



DayBreak Community Church

Abuse Policy

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Table of Contents

I.	Introduction.....	2
II.	Prevention Guidelines.....	3
III.	Ministry Participant Ratios and Classroom Staffing*	4
IV.	Harassment Guidelines	6
V.	Sexual Abuse Guidelines	9

Introduction

Dear Potential DayBreak Volunteer Team Member,

Our mission is to enrich lives with the hope of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The Volunteer Team is a group of people working together as a team to fulfill this mission. You could be a critical part of our team!

It is unfortunate that we live in a day and age where topics such as physical, emotional and sexual abuse need to be addressed in the church. However unfortunate, it is a reality, and we need to be proactive. We have a responsibility to protect our people from harm and you, as volunteers, from false accusations.

On the following pages, you will find the DayBreak Volunteer Abuse Policy. Please read through this carefully. We want to thank you in advance for investing the time it will take to review this material.

If you have any questions, contact the church office.

In Christ's Love,

DayBreak Community Church Leadership

Prevention Guidelines

Rationale

DayBreak Community Church is committed to providing an environment in which all individuals are treated with respect and dignity.

The following policy has been adopted to help prevent the possibility of harassment or sexual abuse at DayBreak Community Church. Harassment, sexual or otherwise will not be tolerated. Any employee or volunteer against whom a complaint is substantiated will be severely disciplined, up to and including dismissal.

Reporting of all incidents of harassment or sexual abuse is encouraged, regardless of who the offender may be. DayBreak Community Church is committed to ensuring that any person who complains of workplace harassment or sexual abuse will in no way experience reprisals or other adverse consequences. DayBreak Community Church will investigate all matters that are brought to its attention relating to this policy.

Guidelines

- 1) All volunteers working at DayBreak Community Church must submit a Criminal Records Check (if 18 years of age or older) and a Volunteer Profile with three references.
- 2) Meeting with individual children or youth should normally be done in a public area or a room with open door or window in door.
- 3) Leaders should not be alone with youth in a classroom, car or on visitation without parents having been previously notified.
- 4) A minimum of two unrelated Ministry Participants (one of which must be an Adult) must be present for supervision, except in the event of an emergency, or one Ministry Participant must be present with windows in place, or the door open, with hall monitors designated by Church Leadership or a Ministry Lead circulating periodically from room to room.
- 5) No staff/leader will go into a home where there is only one youth or child present. The leader should make arrangements to meet the person elsewhere in a public place.
- 6) On excursions away from church/home:
 - a) Ratio of children or youth to leader(s) must never exceed established ratios.
 - b) Boys, girls and respective leaders must always be separated when sleeping overnight.
 - c) A leader must never sleep in the same room with only one youth.
 - d) Appropriate physical distance should be kept between leaders and youth in sleeping settings.

Concerns/Issues

All offices and classrooms in the church should have doors with at least one glass window for quick visibility.

Ministry Participant Ratios and Classroom Staffing*

A. Ministry Participant Ratios

Policy

1. Classroom settings must comply with established ratios for Adult / student Ministry Participants and Children in the Children’s Ministry at all times. This includes off-site activities and trips of the Children’s Ministry. Established ratios are:

Children’s Age Groupings	Student Ministry Participants Grade 5-8	Student Ministry Participants Grades 9-12	Adult Ministry Participants
Nursery – Infants		1:1 Student: Infant, OR 1:3 Student: Infants (with proven maturity, experience with children, and approval by Ministry Lead)	1:3 Adult: Infants
Nursery - Toddlers	1:1 Student: Toddler	1:1 Student: Toddler, OR 1:4 Student: Toddlers (with proven maturity, experience with children, and approval by Ministry Lead)	1:4 Adult: Toddlers
Preschool – 2 yrs	1:1 Student: 2 yr old, OR 1:2 Student: 2 yr olds (with proven maturity, experience with Children, and approval by Ministry Lead)	1:1 Student: 2 yr old Child, OR 1:5 Student: 2 yr olds (with proven maturity, experience with children, and approval by Ministry Lead)	1:5 Adult: 2 yr olds
Preschool – 3 to 4 yrs or pre-Kindergarten	1:1 Student: 3 to 4 yr old, OR 1:3 Student: 3 or 4 yr olds (with proven maturity, experience with Children, and approval by Ministry Lead)	1:1 Student 3 to 4 yr old, OR 1:6 Student: 3 to 4 yr olds (with proven maturity, experience with children, and approval by Ministry Lead)	1:6 Adult: 3 to 4 yr olds
Kindergarten – Grade 6	1:1 Student: G/S Child, OR 1:5 Student: G/S Children (with proven maturity, experience with Children, and approval by Ministry Lead)	1:1 Student: G/S Child, OR 1:10 Student: G/S Children (with proven maturity, experience with children, and approval by Ministry Lead)	1:15 Adult: G/S Child
Kindergarten – Grade 6 Overnight retreats & events			1:6 Adult: G/S Children

2. Programs for Youth must comply with established staffing ratios for Adult / Youth participants at all times. Ratios are:

Youth Age Groupings	Adult Ministry Participants
Grades 7 – 12	1:20 Adult : Youth
Grades 7 – 12 Overnight retreats, events & MTOs	1:10 Adult : Youth

B. Classroom Staffing

Policy

1. In order to provide adequate supervision for Vulnerable Individuals, either: a minimum of two unrelated Ministry Participants (one of which must be an Adult) must be present for supervision, except in the event of an emergency, or one Ministry Participant must be present with windows in place, or the door open, with hall monitors designated by Church Leadership or a Ministry Lead circulating periodically from room to room.

2. Ministry Participants, grade 6 and younger must be assigned to work alongside another Ministry Participant (minimum grade 8). Ministry Participants must be a minimum of grade 8 or older to work independently in a classroom. In both situations, the door must remain open with designated hall monitors circulating periodically from room to room.

*Source: Centre Street Church POLICY TO PROTECT VULNERABLE INDIVIDUALS, May 24, 2011

Harassment Guidelines

What Everyone at DayBreak Community Church Should Know

This document addresses the issue of PERSONAL HARASSMENT. It was written for all members, adherents and employees of DayBreak Community Church.

Policy

- a) All volunteers and employees of DayBreak Community Church are to be treated equally in dignity and rights without discrimination on any basis. Each person has the right to learn or to serve in an environment that is free from personal harassment of any kind.
- b) DayBreak Community Church does not condone personal harassment of any kind or any form of discrimination or exploitation of power.
- c) It is DayBreak Community Church's policy to provide specific recourse for individuals when such violations have occurred, beginning with a written, signed report to a pastor/elder.
- d) Discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, sex, age, disability and national or ethnic origin constitutes a violation of standard anti-discrimination policies. This in no way affects the individual's right to file a complaint, or respond to a complaint filed with the Alberta Human Rights Commission, or to seek such other redress.

What Is Harassment?

Personal harassment is any behaviour that in intent and/or effect disparages, humiliates or harms anyone on the grounds of age, national or ethnic origin, religion, gender, disability or race. Harassment due to sexual orientation is not permitted.

Harassment is any attempt to increase the perpetrator's sense of power by reducing the value or power of the victim. Harassment may be verbal or non-verbal behaviour. It may be an isolated incident or a series of incidents.

The use of written and/or visual materials for these purposes constitutes harassment.

Harassment in intent and/or effect is demeaning, at the least. It can involve social and career damage to either party. At most, it ranges to extremes of emotional or physical abuse. Harassment creates an intimidating, hostile, offensive environment to live, study or work in.

Examples

My teacher makes fun of my accent, my ethnic background or my appearance and I'm afraid to ask questions in class.

My fellow student threatens physical harm or exposure of personal information if I do not do what he/she wants.

My leader continually makes disparaging remarks about women, and most of the time ignores my questions in class.

My fellow students tell jokes about my race. I really don't like it, but I don't know what to do.

