

Child and Youth Protection Policy First Moncton Baptist Church

Our Protection Policy is intended to make First Moncton a safe place for children and youth. In addition to their safety, which is our first concern. Our Protection Policy is intended to provide protective boundaries for individuals on our Ministry Teams. Our Protection Plan has seven main components: **Definitions, Screening, Supervision, Reporting Allegations, Training for Ministry Teams, and Further Health and Safety Restrictions and Guidelines.**

Definitions:

For the purposes of this policy, please note the following:

- **Parent/Guardian:** refers to parent or guardian or temporary care giver who is accepting the guardianship responsibilities.
- **Infants, toddlers, preschoolers:** Children from birth to four years of age.
- **Children:** Children from 5-11 years of age or grades K-5.
- **Youth 1:** from age 12 – 14 years of age or grade 6-8
- **Youth 2:** from age 15-18 years of age or grade 9-12
- **Adults:** (18+)
- **Pastoral staff:** refers to any pastor or any staff member hired by First Moncton
- **First Kids:** refers to FirstKids and FirstYouth

Screening:

All persons working with children/youth must:

1. Be as defined below:
 - **Children/Youth Ministry Team Members (Gr. 9 to adult):** They have a responsibility for delivery of a program.
 - **Children's Ministry Team Helpers: Youth (Gr 6- 8)** They have a responsibility to help deliver a program under the direct supervision of an adult ministry team member.
2. Attend First Moncton for at least six months before joining a Ministry Team that works with children and/or youth. In lieu of waiting the six months, they may participate sooner but only with supervision for the first six months, and only if they qualify with a good reference from a home church member who has known them for at least six months.
3. Be interviewed by Pastoral Staff or Ministry Team Leaders.
4. Complete a Ministry Team Application Form.
5. Submit a current (every five years) police Criminal Check ("Vulnerable Sector Check") for age 18+. A record involving any abuse of children/youth will disqualify the individual from working with children or youth. A record involving other crimes will be carefully reviewed and considered by Pastoral Staff to determine if the applicant is qualified for a ministry position.
6. Participate in a Protection Policy Orientation Session.
7. Agree to adhere to our Protection Policy by signing a copy of this document.

Supervision:

All persons working with children/youth must:

1. Never be alone with a child/youth unless visible to another volunteer/leader. At least two ministry team members should be present, for the following reasons:
 - a. Members must be objective witnesses for one another.
 - b. Make all ministry activity highly visible. Avoid isolated spaces. Keep opaque doors open and bar the threshold to the room with baby gates or half doors. Keep windows in doors uncovered so everything that is happening in the room can be easily seen from the corridor.
 - c. Move to a quiet spot within the room for a private conversation with a minor but do not leave the room.
 - d. Ministry Team Members must call parents for diaper changes unless we have written permission from the parent to do diaper changes.
 - e. If a Ministry Team Member is required to change a diaper, they must stand behind the change table, and make sure the child being changed is always visible to others in the room.
 - f. At no time will children or youth be left in an individual's care behind closed windowless doors.
 - g. Serious behaviour issues, bathroom visits or other unforeseen circumstances may necessitate a leader keeping an eye on two spaces for a short time.
2. Only touch a child appropriately; specifically on the hand, arm, or shoulder. Direct children who want to sit on your lap to sit beside you. Give sideways hugs, A-frame hugs. (A-Frame Hug: This is where the two people sharing the embrace stand about a foot apart from each other and bend at the waist. Only the shoulders come into contact as the two people embrace.)
3. When a child becomes physically aggressive or makes violent threats, FirstKids Ministry Team Members are to remove the other children from the room for their safety. They can be brought to another FirstKids class and remain with that class's Ministry Team Members until the situation is resolved. If the child is damaging property, volunteers should not physically touch the child. If the child is actively harming themselves or others (and not responding to verbal de-escalation tactics), volunteers should gently but firmly hold the child's arms to their chest (approach from behind and hug gently but firmly) until they have calmed enough to stop injuring themselves.
 - a. Before the child is permitted to return to FirstKids programming, the parent(s) must meet with the FirstKids Coordinator to discuss the situation and investigate how we might be able to help the child/family. The parent(s) must also sign a document, acknowledging the issue, the meeting, and the plan moving forward. If the aggression happens again, the same steps must be taken but the child will not be permitted to return to program for 4 weeks. If the aggression happens again after that, the same steps must be taken but the child will not be permitted to return to program for a year.
 - b. While we want to love and support each child/family, we have limited time and resources available in a church setting. We must do what we can to ensure a positive learning environment for all the children in our care.

4. If a child/youth is accused of inappropriate touching of either a leader or another child/youth, the situation should be reported to the FirstKids Coordinator (or designate) as soon as possible. An incident report is to be completed. The situation will then be discussed and investigated. The FirstKids Coordinator is to contact both sets of parents to explain the situation and the actions that will/have been taken.

Before the offending party is permitted to return to FirstKids programming, the parent(s) must meet with the FirstKids Coordinator, sign a document to acknowledge the issue, the meeting, and the plan moving forward. The child/youth responsible may be suspended from returning to the group, the time frame will be dependent on the seriousness of the issue. The FirstKids Coordinator in consultation with pastoral staff will determine the steps taken.

