



COUNTRYHILLS CHURCH

Protection Plan Policy 2024

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1. Preamble

Country Hills Church (also referred to as CHC or the Church) recognizes that we are a reflection of God's love to those in our care. We take our responsibility seriously.

Country Hills Church Leadership has a spiritual, moral and legal obligation to provide a secure environment for children, youth, vulnerable adults, and volunteers who participate in our ministries. Child abuse is a criminal offence 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. The emotional, physical and spiritual trauma to victims, the destructive consequences for abusers and 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 aid in the prevention of abuse. These policies are followed by a detailed plan towards creating a safe environment for children, youth, vulnerable adults and those who serve them.

The development and preparation of this document has been undertaken with great care. However, the employees and agents of Country Hills Church are not responsible for any errors contained herein or for consequences that may ensue from use of materials or information contained in this work.

This policy is distributed with the understanding that it does not constitute legal advice. Country Hills Church is strongly encouraged to seek legal counsel as well as counsel from their insurance company who can give written opinion concerning the specifics of their particular situation about policy. This policy is not to be put on Country Hills Church's website, and/or not to be shared or duplicated without express advance written permission from the Protection Team of Country Hills Church.

2. Policy Review

The Policy will be reviewed and audited annually to ensure procedures are updated and/or clarified as needed and the Policy maintains its relevance to applicable provincial Child protection legislation. Any required changes, additions or deletions to the Policy or Plan will be recommended by the Protection Plan Team to the Elders, and if approved, then communicated to the Ministry Leads.



3. Definitions

3.1. Abuse

Abuse refers to an act committed by a parent, caregiver or person in a position of trust (even though he/she may not care for the child on a daily basis) which is not accidental and which harms or threatens to harm a child's physical or mental health, or a child's welfare. Abuse is categorized as being physical, sexual, emotional, verbal, financial, and/or spiritual, and includes neglect, harassment, improper touching and improper discipline.

Physical Abuse: Physical abuse is any deliberate physical force or action that results, or could result, in non-accidental injury. It can include striking, punching, slapping, beating, shaking, burning, biting or any form of assault.

Sexual Abuse: Children under 12 are never considered able to consent to sexual activity. Older children between 12 and 14 are deemed unable to consent to sexual acts except under specific circumstances involving sexual activity with their peers. Young persons between 14 and 18 are protected from sexual exploitation. Their consent is not valid if the person touching them for a sexual purpose is in a position of trust or authority over them or if they are in a relationship of dependency with that person.

Sexual abuse occurs when someone is used for the sexual gratification of an adult or a child 12 years or older under certain circumstances. Coercion (physical, psychological or emotional) is intrinsic to sexual abuse. This is what distinguishes it from sexual exploration with peers. It is against the law to touch a Child for a sexual purpose; to encourage or force a Child to touch another person in a sexual way to encourage or force a Child to participate in any sexual activity; to tell a Child to touch him or herself for an adult's or older Child's sexual purposes.

Sexual abuse of an individual can take many forms. This includes forcible sexual intercourse, exposing private areas, indecent communications, fondling for sexual purposes, watching the individual undress for sexual pleasure, allowing a Child to look at, or performing in pornographic pictures or videos, or engaging in prostitution.

While these are legal parameters for sexual conduct, Country Hills Church views sexual contact of any kind outside of marriage unacceptable based on our Scriptural beliefs.

Emotional Abuse: Emotional abuse happens when a person uses words or actions to control, frighten or isolate someone or take away their self-respect. Emotional abuse is sometimes called psychological abuse. It can include threats, put downs, name calling or insults, constant yelling or criticism, controlling or keeping someone from seeing friends or family, making fun of or preventing someone from practicing their faith or religion, destroying belongings, hurting pets or threatening to do so, and bullying by intimidation or humiliation (including digital and online).



Neglect: Neglect is the failure of those responsible for the care of a minor or vulnerable adult to provide physical, emotional, medical, and educational needs essential for safety and development.

Harassment: Repeated subtle or overt action, particularly by a person in a Position of Trust, which causes the recipient to feel attacked, demeaned, intimidated or manipulated.

Discrimination: Discrimination is differential treatment based on a personal characteristic which has an adverse impact on an individual or group. Examples of personal characteristics include race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, faith or creed, gender, sexual orientation, age, marital status, family status or handicap. Discrimination robs people of their dignity and their ability to fulfil their capabilities. Any person or group can discriminate and any person or group can be the target of discrimination.

Exposure to Domestic Violence: Children who live in homes where a Parent or caretaker is experiencing abuse are commonly referred to as "Child witnesses" or "Children who are witnessing" domestic violence. Children's exposure to domestic violence typically falls into three primary categories; hearing a violent event, being directly involved as an eyewitness, intervening, or being used as a part of a violent event (e.g. being used as a shield against abusive actions and/or experiencing the aftermath of a violent event).

3.2. Other Definitions

Act: the *Child and Family Services Act*, R.S.O.1990, c.C.11, s. 72 (the "Act")

Approved Ministry Volunteer: an adult Volunteer, aged 18 or older, who has successfully completed the recruitment and screening procedures in the Protection Plan of Country Hills Church. In this document the term Approved Ministry Volunteer will refer to Approved Adult Volunteers.

Board: the Board of Directors of Country Hills Church (also known as the Board of Elders).

Child/Children: any individual from birth to Grade 6. Sometimes they will be referred to as infants, toddlers, preschoolers, or tweens.

Church Leadership: the Board of Directors and staff of Country Hills Church.

Hallway Helper: a fully approved Approved Ministry Volunteer who will circulate throughout the facility, periodically checking from room to room, assisting with washroom guidelines and in the classrooms where necessary, as well as directing and helping parents/guests.

Ministry Coordinator: a fully approved Approved Ministry Volunteer who gives leadership to a section of a ministry under the leadership of a Ministry Lead (such as Nursery Coordinator under the Family Ministries Lead)



Ministry Lead: a volunteer or staff member who has successfully completed the recruitment and screening procedures in the Protection Plan of Country Hills Church and has been given the leadership responsibility over an entire ministry area (such as a Lead Pastor or a Family Ministry Pastor).

Occasional Observer: an individual who visits and observes a ministry program on rare occasions. An Occasional Observer may be the parent or guardian of a child, a prospective volunteer, or a volunteer in the process of being approved under the Protection Plan or other approved visitor. Occasional observers do not need to be screened and trained, however their access to minors will be limited. Occasional Observers will never be placed in a position of trust with children who are not their own. An Occasional Observer must be clearly identified as such with a nametag or approved clothing.

Parent: for the purposes of this document Parent will refer to a child's parent or legal guardian.

PIPEDA: The ***Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act*** (abbreviated **PIPEDA** or **PIPED Act**) is a Federal law relating to data privacy. It governs how private-sector organizations collect, use, and disclose personal information in the course of commercial business. In addition, the Act contains various provisions to facilitate the use of electronic documents.

Personal Support Worker: an adult accompanying and caring for a vulnerable individual attending a church activity who is personally hired and screened by the Child or Youth's parent/guardian. This worker would only be responsible for the individual they are accompanying and would not be placed in a position of trust over any other child, youth or vulnerable person attending the event.

Position of Trust: a position of trust is any position that requires its holder to enjoy the trust of those who elected or chose the holder. It includes any role wherein parents and/or guardians have entrusted their loved one to your care, for example teachers, helpers, assistants, leaders, etc. Violation of Position of Trust, in legal terms, refers to a situation where one person holds a position of authority over another person and uses that position to his or her advantage to commit a crime, or to cause harm in some way. Liability for abuse of this position is not limited to criminal prosecution, and in some cases, a civil lawsuit may be brought as well.

Protection Plan Team: a committee that reports to the Board of Elders, formed to oversee the Protection Plan Policies and Procedures at Country Hills Church. The Protection Plan Team acts as a Screening Committee for Protection Plan needs.

Vulnerable Adult: a person who is 18 years of age or older, who because of his/her age, a disability, or other circumstances, whether temporary or permanent, is in a position of dependence on others or is otherwise at a greater risk than the general population of being harmed by a person or persons in Positions of Trust or authority relative to him/her. For the



purposes of this document, all care associated with children and youth will be extended also to Vulnerable Adults.

Youth: any individual from grade 7 – 12 and under the age of 18.

Youth Volunteer: A volunteer, aged 12 to 17 years old, who has successfully completed the Youth Volunteer recruitment and screening procedures in the Protection Plan of Country Hills Church. The Youth Volunteer may serve alongside two or more Approved Ministry Volunteers, but never be alone with children or youth while in the role of a volunteer without the presence of at least two Approved Ministry Volunteers. There should be at least a two-year gap between Youth Volunteers and the children they serve. Youth Volunteers are not given full leadership or placed in an unsupervised position of trust over the children they are serving. Youth Volunteers are included in the child count of children to Approved Ministry Volunteer ratios. Sometimes a youth has completed grade 6 but is not yet 12 years old because of where their birthdate falls in the year. In this case, 11-year-olds can apply and be approved to be Youth Volunteers based on their birth year and grade completed.



4. RECRUITING, SCREENING, and SUPERVISION OF VOLUNTEERS

4.1. Process

The Protection Plan Team will oversee the screening of all Country Hills Church Approved Ministry Volunteers. Each member of the Protection Plan Team will submit to all screening guidelines.

All prospective Country Hills Church Approved Ministry Volunteers will submit to the recruitment and screening process managed by a designated member of the Protection Plan Team.