Special Note on Sexual Harassment

Sexual Harassment is considered personal harassment and an attempt to increase the perpetrator's value or power with the intent and/or effect of decreasing the value or power of the victim. It is unwanted, unwarranted or inappropriate sexualizing of interaction, with the intent and/or effect of demeaning, coercing or abusing someone.

Sexual harassment can include behaviour such as:

- a) the sexualizing of physical contact
- b) degrading gestures or leering at a person's body
- c) suggestive remarks or other verbal abuse
- d) derogatory or degrading remarks which are directed toward members of one gender group or one sexual-preference group, most often, women or homosexuals
- e) compromising invitations
- f) demand for sexual favours
- g) exposure to pornographic materials

Promise of reward or threat of reprisal may be used to coerce victims into sexual relations with sexual harassers.

Sexual harassment creates an intimidating, hostile and offensive environment to live, study or work in. An incident involving DayBreak Community Church members, adherents or staff may be dealt with under these guidelines, whether or not it occurs in formal or informal church programs or activities.

What Should You Do If You Think You Are Being Harassed?

Do not ignore the matter; do not assume that the problem will go away by itself. Do not assume that you are to blame for the offensive actions of another person, or that harassment has to be endured because of possible retaliation.

1. See Someone at DayBreak Community Church That You Trust

If you think you are experiencing personal harassment, confide in someone at DayBreak Community Church that you can trust. Seek their advice and ask them to assist you in taking further action in

accordance with this policy. If the allegation involves a Pastor, be sure to approach an Elder as soon as possible. This way you can be certain about your situation. In some cases, another individual's actions or words can be misconstrued. In any event, it always helps to talk about it. Please note they are not professional counsellors, but can refer you to one, if appropriate.

2. Informal Resolution

There are numerous informal ways of dealing with personal harassment, in addition to the formal system. Depending on the severity of the situation, they should usually be considered the first line of response, and are often sufficient to stop the harassment.

Personally inform the person that the behaviour in question is offensive and must stop. Keep a dated, written record of this action. Document whenever possible. Include the date, time, place what was said, and what was done.

If the behaviour persists, make arrangement to see one of DayBreak Community Church's elders. Advice will be given freely and every effort will be made to resolve the situation informally.

3. Formal Action

Formal action will NOT be taken unless requested by the complainant. When informal action taken has proven ineffective, you are not satisfied with the results or the severity of your case demands, your next step is formal recourse.

4. Confidentiality

In order to protect the reputations of all individuals involved in an allegation of harassment, confidentiality is assured to both the complainant (person who lays the complaint) and the respondent (person who is accused).

However, confidentiality is not the same as anonymity. When a formal allegation is made, for instance, it is only fair that the individual accused be made aware of who has made the allegation. A complainant must be prepared to be identified if mediation or administrative action is desired.

5. Written Report

An individual who has a complaint of personal harassment, and who is seeking formal recourse, must submit a written report to the Elders. The Chairperson of the Elders shall provide the complainant with advice and assistance. At the complainant's request, the Elders will appoint a committee made up of men and women to investigate the situation and report its findings.

6. Disciplinary Action

Disciplinary action shall be taken in substantiated cases with or without formal complaint. The nature of the discipline shall be decided by the Elders, and will depend on the gravity of the misconduct and any mitigating circumstances.

Possible disciplinary responses may range from an oral or written apology, to removal from a position of leadership, to removal from membership. Penalties may be appealed.

Sexual Abuse Guidelines

A Process to Deal with Child Sexual Abuse

If a pastor, leader, or other member of the congregation has reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is being sexually or other abused, that person has an obligation to report the matter to the Child Welfare authorities.

