



Leading With Care

**A Policy for Ensuring a Climate of Safety
for Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults
at
St. Paul's Presbyterian Church
Nobleton, Ontario**

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“It is the policy of The Presbyterian Church in Canada that all persons, and in particular all children, youth and vulnerable adults, who participate in the denomination’s programs/ministries and/or use the denomination’s facilities will be cared for with Christian compassion and will be safe.”

1. Reasons for the Leading with Care Policy

The *Leading with Care* policy is not about us as individuals. It is about us as a body of Christ – a denomination – a church – trying to ensure the highest quality of ministry by offering our best to Christ and working to make sure that the worst does not happen.

All would agree that we should care for children and youth and vulnerable adults and follow the ways of Jesus. So, why is this policy necessary? Because children, youth and vulnerable adults are precious to us and we want to ensure that their teachers and leaders are equipped and trained in the best ways to nurture their faith journey. We also want to assure them, their parents and guardians, that there is safety in our programs.

While we believe that religious institutions are supposed to be safe places, public media reminds us that it has not always been so. Despite careful procedures, abuse and unsafe practices have occurred in congregations where no one would expect it by people no one would question. To say “It can’t happen here” is not supported by what some people have heard, seen or experienced.

We also know that when vulnerable people are taken advantage of, it dishonours the name of Christ and the church. It dishonours the good work that many faithful servants have contributed over many years. St. Paul’s years of faithful ministry could be seriously undermined by the act of one person. Therefore, our task is to uphold the name of Christ and to protect the work that has been achieved at St. Paul’s. One way to protect is to make sure we have policies and procedures in place that, as best we can, provide a safe environment.

St. Paul’s is committed to providing safe environments for all persons, including children, youth, vulnerable adults, and those who minister to and with them, both from within the church as well as from the community, (See Appendix ‘O’). St. Paul’s ministry includes times of worship, service, study and play in all milieus that fall under the jurisdiction of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. **All staff, both volunteer and paid, must support this policy.**

The following action statements describe both the reasons for this policy and St. Paul’s Presbyterian Church’s active commitment to it:

- **St. Paul’s will prevent abuse of children/youth/vulnerable adults.** Prevention includes having good processes in place in order to prevent opportunities for abuse, neglect and harm from arising.

- **St. Paul's will protect the vulnerable in our midst.** We affirm that the protection of all children, youth and vulnerable adults is a spiritual, ethical and legal imperative.
- **St. Paul's will report incidents of abuse, neglect and harm.** Such incidents, wherever and whenever they are encountered, will be reported immediately to the minister, the police, and the appropriate agencies in accordance with civil law requirements and the policies of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.
- **St. Paul's will train and support our teachers and leaders.** One of the reasons for this policy is to provide ways for us to begin, continue and/or improve on this process so that teachers and leaders are well trained and equipped for their ministry tasks.

2. History of the Policy

In 2002, national staff of the Presbyterian Church in Canada and the national advisory committee for children and youth (Covenant Community with Children and Youth) began to draft a policy for the protection and care of children and youth. This policy arose from an awareness of the biblical imperative to follow the example of Jesus in assuring that the young, weak and vulnerable in our midst are cared for, cherished and protected. It also arose from a variety of practical questions directed to church offices and the national committee over the years such as these: Does our church have a policy around youth being billeted in private homes? Do church programs have appropriate ratios of leaders to children? Does the church have national regulations about sleepovers in church facilities?

The process of developing a draft protection policy began in 2000 and continued to 2005. In 2002, an insurance concern arose when the insurance broker (Marsh Canada), which covers approximately 200 of our congregations, required more extensive implementation than was anticipated. In 2002, a draft of a policy and implementation was prepared by Education for Discipleship staff at national office and circulated to 100 readers. Further revisions were made and another draft was circulated, by permission of the 129th General Assembly (2003), to all congregations and presbyteries. Throughout 2004 changes were made to the draft policy following legal consultation and after noting some inconsistencies. Comments were received at church offices by January 31, 2005. Over 100 congregations and presbyteries responded with many suggestions and comments, which caused the policy to move in the direction of its present form, a more pastoral response to the issue of ensuring safe environments.

3. The Pastoral Heart of the *Leading With Care* Policy

This policy is titled *Leading with Care* because:

- our Lord modeled for us how to lead with care as he healed the sick and infirm, and welcomed the young, the weak, and the vulnerable,
- it is our awareness that some people in our church need special protection,
- it affirms our commitment to training and supporting teachers and leaders in our churches so that children/youth/vulnerable adults will grow in faith and the love of Christ in a climate of safety.

In *Leading with Care* there is a dual focus of safety and prevention, and training and support of teachers/leaders. In creating a safe environment, the church protects people, prevents abuse, and, if necessary, reports abuse. Through training, support and evaluation, ministry is enhanced, enriched and strengthened in St. Paul's and in The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

In addition to enriching ministry, the policy is also part of our church's outreach and evangelism. Having this policy in place will be very reassuring to newcomers. While everyone at St. Paul's may know each other, a new person entering may not know anyone. He or she will wisely ask, "Is St. Paul's a safe environment for my child?" "What signs do I see that tell me that safety procedures are in place at St. Paul's?" Creating a safe environment must be part of the outreach plan of St. Paul's. As new people enter our congregational life and want to get involved, we should have a way of matching their skills and abilities to the ministries we provide. Without some policy in place, there is no way of knowing whether or not we are placing our children in a safe setting. Those of us who are established and/or long-time leaders in St. Paul's must model for others our willingness to enter a screening process. We cannot expect new people to go through a screening process that we ourselves are not willing to go through. Since the intent of this policy is pastoral, not punitive, St. Paul's will be guided by the following procedures:

- The minister and elders of St. Paul's will set an example for the rest of the congregation by actively supporting the implementation of the policy.
- The minister and elders of St. Paul's will model to the rest of the congregation their commitment to safety and prevention by agreeing to a Police Records Check if their ministry involves one-on-one counselling or visiting.
- If confidential matters arise in putting the policy into place, the session of St. Paul's will handle that information with the same careful respect its members have for all confidential congregational matters.

4. Biblical and Theological Foundation of *Leading With Care*

Our concern for the protection and care of all children, youth and vulnerable adults is firmly grounded in scripture and in our Presbyterian/Reformed view of justice. God calls the church to seek and establish a climate of justice because it reflects the divine righteousness revealed in the Bible.

*Show, O heavens, from above,
And let the skies rain down righteousness;
Let the earth open, that salvation may spring up,
And let it cause righteousness to sprout up also:
I the Lord have created it. (Isaiah 45:8)*

*By myself I have sworn,
From my mouth has gone forth in righteousness
A word that shall not return:
"To me every knee shall bow,
every tongue shall swear."
Only in the Lord, it shall be said of me,
Are righteousness and strength. (Isaiah 45:23-24a)*

Even as he lay dying, King David describes his role as leader as grounded in justice. "The spirit of the Lord speaks through me, his word is upon my tongue. The God of Israel has spoken, the Rock of Israel has said to me: One who rules over people justly, ruling in the fear of God, is like the light of morning, like the sun rising on a cloudless morning, gleaming from the rain on

the grassy land.” (2 Samuel 23:2-4)

Our Church is called to deal fairly with each other, protect the rights of others and protest against things that destroy human dignity. Our church’s sense of justice is about both rights and responsibilities.

In addition to our sense of biblical justice, the second main reason we have as Christians for a policy such as this, is the desire to bear witness in our tradition to valuing people in a holistic way in our homes, churches and in the world. The Bible gives us examples of the importance and primacy of family life – the nuclear family and the extended family (Genesis 1:27; Luke 15:11-32; 2 Timothy 1:3-5). In our churches we strive to find a place of significance for all children, youth and vulnerable adults. Children and youth are not seen as “the church of the future,” but are the “church of today”. As adults we acknowledge the valuable gifts they contribute to the community of faith. Concerning this, Living Faith declares, “The church is the family of God. Here all should be valued for themselves. We are one body in Christ: together rejoicing when things go well, supporting one another in sorrow, celebrating the goodness of God and the wonder of our redemption.” (*Living Faith: A Statement of Christian Belief*, The Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1984.)

Third, we are called to provide a protective environment and care for the young and vulnerable because we believe this is what Jesus would have us do. As Christians we imitate the example of Christ and aim to stay rooted in his love in all our relationships. The gospels contain many stories of times when Jesus met and healed children (Matthew 9:18-19, 23-25) and portrayed them as examples for others (Matthew 19:10-14; Mark 9:33-37). The gospels have many stories, too, of Jesus’ care for vulnerable adults. In Mark’s gospel we read about Jesus healing a man possessed by evil spirits (Mark 1:21-26), a man with leprosy (Mark 1:40-42), a crippled man (Mark 2:1-12), a dying girl and a sick woman (Mark 5:22-43), sick people in Gennesaret (Mark 6:53-56), and a deaf man (Mark 7:31-35). We read about Jesus feeding the hungry (Mark 8:1-9), healing a blind man (Mark 8:22-26), and commending a poor woman’s generosity (Mark 12:41-44). In his Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:1-11), Jesus exhorts us to care for and love strangers, prisoners, and the naked, hungry, thirsty and sick of the world; these words of Christ himself constitute, as declared in *Living Faith*, “a call to help people in need and to permeate all of life with the compassion of God.” (*Living Faith: A Statement of Christian Belief*, The Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1984.)

