

Draft: New

17-3: Volunteer Screening

1.Responsibility Centre: Volunteer Resources Committee

2. Rationale or Purpose

The rationale or purpose statement expresses “why” the policy is being written. The rationale or purpose may also contain or cross-reference “background” materials or more explanatory details regarding various factors that led to the development of the policy.

Duty of Care:

Over the last several years, BCUC has been developing its policy on screening of volunteers as a response to the United Church’s call to its congregations and groups to undertake a “Duty of Care” for our members, volunteers and those who make use of our services/facilities

The initial phase included each committee considering their own work and the implications on the well being of the church and the risk it members undertake. The Pastoral Care and the Christian Education Committee both outlined how they would handle volunteer screening, including required training and oaths of confidentiality.

A number of recent activities, including the overnight canoe trip held in the fall, collected pertinent information for the safety and wellbeing of the leaders and participants. In response to concerns about how to keep track of the paper work that is generated, i.e permission forms, health information, police record checks (vulnerable), a number of recommendations were made and a volunteer information form has been designed. Further work is required.

It should be noted that the Camping Trip required permission forms and health information forms be provided for each participant, and leadership indemnity forms; the health information was destroyed on conclusion of the camp and the permission/indemnity information is stored in the Church Office. The recent mission exposure trip required documentation to be held by BCUC.

3. Policy Statement

The policy statement should be a concise statement of “what” the policy is intended to accomplish. The policy should only be a one or two sentence description of general organization intent with respect to the specific topic of the policy. The policy statement should be general enough to provide some flexibility and accommodation to periodic changes in technology.

To meet our duty of care both to those who are vulnerable to individuals in positions of trust and authority, and to the individuals who occupy such positions, BCUC will collect and screen information on those who hold volunteer positions in our church.

4. Scope

The scope of the policy can set important parameters such as to whom will the policy apply (e.g., staff, Committee members, all BCUC members) and to what (e.g., paper and electronic records, information and computer assets, etc.)

Question: is this for ALL volunteers, or only those in high risk areas e.g. working with youth, pastoral care, etc.?

Do we have a policy re the requirement for a screening process for those community groups which use our premises, e.g. Nursery School personnel, Scouts, those working with the elderly, etc? This is a liability issue.

5.Procedures

The procedures will detail “how” the policy statement will be attained. Procedures may also describe “enforcement” provisions or methods for appeal. Procedures are sometimes provided in a separate document or left for local determination to provide greater flexibility for updates as well as local control.

1. A proper form should be kept for each volunteer indicating the following: name, address telephone number e-mail; position name and short description; qualifications; level of risk associated with the work; screening information: references, police records check verification; length of service (see attachment to this policy).
2. Screening files should be kept in a lockable cabinet in the Church Office, available to members of Council.
3. Police Record Reports are NOT to be retained as they are the property of the volunteer. Verification that a Police Record has been reviewed will be indicated on the Volunteer Record by the signatures of two members of VRC, and dated. Where required, Police Record Checks will be reviewed every five years.
4. The Office and / or the Events Committee should ensure leaders of activities are aware of the Church Duty of Care requirements by producing a packet of the information and forms required.

6.Roles/Responsibilities

The procedures may contain details about who is responsible for what. The policy should also identify who is responsible for maintaining and promoting the policy, and who will provide interpretations in the event of the need for clarification or when there is a dispute.

The Volunteer Resource Committee is responsible for the record of volunteers, including screening files.

The Office and / or the Events Committee are responsible for ensuring leaders of activities are aware of the Church Duty of Care requirements.

The Volunteer Resources Committee is responsible for the maintenance and review of this policy.

7. Definitions

Policies should be precise and easy to understand. Some times terms will need to be defined to clarify meaning. However, the policy should attempt to convey messages in simple yet precise terms; excessive definitions may make a policy document unreadable or subject it to greater scrutiny.

Duty of care: a duty to use care toward others that would be exercised by an ordinarily reasonable and prudent person in order to protect them from unnecessary risk of harm

8. References

It is possible that there are other policies or organizational documents that complement, supplement, or help explain the provisions contained within the current policy. References to other policies or organizational documents (e.g. BCUC Handbook, UCC Manual) can improve the usefulness of the policy.

“Faithful Footsteps - Screening Procedures for Positions of Trust and Authority in the United Church of Canada: a Handbook”

9. Approval authority: Church Council

10. Approved date: (New)