

Policies and Procedures Manual

A Plan to Protect Our Children, Youth and Leaders

The Independent Assemblies of God International (Canada) has a spiritual, moral and legal obligation to provide a secure environment for children participating in church programs that are under the auspices and authority of the church. Child abuse is a criminal act as well as a violation of human conscience and dignity. It is a violation of God's moral law within the trusted context of relationship. It is criminal behavior that causes emotional, physical and spiritual trauma to victims, and has destructive consequences for abusers. The devastating effects on the credibility of the church ministry and the name of Christ make it essential that the church take all appropriate steps to prevent abusive incidences from occurring.

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INTRODUCTION

The Spiritual and Moral Responsibility of the Church

Everyone who teaches, helps or cares for children and/or youth under the auspices of The Independent Assemblies of God International (Canada) is required to follow the guidelines and procedures as defined in this document. The General Secretary and the Executive Committee have reviewed and adopted them as official policy.

This plan is designed to assist church leaders in their recruiting of volunteers and, to the greatest extent possible, provide for the safety of the children served by these volunteers.

The gospel of Mark records that when people brought little children to Jesus, He took them in his arms, put His hands on them, and blessed them. As a church, it is our desire to bring children to Jesus, too.

In the church, we recognize that we are a reflection of God's love to those in our care and we take our responsibility to them seriously. In our ministry to children we must follow carefully what the scriptures teach:

1. Avoid every kind of evil. (I Thess. 5:22)
2. But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. (Eph. 5:3)
3. 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. (Matt. 18:6)
4. 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; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan. (Matt 18:15-17)

These guidelines are therefore set forth to provide a safe and nurturing environment in which we can bring our children to the Savior. We view ourselves as partners with parents, seeking to provide quality care and instruction in our ministry to the family. All of our guidelines are designed to protect and promote growth in God for each child and adult involved.

Chapter 1

Understanding the Need



Reducing the Risk of Child Sexual Abuse

The Independent Assemblies of God International (Canada) has a mandate to minister to individuals, families, adults, youth and children. In that context, *The Independent Assemblies of God International (Canada)* stresses the sanctity of human life and the importance and worth of each individual as a child of God.

The disturbing and traumatic rise of physical and sexual abuse of children has claimed the attention of our nation and society. Unfortunately, churches who have children's programs are not insulated from this alarming trend. In response to this trend, it is our commitment to provide reasonable protective care to all preschoolers, children and youth attending any programs sponsored by *The Independent Assemblies of God International (Canada)* or its affiliate churches. We feel compelled to establish guidelines for the prevention of child abuse.

Although *The Independent Assemblies of God International (Canada)* has been fortunate in never having any substantiated incidents of child abuse or molestation happen in their affiliate churches, we recognize that formal guidelines and procedures will help prevent the opportunity for abuse to arise in the future.

We believe that childhood innocence is a gift given by God. Children are naturally trusting. Children readily place their faith in adults who care for them. It is our responsibility as a church to safeguard that trust. Childhood innocence is a gift that we must **Plan to Protect** within our church.



"Children have neither power nor property. Voices other than their own must speak for them. If those voices are silent then children who have been abused may lean their heads against window panes and taste the bitter emptiness of violated childhoods."

Justice Francis T. Murphy

It Can Happen in Any Church

Incidents of molestation can occur in any church - including ours. Churches have traditionally accepted the services of anyone expressing an interest in working as a volunteer with children or youth. Churches are by nature trusting and unsuspecting institutions. Asking sensitive questions of those who are giving their time and talent can be seen as distasteful by church leaders. No one wants to offend potential workers, especially longtime church members with a history of good service. These qualities can make a church susceptible to incidents of child molestation.

There are few topics that create more emotion than that of child abuse, especially if it is sexual in nature.

Impact

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

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

In making sure *The Independent Assemblies of God International (Canada)* and its affiliated churches are a safer place, we will be:

- a) Safeguarding preschoolers, children and youth of our church from abuse.
- b) Protecting the church staff and volunteer workers from potential allegations of sexual abuse
- c) Limiting the extent of legal risk and liability due to any such sexual abuse.

Chapter 2

Understanding Child Abuse

Definition

"Child abuse" is defined as follows:

- It can be physical, emotional, or sexual.
- All child abuse involves the misuse of power.
- Misuse of power takes place when people take advantage of the authority or power they have over vulnerable people.
- Vulnerable people include adults with physical or mental disabilities and children. (Note: Refer to your provincial Child Protection Act for definition as to what constitutes a child, and insert here)

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

In 97 per cent of reported cases of physical abuse, parents are the perpetrators (Wolfe).*

The perpetrator of physical abuse is approximately 1.5 times more likely to be male than female (Wolfe).*

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

Sexual Abuse occurs when a child or youth is used by somebody else for sexual stimulation or gratification. Sexual activity between children or youth may also be sexual abuse if older or more powerful children or youth take sexual advantage of those who are younger or less powerful.

The Law Reform Committee of Canada defines child sexual abuse as "Exposure of the child to sexual stimulation inappropriate for his age and role- the sexual exploitation of a child who is not developed mentally, capable of understanding or resisting the contact; or a child or adolescent who may be psychologically or socially dependent upon the perpetrator."

*Wolfe, David. *Child Abuse. Implications for Child Development and Psychopathology*. Newbury Park, California: Sage, 1987. P.20.

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Child sexual abuse includes behaviour that involves touching and non-touching aspects.

Types of abuse that involve touching include:

- Fondling
- Oral, genital, and anal penetration
- Intercourse
- Forcible rape

Types of sexual abuse that do not involve touching include:

- Verbal comments
- Pornographic videos
- Obscene phone calls
- Exhibitionism
- Allowing children to witness sexual activity

The full extent of child sexual abuse in North America is not known. Current conservative estimates suggest that from 500,000 to over 1,500,000 children are sexually abused each year.

Symptoms of Abuse and Molestation

Church workers and staff should be alert to the physical signs of abuse and molestation, as well as to behavioural and verbal signs that a victim may exhibit. A one-time event would not necessarily constitute a potential abuse case; sudden unexplained changes, however, would warrant investigation. Some of the more common signs are summarized below:

Physical signs may include:

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

Behavioral signs may include:

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

Verbal signs may include the following statements:

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

The Effects of Child Sexual Abuse

Child sexual abuse robs children of their childhood and can potentially scar its young victims for life. Too often in the past, the effects of abuse were minimized or dismissed. Children were viewed as being resilient. Recent research has shown that children can suffer significant pain from even a single abusive incident. Church members must be aware of the pain and long-term suffering that can accompany such abuse. Abused children can display a wide range of negative symptoms in the aftermath of abuse. Abuse can result in abnormal fears, post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), aggressive behaviour, sexual "acting out", depression, diffused sexual identity, and poor self-esteem. (Ksendall-Tackett, Williams, and Finkelhor, 1991) The incidence of sexually transmitted disease is also a possible outcome.

