

---

# SAFEGUARDING, WHISTLEBLOWING, & SAFETY PLAN POLICIES

---



CHURCH**21**

# STATEMENT FOR SAFEGUARDING & WHISTLEBLOWING

We believe that each person matters to God and we are committed to reflecting God's character in maintaining the highest possible Biblical standards of integrity and accountability in the work we do.

Everyone serving at [Church 21] is obliged to conduct themselves in keeping with these high standards and to treat others with dignity and respect. Whether you are a member of the public, or are a member of the church, we invite you to report any concerns you may have about the behaviour of [Church 21] staff or volunteers.

## Safeguarding

Our church is committed to the care, nurture of, and respectful pastoral ministry with all children and adults and to the safeguarding and protection of all children, young people and adults when they are vulnerable. Any allegation or concern regarding the abuse of a child or a vulnerable adult must be treated seriously and reported as soon as possible.

A concern can arise when you observe or suspect abusive behaviour, when an allegation is made or disclosed, or where there are indicators (signs and symptoms) of suspected abuse on the victim.

### **There are two ways for you to report a safeguarding concern:**

1. Directly to the Safeguarding Officer, Brian Stegner, who can be reached at 514-778-1840 or [brian.stegner@church21.ca](mailto:brian.stegner@church21.ca)
2. Or if you prefer to speak to a female contact either Vivienne Tam (English), who can be reached at 514-441-6286 / [vivienne.tam@church21.ca](mailto:vivienne.tam@church21.ca) or Severine Stegner (English / French) who can be reached at 514-226-1840 / [severine.stegner@church21.ca](mailto:severine.stegner@church21.ca)

\*If you feel that both of the above named persons would be inadequate for the situation you are reporting, please review the additional contact options under our whistleblowing section below.

All concerns raised will be investigated thoroughly and action taken in line with our church safeguarding policies and procedures. Confidentiality will be maintained to the fullest practical extent. The main exceptions are when the law requires disclosure, or when someone is at risk.

## **Whistleblowing**

If you discover information which you believe shows serious malpractice, illegal actions, wrongdoing or unacceptable behaviours or practices by church employees, volunteers or members, we ask you to report it.

Legislation protects those who raise legitimate concerns. No one who makes a report in good faith will be victimised for doing so. Your concern could be about one of the following, and could be about things that are happening now, have happened in the past, or are likely to happen in the future:

- A criminal offence
- The breach of a legal obligation
- A miscarriage of justice
- A danger to the health and safety of any individual
- Deliberate concealment of information related to any of the above
- It could also be about something not included in the list above.

### **To report a whistleblowing concern, you have several options:**

1. For general concerns, such as regarding a church member or volunteer, please talk to or contact a member of our pastoral staff. A complete listing and contact information is available on our website at [church21.ca/im-new](http://church21.ca/im-new)

2. Concerns or complaints about a pastor or staff member should be addressed to Brian Stegner, the Executive Pastor. He can be reached at 514-778-1840 or [brian.stegner@church21.ca](mailto:brian.stegner@church21.ca)

3. If you would like to speak to someone in church leadership who is not a staff member, please contact David Long. He can be reached at 438-393-8035 or [david.long@church21.ca](mailto:david.long@church21.ca)

4. Concerns or complaints about the Executive Pastor should be addressed to Louis Bourque, the Director General of AEBEQ (our denominational affiliation). He can be reached at 514-337-2555 or [l.bourque@aebeq.qc.ca](mailto:l.bourque@aebeq.qc.ca)

5. You also have the option of contacting Philip Moore, the Associate Director of Acts 29 (our network affiliation). He can be reached at +33 6 82 61 82 87 or [philip@acts29.com](mailto:philip@acts29.com)

Please note that while you may request that your identity is withheld from the church / organization, it needs to be understood that action cannot be taken on anonymous allegations, or formal actions taken in the absence of reasonably substantiated concerns.

That said, your concerns should be reported as quickly as possible so they can be investigated and any appropriate action taken. Those who raise issues under this provision must have a reasonable belief that it is well founded. Appropriate action will be taken if a malicious allegation is made.

If an investigation is required, confidentiality will be maintained to the extent that this is appropriate and practical in the circumstances. The main exceptions are when the law requires disclosure, or when someone is at risk.

Issues will be investigated as soon as possible and action taken in line with our disciplinary policies and procedures. If there is a conflict of interest, implicated parties will recuse themselves, and if necessary, a third party independent organization will be hired that specialises in the type of allegation made.

The person raising a complaint or concern will be informed of the outcome subject to the normal rules on confidentiality of personal information.

If you have any other concerns or questions about the work of the church / organization not covered by the safeguarding or whistleblowing sections above, please let us know by talking to a member of staff, emailing the Executive Pastor or using the contact form on our website.

