



**MESSIAH LUTHERAN CHURCH  
OF CAMROSE**

**POLICY FOR THE PROTECTION OF  
CHILDREN, YOUTH  
AND OTHER VULNERABLE PEOPLE**

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>1. UNDERSTANDING THE NEED</b> .....	page 5
<b>A.</b> Reducing the Risk of Abuse of Vulnerable People .....	page 5
<b>B.</b> It Can Happen in Any Church.....	page 5
<b>C.</b> Impact .....	page 5
<b>2. UNDERSTANDING ABUSE</b> .....	page 6
<b>A.</b> Definitions .....	page 6
<b>B.</b> Symptoms of Abuse and Molestation .....	page 7
<b>C.</b> The Effects of Sexual Abuse of Vulnerable People .....	page 8
<b>D.</b> The Profile of a Child Molester .....	page 8
<b>E.</b> Consider the Following .....	page 9
<b>3. THE CHURCH'S LEGAL VULNERABILITY</b> .....	page 9
<b>A.</b> Why Churches are Vulnerable .....	page 9
<b>1)</b> Access .....	page 9
<b>2)</b> Need .....	page 10
<b>3)</b> The Civil and Legal Liability of the Church .....	page 10
<b>4. PROTECTION PROCEDURES</b> .....	page 10
<b>A.</b> Commitments .....	page 10
<b>B.</b> Guidelines .....	page 11
<b>1)</b> Washroom .....	page 11
<b>2)</b> Proper Display of Affection .....	page 12
<b>3)</b> Staffing and Supervision .....	page 13
<b>4)</b> Visitation Guidelines (Appendix A) .....	page 27
<b>5)</b> Billeting and Hosting .....	page 15
<b>C.</b> What Does This All Mean? .....	page 15
<b>1)</b> for Nursery, Sunday School and Confirmation Ministry .....	page 15
<b>2)</b> for Youth Group Leaders .....	page 16
<b>3)</b> for Mentors .....	page 16
<b>4)</b> for Other Volunteers .....	page 16
<b>5. RECRUITMENT OF VOLUNTEERS</b> .....	page 17
<b>A.</b> Review of the Policy .....	page 17
<b>B.</b> Volunteer Application .....	page 17
<b>C.</b> Interview .....	page 18
<b>D.</b> Reference Check .....	page 18
<b>E.</b> Police Records Check .....	page 19
<b>F.</b> Approval .....	page 19
<b>G.</b> Disqualification .....	page 20

<b>6. INCIDENT REPORTING PROCEDURES</b> .....	page 20
<b>A.</b> Immediate Discussion .....	page 21
<b>B.</b> Allegation Occurrence .....	page 21
<b>C.</b> Responding to a Child, Youth or Other Vulnerable Person .....	page 21
<b>D.</b> Confidentiality .....	page 21
<b>E.</b> Responsibility of Senior Pastor, Program Director, and ... Committee .....	page 22
<b>F.</b> Protection from Liability .....	page 22
<b>G.</b> Who must Report .....	page 23
<b>H.</b> Report Follow-up .....	page 23
<b>7. RESPONSE TO ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE</b> .....	page 23
<b>A.</b> Spokesperson .....	page 24
<b>B.</b> Position of Messiah Lutheran Church .....	page 24
<b>C.</b> Conduct and Counsel .....	page 24
<b>8. IMPLEMENTATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY</b> .....	page 25
<b>A.</b> Presentation of the Policy .....	page 25
<b>B.</b> Monitoring of the Policy .....	page 25
<b>C.</b> Education of Salaried Staff and Volunteers .....	page 26
<b>D.</b> Accountability .....	page 26
<b>APPENDIX A – POLICY ON VISITATION</b> .....	page 27
<b>1. Guidelines for Visitation in Homes</b> .....	page 27
<b>2. Guidelines for Visitation in Hospitals, Nursing Homes, Lodges etc.</b> .....	page 29
<b>APPENDIX B – POLICY FOR PROTECTION OF THE VULNERABLE FORMS</b> .....	page 31

## **1. UNDERSTANDING THE NEED**

### **A. Reducing the Risk of Abuse of Vulnerable People**

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC) and Messiah Lutheran Church of Camrose have a mandate to minister to individuals, families, adults, youth and children. In that context, Messiah Lutheran Church of the ELCIC stresses the sanctity of human life and the importance and worth of each individual as a child of God.

The physical and sexual abuse of children has increasingly and properly claimed the attention of our society. In response, it is the commitment of Messiah Lutheran Church to provide reasonable protective care to all preschoolers, children, youth and other vulnerable people involved in ministries or programs of Messiah Lutheran Church.

Childhood innocence is a gift given by God. Children are naturally trusting. Children readily place their faith in adults who care for them. It is our responsibility as a church to safeguard that trust.

### **B. It Can Happen in Any Church**

Incidents of abuse can occur in any church – including Messiah Lutheran Church. Churches have traditionally accepted the services of anyone expressing an interest in working as a volunteer with children, youth or other vulnerable persons. Churches are by nature trusting institutions. Asking sensitive questions of those who are giving their time and talent can be seen as intrusive by church leaders. No one wants to offend potential volunteers, especially longtime church members with a history of good service. These realities can make a church susceptible to incidents of abuse. There are few topics that create more emotional turmoil than that of child abuse, especially if it is sexual in nature.

### **C. Impact**

A single incident of abuse can devastate a church. Members become outraged and bewildered. Parents question whether their own children have been victimized. The viability of the church's youth and children's programs is jeopardized. Church leaders face blame and guilt for allowing the incident to happen.

Such incidents often attract media attention – sometimes on a national scale. Television stations conduct live interviews from church property on the evening news. Front page stories hit the local paper. Community residents begin to associate the church with the incident of abuse. However, far more tragic is the emotional trauma to the victim and the victim's family, and the enormous potential legal liability the church faces. If a trial ensues, the issue stays alive in the media for months, sometimes even years.

## **2. UNDERSTANDING ABUSE**

### **A. Definitions**

#### **1) Vulnerable People <sup>i</sup>**

The term "vulnerable people" refers not only to people who are typically recognized as vulnerable such as children, youth, some of the elderly, those coming from an abusive relationship, hospital patients, and the mentally and physically disabled, but also to those otherwise healthy adults who become vulnerable because of recent life experiences. These circumstances include, but are not limited to, those who are grieving because of the death of a loved one, those experiencing job loss, or career difficulties, those living with separation, divorce, or marital discord, those living through financial difficulties, those facing illness in themselves or others, and those facing other uncertainties. It is important to recognize that all of us are vulnerable to varying degrees at different stages in our lives.

<sup>1</sup> This definition is taken from the document *Guidelines for Working with Vulnerable Persons*, p.1, produced by the Diocese of Algoma (copyright 2002) of the Anglican Church of Canada and is used by permission.

#### **2) Duty of Care <sup>2</sup>**

Duty of care is a legal principal that identifies the obligations of individuals and organizations to take reasonable measures to care for and protect their participants.

#### **3) Abuse is characterized as follows:**

- It can be physical, emotional or sexual;
- It always involves the misuse of power;
- Misuse of power takes place when people take advantage of the authority or power they have over vulnerable people.

