

Volunteer Policy for Positions of Trust and Authority			
Source: Standing Committee on Governance	Authority: Standing Committee on Governance	Original Approval Date: 2010 Last Review Date: -	Next Review Date: May 2014
Purpose of Policy: To provide guiding principles and procedures for the recruitment and oversight of volunteers in positions of trust and authority.			
Theological Rationale: Our church is blessed with the gifts of many that offer leadership as volunteers, staff and ministry personnel. These people have a special calling to offer their time and talents in congregations, Sunday schools, programs for children and youth, home visiting and many other ministries of the church. These people also are called to act with integrity and discipline as they teach and care for the people of God. The church and all its workers are called to honour the dignity of each person, as created in the image of God. To be acting in the name of God among vulnerable people demands great integrity and trustworthiness.			

1.0 Statement of Commitment

- 1.1 Eastminster United Church is committed to providing a safe environment for worship, work and study in all programs and organizations which operate under its name. It seeks to ensure that all staff, volunteers and ministry personnel who work with vulnerable individuals in any church setting share this commitment.
- 1.2 This commitment will be demonstrated by staff, volunteers and ministry personnel showing respect for personal boundaries, protecting others from harm and abuse, and enabling those in their care to learn and grow without fear of exploitation.
- 1.3 Eastminster United Church is committed to informing and supporting all parts of our church in creating safe places for work, service, worship and personal growth. Adopting stringent and consistent screening measures in our church communities is an important way to communicate some key values of faith: protection of all in our care, honouring the image of God in each person and being a trustworthy community.

2.0 Risk Management

- 2.1 Eastminster United Church is committed to identifying and minimizing risks of mistreatment, exploitation and abuse for all persons who may have contact of any kind with its programs, activities or organizations.
- 2.2 The following factors must be considered in determining the levels of risk associated with the programs and activities of the church:
 - the participants
 - the setting
 - the activity itself
 - the supervision provided
 - the nature of the relationship between the participant and the leader

3.0 Levels of Risk

3.1 Low Risk:

The activity includes minimal or no contact with children or other vulnerable persons, or the activity takes place in a larger group setting.

3.2 Medium Risk:

The activity includes children or other vulnerable persons but not in private or one-on-one sessions.

3.3 High Risk:

The leader's position presents opportunities to be alone with children or other vulnerable persons, or opportunities for exerting inappropriate influence over youth or senior adults.

4.0 Risk Assessment

4.1 Once a program or activity has been assessed in terms of its level of risk, various options should be considered for minimizing the risks. These may include, but are not limited to, eliminating the program/activity, modifying the program/activity, transferring the liability, and choosing to assume the risk after making every effort to reduce it. Strategies for risk reduction include requiring a higher standard of screening and the purchase of appropriate liability insurance.

4.2 The risk assessment is not optional. Intentional and informed risk assessment, and subsequent risk reduction strategies, enable the church to maintain a high standard of ethical, moral, spiritual and legal accountability.

4.3 The Risk Assessment Chart (appendix i) shall be used for determining levels of risk.

5.0 Screening Policy

5.1 All church volunteers in positions of trust and/or authority shall be appropriately screened.

5.2 Screening is not about individuals. It is about creating and maintaining a safe environment through the careful matching of situations, tasks and skills.

5.3 The following steps shall be followed in screening for a volunteer position:

- the participants
- the setting
- the activity itself
- the supervision provided
- the nature of the relationship between the participant and the leader

5.4 Recruit based on the job description and skills needed.

5.5 Use an application form to collect and keep track of relevant information about the applicants.

5.6 Interview prospective candidates (can be very formal process or fairly conversational, depending on the task).

5.7 Check references given on application form.

5.8 For highest risk positions involving significant trust and vulnerable persons, a police records check will be required.

5.9 Provide orientation and training to persons newly placed in church positions.

5.10 Provide supervision and evaluation feedback regularly and formally.

5.11 Check with program participants on how the leader/ministry volunteer is doing.