

Moosomin Baptist Church

Safe Ministries Policy

A Policy for the Protection of Children, Youth and Vulnerable Persons

**Moosomin Baptist Church
1117 Main street, Moosomin, SK, S0G 3N0
Phone: 306-434-7768
Email: Moosomin.baptist@sasktel.net
www.moosominbaptist.com**

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Part One – Preamble

The children, youth and vulnerable persons* in the care of Moosomin Baptist Church (hereinafter called “the Church”) are a trust from God. The Church’s responsibility is to nurture and to protect them, enabling them to grow into a knowledge of and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. To accomplish this, the Church has the responsibility to provide a safe environment for them to learn, explore, question and seek truth.

“And whoever welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me. But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.”
Matthew 18:5-6

This Policy is intended to be a resource for all leaders within Moosomin Baptist Church ministries and programs, but is not intended to take the place of good judgment and common sense. It is intended to encourage responsible and compassionate practices, exercised with love and respect for all ministry/program participants and leaders.

The Church, recognizing that even within a church setting the potential for abuse exists, has created this Policy to enable its workers to prevent, recognize, stop and report abuse against children, youth and vulnerable persons, within its ministries.

The Church recognizes a moral and legal obligation to respect and protect individuals of all ages in our ministries and programs and will tolerate no abuse. The Church will take any allegations of abuse seriously and will cooperate fully with the appropriate authorities to investigate any cases of alleged abuse. Abuse of children, youth or vulnerable persons is grounds for immediate dismissal and possible criminal charges.

This Safe Ministries Policy will be audited internally at least every two years resulting in a report to the Church Council.

The Safe Ministries Policy has been implemented to:

1. provide a safe and secure environment for all participants in our ministries and programs, especially our children, youth and vulnerable persons,
2. provide standards for the planning and implementing of ministries and programs, to ensure that issues related to abuse and safety are recognized and considered,
3. provide guidelines for the recruitment and training of the staff and volunteers who will work with children, youth and vulnerable persons,
4. ensure all staff and volunteers undergo mandatory training on abuse and the legal responsibility to report,
5. protect our staff and volunteers from unfounded allegations of abuse, and
6. protect the credibility and integrity of the Church and the name of Jesus Christ.

*Vulnerable persons are defined as those persons who are mentally, physically and/or emotionally disabled, and also the frail elderly.

Part Two – Recruitment and Training of Staff & Volunteers

A. Recruitment of Staff and Volunteers

The Pastoral Staff and Commission Chairpersons responsible for a program must ensure that recruiting, orientation and ongoing training and supervision of staff and volunteers is completed according to the following guidelines.

1. Screening of Staff and Volunteers

- a) All staff and volunteers wishing to work in ministry with children, youth and vulnerable persons, will:
 - i. be born again believers in Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior,
 - ii. be members or regular adherents at Moosomin Baptist Church **for at least six (6) months** (A reduced period of time may be approved if the individual comes with adequate references from another church or Christian ministry.),
 - iii. submit a completed Ministry Volunteer Application form and references to the Senior Pastor or appropriate commission Chairperson,
 - iv. have completed a Criminal Record Check, including CPIC (Canadian Police Information Centre) and VSV (Vulnerable Sector Verification) (**re-check every 3 years**), and
 - v. be interviewed by the Senior Pastor or appropriate commission Chairperson.
- b) The Senior Pastor or Chairperson of the appropriate commission will:
 - i. ensure the Ministry Volunteer Application form is complete,
 - ii. contact references, using the Past Ministry Check and Reference Check forms,
 - iii. interview the applicant using the Ministry Volunteer Interview form,
 - iv. determine the suitability of the applicant on the basis of all information provided or collected,
 - v. if approved, complete the Application Approval Form,
 - vi. advise the applicant if he/she is approved or not,
 - vii. if approved, advise the applicant to whom she/he will be responsible and accountable in ministry and the process of supervision and annual review of performance,
 - viii. file all information related to the application in a permanently maintained confidential file, and
 - ix. review with the applicant the “SAFE MINISTRIES POLICY”.

B. Training of Staff and Volunteers

1. Requirement to Be Trained

All staff and volunteers who will work with children, youth and vulnerable persons will be required to attend a Safe Ministries Orientation session and read the “SAFE MINISTRIES POLICY”.

