

WOODCLIFF UNITED CHURCH

DUTY OF CARE POLICY

This Policy represents the intention of Woodcliff United Church (WUC) with regard to providing a safe environment for all people who enter WUC or who participate in WUC programs regardless of location.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE AND BELIEF

The United Church of Canada (UCC) has a Duty of Care that is a moral, spiritual and legal obligation to care for and protect all people in church programs. WUC honors this responsibility to provide a safe environment where “we can direct our lives toward right relationship with each other and with God... we grow in wisdom and compassion, we can recognize all people as kin and ... God calls us to protect the vulnerable” (A Song of Faith, 2006). Staff and volunteers of WUC will act with integrity and discipline and show respect for personal boundaries, protect others from harm and abuse, enabling all to learn and grow without fear.

POLICY

WUC will provide a welcoming and safe community for people of all walks of life, especially our children, youth and vulnerable members by establishing a Duty of Care Committee (DCC). The DCC will be responsible for creating and ensuring adherence to guidelines that will:

- set standards of care for all situations
- establish a Code of Conduct that includes the use of Holy Manners,
- ensure volunteer and staff responsibilities are being met,
- ensure that volunteers’ and staff rights are being maintained,
- ensure that participants’ confidential information is respected,
- ensure fiscal responsibility,
- ensure that WUC facilities are properly equipped, maintained and used.

ADMINISTRATION

This policy is administered by the Duty of Care Committee and Council of WUC.

REFERENCES

A Song of Faith: A Statement of Faith of the United Church of Canada (2006)
Guidelines for Developing Policies and Procedures, United Church of Canada
The Manual (2013)
UCC Financial Handbook for Congregations (2010)
WUC Constitution (2016)
WUC Duty of Care Policy (2016)

Original Approval Date:	Last Review Date:	Next Review Date:
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Approved by the Congregation at the 2016 Annual Congregational Meeting

Date: _____

Signatures:

Council Chair

Council Secretary

GUIDELINES

Terminology

Duty of care

The legal, moral and spiritual obligation that we owe each other, especially the obligation to exercise reasonable care with respect to the interests of the other. This obligation includes protection from harm.

Holy Manners

Our behavior, our words and our attitudes as we relate to one another with:

- Respect
- Humility
- Patience
- Open mindedness
- Courage
- Compassion
- Kindness to self

Position of trust

Situation where:

- someone has a significant degree of authority or decision-making power over another,
- someone has unsupervised access to another person and to his/her property and/or finances,
- the success of the service depends on the development of a close, personal relationship between the individuals as in mentoring or visiting programs.

Risk Management

A process of assessing potential problems and developing strategies for solutions to minimize risk. Screening is an exercise in risk management.

Safe Environment

A space which is safe internally and externally in which measures have been taken to respect each other with respect to such as things as allergies (nut free, scent free, pet free) and physical limitations.

Vicarious Liability

The liability an organization takes on for the actions of those who function on its behalf.

Volunteer

An individual who:

- chooses to undertake a service or activity. Someone who is not coerced or compelled to do this activity,
- does this activity in service to an individual or an organization or to assist the community-at-large, and
- does not receive a salary or wage for this service or activity.

Vulnerable person

One who has difficulty protecting him/herself from harm temporarily or permanently and is at risk because of age, disability, handicap, or circumstances such as emotional distress or uncertainty.

Code of Conduct

All persons involved in attending or participating in activities at Woodcliff United Church and our community including staff, congregants, guests, visitors and volunteers are expected to conduct themselves with “Holy Manner” consistent with our Code of Conduct. This Code of Conduct is intended to provide an environment in which individuals feel safe and secure and are treated with respect.

All staff, congregants, building users, and participants in programs, activities and services at Woodcliff United Church are expected to:

- a) maintain the dignity and self-esteem of all involved.
- b) demonstrate respect for everyone regardless of gender, ethnicity, racial origin, sexual orientation, age, marital status, religion, political beliefs, personally held beliefs, disability or economic status.
- c) direct comments or criticism appropriately and refrain from public criticism, triangulation, rumors and gossip.
- d) demonstrate ethical/respectful conduct, practices and language.
- e) refrain from any behavior that constitutes harassment, where harassment is defined as comments or conduct directed towards an individual or group that are or could reasonably be perceived to be offensive, abusive, racist, sexist, degrading or malicious.
- f) refrain from any behavior that constitutes bullying, where bullying is defined as use of force, threat or coercion to abuse, intimidate or aggressively dominate others where the behavior is often repeated and/or habitual.
- g) refrain from any behavior that constitutes sexual harassment, defined as unwelcome sexual advances or unwelcome conduct and comments of a sexual nature.
- h) abstain from the non-medical use of drugs or excessive use of alcohol while on church property and/or church related functions.
- i) comply at all times with the policies, rules and expectations of the United Church of Canada.

