

Introduction

Mat 18:5-6 And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me. But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and *that* he were drowned in the depth of the sea.

Mar 10:13-14 And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them: and *his* disciples rebuked those that brought *them*. But when Jesus saw *it*, he was much displeased, and said unto them, **Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.**

Jesus expected children to be included and provided for within the local church.

In today's generation, the church maybe the only place where children can unconditional love and care they so desperately need to grow up and become responsible citizens within their communities. The church is responsible for the children's safety and protection while attending any functions of Balm of Gilead. Balm of Gilead therefore must implement and enforce a plan to promote child and youth safety and to prevent child abuse in line with government legislation on child abuse and its prevention.

PURPOSE

The purpose of establishing this Child Safety Policy and the procedures that accompany is to demonstrate the absolute commitment of Balm of Gilead and its members to the protection and safety of all our children and youth. Safeguarding is also a requirement by the Charity Commission.

The Charity Commission's role

Although the Commission does not administer child protection legislation, it aims to increase public trust and confidence in charities and, as part of the registration process, it always asks organisations working with children for (a) information about the policies and procedures which they have in place for keeping children safe and (b) disclosure of Criminal Record Bureau (DBS) certificates in respect of trustees where the charity is legally entitled to obtain these. We have worked with the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) to ensure that this guidance is as relevant, accurate and helpful as possible.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding is a relatively new term which is broader than 'child protection' as it also includes prevention. Safeguarding has been defined as:

- All agencies working with children, young people and their families taking all reasonable measures to ensure that the risks of harm to children's welfare are minimised; and

- Where there are concerns about children and young people's welfare, all agencies taking appropriate actions to address those concerns, working to agreed local policies and procedures in full partnership with other local agencies. (*Safeguarding Children* (2005),
- The 2nd Joint Chief Inspectors Report on Arrangements to Safeguard Children. A broader definition can be found in *Working Together to Safeguard Children* - see [sources of further information](#) below.) <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/charities-how-to-protect-vulnerable-groups-including-children>

Safeguarding children is vital for charities as charity trustees have a duty of care towards the children with whom they have contact. Having safeguards in place within an organisation not only protects and promotes the welfare of children but also it enhances the confidence of trustees, staff, volunteers, parents/carers and the general public. Safeguarding children is beneficial to a charity in many ways - protecting its reputation, helping to effectively meet its objectives and protecting its finances.

The necessity to safeguard children applies both to charities working in the UK and other countries where children may face different or additional risks of abuse or exploitation. These safeguards should include a child protection policy and procedures for dealing with issues of concern or abuse. For the purposes of child protection legislation, the term 'child' refers to anyone up to the age of 18 years.

England

For current guidance on safeguarding, legislation and resources see:
<https://www.gov.uk/topic/running-charity#6>

Two documents are particularly helpful:

- *What to do if you're worried a child is being abused* (2003)
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/257876/change-for-children.pdf
- *Working Together to Safeguard Children: a guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children* (2006) HM Government.
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/592101/Working_Together_to_Safeguard_Children_20170213.pdf

SCOPE

This policy shall apply to all current and future workers, paid or volunteers who will have responsibility of supervising the activities of pre-schoolers, children and youth.

DEFINATIONS

For the purpose of this policy the following definitions shall apply:

- a. "Preschooler, "child"," "children", "youth" and "minor" shall be defined as any individual under the age of eighteen (18) or whose mental capacity is that of a minor.
- b. "Adult" shall be defined as any individual at least eighteen (18) years of age
- c. "Worker" shall be defined as any adult who serves as a volunteer and/or paid person given the responsibility of working with or caring for minors.
- d. "Teenage worker" shall be defined as any worker at least fourteen (14) years old or older, but under the age of eighteen (18) enlisted to assist with the care of minors in the presence of two adults.
- e. "Child abuse" shall be defined as verbal, physical, emotional, or sexual abuse of a preschooler, child, youth or minor.
- f. "Criminal Background Check" is the procedure used to check the background of adult workers and volunteers for any criminal activity.

POLICY and PROCEDURES

Recruiting, Screening and Hiring Workers

From the standpoint of reducing the legal liability of Balm of Gilead if an incident of child abuse occurs, having through screening process for the church's children and youth workers, and having applied that process to all workers (paid and volunteer) will go a long way toward demonstrating that the church has taken reasonable actions to protect its children. In addition, use of a thorough recruitment and screening process will protect the church's workers from false allegations. Finally screening reduces the risk of a child abuser being recruited to work with the children and youth. The screening of all workers with children and youth, including clergy creates a win-win situation for the church and the workers.

