

RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY

**Metropolitan United Church
London, Ontario**

April 2015

REVISION 3 APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF ELDERS
April 2015

ORIGINALLY SUBMITTED BY POLICY REVIEW COMMITTEE
NOVEMBER 2011
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INTRODUCTION

This document is based on the United Church of Canada handbook, [Faithful Footsteps – Screening Procedures for Positions of Trust and Authority in the United Church of Canada: A Handbook](#) (2000) and document [Duty of Care](#) (2014).

From [Faithful Footsteps – Screening Procedures for Positions of Trust and Authority in the United Church of Canada: A Handbook](#) (pp. 19 – 20).

“Church communities need to be places where there is welcome and safety for people of all walks of life. In applying screening measures to selection processes for work in churches we are not intending to “bar the doors” against certain types of people. We need to recognize that God works changes in the lives of individuals, and that the church celebrates personal growth and transformation. At the same time, it is essential that the church be vigilant in its efforts to create and maintain safe environments and safe services for all participants. This will mean that some types of high-risk positions will not be open to all applicants. Faithful stewardship of human resources will allow other kinds of opportunities to be open to those who are not suitable for work with vulnerable people.

There is no way to absolutely guarantee that no harm will ever come to any participants, staff or volunteers in a program or service. But your organization exists and serves because there is a human need, and in faith you step in to offer support and service.

Church ministries and organizations need to guard against charges of negligence by diligent screening and other safety policies. Adequate insurance is needed to safeguard the future of your programs. These things are needed. What is **essential** is that the United Church of Canada congregations, ministries, camps, residences and other organizations minister in a spirit of faith and hope, responding to the gospel call to love and serve others.”

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MISSION, VISION, VALUES

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

Inviting all to know God through Jesus Christ

OUR VISION

We will actively seek people from the wider community to experience joyful and renewing worship.
Matthew 28:19, 20

We will build up believers through worship, study, prayer and fellowship.
Luke 19:10; John 4:23, 24

We will care for people, primarily through small groups.
Ephesians 4:11-13

We will discover and use our God-given gifts together.
Matthew 18:20

We will equip people to share their faith and serve all with love, hope and compassion.
1 Corinthians 14:12

OUR VALUES

We value faithfulness to Jesus Christ.

We value worship in many forms.

We value seeking God's guidance through prayer.

We value speaking the truth in love.

We value the empowering of personal ministries through the Holy Spirit.

We value personal growth through Bible study.

We value children and youth.

We value change and traditions.

We value openness.

We value having fun.

OUR STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

Metropolitan United Church, being an active congregation in the United Church of Canada, is located in London, Ontario. We are committed to providing a safe environment for work and study for all staff, volunteers and ministry personnel who work with individuals in our faith community, as well as for members who worship and serve under our care, especially those who are vulnerable. This commitment is demonstrated by our staff, volunteers and ministry personnel through respect for personal boundaries and protection for others from harm and abuse, while enabling those in their care to learn and grow in their Christian faith without fear of exploitation.

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RISK MANAGEMENT

1.0 DEFINITION

Risk management is “taking care to consider the possibility that something could go wrong and taking steps to stop, minimize, prevent or eliminate the circumstances which may lead to injury, abuse or harm to programme participants.” Risk management means “accepting the fact that harm is possible, either by the deliberate act of an abusive person, or through carelessness or accident.” ([*Faithful Footsteps*](#) – p. 6)

1.1 FACTORS

The following factors bear on the level of vulnerability and risk for every programme or activity held at Metropolitan United Church. Depending on the circumstances, an individual and/or group’s vulnerability can be either increased or decreased.

Consider the following:

- a) age (i.e. those with a greater dependency are more vulnerable than others);
- b) location (isolated setting) and nature of a programme or activity (i.e. pastoral care visits);
- c) nature of the activity (i.e. individual versus group); and
- d) the nature of the relationship between the group and/or activity (i.e. position of trust).

