

Volunteer Training & Orientation Booklet



Safety & Risk
Management

PACIFIC
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CHURCH

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This booklet does not replace our Volunteer Training class (held once/season).

We ask that all volunteers at Pacific attend a Volunteer Training class when they begin volunteering & attend a refresher class once/year. This book serves to **help orient volunteers & give them the basics until they can attend a class.**

The volunteer application & screening process is part of our **Safety & Risk Management (SARM)** plan at Pacific.

Our plan is to protect the vulnerable (children, youth & vulnerable adults) in our midst through planning, safety guidelines, accountability & training.

Thank you for serving & leading in the ministries of Pacific Community Church!

Safety & Risk Management: Who are the vulnerable?



Churches can be vulnerable places as they are naturally places of trust.

DEFINE: vulnerable person

Anyone who by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness, is unable to take care of their self or to protect against significant harm or exploitation.

We can all be vulnerable at different stages of our life. For this reason, we have the SARM guidelines.

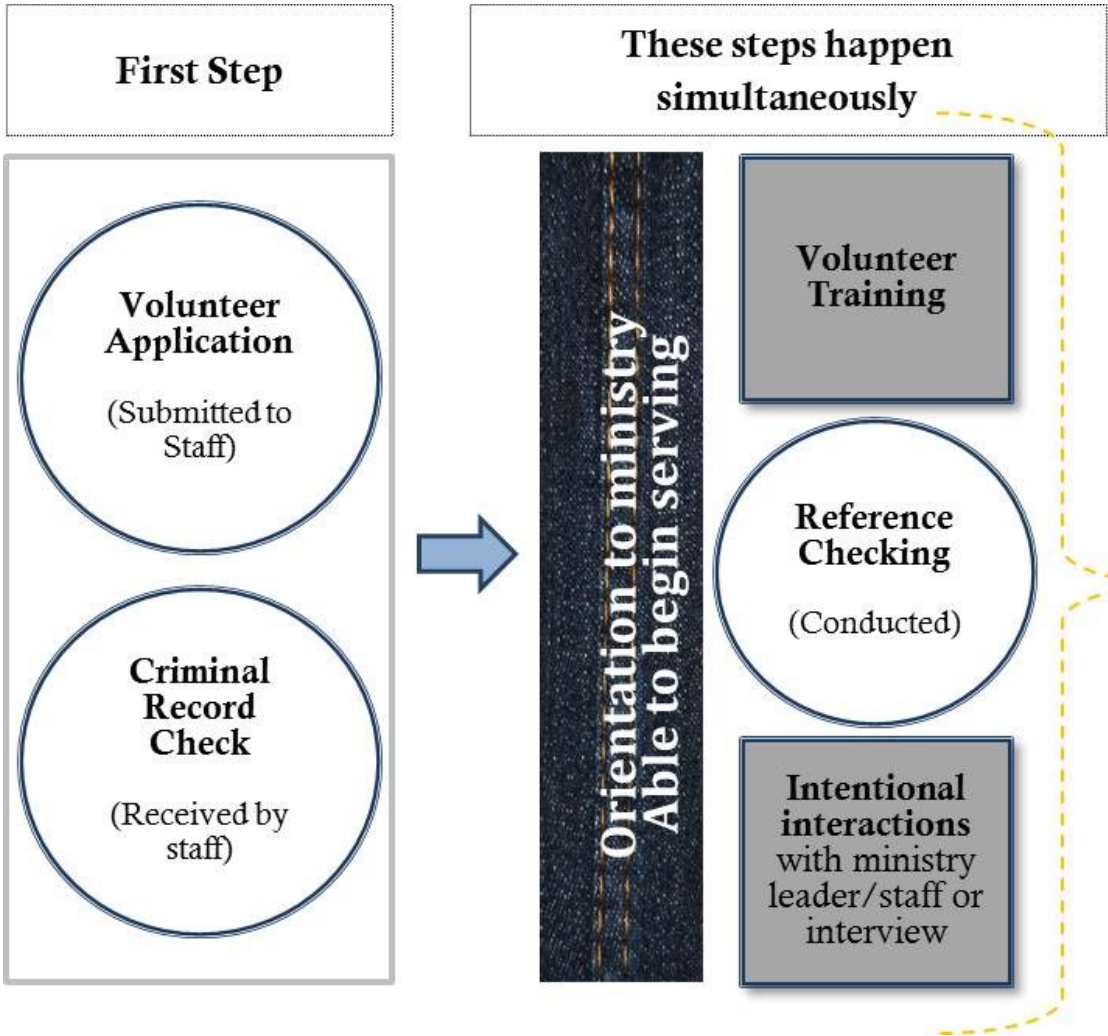
SARM serves to not only protect vulnerable people in our midst, but also legally protects our volunteers and staff from vicarious liability.