5. Definition of Terms Used in the *Leading With Care* Policy

- **Child/youth:** a person who is under 18 years of age.
- **Event:** an occasional or one-time event run by a congregation. Examples: a yearly concert, tea or picnic.
- **Leading with Care Committee:** a group of persons responsible for ensuring that the policy is put into place. The *Leading with Care* committee may be the Session, part of the Session or governing board of a ministry, or the Session/Board of Managers may appoint a committee of respected people specifically for this task.
- **Ministry position:** a leadership role in which there is expected to be direct interaction with children, youth or vulnerable adults. Examples include: the positions of Sunday school teacher, youth group leader, elder, pastoral care worker, camp counsellor.
- **The Presbyterian Church in Canada:** for the purposes of this policy, this shall include The Presbyterian Church in Canada and all related courts – sessions, presbyteries, synod

and General Assembly – and the programs/ministries they oversee and sponsor.

- **Program/ministry:** a structured series of similar activities or events governed and run by St. Paul's, which spans a period of weeks or months and in which the level of risk is expected to remain constant. Examples: the weekly NextStep and KidzKonnection programs; the routine pastoral visitation of an elder in the home of a frail, elderly person; weekly youth group meetings at the church or the weekly FirstLink child care program.
- **Risk assessment:** the process by which programs or ministries are rated according to risk factors. High risk ministries require special attention. (See Appendix 'P').
- **Teacher/leader:** a lay person of at least 18 years of age who devotes significant portions of his/her time and energy in faithful church service and who has gone through a time of orientation and training, in order to hold a ministry position. Examples of teachers/leaders includes: NextStep teachers, KidzKonnection teachers, youth pastor, pastoral care visitor or a leader of a group for developmentally challenged adults, paid staff and clergy.
- **Vulnerable adult:** a person who, because of his or her age, a disability or other circumstances, whether temporary or permanent, is in a position of dependence on others or is otherwise at a greater risk than the general population of being harmed by persons in positions of authority or trust relative to him or her.
- **Volunteer helper:** a layperson who is involved peripherally in ministry with children, youth or vulnerable adults but has not chosen to become a teacher or leader. Examples includes someone who helps out with: FirstLink, NextStep, KidzKonnection, Bible Fun Camp, Food Bank or the Christmas Pageant.

6. Church's Policy on Sexual Abuse and/or Harassment

In 1993 the General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Canada approved for use in the denomination a policy for dealing with sexual abuse and/or harassment. All presbyteries, sessions, the General Assembly offices, colleges and other institutions with The Presbyterian Church in Canada are required to follow the policy or an equivalent policy if they have different governing structures.

With its dual focus of safety/ prevention, and teacher screening/orientation/training/support, ***Leading with Care* is primarily a prevention document.** If careful steps are taken in leading, teaching and supporting; incidents of harm can be prevented.

If, however, despite good prevention practices, an allegation of sexual abuse and/or harassment is made, the Policy of The Presbyterian Church in Canada for Dealing with Sexual Abuse and/or Harassment outlines procedures for both Sessions and Presbyteries (See Addendum 'A'). There is a different procedure for criminal or non-criminal allegations. The procedures include discovery, intervention, investigation, adjudication, communication, and aftercare.

7. Evaluate Risk Factors and Reduce Risk

It is necessary, in many aspects of life, to assess risk and work to reduce it. Just as we would want to check the safety of our car before setting out on a road trip, so, too, we need to look at each of St. Paul's current ministries and explore the risk for each program. For example, you would want to evaluate risk factors in visiting frail seniors or transporting children and youth in the vehicles of church members. Just because a ministry is deemed high risk, we may still, as a church and as Christians, want to do them. It means, however, that we will want to manage the risk carefully.

The *Leading with Care* committee will determine how much risk there is in St. Paul's programs and whether or not we can reduce the risk. Each ministry position requires the completion of a risk assessment. This work is ongoing and must be revisited with each new program year, each change in adult leadership and after a change in the environment. Risk assessment for each ministry should be done annually as responsibilities associated with positions often change over time. **The completed risk assessments should be kept in the locked metal filing cabinet in the office**

Risk assessment is performed in the following cases:

General Programs/Ministries

The *Leading with Care* committee must determine the elements of risk in each ministry position. Such an assessment is performed by reviewing the ministry (job) description and considering the most common circumstances under which a person in that position is likely to carry out his or her ministry.

Specific or Special Events

Should a teacher or leader decide to introduce a new element into a program or ministry, he or she must determine the risk for that specific event and submit the risk assessment in writing to the *Leading with Care* committee for review prior to the event. As in other aspects of putting the policy into action, common sense should be used. For instance, if the youth group leader invites the youth to walk down the block for an ice cream cone after their regular meeting, this should be seen as a spontaneous, creative thing. However, if the leader invites the youth to travel by car to do rock climbing, the risk of the event should be evaluated and approved by the *Leading with Care* committee.

Note: A ministry is automatically classified as high risk if any of these conditions apply:

- teacher or leader is alone with persons served
- teacher or leaders have limited or no supervision in role
- the activities of teachers or leaders are in a place where activities are not observed or monitored
- teachers or leader has access to personal property or money of the persons served
- the ministry position involves touching persons served.

Risk Assessment Guide (See Appendix 'P')

If number 1, 2, 3, 4 or 6 are checked as "Yes, this is true," the ministry is automatically high risk and a Vulnerable Sector Screening is necessary. However, if any of the other categories (not bolded) are also checked as "Yes, this is true," it is imperative that church leaders work to reduce this risk so the "No, this is not true" column may be honestly checked off.

If a ministry is high-risk, a Vulnerable Sector Screening must be obtained. In addition, if we check off any additional checks in the "Yes, this is true" column, we must work to reduce the risks.

List of High-risk Ministries at St. Paul's

As of August 2006, those involved in high-risk ministries and programs at St. Paul's, as determined by the *Leading With Care* committee include: elders, KidzKonnection & NextStep teachers, Youth Pastor, FirstLink volunteers, Christmas Pageant & Bible Fun Camp leaders, church treasurer, administrative assistant, music director, library staff, envelope secretary and all members of the *Leading With Care* committee.

8. Examination of Safety and Prevention Areas

In preparation for orientation of teachers and leaders, **we must examine safety and prevention areas such as** facilities, fire procedures, transportation issues, requirements of staff/user ratios, off-site activities and overnight events, billeting procedures, health issues.

a. Facilities

At St. Paul's we can protect children, youth and vulnerable people by answering questions about our church building - see Appendix 'G'.

b. Fire Procedures

A fire escape map must be posted in each room and we must ensure that fire extinguishers are properly placed. An evacuation plan should be clearly defined. St. Paul's will practice the escape drill once a year. A list of individuals who may need assistance in the event of an emergency will be prepared.

At the beginning of each FirstLink, NextStep and KidzKonnection class, attendance will be recorded. In the event of a fire or fire drill, the teacher helper is responsible to take the attendance binder outside to ensure emergency contact numbers are readily available. The children or youth will be taken outside as a group to a designated gathering place. Teachers are to advise all students of the designated meeting area on the first day of classes and thereafter monthly, or whenever a new child joins the class. Each class is also to be aware of the exit by which they are to leave the church during an emergency.

c. Transportation

A teacher or leader who drives a child, children, youth or vulnerable adults must have a valid driver's license and valid insurance and one seatbelt and/or car seat per person in the vehicle. All adults responsible for the transportation of children, youth and vulnerable adults should avoid driving them when alone. If transportation with personal cars is considered high risk by your insurance company, the liability might be transferred by opting for a professional bus service to transport children/youth/vulnerable adults.

d. Teacher/Leader and Participant Ratios (See Appendix 'H'.)

The activity and age of children or youth affects the ratio of children or youth to staff. The management of the program as well as concern for safety, care and social interaction are some of the factors to take into account when establishing adequate ratios. If there are not enough teachers or leaders or adult volunteers, the program or ministry or activity should not be held.