Volunteers and Staff

Rights

Volunteers are viewed as valuable contributors to Woodcliff United Church, its staff, and its guests. Volunteers shall be extended the following rights to:

- meaningful opportunities to contribute to the Woodcliff Community of Faith,
- effective support and guidance in undertaking volunteer duties ,
- treatment like a valued member with full involvement and participation in our Woodcliff United Church family, and
- recognition for work undertaken.

Responsibilities

Volunteers agree to:

- actively undertake their duties to the best of their abilities,
- adhere to the Code of Conduct,
- respect the vision, mission statement and goals of Woodcliff United Church and the United Church of Canada, and
- follow the policies and procedures as outlined in the Manual.

Standards of Care

A. Volunteer Position Descriptions

Volunteer position descriptions will be determined through discussions with each committee chair using the job description template provided (see appendix). Once the job description is completed it will be used to do a risk assessment.

B. Risk Management and Assessment

Risk Management is:

- taking care to consider the possibility that something could go wrong
- taking steps to stop, minimize, prevent or eliminate the circumstances which may lead to injury, abuse or harm to program participants.
- accepting the fact that harm is possible, either by the deliberate act of an abusive person, or through carelessness or accident.

A solid risk assessment in relation to a particular type of ministry or program will help determine the amount and intensity of the screening relevant to that position. The programs and activities at Woodcliff United Church have many different levels of risk depending on several factors:

- **Participants:**
How vulnerable are they? How old are they? How dependent are they? Are they ever alone with the leader/staff/volunteer?
- **Setting:**
Is the room safe? Is there a window in the door? Is it an off-site public space or in a private home?
- **Activity itself:**
Is the activity carried out in a group or one-on-one? Is it a physically active event? Is it an activity that demands privacy (eg., hospital visiting or counseling)?
- **Supervision provided:**
Is there documentation kept on the events? Are spot checks conducted on programs on a regular basis?
- **Nature of the relationship:**
Is there a significant power differential between participants and leaders? Are leaders in a position of trust? Does the activity itself depend on the fostering of a close and personal relationship (eg., friendly visiting, mentoring)?

Understanding the nature of the risk will help church groups to determine the kind of screening, training and supervision needed to make activities as safe as possible for those who are involved.

C. Screening Process

- Define the nature of the program and write a position description. Appendix 1
- Complete a risk assessment to determine the nature and level of the risk using the risk assessment matrix. (see matrix below)
- Recruit based on the position description and skills needed.
- Use an application form (Appendix 2) to keep track of important information about the applicants for medium and high risk positions.
- Interview prospective candidates (can be a very formal process or fairly conversational, depending on the position).
- Check references given on application form (Appendix 2).
- Ensure a Police Information Check (PIC) has been completed for high risk positions and is on file with the Duty of Care Officer (DCO).

Risk Assessment Matrix

It is important to assess the level of risk to determine what proactive duty of care standards and actions should be implemented.

- Low Risk: Program has minimal or no contact with children or other vulnerable people, or programs take place in large groups.
- Medium Risk: Program has activities with vulnerable people, but no private or one-on-one sessions.
- High Risk: Program presents opportunities to be alone with children or vulnerable persons, or opportunities to exert influence over youth or seniors.

Risk Factor Assessment															
Risk Factor	Risk Level														
Participant	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10			L	M	H
Setting	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10			L	M	H
Activity	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10			L	M	H
Supervision	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10			L	M	H
Relationship	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10			L	M	H

For each risk factor, circle the number which best describes your assessment of the level of risk for this program. (1=lowest.10=highest)*

* From "Trust Worthy Care": <http://www.unitedchurch.ca/files/handbooks/faithfulfootsteps.pdf>

Police Information Checks

A. Volunteers

All volunteers involved in high-risk activities are required to submit a current Police Information Check (PIC) prior to being accepted as a registered volunteer. Forms are available from the Church Administrator. When a PIC is required, a copy of it must be submitted to the DCO. Until a copy of the clearance is reviewed by the DCO the volunteer candidate is considered "in process". The candidate could be scheduled for duties provided supervision is in place. Youth volunteers who are under the age of 18 do not require a security clearance.

Volunteers may be asked to provide an updated security clearance after 5 years from the original check.