"The personal violation of child sexual abuse causes the victim to experience many losses... including loss of childhood memories, loss of healthy social contact, loss of the opportunity to learn, loss of bodily integrity, loss of identity and self-esteem, loss of trust, loss of sexual maturity, and loss of self-determination. All of these personal violations mean that victims of child sexual abuse lose the child's right to a normal childhood. In adulthood it may also mean the loss of the capacity to appreciate sexual intimacy as nurturing, holy and loving." (The Report of the Winter Commission, 1990, Vol.1, p.118)

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



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

The Profile of a Child Molester

Who is the typical child molester? Some church leaders assume that molesters are “strangers wearing trench coats” or “dirty old men.” These stereotypes not only are inaccurate, but they dangerously contribute to a false sense of security. Researchers in the field of child sexual abuse currently indicate that no one profile fits the various perpetrators of abuse. Church leaders can become preoccupied screening stereotypes, while not suspecting the real molester could be an active adult or teen in the church.

Consider the following:

Over eighty percent of the time, the abuser is someone known to the victim.

Most abuse takes place within the context of an ongoing relationship. The usual offender is between the ages of 20 - 30 years.

20 percent of sex offenders begin their activity before the age of 18. Child abusers often are married and have children.

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

Chapter 3

The Church's Legal Vulnerability

Why Churches are Susceptible

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

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

Need: Most churches struggle to get adequate help for children and youth programs. Recruiting nursery workers, for example, can become an unending effort. Turnover among volunteer workers is also high. A willing volunteer worker provides welcome relief.

Churches need to understand the extent of their liability. Churches are not "guarantors" of the safety and well-being of children. They are not absolutely liable for every injury that occurs on their premises or in the course of their activities.

Generally, they are responsible only for those injuries that result from their negligence. Victims of molestation who have sued a church often allege that the church was negligent in not adequately screening applicants or for not providing adequate supervision.

The Civil and Legal Liability of the Church

Increasingly and often more dramatically, the church and its personnel (i.e., staff, directors, officers, and ministers) are being held accountable for the acts of individual abusers within the church even though neither the church nor its leaders were aware of the abuse or condoned it. Churches are being sued in Civil Courts for damages sustained by victims and their families. Those victims and their families are attempting to hold churches accountable by alleging that:

- the church is vicariously liable for the acts of its personnel, be they paid staff or volunteer staff, regardless of whether the church was itself negligent or even knew of the abuse,
- the church was negligent in its hiring or accepting personnel, whether paid or volunteer, and
- the church was negligent in the supervising or monitoring of its personnel or membership.



(Church and the Law Update, June 1994)

Chapter 4

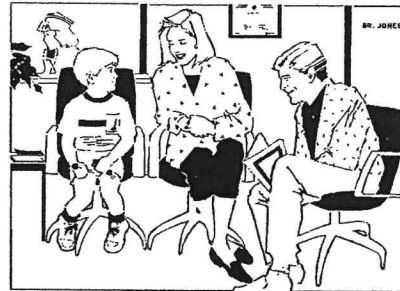
Child Protection Procedures

The Independent Assemblies of God International (Canada) is committed to the following:

1. We will screen all paid employees, including ministerial staff, and volunteers who work with preschoolers, children, or youth.
2. We will check references and do criminal record checks on all our new workers, for any position involving work with preschoolers, children, or youth. Anyone with known criminal abuse violations will not be allowed to work with children or youth.
3. We will train all of our staff who work with preschoolers, children, or youth, both paid and volunteer, to understand the nature of child sexual abuse, how to carry out our policies to prevent sexual abuse, including our clearly defined reporting procedures for suspected incidents.
4. We take seriously, our policies to prevent sexual abuse and will see that they are enforced.
5. All workers will sign the Ministry Covenant, agreeing to comply with church policies and guidelines.
6. We have adopted a basic "Two-Adult" rule. Such a rule says that two adults should be present during any children's activity. This rule reduces the risk of child molestation, and also reduces the risk of false accusations of molestation by individuals seeking a quick legal settlement.
7. We will follow the "Six Month" rule. Volunteers will be permitted to work with preschoolers, children, or youth only after they have been adherents/members of an *Independent Assemblies of God International (Canada) affiliate church* for a period of six months. Such a policy gives the church an additional opportunity to evaluate applicants and volunteers, and will help to repel persons seeking immediate access to children. (This provision may be waived where the person is transferring in from another church and has a letter of recommendation signed by the pastor of that church)

"Is screening important? Ask any member of a church in which an incident of sexual abuse has occurred."

Reducing the Risk of
Child Sexual Abuse
in Your Church



These safeguards are not only to protect our children, but also our workers



A. Two Leaders

As a general rule, there is to be a minimum of two leaders in any room with children, except in the event of an emergency situation. Smaller classes could use high school students or have parents help out on a rotational basis. A temporary alternative to the two adult guideline is the open door policy.

B. Obtain Parental Permission

What about situations where an adult has a legitimate reason to be alone with a child? Church staff or volunteer workers must obtain the consent of the child's parent or guardian before going out alone with that child, or spending time with the child in an unsupervised situation. Workers must also notify an appropriate church leader of such meetings in advance. Children must also have parental permission for involvement in church-sponsored field trips, or overnight events.

C. Open Doors

When it is necessary that only one adult leader be in a closed room with children (e.g. leader leaves room to take children to the washroom; a small class where there is one teacher for a classroom of 3 children), the door of that room should remain open. We have recommended that the class rooms have windows or window doors that will allow ministry supervisors to look in occasionally without interrupting the teaching process.

D. Preschool Classes

All preschool rooms are to be staffed with at least one female adult worker to better facilitate observance of the washroom guidelines.

E. Supervisory Staff

The supervisory staff should make regular visits to the classroom to make sure the class is properly staffed and supervised.



Proper Display of Affection

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



A. Appropriate Touch

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

- Bending down to the child's eye level and speaking kindly; listening to him or her carefully
- Taking a child's hand and leading him or her to an activity
 - Putting an arm around the shoulder of a child who needs quieting or comforting.
 - Taking both of the child's hands as you say, "You did such a good job!" (or "I'm so glad to see you. We've missed you!" etc.)
 - Patting a child on the head, hand, shoulder, or back to affirm him or her.
 - Holding a child by the shoulders or hand to keep his or her attention while you redirect the child's behaviour.
 - Gently holding a child's chin to help him or her focus on what you are saying. (important for children with attention deficit disorder)
- Holding a preschool child who is crying



B. Inappropriate Touch

You must avoid:

- Kissing a child, coaxing a child to kiss you, extended hugging and tickling.
- Touching a child in any area that would be covered by a bathing suit (except when assisting a child with toileting as outlined previously).
- Carrying older children or having them sit on your lap.
- Being alone with a child.