An application form(attached)that requests comprehensive information will need to be completed by full-time, part-time, paid, volunteer, clegy and lay members who work with the children and youth of Balm of Gilead. References will also be requested on the application form. The applicants will need to sign an Authorization and Request for Criminal Records Check (form attached), authorizing Balm of Gilead to request information regarding any record of criminal charges or convictions of the applicant. While this process understandably trespasses into the privacy of our lives, the security of our children and youth outweighs the personal invasion inherent with such investigations and disclosures. All personal information voluntarily disclosed, the results of the background and reference checks, or the refusal of any person to participate in ta program or activity in lieu of such disclosure requirements will be maintained in the strictest of confidence. Failure to sign the authorization will not necessarily eliminate the applicant from consideration, but will be taken into account when reviewing the person's application.

After reviewing applications and verifying references, a personal interview will be conducted with those whom the church is seriously considering for work with the children and youth of Balm of Gilead. The interview will be used to clarify any questions about information on the application and to develop a firsthand impression of the applicant. Interviews will be conducted by the department heads of the children's ministry, youth ministry. Clegy and /or lay leaders may also be invited to participate in the interview process.

If an applicant is approved through the interview process, a background check will be performed and references will be contacted. Upon receiving clearance from the background check, the applicant will be notified of their start date.

This procedure will apply to volunteers,paid staff, clegy and lay members.

I have received a copy of the Child Safety Policy and have been trained in such.

Name

Date

ANNUAL TRAINING FOR WORKERS

All workers with children and youth, (including occasional workers, such as those who volunteer for special children's programs), whether the workers are paid, volunteer, part-time, full-time, clergy or lay person, are required to attend an annual training session at which they are informed of the:

- Church's policies for the prevention of child abuse,
- Procedures to be used in all ministries with children and youth,
- Appropriate steps to report an incident of child abuse, and
- Details of the state laws regarding child abuse.

Those who are currently working with children and youth during the writing and implementation of this policy will be required to complete an application at the first training session. On a Sunday following the annual training, the workers will be recognized and prayed for during the service.

First Aid/CP Training

We hope that first aid will never be needed during any function; however ministries with children and youth inevitably involve minor scrapes or worse. Balm of Gilead believes that our workers must be prepared to deal with emergencies and to that end will provide first aid and CRP training during the annual orientation meeting. In the event of an accident, appropriate emergency personnel will be contacted immediately, if needed. Once the emergency situation has been resolved, the worker in charge will complete an Accident Report (attached) and promptly submit the report to the Church Business Administrator.

The Open Door Policy

Classroom doors shall be open during all children and youth classes, including but not limited to Sunday school. A person will serve as a usher for visitors, helping them to locate the appropriate classroom, but will also serve as a monitor in the event of a disruptive child. The child will be sent to the monitor who would then escort the child to the parents. The monitor will also watch children as they go to and from the toilets.

Discipline of Children

The discipline of children is clearly recognized as the parents' responsibility and it is not the intention of Balm of Gilead or its leaders to assume that responsibility. However, in the event of a disruptive child during any children's activities at Balm of Gilead, the teacher will have the option of speaking to the child in a Christ-like, loving manner in order to end the disruption. At the discretion of the teacher, the child will be excused from the class and escorted to the parents after the child has been spoken to by the teacher a maximum of three times.

Adult Rule

High Wycombe has children's activity that is open to the community; many children attend who do not normally attend Balm of Gilead and whose parents are not known by the teachers of Balm of Gilead. For the safety of all the children attending these activities, a minimum of two adults will be in each classroom. Teenagers will be allowed to assist in classes, but will not be allowed to be in charge of any class.

Teenage Workers

Teenagers 14 years and older will be allowed to assist in the nursery and children's church. Interested teens will be required to complete a questionnaire and their parents will be required to sign the questionnaire, signifying that they are aware of their teen(s) desire to work with the children, and they understand that a Rota of workers will be posted in each Sunday's bulletin. If the teen is not listed to work that Sunday, the teen will be required to be in the main service that week.

The "Five-Year-Older" Rule

Many times especially in youth ministry, the people who volunteer or who apply for a paid youth worker's position, are in college or have just graduated. If a junior in college (age 20 or 21) is serving as a worker with the youth who are only three or four years younger than she/he is. At Balm of Gilead, the workers with the youth must be at least five years older than the oldest youth in the group. This rule is in place for the protection of both the youth and the workers.

OPEN DOOR COUNSELING

At all counselling sessions with children or youth, the door of the room shall remain open for the entire session. The session is to be conducted with 2 adults present so that there is a witness to the counsel/advice offered. Counselling sessions conducted behind closed doors or with only one adult present offer opportunity for false allegations of abuse. Closed doors also make it easy for the child abuser to have the privacy and isolation he or she needs.