Positions deemed to be high risk through Risk Assessment/Management may not be available to all those who show interest. When a PIC identifies information that may contravene the acceptable standards of risk a decision will be made by the DCO as to whether or not the person involved is in a position to begin or continue the defined or relevant activities.

If the volunteer is declined for a position by the DCO, she/he has the option to appeal for reassessment. The appeal will go to the **Duty of Care Committee (DCC) and Relevant Committee Chair who will jointly review the decision.**

B. Staff

All staff, full or part time will be required to show a current PIC to the Chair of Ministry and Personnel (M&P). The Chair of M&P will review the PIC to ensure that it does not indicate any record of offences that are relevant to the duties of the position or that may in any way be related to the position. M&P will mark the employee file that the PIC has been reviewed and accepted.

A PIC must be obtained and reviewed before the staff member begins involvement in the activity. When a PIC identifies information that may contravene the acceptable standards of risk a discussion should take place between the staff member involved and the M&P Chair. A decision will be made as to whether or not the staff person involved is in a position to begin or continue the defined or relevant activities.

*If a non-ministerial staff member wishes to dispute the M&P Chair's decision, then the **DCC and the M&P committee** would jointly review the PIC. If a ministerial staff member wishes to dispute the M&P Chair's decision, then the procedures as outlined in the Manual will apply and take precedence.*

Duty of Care Committee

The Duty of Care Committee (DCC) will consist of three members, one of whom will be the Duty of Care Officer (DCO). Not more than one member should leave the committee at any given point of turnover.

The duties of the committee are to:

- create guidelines that will be attached to the Duty of Care Policy
- maintain the Duty of Care Policy and guidelines to meet current standards.
- administer the Duty of Care Policy.
- meet as required but a minimum of once a year.
- review, along, with the DCO, all activity lists.
- jointly review the Police Information C with the relevant committee chair, any appeals for reassessment by a volunteer who is declined for a position by the DCO.
- jointly review the PIC with the M&P committee, any dispute arising from a non-ministerial staff applicant who is declined a position by the M&P Chair.

Duty of Care Officer

Woodcliff United Church Council will appoint a DCO for a term of three (3) years at the end of which the Church Council shall review the appointment for either re-affirmation or change. The DCO is a

volunteer position. She/he will be a member in good standing of Woodcliff United Church. She/he will be an associate member of the M&P committee and may also be a member of the Church Council.

The DCO will be required to annually review and sign off on a complete activity list for the church. This list must encompass all activities under worship, work, study and friendship.

Leaders/Chair of each committee and/or group must prepare and keep current an electronic list of all activities and events in its area of responsibility. This list must be forwarded to the DCO when planning is completed and when changes are made.

Procedures for Duty of Care Committee

The following steps will be put in place to maintain and enhance a safe environment:

- The Duty of Care procedures apply to all activities whether they are conducted by staff, volunteers or a combination of both.
- All activities must be listed and kept current by standing committees.
- A consolidated master list of activities shall be maintained by the DCO.
- All activities will be risk assessed and categorized as Low, Medium or High by the relevant committee chair and reviewed by the DCC.
- For all activities assessed as **Low**, no further action need be taken.
- For activities/functions assessed, as **Medium** or **High**, a Position Description or Activity Description shall be prepared that outlines the key elements of the position/activity as it relates to risk assessment. The documents need not be detailed for each position or activity but may be general in nature and may cover activities or positions in many areas. (Example: Sunday school teachers, one position description for Junior and one for Senior may suffice.)
- For activities assessed as **Medium**, a "Risk Assessment Form" shall be filled in defining the area of risk and defining any actions that need to be taken to mitigate or communicate the assessed risks.
- For activities assessed as **High**, a PIC must be obtained by the volunteer in addition to the requirements outlined for any activity assessed as **Medium**.
- Committee Chairs will, at least once per year, review the safety of the environment encompassed by the activity and keep records of that review. The review may be detailed or simple depending on the nature of the activity.

Reporting Suspected Violations

If anyone identifies an alleged incident of disrespect for our code of conduct, she/he should discuss the situation with the DCO. Notification to the proper authorities must be done as soon to the incident as possible, according to local laws.

Confidentiality

All volunteer information will be held in strict confidence by the DCO, either in paper form under lock and key, or electronic form, password protected. It shall be held for the exclusive use of Woodcliff United Church while that volunteer is performing duties for our faith community. This information is

collected for the safety and security of the participants. When no longer current or required, the information shall be destroyed.