Special Events and Overnight Policies

Teachers are encouraged to have special class activities in their homes, plan social activities, and involve their pupils in field trips and service projects. The following precautions need to be taken with these activities.

A. Field Trips and Special Events

- Activities conducted away from the church property should be pre-approved by the church leadership.
- Parents should be notified at least one week prior to the outing.
- Proper written consent and medical release forms are required for each child participating in field trips and special events (See appendices)
- All trips and outings must be supervised by a minimum of two approved, unrelated adult leaders.
- When the transporting of children is involved in an activity, all drivers must have a valid driver's license and current automobile insurance. The number of persons per car must never exceed the number of seat belts.



B. Overnight Events

Church sponsored overnight activities may be permitted as long as the following guidelines are met:

- All overnight activities must be pre-approved by the church leadership.
- Proper written consent and medical release forms are required for each child participating in overnight events.
- All overnight activities should have a minimum ratio of one leader for every five children (minimum of two leaders at all times.) Each leader should have an assigned group of children for whom they will be responsible during the overnight event. All supervising adults must be approved volunteers.



Chapter 5

Recruitment of Paid Staff and Volunteers

The Ministry Volunteer Application Form and/or Employee Application Form must be completed for all positions involving ministry with children and youth. To protect the church from legal liability and for the protection of all workers, every prospective ministry leader including established members of *The Independent Assemblies of God International (Canada)* and their affiliate churches, must complete the application form found in the Appendix of this document.

Ministry Volunteer Application Form

In cases where children are to be supervised by volunteers, the Ministry Volunteer Application Form should be submitted by the volunteer before interim approval is considered. The Ministry Volunteer Application Form is critical in protecting the church from legal action if a case of child abuse occurs in which a church volunteer is involved.

To protect our children and to be protected from liability, the church must take reasonable action in screening and supervising the volunteers involved in any children's work. (A court can find the church legally liable if it is less than systematic and, therefore, negligent in screening volunteers). By having everyone fill out these forms and keeping them on file, the church greatly reduces the potential for child abuse and the resultant liability.

Each department must keep its own inventory list of its Ministry Leaders and the status of the application process.

Reference Check

Three personal references are requested on the Ministry Application Form. References that are acceptable are limited to the following:

- Former pastor
- Parents (for minors) - qualifies as one reference
- Teacher (for minors)
- Other volunteer member (who has sufficient strength of relationship to comment on the individual's personal habits and character).
- Employer

New volunteers will be interviewed by the Pastor and Leader of the Department that they will be serving

Criminal Record Check

A Criminal Record Check (CRC) will be made for any new approved volunteers who accept a ministry position. All new paid staff will also submit to a Criminal Record Check for their own protection and for the protection of the church. All records will be placed in the Personnel File set up for that purpose in the Administration Department and will be considered confidential, accessible only by the pastoral staff. Any individual who will not submit to this procedure will be ineligible to be involved with children on behalf of the church. The cost for any CRC's requested will be borne by *The Independent Assemblies of God International (Canada)* or their affiliate churches. Minors under 16 years of age are exempt from the CRC.

The CRC's are to be sent to the church to the attention of the Pastor. If there is no criminal record of any sort, the volunteer may be considered for ongoing service in the church.

If there is a record or information which raises some concern, the designated ministry leader and the pastor in charge of the volunteer will meet to discuss the matter.

If the offense is other than child or sexual abuse, the volunteer may proceed with ministry in the church provided both the pastor and the ministry leader involved agree. The following are criteria to consider when evaluating the information:

- *the number and type of convictions*
- *the age and circumstances of the offender at the time of the offense*
- *the length of time between past criminal activity and the present*
- *the conduct and circumstances of the individual since the offense*
- *the likelihood of the individual repeating the offense*

If the offense is related to abuse of children or of a sexual nature, the volunteer may not be involved in ministry with children on behalf of The Independent Assemblies of God International (Canada) or any of its affiliate churches..

The information contained in the CRC's is considered strictly confidential. Only the affected pastor, his supervisor, and other appropriate senior staff of the church can be privy to the information. The Board of Elders will be consulted for their approval only in the event of disagreement.

Approval Process

- All Ministry Leaders must be approved by the Director of the department involved.
- Approved volunteers will have completed a screening process which includes:
 - a) Regular attendance at this church for at least six months, or having been received into membership, and
 - b) Completing a Ministry Volunteer Application Form, and
 - c) An interview.
- All forms will be kept indefinitely.
- If any current volunteer has a criminal conviction or has plead guilty to sexual or child abuse, that individual must be sensitively relieved of any duties in working with youth or children.
- All current volunteers must complete a Ministry Volunteer Application Form.

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What kinds of criminal convictions disqualify an individual for youth work in *The Independent Assemblies of God International (Canada)* or an affiliated church?

A criminal conviction for a sexual offense involving a minor would certainly disqualify an applicant. In the case of pedophilic behaviour (molestation of a pre-adolescent child) such a conviction should disqualify an individual no matter how long ago it occurred (because of the virtual impossibility that such a condition can be "cured"). Other automatic disqualifiers would include incest, rape, assaults involving minors, murder, kidnapping, child pornography, sodomy, and the physical abuse of a minor.

Should religious conversion make a difference for a youth worker who has been guilty of child molestation in the past?

Occasionally, such persons freely admit to a prior incident, but insist that they have since had a conversion experience and that they now present no risk whatever. The safest course would be to encourage such an individual to work in the church, but in a position not involving access to children or youth. This is a reasonable accommodation of the individual's desire to serve *The Independent Assemblies of God International (Canada)* or an affiliated church. Any church that permits such an individual to work with children or youth, on the basis of the professed religious conversion, will have a virtually indefensible position should another incident of molestation occur. A defense – that the molester claimed to have been converted – would likely be viewed with derision by a civil court. Putting a known child molester in a position involving access to children is taking an enormous risk.



Chapter 6

Incident Reporting Procedures

If you have any concerns regarding the safety of a child, you should report to your ministry Pastor. He will then work with you in contacting the appropriate child protection agency. The pastor will ensure the church's legal advisor is contacted. Where a pastor is involved in the allegation, the Independent Assemblies of God District Office will also be advised.

Any person who has reasonable grounds to believe that a child (or children) is in need of protection is legally required to report the matter to a social worker in the local office of the Ministry for Children and Families. A person who knowingly fails to report in these circumstances is in violation of the law and may be found to have committed an offense. (Please refer to the "Understanding Child Abuse" section earlier in this document.)