<sup>2</sup> *Guidelines for Working with Vulnerable People*

#### **4) Physical abuse**

is using physical force or action that results, or could result, in injury to a vulnerable person. It is more than reasonable discipline. Sometimes injury is caused by over-discipline. Injuring a child, youth or other vulnerable person is not acceptable, regardless of differing cultural standards on discipline.

- In 97% of reported cases of physical abuse, parents are the perpetrators.
- The perpetrator of physical abuse is approximately 1.5 times more likely to be male than female. <sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> David Wolfe, *Child Abuse: Implications for Child Development and Psychopathology* (Newbury Park, California: Sage, 1987) p. 20

## **5) Emotional abuse**

is a pattern of hurting an individual's feelings to the point of damaging their self-respect. It includes verbal attacks, insults, humiliation or rejection. A child, youth or vulnerable person who is emotionally harmed may demonstrate severe anxiety, depression, withdrawal, self-destructive or aggressive behavior.

## **6) Sexual abuse**

occurs when a vulnerable person is used by somebody else for sexual stimulation or gratification. Sexual activity between children or youth may also be sexual abuse if older or more powerful children or youth take sexual advantage of those who are younger or less powerful. Sexual abuse includes behavior that involves touching and non-touching aspects.

### **a) Types of sexual abuse that involve touching include:**

- Fondling
- Oral, genital and anal penetration
- Intercourse
- Rape

### **b) Types of sexual abuse that do not involve touching include:**

- Verbal comments
- Exposure to pornography
- Obscene phone calls, e-mail or other communications
- Exhibitionism
- Allowing children to witness sexual activity

## **B. Symptoms of Abuse and Molestation**

Church volunteers and staff should be alert to the physical signs of abuse and molestation, as well as to behavioral and verbal signs that a victim may exhibit.

### **1) Physical signs may include:**

- lacerations and bruises
- nightmares
- irritation, pain or injury to the genital area
- difficulty with urination
- discomfort when sitting
- torn or bloody underclothing
- sexually transmitted disease

2) Behavioral signs may include:

- anxiety when approaching church or nursery area
- nervous or hostile behavior toward adults
- sexual self-consciousness
- “acting out” sexual behavior
- withdrawal from church activities and friends

3) Verbal signs may include the following statements:

- I don't like (names a particular person).
- (Particular person) does things to me when we're alone.
- I don't like to be alone with (particular person).
- (Particular person) fooled around with me.

### **C. The Effects of Sexual Abuse of Vulnerable People**

Child sexual abuse robs children of their childhood and can potentially scar its young victims for life. Too often, in the past, the effects of abuse were minimized or dismissed. Children were viewed as being resilient. Recent research has shown that children can suffer significant pain from even a single abusive incident. Church members must be aware of the pain and long term suffering that can accompany such abuse. Abused children can display a wide range of negative symptoms in the aftermath of abuse. Abuse can result in abnormal fears, post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), aggressive behavior, sexual “acting out,” depression and poor self-esteem. Sexually transmitted disease is also a possible outcome.

The degree of damage depends upon several factors including the intensity, duration and frequency of the abuse. In addition, the relationship of the perpetrator to the child matters. If the abuser is a known and trusted authority figure in the child's life, the degree of impact increases dramatically.

Consequences of child sexual abuse can plague victims into adulthood. Outcome studies of adult survivors of child sexual abuse suggest the following effects: sexual dysfunction, eating disorders, substance abuse, promiscuity, disassociation from emotions, and possible perpetration of sexual abuse on others. When church leaders, pastors, and respected congregational volunteers perpetrate the abuse, lifelong religious confusion and deep feelings of enmity toward God and the church can occur.

### **D. The Profile of a Child Molester**

Who is the typical child molester? Some church leaders assume that molesters are “strangers wearing trench coats” or “dirty old men.” These stereotypes are not only inaccurate, but they also contribute dangerously to a false sense of security. Researchers in the field of child sexual abuse currently indicate that no single profile fits the various perpetrators of abuse. Church

leaders can become preoccupied screening for stereotypes, while not suspecting the real molester could be an active adult or teen in the church.

## **E. Consider the Following**

If abuse occurs in the church, a respected member will most likely be the molester. Emphasis upon “stranger danger” will leave the church ill prepared. While it’s uncomfortable even to consider this, the most likely assailants include Sunday School teachers, religious educators, nursery or preschool volunteers, teachers in a church operated school, camp counselors, Scout leaders, “concerned” adults who volunteer to transport children to church, and clergy. Trusted adults – male or female – can easily mislead children. Most incidents of child sexual abuse take place in the context of an ongoing relationship between the abuser and the child.

- Over 80% of the time, the abuser is someone known to the victim.
- Most abuses take place within the context of an ongoing relationship.
- The typical offender is between the ages of 20 and 30 years.
- 20% of sex offenders begin their activity before the age of 18.
- Child abusers are often married and have children.

## **3. THE CHURCH’S LEGAL VULNERABILITY**

### **A. Why are Churches Vulnerable**

Churches have unique features that can make them susceptible to incidents of molestation. This risk increases dramatically for overnight activities.

#### **1) Access**

The Boy Scouts, Big Brothers, and similar organizations have instituted comprehensive programs to reduce the risk of child molestation. Child molesters are attracted to an institution in which they have immediate access to potential victims in an atmosphere of complete trust.

#### **2) Need**

Most churches struggle to get adequate help for children’s and youth programs.

Recruiting Sunday

School teachers, for example, can become an unending effort. Turnover among volunteers is also high. A willing volunteer provides welcome relief.

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.

### **3) The Civil and Legal Liability of the Church**

Increasingly and often more dramatically, the church and its personnel (i.e. staff, Council members, officers and pastors) 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 volunteers,
- 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.

(*Church and the Law Update*, June 1994)

## **4. PROTECTION PROCEDURES**

### **A. Commitments**

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada and Messiah Lutheran Church of Camrose makes the following commitments to protect children, youth and vulnerable adults, and those who minister to and with them:

- 1)** Screening of those who work with children, youth and other vulnerable individuals is important.
- 2)** All salaried staff will undergo a police records check.
- 3)** All employees and volunteers who work with preschoolers, children and youth will be made familiar with the nature of child sexual abuse.
- 4)** All employees and volunteers who work with preschoolers, children and youth and vulnerable adults will be made familiar with the guidelines contained in the *Policy for Protection of Children, Youth and Other Vulnerable People*.
- 5)** The policies to prevent sexual abuse are regarded seriously and will be enforced.
- 6)** All volunteers will sign a *Volunteer Ministry Covenant*, agreeing to comply with church policies and guidelines.
- 7)** In general and preferably, two unrelated adults (preferably one male and one female) will be present during activities involving children and youth. When this is not possible, documentation will support the effort to comply with the preference and approval for the

event will be given by the Abuse Prevention and Screening Committee Chair or the Senior Pastor. (see also *Staffing and Supervision page 13*)

**8)** In general, volunteers will be permitted to work with preschoolers, children or youth only after they have been active participants of Messiah Lutheran Church for a period of six months.

(This provision may be waived where the person is transferring in from another church and/or has a letter of recommendation signed by a minister of that church.)

**9)** References for volunteers applying for any position involving work with preschoolers, children or youth will be checked. The right to require a police records check is reserved. A police records check will always be required in those instances where someone is a new resident or unknown to the church community or where an applicant's credentials cannot be verified.