At St. Paul's, during FirstLink, NextStep and KidzKonnection, at least one adult with a Vulnerable Sector Screening and one volunteer helper will be present in the class at all times.

e. Off-site activities and overnight events

Special outings, day trips, service projects and weekend camps are an important part of children, youth or vulnerable adult ministry. They help people grow physically, emotionally, and spiritually, give youth a chance to learn social and leadership skills, and provide social opportunities for vulnerable adults. A signed Activity Program Waiver and Medical and Media Release Form is required for these special activities (See Appendix 'D').

i. Day Excursions

- A teacher/leader must assess the risk of the activity and submit that assessment in writing to the *Leading with Care* committee for approval prior to the activity.
- Parents, guardians or caregivers must be notified prior to the outing.
- An Activity Program Waiver and Medical and Media Release Form is required for each child, youth or vulnerable adult participating in activities or events (See Appendix 'D').
- One teacher or leader should have a cell phone and the phone numbers of where the parents of the children or youth can be contacted during the excursion. The teacher or leader should also have a copy of the completed consent forms with them.
- All daytime excursions must be supervised by a minimum of two teachers or leaders. Additional support workers might be necessary to accompany vulnerable adults.
- When transportation of children, youth or vulnerable adults is needed for an activity, all drivers must have a valid driver's license, valid automobile insurance and must be screened volunteers or paid staff. The number of persons per vehicle must never exceed the number of seat belts or car seats.
- One teacher or leader should have First Aid training.

i.i. Overnight Activities or Events

Follow all requirements listed in daytime excursions plus the following:

- Each child, youth or vulnerable adult is required to follow pre-established codes of conduct signed by the parent, guardian or caregiver and the child, youth and vulnerable adult.
- If the group is comprised of children, youth or vulnerable adults of both genders, teachers or leaders of both genders must be present.
- Each leader should have an assigned group of children, youth or vulnerable adults for whom they will be responsible during the overnight event.
- All facilities in which an overnight function is housed must be equipped with smoke detectors and, for public facilities, inside release doors. All members of the group should be made aware of fire exits and fire procedures as required by provincial or regional standards.
- No adult should be alone with a single child, youth or vulnerable adult.
- If a day or overnight includes trips to a pool, lake or hot tub, the leader must use reasonable care and common sense, that all municipal, provincial or federal regulations regarding safety and supervision are adhered to.

f. Billeting Youth in Private Homes

Billeting reduces costs and allows youth to meet new people. Here are some things to keep in mind when billeting youth:

- Children under 14 years of age should not be billeted.
- The people offering billeting must be known, trusted members of the congregation.
- Billet youth in groups of at least two.
- The contact information (telephone number, address) of the individual with whom the youth will be billeted must be obtained by the group leader.

g. Health

While we cannot always avoid having ill children, youth or vulnerable adults in our programs or ministries, several measures can be taken to promote good health and reduce infection.

i. Allergies

When children, youth or vulnerable adults register for a program, inquire about allergies. Post this information so that it will not be overlooked. If the program serves meals or snacks, post the menu so the parent or caregiver can see it. Avoid foods identified as serious allergens such as peanut butter, chocolate and nuts of any kind. Popcorn can be dangerous for young kids.

ii. Injury

If a participant is injured while participating in a program, ministry or activity, the teacher or leader must arrange to get the person to medical care. If necessary, call 9-1-1. If the individual is bleeding, the teacher or leader should protect himself or herself and all others from the blood. For all injuries, even if the person does not need medical attention, a leader must complete a general incident report (see Appendix 'F') and report the incident to the injured person's parent, guardian or caregiver. The general incident report will be stored in St. Paul's *Leading With Care* file cabinet.

iii. Infectious diseases

Teachers and leaders must ask parents or guardians to not let their children and youth attend church programs if they have symptoms and diseases which are known to be infectious, such as: diarrhoea, vomiting, fever, rash, open sores, skin or eye infection, scarlet fever, measles, mumps, chicken pox, whooping cough, head lice.

9. Orientation for All Teachers and Leaders

Orientation for all teachers, whether new or experienced, is important. Orientation gives people general information to prepare them for their ministry (job). All teachers or leaders, whether experienced or new, must attend the orientation session which will be held at St. Paul's when the functional church year starts and whenever new leaders or teachers begin a new program. The orientation session will also include important information about safety practices. A list of what will be covered in an orientation session can be found in Appendix 'J'. For the NextStep & KidzKonnection Teacher Guidelines and the Youth Pastor Position Description, see Appendices 'B' and 'C'.

10. Obtaining a Vulnerable Sector Screening for High Risk Ministries

Screening comes prior to a Vulnerable Sector Screening

Screening is a process performed by an organization to ensure that the right match is made between the work to be done and the person who will do it. The screening process includes steps such as job design, recruitment and orientation. The steps that are most important in determining the suitability of a candidate are interviews, (See Appendix 'I'), reference checks and, when dealing with vulnerable participants, a Vulnerable Sector Screening. (See Appendix 'E').

One of the ten steps in Volunteer Canada's Safe Steps screening program is the Vulnerable Sector Screening (VSS). VSSs have become a standard and accepted part of institutional and organizational procedures for those working with children, youth and vulnerable persons in schools, hospitals, communities and religious groups. However, VSSs do have limitations, and

that is why they are only one part of the larger screening process.

As indicated earlier, if you discover that some of the programs which are an important part of St. Paul's ministry are high risk and cannot be adapted to make them lower risk, teachers and leaders (including clergy, elders, and paid staff) who are involved in one-on-one counselling in their ministry must have a VSS.

VSSs are mandatory for all high-risk ministries at St. Paul's. Since the work and ministry of active clergy always includes times of one-on-one counselling or visiting, all active clergy must have a Vulnerable Sector Screening at the time of a new call or change of position and/or every five years. Since St. Paul's elders visit people one-on-one, she/he should also have a VSS.

Handling the information

In a similar way that an offering envelope secretary knows how much money you give to the church but holds this in confidence, so, too, St. Paul's *Leading with Care* committee must handle some information with great care and maintain confidence. The individual who obtains a VSS hands it to the designated person – a member of the *Leading with Care* committee. At present at St. Paul's this is either Jocelyne Donaldson or Jeff Loach. **They will keep the original document on file in a locked metal filing cabinet in the secretary's office.**

How often must a screening be done?

At St. Paul's a VSS must be done at any of these points:

- at the time of a new call (for clergy)
- at the time of a change of position
- at a time when the ministry (job) position changes
- every five years.

Who pays for the screening?

St. Paul's will reimburse the cost of obtaining a Vulnerable Sector Screening.

Are there limits to a Vulnerable Sector Screening?

There are some limits, but the fact still remains: VSSs can be a positive deterrent in discouraging nefarious individuals from applying for leadership positions with children, youth and vulnerable adults. Here are some of the limitations of VSSs:

- They are only good up to the day of checking and based on the information provided.
- A person may use a false name, driver's license, or birth date, so there are no matches found in their record.
- If a conviction occurred when the person was a youth, the information is protected under the Youth Criminal Justice Act; therefore, we will not have access to this information after a certain time period.
- Some sex offenders and abusers have never been charged or convicted of a crime, so there will be no record to review.

11. Teacher and Leader Training

It is important that all teachers and leaders meet for a time of orientation and training. If someone from St. Paul's were to become a Scout or Brownie leader, a minor sports coach, or a Big Brother or Big Sister, they would be required to do some training on the "content" of the program. Knowing the content of the program contributes to safety and the good management of

the program. Confident, trained teachers and leaders are more alert to safety and prevention procedures. An outline for what should be included in orientation is found in Appendix 'J'. There are several ways that our teachers and leaders may be trained for their ministry. This training should include three elements: understanding the Presbyterian/Reformed tradition, some biblical knowledge and some teaching and leading skills. A list of resources for leaders and teachers can be found in section 4.10, of The Presbyterian Church in Canada Leading With Care Policy.

12. FirstLink Volunteer Training

It is important for all FirstLink volunteers to meet for a time of orientation and training. This orientation and training is the responsibility of the Christian Education Ministry Team, a committee of Session. One adult volunteering in the nursery must present a current Vulnerable Sector Screening (VSS). Everyone volunteering is to complete and submit a FirstLink, NextStep & KidzKonnection Volunteer Form (Appendix 'R') and a Covenant of Care Form (Appendix 'A').

13. Supervision of and Support for Teachers and Leaders

Prayer Support

The congregation of St. Paul's is encouraged to pray for the work of the *Leading With Care* committee, as well as for St. Paul's leaders and teachers and the community groups who regularly use our church.

On-going Support

After orientation and training, supervision/support and evaluation (see Appendix 'S') will be provided. Supervision and support and evaluation provide the following:

- a standard level of practice
- an opportunity for new teachers or leaders to reflect on what they have learned so they can improve their ministry
- protection for all participants from unsafe practices
- protection for teachers or leaders against false allegations of wrongdoing.

The ministry (job) description/guidelines are used as a reference point. For instance, in the description, a KidzKonnection Co-ordinator may tell new teachers that he/she should know to expect a quick visit from the coordinator about once a month when lessons are in progress. Youth leaders can expect an occasional friendly visit from a Session member during a Friday night event. The level of risk of the program/ministry or event determines the amount and frequency of supervision/support and evaluation: the higher the risk in the program, the more frequent and intense the support and supervision.

Comments and feedback from participants and their families/caregivers are also helpful for a new teacher/leader. Supervisors need to ask new teachers/leaders to maintain open, frequent communication with program/ministry participants and their families/caregivers. Supervisors may assure new teachers/leaders that, if negative feedback is received, the supervisor will honour confidentiality but will work with the teacher/leader to make necessary changes.

