BLOOD

Universal precautions must be used when administering any kind of first aid. (Appendix 9)

Blood pathogen policies will be posted in classrooms.

When an individual is injured, they are to be separated from others. The area where the injury occurred or where any blood may have dropped on the floor or toys is also to be isolated. Ministry Personnel need to ensure that no other individuals have had contact with any of the blood from the cut or injury.

Non-latex gloves are to be used when bandaging the injury, avoiding contact with mouth, ears and eyes. Extreme care will be taken in cleaning up all blood and bloody bandages and the safe and secure removal of waste and disposal of gloves to a secure waste removal container. Hands are to be washed carefully with sterilizing soap available in the first aid kit.

When ministering to individuals with HIV or Aids, specific guidelines for the education and care of these individuals will be developed and followed.

2.6.5. EMERGENCIES

Emergency evacuation procedures will be reviewed semi-annually by Church Leadership and the Board. These procedures are to be posted in a visible place in each classroom stating the planned route of escape to the nearest exit.

Church Leadership, in cooperation with the Ministry Lead, will arrange for annual fire and evacuation drills.

A first aid kit will be kept in each classroom with Ministry Personnel being educated on the kit's contents. In addition to the first aid kits in each room, a master first aid kit must be available to GCF's building and in any church-owned vehicle.

Each kit will contain a pair of disposable non-latex gloves, disinfectant towelettes, two or three 4" x 4" gauze pads for blood absorption, small scissors and bandages.

A Parent will be contacted when an injury, accident or medical emergency occurs. Incident Reports (Appendix 12) are to be completed for any and all accidents. Injuries are to be reported to the Ministry Lead.

2.6.6. SEVERE ALLERGIES

Parents and Caregivers are responsible for notifying GCF of any known allergies which their Children have. This information is to be noted on their Registration Form.

Upon permission of Parents, a notification of severe allergies will be posted in a Child's classroom for high visibility, including a picture of the Child, a list of known allergies and typical signs of reaction. Ministry Personnel assigned to care for the Child must be made aware of the allergy and the treatment required if a reaction occurs.

In recognition of individuals with severe peanut allergies, we recommend that churches consider the value of establishing a peanut-free policy for their facility.

2.6.7. DRUGS AND ALCOHOL

The legalization of cannabis does not change GCF's legal obligation to provide a safe workplace and programs. Ministry Personnel are not to be impaired while serving or working at GCF.

Ministry Personnel will take action to prevent the abuse of drugs and alcohol, teach against it, and promote a safe environment for everyone.

GCF will take steps to ensure individuals who are impaired or whose ability to work is affected by consuming substances such as alcohol and drugs, including cannabis, are removed from the premises, unless accommodation has been provided for medicinal use. Individuals (including minors) under the influence of drugs or alcohol will be escorted off the premises as they may pose a risk to other individuals.

Ministry Personnel cannot possess or consume alcohol or cannabis during church/program hours or at any time during hours of employment including, but not limited to, off-site trips, unless prescribed by a physician, as outlined in this policy.

Ministry Personnel may not possess or consume/use alcohol or drugs (legal or non-legal) where minors are present or where Ministry Personnel are responsible for the supervision and oversight of minors.

If minors are found to be in the possession of drugs or alcohol, it will be confiscated and turned over to the police. An incident report must be completed. Parents will be notified.

Individuals (including minors) under the influence of drugs or alcohol will be escorted off the premises as they may pose a risk to other individuals.

During employment or volunteer service, GCF has a zero tolerance for the possession and/or consumption of illegal drugs at any time.

All Ministry Personnel working with Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults are required to notify their supervisor of their use of prescription and non-prescription medication which may produce side effects causing them to be under the influence of the medication or left impaired by the medication. If such medication is prescribed, Ministry Personnel may be required to provide relevant documentation by a physician. GCF reserves the right to verify with a physician (either with such Ministry Personnel's own physician or an independent medical examination) that Ministry Personnel can safely continue to perform their duties. If the organization determines from the examination or medical information that the Ministry Personnel is unable to safely perform their duties, GCF will not grant continued service in ministry for the period of time that the Ministry Personnel remains impaired. GCF is committed to respecting the privacy of Ministry Personnel, and Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults.

Ministry Personnel that travel on behalf of the organization are expected to conduct themselves in a professional and positive manner at all times. Irresponsible consumption of alcohol or cannabis at any time during employment, volunteer service or engagement with GCF may result in immediate termination and in the case of employment, without compensation. Therefore, Ministry Personnel must exercise responsible alcohol and drug consumption when off-site, including after working hours. Any consumption must not in any way impede capacity or ability to respond competently to situations that may arise any time and must not negatively impact the reputation of GCF.

Ministry Personnel whose duties include driving must not be under the influence of any drugs or alcohol while operating a motor vehicle. It is important for GCF drivers and the passengers to be fully functional and alert when operating or driving in a motor vehicle. When GCF drivers are transporting other member of the organization or any Children, Youth or Vulnerable Adults on behalf of GCF in commercial vehicles, such as a rented vehicle, or in their own vehicles, there is a zero alcohol and cannabis consumption policy for all relevant members of GCF for a full 24 hours prior to the scheduled time of departure.

2.6.8. INCLEMENT WEATHER CONDITIONS

In extremely hot or cold weather, Ministry Leads may use their discretion to determine if it is safe to take Children and Youth outside for programming.

Children and Youth are not to be forced to go outside if the temperature is below -10 degrees Celsius, or if there is a wind-chill advisory in effect, causing the temperature to feel below -10 degrees Celsius. They are also to be kept indoors if the temperature is above 30 degrees Celsius or if a smog alert is in effect.

Ministry Personnel must use discretion when smog alerts are in effect, especially if there are Children and Youth with respiratory ailments in attendance.

In the event of a thunderstorm with lightning, Children and Youth are to remain inside.

In the event of a natural disaster, Children and Youth and Ministry Personnel are to remain indoors, away from windows. If time allows move as a group to the foyer close to the kitchen, Ministry Personnel are to escort Children and Youth calmly.

In the event of inclement weather (heavy snow, tornado warning, etc.) GCF may close due to travel warnings and high-risk of injury and danger. A message is to be posted on church social media accounts, a banner placed on the website, and an email notice to be sent to all families.

2.6.9. MISSING PERSON

The safety of Children and Youth will be given our highest priority. If a person goes missing, time is of the essence. As soon as an individual is found to be missing, all available Ministry Personnel must follow the steps below:

- Conduct a preliminary search of their last known location.
- Assemble all remaining Children and Youth together in a central safe location, enabling as many Screened Leaders as possible to search for the missing person. Split the Screened Leaders into two groups - one group to search, and one group to supervise the remaining Children and Youth. One person is designated as the primary point of contact.
- The Primary Point of Contact must contact the Ministry Lead and Church Leadership immediately, and remain available to coordinate between the searchers, remaining Ministry Personnel, off-site leadership and outside groups.
- The group supervising the Children and Youth must stay together and wait for further instructions from leadership. Do not send any minors to search for a missing person.
- The searching group must appoint individuals to keep watch over points of entry or exit, and to reduce movement in the area by any other groups - under ideal circumstances, no one exits the area.
- Remaining Leaders and Volunteers, (as many as possible without putting the remaining Children at risk) must begin by conducting a search of the “hot spots” - nearby, likely and dangerous areas - then move to less immediate areas.
- Search both inside the building and outside the building. Search inside locations: cupboards, washrooms, closets, stairwells, classrooms, auditorium/sanctuary, baptismal tanks and offices. Search outside locations: parking lot, beach, river, swimming pool, nearby streets, parks, playgrounds, railroad tracks, and ravines, etc.
- At the 10-minute point of searching, the Primary Point of Contact must call 9-1-1 to notify the police and emergency officials of the missing person. Provide them with the individual’s age, physical description (including a description of their clothing), last known location, and possible whereabouts in the building or community where the Child went missing. If possible, provide a photograph.
- The Primary Point of Contact is to designate someone (themselves or a Church Leader) to notify the family members (in the case of a Child, their Parents) immediately after notifying the police.
- Continue to search, cooperating with the police and local authorities.
- Once the missing person is found, administer first aid as needed.
- If a Child is found with another Adult, attempt to calmly and gently detain the Adult until the police arrive. If the Adult leaves, record a description of the individual as soon as possible if they are unknown, and provide it to the police.
- Complete an Incident Report and keep the report on file permanently.
- If the media arrives on the scene, only the Church Leader may speak to the media.

2.6.10. LOCKDOWN GUIDELINES

These guidelines are to be put into action in the event of a lockdown or during a lockdown drill. Although each church is to draft their own lockdown policy with details pertaining to their specific needs and facilities, this policy will help give Church Leadership a place to start.

- Identify green zones and red zones within the facility. Green Zones: More secure – rooms that have doors that lock. Red Zones: open areas, including gymnasiums and auditoriums.
- As soon as the facility is put on “Lockdown Alert”, the designated person in charge will announce “Code Red” to all classrooms and Ministry Personnel: “Announcement: Emergency Code Red, the facility is going into lockdown, repeat, Emergency Code Red, the facility is going into lockdown.”
- Immediately call 9-1-1, unless it is a situation where the police first alerted the church. Instruct all individuals present to shut off cell phones.
- All present must clear away from red zones as quickly as possible. They are to go to the nearest green zone, or if an outside door is closer, they are to evacuate the building.
- Prior to locking doors, those in charge of classrooms are to ensure that any individuals walking the halls within their classroom’s proximity are ushered quickly into the room. The door must then be closed and locked. If the classroom door has a window, Ministry Personnel are to cover it and turn off the lights.
- Those in charge of classrooms are to assist students in turning tables on their sides and position them away from the door and windows. The students are to then take refuge behind them.
- Attendance is to be taken, including a list of all missing and extra students in the room. This list must be emailed to the office, and the teacher must take the list with them if directed to leave the classroom.
- Custodians or ushers are to check all washrooms in the facility, remove any individuals who may be within, and lock the washrooms from the outside.
- Everyone is prohibited from leaving green zones until they are instructed to do so by the designated person in charge or a police officer. Those in charge of classrooms are to remain in the rooms, maintain silence and keep the students calm. Do not contact the church office, the office will contact you when it is safe to do so.
- When instructed to evacuate the building, do so quickly and silently.
- Once the police arrive on the scene, they have the ultimate command of the incident and their instructions will be followed without protest.
- At least twice during a calendar year, GCF is to perform a lockdown drill. Church Leadership are to notify the church community of a lockdown drill the week or day prior to the drill.
- Circumstances and details of the drill are to be recorded and kept on file. It is strongly recommended to have a debriefing with participants, and keep notes of these debriefings on file.

2.6.11. FIRE AND EMERGENCY EVACUATION

Whenever the fire alarm sounds, everyone is to leave the building and wait in the designated waiting area, even if it is a false alarm or a drill.

Ministry Personnel, Church Leadership, and selected members of the congregation are to be trained in Emergency Evacuation Policies and Procedures and must be prepared to assist in the event of an Emergency Evacuation. These Ministry Personnel and members of the congregation are to be referred to as Fire Marshals.

Ministry Personnel must not wait for Parents to pick up their Children when there is an alarm. Rather, they must immediately vacate the building with the Children and Youth and go to the designated location.

Congregation members are to immediately vacate the building. Parents are to be notified to meet their Children at the designated locations outside of the building. A fire alarm does not negate the need for appropriate sign-out and pickup of Children.

The congregation shall periodically conduct a “Fire Drill” in order to practice safe evacuation of the building, according to the procedures.

The Board, in coordination with Ministry Personnel, must be responsible to:

- Assure the periodic training of Ministry Personnel, Church Leadership, and additional selected members of the congregation in Emergency Evacuation Policies and Procedures;
- Schedule and carry out periodic “Fire Drills;”
- Periodically review and update the Emergency Evacuation Policies and Procedures.

Exits are to be maintained free of snow, ice and obstructions.

In the event that the Fire Department is called to the scene, the Fire Department (and other Emergency Responders) have authority to determine a course of action. Ministry Personnel, church members, and building occupants are to follow their directives.

2.7. TECHNOLOGY CONCERNS

2.7.1. ONLINE FORUMS AND GATHERINGS

Online Forums and Gatherings provide an opportunity for us to connect with students during times of self-isolation and quarantines. However due to the high-risk nature of online presence, the following protocols are in place when hosting an online forum / gathering:

- Online Forums/Gatherings must be hosted by GCF’s licensed and operated accounts only, no personal accounts may be used.
- GCF’s licensed and operated accounts must be accessible to more than one member in leadership (passwords, usernames and email credentials).
- To host an Online Forum/Gathering, Ministry Personnel must first secure permission in writing from the Ministry Lead overseeing the department.
- A Letter of Informed Consent must be prepared and submitted to the parent prior to the event. Parents must sign and submit the Letter of Informed Consent to allow a student to participate utilizing an electronic signature platform (i.e., SmartWaiver or DocuSign).
 - o Parents will be provided with an opt-in option on the Letter of Informed Consent to allow their children to use a webcam while a session is being recorded.
 - o Parents will be briefed on the documentation management and retention policies outlined in these policies.
 - o Any Children or Youth that do not have express, written permission from a parent to use the webcam will not be permitted to do so.
- For the duration of the meeting, the Facilitator will have the video platform in ‘Moderator’ mode to restrict the video and webcam sharing of other attendees.
 - o If the ‘Moderator’ mode is unavailable on the video platform, or GCF deems it beneficial for attendees to use a webcam, only Children and Youth that have express written consent from a parent to be

recorded will be permitted to use a webcam. Those that do not have consent to be recorded will not be permitted to use their webcams.

- Ministry Personnel will either:
 - o Remain on the video platform until all attendees have left before closing the session; OR,
 - o Close the session to end the meeting for all attendees.
- Ministry Personnel found to be contacting children, youth or Vulnerable Adults through personal accounts will be subject to disciplinary action by GCF.
- In the event that a conversation with a Child or Youth moves beyond regular program activities, Ministry Personnel must inform Leadership and provide a copy of the conversation immediately.
- Leadership will follow procedure outlined in the Plan to Protect® manual for Suicide, Substance Abuse and Self-Injury. Procedures may include:
 - o Reporting to the proper authorities; and/or,
 - o Informing the parents of the Child or Youth

For Children Grades 1-6:

In order to create a safe experience, GCF must:

- Maintain at least two (2) screened, unrelated adults in GCF's Gatherings (in accordance with the Recruitment and Screening section above).
- The online gathering's Facilitator will record the program. The recordings will not be posted online and will only used for security and resource purposes.
- Attendance will be taken at each online Gathering.
- A parent must be in the room with their child at the beginning and at the end of a call. This is our check in and out process.
- Parents are recommended to remain in the same room as their children when they are on the call, and to not leave their children in front of a computer alone in an isolated room.
- Parents are requested to ensure that the call be played on computer/device with speakers instead of earphones/headphones.
- GCF Gatherings are not permanent chat rooms. Parents will be required to check their children in at each online Gathering. Children will not be able to join an online Gathering outside the pre-set program time.
- Upon completion of the call, the attendance record and the recording must be sent to the Ministry Lead in charge of the department and retained permanently.

For Youth Grades 7-12:

In order to create a safe experience, GCF staff will:

- Maintain at least two (2) screened, unrelated adults (in accordance with the Recruitment and Screening section above) in our online Gatherings.
- The online gathering's facilitator will record the program. The recordings will not be posted online and will only used for security and resource purposes.
- Attendance will be taken at each online Gathering.
- GCF Gatherings are not permanent chat rooms. Youth will not be able to join an online Gathering outside the pre-set program time.
- Upon completion of the call, the attendance record and the recording must be sent to the Ministry Lead in charge of the department and retained permanently.