1.2 GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR EVERYONE

The Risk Management Committee has established general guidelines for the protection of all staff, leaders, volunteers and participants involved in activities at Metropolitan. The following guidelines apply to **all** groups, programmes and individual activities at Metropolitan United Church, **regardless of the risk level assigned to them:**

- a) Be familiar with the location of all exits, emergency lighting, first aid kits, accessible phones, fire extinguishers and their operation. Maps and exit routes are posted beside all exit signs.
- b) Groups or individuals present in the church building outside of normal church hours are asked to check in with the building attendant upon arrival. It is critical that the building attendant knows who is in the building and advantageous for all groups or individuals to know what other activities are occurring at the same time.
- c) No one other than the building attendant is to be left alone in the building for the purpose of turning off lights and locking up.
- d) In the event of an accident or other incident involving a participant in a meeting, programme or activity, immediate and appropriate action is to be taken to deal with the situation. A standard Incident Reporting Form ([Appendix B](#)) or Personal Injury Reporting Form ([Appendix C](#)) is to be filed as soon as possible with the church office. **NOTE:** Forms are in a binder in the church office.
- e) As a congregation, many of our programmes and committees are open to parents, visitors and invited guests. However, in certain instances where there are privacy or confidentiality concerns, it may be necessary to clear attendance ahead of time with the leader.
- f) Participants in our programmes and activities are encouraged to provide feedback to the group leader or church staff concerning their sense of personal safety, the leadership provided and the content of our programmes and activities.

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- g) Families/persons living with circumstances of domestic violence or other legal constraints are encouraged to contact the Senior Minister to collaborate on a plan for safe inclusion and participation.

1.3 SEXUAL ABUSE PREVENTION and RESPONSE

The United Church will not tolerate, and will seek to eradicate, any behaviour by its members, lay and order of ministry, adherents, or employees that constitutes sexual abuse or child abuse. The United Church is committed to providing a safe environment for worship, work, and study in all pastoral charges, congregations, institutions, agencies, organizations, or other bodies that operate under its name. Complaints of sexual abuse or child abuse will be taken seriously and will be dealt with in a spirit of compassion and justice. The General Council (United Church of Canada) has approved the Sexual Abuse Prevention and Response Policy and Procedures (2013) to deal with formal complaints of sexual abuse. These policies and procedures are referred to as the “Sexual Abuse Policy” in the United Church of Canada’s bylaws and they must be followed.

A print copy of the **Sexual Abuse Prevention and Response Policy and Procedures** is available in the Metropolitan United Church office policy binder for viewing.

Any incident falling under the [Sexual Abuse Prevention and Response Policy and Procedures](#) of the United Church of Canada will be handled under their Sexual Abuse Policy per *The Manual 2013*, section J.15.1.

APPLICATION SCREENING

2.0 POLICY

The Board of Elders at Metropolitan United Church requires that a [Police Vulnerable Sector Check form](#) be completed for candidates who have been offered either a “Staff” position *or* “Volunteer” position in which they will be responsible for the care of children or vulnerable adults.

2.1 DEFINITIONS

“Staff” and “Volunteer” include all persons who provide direct or indirect services to vulnerable adults or children.

Children – persons under 18 years of age.

Vulnerable Persons – persons in a position of dependence, or otherwise at greater risk of harm from persons in a position of trust or authority relative to them, because of their age, a disability, or other circumstances (whether temporary or permanent).

2.2 PROCEDURES

- a) Positions requiring a Police Vulnerable Sector Check (PVSC) will be designated by the Risk Management Committee and/or the Board of Elders of Metropolitan United Church.
- b) Anyone wishing to volunteer for a High Risk position must obtain a current Police Vulnerable Sector Check.
- c) The staff/volunteer applicant will be required to complete an application form which is available on the police website in your area.
- d) Screening is to be performed every five years.
- e) In the event of a positive Police Vulnerable Sector Check, this information will be considered in the context of the nature of the information and the specific duties of the position. A meeting may be held between the Chair of the Board of Elders, and whomever he/she feels it is necessary to involve in order that a decision is reached. The privacy of the candidate must always be assured.
- f) The Police Vulnerable Sector Check (PVSC) information is to be collected according to the standards of the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act guidelines.
- g) Participants 12 years of age or younger will be registered by a parent or other responsible adult for all programmes being run at or by Metropolitan United Church.
- h) All participants travelling to and from meetings and activities held off the church property do so at their own risk. Shared travel, such as car-pooling, implies that passengers do so at their own risk. It becomes the responsibility of the driver to ensure that adequate insurance protection is in place.
- i) All activities and meetings in which children and youth are involved are to be documented in reference to time, location and purpose. Group leaders are required to notify the church’s Office Administrator of their plans.

