

Dauphin First Baptist Church
Policy And Procedures Re:
Care of Children &
Vulnerable Persons



DAUPHIN FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
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Dauphin, Manitoba
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CHURCH MINISTRY POLICY AND PROCEDURES RE: CARE of CHILDREN & VULNERABLE PERSONS

INTRODUCTION

The mobilization of workers for ministry is essential to a healthy, growing church. Scripture teaches that every believer has been equipped by God for ministry in, or through, the church. A healthy church will have an environment where the opportunity to minister in a variety of ways will be provided and encouraged, both within the church organization as well as in the community.

This policy is designed to assist church leaders in recruiting and training workers to provide, to the greatest extent possible, for the safety of children/youth (under 18 years of age) and vulnerable persons (persons of any age who have mental, physical and/or emotional disability, as well as the frail elderly) who are served by these workers.

Dauphin First Baptist Church (DFBC) recognizes a moral and legal obligation to respect and protect individuals of all ages in our ministries and programs and will tolerate no abuse. DFBC 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.

It is important for church leaders and workers to have a thorough understanding of the rationale for such policies. Church leaders may distribute portions of this document to members of DFBC ministry teams and to prospective workers. Permission is granted to pastors and leaders to duplicate any portion or all of this document for use in other churches.

This Safe Ministries Policy will be reviewed annually.

This 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 those who will work with children, youth and vulnerable persons
4. ensure all staff and workers undergo mandatory training on abuse and the legal responsibility to report
5. protect our staff and workers from unfounded allegations of abuse
6. protect the credibility and integrity of DFBC and the name of Jesus Christ

A. RECRUITMENT & SCREENING PROCEDURES

Workers will be recruited by the pastoral staff, ministry leaders, or their designates to help administer a particular program. Each worker is required to complete:

- a Ministry Application Form which includes the naming of three references,
- a RCMP Criminal Record Check (to be renewed every five years)
- Child Abuse Registry Check (to be renewed every five years) and
- Worker training session as offered through DFBC

Final approval by a DFBC pastor or Program Coordinator will be given before a worker works independently with children/vulnerable persons. The DFBC pastor or Program Coordinator will communicate with the applicant when approval is complete.

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 Worker Training session,
- b. will be members or regular adherents at DFBC for at least six (6) months (A reduced period of time may be approved if the individual comes with adequate references), and
- c. will be required to work in the presence of an approved ministry worker or staff.

The *Ministry Application Form (MAF)* is vital in protecting the church from legal action if a case of child abuse occurs in which a church worker is involved. To be immune from liability in child abuse cases, the church must show evidence of a process in which it has taken reasonable action in screening the people involved in working with children, youth or vulnerable persons. The courts will look for a process by which a church screens workers before engaging them in service. A court may find a church legally liable if the church is less than systematic and therefore negligent in screening workers. By having every worker fill out a MAF and keeping these forms on file, the church greatly reduces its liability in child abuse cases.

Worker files will be reviewed annually, and as required.

The Ministry Application Form asks for:

- Personal information which assists DFBC leadership to begin to or to continue to learn about the worker applying.
- Three personal references. These references may be contacted and asked to affirm the appointment of the worker. It is recommended that the church leader, who contacts a reference, initial beside the reference's name. Positive references can be noted. References of concern should be recorded on the form.
- Permission to conduct a Criminal Records Check. DFBC will provide a letter which will be submitted with the RCMP Criminal Record form so there will be no charge to the volunteer worker.
- Permission to conduct a Child Abuse Registry check. The Child Abuse Registry check form is returned to the DFBC to be processed and mailed. There is no charge for this form for volunteer applicants.

B. OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

DFBC strives to ensure the safety of the children and families we serve as well as the safety and reputation of the adults and teens who work in offered ministries. DFBC has developed procedures to lessen the possibility of abuse occurring and/or false accusations.

1. WORKER TRAINING

- a. All workers should be equipped with training regarding child safety and child abuse prevention. This is the responsibility of DFBC to provide in conjunction with outside resources as necessary.
- b. Annually, a worker training session will be offered. This will include a review of this document: Ministry Policy and Procedures Regarding Care of Children and Vulnerable Persons.

