CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES PROTECTION POLICY

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1. Purpose of Policy

For more than a century, Scripture Union Canada ("SU") has ministered to children through the running of camps, special events and by supplementing church ministries at the Sunday school and VBS level. Presently, SU's primary outlet for Children's ministries is through the vehicle of sports camps, drama camps, and KidsGames under the banner of "SU Camps". We also use one-day sports events like Cup of Nations and Bubble Soccer to reach children, youth and families.

In today's society we are confronted with daily stories in the media relating instances of actual and alleged abuse against children while in the care of charitable organizations, sometimes Christian organizations. To that end, many such organizations are addressing the issue by formalizing their internal policies and hiring/supervision practices.

SU recognizes it has a spiritual, moral, and legal obligation to provide a secure environment for children, youth, employees, and volunteers participating in SU programs that are under the auspices and authority of SU. Child abuse is a criminal offence as well as a violation of human conscience and dignity. It is a violation of God's moral law within the trusted context of relationship and authority.

SU recognizes its responsibilities as it relates to staffing (both employee and volunteer), and also the need to only partner with or serve churches/organizations that can demonstrate properly implemented protection policies and appropriate insurance coverage.

The intent of this document is to demonstrate SU's obligations to children under its care by prescribing certain policies and procedures designed to minimize the risk of child abuse or complaints of abuse. SU is also committed to protecting its employees and volunteers from false allegations by providing them with a controlled environment and proper protocol for reporting allegations. It is trusted that the policies in this document will further public and church confidence in SU as a safe organization and one that takes its responsibilities seriously.

SU condemns the abuse of children and commits to take every reasonable step to eliminate such risks within its ministry boundaries. To be clear, there is zero tolerance for the abuse of children by any employee or volunteer working or ministering with SU.

In Canada, SU does not own any camp facilities, nor does it operate children's programs at its offices. The standard modus operandi for SU in Canada is to either organize ad hoc events in partnership with churches or other charitable agencies, or by being invited by churches to assist in the running of programs that the churches have organized for themselves or their community.

2. Definition of Abuse

THIS DOCUMENT IS NOT INTENDED TO REPLACE OR EVEN CONTAIN ALL THE LEGAL DEFINITIONS PERTAINING TO CHILD ABUSE IN CANADA. THE FORMAL DEFINITIONS OF 'CHILD ABUSE" OR "CHILD" VARIES BY PROVINCE AND ARE AVAILABLE FROM LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES OR THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES.

The following are some general definitions on which SU's policies are predicated:

- "Abuse is defined as a non-accidental physical or mental injury or mistreatment caused by the acts or omissions of parents or caregivers."[1]

- Abuse is categorized as physical, emotional, verbal, sexual, or as neglect.

- Physical abuse means any physical force or action, which results in non-accidental injury to a child and which exceeds that which could be considered reasonable discipline.

- Emotional abuse is the failure to provide the praise, love, nurturing, and security essential to the psychological and social development of a child. This neglect is likely to produce long-term serious emotional disorder.

- Verbal abuse is difficult to specify due to the ongoing nature of intimidation and manipulation. It destroys an individual's self worth and esteem.

- Sexual abuse means any sexual exploitation of a child, whether consensual or not, which involved touching, intercourse or any behaviour of a sexual nature toward a child. In determining whether this behaviour is of a sexual nature, one should ask whether a reasonable observer, looking at the behaviour in its context, would conclude that it is. This would exclude normal affectionate behaviour towards children and normal health or hygiene care.[2]

The Law Reform Committee of Canada defines sexual abuse as, "Exposure of the child to sexual stimulation inappropriate for his age and role – the sexual exploitation of a child who is not developed mentally, capable of understanding or resisting the contact or a child or adolescent who may be psychologically or socially dependent upon the perpetrator."[3]

Canada's Law on Child Sexual Abuse from the Department of Justice has a listing of 16 sexual offences in the criminal code. Some of these include:

- Sexual interference
- Invitation to sexual touching
- Sexual exploitation of a young person
- Exposing genitals to a child
- Corrupting children
- Indecent acts
- Sexual assault

"Children under 12 are never considered able to consent to sexual activity. Children between 12 and 14 are deemed unable to consent to sexual acts except under specific circumstances involving sexual activity with their peers. Young persons between 14 and 18 are protected from sexual exploitation. Their consent is not valid if the person touching them for a sexual purpose is in a position of trust or authority over them or if they are in a relationship of dependency with that person."[4]

