

A PLAN TO PROTECT

THE CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND
LEADERS OF THE MEETING HOUSE

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CHAPTER 1: PROTECT THROUGH AWARENESS

Introduction

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

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

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

The Meeting House is committed to providing a safe environment for children and students, and maintains a policy of zero-tolerance for abuse, harassment, or neglect. **All staff and volunteers who teach, care for, have access to, or have positions of trust with children, students, and/or vulnerable persons within The Meeting House are required to follow the guidelines and procedures as defined in this document.** Every activity involves some risk, but this plan is designed to prioritize the safety of children, students, and volunteers with the goal of making all programs and activities as safe as is reasonably possible.

A Note to Outside Organizations:

As God has enabled us, we are happy to share our resources and expertise with you. We recommend that you work carefully through the materials we give you so that you are able to customize them appropriately. Our policies and procedures work well for The Meeting House but may not completely fit within your context. As you modify and implement any of these materials to your own organization we would also recommend that you seek your own legal counsel as well as provide the appropriate insurance coverage as necessary.

Definitions

Unfortunately, child abuse is not a rare occurrence in Ontario. According to Ontario's Children's Aid Societies in 2007 over 27,000 children suffered some form of abuse or neglect.

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

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

For the purposes of this document a **child** is defined as a person from birth to grade 5 (age 10 or 11). A **student** is defined as a person from grade 6 (age 10 or 11) to grade 12 (age 17 or 18). A **ministry leader** is defined as anyone (volunteer or paid) who is working with children and/or students.

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

Symptoms of Abuse and Molestation

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

The following characteristics may be indicators of abuse, although they are not necessarily proof. One sign alone does not constitute abuse and may simply be indicative of other issues. You need to ask God for discernment and wisdom as you watch for patterns or a combination of these warning signs.

Physical signs may include:

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

Behavioural signs may include:

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

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

CHAPTER 2: STAFFING

Ministry Staffing

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

Children/students of any age are not permitted to leave the premises until the program concludes. Should a child/student leave the premises while a program is operating, their parents will be notified immediately. Students grade 6 and up are permitted to leave the premises after the program concludes, and it is the responsibility of the parent or legal guardian to ensure their student is picked up or has instructions to get home.

Programs that involve students grade 6 and up will ensure adequate supervision from the time of the start of the program to the completion of the program. When students leave the event location, supervision is the responsibility of the parent or legal guardian.

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

- 1. Two Leader Rule:** At least two leaders (non-related recommended) should be present during any child/student activity or transportation. This rule helps reduce the risk of child abuse and also reduces the risk of false accusations made by children/students towards ministry leaders. (In certain situations exceptions may be allowed if covered by the “open door” policy or by having classrooms with windows. Retreats can follow the “Rule of Three” — see Appendix B for more details.)
- 2. Open Door Policy:** If it is necessary that only one adult be alone in a room with children/students (eg. when highly visible rooms face a common hallway and ratios don’t require more leaders) the door of that room must remain open at all times. We also recommend that all rooms have windows that will allow ministry staff to monitor group activities without interrupting.
- 3. Vaccination Policy:** Any leader serving in the **Infants/Crawlers** room must be up-to-date with all required vaccinations as outlined by the Ontario Ministry of Health. This decreases the risk of small children coming into contact with diseases that they are not yet immunized against. Required vaccines:
 - Tetanus, Diphtheria, Pertussis (Tdap) – one dose is needed by adults followed by Tetanus Diphtheria (Td) every ten years.
 - Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) – two doses of MMR vaccine for adults born in or after 1970; adults born before 1970 can be considered immune.Adults should be covered if they received their regular vaccinations as an infant

and while in grade school. If they didn't, they can get them for free at a local health clinic. For more info see www.ontario.ca/page/vaccines.