14. Evaluation and Reporting

Given that the session of St. Paul's has ultimate responsibility for the spiritual, moral and physical well being of the congregation, at St. Paul's, the *Leading with Care* committee is a subcommittee of session. Accordingly, the evaluation process is simply a part of the on-going work of session meetings.

These key questions will guide this on-going evaluation:

- What positive things have we noticed as a result of introducing *Leading with Care*?
- Are there special problems that have emerged that need attention?
- Are there things that we need to plan for in the future?

It is important, on an annual basis, to do an evaluation of job descriptions and risk assessments. As programs and ministries change and evolve, the job descriptions and risk assessments will also change.

Reporting to a Supervisory Body

This policy is not about us as individuals. It is about us as a body of people trying to ensure the highest quality of ministry by offering our best to Christ and working to make sure that the worst does not happen. Therefore, some checks and balances are helpful. Therefore, at each of the four levels (courts) of our church – congregations, presbyteries, synods and national (General Assembly) – there are ways to be accountable.

To Whom Do We at St. Paul's Report?

St. Paul's must report to the Presbytery of Oak Ridges once a year about our progress in implementing this policy. We must also explain to the presbytery our implementation of *Leading with Care* at the time of the presbytery visitation to St. Paul's. Additionally, each active minister – ordained or diaconal – must show the clerk of the presbytery his or her Vulnerable Sector Screening. This must be done when the policy is approved, at the time of a call or change of appointment, and/or every five years.

15. Collecting and Storing Necessary Documents

The purpose of collecting personal information is to insure that the policy is properly administered. Records that are of a personal, confidential or personnel nature will be kept secure. Information about the collected data is confidential and will be used only for the purpose for which it was collected, that is, implementing and monitoring this policy. Information will be safely stored and only accessed by those who need to access it for the purpose of the policy, such as the minister and, the clerk of session, or the convenor of the *Leading With Care* committee.

How We Will Manage Confidential Information

At present, the Convenor of the Leading With Care Committee has the keys to the locked metal filing cabinet in the office, used for the storing of documents relevant to *Leading with Care*. These include copies of the signed Covenant of Care Forms, FirstLink, NextStep and KidzKonnection Forms, Vulnerable Sector Screenings, Activity Program Waiver and Medical and Media Release Forms, and any completed General Incident Report forms.

Covenant of Care
St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, Nobleton, Ontario

The church is Christ, together with his people, called both to worship and to serve him in all of life (*Living Faith: A Statement of Christian Faith*, The Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1984, section 7.1.1).

The Lord continues his ministry in and through the church. All Christians are called to participate in the ministry of Christ. As his body on earth, we all have gifts to use in the church and in the world to the glory of Christ, our King and Head. Through the church, God orders this ministry by calling some to special tasks in the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of God (*Living Faith: A Statement of Christian Faith*, The Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1984, sections 7.2.1-2).

As an expression of this high and holy duty that Christ has offered to me as a leader or teacher or guide to children, youth or vulnerable adults:

- I promise, in all my relationships with children, or youth or vulnerable adults, to follow appropriate action as defined by my training orientation;
- I promise to use only the physical contact that is deemed appropriate as stated in St. Paul's Presbyterian Church *Leading With Care* policy, which I have read and understand;
- I promise to use appropriate language;
- I promise to show no bias based on gender, ethnic background, skin colour, intelligence, age, religion, sexual orientation or socio-economic status;
- I promise that I will not harass others;
- I promise to respect confidentiality and privacy, unless a child, youth or vulnerable adult is in danger, then I will report to a child protection agency or the police.

I have read and agree with the covenant of care.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Witnessed by: _____ Date: _____

(Minister/Clerk of Session or authorized person)

NextStep & KidzKonnection Teacher Guidelines St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, Nobleton, Ontario

Responsible to: The NextStep/KidzKonnection (NS/KK) Co-ordinator.

Responsible for: ages and number of children to be determined in September, based on registration

Main Goal: To encourage children to follow Christ and serve faithfully in his church.

General summary: The NS/KK teacher will oversee and facilitate the teaching of the curriculum in such a way that spiritual growth is nurtured in children.

Roles, Responsibilities and Tasks:

- maintain a vital spiritual life
- develop and maintain a strong connection with the St. Paul's Church family
- plan and teach a weekly lesson and maintain accurate attendance records
- maintain confidentiality unless the child is in danger
- participate in an orientation session with the NS/KK Co-ordinator
- ensure that the safety issues presented in orientation are followed

Gifts, Skills, Experience and Qualities:

- gift of teaching
- patience, sensitivity and compassion for children

Screening Procedure: In accordance with the *Leading with Care* policy of St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, screening of all adults involved in ministry with children and youth includes: completing a FirstLink, NextStep & KidzKonnection Volunteer Form, a reference check, and a Vulnerable Sector Screening for high risk ministries.

Orientation and Training:

- orientation prior to teaching start-up date
- fire, safety and emergency procedures
- teacher meetings as required

Support, Supervision and Evaluation:

As a support to all adults and youth engaged in children's ministry, St. Paul's will provide orientation, NS/KK meetings and training as required and regular prayer support.

Schedule and commitment: As determined by the NS/KK Co-ordinator

Youth Pastor Position Description St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, Nobleton, Ontario

Title of the Ministry Position: Youth Pastor

Responsible to: The Session of St. Paul's Church through the Lead Pastor

Responsible for: youth between the ages of 12 and 18, number to be determined in September based on registration

Main Goal: To encourage youth to follow Christ and serve faithfully in his church.

General summary: The youth pastor will plan, oversee and facilitate ministry among youth that allows them to explore and grow in their faith.

Roles, Responsibilities and Tasks:

- maintain a vital spiritual life
- develop and maintain a strong connection with the St. Paul's Church family
- demonstrate a deep and growing faith in Jesus Christ
- plan and teach a lesson and/or social activity and/or service and mission opportunity
- maintain confidentiality, unless a youth is in danger (as per Leading with Care)
- participate in events and activities that develop leadership skills
- maintain accurate records of attendance
- meet regularly with the Lead Pastor, and with the Session as requested
- ensure that the safety issues are followed

Gifts, Skills, Experience and Qualities:

- gift of teaching and encouragement; time management, communication, listening, team-building and organizational skills
- patience, sensitivity and compassion for youth
- creativity in sharing stories and personal experiences
- flexibility, energy, courage and a love of fun

Screening Procedure: In accordance with the *Leading with Care* policy of St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, screening of adults involved in ministry with children and youth includes: completing an application form, a reference check, the signing of a Covenant of Care form and a Vulnerable Sector Screening.

Orientation and Training:

- awareness of fire, safety and emergency procedures

Support, Supervision and Evaluation: As a support to all adults and youth engaged in youth ministry, St. Paul's will provide orientation, training, supervision and regular prayer support.

Schedule and Commitment: Every Friday evening, or as arranged.

**Activity Program Waiver and Medical & Media Release
St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, Nobleton, Ontario**

Note: Before an activity, the teacher/leader stores a copy of this waiver in a safe Storage area and takes a copy on the outing.

Description and Location of Activity: _____

Departure Date: _____ Return Date: _____

Full Name of participant: _____

Birth date (N/A for adult): _____

Full Address: _____

Parent/guardian/caregiver name(s): _____

Telephone number where parent/guardian may be reached when trip is taking place:
Home/residence phone: _____ Cell phone: _____ Work phone: _____

Does participant have any severe allergies or other medical condition that leaders should be aware of? No ___ Yes ___ If yes, please explain: _____

Note: All reasonable precautions for the safety and health of the participant will be taken. Best efforts will be made to properly supervise your child. In the event of accident or sickness, St. Paul's, its staff and volunteers are released from any liability. In the event of injury requiring medical attention, I authorize treatment for the participant and understand that reasonable attempts will be made to contact me, should such a situation occur. In the event that travel or activities take place outside this province, I understand that any medical costs incurred involving the participant are my responsibility. The participant must be covered by provincial health insurance or equivalent medical coverage.

If the trip is out of province, please give insurance provider and policy number: _____

Participant's Health card number: _____

Participant's Family Physician: _____

Phone: _____

Contact person(s) in case of emergency and parents/guardians/caregivers cannot be reached:
Name: _____

Phone: _____

Name: _____

Phone: _____ (See over)

Signature of Parent or Guardian: _____

Parent/Guardian Name (PRINT) _____

Media Release

In the course of the above activity, pictures may be taken and recordings may be made. On behalf of my child or ward, I give permission to St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, or to its assignees, to photograph and or record my child or ward's voice on still photographs, film, videotape or audiotape, and to use this material in whole or in part through the media of television, film, multimedia presentation, the closed Facebook groups of St. Paul's, radio, audiotape, videotape or in printed form or in display form for the promotion of St. Paul's ministries.