"Neglect means the failure of those responsible for the care of the child to meet the physical, emotional, or medical needs of a child to an extent that the child's health, development, or safety is endangered."[5]

3. Recruitment of Children's Ministry Personnel

The recruitment process is critical in protecting Scripture Union from legal action if a case of abuse occurs where a staff member (employee or volunteer) is involved. To be protected from liability, SU must show evidence that it has taken reasonable action in screening and supervising employees and volunteers (collectively referred to as "Personnel") involved in any ministry with any person under the age of 18 ("Minors"). The courts will look for a process by which SU has screened its staff before engaging them in their service. A court could find SU legally liable, and thereby declared negligent, if it is less than systematic in its recruitment process.

This document is designed, to a most reasonable extent, to provide protection strategies for children and youth as well as for the Personnel who serve.

SU will not engage the services (neither as a volunteer nor as an employee) of anyone that has been accused or convicted of child abuse.

3.1 Application Process

a) All prospective employees, contract workers and volunteers (referred to collectively as "Applicants") who wish to serve in any SU ministry involving the supervision of Minors are required to complete an Application in a form prescribed from time to time by the Board. Copies of the current Application Form used by SU are available from the Scripture Union Canada office.

b) All accepted volunteers shall be required to re-apply every 3 years for approval to serve in SU ministry involving the supervision of Minors and to complete the Application Form then in effect.

c) All Applicants shall be required to submit two references, both of whom will be required to then complete the Reference pages that are part of the Application Form. References cannot come from relatives, but may be obtained from an employer, pastor, close friend, or teacher. SU personnel shall then telephone and interview both of the Applicant's references. All such calls are to be documented by recording the date and a summary of the referral's comments. All such reference checks shall be filed and remain confidential.

d) All Applicants under positive consideration shall be subject to a personal interview by authorized SU personnel.

e) All Applicants under positive consideration shall be required to complete and provide a Criminal Record Check from the local police or RCMP. A copy of the document shall be retained in a confidential file.

f) All approved Applicants serving in any SU ministry involving the supervision of Minors shall be under the authority and direction of a full-time employee of SU or its designees.

3.2 Training

All Personnel in any SU ministry involving the supervision of Minors is to be equipped with training to help them understand the issues that may confront them. A primary component of the training process shall include instruction on safety and prevention of child abuse. All new employees or volunteers must complete the "Plan to Protect" orientation course and agree to SU's Code of Conduct. These records must be retained in a confidential file. Each year, returning staff and volunteers will be required to complete the "Plan to Protect" refresher course. Scripture Union Canada will issue certificates of completion to each successful candidate, and will retain them on file and make them available to ministry partners as proof of training if requested.

4. Child Protection Procedures

4.1 General

a) All Personnel in any SU ministry involving the supervision of Minors are strongly discouraged from engaging in "out of program" or "off-premises" contact with children and youth that have been under their care.

b) Corporal punishment as a means of discipline shall not be permitted. There is zero tolerance for this.

4.2 Health, Safety & Operational Guidelines

4.2.1 Sick Children

- A child who is ill and could therefore expose other children and workers to illness should not be received into the program. Some signs of illness include unusual fatigue or irritability, coughing, sneezing, runny nose, fever, vomiting, diarrhea, inflamed mouth and throat. Any child with a known communicable disease shall not be received into the program.

4.2.2 Medications

- Generally, volunteers are not to give or apply any medication. If a child needs medication, the parent or guardian should administer it.

- Medication should not be left with the child. If medication is brought with the child, it should be left in the care of the ministry supervisor. Any medication that is left must be in its original packaging, with the dosage clearly labeled, along with the name of the individual it is prescribed to or intended for.

- In extreme cases where EpiPens and inhalers are needed for allergies or asthma, arrangements should be made with (adult) Personnel along with written consent and instructions from a parent or guardian.

- If medication is given, the time, date and reason will be documented. Records will be kept in accordance with PIPEDA and PHIPA.

4.2.3 Emergencies

- It is the responsibility of the centres, churches or camp organizations to have in place proper fire emergency procedures for their facilities. SU Personnel assisting with the running of programs at these facilities shall familiarize themselves with emergency exits and planned routes of escape in case of emergency.

- Although third party facilities are expected to have their own First Aid kits, SU Personnel shall be required to take a First Aid kit with them if they are responsible for the running of the program. The

First Aid kit should contain (and be replenished when components are used) the standard recommended items defined as an "infectious disease kit".