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

- LIT Volunteers are ages 10 to 15. They must be at least graduated from Grade 5.
 - Volunteers in Infants/Crawlers rooms can be as young as 14 years old.
 - Volunteers in all other Preschool rooms can be as young as 10 years old.
 - Volunteers in Grades 1–5 can be as young as 12 years old, and must be at least 5 years older than the children in their small group.
- Volunteers in Junior High Sunday Morning must be at least 16 years old.
- Volunteers in Junior High Midweek must have graduated High School.
- Volunteers in Senior High Midweek must be at least 20 years old.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Age of Children/Students	Ratio*
Infants/Crawlers	1:2
Walkers Only	1:3
Walkers–2s	1:4
2s–3s	1:5
3–SK	1:6
JK–SK	1:7
Grades 1–2	1:8
Grades 3–5	1:10
Grades 6–12	1:15
Overnight grade 5 and under	1:5
Overnight grades 6–12	1:10

Note: These ratios are the minimum requirements for security purposes only. They are not intended as standards for the number of children/students per small group leader.

Security Clearance Process

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

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

- 1. Adhere to Six Month Rule:** We will adhere strictly to the “Six Month” rule, which will require volunteers who desire to work with children/students to have been regular attendees of The Meeting House for a period of six months. Such a policy gives the church an additional opportunity to evaluate applicants and volunteers, and will help to repel persons seeking immediate access to minors. (This provision may be waived if the prospective volunteer is transferring from another church and has a letter of recommendation signed by the Pastor of that church on letterhead or a documented phone call performed by the Pastor who oversees that ministry. A copy of this letter is sent to our Data Team.)
- 2. Ministry Application Form** (those grade 6 to age 15 will complete the LIT application form)

3. Face to Face Interview

4. Ministry Covenant Form including signed statement of knowledge of and adherence to Plan to Protect procedures

5. Accessibility Training: Read and sign on The Meeting House accessibility policy.

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

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

Note: References cannot be completed by the individual performing the interview or the Church Leadership giving the Final Approval.

7. Police Records Check: We will have each paid staff and volunteer staff (16 years of age and older) submit a Police Record Check for any position involving work with, or access to children or students. Volunteers must submit their completed police check to ministry staff within six months of the date of completion appearing on their form. Police checks must be renewed within 5 years of the date of completion, otherwise the check will be considered invalid. The type of police check required is as follows:

The FIRST check submitted:

- For volunteers ages 16 and 17: a CPIC from their local police station.
- For adult volunteers born January 1, 1986 or later: a CPIC from their local police station OR a PIC completed through Backcheck.
- For Adult volunteers born before January 1, 1986: A Vulnerable Sector Check from their local police station.

ANY Renewal Check (submitted within 5 years of the valid check on file):

- For any volunteer over age 18: a CPIC from their local police station OR a PIC completed through Backcheck.

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

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

Security Clearance Considerations

Occasional Observers who join a class will have their attendance recorded and kept on file with the attendance for that day. Visitors will be clearly identified as such. If they have not completed the security process, occasional observers will not be placed in a position of trust with any child/student who is not their own. Occasional observers may include summer serve volunteers, parents, musicians, and volunteers at special services who are paired with security cleared volunteers.

Occasional observers will not:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CHAPTER 3: MINISTRY STANDARDS

Health and Safety Guidelines

- 1. In case of illness:** A child/student who is ill and could therefore expose other children/students and workers to illness will not be received into the program. Typical signs of illness are unusual fatigue or irritability, coughing, sneezing, runny nose and eyes, fever, vomiting, diarrhea, inflamed mouth and throat. Any child/student with a known communicable disease should not be received into children or youth programming.
- 2. Medications:** Ministry Leaders at The Meeting House are NOT to give or apply any medication to children. If a child needs medication, the parent/guardian must give it. No medication will be left in the room or with a leader or child. If a student is in need of over-the-counter medications during a youth program (eg. Advil), a Youth Coordinator/Pastor may give (but not administer) it to them after obtaining verbal permission from the parent/guardian. Verbal permission must be documented alongside an age appropriate incident report. In extreme cases, (ie. epi pens, inhalers, etc.) arrangements should be made with written instructions and the permission of the child's parent/guardian. Requests should be written, dated, signed, and filed permanently. Topical medications for diaper changing purposes are to be used only when instructed and provided by the parent/guardian. In the special case of a retreat or event, the ministry leader will help the student find proper storage for medication, but will not administer unless specifically requested by their parent/guardian in written form.
- 3. Allergies:** Children/students having severe allergies will have the information brought to the attention of the ministry leaders and noted on their registration form and, for infants to grade 5, noted on their name tag. See information on medications for policies involving epi pens and inhalers.
- 4. Procedures for Dealing with Cuts or Injuries Involving Blood:**
 - a) First aid kits will be available in each room. In addition, a master first aid kit will also be available in the building.
 - b) Separate the other children/students from the injured child/student. The injured child/student must not be moved, unless they can stand up and walk on their own. Isolate the area where any blood may have dropped on carpet, toys, etc. Apply first aid measures and send someone to locate the parents/guardians.
 - c) If other children/students have had contact with any of the blood from the cut or injury, their parents/guardians should be informed.
 - d) Put on vinyl gloves (available in first-aid kits and diaper changing supplies) and bandage the injury, avoiding contact with the mouth, ears and eyes.
 - e) Carefully wipe all blood and bloody bandages and remove to a secure, inaccessible waste removal receptacle.
 - f) Any blood on the floor or toys must be washed away using solution of one part bleach to ten parts water.
 - g) Properly remove and dispose of vinyl gloves. Wash carefully with soap.
 - h) Complete an Incident Report.