ADVANCE NOTICE TO PARENTS

The children and/or youth workers of Balm of Gilead must always give the parents advance notice and full information regarding the event(s) in which their children will be participating. The workers are also required to inform parents of any event in which a worker will be alone with their child. Prior to the event, parents must sign a permission slip and/or waiver (form attached) giving their full permission for the child to participate in the event and to receive any medical treatment, if necessary. Children/youth who do not have a permission slip on file for the particular event will **not** be allowed to participate in that event **unless and only** if the youth director speaks with one or both

of the child's parents and receives verbal permission for the child's participation and medical treatment if necessary. There will be no exceptions to this rule. This is for the protection of the church as it proves that parents were informed of the event or warned of the situation. It gives the parents the opportunity to agree to have their child receive necessary medical treatment in the event of an accident or injury and/or also prevents the child from being alone with a worker without the parents' knowledge.

PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT AND SUPERVISION

For the health and safety of our children and youth, the workers are to know how all games and playground equipment works. When children are on the playground, adequate adult supervision is to be present (1 adult per no more than 5 children) at all times. If there is no supervised play on the playground at a time when children are present; parents should not allow their children on the playground unless accompanied by one of the parents.

Swimming or other water activities will require a supervisor with lifeguard skills. First aid and CPR will be required for hiking, camping, etc.

In some activities the dangers outweigh the enjoyment. These are classified as hazardous and extra hazardous. Hazardous activities should be stringently supervised with strict limitations. Extra hazardous activities will not be permitted by the church.

Hazardous

Water slides

Rafting

Canoeing

Horse riding

Sack races

Roller skating

Ice Skating

Rope jumping

Extra Hazardous

unsupervised swimming

Tackle football

Rope Swings

Rope swings

Fireworks displays & stands

Rock climbing

Trampolines

Bungee-jumping

PARENT AND FAMILY EDUCATION

In addition to annual orientation for workers, a parent and family education session will also be held yearly. Included in the session will be discussions on the facts of child abuse, how to recognise child abuse, how to report abuse, Balm of Gilead policies and procedures for child

safety, etc. Sessions may be also be held for children and/or youth to teach them the behaviour that is expected from workers, teachers and other adults involved in their lives. These sessions will be held on a yearly basis in order to accommodate new members.

WORKER / VOLUNTEER CODE OF ETHICS

While acting in our capacity as a Youth/Children worker or volunteer of Balm of Gilead, the following code of ethics will apply:

1. Smoking or using tobacco products in the presence of minors is strictly prohibited.
2. Using, possessing or being under the influence of alcohol, illegal, or illicit drugs is strictly prohibited.
3. Workers and volunteers of minors shall not abuse such minors, including:
 - Any direct observation or evidence of sexual activity in the presence of or in association with a minor.
 - Any display or demonstration of sexual activity, abuse, insinuation of abuse, or evidence of abusive conduct towards a minor.
 - Sexual advances or sexual activity of any kind between any person and a minor.
 - Sexual advances or sexual activity of any kind to a minor(s)
 - Infliction or physical abusive behaviour or bodily injury to a minor
 - Physical neglect of a minor, including failure to provide adequate supervision in relation to the activities of Balm of Gilead.
 - Mental or emotional injury to a minor
 - The presence or possession of obscene or pornographic materials at any function of Balm of Gilead.
 - The consumption of or being under the influence of alcohol while leading or participating in a function for minors of Balm of Gilead.
 - The presence or possession or being under the influence of any legal, illicit drugs.
4. Workers and volunteers must treat all people of all races, religions and cultures with respect and consideration.
5. Workers and volunteers will not use or tolerate the use of profanity in the presence of minors.
6. Workers and volunteers must be free of physical and psychological conditions that might adversely affect any minor's health, including but not limited to contagious disease.
7. Workers and volunteers will portray a positive Role Model for minors by maintaining an attitude of respect, loyalty, patience, courtesy and maturity.
8. Workers and volunteers will be expected to act and react with Christian love and understanding in all situations.
9. Workers and volunteers will do everything in their power to avoid being put in a situation where they are alone with a minor other than their own child(ren).

I understand that as a worker or volunteer with minors for Balm of Gilead, I will be subject to a background check, including criminal history.

I understand that any violation of this code may be grounds for removal as a worker or volunteer with minors.

Print Name _____ Date _____

Applicant's Signature _____

RECOGNISING CHILD ABUSE

Child abuse is generally categorised and defined in five primary forms:

1. **Physical Abuse**

Physical abuse is defined as abuse in which a person deliberately and intentionally causes bodily harm to a child. Examples may include violent battery with a weapon (belt, strap, knife etc), burning, shaking, kicking, choking, fracturing bones and any wide variety of non-accidental injuries to a child's body.