The process to become an Approved Ministry Volunteer covered by the Protection Plan has six steps:

Application Package

- Contact a member of church leadership, Ministry Lead, or member of the Protection Plan Team to receive a Digital Protection Plan Application Package which includes:
- CHC Protection Plan
- Approved Ministry Volunteer Application Form, with Release of Information and Declaration of Intent Form
- Link to the CHC Ministry Personnel Reference Form
- Confidentiality Agreement Form
- Release of Information and Declaration Intent Form
- Instructions to obtain Police Records Check with Vulnerable Sector Search (VSS)

Return Forms and Contact References

- Read the CHC Protection Plan
- Complete the digital Approved Ministry Volunteer Application Form
- Send the link to the CHC Ministry Personnel Reference Form to three unrelated people who will provide you with references. The completed reference forms will be sent directly to the church when the reference fills out the form at the link provided
- The Release of Information and Declaration of Intent forms can be printed off, signed and returned to the church office, or you may sign them at your interview.

Police Check

A prospective Approved Ministry Volunteer must go to the police in their residential region to obtain a Police Check with Vulnerable Sector Search. If you live in the Region of Waterloo, you can apply on-line to the Waterloo Regional Police for the Police Check. It is important to indicate on the request that you will be working with the vulnerable. When the police confirm the Check is ready you will go, with acceptable government-issued identification, to





the Reporting Centre at 150 Maple Grove Road, Cambridge or other WRP designated location, to obtain the police records check with vulnerable sector search document. If you live outside of Waterloo Region, contact your local police station to find out their requirements to obtain the document. Applicants may request multiple copies of the police records check, the Church requires an original copy as received from the police for its records and cannot accept photocopies.

Interview

Once the Team has all your paperwork and references, you will be contacted to arrange a short interview.

Training

The application process includes reading the protection plan document and training. Training is important. You will need to participate in training as part of the volunteer approval process. Volunteers are encouraged to attend training in person annually but are only required to attend in person once every three years once the initial in person training has taken place. In the interim years, refresher training will be available in person and online.

Approval

When all requirements are completed and all checks are clear, the Protection Plan Team will approve the volunteer to start serving at that time. The Board will be notified of the approval of Ministry and Youth Volunteers. The Board retains its right to override any approval and, when applicable, will inform the Protection Plan Team of that action.

4.2. Qualifications for Service

Individuals desiring to work with children, youth, or vulnerable adults must be members of, or have regularly attended, Country Hills Church for at least six months. Reference checks for these individuals must be received from at least two referees who are unrelated to the individual and to each other.

Exceptions to the six-month rule

Individuals who attend another church and who are recommended by someone from Country Hills Church, and individuals who have not attended Country Hills Church for six months, must provide three references, including one from their current or former pastor. When the references and all other requirements are satisfactory and the application approved, the individuals will be assigned to work alongside a Approved Ministry Volunteer that is a member or adherent of Country Hills Church and has attended the Church for at least six months.

Individuals accused, or convicted, or are under the suspicion of crimes against children, or youth or vulnerable adults, or who have been convicted of violent crimes or other relevant crimes, will not have any direct volunteer or Occasional Observer involvement in activities or programs where children, youth, or vulnerable adults are present.



4.3. Required Forms

Approved Ministry Volunteer Application Form

Prospective Volunteers will complete an Approved Ministry Volunteer Application Form and all other documents included in the application package.

Individuals from an organization unknown to Country Hills Church Leadership and who seek to volunteer at the Church must include contact information or a reference from a member of the leadership from their organization.

In accordance with PIPEDA regulations, the Approved Ministry Volunteer Application Form will include the reason for which the information is being collected.

All information collected from applicants will be kept confidential and available only to the Protection Plan Team, Country Hills Church Leadership, or Ministry Leaders

Completed Approved Ministry Volunteer Application Forms and related documents are to be kept on file permanently and in a secure location at the church.

Reference Checks

The Protection Plan Team will act as the Screening Committee and will receive at least two qualitative reference checks for all prospective Approved Ministry Volunteers.

As part of the application form, all prospective Volunteers must sign a “Release of Information and Declaration of Intent” form before reference checks are conducted

References provided to the Church must fit with the acceptable categories for working with the vulnerable sector

The Screening Committee may conduct reference checks by telephone or in person to confirm the suitability and appointment of prospective Approved Ministry Volunteers

Interview

The Protection Plan Team will interview prospective Volunteers in person, or by phone at the Team’s discretion, before giving approval to serve to the prospective volunteers.

Police Records Check with Vulnerable Sector Search

A Police Records Check with Vulnerable Sector Search must be conducted on all Approved Ministry Volunteers 18 years of age and older and needs to be renewed every five years.

Police Records Check with Vulnerable Sector will be kept on file at the Church permanently.

In some cases, during a Police Records Check, the police may require further steps to be cleared (*for example*, fingerprinting) even though no crimes have been committed. This is part of a series of security checks by Police Services to ensure the safety of children and vulnerable adults. In such cases the Church asks for the understanding of any volunteer in process because the approval period will take longer.



If the Police Records Check with Vulnerable Sector Search check is returned “NOT CLEAR”, the prospective candidate will be asked to submit to a Criminal Record Check with fingerprint verification and disclosure and verification of the crimes committed of which he/she has been convicted. Failure to submit an acceptable Record Check will result in the withdrawal of the application to serve.

Individuals cannot be placed in a Position of Trust without a clear Police Records Check with Vulnerable Sector Search.

Training

Abuse prevention education and training are required for all Approved Ministry Volunteers. This training (in person or online) must be completed prior to being placed in a Position of Trust. Training will include components of Country Hills Church Orientation Training and may include more specific training for a given ministry area.

It is preferable that all Approved Ministry Volunteers attend a training event in person before beginning to serve. When this is not possible, they may take training online before beginning to serve, but must attend a training event in person within the first year of service with children, youth, or vulnerable adults.

All Approved Ministry Volunteers must take refresher training annually after initial approval and training which includes:

- Signing a record indicating they have read the Country Hills Protection Plan again
- Watching refresher training online or attending a refresher training event
- Answering a short series of questions
- These records will be kept permanently in their Approved Ministry Volunteer File.
- All Approved Ministry Volunteers will be required to attend a training event in person a minimum of every 3 years.

4.4. Approval

When all has been completed and all checks are clear, the Protection Plan Team will approve the volunteer to start serving at that time.

Approval shall not be granted unless the screening process is complete, carefully reviewed, signed and dated. Approved Ministry Volunteers and Youth Volunteers may begin to serve on the approval of the Protection Plan Team. Volunteers will be contacted by the Protection Plan Team Lead when they are able to begin serving. The Protection Plan Lead will inform the Board of Elders of all new Approved Ministry Volunteers for ratification of the approval.

To avoid the application information becoming out-of-date, the recruitment and screening process must be completed within a three-month period starting from the time the application package is given to the Prospective Volunteer. Applicants who have not fully completed the recruitment and screening process may not begin to serve, and access to children, youth, and vulnerable adults will be restricted.



During the application process a prospective Volunteer may attend as an Occasional Observer of the ministry in which they would like to participate up to a maximum of four times.

4.5. Process of Approval for Personal Support Workers

If the church is unable to provide accommodations and support for individuals with disabilities, personal support workers may accompany the individual to the program.

In accordance with the definition of Personal Support Worker within this policy, the following is the process for parents/guardians to provide a Personal Support Worker in the case of their child requiring one on one support and supervision while attending children's ministry programming at CHC.

1. When parents/guardians personally hire and screen a Personal Support Worker, the parents/guardians will provide:
 - a signed form identifying the support worker as a private hire
 - copies of the criminal record check
 - copies of references conducted.
2. A Personal Support Worker may only take responsibility over the individual they were hired to support and may not supervise any other participants in a program, activity, or event.
3. A Personal Support Worker would wear identification (nametag), identifying them as a Personal Support Worker and not someone in a position of trust. If possible the nametag would have the logo or some other identifying text or graphic from the organization they are working out of (if applicable)
4. All documentation regarding personal support workers and their screening procedures will be kept on file permanently.

4.6. Process of Approval for Youth Volunteers

Although not in a position of trust, Country Hills Church requires Youth Volunteers to go through an application and screening process before they are able to volunteer in Children's Ministry. Parents are encouraged to help their youth complete the steps of the approval process. Parents are also required to sign the Youth Volunteer Application Form, granting their youth permission to volunteer at the church.

The process to become a Youth Volunteer, covered by the Protection Plan has four steps:

Student Volunteer Application Form including Parent/guardian signature granting permission to be a volunteer at Country Hills Church.

References from 2 adults who know the Youth. We understand that many 12-year-olds have not had work experience and may have a difficult time providing references. These references could be a teacher, sports coach, family friend or anyone who can speak to the reliability and suitability of the student to volunteer with children.



Interview by the Protection Plan team. During this interview, the Youth Volunteer may be asked a few questions to demonstrate that they will be a benefit to the area they are volunteering in, and that they understand the expectations and limitations of being a volunteer who is not in a position of trust.

Youth Volunteer Training This training will be done annually, and in – person, and is intended among other things to help the Youth Volunteer understand what they can and cannot do as a volunteer who is not in a position of trust. A Ministry Lead may cover the training material with a Youth Volunteer who has completed all of the other steps in the approval process, if it is at a time when an in – person training event is not scheduled.

4.7. Supervision of Volunteers

Supervision of volunteers is an important step in providing a safe and secure ministry environment. Supervision should include regular checks through classroom windows to ensure things are going well, planned formal and informal visits to a ministry area, and by simply “making rounds”. Supervision is provided on a scheduled frequency as set by the Protection Plan Team and findings from each occasion will be reported to the team.