Exceptions – Parents or guardians, helpers and others who only periodically assist with children, youth and vulnerable persons ministries:

- a) will not be required to submit an application or participate in the Ministry Orientation session,
- b) will be members or regular adherents at Moosomin Baptist Church for at least six (6) months (A reduced period of time may be approved if the individual comes with adequate references from another church or Christian ministry), and
- c) will be required to work in the presence of an approved ministry volunteer or staff.

2. Orientation

The Safe Ministries Orientation session will include information about:

- a) Moosomin Baptist Church and its ministries,
- b) identification of ministry leaders,
- c) our obligation to protect our children, youth and vulnerable persons from abuse and harm,
- d) an understanding of child abuse, as a criminal act, and its impact on its victims,
- e) our "SAFE MINISTRIES POLICY" to prevent and respond to abuse in our ministries,
- f) the process for reporting allegations of abuse,
- g) what we can do to ensure a safe environment for children, youth and vulnerable persons,
- h) fire safety, evacuation and missing child procedures,
- i) use of safety equipment, and
- j) ongoing ministry monitoring and supervision.

3. Ongoing Training

Ministry volunteers are required to attend an annual refresher session on the Safe Ministries Policy as required by our liability insurance policy.

Part Three – Health and Safety Guidelines and Procedures

A. General Safety Guidelines

1. A minimum of 2 approved and unrelated ministry staff or volunteers to be present at all times
2. The Senior Pastor, ministry directors and team members will have open access to all areas where adults are working with children, youth and vulnerable persons.
3. All church work areas will have doors with windows in them (or split doors where the top is left open) so supervision can occur without interrupting the group session.
4. At no time will doors be locked to prevent entrance to an area while a program is running.
5. There will be sufficient lighting in place, both inside and outside the building, while programs are running.
6. Parent(s) or guardian(s) are welcome to check on their children, youth and vulnerable persons at any time.
7. Adequate Supervision will be provided at all times.
8. It is recommended that youth (Staff & Volunteers) who are leading other youth and children be a minimum of 5 years older than those children and youth they are serving.
9. Recommended supervision ratios will be maintained at all times.

Note: - This does not preclude the 2 Person Rule

- Infants: 1 worker to 3 infants
- Toddlers & Preschoolers: 1 worker to 4 children
- Elementary age: 1 worker to 7-10 children
- Youth: 1 worker to 7-10 children

B. General Responsibilities

All team members will:

1. be responsible for the personal health and safety practices of their group
2. follow safe operating procedures, standards of behavior and modest dress
3. refrain from the use of damaged furniture, equipment or fittings
4. give clear instructions and warnings as often as necessary

C. Recording Attendance, Receiving and Releasing Children, Youth and Vulnerable Persons

All persons who are leading, helping, or participating in a program or event for children, youth and vulnerable persons are to be recorded in an Attendance Record maintained at a location at the first point of contact with the program venue. This would typically be in the classroom. Attendance Records are to be kept in a permanent file in the Church Office.

1. The Attendance Record will include the following
 - a) Names and contact information of children and their parents will be kept on file and updated regularly
 - b) Staff, volunteers and participant attendance records will be held in a permanent and secure file
 - c) Privacy protocols are in place for the gathering, review and storage of all personal information

- 1.1 Liability shields must be in place for participating in off site events and those with inherent risk. These include:
 - a) Waiver and Release of Liability and Indemnity Consent: a contract between parents releasing the church and its workers from liability in certain circumstances.
 - b) Informed Consent: clear description of the event and its inherent risks
 - c) Permission forms: informational in nature

2. Parent(s) or guardian(s) are to be instructed that the following requirements apply to the dropping off and picking up of children under Grade 1.
 - a) No child is to be dropped off at a ministry program venue or event unless an approved ministry staff person or volunteer is present.
 - b) No child will be released by the staff or volunteers to anyone other than their parent or guardian unless the parent or guardian has indicated beforehand that another named person will be picking them up.
 - c) Parents are responsible to supervise and care for their children before and after classes or programs

D. Guidelines for Behavior

Leaders are required to ensure that expectations and boundaries for behavior are clearly communicated to children, youth and vulnerable persons.

1. It is reasonable to expect that children, youth and vulnerable persons and adults will:
 - a) “Do to others what you would have them do to you.” Matthew 7:12 NIV,
 - b) listen well and think about the impact of their personal behavior on others,
 - c) do their best,
 - d) make wise choices,
 - e) be responsible for themselves, for their feelings, actions and belongings, and
 - f) handle conflicts as graciously as possible and inform the leader,
 - g) always watch out for one another.