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

Historical abuse or neglect, that is, abuse or neglect which occurred in the not very recent past, must be reported wherever there are reasonable grounds to believe that a child may be in need of 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 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 abuser is in a position of trust concerning children, such as a teaching position.

Discuss Suspicious Behaviour Immediately

Any inappropriate conduct or relationships between adult volunteer workers and a youth or a child must be confronted immediately and investigated. Prompt warnings must be issued when appropriate, and the situation monitored very closely. The adult worker's services should be terminated immediately for continued violation of sufficient gravity. Ministry Leaders should note when a youth or child appears aloof or withdrawn, or exhibits a marked personality change. This may indicate a problem that deserves attention.

Some conduct just deserves an initial comment.

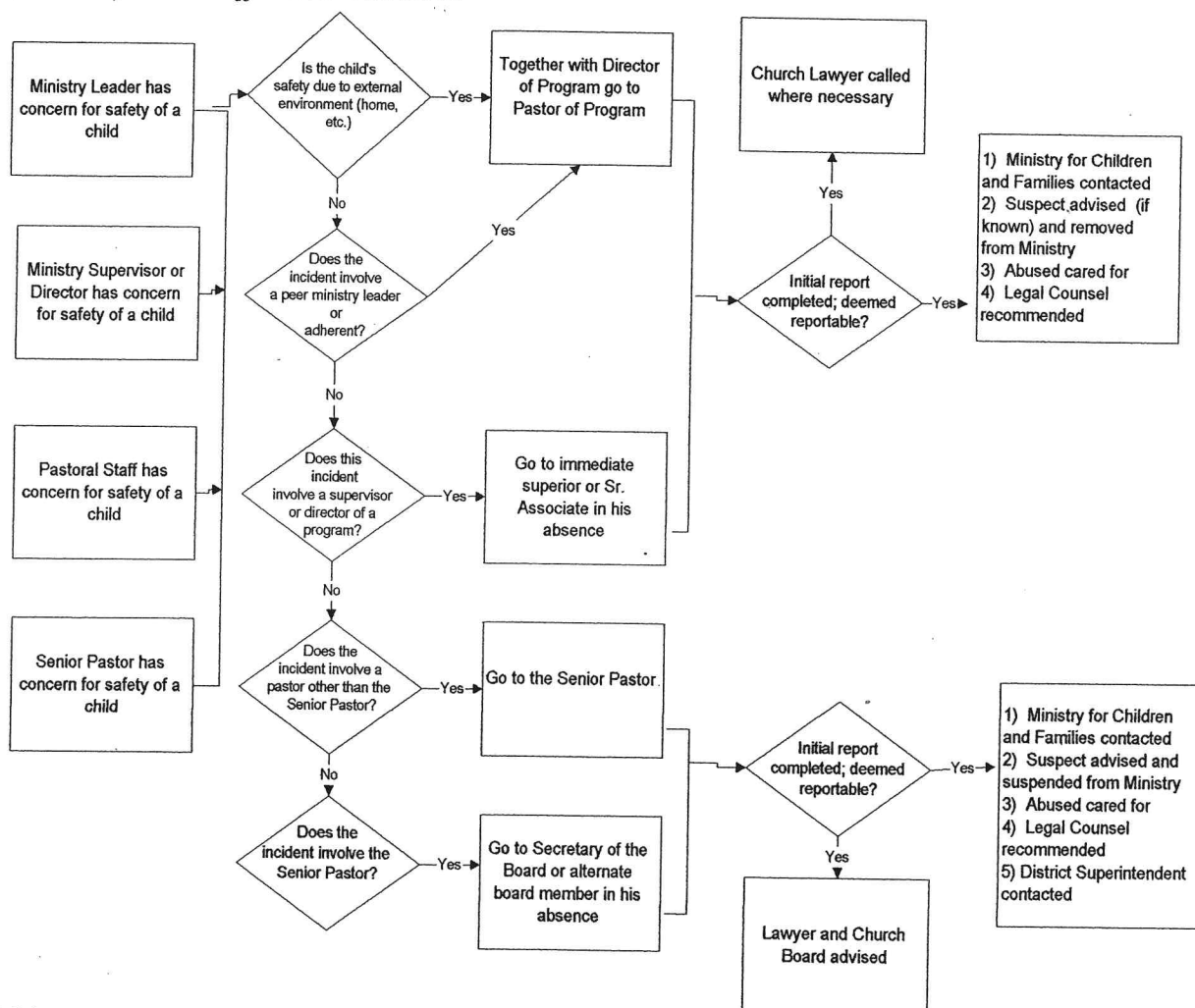
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When an allegation occurs

In the case of an actual allegation, follow these guidelines:

- Document all your efforts at handling the incident.
- Report the incident immediately to the Senior Pastor or his designate who may in turn draw in the church's lawyer if required. Do not try to handle this without professional outside assistance. The accused should also consider legal counsel.

The schematic drawing below illustrates the Reporting Lines of Communication for any case of suspected Child Abuse at *The Independent Assemblies of God International (Canada)* and its affiliated churches:



This process must be implemented as soon as possible after the allegation comes to light. (within one hour is advised)

IMPORTANT:

As soon as possible after the incident comes to your attention:

- **Contact the local Children's Aid Society. Do not attempt an in-depth investigation. This should be left to professionals who are familiar with these cases.**

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- Do not prejudge the situation, but take the allegations seriously and reach out to the victim and the victim's family. Showing care and support help to prevent further hurt. Extend whatever pastoral resources are needed. Remember that the care and safety of the victim is the first priority. In some situations, churches have responded in a negative or non-supportive manner to the alleged victim. This can increase the anger and pain of the victim and the victim's family. Future reconciliation will be more difficult. The possibility of damaging litigation increases.
- Treat the accused with dignity and support. If the accused is a church worker, that person should be relieved temporarily of his or her duties until the investigation is finished. If the person is a paid employee, arrangements should be made to either maintain or suspend his or her income until the allegations are cleared or substantiated.

Confidentiality

In these matters it is important to keep the information restricted to those who need to be advised, therefore, all suspicions of abuse should be directed only to the pastor. It is the responsibility of the pastoral staff to contact the local office of the Ministry for Children and Families.

The only claim of confidentiality which overrides the legal duty to report is solicitor-client privilege. Thus, 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.

Responding to the Child

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

Protection from Liability

Church personnel are required to immediately report to the Children's Aid Society, any suspected case of child abuse. It is not a breach of confidence between church personnel and the child involved. No person is personally liable for anything done or omitted in good faith in the exercise of this responsibility. As church leaders, we are accountable to God to protect His little ones. Although it is our desire to protect the parents as much as legally possible from undue interference by outside authorities into their family, the protection of children from abuse is even more important. We want to follow the principles of submitting to governing authorities (Romans 13:1 ff) while at the same time helping parents to exercise child discipline that is consistent with the Scriptures, and in the best interest of the children.