5. GENERAL SAFETY GUIDELINES

5.1. Architectural Precautions

Architectural precautions have been taken to ensure a safe environment for our children. Even with these precautions in place Approved Ministry Volunteers need clear lines of sight between them and the children they are serving and other Volunteers and/or Hallway Helpers.

Open Door Policy

In any room or area where Approved Ministry Volunteers are in a position of trust there will be 2 Approved Ministry Volunteers present at all times. Where this is not possible due to an emergency, or for other temporary acceptable reasons, the “2 Approved Ministry Volunteer Policy” per area may be waived where the doors into the room or area are left open so that there are clear lines of sight to Approved Ministry Volunteers and children. Approved Ministry Volunteers working with children will not have one-on-one contact or be part of any program with only one Approved Ministry Volunteer behind closed doors. In these circumstances Hallway Helpers will make periodic checks into the rooms or areas with only one Approved Ministry Volunteer during this time. A Hallway Helper may only cover one temporary emergency situation at a time. If there is more than one temporary emergency situation requiring help, another Approved Ministry Volunteer must be found.

Approved Ministry Volunteers will note any architectural obstructions that hinder clear sight lines into a room or area and share that information with the Ministry Lead. Caution should be exercised in these areas. Further renovation suggestions should be made to the Protection Plan Team and submitted to Church Leadership.



The following steps have been included in the design of our facility for safety:

Windows and Doors

Windows in classroom doors allow for easy viewing by parents and supervisors. Sight lines through these windows should remain unobstructed at all times other than when required in a lockdown situation. If the sight lines seem inadequate, the door should remain open.

Child Gates and Half-doors

These barriers are in place in rooms with infants, toddlers, and preschool aged children. These increase lines of sight, and help keep children safely contained in a room or area. In some instances, children are passed over a gate or half-door to awaiting parents to avoid children walking out by themselves. Use of these barriers can facilitate the open-door policy without compromising the safety of the children.



Washrooms

Washrooms are located on the main floor, in the lower - level hallway, and in between the Nursery and Toddler rooms. To maintain safety and to comply with our open-door policy during Children's Ministry programs, all washroom doors will be propped open, and no doors or stalls will ever be locked. Children will be taken to, or permitted to use, the washroom that is closest to the room in which their program is taking place.

Nursery Facilities

The Nursery change/sleeping room has windows in the door to allow for easy supervision, and this door will be left open whenever possible. All electrical outlets will be covered with outlet plug covers unless safety plugs are installed. Furniture and toys must meet safety standards and be cleaned regularly.

Shower and Locker Room Guidelines

Two Approved Ministry Volunteers must be present at the same time in a dressing or locker room while children are showering or changing. Approved Ministry Volunteers must not be alone with children in this setting. Out of respect for the children, and to maintain a high standard of professionalism, Approved Ministry Volunteers will announce their arrival prior to entering a dressing or locker room.

Approved Ministry Volunteers are not permitted to change or shower at the same time as children unless there are individual private changing and shower stalls. Separate facilities should be designated for each gender or, if these are not available, separate showering/changing times will be arranged.

If a child is too young or is unable to dress him/herself, the child should be helped by a parent/guardian or Approved Ministry Volunteer.

- Appropriate facilities should be provided where parents/guardians, and/or Approved Ministry Volunteers can assist children in getting dressed
- If assistance in the dressing room is requested from someone other than a parent or guardian, attendant or child, they must only assist within sight of other volunteers or parents and in a manner where only necessary physical contact occurs
- The use of photographic or video recording devices including cell phones is prohibited in washrooms, dressing or locker rooms at all times.

5.2. Internet and Digital Communications

When Church computers are used in church programs, the computers will be placed in open areas where the screen is easily visible. Users will be held accountable through the use of sign-in/sign-out sheets, and/or a user password. When possible, internet filters will be on each computer to limit access to certain types of content.

The Ministry Lead overseeing a program using computers will ensure that this policy is known and understood by the volunteers and program participants. Country Hills Church



leadership may appoint an individual from time to time to review the browser history as well as the documents downloaded onto the Church computers.

No downloads or software installation can be carried out on any church computers without the express permission of the Ministry Lead and Director of Administration and Finance in advance of the installation.

Relationships between children, youth and screened personnel will be conducted within the parameters set by the Church. Communications outside of scheduled programs should only be done with parental knowledge and, when possible, with the participation of the parent/guardian.

6. HEALTH & SAFETY GUIDELINES

Country Hills Church desires to provide a consistently safe environment. If the church prioritizes a few common sense safety precautions, it will lessen the risk of accidents as well as protect volunteers from potential liabilities.

Risk

- When RISK increases, supervision should also increase
- RISK increases as isolation increases
- RISK increases as accountability and adherence to policies decrease
- RISK increases when there is an imbalance of power, authority, influence and control between a potential abuser and potential victim
- The key to demonstrating due diligence is retaining good documentation

First Aid

Approved Ministry Volunteers are encouraged, but not required, to be certified and trained in first aid, including CPR. The Ministry Lead must inform Approved Ministry Volunteers of any children or youth with severe allergies and help to create a safe atmosphere for them within reasonable parameters.

Illness

An individual, whether child, youth, parent, or volunteer, who is ill and could expose others to illness, should not be permitted to attend a program, or should be kept separated from others. It is at the discretion of the Approved Ministry Volunteers with the consultation of a Ministry Lead or Ministry Coordinator, to allow or decline an individual to attend a program when ill. Factors and symptoms to consider include fever, unusual fatigue, irritability, coughing, sneezing, runny nose and eyes, vomiting, diarrhoea, inflamed mouth and throat, or individuals with a known communicable disease.



Severe Allergies

Parents and guardians are responsible for notifying the church of any known allergies which their children or youth have. This information must be noted on their registration form and updated if the allergies or other medical concern becomes known after the registration is completed.

Notification of severe allergies will be posted in the child's classroom for visibility, including a picture of the child, a list of his or her allergies and typical signs of reaction. Approved Ministry Volunteers assigned to care for the child must be made aware of the allergy and the treatment required, based on the parent's instructions, if a reaction occurs while in the care of the Approved Ministry Volunteers.

Lice

Country Hills Church has a "no nit" policy. This means that, for the sake of the many, we will ask volunteers and children to leave the church program and/or stay home if it is discovered that an individual has lice, live or dead, including the un-hatched "nits" (eggs). This request includes the family members of infected individuals. As a rule, school-aged children will be asked to stay away from church activities until they have been given clearance to return to school. School practice is a good guideline as schools generally are very proactive in checking for lice. It is a good public health practice to stay away from public areas if lice have entered your home and the church reserves the right to request that a reasonable amount of time be given from the treatment to entrance back into the church activities.

If an individual is identified as having lice or nits, the church will take care not to embarrass that individual or the family as much as possible, but the situation must be dealt with to prevent an outbreak. In the event that that individual has been found with lice or nits in a ministry area, the Ministry Lead of that area will inform volunteers and parents whose children may have been exposed to that individual.

Immunizations

Considering the susceptibility and contagious nature of some illnesses and diseases, parents and Approved Ministry Volunteers will disclose to the church if they or their own children have not been immunized against diseases for which immunizations are commonly available.

If there is a breakout of a disease within the church, or when there is a medical advisory:

Parents and volunteers should be notified by the church or Ministry Lead of any kind of break out of a disease or contagious illness

Approved Ministry Volunteers should request that for safety, all children who have not been vaccinated stay away from other children until such time as the break out has been cleared



Any individual who is unvaccinated against the disease or contagious illness or who is showing signs or symptoms of illness should not attend any Country Hills Church program until they have been seen by their doctor and cleared of any disease, or contagious illness

Medications

Approved Ministry Volunteers are not to give or apply any medications including over the counter medications. Physicians should prescribe medication and parents should be responsible for administering all types of medications. The following exceptions may be made:

- The Parent is hospitalized or absent and a designated person is responsible for the direct care of a child.
- Only medications with a doctor's prescription on the bottle will be given or administered. In this case, written parental permission is required and a log of the distributed medication will be kept, signed and dated by the designated administering person.
- Approved Ministry Volunteers are not to give over-the-counter medication without written authorization from a physician, parent, or guardian. Medication should be administered at the discretion of the Parent. Any medication provided will be returned to the Parent or guardian and the incident forms recording the medication distribution will be signed by the Parent.
- Topical medications for diaper changing purposes will be used only when instructed and provided by the Parent or a medical care provider. Approved Ministry Volunteers will adhere to the Washroom Guidelines policy in this document.
- In extreme cases where EpiPens[®] and puffers are needed, arrangements for their use should be made in advance by the parent/guardian with a Ministry Lead or Approved Ministry Volunteer including providing clear, written instructions.

Footwear

Footwear is required to be worn at all times both in and outside the church for safety, hygiene and emergency preparedness reasons



7. Emergencies

7.1. Medical Emergencies or Severe Injury

In the case of a medical emergency, and the need for a medical professional, Approved Ministry Volunteers or designated responsible adults should stay with the child or youth until the parents or paramedics arrive. The emergency should be dealt with as well as possible, keeping a calm and confident tone, and praying together while waiting for parents and/or emergency personnel to arrive.

If there is a medical emergency or the injury is severe the following steps should be followed by Ministry Lead or designate:

- Immediately call 911 for an ambulance
- if the injured person is a child/youth, contact the youth's parent/guardian and inform them of the situation
- If the decision is made to transport the injured child/youth to the hospital, a leader should accompany the injured child/youth to the hospital whether by ambulance or given ride
- If the decision has been made to call an ambulance or wait for the parents, then deal with the emergency as well as possible, maintain a calm and confident tone, and pray together while waiting for parents or emergency personnel to arrive
- When the parents arrive at the program, event, or hospital, the Approved Ministry Volunteer or designate should introduce him/herself and his/her role in their child's life, explain the situation and the injury (being careful to admit no fault on any part), return to the program/event (unless there is a good reason to stay), have parents call the relevant Ministry Lead if they have any questions or concerns about the injury, insurance, etc.
- If the parents cannot be reached, follow the instructions given on any completed consent form, or other collected information about the child or youth.
- Fill out an Incident Report Form when the emergency is over following the reporting procedures below.