2. Leaders will not use corporal punishment or harassment as a means of discipline.

“Corporal Punishment” means the infliction of physical injury on someone as an attempt to correct bad behavior.

“Harassment” means any objectionable conduct, comment or display by a leader that:

 - a) is directed at a child, youth or vulnerable person under our care;
 - b) is made on the basis of race, creed, religion, color, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, family status, disability, physical size or weight, age, nationality, ancestry or place of origin; and
 - c) constitutes a threat to the health or safety of the child, youth or vulnerable person under our care.

3. Consequences for Inappropriate Behavior:
 - a) should be logical and proportionate, in relation to the prompting behavior,
 - b) may consist of non-verbal cues such as use of eye contact, headshake, moving nearer to the person,

- c) may consist of verbal cues – e.g. asking the child, youth or vulnerable person to correct his/her action. The child, youth or vulnerable person will be made aware of his/her actions by being asked, “What are you doing? What should you be doing? Please do it.”,
 - d) may consist of “time out” – the child, youth or vulnerable person may be given the choice of following expectations or sitting out for a time. (A child, youth or vulnerable person will be asked to move to a designated area inside the program area, within full view of the leader, for a certain amount of time.)
 - e) in the case of persistent non-compliance, the ministry supervisor will be informed and the child, youth or vulnerable person’s parent(s) or guardian(s) will be contacted. A suitable plan of action will be developed with the parent(s) or guardian(s).
 - f) in the event of a serious incident and if there is a likelihood that a child, youth or vulnerable person could be a danger to themselves or to others, the ministry supervisor will be sent for.
4. God is a loving God as well as a God of order and discipline. Leaders will demonstrate this to children, youth and vulnerable persons by:
- a) being well prepared and forward thinking enough to be able to spot potential difficulties and intervene before they occur,
 - b) being consistent in their attitudes and behavior and in helping their group to uphold group rules,
 - c) taking control and responsibility in a situation,
 - d) being firm but loving,
 - e) giving clear, understandable instructions,
 - f) using a voice that is firm, that shows you expect to be obeyed. Leaders will not raise their voice to children, youth and vulnerable persons in irritation or anger, and
 - g) not attempting to grab or restrain a child, youth or vulnerable person physically.
5. Consequences for Appropriate Behavior Include:
- a) smiles
 - b) verbal praise
 - c) handshake, thumbs up, pat on the back
 - d) reward sticker
 - e) written note of praise
 - f) phone call to or discussion with parents or guardians
 - g) opportunity to share and celebrate success with group
 - h) opportunity to be a leader

E. Guidelines for Proper Displays of Affection

Touch is an essential responsibility in nurturing lives. Team members need to be aware of and sensitive to the differences in sexual development, culture, family backgrounds, individual personalities and special needs. Physical contact with children, youth and vulnerable persons should be age and developmentally appropriate. The following guidelines are recommended as pure, genuine and positive displays of God’s love.

1. Appropriate Touch Guidelines – team leaders are encouraged to:

- a) bend down to the child, youth or vulnerable person’s eye level and speak kindly,
- b) listen to him/her carefully,
- c) take a child, youth or vulnerable person’s hand and lead him/her to an activity,
- d) put an arm around the shoulder of a child, youth or vulnerable person who needs comforting,
- e) take both of the child, youth or vulnerable person’s hands as you say “You did such a good job!”, etc.,
- f) pat a child, youth or vulnerable person on the head, hand, shoulder or back to affirm him/her,

- g) hold a child, youth or vulnerable person by the shoulders or hand to keep him/her attention while you redirect their behavior,
- h) gently hold a child, youth or vulnerable person's shoulders to help him/her focus on what you are saying (important for children, youth and vulnerable persons with ADD or ADHD).
- i) should you have a child, youth or vulnerable person in any of your programs/groups with any of the above mentioned problems, (this includes ADD, ADHD, OCD etc.) the volunteer is to be in constant contact with the parents/guardians in regards to calming approaches etc.

If a child, youth or vulnerable person needs to have a private conversation with a leader, the two will separate themselves from the others, but stay in view of the group. In all things respect the integrity of the child, youth or vulnerable person. Use common sense and good judgment to guide you in protecting the personal space of the child, youth or vulnerable person in your care.

