

# **Youth & Children's Ministries Volunteer Management and Screening Policy for the Local Church**

**Applicable for all church sponsored youth/children events  
and for all church/youth positions**



**April 2016**

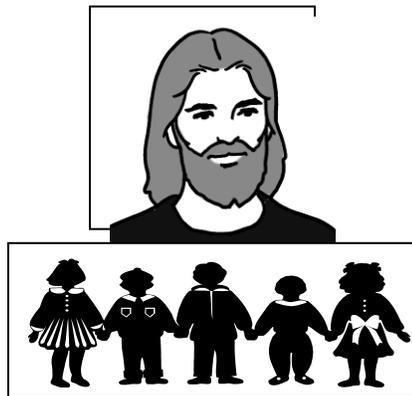
# Why Volunteer Management

One of God's most precious gifts to the Seventh-day Adventist Church are the children.

Jesus said.....

“Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me...”

Mark 9:37



Because of this, the Adventist Church is committed to providing a safe environment to help children learn to love and follow Jesus Christ. It desires to make its worship and educational environment free from abuse of all kinds. In this time of disturbing and traumatic rise and recognition of physical and sexual abuse of children, we find that Adventist churches and schools which conduct programs for children and youth are not insulated from those individuals who abuse children.

Therefore, the Seventh-day Adventist Church believes that it is important to take decisive steps to ensure that to the best of its ability, the programs the church sponsors are safe and provide a joyful experience for children and youth.

## **Why Volunteer Management and Screening?**

In keeping with the council of *The Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual*, it is the responsibility of the local church to select trustworthy individuals to fill volunteer positions in ministry and activities.

“The local church should take reasonable steps to safeguard children engaged in church-sponsored activities by choosing individuals with high spiritual and moral backgrounds as leaders and participants in programs for children.”

The Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual, Revision 2000

## Focus on Mission

The work of volunteers is essential to the successful accomplishment of the Church's mission and ministry. In selecting individuals for volunteer positions, only persons who support the mission of the organization should be recruited. The management policies and procedures employed to supervise the work of volunteers must be consistent with the mission of the church or school and must support its successful achievement. **Individuals who are unwilling to support the volunteer screening guidelines and practices should not be allowed to serve.**

“Effective screening of volunteers requires considering the mission of the organization and the activities of volunteers necessary to accomplish that mission. Screening must be thorough enough to impact child abuse, but should not intrude on the privacy of volunteers more than required for the safety of the children with whom they work. Every youth-serving organization should understand that even well-screened volunteers may still pose a threat to the children with whom they work.” – The national Collaboration for Youth – *Screening Volunteers to Prevent Child Abuse: A Three Step Action Guide*, p.3.

# **Introduction to Volunteer Management and Screening Program for the Local Church**

An introductory Power Point program on Volunteer Management and Screening authored by Arthur F. Blinci, Vice President of Adventist Risk Management and adapted by the Alberta Conference is available online at <http://www.albertaadventist.ca/>.

# Responsibility for Screening of Volunteers

The Alberta Conference has designated the pastor (or acting designee) of each local church as the individual who is accountable for the church's compliance with this document. This individual is the *Privacy Officer* of the local church.

Safeguarding personal information of volunteers is a fundamental concern of the Alberta Conference. The Church is committed to meeting or exceeding the privacy standards established by Alberta's Personal Information Protection Act (PIPA) and any other applicable legislation.

"Personal information" means any information about an identifiable individual, as further defined under Alberta's *Personal Information Protection Act* or other applicable laws. Personal information excludes the name, position name or title, business telephone number, business address, business email, and business fax number of an individual, as well as any publicly available information as designated under applicable laws, such as information available from a public telephone directory, public registry, and record of a quasi-judicial body, or from a publication.

The booklet you are reading, *Youth & Children's Ministries Volunteer Management and Screening Policy for the Local Church* describes the policies and practices of the Alberta Conference regarding the collection, use and disclosure of personal information about volunteers, including the steps the local church will take to ensure personal information is handled appropriately and securely.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church (Alberta Conference) – Vice-president for Administration Department in consultation with the Youth & Children’s Ministries Director, other Conference administrators and legal counsel may add, modify or remove portions of this *Youth & Children’s Ministries Volunteer Management and Screening Policy for the Local Church* when it is considered appropriate to do so, and any such changes will be effective upon giving notice of the revised policy. This *Youth & Children’s Ministries Volunteer Management and Screening Policy for the Local Church* may be supplemented or modified from time to time.