Fiscal Responsibility

Reasonable measures to provide a safe environment requires the use of best business practices which includes our handling of money:

- See the Treasurer' handbook (2013) and the Manual (2013) for guidelines related to the policies in place from the UCC for handling of offerings and contributions.
- Petty cash be kept in the church for discretionary use by the minister and that it must be kept in a secured safe in the Church Administrative Coordinator's (CAC's) office.
- All cash that comes in to the CAC's office to be held for bank deposit by the Count Team must be kept in a secured safe in that office. Access to the safe will be via code shared with count teams only and changed on a regular tri-weekly basis as the Count Teams change.
- Many other volunteers handle money from honoraria, children's programs, fundraisers, ticket sales, etc. This money should be counted by two people and sealed in an envelope where the two counters sign across the seal as witness to how much is inside. If it is not practical for two people to count then the single counter must have a PIC.
- Committee chairs must review and approve all cheque requisitions for their committee's expenditures before the accounts payable person issues a cheque.
- In the case of reoccurring expenses with due dates, the cheque can be written without the chair's approval to avoid late charges if the amount falls within a reasonable variation of the norm.

Facilities

Reasonable measures to provide a safe and environment must also extend to the building that houses WUC as well. Factors to be considered are:

- Routine maintenance and repairs as identified by or reported to custodian.
- Annual inspection and maintenance of the elevator.
- Annual inspection and repairs to boiler.
- Inspection of the roof every few years.
- Safe environment for all including windows in classrooms, office doors, lighting in stairways, flooring maintained (carpets cleaned and/or replaced), etc.
- Clearance of ice and snow as required from sidewalks.
- In consideration of peoples' allergies WUC building strive to be:
 - pet free,
 - scent free, and
 - peanut free.
- Kitchen is used in accordance with health regulation guidelines.
- A maintained list of people who have keys to the building. The key is for their use only and is not to be loaned to anyone. Collection of keys from people who no longer have need for them.
- Password protection on the computers with only authorized users having access.
- Adequate insurance as determined by a broker and reviewed with the broker by the Treasurer annually.
- Use of candles – Sundays, Christmas Eve and other special events – be supervised.

- Our Code of Conduct is posted at front entrance, bulletin boards, on the Narthex and in the lounge, nursery and larch room meeting areas, in the lower hall, kitchen, and meeting rooms.
- Complete a safety audit of building annually (using UCC form - <http://www.united-church.ca/files/local/insurance/church-safety.pdf>)

Appendix 1

Volunteer Ministry Position Description - Template
Title of Ministry Position (i.e., Sunday school teacher, greeter, sound,/powerpoint, pastoral care visitor, etc.)
Participant Group (i.e., children, seniors, etc.)
Length of term of ministry appointment (i.e., 6 months, 1 year, 3 years, 20 years)
Goal of ministry <ul style="list-style-type: none">•••
Activities and tasks associated with the ministry <ul style="list-style-type: none">•••
Skills, experience and qualifications required (include personal traits and qualities) <ul style="list-style-type: none">•••
Responsibilities of the positions <ul style="list-style-type: none">•••
Orientation and training provided
Screening Process required
Benefits to the volunteer
Risk Level

Appendix 2

Woodcliff United Church Volunteer Application Form

Applicant

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Province: _____ Postal Code: _____

Phone: (Home) _____ (Business) _____

(Cell) _____ Email: _____

Choice of volunteer positions:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

If these choices are not available, would you consider a different position? Yes No

Identify your previous volunteer positions:

Group	Position
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

What are some of your personal ministry goals in the faith community?

Why are you volunteering for this position?

References:
(List three reference: i.e., faith group leader, professional)

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Province: _____ Postal Code: _____

Phone: (Home) _____ (Business) _____

(Cell) _____ Email: _____

Relationship to applicant: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Province: _____ Postal Code: _____

Phone: (Home) _____ (Business) _____

(Cell) _____ Email: _____

Relationship to applicant: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Province: _____ Postal Code: _____

Phone: (Home) _____ (Business) _____

(Cell) _____ Email: _____

Relationship to applicant: _____

Authorization for collection of personal information

I, _____, authorize Woodcliff United Church
(name of applicant)

to collect personal information appropriate to the position applied for concerning my academic background, employment history, and verify the character references I have supplied.

I understand that the information obtained will be confidential but may be shared with the relevant group(s) in order to obtain an appropriate volunteer position.

I, _____, have read and will comply with the
(name of applicant)

Woodcliff United Church Duty of Care Policy and Protocol.

day/month/year

applicant's signature

Appendix 3

Process Checklist

1. Position Description
2. Determine Risk
3. Formalize Recruitment Process
4. Application Forms
5. Interview
6. Check Reference
7. Police Check (if risk level requires)
8. Orientation and Training
9. Supervision & Evaluation
10. Participant Follow-up