

A PLAN TO PROTECT

The children, youth, community and leaders of Commons Church

adopted Dec 2016

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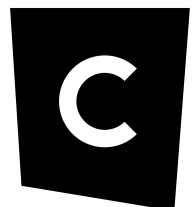
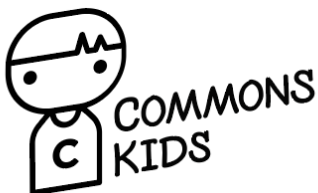


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CHAPTER 1: PROTECT THROUGH AWARENESS

Introduction

Commons Church is committed to creating safe places for people to hear the message of Jesus. This includes safe spaces for children, students and vulnerable people. We recognize that we are a reflection of God's love to those in our care and we take our responsibility to them seriously. We view ourselves as partners with parents, seeking to provide quality care and instruction in our ministry to the family.

Churches have unique features that can make them susceptible to incidents of child molestation – they have large numbers of children, a shortage of willing workers, and a culture of trust that assumes no Christian could be suspect of such exploitation. Children are naturally trusting and impressionable, and readily place their faith in adults who care for them. It is our God-given and legal responsibility to safeguard that trust.

We consider all forms of abuse to be a serious matter. Child abuse can potentially leave scars that last a lifetime, and the effects of abuse are too often minimized or dismissed. The degree of damage that results from abuse depends upon several factors including the intensity, duration and frequency of the abuse, as well as the nature of the relationship of the perpetrator to the child. If the abuser is a known and trusted authority figure in the child's life, the degree of impact increases dramatically.

Commons Church is committed to providing a safe environment for children and students, and maintains a policy of zero-tolerance for abuse, harassment, or neglect.

All staff and volunteers who teach, care for, have access to, or have positions of trust with children, students, and/or vulnerable persons within Commons Church

are required to follow the guidelines and procedures as defined in this document.

Every activity involves some risk, but this plan is designed to prioritize the safety of children, students, and volunteers with the goal of making all programs and activities as safe as is reasonably possible.

Definitions

Unfortunately, child abuse is not a rare occurrence in Canada.

“Canadian authorities estimate that the incidence of child abuse and neglect in Canada parallels that of the United States. At least one in three girls and one in seven boys are sexually abused by the time they reach the age of 18. In the vast majority of cases, sexual abusers are known to their victims. More than half of all sexual abuse occurs within the family. Offenders come from all economic, ethnic, racial and educational backgrounds and religious traditions. They may be respected members of the community, church or synagogue.”

Refer to CHILD, YOUTH AND FAMILY ENHANCEMENT ACT [AB 2000
<http://www.qp.alberta.ca/documents/Acts/c12.pdf>] for further research.

Abuse is primarily categorized as physical, sexual, emotional, or involving neglect. All child abuse involves the misuse of power. Misuse of power takes place when people take advantage of the authority or power they have over vulnerable people. Vulnerable people include adults with physical or mental disabilities and children (under age 18).

For the purposes of this document a **child** is defined as a person from birth to grade 6 (age 11 or 12). A **student** is defined as a person from grade 7 (age 11 or 12) to grade 12 (age 17 or 18). A **ministry leader** is defined as anyone (volunteer or paid) who is working with children and/or students.

- **Physical abuse** includes any non-accidental action that causes, or could cause physical harm to a child/student such as hitting, shaking, or the unreasonable

use of force to restrain a child/student.

- **Sexual abuse** includes using a child/student for sexual purposes such as through sexual contact, inappropriate exposure to sexual activity or material, or exploitation through prostitution and related activities.
- **Emotional maltreatment** includes behaviours that harm a child's/student's development or sense of self-worth such as humiliation, rejection or withholding love or support. Witnessing or exposure to domestic violence is considered a form of emotional maltreatment under some legislation.
- **Neglect** includes the failure of a parent/guardian or caregiver to provide a child's/student's basic needs such as for food, education, healthcare or supervision.
- **Harassment** involves persistently and wrongfully badgering a person with annoying, offensive, or troubling behaviour.
- **Improper discipline** includes any physical punishment, verbal or emotional abuse, or neglect. Corporal punishment is absolutely prohibited.

Symptoms of Abuse and Molestation

What constitutes reasonable grounds to report a suspicion of abuse? Reasonable grounds are what an average person, given his or her training, background and experience, exercising normal and honest judgment, would assume to be an action that needs attention. No action would be taken against a person making a report unless it is made maliciously or without reasonable grounds for the belief.

The following characteristics may be indicators of abuse, although they are not necessarily proof. One sign alone does not constitute abuse and may simply be

indicative of other issues. You need to ask God for discernment and wisdom as you watch for patterns or a combination of these warning signs.

Physical signs may include:

- lacerations and bruises
- recurring nightmares
- irritation, pain, regular discomfort, or injury to the genital area
- difficulty sitting
- torn or bloody under clothing
- venereal or sexually transmitted infection

Behavioural signs may include:

- anxiety when approaching a childcare area
- nervous, hostile, or rejecting behaviour toward one or more adults
- sexual self-consciousness
- acting out of sexual behaviours or other expressions of sexual knowledge beyond that appropriate for the child's age
- withdrawal from church, school, or sports activities
- withdrawal from friends and family

Child abuse can happen at home. Child abuse can happen at school. Child abuse can happen at church. Having been placed in positions of trust, it is our responsibility, before God and before the governing authorities, to be aware and prepared to create safe places for our children and students.

CHAPTER 2: STAFFING

Ministry Staffing

All children and youth ministry programs are to be staffed by a team of qualified, security cleared ministry leaders. Programs that involve children/students must always include adequate supervision. Supervision should be maintained before and after the event until all children grade 5 and under are in the custody of their parents or legal guardians.

Children/students of any age are not permitted to leave the premises until the program concludes. Should a child/student leave the premises while a program is operating, their parents will be notified immediately. Students grade 7 and up are permitted to leave the premises after the program concludes, and it is the responsibility of the parent or legal guardian to ensure their student is picked up or has instructions to get home.

Programs that involve students grade 7 and up will ensure adequate supervision from the time of the start of the program to the completion of the program. When students leave the event location, supervision is the responsibility of the parent or legal guardian.

Our desire is to provide a safe, loving environment where the child/student feels comfortable and learning can take place. Therefore, we recommend the following guidelines:

Definitions:

For the purpose of the document:

Staff or Pastor: refers to person in the direct employ of Commons Church

Coordinator: refers to a volunteer of Commons Church placed in direct oversight and responsibility for an area of ministry

Leader or Volunteer: refers to any volunteer of Commons Church acting in a position of authority as authorized by Commons Church

1. Two Leader Rule: At least two leaders (non-related recommended) should be present during any child/student activity or transportation. This rule helps reduce the risk of child abuse and also reduces the risk of false accusations made by children/students towards ministry leaders. (In certain situations exceptions may be allowed if covered by the “open door” policy or by having classrooms with windows. Retreats can follow the “Rule of Three” — see Appendix B for more details.)