- Any accident resulting in injury shall be reported to the ministry leader in charge.
- A parent or guardian shall be contacted when an injury, accident, or medical emergency occurs.

4.2.4 Procedures for dealing with cuts or injuries involving blood

- Separate the injured child from the other children. Isolate the area where any blood may have dropped on carpets, equipment, etc. Parents should be contacted at this time.
- Check to ensure that no other children had contact with any of the blood from the cut or injury.
- Put on the latex gloves available in the First Aid kit and then clean and bandage the injury, avoiding contact with mouth, ears, and eyes.
- Carefully wipe up all blood and bloody bandages and remove to a secure waste removal receptacle.
- Remove and properly dispose of latex gloves. Wash hands carefully with sterilizing soap available in the First Aid kit.

4.2.5 Proper Display of Affection

Physical touch is an important element in the communication of love and care. Personnel need to be aware of, and sensitive to, differences in family backgrounds, individual personalities, and special needs. Physical contact with Minors should be age and developmentally appropriate. The following guidelines are recommended as pure, genuine, and positive displays of God's love.

Appropriate Touch

- Holding the child's hand when speaking, listening or walking with them to an activity
- Putting your arm around the shoulder of a child when comforting or quieting as needed
- Patting a child on the head, hand, shoulder or back to affirm them
- Gently hold the child's shoulder or hand to keep their attention you are redirecting the child's behaviour
- Holding a pre-school child who is crying
- All touching should be done in the view of others and never alone

Inappropriate Touch

The following types of touching will not be tolerated:

- Kissing or coaxing a child to kiss you
- Extended hugging and tickling
- Touching a child in any area that would be covered by a bathing suit (except when assisting a small child with toileting as outlined below)
- Carrying children or having them sit on your lap
- Being alone with a child
- Any prolonged physical contact

4.2.6 Toileting procedures

- No personnel alone with children in washroom.
- No elementary aged children in bathroom alone.

If assistance is needed:

- Two personnel escort children or
- One personnel with one hall monitor
- Keep door propped open
- Male personnel are not to accompany female children to washroom

4.2.7 Event/Camp Management

The vast majority of times, SU will conduct its event and camp services in partnership with, or under contract from a church or another ministry. Therefore, procedures related to the receiving and releasing of children will be managed and responsibility accepted by the host organization. On the occasions when SU is responsible for the registrations, the following procedures apply:

a) Only registered children may attend an event or camp organized by SU. Registration forms must contain all appropriate contact information and the applicable consent and release agreement must be signed by a parent or guardian. All children must be dropped off at the event/camp location and signed in by authorized Personnel. Minors shall not be permitted to leave the site until a parent, guardian or authorized person arrives to pick them up.

b) Except in the case of extreme emergency, SU requires a minimum of two screened adult workers over the age of 18 for:
   a. Every 10 pre-school children
   b. Every 20 elementary children
   c. Every 14 junior high students
   d. Every 20 senior high students

c) When it is necessary that only one adult leader be in the room with children, the door of that room

d) At no time should anyone working with Minors have a one-on-one meeting behind closed doors. For the protection of both the Minors and SU Personnel, the door must be kept open or the meeting must be in a room with an uncovered window in the door.

e) At no time should any Personnel working with teens pursue a dating relationship with a student. Personnel should always be cautious regarding students with “crushes”.

f) SU personnel working with minors should wear approved clothing or identification that identifies them to parents, guardians and the children.

No overnight functions shall be permitted unless:

g) Two or more approved adult Personnel are present at the same time, and all supervision ratios are met as stated in 4.2.7 b

h) The function has first been approved by a full-time employee of SU or its authorized representative

i) The parents or guardians of the participating children have signed consent and release form.

j) All Personnel are prohibited from disciplining a Minor using physical contact in any manner whatsoever.

5. Reporting Procedures

5.1 Obligation to Report

a) Any person who has reasonable grounds to believe that a Minor is or may be in need of protection or is/has suffered abuse is legally required to report the matter to a social worker in the local office of the Department of Social Services or to the Police. A person who knowingly fails to report in these circumstances is in violation of the law and may be found to have committed an offense. Should anyone have questions regarding the specific incident they are facing, an anonymous call can be placed to the Department of Social Services to clarify whether or not this situation constitutes a reportable offense.

b) If an incident is reported to the authorities, Personnel shall also report the occurrence to the SU's President or, in his/her absence, other person(s) in authority within SU.

c) Prior to reporting the occurrence, if necessary and pursuant to the Child and Family Services act, no Personnel shall conduct any investigation or question any individual unless specifically authorized by the SU President or his/her authorized designate. Any information obtained and any report subsequently issued shall be considered and treated CONFIDENTIAL information by SU.

d) No investigation or inquiry shall be conducted where a report has been made to the Department of Social Services or police investigation has been undertaken unless otherwise authorized by the appropriate civil authorities where such an investigation or inquiry may otherwise interfere or obstruct any investigation undertaken by the Department of Social Services or police.

e) If there is an allegation against SU Personnel, it is recommended that SU immediately engage the services of an Attorney.