2.7.2. SOCIAL MEDIA, EMAIL AND TEXT MESSAGING

Church members, adherents and Ministry Personnel are encouraged to demonstrate and model purity, integrity, transparency and accountability with all communications including those noted above.

Email or text communication with Children 12 years of age and under is prohibited.

Youth Ministry Personnel will agree to allow the Ministry Lead or designate access to their Social Media networks in order to facilitate regular supervision.

Communication with Youth 13 years of age and older via Social Media, telephone and texting is permitted under the following conditions:

- Communication with a Youth via email, text, Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook Messenger, or other Social Media networks will be monitored closely and only used with written Parental permission (Appendix 10).
- To avoid isolation on social media, one of the following must take place:
 - Ministry Personnel may communicate with Youth via email with written Parental permission (Appendix 10). The Parents will be copied on all communications; or
 - In cases where Ministry Personnel contact Youth via email, text or Social Media without copying Parents, they must include another Ministry Personnel in the communications; or
 - Use a public Social Media option (wall-to-wall, church-owned pages and accounts). In either case, Parental permission to contact Youth directly is required.
- Ministry Personnel will limit their online communications with Youth via Social Media to daytime hours (8:00am - 11:00pm).
- Online communication will not involve video messaging (FaceTime, Skype, etc.) in any form, unless it is a training post or group conference call approved by the Ministry Lead.
- In the rare occasion that a conversation with a Youth moves beyond communication of information, Ministry Personnel will notify their Ministry Lead immediately and submit a copy of the conversation to the Ministry Lead. Ministry Personnel will request the Youth to continue the conversation in person with the Ministry Lead.

2.7.3. INTERNET AND COMPUTER USE

Church Leadership are to determine who will have access to GCF's Wi-Fi. Passwords are not to be distributed without permission from Church Leadership.

Public computers are to be placed in open areas where the screen is easily visible. Users are to be held accountable through the use of sign-in and sign-out sheets, and/or a user password.

Internet filters are to be installed on each computer to limit access to certain types of content.

Church Leadership are to appoint an authorized computer system's individual who is to periodically review the browser history as well as the documents downloaded onto church-owned computers.

An 'Acceptable Computer Use Policy' are to be developed and posted in the computer centre. (Appendix 20).

Ministry Personnel should closely monitor the use of their church owned devices and not allow minors to use these devices.

2.7.4. PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEO RECORDING

With a desire to capture on film memorable moments at GCF, photography and videotaping will be closely monitored by Church Leadership. The AV Department and ministry departments must abide by the following guidelines:

- Photography and videotaping will be done by designated Ministry Personnel who have been screened and trained in Child / Youth protection procedures;
- For general, public church activities including services where videotaping will be done in the sanctuary, and with the church family together, it is required that signage be posted notifying those in attendance that the service / activity will be captured on film. Individuals can either stay out of the line of the camera or, if necessary, opt out of the activity / service.
- For all Children and Youth ministry activities and programs, Parental permission must be secured prior to taking photographs of Children and Youth. Parental permission will be secured on an annual basis on the registration forms (Appendix 10);
 - o No photographs of Children or Youth will be taken without prior written approval;
 - o No photographs will be posted on GCF's website, Facebook, Instagram, or other online social networks without Parental permission and only on sites monitored closely by Church Leadership;
- To easily identify Children and Youth that are not to have their picture taken, it is recommended that they be clearly identified with either a sticker on their nametag or with an arm band. All effort must be made to adhere to the Parent's request.
- No photographs of Children/Youth will be tagged or labeled with the name of the Child/ Youth at any time, including but not limited to bulletin boards, newsletters, websites, social media sites, or church bulletins.
- When archiving and filing photographs/video of Children and Youth, only those with written Parental permission can be kept for future use. Written permission forms must be kept permanently on file in the church office. Archived photos must be labeled, and cross referenced with Parental permission form.

2.8. FACILITY PRECAUTIONS

2.8.1. FACILITY MODIFICATION

Recognizing that there are many storage areas within the church, elevated precautions must be taken to monitor these areas. Storage closets and doors must be locked at all times except when in use. When doors are unlocked, additional Hall Monitors will be on duty to monitor these areas.

All windows in doors in Children's program areas are never to be covered in any way so as to keep clear sight lines into rooms.

Washroom facilities in the preschool area are for the sole use of Children.

Nursery doors are to be secured from the inside.

All electrical outlets are to be kept covered when not in use in the nursery and toddler classrooms.

Doors of rooms and closets must be locked when not in use during Children's programs.

For accessibility:

The following accommodations will be considered:

- Ramps and automatic doors.
- Elevators or stair lifts.
- Handicap seating and space for wheelchairs.
- Accessible washrooms with wide doors, space for assistive devices, low sinks, and handrails.
- Signage and program materials accessible to those with limited vision.
- Accommodations for those with hearing loss

2.8.2. SECURITY SYSTEMS AND CAMERAS

Security cameras are provided for the purpose of elevated safeguarding precautions, and to aid in investigations.

As the purpose of Plan to Protect® is to prevent injury, harm and abuse from happening, security cameras that are installed for recording purposes are not to be considered a replacement for Hall Monitors or elevated supervision.

2.9. HIGH RISK ACTIVITIES

2.9.1. HIGH RISK ACTIVITIES

High risk activities include each of the following:

- Activities identified as having a higher risk, such as off-site events, water activities, online events, overnight events, billeting, transportation, mission trips, and small groups, and;
- Irregular activities that take place, including one-off events, yearly events, and new activities.

High risk activities that fall into the categories above may only take place under the following criteria:

- A risk assessment must be completed prior to the event;
- Permission must be granted from the Church Board or designate;
- Parents must be provided a Letter of Informed Consent one week in advance of the event;
- A qualified instructor or lifeguard has been appointed; and
- Ratios have been modified to provide elevated supervision.

At GCF, we are committed to protecting Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults.

The following activities are prohibited:

- Uncontrolled free falls or jumps that exceed 8 feet;
- Driving at high speeds; and
- Minors driving all-terrain vehicles or motorized vehicles.

2.9.2. TRANSPORTATION

When planning off-site activities, Parents are to be encouraged to drop off and pick up their Children and Youth at the event location. For out of town events, commercial school carriers are to be used whenever possible.

Our first concern in transportation is the safety of our Children and Youth. Drivers must obey all the rules of the road including the speed limits. Reckless or unsafe driving will not be tolerated.

When not using commercial carriers, all Ministry Personnel drivers transporting on behalf of GCF must complete the following prior to the event:

- Be pre-approved by the Ministry Lead,
- Provide a copy of their valid driver's license,

- Provide a copy of their current automobile insurance policy, and,
- Have a minimum of five (5) years driving experience in good standing.

The number of occupants in vehicles transporting Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults during GCF sponsored activities must not exceed the number of seat belts and each passenger must be in age-appropriate safety restraints. Seat belts must be worn by everyone and remain fastened at all times the vehicle is in operation.

No individual driver can drive beyond an accumulated 13 hours of driving time in a 24 hour period after at least 8 hours of consecutive rest. Drivers are also required to have 2 hours of break time over their 13 hour driving time with at least 30 mins at each meal time.

Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults must never be left alone in a vehicle. At least two (2) Ministry Personnel must be in each vehicle transporting Children during GCF sponsored activities. Exceptions to this policy may only happen when Ministry Leads and Parents are informed, and there is more than one Child/Youth in the vehicle, avoiding isolation.

A copy of the 'Off-site Travel Form' (Appendix 15) will accompany the group with the original left in GCF's office and filed permanently consisting of:

- Names and phone numbers of all participants
- Location of event and phone number(s)
- Drivers and vehicles involved

When transportation is being provided by GCF, a Letter of Informed Consent for Transportation must be signed by Parents of minors (Appendix 16). The travel forms must be maintained and filed in the church office. Forms are to be kept on file permanently.

2.9.3. OFF-SITE EVENT PLANNING

Prior to any off-site trip the Ministry Lead must complete a risk assessment. The results of the risk assessment must be provided when securing approval to host the off-site event.

All off-site trips must be pre-approved by a Pastor.

A Letter of Informed Consent for the off-site trip will be given to the Parents no less than one week prior to the event. Information must include the exact location of the event, emergency phone numbers, a list of Adult Ministry Personnel attending the event, and any inherent risks of the event.

If there is travel involved or there are additional elements of risk to the activity, Parents will be informed of risks and required to provide clear permission for each element of risk.

Sufficient supervision by at least two screened Adults is required to ensure protection and safety for all involved.

Copies of Letters of Informed Consent (Appendix 13), medical authorizations, and any additional Registration Forms (Appendix 10) for each Student must be kept on hand at each event.

Attendance of all Ministry Personnel, Children, Youth, and Occasional Observers must be recorded on the Off-Site Travel Forms. (Appendix 15) The Travel Form must be maintained and filed in the church office. Forms will be kept on file permanently.

2.9.4. OFF-SITE EVENT PLANNING: SHARED ACTIVITIES

In the case that outside users, members, adherents or renters are granted permission to use the facility for activities involving Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults, that are not direct ministries and activities of GCF, it is required that they provide a certificate of insurance, with no less than \$2,000,000 Commercial General Liability coverage with abuse coverage and GCF be named as additional insured. The user or renter is also required to demonstrate that they have a full Child/Youth protection policy and protocol in place. If they lack an Abuse Prevention Policy, GCF will refer them to Plan to Protect® to secure their own copy of the Plan to Protect® manual.

In the case that GCF partners with other churches, agencies or community groups for the delivery of a joint activity or event with Children or Youth, the leadership of GCF requires that their insurance agent be consulted during the planning stage, to determine the risks, insurance coverage and shared liability. The Program Leader is required to obtain written opinion from the insurance agent acknowledging the status of insurance coverage for these joint activities.

2.9.5. OFF-SITE EVENT PLANNING: HOME GROUPS

The following protocols is to be adhered to for all group meetings hosted in homes:

- Host homes and families must be approved by a Pastor.
- At no time may Children be left unsupervised. One of the following two criteria for supervision must be in place:
 - The Child must stay with the Parent at all times; or
 - If Children are separated from their Parents, two Screened Adults must be assigned to supervise the Children; or one Screened Adult with the second Screened Adult acting in the role of a Hall Monitor to check on the group frequently throughout the event.
- Children are never to be left unattended or left in the care of only Youth child care worker(s). There must always be a minimum of one Screened Adult and a Hall Monitor supervising the Children.
- Programming for Children is to be planned in advance in conjunction with Church Leadership. Prior to each event, Parents must be notified of the activities that the Children will participate in. This includes but is not limited to verifying appropriate games, computer activity, and screen activity (i.e., TV, video, Netflix).
- Children are not to be left alone with Unscreened Adults or Youth.
- Home Group Leaders will be responsible to:
 - Take attendance each time a group meets as part of a Cell/Home Group;
 - The Attendance Form must include the date, location and the names of all Adults and Children in attendance;
 - The attendance must include the age or grade of Children, participant's first and last name, full names of all Ministry Personnel and Occasional Observers attending on that date.
- Each Home Group Leader must remit this Attendance Form within one week to the Pastor or Ministry Lead or to the church office.
- These Attendance Forms are to be kept on file permanently.

2.9.6. FIELDTRIPS AND SPECIAL EVENTS

All off-campus activities are to be pre-approved by the Ministry Lead with Parents being notified at least one week prior to the outing.

Proper written Letter of Informed Consent and Registration and Medical Consent Forms are required for each individual participating in field trips and special events. Photocopies of the forms must be kept in the Ministry Lead's possession during trips and events with the originals filed in the church office. (Appendix 13 and 10)

All trips and outings are to be supervised by a minimum of two approved, unrelated Adult Ministry Personnel.

When planning local special events, it is preferred that Parents drop off and pick up their Children at the event location. For out of town events, it is preferred that a commercial carrier be employed.

Children and Youth may not be transported one-on-one. Mentoring relationships must be conducted in teams and in public places. Parents are encouraged to drop their Children or Youth off and pick them up.

All Ministry Personnel drivers transporting individuals during church activities must be pre-approved by the Ministry Lead, provide a copy of their valid driver's license and current automobile insurance in accordance with the church insurance policy, and have had a minimum of five years of driving experience.

Church vehicles are to be driven by Ministry Personnel that have been pre-approved by Church Leadership. These drivers are to be insured under the church automobile insurance policy.

The number of occupants in the vehicle are not to exceed the number of seat belts and each Child must be in age appropriate safety restraints. Seat belts must be worn by everyone and remain fastened at all times the vehicle is in motion. Children are not to be left unattended in a vehicle.

2.9.7. OVERNIGHT EVENTS

All overnight activities are to be pre-approved by Church Leadership.

Proper written Letter of Informed Consent and Registration and Medical Consent Forms are required for each Child or Youth participating in overnight events. Forms must be kept in the Ministry Lead's possession during trips and events and a photocopy filed in the church office. The originals are to be kept on file permanently. (Appendix 13 and 10)

All overnight activities must have a minimum ratio of two Ministry Personnel for every 10 Children or Youth. Ministry Personnel are to be assigned a specific group of Children or Youth for who they are responsible. If both genders are in attendance, there must also be both male and female Ministry Leaders providing supervision.

All trips and outings must be supervised by a minimum of two approved, unrelated Adult Ministry Personnel.

When transportation is being provided by your church, a Letter of Informed Consent for Transportation must be signed (Appendix 16). The travel forms must be maintained and filed in the church office. Forms are to be kept on file permanently.

2.9.8. SHOWER AND CHANGE ROOM GUIDELINES

These guidelines are in place with such activities as water events during VBS in mind.

Locker Rooms must be supervised at all times. Two Adult screened individuals must be present together in the dressing or locker room with Children or Youth while they are showering or changing; screened personnel must not be alone with minors in this setting.

Out of respect for the Children and Youth, and to maintain a high standard of professionalism, Ministry Personnel will announce their arrival prior to entering a dressing or locker room.

Screened personnel are not permitted to change or shower at the same time as Children and Youth.

Separate facilities should be designated for both genders or, if these are not available, separate showering/changing times will be arranged.

The use of photographic or video recording devices, including cell phones, is prohibited in dressing or locker rooms at all times.

2.9.9. OVERNIGHT TRIPS AND HOUSING

For the protection of our Children and Youth, the following guidelines will be followed prior to all off-site trips where overnight accommodations must be secured.

A notice with a Letter of Informed Consent (Appendix 13) will be sent home to Parents at least one week in advance, advising them that an overnight trip is being planned, which requires the team to stay in a conference centre/camp/hotel/motel. The notice will note:

- The inherent risks associated with the event;
- The precautions being taken to minimize the risk and to raise the level of safety provided for their Children and Youth; and,
- Specific sleeping and travel arrangements that have been planned.

The Parent must return the signed and witnessed Letter of Informed Consent which includes the required liability shields.

Ministry Personnel travelling with Children and Youth must complete the screening and training process outlined in this policy prior to departure. Screened and trained Ministry Personnel who are placed in a Position of Trust with Children and Youth must be known by *GCF* for six months.

Any individuals travelling with the team who do not qualify as screened Ministry Personnel must have separate sleeping arrangements.

When travel plans require overnight housing, housing must be arranged in the homes of screened and approved billets, or in a conference centre, camp, or church where Children or Youth can stay together, and where more than one screened Adult can be assigned to each common sleeping area. When this is not possible, and it is necessary that the group stay in hotels or motels, the following plans must be made so that Children and Youth have distinctly separate sleeping arrangements from Ministry Personnel. In these plans, safety will be prioritized using the following guidelines when possible:

- Hotel rooms will be all together in one wing of the hotel or motel; and
- Parents are encouraged to accompany the team, assigning the family to hotel rooms; or, Ministry Leads request the availability of suites with two or three bedrooms per suite and assign two Children or Youth of the same age to a separate room, set apart from the two Adult screened Ministry Personnel; or,
- Ministry Leads must assign two unrelated Adult Ministry Personnel to a hotel room with two or more Children or Youth; or,
- In hotel or motel rooms with adjoining doors, Ministry Leads must assign one Adult Ministry Personnel with two Children or Youth in each room. For accountability purposes, the door separating adjoining rooms must be kept ajar or open at all times. Children and Youth must have distinctly separate sleeping arrangements from other Adults.