2. CLASSROOM RATIO

DFBC strives to provide a safe, nurturing classroom where a child feels comfortable and where learning can take place. Therefore, the following guidelines apply:

- a. It is preferred there will be a minimum of two leaders in any room with children.
- b. When only one leader is in a room with children, a door of that room will remain ajar or be a window door that will allow occupants of the room to be visible to others outside of the room. In this way, occupants may be observed without interrupting the teaching process.
- c. There will be a minimum of:
 - 1 leader for up to 2 nursery age children
 - 1 leader for up to 6 preschool children and
 - 1 leader for up to 15 children from Grades 1-6.

3. RECORD KEEPING

- a. Nursery and School-Age classes: Names and contact information of parents and children should be recorded. Annual review is recommended.
- b. For the nursery (children ages newborn – 5 years):
 - An accurate sign-in/out procedure will be maintained for each child, recording the child's name and parent's name.
 - Full names of each worker should be recorded each session on the sign-in/out list.
 - Workers should not release a child to anyone except the child's parent or previously arranged alternative. The parent or the worker may initial when the child is signed in/signed out. It is preferred the parent initials for sign in/out.
 - Attendance records will be kept on file at DFBC.
- c. School-age classes: An accurate sign in/out procedure will be maintained with:
 - Names of children
 - Names of worker/staff
 - Parent initials are not required for children in kindergarten and older
 - Attendance records will be kept on file at DFBC.

4. WORKER BEHAVIOUR

- a. Workers should conduct themselves in an exemplary manner to the children/vulnerable persons with whom they interact.
- b. All workers must submit the required documents as outlined in the Recruitment and Screening Procedures section above.

Physical Contact

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 constitutes a threat to health or safety.

Appropriate Physical contact:

1. Nursery age (less than 2 years):
 - a. carrying, holding the infant/child is appropriate
 - b. Diaper changing: check with parent if the parent wants to be called to change the diaper or if they give permission for the childcare worker to do so.
Diaper changing should always take place in such a way that another nursery worker can easily see the child being changed
 - c. If the childcare worker is not comfortable changing the diaper either take the child to the parent or have the parent come to the nursery room to change the diaper for the child.
2. Preschool (2 – 5 years)
 - a. Side hugs, holding on lap (reading books, comforting), is appropriate
 - b. If a child initiates a hug or kiss, gently change the position to one that is appropriate.
 - c. Discipline:
 - absolutely no spanking, hitting
 - preventing a child from hitting, biting, kicking is okay
 - brief (1-2 minute) timeouts are okay, either with the child sitting on their own or with a childcare worker – the intent is for a child to have the space to become calm and return to play in a cooperative manner
 - no yelling, screaming
 - firmly spoken expectations are okay
3. School-age children (6-18 years)
 - a. No hugging, kissing, sitting on laps, inappropriate touching or being alone with a child – be cautious of unscheduled time where games such as hide and seek occur spontaneously. Avoid situations of a worker alone with just one child.
 - b. High fives, back pats, side hugs, verbal praise, active listening are appropriate

NOTE: Young children will often initiate physical affection such as hugging or climbing onto a lap. The worker should kindly move the child to a position of a side-hug or sitting beside.

5. GUIDELINES FOR BEHAVIOR OF CHILDREN, YOUTH AND VULNERABLE PERSONS

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 can:
 - 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
 - f. handle conflicts as graciously as possible and inform the leader

2. 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.

3. Leaders are responsible for:
 - 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 while nurturing and fair
 - e. giving clear, understandable instructions
 - f. not raising their voice in irritation or anger
 - g. not attempting to grab or restrain physically
 - h. preventing a child, youth or vulnerable person from harming another person
 - Begin with a verbal correction and move to physical intervention only as the circumstances indicate.

- Appropriate examples include: holding the hands or feet to prevent striking, holding the arms and shoulders from a side position to prevent aggression.
- i. If unhappy/disruptive behaviour is extreme or lasts longer than 5-10 minutes, please return the child to their parent. Usually, this type of behaviour is an indication of a child not feeling well, or a reaction to something else that occurred prior to them entering the childcare area.