When the Pastor/acting designee has reviewed the *Volunteer Ministry Information Form* of an applicant and has received church board approval, they will mark it with ‘recommend’ or ‘not recommend’ and retain a copy in a safe location to meet privacy standards.

# Local Church Responsibilities

The Church has both a moral and civil duty to protect from harm caused by abuse those children entrusted to its care. The local community has an expectation that the church will provide a safe haven for children who participate in its ministries.

The local church will exercise reasonable care in the selection and supervision of volunteers:

- a. Carefully select individuals who will serve in volunteer positions.
- b. Have volunteers appropriately screened and approved by church board before they are allowed to supervise children.
- c. Provide volunteers with a written/electronic copy of the Code of Conduct and Guidelines for Volunteers required by the church, and provide a signed copy to the local Pastor/designee.
- d. The church should adopt a practice that no adult will be considered for a volunteer leadership/helper role in a church-sponsored ministry or activity until he/she has held membership in the congregation or has been known by the organization for a minimum of six (6) months.
- e. All volunteers should be given a *Volunteer Ministry Information Form* to be filled out and signed. Individuals who submit incomplete forms will not be considered for a volunteer position.
- f. All volunteer leaders, regardless of their previous experience, shall submit to the screening procedure provided by the Alberta Conference.



# **Local Church Volunteers Working with Children**

# Code of Conduct and Guidelines for Volunteers

Jesus loved to minister to children. Today, we have the privilege of volunteering our time, talents, and service in numerous ways to help fulfill the Gospel Commission. Therefore, volunteers must receive orientation and training in the following areas to effectively serve the local church.

1. Volunteers may be asked to participate in seminars and workshops offered by the Alberta Conference from time to time, directed at issues of child abuse such as:

- a. recognizing child abuse
- b. assisting the victim and victim's family
- c. local law regarding the reporting of child abuse
- d. how volunteers can:
  - i. protect themselves from becoming an abuser
  - ii. protect themselves from unjust accusations and charges

2. Provide all volunteers with an understanding of your ministry's mission and the expectation you have for its accomplishment in a safe and abuse-free manner.

3. Explain and provide in writing the expectations, code of conduct, and rules that will be followed by all adult staff and volunteers in relation to their supervision and interaction with children.

4. Alleged incidents of child abuse will be investigated and reported to authorities in accordance with local law.

5. Reinforce the Two-person rule – Never be the only adult supervisor or caregiver. Always have a minimum of two (2) adults present at all times during the supervision of children's activities.

6. Reinforce the Open Door rule – If an activity is taking place in a room where the door does not have a glass viewing area, it should remain open, so the adult staff member or volunteer is in full view during the activity.
7. Never leave children alone without supervision.
8. Special events or field trips off church or school premises must be pre-approved by church Board. Parents should be notified well in advance of the outing and written parental approval must be obtained for every participant, without exception. At least two adults should be available to supervise the event and leaders of both genders should be available if working with a co-ed group.
9. If an event requires that a leader drive children or youth, the leader must hold a valid driver's license and be insured. Seat belts must be available for all passengers. When driving young children, approved child restraints or car seats must be available and used as required by law. Leaders should avoid being alone with a single child in the car.
10. Make it clear that failure to comply with the established code of conduct and rules may result in the volunteer being asked to terminate participation in your program.
11. Evaluate all volunteer positions at the church to determine the appropriate level of consideration that should be undertaken based on the potential level of interaction with children, taking into consideration one-on-one activity, off-site programs, and overnight activities in which the volunteer may be involved for the organization.
12. It is recommended that the local church adopt a practice that no person will be considered for a volunteer leadership role in a church sponsored ministry or activity until he/she has been a member of the congregation or known by the organization for a minimum of six (6) months.