Ministry Personnel are never to be alone in a room with a Child or Youth.

2.9.10. BILLETING AND HOSTING

For the protection of our minors, it is required that all Adults residing in the home where billets are provided must complete the following screening process prior to hosting. Screening includes:

- A recommendation from a Pastor or member of Church Leadership
- A Criminal Record Check

Information guidelines are to be distributed to host homes no less than one week in advance of minors arriving at their home.

Any allergies and medications for minors will be communicated to the host home prior to arrival, with clear directions on how to manage allergies and medications.

Minors must always be billeted in teams or small groups of the same gender, must have distinctly separate sleeping arrangements from the household members, and are not to be left alone in the home without adequate adult supervision.

Curfews shall be established and enforced when minors are being billeted. All minors staying in host homes are to be informed of proper etiquette, rules and curfew guidelines.

2.10. CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES

The following procedures are in place for ministries including but not limited to : Nursery, Sunday School, and all other children's ministry programs designated for Children birth to grade six.

2.10.1. MINISTRY PERSONNEL/CHILD RATIOS

Room settings must comply with established ratios for Ministry Personnel and Children at all times. Established ratios are:

- Two Ministry Personnel for every 6 infants (birth to 18 months old)
- Two Ministry Personnel for every 10 toddlers and pre-schoolers (18 months old to 4 years of age)
- Two Ministry Personnel for every 30 elementary age Children (6 years old to gr. 6)

2.10.2. PROPER DISPLAY OF AFFECTION WITH CHILDREN

Appropriate Touch:

Recognizing that Children need appropriate displays of affection that reflect pure, genuine and positive displays of God's love, appropriate touch of Children will be age and developmentally appropriate. We encourage Ministry Personnel to:

- Hold a preschool Child who is crying,
- Speak to a Child at eye level and listen with your eyes as well as your ears,
- Hold a Child's hand when speaking, listening or walking with them to an activity,
- Gently hold the Child's shoulder or hand to maintain focus while you redirect the Child's behaviour,
- Put your arm around the shoulder of a Child when comforting or quieting is needed,
- Pat a Child on the head, hand, shoulder or back to affirm him or her.

All touch must be done in view of others.

Inappropriate Touch:

Recognizing that the innocence of Children must be protected, certain actions are deemed inappropriate and will not be permitted. Ministry Personnel are not to:

- Kiss a Child or coax a Child to kiss you,
- Engage in extended hugging and tickling,
- Hold a Child's face when talking to or disciplining the Child,
- Touch a Child in any area that would be covered by a bathing suit (strictly prohibited except in cases of assisting preschoolers as outlined in washroom procedures),
- Carry older Children or allow them to sit on your lap,
- Have prolonged physical contact with a Child.

Ministry Personnel are not to be left alone with a Child.

2.10.3. CHILD-TO-CHILD SEXUAL PLAY OR ABUSE

If caregivers discover age-appropriate consensual Child-to-Child sexual play, use it as a teachable moment. Calmly figure out what happened by asking open-ended questions. Provide appropriate consequences and provide education in the area that appears most relevant to the situation. For example: learning names and functions of body parts, clarifying social rules and privacy, understanding how to respect their own bodies and others, identifying friendship vs. intimate relationships, and age-appropriate sexual education.

- Reassure the Child that you care about them.
- Fill out an Incident Report, notify Parents and leadership, and respond appropriately.
- If it is inappropriate sexual play, if there is an imbalance of power or authority, if there is a difference in age, ability or strength, if the actions are aggressive in nature or do not follow age of consent laws, fill out a Suspected Abuse Report Form and make a report to the proper authorities immediately.
- Notify Parents as instructed by authorities.
- Keep all documentation of Child-to-Child sexual play and abuse permanently.

2.10.4. WASHROOM GUIDELINES

Upon registering Children for programs, Parents will be notified to take their Children to the washroom prior to programs.

For Nursery:

Ministry Personnel are not required to change the diapers of young Children. It is the responsibility of a Child's Parents to change diapers.

Diaper changing procedures are to be clearly posted in the diaper changing area. (Appendix 8).

In the rare case Ministry Personnel do change diapers, it is to be done only by a designated Adult Ministry Personnel and must be conducted within view of other Ministry Personnel.

For Preschool Children:

Preschool Children are not to go to the washroom alone.

One of the following will be adhered to when accompanying preschool Children to the washroom:

- Two (2) Ministry Personnel escort a group of Children to the washroom OR
- One (1) Ministry Personnel escort a group of Children to the washroom with one (1) Hall Monitor appointed to assist with washroom and security duties.

Ministry Personnel are never to be alone with a Child in an unsupervised washroom and they are never to go into a cubicle with a Child and shut the door.

When a preschool Child needs assistance in a washroom, Ministry Personnel may only enter the washroom cubicle to assist following these guidelines:

- The outside washroom door must be propped open and the Ministry Personnel must stand in an open cubicle doorway,
- Ministry Personnel will take into consideration the privacy of the Child.

For Elementary Children:

Elementary Children are not to be sent to the washroom alone but must be accompanied by a buddy and Ministry Personnel.

Ministry Personnel will escort the Children to the washroom, prop the door open and remain outside the washroom door to wait for the Children before escorting them back to the room.

Ministry Personnel are not to be alone with Children in an unsupervised washroom and are never to enter a cubicle with a Child and shut the door.

2.10.5. RECEIVING AND RELEASING CHILDREN

Receiving and releasing Children under the age of 6 is strongly monitored. A mandatory sign-in and sign-out form is to be used in all Children's programming. (Appendix 22)

Children are not to be dropped off in a classroom without Ministry Personnel present.

Babies and preschool Children are to only be released into the care of the Child's Parent or designate utilizing a signature, security number or identification card.

Parents and visitors are not to enter the nursery or preschool classroom when picking up their Child unless requested to do so.

For Younger Elementary Aged Children:

Younger elementary students and newcomers are to remain in the classroom until the Parent or designate comes to pick them up and the student demonstrates recognition.

Consideration must be given to security, church facilities and location when determining the age of release of older elementary Children. Ministry Personnel are to ask on an informal basis whether the Child knows where to find a Parent. If the Child demonstrates uncertainty, the Ministry Personnel will keep the Child in the classroom until the Parent or designate picks up the Child.

2.11. YOUTH PROTECTION PROCEDURES

The following policies and procedures are in place for ministries including but not limited to : Youth Group, Sunday School, youth discipleship, and all youth ministry programs designated for Youth 12 – 18 years in age.

2.11.1. PHYSICAL CONTACT

Physical contact guidelines are to be posted in Youth rooms.

Ministry Personnel must limit physical contact with Youth to what constitutes appropriate touch, such as:

- One arm hugs
- Shoulder to shoulder hugs
- Touch on the back or shoulder

Ministry Personnel must refrain from inappropriate touch at all times, such as:

- Chest-to-chest hugging
- Extended hugging
- Over exuberant affection
- Lap sitting
- Kissing
- Touching of thighs, knees, back rubs or inappropriate spots of the body

Ministry Personnel must be cognizant of, and refrain from, conduct that could be misinterpreted, such as:

- Horseplay
- Tickling
- Extended backrubs

All touch should be done in view of other people.

2.11.2. MINISTRY PERSONNEL / YOUTH RATIOS

Programs for Youth must comply with the following established staffing ratios:

- Junior High events – Two Ministry Personnel for every 30 students
- Senior High events – Two Ministry Personnel for every 30 students
- Overnight/Off-Site events – Two Ministry Personnel for every 16 students

There must be at least two (2) unrelated Ministry Personnel at all events. Overnight events with mixed genders must be supervised by both male and female Ministry Personnel.

It is recommended there be at least a five (5) year age difference between Ministry Personnel and the Youth they supervise.

2.11.3. MENTORING

Church Leadership must grant approval for a mentoring ministry to take place. Once approved, for the protection of those we mentor and for Ministry Personnel engaged in mentoring, the following policies are to be followed:

- The Ministry Lead is responsible for assigning mentees with mentors.
- Ministry Personnel granted to be mentors must be screened and trained according to recruitment and screening policies and procedures.

- Ministry Personnel are encouraged to meet with Youth in small group settings and in teams.
- Parental permission must be granted in writing using a Letter of Informed Consent.

If off-site mentoring, the following must take place:

- A risk assessment must be submitted to Church Leadership.
- The Ministry Lead must be informed of the time and place of the meeting prior to the meeting.
- Mentoring must be done in small groups, or in conjunction with another team of two.
- Mentoring can then take place at the church or an approved stationary public location, such as a coffee shop, library, restaurant, or campus cafeteria; and
- Separate transportation must be arranged (avoiding isolation in a vehicle).

If mentoring is not done in small groups, it may only take place at the church or in a public setting, in view of other people. Furthermore, these additional policies must be followed:

- The Ministry Lead must pre-approve the conducting of any one-on-one mentoring with the information being documented and filed.
- The public setting where mentoring takes place must be a static location, not subsequently moving to another location.
- One-on-one mentoring is permissible only for mentoring minors thirteen (13) years of age and older.
- The difference in the age between the mentor and the mentee must be five (5) years or more, subject to the mentor being a minimum of twenty-one (21) years of age, or older.

Mentors must avoid meeting in a home setting unless it is the home of the mentee, and the Parents are at home during the meeting and the mentoring happens in a common shared room (i.e., living room, family room, or dining room).

2.11.4. YOUTH-TO-YOUTH SEXUAL ACTIVITY

If Ministry Personnel discover the occurrence age-appropriate consensual sexual activity, they are to use it as a teachable and mentoring moment.

- Calmly discuss your concerns with open-ended questions. Provide education in the area that appears most relevant to the situation. For example: discussing the church's theological position, safety concerns, clarifying social rules and privacy, understanding how to respect and honour each other, identifying friendship vs. intimate relationships, and age-appropriate sexual education.
- Reassure the young people that you care about them.
- Fill out a Suspected Abuse Report Form, and respond appropriately by encouraging the Youth to discuss their relationship and activity with their Parents. If they are not willing to tell their Parents, it may be appropriate for Ministry Personnel to notify their Parents if you deem the Youth to be in an unsafe sexual relationship or if they are below the age of consent.
- If it is inappropriate or not consensual sexual activity, if there is an imbalance of power or authority, if there is a difference in age, ability or strength, if the actions are aggressive in nature or do not follow age of consent laws, fill out a Suspected Abuse Report Form and make a report to the proper authorities immediately.
- Notify Parents as instructed by authorities.
- Keep all Suspected Abuse Report Forms and documentation permanently.

2.12. ADULT PROTECTION PROCEDURES

The following procedures are in place for programs and ministries where Vulnerable Adults are in attendance and/or for opportunities where Vulnerable Adults are visited and ministered to.

2.12.1. PHYSICAL CONTACT

Ministry Personnel must refrain from inappropriate touching at all times:

- Chest-to-chest hugging
- Extended side hugs
- Overexuberant affection
- Sexual activity
- Kissing on the mouth
- Touching of the thighs, knees, lower back, buttocks, or other inappropriate spots of the body
- Any form of touch that makes someone feel uncomfortable, i.e., attempting to forcefully hold their hand or any part of the body, or even trying to hug someone without their consent.

Ministry Personnel are aware of what constitutes appropriate touch of Adults:

- One-arm hugs
- Shoulder-to-shoulder hugs
- Brief touch on the shoulder or hand

Ministry Personnel must be cognizant of conduct that could be misinterpreted and avoid these actions:

- Compliments regarding someone's body or clothing
- Whistling
- Tickling
- Offers of backrubs

2.12.2. NEW IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE SETTLEMENT

Newly arrived immigrants and refugees to Canada are vulnerable due to their dependency on others to assist with acclimation to a new country, culture, and in some cases a new language.

A plan and strategy for Refugee sponsorship and engagement has been approved by the Board and is reflective of both the Refugee Sponsorship Agreement Holder handbook and the Plan to Protect® policy. The plan:

- Requires all Refugee Sponsorship team members be screened and trained per the Plan to Protect® policy;
- Ensures Refugee family members are solely responsible for their own Children;
- Includes both oral and written translation;
- Remains in place until the Refugees are independent or no longer the legal responsibility of GCF.

For the initial year of sponsorship and dependence, Ministry Personnel are not to assign the care of Refugee Children to minors under the age of 18 years old. Following this time, all Child protection procedures will be adhered to in accordance with the procedures outlined under the "Child Protection Procedures."

All care procedures will be followed as outlined in "General Protection Procedures," "Child Protection Procedures," and "Youth Protection Procedures." This includes Occasional Observers, personal care and washroom guidelines, dating, discipline, contacting opportunities, and transportation.

Temporary Housing

If temporary housing is provided with a church family, the following guidelines must be followed:

- All Adult members of the home must be appropriately screened and trained.
- Refugee family members will have distinctly separate sleeping arrangements from the other household members. Separate sleeping arrangements must be made available for each family member, or as preferred by the Refugees.
- The Refugee family members will be housed together, and Children are not to share a bedroom or bed with the host family Children.
- Children will accompany Parents to meetings and appointments whenever possible. e. If young Children are part of the family, all electrical outlets will be kept covered when not in use. f. Children will not be left alone in the care of any minors.
 - For the protection of all parties, the host family will maintain a daily log of activities. This log is to be submitted to the church office on a monthly basis.

2.12.3. PERSONAL CARE

Personal Care is the responsibility of care givers and family members, not Ministry Personnel.

Note: Caregivers and family members may look forward to the respite of Ministry Personnel coming to visit the Vulnerable. It is at the Ministry Personnel's discretion if they wish to provide this extra level of care; however, at no time may Ministry Personnel be left alone in a home or behind closed doors with Vulnerable Persons

2.12.4. MENTORING ADULTS AND PASTORAL CARE

Only Ministry Personnel approved by the Lead Pastor may mentor Adults or provide pastoral care under the umbrella of *GCF*.

Mentoring and pastoral care must take place in a church office or a stationary public location, such as a coffee shop, library, restaurant or another public location, or a room with the door fully open.

Mentors are to maintain and submit monthly communication and appointment logs.

Individuals providing pastoral care must maintain a journal or calendar of appointments and a summary of pastoral care that has been provided.

When meeting off-site, separate transportation is to be arranged (avoiding opportunities for isolation).

2.12.5. SHELTERS, RECOVERY AND REHABILITATION MINISTRIES

This policy is for ministries of *GCF* where overnight housing and shelter is provided to individuals in recovery or seeking a safe residence.

Visitors

Visitors and non-housing Ministry Personnel are discouraged from coming to the residence, this includes Board members and Directors. In the rare occasion that this may occur, the visit must be scheduled well in advance when there is a minimum of two unrelated Ministry Personnel present.

No individuals of the opposite gender are allowed in the sleeping quarters of residences.

Guest Log

In the rare occasion where visitors do come to the shelter or residence, a guest log is to be maintained.

Guests' first and last names, along with the names of Ministry Personnel present must be acquired for every visit. The date and time of all guest comings and goings are to be captured on the guest log. The log will be retained permanently.

Confidentiality

Unless granted permission, the location of the residence must be kept confidential. It is a vital matter of the safety of residents and Ministry Personnel working and living in the house.