4. Consequences for **Appropriate** Behavior include:

- smiles
- verbal praise
- handshake, thumbs up, pat on the back
- reward sticker
- written note of praise
- phone call to or discussion with parents or guardians
- opportunity to share and celebrate success with group
- opportunity to be a leader

6. SOCIAL MEDIA

"Social media" refers to social networking services, short-message services, message boards, wikis, podcasts, image/video sharing sites and other methods for sharing real time information among users. Due to the ever-changing speed of social media, this policy applies to all new social media platforms, whether they are mentioned or not. All social media platforms are relevant and included.

a. Guidelines

1. Creating a social media group or profile for any DFBC related ministry requires approval by DFBC leadership
2. Photography of individuals used on the website requires parent/guardian written consent, kept on file. Consent can be integrated into signed registration forms, parental permission forms and membership agreements.
3. Photos taken during a DFBC ministry event may only be shared:
 - a. With DFBC staff, to discern it's use on an approved DFBC social media or other communication platform
 - b. With written consent of parent/guardian and approval of DFBC staff, if they are intended to be posted on a personal platform
4. Personal online presence and posts have the potential to affect the ministry of DFBC. For this reason, we ask for consistency between personal online practices and the standards set out by DFBC.
5. Misuse of DFBC social media resources in ways that violate the law or other ministry policies are subject to immediate disciplinary action and/or dismissal.

b. Communication with Minors

1. Phone conversations and face-to-face meetings are the recommended mode of communication. Discourage directly communicating with minors by means of social networking media.

- a. For children under the age of 16, only communicate with the parent/guardian via email or text message, leaving the parent responsible to review messages and convey the information to their child.
2. If an allowance is made for a ministry employee or approved ministry team leader to use text messaging with minors, it should only be with the formal written consent of parents/guardians.
 - a. Group texts are recommended, that include another approved DFBC worker and/or child's parent/guardian
 - b. Content should be limited to information and announcements related to upcoming events.
 - c. Questions in the text message should be kept simple, requiring only a "yes or "no" answer (e.g. about attending an event or requiring transportation)
 - d. Never disclose personal or confidential information
 - e. Pastoral care or counselling should never be done through text messaging.
3. Volunteers should not communicate directly with unrelated children or students via social networking media. They should only communicate through DFBC approved public forum sites or with group messages that include another DFBC staff, approved DFBC adult volunteer or child's parent.
4. Educate on positive and effective ways of using social media and technology whether written, posted, shared, or viewed. There should be no expectation of privacy or reasonable expectation that the information stops with the person for whom it was intended.
5. Examples of information that should not be shared or engaged online via any DFBC digital platform or media include:
 - a. A child or volunteer's name (first or last)
 - b. Identifying characteristics such as (but not limited to) grade, school, neighborhood, etc.
 - c. Posts or interactions that violate DFBC policies, including harassment and confidentiality
 - d. Partisan political messages or paid advertising
 - e. Responding to an offense

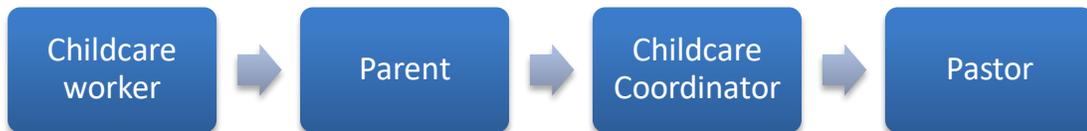
DFBC will use social media for positively connecting with the community. These policies and guidelines are in place to protect the safety and integrity of all persons (employed staff, volunteers, participants and families) involved in the DFBC ministries.

7. LINE of COMMUNICATION

Regarding supplies, policies & procedures, personnel & childcare room dynamics:



Regarding child behaviour needs & care:



8. PARTIES, FIELD TRIPS, HOME MEETINGS

Leaders are encouraged to have special class activities outside of the DFBC building, plan social activities and involve young people in field trips and service projects. The following additional precautions need to be taken with these activities:

- a. Always have two leaders present at these activities who have been approved under the Child and Vulnerable Persons Safety Policy.
- b. Obtain a signed parental waiver if the church is responsible for transporting children to these activities.
- c. DFBC's insurance policy should be reviewed to ensure that liability coverage includes off-premises activities. Leaders who hold special events are recommended to review their own home policy for liability coverage.
- d. 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 worker responsible for the event. Failure to do so will prohibit the child, youth or vulnerable person from participation in the event.
- e. In the event of staff/workers being the drivers:
 1. Generally, two workers or staff will always be present – 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 permission will be sought beforehand.
 2. All drivers will have a valid driver's license, not a Learner or Novice status.
 3. All vehicles will have valid insurance and liability coverage.
 4. The number of riders in a vehicle will not exceed the number of working seatbelts in the vehicle. It's the driver's responsibility to ensure that every minor in the vehicle is properly secured.