5. Insist that children ask permission before leaving the group to use the washroom. (Age 11 and under). All children up to grade 2 who must use the washroom must be accompanied by a Ministry Team Member who must first ensure that there is no one else in the washroom and then send the child in alone. The Ministry Team Member must stand outside the door, guiding the child with their voice if needed. If the child needs help, the Ministry Team Member asks someone else to enter the washroom or cubical with them and/or sends someone for the child's parents. (The corridor door to a multi washroom with stalls is to remain open and the leader is to stand in the corridor, the cubical door is to be closed. The door to a single washroom is to be closed, the leader is to stand outside the closed door.) No other person is allowed to enter a single or multi washroom (unless for assistance as indicated above) until the child has exited the washroom (or children if the leader is bringing more than one child at a time).
6. Ensure that all children up to and including Grade 12 are registered. Registration forms must be signed by the child's/youth's parent/guardian. Youth 16+ who live independently may sign for themselves.
7. Ensure that all children up to and including Grade 5 must be signed in/out of Sunday morning and weekday children's ministries by the adult who brings them.
8. Be responsible for the safety of every child until the adult responsible for the child arrives at the ministry space to pick them up. Parents, grandparents, or the adult who brings the child must arrive immediately after worship, or other adult event, to reassume responsibility for their child.

Transportation:

1. Transportation of the child/youth to and from the program/event is the sole responsibility of the parent/guardian, regardless of whether they drive them, a ministry team member drives them or they arrange to have someone else to drive them. Parents are responsible even if First Moncton pays for the taxi.
2. If during the program/event the child/youth is transported away from church property, Ministry Team Members must ensure children/youth being transported in either a private vehicle, taxi or bus are accompanied by at least two responsible adults. A child/youth may travel in a car with only one adult only if the parent/guardian has given written permission and only if there are other children/youth in the vehicle as well.

3. If a church bus is used for transportation of children, there must be 1 adult plus the driver on the bus supervising children. Children must have parent/guardian permission to go on the bus.
4. When Ministry Team members are transporting kids or youth in either their personal vehicle or a church-owned vehicle, a safety check must be performed inside the vehicle to ensure there are no hazards present that could threaten the health or wellbeing of the passengers.

Reporting Allegations:

Any Leader who has reasonable grounds to believe that a child or youth has been subjected to abusive behaviour will:

1. Listen carefully to what a child/youth says without asking questions or making notes. You may make notes immediately afterwards but not in the minor's presence.
2. Never promise not to tell anyone. Assure the child that you will only tell someone if the child or someone else needs help.
3. Report what the child/youth says and/or any other concerns or observations of possible abuse to:
 - 1st Department of Social Development
 - 2nd one of the Pastors

If the accusation is against one of the Pastors, the Lead Pastor must contact the Office of Canadian Baptists of Atlantic Canada. If the accusation is against the Lead Pastor, the report must first be made to:

- 1st Department of Social Development
 - 2nd chair of the Council who will contact the office of Canadian Baptists of Atlantic Canada.
4. A written copy of every report, including dates, times and the content of all pertinent conversations, will be kept in a locked confidential file in a church office. These reports must be kept indefinitely regardless of the outcome of any subsequent investigation.
 5. If it is proven that child abuse by a member of the church has taken place, he/she will be required to step down from all leadership positions.
 6. First Moncton is responsible to make a report for any allegations of abuse. First Moncton takes all allegations seriously.

Training Ministry Teams:

1. All new Ministry Team Members must complete a Child Protection Orientation Session with a Pastor or Ministry Team Leader before they join a Ministry Team that works with minors. The content of this Orientation Session will include reasons why a Child Protection Plan is important, a review of our written Protection Policy, and discussion about the importance and implication of each aspect of the Policy.

2. This Child Protection Plan will be reviewed and updated annually by Council/Kids & Youth Ministry Coordinator. Updated copies of the document will be posted on the website. Annual reviews should be recorded even if no change has been made. If a change is to be made or if any updates are suggested, these must be submitted to Council for review/approval.

Further Health and Safety Restrictions and Guidelines:

1. If a child is not well, they should be kept home. IF he/she become ill at program, the parent/guardian will be asked to take them home.
2. Ministry Team Leaders will not give children medication. Exceptions will be reviewed on an emergency case by case basis.
3. Ministry Teams will be advised, at least annually, as to the location of First Aid Kits.
 - Large First Aid Kits are attached to the wall:
 - i. in the custodial closet in the Queen Street entrance foyer opposite the chapel on the main level
 - ii. across from the gym near the kitchen.
 - These First Aid Kits are to be maintained by a group/person designated by the church staff.
 - Smaller portable First Aid Kits will be stored
 - i. on a high shelf in the photocopier room
 - ii. on a high shelf in the bathroom at the top of the back stairway in the children's ministry centre (3rd floor),
 - iii. in the youth room.
4. A written incident report must be completed by the witnessing Ministry Team Member and filed with the Council/Kids & Youth Ministry Coordinator. Incident reporting forms are available in the photocopier room. Incidents include any kind of accident or physical mishap regardless of cause or a child running away from a Ministry Team Member. A written copy of every report, including dates, times and the content of all pertinent conversations, will be kept in a locked confidential file in a church office. These reports must be kept indefinitely regardless of the outcome of any subsequent investigation.
5. Fire evacuation plans and lockdown procedures will be reviewed at least annually in Ministry Team Training. Specific evacuation directions will be posted in each room.
6. Ensure that pictures and names of children are not published without parental permission. The location of overnight events will not be made public.
7. Keep a record of all online communication with youth.

I have read this Policy and agree with it:

Name (print) _____

Signature _____ Date _____