On behalf of my child or ward **I give permission** as set out above:

Signature of Parent or Guardian: _____

On behalf of my child or ward **I do not give permission:**

Signature of Parent of Guardian: _____

Appendix 'E'

General Incident Report Form

St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, Nobleton, Ontario

Confidential

Report date: _____ Time of report: _____

Full Name of child/youth/adult: _____ Age/Grade: _____
(not necessary for adult)

Date of Birth: _____ Gender: M ___ F ___

Full Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Name of Parent/Guardian (for child/youth) or caregiver (for adult): _____

Notified: Yes ___ No ___ If yes, date/time of notification: _____

Address: _____
(If different from above)

Phone number: _____
(If different from above)

Date/time and location of incident: _____

Description of incident: _____

Names/contact information of witnesses: _____

Description of injuries sustained: _____

Description of action taken: _____

(See over)

Additional information you think is relevant: _____

Direct quotes from child/youth/adult: (Note: If this is an abuse allegation, do not interview the child/youth but report only the comments they share with you.)

Date: _____

Signature: _____

(Name and position of person making report)

I hereby confirm that the information provided in this report is accurate to the best of my knowledge.

Name of Person making report (Please print):

Address: _____

Telephone Number: _____

The person filing this report must give a copy to the *Leading with Care* committee and/or the session of the congregation.

**Note: If this is an allegation of abuse, it must be reported to a protection agency or police.
(See Appendix 'N' on Abuse Reporting Procedure.)**

Facilities Checklist
St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, Nobleton, Ontario

	Adequate	Plan for Improvement
Are railings at the right height for children?		
Are stairs/steps safe?		
Are bathrooms easily accessible?		
Are toilets accessible for children and people with disabilities?		
Are exits clearly marked?		
Are exit doors unlocked from the inside?		
Can exits, especially basement exits, be released from the inside?		
Are floors, especially around entrances, resistant to slipping?		
Is the nursery cleaned and vacuumed after each use?		
Are used diapers disposed of immediately after each nursery use?		
Are there windows in doors or split doors? If not feasible, are safety gates used in open doorways?		
Are nursery toys washed regularly in a solution of one-tablespoon household bleach to one-gallon warm water?		
Are signs posted reminding people to wash hands?		
Is there a well-stocked first aid kit? Is it easily accessible?		
Have you consulted with an appropriate health care worker about a first aid kit?		
Are fire extinguishers in proper locations?		
Are there fire/emergency escape maps in each room?		
Is there regular practice for fire/emergency escapes?		
Are there smoke detectors?		
Is there a locked metal cabinet?		

**Ratios of Children/Youth/Vulnerable Adults
to Teachers/Leaders
St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, Nobleton, Ontario**

While the rule of having two adults at all times in a group is encouraged, there are occasional times when only one leader is present. In the situation, the teacher or leader should, from the orientation session, know what to do if he or she is alone with a child. For instance, the teacher might provide some pencil and crayon activities for the child and the two of them may rejoin the congregation. Or, the teacher may find another adult or youth from the congregation to join them. Here are the suggested child, youth or vulnerable adult ratios to teachers or leaders in a regular program, but additional adults can be helpful if one adult needs to leave the program temporarily because of illness or a family problem.

0-18 months 2 adults to 6 children
 18 months-2 years 2 adults to 10 children
 2-5 years 2 adults to 12 children
 Ages 5-14 2 adults to 15 children
 Ages 15-18 2 adults to 15 children
 Vulnerable adults 2 adults to 10 vulnerable adults

Day excursions and overnight outings

Here are the recommended participant ratios to teachers, leaders or volunteers on day excursions and overnight outings:

Age	Day excursions	Overnight excursions/activities
5 or under	2 adults per group of 10	overnight excursions not recommended
Ages 6-8	2 adults per group of 12	not recommended for age 6; 4 adults for 20 children for ages 7 & 8
Ages 9-10	2 adults for every 15 children	2 adults for every 10 children
Ages 10-14	2 adults for every 15 children	2 adults for every 10 children
Ages 15-18	2 adults for every 15 youth	2 adults for every 10 youth
Vulnerable adults	2 adults per 10 vulnerable adults	2 adults per 10 vulnerable adults

Guide for Interviewing St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, Nobleton, Ontario

Guidelines for Interviewing

Begin the interview with prayer, asking for God's guidance in leading everyone to a decision that is for the well being of all. The interview may be informal or more formal, using questions like these:

- Tell us about yourself. How did you come to our church?
- What activities help you grow and mature in your faith?
- Tell us about your experience in working with children or youth or vulnerable adults.
- Why do you feel called to assume this position?
- This position requires (list requirements) - will you be able to meet these requirements?

During the interview, discuss the *Leading with Care* policy, the orientation session and training you offer to all leaders and the support they can expect. Explain that, as part of St. Paul's commitment to ensure that our church is safe and nurturing, you would like to talk to two references who they have known for at least a year.

Thank the applicant for seriously considering leadership in St. Paul's and promise another visit or a phone call in the near future. After the interview, call the references provided and ask questions such as the ones suggested in this Appendix.

If the *Leading with Care* committee believes that the new recruit is a suitable candidate for a teacher or leader position, call him or her with the good news and explain the orientation and training times.

What happens if the *Leading with Care* committee does not think the applicant is a good fit with the ministry program? You might say something like this: "We have very carefully considered your desire to be a teacher or leader at St. Paul's. However, we believe that your skills and abilities lie more in the area of (name another viable ministry). Would you consider serving there this year?" Or, it may be that the committee feels strongly that it cannot offer a leadership position of any kind to a specific volunteer. It is hard to say no to a volunteer teacher or leader, but it can also be very damaging to have the wrong person in a teaching or leading position. It is easier to say no in the beginning than to have to ask them to leave after they have begun.

Group interview with experienced teachers/leaders

Teachers or leaders who have been involved in program leadership for many years can be invited to participate in a group interview. This can take the form of coffee and a snack and should be framed as a way for the congregation to support the teacher or leader in his or her ministry. Each person should be asked to respond to questions like these:

- What originally motivated you to become a teacher or leader?
- What motivates you to continue in your role as teacher or leader?
- In the years that you have been a teacher or leader, what has given you most satisfaction?
- What do you consider to be the most challenging or difficult thing about being a teacher or leader?
- Finish this sentence: "I wish our church would ..."
- What are your hopes and dreams for the people you teach or lead?

Following up on references

It is important to speak to at least two references provided by the applicant. References are extremely helpful and must be requested with all new recruits and in all new ministries. Even if members of the *Leading with Care* committee know a person well, they may not have seen him or her interact with others at work, with children at play or in a teaching or leading capacity, or while visiting with an elderly, mentally ill or homeless person. Even if written references are provided, follow up with a phone call. Inform the reference of the nature of the ministry position. Ask his or her opinion about the person's suitability in this situation, e.g., "John may be co-leading a youth group on Friday nights at our church. Would you be comfortable with John having this type of responsibility?" "Samantha has applied to be coordinator of our Township Food Bank. Tell us what you know about her abilities to coordinate this program at our church." Listen to tone, attitude and hesitancy as well as to the words the reference uses. Contact at least two references.

Sample reference check form

Person's name for which references are checked: _____

Person contacted: _____ Phone: _____

Contacted by: _____

Date: _____

Person who contacted reference: _____

Introduce yourself and state the purpose of your call. Ask if they have a few minutes to answer some questions.

1. How long have you known (person's name)?
2. In what capacity do you know him or her?
3. How well do you feel you know (person's name)?
4. Could you briefly describe the character and personality of (person's name)?
5. Have you ever been in a position to work with him/her? If so, what was your impression?
6. What gifts, talents and abilities would this person offer to (your church name)?
7. Are you aware of any facts or circumstances involving this person that would call into question his or her ability to do this ministry?
8. Would you, without reservation, recommend this person as a leader in _____ ministry?

"Thank you for taking the time to answer these questions for us. We are working hard to provide a safe environment for all who participate and all who offer leadership in our church."

Orientation of Teachers/Leaders St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, Nobleton, Ontario

Orientation includes items like these:

- A review of ministry (job) position descriptions. Does everyone know what his or her job entails?
- What to do in the case of a sudden illness of either themselves or someone in the program. If ill, teachers and leaders should be given instruction about who to inform and how to find a replacement teacher or leader for their ministry or program.
- How to access supplies and equipment.
- How to access buildings, cupboards, rooms.
- Overview of training sessions that will be available in the year ahead.
- Watch the video *Leading with Care in Your Congregation*
- All teachers/leaders must fill out a Teacher/Leader Registration Form. (See Appendix 'K')
- Safety issues such as fire procedures, transportation (if necessary), washroom practices and other safety issues which are specific to the situation of this policy).
- All teachers/leaders must be given a print form about physical contact, washroom procedures, and information on abuse.
- Teachers or leaders must be given a record book to record attendance carefully in case parents need to be advised about a health or safety concern. Attendance should be recorded at the beginning of each program and the attendance book taken to a central place.
- The location of telephones and First Aid Kits in case of an emergency.
- All teachers/leaders must read, agree to and sign a Covenant of Care form. (See Appendix 'A')
- The Session at St. Paul's supports and encourages efforts made by our teachers and leaders in implementing and following this policy.