5.2 What should be reported?

a) Any SU Personnel need to report matters relating to child abuse or neglect of which they have direct knowledge or have observed within the scope of their duties. It is not the responsibility of the reporting person or other SU Personnel to substantiate any allegations or suspicions.

b) A child is in need of protection under the Family and Child Services Act if they are:
- Abused or neglected so that their safety or well-being is endangered
- Abandoned
- Deprived of necessary care through the death, absence or disability of their parent
- Deprived of necessary medical attention
- Absent from their home in circumstances that endanger their safety or well-being

c) Some signs of abuse to watch for are as follows:
- Has an unexplained injury (e.g., A patch of hair missing, a burn, a limp or bruises)
- Has an inordinate number of unexplained injuries such as bruises on his/her arms and legs over a period of time

- Gives verbal testimony
- Makes drawings in conjunction with verbal testimony
- Through writing, prayer requests or play situations may allude to incidents
- Complains about numerous beatings
- Complains about others doing things to them when others are not at home
- Is consistently dirty and smells or has bad teeth or hair falling out

Abuse or neglect need not have already occurred for a child to be in need of protection; it is not necessary to wait until a child has been harmed to intervene. When abuse or neglect can be reasonably anticipated and there are reasonable grounds to believe a child is in need of protection, the legal obligation to report applies.

5.3 Responding to and Reporting Abuse Allegations

a) When a child first seeks help or makes a statement, Personnel are to take the child's word seriously. Actions steps:
   - Do not deny the problem, but stay calm and listen carefully
   - Give emotional support, reminding the child that they are not at fault and was right to tell you about it
   - Do not promise the child that you will not tell anyone else
   - Complete a "Suspected Abuse Form" along with the SU Ministry Leader and call the Children's Aid Society or Child and Family Services immediately to make a report
   - Inform SU Canada's President that the report has been made

b) If there is a written or oral report made by a person who is prepared to identify themselves alleging that an SU Personnel has abused or threatened to abuse a child or if the SU President is made aware of the situation, the Personnel in question shall be immediately suspended from any duties and responsibilities, pending the outcome of the subsequent investigation and be subject to the discipline policy in SU's constitution. If the accused Personnel is a paid employee, then they shall be suspended with pay until the outcome of the investigation is made available.

c) Any notice of suspension of Personnel shall not be given in such a way that any investigation by the Department of Social Services or the police will be placed in jeopardy and shall be given in consultation with the civil authorities. The suspension from duties and responsibilities is not and shall not be seen or accepted as the "guilt" of the Personnel, but only as an indication of the priority given to the need to protect the Children.

d) Any personnel found to have abused or placed at risk a Minor shall, apart from other discipline process, be prohibited from participating in any Children's Ministry with SU unless specifically authorized in writing by the Board or its designate, and then only in accordance with any and all terms and conditions determined by the Board.

e) SU's insurance company shall be informed of the situation once a report is made and a copy of any report on the issue shall be sent directly to them.

5.4 Summary of Action Guidelines When an Allegation Occurs

a) Document all efforts at handling the incident.
b) Report the incident immediately to the SU President and the Corporate Attorney. (Do not try to handle the incident without professional assistance. The accused should do the same.)
c) Contact the proper civil authorities with a formal report following the guidance of the Attorney.

d) Do not attempt to conduct an investigation.
e) Do not pre-judge the situation, but take the allegations seriously.
f) Treat the accused with dignity and support.
g) Be ready to use a prepared public statement to answer questions from the press. This should only be handled by the SU President or his designate and only under SU's attorney's direction.
h) Carefully safeguard the privacy and confidentiality of all involved.

