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Introduction

Whitehorse Baptist Church (WBC) has a spiritual, moral, and legal obligation to provide a secure environment for children participating in church programs that are under the auspices and authority of the church. Everyone who teaches, helps, or cares for children and/or youth under the auspices of Whitehorse Baptist Church is required to follow the guidelines and procedures as defined in this document. The Church Board has reviewed and adopted them as official policy.

This plan is designed to assist church leaders in their recruiting of volunteers and, to the greatest extent possible, provide for the safety of the children served by these volunteers.

These guidelines are therefore set forth to provide a safe and nurturing environment in which we can bring our children to the Savior. We view ourselves as partners with parents, seeking to provide quality care and instruction in our ministry to the family. All of our guidelines are designed to protect and promote growth in God for each child and adult involved.

Incidents of abuse can occur in any church - including ours. Churches have traditionally accepted the services of anyone expressing an interest in working as a volunteer with children or youth. Churches are by nature trusting and unsuspecting institutions. Asking sensitive questions of those who are giving their time and talent can be seen as distasteful by church leaders. No one wants to offend potential workers, especially longtime church members with a history of good service. These qualities can make a church susceptible to incidents of child abuse. A single incident of child abuse can devastate a church and divide the congregation.

Churches need to understand the extent of their liability. Churches are not 'guarantors' of the safety and well-being of children. They are not absolutely liable for every injury that occurs on their premises or in the course of their activities. Generally, they are responsible only for those injuries that result from their negligence. Victims of molestation who have sued a church often allege that the church was negligent in not adequately screening applicants or for not providing adequate supervision.

Increasingly and often more dramatically, the church and its personnel (i.e. staff, directors, officers and ministers) are being held accountable for the acts of individual abusers within the church even though neither the church, nor its leaders were aware of the abuse or condoned it. Churches are being sued in Civil Courts for damages sustained by victims and their families. Those victims and their families are attempting to hold churches accountable by alleging that:

- the church is vicariously liable for the acts of its personnel, be they paid staff or volunteer staff, regardless of whether the church was itself negligent or even knew of the abuse
- the church was negligent in its hiring or accepting personnel, whether paid or volunteer
- the church was negligent in the supervising or monitoring of its personnel or membership.

In making sure Whitehorse Baptist Church is a safer place, we will be:

- Safeguarding preschoolers, children and youth of our church from abuse
- Protecting the church staff and volunteer workers from potential allegations of sexual abuse
- Limiting the extent of legal risk and liability due to any such sexual abuse.

Child Protection Procedures

Whitehorse Baptist Church is committed to the following:

- **We will** screen all paid employees, including ministerial staff, and volunteers who work with preschoolers, children or youth.
- **We will** check references and do criminal record checks on all our workers, for any position involving work with preschoolers, children or youth. Anyone with criminal abuse violations will not be allowed to work with children or youth.
- **We will** train all of our staff who work with preschoolers, children or youth, both paid and volunteer, to understand the nature of child sexual abuse, how to carry out our policies to prevent sexual abuse including our clearly defined reporting procedures for suspected incidents.
- **We take very seriously** our policies to prevent sexual abuse and will see that they are enforced.
- **All workers will** agree to comply with church policies and guidelines.
- **We will follow** a basic Two-Adult rule. Such a rule says that two adults should be present during any children's activity. This rule reduces the risk of child abuse, and also reduces the risk of false accusations of abuse by individuals seeking a quick legal settlement.
- **We will follow** the Six Month rule. Volunteers will be permitted to work with preschoolers, children or youth only after they have been adherents/members of Whitehorse Baptist Church for a period of six months. Such a policy gives the church an additional opportunity to evaluate applicants and volunteers, and will help to repel persons seeking immediate access to children. (This provision may be waived where the person is transferring in from another church and has a letter of recommendation signed by the pastor of that church.) This rule does not necessarily apply to Marsh Lake Bible Camp.

These safeguards are not only to protect our children, but also our workers

Is screening important?
Ask any member of a church in which
an incident of sexual abuse has occurred.

Recruitment of Paid Staff and Volunteers

The Ministry Volunteer Application Form and/or Employee Application Form must be completed for all positions involving ministry with children and youth. To protect the church from legal liability and for the protection of all workers, every prospective ministry leader including established members of Whitehorse Baptist Church must complete the application form found in the Appendix of this document.

Ministry Volunteer Application Form

In cases where children are to be supervised by volunteers, the Ministry Volunteer Application Form should be submitted by the volunteer before interim approval is considered. The Ministry Volunteer Application Form is critical in protecting the church from legal action if a case of child abuse occurs in which a church volunteer is involved.

To protect our children and to be protected from liability, the church must take reasonable action in screening and supervising the volunteers involved in any children's work. (A court can find the church legally liable if it is less than systematic and therefore negligent in screening volunteers). By having everyone fill out these forms and keeping them on file, the church greatly reduces the potential for child abuse and the resultant liability. All forms will be kept for a period of at least 10 years.

Each department must keep its own inventory list of its volunteers and the status of the application process.

Reference Check

Three personal references are requested on the Ministry Application Form. References that are acceptable are limited to the following:

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

At least two of these references will be contacted and asked to affirm the appointment of the volunteer. The person making the contacts, the date, and a summary of the reference's comments will all be recorded; this will become part of the Volunteer's Placement File.

Interview

An interview provides the ministry heads with the opportunity to review the important items from the Ministry Volunteer Application Form in a personal setting, allowing them to ask follow-up questions and to enhance their knowledge of the applicant. The information given in the interview will be available only to the pastoral staff and so has limited confidentiality. The interview will also allow the potential volunteer the opportunity of asking questions about various children's ministries and the reasons behind our child protection procedures.

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Interviews will be conducted with all applicants who have not previously volunteered in children's/youth ministries at Whitehorse Baptist Church, with the exception of those applying to volunteer at Marsh Lake Bible Camp who live outside the Yukon Territory. Due to the logistical difficulties, we will rely on the application form/references/and Criminal Record Check.

Criminal Record Check

A Criminal Record Check (CRC) will be made for any approved volunteers who accept a ministry position. All paid staff will also submit to a Criminal Record Check for their own protection and for the protection of the church. All records will be placed in the Personnel File set up for that purpose in the Administration Department and will be considered confidential, accessible only by the head elder. The information contained in the CRCs is considered strictly confidential. Only the affected pastor, his supervisor, and other appropriate senior staff of the church can be privy to the information. Any individual who will not submit to this procedure will be ineligible to be involved with children on behalf of the church. The cost for any CRCs requested by Whitehorse Baptist Church will be borne by the church. Minors under 16 years of age are exempt from the CRC. CRC's will be required to be renewed every 3 years.

New workers may begin working for the church provided they can give evidence of having applied for a Criminal Record Check. This grace period will not exceed 60 days. If any current volunteer has a criminal conviction or has plead guilty to sexual or child abuse, that individual must be sensitively relieved of any duties in working with youth or children.

The CRCs are to be sent to the church to the attention of the head elder. If there is no criminal record of any sort, the volunteer may be considered for ongoing service in the church.

If there is a record or information which raises some concern, the designated ministry leader and the pastor in charge of the volunteer will meet to discuss the matter.

If the offense is other than child or sexual abuse, the volunteer may proceed with ministry in the church provided both the pastor and the ministry leader involved agree. The following are criteria to consider when evaluating the information:

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

If the offense is related to abuse of children or of a sexual nature, the volunteer may not be involved in ministry with children on behalf of Whitehorse Baptist Church.

What kinds of criminal convictions disqualify an individual for youth work in Whitehorse Baptist Church?

A criminal conviction for a sexual offense involving a minor would certainly disqualify an applicant. Automatic disqualifiers would include pedophilic behaviour, incest, rape, assaults involving minors, murder, kidnapping, child pornography, sodomy, and the physical abuse of a minor.

Other crimes would strongly indicate that a person should not be considered for work with minors in our church. Some crimes would not be automatic

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disqualifiers, because they would not necessarily suggest a risk of child abuse or molestation.

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

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

Training

All Ministry volunteers will be equipped with training regarding child safety and child abuse prevention. Each volunteers must sign a record indicating they have been trained or have read through the Whitehorse Baptist Church Abuse Policy materials; that record must be kept in the Volunteer Placement File.

Survivors of child abuse

Adult survivors of child abuse must meet with a pastor or designate before working with children or youth. This policy is included because of litigation suggesting that it is negligent for a church to hire children's workers without asking them if they were themselves victims of child abuse. Some courts have said that the statistical correlation between persons who abuse children and who were themselves abused as minors is so high that this kind of question must be asked. Whitehorse Baptist Church wants to respond to these legal developments, while at the same time preserving as much as possible the confidentiality of this kind of information.

Persons who are adult survivors of abuse should not automatically be disqualified from further consideration. Rather this information simply imposes on Whitehorse Baptist Church a higher duty of care. If the Criminal Record Check comes back with no record of any child abuse or molestation, and if there is no other indication that the applicant poses a risk (from references or previous churches), then there is no reason why the person cannot serve. In some instances when warranted, counseling may be recommended.

Implementation Procedures

The topic of child abuse and this Prevention Plan will create a variety of reactions among congregational members. Many will be in favor of the concept. Others will have questions and reservations. It is important for leadership to continually provide prospective leaders and vested interest groups the need for such a policy then give them opportunities for providing feedback. The topic can be presented in Leadership Seminars and Sunday or mid-week Adult classes. Staff members or other volunteers will be available to answer concerns and provide specific answers about this particular aspect of the church's policies.

Presenting this Policy

The following key points should be made:

- Child sexual abuse can happen in our church
- One incident can devastate a child, a family and the church
- The legal liabilities can be enormous
- Church leaders may be held liable
- A prevention program can reduce risk through relatively simple procedures

The cassette tape 'What Church Leaders Should Know About Sexual Abuse and the Church' provides an excellent introduction to this issue for church leaders. New church volunteers can listen to the tape in their car as they commute to work or church. If possible, these volunteers should listen to the tape prior to a formal training session. Use segment #1 of the video tape 'Reducing the Risk' as part of the presentation.

It is important to periodically inform the congregation of the key issues pertaining to child sexual abuse and why a decision was made to establish a prevention plan. This will continue to nurture an emotional commitment within our membership to maintain a safe church environment for all children and youth.

The climate in these presentations should not be one of sober reflection but of hope. You want the people to realize that Whitehorse Baptist Church is taking action to minister to this need. The focus should be upon the great responsibility God has given to us to care for our children. Scripture verses might be used such as the following: Psalm 78:1-6; Psalm 127; Psalm 46: 1, 6; 2 Samuel 13; Matthew 18:1-6; Matthew 18:10; Luke 18:15-17; Ephesians 5:11-13.

Monitoring of Policy

Ministry Heads should thoroughly review these policies and procedures as part of their pre-fall program planning. After the initial emphasis on the program wanes, workers may begin to ignore basic policies. Attention must be given to periodic monitoring that examines the following:

- Has each department trained its workers regarding these policies?
- Are workers following the required policies and guidelines?
- What obstacles exist in complying with the policies?
- What is the level of cooperation?
- Do sufficient materials exist for training and information?
- Are the policies printed and available?

Thoroughly discuss each policy and procedure with your department heads and/or ministry volunteers. Work through all concerns. If problems exist in the policies,

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they should be brought to the attention of the head elder. Consider revisions, but changes **must not sacrifice the integrity of the program**. Work at developing a sense of unity before educating workers and volunteers.

Educate Workers and Volunteers

Routines must be established for the training of all new workers who serve the church. Nursery workers fall into a category that we will consider separately.

Future Workers

Often, new workers begin together as a group at the start of a new quarter or educational period. Sometimes, however, a new worker becomes active after a program has already begun. A plan must exist to provide training for all workers, regardless of when they begin. All church members/adherents should be aware of basic policies concerning working with youth and children.

Group training will occur at the start of each new program year. Individuals who begin at a later date should meet with a designated person to review the policies and procedures and to complete the screening form.

Annual Training/ Additional Classes

A regularly scheduled annual training program will be offered each Fall as school begins and church programs gear up for the new church year. Additional classes will be scheduled as required. This will all be coordinated by the Sunday School Department.

Nursery

Whitehorse Baptist Church uses a number of volunteer workers in the nursery programs. Many of these volunteers may serve only a few hours each year. Special training sessions will be conducted for all volunteer nursery workers outlining nursery policy and procedures, behavioral guidelines, and where to find supplies.

STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

Overriding Principles

The purpose of Whitehorse Baptist Church is to enjoy a growing relationship with God and to help others experience the freedom that comes from knowing Him.

In order to do that, the church strives to foster an environment that reflects God's love, and that includes ensuring that WBC is a place where people feel valued and safe, and where they can grow and develop into the people God intended them to be.

The Bible and the Holy Spirit provide day-to-day guidance for all aspects of life and provide the ultimate and authoritative standard for all behavior in the church. On that foundation, the church has established some standards that pertain specifically to topics of physical and emotional safety and health. Included in this are policies pertaining to discrimination, harassment and child abuse.

Definitions and Standards

All volunteers will commit themselves to keeping WBC free from discrimination, harassment and child abuse.

- **Discrimination** is making a distinction, based on grounds defined in the Yukon Human Rights Act, that imposes burdens, obligations or disadvantages not imposed on others. The grounds defined in the code are: race, color, ancestry, place of origin, political belief, religion, marital status, family status, physical or mental disability, sex, sexual orientation, age, unrelated criminal conviction. The application of discrimination prevention principles in the context of the Biblical beliefs which govern the purpose and operation of the church will be explained further in educational material presented in written and/or verbal form to all volunteers.
- **Harassment** is a form of discrimination. It includes any unwelcome conduct or comments that have a negative impact on a person or their work environment. Some common examples of harassment are on-going teasing, disparaging comments, intimidating or belittling remarks and offensive pictures or e-mail messages.
- **Sexual harassment** is unwelcome or offensive comments or conduct of a sexual nature (e.g. touching which causes uneasiness on the part of the recipient). In general, a handshake is acceptable, but briefly putting a hand on someone's shoulder or giving them a friendly hug may be considered harassment depending on the circumstances, and the perception and comfort level of the recipient.
- **An abused or neglected child** is one who is harmed, threatened with physical or mental harm, or from whom is withheld the necessities of life. Abuse can occur on a physical, emotional and/or sexual level and includes neglect.

WBC will provide education on discrimination, harassment and child abuse and on what to do in the event of a situation involving any of these. All volunteers are

required to participate in this education. Material will also be made available to all church members and adherents, including children.

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A child is defined as a person who is under the age of 19. Adults are 19 and over. Volunteer leaders in all ministry areas will be adults. Volunteer assistants can, at the discretion of the staff person responsible for the ministry area, be children. In all ministry areas, a volunteer leader (i.e. adult) will be present at all times and will supervise any assistant volunteers.

Volunteer leaders and assistants working with children are expected to maintain a relationship of instructor, mentor, protector (i.e. providing a physically and emotionally safe environment) and/or dispassionate friend. No physically intimate or romantic relationship is permitted.

Discretion must be used to ensure that games do not involve inappropriate body contact, and that children and adults are not involved in attention-seeking behavior that is overly physical or in any way sexual.

People in the church come from a variety of backgrounds and situations. Volunteers are expected to show compassion and sensitivity to all those with whom they are working regardless of gender, race, culture, beliefs, sexual orientation, etc. This does not mean that Biblical principles adhered to by the church and in conflict with the lifestyle or beliefs of some people in attendance cannot be openly taught and applied, but rather that teaching and practice should be done in a caring environment that does not involve words or actions that demean people.

Volunteers will not use vulgar or coarse language.

Drunkenness and drug abuse will not be tolerated in a volunteer **at any time**. A volunteer will not consume alcoholic beverages or any other mood-altering substance or smoke while carrying out volunteer responsibilities. It is recommended that volunteers abstain from the aforementioned activities.

Volunteers need to work within their own limits and abilities so as not to put at physical, emotional or spiritual risk those with whom they are working. They should seek out advice and training to assist them to grow and develop in their role.

Efforts should be made by volunteers in the children's ministry areas to establish rapport and contact with parents. Volunteers should openly discuss with parents what activities are happening, what the goals and principles of the group/program are and should ensure that parents feel welcome to attend meetings/events and observe what is going on. They should also be asked for feedback, input and be encouraged to ask questions or express concerns.

Open Doors Policy

A volunteer should not be alone with a child or children **if at all possible**. When it is necessary that only one adult leader be in a closed room with children (e.g. leader leaves room to take children to the washroom; a small class where there is only one teacher), the door of that room should remain open. Our classrooms have door windows that allow ministry supervisors to look in without interrupting the teaching process.

During any children's activity there shall be two workers present in the immediate area to reduce the risk of child molestation and to protect the workers from false accusations. One of these workers must be an adult. Where assisting workers are

youth or children (none of whom may be under 12 years of age), they shall be under the immediate supervision of an adult worker. A ratio of workers to children shall be determined by the ministry head and maintained that ensures

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reasonable and diligent oversight of the children in accordance with the number of children present and the nature of the activity.

An individual's right to privacy (e.g. when dressing, sleeping, or in washrooms) must be respected. If, during church events, volunteers are sharing sleeping or dressing quarters with children due to reasons of safety, discipline or facility availability, at least two adults must be present at all times. Separate dressing and sleeping facilities for males and females must always be used.

Discipline

When there is a need for disciplinary action, a volunteer should seek out appropriate consequences such as removal from a program activity. The group may agree ahead of time to a code of conduct and to related consequences. Hitting and/or public humiliation are not acceptable forms of discipline.

Washroom Guidelines

Parents are to be encouraged to take their children to visit the washroom prior to each class or service. This recommendation is to be communicated to parents at the beginning of each new school year, and throughout the year to newcomers.

Nursery Children

As a general rule, staff in the nursery will not be expected to change diapers. However in the event that this becomes necessary the following rules will apply:

- Diaper changing must always take place in such a way that another nursery worker can easily see the child that is being changed.
- Children must be 12 years of age or older, with appropriate training before being permitted to change infant's diapers.

Children 5 and under

For preschool children, two adults will escort a group of children to the washroom. Where we do not have two adults available to take children to the washroom, hallway or safety monitors (preferably female) will be appointed to assist with washroom and security duties.

If just one child must go to the washroom, the adult volunteer should escort the child to the washroom and prop the main washroom door open. The volunteer should then remain outside the washroom door and wait for the child before escorting him or her back to the classroom. The volunteer should call the child's name if they are taking longer than seems necessary.

Never be alone with a child in an unsupervised washroom and never go into a washroom cubicle with a child and shut the door.

When preschool children need assistance in the washroom, an adult may enter the washroom cubicle to assist only when a second adult is within visual contact. If this is not possible, inform another adult when taking a child to the washroom and when returning.

In light of the fact that most abusers are male, and for the protection of our male volunteers, it would be wise for men to avoid assisting children of any age in the

washrooms. We suggest that only women assist children in the washrooms.

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Ministry and Premises Operations and Requirements

Supervisors of the church's ministry shall circulate periodically from room to room to maintain surveillance of activities and persons.

Adequate lighting shall be maintained at all times in any room or place where children's or youth activities are being conducted.

All equipment, tools or any object that may pose harm to children shall be secured in a locked area.

Washrooms, classrooms, hallways and all premises shall be maintained in an orderly and clean manner, fully equipped with necessary items for personal use.

A fire evacuation plan shall be designed for the building and area, with the workers and children periodically informed and led through evacuation procedures.

A first aid kit shall be present and maintained on site and one carried on any field trip or outside event.

Medications

No worker is to give any child medication; the parent must administer it. No medication shall be left with a child or worker. In extreme cases (i.e. life-threatening allergies, etc.) arrangements can be made with written instructions and a signed agreement between the parents and the worker assigning and accepting permission to administer emergency medications. The agreement shall be signed both by the parents and worker; it shall state that the church is absolved from all liability; it shall be placed on file in the church office.

This policy does not apply to the camp, where parents are required to sign authorization over to the camp health administrator.

Controlled Access

Only authorized workers are permitted in the nursery or classrooms, with the exception of parents caring for their own children. During such occasions when parents are present, they must be admitted by the permission of the supervising worker and at no time are the workers to vacate the room, leaving the other children in the care of other parents present.

PROCESS FOR REPORTING & DEALING WITH DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT AND CHILD ABUSE

Child Abuse

An abused or neglected child is one who is harmed, threatened with physical or mental harm, or from whom is withheld the necessities of life. Abuse includes physical, emotional and sexual abuse as well as neglect. Adults have a **legal responsibility** to report if a child has been or is at risk of being physically or emotionally harmed by someone who has charge of the child. There is also a duty to report if a child under the age of 12 has seriously injured another person or another person's property.

If a child tells a volunteer that he/she is being abused, the volunteer should:

- Have a private conversation with the child (within sight, but not hearing of another adult);
- Remain calm, listen compassionately and take seriously what the child says;
- Refrain from making any kind of judgmental statement about the person alleged to be abusing the child or about the child;
- Refrain from conducting any investigation, i.e. asking for details, or asking other people questions about the situation;
- Explain that he/she will need to tell the pastor or camp director who will discuss the situation with the child regarding addressing the situation;
- Write detailed notes immediately after the conversation about what was said; these notes should be factual (who, what, when, where), and should in no way include assumptions or projections.

If a child does *not* tell a volunteer that he/she is being abused or is at risk of abuse, but the volunteer has reason to believe that this is the case, the volunteer should:

- Refrain from conducting any investigation or asking the child or anyone else about the situation;
- Refrain from making any kind of judgmental statement about the person alleged to be abusing the child or about the child;
- Write detailed notes about what facts have led to the belief that there is abuse or risk of abuse (i.e. who, what, when, where, but no assumptions or projections).

In both cases (i.e. whether or not the child tells the volunteer about abuse), the volunteer will then discuss the situation in confidence with and give the notes to:

- o The Senior Pastor IF the alleged abuser is NOT a pastor or relative of a pastor, who will then contact the Yukon Family and Children's Services.
- o The Chairman of the Board IF the alleged abuser IS a pastor or relative of a pastor, who will then contact the Yukon Family and Children's Services.
 - The Chairman will also contact the Director of the Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Churches in BC and the Yukon (FEBBC/Y) if the alleged abuse involves a pastor. The Chairman will remain WBC's primary contact in the situation.

The primary contact from WBC will review the notes and:

- Report the matter directly to the Yukon Family and Children's Services OR, IF the information in the notes is not clear AND/OR the facts describe a situation that does not fit the definition of child abuse AND there is no increased risk to the child by taking the time for an additional step, the contact will have a

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conversation with the child to clarify information or observe the child if the child did not tell anyone about any abuse, and then determine whether or not there is a situation of abuse to report.

WBC's primary contact will not attempt to resolve a situation of child abuse on his/her own, but will fulfill the legal responsibility to report the matter and work in cooperation with the appropriate agencies and authorities.

The agency to contact for reporting abuse in Whitehorse is the Yukon Family and Children's Services at 867-667-3002.

If a volunteer leader is alleged to be involved in child abuse, the leader will be required to withdraw immediately from volunteer service until the situation is investigated and resolved. The staff person or Chairman must record the facts surrounding the situation (e.g. what, where, when, steps taken, resolution reached) and put this in the volunteer's application file which is kept permanently in a locked location in the church. Until such time as allegations are proven/disproved, these steps must be taken with utmost discretion to preserve safety while not unduly destroying reputation.

Anyone convicted of child abuse will be barred permanently from volunteer service with children at WBC.

A staff person convicted of child abuse will be fired from the staff position and permanently barred from paid or volunteer service with children at WBC.

Discrimination and Harassment

Discrimination is making a distinction that imposes burdens, obligations or disadvantages not imposed on others. Harassment is a form of discrimination and includes any unwelcome conduct or comments, based on grounds defined in the Yukon Human Rights Act, that have a negative impact on a person or their work environment. Sexual harassment is unwelcome conduct or comments of a sexual nature. The grounds defined in the Act include: race, color, ancestry, physical or mental disability, sex, sexual orientation, age, unrelated criminal conviction. Discrimination cases may involve children and/or adults.

In general, reporting responsibility rests with the person who feels that he/she is the object of discrimination. That person is encouraged to:

- Approach the person responsible for the offending behavior and state clearly what is offensive and ask that it stop. This step is most appropriate if the behavior is a less serious or first-time offense. If the behavior stops, the situation is considered resolved. (Discussion between parties may also result in mutual agreement that discrimination is not taking place. Clearing up a misunderstanding in this way is also considered resolution of the situation.)
- Ask a leader in the church, a pastor, or, if a pastor is the one with the offensive behavior, the Chairman of the Board to assist in dealing with the matter if he/she does not feel comfortable or safe approaching the person directly OR if direct approach has not resulted in a change in behavior.

All volunteers are responsible for fostering an environment that is non-discriminatory and therefore may need to intervene to stop clearly discriminatory and/or unsafe behavior (e.g. bullying of a child in youth group) rather than wait

for the person who is the object of discrimination to speak or act on his/her own.

Any person can also contact the Yukon Human Rights Commission to ask questions about situations of discrimination and human rights and/or to file a claim. The Commission can be contacted at 867-667-6226 or 1-800-661-0535.

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Volunteers and staff must use discretion when dealing with situations of discrimination. Factors to consider are:

- Seriousness of the offense (e.g. situation which is slightly offensive to someone vs. one involving public humiliation);
- Number of times the discriminating behavior has taken place (e.g. one-time disparaging comment vs. repeated teasing).
- Safety of the person who is the object of discrimination (e.g. offensive joke vs. sexual advance on a child).

Steps to resolution will depend on the situation and the parties involved. They include, but are not limited to:

- Direct discussion between the parties involved, with or without the assistance of a third person. Direct discussion may be repeated if the behavior does not stop and if the situation is not serious enough to warrant other action right away.
- Progressive discipline if resolution does not result from initial direct discussion.
 - In the case of a child whose behavior is discriminatory, this would include:
 - Discussion between the child, complainant (i.e. object of discrimination), leader or staff person and the child's primary caregiver.
 - Suspension of the child from participation in selected church activities for a determined period.
 - Permanent barring from selected church activities.
 - In the case of an adult whose behavior is discriminatory, this would include:
 - Suspension of the adult from leadership and/or participation in selected church activities for a determined period.
 - Removal from church membership and/or permanent barring from leadership or participation in selected church activities.

A volunteer must consult with a pastor prior to and during a progressive discipline process. In addition, removal from church membership requires voting by the church members; therefore the Board would need to review a situation of that nature to decide whether or not to recommend removal of membership and then call a church business meeting for the church to vote.

Suspension from leadership or membership removal of a pastor would obviously have very serious implications; therefore, in the case of unresolved discriminatory behavior on the part of a pastor, the Board Chairman must consult with the Board and with the Director of the FEBBC/Y to determine what steps to take.

- Immediate suspension of the child or adult from a church activity if the seriousness of the offense warrants immediate action (e.g. sexual advances on a child by a leader). Following any immediate action, a volunteer leader must consult with a pastor to determine what the next steps will be. Possible steps include those listed for progressive discipline.

If a volunteer engages in discriminatory behavior that is not resolved at the initial discussion stage, a pastor must record the facts surrounding the situation (e.g. what, where, when, steps taken, resolution reached) and put this in the volunteer's application file which is kept permanently in a locked location in the

church. This is important reference information should another incident arise in the future or should the person want to volunteer in another area.

If a pastor engages in discriminatory behavior that is not resolved at the initial discussion stages, the Chairman of the Board is responsible for ensuring that the

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facts surrounding the situation are recorded (e.g. what, where, when, steps taken, resolution reached) for permanent filing either at the church or with the Fellowship office.

At least annually, a staff person or appointed volunteer leader will explain briefly to children in church programs what child abuse and discrimination are, who they can approach for help if they are facing a situation of abuse or discrimination and what process will be followed by the church (i.e. a brief review of the above policy). Copies of the policy will be made available to anyone in WBC. Volunteers will be required to attend an educational session on WBC's policies regarding child abuse and discrimination.

VOLUNTEER APPLICATION PROCESS OVERVIEW

Purpose

- To facilitate the best fit between the volunteer and area of service.
- To ensure that volunteers are properly prepared and informed so as to establish mutual accountabilities and understanding between the volunteers, staff and church body.
- To ensure a physically, emotionally and spiritually safe environment for those with whom the volunteers and staff are working.

Process Outline

- Prospective volunteers are given an application form with an information package that contains:
 - information (e.g. purpose, goals, primary activities and responsibilities) on the area in which they will be serving;
 - the Ministry Volunteer Application Form;
 - the Whitehorse Baptist Church Abuse Policy;
 - a Criminal records Check form;
 - the foundational spiritual beliefs and principles of the church (i.e. Statement of Faith);
- The criminal records check is done.
- References are checked.
- An interview with the prospective volunteer concludes the application process.

Roles

- A staff person or elder conducts the application process with ministry head of service areas.
- The ministry head of the service area conducts the application process with volunteers who will be working in that area. Throughout the process, the ministry head liaises with the staff person/elder who oversees that area. Both the ministry head and staff person/elder agree on the decisions made regarding the volunteers.
- At any step in the process, the volunteer, ministry head or staff person/elder may stop the process.
- The RCMP require that volunteers return the criminal records check forms in person to the RCMP office for identification verification purposes. A supply of blank forms for the criminal records checks will be kept at the church and made available to all staff and ministry heads. The results of the check will be returned to the church by the RCMP, reviewed by specifically designated elders, and kept in a locked place at the church. Retaining the check information will avoid duplicative processes when/if the volunteer works in another area.
- The WBC Elders Board conducts the application process for staff people. Staff people are subject to the same policies and standards as volunteers,

but the hiring process for staff people involves a separate, very thorough application, interview and reference check process.

**Whitehorse Baptist Church
Risk Management Policy**

**REPORT FORM
SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE**

DATE: _____

NAME OF CHILD: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE NUMBER: _____

NAME OF PERSON FILING REPORT: _____

NAME OF PERSON RECEIVING REPORT: _____

Nature of suspected abuse: (Physical, sexual, emotional, neglect):

Indications of suspected abuse: (Including facts, physical signs and course of events where necessary):

Action taken: (Including date and time):

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**. A duplicate copy must be retained in church records.

Signed:

Person Reporting

Pastor

Whitehorse Baptist Church
2060 2nd Avenue, Whitehorse, Y1A 1A9
Phone: 867 - 667 - 4889 e-mail: wbc@northwestel.net

**Whitehorse Baptist Church
Risk Management Policy**

**SUMMARY REPORT FORM
SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE**

DATE: _____

NAME OF CHILD: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE NUMBER: _____

NAME OF PERSON WHO FILED INITIAL REPORT: _____

NAME OF PERSON RECEIVING REPORT: _____

CONCLUSIONS: _____

Action taken: (Including date and time): _____

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**.

Signed:

Pastor

Whitehorse Baptist Church
2060 2nd Avenue, Whitehorse, Y1A 1A9
Phone: 867 - 667 - 4889 e-mail: wbc@northwestel.net

Whitehorse Baptist Church gratefully acknowledges the following as being sources of much help in the putting together of this policy:

A Plan To Protect, Pentecostal Assemblies Of Canada

Risk Management Policy of Central Fellowship Baptist Church, Prince George