This specifically refers to any mention of:

- The ACTUAL STREET ADDRESS of the house;
- ANY IDENTIFYING CHARACTERISTICS of the house or programs, (i.e., description of buildings, neighbourhood, etc.)

No information shall be divulged without written, informed consent of Leadership.

In addition, Ministry Personnel taking participants on outings may not disclose to associates, friends, relatives or anyone that you encounter, that is not involved in shelter ministry, that the participant is part of the Shelter or Residence programs. Participants should only be referred to as 'friends'.

2.12.6. Violence and Harassment

Grace Christian Fellowship of Fergus is committed to the prevention of violence and is ultimately responsible for the health and safety of individuals that come to our services and who work at the church. We will take reasonable steps to protect our Ministry Personnel and attendees from violence.

A security plan has been put in place. It is the responsibility of the Board and Church Leadership to ensure this policy and the supporting security plan are implemented and maintained, and that all Ministry Personnel have the appropriate information and instruction to protect them from violence within the church.

Ministry Leads are to adhere to this policy and the supporting security plan. Ministry Leads are responsible for ensuring that measures and procedures are followed by Ministry Personnel, and that they have the information they need to protect themselves.

Violent behaviour in any form is unacceptable from anyone. All concerns regarding violence or not feeling safe within the church must be reported to the Pastor or Chair of the Board.

Ministry Personnel must work in compliance with this policy. Everyone is encouraged to raise any concerns about violence and to report any violent incidents or threats. If it is an emergency, immediately call 9-1-1. Please complete an Incident Report Form and submit all concerns and complaints to the Pastor or Chair of the Board. The Board must be made aware of these incidents.

The Board and Church Leadership pledge to investigate and deal with all incidents and complaints of violence in a fair and timely manner, respecting the privacy of all concerned as much as possible.

Incidents of Aggressive and Violent Behaviour

To ensure the safety of participants, aggressive behaviour by an attendee will result in the request for them to leave the premises.

In an effort to discourage aggressive behaviour, Ministry Leads are to follow the disciplinary action policy guidelines.

If aggressive behaviour has occurred, the aggressive individual is to be required to stay home from the program for at least one event. Additional incidents are to result in a progressive number of days out of the program. In some cases, it may be necessary to impose permanent removal. This would be addressed on a case-by-case basis, and only after other reasonable alternatives have been exhausted. The Ministry Lead is to work with the individual, caregiver or guardian to identify behaviour triggers and look for solutions.

Complete an Incident Report Form for any act of violence.

2.12.7. Financial Aid

Ministry Personnel may not distribute money or loans from their own resources.

Ministry Personnel are not to give money, or loans to individuals in their programs as a bribe or in exchange for any services or favours.

If an individual asks for aid, requests must be submitted in writing, with supporting documentation demonstrating the need to the Ministry Lead of the benevolent fund. Leadership must approve these funds, whether the aid is being provided personally or from the benevolent fund. Groceries and gift cards can be given in the case of need, but must be approved by the Board or benevolent committee.

All financial aid distributed by *GCF* is to be accounted for by the finance

3. REPORTING & RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS & SUSPICIONS OF ABUSE

3.1. REPORTING PROCEDURES FOR CHILD ABUSE

The following policies outline the procedure and sequence for reporting suspected abuse cases.

3.1.1. HEARING OF AN ALLEGATION OR SUSPICION OF CHILD ABUSE

For the protection of our Children, Youth and Adults, all allegations and suspicions of abuse against Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults will be taken seriously.

Immediately upon hearing of potential abuse or allegations of abuse to a Child or Youth, the Ministry Personnel must complete a Suspected Abuse Report Form documenting all pertinent information (Appendix 25). The victim should not be asked leading questions nor should the accused or any other parties be contacted at the point of completing the Suspected Abuse Report Form.

The Ministry Personnel must make an immediate report to Child and Family Services. Reporting may be done in conjunction with the Lead Pastor or a Ministry Lead.

All forms must be kept permanently unless otherwise directed by legal counsel.

Reporters are requested to submit a copy of the Suspected Abuse Report Form to the Lead Pastor .

3.1.2. REPORTING AN ALLEGATION OR SUSPICION OF CHILD ABUSE

According to the Child and Family Services Act, any person including, but not limited to, Ministry Personnel, who has reasonable grounds to believe that a Child is in need of protection has a legal responsibility to immediately report the matter to child protection authorities or the police. Reporting must be done orally by telephone or in person promptly at the point of observing signs of abuse or receiving a report of abuse. The reporting must be immediate, a direct report, and an on-going report. The report may be done in conjunction with pastoral staff or your immediate Ministry Leader.

A person who knowingly fails to report in these circumstances is in violation of the law and may be found to have committed an offence and may be subject to discipline action by *GCF*.

If the abuse occurred within the context of *GCF*, the Lead Pastor or their designate must notify *GCF*'s insurance provider and seek legal counsel upon hearing of a suspected child abuse case.

GCF will notify and work in conjunction with denominational leadership in any and all allegations or suspicions of abuse that may have happened in the context of church ministry.

If the suspected abuse happened in the context of *GCF* ministries or was committed by a member or attendee of *GCF*, the Parents of the victim must be notified by the Lead Pastor or by Church Leadership in conjunction with Child and Family Services and legal counsel.

3.2. REPORTING AND RESPONDING PROCEDURES FOR ADULT ABUSE

The following outlines the procedure and sequence for responding to suspected Vulnerable Adult abuse cases.

3.2.1. HEARING OF AN ALLEGATION OR SUSPICION OF ABUSE AGAINST AN ADULT

All allegations and disclosure of abuse or harassment against Adults are to be taken seriously.

Upon hearing an allegation or disclosure of abuse or harassment against an Adult, Ministry Personnel must complete a Suspected Abuse Report Form (Appendix 24) documenting all pertinent information. Do not ask the individual leading questions, and neither the accused nor any other parties should be contacted at the point of completing the Suspected Abuse Report Form.

All forms must be kept permanently unless otherwise directed by legal counsel.

Ministry Personnel are requested to notify the Lead Pastor that they have heard an allegation or disclosure of abuse.

If the abuse occurred within the context of *GCF*, the Lead Pastor or their designate must notify *GCF*'s insurance provider and seek legal counsel upon hearing of a suspected child abuse case.

If the abuse happened within the context of *GCF*, leadership will notify and work in conjunction with denominational leadership in any and all allegations or suspicions of abuse that may have happened in the context of church ministry.

3.2.2. REPORTING AND RESPONDING TO AN ALLEGATION OR SUSPICION OF ABUSE OR HARASSMENT AGAINST AN ADULT

All allegations, disclosures and suspicions of abuse and harassment against an Adult will be taken seriously and responded to with empathy.

If an allegation or suspicion of abuse represents a situation that is an emergency and a crime is about to be committed, immediately call 9-1-1 and report it to police.

If it is not an emergency or no imminent threat exists, and an accusation of abuse, harassment, misconduct or exploitation towards an Adult is made or suspected, the following guidelines are to be followed:

- If the Adult has the cognitive ability to make a report to police, then Ministry Personnel are to encourage the person to make that report, and support them in their decision, whatever they decide. At no time should the individual be discouraged or instructed not to call the police.
- If the Adult does not have the cognitive ability to make a report, then Ministry Personnel are to complete a Suspected Abuse Report Form (Appendix 24) and make a report to police, where the accusation involves a crime.
- In some cases, such as Long Term Care homes, additional laws define anyone who works with certain Adults as a Mandatory Reporter. In these cases, whether the Adult has the cognitive ability to make a report on their own or not, Ministry Personnel are to complete a Suspected Abuse Report Form (for Adults) and make a report to the mandated reporting agency.

If the Adult has the cognitive capacity to make a report, but is unwilling to do so, and no law requires mandatory reporting, Ministry Personnel should:

- Express concerns for the individual's well-being;
- Provide them the phone number to make the report in the future;
- Offer to be with them when they report it;
- Inform them about the laws in place regarding abuse and harassment and that they are not alone, that there are supports available to them;
- Encourage them to consider what to do next time;
- Arrange for a follow-up;
- Develop a safety plan.

Ministry Personnel and leadership are not to confront the accused as this may put the victim in more danger. They may offer pastoral care and professional counselling to the individual that disclosed the abuse but they are not to confront the accused about the abuse.

GCF requests that when a report is made to police on behalf of an Adult who does not have the cognitive capacity to report on their own, in the case where a Ministry Personnel provides support to an Adult who makes their own report to police, or in a case where the Ministry Personnel is a Mandatory Reporter, that Ministry Personnel notify the Lead Pastor that such a report has been made.

3.3. ASSESSING AND INVESTIGATING AN ALLEGATION OR SUSPICION OF ABUSE

No persons, including Church Leadership, are to assume the function of assessing, substantiating or investigating the need for intervention or interpretation of suspected Child abuse or abuse against an Adult.

GCF is to engage an external investigator to investigate allegations and disclosures of sexual misconduct and abuse of Adults.

GCF and its individuals must avoid any undue interference when a report of Child abuse has been filed with Child and Family Services or the police. *GCF* must ask how it can assist in helping and supporting the investigation and the victim. *GCF* must maintain frequent communication and supportive relationships with those suspected or guilty of child abuse as long as these persons exhibit a willingness to listen, change and look to Christ for help. This does not exclude the need for hurting individuals to receive professional counselling.

At the request of the victim of abuse, a victim advocate will be appointed to walk alongside the victim. This person should maintain an arms-length relationship with the board and will act to advocate for input from and services for the victim.

The board will designate an individual to maintain communication and act as a representative to the individual suspected of abuse throughout the investigation.

GCF is to support Ministry Personnel when they fulfill their duty to report abuse as outlined in the Plan to Protect® training and church policies.

3.4. PROTECTING CONFIDENTIALITY AND DIGNITY OF THE VICTIM AND THE ACCUSED

During the process of reporting and response, all Ministry Personnel will be committed to prayer and strive to remain calm and hopeful.

Discretion must be observed and details of the suspected abuse must not be shared among the church community. Information must only be shared on a need-to-know basis, expanding only as individuals are drawn into the response and investigation. Confidentiality for the suspected victim and the accused must be protected

3.5. SPIRITUAL ABUSE

GCF is opposed to any form of spiritual abuse. Ministry Personnel are not to misuse their positions of authority or influence to manipulate or coerce others to act or believe in a certain way for the apparent benefit of *GCF* or those in a position of authority.

Ministry Personnel are not to use scripture out of context or to use the Bible as a weapon to unduly manipulate an individual.

Ministry Personnel and Board members must attend additional professional development training on spiritual abuse awareness and prevention. Volunteers must receive training on the definition of spiritual abuse as part of their safeguarding training.

A whistleblower policy must be put in place to provide a safe contact to receive concerns about any form of injury, harm, and abuse. All complaints of spiritual abuse are to be brought to the attention of the Board and are to be fully investigated as outlined under the Whistleblower Policy.

Ministry Personnel are to be held accountable if they have been found to have misused their positions to unduly cause spiritual harm to another individual and are to be subject to progressive steps of discipline.

If an individual raises a concern about spiritual abuse, they are to be encouraged to seek out professional help and healing. Church Leadership are to assign a knowledgeable person to provide care to the individual, and where able, are to extend the offer of professional care and therapy to help with the recovery of the spiritual harm that has occurred.

3.6. WHISTLEBLOWERS

GCF is to act with due diligence in its investigation and follow through on all allegations of misconduct. They are to do their utmost to protect any whistleblower from reprisal, dismissal or any other retaliation.

GCF is not to tolerate any harassment or victimization (including informal pressures) and is to take appropriate action to protect the whistleblower when they raise a concern in good faith, even if they are mistaken. Any harassment or victimization of a whistleblower may result in disciplinary action against the person responsible.

In situations where we have a legal duty to report child abuse, no internal investigation is to take place until such time as an investigation has been conducted by law enforcement or the child protection agency.

Any investigations into allegations arising from whistleblowing are not to influence or be influenced by any other Ministry Personnel procedures to which the whistleblower may be subject.

All concerns are to be treated in confidence and every effort is to be made not to reveal the identity of the whistleblower if that is their wish. If a concern cannot be resolved without revealing the identity of the whistleblower, steps forward are to be determined in collaboration with the whistleblower. This policy encourages the whistleblower to put their name to their allegation whenever possible.

Church Leadership has overall responsibility for the maintenance and operation of this policy. *GCF* is to maintain a record of concerns raised and outcomes (in a form which does not endanger confidentiality) and is to report as necessary to the governmental, or other legal authority as required by law.

GCF is to respond to every complaint or allegation. Within 10 working days of a concern being raised, a member of Church Leadership is to write to the whistleblower to:

- Acknowledge that the complaint or allegation has been received;
- Indicate how the matter will be dealt with;
- Give an estimate of how long it will take to provide a final response;
- Indicate whether any initial inquiries have been made;
- Supply the whistleblower with information on support mechanisms;
- Tell the whistleblower whether further investigations will take place and if not, why not.

Where appropriate, the matters raised may:

- Be referred to the next level of leadership;
- Be referred to the Board of Directors;
- Be referred to the disciplinary process;

- Be referred to the police;
- Be referred to an external investigator; or
- Form the subject of an independent inquiry.

GCF is to take steps to minimize any difficulties which the whistleblower may experience as a result of raising a complaint or allegation.

If a complaint or allegation is not confirmed by an investigation, no action is to be taken against a whistleblower. If, however, a complaint or allegation is made frivolously, maliciously or for personal gain, disciplinary action may be taken against the complainant.

Subject to legal constraints, *GCF* is to inform the whistleblower of the outcome of any investigation.

3.7. RESPONSE TO ABUSE

3.7.1. SPIRITUAL RESPONSE AND COUNSEL FOR THE VICTIM

GCF is committed to providing a trauma-informed response, prioritizing the needs of the victim.

For the protection of everyone, all allegations and suspicions of abuse are to be taken seriously and handled with the utmost care. The suspected victims are to be treated with dignity and respect.

During the process of reporting and response, all Ministry Personnel are to be committed to prayer and strive to remain calm and hopeful.

Situations of abuse must be handled forthrightly with due respect for people's privacy and confidentiality. Discretion must be observed and details of the suspected abuse must not be shared among the church community. Information must be shared on a need-to-know basis, expanding only as individuals are drawn into the response and investigation.

Confidentiality for the victim must be protected.

Church Leadership are to seek opportunity to provide individual care and counsel both for the abuse victim and their family. In consultation with the individual, a victim advocate will be assigned to support the victim. Church Leadership are to determine the need for professional assistance and evaluate and designate resources as needed and able.

The victim will be empowered to make decisions and granted opportunity for their voice to be heard. At no time will the victim be asked to sign a non-disclosure agreement in relation to the incident of abuse.

3.7.2. BIBLICAL RESPONSE AND DISCIPLINE FOR THE ACCUSED OR CONVICTED

The accused is to be treated with dignity and respect. If the accused is a paid Ministry Personnel, that person is to be relieved temporarily of all duties until an investigation is completed with arrangements made to either maintain or suspend income until the allegations are cleared or substantiated.

It is the responsibility and right of Church Leadership to exercise and practice church discipline as outlined in Matthew 18 and as stipulated in denominational guidelines.

Church Leadership are to seek opportunity to provide individual care and counsel both for the accused and their family. Church Leadership are to determine the need for professional assistance and evaluate and designate resources as needed and able.

Anyone accused of abuse to Children or Youth is to be prohibited from having access to Children or Youth until they are cleared of any and all charges. Clear written guidelines are to be provided to the individual with restricted activities and areas of the church that they are not permitted to use.

Anyone convicted of Child abuse will be prohibited from having access to Children or Youth. Church Leadership may designate an individual to be responsible to be informed whenever the convicted person attends church activities and to accompany the convicted person while on church property. Clear written guidelines are to be provided to the individual listing restricted areas and access points on the church property.