The Covenant of Care Form (Appendix 'A')

At orientation, teachers and leaders will be asked to sign a Covenant of Care and promise to adhere to the safety standards as presented in the orientation. The Covenant of Care makes clear the expectations of behaviour. This code of conduct fits with St. Paul's commitment to the safety and well-being of all children, youth and vulnerable adults.

Guidelines for Teachers and Leaders St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, Nobleton, Ontario

Physical Contact

It is essential to be careful regarding behaviour, language and physical contact when working with children, youth and vulnerable adults:

- Do not show favouritism when dealing with children, youth or vulnerable adults. Show a similar level of affection and kindness to all.
- Do not engage in or allow the telling of sexual jokes or behave in a way that promotes sexual exploitation of others.
- Provide clearly stated consequences for inappropriate behaviour. Stop inappropriate behaviour early. Be fair, consistent and reasonable, matching consequences to the age and ability of the child or youth.
- Do not use corporal punishment such as hitting, spanking or strapping.

a. Appropriate and inappropriate touching

A touch can convey a multitude of positive messages and communicate care, comfort and love; however, it is important to distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate touching. It is also important to be aware of, and sensitive to, differences in interpretation to touching based on sex, culture or personal experience.

Some examples of **appropriate touch**:

- Love and care can usually be expressed in the following common sense ways:
 - holding or rocking an infant who is crying
 - affirming a participant with a pat on the hand, shoulder or back
 - bending down to the child's eye level and placing a hand gently on the child's hand or forearm
 - putting your arm around the shoulder of a person who needs comfort
 - taking a child's hand and leading him/her to an activity
 - holding hands for safety when changing locations
 - shaking a person's hand in greeting
 - holding a child gently by the hand or shoulder to keep his/her attention as you redirect behaviour
 - anointing a person with oil on the head
 - holding hands in a circle prayer or song
 - providing comfort with a wet, warm cloth.

Some examples of **inappropriate touch**:

- kissing a child, youth or vulnerable adult or coaxing them into kissing you
- extended cuddling
- tickling
- piggy-back rides
- having others sit on your lap (except for babies/young toddlers)
- touching anyone in any area covered by a bathing suit (except changing infant's diapers)
- hand holding, except for the examples listed above

- stroking a child or youth's hair
- hugging, where an adult knows or ought to have known that hugging is inappropriate.

b. Dealing with a Participant's Inappropriate Behaviour

The best approach to dealing with inappropriate behaviour is thoughtful prevention. If a teacher or leader has prepared for teaching or leading, makes clear statements about expectations and provides an engaging program, inappropriate behaviour will be avoided or reduced. If, however, a child, youth or vulnerable adult's behaviour is unacceptable, these practices must be followed:

- Tell or remind the child, youth or vulnerable adult what is expected.
- If it is necessary to speak to a child, youth or vulnerable adult in private, move to a quiet place in view of others. Seek supervisory help if needed and if available.
- Keep children, youth or vulnerable adults from harming themselves or others.
- If necessary, engage another adult to help you remove the child, youth or vulnerable adult from the situation to calm down.
- Discipline with children and youth must be limited to talking and time out. Correction to a vulnerable adult must be limited to talking to a vulnerable adult or his or her guardian.
- Provide a 'time-out' space for younger children on one side of the room until they are ready to rejoin the group. The 'time-out' should be no longer than one minute for each year of the child's age.
- Inform the parent or guardian of the problem and work co-operatively with them. They may have good ideas of how to deal with particular situations.

Important: Do not use corporal punishment (such as hitting, spanking or strapping) under any circumstances.

Washroom Procedures

Every group in St. Paul's providing a program or ministry for children, youth or vulnerable adults must determine the washroom procedure that will be followed in that program or ministry at the time of determining the risk. This is particularly critical with pre-school children and some vulnerable adults who must have help to use the washroom. Here are guidelines:

- Ask parents of pre-school children to take their child to the washroom before class.
- Children under the age of 6 years who need to go to the washroom should be accompanied by a teacher or leader who escorts the child to the washroom and checks the bathroom for safety. No adult or teen helper is ever to be in a closed washroom or cubicle with a child. If another adult is not available, the adult who accompanies the child should position him or herself in plain view at the open door of the washroom. A volunteer or teen helper may stay behind with the remaining children.
- Children 6 years of age and over may go to the washroom with a "buddy."
- If there is an emergency bathroom situation, the parent or supervisor should be notified immediately.
- Vulnerable adults may need special bathroom aids: assist bars, and so on. It may be necessary to ensure that cleanliness follows use.

What is Abuse? St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, Nobleton, Ontario

Understanding Child or Youth or Vulnerable Adult Abuse

This policy has zero tolerance for abuse in any form. This includes abuse that happens to a child or youth or vulnerable adult by a church staff member or volunteer. There is also a need for adults in St. Paul's to be sensitive to incidents of abuse that may be happening in the home or social life of a child, youth or vulnerable adult.

Any person who has reasonable grounds to suspect that a child or youth is or may be in need of protection must report the suspicion to a protective agency or police. Clergy and other professionals have special responsibility to report allegations of abuse. A teacher/leader who hears an allegation of abuse should confide this to a member of the clergy because a minister is the executive of the presbytery in the congregation and, as such, needs to know what is going on in his or her congregation.

In order to understand and recognize child abuse, the following definitions and indications of emotional, physical and sexual abuse or neglect are listed. Some of the following also apply to vulnerable adults. A more complete description of abuse of vulnerable adults is found below.

What is Child or Youth abuse?

The term "child abuse" refers to the violence, mistreatment or neglect that a child or adolescent may experience while in the care of someone they either trust or depend on, such as a parent, sibling, other relative, caregiver or guardian. Abuse may take place anywhere and may occur, for example, within the child's home or that of someone known to the child.

There are many different forms of abuse and a child may be subjected to more than one form:

- **Physical abuse** may consist of just one incident or it may happen repeatedly. It involves deliberately using force against a child in such a way that the child is either injured or is at risk of being injured. Physical abuse includes beating, hitting, shaking, pushing, choking, biting, burning, kicking or assaulting a child with a weapon. It also includes holding a child under water, or any other dangerous or harmful use of force or restraint. Female genital mutilation is another form of physical abuse.
- **Sexual abuse** and exploitation involves using a child for sexual purposes. Examples of child sexual abuse include fondling, inviting a child to touch or be touched sexually, intercourse, rape, incest, sodomy, exhibitionism, or involving a child in prostitution or pornography.
- **Neglect** is often chronic, and it usually involves repeated incidents. It involves failing to provide what a child needs for his or her physical, psychological or emotional development and well-being. For example, neglect includes failing to provide a child with food, clothing, shelter, cleanliness, medical care or protection from harm. Emotional neglect includes failing to provide a child with love, safety, and a sense of worth.
- **Emotional abuse** involves harming a child's sense of self. It includes acts (or omissions) that result in, or place a child at risk of, serious behavioural, cognitive, emotional or mental health problems. For example, emotional abuse may include aggressive verbal threats, social isolation, intimidation, exploitation, or routinely making unreasonable

- demands. It also includes terrorizing a child, or exposing them to family violence. An abuser may use a number of different tactics to gain access to a child, exert power and control over them, and prevent them from telling anyone about the abuse or seeking support. A child who is being abused is usually in a position of dependence on the person who is abusing them. Abuse is a misuse of power and a violation of trust. The abuse may happen once or it may occur in a repeated and escalating pattern over a period of months or years. The abuse may change form over time.

Abuse of Vulnerable Adults

The most extensive body of literature on abuse of vulnerable adults can be found under “abuse of the elderly”. Although individuals may be abused at virtually any life stage – the nature and consequences of abuse may differ depending on an individual’s situation. Older adults’ experiences of abuse, for example, may be related to their living arrangement (they may be living alone, with family members or others, or in an institution). Their experiences may also be linked to their level of reliance on others, including family members or other care providers, for assistance and support in daily living.

Abuse of older adults is sometimes described as a misuse of power and a violation of trust. Abusers may use a number of different tactics to exert power and control over their victims. Abuse may happen once or it may occur in a repeated and escalating pattern over months or years. The abuse may take many different forms, which may change over time.

Types of Abuse

Psychological abuse includes attempts to dehumanize or intimidate older adults. Any verbal or non-verbal act that reduces their sense of self-worth or dignity and threatens their psychological and emotional integrity is abuse. This type of abuse may include, for example:

- threatening to use violence
- threatening to abandon them
- intentionally frightening them
- making them fear that they will not receive the food or care they need
- lying to them
- failing to check allegations of abuse against them.