Because it is important not to interfere with the process of investigation started by the police, the church cannot immediately take action to discipline the alleged abuser, nor can it interview the child or collect evidence. But it has an obligation to assist and support the family of both the victim and the alleged abuser while the investigation and court appearances are pending. If both the abuser and the victim are in the same congregation, it will be very difficult for the church. For that reason I would recommend the following:

- a.) If a child reports abuse to a leader or child care worker in the congregation, assume the child is telling the truth; listen carefully, calmly, without anger or horror. Reassure the child that he or she is not to blame for what happened, but tell the child that you cannot keep what has happened a secret, and that the child has done the right thing in telling you about the situation.
- b.) Immediately advise the pastor or another member of the pastoral staff of the situation.
- c.) In consultation with the pastor, arrange for immediate reporting of the incident to the proper authorities and complete a brief written report on the event.
- d.) The pastor should not interview the child about the details of the event(s): that is the responsibility of the child care worker or the police. However, the pastor needs to provide spiritual help and support to the child during the process.
- e.) The leader should not immediately contact the child's parents if the alleged abuser was a family member. Such an act will likely jeopardize the investigation, and may re-victimize the child. As a general rule, ask the authorities to whom you report whether you may advise the parents.
- f.) If the child has been molested by someone outside the family, even if it is another member of the congregation, the parents should be contacted immediately, preferably by the pastor, and informed about the situation, though there is still the responsibility to report the matter to the authorities.
- g.) The pastor or the leader has the right to remain with the child to offer support during the investigation if it is felt this would be useful.
- h.) An outside consultant should be sought by the pastor to advise the leaders of the congregation if the abuser is a member of the congregation. The name of such consultants could be provided to help the leaders deal with the feelings of outrage, guilt and congregational disarray, and advise them as to what will take place.
- i.) Throughout the process of investigation by the authorities, the innocence of the accused should be assumed, unless the leaders have clear reason to believe the contrary. If the alleged abuser is a member of the congregation it will usually be more difficult for the pastor to adequately help abuser and victim. For this reason a pastoral advocate should be identified and made available for both the family of the victim and for the accused such that each will be able to share their spiritual shock and reaction, and be prayerfully guided through the process, including, in the case of the abuser, through into the court's decision and the subsequent penalty. There are counselling specialists available in the Calgary/Airdrie area to deal with

victims and abusers.

- j.) The congregational leaders should be prepared to review the need for help with legal fees and counselling for both victim and alleged abuser, and offer assistance as is possible.
- k.) If necessary, it should be arranged that the outside consultant meets with the congregation and answer questions about the situation, and in particular the process that is being followed by the legal system.
- l.) The average pastor cannot be primary therapist for the abuser who invariably needs a specialized treatment program. Support by a skilled member of the congregation should be provided throughout the process. Also arrange for care for the entire abused family, especially siblings.

Signs and Symptoms of Sexual Abuse

If we are willing to accept that child abuse could be happening in our churches, homes and communities, then we need to be aware of the possible warning signs of sexual abuse. Here is a list of some of the potential signs of sexual abuse:

- a.) A change in emotional state: was a happy child, now suddenly he or she is withdrawn and quiet.
- b.) Regressive behaviour: going back to sucking their thumb, bed wetting, talking baby talk.
- c.) Not being able to sleep: nightmares, wanting to sleep with their parents.
- d.) Physical symptoms: tenderness around the genital area, stomach aches, headaches, particularly when they have to go to some place to see a particular person.
- e.) In younger children, scary drawings, monsters with sexual organs.
- f.) Children exhibiting sexualized or provocative behaviour. Also, younger children who try to engage other children in sexual play, particularly sexual acts that are beyond their knowledge base, and the use of graphic sexual language that would not be normally appropriate to their age.
- g.) Over or under eating.
- h.) Unusual fearfulness of being left alone or going to a particular place.
- i.) Not wanting to be touched; pulling away from any physical contact, when they would otherwise enjoy healthy physical touching or holding.
- j.) In older children, a change in behaviour that would involve: running away, stealing or the use of drugs or alcohol.

It is important to note that a child may exhibit many of the behaviours listed, and NOT be a victim of sexual abuse.

There may be many other explanations, such as a family trauma, a move, a loss of a friend or a new school.