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

6. Room Capacities: All rooms for children's activities will abide by maximum capacities that promote a healthy environment for kids and their leaders. This space requirement is one factor in establishing the capacity of our kids' rooms. Other requirements include the following:

- for Infants/Crawlers – a separate area for each 10 children (under 18 months)
- for Walkers only – a separate area for each 15 children (under 35 months)
- for Walkers-2s – a separate area for each 18 children
- for 2s-3s – a separate area for each 21 children
- for 3-SK – a separate area for each 24 children

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

Receiving and Releasing Children & Students

These procedures will be in effect for all children & students, infants to grade 12.

1. The names, addresses and phone numbers of parents and children/students must be carefully maintained in our church database.
2. No child/student will be allowed to enter a classroom or attend an event without first being properly signed in. Children from infants to grade 5 will also receive a security name tag.
3. No child/student will be allowed to be dropped off in a classroom or at an event without a security cleared volunteer present. If only one volunteer is present, the door must be left open until additional volunteers arrive. In the case of infants to grade 5, rooms are to be supervised so that children are not able to exit alone and/or a parent/guardian cannot take them from the room without a worker's knowledge.
4. All ministry leaders working with children/students, and all visitors, must wear an approved Meeting House name badge which identifies them accordingly.
5. Attendance of both children/students and ministry leaders (including first and last names) and visiting adults will be taken in each room every time a program is in session. This includes events and retreats. These records will be kept on file permanently.

These procedures will be in effect for all children infants to grade 5.

1. Only adults (over the age of 18) are permitted to pick up children from their classrooms, provided they have the necessary security code that matches their child's name tag issued at check-in.

2. If a security tag is lost by either the child or parent, then a child will be released to a parent/guardian or representative only on the basis of providing proof of identity such as a home address, phone number, government issued photo I.D. (e.g., drivers license) or a witness who knows the parent. This will be done only at the discretion of ministry staff, AND if the child is old enough, consultation with that child to identify who should be picking them up. Contact information should be recorded from any adult picking up a child without a security tag.
3. Parents/guardians of children must not leave the church premise while their child is involved in our programs unless written consent has been given by ministry staff. We also will require parents/guardians to leave an emergency number in case we are unable to locate them if needed.
4. Parents/guardians are not to enter the classroom when picking up their child unless requested to do so. This better enables the volunteers/staff to maintain order and provide the level of security that parents/guardians should expect.

Washroom Guidelines

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

For Preschool Children:

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

For Elementary Children:

- In regional sites: grades 1–5 children are not to be sent to the washroom alone but should be accompanied by a buddy and ministry leader. Ministry leaders will escort the children to the washroom and prop the door open to make sure that everything is in order. Ministry leaders should then remain outside the washroom door and wait for the children before escorting them back to their room.
- In Oakville: grades 1–5 children are permitted to go to the washroom in the grades 1–5 area on their own. Volunteers should be attentive to the time a child is away from the room, and check on a child who is gone for longer than is considered reasonable.
- Ministry leaders are not to be alone with children in an unsupervised washroom and are never to enter into the cubicle with a child and shut the door.

