

PEMBINA PARISH PASTORAL CHARGE

DUTY OF CARE POLICY FOR VULNERABLE PEOPLE

*Approved by the Leadership Team of Pembina Parish
Pastoral Charge on November 7th, 2012.*

POLICY STATEMENT

Pembina Parish Pastoral Charge is committed to the charge given to us by God – to protect and care for the vulnerable in society.

In Pembina Parish Pastoral Charge we wish to maintain an environment where all people, especially children, youth, seniors, handicapped, and other vulnerable people are safe, well treated, well cared for, and properly supervised.

OUR PURPOSE

To create and maintain a safe environment where all participants and volunteers feel welcomed and secure within Pembina Parish Pastoral Charge.

BACKGROUND REFERENCE & LEGAL FRAMEWORK

1. CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES ACT
2. “FAITHFUL FOOTSTEPS: Screening for Positions of Trust and Authority in the United Church of Canada”.
3. SEXUAL ABUSE PREVENTION AND RESPONSE POLICY AND PROCEDURES, April 2011, United Church of Canada

RISK ASSESSMENT

(from “Faithful Footsteps”)

An appropriate job description will be written for each volunteer and staff position, if:

- it involves supervision of persons under 18 years of age
- it involves one-to-one contact with disabled persons or infirm seniors,
- it involves one-to-one home visits, instruction or counseling,
- involves acting as mentor, personal counselor, or spiritual advisor.

VOLUNTEER AND STAFF SCREENING

1. Volunteers and staff are required to complete an application form. They will meet with the Chairperson of the appropriate committee or a Minister of Pembina Parish Pastoral Charge.
2. References if deemed necessary will be conducted and documented for all new volunteers and staff.
3. Volunteers and staff will require a **Police Records Check** to be renewed every 3 years, dated no earlier than 6 months before beginning their new duties.
4. If the Police Records Check, reference checks and interviews are deemed unsatisfactory by those conducting the screening, **the Minister and the Chair of M&P* will decide on the appropriateness of the volunteer, and they shall inform the applicants if their application is refused.

5. All volunteers and staff will receive formal child protection and personal safety training including this document at the start of their duties and once per year thereafter.
6. Volunteers and staff will participate in documented supervision and evaluation reviews by the *M&P Committee/ Other designated persons*. The amount and frequency of supervision will be determined by the level of risk in that position.

CONFIDENTIALITY

1. All information collected for the safety and security of participants is for the exclusive use of Pembina Parish Pastoral Charge only. It is not to be shared or disclosed.
2. The *M&P Committee or Designated Person* will store this information on hard copy locked in a secure office, and / or in electronic form in password-secure computers. The information will be destroyed when no longer relevant.

PARTICIPATING CHILDREN AND YOUTH

To participate on a regular basis in programs at Pembina Parish Pastoral Charge:

1. All children and youth (and/or their parents/guardians) will complete a registration form, renewable yearly.
2. All children and youth will be expected to follow participation guidelines as set by the leader.
3. When children and youth visit the Church a reasonable effort will be made to obtain registration and medical information about them.

SAFETY PROCEDURES AT CHURCH FUNCTIONS

1. Classrooms and other activities: – a fully screened staff person or volunteer must be in attendance at all times in the presence of those aged 0 - 18. A second volunteer aged 13 - 18 may assist. After classes, parents are expected to supervise their own children while still in the Church building.
2. Diaper changing: – Should diaper-changing become necessary, the parents should be notified.
3. Washrooms: – It should be communicated to parents at the beginning of the year, as well as to new parents during the year, that they should take their children to the washroom prior to classes or service. A volunteer should escort children up to 6 years to the washroom, and inspect the washroom before the child enters. A volunteer should *never* go into a washroom cubicle with a child or youth and shut the door.

VOLUNTEER BEHAVIOUR

1. Volunteers should always conduct themselves, responsibly and ethically, being above reproach, and as examples to the community.
2. If an individual is injured during a Church activity, and it becomes necessary to remove part of the individual's clothing to examine the injury, two volunteers should be present, and the incident should be reported to his or her contact as soon as possible. This should also be reported to the church.

Appropriate touch:

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

- bending down to the person's eye level and speaking kindly, listening to the person carefully,
- taking a child's hand and leading him or her to an activity
- putting an arm around the shoulder of a child who needs quieting or comforting,
- taking both of the child's hands as you say "you did such a good job!", "I'm so glad to see you!", "We missed you!" etc,
- patting a child on the head, hand, shoulder, or back to affirm him or her,
- holding a pre-school child who is crying.

Inappropriate touch:

Volunteer staff must always avoid

- Hitting or hurting
- kissing a child, coaxing a child to kiss you, extended hugging and tickling,
- touching a child in any area that would be covered by a bathing suit (except when assisting a child with toileting as outlined previously),
- carrying older children or having them sit on your lap
- being alone with a child
- prolonged physical contact
- piggyback rides
- seductiveness or suggestive contact, or verbal mention
- any physical contact of any kind that is done for the pleasure or satisfaction of care providers
- any touching used to express power or control over a child.

SPECIAL EVENTS AND OVERNIGHT POLICIES

Teachers occasionally plan special class activities in their homes, or plan social activities involving their pupils in field trips and service projects. The following precautions need to be taken with these activities:

1. field trips and special events activities should be pre-approved by the Church Leadership Team
2. parents/guardians should be notified at least one week prior to the outing,
3. proper written consent and medical release forms are required for each child participating in field trips and special events
4. all trips and outings must be supervised by a minimum of 2 approved, unrelated adult leaders,
5. all drivers providing transportation must have a valid driver's license and current automobile insurance; and the number of passengers must never exceed the number of seat belts.

CHURCH-SPONSORED OVERNIGHT ACTIVITIES

These may be permitted as the following guidelines are met:

1. all overnight activities must be pre-approved by the Church Leadership Team
2. written consent and medical release forms are required for each child,
3. each leader should have an assigned group of children for whom they will be responsible during the overnight event.

REPORTING SUSPECTED ABUSE OR NEGLECT

The reporting of child or vulnerable person abuse allegations is clearly mandated by law.

A complaint can be made by:

1. A person who has been sexually abused by a person in a position of trust
2. Someone who has first-hand knowledge of sexual abuse by a person in a position of trust
3. In the case of a minor, a parent or guardian may initiate a complaint

The process for complaint within the United Church Of Canada is as follows:

1. The complainant contacts a designated consultant and informs the consultant of the allegation
2. The consultant reviews the policy with the complainant and determines if the policy applies
3. The complainant puts the complaint in writing, or the consultant's notes will serve as the written record
4. The Conference Personnel Minister is notified of the complaint and the process moves forward (as per Abuse Prevention Policy, pg 11-13)
5. All records and related material of complaints are kept confidential

- Updated, March 2017 -

