

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| POLICY NAME | DUTY of CARE - Christian Education Ministry: Junior Sunday School |
| POLICY NUMBER | C – 004 - 01 |
| DATE | April 22, 2025 |
| DATE REVIEWED OR REVISED | Approved by Church Council – April 22, 2025 |
| REFERENCES | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Manual 2025, UCC The Manual, 2025 • <i>Faithful Footsteps</i> Screening Procedures for Positions of Trust and Authority in The United Church of Canada: A Handbook. Faithful Footsteps (Reprint Version) (united-church.ca) • Church Administration – Duty of Care Duty of Care The United Church of Canada • Guidelines on Developing Human Rights Policies and Procedures (OHRC) Updated guidelines on developing human rights policies and procedures Ontario Human Rights Commission • “A Tender Trust: Helping Churches to provide safe service” A Tender Trust: Helping Churches to Provide Safe Service (united-church.ca) • Police Records Checks Police Records Check Handbook (January 2019); Record and Background Checks - Ottawa Police Service; |
| SEE ALSO | BUC Policies: C – 001 Duty of Care – General C – 004 Duty of Care – Christian Education Ministry |

Barrhaven United Church (BUC)
an Affirming Community of Faith of the United Church of Canada
located on the Territory of the Algonquin Anishinaabe People

INTRODUCTION and INTENTION

The congregation, volunteers, and staff of BUC recognize that we have a spiritual, moral, and legal duty to care for and protect all participants in all of our church activities

We take seriously our responsibility to offer a warm, welcoming, safe and nurturing environment to all people who enter our buildings for worship, work, study, service, and personal growth.

POLICY STATEMENT

It is the responsibility of Church Council and all ministries of BUC to exercise the care, diligence and skill of a reasonably prudent person in the oversight of the church's programs to maintain standards of care for all of BUC activities and ministries.

We recognize that children fall into the "vulnerable" category and therefore will ensure that they are well protected from harm and are able to learn and grow without fear of exploitation.

Our commitment to protecting all those who come into BUC includes a zero tolerance level for any form of abuse, harassment, discrimination, or bullying.

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to provide a clear direction on the duty of care as it relates to those who participate in the activities of the BUC Sunday School for children ages 3 to 12, inclusive.

SCOPE:

This policy applies to volunteers, staff, ministry personnel and the congregation, with respect to the programming for and care of children ages 3 to 12, involved in BUC Sunday School programs.

Note: This policy pertains to the Sunday School programming run primarily during the worship time. It is assumed that parents/grandparents/other guardians who are

responsible for the child are available in the sanctuary to assist with any challenges.

DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATION

“**Duty of Care**” is the obligation to take reasonable care to avoid causing foreseeable harm to another person or his or her property.

Definitions of terms used throughout this policy can be found in the *Duty of Care Policy – General* document as approved by Church Council on April 22, 2025.

PROCEDURES

1.0 RISK ASSESSMENTS

Because of the age of the participants (3 to 12 years), the BUC Junior Sunday School program has been assessed as being at a **High Risk Level**.

2.0 POLICE VULNERABLE SECTOR CHECKS

a) Adults in Classes

A minimum of one adult volunteer or paid staff person with each class must have a current Vulnerable Sector Check (VSC) from the Ottawa Police.

Volunteers may request a letter from the minister to support their application for a VSC without charge.

b) Review and Security of Vulnerable Sector Check documents

The Christian Education (CE) Chair or the Chair of Council will review each VSC and will provide pertinent details (full name, date the check was completed, and that no issues were found) to the BUC Office Administrator. The Office Administrator will register the information and maintain it in a locked cabinet. This information will be treated as confidential.

c) Renewal of Vulnerable Sector Checks

VSC's must be renewed every three (3) years to be maintained.

Once a year the Office Administrator will review the VSC's to determine which ones will need renewing and will advise the CE Chair or the Chair of Council accordingly.

3.0 ADULT SUPERVISION

a) Number of Adults per class

There will be at least two (2) adults with every class, regardless of the number of children.

b) Casual Adult Volunteers

Casual Adult Volunteers (at least 18 years of age) who help with a specific lesson or activity and who do not have a current VSC must not be alone with any child.

c) Adult to Children Ratios

The following adult to children ratios and maximum class sizes will be maintained for all activities:

1:8 for children aged 3-4

1:10 for children aged 5-12

If children of different ages are combined in one group, the ratio becomes what is required for the youngest age group.

