



Protecting Children from Sexual Abuse

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1 / 1.2 million

1 / 11 million



Child abuse is
catastrophic!



Review Safety Guidelines regularly






Partnering With You

Our Ministry: We protect the ministries of the Seventh-day Adventist[®] Church with insurance and risk management solutions.





Understanding Sexual Abuse of Children



What is sexual abuse of children?

- It is a sexual act against a minor (under 18-year-olds).
- Sexual abuse of a child always harms their physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health.





Two Types of sexual abuse

Contact abuse

- This can range from inappropriate touching to rape and is never accidental.

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/child-sexual-abuse/>



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Contact abuse includes:

- Sexual touching of any part of a child's body, whether they're clothed or not
- using a body part or object to rape or penetrate a child
- forcing a child to take part in sexual activities
- making a child undress or touch someone else.

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/child-sexual-abuse/>





Two Types of sexual abuse

Non-contact abuse

- A child is abused without being touched by the abuser. This can be in person or online.

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/child-sexual-abuse/>






Non-contact abuse includes:

- Exposing or flashing
- showing pornography
- exposing a child to sexual acts
- making them masturbate
- forcing a child to make, view or share child abuse images or videos
- making, viewing or distributing child abuse images or videos
- forcing a child to take part in sexual activities or conversations online or through a smartphone.





Does it really happen
within our churches?



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Our Duty in Three Goals

1

Show
God's love.

2

Keep our
children safe.

3

Ensure that sexual abuse of children is prevented, but if it happens, is dealt with swiftly and decisively and that law enforcement is involved.





Four Steps to Protect Children from Sexual Abuse



1 | Identify the Risks

Understand the potential risks during church activities. When going to camps, outings or in the regular church activities every week.

- Appropriate supervision
- Isolated areas
- Lack of policies
- Reluctance to report
- Overemphasis on forgiveness
- Ignorance or Denial



2 | Minimise the Risk

Once you acknowledge and identify the risks, think of ways to minimise them.

The Adventist Church is concerned about safeguarding children.

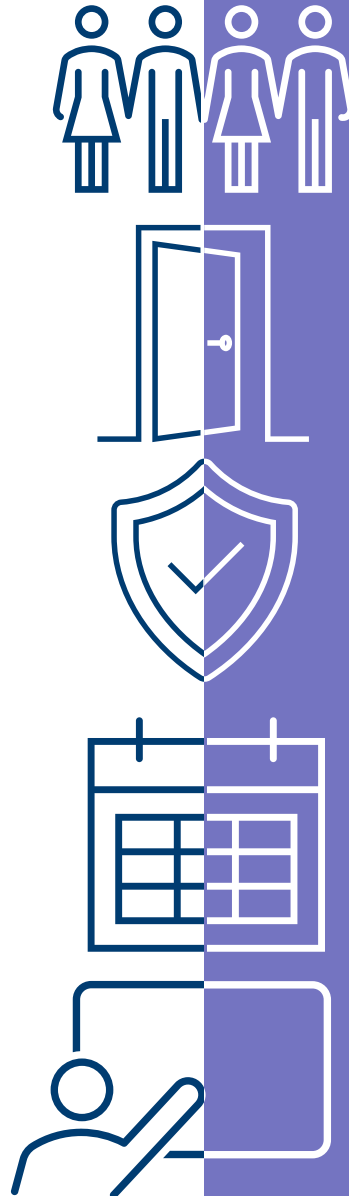


2 | Minimise the risk

Church should be a safe place to bring our children. Everyone involved with children who are minors must meet all Church and legal standards and requirements. In order to safeguard our children, churches are encouraged to adopt policies that would provide a measure of safety and protection for children. (Chapter 9 Notes – Safeguarding Children)



- Two-Adult Policy
- Open Door
- Volunteer Screening
- Six-month Policy
- Training



5 Policies



3 | Open communication

It is important to talk about appropriate touch.

All should know the position of our church regarding the protection of our children.



4 | Stay vigilant

Being vigilant is being prudent

- a. Stay vigilant to
 - emotional and behavioural signs
 - physical signs



4 | Stay vigilant

Emotional and Behavioural Signs include:

- Avoiding being alone with or frightened of people or a person they know.
- Language or sexual behaviour you wouldn't expect them to know.
- Having nightmares or bed-wetting.
- Alcohol or drug misuse.



4 | Stay vigilant

- Self-harm.
- Changes in eating habits or developing an eating problem.
- Changes in their mood, feeling irritable and angry, or anything out of the ordinary.
- Change in normal behaviour for the child, for example suddenly not attending education or avoiding wanting to go home/running away.



4 | Stay vigilant

Physical Signs include:

- Bruises
- Bleeding, discharge, pains or soreness in their genital or anal area
- Sexually transmitted infections
- Difficulty in walking/sitting that are not usual for the child
- Pregnancy



4 | Stay vigilant

b. to disclosing attempts.

- Sense of shame, loyalty to the abuser
- Fear of not being believed or
- Fear of negative consequences to them or to their family



4 | Stay vigilant

If a child talks to you about sexual abuse it's important to:

- listen carefully to what they're saying
- allow them to talk freely
- let them know they've done the right thing by telling you
- say you take them seriously



4 | Stay vigilant

- don't confront the alleged abuser
- report what the child has told you as soon as possible
- decide if they need medical attention

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/child-sexual-abuse/>



4 | Stay vigilant

c. regarding behaviour / grooming

Grooming is a process that involves the offender building a relationship with a child, and sometimes with their wider family, gaining their trust and a position of power over the child, in preparation for abuse.