## Code of Conduct and Guidelines for Volunteers

Because our society is filled with pain, problems, and litigation caused by improper conduct of adults working with children and youth, it is imperative that those working with children have meaningful guidelines for conduct in order to protect both themselves and those under their care. As a ministry volunteer, you want parents and others to feel comfortable and confident with you.

### My Commitment to Volunteer Ministry

I will,

1. Never leave a child or group of children for whom I am responsible unattended. I will provide appropriate supervision at all times.
2. Always have at least one other adult, (18) years of age or older, to help with the supervision of children. If I find myself in a situation where I am the only adult present, UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES will allow myself to be alone with one child.
3. Never touch a child inappropriately.
4. Refrain from physical and verbal attacks and corporal punishment which are inappropriate behaviors and should never be used as discipline. "Time outs" or "sit-in-that-chair," for example, may be helpful discipline methods to use with children.
5. Provide extra care when taking small children to the restroom. I will take another adult along, or leave the door open.
6. Be aware of conducting activities in rooms that do not have an interior viewing area, or I will leave the door open during the activity to allow easy observation by others.
7. Cooperate with the volunteer screening process and complete the Volunteer Ministry Information form, as required by the church.
8. Be aware of the signs and symptoms of child abuse and aware of the legal requirements for reporting suspected cases of abuse.
9. Cooperate with church leadership in conducting children and youth ministries by being loving, kind, firm, and always a thoroughly professional person. Working with children and youth is not only a privilege; it is also a serious responsibility that must be approached with utmost care.
10. Participate in orientation and training programs as may be conducted by the Conference.

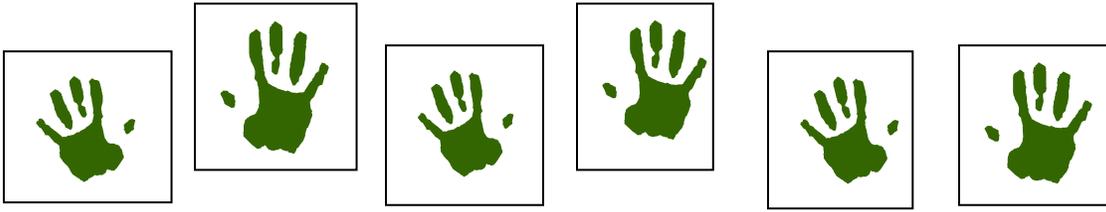
The North American Division of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists and Adventist Risk Management, Inc., recommend these Code of Conduct and Guidelines for Volunteers, which serve as a protection to you, your ministry, and the church from allegations of abuse.

**I, the undersigned, have read this document and agree to abide by the Code of Conduct and Volunteer Guidelines outlines above. I will retain a copy of this document and keep it for reference.**

**Signed** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

## **Process for Completing the Volunteer Ministry Information Form**

1. The Pastor/designee will give the *Volunteer Ministry Information Form* and *Code of Conduct and Guidelines for Volunteers Form* to volunteers/potential volunteers and instruct them to fill out the forms, completing all questions. References, and signature are mandatory.
2. The church should adopt a practice that no adult will be considered for a volunteer leadership role in a church-sponsored ministry or activity until he/she has held membership in the congregation or has been known by the organization for a minimum of six (6) months.



# Conference Screening Process

# The Process for Volunteer Screening

## The Pastor will:

1. Date the *Volunteer Ministry Information Form* and when it is received
2. They will look for:
  - a. The signature
  - b. The completion of the form
  - c. Check for references
3. Make contact with those used as references
4. File the form in a confidential location to wait for references and future processing
5. Track reference forms to make sure they are returned in a timely manner

## The Pastor will:

### A. Evaluate form, noting particularly:

1. *SDA membership* – If not SDA, it should be noted in Section 1 of the Volunteer Ministry Information Form. Most positions require SDA membership. If necessary, check *Recommended w/conditions* noted and write a note in the “office use only” section.
2. *Health History* – If there is a health disability, you must judge whether this is cause for *Not recommended* (which would be unusual) or *Recommended w/conditions noted* and then suggest activities or types of activities that the volunteer should avoid or be cautious of.

This is a ministry of protection and healing and at least three different things are being accomplished:

- a. *Protecting the child* – The argument that some abusers may slip through the process is legitimate. It is true that some drunk drivers are not caught. But that does not mean that the highway patrol should give up the pursuit of dangerous drivers. Neither should we give up. Some will eliminate themselves because they will not want to admit their history of abuse.
  