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LEVELS OF RISK

The Risk Management Committee has identified two levels of risk within our faith community. These two levels are identified as: **Low Risk** and **High Risk**.

3.0 LOW RISK GROUPS AND ORGANIZATIONS

The Risk Management Committee has assessed the following groups and organizations as Low Risk. They are placed at this level because there are no children or vulnerable people currently participating in these groups and organizations. If and when children, youths and/or vulnerable adults become involved with them, the increased level of risk will be reviewed and may be revised. Although the level of risk is low, confidentiality agreements may need to be signed because of the nature of information being dealt with.

- a) Risk Management Committee
- b) Board of Trustees
- c) Membership Team
- d) Music Committee
- e) Certain outreach groups
- f) United Church Women's and Men's Clubs
- g) Senior Choir / Senior Hand Bells Group
- h) Ministry and Personnel Committee (Confidentiality Agreement required – [Appendix F](#))
- i) Board of Elders (Confidentiality Agreement required – [Appendix F](#))
- j) Finance Committee (Confidentiality Agreement required – [Appendix F](#); excluding Office Staff, Counters, and Offering Depositors)

3.1 GUIDELINES FOR LOW RISK GROUPS AND ORGANIZATIONS

Be aware of and adhere to the general guidelines for all groups, programmes, and/or activities taking place within the Metropolitan United Church building.

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3.2 HIGH RISK GROUPS AND ORGANIZATIONS

The Risk Management Committee has assessed the following groups and organizations as High Risk. These groups are considered to be high risk because the participants in their activities are children or vulnerable adults, or there is access to confidential information and/or money or there is the possibility of physical risk.

- a) Pastoral Care
- b) Vacation Bible School
- c) Church Nursery
- d) Sunday School, Youth and Student Ministries
- e) Music Programmes for children
- f) Visitation Teams
- g) Office Staff, Treasurer and Volunteer Counters, Custodial Staff, Security
- h) Certain outreach activities

3.3 GUIDELINES FOR HIGH RISK GROUPS AND ORGANIZATIONS

- a) Be aware of and adhere to the general guidelines for all groups, programmes or individual activities taking place within the Metropolitan United Church building.
- b) Doors to classrooms and other meeting/gathering spaces without windows are to be left partially open at all times.
- c) More than one responsible adult must accompany a high-risk group to any off-site activity unless an exception is approved by the Programme Director or the Board of Elders (i.e. practicality for Visitation team).
- d) Participants and the church's Office Administrator must be notified at least one week in advance of any plan to hold an off-site meeting or activity.
- e) All participants travelling to and from meetings and activities held off church property do so at their own risk. Shared travel, such as car-pooling, implies that passengers do so at their own risk. In the case of passengers 12 years of age and under, shared travel implies that the permission of a parent or legal guardian has been obtained. ([Appendix A](#))
- f) Off-site activities and/or meetings held outside regularly scheduled programme times are to be approved, in advance, by the Programme Director or the Board of Elders. Registration/permission forms ([Appendix A](#)) must be completed.
- g) There is to be a minimum of two (2) supervisors, with at least one being an adult, for groups or classes of children under the age of six (6) years. Additional supervisors are to be sought as deemed necessary by the Programme Director or Board of Elders.
- h) The application procedure is to include a job description, an application form, an interview and a Police Vulnerable Sector Check (PVSC) form.
- i) The operation and evaluation of each High Risk group or activity will be assessed through teachers and/or other leaders associated with the group or activity as directed by the Risk Management Committee.

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- j) Visits or other forms of contact made through the Pastoral Care programme, Visitation volunteers, Ministers or Staff Associates, are to be properly documented indicating the date and time of the contact, the purpose of the contact, and any unusual or disturbing comments or actions that were made at the time of contact.
- k) As they activate their ministries, visiting members and other representatives of Metropolitan United Church who engage in pastoral visiting, are to receive training in the principles of Risk Management at fall training sessions provided by members of the Risk Management Committee.
- l) Members visiting and other official representatives of the congregation who engage in pastoral visiting, must wear Metropolitan United Church nametags which will be provided by the church office.