2. **Emotional Abuse**

Emotional abuse is abuse in which a person exposes a child or youth to spoken and/or unspoken emotional cruelty. Children exposed to emotional abuse may have experienced being locked in a closet, being deprived of any sign of parental affection, being constantly told they are bad or stupid, or being allowed or forced to abuse alcohol or drugs. Emotional abuse sends a message to the child of worthlessness, badness, and being not only unloved, but undeserving of love and care. Emotional abuse can be very difficult to prove and is always devastating to the victim.

3. **Neglect**

Neglect is abuse in which a person endangers a child's health, safety, or welfare through negligence. Neglect may include withholding food, clothing, medical care, education and even affection and affirmation of the child's self-worth. This is perhaps the most common form of abuse, and yet it is the least reported form of abuse.

4. **Sexual Abuse**

Abuse in which sexual contact between a child and an adult (or another older and more powerful youth) occurs. The child is never truly capable of consenting to or resting such contact and/or such sexual acts. Often the child is physically and psychologically dependent upon the perpetrator of the abuse. Examples of sexual abuse may include fondling, intercourse, incest, and the exploitation of and exposure to child pornography or prostitution.

5. **Ritual Abuse**

Ritual abuse is abuse in which physical, sexual, or psychological violations of a child are inflicted regularly, intentionally and in a stylised way by a person or persons responsible for the child's welfare. The abuser may appeal to some higher authority or power to justify the abuse. The abuse may include cruel treatment of animal(s) that belong to the child or repeated threats of harm to the child, other persons known by the child and /or animals.

Reports of ritual abuse are often extremely horrifying and may seem too grim to be true. Children making such reports must not be ignored.

Where Can Abuse Happen?

Unfortunately, abuse of children and youth can happen anywhere and at any time. When a child or youth reports that he/she has experienced any of the behaviours described on the previous page, serious attention should be given to the child and to the report. While every child's story may not be an actual case of abuse, the truth needs to be determined to prevent either further harm to the child or further false allegations.

Child abuse is criminal behaviour and is punishable by law in the whole of the United Kingdom. Child sexual abuse exploits and harms children by involving them in sexual behaviour for which they are unprepared, to which they cannot consent, and from which they are unable to protect themselves.

The child victim is must **never be made to feel responsible** for causing the abuse. The child victim is **never capable of consent to abusive behaviour**, either legally or morally.

Knowing the Facts

Studies have estimated that 1 out of 3 girls are sexually abused before the age of 18. Studies have also estimated that 1 out of 7 boys have been sexually abused before the age of 18. These numbers are only based on reported incidents; many children are reluctant to report abuse. We need to research the statistics of fatalities connected to child abuse. **Approximately 50,500 children in the UK are known to be at risk of abuse right now. Latest available figures show that there were 50,552 children on child protection registers or the subject of child protection plans in the UK as at 31 March 2011 (or 31 July 2011 in Scotland):**

The Church at Risk

It is clear that any organisation working with children is a place where abuse could occur. The risk for churches is so high because:

- Churches behave as relatively trusting organisations relying upon members and their leaders to conduct themselves appropriately. Members may tend to have an "it could never happen here" attitude. Sometimes this attitude persists even in the face of questions or reports of misconduct.
- Churches normally will not screen its volunteers and/or employees who work with children and youth. Often, no investigation is done at all before total strangers are allowed to work with the children and youth.

- Churches routinely provide opportunities for close contact and for close personal relationships with their children and youth. In fact, these are nurtured and encouraged as the members try to live out the gospel message.

Recognising the possibility of child abuse and the frequency of the occurrence of abuse is only part of the church's responsibility. Members must become knowledgeable on how to recognise the signs of possible abuse and how to safely carry out the children's and youth's ministries without providing opportunities for abuse to occur. This is not meant for the church to withdraw the ministries because of fear of abuse but rather we must ensure the ministries are carried out in responsibly safe circumstances.

Indicators of Child Abuse

Children suffering from abuse will seldom, if ever tell anyone about the situation. Thus, we as adults must learn to recognise the signs of abuse. Listed below are possible signs of abuse, although the signs may not necessarily be proof of abuse. Taken individually, any one of these signs could be a symptom of other more or less serious problems. However, when these indicators are observed in a child or youth, they should be considered as warnings that warrant further investigation.