- b. *Protecting the church from liability* – This is the least important reason. However, courts do look more favorably on groups who have attempted to educate their staff and eliminate potential abusers.
  
- c. *Redemption of the abuser* – At times an application will be found that indicates a history of abuse. The goal is to find redemption for this individual. Most likely, if the accusation or charge was accurate, they will not be able to serve the church. But professional and/or pastoral counseling can be offered and recommended.

## Keeping of Records

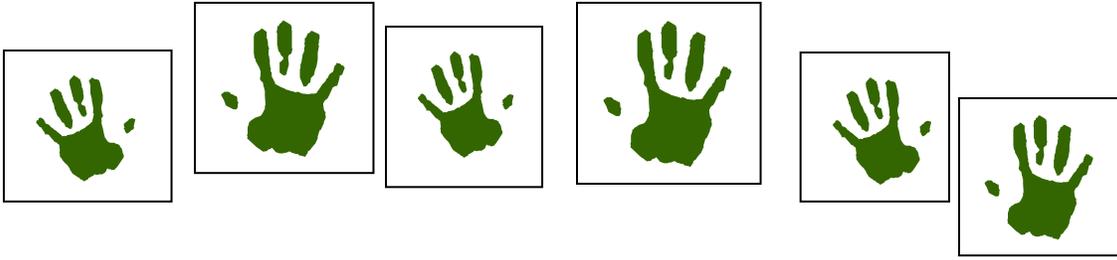
The Pastor/designee will receive and store all completed *Volunteer Ministry Information Forms*, *Code of Conduct and Guidelines for Volunteers* and information from police checks. All information associated with this process will be handled in a confidential manner consistent with the “[\*Personal Information Protection Act\*](#)”.

Certain classes of convictions will automatically preclude an individual from filling a ministry position of trust with children or vulnerable adults (e.g. violent or sex-related crimes). In some cases the existence of an Official Pardon will be taken into consideration. An individual with a criminal history may be considered in a ministry position so long as the convictions are not related to the tasks of that position.

Information contained in the *Volunteer Ministry Information Form* will only be released to other church organizations upon the written request and written authorization of the applicant. Personal information about volunteers may be disclosed for the purposes of establishing and managing an effective volunteer program and for other purposes identified when the information is collected. Information may also be disclosed when required or permitted by law.

The Conference does not sell, lease or trade information about volunteers to other parties.

Personal information will only be retained for a 3-year period. Once the personal information is no longer required to be retained to fulfill the purposes for which it was collected and is no longer required or permitted to be retained for legal or business purposes, it will be destroyed.



## **If Abuse Occurs**

## **Church Responsibilities If A Volunteer Is Alleged To Have Abused**

All allegations of inappropriate conduct involving a child with a volunteer will be promptly investigated by the leadership of the church. The church will respect the rights of all parties involved in the alleged incident and that all matters concerning the situation discreetly, confidentially, and in accordance with local child abuse reporting laws.

*Upon receiving a report or learning of alleged abuse or sexual misconduct or sexual harassment by a volunteer, the accused's immediate supervisor must immediately:*

1. If Child is in Immediate Danger - Report what you observe to your senior pastor/designee who shall then call a child protection social worker or law enforcement agency and follow up with a written report within thirty-six hours.
2. If Child is Not in Immediate Danger – Report what you observe to your senior pastor/designee who shall take appropriate corrective action to either discipline, counsel, or remove volunteer(s) when necessary.
3. Do not try to investigate by asking questions of the child, parents or others. Leave this to those who have been trained to do so.
4. Keep notes of your observations and actions and keep those notes in a secure place.
5. The local church will respect the rights of the child(ren) and the volunteer(s) involved and treat all matters concerning the situation discreetly, confidentially and in accordance with *Personal Information Protection Act*.

## **Emergency Law Enforcement is:**

**911**

### **Use the Alberta Child Abuse Hotline 1-800-387-kids (5437):**

- In the case of an emergency

Report to a child protection social worker in either a Ministry of Children and Family Development office, or a First Nations child welfare agency that provides child protection services.