2. Open Door Policy: If it is necessary that only one adult be alone in a room with children/students (eg. when highly visible rooms face a common hallway and ratios don’t require more leaders) the door of that room must remain open at all times. We also recommend that all rooms have windows that will allow ministry staff to monitor group activities without interrupting.

3. Vaccination Policy: Any leader serving in the **Infants/Crawlers** room must be up-to-date with all required vaccinations as outlined by Alberta Health Services. This decreases the risk of small children coming into contact with diseases that they are not yet immunized against.

Adults should be covered if they received their regular vaccinations as an infant and while in grade school.

4. Age Requirement: At least one volunteer 18 years old or older who will be responsible for general supervision of children.

Student Volunteers are ages 10 to 15. They must be at least graduated from Grade 5.

- Volunteers in all other Preschool rooms can be as young as 10 years old.
- Volunteers in Grades 1–5 can be as young as 12 years old, and must be at least 5 years older than the children in the room.

Regardless of age, all volunteers must complete the volunteer application process.

5. Student Volunteers (under the age of 16) will not be responsible for:

- a) diaper changing or washroom visits
- b) recording attendance in infants/crawlers rooms
- c) releasing children from the classroom and checking security badges

6. Staff Monitoring: Ministry staff will make regular visits to each room to ensure the class is properly staffed and supervised.

7. Family Volunteer Teams: Family ministry teams work well together and should be encouraged as a positive method of staffing. However, for the protection of the family unit, we recommend the presence of at least one other volunteer who is not related to the family.

8. Adequate Supervision: There are to be no children/students in the church building unsupervised. The supervisor needs to have sufficient charge of the group so that a positive environment is maintained. Supervisors should be sufficiently older to demand the respect required to maintain control.

In order to provide a safe environment where a child/student can be properly cared for the following guideline and ratios are to be followed:

(minimum 2 non-related leaders in EVERY room, unless room occupants are visible from the hall)

Security Clearance Process

To protect our children/students and to be protected from liability, Commons Church must take reasonable action in screening and supervising the volunteers involved in children's and youth ministry. All ministry leaders must be approved by the supervisory staff member or director of the department involved. Each department must keep its own list of ministry leaders and the status of the application process.

In order for prospective ministry leaders to be "security cleared" individuals will submit/complete the following:

1. Adhere to Three Month Rule: We will adhere strictly to the "Three Month" rule, which will require volunteers who desire to work with children/students to have been regular attendees of Commons Church for a period of three months. Such a policy gives the church an additional opportunity to evaluate applicants and volunteers, and will help to repel persons seeking immediate access to minors. (This provision may be waived if the prospective volunteer is transferring from another church and has a letter of recommendation signed by the Pastor of that church on letterhead or a documented phone call performed by the Pastor who oversees that ministry. A copy of this letter is filed in the volunteers PCO profile.

2. Ministry Application Form

3. Face to Face Interview

4. Ministry Covenant Form including signed statement of knowledge of and adherence to Plan to Protect procedures and disclosure of any material or history that may disqualify the person from serving in this area including any ongoing investigation. The applicant also agrees to disclose any investigation they may be involved in at any point while they are volunteering with Commons Church.

5. Accessibility Training: Read and sign off on Commons Church accessibility policy.

6. Reference Checks: We will have each paid staff and volunteer provide two personal references from sources who can speak to their overall integrity and previous work with children and/or students. Acceptable references may include the following.

- Former Pastor or Ministry Leader
- Current or previous employer
- Parents (for minors)—qualifies as one reference
- Teacher/Professor
- Another person who has sufficient strength of relationship

7. Police Records Check: We will have each paid staff and volunteer staff (18 years of age and older) submit a Police Record Check, including a Vulnerable Sector Search for any position involving work with, or having access to children or students. Volunteers can apply for Police Checks through Calgary Police Services at the cost of Commons Church. [<https://policeinformationcheck.calgarypolice.ca>] For volunteers with previously completed police checks they may submit their completed police check to ministry staff within six months of the date of issue appearing on their form. The date received will be noted in the volunteers file. Police checks older than 6 months may not be submitted. Police checks must be renewed within five years of the date of issue, otherwise the check will be considered invalid.

8. Training: We will train all of our ministry leaders who work with children and students to understand how to carry out our policies contained within this manual to prevent any type of abuse.

9. Final Approval From Church Leadership: Ministry leaders must complete the security clearance process prior to being scheduled in a position of trust. Also, ministry leaders who serve children and students must have a personnel file kept with church records. These files are to be kept permanently.

Security Clearance Considerations

If they have not completed the security process, occasional observers will not be placed in a position of trust with any child/student who is not their own. Occasional observers may include prospective volunteers, parents, musicians, and volunteers at special services who are paired with security cleared volunteers.

Occasional observers will not:

- be left alone in a room with a child/student, or group of children/students

- change diapers or assist with washroom breaks
- record attendance
- be the lead teacher of a lesson
- release children/students from the classroom
- have access to check-in computers

Police Record Checks: If there is a record or information that raises some concern, the designated ministry leader and the Pastor in charge of the volunteer will meet to discuss the matter. After which, the designated ministry leader will meet with the individual to discuss the offence. If the offence is other than child abuse or sexual abuse, the volunteer may proceed with ministry in the church provided both the Pastor and the ministry leader involved agree. The following are criteria considered when evaluating the information:

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

Individuals that have been accused, or convicted, or are under the suspicion of crimes against children and/or students, or who have been convicted of violent crimes or other relevant crimes will not have any involvement in ministries or programs where children or students participate.

The information contained in the Police Record Check is considered strictly confidential. Only appropriate staff and relevant leaders of the church can be privy to the information. The Board will be consulted for their approval only in the event of disagreement. All documentation collected during the screening process will be kept on file.

Should spiritual conversion make a difference for a volunteer who has been guilty of child molestation in the past?

Occasionally, such persons freely admit to a prior incident, but insist that they have since had a conversion experience and that they now present no risk whatsoever. However, they will **not** be permitted to serve in a position involving access to children or students. They should be encouraged to serve in other areas of the church. This is a reasonable accommodation of the individual's desire to serve at Commons Church.

CHAPTER 3: MINISTRY STANDARDS

Health and Safety Guidelines

1. In case of illness: A child/student who is ill and could therefore expose other children/students and workers to illness will not be received into the program. Typical signs of illness are unusual fatigue or irritability, coughing, sneezing, runny nose and eyes, fever, vomiting, diarrhea, inflamed mouth and throat. Any child/ student with a known communicable disease should not be received into children or youth programming.