2. **Inappropriate Touch Guidelines** – team members will avoid:

- a) kissing a child, youth or vulnerable person, coaxing him/her to kiss you, or engaging in extended hugging or tickling,
- b) touching a child, youth or vulnerable person in any area that would be covered by a bathing suit, or
- c) carrying an older child, youth or vulnerable person or having them sit on your lap
- d) any tackling, carrying, piggy back rides and extended physical touch.

F. **Social Networking and Internet Use Guideline**

The use of social networking and the Internet by staff, volunteers and participants in any program where children, youth and vulnerable persons are involved will be monitored by the leaders in order to ensure that there is no use or display of inappropriate content or materials.

G. **Photography and Video Recording Guidelines**

In all activities and programs involving children, youth or vulnerable persons, permission must be secured from the parent(s) or guardian(s) prior to photographing or video recording of participants. No photographs of children, youth or vulnerable persons will be taken without prior written approval.

No photographs of children, youth or vulnerable persons, will be posted on websites, the internet, Facebook, MSN or any other online social networks, or posted in public places without written permission from their parents or guardians.

The name of any child, youth or vulnerable person who has been photographed or videoed may not be attached to the photo or video if posted by the Church in any public place, including bulletin boards, newsletters, websites, and/or church bulletins.

Only those photographs and video recordings of children, youth or vulnerable persons for which written parental or guardian permission has been obtained may be filed or archived for future use. Any filed or archived photos or video recordings that are filed must be cross-referenced with the written parental or guardian permission forms, which must be kept permanently on file.

H. **Special Events and Activities Guidelines**

Group activities and group outings outside regularly scheduled classes or childcare **must be pre-approved** by the Senior Pastor or Chairperson of the commission responsible for the respective ministry program.

1. **Field Trips**

- a) Generally, two volunteers or staff (unrelated) will be present at all times – including when driving a child, youth or vulnerable person home. When this is not possible or practical, the child, youth or vulnerable person's parent(s) or guardian(s) will be advised and him/her permission will be sought beforehand.

- b) A Medical Release and Waiver Form will be completed by each participant's parent(s) or guardian(s) and returned to the staff member or volunteer responsible for the event. Failure to do so will prohibit the child, youth or vulnerable person from participation in the event.
- c) All drivers will have a valid driver's license, not a Learner or Novice status.
- d) All vehicles will have valid insurance and liability coverage.
- e) The number of riders in a vehicle will not exceed the number of working seatbelts in the vehicle. The driver will ensure that all riders are wearing seatbelts while the vehicle is moving.

2. Overnight Events

All guidelines for Field Trips apply to Overnight Events, plus the following:

- a) Leaders must be approved in accordance with the "SAFE MINISTRIES POLICY" or supervised by an approved leader of at least 18 years of age.
- b) There must be a minimum of one leader for each ten (10) participants with a minimum of two leaders at the event.
- c) Events with mixed gender participants must be supervised by both male and female staff and volunteers (unrelated).
- d) Youth are to be billeted in groups of the same gender.

I. Hygiene Guidelines

1. Hand washing should be practiced by children, youth or vulnerable persons and team members before eating and handling of food, after going to the bathroom or assisting in toileting or diapering, and after contact with body fluid (mucus, blood, vomit, etc.).
2. A disinfecting solution will be used for wiping up all spills, cleaning, cleaning play equipment and the cleaning of tabletops, chairs and play areas.

J. Washroom Guidelines

1. Younger children, youth or vulnerable persons will have washrooms which are closely located to their program area.
2. A leader shall not be alone with a child, youth or vulnerable person in a washroom. The leader will remain outside the washroom and wait for him/her before escorting him/her back to the program. The leader will call the child, youth or vulnerable person's name if they are taking longer than seems necessary and will call another leader if needed to assist the child, youth or vulnerable person from the washroom.
3. Diaper Changing:
It is strongly encouraged that parents be called to diaper their own children. If parents are not available, only screened and approved female adults change diapers and that they remain in view of other ministry personnel when doing so.
4. Preschool:
 - 4.1 Encourage parents to toilet their children prior to any program
 - 4.2 Preschool children must be accompanied to the washroom by 2 approved ministry personnel.
 - 4.3 It is recommended that only female adult ministry personnel may assist a child, and only when the cubicle and main doors are open
 - 4.4 Assistance is limited to help with clothing with preschool children
 - 4.5 When a child needs help cleaning him/herself, a parent must be called

5. Elementary:
 - 5.1 Children may not go the washroom alone - use the same gender buddy system within the same age group
 - 5.2 Ministry personnel will escort children to the washroom and stand with the main washroom door open
 - 5.3 Ministry personnel will never enter the cubicle with the child and shut the door
 - 5.4 Male personnel will not accompany female children to the washroom
6. Have mass bathroom breaks with your group

K. Minor Incident Procedures

1. First Aid Kits are located in the kitchen. One is for use in the building and the other is for field trips and events away from the church property.
2. Children, youth or vulnerable persons or workers with symptoms of an infectious illness will not attend group sessions as this exposes others to illness.
3. Care must be taken in the assessment of incidents that seem trivial, e.g. a knock on the head can produce serious consequences, as can an untreated cut.
4. For cuts and bruises, tap water on a piece of cotton or Kleenex is sufficient.
5. Treatment of any nature to a child, youth or vulnerable person must be recorded on an Incident Report Form and reported to the ministry director. Parent(s) or guardian(s) shall be informed of the incident when the child, youth or vulnerable person is picked up.
6. A child, youth or vulnerable person who is unable to continue participation in an activity, due to illness or injury, should be returned to him/her parent(s) or guardian(s), if present. If the parent(s) or guardian(s) is not present, a leader will call to advise them of the circumstances and request that the child, youth or vulnerable person be picked up.

L. Major Injury or Illness Procedures

1. Leaders are not to give or apply any medication. If a child, youth or vulnerable person needs medication, the parent(s) or guardian(s) must give it. No medication will be left in the program area or with a worker or child, youth or vulnerable person.
2. In extreme cases (e.g. peanut allergies, ventilators, etc.) the parent(s) or guardian(s) must make arrangements to handle the situation safely through written instructions for the leaders or the presence of a person qualified in dealing with the situation.
3. For more serious incidents, when the recipient of aid requires attention beyond first aid, the following procedure applies:
 - a) Stop all group activity.
 - b) Make sure the area is safe.
 - c) Move the other participants away from the area.
 - d) Alert the program leader.
 - e) Summon an ambulance.
 - f) Contact the parent(s) or guardian(s).
4. Make arrangement for the other children, youth or vulnerable persons to be properly supervised.
5. Complete an Injury or Illness Incident Report as soon as possible.

M. Procedures for Injuries Involving Blood

1. Put on latex/not latex gloves (available in the first aid kit).
2. Separate the injured person from the others.
3. Isolate the area where any blood may have dropped.
4. Send someone to inform the parent(s) or guardian(s) of the injured person.
5. Check to ensure that no other people had contact with any of the blood from the cut or injury.
6. Bandage the injury, avoiding contact with mouth, eyes, and ears.
7. Immediately clean up and disinfect any blood soiled surfaces.

8. Remove blood stained bandages, patches or cloths and discard in a sealed plastic bag into the garbage dumpster.
9. Remove and properly dispose of latex gloves.
10. Wash hands and any body parts that contacted the injured person or their blood carefully with sterilizing soap (available in the first aid kit).
11. Never delay emergency action.
12. Complete an Injury or Illness Incident Report as soon as possible.

N. Fire Procedures

Your first duty is to prevent injury or loss of life. Get people to safety before contemplating salvaging things. Be sure you are acquainted with the locations of fire alarm “pulls”, fire extinguishers, escape routes from your ministry/program area and the assembly points to be used in the event of evacuation.

1.) If you are the first to discover a fire:

- a) Ensure that everyone is removed from the immediate vicinity of the fire.
- b) Take reasonable steps, not causing undue risk to yourself or others, to put out the fire. If the fire cannot be extinguished, pull the nearest fire alarm.
- c) Immediately advise the ministry director, Senior Pastor or designate, of the fire, its whereabouts, nature and risk. Then, proceed with evacuation. The ministry director, Senior Pastor or designate will call “911”, if necessary.

2.) When a fire alarm sounds:

- a) Take the Attendance Register with you.
- b) Escort all persons in your charge from the building by the nearest fire exit, without diversion, or collecting personal belongings.
- c) Group leaders are responsible for ensuring that their group remains calm and orderly. **Running is absolutely not allowed.**
- d) Close all doors, through which you pass, behind your group.
- e) Assemble your group in the designed “assembly area” of the parking lot outside the building.
- f) Check your register to ensure that all group members are present. Notify the ministry director, Senior Pastor or designate of any children, youth or vulnerable persons who should be with your group but are not.
- g) The ministry director, Senior Pastor or designate is responsible for checking the toilet stalls on the way through the building and will ensure that all people are evacuated.
- h) All leaders and children, youth or vulnerable persons will remain in the designated “assembly area” of the parking lot until the ministry director, Senior Pastor or designate gives direction to re-enter the building.

O. Missing Child, Youth or Vulnerable Person Procedures

If a child, youth or vulnerable person is reported to be missing during a ministry program at the church building, the following procedure is to be followed:

1. The person leading the program is to be informed immediately.
2. If a child, youth or vulnerable person is reported missing during a Sunday worship service, the Head Usher is to be informed immediately.
3. The Head Usher or person leading the program will perform a lock down of the building. Reliable persons will be deployed to lock all outside doors, and will guard those doors to prevent any person from leaving the building.

4. A thorough search of the building will be made by adults working in pairs.
5. The lock down will not be lifted until the child, youth or vulnerable person is found or is determined to be safe at another location.
6. If the child, youth or vulnerable person is not found or determined to be safe elsewhere then the parent(s) or guardian(s) are to be notified and the RCMP contacted.
7. The lockdown will continue until RCMP members arrive and take control.

Part Four – The Need for Protection

A. Social Context

The Church is accountable for the actions of its staff, volunteers and adherents in the context of its ministries to children, youth and vulnerable persons.

Abuse, especially sexual abuse, can have horrific impact on the lives of victims. It violates the basic values of our Christian faith; it is a misuse and abuse of power by a person taking advantage of another in a relationship characterized by a power imbalance. Abuse of children, youth or vulnerable persons is a criminal act under Canada's Criminal Code and we have a moral and legal obligation to report suspicions of such behavior to legal authorities.

B. Definitions of Child Abuse and Neglect

There are several forms of child, youth and vulnerable person's abuse. Generally, abuse means actions by a person in a position of trust that may be harmful to a person's physical, emotional or psychological health.

More information can be found:

- CBWC Website - Abuse Prevention
 - Plan to Protect (plantoprotect.com)
 - Canadian Child Welfare Research Portal (cwrp.ca) - For provincial specifics.
1. **Physical abuse** – is any deliberate physical force or action that results, or could result, in injury to a child. It can include punching, slapping, beating, shaking, burning, biting or throwing a child. It is different than what is considered reasonable discipline.
 2. **Sexual abuse** – occurs when a child is used for the sexual gratification of an adult or an older child. It can take many forms. This includes sexual intercourse, exposing a child's private areas, indecent phone calls, fondling for sexual pleasure, allowing a child to look at or perform pornographic pictures or videos. Coercion (physical, psychological or emotional) is intrinsic to sexual abuse. It is against the law to touch a child for sexual purpose, to encourage or force a child to touch another person in a sexual way or to tell a child to touch him or herself for an adult's or older child's sexual pleasure. Child sexual abuse exploits and harms children by involving them in sexual behavior for which they are unprepared, to which they cannot consent, and from which they are unable to protect themselves.
 3. **Emotional abuse** – Emotional abuse is a pattern of behavior that attacks a child's emotional development and sense of self worth. It includes excessive, aggressive, or unreasonable demands that place expectations on a child beyond his or her capacity. Emotional abuse includes constant criticizing, teasing, belittling, insulting, rejecting, ignoring or isolating the child. It also includes failure by the parent or caregiver to provide their children with love, emotional support or guidance.
 4. **Neglect** – is the failure to meet a child's basic need for food, clothing, shelter, sleep, medical attention, education and protection from harm. This can occur when parents do not know about appropriate care for children, when they cannot adequately supervise their children or when they are unable to plan ahead.
 5. **Bullying** - occurs when a stronger, more powerful person hurts, frightens or threatens a smaller or weaker person deliberately. A bully's intention is to cause harm, distress or induce fear in the target. In a bullying situation, there is a power difference between the bully and the victim. For instance, the bully may be bigger, tougher or physically stronger than the victim. The bully may be able to intimidate others or have the power to exclude others from their social group.

There are usually signs that a child, youth or vulnerable person is being abused or neglected. The signs may be physical which means it may be possible to see them. In other cases, the child, youth or vulnerable person's behavior may lead to concerns about abuse. **Often, one sign is not enough to suggest abuse or neglect, but several signs or a pattern of signs make it more likely that abuse or neglect may exist.**

1. Physical Abuse

Physical Indicators:

- a) injuries (bruises, cuts, burns, bite marks, fractures, etc.) that are not consistent with explanation offered (e.g., extensive bruising to one area)
- b) the presence of several injuries over a period of time
- c) any bruising on an infant
- d) facial injuries in preschool children (e.g., cuts, bruises, sores, etc.)
- e) injuries inconsistent with the child, youth or vulnerable person's age and development

Behavioral Indicators:

- a) cannot recall how injuries occurred, or offers an inconsistent explanation
- b) wary of adults or reluctant to go home, absences from school
- c) may cringe or flinch if touched unexpectedly
- d) may display a vacant stare or be extremely withdrawn
- e) wears long sleeves to hide injury
- f) extremely compliant and/or eager to please
- g) sad, cries frequently

2. Emotional Abuse

Physical Indicators:

- a) bedwetting and/or diarrhea which is non-medical in origin
- b) frequent psychosomatic complaints: headaches, nausea, abdominal pain
- c) child, youth or vulnerable person fails to thrive

Behavioral Indicators:

- a) extreme withdrawal or aggressiveness, mood swings
- b) overly compliant; too well-mannered; too neat and clean
- c) extreme attention-seeking behaviors
- d) displays extreme inhibition in play
- e) poor peer relationships
- f) severe depression, often suicidal
- g) running away from home
- h) constantly apologizes

3. Sexual Abuse

Physical Indicators:

- a) unusual or excessive itching in the genital or anal area
- b) torn, stained or bloody underwear (observed if the child or vulnerable person requires bathroom assistance)
- c) pregnancy or venereal disease
- d) injuries to the vaginal or anal areas (e.g., bruising, swelling or infection)

Behavioral Indicators:

- a) age-inappropriate sexual play with toys, self, others (e.g., replication of explicit sexual acts)

- b) age-inappropriate, sexually explicit drawings and/or descriptions
- c) bizarre, sophisticated or unusual sexual knowledge
- d) promiscuity
- e) prostitution
- f) seductive behaviors directed toward members of the opposite sex
- g) fear of home, excessive fear of men or women
- h) depression

4. Neglect

Physical Indicators:

- a) abandonment
- b) unattended medical or dental needs
- c) consistent lack of supervision
- d) consistent hunger, inappropriate dress, poor hygiene
- e) persistent conditions (e.g., scabies, head lice, diaper rash or other skin disorder)
- f) developmental delays (e.g., language, weight)

Behavioral Indicators:

- a) regularly displays fatigue or listlessness, falls asleep in class
- b) steals food, begs from classmates
- c) reports that no caretaker is at home
- d) frequently absent or late
- e) self-destructive
- f) school drop-outs (adolescents)

5. Bullying

Signs of bullying:

- a) fearful and withdrawn
- b) doesn't want to attend or participate
- c) unexplained injuries
- d) tearful, unhappy or irritable
- e) torn or missing pieces of clothing
- f) missing personal items
- g) complains of feeling unwell

Part Five - Responding to Abuse

A. When a Child, Youth or Vulnerable Person Confides in You

Children and Youth group leaders often build close relationships with children, youth or vulnerable persons in their care. As the child, youth or vulnerable person begins to see their group leader as a trusted adult, she/he may choose to confide in them details about his/her life, friends, school and family. It is quite possible at some stage that a child, youth or vulnerable person may choose to disclose an experience of abuse in which she/he is or has been involved.

B. Reporting Procedures

1. When to Report

If you have reason to believe a child, youth or vulnerable person is being abused or neglected, it is important to remember that **it is NEVER the fault of the suspected victim.**

- a) If you are suspicious at any time that a child, youth or vulnerable person may have been abused or neglected, or
- b) If you think a child, youth or vulnerable person may be in danger and in need of protection, or
- c) If a child, youth or vulnerable person has disclosed any information to you that you find worrying . . .

. . . you have a legal obligation to contact a Child Protection Social Worker at the Ministry of Children and Family Development or the local RCMP, or the First Nations Child Welfare Agency if the child, youth or vulnerable person is of First Nations descent, so that appropriate action can be taken.

Follow the following link to help find people in your are:

<https://www.saskatchewan.ca/residents/justice-crime-and-the-law/child-protection/child-abuse-and-neglect>

You can also find out more on Duty to Report:

<https://publications.gov.sk.ca/documents/17/85210-Duty-to-report.pdf>

The suspected situation of abuse or neglect is also to be reported to the Senior Pastor or the Chairperson of the Church Council.

You are asked to report your suspicions. You are not expected to figure out who may have caused the abuse or neglect.