We appreciate your help in bringing matters to our attention. Thank you.

# CHILD SAFETY PLAN

## INTRODUCTION

The aims of the Church 21 Safety Plan are tri-fold:

First, and foremost, to protect our children and vulnerable persons (disabled, elderly) from abuse and neglect. At its most basic form, abuse and neglect is defined under law as:

- Any recent act or failure to act which results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse or exploitation of a child (or vulnerable person)
- An act or failure to act which presents an imminent risk of serious harm to a child (or vulnerable person)

Secondly, to protect our staff and volunteers from putting themselves into situations where they themselves could come under harm, false accusation, or compromise.

Third, to operate in a professional and legal manner, respecting the laws of the land and the standards appropriate to a modern, urban church organisation.

The Church 21 Safety Plan rules and guidelines apply to any legal adult who is working with children of any age under 18 (minors) or vulnerable persons (disabled, elderly) within Church 21, in either a staff or volunteer capacity.

This Child safety plan conforms to the [Church 21 Policy & Statement for Safeguarding and Whistleblowing](#).

## **STEPS TO APPLY:**

1. Submit to the SPVM Criminal Background Check
2. Read this entire Child Safety Plan document
3. Read the Church 21 Policy & Statement for Safeguarding and Whistleblowing
4. Go through this one-page training on spotting abuse: Child Abuse Prevention, Identification, and Reporting
5. Fill out a separate form called the "C21 - Application to work with Minors" (hereafter referred to as the "application") and sign.

\*Applicants must be at least sixteen years of age to be considered "trained" adults. Younger children may assist but will not count towards the total "trained" adults required as per the general guidelines below. Application details, personal information, and background check results will be kept private, with access limited to the pastoral staff / Board of Elders.

In your application, you will have the opportunity to sign to indicate that you have read, understood, and will abide by everything stipulated in these documents. If you have any questions or concerns about the following guidelines please ask before signing.

You will be required to review the rules annually or at any appointed time, and / or if there has been an adjustment or update to this document. You may also be asked to provide references, and in most cases a six-month minimum attendance with Church 21 will be considered a prerequisite, as well as participation in a City Group.

Final decisions regarding applications are ultimately up to the Board of Elders and / or their appointed representative(s).

## **LEXICON**

In this policy, unless the context indicates otherwise, the following terms mean:

**Abuse:** Any recent act or failure to act which results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse or exploitation of a child (or vulnerable person).

**Physical abuse:** Physical abuse is any intentional act causing injury or trauma to another person or animal by way of bodily contact.

**Verbal abuse:** A type of psychological/mental abuse that involves the use of oral, gestured, and written language directed to a victim.

**Emotional abuse:** Psychological abuse, often called emotional abuse, is a form of abuse characterised by a person subjecting or exposing another person to a behaviour that may result in psychological trauma, including anxiety, chronic depression, or post-traumatic stress disorder.

**Sexual abuse:** Any behaviour that is detrimental to the healthy sexual development of a child or young person; any form of sexual exploitation, including indecent exposure, touching, harassment, assault, display of explicit material, suggestive language, or other.

**Neglect:** An act or failure to act which presents an imminent risk of serious harm to a child (or vulnerable person).

**Child:** A person under the age of 12.

**Infant:** A child ages 0-2.

**Adolescent:** Any person who is at least 12 years of age and has not yet reached the age of 18.

**Adult:** A person who has reached the age of 18.

**Minor:** Any person who has not yet reached the age of 18.

**Applicant:** A person who is at least 12 years of age, paid or volunteer, who applies for a position as a stakeholder.

**Trained / Safety Trained:** A person who has completed the safety training process and is at least 16 years of age.

**Approved Adult:** A person who has completed the certification process and met each of its requirements, including the safety training.

**Caregiver:** Any Trained & Approved Adult or 16-17 year old helper who is actively working with children and / or vulnerable persons.

**Staff:** All employees who work for the church and related ministries.

**Volunteer:** Unpaid workers who volunteer their time as service to and in the church.

**Board of Elders:** Legal board of pastor/elders responsible for the overall management of the church.

**Ministry:** Refers to an area of service officially recognized by the Board of Elders.

**Parent(s):** The holder(s) who has (have) parental authority over a minor.

## **I. General Rule for Working with Minors**

Two unmarried, Safety-Trained (hereafter "trained") adults must be present all at times within a room where ministry to minors is taking place. If ever one adult has to leave due to an emergency, the door to the room must be left open so that the remaining adult can remain in "line of sight" to the hall, and then only until a second "trained" adult can join the group.

The only people allowed into Nursery and the Children's Ministry areas should be "trained" adults, child helpers, and parents of children in the ministries. The Greeters, Security, and active Staff should work to keep adults from unnecessarily passing into these spaces.