4.0 YOUTH VOLUNTEERS

a) Age Difference

Youth (13 to 18 years of age) who are casual volunteers must be at least three (3) years older than the group with whom they are interacting.

b) Adult Supervision

Youth volunteers must not be alone with children and must always be supervised by an adult.

5.0 REGISTRATION

a) Completion of Registration Form

A Registration Form should be completed annually by parents, grandparents or guardians for all children in Sunday School.

b) Contact Information

The registration form should include the parents', grandparents' and/or the legal guardians' names, emails and phone/cell numbers, and any special legal custodial arrangements, including to whom the child or information should be released.

c) Permission

Registration must include specific permission from parents, grandparents,

and/or guardians for photographs and/or videoing of their child(ren) at any time which may be shared internally or externally (e.g.: photo collages displayed on church bulletin boards, websites or other forms of social media).

d) Health Information

Registration must include important health issues, including allergies, that parents/grandparents/guardians want to identify. This information should be relayed to Sunday School teachers.

e) Confidentiality

Personal information must be used only for the purpose for which it was collected; namely, in the conduct of the Junior Sunday School program. Registration and other permission forms should be kept in a locked space, available to the teachers.

Only a child's given name should be printed on a nametag.

6.0 SAFE SPACES

a) Physical Space

Every effort will be made to ensure that the spaces used for the Sunday School programs are physically safe.

The doors to the class areas are to be unlocked and the windows in the doors are to be left uncovered.

Training on emergency evacuation routes and emergency procedures will be regularly provided to the congregation.

b) Privacy

No photos or videos of a child may be taken without permission (see: Registration - Permission) and alternate ways of participating in a service or activity worked out so that all children can be involved (e.g., recording only the audio in a service).

c) Food Allergies

In light of the prevalence of food allergies, no snacks will be provided in class. Severe allergies should be noted on the child's name tag.

d) First Aid

Ideally, at least one adult on site should possess a current First Aid Certificate and be aware of the location of first aid kits nearest to the classes.

e) Accidents or Incidents

If an accident or incident occurs, a report should be written by the adult volunteer who is most aware of the occurrence and given to the CE Chair or the Chair of Council.

f) Punishment

Physical punishment of a child by any volunteer or staff member is strictly prohibited.

Under no circumstances will there be any verbal, physical or spiritual abuse, physical restraint, confinement or isolation

7.0 COMMUNICATION

a) Expectations

The parent, grandparent and/or guardian will be informed of behaviour expectations for their children when participating in a Sunday School program.

8.0 USE OF WASHROOMS

a) Location of Washrooms

If possible, the upstairs accessible washroom will be used.

b) Children are to be accompanied to the washroom

Under normal circumstances, children seven (7) years of age and younger should be accompanied to the washroom by their parent, grandparent, or other guardian. In the case of an emergency, however, an adult with a VSC may do so.

Children eight (8) to 12 years of age may go the washroom with a buddy.

9.0 CHILD ABUSE or NEGLECT

a) Suspicion of child abuse or neglect

If at any time there is suspicion of child abuse, or neglect, or if a child indicates that they are being abused in any way, it must be reported immediately.

b) Reporting

All suspected situations of child abuse or neglect should be reported by calling The Children's Aid Society of Ottawa at **613-747-7800** or, in case of an emergency, the Ottawa Police Service at 911.

Under the *Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017*, anyone who has reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is, or may be, in need of protection must promptly report the suspicion and the information upon which it is based.

c) More Information

More information about the legislation in Ontario can be found at this site:
[Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect: It's Your Duty - Your responsibilities under the Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017](#)

| |
|-------------------|
| DISCLAIMER |
|-------------------|

This document was produced for use by BUC by referencing United Church of Canada (UCC) policy statements, industry sources and government releases on a range of topics. It is not a legal document. The laws of Canada, the Province of Ontario and the City of Ottawa take precedence where unintentional conflicts may arise.