If you are not sure whether or not you should report a particular situation, you may want to discuss it with a Child Protection Social Worker or the RCMP.

A person may make a false report of abuse or neglect out of spite, anger, revenge or a desire to cause problems for a parent or guardian or worker. Any person who does this may have legal action taken against them by the person against whom the false report is made.

2. Confidentiality

All information about an alleged incident of abuse or neglect and the people involved will be treated in confidence on a “need to know” basis only by:

- a) those who will assure the child, youth or vulnerable person’s safety
- b) those who will investigate to determine the present and future risk
- c) those who will pursue founded allegations

Due diligence will be exercised in all actions taken following an allegation of abuse or neglect.

3. Follow Up

The Senior Pastor or Chairperson of the Church Council, when informed about a suspected situation of abuse or neglect, will:

- a) take whatever steps are necessary to protect the child, youth or vulnerable person from further risk,
- b) advise the parent(s) or guardian(s), if the reported abuse has not implicated them, and extend to the family whatever pastoral support may be appropriate,
- c) ensure that the allegation has been reported to a Child Protection Social Worker of the Ministry of Children, and Family Development or the RCMP,
- d) seek legal counsel for the Church as well as report the incident to the Church's insurance company,
- e) ensure completion, by the adult reporting the allegation, of the "Report of Suspected Child Abuse" form, available from the church office, and
- f) complete the "Follow Up Report of Suspected Child Abuse" form.

Formal contact on behalf of the Church with investigators will be through the Senior Pastor or legal counsel for the church.

Where the Senior Pastor is the alleged abuser, the report will be made as soon as is practical to the Chairperson of the Church Council, or designate, in his/her absence.

C. Responding to the Alleged Victim

DO ...

1. take reports of abuse seriously, believe the alleged victim, and say, "I believe you and I believe something has happened to you",
2. find a quiet place in which to listen carefully to their account,
3. listen without interruption, assuring them that he/she can continue or stop at any time,
4. be calm and non-judgmental in any response to them,
5. acknowledge their feelings,
6. assure them that the incident(s) was not his/her fault,
7. say, "I'm glad you were able to tell me. I will help you as best I can",
8. record information as accurately as possible, recording their comments in his/her own words, and
9. keep all information confidential and secure.

Remember - the care and safety of the alleged victim is always the first priority.

DO NOT ...

1. ask leading questions, provide opinions or judgments,
2. interrupt their account,
3. show horror or anger,
4. promise to keep disclosure confidential,
5. tell them what the next steps will be,
6. promise that things will get better, or
7. launch your own investigation.

D. Responding to the Alleged Perpetrator

1. treat him/her with dignity and respect,
2. if it is a church volunteer worker - immediately relieve him/her of their ministry program duties,
3. if it is a paid staff member - suspend from duties immediately,
4. offer what support seems appropriate, and
5. remember, he/she is still loved by God.

E. Media Relations

1. Spokesperson

The Senior Pastor or designate will be the spokesperson for the church; in some cases the Chairperson of the Church Council or legal counsel may be designated as the spokesperson. In any case, only one person will be the identified spokesperson and authorized to speak on behalf of the church and all attempted contacts by the media will be directed to that spokesperson. **No other person from the Church should attempt to contact the media regarding the case, or discuss the case with anyone else outside those who are immediately and necessarily involved in the case.**

2. Position Statement

- a) Do not admit liability.
- b) Keep all information in strict confidence.
- c) Speaking out on abuse is an opportunity to influence public opinion positively by emphasizing:
 - i. an awareness of the problem of abuse – that we take the issue very seriously.
 - ii. a concern for victims and their families.
 - iii. the steps that have been taken at Moosomin Baptist Church to provide a safe environment for children, youth or vulnerable persons.
 - iv. that we have acted responsibly.
 - v. that we have in place a Safe Ministries Policy to ensure the safety of our children, youth or vulnerable persons.
 - vi. that we train our staff and volunteers to maintain a safe environment.

3. Suggested Wording for an Official Statement to the Media

“It is always tragic when children, youth or vulnerable persons are abused or exploited. Moosomin Baptist Church is aware of the ever-growing problem of abuse in society. We have taken careful precautions to protect the children, youth or vulnerable persons entrusted to our care. We are distressed by any accusations of abuse. We will do everything in our power to address any needs in this situation. For the welfare of those involved, all information has been directed to the appropriate authorities.”