However, if one or several of these behaviours is observed, it is now very important to consider that these changes in behaviour MAY be caused by the child being a victim of sexual abuse.

Legal Aspects and Processes of Child Abuse

If humans all lived according to God's laws, the issue of sexual abuse would not arise, and we would not have to address it. However, we clearly do not meet the standards set for us, and as has been evidenced

quite regularly in the news for the past period of time, the Church is not immune from this problem. Unfortunately, we must anticipate that at some point in time, a pastor or denominational leader will be approached by someone expressing concerns about the sexual conduct of someone else. That someone may be a parent, a relative, a member of the same congregation, a Sunday school teacher or youth worker, a secretary or janitor, a pastor, or a seminary professor. Once you recover from your shock and dismay, what do you do? This outline is an attempt to provide you with some guidelines so that your actions and reactions are appropriate and do not result in making the situation worse.

From the denominational standpoint, there are four parties involved in any incident—the victim, the accused, the church or associated body, and the denomination itself. It should be recognized that the focus upon each will change from time to time during the course of events after a complaint is made. Appropriate attention to, and action toward each, will make the end results much less stressful and less destructive to all.

1. What to Do when a Complaint is Made to You

Firstly, it should be noted that if the accused is a parent or guardian of the victim, then the appropriate Child Welfare officials must be contacted:

Alberta: Child Welfare Act, R.S.A. 1980 c. C-8 - sec. 3 (1)—Any person who has reasonable and probable grounds to believe and believe that a child is in need of protective services shall forthwith report the matter to a director. (A child is considered to be in need of protective services if, among other things, the child has been or there is substantial risk that the child will be physically injured or sexually abused by the guardian of the child).

In both **British Columbia and Manitoba**, the legislation referred to goes beyond parents and guardians, and would include anyone who is in contact with a child. Any complaint dealing with a child should therefore be forwarded to the Child Welfare officials. In Alberta and Saskatchewan, on the other hand, the legislation limits the role of the Child Welfare officials to situations dealing with parents or guardians. If a parent or guardian, is involved, then the complaint should be forwarded to Child Welfare if it is someone other than a parent or guardian, then the police should be notified.

In all situations, there is no choice given—a report must be made. Failure to do so is an offence in itself. After the Child Welfare officials have taken a report, they would contact the police to carry out an investigation.

Where the accused is not in the position of a guardian (Alberta or Saskatchewan), or where the victim is no longer a child, then Child Welfare would not be involved and a report should be made directly to the police.

Until the complaint has been passed on to the appropriate authority, it would be prudent for the Church or denomination to avoid any extensive investigation of the incident(s).

2. What to Do While a Complaint is Being Investigated

While the police investigation is under way, the Church and/or the denomination should stay as far removed from the situation as possible. From the police perspective, this is necessary so that their

investigation is not interfered with and so that evidence is not contaminated. It also gives more of an indication to all parties that the complaint is being investigated impartially, and that the Church/denomination is not “siding” with one party or the other. Recognize that there will usually be both supporters and detractors of both the victim and the accused, and there will as a result be some people critical of your findings determined by an independent group that is trained to obtain the facts and evidence of support or reject an allegation than it is to get caught in the middle of an impossible dilemma. Bear in mind that statements made to a clergyman are not in law privileged, and anything said by a victim or an accused to his or her pastor, even if given under the impression that those statements would not be passed on to anyone else, would be admissible in court and the person to whom they were made could be compelled to disclose what those statements were.

Also, as a result of a recent Supreme Court of Canada ruling, the police will have to disclose to an accused all evidence that has been collected in a case (whether favourable or unfavourable). It is therefore more prudent to have statements, confessions, explanations, etc. made directly to the police rather than to several people, who would then all have to give statements and testify.