**10)** A directory of names and addresses of parents and children will be carefully maintained.

## **B. Guidelines**

### **1) 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.

#### **a) Nursery**

As a general rule, volunteers 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 volunteer or responsible adult can see the child being changed.
- Young volunteers must be of confirmation age or older, with appropriate training, before being permitted to change diapers.

#### **b) Preschool**

- For a group of preschoolers, two adults will escort the children to the washroom.
- If just one child must go to the washroom, the adult volunteer should escort the child to the washroom and prop the outside 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.
- The volunteer should 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.
- A second adult should be 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 male volunteers, it would be wise for men to avoid assisting boys or girls of any age in the washrooms. It is suggested that only women assist children in the washrooms.

**c) Ages 5—7**

- A child seven years of age or younger should not be sent to the washroom alone, but should be accompanied by an adult volunteer.
- For children seven years of age and under, the adult volunteer should escort the child to the washroom, and prop the door open to make sure that everything is in order. 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.
- The volunteer should never go into a washroom cubicle with a child/youth and shut the door.

**2) Proper Display of Affection**

Touch is an essential responsibility in nurturing lives. Volunteers need to be aware of, and sensitive to, differences in sexual development, cultural differences, family backgrounds, individual personalities, and special needs. Physical contact with children should be age and developmentally appropriate. The following guidelines are recommended as healthy and positive displays of God's love.

**a) Appropriate Touch**

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

- Bend down to the child's eye level and speak kindly; listen to him or her carefully;
- Take a child's hand and lead him or her to an activity;
- Put an arm around the shoulder of a child who needs quieting or comforting;

- Take both of the child's hands as you say, "You did such a good job!" or "I'm so glad to see you. We've missed you!" etc.
- Pat a child on the head, hand, shoulder or back to affirm him or her;
- Hold a child by the shoulders or hand to keep his or her attention while you redirect the child's behavior;
- Gently hold a child's chin to help him or her focus on what you are saying;
- Hold and console a preschool child who is crying.

#### **b) Inappropriate Touch**

Staff and volunteers should avoid:

- Kissing a child or coaxing a child to kiss you;
- Extended hugging;
- Tickling;
- Touching a child in any area that would normally 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.

### **3) Staffing and Supervision**

Church staff and volunteers should always conduct themselves appropriately, being an example of integrity, respect and honesty to those in their care. The desire is to provide a safe and loving environment where children and youth feel comfortable and are protected.

#### **a) Supervision**

Programs that involve children and youth must always include adequate supervision. Supervision should also be maintained before and after the event until all children are in the custody of their parents or legal guardians.

#### **b) Two Adults**

In general, there are to be two preferably unrelated adults in any enclosed room with children or youth. Family (couple) ministry teams work well and are encouraged as a method of staffing. However, for the protection of this family, we recommend the presence of at least one other volunteer not related to the family

(or visibility through an open door or a window) with checks by another supervising adult.

**c) Parental Permission**

Consent of a parent must be obtained before transporting or being alone with a child or youth. Children and youth must also have written parental permission for involvement in confirmation ministry programs, Messiah Lutheran Church Youth, or other church-sponsored field trips or outings. See **Activity Permission Form** (Document G).

**d) Day Trips**

- Activities conducted away from church property should be pre-approved by the Senior Pastor or the appropriate program director.
- Parents should be notified at least one week prior to the outing.
- A completed **Activity Permission Form** (Document G) and **Medical Permission Form** (Document H) are required for each child participating in day trips.
- Day trips must be supervised by a minimum of two approved, preferably unrelated adult leaders. {see 4.A.7}
- All supervising adults must be approved volunteers.
- When transporting children is involved in an activity, all drivers must have a valid driver's license and current automobile insurance (with a minimum of \$2,000,000 public liability insurance). A Driver's Abstract on any driver should be obtained from the Alberta Motor Vehicles office. Drivers must have a minimum of five years driving experience. The number of persons per car must never exceed the number of seat belts.

**e) Overnight Events**

- Overnight activities should be pre-approved by the Senior Pastor or the appropriate program director.
- Parental permission should be secured in writing for over-night events.
- A completed **Activity Permission Form** (Document G) and **Activity Permission Form** (Document H) are required for each child participating in overnight events. Overnight trips must be supervised by a minimum of two approved, preferably unrelated adult leaders. {see 4.A.7}

- Overnight activities should have a minimum ratio of one adult leader for every five children or one adult leader for every nine youths. Each leader should have an assigned group of children/youth for whom they will be responsible during the overnight event.

- All supervising adults must be approved volunteers.

**4) Visitation Guidelines**

see *Appendix A*

**5) Billeting and Hosting<sup>4</sup>**

**a)** All adults residing in the home where billets are provided must complete the screening process.

**b)** Information guidelines to be distributed to host homes preferably no less than one week in advance of the event

**c)** Health history clearly identifying any allergies and medications should be communicated to the host home prior to arrival, with clear directions on how to manage allergies and/or medications.

**d)** Youth to always be billeted in pairs, teams or small groups of the same gender.

**e)** Youth should have distinctly separate sleeping arrangements from the other household members and should not be left alone in the house.

**f)** Curfews of 11:00 p.m. should be enforced when youth are billeted.

**g)** All youth staying in host homes are informed of proper etiquette and curfew guidelines

<sup>4</sup> Used with permission from Carole Wiebe, *Plan to Protect: A Protection Plan for Children and Youth* (Christian and Missionary Alliance in Canada, 2007) p. 135

**C. What Does This All Mean?**

**1) What Does this Mean for Nursery, Sunday School and Confirmation Ministry?**

- All Sunday School and Nursery staff must wear name tags so that they can be easily identified.
- Two, preferably, unrelated adults should be with any group of children. If it is necessary for an adult to be alone with children, there must be a window in the door providing an unobstructed view of the children or the door must be left open.

- Each Sunday, the Sunday School Coordinator (or designate) should make regular visits to ensure each class is properly staffed and supervised.
- Should there be a nursery staffed by volunteers, a sign-up sheet indicating child's name, parent's name and parent's location should be provided in the nursery.
- Children should not be dropped-off in a pre-school classroom without a teacher or care-giver present.
- Pre-school children should be released only to a parent or adult family member known to the staff-person.
- For nursery and for pre-school classes, follow the washroom guidelines (*see page 11*)
- Observe the guidelines for proper display of affection, (*see page 12*)
- For day trips or special events, follow guidelines (*see page 11& 12*)
- When in doubt, confer with the Senior Pastor or appropriate program director.

## **2) What Does this Mean for Youth Group Leaders?**

- Two, preferably, unrelated adult leaders should always be present at any youth group activity.
- Obtain parental permission for youth to be transported or involved in youth group activities. See the **Activity Permission Form** (Document G).
- Observe the guidelines for proper display of affection, (*see page 12*)
- For day trips or special events, follow guidelines, (*see page 11& 12*)
- When in doubt, confer with the Senior Pastor or appropriate program director.

## **3) What Does this Mean for Mentors?**

- To the extent possible, meet in such public environments as Tim Horton's, a park setting, a congregational fellowship room, a community centre, etc.
- Consider meeting in a group with one or more fellow mentors and youth.
- Always obtain parental permission to transport youth or to be alone with them.
- Observe the guidelines for proper display of affection, (*see page 12*)
- When in doubt, confer with the Senior Pastor or appropriate program director.