3.7.3. MEDIA RELATIONS

It is the responsibility of the Church Leadership and Lead Pastor to designate a spokesperson to speak on behalf of *GCF* to media and to the public in relation to any crisis or allegation of abuse. All inquiries must be directed to this person and comment must not be made by other individuals unless given permission to do so.

Public statements must be well prepared and presented under the guidance of legal counsel.

The media spokesperson is to cooperate with the media to communicate our deep concern about the incident and reaffirm our commitment to cooperate with the investigation.

3.7.4. ONGOING INVESTIGATION

Full cooperation must be given by all parties to civil authorities under the guidelines of legal counsel.

At no time may Church Leadership or its individuals either engage in denial, minimization or blame, or admit responsibility which could prejudice the case or cause increased liability to *GCF*.

A confidential follow-up report with conclusions and action taken must be documented by the Lead Pastor following a report of abuse. This report must be placed in a confidential Ministry Personnel file and kept permanently.

Church Leadership are to inform others of any ongoing investigation strictly on a need-to-know basis. In consultation with legal counsel, a trauma informed summary report will be shared with the complainant, accused and the congregation.

This policy relates to Offenders, meaning individuals who have been convicted of sexual crimes against Children or Youth who wish to attend *GCF* on a consistent basis.

3.8. OFFENDER'S POLICY

3.8.1. COVENANT AGREEMENT

Offenders of Child sexual abuse may attend *GCF* on a regular basis if they enter into an Offender's Covenant Agreement with the leadership of the church.

Two delegates from the Board and the Lead Pastor are to meet with the individual and inform the individual that *GCF* requires Offenders to enter into an Offender's Covenant Agreement in order for them to attend the church on a regular basis.

The Covenant Agreement is to be written and signed by the Lead Pastor, two representatives of the Board, and the individual, making up the accountability team.

The Offender's Covenant must include the following:

- Who is to be informed when the Offender will be at the church.
- What part of the building the Offender may come to.
- Locations in the building the Offender is not allowed to go to (Children and Youth wings of the church).
- Where in the sanctuary the Offender may sit (recommend the front of the sanctuary with one of the accountability team members).
- Restriction to take pictures at the church.
- Restrictions for befriending and spending time with families with Children.
- When the Offender uses the washroom, one of the chaperones are to first check the washroom to make sure there are no Children in the washroom. If there is a Child in the washroom they are to wait until the Child is done before entering.
- Restrictions from participating in programs with Children and Youth, i.e., church property during special Children's events (such as VBS, mid-week Children's/Youth programs, etc.).
- The requirement for annual review and signature of the Offender's Covenant Agreement by the accountability team.
- The consequences if the covenant is broken.

3.8.2. PRIVACY CONCERNS

Information regarding an individual's convictions must only be disclosed on a need-to-know basis to the Board, the Pastor and some Ministry Leaders. If the individual is a Parent with Children attending , which may afford opportunity for the individual to have more access to other Children (i.e. pickup and drop-off, and social events), then the need to know circle could be expanded to those families.

In our desire to reduce the risk of abuse within our church ministries, we believe this information is necessary to protect our Children, Youth, Vulnerable Adults and our Volunteers and to effectively place our Volunteers in ministry positions. Thank you in advance for your partnership.

APPENDICES

These forms have been adapted from Plan to Protect®, permission granted by
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Appendix 1 - Risk Assessment

Risk Category	Risk Factor	
Degree of Isolation	The Ministry Personnel may have an opportunity to be alone with Children/Youth or Vulnerable Persons.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Degree of Supervision/ Leadership	The Ministry Personnel has limited or no supervision or is considered a person in a leadership role with authority. Children/Youth and Vulnerable Persons would have contact with this person and consider them to be an authority figure.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	The activities of the Ministry Personnel are in a place where activities are not observed or monitored regularly.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Access of Property	The Ministry Personnel may have access to personal property or money of persons served.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	The Ministry Personnel has access to confidential information related to Children/Youth and Vulnerable Persons.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Degree of Physical Contact	This role requires the Ministry Personnel to have physical contact with Children/Youth or Vulnerable Persons.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Vulnerability of Persons Served	Persons served have language or literacy barriers.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Persons served are immobile.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Persons served have challenges that contribute to their vulnerability (e.g., physical, psychological, and situational).	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Degree of Physical Demands	The activity involves potential danger to persons served (e.g., rock climbing, using a stove).	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	The activity involves potential stress (e.g., Children upset by visit to elderly in palliative care).	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Degree of Trust	<p>The Ministry Personnel develops close, personal relationships with the Children/Youth or Vulnerable Persons they serve.</p> <p>Parents and caregivers entrust Children/Youth or Vulnerable Persons into this individual's care (e.g., teaching, visiting, mentoring, tutoring, nursery care).</p> <p>The position involves transportation of Children/Youth or Vulnerable Persons.</p> <p>The Ministry Personnel contributes to making career decisions or other important decisions of persons served.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>
Degree of Inherent Risk	<p>The activity heightens potential for the Ministry Personnel to be in contact with bodily fluids or disease of persons served.</p> <p>The activity exposes persons served to operation or handling of potentially dangerous equipment (e.g., playground equipment, lawnmower).</p> <p>The activity exposes the persons served to handling toxic substances or results in exposure to poor air quality, noise, etc. (e.g., demolition in an inner-city mission).</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>



Appendix 2 - Ministry Personnel Application Form (Adults)

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Full Name _____

Address _____

Postal Code _____ Email _____

Phone Number (H) _____ (W) _____

PERSONAL HISTORY

Please provide a copy of your employment resume and/or list any employers with which you have worked in the past 20 years, including name and address of employer, dates of your employment, your position, and a contact person.

HOBBIES, INTERESTS OR SKILLS

SPIRITUAL HISTORY

How long have you attended *Grace Christian Fellowship of Fergus*? _____

Do you regularly attend (2 or more services a month)? Yes No

Have you been baptized? Yes No

If not, are you willing to attend a baptismal seminar? Yes No

In a brief paragraph, please outline your spiritual journey.

Appendix 2 - P.2

List any gifts, training, education or other qualifications that have prepared you to minister with Children, Youth or Vulnerable Adults.

MINISTRY INFORMATION AND EXPERIENCES

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

1. Name of Church _____ Phone Number _____
Address _____
Dates Attended _____ Member or Adherent _____

2. Name of Church _____ Phone Number _____
Address _____
Dates Attended _____ Member or Adherent _____

My present and previous ministry experience is as follows:

1. Name of Church/Organization _____
Dates and Description of Ministry _____
Pastor or Ministry Supervisor _____ Phone # _____

2. Name of Church/Organization _____
Dates and Description of Ministry _____
Pastor or Ministry Supervisor _____ Phone # _____

Appendix 2 - P.3

INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR ABILITY TO WORK WITH CHILDREN, YOUTH OR VULNERABLE ADULTS

In order to provide a safe and secure environment for our Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults, we believe it is necessary to include the following questions as part of our application process. All information will be kept confidential by Church Leadership and the Plan to Protect® team. (Police may access this information, under warrant, if requested.) Answering yes to any of the questions may not necessarily preclude your involvement in ministry. Thank you in advance for your understanding.

1. Are there any circumstances involving your lifestyle or history that would call into question your ability to work with Children, Youth or Vulnerable Adults? (e.g. use of illegal substances, etc.) Yes No
2. Have you ever been convicted or found guilty of a criminal offense for which a pardon has not been granted (excluding minor traffic violations)? Yes No

If yes, please list offence(s) and the date(s) of conviction: _____

3. Have you ever been expelled from or had your employment terminated by any organization or employer for assault, violence or impropriety against a Child, Youth or Vulnerable Person (e.g. senior citizen or person with disabilities)? Yes No
4. Have you ever been investigated by the Child Welfare Agency or any other organization for suspected child abuse? Yes No
5. Have you ever been a defendant or respondent in a civil lawsuit or human rights complaint or other legal proceeding in which you were alleged to have abused or engaged in violence, harassment or other immoral or illegal behaviour or conduct involving Children, Youth or Vulnerable Adults? Yes No
6. Do you have any health concerns which could impact your ability to perform the functions of the volunteer position for which you are applying? (Please note such health concerns may not prevent you from holding the position for which you have applied) Yes No
7. Do you have any contagious diseases or conditions of which we should be aware, and which we may need to take steps to protect against transmission should you volunteer at our organization? Yes No

If you have answered yes to any of the above questions, please explain. _____

Appendix 2 - P.4

REFERENCES

Please provide the names of three individuals, excluding relatives, who could provide a reference for you. Include at least one reference from outside the church.

1. Name of Reference _____ Phone Number _____
Address _____
Nature of Relationship _____

2. Name of Reference _____ Phone Number _____
Address _____
Nature of Relationship _____

3. Name of Reference _____ Phone Number _____
Address _____
Nature of Relationship _____



Appendix 2a - Release of Information And Declaration of Intent

I hereby give the *Grace Christian Fellowship of Fergus (GCF)* consent to verify the information provided by me in this Ministry Personnel Application Form and to contact the references and current and former employers listed above and to obtain and verify any information from them (and any other persons that the church determines might be able to provide relevant information) that may be relevant to my application.

I grant my permission for *GCF* to perform a police records check on me, and I will sign and return the attached "Release of Information and Declaration of Intent" for such purpose.

I further grant *GCF* permission to perform an internet search on me and to review and consider any information found by me on the internet.

I understand that if *GCF* approves my volunteer application and later determines, in its discretion, at any time that I am not suitable for volunteer service in the church or for the volunteer position for which I am applying, *GCF* may terminate my volunteer service or volunteer position for any reason without advance notice.

If *GCF* approves my application for a volunteer position, I will sign any documents that the church requires and will at all times cooperate fully with the staff of *GCF* in the fulfillment of my duties and will keep all confidential information I encounter in my role as a volunteer confidential.

If at any time I determine that for any reason I am unable to support or adhere to or follow the policies, procedures or doctrine of *GCF*, I will inform the church and will resign my volunteer position.

I hereby acknowledge that, to the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this Ministry Personnel Application Form is true and correct.

Signature of Applicant _____

Printed Name _____ Date _____

Signature of Witness _____

Printed Name _____ Date _____

Information received is confidential and is being gathered for the purposes of screening Ministry Personnel and placing them into ministry with Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults. The information gathered here will be used for the purposes of supporting the ministries at *GCF*.



Appendix 2b - Declaration of Faith

1. I believe that God exists and is pleased with all who draw near by faith. We worship the one holy and loving God who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit eternally. God has created all things visible and invisible, has brought salvation and new life to humanity through Jesus Christ, and continues to sustain the church and all things until the end of the age.
2. I believe in Jesus Christ, the Word of God become flesh. He is the Savior of the world, who has delivered us from the dominion of sin and reconciled us to God by his death on a cross. He was declared to be Son of God by his resurrection from the dead. He is the head of the church, the exalted Lord, the Lamb who was slain, coming again to reign with God in glory.
3. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the eternal Spirit of God, who dwelled in Jesus Christ, who empowers the church, who is the source of our life in Christ, and who is poured out on those who believe as the guarantee of redemption.
4. I believe that all Scripture is inspired by God through the Holy Spirit for instruction in salvation and training in righteousness. We accept the Scriptures as the Word of God and as the fully reliable and trustworthy standard for Christian faith and life. Led by the Holy Spirit in the church, we interpret Scripture in harmony with Jesus Christ.
5. I believe that God has created the heavens and the earth and all that is in them, and that God preserves and renews what has been made. All creation has its source outside itself and belongs to the Creator. The world has been created good because God is good and provides all that is needed for life.
6. I believe that God has created human beings in the divine image. God formed them from the dust of the earth and gave them a special dignity among all the works of creation. Human beings have been made for relationship with God, to live in peace with each other, and to take care of the rest of creation.
7. I confess that, beginning with Adam and Eve, humanity has disobeyed God, given way to the tempter, and chosen to sin. All have fallen short of the Creator's intent, marred the image of God in which they were created, disrupted order in the world, and limited their love for others. Because of sin, humanity has been given over to the enslaving powers of evil and death.
8. I believe that, through Jesus Christ, God offers salvation from sin and a new way of life. We receive God's salvation when we repent and accept Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. In Christ, we are reconciled with God and brought into the reconciling community. We place our faith in God that, by the same power that raised Christ from the dead, we may be saved from sin to follow Christ and to know the fullness of salvation.
9. I believe that the church is the assembly of those who have accepted God's offer of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. It is the new community of disciples sent into the world to proclaim the reign of God and to provide a foretaste of the church's glorious hope. It is the new society established and sustained by the Holy Spirit.
10. I believe that the mission of the church is to proclaim and to be a sign of the kingdom of God. Christ has commissioned the church to make disciples of all nations, baptizing them, and teaching them to observe all things he has commanded.
11. I believe that the baptism of believers with water is a sign of their cleansing from sin. Baptism is also a pledge before the church of their covenant with God to walk in the way of Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. Believers are baptized into Christ and his body by the Spirit, water, and blood.
12. I believe that the Lord's Supper is a sign by which the church thankfully remembers the new covenant which Jesus established by his death. In this communion meal, the church renews its covenant with God and with each other and participates in the life and death of Jesus Christ, until he comes.
13. I believe that in washing the feet of his disciples, Jesus calls us to serve one another in love as he did. Thus we acknowledge our frequent need of cleansing, renew our willingness to let go of pride and worldly power, and offer our lives in humble service and sacrificial love.
14. I practice discipline in the church as a sign of God's offer of transforming grace. Discipline is intended to liberate brothers and sisters from sin, and to restore them to a right relationship with God and to fellowship in the church. The practice of discipline gives integrity to the church's witness in the world.
15. I believe that ministry is a continuation of the work of Christ, who gives gifts through the Holy Spirit to all believers and empowers them for service in the church and in the world. We also believe that God calls particular persons in the church to specific leadership ministries and offices. All who minister are accountable to God and to the community of faith.
16. I believe that the church of Jesus Christ is one body with many members, ordered in such a way that, through the one Spirit, believers may be built together spiritually into a dwelling place for God.
17. I believe that Jesus Christ calls us to discipleship, to take up our cross and follow him. Through the gift of God's saving grace, we are empowered to be disciples of Jesus, filled with his Spirit, following his teachings and his path through suffering to new life. As we are faithful to his way, we become conformed to Christ and separated from the evil in the world.
18. I believe that to be a disciple of Jesus is to know life in the Spirit. As the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ takes shape in us, we grow in the image of Christ and in our relationship with God. The Holy Spirit is active in individual and in communal worship, leading us deeper into the experience of God.

Signature of Applicant _____

Printed Name _____ Date _____



Appendix 2c - Approval Checklist (Office Use Only)

Name of Applicant _____

1. Ministry Interview Date _____

Name of Interviewer _____

2. References Checked Date Completed _____

3. Criminal Record Check Received Date Completed _____

4. Plan to Protect® Training Completed Date Completed _____

5. Bi-Annual Training Date(s)

Date Completed _____

Date Completed _____

Date Completed _____

Date Completed _____

Appendix 2d - Code of Conduct

As a (volunteer/staff member) at *Grace Christian Fellowship of Fergus (GCF)*, you have a duty to care for the people who make up our community, to steward our resources, and to treat our equipment with respect. Whatever your role will be, we expect all personnel to maintain a friendly and positive attitude. We ask every staff member and volunteer to read, understand and adhere to the guidelines of this Code of Conduct so we can overcome challenges and obstacles when working together in a team setting.