Emergency & Safety Procedures

DEFINE: Position of trust

A role where a parent and/or guardian has *entrusted* their child or vulnerable adult in our care. Unscreened volunteers will *not be asked to assume responsibility for children* & will not be asked to take children to the washroom.

Screening Procedures: *a first line of defense in protection*



All volunteers, staff & ministry leaders at Pacific must go through the same screening process before engaging in any ministry.

- Criminal Record Checks are performed on all volunteers & staff, 16 and over, every 3 years
- All records are kept permanently in a confidential file

Child & Youth Procedures

Volunteer to student ratios (students:volunteers)

Ratios hold true for all programs & events, including off-site and/or overnight events.



Children's Programs & Events

- **6 months—1 year olds:** 4:1
- **2 & 3 year olds:** 5:1
- **4 & 5 year olds:** 8:1
- **Grades 1 to 4:** 11:1
- **Grades 5 to 7:** 15:1

Youth Ministry Programs & Events

- **Junior High (ages 12 –15):** 7:1
- **Senior High (ages 16-18):** 10:1
- **Overnight/Off-site events:** 7:1

DON'T FORGET!

- ♦ **Children must never be left unattended**
- ♦ **Min. 2 volunteers, or door open with hall monitors**
- ♦ **Youth volunteers (12-16) may be assigned in children's areas to help cover ratios. They must serve with another screened volunteer over 16 years old.**

Categories & Characterizations of Abuse**

Categorization

Physical = deliberate physical force that results in injury. Child may be mean/aggressive to others, fearful of adults.

Emotional = a pattern that attacks a child's self worth & development.

Sexual = an adult (or youth) physically, psychologically or emotionally using a child for sexual reasons.

Neglect = failing to meet a child's basic needs or protect them from harm (clothing shelter, sleep, medical attention, education).

Characteristics

Recurrent or unexplainable bruising, fractures, burns or injuries may be present.

May be depressed, lack self-esteem, threaten suicide, have speech or eating disorders or be over-needy for adult attention.

May have knowledge of sexual behaviour beyond their age, depression, "act out" in intimate/physical ways, difficulty walking or sitting.

May beg or steal food/seem always hungry, speech or eating disorders, do not dress appropriately for the weather, depression or poor hygiene.

REPORTING

The abuser may not be known, and must not be contacted, but all suspicions must still be reported. The following actions may not necessarily be done in order, but may be a simultaneous action:

- **Report to proper authorities** (Call 310-1234 or police if fear the child is in immediate danger)
- **Complete a Suspected Abuse Report Form** (staff have this form)
- **Comfort the child** without making promises
- **Cooperate** with the investigation, but leave it to the professionals & **protect confidentiality.**

**Characteristics may be indicators of abuse, but not necessarily proof. One sign alone does not constitute abuse & may be indicative of other issues. For a more detailed break-down of characteristics & info about how to speak to an abused child—see additional handouts.

Abuse Awareness & Response

DEFINE: Abuse

"...an act committed by a parent, caregiver or person in a position of trust (even if not cared for on a daily basis) which is not accidental & which harms or threatens to harm a child's physical or mental health or a child's welfare."



"ANYONE with a reasonable suspicion of child abuse has a legal responsibility to report the suspicion."

Canadian Child & Family Services Act

Safety & Risk Management **equips you to respond** to suspicions of abuse in the church setting, as well as prepare you in case you suspect abuse in other contexts. You are not required to look for abuse, it is important to **be aware of the characterises of abuse & know how to report**, as it is your legal responsibility.

Do not ask leading questions, just listen & be calm.**

The child may tell you directly, or indirectly (pictures, behaviours or emotions, etc.). All allegations &/or suspicions must be reported. Pacific's pastoral staff will walk alongside you if you need to make a report. They will handle all media relations.

Suspecting abuse & doing nothing can be more damaging to a child than making a report that may result in an investigation to help the child.

Temporary Volunteers vs. Occasional Observers

In **unique circumstances** where classrooms may be closed to do unmet ratios, **temporary, unscreened volunteers** may serve when **two other** screened volunteers are present.

Temporary volunteers:

- Must not be put in a position of trust (page 2)
- Will serve a max. of 6 times per year
- Will be encouraged/requested to complete a volunteer application for future screening if they serve as a temporary volunteer more than once

DEFINE: Occasional observer

Parents or guardians that join a class to be with their own child. Their attendance will be recorded & they will be clearly identified as an observer. They will not be put in a position of trust.





Washroom Guidelines

We encourage parents to take their children to the washroom before events.

Diaper changing is to be done by the parent/guardian in most situations. When parents are unable to diaper, one designated, screened adult may diaper the child in view of others.