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

- the child's current state of health;
- their sense of safety and their views of abuse
- previous abuse, neglect, or harm; and
- the ability of the parent(s) to care for and protect the child.

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

When a Ministry Leader receives a request for information regarding a child attending our facility, the following process should be followed at all times to assure the health and safety of the child in your care.

- A. Any request from a child protection social worker should be in person and the protection worker should carry and show you photo ID.
- B. On the occasions where there is an urgency and the child protection social worker is unable to visit the facility and show photo ID, the protection social worker may telephone you from their office.
 - The social worker is to identify him/herself
 - They are to explain the information they are requesting and the process you are to follow. They WILL NOT ask for information at this time. You are NOT to give information at this time
 - The social worker will give you their name and their office phone number
 - You will check the number given with the phone number of the local offices listed in this chapter to make sure they match
 - You may telephone the district supervisor of child protection to make sure this is a legitimate request.
 - You will then call the number given by the social worker. At that time the social worker will ask for the information needed.
 - You will provide the necessary information
 - You will then ask to be told what happens. This is very important. It becomes extremely important if the child continues to attend our facility.
- C. It is possible that a protection social worker may call from their cell phone. This is the least acceptable form of requesting information from a caregiver, follow the exact same process as a request by telephone with one additional stipulation:

If it is after hours and the office cannot be contacted or the cell number confirmed, the caregiver is not to give out any information. They can request the social worker appear at the church with photo ID.

- D. No information is to be given out if the request is from a pay phone, or for any other type of request.

Who Must Report

Any person who has reasonable grounds to believe that a child (or children) is in need of protection is legally required to report the matter as outlined in this document. A person who knowingly fails to report in these circumstances is in violation of the law and may be found to have committed an offense.

For working definitions of abuse and neglect, see the "Understanding Child Abuse" section found in Chapter 2.

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Social workers designated to receive reports are trained to investigate and assess the need for intervention. Other professionals must not assume this function. A professional who does so and fails to report commits an offense. The Act protects an individual when a report is made. No action would be taken against a person making a report unless it is made maliciously or without reasonable grounds for the belief.

Report Follow-Up

A confidential written report (See Appendix 2B) with conclusions and action taken should always be made by the pastor following a child abuse report. These reports should be kept in a confidential personnel file.

Response to Allegations of Abuse

Be Prepared in Advance

Realistically, no practical prevention strategy is 100 percent effective. An accusation of child sexual abuse may occur in any church. *The Independent Assemblies of God International (Canada)* has a premeditated plan or strategy to respond to sexual abuse allegations. The church should not try to navigate a crisis situation without a compass to guide it. Wrong actions can multiply the pain and liability inherent in an abuse case.

An effective response strategy recognizes the following underlying principles:

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

Records

Always have adequate records of workers' applications, references, and screening forms. They should be up-to-date and accessible. Records are to be kept indefinitely.

Spokesperson

The senior pastor or his designate will be the spokesperson for the church. He will speak to the media and the congregation regarding the matter in a discreet, informed, truthful, and diplomatic way. (Often, the media interviews several church leaders who have never given any consideration to responding to such inquiries. In such cases, conflicting and contradictory statements can abound, and the public will develop a negative impression of the church. This is avoided when only one person is designated to speak for the church in such cases).

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Position Statement

In an allegation of abuse, the statement below is to be used for a public response until all of the facts are uncovered and the case reviewed:

"It is always tragic when children are abused or exploited. The Independent Assemblies of God International (Canada) is aware of the ever growing nature of child abuse. We have taken careful precautions to protect the children entrusted to our care. We are distressed by any accusation of child abuse. We will do everything in our power to address any needs in this situation. For the welfare of those involved, all information has been directed to the (insert name of appropriate agencies and authorities)."

This is a clear position statement of *The Independent Assemblies of God International (Canada)* regarding child sexual abuse. The policies and established safeguards are included. Having a carefully prepared statement is far superior to making no comment.

This is an opportunity to influence public opinion positively by emphasizing an awareness of the problem of child abuse, a concern for victims, and the extensive steps *The Independent Assemblies of God International (Canada)* has taken to reduce the risk and provide a safe environment for children. It lets the media know that *The Independent Assemblies of God International (Canada)* takes the risk of child abuse seriously, and that we have acted responsibly. This is not the time for silence or "no comment." We will not surrender the pulpit to those who will criticize and condemn the church.

The Independent Assemblies of God International (Canada) and its affiliated churches will not engage in denial, minimization, or blame.

Often when confronted with an allegation of abuse, a church may respond in one or more of the following ways:

- Deny that the incident occurred, despite clear evidence to the contrary
- Acknowledge that the incident occurred, but minimize it. For example, a church leader may say, "It only happened once," or, "It wasn't that serious".
- Blame the victim or, the victim's family.

These responses are all inappropriate and are to be avoided.

Don't be Accusatory

Avoid spelling out the details of an accusation in a public interview.

Use a Lawyer

Always have the church's lawyer present while answering any investigative questions from the police or social service agencies. The accused should follow the same procedure with their lawyer.

Chapter 7

Implementation Procedures

The topic of child abuse and this Prevention Plan will create a variety of reactions among congregational members. Many will be in favor of the concept. Others will have questions and reservations. It is important for leadership to continually provide prospective leaders and vested interest groups the need for such a policy then give them opportunities for providing feedback. The topic can be presented in Leadership Seminars and Sunday or mid-week Adult classes. Staff members or other Ministry Leaders will be available to answer concerns and provide specific answers about this particular aspect of the church's policies.

Presenting this Policy

The following key points should be made:

- Child sexual abuse can happen in our church.
- One incident can devastate a child, a family, and the church.
- The legal liabilities can be enormous.
- Church leaders may be held liable.
- A prevention program can reduce risk through relatively simple procedures.

It is important to periodically inform the congregation of the key issues pertaining to child sexual abuse and why a decision was made to establish a prevention plan. This will continue to nurture an emotional commitment within our membership to maintain a safe church environment for all children and youth.

The climate in these presentations should not be one of sober reflection but of hope. You want the people to realize that *The Independent Assemblies of God International (Canada)* is taking action to minister to this need. The focus should be upon the great responsibility God has given to us to care for our children. Scripture verses might be used such as the following: Psalm 78:1-6; Psalm 127; Psalm 46: 1, 6; 2 Samuel 13; Matthew 18:1-6; Matthew 18:10; Luke 18:15-17; Ephesians 5:11-13.

Monitoring of Policy

Department Heads and/or ministry leaders should thoroughly review these policies and procedures as part of their pre-fall program planning.