9. PREMISES

1. All classrooms and/or office doors have windows installed, so that all classes/groups can be visible even when doors need to be closed for safety or confidentiality reasons. Rooms that have solid doors should not be used as a classroom or meeting room.
2. At no time will doors be locked to prevent entrance to an area while a program is in session.
3. There will be sufficient lighting in place, both inside and outside the building, while programs are in session.
4. Parents or guardians are welcome to check on their children, youth and vulnerable persons at any time.
5. All rooms should be supplied with an emergency exit plan, both in directions and instructions. The emergency exits will be reviewed annually with workers.

Restrooms

1. This is an area in which we need to be especially sensitive to gender dynamics and child development. Generally, a child under the age of 5 should not be allowed to the restroom by themselves.
2. Communicate with the parent regarding restroom preferences. Ask if they would like to be called to assist their child or if an approved worker may assist as needed.
3. One leader may take a group of children to the restroom.
4. One leader may take a single child to the restroom if the doors to the restroom and stalls remain ajar. The leader should assist the child as little as possible. Only assist the child as they ask or if it becomes apparent they require assistance i.e. young children wiping after a bowel movement, urine having spilled on clothes or floor, washing hands after use of restroom. If assistance of a child is inevitable, the leader should verbally communicate to the child how assistance will be given and continue the verbal communication so it can be heard by others in the restroom or passing the ajar doors.

C. EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

1. FIRE EMERGENCY

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 location of fire extinguishers, escape routes from your ministry/program area and the assembly points to be used in the event of evacuation.

- a. If you are the first to discover a fire:
 1. Ensure that everyone is removed from the immediate vicinity of the fire.
 2. Take reasonable steps (not causing undue risk to yourself or others) to put out the fire. If the fire cannot be extinguished, shout “Fire” to alert others in the building.
 3. 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.

- b. When a fire alarm sounds (When a shout of “Fire” is heard):
 1. Take the Attendance Register with you.
 2. Escort all persons in your charge from the building by the nearest fire exit, without diversion, or collecting personal belongings.
 3. Group leaders are responsible for ensuring that their group remains calm and orderly. Running is not allowed.
 4. Close all doors, through which you pass, behind your group.
 5. Assemble your group in the designated “assembly area” of the parking lot outside the building (Extra lot, South of the DFBC church building. In winter, proceed to the Co-op Store building to be warm from extreme cold)
 6. During the MOPS program the gathering point will be the Dauphin Library using the back door entrance
 7. 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.
 8. 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.
 9. 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.
 10. Communicate with parents/guardians that in the case of a fire alarm, the children will not be released into parent/guardian care until the children/vulnerable persons are accounted for at the safe outdoor location.

2. MISSING CHILD, YOUTH OR VULNERABLE PERSON

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:

- a. The person leading the program is to be informed immediately.

- b. If a child, youth or vulnerable person is reported missing during a Sunday worship service or any other program offered by DFBC, the Head Usher or Ministry Leader is to be informed immediately.
- c. 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 remain stationed at the door to prevent any person from entering or leaving the building.
- d. A thorough search of the building and grounds will be made by adults working in pairs.
- e. 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.
- f. 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.
- g. The lockdown will continue until RCMP members arrive and take control.

3. ACTIVE THREAT

Best practices to avoid potential threats are:

1. Know who is in the building
2. Lock doors after the program starts
3. Be alert to suspicious behaviour

In the case of an active, violent threat to the safety of the people in the church building, the following guidelines should be followed:

1. **Run** - evacuate as many people as possible from the threat
2. **Hide** – lock doors – remain silent
3. **Fight** – The person in charge should attempt to de-escalate the situation and, **AS A LAST RESORT**, physically intervene
4. Call the police (911) when safe to do so

D. MEDICAL ATTENTION

1. MINOR INCIDENT PROCEDURE

- First Aid Kits are in the kitchen and upstairs in the Administration closet.
 - The location and contents will be reviewed annually.
- a. Children, youth or vulnerable persons or workers with symptoms of an infectious illness will not attend group sessions as this exposes others to illness.
 - Some signs of illness are: unusual fatigue or irritability, coughing, sneezing, runny nose and eyes, fever, vomiting, diarrhea, inflamed mouth and throat.
 - Communicate with the parent/guardian regarding observations of illness and ask that the child remain with the parent/guardian.
 - b. 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.