Dealing with Cuts or Injuries Involving Blood:

When an individual is injured:

- They will be separated from other individuals
- The area where the injury occurred or where any blood may have dropped on the floor, furniture, or toys also will be isolated
- Precaution will be taken to ensure no other individuals had contact with any blood.
- Non-latex gloves will be used when bandaging the injury, avoiding contact with mouth, ears and eyes



- Take precaution when cleaning up all blood and bloody bandages, and ensure the safe and secure removal/disposal of waste and gloves
- Hands must be washed carefully with sterilizing soap before and after attending to the injury or illness
- When ministering to individuals with HIV or AIDS, specific guidelines for the education and care of these individuals should be followed

Dealing with Injuries

If an injury that requires medical attention occurs at an event, the following steps should be followed:

- Do not move the injured person if he/she is not moving on his/her own
- If the injured person is moving and mobile, lead him/her out of the activity area
- One or two witnesses as well as a volunteer must remain with the injured person for assistance, comfort and to confirm information on the incident report
- Fill out an Incident Report Form once the emergency is over following the procedures below

7.2. Fire and Safety Evacuation

In the case that an emergency exit is required for any reason during a church event or activity, all those in each area and room will exit the building following the Fire Escape Plan that is posted in several locations throughout the facility. Approved Ministry Volunteers will take attendance forms with them when leaving the building. Everyone will then meet on the the North-East corner of the property for a headcount/attendance check before releasing children or youth to parents.

7.3. Lockdown Guidelines

If there is the need for a lockdown, everyone will be instructed to move to a Green Zone.

Green Zones are rooms where all doors lock. At Country Hills Church, these rooms include all classrooms, washrooms, offices and kitchens.

Red Zones are open areas that are not secure. At Country Hills Church, these areas include hallways, stairwells and the auditorium.

Lockdown Procedure

If the facility is put on “Lockdown Alert”, the Ministry Lead, Hallway Helper or designate will announce “Code Red” and lockdown to all classrooms and staff:

Sample Announcement:

“Emergency Code Red, the facility is going into lockdown, repeat, Emergency Code Red, the facility is going into lockdown.”



1. The Ministry Lead, Hallway Helper or designate will immediately call 911, unless it is a situation where the police have alerted the church first.
2. Instruct all individuals present to shut off or fully silence cell phones (no vibration alerts are permitted), only text messages may be sent.
3. All present must clear away from Red Zones as quickly as possible. They will go to the nearest Green Zone, or if an outside door is closer, they will evacuate the building.
4. Prior to locking doors, those in charge of classrooms should ensure that any individuals walking the halls within their classroom's proximity are ushered quickly into the room. Hallway Helpers will do the same for all open areas of the church and usher people to a Green Zone. The Green Zone door should then be closed and locked. If the door has a window, personnel should cover it and turn off the lights.
5. Where people are in a Red Zone (in the case when people cannot get to a Green Zone) or in a Green Zone, Approved Ministry Volunteers will use every possible means to secure and lock doorways or obstruct access to the area. Volunteers will also assist youth to turn tables or other furniture on their sides, positioning them away from the door and windows in order to take refuge behind them.
6. Volunteers will take attendance and include a list of all missing and extra people in the room.
7. Everyone is prohibited from leaving Green and Red Zones until they are instructed to do so by the Ministry Lead or designate or a police officer. Those in charge of classrooms or areas will remain in them, maintain silence and keep everyone calm.
8. When instructed to evacuate the building, do so quickly and silently. Attendance records will be given to the Ministry Lead.
9. When the police arrive on the scene, they have the ultimate command of the incident and their instructions will be followed without protest.

7.4. Safety Drills

At least once during a calendar year, Country Hills Church will perform a lockdown drill and/or emergency evacuation drill. Leadership will give notice in advance of a lockdown or emergency evacuation drill to the church community, including youth, parents, volunteers and others.

Circumstances and details of the drill, including attendance, will be recorded and kept on file.

Following the drill, the church will debrief participants, keep on file notes of these debriefings, and make changes to the plan and policy as needed based on the drill experience.



7.5. Incident Reports

In the event a child, youth, or vulnerable adult or volunteer is physically injured or bullied or if there is property damage or other types of emergency, an online Incident Report Form will be completed by the Approved Ministry Volunteer/s and copies will be sent to the Ministry Lead and the Protection Plan Team Lead. The Ministry Lead will review the form for accuracy and follow up with the parent/guardian. The parent/guardian will receive a copy of the form which will include any comments made by the parent/guardian in the follow-up. The form will be filed permanently in the Protection Plan files.

Incidents of verbal abuse or conflict issues should be reported to the Ministry Lead who will use personal discretion in obtaining resolution.

Incident Report Forms are available online from any Ministry Lead or Ministry Coordinator, and are generally available in each classroom.



8. Abuse, Addiction, and Suicide

While it is not the church’s primary purpose to spot abuse, addiction, or suicidal desires, Approved Ministry Volunteers do need to be aware of the indicators of abuse, how to report it, and to help a child or youth in crisis should the need arise.

8.1. Substance Abuse - Possible Indicators

Social Indicators	Physical Indicators	Behavioral Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> family history of substance abuse changes in peer group uncharacteristic irritability or moodiness suspicion of and aggression towards friends, teachers, parents lying, theft, promiscuity, rebelliousness, antisocial behavior withdrawal consistent failure to meet obligations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> hangovers hand tremors appetite/weight gain or loss sleeping difficulties drawn appearance fatigue changes in hygiene, dress, grooming red eyes, dilated pupils vague, dull, confused 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> low or deteriorating self-esteem loss of interest in usual activities grandiose feelings can’t cope easily frustrated impulsive behavior depression, suicide attempts confusion, poor memory paranoid statements and feelings uncharacteristic irritability, moodiness withdrawal failure to meet obligations

8.2. Physical Abuse - Possible Indicators

Physical Indicators	Behavioral Indicators	Parent/Guardian Behavior
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> frequent bruises cigarette burns, immersion burns, rope burns poorly explained injuries patchy hair loss grip marks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> disclosure reluctance to explain injuries fear of going home fear of adult approach or adult disapproval uncharacteristically demanding and aggressive or passive and compliant sadness, tension, apathy low self-esteem difficulty cooperating with peers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> historical abuse inadequate knowledge of the child’s development unrealistically high or low expectations low tolerance level, lack of self-control hostility never happy with the child’s performance substance abuse suspicious of attempts to talk about the child



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● resistance to change or to rules ● tantrums, rages ● wearing seasonally inappropriate clothing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● attempts to conceal the child's ● injuries ● illogical or contradictory reasons for the child's injuries
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8.3. Sexual Abuse - Possible Indicators

Behavior (Girls)	Behavior (Boys)	Physical Condition
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● inappropriate sexual knowledge for age ● sexually provocative actions ● promiscuous ● lack of age appropriate sexual attraction ● resistance to change for gym class ● social withdrawal or unease ● preoccupation with fantasies ● fear of closed places ● distrust of adults ● overly compliant ● perfectionist ● poor school performance ● poor self esteem ● substance abuse ● reluctance to go home/running away ● parents limit involvement with the opposite sex ● overly mature 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● self-destructive ● depression ● preoccupation with body language ● reluctance to be involved with males ● reluctance to change for gym class ● arson ● sexually abusive to peers or younger children ● aggression 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● report or indication of pain or itching in genital area ● urinary, bowel problems or infections ● vaginal odor ● sexually transmitted disease ● pregnancy ● abdominal pain or discomfort ● difficulty sitting or walking

Some Issues That Relate Specifically to Youth

- Youth need to form their own identity and self-esteem; volunteers can build into their character
- Youth are adapting to rapid physical changes; this can add to the confusion in many situations



- They are adapting to sexual changes; weird feelings, fantasies and confusion which make decisions more difficult
- Youth are struggling with dependence vs. independence; teens are beginning to move away from their parents and yet know that they love and need them. This struggle can make them irritable, argumentative, irrational and difficult.
- Usually the conflicts arise from a difference in opinion on how much freedom they can have. Volunteers should not take sides.
- There is an increasing importance of peer and intimate relationships; youth need approval and often overreact to rejection
- They are forming their life-directing values and beliefs; most of these lessons (such as careers, lifestyles, behaviours and even problem solving) need to be learned experimentally
- They need to develop a wider variety of social and interpersonal skills: dealing with conflict, coping, stress, temptation, study, productivity, interaction, authority and handling money all need to be understood and developed

How Youth Often Respond to Problems

- **Repression** is exhibited through denial, pushing aside and trying to forget. This often results in more serious behaviours such as eating disorders, anger, apathy, poor achievement, withdrawal or substance abuse.
- **Suppression** is not an activity of denial but an attempt to hide it from others. Behaviours may be similar to repression but could be expressed through running away, substance abuse or suicide.
- **Expression** is an obvious negative outward response that may be exhibited through anger, quitting school, lying, stealing, substance abuse, defiant behaviour or rebellion. These responses are a way of 'crying out for help' and may lead to serious depression, and may require intervention.

8.4. Suicide/Depression

Direct or Indirect Preoccupation with Death

- verbal or written suicidal statement/
- references
- giving away personal belongings
- writing of a will
- previous attempts

Significant Lifestyle Changes

- loss of significant person through death, divorce, separation
- loss of an object of affection (friend, boyfriend, girlfriend)
- loss of health



- financial difficulties
- loss of status

Observable Changes in Behavior or Motivation

- decreased academic performance
- more attendance problems or lateness
- poor interpersonal relationships
- decrease in social activity
- substance abuse

Observable Changes in Personality and Emotions

- feelings of helplessness, hopelessness, discouragement
- feelings that life is too painful or too difficult
- frequent crying, tantrums
- irritability, moodiness

Physical Changes

- loss or increase in appetite
- headaches, stomach aches
- change in sleep patterns
- symptoms of substance abuse
- deterioration of hygiene or tidiness

Responding to the Threat of Suicide

Occasionally, Approved Ministry Volunteers may encounter a person who threatens suicide. Suicide statements must always be taken seriously and responded to accordingly. The individual will usually provide tips to their situation by making statements like, “Sometimes I just want to end it all” or “Life just isn’t worth living anymore” or “If a person commits suicide, do they go to hell?”

Most people do not want to kill themselves; they just want to end the pain they are feeling. If someone expresses a plan for suicide (place, time, method) they need emergency help, parents and/or police must be contacted, and the individual taken to an Emergency Room at a nearby hospital.

The following guidelines give helpful strategies when dealing with someone in crisis:



- Don't minimize their pain
- Don't ask leading questions
- Don't make promises that you can't keep
- Hear them out, listen and encourage
- Remind them that God hasn't turned His back on them (Romans 8:38-39)
- Assure them that you are concerned and you would like to put them in touch with someone who can help
- Keep them safe
- Immediately inform the Ministry Lead who will communicate with the Protection Plan Team

Crisis Intervention

- In the event of a crisis, immediately refer it to a Ministry Lead who will consult with church leadership if necessary.
- Establish Rapport:
 - Show warmth and interest
 - Listen carefully
 - Take them seriously
 - Remain calm and reassuring
 - Don't offer pat answers like ... "God will take care of you"
 - Offer valid reassuring statements such as, "I will see if I can find somebody that can help"
 - Encourage them to do the things that they can
 - Give help and support with the things that they can't do

8.5. Bullying

Country Hills Church has a zero-tolerance policy when it comes to bullying. Our Approved Ministry Volunteers and all children and youth have a right to a caring, respectful and safe environment. An anti-bullying policy will be in effect at all times and will be clearly communicated and enforced. Approved Ministry Volunteers will take action to prevent bullying, be positive role models, teach against bullying, as well as teach, assist and/or care for those who have been bullied, or are bullying others. Bullying in any form will not be tolerated.

Bullying is defined as unwanted, aggressive behavior that involves a real or perceived power imbalance and is repeated or has the potential to be repeated. Bullying can be verbal, social, physical, cyber (online or digital), racial, religious, or include homophobic behavior, discrimination or sexual harassment.



Any incidents, reports or suspicions of bullying will be acknowledged, reviewed and dealt with appropriately and immediately. All incidents, reports or suspicions will be reported immediately to the Ministry Lead. Appropriate action will take place based on the situation.

Possible action may include, but is not limited to:

- Completing the Incident Report Form after each incident following the guidelines in this document
- Notifying parents after each incident
- Providing a warning that bullying will not be tolerated
- If necessary and appropriate, contact and consult with police
- All attempts will be made to work towards reconciliation and change of behavior with the bully or bullies. Counseling and support will be recommended and support provided for the victim of bullying.



9. REPORTING PROCEDURES

For the protection of our children, youth, volunteers, and vulnerable adults, all allegations and/or suspicions of abuse or crimes against any of these individuals will be taken seriously.

We report and respond to Child abuse and vulnerable adult abuse differently:

- We report Child abuse to Family and Children's Services
- We respond to vulnerable adult abuse with support and encouragement, and contact the police for further investigation

Who Must Report

All volunteers and paid staff who are involved in ministry to children, youth, or vulnerable adults should communicate any items of serious concern to their Ministry Lead immediately.

According to the Family and Children's Services Act, any person with a reasonable suspicion of Child abuse has a legal responsibility to report the matter immediately to child protection authorities (Family and Children's Services) or to the police. Reporting must be done by telephone or in person promptly at the point of observing signs of abuse or receiving a report of abuse. The reporting must be immediate, a direct report, and an on-going report. The report may be done in conjunction with the Lead Pastor or the Ministry Lead.

A person who knowingly fails to report in these circumstances is in violation of the law and may be found to have committed an offence and may be subject to discipline action by Country Hills Church and/or authorities.

What to Report

All volunteers and paid staff must report any matters relating to child abuse or neglect of which they have knowledge or have observed within the scope of their duties. It is not the responsibility of the reporting person to substantiate any allegations or suspicions.

A child is in need of protection under the Family and Child Services Act if he or she is:

- Abused or neglected so that his or her safety or well-being is endangered
- Abandoned
- Deprived of necessary care through the death, absence or disability of his or her parent
- Deprived of necessary medical attention
- Absent from his or her home in circumstances that endanger his or her safety or well-being

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 that occurred in the not very recent past, must be reported whenever 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 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 abuser is in a position of trust.

How to Report an Allegation or Suspicion of Abuse of a Child

The following policies outline the procedure and sequence for reporting suspected abuse cases:

- Immediately upon hearing of potential abuse or allegations of abuse to a child, youth, or vulnerable adult, the Approved Ministry Volunteer must complete a Suspected Abuse Report Form documenting all pertinent information.
- The victim should neither be asked leading questions nor should the accused or any other parties be contacted at the point of completing the Suspected Abuse Report Form.
- The Approved Ministry Volunteer then should inform the Ministry Lead of the situation and submit the Suspected Abuse Report Form to him/her. The report must be kept confidential. All forms must be kept permanently by the Church unless otherwise directed by legal counsel.
- The Ministry Lead will immediately inform the Protection Plan Team and Lead Pastor or designate that there has been a report of suspected abuse. The Protection Plan Team and Lead Pastor or designate will work together with the Approved Ministry Volunteer in contacting Family and Children's Services or the police.
- The Lead Pastor and Protection Plan Team or designate must notify Country Hills Church's insurance provider and seek legal counsel upon hearing of a suspected child abuse case.
- If the suspected abuse happened in the context of Country Hills Church ministries or was committed by a member or attendee of Country Hills Church, the Parents of the victim must be notified by the Lead Pastor or designate.
- Assessing and Investigating an Allegation or Suspicion of Abuse of a Child
- No persons including Board members, Country Hills Church leadership or Approved Ministry Volunteers will assume the function of assessing, substantiating or investigating the need for intervention or interpretation of suspected child abuse.
- There must not be undue interference when a report of child abuse is filed with child protection authorities or the police. The Lead Pastor or designate should ask the child protection authorities how they can assist in supporting the investigation, and



the hurting child or youth and their family. The Lead Pastor or designate should maintain frequent communication and supportive relationships with those suspected or guilty of child abuse as long as these persons exhibit a willingness to listen, change and look to Christ for help, and such communication takes into account advice from the police, Board and/or insurance provider. This does not exclude the need for hurting individuals to receive professional counselling.

Hearing of an Allegation or Suspicion of Criminal Activity or Abuse of a Vulnerable Adult

The following section outlines the procedure and sequence for reporting any Criminal Activity. When it comes to reporting and responding to abuse of a vulnerable adult, the process is different than with children.

- If the situation is an emergency and a crime is about to be committed, the volunteer must immediately call 911 and report it to the police.
- If the situation is not an emergency, and the person has cognitive capacity and is willing to make the report themselves, encourage them to make the report and with translation assistance as needed to make the report.
- If the situation is not an emergency, and the person does not have cognitive capacity, make the report on their behalf.
- If the situation is not an emergency, and the person has cognitive capacity but is unwilling to make the report and resists making the report, the volunteer should:
 - Encourage the adult to make a report, express concerns for their well-being
 - Provide them the phone number to make the report in the future
 - Offer to be with them when they report it, inform them about abuse and that this is criminal activity that they are not in trouble but that you are helping to protect them
 - Encourage them to consider what to do the next time this happens
 - Follow up with them during future visits
 - Develop a safety plan along with them
 - Complete an Incident Report and submit it to leadership immediately

9.1. Responses to Allegations

Response and Counsel for the Victim

For the protection of our children, youth, and vulnerable adults all allegations and/or suspicions of abuse or crimes against children, youth, or vulnerable adults will be taken seriously and handled with the utmost care. The suspected victims will be treated with dignity and respect.

During the process of reporting and response, everyone involved will strive to remain calm.

Situations of abuse or criminal activity must be handled forthrightly with due respect for people's privacy and confidentiality. Discretion must be observed and details of the



suspected abuse must not be shared with anyone other than those mentioned in these procedures. Information should be shared on a need-to-know basis, expanding only as individuals are drawn into the response and investigation. Confidentiality for the victim(s) must be protected.

Church leadership will seek ways to provide individual care and counsel for the victim(s) and their family. Leadership will determine the need for professional assistance and evaluate and designate resources as needed and available.

Response and Discipline for the Accused or Convicted

The accused will be treated with dignity and respect. If the accused is a Approved Ministry Volunteer or paid staff member, that person will be relieved temporarily of all duties until the investigation is completed with arrangements made to either maintain or suspend his or her income (where applicable) until the allegations are cleared or substantiated.

Country Hills Church Leadership will seek ways to provide individual care and counsel for the accused and their family. The Board of Elders will determine the need for professional assistance and evaluate and designate resources as needed and available.

Anyone accused of abuse to children or youth will be prohibited from having access to other children or youth until they are cleared of any and all charges. Clear written guidelines will be provided to the individual with restricted activities and areas of the property that they are not permitted to use or be in.

Anyone convicted of child abuse will be prohibited from having access to children or youth. Country Hills Church leadership may designate an individual to be informed whenever the convicted person attends program activities and to accompany the convicted person while on the property. Clear written guidelines will be provided to that individual listing all restricted areas and access points on the property.

Media Relations

Country Hills Church Leadership is responsible to designate a spokesperson to speak on behalf of the organization. That spokesperson will be the only one to speak to media and to the public in relation to a suspected child abuse case. All inquiries should be directed to the spokesperson and comments should not be made by any other individuals unless given permission to do so.

Public statements must be well prepared and presented under the guidance of legal counsel.

Ongoing Investigation

All parties must give full cooperation to civil authorities under the guidelines of legal counsel.

At no time should Country Hills Church leadership, Approved Ministry Volunteers, Board members or any other individuals engage in denial, minimization or blame, or admit



responsibility, which could prejudice the case or cause increased liability to Country Hills Church.

Following a report of abuse, the Lead Pastor or designate must document a confidential follow-up report with conclusions and action taken. This report should be placed in a confidential Protection Plan file and kept permanently at the Church by the Protection Plan Team.

It is critical to maintain confidentiality and strictly adhere to sharing information on a need-to-know basis only.

10. MINISTRY PROCEDURES:

For people to believe the message of God's love, they must trust the messenger. God has placed volunteers serving children in a strategic position to change the lives of entire families. Their mission begins with trust. Parents and children will be open to the message it brings when they know that Approved Ministry Volunteers care so much for them that it is a priority to protect their safety.

Attention to safety brings glory to the name of Christ. It shows love and concern. It lays the foundation for future trust when the life-changing message of Jesus is presented. Safety concerns are not a contradiction to a life of faith. In Children's Ministry safety concerns open the door for people to discover a life of faith.

Safety and security are important to create an atmosphere for the children and families at Country Hills Church to grow close to each other and become more like Jesus. In light of this goal, Country Hills Church has developed procedures for the protection of our children and volunteers.

10.1. Physical Contact

Country Hills Church does not want to take a hands-off approach to ministry. However, leaders and all volunteers must be aware of the difference between appropriate and inappropriate touch. A good rule of thumb is to use common sense and ask whether or not you would be comfortable with that touch in the presence of other adults or volunteers.

The Church recognizes that children and youth need appropriate displays of affection that reflect pure, genuine and positive displays of God's love. Appropriate touch with children will be age and developmentally appropriate. Guidelines for appropriate physical contact with children and youth are communicated to Ministry and other Volunteers and those guidelines will be followed.

Touch

Work with other volunteers to keep each other aware of how you are relating to children and youth and any concerns you may have about children and youth and their relationships with others. All touch should be done in view of others.



Appropriate interaction and touch

- One-arm hugs
- Shoulder-to-shoulder hugs
- Hold a child who is crying
- Give high fives, fist bumps, or shaking hands
- Speak to a child at eye level and listen with your eyes as well as your ears
- Hold a child's hand when speaking, listening or walking with him or her to an activity
- Gently hold the child's shoulder or hand to keep his or her attention while you redirect the child's behaviour
- Put your arm around the shoulder of a child when comforting or quieting is needed
- Pat a child on the head, hand, and shoulder or back to affirm him/her
- Touch must be done in view of others

Inappropriate interaction and touch

- Kissing someone or coaxing him or her to kiss you
- Prolonged physical contact of any kind
- Holding a child's face when talking to or disciplining the child
- Touching thighs, knees or other areas that would be covered by a bathing suit (strictly prohibited except in cases of diapering and assisting preschoolers as outlined in washroom procedures)
- Carrying older children or allowing them to sit on your lap (exception for women with very young children under 4)
- Chest to chest hugging, or extended hugging
- Over-exuberant affection, horseplay, tickling, piggybacks, and backrubs are inappropriate or tend to be behaviours that are easily misinterpreted
- When serving people from other cultures, making eye contact with individuals of the opposite gender may be offensive

10.2. Modeling and Mentoring

When we become involved in ministry our lives become models. No one person can pastor a large group of children or youth. When modeling and mentoring are shared responsibilities, the care given to children and youth multiplies and is enhanced. Therefore, as a leader, volunteers are committing to maintain a consistent spiritual life including prayer, Bible reading, and attendance at events, planning meetings and worship services.

As role models, Approved Ministry Volunteers are expected to refrain from activities that are illegal or could be considered morally and biblically questionable. The issue of integrity is critical in both modeling and mentoring.



10.3. Discipline

Discipline does not refer to punishment. Discipline refers to managing behavior in order to shape character in such a way that Approved Ministry Volunteers disciple children and youth. All discipline and program management will be conducted in a loving and caring environment. Approved Ministry Volunteers will make every attempt to prevent disciplinary problems from arising and to avoid the need for remedial discipline. Remedial discipline will be carried out according to guidelines, when required.

Preventive Discipline:

- Create a loving, caring atmosphere
- Give respect to gain respect
- Model self-discipline and structure in your own life
- Establish and communicate realistic expectations for the children and youth
- Be fair and consistent with all children and youth
- Be sure to focus on positive actions and reward positive behaviour
- Remedial Discipline:
 - Deal with problems individually and discretely so as not to embarrass the children/youth involved
 - Explain to the child or youth why the behaviour is unacceptable and instruct them in how to do it correctly
 - Redirect the child or youth to positive action
 - Explain the consequences of unacceptable behaviour by defining the correct way to behave as well as the result of the wrong behaviour
 - Offer choices that are acceptable to both you and the child/youth
 - Refrain from any words that could cause feelings of condemnation or shame in a child about any aspect of their person, including derisive references to anything physical, emotional, mental, or position in life

10.4. Mentoring Youth

Ministry Leads can help volunteers determine needs and next steps in mentoring situations. Though volunteers are not professional counselors they do have an important role in helping youth, so awareness of and adherence to the following ethics provide for the best atmosphere to help youth:

- Respect the person's dignity and worth
- Work towards their best interest
- Be sure not to manipulate or use guilt in your mentoring
- Never exploit trust or dependency
- Share the bounds of confidentiality at the outset



- Regarding confidentiality, clearly communicate that if information is shared that could impact the safety or welfare of anyone including the person being mentored, the information will need to be shared
- Mentoring should be with the same gender
- If feelings of attraction begin in either party, terminate mentoring immediately
- If the relationship is destructive to either party, terminate mentoring immediately
- Never mentor if the person is under the influence of alcohol, drugs or illness (in that case seek help immediately)
- Never create false expectations of favourable results
- Keep information confidential unless the person's welfare is at stake, discuss with Ministry Lead or Lead Pastor when in doubt
- As a general rule, only share information if the person consents
- Approved Ministry Volunteers are legally bound to report physical abuse or neglect of a minor to the Family and Child Services or the police. Anyone who does not comply with this law is subject to a fine and/or a jail sentence. Volunteers are also bound to notify parents and/or police if the youth is planning to harm themselves or others.
- Ministry Leads or volunteers with the assistance of the Ministry Lead should refer individuals requiring specialized physical, mental or emotional diagnosis, therapy or treatment to qualified health-care professionals.
- Volunteers should always involve the Ministry Lead in the reporting process.

10.5. Guidelines for Communication:

- Parents should be included on a call, when possible, when communicating by telephone
- All email communication with a child or youth will be copied to parents and the Ministry Lead
- Communication on social media or by text message should be avoided for the protection of the child and volunteers
- All Social media communication will be copied to parents and the Ministry Lead

Texting or Private/Direct Messaging between a child/youth or vulnerable adult by a Approved Ministry Volunteer is an unsafe practice and is not supported or covered under the Protection Plan.

10.6. Photography and Publishing Stories

No photographs or videos of children or youth involved in a CHC event or activity will be taken or posted on social media without prior written consent from parents/guardians and CHC.



Only the Ministry Lead or his/her designate may post photographs or videos and such posts may only be made to Country Hills Church accounts on social networks or print publications

No stories and pictures using real names and identifiers will be published without written permission from the child/youth and their parent or guardian in advance of publication.

10.7. Dating

At no time should anyone working with youth pursue a dating relationship with a youth. Further, staff and volunteers should always be cautious regarding youth with 'crushes'. Anyone in violation of this policy may be subject to discipline, including dismissal.

11. Volunteer Supervision, Identification, and Records

11.1. Supervision

The Ministry Lead should make regular visits to the classroom to make sure the class is properly staffed and supervised. Volunteers, helpers, and parents should have regular access to the Ministry Lead for help and assistance during programs and have clear communication lines outside programs and meetings.

11.2. Identification

All Approved Ministry Volunteers, Staff, and Occasional Observers who are serving or present at a children's ministry program are required to be clearly identified. The Ministry Lead is responsible to ensure that these people and their roles are identified to children and parents with a nametag or approved clothing. Occasional Observers should receive coaching with regard to their participation in a class or program, and will not be placed in a Position of Trust with children who are not their own.

11.3. Records

The attendance of all Approved Ministry Volunteers and Occasional Observers will be recorded as part of the event attendance and all attendance records will be kept permanently.

12. Volunteer Ratios

12.1. Volunteer Minimums

A minimum of two Approved Ministry Volunteers must be present in any room/area with children and youth. These two leaders may be husband and wife, siblings, or a parent and adult child. Related volunteers, and Youth Volunteers may serve together where at least one other unrelated Approved Ministry Volunteer is present, for example a Hallway Helper. In the case of an emergency, all efforts to comply with this requirement without hindering safety will be taken.



Note: Youth Volunteers add to the ratio of children

12.2. Volunteer to Child Ratios

With a minimum 2 Approved Ministry Volunteers per class/area, established ratios are:

Nursery - Infants & toddlers (birth – 3 years old)

Ratio is 1:3 (1 Approved Ministry Volunteer or Youth Volunteer for every 3 infants and/or toddlers)

An additional volunteer must be added every time a ratio limit is passed. For example, an additional volunteer must be added when the 7th, 10th, 13th etc. infant or toddler arrives.

Preschool - Preschool (3-4 years old)

Ratio is 1:7 (1 Approved Ministry Volunteer for every 7 pre-school children)

An additional volunteer must be added every time a ratio limit is passed. For example, an additional volunteer must be added when the 15th, 22nd, 29th etc. child arrives.

JK – Grade 6

Ratio is 1:10 (1 Approved Ministry Volunteer for every 10 elementary children)

An additional volunteer must be added every time a ratio limit is passed. For example, an additional volunteer must be added when the 21st, 31st, 41st etc. child arrives.

Jr. High & High School (Grade 7-12)

Ratio is 1:10 (1 Approved Ministry Volunteer for every 10 Jr. Highs)

An additional volunteer must be added every time a ratio limit is passed. For example, an additional volunteer must be added when the 21st, 31st, 41st etc. youth arrives.

Age group	Adult:Child Ratio	Ministry Setting Minimum of Approved Ministry Volunteers
Nursery: birth to age 3	1:3	2:1-6 3:7-9 4:10-12
Preschool: age 3 - 4	1:7	2:1-14 3:15-21 4:21-28
JK – Gr. 6	1:10	2:1-20 3:21-30 4:31-40
Gr. 7 – 12	1:10	2:1-20 3:21-30 4:31-40



13. Child Security and Records

Country Hills Church understands the need to maintain child security. When parents bring their children to our programs, the church is responsible for their safety and security until they are once more in the care of the parent/guardian. Further, children should attend the class designed for their age, grade or developmental level.

13.1. Registration of Children

Registration forms are available digitally to all program participants. Hard copy forms are available only when digital is not an option. The Country Hills Family Ministries “Registration, Authorization, Offsite Liability Shield and Consent” forms will be used for this purpose and are valid until a child turns 18 years of age.

Every effort will be made to keep registration information updated and current by the Ministry Lead for the ministry area attended. Participant information will be updated by a parent/guardian annually through the use of an annual update form to be available at the beginning of every ministry year. All forms and information for each participant will be kept on file permanently. It is the responsibility of the Ministry Lead, with the assistance of Approved Ministry Volunteers and/or the Protection Plan Team, to ensure that forms are completed and submitted for all program participants.

Guests and Onsite Events

In the case of a visiting child or youth attending an onsite and low risk program or event at Country Hills Church, the parent/guardian bringing the child will be considered the guardian for the event and a guest registration form will be completed. After the third time attending a program the child will be considered a regular participant and a “Registration, Authorization, Offsite Liability Shield and Consent” form will be sent home to return within 2 weeks. If this is unsuccessful, and at the discretion of the Protection Plan Team, for the safety of all, the child may be asked to stop attending until registration information is submitted.

Guests and Offsite Events

If the visiting child or youth is attending any offsite, overnight, or elevated risk activity a “Registration, Authorization, Offsite Liability Shield and Consent” form must be completed before attending this type of event.

Additional Permission Forms and Registration Events

In addition to the “Registration, Authorization, Offsite Liability Shield and Consent” form, overnight events or events that involve an elevated risk require a separate permission form or digital registration event. When parents register their child(ren) for such events, the event description will disclose if there is potential of elevated risk or is an overnight event. Registration in the event will indicate understanding of and permission to participate in the event. Ministry Leads must ensure that each registration event includes:



- Date and location of the event
- Clear description of the event and potential elevated risk
- A place for parent/guardian to indicate understanding and permission to participate in the event

In these types of events the “Registration, Authorization, Offsite Liability Shield and Consent” form and the Registration Event (or permission form) work together to grant permission and provide information for participation.

13.2. Receiving and Releasing Children

The Ministry Lead will establish and administer the receiving and releasing of children in our programs. The policy for receiving and releasing children must be clearly communicated to, and understood by, volunteers, helpers and parents.

Attendance

Attendance will be taken for all participants, Approved Ministry Volunteers, Youth Volunteers, and Occasional Observers for all Family Ministry programs. Records will be kept on file permanently.

Check-In

Country Hills Church uses a digital check-in system. Each child from birth to age 18 will be checked in to attend programs. Once checked in, each child up to Grade 4 will receive an Identification (name) label, and the parent will receive 1 security label for their family. Identification and security labels help to ensure that only the appropriate people can pick up their children. It also provides better tracking and attendance records and it allows leaders to access information on each child should the need arise.

Security labels are kept by the parent and used in each classroom/area to release children with a matching code. Identification labels are placed on the child: on the back of infants, toddlers, and preschool children, and on the front of children from JK - Grade 4. Once a child is checked in and has a label on, they may be dropped off in the appropriate classroom/area once the program begins.

Children should never be dropped off in a classroom without two Approved Ministry Volunteers present. Parents are required to wait to leave their children until adequate ratios are achieved.

Children in Grades 5 - 6 attending Lighthouse Pro must check in but identification labels for them and their parents are not issued.

Pick-Up

At times parents might send their other children or other family members to pick up their children (younger siblings). Provided that these children or family members have the security label, they may pick up their younger siblings (parental consent is given the moment they give their security label to someone else).



Lost Labels

If a parent comes to pick up their child without a matching security label they will be requested to find their label before their child is released. In a case of a lost label the parent will be required to go to the registration desk and provide photo identification to print out a new set of labels OR the Ministry Coordinator or Ministry Lead may give permission to release a child without a security label.

In the case of a lost identification label on a child, a Approved Ministry Volunteer will need to confirm the identity/name of the child before releasing a child to a parent with a security label. Approved Ministry Volunteers in this case will need to stress to parents to teach their children the importance of leaving identification labels on for their own safety.

Nursery and Preschool (birth to age 3)

Parents will need to provide a security label with a matching code for each child they pickup. We ask that parents do not enter the nursery or preschool rooms when picking up their child unless requested to do so. This enables the staff to maintain order and provide a better level of security.

Lighthouse (JK - Grade 4)

Parents will need to provide a security label with a matching code for each child they pickup. We advise that parents do not enter the Lighthouse classroom when picking up their child unless requested to do so. This enables the staff to maintain order and provide a better level of security.

Preteen (Grade 5-6)

Grade 5 and 6 children do not need to be picked up but can be released without consent at the end of a program to find their parents. Exceptions to this may be made at the request of a parent where there are specific needs or reasons a child may not be released on their own.

14. Washroom Procedures

Parents are requested to deal with their baby's toileting needs and to take their children to the washroom prior to each class or service. When this is not possible Approved Ministry Volunteers will follow washroom guidelines for all children. Approved Ministry Volunteers are not to be alone with children in an unsupervised washroom and are never to enter into the cubicle with a child and shut the door.

Infant and Toddler (birth to age 3)

When possible, the child's parents are encouraged to carry out diaper changing. If necessary, diaper changing will be done only by fully approved female Adult Volunteers and must be conducted within view of other Approved Ministry Volunteers. Approved Ministry Volunteers will be provided with diaper changing guidelines that are clearly posted in the nursery.



Preschool (age 3 to 4)

Preschool children will not go to the washroom alone but will be escorted by 2 Approved Ministry Volunteers or 1 Approved Ministry Volunteer and 1 Hallway Helper. The outside washroom door must be propped open, Approved Ministry Volunteers may wait outside the open washroom door or outside a cubicle doorway, and the Hallway Helper will wait outside the open door to the washroom. If assistance is needed in the washroom it is preferred that female Approved Ministry Volunteers help. Female Approved Ministry Volunteers will assist both girls and boys in the washroom if needed and must leave the cubicle door open while helping (doing their best to guard the privacy of the child). If absolutely necessary, male Approved Ministry Volunteers may assist in the boys' washroom under the same guidelines as above but must not assist girls. Appropriate and inappropriate forms of assistance are listed below for each age group.

14.1. Age Based Washroom Procedures

Infants & Toddlers

Appropriate: Diapering is only done where parents are not available (e.g. they are serving and not able to be present). This is only to be done by a female Approved Ministry Volunteer at a change table in full view of other Approved Ministry Volunteers. Never leave the child unattended. Make sure that the baby is clean before putting on a new diaper. Wash hands before and after each change. Spray the change table with disinfectant when you are done.

A Toddler washroom is located between our Nursery and Toddler rooms. A child who is potty training may require assistance. If this occurs, the leader may enter the washroom with the child, but must leave the door partially open (balancing the privacy of the child and lines of sight guidelines). Helping a child with buckles, buttons, zippers, clothing etc. may be necessary, but a child should never be intentionally touched any place a bathing suit normally covers.

Inappropriate: Diapering in a secluded area, or without the permission/instructions of the parent. Except when changing a diaper on an infant, touching any part of the body that is generally covered by a bathing suit is not permitted. Toddlers who need help with potty training should only receive help with clothing where necessary, other help (wiping, etc.) will be left to a parent.

Preschool

Appropriate: Washrooms are located outside the Preschool room. Permission is granted to use the washroom and an Approved Ministry Volunteer and Hallway Helper can take a child/ren to the washroom under the guidelines above. Unless special help is required, children may go to the washroom by themselves. If the child is taking longer than seems necessary, the worker should check on the child and help where needed. Helping a child with buckles, buttons, zippers, clothing etc. may be necessary, but a child should never be intentionally touched any place a bathing suit normally covers.



Inappropriate Closed-door situations with a child and volunteer in a stall or washroom alone. Touching any part of the body that is generally covered by a bathing suit. Preschoolers who need help with potty training should only receive help with clothing where necessary, other help (wiping etc.) will be left to a parent.

Elementary (JK to Grade 6)

Elementary children will not be sent to the washroom alone but will be escorted by 2 Approved Ministry Volunteers or 1 Approved Ministry Volunteer and 1 Hallway Helper. The outside washroom door must be propped open, Approved Ministry Volunteers may wait outside the open washroom door or outside a cubicle doorway, and the Hallway Helper will wait outside the open door to the washroom. For this age group assistance is generally not needed, but if assistance is needed in the washroom, it is preferred that female Approved Ministry Volunteers help. Female Approved Ministry Volunteers will assist both girls and boys in the washroom if needed and must leave the cubicle door open while helping (doing their best to guard the privacy of the child). If absolutely necessary, male Approved Ministry Volunteers may assist in the boys' washroom under the same guidelines as above but must not assist girls.

Appropriate and inappropriate forms of washroom assistance are listed below for each age group.

Youth generally do not need help or supervision in the washroom except where there are special circumstances. If this is the case, the general washroom guidelines in this document will be followed. Approved Ministry Volunteers should never be alone with youth in a washroom for any extended period of time. Youth and volunteers may use the washroom at the same time, for an appropriate period of time, but may not be alone together in a stall. No physical contact is permitted in a washroom.

ANY Age

Appropriate: If a child has had an accident notify the parent immediately and request that the parent helps their child.

Inappropriate: In light of the fact that most abusers are male, and for the protection of our male volunteers, we generally do not allow men to assist boys or girls of any age in the washrooms. It is generally not reasonable for a volunteer to take time away from the supervision of the rest of the children to clean an accident.

Youth

Youth generally do not need help or supervision in the washroom except where there are special circumstances. If this is the case, the general washroom guidelines in the document will be followed. Ministry Volunteers should never be alone with students in a washroom for any extended period of time. Students and volunteers may use the washroom at the same time, for an appropriate period of time, but may not be alone together in a stall. No physical contact is permitted in a washroom.



15. Offsite & One-on-One Policy

15.1. Transportation

Safety is our first concern with regard to transportation. An Approved Ministry Volunteer providing transportation on behalf of the church must be an approved driver for Country Hills Church, and obey all the rules of the road including the speed limits. Reckless or unsafe driving will not be tolerated. Approved Ministry Volunteers approved as drivers will be responsible for transportation unless Public Transportation or a Commercial Carrier is utilized. Approved Ministry Volunteers with minor traffic infractions still may be approved as a driver at the discretion of the Protection Plan Team.

- All Approved Ministry Volunteers transporting children, youth, or vulnerable adults must:
 - Be screened and pre-approved by Country Hills Church leadership
 - Provide a copy of their valid driver's license
 - Provide a copy of their current automobile insurance policy
 - Have a minimum of five years driving experience in good standing
 - The Protection Plan Team will conduct a driver check on each potential driver and determine, at its discretion, whether the Approved Ministry Volunteer can be approved to be a driver
- The number of occupants in vehicles must not exceed the number of seat belts and each child must be in age appropriate safety restraints. Seat belts must be worn by everyone and remain fastened at all times the vehicle is in operation.
- There must be two Approved Ministry Volunteers per vehicle when transporting children/youth. Exceptions to this policy should only happen when travel is from one designated place to another designated place in convoy with two or more vehicles (e.g. travelling from the church to a retreat centre). Under these circumstances one Approved Ministry Volunteer per vehicle is permitted as long as there is more than one child/youth per vehicle, and all vehicles remain together for the duration of the trip, avoiding isolation. Volunteer ratios must be followed at all times.
- When planning local special events, it is preferred that parents drop off and pick up their children or youth at the event location. For longer distance events it is preferred that a commercial carrier be used.

15.2. Contact Opportunities

Approved Ministry Volunteers are encouraged to meet with children and/or youth in small group settings and in teams. The Ministry Lead must pre-approve any one-on-one mentoring between an Approved Ministry Volunteer and youth with the information being documented and filed, and written parental permission granted.



One-on-one meetings between children and volunteers are not regular, as we encourage most contacts to involve a minimum of three people. However, for various reasons, one-on-ones will at times happen. Therefore, the following protocol has been established.

One-on-one mentoring must be done in public settings, homes, or areas where others are present and only under the following conditions: the Ministry Lead is informed of the time and place of the meeting and written parental permission is granted using the One-on-One Mentoring Form, and separate transportation is arranged.

Travelling alone in a vehicle with a child/youth is not recommended but for the purposes of mentoring may happen with specific documentation and procedures: pick-up and drop-off are pre-approved by the parent/guardian and the Ministry Lead and done publicly (preferably with a parent present), and travel is directly to the public location of meeting. Specific times/places of pickup, arrival, departure, and drop off must be recorded on the form and kept permanently by the church and the Ministry Lead and parent/guardian notified.

15.3. Off-Site & Overnight Policies

All off-site trips must be pre-approved by the Ministry Lead. Written communication regarding off-site trips should be available to families no less than one week prior to the event. The communication must include the details and the exact location of the event as well as contact details during the event and trip. If there is any element of risk in the activity a separate permission form will be used for the event.

Sufficient supervision following the ratio of one Approved Ministry Volunteer to seven children/youth with the minimum of at least two Approved Ministry Volunteers is required to ensure protection and safety for all involved.

Copies of the “Registration, Authorization, Offsite Liability Shield and Consent Form” and/or Emergency Contact and Medical information for each child or youth must be kept on hand at each event. Attendance of all volunteers, children, and youth must be recorded. Forms will be kept on file at the church permanently.

Retreats and Overnight Events

All retreats and overnight events must be pre-approved by Church Leadership.

Written communication regarding retreats and overnight events should be available to families no less than one week prior to the event. Notice must include the exact location of the event, emergency phone numbers and a list of volunteers attending the event. All retreats or overnight events require a separate permission form to be used for that event.

Completed copies of the “Registration, Authorization, Offsite Liability Shield and Consent Form” for each child or youth must be kept on hand at each event. Attendance of all



volunteers, children, and youth must be recorded. Forms will be kept on file at the church permanently.

A minimum of two male Approved Ministry Volunteers are required to stay with the male children/youth and two female Approved Ministry Volunteers to stay with the female children/youth for overnight events with mixed genders and must meet the Volunteer Minimum and Staffing Ratio requirements of one Approved Ministry Volunteer to seven children/youth for each gender group as well, with a minimum of at least two Approved Ministry Volunteers per gender.

Female volunteers will be assigned responsibility for females, and male volunteers will be assigned responsibility for males. Children or youth attending retreats and overnight events will not be allowed to leave the event. Any exceptions must be added to the permission form signed by the parent. Approved Ministry Volunteers may sleep in separate rooms from children/youth, but when Approved Ministry Volunteers and children/youth are staying in the same room a minimum of two unrelated same gendered Approved Ministry Volunteers must be present. Approved Ministry Volunteers should stay in the same rooms with children/youth whenever possible.

Female and male children/youth are not allowed in each other's rooms or tents for any reason during retreats and overnight events and they are not permitted to sleep in mixed company.

Since changing clothing during an overnight event does not allow for the open door policy, Approved Ministry Volunteers must never be alone with a youth when changing. In these situations, there must be another same gendered leader present, or more than one youth present, and if not, the leader must wait to change.

Billeting and Hosting

For the protection of our children/youth, all adults residing in the home where billets are provided must complete the following screening process prior to hosting. Screening includes recommendation from Church Leadership or Ministry Lead, references, written agreement to follow the information guidelines, and clear police record checks.

Information guidelines will be distributed by the Ministry Lead to host homes no less than one week in advance of the children/youth arriving at their home.

Any allergies and medications of the billeted youth should be communicated to the host home by the Ministry Lead prior to arrival, with clear directions on how to manage allergies and/or medications.

Children/youth must always be billeted in teams or small groups of the same gender.

Children/youth should have distinctly separate sleeping arrangements from the other household members and should not be left alone.

Everyone staying in host homes is informed of proper etiquette and curfew guidelines.



16. SMALL GROUPS

Country Hills Church encourages our church family to participate in Small Groups. From time-to-time children and youth may accompany their parents to the homes or places where a Small Group meets.

In this section, somewhat unique issues related to Small Groups will be addressed. These guidelines are only part of the whole process of protection for children, youth, and vulnerable adults and those who work with them. This should not be considered as a stand-alone section, but as a part of the larger Protection Plan, and all policies and procedures still must be followed.

The Church has a responsibility when Small Groups meet and towards these children and youth in those circumstances.

- Small Groups of adults that have children accompany them from time to time, or where children live in the host home, will follow good practices to keep the children and youth safe. Parents will be responsible to care for their own children in those circumstances.
- Attendance will be taken each gathering at all small groups, and where applicable the attendance record must include all children, youth, vulnerable adults and Occasional Observers present. Attendance records will be digitally submitted by small group leaders to the Church within a week of the meeting and will be kept permanently on file at the Church.
- If a Small Group designates any of its members, or others they invite, to assume a position of trust and care for the children during the meeting then all Protection Plan policies and procedures will apply, and both the people providing the childcare and the Small Group Leaders must be fully approved Approved Ministry Volunteers.
- The Approved Ministry Volunteers responsible for Small Groups will adhere to all Protection Plan policies and procedures, whether the Small Groups regularly include children or youth or when a child or youth may attend as a guest.



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