## **II. Physical Contact**

Verbal communication, eye contact and physical contact are essential aspects of establishing and cultivating an appropriate relationship with a minor. However, care must be taken when expressing legitimate affection to a minor. Practitioners must be emotionally appropriate towards minors. They must be sensitive to cultural differences, family backgrounds, personality, special needs and sexual development of the minor.

Appropriate physical contact shall take into account the age and development of the minor. The following measures are put forward to delineate what is a pure, positive and sincere expression of God's love on the part of the caregivers.

### **Appropriate expressions of physical contact:**

- Gently patting a child's head, hand, shoulder or back to show affection or to encourage the child.
- Taking the child's hand and leading him/her to an activity.
- Putting your arm around a child who needs to be comforted or calmed.
- Holding a crying preschooler or a child who needs to be comforted.
- Verbally and tactfully express affection to a child. It is appropriate to hold a child's hands and say, for example, "You did a good job," or "I'm glad to see you. We missed you," etc.



- Holding a child by the shoulders or hands to keep the child's attention while correcting the behaviour.
- Practitioners are encouraged to lean in close to the child's visual level and speak gently or listen carefully.

**Inappropriate expressions of physical contact:**

- A caregiver shall not initiate or request a hug, kiss or embrace of a minor.
- A caregiver shall not carry a child or have a child sit on his/her lap.
- With the exception of infants, a caregiver should avoid carrying a child and should not invite a child to sit on his/her lap.
- It is forbidden for any person to touch a minor or vulnerable person on a part of the body that could be covered by a bathing suit (exception for the carrying of infants, placing proper support under the bottom is OK).
- It is forbidden for any person to hit a minor, regardless of the situation.
- It is forbidden for any speaker to use bad language in the presence of a minor.
- A caregiver shall not be left alone with a minor in a building, room, motor vehicle, isolated area or other location.
- All forms of child abuse are prohibited, both those defined in this policy and those that are not.

\*At no time should any form of physical discipline be used (see discipline below).

**III. Bathroom Trips**

Depending on your specific location, bathrooms may not be in "line of sight" of the children's area. If that is the case and a child needs to go to the bathroom and there are only two trained adults working in the space, solicit the help of a third trained adult to come and fulfil the two-adult rule in the kids area. (If the third person is married to one of the two trained adults working with children, send one of the two married partners to go with the children so as to not violate the general rules outlined above.)

Before leaving, ask if any other children need to use the washroom. It's not a bad idea if an older sibling of the same sex is present to have them come along to help facilitate.

The adult should clear the bathroom first to make sure there are no adults already present inside. The children should be sent in alone to use the washroom. If the children require assistance, someone should be sent to get their parents in order to have them assist their child. Do not enlist the help of an untrained adult who happens to be readily present. Know who is trained and who isn't.

\*Be aware of any additional procedural requirements that are specific to your meeting location.\*

#### **IV. Changing Diapers**

If you suspect a minor needs a diaper change, send Security to bring a parent.

Diaper changes should be performed in the washroom facilities where diaper changing states are provided. If your location does not have diaper changing stations, please avoid using a surface that would otherwise be used for food prep or consumption. As noted above, at no time should a staff member take a minor into the bathroom, which includes taking a baby to be changed.

#### **V. Discipline**

If a toddler or child begins to be a problem, such as being disrespectful or disruptive, you are allowed to discipline using verbal warnings such as the following:

*"If you want to stay here, you need to respect us as the leaders in this room, and you need to follow our instructions. If you can't do that, then we will have to go get your parents, and you won't get to stay here with us."*

Keep in mind at all times that, like with your own children, Jesus has already taken the punishment due the child for their sin, and that our role is to disciple them towards holiness out of love. Scolding a child or speaking harshly with them is always unbiblical and unproductive.

And again, as noted above, no physical action should be taken against a child (unless in extreme circumstances where one child is posing a serious threat to themselves, to another child, or to yourself, i.e, has a sharp or hot object in their hand, etc.).

#### **VI. Allergies**

Our check-in process allows for parents to note any allergies and / or special instructions on their name tag. Please take the time to check the tag of any child you don't know for any special notes or marks. Because we give that option on the check-in computer, parents have a reasonable expectation that we will check

their instructions. There is significant liability for us if we were to skip this, please make it a habit. We do work to provide 'school-safe' level snacks, meaning ones that self-identify as being peanut and soy free, but many kids are still allergic to even these types of snacks.

## **VII. Emergency Procedures**

In case of a **fire alarm**, organise the children in a line against a wall or another safe space, to orderly await parents to pick up their kids (instructions in the service will be given for parents to pick up their kids before exiting the building).