### ***What to Report***

You need not have details or proof prior to calling. But you will be asked for as much information about the concern as you can provide. This may include:

- Your name and phone number (although you may call anonymously if you prefer)
- relationship to child
- any immediate concerns about the child's safety
- the location of the child
- the age of the child
- information on the situation including all physical and behavioral indicators observed
- information about the family, parents and alleged offenders
- the nature of the child's disabilities, if any
- the name of a key support person
- other child(ren) who may be affected
- information about other persons or agencies closely involved with the child and/or family
- and any other relevant information concerning the child and/or family such as language and culture
- fill in the "Confidential Report of Child Abuse" form and keep it in a confidential place

## **After you report**

The child protection social worker will:

- determine if the child needs protection
- contact the police if a criminal investigation is required
- coordinate a response with other agencies, if necessary

If a child is in immediate danger, police should be called to intervene and a child protection social worker should be contacted to determine whether the child is in need of protection.

5. After your report has been made you will need to contact the local church Pastor/designee.

6. We must never forget to show Christian charity and concern for both the volunteer and the accuser in any matter involving sexual abuse.

## Confidential Report of Child Abuse

Please complete this written report, providing as many details as possible. This information will be used to report to proper authorities.

Name of Person Making Report \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
(Home) (Work)

Name of Victim \_\_\_\_\_  
(Print) (Home phone number)

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to person making report \_\_\_\_\_

Person accused \_\_\_\_\_  
(Name) (Title)

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
(Home) (Work)

Relationship to victim \_\_\_\_\_

Location of Incident \_\_\_\_\_

Date and Time of Incident \_\_\_\_\_

Basis for suspicion or knowledge of abuse

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*(Please use reverse side if more space is needed)*

\_\_\_\_\_

I certify that I have read this document and affirm that it is true to the best of my knowledge

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of person making the report)

# Definitions of Child Abuse and Neglect

Child abuse and neglect occurs with alarming frequency. As public awareness of the subject has grown, so has the number of reported and confirmed cases. The following definitions are adapted from *Responding to Child Abuse in Alberta: A Handbook*:

**Physical Abuse** - Physical abuse is an intentional, substantial and observable injury to a child.

**Sexual Abuse** - Sexual abuse is inappropriate exposure or subjection to sexual contact, activity or behavior, including prostitution-related activities. Exposing children to child pornography or luring children through the Internet are forms of sexual abuse. Sexual abuse might show itself in a broad range of indicators. Although these indicators might reveal sexual abuse, they might also reveal other psychological or physical trauma.

**Emotional Abuse** - Emotional abuse is the impairment of a child's mental or emotional functioning or development and there are reasonable and probable grounds to believe that the emotional injury is the result of:

- rejection;
- deprivation of affection and/or cognitive stimulation;
- exposure to domestic violence or severe domestic disharmony;
- inappropriate criticism, threats, humiliation, accusations or expectations;
- the mental or emotional condition of the guardian of the child or of anyone living in the same residence as the child;
- chronic alcohol or drug abuse by anyone living in the child's home.

**Neglect** – The *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act* states that a child is neglected if the guardian is unable or unwilling to:

- (a) provide the child with the necessities of life;
- (b) obtain for the child, or to permit the child to receive, essential medical, surgical or other remedial treatment that is necessary for the health or well-being of the child, or;
- (c) provide the child with adequate care or supervision.

## Possible Indicators of Child Abuse and Neglect

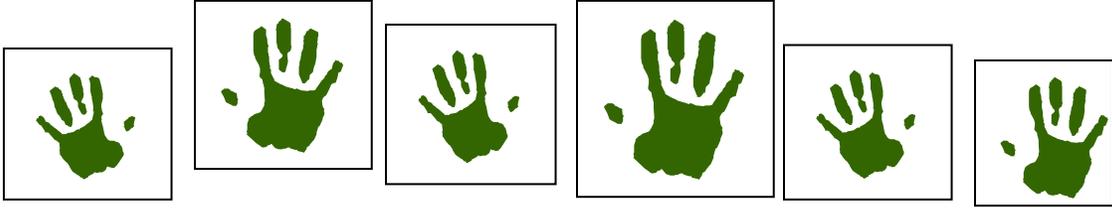
Abused and neglected children almost always show signs of their suffering. Some of the most common indicators are listed below. These are warning signs. They do not necessarily mean abuse and neglect are happening.