Children ages 3-5

- Do not send a 3-5 yr. old to washroom alone
- Do not find yourself alone with a child in a washroom
- Two or more volunteers can escort children to the washroom; one standing in the doorway & the other observing outside the door.
- If a child needs assistance (consider privacy of the child—only help if they ask), a volunteer may enter the cubicle with another volunteer propping the main doorway open.
- Male volunteers/staff are not to accompany female children to the washroom

Children Kindergarten to Grade Six

- Use the buddy-system—send two children together



Informal & One-on-One Meetings

Our plan is to cultivate relationships safely with students. One-on-one relationships and mentoring are a vital part of youth ministry.

- We have an “open door policy” at Pacific: one-on-one & small group meetings happen in public places or in rooms with open doors or a window in the door & a hall monitor present.
- When meeting with students, we gain parental permission & inform them of place, time, purpose & length of all meetings.
- Leaders & staff are required to inform each other of these meetings for accountability.

RULE OF 3

When meeting with students, the goal is to meet as a group of 3 or more.

i.e.: 2 youth and 1 leader or 2 leaders & 1 youth

Transportation of Students

It is preferred that parents drop off and pick up youth for church activities. In extreme circumstances where transportation must be provided, use the “Rule of 3” (male leaders will not drive all-female students and vice versa).

If transport must be provided:

- Driver must be pre-approved & have a completed a Driver's Abstract & have a Driver's Contract on file
- Let another leader/staff know the details of where you are going & when returning
- Gain parental permission





Youth-specific Procedures

Meetings & Off-site Events

Many Student Ministries (Youth in Grades 5-12) events happen on-site at Pacific Community Church & pose little risk to students.

DEFINE: Risk

Prior to planning events a risk assessment is done to **determine the level of risk** for on– or off-site events. Some examples:

- Is there heightened potential to come in contact with bodily fluids/disease?
- Will there be operation of dangerous equipment?
- Will students be exposed to toxic substances, poor air quality, noise, etc.
- Does the activity involve potential danger or pose possible stress or injury to students?

Answering YES to any of these questions will determine that an additional activity-specific consent & authorization form is required for the event. Most off-site events are considered to be a higher risk.

Retreats & Overnight Events (High Risk)

- Female leaders are assigned responsibility for females, males for males
- Youth may not leave events
- Preferred retreat accommodations: church buildings or hotels
- When billeting, hosts will be screened (recommendation & Criminal Record Checks performed)

Discipline

Discipline is not something you do **to a child**; it is something you do **for a child**. It is not punishment, but training that moulds character, behaviour & values. Rather than merely maintaining control, we seek to **shape character & attitudes**.

Preventative methods

- Design a loving, caring atmosphere
- Create & model structure
- Prepare exciting, age appropriate, meaningful & interesting classes with short transitions
- Focus on positive actions & reward positive behaviour
- Be aware of children with special needs
- Clearly communicate classroom rules & expectations:
 - One voice talking at a time
 - Quiet hands get answered
 - Use inside voices
 - Obey directions the first time
 - Keep hands & feet to yourself
 - Respect each other & be friendly

Remedial methods

- Deal with problems individually
- Explain why behaviour is unacceptable & redirect them to positive action
- Explain consequences of unacceptable behaviour
- Offer choices acceptable to you & the child



Proper Displays of Affection

“Age & developmentally appropriate. Always in view of others”

We recognize that children need appropriate displays of affection that reflect pure, genuine & positive displays of God’s love. Touch with children & youth will always be **age & developmentally appropriate.**

We encourage...

- Hold the hand of a child who is crying
- Speak at eye level
- Hold the hand of child when speaking, listening or walking to an activity
- Gently hold a child’s shoulder or hand to keep attention while directing behaviour
- Put your arm around a child’s shoulder when comforting or quieting a need
- Pats on a child’s head, hand, shoulder or back when affirming
- Shoulder-to-shoulder/one-arm hugs

TIPS FOR PARENT VOLUNTEERS

We want parents to enjoy their volunteer experience!

When you’re in a classroom with your own child(ren), encourage them to:

- Participate & stay with their peers
- Sit beside you on the floor, rather than on your lap & hold hands with other children/leaders

Other leaders will support you by helping your child participate while you focus on other children too!

Proper Displays of Affection (continued)

Recognize that the innocence of children must be protected

The best protection is to be sure you are not alone with a child or youth

We discourage...

- Extended chest-to-chest hugging or tickling
- Kissing or coaxing a child/youth to kiss you
- Holding a child’s face when talking or disciplining
- Touching any area of a child/youth that would be covered by a bathing suit (washroom exception: pg. 6)
- Carrying older children
- Lap-sitting of older children/youth (always encourage children to stay sit on chair/floor, unless comforting young children)



Conduct that may be misinterpreted:

- Horseplay
- Tickling
- Extended back rubs