- c. Beyond minor injuries such as cuts and bruises, treatment of injury to a child, youth or vulnerable person should be recorded on an Incident Report Form and reported to the ministry director.
- d. Parent(s) or guardian(s) shall be informed of the incident when the child, youth or vulnerable person is picked up.
- e. A child, youth or vulnerable person who is unable to continue participation in an activity, due to illness or injury, should be returned to the 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.

2. MAJOR INJURY OR ILLNESS PROCEDURES

- a. 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.
- b. 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.
- c. For more serious incidents, when the recipient requires treatment beyond first aid, the following procedure applies:
 - 1. Stop all group activity.
 - 2. Make sure the area is safe.
 - 3. Move the other participants away from the area.
 - 4. Alert the program leader.
 - 5. Summon an ambulance.
 - 6. Contact the parent(s) or guardian(s).
 - 7. Make arrangement for the other children, youth or vulnerable persons to be properly supervised.
 - 8. Complete an Injury or Illness Incident Report as soon as possible.

Procedures for Injuries Involving Blood

- 1. Put on gloves (available in the first aid kit).
- 2. Separate the injured person from the others.
- 3. Isolate the area where any blood has dropped.
- 4. Send someone to inform the parent(s) or guardian(s) of the injured person.
- 5. Bandage the injury, avoiding contact with mouth, eyes, and ears.
- 6. Check if others had contact with blood from the cut or injury.
- 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 container.
- 9. Remove and properly dispose of gloves.
- 10. Wash hands and any body parts that contacted the injured person or their blood.
- 11. Never delay emergency action.
- 12. Complete an Injury or Illness Incident Report as soon as possible.

E. CHILD ABUSE: PREVENTION AND PROCEDURES

SCRIPTURE

1 Thessalonians 5:22 - "Avoid every kind of evil."

Ephesians 5:3 - "But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality...because these are improper for God's holy people."

Matthew 18:6 - "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 18:15-17 - "If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; if he refuses to listen even to the Church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector."

DEFINITIONS

Child Abuse is defined as any action - physical or verbal - which is exploitative, potentially harmful, or damaging to the child's physical, emotional or psychological health. It may take the form of physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse or neglect.

Physical abuse means any physical force or action which results in, or may potentially result in, non-accidental injury to a child and which exceeds that which could be considered reasonable discipline.

Sexual abuse means any sexual exploitation of a child whether consensual or not. It includes touching of a sexual nature, exposure, sexual intercourse, using a child, youth or vulnerable person in the making or viewing of pornography, or involving a child, youth or vulnerable person in prostitution and may include any behaviour of a sexual nature toward a child. In determining whether behaviour is of a sexual nature, one should ask whether a reasonable observer, looking at the behaviour in its context, would conclude that it is. Sexual activity between children may constitute sexual abuse if the difference in age or power between the children is so significant that the older or more powerful child is clearly taking sexual advantage of the younger or less powerful child.

Emotional abuse means harassing, embarrassing or insulting a child, youth or vulnerable person, pressuring them to do things they cannot or should not do, making hurtful comments about their appearance, intelligence, size, ability, race, etc.

Neglect means the failure of those responsible for the care of the child to meet the physical, emotional or medical needs of a child to an extent that the child's health, development or safety is endangered. It is failing to provide a child, youth or vulnerable person with basic needs for food, clothing, shelter, health care, education, and protection from harm.

1. PROTECTION FROM LIABILITY

DFBC personnel are required to report immediately to Manitoba Child and Family Services Department (see appendix) and the senior pastor, any suspected case of child abuse. Such reporting is not a breach of confidence between DFBC personnel, and the child involved. Due diligence will be exercised in all actions taken following an allegation of abuse or neglect.

2. INDICATORS OF ABUSE

Signs of abuse may or may not be physically obvious. In some 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 short 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
- c. absences from school
- d. may cringe or flinch if touched unexpectedly
- e. may display a vacant stare or be extremely withdrawn
- f. wears long sleeves to hide injury
- g. extremely compliant and/or eager to please
- h. 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. evidence of unusual or excessive discomfort 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
- 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 dropouts (adolescents)

3. OBLIGATION TO REPORT

Any person who has reasonable grounds to believe that a child (or children) needs protection is required legally by the Child and Family Services Act to report the matter to Child and Family Services or the RCMP if it is thought the child is in immediate danger. Failure to report in these circumstances is an offence. A person who knowingly fails to make such a report is in violation of the law and may be found to have committed an offence.