2. Medications: Ministry Leaders at Commons Church are NOT to give or apply any medication to children. If a child needs medication, the parent/guardian must give it. No medication will be left in the room or with a leader or child. If a student is in need of over-the-counter medications during a youth program (eg. Advil), a Youth Coordinator/Pastor may give (but not administer) it to them after obtaining verbal permission from the parent/guardian. Verbal permission must be documented alongside an age appropriate incident report. In extreme cases, (ie. epi-pens, inhalers, etc.) arrangements should be made with written instructions and the permission of the child's parent/guardian. Requests should be written, dated, signed, and filed permanently. Topical medications for diaper changing purposes are to be used only when instructed and provided by the parent/guardian. In the special case of a retreat or event, the ministry leader will help the student and proper storage for medication, but will not administer unless specifically requested by their parent/guardian in written form.

3. Allergies: Children/students having severe allergies will have the information brought to the attention of the ministry leaders and noted on their registration form and, for infants to grade 5, noted on their name tag. See information on medications for policies involving epi-pens and inhalers.

4. Procedures for Dealing with Cuts or Injuries Involving blood:

- a) First aid kits will be available in the Commons Kids Area. In addition, a master first aid kit will also be available in the building.
- . b) Separate the other children/students from the injured child/student. The injured child/student must not be moved, unless they can stand up and walk on their own. Isolate the area where any blood may have dropped on carpet, toys, etc. Apply first aid measures and send someone to locate the parents/guardians.
- . c) If other children/students have had contact with any of the blood from the cut or injury, their parents/guardians should be informed.
- . d) Put on vinyl gloves (available in first-aid kits and diaper changing supplies) and bandage the injury, avoiding contact with the mouth, ears and eyes.

- . e) Carefully wipe all blood and bloody bandages and remove to a secure, inaccessible waste removal receptacle.
- . f) Any blood on the floor or toys must be washed away using solution of one part bleach to ten parts water.
- . g) Properly remove and dispose of vinyl gloves. Wash carefully with soap.
- . h) Complete an Incident Report.

5. Cleanliness: Sanitize the child care areas regularly. Clean and sanitize all toys, tables, bedding, gaming consoles, and carpets at least quarterly. Professionally steam clean carpets where children/students regularly sit on the floor every year.

6. Zero Tolerance: There will be no tolerance given for abuse, harassment, or neglect as defined in the Definitions section of this document.

Receiving and Releasing Children & Students

These procedures will be in effect for all children & students, infants to grade 6.

1. The names, addresses and phone numbers of parents and children/students must be carefully maintained in our church database.
2. No child/student will be allowed to enter a classroom or attend an event without first being properly signed in. Children from infants to grade 6 will also receive a security name tag.
3. No child/student will be allowed to be dropped off in a classroom or at an event without a security cleared volunteer present. If only one volunteer is present, the door must be left open until additional volunteers arrive. In the case of infants to grade 6, rooms are to be supervised so that children are not able to exit alone and/or a parent/guardian cannot take them from the room without a worker's knowledge.

4. All ministry leaders working with children/students, and all visitors, must wear an approved Commons Church name badge which identifies them accordingly.
5. Attendance of both children/students and ministry leaders (including first and last names) and visiting adults will be taken in each room every time a program is in session. This includes events and retreats. These records will be kept on file permanently.

These procedures will be in effect for all children infants to grade 6.

1. Only adults (over the age of 18) are permitted to pick up children from their classrooms, provided they have the necessary security code that matches their child's name tag issued at check-in.
2. If a security tag is lost by either the child or parent, then a child will be released to a parent/guardian or representative only on the basis of providing proof of identity such as a home address, phone number, government issued photo I.D. (e.g., drivers license) or a witness who knows the parent. This will be done only at the discretion of ministry staff, AND if the child is old enough, consultation with that child to identify who should be picking them up. Contact information should be recorded from any adult picking up a child without a security tag.
3. Parents/guardians of children must not leave the church premise while their child is involved in our programs unless written consent has been given by ministry staff. We also will require parents/guardians to leave an emergency number in case we are unable to locate them if needed.
4. Parents/guardians are not to enter the classroom when picking up their child unless requested to do so. This better enables the volunteers/staff to maintain order and provide the level of security that parents/guardians should expect.
5. In the case of a parental custody case, the parent dropping off the child must inform the staff/volunteer manning the check-in computer and a note will be attached to the child's profile indicating that even in the case of presenting

government photo identification only the parent registered in the system will be permitted to pick the child up.

6. In the case that a child is not picked up after the ministry event has concluded. A volunteer is to speak with the children's staff pastor and attempts will be made to contact the parents and if necessary the appropriate authorities.

Washroom Guidelines

Parents/guardians will be encouraged to take their child(ren) to visit the washroom or ensure that their child's diaper is dry prior to each class or service. This recommendation is to be communicated to parents/guardians at the beginning of each new school year and throughout the year to newcomers.

For Preschool Children:

- Preschool children are not to go to the washroom alone.
- Two security cleared volunteers will escort a group of children to the washroom.
- No ministry leader will ever be alone with a child in an unsupervised washroom and they are never to go into the cubicle with a child and shut the door.
- When a preschool child needs assistance in the washroom, ministry leaders may enter the washroom cubicle to assist utilizing the following guidelines:
- The outside washroom door must be propped open and the adult must stand in an open cubicle doorway
- Ministry leaders will take into consideration the privacy of the child.

For Elementary Children:

- In parish sites: grades 1–6 children are not to be sent to the washroom alone but should be accompanied by a buddy and ministry leader. Ministry leaders will escort the children to the washroom and prop the door open to make sure that everything is in order. Ministry leaders should then remain outside the washroom door and wait for the children before escorting them back to their room.

- In Kensington: grades 1–6 children are permitted to go to the washroom in the Commons Kids area on their own. Volunteers should be attentive to the time a child is away from the room, and check on a child who is gone for longer than is considered reasonable.
- Ministry leaders 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.

Diaper Changing

Whenever possible the parent/guardian will be notified when a diaper needs to be changed. Only if the parent is unable to respond and it is determined to be essential will the ministry team change diapers.

- Diaper changing procedures are to be clearly posted in the nursery diaper changing area. (See Appendix A for additional information)
- Only adults with full security clearance are permitted to change an infant's diaper or take children to the washroom.
- Diaper changing must always take place in such a way that another nursery worker can easily see the child who is being changed, as well as the other children and workers in the room.
- In the case of preschoolers over the age of 3, diaper changing should always be the responsibility of the primary caregiver unless it is absolutely essential that a diaper needs to be changed (ie. a parent has been paged to the classroom for this purpose and is not responding). If necessary a security cleared preschool worker may change the diaper as long as they follow the plan to protect procedures.

Discipline Strategy

The word discipline does not mean punishment. It comes from the root word disciple, which means training that molds character, behaviour and values. God's definition of discipline is outlined in Hebrews 12:7-11

“Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as his children. For what children are not disciplined by their father? If you are not disciplined—and everyone undergoes discipline—then you are not legitimate children at all. Moreover, we have all had parents who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of spirits and live! Our parents disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.”