1. Respect and honor the mission and values of *GCF*.
2. Respect *GCF* property. Always ask for permission and follow instructions before using equipment or facilities.
3. Respect those who have different beliefs, lifestyles and cultures. We have zero tolerance for discrimination or harassment of others on the basis of religion, economic status, disability, age, gender, or social condition.
4. Direct questions, concerns or requests to Leadership and ask for help when needed.
5. Volunteers - sign in and out of all volunteer opportunities.
6. Volunteers and staff - arrive on time for service and notify your Ministry Lead as soon as possible if unable to fulfill your commitment.
7. Maintain a lifestyle that reflects positively on our church and on our values as a church.
8. Maintain the confidentiality of all proprietary or privileged information learned about *GCF*, its programs, volunteers, staff, community members, partners or others to which they are exposed while serving. Do not reveal sensitive information to anyone outside of the church and only share information under the direction of the Board or Senior Leadership.
9. Do not contact organizations or individuals on behalf of *GCF* unless directed by the Board or Senior Leadership. Actions requiring prior approval of the Board include, but are not limited to, public statements to the press, use of our logo, coalition agreements, political initiatives, or lobbying efforts with other organizations.
10. Avoid engaging in any forms of harassment or abuse. Harassment refers to verbal or physical or sexual conduct that is unsolicited, offensive, and detrimental to an individual. Report any inappropriate behaviour (including harassment) immediately to Senior Leadership or the Board.
11. Refrain from the following behaviours while on church property (including the parking lot) or during service hours: smoking, gambling, or consuming alcoholic beverages and recreational drugs.
12. Comply with the screening and training policies, Plan to Protect® Policies, Privacy Policy, Information Release and this Code of Conduct.
13. Immediately inform the church in writing of any status change of your vulnerable sector check result and any recent arrests, or conviction in criminal offences and/or unresolved charges.
14. I recognize that a breach of the Code of Conduct and Covenant of Care could result in progressive steps of discipline, including the possibility of termination of activities with *GCF*. Volunteers – I understand that the volunteer/church relationship is not a contract of employment and can be terminated at any time by either the volunteer or *GCF*.

I agree to the Code of Conduct.

Signature _____

Printed Name _____ Date _____



Appendix 2e - Covenant of Care

I (Name) _____ have read, understand and agree to comply with all the Plan to Protect® policies and procedures of *Grace Christian Fellowship of Fergus* to protect the health and safety of Children, Youth and Adults at all times.

I also acknowledge the paramount importance of safeguarding in all respects all of those to whom we minister, especially Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults and commit to providing a caring environment by:

- Adhering to the Code of Conduct;
- Following all of the directives of the policies;
- Complying with the information given in my orientation and refresher trainings;
- Avoiding opportunities to be alone with a vulnerable person;
- Using appropriate language;
- Not changing diapers or taking children to the washroom alone;
- Showing no bias on account of gender, ethnic background, skin colour, intelligence, age, religion, or socio-economic status;
- Respecting confidentiality and privacy, except in cases where I am legally bound to report; and
- Striving to bring glory to God in my speech, behaviour and actions.

Signature _____

Printed Name _____ Date _____



35 FARLEY ROAD, FERGUS, ONTARIO • IGRACE.CA

Appendix 3 - Ministry Personnel Application Form for Youth Working with Children

In our desire to reduce the risk of abuse within our church ministries, we believe this information is necessary to protect our Children and our Volunteers and to effectively place our volunteers in ministry positions. Thank you in advance for your partnership.

Youth under the age of 18 will not be placed alone in a Position of Trust in ministry but will be assigned to work with a minimum of two adult Ministry Personnel.

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Full Name _____

Address _____

Postal Code _____ Email _____

Phone Number (H) _____ (C) _____

Name of Parents _____ Phone Number _____

Are your parents supportive of your ministry involvement? Yes No

If no, please explain

PERSONAL HISTORY

Hobbies, Interests or Skills

VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE AND PART-TIME JOBS

Appendix 3 - P.2

SPIRITUAL HISTORY

How long have you attended *Grace Christian Fellowship of Fergus*? _____

Do you regularly attend (2 or more times a month)? Yes No

When did you accept Christ as your Saviour? _____

In a brief paragraph, please describe what your faith means to you.

MINISTRY QUESTIONNAIRE

Describe why you would like to be part of our Children's Ministry Team.

What strengths or assets would you bring to our Children's Ministry Program?

What areas of concern do you have in working with Children?

Do you see yourself as a team player? Please explain. Yes No

Please list the area of ministry in which you would like to serve.

Appendix 3 - P.3

REFERENCES

List three adults that you've known for at least one year and who have a definite knowledge of your character and ability to work with Children. You may include one reference from a relative, but must also include references from your youth pastor, employer or teacher.

1. Name of Reference _____ Phone Number _____
 Address _____
 Nature of Relationship _____
 How long have you known this person? _____

2. Name of Reference _____ Phone Number _____
 Address _____
 Nature of Relationship _____
 How long have you known this person? _____

3. Name of Reference _____ Phone Number _____
 Address _____
 Nature of Relationship _____
 How long have you known this person? _____

Signature of Applicant _____
 Printed Name _____ Date _____

Signature of Parent/Guardian _____
 Printed Name _____ Date _____

Information received is confidential and is being gathered for the purposes of screening Ministry Personnel and placing them into ministry with Children. The information gathered here will be used for the purposes of supporting the ministries at GCF.



Appendix 4 - Confidential Record of Reference Checks

Name of Volunteer _____

REFERENCE #1

Name of Reference or Church Contacted _____

Date of Contact _____

Person Contacting the Reference or Church _____

Method of Contact telephone letter personal conversation

Summary of Contact

REFERENCE #2

Name of Reference or Church Contacted _____

Date of Contact _____

Person Contacting the Reference or Church _____

Method of Contact telephone letter personal conversation

Summary of Contact

REFERENCE #3

Name of Reference or Church Contacted _____

Date of Contact _____

Person Contacting the Reference or Church _____

Method of Contact telephone letter personal conversation

Summary of Contact



35 FARLEY ROAD, FERGUS, ONTARIO • IGRACE.CA

Appendix 5 - Ministry Personnel Reference Form

(Name of Volunteer) _____ has applied to be a volunteer within our Children/ Youth ministries and has indicated on their application that you might be willing to act as a personal reference. We have a program in our church called Plan to Protect® which is designed to protect our Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults as well as our volunteers. We do a reference check on all our volunteers working in our ministries. Your response will remain confidential. Thank you for your cooperation.

PLEASE FORWARD THIS INFORMATION TO:

Grace Christian Fellowship
35 Farley Road, Fergus, ON N1M 2W3
Attention: Process/Facilities Manager

Your Name _____ Phone Number _____

Address _____

1. Describe your relationship with this person.

2. How long have you known this person?

3. Please use the following scale to respond to the following:

1 - low 2 - below average 3 - average 4 - very good 5 - excellent

How would you rate this individual in the following areas?

- a. Ability to work with other volunteers 1 2 3 4 5
- b. Ability to follow through on commitments 1 2 3 4 5
- c. Ability to relate to Children or Youth 1 2 3 4 5
- d. Level of spiritual maturity 1 2 3 4 5

Appendix 5 - P.2

4. What are the applicant's greatest strengths?

5. Would you entrust the care of your Children, Youth or Vulnerable Adults to the applicant without any concern, reservation or hesitation?

6. Do you have concerns regarding this person working with Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults?

If so, please explain.

Signature _____

Printed Name _____ Date _____



Appendix 6 - Ministry Personnel Interview Form

Name of Applicant: _____

Have you completed the Ministry Personnel Application Form? Yes No

Has anyone explained the types of ministries that we provide as a church and which might provide you with an opportunity for volunteer service? Yes No

What prompted you to be interested in the ministry that you identified on your Ministry Personnel Application Form? (Indicate the ministry that interests them)

Would you be willing to attend the training session associated with that ministry? Yes No

Have the potential ministry personnel review their spiritual journey and compare responses with those indicated on the Spiritual History of the Ministry Personnel Application Form. Note any significant omissions or questions that arise.

Review the items listed under Confidential Information on the Ministry Personnel Application Form and note any significant omissions or questions that arise.

On what date would you be available? _____

What is the minimum length of your commitment? _____

Thank you for your interest in serving.

Signature of Interviewer _____

Printed Name _____ Date _____



Appendix 7 - Ministry Personnel Renewal Application Form

In our desire to reduce the risk of abuse within our church ministries, we believe this information is necessary to protect our children and our volunteers and to effectively place our volunteers in ministry positions. Thank you in advance for your partnership. Information received is confidential and is being gathered for the purposes of screening ministry personnel and placing them into ministry with children or youth. The information gathered here will be used for the purposes of supporting the ministries at *Grace Christian Fellowship of Fergus (GCF)*.

Name _____

Phone Number _____

Has your address changed in the last year? Yes No

New Address _____

In what ministry program(s) are you currently involved?

In what other ministry program(s) do you plan to become involved?

Have you at any time ever:

- Been arrested for any reason? Yes No
- Been convicted of, or pleaded no contest to a crime? Yes No
- Been arrested or convicted for any abuse related crimes? Yes No

Are you aware of:

- Having any traits or tendencies that could pose any threat to children, youth or others? Yes No
- Any reason why you should not work with children, youth or others? Yes No

If the answer to any of these questions is 'yes', please explain in detail:

APPLICATION VERIFICATION AND RELEASE

I recognize that the organization to which this application is being submitted is relying on the information contained herein. Accordingly, I attest and affirm that all of the information that I have provided is absolutely true and correct. I agree to abide by all the policies and procedures of *GCF* and to protect the health and safety of the children or youth at all times.

Signature _____

Printed Name _____ Date _____

Appendix 8 - BloodBorne Pathogens and Infectious Diseases

The following is a compilation of guidelines on dealing with bloodborne pathogens (any microorganism or virus that can cause disease that is carried through the blood) and infectious diseases.

Studies of school and residential settings reflect a parallel between the inefficiency of transmission of bloodborne pathogens and the extent to which risk is adequately controlled by common hygienic measures. Children who have blood borne pathogen infections should not be excluded from children's ministries activities. There is no reason for excluding Children who do not exhibit aggressive behaviour and who do not have medication conditions facilitating transmission. The benefits of an unrestricted setting outweigh the risk of the Child acquiring harmful infections. The risk of transmitting the virus to others is almost nonexistent.

1. Common infectious diseases may be contracted from dirt and waste encountered in ministry areas. Wash your hands with soap and running water at regular intervals throughout the day.
2. All bodily fluids must be treated as though they are infectious, as blood borne pathogens could be present in any Child. Confidentiality laws may prevent you from knowing those infected with the HIV (virus that causes AIDS) or AIDS virus. By treating all bodily fluids as infectious, you protect not only yourself, but others.
3. Non-latex gloves are required when handling any discharges from another person's body particularly body fluids containing blood. Hands must be thoroughly washed with soap and running water when finished.
4. Ministry Personnel who are exposed to an infected Child's body fluids and excrement should know procedures to follow to prevent transmission. Disposable diapers should be used and soiled diapers should be placed in a plastic bag before discarding. Feces can be flushed down the toilet. Non-latex gloves should be worn if open sores are present on the caregiver's hands. Any open sore on the infected child should also be covered. Hands should be washed after exposure to blood and body fluids and before caring for another Child.
5. Contaminated disposable non-latex gloves and other contaminated materials should be disposed in plastic-lined waste containers.
6. You need to develop an awareness of situations or dangers that may put you or others at risk. For instance, do not pick up broken glass with bare hands but use a brush and dustpan instead. You need to avoid punctures with objects that may contain blood from others. Carefully dispose trash that contains sharp objects. Use containers that cannot be broken or penetrated.
7. Surfaces that have blood or other potentially infectious materials containing blood on them must be cleaned with an approved disinfectant or a 1:10 solution of liquid household bleach and water. This disinfectant must be mixed daily and must sit for ten minutes before use.
8. An HBV (virus causing Hepatitis B) vaccination should be pursued within 24 hours if you have had an 'exposure incident'. An 'exposure incident' is when there is blood contact through an open sore, injury by a contaminated sharp object or by a blood splash into your eyes, nose or mouth.
9. If you are responsible for administering first aid, it is strongly recommended that you receive current instruction. For instance, the rescuer needs to use a resuscitation mouthpiece when administering CPR so that there is no direct mouth-to-mouth contact.

Appendix 8 - P.2

10. Individuals involved in the care and education of a preschool-aged Child infected with HIV, HBV, or HCV should be informed of the Child's infective status only if such knowledge is necessary to ensure proper care of the Child and to detect situations in which there is potential for transmission. Parental consent is required for the disclosure of a Child's infective status and should be made on a case-by-case basis respecting the Child's and family's right to privacy. Decisions about education and care for Children infected with the AIDS virus should be made by a team including the Child's physician, public health personnel, parents or guardian and church staff. The records of Children with AIDS should be kept confidential. Parental consent must be given to the agency releasing pertinent medical information to those administering care to the Child.

11. A more restricted environment is advised for infected preschool-age Children, for Children who cannot control their bowels or bladder, for Children who display such behaviour as biting and scratching and for infected Children who have uncovered oozing sores. These Children should be cared for and educated in settings that minimize the exposure of other Children to their blood and body fluids.

Decisions regarding vaccination of Children and workers who have contact with the Child should be discussed with public health officials.

The hygienic practices of an infected Child may improve as the Child matures, or they may deteriorate if the Child's condition worsens. For these reasons, the need for a restricted environment should be re-evaluated regularly.

SOURCES:

Preventing the Transmission of Bloodborne Pathogens in Healthcare and Public Service Setting,
Canada Communicable Disease Report – Supplement V23S3, May 1997
Guidelines Regarding Children and Infants with AIDS, Love in Action, Annapolis, MD
Universal Precautions, Alliance Academy, Quito Ecuador



Appendix 9 - Registration and Medical Consent Form

Information received is confidential and is being gathered for the purposes of serving your Child while in the care of *Grace Christian Fellowship of Fergus*. Any medical information collected here serves to authorize *Grace Christian Fellowship of Fergus*, and its staff and volunteers, to obtain medical assistance in emergencies.

For the school year 20 __/ 20 __

In the case of custody agreements, please include the proper form authorizing Parental contacts.

Student's Name _____ Date of Birth _____

Address _____

Phone Number _____ Parents' Work Number _____

Health Card Number _____

Family Doctor _____ Phone Number _____

Allergies _____

In case of an emergency, contact _____

Does your child have any physical, emotional, mental, behavioural concerns or limitations that staff should be aware of? Yes No

If yes, please explain:

Is your child bringing any medication with them? Yes No

If yes, please list.

The safety of your child is our primary concern. Precautions will be taken for their well-being and protection.

Appendix 9 - P.2

I/we, the parents or guardians named below, authorize _____
(Ministry Lead) or one of *Grace Christian Fellowship of Fergus* Ministry Personnel to sign a consent for medical treatment and to authorize any physician or hospital to provide medical assessment, treatment or procedures for the participant named above.

I/we, named below, undertake and agree to indemnify and hold harmless Ministry Personnel, *Grace Christian Fellowship of Fergus*, and its Leaders from and against any loss, damage or injury suffered by the participant as a result of being part of the activities of *GCF*, as well as of any medical treatment authorized by the supervising individuals representing *GCF*. This consent and authorization is effective only when participating in or traveling to events sponsored by *GCF*.