For Grades 6-8 Students:

- In order to prevent issues, we encourage that students in Jr High use the facilities prior to the start of a program.
- Students are required to ask for permission to go to the washroom.
- Ministry leaders are not to be alone with students in an unsupervised washroom.
- Ministry leaders should be attentive to the time a student is away from the group, and check on a student who is gone for longer than is considered reasonable.

Diaper Changing

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

Discipline Strategy

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

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

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

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

Proper Display of Affection

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

Preschool:

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

Grades 1–5:

- Gently hold the child's shoulder or hand to keep his or her attention while you redirect their behaviour.
- Put your arm around the shoulder of a child when comforting or quieting is needed.
- Pat a child on the head, hand, shoulder or back to affirm them.

Grades 6–12:

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

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

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

Photography and Videotaping Policy

No child or student will be photographed, videotaped, or audio taped by ministry staff without prior written consent from a parent or guardian. Consent must be given through use of an approved Meeting House release form. All photography, videotaping, or audio taping must be approved by The Meeting House staff.

With consent, The Meeting House staff or an authorized photographer/videographer may take photos/videos during an event or program, to be used for ministry purposes only. Family members should not be "tagged" by ministry staff in media that is posted.

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

Communication and Social Media Policy

Social media is a major part of our culture and a means by which we interact with the students who are a part of our ministry. As ministry leaders interact online with students who are a part of our ministry, we want to ensure the safety of all parties involved. Online communication and text messaging with children grade 5 and younger is not permitted.

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

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

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

Note: In the case of students in designated volunteer roles (eg. Kidmax), email communication is appropriate for dialogue regarding the ministry position without copying a second leader. Wisdom is still encouraged in utilizing email and social media regarding all communication with minors.

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

- Youth leaders must be mindful to maintain appropriate opposite gender interactions and redirect opposite gender students to their same gender leaders whenever possible, especially when discussing highly personal, physical, or emotionally intense topics (eg. female students with female leaders, male students with male leaders). In the case of same gender attracted or transgender students, discuss wise approach with overseeing Pastor.
- When communicating with students through social media, email, or text messaging it is important that ministry leaders are never speaking alone with a student. Always include a second leader or parent in all online conversations.
- In the event that children or students attempt to converse or exchange information of an inappropriate nature, the worker or volunteer will screen shot the conversation and contact their manager or ministry coordinator immediately.

- Ministry leaders will not post comments, content, or photographs that are not conducive to the integrity of the ministry, or that may be considered a contradiction of beliefs and core values of The Meeting House.
- Ministry leaders (including staff) will not post photographs or videos of children or students online except with permission on an approved page of The Meeting House; **they cannot be posted on a personal account.**
- Ministry leaders will not use The Meeting House logos or other graphics that may cause confusion as to whether or not a site is an “official” site of The Meeting House.

Age Appropriate Sex Education

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

- Children grade 5 and younger will not be taught sexual issues in the church.
- Students grades 6–12 may be taught the biblical standard of sexual issues as long as the overseeing Pastor has approved the lesson being taught. It is our policy that Youth leaders must never teach on this issue without first speaking with the overseeing Pastor. If sexual issues come up in an informal or teaching setting, the leader may discuss the issue but must teach it according to the beliefs and teachings of The Meeting House.
- When this topic is taught in grades 6–8, a reasonable attempt will be made to notify parents in advance.

CHAPTER 4: SPECIAL EVENTS

Special Events and Overnight Policies

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

Note: the policies outlined in the previous chapter still apply during a special event.

1. Field Trips and Special Events

- Church affiliated activities conducted away from the church property must be pre-approved by the supervising Pastor or coordinator.
- Parents must be notified at least one week prior to the outing.
- Proper written consent and medical release forms are required for each child/student (participating in field trips and special events). A copy of these forms, along with attendance sheets (names of all students, leaders, and visiting adults) is to accompany the supervisor(s) on the outing. Following the event, these will be filed with the Data Manager at the production site and kept indefinitely.

2. Overnight Events

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

- All overnight activities must be pre-approved by the supervising Pastor
- A completed Meeting House Event Form is required for each person participating in overnight events
- Proper supervision is required (see section on Ministry Staffing)

All supervising adults must be security cleared volunteers.