3.4 GUIDELINES SPECIFICALLY FOR WORKING WITH PERSONS AGED 12 AND UNDER

Recognizing that young children are often the most vulnerable sector of our population, these guidelines are intended to provide a general overview of how adult-child interactions should occur. It is recognized that unforeseen circumstances can and will occur. The most important safeguard for our children is full disclosure. If an adult finds him/herself alone with a child for any significant amount of time, or in a situation of emotional intensity, every effort should be made to find another adult or at least inform the child's parent or guardian as quickly as possible under the circumstances.

- a) Adults shall not spend extended time alone with children without the consent of the child's parent or guardian and the knowledge of the programme supervisor, Director of Children's Ministries, Choir Director.
- b) Adults who form a relationship with children through our faith community's activities shall not seek out opportunities to spend time with the child "off site." If off-site interactions occur, the appropriate people should be informed.
- c) Parents are encouraged to take their children to visit the restrooms prior to each class or service. As a general rule, nursery volunteers are not expected to change diapers unless they have permission from the child's parent or guardian. Adult volunteers are required to escort a pre-school child to the washroom and remain outside the door until the child is ready to be escorted back to class. The volunteer may enter the restroom to assist only when a second adult is within visual contact and/or the door is left ajar. It is recommended that a volunteer is never alone with a child in an unsupervised washroom. Children shall not be sent to the washroom alone under any circumstance.
- d) Children shall not be taken in an adult's vehicle without parental/guardian permission and the knowledge of the group leaders.
- e) It is the adult's responsibility to ensure that inappropriate physical contact does not occur.
- f) Parents of children in our programmes shall be encouraged to ask questions and be aware of events as they arise including the nature of adult-child interactions. They should talk with their children about the programmes and the volunteers and staff that they encounter.
- g) Any incident regarding a minor must be reported to the appropriate adults/authorities (e.g., Police, Children's Aid Society) immediately. An Incident Reporting Form ([Appendix B](#)) must be completed as soon as possible. This form is available from the Office Staff or Security personnel.

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SAFETY

4.0 SAFETY PROCEDURES

Metropolitan United Church expects each of the volunteers, regardless of his/her position with the church, to cooperate in every respect with our Risk Management policy. Some of the major points of our policy require that:

- a) All injuries and incidents are reported immediately to your supervisor and you are to obtain medical aid without delay.
- b) All volunteers, where required, must use personal protective equipment.
- c) Hazardous conditions and other safety concerns must be reported immediately to your supervisor, group leader or staff member.
- d) Volunteers will follow all safety rules. Failure to follow the rules will result in disciplinary action or removal from the ministry.

4.1 REPORTING AN INCIDENT (See Incident Reporting Form, [Appendix B](#))

- a) Complete the form and submit it to the office.
- b) When necessary, the office notifies and gives the form to the Senior Minister.
- c) If necessary, the Senior Minister sets up a meeting with the people involved.

4.2 INJURY PROCEDURES

- a) When there is a volunteer or student injured, the first priority is to provide medical support. Apply immediate first aid. If serious, call 911.
- b) Let the supervisor know about the injury and explain the details.
- c) Immediately call the parent(s), or guardian(s) of the student and let them know about the injury.
- d) Fill out a form called the Personal Injury Reporting Form ([Appendix C](#)) located in a labelled binder in the church office. Return the completed form to the church office within 24 hours of the injury when possible.

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LIST OF APPENDICES

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Appendix B	Incident Reporting Form
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Appendix D	Volunteer Information Form
Appendix E	Field Trip / Excursion Proposal Form
Appendix F	Confidentiality Agreement
Appendix G	List of Revisions

Appendix A

PERMISSION FORM

For children unaccompanied by parents or legal guardians

Description of Activity: _____

Date of Activity: _____

Time of Activity: _____

Place of Activity: _____

Mode of Transportation: _____

Cost: _____

Name of Person in Charge of Activity: _____

Additional Adult Attendees: _____

Name(s) of Child(ren): _____

Allergies, Medications or other Special Needs: _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Parent or Legal Guardian

Telephone: _____

Emergency Contact: _____ Telephone: _____

This information will be kept on file in a secure location in the church office. If necessary, it may be used for future reference. Blank forms are available in a labelled binder in the church office.