Reports may be made by telephone, letter, or in person and are made to a Child Protection Social Worker in the local office of the Child & Family Services. (Forms attached)

A child needs protection under the Child Welfare Act if they are:

- abused or neglected so that their safety or well-being is endangered,
- abandoned, (any child left under the age of ten)
- deprived of necessary care through the death, absence or disability of a parent/guardian,
- deprived of necessary medical attention, or
- absent from home and in circumstances that endanger his or her safety or well-being, such as improper supervision by the parent/guardian.

Abuse or neglect need not have already occurred for a child to need protection; it is not necessary to wait until the child has been harmed to intervene. When abuse or neglect can be reasonably anticipated, there are reasonable grounds to believe a child needs protection, and the legal obligation to report applies.

Historical abuse or neglect, that is abuse or neglect which occurred in the not-recent past, must be reported wherever there are reasonable grounds to believe that a child or children may need protection. If the alleged offender is in regular contact with a child or children, irrespective of whether it is the same child or children abused in the past, there may well be grounds to believe that the child or children are at risk based on the offender's past behaviour. It is particularly vital to report these cases where the alleged offender is in a position of trust, such as a teaching position. Where the information is obtained from a victim, the victim should be guided on how to file a complaint with the police irrespective of whether there are any current protection concerns.

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

Social workers designated to receive reports are trained to investigate and assess the need for intervention. Other professionals must not usurp this function. A professional who does so and fails to report commits an offence. The Child Welfare Act protects an individual who makes a report; no action lies against an individual making a report unless the report is made maliciously or without reasonable grounds.

Responding To The Alleged Victim

In the event a child, youth or vulnerable person reports abuse or neglect, as the receiver of the information:

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, appropriate place in which to listen carefully to their account,
3. listen without interruption, assuring they 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 was not their 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 their own words, and
9. keep all information confidential and secure.

Remember – the care and safety of the alleged victim is always the 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.

Responding To The Alleged Perpetrator

1. treat them with dignity and respect,
2. if it is a church volunteer worker – immediately relieve them 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, they are still loved by God.

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:

- those who will assure the child, youth or vulnerable person’s safety
- those who will investigate to determine the present and future risk
- those who will investigate allegations

Report Follow-Up

Following the report of a suspected or observed offence to Child and Family Services or the local police, the report must also be made to the Ministry leader or Pastor for reasons of liability and integrity.

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

1. take whatever steps are necessary to protect the child, youth or vulnerable person from further risk,
2. 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,
3. ensure that the allegation has been reported to Manitoba Child and Family Services or the RCMP,
4. seek legal counsel for the Church as well as report the incident to the Church’s insurance company,
5. ensure completion, by the adult reporting the allegation, of the “Report of Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect” attached form, and
6. complete the “Follow Up Report of Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect” attached form.

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

Where the Senior Pastor is the alleged perpetrator, the report will be made to the Chairperson of the DFBC Board, or designate, in their absence. If a pastor or other person holding credentials with the Canadian Baptist of Western Canada is implicated, the CBWC will also be contacted and will thereafter pursue the matter through their established protocol.

Following the report to Child and Family Services that involves a staff/volunteer member, an immediate suspension shall result until the investigation is complete and a final decision is made. A confidential report shall be written including:

- allegations,
- conclusions,
- action taken and
- recommendations for follow-up action if appropriate

This report should be written by the appropriate pastor, following a child abuse allegation of a staff person/volunteer. These reports shall be kept in a confidential personnel file.

4. MEDIA RELATIONS

1. Spokesperson

The Senior Pastor or designate will be the spokesperson for DFBC; in some cases, the Chairperson of the Board 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 DFBC and all attempted contacts by the media will be directed to that spokesperson. No other person from DFBC 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:
 - an awareness of the problem of abuse – that we take the issue very seriously.
 - a concern for victims and their families.
 - the steps DFBC has taken to provide a safe environment for children, youth and vulnerable persons.
 - that DFBC has acted responsibly.
 - that DFBC has in place a Safe Ministries Policy for children, youth or vulnerable persons.
 - that DFBC trains 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. Dauphin First Baptist Church is sadly aware of the potential for abuse within 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 all in our power to address needs related to this situation. For the welfare of those involved, all information has been directed to the appropriate authorities. We will continue to take measures to protect the children, youth and vulnerable persons entrusted to our care”