Driving Students

When transporting students the following guidelines will be observed:

- A proper written consent form must be signed by parents prior to the outing. This form will be specific to one driver and can be signed once per ministry year.
- All drivers must have a valid "G" driver's license and current automobile insurance. Leaders must sign The Underground's Safe Driving Statement (see Appendix D).
- The number of persons per car must never exceed the number of seat belts. Each person must wear a seat belt. Children must be transported in legally required booster seating.
- Leaders will not drive individual students whenever possible. If it is necessary to drive one student, the leader will ask the student to sit in the back seat. A male student should never be alone with a female leader or vice versa.

Meeting with Students Outside of Regular Programming

Connecting Outside of Regular Programs

We encourage leaders to connect with The Underground students on a regular basis, which sometimes means in-person check-ins and meetings outside of regular ministry programming. When a staff member or volunteer recognizes the need to meet with a student, including Video Calls (Skype, FaceTime etc), written or verbal consent from the parent / guardian must be obtained prior to the meeting. The appropriate ministry staff will be informed of all meetings in advance (for volunteers this is the site Youth Coordinator; for staff this is the direct supervisor). Leaders of children grade 5 or younger will not meet with individual children.

Small Group Events & One on Ones

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

It is always recommended that meetings with students in grades 6–12 include at least three people (two leaders with an individual student or two students with one leader) but we recognize that on occasion a One on One meeting with a leader and student is appropriate. Leaders of students in grades 6–12 will abide by the following policies when meeting with students:

- Leaders will inform their Youth Coordinator or Lead Pastor of the meeting time, location, and people involved in advance.
- Leaders involved must be security cleared.
- Meetings must take place in a public space and be clearly visible to other adults.
- Parents must be notified, and give consent, prior to each outing.
- If a leader must drive a student to/from a meeting, the appropriate driving policies must be followed. (see the “Driving Students” section of this document).
- A male small group leader will never meet alone with one or more female students for any reason. A female small group leader will never meet alone with one or more male students for any reason. Consent by the supervising ministry staff must be given for each meeting between a Youth Coordinator/Pastor and one or more students of the opposite gender.

Family Friendly Home Church

A Family Friendly Home Church is a specially designated Home Church that has met certain requirements so that parents can bring their children to Home Church. If children are in a separate room childcare must be provided. It is recommended that childcare be provided on site at the Home Church. For Home Churches that are not designated “Family Friendly,” only children of the host family can be present, unless the children are in the same room with their parents at all times.

Caregiver Requirements:

- Anyone that has been security cleared for Kidmax or The Underground also qualifies as a Home Church caregiver
- There must be at least two unrelated, screened caregivers in the room with the children
- One must be at least 16 years old, all others at least 14 years old
- Each caregiver must have attended The Meeting House for at least 6 months (or the Home Church leader has known them for at least 6 months)
- Each caregiver must be screened, meaning they must:
 - have a police check done if over the age of 16
 - provide two reference checks
 - be approved by the overseeing Pastor
- Caregivers can be volunteers or paid and may or may not be members of the Home Church.

Home Church Leader Responsibilities:

- Ensure the kids area is safe
- Ensure the above Caregiver Requirements are met for all childcare providers interacting with children
- Ensure proper ratios are met (see the “Ministry Staffing” section of this document for details).
- Check in on the kids area at least once during each meeting to ensure that the environment remains safe and that the caregivers are able to maintain adequate control of the group.

If Childcare is provided in a different location than the Home Church meeting:

- You will need to follow the normal Sunday morning requirements for Kidmax including attendance tracking, full adherence to suggested ratios, and full security clearance of all childcare providers including submitting references and in person interviews.
- We will need standard permission forms signed by parents and submitted to our offices for this offsite gathering.

CHAPTER 5: IN CASE OF EMERGENCY

Fire Safety Procedures

Each classroom is to exit via the closest exit. Look for exit signs mounted to the ceiling. In each site (excluding Oakville), there will be an emergency exit in each theatre. Party rooms are to exit via the closest exit off the main corridor. In Oakville, classrooms are to exit via the closest exit according to the map mounted in the classroom. Please contact your Lead Pastor for fire plan instructions specific to your site.