Child Exploitation and Online Protection CEOP, 2022



Become pro-active in protecting children

- a. Support the parents in educating their children about their bodies, boundaries, and consent.
- b. Stay informed about their activities and online interactions to ensure their safety.
- c. Encourage open communication, teach children to recognise inappropriate behaviour, and establish a trusting relationship so they feel comfortable sharing concerns.
- d. If you suspect abuse, report it to the appropriate authorities.



Prevention plan

ARM website — adventistrisk.org — Click on **Safety Resources** and scroll down to the **Child Protection** section

Make a child protection plan and enforce it



#1 Premises Review

Access to premises – Carefully monitor the arrival and departure of children at your facilities. Keep all ministry activities within a specified area and do not allow children unrestricted access throughout the building or property.

Interior & exterior lighting – Ensure your facilities are well lit, both indoors and outdoors, during all children and youth programs to help facilitate appropriate security and supervision.

Visual panels – Be sure all areas have either windows or vision panels in doors to allow easy monitoring of the activities taking place in these rooms. Vision panels should be free from paper, curtains, or other materials.

Restrooms – Limit the number of children allowed to use restrooms at

the same time. Monitor these areas in order to minimize one-on-one situations, which can lead to foul play, inappropriate behavior or accusations and misunderstandings.

#2 Personnel Administration

Staff selection – Carefully interview and select all adult staff members (employees and volunteers) after a six-month waiting period during which they are known to you or are members of your church. This time period allows you to become acquainted with the individual's talents, personality and temperament. Conduct background screenings in accordance with denominational policies, which include background and reference checks.

Staff training – All staff members who work with children and teenagers should be appropriately trained in

child abuse awareness, prevention and the reporting laws of the local jurisdiction. Training should also include the expected code of conduct used in keeping with the Christ-centered mission of the ministry.

Supervision – Appropriate adult supervision is required at all times, including the two-adult rule, meaning more than one adult should be present at all times. If this is not possible, an adult should never be alone with one child. All staff should make this a high priority and know what is expected of them as they interact with children and teenagers.

Dismissal of staff – Any adult who fails to abide by the outlined code of conduct could be subject to dismissal from further participation in the ministry. This policy is to protect children and teenagers from harm, and protect staff from accusations and misunderstandings.

#3 Protecting Children

Discipline and touching – Carefully monitor staff member interaction with children and teenagers for appropriate behavior in keeping with the ministry's code of conduct.

Out-of-program contact – Carefully monitor any staff member who has frequent out-of-program contact with a child or teenager especially on a one-to-one basis or without the knowledge of the child's parent or guardian.

Sign in / sign out controls – Maintain a record of all children who are participating in the activity and be sure they are picked up and released only to their parent or other authorized adult as designated in a parental permission slip.

Reporting incidents – Be observant of any signs of child abuse or incidents of inappropriate conduct by adults or other children. Promptly report all incidents of suspected child abuse to law enforcement authorities and to the local denominational administration.

Stranger awareness – Always be alert and observant of any strangers or unknown individuals who may be watching or lurking around the premises during children and youth ministry activities.

Bullying awareness – Be observant for signs of bullying or incidents of inappropriate hazing activity among children or teenagers. Adopt a zero tolerance policy and teach them to respect each other by living the Golden Rule and developing strong Christian friendships.

#4 Program Review

Evaluate – Evaluate your Child Protection Program twice a year. Ask your team:

- What concerns or issues arose and how were they handled?

- Was the way the incidents were handled effective? Are there further steps that need to be taken?
- Are there any concerns or issues that the program does not cover?
- How should the program be modified to address these new concerns?

Implement – Modify your program to accommodate the improvements from your program evaluation. Present the changes to the church board at the next board meeting to have the changes approved. Send out a notice to all staff members and parents introducing the changes to your Child Protection Program. Incorporate the changes into your program and continue to affirm and encourage all staff in their mission to keep all children safe.

Find more information on child abuse prevention and developing a Child Protection Program for your ministry at AdventistRisk.org



APPROPRIATE TOUCH GUIDELINES for **GROWN UPS**



- Always ask for permission to hug, pat on the back, or even high-five a child.
- Only touch at the shoulder level or above.
- Use side hugs.
- Rough physical play and physical discipline are not ok.



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EMPOWER **CHILDREN** to be **IN CHARGE** of **THEIR BODIES**



- Help children to understand their bodies belong only to them.
- No one may touch their bodies without their permission.
- Children should always ask before touching someone else.



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How to DISTINGUISH BETWEEN SAFE and UNSAFE TOUCH



Safe Touch...

- Is aware of boundaries and asks for permission.
- Is respectful of privacy and personal zones.
- Is affirming and uplifting.

Unsafe Touch...

- Seems to compromise the boundaries and privacy of personal zones.
- Is not respectful of the individual's body autonomy.
- Allows hitting, pushing, or kicking, which is never ok.



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YOU MUST SPEAK UP



Help children to speak up if something inappropriate has occurred. Remind them to tell a trusted adult if anyone has touched them in a way they did not allow. Inappropriate behavior to a child is never the child's fault. **If abuse is suspected, you must report.**



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Our Church – A Safe Place

Proverbs 27:12

A prudent person foresees
danger and takes
precautions...



Our Church – A Safe Place

Our duty is to embody
Christ's love in every
interaction



Let us stand united in our commitment to creating safe spaces for the children in our churches





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is to ***protect***
your ministry.

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