### Possible Indicators of Child Abuse and Neglect:

- unexplained bruises, different coloured bruises, welts, cuts, burns, bite marks, especially on the face, lower back, thighs or upper arms
- unexplained fractures, repeated injuries over time
- constant complaints such as sore throats or stomach aches that have no medical explanation
- lack of proper hygiene, constant hunger, clothing inappropriate for weather conditions
- torn, stained or bloody underwear
- irritation, bruising, bleeding, pain or itching near genitals or anus
- bruises on breasts, buttocks or thighs
- sudden onset of nightmares, bedwetting, and/or fear of the dark
- cuts or sores on arms or legs
- fear of going home, attempts to run away
- sudden change in attitude towards someone previously liked and trusted
- expressing bizarre, sophisticated or unusual sexual knowledge not typical for age, language or play
- unable to concentrate
- sexually acting out
- becoming anxious and fearful after being outgoing and friendly
- expressing sadness, crying frequently, becoming depressed
- unable to concentrate
- lacking friends or not participating in activities
- appearing lethargic
- showing poor impulse control, physical aggression
- irregular or non-attendance at school

### Protect Confidentiality of Personal Information

- Share information regarding an allegation of child abuse and neglect only with those persons who have legitimate reason for receiving the information; i.e., child protection social worker, the police, the principal and/or appointed school official.



# **Local Church Resources**

**The following Form is an approved Alberta Conference  
Form for events**

**(Local Church Name)**  
**Parent/Guardian Consent Form**  
**Information Sheet**

When an event is planned for your child/teen, not only do we want to plan a fun, exciting event, we hold the health and safety of the participants as our primary concern. Part of this is to ensure that you know what your son/daughter/ward is doing, and if in the unlikely event we need to contact you in an emergency, we have that information on hand.

**Event Information:**

The Event/Activity: \_\_\_\_\_

To be held: from: \_\_\_\_\_ to: \_\_\_\_\_  
(date) (time) (date) (time)

Location \_\_\_\_\_ Cost \_\_\_\_\_

Leader's name \_\_\_\_\_

Transportation arrangements \_\_\_\_\_

Time and place of departure \_\_\_\_\_ Return \_\_\_\_\_

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**Participant Information:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_  
(print name of participant attending event)

Age \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

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**This section applies for underage participants who are less than sixteen (16) years of age.**  
In return for permission to attend the above event, the undersigned acknowledges and warrants that:

a) My son/daughter/ward requires no special arrangements to safely participate in the event under normal adult supervision.

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

If you answered No, specify the special arrangements required:

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b) If your son/daughter/ward required medical treatment, your signature (below) on this Consent Form gives the event leaders authority to take initial steps to secure medical advice and services. In that event, you or the person you designate on the form, will be contacted as soon as possible.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of Parent/Guardian)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

**The emergency contact information for your child/youth is...**

Name: (print) _____ Relationship to participant: _____
Address: _____
Phone: Day: _____ Night: _____ Other: _____

If, in an emergency, you cannot be reached, the following person is hereby authorized to act in your behalf and has been notified that he/she **has been granted this authority and may be contacted by (local church name).**

Name: (print) _____ Relationship to participant: _____
Address: _____
Phone: Day: _____ Night: _____ Other: _____

**Return this signed form to:** \_\_\_\_\_ **By (date)** \_\_\_\_\_  
(Event registration information)

## **Statement on Child Abuse**

### **General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists**

Child sexual abuse occurs when a person older or stronger than the child uses his or her power, authority or position of trust to involve a child in sexual behavior or activity. Any sexual activity between a child and a parent, extended family member, or step/surrogate parent is incest.

In countries where studies have been done, as many as one in three girls and one in eleven boys report having been sexually abused before the age of 18 years. As many as half of the cases involve repeated abuse over a period of time – some for months, others continue for many years.