Rules: Rules should be established to clearly communicate the expectations required of children/students. For specific discipline strategies, see Appendix C.

Reasonable restraint can be applied if the students/children are hurting themselves or placing members of the group at risk, otherwise students/children should not be touched in restraining or punishing ways. See definitions page for a definition of improper discipline.

Proper Display of Affection

Appropriate Touch: Recognizing that children/students need appropriate displays of affection that reflect pure, genuine and positive displays of God’s love, all touch will be age and developmentally appropriate. All touch must be done in view of others and done in the context of appropriate settings as outlined in this document. We encourage ministry leaders to:

Preschool:

- Hold a preschool child who is crying.
- Speak to a child at eye level and listen with your eyes as well as your ears.
- Hold a preschool child’s hands when speaking, listening, or walking to an activity.

Grades 1–6:

- Gently hold the child’s shoulder or hand to keep his or her attention while you redirect their behaviour.

- Put your arm around the shoulder of a child when comforting or quieting is needed.
- Pat a child on the head, hand, shoulder or back to affirm them.

Grades 6–12:

- Gently tap a student's shoulder to get their attention.
- A side hug or arm on the shoulder is appropriate when greeting or comforting a student.
- Give a student a high-five, fist-bump, or a pat on the shoulder to affirm them.

Inappropriate Touch: Ministry leaders will be made aware that the following actions are deemed inappropriate and will not be permitted:

- Do not kiss a child or coax a child to kiss you, (this includes infants)
- Do not engage in extended hugging and tickling,
- Do not hold a child's face when talking to or disciplining the child,
- Do not touch a child in any area that would be covered by a bathing suit (strictly prohibited except in cases of diapering and assisting preschoolers as outlined in washroom policies),
- Do not carry older children (Kindergarten+) and do not allow them to sit on your lap,
- Avoid shoulder massages, prolonged rubbings, wrestling, etc.
- Avoid prolonged physical contact with any child or youth.

Photography and Videotaping Policy

With consent, Commons Church may take photos/videos during an event or program, to be used for ministry purposes only. Children/Students should not be “tagged” by ministry staff in social media that is posted.

Volunteers, outside of Volunteer Coordinators and authorized photographers/videographers, are not approved to take photos or videos of children or students.

Communication and Social Media Policy

Social media is a major part of our culture and a means by which we interact with the students who are a part of our ministry. As ministry leaders interact online with students who are a part of our ministry, we want to ensure the safety of all parties involved. Online communication and text messaging with children grade 6 and younger is not permitted.

Social Media: Social media interactions between leaders and students must be done within approved social media platforms (see Appendix E). Social media interaction is done publicly (eg. writing on Facebook walls) or including a second leader in messages. Leaders are not permitted to use services with disappearing private posts to connect with students.

Video Calls (Skype, FaceTime, etc.): must include 2 security cleared leaders with the acknowledgement of the appropriate ministry supervisor and parental consent.

Phone, Texts & Emails: While text messaging remains a popular means of communication, it is not to be the primary means of communication between leaders and students. Text messaging and phone conversations are to be used to exchange event details or for brief check-ins, not as a means of building relationships or having deeper conversations. Leaders should move these conversations to Facebook or email (cc'ing another leader) whenever possible.

We ask that all of our ministry leaders abide by the following guidelines:

- Youth leaders must be mindful to maintain appropriate opposite gender interactions and redirect opposite gender students to their same gender leaders when-ever possible, especially when discussing highly personal, physical, or emotionally intense topics (eg. female students with female leaders, male students with male leaders). In the case of same gender attracted or transgender students, discuss wise approach with overseeing Pastor.

- When communicating with students through social media, email, or text messaging it is important that ministry leaders are never speaking alone with a student. Always include a second leader or parent in all online conversations.
- In the event that children or students attempt to converse or exchange information of an inappropriate nature, the worker or volunteer will screen shot the conversation and contact their manager or ministry coordinator immediately.
- Ministry leaders will not post comments, content, or photographs that are not conducive to the integrity of the ministry, or that may be considered a contradiction of beliefs and core values of Commons Church.
- Ministry leaders (including staff) will not post photographs or videos of children or students online except with permission on an approved page of Commons Church; **they cannot be posted on a personal account.**
- Ministry leaders will not use Commons Church logos or other graphics that may cause confusion as to whether or not a site is an “official” site of Commons Church.

Pre-Existing Relationships

In the case that a volunteer has a pre existing relationship with a student outside the church and there are existing lines of communication from before the volunteer begins working with the Church, disclosure must be made to the appropriate staff person who will communicate with parents and obtain parental consent for continued communication.

Age Appropriate Sex Education

We feel it is important that young people be taught the biblical view of relationships and sexual issues. It is important for parents to teach their own children about these subjects in a healthy and safe environment. We also feel that the church is to partner with parents by reinforcing the biblical standard for sexual relationships that is outlined in the scriptures. With this in mind all volunteers are to abide by the following guidelines:

- Children grade 6 and younger will not be taught sexual issues in the church.
- Students grades 7–12 may be taught a biblical conversation of sexual issues as long as the overseeing Pastor has approved the lesson being taught. It is our policy that Youth leaders must never teach on this issue without first speaking with the overseeing Pastor. If sexual issues come up in an informal or teaching setting, the leader may discuss the issue but must teach it according to the beliefs and teachings of Commons Church.
- When this topic is taught in grades 7–9, a reasonable attempt will be made to notify parents in advance.

CHAPTER 4: SPECIAL EVENTS

Special Events and Overnight Policies

Leaders are encouraged to plan social activities and involve their children or students in field trips and service projects. The following precautions need to be taken with these activities.

1. Field Trips and Special Events

- Church affiliated activities conducted away from the church property must be pre-approved by the supervising Pastor or coordinator.
- Parents must be notified at least one week prior to the outing.
- Proper written consent and medical release forms are required for each child/student (participating in field trips and special events). A copy of these forms, along with attendance sheets (names of all students, leaders, and visiting adults) is to accompany the supervisor(s) on the outing. Following the event, these will be filed with the Data Manager at the production site and kept indefinitely. In the case that no medical attention was required the medical release forms will be destroyed in accordance with the HEALTH INFORMATION ACT [AB 2000] once the event is concluded.

2. Overnight Events

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

- All over night activities must be pre-approved by the supervising Pastor
- A completed Commons Church Event Form is required for each person participating in overnight events
- Proper supervision is required (see section on Ministry Staffing)
- All supervising adults must be security cleared volunteers.

Driving Students

When planning local special events, it is preferred that parents drop off and pick up their children at the event location. For out of town events, it is preferred that commercial carriers be employed. However, when transporting students the following guidelines will apply

- Children and youth may not be transported one-on-one.
- All ministry personnel drivers transporting children during church activities must be pre-approved by the ministry lead, provide a copy of their valid driver's license and current automobile insurance in accordance with the church insurance policy, and have had a minimum of five years of driving experience.
- The number of occupants in the vehicle will not exceed the number of seat belts and each child will be in age appropriate safety restraints. Seat belts must be worn by everyone and remain fastened at all times the vehicle is in motion.
- Children will not be left unattended in a vehicle.
- There is zero tolerance for driving under the influence of alcohol, or drugs.
- Tobacco products (i.e. cigarette, e-cigarette, vape) will not be used while students are in the vehicle.

Meeting with Students Outside of Regular Programming

Connecting Outside of Regular Programs

We encourage leaders to connect with students on a regular basis, which sometimes means in-person check-ins and meetings outside of regular ministry programming.

When a staff member or volunteer recognizes the need to meet with a student, including Video Calls (Skype, FaceTime etc) notification of parent/guardian will be made. The appropriate ministry staff will be informed of all meetings in advance.

Leaders of children grade 6 or younger will not meet with individual children.

Small Group Events & One on Ones

Small group activities are encouraged. Parents will be informed of all details and appropriate event forms will be used if applicable. It is always recommended that students meet leaders at the designated meeting location. When this is not possible leaders may drive students with parent/guardian consent following the driving policies in the “Driving Students” section of this document.

It is always recommended that meetings with students in grades 7–12 include at least three people (two leaders with an individual student or two students with one leader) but we recognize that on occasion a One on One meeting with a leader and student is appropriate. Leaders of students in grades 7–12 will abide by the following policies when meeting with students:

- Leaders will inform their Youth Coordinator or Staff Pastor of the meeting time, location, and people involved in advance.
- Leaders involved must be security cleared.
- Meetings must take place in a public space and be clearly visible to other adults.
- Parents must be notified, prior to each outing.
- If a leader must drive a student to/from a meeting, the appropriate driving policies must be followed. (see the “Driving Students” section of this document).

- Consent by the supervising ministry staff must be given for each meeting between a Youth Coordinator/Pastor and one or more students of the opposite gender.
- In order to be a safe and welcoming space for all students respect will be given to LGBTQ students and volunteers and staff and volunteers will respect and accommodate appropriate gender identity and sexual expressions.

CHAPTER 5: IN CASE OF EMERGENCY

Fire Safety Procedures

In the event of a fire alarm. Children are to be taken back into their classrooms and all names confirmed against the classroom roster which will be available in each room. The Children's lead will coordinate with the Operations Director to decide if evacuation is necessary.

If safe, each classroom will exit the building through the Northhall exit, up the stairs and out the 23rd Street entrance. If necessary alternate exits can be used: through the

south hall, and then either exiting through the east or south exits. All paths indicated by an appropriately labelled emergency exit.

For ALL children:

When there is an emergency requiring the evacuation of the building, the lead teacher is to ensure children are lined up in single file and that the classroom roster is taken from the room with the leader. Remain calm when exiting the building and take children/students to designated evacuation location (Louise Dean School). Caution will be used when crossing the street. When children/students are safely gathered outside the building, the ministry leaders will do an attendance check to ensure each child/student is accounted for.

For children & infants to grade 6:

Do not allow parents to pick-up their children until all children have been accounted for and approval has been given by your Coordinator. Parents may only pick up their children after displaying their matching security pick up tag.

For Jr High Students:

When there is an emergency requiring the evacuation of the building, the room teacher is to ensure students are lined up and counted before exiting the building. Remain calm when exiting the building and take students to designated evacuation location (Louise Dean School). Jr high students will be counted upon reaching the designated evacuation location and then released to families.

Lockdown Procedures

Volunteers will be trained on the emergency plan and on techniques to remain calm in a crisis.

If the threat is inside the building, you cannot secure yourselves inside, and it is safe outside, call 9-1-1 and exit the building in the same way as the above fire plan. If it is not known where the threat is located, follow these steps:

- Call 9-1-1.
- Staff/Coordinator will immediately lock all doors/windows and check hallways and restrooms for kids to get to safety. Secure leaders and kids inside classrooms, locked if possible.
- Classroom volunteers will verify their class list, and try to keep kids calm, silent, and unseen. Create obstacles between the threat and potential victims by locking doors, covering windows, and staying out of sight. Create a fort with tables, chairs, and play panels for kids to hide in.
- Remain in place until you get the all-clear from the *same* Staff/Coordinator. Don't open doors or windows for anyone unless you can easily confirm the person isn't a threat through identification precautions. Let rescuers find and come to you.

Missing Child

If a child has gone missing from a classroom, page the Coordinator immediately. Your Coordinator/Coach will search the classrooms, restrooms, and all other rooms at the site. The parent will be paged. If the child is not found inside, the Coordinator/Coaches will do a perimeter search outside the building. If the child is still not found, call 9-1-1.

First Aid Certification

At least 50% of the Children's ministry staff will be certified in Basic First Aid and Level B CRP (Adult, Child and infant casualties). All staff will be offered the same certifications provided by Commons Church.

An Automatic Electronic Defibrillator (AED) will be installed in the church, and verified annually. First Aid kits will be installed in both levels of the facility.

CHAPTER 6: REPORTING & RESPONSE

Hearing an Allegation or Suspicion of Abuse

The following policies outline the recommended procedure and sequence for reporting suspected abuse cases. For further information regarding the disclosure requirements refer to the CHILD, YOUTH AND FAMILY ENHANCEMENT ACT [AB 2000 Part 1 Section 4 <http://www.qp.alberta.ca/documents/Acts/c12.pdf>]

1. For the protection of our children, students, and community all allegations and/or suspicions of abuse including inappropriate behaviour will be taken seriously.
2. Upon hearing of potential abuse or allegations of abuse, the ministry leader should document all pertinent information. All documentation must be kept permanently unless otherwise directed by legal counsel.
3. Stay calm and listen to the allegation. Document the allegation.
4. Do NOT ask leading questions or attempt to investigate the incident. Get the basic story, give emotional support, and remind the person that they are not at fault. Take particular care if this is a child or student.
5. Extend whatever resources are needed including pastoral or appropriate referral to professional supports. Remember that the care and safety of the victim is the first priority. Responding in a negative or non-supportive manner to the alleged victim can increase the pain of the victim and the victim's family, and future reconciliation will be more difficult along with increasing the possibility of damaging litigation.
6. Do not promise a child/student that you will not tell anyone. The only claim of confidentiality which overrides the legal duty to report is solicitor-client privilege. Thus physicians, clergymen and others who consider their professional relationships confidential for certain purposes are not exempt from the duty to report child abuse or neglect.

7. In no way should the accused or any unnecessary parties be contacted at the point of completing the documentation aside from the appropriate authorities and ministry coordinator. A third party consult for professional advice is appropriate only if the consult has the relevant training.

8. Any allegations of abuse to a child or student must be reported to the proper authorities. The reporting should be done in conjunction with the Senior Pastor, Children's Pastor or Youth Pastor.

Reporting an Allegation of Abuse

If you have any concerns regarding the safety of a child, student, or participant at Commons Church, **you must report this to your Pastor or Ministry Coordinator immediately.** He/she will then work with you in addressing the issue and, if needed, contacting the appropriate child protection agency or authorities. Any person who has reasonable grounds to believe that a child or student is in need of protection is legally required to immediately report the matter to the appropriate authorities.

An effective response strategy to an allegation of abuse recognizes the following underlying principles:

- All allegations are to be taken seriously.
- Adequate care must be shown for the well being of victims.
- The victim should not be held responsible in any way.
- Situations must be handled forth rightly with due respect for people's privacy and confidentiality where possible.
- Full co-operation must be given to civil authorities under the guidance of our legal counsel.
- The incident will be reported to the church's insurance agent.
- The church will notify and work in conjunction with denominational leadership.

In the case of an allegation, the following guidelines should be followed:

1. Responding to a Disclosure of Abuse: If a person discloses to you that an episode of abuse has occurred, take the allegations seriously. Follow the guidelines listed in the previous section of this document. If the complaint comes from a child refer to the CHILD, YOUTH AND FAMILY ENHANCEMENT ACT [AB 2000 Part 1 Section 4 <http://www.qp.alberta.ca/documents/Acts/c12.pdf>]

2. Reporting the Incident or Allegation: Any allegation of abuse will be reported to the supervising Pastor or his/her designate immediately. The church and its individuals must avoid any undue interference when a report of child abuse has been filed. The church should ask the appropriate authorities how it could assist in helping and supporting the investigation and the hurting child/student and their family. At this point, the church's lawyer may be contacted if necessary. Keep all information confidential and do not notify the individual against whom an allegation has been made. If the suspected abuse happened in the context of church ministries or was committed by a church member or attendee, the parents of the victim must be notified by the senior Pastor or by church leadership.

3. Documentation of the Incident: As soon as possible, take special care to accurately and thoroughly document all interactions, observations, and comments clearly and precisely. Include as many details as possible, as this information may become part of a legal proceeding. It is necessary to provide all available information on both the victim and the accuser (name, age, gender, address, etc.), and to explain the information on which your suspicion is based. Report any additional concerns you become aware of, even if a previous report has already been made with respect to the same victim and/or abuser.

4. Notification of Appropriate Authorities: Reports of suspected abuse should be done with the knowledge and assistance of the supervising Pastor. Social workers designated to receive reports are trained to investigate and assess the need for intervention. The child protection workers will determine if abuse has occurred. The supervising Pastor will ask the Children's Aid Society and/or the police how to proceed

with notification of the child's parents, unless the allegations concern the involvement of the victim's parent(s).

5. Protection of the Victim: If the allegation of abuse comes forward while the child/student is in the care of Commons Church, the child/student must be kept in a safe place and a plan developed in conjunction with the Children's Aid Society and/or the police as to how to proceed with the investigation.

6. Treatment of the Accused: It is crucial to ensure that even in a situation where an accusation of abuse has been made, the accused needs to be treated with dignity and in a manner of love. However, for the safety of all involved, the accused will be immediately suspended pending the outcome of the investigation.

7. Confidentiality: It is important to keep all relevant information restricted to those who need to be advised. All suspicions of abuse should be directed only to the supervising Pastor of the ministry involved or the lead Pastor. Discretion must be observed and details of the suspected abuse must not be shared among the church community. Information should be shared on a need-to-know basis, expanding only as individuals are drawn into the response and/or investigation. Confidentiality for the suspected victim and the accused must be protected.

Commons Church will decide how to deal with rumour and innuendo that often circulate in such situations and will as a matter of principle not try to handle information dissemination without legal assistance. The senior Pastor or his designate will be the spokesperson for the church. They will speak to the media and the congregation regarding the matter in a discreet, informed truthful and diplomatic way.

8. Position Statement: With any allegation of abuse, the following statement is to be used for a public response until all of the facts are uncovered and the case reviewed, as having a careful prepared statement is far superior to making no comment:

"It is always tragic when children are abused or exploited. Commons Church is aware of the ever growing nature of child abuse. We have taken careful precautions to protect the children entrusted to our care. We are distressed by any accusation of child abuse. We will do everything in our power to address any needs in this situation. For the

welfare of those involved, all information has been directed to the (insert name of appropriate agencies and authorities).”

9. Report follow-up: A confidential written report with conclusions and action taken should always be made by the supervising Pastor following an abuse report. These reports should be kept in a confidential file.

When a staff member or ministry leader receives a request for information regarding a child or student attending our programs, the Human Resources department should be contacted immediately and the department will process best practices to assure the health and safety of the child/student in your care.

If it is proven that a staff member or ministry volunteer who has access to children or students at Commons Church has committed abuse, the church will practice discipline according to Matthew 18:15–17, the policy manual of the church, and the constitution and by-laws of Commons Church.

Workplace Violence and Harassment Policy

Purpose

Commons Church is committed to providing safe environments for work, worship, and study, free from harassment and violence.

The church will not tolerate any behaviour by any person—including but not limited to its members, adherents, lay employees and ministry personnel, and elected members or volunteers—that constitutes harassment, or is violent or threatens violence.

Harassment and violence in the workplace are prohibited by federal and provincial law and the laws of the church.

Policy

All complaints of harassment or violence toward anyone within the church—including lay employees or ministry personnel, and elected members or volunteers—will be taken seriously and dealt with in a spirit of compassion and justice.

Harassment is defined as any unwanted physical, sexual, or verbal conduct that is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwanted, and is a form of discrimination. Harassment may involve a wide range of behaviour, from verbal innuendo and subtle suggestions to overt demands and physical abuse, and it includes psychological harassment.

Sexual harassment is defined as any attempt to coerce an unwilling person into a sexual relationship, to subject a person to unwanted sexual attention, or to punish a refusal to comply.

Violence is defined as the exercise of physical force or attempt to cause physical force by a person against a worker in a workplace that causes or could cause injury. It also includes statements or behaviours that it is reasonable for a worker to interpret as a threat to exercise physical force against the worker, in the workplace, that could cause physical injury.

It is everyone's responsibility to raise concerns about harassment, violence, and discrimination within the workplace. It is also everyone's responsibility to take steps to address harassment, violence, and discrimination in the workplace.

Procedures

1. All complaints of harassment or violence will be taken seriously and will be investigated.
2. If the person complaining (the complainant) is able to do so, they should communicate directly with the person who is behaving inappropriately, to tell them that their behaviour is unacceptable and is being experienced as unacceptable by the complainant.
3. If the behaviour does not stop or the complainant is unable to speak to the respondent (the person behaving inappropriately), then a complaint should be provided

in writing with detail as to the date of the incident(s), location, any witnesses, and a description of the incident(s).

4. The complaint should be sent to the Chairperson of the Leadership Board of Commons Church.

5. The Chairperson will assess the complaint and the applicability of this policy to respond to the complaint. If there are other processes available to address the complaint, those may be recommended. Such other options could include mediation, a facilitated conversation, or other forms of dispute resolution.

6. The complaint will be provided to the respondent at the earliest possible opportunity by the Chairperson or appointee.

7. If the complaint is being made about the Chairperson, the complaint will be made to the Lead Pastor and/or Vice-Chairperson.

8. Pastoral care will be offered to the parties.

9. The Chairperson will assign an investigator to the complaint in consultation with the Leadership board.

11. The investigator will meet with the parties to the complaint in person; if there are any witnesses, conversations with the witnesses may be conducted in person or over the phone.

12. The investigator will prepare a report with recommendations to resolve the complaint, and the report will be provided to the Chairperson, who will communicate the resolution and recommendations, as appropriate, to the parties and to the pastoral charge or faith community.

13. The parties will be provided with information about the outcome as appropriate in the circumstances. Personal information will not be provided about any party, and all information will be held in as much confidence as is possible while still ensuring fair process.

CHAPTER 7: POLICY MONITORING

Compliance with the Plan to Protect guidelines

Education, communication, and commitment to this policy are key to our efforts to prevent the occurrence of abuse of children and students in our care. We recognize the serious nature of the implementation of this policy and believe it to be critical in providing a safe and effective environment for our children and students. As such, we require an annual refresher training of the relevant policies and procedures for each ministry area.

Ministry leaders should thoroughly review the Plan to Protect Guidelines and attention must be given to periodic monitoring that examines the following:

- Have all relevant ministry areas trained its leaders regarding these policies?
- Are ministry leaders following the required policies and guidelines?
- What obstacles exist in complying with the policies?
- What is the level of cooperation?
- Do sufficient materials exist for training and information?
- Are the policies available?

We will conduct a yearly internal audit of the implementation of these policies and procedures, including a report to the board. Our volunteer scheduling system will be kept up to the date and the option that disallows volunteers without current police checks to be scheduled in vulnerable areas will always be turned on so that volunteers are not inadvertently scheduled without the appropriate checks. No volunteers will be permitted to serve the children's area without being scheduled in the Planning Centre

Online Services module. This will also ensure that records of all volunteers is maintained.

APPENDICES

Appendix A. Notes relating to the Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act [AB 2000]

In Alberta, a mature minor who is not a ward of a director under the Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act is entitled to be treated as an adult and will be treated appropriately by Commons Church.

Appendix B. Policy on Diaper Changing

Only Security Cleared Volunteers are permitted to change diapers.

1. Check all children's diapers about 40 minutes into the service and stick on a "Dry When Checked" sticker/note if the child is dry.
2. If not, collect all necessary supplies (gloves, clean diapers, plastic bags, pre-moistened towelettes, hand sanitizer). Note: Diaper changing needs to take place in such a way that another nursery worker can easily see the child who is being changed, as well as the other children and workers in the room.
3. Put on gloves.
4. Talk with child about what you are going to do.
5. Place the child on a clean, disposable surface (if you are out of changing sheets use paper towels at minimum).

6. Unless a proper change table or a wide countertop is available, diaper changing must happen with the changing pad on the floor. This is to prevent a fall or injury of the child. Changing pads are not to be placed on tables. Never turn away from a child on a changing table.
7. Remove the wet or soiled diaper. Place in a plastic bag
8. Use wet wipes to clean the diaper area, wiping from front to back. Place towelette in plastic bag containing soiled diaper. Close and knot bag and throw it away.
9. Put clean diaper on child and stick on a “Changed with Care” sticker or note.
10. Remove child from the changing area.
11. Remove gloves and place in wastebasket.
12. Wash hands thoroughly.

Note: Diaper should be the responsibility of the primary caregiver unless it is absolutely essential that a diaper needs to be changed (i.e., a parent has been paged to the nursery for this purpose and is not responding).

Appendix C. Discipline Strategies

Preschool Discipline Strategy

In the Commons Kids area, we are working together to create a safe environment where kids can learn to love and follow Jesus. We want church to be safe and fun for every child who visits. Preschoolers are just discovering the world around them and testing boundaries for the first time. The goal for Preschool is to keep things simple and to involve the parents regularly.

We have one rule in Preschool — “I will try my best”. If a child is misbehaving, ask them if they are trying their best. Encourage them to try their best by sharing, being nice, and listening to their leaders.

If a child puts themselves or another in danger (ex hitting, biting, throwing toys), separate the child from the rest of the group. If a visible injury has occurred, or the child is in distress (ex crying), an incident report must be completed by the Coordinator. The Coordinator will connect with the parents/guardians of both the victim and perpetrator to explain the incident (depending on the severity you could wait until pickup time).

If this behaviour/incident reporting reoccurs for 2–3 consecutive weeks, a parent meeting will be arranged with the child’s parent/guardian, the Coordinator, and the Lead Pastor. At this meeting the documentation surrounding the incidents will be shared, as well as discussion concerning how best to serve the child while maintaining the safety and well-being of all children in church.

Gr. 1–6 Discipline Strategy

In the Commons Kids area, we are working together to create a safe environment where kids can learn to love and follow Jesus. We want church to be safe and fun for every child who visits. The goal of discipline is to help kids learn self-control, responsible behaviour, and appropriate ways to socially interact.

Rules – RESPECT

1. Respect Yourself [try your best]
2. Respect Others [listen when others speak, be kind to others, keep your hands to yourself, respect the space of others]
3. Respect Your Space [stay in your seat, stay off the stage, respect classroom supplies & property]

Colour System

1. Children that follow the rules and show respect to their peers & leaders are considered “green” – all systems go!

2. If a child is misbehaving and a couple of gentle reminders do not remedy the concern, they will be moved to “yellow”. A volunteer will take two minutes and talk with the child to help them understand why they were given yellow [explain specifically what they have done wrong]. They will reiterate the colour system, and that they have an opportunity to go back to “green” if they begin to show respect again.
3. If the child continues to misbehave, they will be moved to “red”. The child will speak with the Coordinator to talk about what has happened, and will have 5 minutes of “time out.” The Coordinator/Coach will document what has happened, reiterate the colour system to the child, and tell them they have an opportunity to go back to “green” if they begin to show respect.
4. If the child continues to misbehave after the colour “red” is given, and continues to be unresponsive to leaders, their parent/guardian will be paged to come and pick them up. The child is absolutely welcomed back the next week to try again, unless the behaviour was severe (for example, extreme violence).

Documentation

If a child earns a “red”, the Coordinator will record what happened on an incident report form. This written record will be important if there needs to be a meeting with parents to discuss what has happened. Coordinators, please record objectively, without the use of emotion (facts only).

Parent Meetings

If a child is continuously earning “red” week after week, and no solution can be found, a parent meeting will be arranged with the child’s parent/guardian, the Coordinator and the Lead Pastor. At this meeting the documentation surrounding the incidents will be shared, as well as discussion concerning how best to serve the child while maintaining the safety and well-being of all children in church.

Student Discipline Strategy

In Commons Youth programming we are continually working to create safe environments for students to get to know Jesus better. We aim to create a space that encourages love and respect for self and each other. We will encourage students to take ownership of their own behaviour. If a student's behaviour is continually negatively impacting those around them, parents may be contacted by the Youth coordinator/pastor to discuss next steps.

Leaders should not react in anger to students negative behaviour (yelling, prolonged exclusion, mocking) but seek always to show the love of Jesus in any behaviour management, or discipline. We see these as teachable moments in a student's discipleship journey and not an end point.

Violence and physical intervention

Leaders will not physically discipline any student, however in the case of violence between students, or towards students, a leader may use appropriate physical restraint to minimize danger to those involved. Physical restraint must never cause more harm, or endanger students, with the clear intent to de-escalate a situation. This will never be a response of anger (or violence toward the student) and should reflect the peace teachings of Jesus. Physical intervention should only be used when no other means of de-escalation have worked.

Appendix D. Youth Transportation Policy

For events where minors are being transported a chartered bus is the preferred method of transport. In situations where this is not cost effective or size appropriate, a rental vehicle or personal vehicle may be used. It is the responsibility of the driver to ensure that any rental vehicle is appropriately covered by insurance in line with expectations set out in the safe driving policy.

When the number of attendees is too small to warrant the use of a bus the following procedures must be followed:

1. The Driver must sign and comply with the Safe Driving Statement (below).
2. The Driver must adhere to the Plan to Protect Policy.
3. Commons Church must have a current, valid Police Check on file for the Driver.
4. If the event is a car rally or scavenger hunt it must not be a timed event or race.
5. The student must provide a current, signed Parental Permission and Release Form that provides the details of the event for each offsite event or trip. Students may not participate without the signed release form.

Youth Safe Driving Policy

Any ministry leader who drives students Gr 7–12 must sign and adhere to the following:

- I confirm that I have a valid class 5 license.
 - My vehicle is fully insured and has at least \$1million in Third Party Liability coverage. We encourage \$2 million in Third Party Liability for the safety of our drivers.
 - I am 21 years or older with at least 3 years driving experience. We recommend at least 25 years old and at least 5 years driving experience.
 - My driver's license is current, valid and is not suspended.
 - I will always have at least 1 security cleared person in the car while driving any students from Commons Church. This could be myself or another person.
 - While transporting students from Commons Church I agree to drive with extreme care and safety, abiding by the rules of the road. This includes avoiding distracted driving due to cell phone use, texting, eating, loud music, etc.
 - I will not drive individual students whenever possible.
 - I confirm that my vehicle is in safe working order, including all safety equipment such as seat belts, air bags, etc.
 - The number of persons per car must never exceed the number of seatbelts. Each person must wear a seat belt.
 - I am personally responsible for all traffic and parking violations and will notify authorities immediately of any accident.
 - I have not had more than 2 minor traffic violations in the past 3 years (eg. speeding, traffic light violation, unsafe vehicle, etc).

- I have not had any major at-fault accidents, or major traffic violations in the past 5 years (eg. dangerous driving, speeding, impaired driving, etc).
- While transporting students from Commons Church I agree to drive with extreme care and safety. I also agree to abstain from consuming any alcoholic beverage before or while driving. Furthermore, I will not drive under the influence of any drug. I will not smoke any tobacco product (i.e. cigarette, e-cigarette, vape) while students are in my vehicle.

Appendix E. Student Social Media Policy

The current approved methods of social media interaction between students and ministry leaders are Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Social media interaction is to be done publicly (writing on Facebook walls) or including a second leader in messages.

Snapchat is not permitted to be used for student/leader interactions. Any form of private disappearing messaging is not permitted between students and leaders.

Appendix F. Youth Retreat Procedures

While on youth retreats and extended overnight trips, leaders will strive to not be alone with students. However we recognize it is not always possible for two leaders to be present in every situation.

The rule of three: When two leaders cannot be present, leaders will not be alone with a single student, but will ensure two or more students are present. There will always be at least three people.

If one on one conversations need to occur between students and leaders, they will be in public spaces.

Between the hours of 11pm and 6am, no leader will be alone in a cabin without another security cleared leader present.

Student medications will be kept in the possession of the student and leaders will not administer medications. In special circumstances, student medications may be looked after (but not administered) by a ministry leader only after discussion with parents and staff. When needed, over the counter medications will only be given to students by the designated first aid person after permission from parent/guardian. Verbal permission must be documented by the ministry leader.

For extended international trips, a plan to protect addendum may be made, with written permission/consent by the parent/guardian.

For LGBTQ+ students, decisions around accommodation on retreats will be made by staff in conjunction with Youth Coordinators/Pastors, ministry leaders, parents and church leadership.

Appendix G: Accessibility Policy & Procedure

Policy Statement

Commons Church is committed to improving accessibility for persons with disabilities to afford equal opportunities and provision of integrated programs and services where possible, in a manner that respects dignity and independence.

Purpose

This policy is intended to address the requirements of the Alberta PERSONS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES SERVICES ACT (2000) and related legislation, ensuring that persons with disabilities are provided equal opportunities and standards of services. The established procedures shall ensure compliance by recognizing the use of assistive devices, support persons, service animals and other accessible means.

Procedure

Commons Church shall accommodate persons that require the use of assistive devices, a service animal and/or a support person to access goods and services in accordance with applicable legislation, policies and procedures.

Training

Commons Church shall provide appropriate training to all staff and volunteers who interact with the public. This includes full-time staff, board members, children, youth, and connection team volunteers. Training shall be proportional to the level of public contact and shall include:

1. The purpose of the Alberta PERSONS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES SERVICES ACT (2000), and the requirements.
2. How to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.
3. How to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device, require assistance, or have a support person.

Training shall be provided on an as-needed basis.

Assistive Devices

Commons Church will accommodate the use of assistive devices by individuals when accessing services, unless otherwise prohibited due to health and safety or privacy issues.

Technologies such as ASL interpreters, captioning, brail, assisted listening etc., may be made available. Commons Church is willing to consider implementation after considering an individual's needs, cost and timing. Contact info@commons.church to discuss further.

Service Animals

Commons Church will accommodate the accompaniment of service animals in areas that are open to the public, unless prohibited by law.

Support Persons

Commons Church will accommodate the need for a support person to support and assist an individual with a disability when accessing services.

Service Distribution Notification

Commons Church shall provide notice of any anticipated disruption of service. In the event of an unexpected disruption, notice shall be provided by such method as is reasonable under the circumstance.

Feedback

Feedback about this policy or procedure shall be received in any form: in person, in writing, by email (info@commons.church). It will be reviewed by the appropriate member of our team.