After the initial emphasis on the program wanes, workers may begin to ignore basic policies. For example, the Two Adult Rule may become routinely neglected. Attention must be given to periodic monitoring that examines the following:

- Has each department trained its workers regarding these policies?
- Are workers following the required policies and guidelines?
- What obstacles exist in complying with the policies?
- What is the level of cooperation?

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- Do sufficient materials exist for training and information?
- Are the policies printed and available?

Thoroughly discuss each policy and procedure with your department heads and/or ministry leaders. Work through all concerns. If problems exist in the policies, they should be brought to the attention of the (insert designated person). Consider revisions, but changes must not sacrifice the integrity of the program. Work at developing a sense of unity before educating workers and volunteers. Also, work with the Provincial authorities by having them review the policy to ensure completeness and legal compliance.

Educate Workers and Volunteers

Routines must be established for the training of all new workers who serve the church. Nursery workers fall into a category that we will consider separately.

A. Future Workers

Often, new workers begin together as a group at the start of a new quarter or educational period. Sometimes, however, a new worker becomes active after a program has already begun. A plan must exist to provide training for all workers, regardless of when they begin. Begin with a new member orientation class. All church members should be aware of basic policies concerning working with youth and children.

Group training will occur at the start of each new program year. Individuals who begin at a later date should meet with a designated person to review the policies and procedures and to complete the screening form. These members should read the policy manual.

B. Annual Training/ Additional Classes

A regularly scheduled annual training program will be offered each Fall as school begins and church programs gear up for the new church year. Additional sessions will be scheduled as required. This will all be co-ordinated by the Pastor and the Christian Education Department.

MY MINISTRY COVENANT THE MEANING OF THIS COVENANT:

I understand that a covenant is a promise, that **it is not** merely a mutual acquaintance but a **commitment** to responsibility and action.

Acknowledgment of WHAT MY MINISTRY LOOKS LIKE AT *The Independent Assemblies of God International (Canada)*

Here at *The Independent Assemblies of God International (Canada)*, we believe that ANY PERSON WHO PARTICIPATES IN ANY FORM OF SERVICE TO THIS FELLOWSHIP, NO MATTER HOW MENIAL IT MAY APPEAR TO BE, IS INVOLVED IN MINISTRY LEADERSHIP. WE FURTHER BELIEVE THAT God intended THESE MINISTRIES be carried out in the spirit of a servant. Although our talents, personalities, and gifts may vary, Scripture clearly teaches a leadership style that is uniquely Christian. It has been given to us by the Lord of the Church. Jesus has demonstrated this leadership style, and commanded us to do likewise.

"Do nothing from selfish or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, being made in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross." Phil. 2:3-8 (NAS)

Servant Leadership is much more than a leadership style we act out and master like other management styles. Servant leadership begins with the heart, with our attitude, and with our motives. A servant-leader can be characterized by submission, love, compassion, persistence in the pursuit of God's will, and self-sacrifice. Reflections from Scripture on Servanthood: *John 17, Phil. 2:3-8, John 6:38-40, John 15:12-13, 1 Corinthians 13*

MY QUALIFICATIONS FOR MINISTRY AT *The Independent Assemblies of God International (Canada):*

A life that qualifies FOR MINISTRY LEADERSHIP in *The Independent Assemblies of God International (Canada)* exhibits personal morality and character consistent with the Bible. While recognizing that grace abounds in our experience with Christ, and that in Christ there is forgiveness for moral failure, it is also recognized that biblical principles and standards are what qualify and empower an individual to lead.

Models, not just rhetoric, change people. Our primary mandate in this church is to "make disciples, teaching them to obey" (Matt. 28:19). Modeling Biblical truth and standards give those who are young (in age or faith) an example to follow; an illustration of what it means to be a Christian. They give the church community confidence in the integrity of their church and the quality of our vision.

I ACCEPT the responsibility of MODELING A BIBLICAL LIFESTYLE:

I understand that consistent modeling requires diligence in the pursuit of the Biblical lifestyle. There are some things that we can do to renew ourselves from the inside out. There is a need to 'keep short accounts with God' (confession). We must be sensitive to sin so that we can easily identify it and recognize its presence in our own lives. We must immediately go to God and ask forgiveness. A lifestyle of sin evolves through inattention and insensitivity to God's view of sinful behavior.

The Biblical lifestyle is both a life of participating and a life of abstaining. In participating, we are to fully involve him/herself in the principles and, when appropriate, the programs of our church.

Abstaining is also considered part of the Biblical lifestyle. Abstaining from what the Bible refers to as acts of the sinful nature, means not participating in an activity that is harmful to both your personal welfare and that of the church. A list of some acts of the sinful nature are as follows:

Adultery, cohabitation that includes physical intimacy and/or negatively impacts the church as a result of the appearance of evil, occultic practices, dissensions/factions, drunkenness, lesbian or homosexual activity, criminal activity, any sexual abuse, and/or any behaviour that is deemed to be detrimental to the purposes of the church.

By no means is the above list a comprehensive representation of acts that would require disciplinary attention. We are to abstain from ANY ACT OR ATTITUDE that is counter-productive to the purposes of the church or its ministries.

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COVENANT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

Having received Christ as my Lord and Savior, and in recognition of God's covenants toward us, I understand and agree to the content of this Ministry Covenant. I resolve to minister within the church and within the world as a servant of Jesus Christ, under God, and according to Scripture. The following statements help to further define my commitment:

I. I will protect the unity of my church

- by acting in love toward other members
- by refusing to gossip
- by following the leaders
- by being supportive of *The Independent Assemblies of God International (Canada)*'s Statement of Faith
- by complying with *The Independent Assemblies of God International (Canada)*'s Constitution and By-laws.

"So let us concentrate on the things which make for harmony, and on the growth of our fellowship together." (Rom. 14:19)

"Have a sincere love for other believers; love one another earnestly with all your heart." (1 Peter 1:22)

"Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs." (Eph. 4:29)

"Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be no advantage to you." (Heb. 13:17)

II. I will share the growth of my church

- by praying for its growth
- by inviting the unchurched to attend
- by warmly welcoming those who visit.

"To the church – We always thank God for you and pray for you constantly." (1 Thess. 1:1-2)

"The Master said to the servant, 'Go out to the roads and country lanes, and urge the people there to come so my house will be full'" (Luke 14:23)

"So, warmly welcome each other into the church, just as Christ has warmly welcomed you; then God will be glorified." (Rom. 15:7)

III. I will serve the ministry of my church

- by discovering my gifts and talents
- by actively involving myself in ministry
- by being equipped to serve by my pastors
- by developing a servant's heart
- by ministering in cooperation with others in the Body of Christ
- by supporting, through prayer and affirmation, others' gifts and ministries.

"Serve one another with the particular gifts God has given each of you" (1 Peter 4:10)

"God gave... some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the Body of Christ may be built up." (Eph. 4:11-12)

"Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus; Who... [took on] the very nature of a servant." (Phil. 2:3-4, 7)

IV. I will support the testimony of my church

- by attending faithfully
- by living a godly life (applying Biblical principles in all aspects of my life)
- by keeping a regular, personal quiet time of Bible reading and prayer and regularly confessing my sins before God
- by giving regularly
- by abstaining from any act or attitude that is counter-productive to the purposes of the church or its ministries.

"Let us not give up meeting together ... but let us encourage one another." (Heb. 10:25)

"Whatever happens, make sure that your everyday life is worthy of the gospel of Christ." (Phil. 1:27)

"Each one of you, on the first day of each week, should set aside a specific sum of money in proportion to what you have earned and use it for the offering." (1 Cor. 16:2)

"A tenth of [all your] produce ... is the Lord's and is holy." (Lev. 27:30)

I understand that *The Independent Assemblies of God International (Canada)* is responsible for the welfare of any person entrusted to my care, and thus, I will co-operate fully with the staff in the fulfillment of my duties and will keep all information I encounter in my role as a Ministry Leader, confidential. If, at any time, I find that for any reason I am unable to support the policies, procedures, or doctrines of *The Independent Assemblies of God International (Canada)*, I will gracefully and quietly resign my position.

If I fail to live a life consistent with God's word so that my witness, the reputation of the Name of Christ and / or the integrity of *The Independent Assemblies of God International (Canada)* is compromised, I will withdraw from my position of ministry and submit to a process of restoration.

Name: (Please Print): _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____

DISCIPLINE AND RESTORATION OF MINISTRY LEADERS

All who are involved in Ministry Leadership must practice what they confess with their mouths. Anyone who fails to model and exemplify a lifestyle consistent with God's Word so that the integrity and testimony of the church is undermined, will be subject to a process of discipline. The paramount concern in any disciplinary action must be the restoration of the reputation and integrity of the name of Christ as represented through the ministry of *The Independent Assemblies of God International (Canada)*, and the restoration of the person under discipline to a full and complete fellowship in the body.

The Senior Pastor and/or his designate will be primarily responsible for the consistent and adequate application of the discipline and restoration. Generally, anyone who breaches a standard which significantly impacts his or her personal testimony and the corporate reputation of *The Independent Assemblies of God International (Canada)* will be asked to submit his/her resignation from ministry leadership and will remain inactive in ministry for a minimum of one year. This year may be extended upon the counsel of the Senior Pastor and/or his designate.

Guiding Principles in the Discipline of Ministry Leaders

The church is spoken of as a body with each member contributing to its overall success and health (1 Cor. 12). When one part of the body is infected or injured by sin or by being sinned against, a restorative process needs to occur so that full health and strength may be regained.

In a healthy church, the restoring of a sinning ministry leader should be a quiet and normative process. It calls for each of us to care and to love enough to speak to someone who is sinning. Frequently, this is all that will be required. There are times, however, when the process of accountability goes beyond a private calling to account or a gentle admonition. In 1 Cor. 5, Paul further extends the process of accountability beyond the realm of interpersonal offenses to behaviours or attitudes which are an offense against the testimony and integrity of the entire church and the name of Jesus Christ. When the offense is interpersonal in nature, and yet resistance occurs and sin persists, the health of the body, the honour of the name of Christ, and obedience to Christ requires that others become involved in the restorative process. The primary instruction in Scripture on this process is found in Matthew 18:15-20. (For Scriptural listings of sins see Mark 7:21-22; Romans 16:17; Gal. 5:19-21; II Tim. 3:1-5).

As a local church, *The Independent Assemblies of God International (Canada)* is under the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ and is, therefore, called upon by Him to submit to the authority of local government (Romans 13:1-7). We will act in accordance with all government laws and regulations within the bounds of Scripture.

REPORT FORM SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE
--

DATE: _____

NAME OF CHILD _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE NUMBER: _____

NAME OF PERSON FILING REPORT: _____

NAME OF PERSON RECEIVING REPORT: _____

Nature of suspected abuse : (Physical, sexual, emotional, neglect): _____

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

Action taken: (Including date and time): _____

The above information will serve as a guide and will be necessary if a formal report is filed with the police or appropriate government agency. All information received is to be kept **STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL**.

Signed: _____ Signed: _____
(Person Reporting) (Pastor)

The Independent Assemblies of God International (Canada)
1211 Lancaster Street
London, Ontario N5V 2L4

FOLLOW-UP REPORT SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE
--

NAME OF CHILD: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE NUMBER: _____

NAME OF PERSON WHO FILED INITIAL REPORT: _____

NAME OF PERSON RECEIVING REPORT: _____

CONCLUSIONS: _____

Action taken: (Including date and time):

The above information will serve as a guide and will be necessary if a formal report is filed with the police or appropriate government agency. All information received is to be kept **STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL**.

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Pastor)

The Independent Assemblies of God International (Canada)

1211 Lancaster Street
London, Ontario N5V 2L4

WAIVER & MEDICAL RELEASE FORM

Field Trips and Special Events

Activity: _____ Date: _____

Chaperones: _____

Name of Child: _____ Age: _____

Address: _____ Pc: _____

Phone: _____ School: _____

Does your child have any severe allergies? (bee stings, food, penicillin, other drugs) YES _____ NO _____

If yes, please explain: _____

Does your child have any life-threatening allergies? YES _____ NO _____

If yes, please explain: _____

Is your child bringing any medication with him or her? (Antibiotics, ventilator, Ritalin) YES _____ NO _____

If yes, please explain: _____

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

If yes, please explain: _____

Precautions are taken for the safety and health of your child, but in the event of accident or sickness, *The Independent Assemblies of God International (Canada)* are hereby released from any liability. In the event that your child requires special medication, x-rays, or treatment, the parents/guardians will be notified immediately.

Your child must be covered by Provincial Health Insurance or equivalent medical insurance.