For ALL children & students:

When there is an emergency requiring the evacuation of the building, the lead teacher is to ensure children/students are lined up in single file and that any available attendance sheets and walkie talkies are in their possession. Remain calm when exiting the building and take children/students to designated evacuation location, away from the main traffic route. When children/students are safely gathered outside the building, the ministry leaders will do an attendance check to ensure each child/student is accounted for.

For children infants to grade 5:

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

Lockdown Procedures

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

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

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

Please contact your Lead Pastor for lockdown instructions specific to your site.

Missing Child

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

CHAPTER 6: REPORTING & RESPONSE

Hearing an Allegation or Suspicion of Abuse

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

1. For the protection of our children and students, all allegations and/or suspicions of abuse against children and students will be taken seriously.
2. Upon hearing of potential abuse or allegations of abuse to a child or student, the ministry leader should document all pertinent information. All documentation must be kept permanently unless otherwise directed by legal counsel.
3. Stay calm and listen to the child/student.
4. Do NOT ask leading questions or attempt to investigate the incident. Get the basic story, give emotional support, and remind the child/student that he or she is not at fault.
5. Extend whatever Pastoral resources are needed. Remember that the care and safety of the victim is the first priority. Responding in a negative or non-supportive manner to the alleged victim can increase the pain of the victim and the victim's family, and future reconciliation will be more difficult along with increasing the possibility of damaging litigation increases.
6. Do not promise the child/student that you will not tell anyone. The only claim of confidentiality which overrides the legal duty to report is solicitor-client privilege. Thus physicians, clergymen and others who consider their professional relationships confidential for certain purposes are not exempt from the duty to report child abuse or neglect.
7. In no way should the accused or any other parties be contacted at the point of completing the documentation aside from the appropriate authorities and ministry coordinator.
8. Any allegations of abuse to a child or student must be reported to the proper authorities. The reporting should be done in conjunction with the senior Pastor, children's Pastor or Youth Pastor.

Reporting an Allegation of Abuse

If you have any concerns regarding the safety of a child or student at The Meeting House, **you must report this to your Pastor or Ministry Coordinator immediately.** He/she will then work with you in addressing the issue and, if needed, contacting the appropriate child protection agency. Any person who has reasonable grounds to believe that a child or student is in need of protection is legally required to immediately report the matter to the Ontario ministry of children and youth services: www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/childrensaidthereportingabuse/index.aspx.

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

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

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

- 1. Responding to a Disclosure of Abuse:** If a child or student discloses to you that an episode of abuse has occurred, take the allegations seriously. Follow the guidelines listed in the previous section of this document.
- 2. Reporting the Incident or Allegation:** Any allegation of abuse will be reported to the supervising Pastor or his/her designate immediately. The church and its individuals must avoid any undue interference when a report of child abuse has been filed. The church should ask the appropriate authorities how it could assist in helping and supporting the investigation and the hurting child/student and their family. At this point, the church's lawyer may be contacted if necessary. Keep all information confidential and do not notify the individual against whom an allegation has been made. If the suspected abuse happened in the context of church ministries or was committed by a church member or attendee, the parents of the victim must be notified by the senior Pastor or by church leadership.
- 3. Documentation of the Incident:** As soon as possible, take special care to accurately and thoroughly document all interactions, observations, and comments clearly and precisely. Include as many details as possible, as this information may become part of a legal proceeding. It is necessary to provide all available information on both the victim and the accuser (name, age, gender, address, etc.), and to explain the information on which your suspicion is based. Report any additional concerns you become aware of, even if a previous report has already been made with respect to the same child and/or abuser.

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

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

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

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

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

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

"It is always tragic when children are abused or exploited. The Meeting House is aware of the ever growing nature of child abuse. We have taken careful precautions to protect the children entrusted to our care. We are distressed by any accusation of child abuse. We will do everything in our power to address any needs in this situation. For the welfare of those involved, all information has been directed to the (insert name of appropriate agencies and authorities)."