Financial abuse encompasses financial manipulation or exploitation including theft, fraud, forgery, or extortion. It includes using older adults’ money or property in a dishonest manner, or failing to use older adults’ assets for their welfare. Anytime someone acts without consent in a way that financially or personally benefits one person at the expense of another it is abuse. This type of abuse against an older adult may include, for example:

- stealing their money, pension cheques or other possessions
- selling their homes or other property without their permission
- wrongfully using a Power of Attorney
- not allowing them to move into long-term care facilities in order to preserve access to their pension income
- failing to pay back borrowed money when asked.

Physical abuse includes any act of violence – whether or not it results in physical injury. Intentionally inflicting pain or injury that results in either bodily harm or mental distress is abuse. Physical abuse may include, for example:

- beating
- burning or scalding
- pushing or shoving
- hitting or slapping
- rough handling
- tripping
- spitting.

There may also be sexual and spiritual abuse.

How widespread is abuse of older adults in Canada?

Approximately 7% of the sample of more than 4,000 adults 65 years of age and older who responded to the 1999 General Social Survey on Victimization (GSS) reported that they had experienced some form of emotional or financial abuse by an adult child, spouse or caregiver in the five years prior to the survey, with the vast majority committed by spouses. Emotional abuse was more frequently reported (7%) than financial abuse (1%). The two most common forms of emotional abuse reported were being put down or called names, or having contact with family and friends limited. Only a small proportion of older adults (1%) reported experiencing physical or sexual abuse. Almost 2% of older Canadians indicated that they had experienced more than one type of abuse.

What are some potential warning signs of abuse?

Some of the signs that may indicate an older adult is being abused include:

- depression, fear, anxiety, passivity
- unexplained physical injuries
- dehydration, malnutrition or lack of food
- poor hygiene, rashes, pressure sores
- over-sedation.

Dealing With Reports of Abuse St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, Nobleton, Ontario

When a child, youth or vulnerable adult is upset or distressed about a situation, he or she may turn to a trusted adult for support and advice. Often, though, they may be hesitant and shy about discussing what has happened. Feelings of guilt or shame are common. The teacher or leader should help the child, youth or vulnerable adult feel safe and understand that they can talk about what happened. A vulnerable adult, disabled or confined, may not be able to tell anyone, so teachers or leaders or visitors need to be sensitive and aware of any change in appearance or emotion.

A listening adult should be supportive and pay attention to what is said. Be cautious about asking questions. Asking questions can invalidate future statements to police or child welfare authorities and can cause a case to be dismissed in court. Accept the child, youth or vulnerable adult's story; do not dispute it. Investigating the incident is the responsibility of the protection agency or police. Although it is difficult, be calm, supportive and hopeful.

It is important not to make promises that you cannot keep, such as promising to stop the abuse, punish or remove the offender. Do not promise not to report the incident to the authorities. If you have inadvertently promised to keep what the child or youth or vulnerable adult says confidential, tell him/her that you must tell someone who can help you both.

Note: Any person who has reasonable grounds to suspect that a child or youth or vulnerable adult is or may be in need of protection must report the suspicion to a protective agency or police. Clergy and other professionals have special responsibility to report allegations of abuse. A teacher or leader who hears an allegation of abuse should confide this to a member of the clergy because a minister is the executive of the presbytery in the congregation and, as such, needs to know immediately what is going on in his or her congregation. If the complaint is against the minister, however, the person who heard the complaint should consult with the clerk of presbytery about the allegation.

If the allegation is of sexual abuse and/or harassment, the process of investigation and action will be in accordance with the Policy of The Presbyterian Church in Canada For Dealing With Sexual Abuse And/Or Harassment, 1998. Ministers should consult a clerk of presbytery, synod or General Assembly regarding the two different processes to follow for reporting of non-criminal or criminal activity.

Reporting to a Protection Agency

Moral Obligation

God has given us the responsibility to protect and care for children, youth and vulnerable adults. It is the responsibility of adults to develop and maintain a safe church environment for all. Reporting an incident of abuse involving a child, youth or vulnerable adult demonstrates this care and concern. A sample general incident report form can be found in Appendix 'F'.

Some people, especially clergy, may hesitate to report a suspicion or allegation of abuse because of the confidential relationship they have with parishioners. However, it is important to distinguish between "confidentiality" and "secrets". Confidentiality refers to being entrusted with important private information. However, if an activity is harmful to others and is kept secret, the situation will continue to be harmful and will likely worsen. In the case of abuse,

secrets should not be kept. Confidentiality can still be honoured by reassuring a victim that only a person or restricted persons who need to know, will know. Reassure the victim that the purpose of “telling” is to obtain help. Reassure the victim of your support through the process.

Legal Obligation

We are bound by The Child and Family Services Act of the Province of Ontario, as confirmed to us by David Phillips, Coordinator , Leading With Care, in an email dated November 10th, 2006.

Information Needed by a Protection Agency

When a call is made to a protection agency, the minister should prepare notes on why he/she is calling.

- Ask for an intake screener.
- Give your name and location, or you may remain anonymous.
- State that you are making a report of a person you believe to be in need of protection.
- Give your relationship to the person and/or family.
- Indicate what you heard from the child, youth or vulnerable adult or what you observed.
- Offer facts such as dates, descriptions of the child, youth or vulnerable adult and identifying facts
 - about people who were involved.
 - Share knowledge of other agency or community involvement if known.
 - Provide any relevant background information.

Procedure if Contacted by a Protection Agency

1. Any request from a child protection worker (ask for identification) should normally be made in person. The worker will want to speak with the person filing the suspected abuse report and, if a different person, to the person to whom the child or youth spoke. If the matter is urgent and those investigating cannot do a personal interview, the investigator may telephone you from his or her office.
2. The child protection agent should identify him or herself and give his or her work contact phone number. Record the workers first and last name.
 - Do not give any information at this time. The investigator will explain the process to follow and what information he or she is seeking.
 - It is your responsibility to verify that this is indeed a child protection agent. Simply say, “I need to move to another phone. May I phone you back in 30 seconds?” Move to a phone where you can ensure confidentiality.
 - When you return the call, provide the necessary information.
 - Ask what is to happen next. This is critical as a court order may be warranted and a restraining order put in place. The church or ministry should be aware of this. Details do not need to be given.
 - Ask when the church or ministry can expect a final report on the case and if further information will be required.
 - Make clear written notes about what you reported, date, time, phone number and name of investigator. Place in the *Leading With Care* file cabinet.

Pastoral Response to a Report of Abuse

Disclosure of an incident of alleged abuse is an emotionally charged experience. When an individual discloses that he or she is a victim of alleged abuse, it is important to:

- assure him or her that he or she will be listened to and be provided with support throughout the process
- take the allegations seriously
- keep emotions in check; when disbelief or horror is shown, this may result in the individual becoming withdrawn or unwilling to share the experience with you
- “listen more, talk less”
- remind him or her that he or she is in no way at fault for the abuse
- affirm that it is always appropriate to tell someone that he or she has been abused
- remind him or her that your first priority is his or her protection
- ask him or her if it is okay to pray with them
- reassure him or her that ongoing care will be provided for him or her and his or her family
- provide pastoral support to him or her; give reassurance that he or she has done the right thing in reporting this incident.

Do not:

- promise him or her that you will not tell anyone; some secrets should not be kept secret; assure the individual that this information is to be restricted to those who need to be advised
- prejudge the situation
- defend the alleged perpetrator or make comments like, “I can’t believe they did that.”

Response to the Media

If it is deemed essential to respond to media, a designated church leader – the Minister, Clerk of Session, or Convenor of the *Leading with Care* committee – will be the spokesperson for St. Paul’s. No facts should be disclosed and the spokesperson may say something like this: “*All allegations of abuse or harassment are taken seriously. The protection of children or youth or vulnerable adults is a priority of St. Paul’s Presbyterian Church and The Presbyterian Church in Canada. In accordance with civil law an allegation of abuse has been reported to (insert the name of the appropriate governmental protection agency).*”

Procedure Regarding Community Groups Using St. Paul's for Regular, Ongoing Programs St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, Nobleton, Ontario

Up to this point we have focused on programs that are run by St. Paul's Presbyterian Church. But what about community groups who use our church facilities? The church is assumed to be a safe place, even when used by others.

Hosting community groups, like Scouts or A.A., is part of the outreach and hospitality plan of many congregations. However, as the host, St. Paul's has the following responsibilities.

Policy

Appropriate church representatives such as the Session or the *Leading with Care* committee must meet with each community group using St. Paul's to explain the *Leading With Care* policy. The community group may have their own safety and protection policy. If they cannot produce evidence of a policy to the *Leading with Care* committee, ask them to take a copy of *Leading with Care* to the hierarchy of their organization and ask for implementation of a similar policy of care.

Insurance

Even if St. Paul's is a willing host, we must ensure that all regular on-going community groups who use our facility have insurance coverage. We must ask the group to provide a letter from their insurance broker confirming their coverage. If they do not have insurance, we must check with our insurance company to see if the community group falls under our church's insurance. Wherever any church members are involved in a community group using church facilities, it is important to make sure that the church members fall under the care of the congregational insurance.