Possible signs of Physical Abuse

Behavioural Indicators

- Is wary of adults
- Is either extremely aggressive or withdrawn
- Is dependent and indiscriminate in his/her attachments
- Is uncomfortable when other children cry
- Generally controls his/her own crying
- Exhibits a drastic behaviour change when not with parents or caregiver
- Uses or abuses alcohol and other drugs
- Is manipulative
- Has poor self- concept
- Exhibits delinquent behaviour, such as running away from home
- Is self-harming
- Is frightened of parents or of going home
- Exhibits suicidal gestures and/or attempts suicide
- Has behavioural problems at school

Physical Indicators

- Has unexplained bruises often clustered in a pattern
- Has unexplained and/or unusual burns (cigarettes etc.)
- Has unexplained bite marks
- Has unexplained fractures or dislocations

- Has unexplained abrasions or lacerations
- Wets the bed

or inconsistent explanations of all the above.

Possible signs of Emotional Abuse

Behavioural Indicators

- Is overly eager to please
- Views abuse as being warranted
- Exhibits changes in behaviour
- Is excessively anxious
- Is depressed
- Is unwilling to discuss problems
- Exhibits aggressive or bizarre behaviour
- Is withdrawn
- Is passive
- Has unprovoked fits of yelling or screaming
- Exhibits inconsistent behaviour
- Has low self-esteem
- Exhibits a gradual impairment of health and/or personality
- Has difficulty sustaining relationships
- Is unable to communicate his/her feelings, needs or desires
- Sabotages his/her chances of success
- Lacks self confidence
- Has a negative self-image

Physical Indicators

- Has a sleep disorder(nightmares)
- Exhibits eating disorders

Possible Signs of Neglect

Behavioural Indicators

- Begs or steals food
- Arrives early and stays late
- Is extremely dependent or detached
- Appears to be exhausted
- Continual absence of parent or guardian

Physical Indicators

- Is frequently dirty, unwashed, hungry or inappropriately dressed
- Has unattended physical problems
- May appear to be overworked
- Is tired and listless

Possible signs of Sexual Abuse

Behavioural Indicators

- Is reluctant to change clothes in front of others
- Is withdrawn
- Exhibits unusual sexual behaviour and/or knowledge beyond developmental age
- Either avoids or seeks out adults
- Is self-conscious
- Is self-manipulating
- Is fearful or anxious
- Is promiscuous

Physical Indicators

- Has pain or itching in the genital area
- Has bruises or bleeding in the genital area
- Has venereal disease
- Has swollen private parts
- Has difficulty walking or sitting
- Has torn bloody and or stained underclothing
- Experiences pain when urinating
- Is pregnant
- Has vaginal or penile discharge

In addition to the above indicators, children who have been abused at church functions may exhibit some of the following symptoms:

- Unusual nervousness or anxiety about being left in the nursery or Sunday school class
- Reluctance to participate in church activities that were previously approached with enthusiasm
- Unexplained hostility towards a particular worker or teacher

Possible Signs of Ritual Abuse

- Unexplained mistrust and mood swings
- Eating disorders
- Night mares or sleep disorders
- Any of the symptoms of sexual abuse

Child abuse occurs in every economic, racial, ethnic, religious and other demographic groups. As Christians we must be vigilant in protecting our children and youth and in preventing child abuse in our community of faith.

Who are the abusers?

In order to prevent child abuse, we must not only recognise the signs of abuse, but we must also be able to recognise that the abusers of children are more often than not familiar adults trusted by the children.

Research has shown that at least 25% of people (in some areas the percentage is much higher) who are known to have committed sexual offences against children regularly attend church after conviction, sentence and release. This presents great challenges to churches, both as they seek to protect children from abuse and as they help offenders to behave such that they are less likely to offend in future. (Sanctuary was established in April 2004 as an independent charity. It came under CCPAS's wing in 2010.)

Consequences of Child Abuse

When a child is abused within the church, many victims are created including the child, the congregation, the child's family and of the abuser.

The most important person here is the child who has been harmed; he/she must be cared for.

When the abuse is perpetuated by a trusted person within the church, even greater harm is done to the child's faith in God and faith in the church.

Congregational members also become victims after abuse has been revealed. Members are stunned that such a crime could have been committed within their midst. They are humiliated at their failure to maintain the church as a safe and holy place. Often members are divided when they begin to discuss how to address all of the problems created by an incident.

The congregation may also suffer for a long time if civil or criminal litigation ensues as a result of the abuse. The financial consequences of child abuse in the church cannot be ignored. A victim of child abuse and his or her family will suffer financially since the costs of counselling and medical treatments go higher every year. No congregation can afford, either financially, ethically or morally to fail to implement strategies for the prevention of child abuse.

Reporting Suspected Abuse

If the child is in immediate danger (for example, obviously being beaten, left alone overnight etc.) the police should be called immediately. People who call to report suspected abuse do not have to be sure that mistreatment has occurred. They simply need to report what they have seen or heard. Reports are confidential and the caller does not have to give their name, although it is helpful to the

child in the long run if the caller does give their name and contact details and if necessary testify in court.