3. What to Do After the Investigation is Completed

Once the police investigation has been concluded, the Church/denomination will be more able to determine the steps it will take and to assist in counselling. If a charge has been filed against an accused, that person will have to appear in court to be advised of the charge and to have the matter of his/her release addressed. If the accused is released from custody, it would undoubtedly be on the basis of undertakings including no contact with the victim(s). I have been advised by police working in this area that where there is one complaint, generally they will find that there are more victims. It is at the point that those victims have been identified that the Church/denomination needs to become quite active.

4. Counselling

The police are concerned that victims need to be identified, so that they can then be counselled to overcome the trauma. Generally, it is ultimately a victim who comes forward to identify the problem, rather than the perpetrator. Ideally, counselling by the Church/denomination for the victim(s) would begin after the police investigation has concluded, but in reality it is quite likely that it may have started concurrently with the start of the investigation. If that is the case, the counsellor often sits in on police interviews with the victim and the presence of a trusted person can be very important for the victim.

What if a perpetrator approaches someone with an indication that he/she has a problem or needs to confess something? As indicated earlier, any statements made by the perpetrator would be admissible in subsequent criminal and civil proceedings—unless they were made to that person’s solicitor. If I as a church or denominational leader were approached in the manner mentioned at the start of this paragraph, I would suggest two things:

- a.) at this stage, talk to me in a hypothetical fashion—What if someone had ...?; and
- b.) perhaps should talk to a lawyer to obtain advice and direction, since what you tell him can be

said without fear that it will be brought up in court proceedings. His advice can be given when he has the whole story. If you tell your story to me at this time, and it relates to the commission of an offence, then I will have to notify the police, and what you have told me would be evidence in court of your admission of having committed that crime.

From the police perspective, it is the victim who has been made to suffer, and it is the victim who is entitled to the initial support and counselling. Once the court process is underway, the Church/denomination will have to consider how to restore the perpetrator, how to assist in counselling him/her to overcome the problem, and what needs to be done to discipline the perpetrator and protect others from further occurrences. Those are matters of internal discipline, and while they would focus on the perpetrator, the emphasis must still, in my opinion, be primarily on the need to ensure that there are no more victims.

5. What to Do Where the Allegation Appears to be Unfounded

The comments given in this memo relate to situations where a complaint is made of sexual contact that is a crime under the Criminal Code of Canada. This area of crimes, with good reason, is regarded by police as heinous and the effect upon victims is usually serious. I have not dealt with a situation where the police investigation of an allegation turns up no evidence of criminal conduct or establishes that the victim lied or recanted. Again, that would be an area for church discipline and possible civil action for damage to reputation (slander).

It needs to be recognized that there may be a situation where an allegation of sexual misconduct is seen by some upset, hurting person as a means of getting back at an individual or the Church itself. The implications and repercussions of such an allegation can be disastrous upon the reputation and calling of the alleged perpetrator, and in my opinion would not be negated by a subsequent confession and apology by the person who made the allegation. The handling of such a situation by a Church body after a police investigation has ended would require Solomon-like wisdom and discernment. It would even be more difficult where the police did not obtain any (or sufficient) evidence to justify issuing a charge, but the victim continues to maintain that he/she was sexually abused. Both parties will need to be counselled and nurtured, but it would be highly unlikely and impractical to expect that both could continue attending the same Church.

6. What to Do When Acts Complained of are Not Criminal but are Considered to be Morally Wrong

It should also be pointed out that there are situations that do not involve criminal acts but which may call for review of a person's status in a church organization—e.g. a pastor who has been divorced (particularly if on more than one occasion), a man and a woman living together but not in a state of matrimony, two consenting adults engaging in homosexual activities. Your rules of conduct and ethics would determine how these are to be addressed, but there would be no reporting to police and no investigation by or involvement of police officers. Some counselling may be needed though, for the indirect victims of those actions such as the members of a junior high youth group who discover their leader has been involved in a homosexual relationship.

These are perilous times for people in positions of authority. They are equally perilous for those who are abused because of that authority. Hopefully, this memorandum provides some guidance in dealing with

allegations of abuse in a way that can best meet the requirement of the law and the needs of the victims and of the perpetrators.

(Material here is compiled from several sources)