In the case of an **actual fire** (or if you see / smell smoke, etc.), line the kids up to exit via the nearest fire escape, one leader at the front, and the other counting them off as they leave and following at the rear. Keep them all together. Once outside the building, find a safe location nearby (such as up the sidewalk) and have the kids sit in a group. If there are fire, police, or security persons directing you, allow them to find you a safe place to wait for their parents. \*Nursery workers will have to enlist the help of Security and perhaps other (KNOWN!) bystanders to carry / transport our youngest toddlers and babies out of the building safely (don't hand a baby to someone you don't know in a moment of panic). Security and the Ops Director will do the final sweep of all areas, as conditions allow.

In the case of an **intruder** (someone who obviously should not be present and / or is acting in an unusual or inappropriate manner), alert the Security Person (or barring that, the Ops Director, or any other Kids Zone Volunteer that might be helpful). The Security person should ask to talk with them, and lead the person or persons away from the Kids Zone area. Physical confrontations are to be avoided at all costs, unless to prevent immediate bodily harm to themselves or another person. A second person should be enlisted to call the police, if necessary.

In the case of an **assault or other crime**, call 911 immediately.

## **VIII. Child to Adult Points System**

Due to the high number of participants and the challenges in staffing, we are instituting the following age-based child to adult points system that must be observed at all times.

Adults in each area are worth 10 points, and teen-helpers are worth 6 points.

Children cost the following points each:

1. Infants (birth to 15 months) - 3 points each

2. Toddlers and Preschoolers (15 months to 5 years) - 2 points each

3. Elementary aged children (6 years to Gr. 6) - 1 point each

If ever there is an issue where the above point system is about to be exceeded, on-call parents may be enlisted to provide additional help.

If on-call parents cannot be acquired, additional children that would "cost" more points than we have staffed must be turned away.

## **IX. Pickups**

In most locations, after the sermon parents will return to pick up their kids. As a general rule, if you know the parents and the child personally and can match them up safely, that's OK. If you don't know the parents or child very well, please ask to see the parent tag to match it to the sticker on the child (the four-digit code), if your location employs this system. This is especially important in the Nursery, where a child might not be far enough along developmentally to react to a stranger picking them up. Use common sense on how and when to apply the above rules, and follow your gut. If a child has an unusual or negative reaction to the person picking them up, take some extra verbal steps to make sure everything is OK.

## **X. Reporting**

If ever you notice something that seems off, behaviour, marks, drawings, "stories," please make it known to the director of the worship gathering. We are legally required as individuals and as an organisation to report anything suspicious to the authorities. If you are unsure about what you're seeing / hearing, please reference the Canadian Federal guide to recognizing and reporting abuse: [Child Maltreatment: A "What to Do" Guide for Professionals Who Work With Children](#)

Do not gossip about anything that you suspect to others, simply make the report. Ask to sit with the Operations Director and fill out the form on the last page of this document (Incident / Observation Report Form). They will contact the authorities to communicate the recorded details. If anyone appears to be in immediate danger, call 911.

If there is an issue observed with the operations director themselves, local pastoral staff, or any other kind of whistleblowing type report that needs to be made and you feel unable or unsafe to communicate with the usual channels, please contact Brian Stegner (514-778-1840 / [brian.stegner@church21.ca](mailto:brian.stegner@church21.ca)) or one of the secondary appointed reporting representatives as detailed in the [Church 21 Policy & Statement for Safeguarding and Whistleblowing](#).

## **XI. Confessions**

If a co-worker / volunteer confesses feelings of sexual attraction for children, use of child pornography, or any comparable struggle or anything that would violate the sentiments of this document, you are obligated to convey this information to someone on the pastoral team / elder board. If you are unsure of who to communicate with, you can email [brian.stegner@church21.ca](mailto:brian.stegner@church21.ca)

## **XII. Be Wise!**

If something feels weird, change the situation. Use common sense, these rules are very specific and are only a guideline. Most adults should be able to make smart decisions on the fly and know when a rule needs to be broken in word to uphold the sentiments of the rule. (See tri-fold aims of the safety plan).

If ever you find an area that has not been addressed, please bring it up with whoever is supervising the worship gathering so that this document can be updated.

## **XIII: Incident / Observation Form**

Sample Incident / Observation Form included below. If ANYTHING happens of a physical nature, or would otherwise qualify as an "incident", you must use the following form to make notes AND inform the relevant parents / guardians.

# INCIDENT / OBSERVATION REPORT FORM

Date:

Name:

Address:

Phone:

Details of Incident / Observation:

**[SAMPLE]**

Were the Parents Informed Y / N

Was Medical Attention Given? Y / N

Were Emergency Services Called? Y / N

SIGN: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

Witnessed by (Print Name): \_\_\_\_\_

SIGN: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_



CHURCH21.CA