COMMUNICATION

A policy is in effect that communication is to be used solely for the dissemination of information. Please sign below to grant permission for Children/Youth Program Ministry Personnel (staff and volunteers) to communicate with your child via telephone, email, social media and text:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Telephone (home / work / cell) | <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media Networks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Email | <input type="checkbox"/> Text messages |

PHOTOS

Please sign below to grant permission for the reasonable use of pictures containing your child in any or all of the following ways:

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brochures/Promotional material | <input type="checkbox"/> Church |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Website | <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletters |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Videotaping | |

PURPOSES AND EXTENT

GCF is collecting and retaining this personal information for the purpose of enrolling your child in our programs, to assign the student to the appropriate classes, to develop and nurture ongoing relationships with you and your child, and to inform you of program updates and upcoming opportunities at our organization. This information will be maintained indefinitely as it is a requirement of our insurance company and legal counsel. If you wish *GCF* to limit the information collected, or to view your child's information, please contact us.

PARENT/GUARDIAN OPTIONS

I have read, understood and agree with above and sign it to cover all Children/Youth Program activities for the program year effective as stated below. A separate Letter of Informed Consent will be sent home for off-site activities and activities of elevated risk.

Parent Signature _____

Printed Name _____ Date _____



Appendix 10 - Medication Form

Child's Name: _____

Dr.: _____ Phone #: _____

Date	Name of Medication	Dosage	Time Required	Parent Signature	Dose Given	Time Given	Staff Signature

These forms have been adapted from Plan to Protect®, permission granted by Plan to Protect® 2022 © for use by Grace Christian Fellowship of Fergus.



Appendix 11 - Incident Report

The incident report should be completed as soon as possible after the incident occurs and should include as detailed a description of the situation as possible.

Student Name/s _____ Phone Number _____

Address _____

NATURE OF INJURY/INCIDENT

Incident Date _____ Incident Time _____

Incident Location _____ Event Title _____

All Leaders Present _____

What happened?

Why did it happen?

What action was taken?

Contacted Parents Yes No

Parents' Response:

Leader's Name _____ Signature _____

Witness' Name _____ Signature _____



Appendix 12 - Letter of Informed Consent

To be used for all off-site trips and activities of increased risk.

Student's Name(s): _____

Activity: _____

Date of Activity: _____

Details of the Activity: (include location, time, sleeping arrangement, mode of transportation, driver, activities upon arrival, ratios of Child/Youth to staff, explanation of any and all risk which the students will be participating in i.e. rock climbing/bungee jumping/white water canoeing/water skiing)

Special Information: (recommended clothing, such as a hat; required supplies, like sunscreen, bag lunch, etc.)

Dear Parent:

We are planning an activity as part of our programming that requires your permission prior to participation. We have provided you the details of the activity and request that you complete and sign the permission form. Please note that all physical activities have risks. The safety of your Child is our primary concern. Precautions will be taken for their wellbeing and protection.

PERMISSION FORM AND CONSENT:

Student's Name _____ Date of Birth _____

Address _____

Phone Number _____ Parents' Work Number _____

Health Card Number _____

Family Doctor _____ Phone Number _____

In case of an emergency, contact _____

I hereby consent to the participation of my/our child(ren) in this supervised activity.

While every precaution is taken for the safety and good health, some sports and activities carry with them the inherent risk of personal injury beyond the risks associated with many of the recreational activities at *Grace Christian Fellowship of Fergus*. I/we understand and accept these risks and agree that by allowing my child to participate in those activities, they may be taking part in a recreational activity that presents the potential for personal injury.

Appendix 12 - P.2

I/we, the parents or guardians named below, authorize the Director or one of *Grace Christian Fellowship of Fergus (GCF)* Ministry Personnel to sign a consent for medical treatment and to authorize any physician or hospital to provide medical assessment, treatment or procedures for the participant named above.

I/we, named below, undertake and agree to indemnify and hold blameless [Organization Name], its Personnel, its Directors and Board from and against any loss, damage or injury suffered by the participant as a result of being part of the activities of *GCF*, as well as of any medical treatment authorized by the supervising individuals representing *GCF*. This consent and authorization is effective only when participating in or traveling to events of the *GCF*.

I have read, understood and agree with above.

Activity: _____

Parent / Guardian Signature _____

Printed Name _____ Date _____



Appendix 13 - Off-Site Activity Report Form

I would like to take _____ on the following activity:

This activity will take place on _____
from _____ to _____

The other adult(s) who will assist me is/are:

I will ensure that each student has both a parental consent and medical release form for this activity. I will not transport more individuals in any vehicle than is legally allowed according to the passenger rating of the vehicle.

Process/Facilities Manager Signature of PFM _____

Signature _____ Date _____



Appendix 14 - Off-Site Travel Form

Group _____

Destination _____ Contact Number _____

DEPARTURE

RETURN

Date _____ Date _____

Time _____ Time _____

ETA _____ ETA _____

DRIVER'S NAME

VEHICLE

LEADER NAME(S)

PHONE NUMBER

STUDENT NAME(S)

PHONE NUMBER



Appendix 15 - Letter of Informed Consent for Transportation

Student's name _____

Transporting from and to locations:

From: _____ To: _____

Date(s) of transportation: _____

Dear Parent: *Grace Christian Fellowship of Fergus* has arranged transportation to and from church activities on your behalf for your child(ren).

Details of the activity: (include location/time/mode of transportation/driver/ratios of student to staff)

While every precaution is taken for the safety and good health, some activities including transportation carry with them the inherent risk of personal injury. Your permission is required to provide this transportation. Please carefully read the following information and consent form. If you are in agreement, please sign this and return it to the church.

PERMISSION

I give permission for my child/charge ("child") to be transported in a motor vehicle driven by the individual identified to an event at the specified location on the date indicated. I understand that my child is expected to follow all applicable laws regarding riding in a motor vehicle and is expected to follow the directions provided by the driver and/or other adult volunteers.

I understand that participation in the identified event is not a requirement for participation in GCF's activities.

I have read, understand, and discussed with my child that:

- 1) They will be traveling in a motor vehicle driven by an adult and accompanied by a second adult and they are to wear their safety-belt while traveling;
- 2) They are expected to respect each other, the vehicles they ride in, and the people they travel with during the trip;
- 3) Riding in a motor vehicle may result in personal injuries or death from wrecks, collisions or acts by riders, other drivers, or objects; and
- 4) They are to remain in their seats and not be disruptive to the driver of the vehicle.

I recognize that by participating in this activity, as with any activity involving motor vehicle transportation, my child may risk personal injury or permanent loss. I hereby attest and verify that I have been advised of the potential risks, that I have full knowledge of the risks involved in this activity, and that I assume any expenses that may be incurred in the event of an accident, illness, or other incapacity, regardless of whether I have authorized such expenses.

Appendix 15 - P.2

Student's Name _____ Date of Birth _____

Address _____

Phone Number _____ Parents' Work Number _____

Health Card Number _____ Family Doctor _____

Phone Number _____

In case of an emergency, contact _____

I hereby consent to the participation of my/our child(ren) in this supervised activity.

I/we, the parents or guardians named below, authorize the Director or one of *GCF* Personnel to sign consent for medical treatment and to authorize any physician or hospital to provide medical assessment, treatment or procedures for the participant named above.

I/we, named below, undertake and agree to indemnify and hold blameless *GCF*, its personnel, its Directors and Board from and against any loss, damage or injury suffered by the participant as a result of being part of the activities of *GCF*, as well as of any medical treatment authorized by the supervising individuals representing *GCF*. This consent and authorization is effective only when participating in or traveling to events of *GCF*.

I have read, understood and agree with the above.

Activity: _____

Parent / Guardian Signature _____

Printed Name _____ Date _____



Appendix 16 - Emergency Information Card

EMERGENCY INFORMATION CARD

Student's Name _____

Parent's Name _____

Home Number _____

Emergency Contact Number _____

Known Allergies _____

Health Card Number _____

Family Physician _____

EMERGENCY INFORMATION CARD

Student's Name _____

Parent's Name _____

Home Number _____

Emergency Contact Number _____

Known Allergies _____

Health Card Number _____

Family Physician _____



Appendix 17 - Volunteer Driver Agreement

“Trip Driver” is defined as any person authorized by the leadership of *Grace Christian Fellowship of Fergus (GCF)* who has agreed to be a driver for a certain trip while they are driving their own or another licensed automobile.

This will authorize _____ (Name of staff or volunteer)

- 1. To transport children and/or youth participating in the regular events of *GCF* or
- 2. To transport children and/or youth participating in the following activity:

Vehicle Make: _____ Year: _____ License #: _____

All “trip drivers” including volunteer drivers are advised that in order to ensure the automobile liability insurance coverage are not invalidated that the following are enforced:

- 1. Use a licensed automobile which carries valid third-party liability insurance as required under legislation in our province.
- 2. Provide the Board with prompt written notice, with all available particulars, of any accident arising out of the use of a licensed automobile during a trip on business of the Board.
- 3. Be aware that the Board’s Excess Liability Insurance comes into effect only after the “trip driver’s” insurance has been exhausted.

I. Declaration to be signed by Driver:

- I declare that I am licensed in _____ [province] and my vehicle is insured by valid automobile insurance as required by provincial law.
- That the vehicle is mechanically fit and that there are seatbelts in working condition for all passengers. The vehicle has car seats for all passengers under 40 lbs., and booster seats for children between 40 lbs. and 59 lbs. Seat belts are required for anyone over 8 years and more than 60 lbs.
- I will follow the manufacturer’s vehicle guidelines regarding air bags and acknowledge that children should not be seated in the front seat of any vehicle, especially under the age of 10.

Signature _____ Date _____

Insurance Company _____ Policy # _____

II. Declaration to be signed by the owner of the vehicle, if the volunteer does not own the vehicle.

- I declare that I have authorized _____ to drive my vehicle to transport children and/or youth participating in the events listed on this form.
- They are licensed to carry passengers and is fully insured under the vehicle liability insurance as required by provincial legislation.
- That the vehicle is mechanically fit and that there are seatbelts in working condition for all passengers. The vehicle has booster seats for all passengers under 40 lbs.

Signature _____ Date _____

Date _____ Organization _____

Program Lead’s Signature _____



Appendix 18 - Driving Contract

I AGREE:

1. To be a safe, responsible driver.
2. To follow all provincial and state licensing laws and to abide by any additional requirements placed on me by *GCF*.
3. To abide by any restrictions that are put in place by *GCF* (how many passengers, speed, etc).
4. Never to drive when I have been using alcohol or drugs.
5. To avoid distractions when I am behind the wheel, including loud music, eating, drinking, using a cellphone, or engaging in distracting conversations with other passengers.
6. To take responsibility for telling authorities and *GCF* supervisor when an accident or problem with the vehicle has taken place.
7. To take responsibility for any accidents that occur because of poor judgment on my part.
8. To follow all provincial and state driving laws (speed limits, construction zones, etc).
9. To always notify *GCF* supervisor if I am tired and do not feel that I can continue to drive.

DRIVING RESTRICTIONS:

1. All drivers must be 25 years of age or older.
2. All drivers must hold a valid driver's license.
3. Under no circumstances will a sanctioned *GCF* driver allow a student to drive a vehicle.

I understand that if I do not follow any of these guidelines my ability to drive will be jeopardized.

A *GCF* supervisor has the right and authority to take away my driving privileges for the church at any time.

Your signature below means that you have read the preceding statements and guidelines, that you agree to them, that you will abide by them, and that if at any time you cannot agree to the preceding you will notify *GCF* supervisor and will discontinue driving for the church.

Signature _____

Printed Name _____ Date _____

Appendix 19 - Acceptable Computer Use Policy

By using these public computers, you agree to abide by these guidelines:

1. All users must sign-in and sign-out when using public computers, including name, date and time.
2. Public computers are only open for public access during posted hours. Staff and volunteers reserve the right to ask anyone to leave the Center at any time for any reason.
3. Be polite. Do not use abusive or threatening messages to or about others.
4. Use appropriate language in conversation and online.
5. Obscene or sexually explicit material may not be accessed on these computers.
6. Illegal online activity or websites may not be accessed on these computers.
7. Sharing of copyrighted material, including piracy of books, movies or computer software is not allowed on these computers.
8. Only staff members are permitted to load software on these computers.
9. Damaging or attempting to harm our or others' data, computer equipment, or network performance is prohibited.

Any violation of the regulations above may cause access privileges to be revoked and may result in additional disciplinary actions.

User's Full Name: _____

User Signature: _____ Date: _____



Appendix 20 - Computer Policy Agreement for Ministry Personnel

PREAMBLE

Everything must be done in order to protect the children in our care against harmful materials and predators on the Internet. All Ministry Personnel have a responsibility for the ethical and appropriate use of the computers and the Internet in our centers. The following details this more fully.

CONTEXTS FOR USE

Computer equipment, access to the organization's network and an Internet connection will be used in the performance of your job for legitimate business. All users have a responsibility to use these computer resources and the Internet in a professional, lawful and ethical manner. Occasional limited appropriate personal use of the computer is permitted if such use does not interfere with the user's or any other employee's job performance; have an undue effect on the computer or *Grace Christian Fellowship of Fergus (GCF)* network's performance; or violate any other policies, provisions, guidelines or standards of this or any other agreement of the organization.

INAPPROPRIATE ACTIVITIES

The following list is not exhaustive but gives examples of inappropriate computer-based activities:

- Using tech resources to create, view or share offensive, pornographic, discriminatory or demeaning media
- Using technology resources without appropriate permission or access
- Using technology resources to harass, insult or attack others
- Sharing or copying another's work without their consent
- Violating copyright laws or other legal contracts
- Installing unauthorized software on *GCF's* equipment

CONSEQUENCES

Failure to comply with these policies will be taken seriously. Any inappropriate use of the computer or the Internet technologies, particularly that which puts our children's and youth's protection in jeopardy, is grounds for disciplinary action and/or termination.

DISCLAIMER

Grace Christian Fellowship of Fergus recognizes that it is difficult to avoid at least some contact with objectionable material while using the Internet. Even innocuous search requests may lead to sites with highly offensive content.

Additionally, having an e-mail address on the Internet may lead to receipt of unsolicited e-mails containing offensive content. Users accessing the Internet do so at their own risk; the organization is not responsible for material viewed or downloaded by users from the Internet. Employees will not be held accountable for inappropriate material sent to them or inadvertently viewed. All inappropriate material received should be deleted immediately.

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LACK OF PRIVACY/ORGANIZATION'S RIGHTS

The user expressly waives any right of privacy in anything they create, store, send or receive using *GCF's* computer equipment or Internet access. User consents to allow *GCF's* personnel access to and review of all materials created, stored, sent or received by user through any organization network or Internet connection. *GCF* has the right to monitor and log any and all aspects of its computer system including, but not limited to, monitoring Internet sites visited by users, monitoring chat and newsgroups, monitoring file downloads, and all communications sent and received by users. Employees should have no expectation of privacy in anything they create, store, send or receive using *GCF's* computer equipment.

GCF has the right to utilize software that makes it possible to identify and block access to Internet sites containing sexually explicit or other material deemed inappropriate in the workplace.

PERSONAL ACCOUNTABILITY

It is recommended that all users consider installing an accountability program like Covenant Eyes or X3Watch. *GCF* grants permission to install such software on all equipment with Internet access. For an employee who has been cited for inappropriate Internet use, *GCF* may require that such software be installed.



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Appendix 21 - Sign-in/Sign-out Sheet

Date _____ Time _____

Department _____

All Ministry Personnel Working: _____

ID Number Child's Name Sign In Sign Out Special Instructions

ID Number	Child's Name	Sign In	Sign Out	Special Instructions

These forms have been adapted from Plan to Protect®, permission granted by Plan to Protect® 2022 © for use by Grace Christian Fellowship of Fergus.

Appendix 22 - Symptoms Abuse

Ministry Personnel should be aware of the physical signs of abuse, as well as behavioural and verbal signs that a victim may exhibit. The following characteristics may be indicators of abuse, although they are not necessarily proof. One sign alone does not constitute abuse and may simply be indicative of other issues. Here is where you need to ask God for discernment and wisdom as you watch for patterns or a combination of these warning signs.