It is necessary to notify the church's insurance if an allegation of child abuse has been made and stated to have occurred within the church property or during a church activity.

The Elders of Balm of Gilead will designate one person who will speak to the media. Questions will be answered honestly without adding any extra or unnecessary information. No other person will be authorised to speak to the media on behalf of the church.

SUMMARY

When an allegation of child abuse is made against a worker or member of Balm of Gilead, the officials of the church will be prepared to do the following:

- Notify the parents of the victim, and take any and all necessary steps to assure the child's safety until the parents arrive. **The safety of the victim must and will be the church's primary concern.**
- The accused abuser will be immediately removed from further involvement with children and youth. This will be done in a dignified and Christian manner.
- The proper Law enforcement will be notified.
- The church's insurance agent and lawyer will be contacted
- A written record will be maintained of the steps taken by the church in response to the allegation.
- The designated spokesperson for the church will be notified so that he/she may prepare any necessary statements or responses to the news media.
- A brief and honest statement will be prepared that can be made to the congregation without giving unnecessary details, placing blame, interfering with the victim's privacy, or violating any confidentiality concerns.

A Time of Healing

It is understood that when allegations of sexual abuse are made and found to be true, that much healing will be needed, not only in the life of the victim and their family, but also in the lives of the church members. The reality of ministry after abuse is that it must be aimed at assuring justice for all and healing for those who are suffering. Neither justice nor healing can be achieved in a short period of time.

The first step in ministry to the congregation when allegations have been made must **be telling the truth**. This means engaging in honest communication about what has happened. It does not mean engaging in gossip or speculation and it most definitely does not mean blaming the child victim in any way.

It is important to provide honest and forthright information. This may be handled by a letter to the members of the congregation that briefly explains the situation and the initial action taken by the

church. The letter will not include the identification of the child victim or that of the accused abuser. It will include a statement of the actions taken to assure the safety of all the children and to assure the congregation of the church's continuity ability to provide ministry to the children and youth.

The Pastor and Elders of Balm of Gilead may feel it necessary to call for a congregational meeting to further address the situation. Such a meeting will be approached thoughtfully and prayerfully. A specific day, time and place will be announced in advance so that members may choose whether to attend. Those addressing the congregation will be the Pastor and Elders. The meeting agenda will include; but not be limited to fact sharing, questions and answers, small group sharing time and a closing time of prayer and intercession.

The fact sharing will include an accurate description of what has happened and what actions have been taken or will be taken. The identity of the victim and accused abuser will not be released. Questions will be answered as honestly as possible.

The group sharing will allow the people to identify and verbalise their own personal feelings about the incident. The facilitator will guide the discussion. This will not be time to gossip or time for the congregation to try and strategize a response and/or premature forgiveness for the abuser.

CONCLUSION

Churches need to be prepared! This is the legal reason for creating safety policies, but there is a deeper, more significant reason; to protect the children. Policies are only printed expressions of the value placed on our children.

Some people may think that our church is too small or that our church knows everyone so we don't need to worry about these safety problems. Some churches tend to take the biblical concept of trusting God to protect to an extreme. They think nothing bad can happen to Christians. Accidents will happen, mistakes are made and the devil is at work even in the church. False accusations may also become a factor. Thus the church should build into its organisation safety-policy fire blocks into the walls of its ministry to protect both its ministry to children and its workers.

Balm of Gilead desires to be a church that cares through the implementation of the above policy.

AMEN



CHILD SAFETY POLICY

APPLICATION FOR CHILDREN/YOUTH WORKER

Balm of Gilead World Ministries believes that children are a gift from God and should be treated as such. It is not only our legal but also our moral obligation to protect the health and welfare of our children.

This application is to be completed by all applicants for any position (volunteer or paid) involving the supervision of custody of minors. It is being used to help the church provide a safe and secure environment for those children and youth who participate in our programs and use our facilities.

PERSONAL

Date: _____

Name: _____

Are you over the age of 18? Yes _____ No _____

Identity must be confirmed with a driver's license, passport or other photographic identification. Copy to be attached to completed application.

Current

Address: _____

Home telephone: _____ Work Telephone _____

Mobile number: _____

Emergency contact: Name: _____ Telephone _____

Please list 10 years of previous Addresses:

Position applied for: _____



CHILD SAFETY POLICY

Date you are available to start: _____

QUALIFICATIONS

Academic Achievements: (schools attended, degrees earned, dates of completion)

First Aid training? Yes _____ No _____ Date completed: _____

CRP training? Yes _____ No _____ Date completed: _____

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

Please list your previous employers for the past 5 years.