Metropolitan United Church, 468 Wellington Street, London ON N6J 3P8

Tel: 519-432-7189 Fax: 519-432-3141

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Appendix B

INCIDENT REPORTING FORM

Name of Group or Organization: _____

Date of Event: _____

Time of Event: _____ Type of Event: _____

Place of Event: _____

Who Was Involved? _____

What Happened? _____

What Action Was Taken? / Future Plans: _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____

This information will be kept on file in a secure location in the church office. If necessary, it may be used for future reference. Blank forms are available in a labelled binder in the church office.

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Appendix C

PERSONAL INJURY REPORTING FORM

Injured person's name: _____ Age: _____

Gender: M F

Date of Injury: _____ Time of Injury: _____

Date and Time Injury Reported: _____

Who was Notified? _____

Name(s) of Witness(es): _____

Describe how and where the injury occurred: _____

Which part of the body was injured? _____

Describe the injuries in detail: _____

Date and Time you sought Medical Attention: _____

Name of Doctor and / or Hospital: _____

Could anything be done to prevent injuries of this type? If so, what? _____

Describe any follow-up action(s) taken: _____

Parent(s) / Guardian(s) have been notified: Y N

Signature of Volunteer / Staff: _____ Date: _____

Volunteer / Staff Person's Name (print): _____

This information will be kept on file in a secure location in the church office. If necessary, it may be used for future reference. Blank forms are available in a labelled binder in the church office.

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Appendix D

VOLUNTEER INFORMATION FORM

The information provided on this form will be treated confidentially.

Surname: _____

Given Name(s): _____

Address: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Telephone #: _____

Emergency Contact: _____

Are you over the age of 18: Y N

How much time can you commit to volunteer work? *Provide days and times.*

Please describe your areas of interest? _____

Please provide any other information that you think may be relevant: _____

Please provide names and addresses of two people (not relatives) whom we could contact for references:

Name: _____ Name: _____

Address: _____ Address: _____

Telephone: _____ Telephone: _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Volunteers for designated activities involving children or vulnerable adults may be required to present a completed Police Vulnerable Sector Check (PVSC) form to the church before appointment.

This information will be kept on file in a secure location in the church office. If necessary, it may be used for future reference. Blank forms are available in a labelled binder in the church office.

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Appendix E

FIELD TRIP / EXCURSION PROPOSAL FORM

The information provided on this form will be treated confidentially.

Group Attending: _____

Destination: _____

Number of Participants: _____

Purpose of Trip: _____

Departure Date: _____

Return Date: _____

Supervisor(s): _____

Mode of Transportation: _____

Overnight Accommodation: _____

Financing:

Cost per Participant: _____

Organization / Group: _____

Other Sources: _____

Total Cost: _____

Submitted by: _____ Date: _____

Approved by: _____ Date: _____

Volunteers for designated activities involving children or vulnerable adults may be required to present a completed Police Vulnerable Sector Check (PVSC) form to the church before appointment.

This information will be kept on file in a secure location in the church office. If necessary, it may be used for future reference. Blank forms are available in a labelled binder in the church office.

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Appendix F

CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

I, _____, understand that as a result of serving on
(please print name)
_____, I may receive information of a personal,
(please print name of committee)

financial, medical or otherwise sensitive nature. I agree to not discuss with anyone, outside the bounds of the team and its mandate, such confidential information and understand that doing so may jeopardize my ability to complete these duties.

Name (printed)

Signature

Chair/Vice Chair, Board of Elders

Signature

Date: _____

This information will be kept on file in a secure location in the church office. If necessary, it may be used for future reference. Blank forms are available in a labelled binder in the church office.

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Appendix G

LIST OF REVISIONS

First draft.....	2009
Second draft.....	2010
Third draft	May 2011
Submitted to Ministry and Personnel Committee.....	June 2011
Submitted to Board of Elders.....	September 2011
First document approved by Board of Elders	October 27, 2011
Second version submitted to and approved by Board of Elders	June 21, 2012
Third version submitted to and approved by Board of Elders.....	April 30, 2015

RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY	
Approval Meeting of the Board of Elders:	April 2015
Approved by Risk Management Committee:	April 2015
Previous Version Date:	June 2012
Group/Committee Responsible:	Risk Management Committee

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