#### 4) What Does this Mean for Other Volunteers?

- Follow the staffing and supervision guidelines (*see Staffing and Supervision page 13*)
- Observe the guidelines for proper display of affection, (*see page 12*).
- When in doubt, confer with the Senior Pastor, program director or Abuse Prevention and Screening Committee.

### 5. RECRUITMENT OF VOLUNTEERS

All prospective volunteers for ministry with children and youth must meet the following requirements:

- active participation in an ELCIC congregation or Messiah Lutheran Church for at least six months, or a letter of recommendation from a former pastor;
- attendance at an session to review this policy;
- signing of a ***Volunteer Ministry Covenant*** (Document A);
- completion of a ***Volunteer Application Form*** (Document B);
- participation in an interview;
- a reference check;
- a police records check

#### A. Review of the Policy

Training to be mandatory and will include all ministry personnel regardless of position, title or time commitment whether staff or volunteer. Training sessions to be held in early September and coordinated by the Abuse Prevention and Screening Committee.

All prospective volunteers for ministry with children and youth must attend an introductory session to review this policy. These sessions will be offered by the appropriate program director for groups or individuals as required. A copy of the *Policy for Protection of Children, Youth and Other Vulnerable People* will be provided to all prospective volunteers with the expectation that they read the material and become familiar with the contents.

#### B. VOLUNTEER APPLICATION

Prospective volunteers for ministry with children and youth must complete a ***Volunteer Ministry Covenant*** (Document A) and ***Volunteer Application Form*** (Document B). To protect the church from legal liability and for the protection of all volunteers, every prospective ministry

leader, including established or long-time members of the Messiah Lutheran Church, must complete the ***Volunteer Application Form***.

The ***Volunteer Application Form*** is critical in protecting the church from legal action if a case of abuse occurs in which a church volunteer is involved. To protect vulnerable people and to be protected from liability, the church must take reasonable action in screening and supervising the volunteers involved in any work with children, youth or other vulnerable people. A court can find the church legally liable if it is less than systematic and therefore negligent in screening volunteers. By having prospective volunteers fill out a ***Volunteer Application Form***, the church greatly reduces the potential for abuse and the resultant liability.

The Messiah Lutheran Church Abuse Prevention and Screening Committee will monitor the status of the application process and will ultimately place completed material in a secure Volunteer Placement File containing:

- ***Volunteer Ministry Covenant*** (Document A)
- ***Volunteer Application Form*** (Document B)
- ***Volunteer Interview Form*** (Document C)
- ***Volunteer References Verification Form*** (Document D)
- ***Volunteer Approval Form*** (Document F)
- Police records check report

### **C. Interview**

An interview, conducted by two people authorized by the Abuse Prevention and Screening Committee, provides an opportunity to review the important items from the ***Volunteer Ministry Covenant*** (Document A) and ***Volunteer Application Form*** (Document B) in a personal setting.

The interviewers can ask follow-up questions and questions of clarification. The information given in the interview will be available only to the interviewers and the Abuse Prevention and Screening Committee.

The interview will allow the prospective volunteer the opportunity to ask questions about various children's ministries and the reasons behind our child protection procedures.

### **D. Reference Check**

Three personal references are requested on the ***Volunteer Application Form*** (Document B).

References that are acceptable are limited to the following:

- Former or present pastor;
- Long-time friend (minimum of five years);
- One parent (for minors);
- Teacher (for minors);
- Congregational member (who has sufficient strength of relationship to comment on the individual's personal habits and character);

- Employer or colleague.

At least two of these references will be contacted by an individual authorized by the Abuse Prevention and Screening Committee 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 on the **Volunteer Application Verification Form** (Document D) which will become part of the individual's Volunteer Placement File. A suggested **Volunteer Application Verification Script** (Document E) can be used for telephone follow-up when screening applications.

## **E. Police Records Check**

Police records check for all volunteers under this policy will be required by Messiah Lutheran Church. (All salaried staff submit to a police records check for their own protection and for the protection of the church.)

The cost for a police records check requested by Messiah Lutheran Church will be borne by Messiah Lutheran Church.

The police records check report is to be brought to the Abuse Prevention and Screening Committee. 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 Abuse Prevention and Screening Committee will meet to discuss and resolve the matter.

If the offense is other than child or sexual abuse, the volunteer may proceed with ministry in the church provided the pastors, the Messiah Lutheran Church Council chairperson and the appropriate program director 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; and
- The likelihood of the individual repeating the offense.

If any offense is related to the abuse of children or is of a sexual nature, the prospective volunteer will not be approved for ministry with children, youth or vulnerable people in Messiah Lutheran Church.

The information contained in the police records check report is considered strictly confidential. Only the Senior Pastor, the Messiah Lutheran Church Council chairperson, the appropriate program director, and the Abuse Prevention and Screening Committee can be privy to the information.

A copy of any submitted police records check report will be kept in the confidential, secure Volunteer Placement File.

## **F. Approval**

The Abuse Prevention and Screening Committee will review the materials and complete the **Volunteer Approval Form** (Document F). A prospective volunteer becomes an approved volunteer once the pastor, manager or director signs the **Volunteer Approval Form**. All volunteer application materials will be kept in a confidential, secure Volunteer Placement File indefinitely.

## **G. Disqualification**

### **1) Kinds of criminal convictions which disqualify individuals from working with children and youth:**

- A criminal conviction for a sexual offense involving a minor would disqualify an applicant.
- Other crimes would strongly suggest that a person should not be considered for work with minors at Messiah Lutheran Church. At the same time, some crimes would not result in automatic disqualification because they would not suggest a risk of abuse or molestation. For example, some property offenses would not be included in this list, particularly if the offense occurred long ago and the individual has a long history of impeccable behavior.

### **2) Will religious conversion make a difference for someone who has been guilty of past abuse?**

No. Occasionally, a person may 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 is to encourage such an individual to work in the church, but in a position not involving access to children, youth or other vulnerable people. This is a reasonable accommodation of the individual's desire to serve at Messiah Lutheran Church.

A church that permits such an individual to work with children, youth or other vulnerable people, on the basis of the professed religious conversion, will have a virtually indefensible position should another incident of abuse occur. The defense – that the abuser claimed to have been converted – would likely be viewed with derision by a civil court. Putting a known abuser in a position involving access to children, youth or other vulnerable people is taking an enormous risk.

## **6. INCIDENT REPORT PROCEDURES**

Anyone who has concerns regarding the safety of a child must report it to the Senior Pastor and the Abuse Prevention and Screening Committee chairperson who will facilitate the contact with the appropriate child protection agency. The church's legal advisor will also be contacted.

Where a rostered minister is the object of an allegation, the Bishop of the synod in which the minister is rostered will be advised.

Abuse or neglect need not have already occurred for a child to be in need of protection; it is not necessary to wait until a child has been harmed to intervene.

## **A. Immediate Discussion**

### **Discuss suspicious behaviour immediately.**

Any inappropriate conduct or relationships between volunteers and a child, youth or other vulnerable person must be confronted immediately and investigated. Prompt warnings must be issued when appropriate, and the situation monitored very closely. The volunteer's services should be terminated immediately for continued violation of sufficient gravity. Sunday School staff, Confirmation Ministry mentors, Youth Group coordinators and other ministry leaders should note when a youth or child appears aloof or withdrawn, or exhibits a marked personality change. This may indicate a problem that deserves attention.