APPENDIX A - GOVERNMENT RESOURCES:

Emergency:

RCMP 911 Emergency
Dauphin: (204) 622-5050

Manitoba:

- **Child and Family Services -- 1-866-345-9241**
- Domestic Violence Crisis and Information Line — 1-877-977-0007
- Kids Help Phone (24 hour) — 1-800-668-6868
- Seniors Info Line — 1-888-896-7183
- Health Links – 1-888-315-9257

Parkland:

- **Area 8 Michif Child and Family Services Agency (DIA)**
 - Toll-free 1-877-676-7921
 - Phone. 204-638-7896
- **West Region Child and Family Services**
 - Toll-free 1-888-333-5518
 - Phone. 204-622-5200

APPENDIX B - FORMS

SAMPLE REPORT FORMS:

REPORT OF SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT
FOLLOW UP REPORT OF SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT
INJURY OR ILLNESS INCIDENT REPORT FORM
REGISTRATION/PERMISSION FORM

REPORT OF SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT

Date: _____

Name of Child: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Name of Person Filing Report:

Position of Person Filing Report: _____

Nature of suspected abuse: (Physical, Sexual, Emotional, Neglect)

Indicators of suspected abuse:
(Including facts, physical signs and course of events where necessary)

Action taken: (Including date and time)

Any worker or volunteer who has reasonable grounds to believe that a child needs protection shall immediately report the matter to Child and Family Services or the local RCMP, **and** to the Senior Pastor or Chairperson of the DFBC Board.

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

1. those who will assure the child’s safety
2. those who will investigate to determine the present and future risk
3. those who will pursue founded allegations

Signed:

Date:

(Signature of Person Reporting Incident)

FOLLOW UP REPORT OF SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT

Date of incident: _____

Name of Child: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Name of Person Who Filed Initial Report _____

Date filed: _____

Check List – DFBC has taken the following action:

- Protected the child from further risk.
- Advised the parent(s) or guardian(s), if the reported abuse has not implicated them, and extended to the family whatever Senior Pastoral support resources may be appropriate.
- Ensured that the allegation has been reported to Manitoba Child and Family Services, or the RCMP.
- Sought legal counsel for DFBC.
- Reported the incident to the DFBC’s insurance company.
- Ensured the completion of the “Report of Suspected Child Abuse” form, by the adult reporting the allegation.

Other Action Taken: (Including dates and times):

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:

1. those who will assure the child’s safety
2. those who will investigate to determine the present and future risk
3. those who will pursue founded allegations

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Senior Pastor or Chairperson of DFBC Board)

INJURY OR ILLNESS INCIDENT REPORT FORM

Date: _____

Name of Child: _____

Name of second child (if more than one): _____

Name of Person Filing Report: _____

Position: _____

Nature of incident:

Injuries incurred (if any):

Action taken: (Including date and time)

Parent(s) or guardian(s) informed: Yes _____ No _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Signature of Person Reporting Incident)

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Signature of Person Witness to Incident)

REGISTRATION/PERMISSION FORM

Program: _____

Date enrolled: _____

Name of Child: _____

Gender: _____ Age: _____ Grade: _____

Primary Contact (Parent/Guardian): _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Alternate Contact #1: _____

Phone: _____

Alternate Contact #2: _____

Phone: _____

Does your child have any allergies? (Bee stings, food, medications, etc.) Yes _____ No _____

Please explain:

Does your child have any severe or life-threatening allergies? Yes _____ No _____

Please explain:

Please Note: DFBC AND ITS WORKERS & VOLUNTEERS ARE NOT RESPONSIBLE AND DO NOT ASSUME ANY RESPONSIBILITY FOR MONITORING AND ENSURING THAT A CHILD TAKES THEIR MEDICATION PROPERLY.

Does your child have any physical, emotional, mental or behavioral concerns or limitations that our staff should be aware of? Yes _____ No _____

Please explain:

Permission:

I hereby give permission for my child, _____, to participate in the _____, as planned and carried out by the staff and volunteers of Dauphin First Baptist Church.

Precautions will be taken for the safety and good health of your child, but in the event of accident or sickness, DFBC, its staff, and its volunteers are hereby released from any liability.

I hereby give permission for my child, _____, to be photographed or video recorded within DFBC programs and for the photos to be posted within the DFBC community or on the DFBC website.

Parent/Guardian's Signature _____

Date: _____