Waiver Form for Rental Groups

It is prudent to use a Waiver Form for groups who use church premises, referring specifically to the *Leading With Care* policy, as well as the need for insurance coverage of the group. (See Appendix 'Q')

Occasional Users of St. Paul's Facilities

In addition to on-going, regular community groups, other groups may occasionally use St. Paul's. For instance, the church hall may be used for a wedding shower or a community choir may use the sanctuary for a practice. As host, it is St. Paul's responsibility to see if these occasional uses are covered by our insurance policy or that the group using the church has their own insurance.

Risk Factor Assessment Chart
St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, Nobleton, Ontario

Risk category	Risk Factor	Yes, this is true	No, this is not true
Degree of Isolation	1. Teacher or leader may be alone with person served.		
Degree of Supervision	2. Teachers or leaders have limited or no supervision in role.		
Degree of Supervision	3. The activities of teachers or leaders are in a place where activities are not observed or monitored.		
Access to Property	4. Teacher or leader has access to personal property or money of persons served.		
Access to Property	5. Teacher or leader has access to confidential information related to the person served.		
Degree of Physical Contact	6. The ministry job description includes touching persons served.		
Vulnerability of Persons Served	7. Persons served have language or literacy barriers.		
Vulnerability of Persons Served	8. Persons served are immobile.		
Vulnerability of Persons Served	9. Persons served have challenges that contribute to their vulnerability (e.g. physical, psychological, situational).		
Degree of Physical Demands	10. The activity involves potential danger to person served (e.g. rock climbing, using a stove).		
Degree of Physical Demands	11. Activity involves potential stress (e.g. children upset by visit to nursing homes, support group activities).		
Degree of Trust	12. The teacher or leader develops close, personal relationships with persons served.		
Degree of Trust	13. The ministry position involves transportation of persons served.		
Degree of Trust	14. The teacher or leader contributes to making career or other important decisions of persons served.		
Degree of Inherent Risk	15. The activity heightens potential for the teacher/leader to be in contact with bodily fluids or disease of the person served.		
Degree of Inherent Risk	16. The activity exposes the person served to operation or handling of potentially dangerous equipment or toxic substances, noise, or poor air quality.		

**St. Paul's Presbyterian Church
Facility Usage Terms and Conditions
Application Form**

Name or Group: _____
Contact Person: _____ Address: _____
Telephone: _____ Email: _____
Date of application: _____
Requested date of use: _____
Purpose and nature of use:

Church Facilities required, check all that apply:

- 1 ___ Worship area, friendship room, kitchen and upstairs washroom
- 2 ___ Friendship room, kitchen and upstairs washroom
- 3 ___ Gym & upstairs washroom
- 4 ___ Fellowship hall downstairs, kitchen, washroom
- 5 ___ Whole Church

Groups are to use only the facilities of the Church identified.

Policy for Use of the Church Facilities:

- All uses must be approved by St. Paul's Session or the Board of Managers
- The activities conducted in the facilities will not conflict with the Christian values of the Church

Guidelines when using the facilities:

- Facilities must be used responsibly and any damages need to be reported, with appropriate compensation made to replace the damaged item(s).
- Applicants must leave the facilities as they were found.
- Food or beverages are not allowed in the worship area.
- All Applicants using the Church facilities are responsible for set-up and clean-up, including the removal of all garbage, recycling and boxes.
- The Supervisor fee covers the opening and closing of the Church, supervising all necessary clean-up and the return of all approved items that were used.
- The sound system is to be operated by a trained St. Paul's member.
- Use of the musical instruments requires the Choir Director's approval.
- Weddings:
 - Rehearsals, pre & post wedding usage, florist access etc – all to be arranged separately
 - Confetti, rice, rose petals or tape are not permitted in the Church

Terms, Conditions, Assumption of Risk, Release and Indemnity

- I/we acknowledge and agree that St. Paul's has the right, in its sole discretion, to not approve our intended use of the Church facilities should the request not adhere to the Christian values of the Church
- I/we acknowledge and agree that St. Paul's has the right, in its sole discretion, to cancel our use of the Church facilities should the usage not adhere to the Christian values of the Church
- I/we acknowledge having been provided with a copy of St. Paul's Leading With Care Policy, and I agree to follow the guidelines and spirit of this policy as it pertains to children, youth and vulnerable adults.
- I/we will provide St. Paul's with our corresponding care policy, if applicable.
Date submitted: _____
- I/we will provide to St. Paul's a copy of a broker's letter or certificate confirming our group's insurance coverage. Date submitted: _____
- I/we assume all risks arising from, or in any way connected with, our use of the Church facilities
- I/we release St. Paul's, its members and representatives, from any and all claims, actions, demands and expenses arising from, or in any way connected with, our use of the Church facilities
- I/we will indemnify, defend and hold harmless St. Paul's, its members and representatives, from any and all claims, actions, demands, liabilities and expenses arising from or in any way connected with our use of the Church facilities

I/we have read and agree to these terms and conditions governing the usage of St. Paul's facilities:

Signed by:

Date:

(I have authority to bind the Group)

Fee Schedule:

Whole Church	\$500
Fellowship Hall Downstairs kitchen, washroom & nursery	\$250
Worship Area, Friendship Room, Kitchen and Upstairs washroom	\$200
Friendship Room, Kitchen and Upstairs washroom	\$100
Gym & Upstairs washroom	\$ 75
Supervisor for duration of all events, per hour \$15 or tbd by event	
Non profit community service groups (eg. Girl Guides & Brownies)	No charge

Please make payable to St. Paul's Presbyterian Church and leave in the Church office

Appendix 'U'

St. Paul's Presbyterian Church Facilities Usage Policy

The policy provides the overriding principles governing decisions for the use of the St. Paul's Church facility, and the fee structure for such use:

1. The Board of Managers will approve facility usage applications following the policy guidelines. Session will decide on worship space requests.
2. The activities conducted in the building should not conflict with the values of the church.
3. The facility should be used as much as practical when not in use for church functions.
4. The church (people) should be seen as welcoming the community.
5. The church (people) should be seen to support opportunities to further God's Kingdom.
6. God provides for the ongoing financial needs of the people of St. Paul's in such a way that when they return a portion (the tithe) to Him, all needs of the church can be met.
7. Commercially motivated requests should be considered with extra caution to ensure that they do not conflict with the Christian values of the church.
8. Events involving the consumption of alcohol require a certificate from King Township, and should be considered with extra caution ensuring they do not conflict with the Christian values of the Church.

Fee Schedule:

Whole Church	\$500
Fellowship Hall Downstairs kitchen, washroom & nursery	\$250
Worship Area, Friendship Room, Kitchen and Upstairs washroom	\$200
Friendship Room, Kitchen and Upstairs washroom	\$100
Gym & Upstairs washroom	\$ 75
Supervisor for duration of all events, per hour	\$15 or tbd by event

Church members, adherents and any community member will be charged consistently
Non profit community service groups (eg. Scouts, Guides) No charge

Appendix 'R'

FirstLink, NextStep & KidzKonnection Volunteer Form

St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, Nobleton, Ontario

Personal Information

Full name: _____

Address: _____ Postal Code: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

First aid qualifications: _____

Please list activities/volunteer service/or special training you have been involved in outside of St. Paul's:

References

Please provide the name of one person (excluding relatives) who will provide a reference for you.

Full Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Relationship to applicant: _____

Please return completed form to Jocelyne Donaldson's family file folder

Appendix 'S'

**Teacher/Leader Evaluation Form
St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, Nobleton, Ontario**

This evaluation is to be conducted on an annual basis for each teacher/leader.

Full name: _____

Grade level taught and duration: _____

Names of students taught: _____

Date Teacher / Leader Registration Form completed: _____

Date of Police Record Check /Vulnerable Sector Screening: _____

Date Covenant of Care Form completed: _____

Date Attended Orientation Session: _____

Were there any allegations of wrongdoing concerning this teacher during this KidzKonnection year? Yes ___ No ___. If yes, when were allegations reported and when were the Minister and Session advised ?

Note: It may be necessary to attach further information re: allegation to this form.

Were there any Incident Report Forms completed for any students in this class during this KidzKonnection year? Yes ___ No ___ If yes, attach copy/ies.

Were St. Paul's approved curriculum lessons followed?: Yes ___ No _____

KidzKonnection Supervisor's Reflections: _____

KidzKonnection Teacher/Leader Reflections:

Signature: _____

Appendix 'T

**St. Paul's Presbyterian Church
NextStep/KidzKonnection Registration Form**

Name of Child: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Date of Baptism: _____

Parents' names: _____

Address: _____

Phones: (H) _____ (W) _____

(Cell) _____ (Email) _____

Member of which church: _____

Siblings' names and ages: _____

If you will not be on site at St. Paul's during the NextStep/KidzKonnection program activities, give the telephone number where you can be reached most quickly in an emergency.

I can be reached at: _____

To whom should the child be dismissed after church activities? _____

School child attends: _____

Special interests: _____

Other helpful information: _____

Allergies or special needs: _____

Parent signature: _____ Date: _____