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

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

If it is proven that a staff member or ministry volunteer who has access to children or students at The Meeting House has committed abuse, the church will practice discipline according to Matthew 18:15–17, the policy manual of the church, and the *Brethren in Christ Canadian Conference Conflict Resolution Manual*.

CHAPTER 7: POLICY MONITORING

Compliance with the Plan to Protect Guidelines

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

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

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

We will conduct a yearly internal audit of the implementation of these polices and procedures, including a report to the overseers.

APPENDICES

Appendix A. Policy on Diaper Changing

Only Security Cleared Leaders are permitted to change diapers.

1. Check all children’s diapers about 40 minutes into the service and stick on a “Dry When Checked” sticker if the child is dry.
2. If not, collect all necessary supplies (gloves, clean diapers, plastic bags, pre-moistened towelettes, hand sanitizer).
Note: Diaper changing needs to take place in such a way that another nursery worker can easily see the child who is being changed, as well as the other children and workers in the room.
3. Put on gloves.
4. Talk with child about what you are going to do.
5. Place the child on a clean, disposable surface (if you are out of changing sheets use paper towels at minimum).
6. Unless a proper change table or a wide countertop is available, diaper changing must happen with the changing pad on the floor. This is to prevent a fall or injury of the child. Changing pads are not to be placed on tables. Never turn away from a child on a changing table.
7. Remove the wet or soiled diaper. Place in a plastic bag
8. Use wet wipes to clean the diaper area, wiping from front to back. Place towelette in plastic bag containing soiled diaper. Close and knot bag and throw it away.
9. Put clean diaper on child and stick on a “Changed with Care” sticker.
10. Remove child from the changing area.
11. Remove gloves and place in wastebasket.
12. Wash hands thoroughly.

Note: Diaper changing for children over 3 years old should be the responsibility of the primary caregiver unless it is absolutely essential that a diaper needs to be changed (i.e., a parent has been paged to the nursery for this purpose and is not responding).

Appendix B. Discipline Strategies

Preschool Kidmax Discipline Strategy

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

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

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

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

Gr. 1–5 Kidmax Discipline Strategy

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

Kidmax Rules – RESPECT

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

These rules should be posted in large print in Kidmax, and reviewed with kids each week.

Colour System

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

Documentation

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

Parent Meetings

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

The Underground Discipline Strategy

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

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

Violence and physical intervention

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

Appendix C. The Underground Transportation Policy

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

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

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

The Underground Safe Driving Policy

Any ministry leader who drives students Gr 6–12 must sign and adhere to the following:

- I confirm that I have my G-class license.
- My vehicle is fully insured and has at least \$1 million in Third Party Liability coverage. We encourage \$2 million in Third Party Liability for the safety of our drivers.
- I am 21 years or older with at least 3 years driving experience. We recommend at least 25 years old and at least 5 years driving experience.
- My driver's license is current, valid and is not suspended.
- I will always have at least 1 security cleared person in the car while driving any students from The Underground. This could be myself or another person.
- While transporting students from The Underground I agree to drive with extreme care and safety, abiding by the rules of the road. This includes avoiding distracted driving due to cell phone use, texting, eating, loud music, etc.
- I will not drive individual students whenever possible. If it is necessary to drive one student, I will ask the student to sit in the back seat.
- I confirm that my vehicle is in safe working order, including all safety equipment such as seat belts, air bags, etc.
- The number of persons per car must never exceed the number of seat belts. Each person must wear a seat belt.
- I am personally responsible for all traffic and parking violations and will notify authorities immediately of any accident.
- I have not had more than 2 minor traffic violations in the past 3 years (eg. speeding under 60km, traffic light violation, unsafe vehicle, etc).
- I have not had any major at-fault accidents, or major traffic violations in the past 5 years (eg. dangerous driving, speeding over 60km, impaired driving, etc).

Appendix D. The Underground Social Media Policy

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

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

Appendix E. Youth Retreat Procedures

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Getting Involved

If you have any questions about getting involved, e-mail:
connect@themeetinghouse.com.

 facebook.com/themeetinghousechurch

 [@themeetinghouse](https://instagram.com/themeetinghouse)

 [@themeetinghouse](https://twitter.com/themeetinghouse)

 youtube.com/themeetinghouse

Download The Meeting House app



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