Sexual abusers are mostly men, and may be of any age, nationality or socio-economic background. They are often married with children, have respectable jobs, and may be regular churchgoers. It is common for offenders to strongly deny their abusive behavior, refuse to see their actions as a problem, and to rationalize their behavior or place blame on something or someone else.

Many abusers blame their behavior on alcoholism, stress, mental instability, their strong need for support and affections, and/or an inadequate, indifferent sexual relationship with a spouse. However, most authorities agree that the real issue in child sexual abuse is more related to a desire for power and control than for sex. While it is true that many abusers exhibit deeply rooted insecurities and low self-esteem, these problems should never be accepted as an excuse of sexually abusing a child. It is a myth that flirtatious, seductive behavior on the part of the child causes the perpetrator to abuse.

Child sexual abuse has a devastating effect on its victims by dramatically influencing the way they think, feel and behave during and even long after the abuse has ceased. It often results in a wide range of emotional, behavioral and relationship difficulties that impede normal development. Abused individuals can develop psychosomatic illnesses, disturbed or self-destructive behavior and/or feelings of low self-esteem, fear, isolation, anger, guilt, shame and depression. Frequently they have difficulty in forming close, intimate relationships and often develop distorted views of God and others. In the long term, sexual abuse can lead to marriage and family breakdown, truancy, drug dependency, promiscuity, prostitution, mental illness and suicide.

Early intervention by trained professionals is the key to recovery from the trauma of abuse. The short and long term effects can be reduced when counseling is sought to help a victim to work through their feelings about the abuse. Preventive education appropriately designed for each developmental level is essential.

When God created the human family, He began with a marriage based on mutual love and trust, with very clear and distinct gender boundaries. This relationship is still designed to provide the foundation for a stable, happy family in which the dignity, worth and integrity of each family member is upheld. All children, both male and female, are to be affirmed as a gift from God. Parents are given the privilege and responsibility of providing nurture, protection and physical care for children entrusted to their care by God. Children should be able to honor, respect and trust their parents without the risk of abuse.

The Bible condemns sexual abuse in the strongest possible terms. It sees any attempt to confuse, blur or denigrate personal, generational or gender boundaries through sexually abusive behavior as an act of betrayal and gross violation of personhood. It openly condemns abuses of power, authority and responsibility because these strike at the very heart of the victim's deepest feelings about themselves, others and God, and shatters their capacity to love and trust.

We believe that the Church has a moral obligation to be actively involved in the prevention of child sexual abuse. We are also committed to assisting abused and abusive individuals and their families in their healing and recovery process, and to holding perpetrators, especially church professionals and lay church leaders, accountable for maintaining behavior appropriate for persons in positions of spiritual leadership and trust.

As a Church, we believe we have a responsibility to:

1. Listen to and believe those who are suffering from sexual abuse. Research indicates that in only 3-5% of cases do children fabricate a story. In most instances, children lack the experience of language to concoct lies about sexual behavior.
2. Become thoroughly informed about sexual abuse and its impact upon our own church community.
3. Help ministers and lay leaders to recognize the warning signs of child sexual abuse and know how to respond appropriately when abuse is suspected or a child reports being sexually abused.
4. Establish effective referral relationships with professional counselors and local sexual assault agencies, to whom appropriate reports should be made and who can, with their professional skills, assist abuse victims and their families.
5. Create guidelines/policies to assist church leaders who are responsible for holding abuser accountable for their actions and administering appropriate discipline.
6. Support the education and enrichment of families and family members by:
  - a. Rectifying the ways in which commonly held religious beliefs may be used to justify or cover up child sexual abuse.
  - b. Examining the ways in which we socialize children in their male and female roles and responsibilities.
  - c. Facilitate mature attitudes towards healthy male/female relationships.
7. Provide caring support and a redemptive ministry within the church community for abusers, survivors and abusers while enabling them to access the full network of professional resources available in the church and community.
8. Encourage the training of more family professionals to facilitate the healing and recovery process of abuse victims and perpetrators.

(The above statement is informed by principles expressed in the following scriptural passages: Genesis 1:26-28; Genesis 2: 18-25; Leviticus 18:20; /II Samuel 13: 1-22; Matthew 18: 6-9; I Corinthians 5: 1-5; Ephesians 6: 1-4; 3:15-21; I Timothy 5: 5-8).