

Child Safe Policy

Policy Statement

As the ministry within our fellowship, we are fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children (under the age of 19). Our child protection policy is based on the following principles:

1. All children have the right to be protected from all forms of harm, abuse and exploitation.
2. Child protection is everyone's moral, ethical and spiritual responsibility.
3. We acknowledge the responsibility to ensure that all workers (within our fellowship) are aware of and adhere to all aspects of safety for children.

Reporting

We will report any suspected abuse or neglect of children to the **local RCMP detachment** as well as report to the **Child Protection Helpline: 1 800 663 9122**. Reporting will be done according to the BC Handbook for Action on Child Abuse and Neglect as follows:

- **“Reason to Believe”** – “based on what you have seen or information you have received, you believe a child or youth has been or is likely to be at risk. You do not need to be certain. It is the child protection worker's job to determine whether abuse or neglect has occurred or is likely to occur.”
- **“Failure to Report”** – “failing to promptly report suspected abuse or neglect to the Ministry of Children and Family Development is a serious offence under the Child, Family & Community Service Act and carries a maximum penalty of a \$10,000 fine, six months in jail, or both. No action for damages may be brought against you for reporting information under the Child, Family & Community Service Act unless you knowingly report false information or the report was not made in good faith.”

(https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/public-safety-and-emergency-services/public-safety/protecting-children/childabusepreventionhandbook_serviceprovider.pdf)

Governance

- All workers will complete Sexual Abuse Awareness training and be updated as required.
- All workers will be educated regarding the BC Child Protection Law and be updated as required.
- All workers will be provided with a copy of the Workers' Code of Conduct and adhere to it at all times.
- All workers will complete a criminal record check.
- All workers will be issued a copy of this Child Safe Policy.
- Visiting workers from other provinces or countries will be provided with a copy of this Child Safe Policy and Worker's Code of Conduct.
- Any person under police investigation or convicted of an offence against a child will not be permitted to participate in gatherings that provide access to children without permission being granted by the professionals involved in the investigation.

Note: Any person communicating with an alleged offender regarding any incident becomes a witness to that incident and/or can be seen as interfering with a police investigation. This includes any period of time from the time of the incident up to and including the duration of the police investigation. Any witnesses will be asked by police to provide a witness statement, and any refusal to do so can still result in one being subpoenaed to testify in court.

- We will ensure an annual review of this Child Safe Policy is conducted through internal and external committee review.