POSSIBLE SIGNS OF PHYSICAL ABUSE

- Hostile and aggressive behaviour toward others
- Fearfulness of parents and/or other adults
- Destructive behaviour toward self, others and/or property
- Inexplicable fractures or bruises inappropriate for child's developmental stage
- Burns, facial injuries, pattern of repetitious bruises

POSSIBLE SIGNS OF SEXUAL ABUSE

- Unusually advanced sexual knowledge and/or behaviour for child's age and developmental stage
- Depression – cries for no apparent reason
- Promiscuous behaviour
- Runs away from home and refuses to return
- Difficulty walking or sitting
- Bruised or bleeding in vaginal or anal areas
- Exhibits frequent headaches, stomach aches, extreme fatigue
- Sexually transmitted diseases

POSSIBLE SIGNS OF EMOTIONAL ABUSE

- Exhibits severe depression and/or withdrawal
- Exhibits severe lack of self-esteem
- Failure to thrive
- Threatens or attempts suicide
- Speech and/or eating disorders
- Goes to extremes to seek adult approval
- Extreme passive/aggressive behaviour patterns

POSSIBLE SIGNS OF NEGLECT

- Failure to thrive
- Pattern of inappropriate dress for climate
- Begs or steals food; chronic hunger
- Depression
- Untreated medical conditions
- Poor hygiene

POSSIBLE SIGNS OF ABUSE IN CHURCH SETTINGS

- Unusual nervousness or anxiety about being left in a church class
- Reluctance to participate in church activities that were previously enthusiastically approached
- Comments such as: "I don't want to be alone with ..." in reference to a child care worker or teacher
- Nightmares including a child care worker or teacher as a frightening character
- Unexplained hostility toward a child care worker or teacher
- Preferential treatment toward one individual
- Secretiveness
- Lack of accountability



Appendix 23 - Suspected Abuse Report (Vulnerable Adult)

Date _____ Name of Adult _____

Address _____

Postal Code _____ Phone Number _____

Parents'/Care Giver's Names (if applicable) _____

Name of Person Filing Report _____

Name of Pastor Receiving Report _____

Name of alleged perpetrator _____ M F

Relationship between suspected victim and alleged perpetrator _____

- Nature of suspected abuse:
- physical/assault
 - sexual
 - emotional/psychological
 - neglect
 - financial
 - other

Indications of suspected abuse (including facts, physical signs and course of events)

If the Adult is reporting, what did they say? (Give quotes where possible.)

What was your response?

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Action taken (emergency call to 911, did they make the report for themselves, did they express that they weren't ready to make a report)

Signature _____

Printed Name _____ Date _____

The above information will serve as a guide and will be necessary if a formal report is filed with the police or appropriate government agency. All information received is to be kept STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL and not shared with anyone or influenced by anyone.

This document should be sealed and labelled and stored under lock and key.



Appendix 24 - Suspected Abuse Report (Child)

Date _____ Name of Child/Youth _____

Age of Child/Youth _____ Grade _____ Birthdate _____

Address _____

Postal Code _____ Phone Number _____

Parents' Names _____

Siblings' Names _____

Name of Person Filing Report _____

Name of Pastor Receiving Report _____

Name of Social Worker _____ Phone Number _____

Name of alleged perpetrator _____ M F

Relationship between suspected victim and alleged perpetrator _____

Nature of suspected abuse: physical sexual emotional neglect other

Indications of suspected abuse (including facts, physical signs and course of events)

Action taken (including date and time)

If a Child is reporting:

What did the Child say? (Give quotes where possible.)

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What was your response?

Signature _____

Printed Name _____ Date _____

The above information will serve as a guide and will be necessary if a formal report is filed with the police or appropriate government agency. All information received is to be kept STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL and not shared with anyone or influenced by anyone.

This document should be sealed and labelled and stored under lock and key.



Appendix 24a - Suspected Abuse Follow Up Form

To Be Completed by Program Leader/Pastor (separately from Appendix 23 or 24)

Date _____ Name of Child/Youth _____

Date of Suspected Abuse Form being addressed _____

Age of Victim _____ Grade _____ Birthdate _____

Address _____

Postal Code _____ Phone Number _____

Details as reported to you:

Conclusions:

Action taken (including dates and times):

Lead Pastor's Signature _____

Printed Name _____ Date _____

The above information will serve as a guide and will be necessary if a formal report is filed with the police or appropriate government agency. All information received is to be kept STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL and not shared with anyone or influenced by anyone.

Appendix 25 - Fire Prevention Procedure Checklist

The responsibility for fire safety lies with the church leadership.

- Contact your local fire department to ensure that your building is up to code.
- Partner with a fire department representative to develop a Fire Safety Plan for your church.
- Post fire routes in each room where children are served.
- Develop an emergency escape plan.
- Train ministry personnel and other associated ministry leaders regarding the plan (For example, you may need to utilize ushers or other staff to assist with carrying babies from the nursery in case of fire. Consider including them in your training nights.)
- Inform parents of the fire safety procedures that will be followed in the case of a fire in the building. Assure parents that their children will be removed from the building by ministry personnel and will be reunited with them once outside the building.
- Propose performing a fire drill during a peak ministry time.
- Contact the fire department and set up a time for them to perform a fire drill during your ministry time.

Appendix 26 - Abuse Prevention Declaration

Name of organization/policyholder: _____

Address: _____

Please have an authorized representative of your organization review the following declarations, mark the appropriate box for your response and return the original signed copy for underwriting review by your insurance company. Retain a copy for your records.

Declarations

A. Our organization has implemented a formal written abuse prevention Plan to Protect® for the children, youth and/or vulnerable adults in our care. Yes No

B. Our formal prevention plan contains the following measures:

1. A written statement of policy confirming our organization's commitment to:

- a. a safe environment by preventing harm to those in our care,
- b. protecting our childrens' and youth ministry workers from false allegations, and
- c. declaring zero tolerance for abuse, harassment or neglect. Yes No

2. Our prevention plan assists workers by defining physical, sexual and emotional abuse, child neglect, harassment, inappropriate touching and improper discipline. Yes No

3. We have mandatory Screening measures for all workers (including all employees, ministers, staff, board members and volunteers) serving in any position involving work with children, youth or vulnerable adults, including the following:

PLEASE CHECK APPLICABLE BOX IF YOUR ANSWER IS **YES**:

Signed Employee/Volunteer Application (including ministry agreement and release for references and criminal record checks) Employee Volunteer

Criminal Record Checks: (i.e. C.P.I.C. and V.S.V.) Employee Volunteer

- New Applicants - checked prior to eligibility
- Existing Workers - re-checked as follows:
- Camping and Short-Term Missions Organizations - Annually
- Schools, Day Cares and Nurseries - Every Three (3) years, or less
- Churches and All Other Organizations - Every Five (5) years, or less

Note: For Existing Workers being re-checked or for New Applicants under 25 years of age, a C.P.I.C. and F.I.P can be done in lieu of a C.P.I.C. and V.S.V.

- C.P.I.C. means named-based Police Check through Canadian Police Information Centre

- V.S.V. means Vulnerable Sector Verification (Screening)

- F.I.P. means Firearms Interest Police query Employee Volunteer

Background Reference Checks (minimum 2) for new Employees/Volunteers Employee Volunteer

Personal Interviews for new Employees/Volunteers Employee Volunteer

Minimum 6-month waiting period for volunteers who are new to your organization prior to eligibility N/A Volunteer

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4. We have implemented written procedures to prevent abuse and harassment through the following Operational Procedures: (Please check if yes)

- Prohibiting corporal punishment and inappropriate touching, affection or discipline
- 'Two adult rule' (unrelated) for off-premises contact with children and youth (refer to "Good/Better/Best" Guidelines)
- Addressing health, safety and sanitation issues to prevent child neglect
- Age appropriate supervision of washroom breaks (refer to 2011 Abuse Prevention Newsletter – FAQ Question 3)
- Avoiding activities that could easily lead to allegations of abuse or harassment, such as unsupervised Internet access, individual photography of children and vehicle transportation by a worker alone with unrelated minors
- Obtaining written parental consent for sponsored off-premises or overnight activities and field trips
- Implemented a social networking policy for youth programs addressing appropriate content and confidentiality issues
- Keeping confidential screening documentation on file indefinitely for all workers, including original Criminal Record Checks
- Annual or bi-annual internal audit, including report to board

5. We have modified or altered our premises (owned or rented) to prevent or discourage abuse incidents by ensuring the following: (Please check if yes)

- 'Two-adult rule', and/or 'open door policy' and/or windows in all classrooms and/or designated monitors circulating periodically from room to room, for surveillance and to protect workers against false allegations
- Controlled access and parental sign-in/sign-out for nursery facilities
- Parental sign-in/sign-out for children's programs under Grade 1 age
- Adequate lighting inside and outside of building(s) where children's/youth activities take place

6. We conduct training for all children's and youth ministry workers and other workers in positions of trust with minors or vulnerable adults to assist them in understanding the issue of abuse, abuse prevention and the legal responsibility to report actual or alleged incidents, including the following: (Please check if yes)

- Initial training for all new workers
- Annual refresher training for Operational Procedures, Premises and Responding protocol (refer to items 4., 5. and 7. of the Declaration Form)

7. In cases of suspected or alleged abuse, our written protocol for responding includes the following: (Please check if yes)

- We will immediately complete an incident report form
- We will fulfill statutory reporting obligations to child protective agencies or police authorities
- Without admitting legal liability or making public statements prior to obtaining legal counsel, we will assure a compassionate response to the alleged victim and their family
- We will maintain confidentiality for the alleged victim and alleged perpetrator
- We will immediately suspend the alleged perpetrator pending outcome of investigation

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Note: For any boxes left unchecked, please attach a written explanation signed by the authorized representative of the organization. Approval is subject to underwriting review. Please keep a photocopy of this Declaration Form for your records and for your internal auditing purposes.

We, the undersigned, duly authorized to make representations on behalf of the organization/corporation applying for coverage eligibility under a contract of liability insurance (new policy or renewal) with the participating Insurer(s). To the best of our knowledge and after having made reasonable inquiries, we hereby state that all of the declarations contained in this document are accurate and that the organization/corporation is in compliance with the provisions of its abuse prevention plan, as stated in this Abuse Prevention Declaration.

1. _____
Name of Executive Director, Minister or Children's Ministry Director (PLEASE PRINT)

Title

Signature Date

2. _____
Name of Chairman or President of the Board (PLEASE PRINT)

Title

Signature Date



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Appendix 27 - Confidentiality Agreement

Note: it is recommended that a confidentiality statement be signed by all employees and volunteers - whether that clause is in their employment agreement or in a separate confidentiality agreement.

I understand that I will obtain or have access to sensitive and confidential information in my role as an [employee/volunteer] with *Grace Christian Fellowship of Fergus (GCF)*. That confidential information may include, without restriction, personal information regarding employees, volunteers, members, attendees, supporters or persons assisted by *GCF* including information in relation to donations, personal or family matters, or obtained from background screening of prospective employees or volunteers. I agree to maintain strict confidentiality of all such confidential information and I will not disclose such information to anyone (including to employees, volunteers, members, attendees, supporters, persons assisted, or my spouse or family members) except authorized representatives of *GCF* who need to know such information or as required by law. I understand and agree that confidentiality is very important in my role and critical to the effective functioning of *GCF*. If I become aware that any confidential information was improperly disclosed, I will immediately advise _____ of *GCF*.

Dated this _____ day of _____, 20_____

Name _____

Signature _____

Witness Name _____

Signature _____



Appendix 28 - Offenders Covenant

Dear _____,
(name of Offender)

On behalf of the leadership of *Grace Christian Fellowship of Fergus (GCF)* I would like to welcome you to participate in the worship and congregational life of our church. We want you to know that we see you as a very important and valued part of God's family. In light of all that has taken place in your life there are some guidelines that we feel must be followed. These guidelines are not meant to be punitive but to ensure safety and peace of mind for the congregation and yourself.

- You must refrain from all contact with Children and Youth while attending church functions. This includes all verbal and written communication.
- You must not volunteer or agree to lead, chaperone or participate in events involving Children or Youth.
- You must not transport any Children or Youth as part of the ministry programs of *GCF*.
- The Board will identify at least two "covenant partners" who must accompany you if you leave the main congregation room or if you need to go the public washrooms.
- You are to avoid being in the building unsupervised at all times. This includes all Children and Youth ministry areas and washroom areas. When entering the church, you must use the most direct route to the sanctuary area and sit in an area that is visible to your covenant partners.
- You are to abide by any terms and conditions of probation as set out by the court.
- You are not to be in any poorly or unlit areas of the church property.
- You are welcome and encouraged to join one of our adult small groups if minors are not present and if the facilitator is made aware of the situation.
- You are to avoid befriending families of the church with minors.
- At least twice per year you are requested to meet with the Board to discuss your adherence to these guidelines.

We are so grateful that you have made us aware of your situation. It shows us that there is a cooperative spirit and willingness for restoration and wholeness.

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I, the undersigned, accept the following people as Covenant Partners. I agree to these Covenant Partners being made aware of the circumstances of my situation and the contents of this covenant.

(Covenant Partner #1)

(Covenant Partner #2)

(Covenant Partner #3)

I have read and agree to abide by the conditions of this covenant.

I understand that any violation of this covenant may result in refusal of access to the church property or congregational gatherings may be restricted or prohibited.

I understand that this covenant will be reviewed every six months and will remain in effect for an indefinite period of time.

Offender's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Pastor's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Board Member's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix 29 - Terms of Reference for Plan to Protect® Committee

The purpose of this committee is to ensure that the Plan to Protect® Policies and Procedures are implemented throughout *GCF*.

GOALS:

- To stay abreast of best practices of abuse prevention and safety for our context;
- To coach and train department leaders on the necessary steps to ensure implementation of the policies and procedures;
- To screen and maintain the screening requirements of all Ministry Personnel (paid and unpaid) that will be placed in a position of trust;
- To provide orientation training and maintain the annual training requirements of all Ministry Personnel (paid and unpaid) that will be placed in a position of trust;
- In partnership with the administrative staff ensure the management of documentation is in order to protect the stakeholders of *GCF*;
- To address questions and concerns that arise in relation to the Plan to Protect® policies;
- To conduct an annual audit of the policies and report back to the Board the findings of the audit; and
- To alert the Board of needed policy revisions, and potentially draft and recommend amendments to the policies;
- To prepare an annual report on the outcomes of the Abuse Prevention and Safety initiatives of *GCF*.

COMMITTEE MAKE-UP:

- Chair (1) - call meetings, write annual report, meet with Board and staff as needed, assist with policy development and audits, in partnership with pastoral staff and Administrative Staff update and review forms, assist with trainings, and coach team members.
- Board of Directors (1) - liaison with Board and assist with serving Church Leadership and Chair in dealing with difficult issues that arise from opposition or screening
- Administrators (1) - Volunteers or staff who have strong administrative skills or gifts (setting up the screening files, managing the master list of screened Ministry Personnel, processing police record checks)**
- Screeners (2) - Volunteers who have strong discernment gifts and/or experience in interviewing/ screening staff (in partnership with pastoral staff, they conduct interviews, check references, etc.)
- Members at Large (1) - Individuals serving in children's ministry or youth ministry
- Trainers (1) - Volunteers or paid staff who have strong communication skills and influence, willing to be certified as a trainer. Estimated 4-8 trainings per year.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

For the size of *GCF* we should have 1 trainer for every 100 volunteers

The committee will meet initially 2-3 times until the policy is approved by the Board.

Once the policy is approved, the team will meet quarterly. This is not the extent of their involvement as each role on the committee will have a portfolio which will require active involvement in either administrative, screening or training.