Provincial Health Insurance Number: _____

Name of Family Physician: _____ Physician's Phone Number: _____

Parent/Guardian's Signature:

Date:

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Appendix 2D

WAIVER & MEDICAL RELEASE FORM Overnight Events

Activity: _____ Date: _____

Chaperones: _____

Name of Child _____ Age _____

Address _____ Pc _____

Phone _____ School _____

Does your child have any severe allergies? (bee stings, food, penicillin, other drugs) YES _____ NO _____
If yes, please explain: _____

Does your child have any life-threatening allergies? YES _____ NO _____
If yes, please explain: _____

Is your child bringing any medication with him or her? (Antibiotics, ventilator, Ritalin) YES _____ NO _____
If Yes, please explain: _____

Does your child have any physical, emotional, mental or behavioral concerns or limitations that our staff should be aware of?
YES _____ NO _____
If yes, please explain: _____

Check if your child currently, or within the last three months, has had any of the following:

Appendicitis	Ear Infection	Hay Fever	Mumps
Asthma Epilepsy	Hepatitis	Severe Stomach Ache	Tonsillitis
Bedwetting	Diabetes	Measles (Red)	Sinusitis
Chicken Pox	Fainting	Measles (German)	Other

Date of last Tetanus shot: _____

Precautions are taken for the safety and health of your child, but in the event of accident or sickness, *The Independent Assemblies of God International (Canada)*, its staff, and its volunteers are hereby released from any liability.

In the event that your child requires special medication, x-rays or treatment, the parents/guardians will be notified immediately.

In case of surgical emergency, I hereby give permissions to the physician selected by *The Independent Assemblies of God International (Canada)*, to hospitalize, secure proper treatment for, and to order injection, anesthesia or surgery for my child as named above.

Your child must be covered by Provincial Health Insurance or equivalent medical insurance.

Provincial Health Insurance Number _____

Name of Family Physician _____

Physician's Phone Number _____

Parent/Guardian's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix 3A

**MINISTRY LEADERSHIP VOLUNTEER
APPLICATION FORM
FOR MINISTRIES TO CHILDREN & YOUTH**

(INFORMATION RECEIVED IS STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL)

The Independent Assemblies of God International (Canada)

1211 Lancaster Street
London, Ontario N5V 2L4

In our desire to reduce the risk of abuse within our church ministries, we believe this information is necessary to protect our children and to protect our volunteers. Thank you in advance for your understanding.

Personal Information

Full Name: _____ Male ____ Female ____

Phone Number (Res.) _____ (Bus.) _____

Address _____ Pc _____

e-mail Address _____

Single ____ Married ____ Engaged ____ Separated ____

Divorced ____ Remarried ____ Widow/widower ____ Date of Birth _____

Spouse's Name _____

Occupation and/or Employer: _____

Hobbies, Interests or Skills: _____

Spiritual History

How long have you been affiliated with the *The Independent Assemblies of God International (Canada)*? _____

Member? Yes__ No__
When did you accept Christ as your Savior? _____

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Have you been baptized in water? Yes ____ No ____

-2-

Christian Education History

Have you completed any Christian Education Teacher Certification courses?

If yes, give details _____

Please list any courses and/or training you may have taken that would particularly equip you for Christian Ministry.

Church Attendance Background

Churches I have attended in the last five years are as follows:

1. Name of Church _____ Phone No. _____

Address _____

Dates Attended _____ Member or Adherent _____

2. Name of Church _____ Phone No. _____

Address _____

Dates Attended _____ Member or Adherent _____

Present and Previous Ministry Experience:

1. Name of Church _____

Dates and Description of Ministry _____

Pastor or Ministry Supervisor _____ Ph. Number _____

2. Name of Church _____

Dates and Description of Ministry _____

Pastor or Ministry Supervisor _____ Ph. Number _____

3. Name of Church _____

Dates and Description of Ministry _____

Pastor or Ministry Supervisor _____ Ph. Number _____

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Lifestyle

*In order to provide a safe and secure environment for our children, we believe it is necessary to include the following questions as part of our application process. All information will be kept strictly confidential. (Police may access this information under warrant, if requested.) Answering "yes" to any of the questions may not necessarily preclude your involvement in ministry. **A meeting will be arranged with a Pastor so that you may discuss the circumstances.** Thank you in advance for your understanding.*

If any of the following circumstances apply to you, please check here _____

- Have been convicted of a criminal offense involving children.
- Have been convicted of a sexually related crime.
- Have been convicted of an abuse-related crime.
- Have been hospitalized or treated for alcohol or substance abuse.
- Have any communicable disease.
- Currently in treatment for any form of mental illness.

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

References

Please provide the names of three individuals, excluding relatives, who could provide a reference for you. If you are a minor, include the name of a parent and teacher. If possible, include at least one reference from inside the church.

1. Name of Reference _____

Address _____ Phone _____

2. Name of Reference _____

Address _____ Phone _____

3. Name of Reference _____

Address _____ Phone _____

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Ministry Profile

In answering the following, please don't be too humble as the purpose of this section is for you to declare your strengths so that your skills will be put to the best use possible.

Mark the areas in which you desire to:

- **oversee** (put an "O" in the box),
- **assist** (put an "A" in the box),
- **receive training** (put a "T" in the box)

- ☐ Children's Church
- ☐ Children's S.S. (preschool)
- ☐ Children's S.S. (elementary)
- ☐ Youth Sunday School
- ☐ Youth Midweek Promotions/Contests
- ☐ Kid's Club
- ☐ Crafts

- ☐ Administration/Office
- ☐ Other _____

Do not hesitate to mark more than one area with the same letter. You can show your preference by placing a number with the letter by your preference.

Applicant's Statement

I hereby acknowledge that the information contained in this application for ministry is correct to the best of my knowledge. I authorize any references or churches listed in this application to give you any information they may have regarding my character and fitness for children's ministry, and I release all such references from liability for any damage that may result from furnishing such evaluation to you. I also grant my permission for The Independent Assemblies of God International (Canada) to perform a personal Criminal Record Check for the purpose of my protection against any false allegations and for the protection of those I serve. I consent to such an investigation with the understanding that the results will be kept in extreme confidentiality. I further agree to adhere to the Child Protection Policy as adopted by The Independent Assemblies of God International (Canada).

(Applicant's Name - Please Print)

(Date)

(Signature)

Employee/Volunteer Initial Clearance Checklist
--

- ☐ Application for Ministries to Children & Youth completed and signed
- ☐ Application/instructions for Criminal Record Check given to applicant
- ☐ Reference Contact Form completed and signed; file copy for all contacts
- ☐ Criminal Records Report completed and received from authorities
- ☐ Interview Form completed and signed
- ☐ Driver's Record Check (if required) received
- ☐ All of the above in order, reviewed, and cleared for applicant to serve in the Children's and Youth ministries at The Independent Assemblies of God International (Canada).

Signature of Pastor or Authorized Department Head: _____

Date: _____

If this cannot be signed at this time because of an unsatisfactory response in any of the above categories, it must be referred to the leader of that department before any further discussion with the applicant.
--

- ☐ I acknowledge receipt of the Plan to Protect.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

- ☐ Training on Policy completed Date: _____

- ☐ First Aid Certification/Documentation on file

- ☐ Photocopied for department records and original copy forwarded to Central File.

The Independent Assemblies of God International (Canada)

1211 Lancaster Street
London, Ontario N5V 2L4