Company Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Supervisor's Name: _____

Dates

Employed: _____ Position: _____

Responsibilities:

Company Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Supervisor's Name: _____

Dates

Employed: _____ Position: _____



CHILD SAFETY POLICY

Responsibilities:

Company Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Supervisor's Name: _____

Dates

Employed: _____ Position: _____

Responsibilities:

Company Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Supervisor's Name: _____

Dates

Employed: _____ Position: _____

Responsibilities:

Company Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Supervisor's Name: _____



CHILD SAFETY POLICY

Dates

Employed: _____ Position: _____

Responsibilities:

Company Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Supervisor's Name: _____

Dates

Employed: _____ Position: _____

Responsibilities:

CHURCH HISTORY AND PRIOR CHILDREN/YOUTH WORK

Name of Church of which you are currently a member: _____

List all previous church work involving children and/or youth (list each organisation's name, address, type of work performed, and dates): _____

CHILD SAFETY POLICY

List all previous non-church work involving children and/or youth (list each organisation's name, address, type of work performed, and dates): _____

List any gifts, callings, training, education or other factors that have prepared you for children or youth work: _____

Have you ever been convicted of or pled guilty to a crime, either a misdemeanour or a felony (including but not limited to: drug-related charges, child abuse, and/ or other crimes of violence; theft or motor vehicle violations)? Yes: _____ No: _____

If yes, please explain:

Has any person living in your household ever been convicted of or pled guilty to a crime, either a misdemeanour or a felony (including but not limited to: drug-related charges, child abuse; and/or other crimes of violence, theft or motor vehicle violations)? Yes _____ No _____

If Yes, please explain:

PERSONAL REFERENCES

Please list three personal references who are not relatives or former employers.

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone _____

How long has this person known you? _____

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone _____

How long has this person known you? _____

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone _____

How long has this person known you? _____

WAIVER AND CONSENT

I, _____, hereby certify that the information I have provided on this application for working with the youth and/or children (either voluntary or paid) of Balm of Gilead Ministries is true and correct to the best of my knowledge. I authorise any references or churches listed in this application to give you any information (including opinions) that they may have regarding my character and fitness for children or youth work. In consideration of the receipt and evaluation of this application by Balm of Gilead ministries, I hereby release any individual, church, youth organisation, charity, employer, reference, or any other person or organisation, including record custodians, both collectively and individually, from any and all liability for damages of whatever kind or nature which may at any time result to me, my heirs, or family, on account of compliance or any attempts to comply with this authorisation. I waive any right that I may have to inspect any information provided about me by any person or organisation identified by me in this application.

Should my application be accepted, I agree to be bound by the By-laws and policies of Balm of Gilead World Ministries and to refrain from unscriptural conduct in the performance of my services on behalf of the church.

I further state that I HAVE CAREFULLY READ THE FOREGOING RELEASE AND KNOW THE CONTENTS THEREOF AND I SIGN THIS RELEASE AS MY OWN FREE ACT. This is a legally binding agreement which I have read and understood.

Applicant's

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Witness

Signature: _____ Date: _____

PARTICIPATION COVENANT STATEMENT

The congregation of Balm of Gilead is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all children, youth, volunteers and paid workers who participate in ministries and activities sponsored by the church. The following policy statements reflects our congregation's commitment to preserving this church as a holy place of safety and protection for all who would enter and as a place in which all people can experience the love of God through relationships with others.

- No adult who has been convicted of child abuse (either sexual abuse, physical abuse, or emotional abuse) will be allowed to volunteer to work with children or youth in any church – sponsored activity.
- Adult survivors of child abuse need the love and support of our congregation. Any adult survivor who desires to volunteer in the same capacity to work with children or youth is encouraged to discuss their willingness with one of our church's ministers before accepting an assignment.
- All adult volunteers involved with children or youth of our church must have been members of the congregation for at least six months before beginning a volunteer assignment.
- Adult volunteers and paid children and youth workers shall observe the "Two-Adult-Rule" at all times so that no adult is ever alone with children or youth.
- Adult volunteers and workers with youth and children shall attend regular training and educational events provided by the church to keep volunteers informed of church policies and government laws regarding child abuse and to stay current on first aid and CRP practices.
- Adult volunteers and workers shall immediately report to their supervisor any behaviour that seems abusive or inappropriate.