## **B. Allegation Occurrence**

If any volunteer leader has concern for the safety or well-being of any child, youth or other vulnerable person at Messiah Lutheran Church, s/he should report it immediately to the appropriate program director and/or the Senior Pastor, who will offer support and assistance in reporting the concern. The pastor, manager or director will contact the church's lawyer and will obtain from the concerned person all information necessary to complete the ***Suspected Abuse Report Form*** (Document I).

If the alleged perpetrator is a volunteer at Messiah Lutheran Church s/he will be advised of the allegation and suspended from his or her duties. S/he will be advised to seek legal counsel. Pastoral care will be offered to all involved.

If the alleged perpetrator is a rostered minister, the incident will be immediately reported to Bishop of the Synod in which the minister is rostered.

If the alleged perpetrator is a non-rostered employee, the incident will be immediately reported to their immediate supervisor.

## **C. Responding to a Child, Youth or Other Vulnerable Person**

When a child, youth or other vulnerable person first comes to you, be sure to take his or her word seriously. Don't deny the problem, but stay calm and listen to the individual. Give emotional support, reminding the individual that he or she is not at fault. Tell the individual that he or she was right in telling you about the problem. Do not promise the individual that "you will not tell anyone."

## **D. Confidentiality**

In these matters it is important to keep the information restricted to those who need to be advised. This means that all suspicions of abuse should be directed only to the pastor, bishop, manager or director or immediate supervisor.

The only claim of confidentiality which overrides the legal duty to report may be that of solicitor-client privilege. Thus physicians, clergy and others who consider their professional relationships confidential for certain purposes are not exempt from the duty to report child abuse or neglect.

### **E. Responsibility of the Senior Pastor, appropriate Program Director and Abuse Prevention and Screening Committee Chair**

As soon as possible after an incident is disclosed they will:

- In conversation with the person who has made the disclosure, complete the ***Suspected Abuse Report Form***. (Document I).
- Advise the person who has made the disclosure to maintain his/her own detailed notes including names, dates, times, places, etc.
- Assist the person who has come to you to contact appropriate authorities. An in-depth investigation will be left to professionals who are familiar with such cases.
- Take the allegations seriously without prejudging the situation and reach out to the victim and the victim's family. Showing care and support help to prevent further hurt and extending whatever pastoral resources are appropriate. The care and safety of the victim is the first priority.
- Treat the accused with dignity and support. If the accused is an approved volunteer, that person should be suspended from his or her duties until the investigation is finished. If the person is a paid employee, arrangements should be made to either maintain or suspend his or her income until the allegations are cleared or substantiated.

### **F. Protection from Liability**

Church personnel are required to immediately report to the appropriate local authorities any suspected case of child abuse. It is not a breach of confidence between church personnel and the child involved. No person is personally liable for anything done or omitted in good faith in the exercise of this responsibility.

Church leaders are accountable to God to protect God's children. Although protecting parents as much as possible from undue interference by outside authorities may be desirable, the protection of children from abuse is more important.

As part of a child protection investigation, social workers are required under the *Child and Family Services Act* to assess:

- the child's current state of health;
- their sense of safety and their views of abuse;
- previous abuse, neglect or harm; and

- the ability of the parent(s) to care for and protect the child.

The social worker will talk to people who have contact with the victim and family. They may request records or other types of information. They are entitled to whatever information is needed to complete an investigation. If denied access to a record, they can seek a court order.

### **G. Who Must Report**

All persons who have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is or may be in need of protection have an obligation to report.

### **H. Report Follow-Up**

A ***Suspected Abuse Follow-Up Report Form*** (Document J) should always be completed by a pastor following a report of suspected abuse.

The completed ***Suspected Abuse Report Form*** (Document I) and ***Suspected Abuse Follow-Up Report Form*** (Document J) should be kept in a confidential file.

## **7. RESPONSE TO ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE**

Realistically, no practical prevention strategy is completely effective. An accusation of sexual abuse may occur in any church. The *Policy for Protection of Children, Youth and other Vulnerable People* contains an approved strategy to respond to allegations of abuse.

The response strategy of Messiah Lutheran Church recognizes the following underlying principles:

- All allegations are to be taken seriously.
- Situations must be handled forthrightly with due respect for people's privacy and confidentiality.
- Full co-operation must be given to civil authorities under the guidance of the church lawyer.
- Adequate care must be shown for the well-being of victims.
- The victim should not be held responsible in any way

Records of volunteer applications and related material will be maintained. Records shall be kept indefinitely in a safe and accessible location, honoring their confidentiality.

## **A. Spokesperson**

The President of Messiah Lutheran Church, the Senior Pastor or the Abuse Prevention and Screening Committee Chairperson will serve as the spokesperson for Messiah Lutheran Church. S/he will speak to the media and the congregation regarding the matter in a discreet, informed, truthful and diplomatic way.

## **B. Position of the Congregation, Ministry or Office**

In the case of an allegation of abuse, the following points would be made until all of the facts are uncovered and the case reviewed:

- It is always tragic when individuals are abused or exploited.
- The congregation/ministry/office is aware of the toll which any form of abuse takes.
- Careful precautions have been taken to protect the children entrusted to church's care.
- Accusations of abuse are distressing to the church.
- 
- The congregation/ministry/office will do all in its power to address any needs in this situation.
- 
- For the welfare of those involved, all information has been directed to the appropriate authorities.

## **C. Conduct and Counsel**

Messiah Lutheran Church will not engage in denial, minimization, or blame.

- It will not be denied that the incident occurred; all allegations are taken seriously. Once a formal complaint has been made, even if there is clear evidence to the contrary, the church is under a responsibility to follow this policy's process.
- The nature of the incident will not be minimized by saying such things as "It only happened once," or "It wasn't that serious."
- The victim or the victim's family will not be blamed.
- The church will not be accusatory.

Divulging details of an accusation in any public interview will not be tolerated. The church will endeavour to have its lawyer present while answering any investigative questions from the

police or social service agencies. The accused will be advised to seek legal counsel and will be offered pastoral care.

## **8. IMPLEMENTATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

The topic of abuse and the introduction of the *Policy for Protection of Children, Youth and Other Vulnerable People* will create a variety of reactions among church members. Many will solidly support the adoption of the policy. Some will have questions while some may have reservations.

The need for such a policy will be presented in introductory sessions and opportunity for feedback will be provided. The pastor, congregational council chairperson, manager or director will be available to address concerns and provide specific answers about the policy.

### **A. Presentation of the Policy**

The following key points will be made:

- Sexual abuse can happen in the 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.

On an ongoing basis, members of the congregation will be kept informed of the key issues pertaining to abuse and why a decision was made to establish a prevention plan. This will continue to nurture a commitment within the church membership to maintain a safe environment for all children, youth and other vulnerable people. The climate in these presentations will be one of hope. The church community will realize that Messiah Lutheran Church is taking action to address the real needs of our community. The focus will be upon the great responsibility God has given to us to care for our children.

### **B. Monitoring the Policy**

Ministry leaders – especially the pastors, Sunday school coordinators, youth leaders – will review the guidelines set out in the policy as part of program planning. This monitoring will examine the following:

- Have volunteers/staff been trained regarding these policies?
- Are volunteers/staff following the required policies and procedures?
- What obstacles exist to compliance with these policies?

- What is the level of cooperation?
- Do sufficient materials exist for training and information?
- Are the policies current and readily available?

If problems exist in the policies, they should be brought to the attention of the pastor, manager or director. Helpful revisions that do not sacrifice the integrity of the policy are welcomed.

### **C. Education of Salaried Staff and Volunteers**

Routines will be established for the training of all new staff and volunteers who serve the church.

#### **1) Salaried Staff**

Salaried staff who will be working with children or youth will be introduced to the *Policy for Protection of Children, Youth and Other Vulnerable People* upon being called or hired. A police records check is mandatory.

#### **2) New Volunteers**

Training or orientation sessions about the policy will occur in the congregation/ministry, office at least once a year. Depending upon the circumstances and the time of year, an individual training session may also be offered for a volunteer who joins a program mid-Year.

Individuals who apply to begin in ministry after a program is under way must still complete the volunteer approval process. The initial policy orientation/training session may be arranged on an individual or small-group basis.

### **D. Accountability**

Messiah Lutheran Church will avoid any undue interference when a report of abuse has been filed with the appropriate authorities.

The Council Chairperson, Senior Pastor or the Abuse Prevention and Screening Committee Chairperson will ask the agency how the congregation can assist in helping and supporting the hurting victim and his or her family.

Pastoral care will be offered to the victim and those suspected or guilty of abuse. This does not exclude the need for individuals to receive professional counseling.

# **APPENDIX A**

## **MESSIAH LUTHERAN CHURCH**

### **POLICY ON VISITATION IN**

### **HOMES, HOSPITALS, LODGES, NURSING HOMES, & ASSISTED LIVING FACILITIES<sup>5</sup>**

#### **I. GUIDELINES FOR VISITATION IN HOMES**

There are a wide variety of reasons and circumstances that make meeting people in their own homes a necessary part of Messiah's ministry. When visiting shut-ins, preparing people for membership, welcoming new members, conducting stewardship or evangelism programs, or responding to pastoral crisis, it is often necessary and desirable to go to someone's home.

However, visiting people in their own homes presents its own set of challenges and risk. Homes, by their very nature, are private environments. Because a person tends to be more comfortable and relaxed in his or her own environment, this increased degree of relaxation may, in fact, make him or her more vulnerable. Also, because the person being visited is better able to control the situation in his or her own environment, he or she may hold a higher degree of power than the visitor. Visitors should be aware that they are potential victims of abuse when visiting someone's home and should take the necessary steps to protect themselves.

The following guidelines are meant to protect both parties in these situations: the visitor and the visited.

1. All home visits should generally be carried out by teams of at least two persons.
2. Always arrange the visit in advance. Establish a starting time and approximate ending time, as well as a clear purpose for the visit so that the individual knows exactly what to expect.
3. Make another person (church secretary, spouse, colleague) aware of where you are going and when you can be expected to return.
4. Be respectful of other people's time and do not overstay your welcome. When visiting a shut-in or someone who is ill, be particularly conscious of how they are feeling and avoid over-tiring them.
5. Keep the pastoral purpose of your visit in mind at all times. Do not attempt to persuade or influence the person unduly, particularly if he or she seems confused.

6. Stay in the most public areas of the home—the living room, family room, or kitchen. Avoid entering people’s bedroom unless a third party is present in the home.
7. Choose a seat at a comfortable distance from the person you’re talking to; avoid sitting next to them on a couch or sofa. Do not invite or initiate any unwanted or inappropriate physical contact.
8. Visitors should never engage in any form of sexual impropriety with those whom they are visiting. Sexual impropriety includes but is not limited to, all forms of overt or covert seductive speech, gestures, and behaviors as well as explicitly sexual contact.
9. Do not agree to meet anyone in his or her own home if you sense your own personal safety may be compromised, or if you feel that there is the potential that a boundary may be crossed. If a person whom you don’t know well asks for a meeting and you are at all suspicious, arrange to meet him or her at church offices, a coffee shop, or a local restaurant until you know him or her better.
10. When first arriving at a person’s home, assess the situation for anything that may be out of the ordinary. Do not continue if the person is inappropriately dressed, under the influence of alcohol or drugs, or if a person or animal acts in a threatening or aggressive manner and is not properly restrained.
11. If the person acts strangely, says or does things that make you feel unsafe or uncomfortable, or initiates inappropriate physical contact, tell them to stop, then re-establish and maintain appropriate boundaries. If the behavior continues, excuse yourself, document what happened, and report it to your supervisor. **Do not stay in a potentially dangerous or compromising situation.**
12. Do not take the person away from the home for a walk or in your car unless specifically arranged in advance as part of the visit and approved, in advance, by your supervisor. If driving a person to appointments or errands is part of the stated ministry, drivers must hold a valid driver’s license and insurance. Seat belts must be available for all passengers and used. Drivers must not have any alcohol or drugs in their system when driving. If possible, driving ministries should be team ministries to avoid being alone in a car with a vulnerable person.
13. Visitors must treat all information and communication obtained while visiting as strictly confidential and should not disclose them to anyone except where required by law or where given written consent by the individual(s) involved. When discussing the details of a particular situation with a supervisor, the identity of the people involved must be protected.
14. Except where the stated purpose of the visit is stewardship, it is best not to accept gifts or donations when making in-home visits. Encourage the person to make his or her donation using the offering plate on Sunday or by mailing it directly to the church. If the person insist on giving you something while you are there, provide a written receipt, and explain that the church will issue an official receipt for income tax purposes at the appropriate time.

15. Be aware of signs that a person may not be caring for him or herself as he or she should and may require additional community resources to assist him or her. Signs of personal neglect include but are not limited to: a decrease in personal hygiene, wearing the same clothes all the time, particularly if they are stained or soiled, and periods of confusion, disorientation, or loss of memory.
16. If you become concerned about the well being of a person whom you are visiting, speak to your supervisor about trying to initiate contact with a family member in order to discuss the situation and recommend possible courses of action.

## **2. GUIDELINES FOR VISITATION IN HOSPITALS, NURSING HOMES, LODGES, OR ASSISTED LIVING FACILITIES**

People in a hospital, nursing home, lodge, or assisted living facility may be in unfamiliar surroundings. They may be experiencing considerable pain, uncertainty, or fear over their condition. They may be under the affect of anesthesia or other medication. As such, people in these situations become more vulnerable because they may not be completely themselves.

Additional care must be taken when ministering to them, as outlined below:

1. All nursing home, lodge, or assisted living facility visits should generally be carried out by teams of at least two persons.
2. Upon arrival check with the nurse or attendant to determine if the person is able to receive visitors and to make them aware of our presence.
3. Make yourself aware of institutional rules and procedures and follow them closely. For example, some hospitals may have strict hand washing or other policies in place.
4. Be prepared to listen to the situation or diagnosis with the individual you are visiting, but refrain from giving opinions or advice.
5. Be prepared to meet with friends or family members who may be visiting at the same time as you are. Keep in mind that these people may or may not hold the same religious beliefs as the person you are visiting.
6. Discussions with a patient, their family, or friends should be held in strict confidence. Visitors must treat all information and communication obtained while visiting as strictly confidential and should not disclose them to anyone except where required by law or where given written consent by the individual(s) involved. When discussing the details of a particular situation with a supervisor, the identity of the people involved must be protected.
7. If a nurse or doctor comes to engage the patient in discussion or treatment, excuse yourself to a waiting area until the conversation is finished, unless specifically requested to remain by the patient or the health care professional.

8. If a patient requires assistance to use the washroom, or to get out of bed, seek the help of a nurse; do not attempt to help the person on your own.
9. Do not take the person away from the hospital, nursing home, lodge, or assisted living facility unless specifically arranged in advance as part of the visit and approved, in advance, both by your supervisor and the appropriate authorities at the hospital, nursing home, lodge, or assisted living facility. If driving a person to appointments or errands is part of the stated ministry, drivers must hold a valid driver's license and insurance. Seat belts must be available for all passengers and used. Drivers must not have any alcohol or drugs in their system when driving. If possible, driving ministries should be team ministries to avoid being alone in a car with a vulnerable person.

<sup>5</sup> *This policy is based on the document **Guidelines for Working with Vulnerable Persons**, produced by the Diocese of Algoma of the Anglican Church of Canada (copyright ©2002) and is used by permission.*

**MESSIAH LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
**POLICY FOR PROTECTION OF CHILDREN, YOUTH**  
**AND OTHER VULNERABLE PEOPLE**

**DOCUMENTS**

<b><i>Volunteer Ministry Covenant</i></b> (Document A) .....	page 32
<b><i>Volunteer Application Form</i></b> (Document B) .....	page 33
<b><i>Volunteer Interview Form</i></b> (Document C) .....	page 37
<b><i>Volunteer References Verification Form</i></b> (Document D) .....	page 39
<b><i>Volunteer Reference Verification Script</i></b> (Document E) .....	page 40
<b><i>Volunteer Approval Form</i></b> (Document F) .....	page 42
<b><i>Activity Permission Form</i></b> (Document G) .....	page 43
<b><i>Medical Permission Form</i></b> (Document H) .....	page 44
<b><i>Suspected Abuse Report Form</i></b> (Document I) .....	page 45
<b><i>Suspected Abuse Follow-Up Report Form</i></b> (Document J) .....	page 46
<b><i>Mentor–Youth Boundaries Form</i></b> (Document K) .....	page 47

## VOLUNTEER MINISTRY COVENANT

### (Document A)

*Rejoicing in my baptism and celebrating God's grace and gifts in my life, I resolve to minister within the community of Messiah Lutheran Church of Camrose as a servant of Jesus Christ as follows:*

I will support the witness of the church:

- by regular attendance at worship;
- by living a godly life;
- by giving regularly.

I will serve the ministry of Messiah Lutheran Church:

- by seeking to discover and nurturing my gifts and talents;
- by fulfilling the duties of my ministry to the best of my ability;
- by participating in training as I am given opportunity;
- by serving in partnership with others in the Messiah Lutheran Church community
- by supporting and affirming the gifts and ministries of others.

I will share in the growth of Messiah Lutheran Church:

- by praying for our congregation/ministry/office and for our community;
- by inviting those without a church home into our ministry;
- by warmly welcoming those who visit.

I will build-up the community of Messiah Lutheran Church:

- by acting in love toward others;
- by holding others in high regard;
- by working cooperatively with others.

I have read and become familiar with the *Policy for Protection of Children, Youth and Other Vulnerable People*. I understand that Messiah Lutheran Church of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada is responsible for the well-being of all children, youth and other vulnerable people entrusted to our care. I will endeavour to minister to the best of my ability and to cooperate fully with Messiah Lutheran Church's staff in the exercise of my ministry.

Applicant's Name (printed) \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Messiah Lutheran Church, Camrose, AB

## VOLUNTEER APPLICATION FORM

### (Document B)

(For Ministries with Children, Youth and Other Vulnerable People)

*The following information is necessary to help reduce the risk of abuse and to protect children, youth and volunteers. Thank you for your interest in ministry and your understanding.*

#### Personal Information

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Are you under the age of 18?

Yes  No

How long have you been a member or an active participant of Messiah Lutheran Church?

Previous church membership

Do you have any physical conditions that would prevent you from performing certain types of activities (lifting children, playing sports...)? If so, please explain.

Education/Employment/Skills

High School

College/University

Occupation

Employer

Hobbies/Interests

Skills

Do you have

- CPR training
- First-Aid Training

Other

Training received or courses taken that would assist you for ministry with children, youth or other vulnerable people

### **Conviction for a Criminal Offense**

*Answering "yes" to the following question will not necessarily preclude your involvement in volunteer ministry. A meeting will be arranged with the senior pastor and/or chair of the Abuse Prevention and Screening Committee to discuss the circumstances.*

Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offense for which a pardon has not been granted?

- Yes
- No

Volunteer Experience

Description of volunteer experience

Volunteer Ministries in Which You Are Interested

**References**

*Please provide the names of three individuals (not relatives) who have known you for five years or more and who can provide a reference for you. If you are under the age of 18, you may use the name of a parent and/or teacher. If possible, please include at least one reference from someone at Messiah Lutheran Church. All people listed as references should be informed that you have so listed them.*

*References that are acceptable are limited to the following:*

- Former or present pastor;*
- Long-time friend (minimum of 5 years); One parent (for minors);*
- Teacher (for minors);*
- Messiah Lutheran Church member (who has sufficient strength of relationship to comment on the individual's personal habits and character);*
- Employer or colleague*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

**Applicant's Statement**

I hereby acknowledge that the information contained in this **Volunteer Application Form** is correct to the best of my knowledge. I authorize any people listed as references to provide any information they may have regarding my character and fitness for ministry.

I will provide Messiah Lutheran Church with the results of a police records check.

I agree to adhere to the guidelines contained in the *Policy for Protection of Children, Youth and Other Vulnerable People*.

Applicant's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Messiah Lutheran Church  
Camrose, AB

## VOLUNTEER INTERVIEW FORM

### (Document C)

*NOTE: A completed **Volunteer Application Form** (Document B) must be in hand prior to the interview. If the applicant has marked "yes" in connection with Conviction for a Criminal Offense, this interview is to be conducted by the chair of the Abuse Prevention and Screening Committee and a program director.*

Name of Applicant \_\_\_\_\_

1. Tell me about your past experience with volunteer ministry in a church.
2. Tell me about your experience with volunteering in other settings (joys, sorrows, insights, etc.)
3. Describe your interest in the volunteer ministry(ies) you have indicated
4. Would you be willing to attend a training session associated with that ministry?
5. When would you be available for this volunteer ministry (days and times)?
6. What is the minimum length of your commitment?

7. What is your understanding of why we require training about abuse, an interview and references?

8. Do you have any questions about anything in the *Policy for Protection of Children, Youth and Other Vulnerable People*?

9. Have you had any personal experience with abuse? If so, how was it handled?

10. If you had reason to believe that a child, youth or other vulnerable person were being abused, what would you do?

11. What do you consider to be an appropriate show of affection with a child? a youth?

12. Do you have any further questions?

Signature of Interviewer(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Position \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Interviewer(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Position \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Messiah Lutheran Church, Camrose, AB

## VOLUNTEER REFERENCES VERIFICATION FORM

### (Document D)

Reference contacted \_\_\_\_\_

Method of contact

phone

letter

face-to-face conversation

Detail

Reference contacted \_\_\_\_\_

Method of contact

phone

letter

face-to-face conversation

Detail

Reference contacted \_\_\_\_\_

Method of contact

phone

letter

face-to-face conversation

Detail

Recommendation

Interviewer

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Position \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Messiah Lutheran Church  
Camrose, AB

## VOLUNTEER REFERENCE VERIFICATION SCRIPT

### (Document E)

Church reference

Hello, this is \_\_\_\_\_ from Messiah Lutheran Church.

As with many churches and community organizations today, our church has a screening process for all persons who volunteer to work with children, youth or other vulnerable people.

I am calling you because \_\_\_\_\_ indicated in his/her application that he/she taught Sunday School / led a youth group / helped with your children's program...

1. Can you verify this information?
2. I am calling you because applicant listed you as a personal reference.
3. How long have you known him/her?
4. Would you please comment on his/her personality and leadership ability?
5. Do you have any reservations about \_\_\_\_\_ working with children, youth or other vulnerable people?
6. Is there anything you would care to add?

Personal Reference

Hello, this is \_\_\_\_\_ from Messiah Lutheran Church.

As with many churches and community organizations today, our church has a screening process for all persons who volunteer to work with children, youth or other vulnerable people.. I am calling you because applicant listed you as a personal reference.

I am calling you because applicant listed you as a personal reference.

1. How long have you known him/her?
2. Would you please comment on his/her personality and leadership ability?
3. Do you have any reservations about \_\_\_\_\_ working with children, youth or other vulnerable people?
4. Is there anything you would care to add?

Thank you very much for your help.

## VOLUNTEER APPROVAL FORM

### (Document F)

Applicant's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Introductory session on *Policy for Protection of Children, Youth and Other Vulnerable People*  
DATE COMPLETED \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ ***Volunteer Ministry Covenant*** (Document A) signed.

\_\_\_ ***Volunteer Application Form*** (Document B) completed and signed

\_\_\_ ***Volunteer Interview Form*** (Document C) completed and signed

\_\_\_ ***Volunteer References Verification Form*** (Document D) completed and signed

\_\_\_ ***Drivers Abstract Obtained***

\_\_\_ Police records check completed by authorities and report received from applicant

Notes

The applicant is approved \_\_\_\_\_ / not approved \_\_\_\_\_ to serve in ministries involving children, youth or other vulnerable people at Messiah Lutheran Church

Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
Chair Abuse Prevention and Screening Committee

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Messiah Lutheran Church  
Camrose, AB

## ACTIVITY PERMISSION FORM

### (Document G)

For the year September 1, \_\_\_\_ - August 31, \_\_\_\_

Name of Child \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) of Parent(s) or Guardian(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Alternate Person to Contact in Emergency \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to child/youth \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

I give permission for the child/youth/vulnerable person named above to participate in field trips, retreats, camps and any other off-site activities that are sponsored by Messiah Lutheran Church and which are offered as part of Messiah Lutheran Church's Sunday Church School, Confirmation Ministry program, Messiah Lutheran Church's Mentoring program, Messiah Lutheran Church Youth Group activities or other ministries.

On occasions when I cannot provide transportation myself, I consent to my child being driven to and from these activities by an adult member of Messiah Lutheran Church.

I understand that Messiah Lutheran Church will do its best to follow the guidelines set out in *Policy for Protection of Children, Youth and Other Vulnerable People* which is a policy of Messiah Lutheran Church and of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada intended for the health, safety and protection of the children, youth, other vulnerable people and the volunteers of Messiah Lutheran Church.

Parent or Guardian's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Messiah Lutheran Church  
Camrose, AB

## MEDICAL PERMISSION FORM

### (Document H)

For the year September 1, \_\_\_\_\_ - August 31, \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Child/Youth/Vulnerable Person \_\_\_\_\_

Birth Date \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Family Doctor \_\_\_\_\_

Provincial Health Insurance Number \_\_\_\_\_

Does your child have any severe or life-threatening allergies? (eg. bee stings, food, Penicillin or other drugs, etc.)

Yes  No Detail \_\_\_\_\_

Does your child use or carry any medications? (e.g. antibiotic, ventilator, epi-pen, etc.)

Yes  No Detail \_\_\_\_\_

Does your child have any physical, emotional, cognitive or behavioural concerns or limitations?

Yes  No Detail \_\_\_\_\_

Does your child have any medical conditions of which we should be aware?

Yes  No Detail \_\_\_\_\_

In the event of accident, sickness or other medical emergency, I hereby authorize Messiah Lutheran Church to secure such medical treatment as is deemed necessary. It is understood that medical care will be secured promptly and that parents or guardians will be notified at the earliest possible opportunity. In the event of accident, sickness or other medical emergency, Messiah Lutheran Church, its pastor, staff and volunteers are hereby released from any liability.

Parent or Guardian's signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Messiah Lutheran Church, Camrose, AB

## SUSPECTED ABUSE REPORT FORM

### (Document I)

*This form is to be completed by senior pastor, appropriate program director or chair of the Abuse Prevention and Screening Committee.*

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Victim \_\_\_\_\_

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 (facts, physical signs, course of events...)

Action Taken (include date and time)

*The above information will serve as a guide and will be necessary if a report is filed with the police and/or the appropriate authorities. All information is kept strictly confidential.*

Signature of person reporting \_\_\_\_\_

Form completed by: signature \_\_\_\_\_ Position \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Messiah Lutheran Church, Camrose, AB

## SUSPECTED ABUSE FOLLOW-UP REPORT FORM

### (Document J)

*This form is to be completed by the senior pastor, appropriate program director or chair of the Abuse Prevention and Screening Committee.*

Name of Victim \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Person Who Filed Initial Report \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Person Receiving Report \_\_\_\_\_

Conclusions

Action Taken (include date and time)

*The above information will serve as a guide and will be necessary if a report is filed with the police and/or the appropriate authorities. All information is kept strictly confidential.*

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Position \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Messiah Lutheran Church  
Camrose, AB

## MENTOR – YOUTH BOUNDARIES FORM

### (Document K)

This form is to be completed by a parent or guardian in families participating in Messiah Lutheran Church's mentoring program.

The *Policy for Protection of Children, Youth and Other Vulnerable People* offers the following guidelines in connection with the mentor-youth relationship:

- To the extent possible, meet in such public environments as Tim Horton's, a park setting, a congregational Fellowship Room, a community centre, etc.
- Consider meeting in a group with one or more fellow mentors and youth
- Always obtain parental permission to transport youth or to be alone with them
- Observe the guidelines for proper display of affection
- When in doubt, confer with the pastor

Our family is comfortable having our child...

- meet with his/her mentor at the church
- meet with his/her mentor in a public venue (park, McDonalds, Tim Hortons, etc.)
- visit our child's public/school activities (hockey game, dance competition, etc.)
- meet with his/her mentor in our family home
- meet with his/her mentor in the mentor's home

Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Parent or Guardian's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Messiah Lutheran Church  
Camrose, AB