6. Appendices & Footnotes

Appendix items to be added are the following forms:

- Volunteer Consent, Waiver and Agreement
- Camper Health Form
- Incident Report
- Suspected Abuse Report

Bibliography and Resources

Scripture Union wishes to express its thanks to The Christian and Missionary Alliance in Canada for allowing it to use selected content from its "PLAN TO PROTECT" manual.

www.cccc.org Canadian Council of Christian Charities

Footnotes:

[1] Inter-Ministry Child Abuse Handbook, Province of British Columbia, 1988. pages 10-11.
[2] Ibid
[3] Law Reform of Canada
[4] Mary Wells, Canada's Law on Child Sexual Abuse (Ottawa: Department of Justice, Canada, 1990).
[5] Inter-Ministry Child Abuse Handbook, op. cit., pages 10-11.

Volunteer Verification

SU is not responsible for checking every volunteer recruited by a camp partner. We expect that any volunteer involved in a SU camp has been adequately screened by the church and that the church has all necessary documents required by their insurance company. We strongly advise that all volunteers: submit an application, are interviewed, have a police check and two references.

I declare by my signature below that CHURCH NAME_____ has diligently selected volunteers to help at the SU camp. I verify that all volunteers have been reviewed and police checks are on file for everyone working with the children at camp.

_____
Name (printed)

_____
Signature

_____
Date

_____
SU Intern Name (printed)

_____
SU Intern Signature

_____
Date

_____
Witness Name (printed)

_____
Witness Signature

_____
Date

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SPORTS CAMP HEALTH FORM

Camper Name: _____ ☐Male ☐Female

Date of Birth: _____ Health Card #: _____
mm/dd/yyyy

EMERGENCY CONTACT INFO

Name: _____ Relationship to Camper: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone:_____Cell Phone: _____

MEDICAL INFO

Please list any allergies that your child may have:_____

Please list any health conditions camp staff need to be aware of: _____

Please list any medications that your child is currently taking: _____

Important Note: If your child requires medication while at camp we ask that you make arrangements to administer the medicine throughout the day. We will not administer any medicine of any type for children at camp.

Are there any other problem's that may affect your child's ability to participate in camp activities?

DISCLAIMER

I am the legal guardian of the camper with full authority to make decisions with respect to the care, upbringing, and education of the applicant.

I agree and comply that all of the medical information provided on this form is true and accurate – lacking nothing. I hereby release my child to the care and medical discretion of the staff at Scripture Union, the church and volunteers. In the event of an emergency and that no one can be immediately contacted, my child will be taken to the hospital or a physician to be treated if deemed necessary by one of the camp staff, church staff or volunteers. I hereby authorize the physician and nursing staff to undertake examination, investigation and necessary treatment of my child.

Parent/Guardian Signature_____ Date_____

Children with special needs should visit www.scriptureunion.ca/everykidcamp for more information re:medication.

Incident Report Form

Date of Incident: _____ Time of Incident: _____ Person Reporting: _____

Full Names of all involved: _____

Nature of Incident *including camp activity prior to and during the incident:*_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Location of Incident: _____ Activity at the time: _____

What action was taken: _____

_____

_____

Who took action: _____ ◯ Staff ◯ Volunteer ◯ Church Staff

If first aid was administered explain treatment: _____

_____

If major first aid was required or emergency services called please complete Medical Report Form.

When were parents/guardians notified: _____ ◯ Called ◯ Told in person ◯ Sent letter

Is follow up required by SU or church administration? ◯ Yes ◯ No

Participants Contact Information (include address, phone number and email if possible):

_____

_____

I declare that all the above information is accurate to the actual event that took place in this incident.

Signature of Reporter: _____ Date: _____

Submitted completed report form to Camp Director (name) _____ on (date) _____.

Submitted to Scripture Union Canada office on: _____

Incident Report Form

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Suspected Abuse Report

Date of suspected abuse: _____ / _____ / _____
Month Day Year

Name of person reporting: _____ Role at camp: _____

Report received by: _____ Date: _____

Full Name of the Child / Youth: _____

Age: _____ Sex: M F

Home Address: _____
(Street and Number) (City & Province) (Postal Code)

Phone Number: _____

Name/Addresses of Witnesses (attach signed statements about incident)

a. _____

b. _____

1. Type of Abuse: ☐ Physical ☐ Mental ☐ Sexual ☐ Neglect

2. The report was made as a result of: ☐ Observing physical and/or behavioural indicators
☐ A statement was made by the minor

3. Narrative description of what was observed, when and where:

4. If a statement was made by the minor, write what was said accurately and objectively:

5. What were the circumstances surrounding the observation or disclosure:

6. What action was taken and who was informed:

7. Additional comments, concerns, or observations:

Signature (of person reporting): _____ Date: _____

Suspected Abuse Report

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