Please answer each of the following questions:

1. As a volunteer in this congregation, do you agree to observe and abide by all church policies regarding working in ministries with children and youth? Yes ____ No _____
2. As a volunteer in this congregation, do you agree to observe the "Two-Adult-Rule" at all times? Yes _____ No _____
3. As a volunteer in this congregation do you agree to abide by the six-month rule before beginning a volunteer assignment? Yes _____ No _____
4. As a volunteer in this congregation, do you agree to participate in training and education events provided by the church related to your volunteer assignment? Yes ____ No ____
5. As a volunteer in this congregation, do you agree to discuss with a minister of this congregation your experience, if any, as a survivor of child abuse? Yes ____ No ____
(Answering yes to this question does not automatically disqualify you from volunteering with children or youth.)
6. As a volunteer in this congregation, do you agree to promptly report abusive or inappropriate behaviour to your supervisor? Yes ____ No _____
7. As a volunteer in this congregation, do you agree to inform a minister of this congregation if you have ever been convicted of child abuse? Yes ____ No _____

I have read the **Participation Covenant** and I agree to observe and abide by the policies set forth above.

Signature of Applicant

Date

Print full Name

REFERENCE CHECK FORM

For office use only

Applicant Name: _____

Reference Name: _____

Reference Address: _____

Reference Phone: _____

1. What is your relationship to the applicant?

2. How long have you known the applicant?

3. How well do you know the applicant?

10. Do you have knowledge that the applicant has ever been convicted of a crime? If so please describe.

11. Please list any other comments you would like to make.

Reference inquiry completed by: Signature _____ Date _____

REPORT OF SUSPECTED INCIDENT OF CHILD ABUSE

1. Name of worker (paid or volunteer) observing or receiving disclosure of child abuse:

2. Victim's Name: _____

Victim's age/date of birth: _____

3. Date/place of initial conversation with/report from victim: _____

4. Victim's statement (detailed summary):

5. Name of person accused of abuse: _____
Relationship of accused to victim: (paid staff, volunteer, family member, other);

6. Reported to Pastor/supervisor by: _____ Date/time _____
Summary:

7. Call to victim's parent/guardian by: _____

8. Date/time: _____
Spoke with: _____
Summary:

9. Call to local police by: _____
Date/time: _____
Spoke with: _____
Summary:

10. Other contacts: _____
Date/time: _____
Spoke with: _____
Summary:

Signature of person completing the form: _____

ACCIDENT REPORT FORM

(Please print all information)

Date of accident: _____ Time of accident: _____

Name of child/youth involved: _____

Address of child/youth:

2. All childcare staff members shall:
 - Be physically, mentally and emotionally healthy
 - Have a basic understanding of children and their needs
 - Be adaptive to a variety of situations
 - Be willing to grow in their knowledge of children through periodic education and training events.
 - Be patient.
3. All childcare staff members shall have a physician's report stating that the staff member is in good health.
4. Balm of Gilead will not discriminate with regards to race, sex, or national origin.

Educational Qualifications Required:

All childcare staff members shall have completed the equivalent of a high school diploma.

Duties of Childcare Staff Member:

1. Provide physical, emotional and intellectual support and stimulation to each child in your care, as appropriate for the circumstances.
2. Provide appropriate guidance to each child in your care
3. Develop a relationship of trust and continuity with the children in your care that will enhance each child's development of positive self-images
4. Provide support and assistance to parents when they arrive and depart with their child

Performance Expectation of a Childcare Staff Member:

1. Be Punctual. Notify your supervisor in advance if you must be late
2. Be reliable in your attendance. Notify your supervisor in advance if you must be absent
3. Attend periodic training and education events provided by the church
4. Be polite, friendly, and courteous to others, both children and adults
5. Do not engage in physical punishment/discipline of any child
6. Cooperate with other childcare staff and with parents
7. Abide by and apply the childcare policies of Balm of Gilead at all times

I have read the position description for childcare workers of Balm of Gilead and understand its contents. My signature below indicates my agreement and covenant to abide by the requirements set forth above

Signature of Applicant _____ Date _____

PERMISSION SLIP

Name: _____ Age: _____

Address _____



CHILD SAFETY POLICY

Parental Authorisation:

My child _____, has my permission to attend the activity described below.

Parent's printed Name: _____

Event: _____

Date: _____ Times: _____

I will instruct my child to obey the rules of conduct announced by the adults in charge (sponsors) of the activity.

I agree that neither Balm of Gilead World Ministries nor the sponsors are responsible for loss or damage to my child's property.

I agree to be responsible for any damage or injury my child inflicts on other persons or property. In case of emergency, the sponsors are authorised to arrange for emergency medical aid for my child on my behalf.

My child also has permission to ride to and from the activity with the sponsors. (The names of the drivers must be made available to the parents)

Signature of Parent _____ Date _____

In case of emergency, contact: _____

Telephone (daytime) _____ Telephone(evening) _____

PLEASE LIST ANY ALLERGIES OR Other MEDICAL CONDITIONS:
