

## **Meadowlodge Bible Camp Protection Policies & Procedures**

*“Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God.”*

Mark 10:14

### **Introduction.**

- a. The Bible makes it clear that we live in a fallen, sin-filled world, that has affected every camper and staff member who comes to Meadowlodge. Indeed, sin (and the sin nature) is the reason that Meadowlodge exists! Unfortunately that sin nature also includes abusive behaviour, and it is probable that we will have campers and staff who have experienced such abuse. There may also be the potential for abuse, as well as false accusations of such, to take place during any of our camps.
  
- b. Meadowlodge is a ‘Bible’ camp, and thus we must not be afraid to teach the whole counsel of God. Nothing in this policy is meant to restrict our freedom to teach the whole Word of God, including topics which run contrary to current accepted norms in society, e.g. sexuality, sin, personal conduct, eternity etc.

2. **Policy Statement.** Meadowlodge Bible Camp will take reasonable care to ensure a camping environment that is safe from physical, emotional and sexual abuse, for campers, staff and visitors. All complaints related to abuse will be taken seriously and dealt with in a spirit of compassion and justice.

3. **Aim.** The aim of this document is to detail how we will act to protect campers, staff and visitors at camp, and how we will respond to allegations of abuse of which we are made aware.

4. **Definitions.** Definitions related to this policy are contained at Annex A.

### **Prevention Procedures**

5. Recruitment, Screening & Selection of Staff. We are a Bible camp and we will seek to recruit only Christians who are serious about serving God at camp. Since we are an extension of the ministries of the member assemblies we will rely primarily upon them to screen their respective applicants for suitability to work at camp. Applicants from non-member churches will be required to have the recommendation of their own church leadership. To this end the staff application process will include endorsement from a church leader; and for first-time staff, a letter of reference. Police and/or social services checks, and/or

personal interviews may be required if, in the opinion of the registrar and/or the Board, they are warranted. All records relating to individual staff members (application forms, background checks, interview notes, etc.) shall be kept permanently on file. The Board will review the staff application process annually.

6. Staff Training. The Staff Development Committee is responsible for staff training via the Counsellor Handbook and formal training activities. In addition, each camp director is responsible for ensuring appropriate training applicable to their camp. All staff are required to sign that they have read, understood and will comply with the policies set forth in the Counsellor Handbook. The Staff Affirmation Form is attached at Annex G. This acknowledgement will be retained on the respective staff record on file.
7. Staff Conduct. “...whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.” (1Cor.10:31b). The guiding principle for all Christian conduct (and therefore all staff conduct) is to be Christ-honouring in what we think, say and do. While staff, particularly counsellors, need to be accessible and approachable to campers, they must be ever diligent to avoid compromising their witness. Camp directors are in the best position to monitor and counsel staff, both for their own protection, and for their example to the campers. Specific staff conduct guidelines are set forth at Annex B, and in the Counsellor Handbook.
8. Camper Conduct. While campers will come from a diversity of backgrounds, our desire is to encourage them in Christ-like character and conduct. To that end we will not tolerate any inappropriate behaviour at camp. Specific camper conduct guidelines are set forth at Annex C, and in the Counsellor Handbook.
9. Visitors. Visitors for both campers and staff are discouraged, both for safety and to prevent disruption.
  - a. If a parent or guardian insists on visiting their child, they should be encouraged to phone the Camp Director ahead of time. If a child is to be picked up from camp other than by the parent or guardian, either written consent or previous arrangements with the staff is required. Photo ID may be required. These requirements will be detailed in the Camper Application Form.
  - b. Since the primary focus of staff is the campers, they are not to invite non-staff to ‘drop-in’ to visit them while camp is in progress. If a visit is necessary, staff must get permission from either the Camp Director (counsellors) or the Camp Manager (support staff) beforehand.
  - c. ‘Official visitors’ (Camp Board and Committee members, assembly elders) are welcome at any time, but must be careful not to disrupt the camp programme.
  - d. Casual visitors, seeking information about Meadowlodge, should be directed to the Camp Manager, and should never be allowed to wander around unescorted.

- e. All visitors, regardless of the nature of their visit, must report to the Camp Director and/or Camp Manager upon arrival.

## **Reporting Procedures**

10. While most instances of poor behaviour on the part of campers would not be considered as abuse under the Alberta Child, Youth & Family Enhancement Act, there should be open dialogue between staff and the camp director to determine the difference between poor behaviour and suspected abuse. The Act leaves little room for discretion in cases of suspected or actual abuse, either at camp or elsewhere. When in doubt camp directors should seek the advice of the Camp Manager and their Board representative. Information and assistance is available from government agencies to assist in making a proper determination. Contact information and detailed reporting procedures are contained at Annex E.
11. While staff are not expected to be experts in child welfare, they are required to report all suspected cases of abuse. Guidelines for how to recognize child abuse are contained in Annex D, and in the Counsellor Handbook.
12. All allegations of abuse are to be taken seriously. Staff are not to try to solve a camper's concerns, but rather be available to provide a listening ear. Investigating the allegation, including conducting interviews, is the responsibility of the police and/or government agency. That notwithstanding, the camp director should keep detailed notes on the Suspected Child Abuse Report Form contained at Appendix 1 to Annex E, and in the Counsellor Handbook.
13. False Allegations. Care should be taken to avoid an assumption of either guilt, or of false allegation. While all complaints of abuse need to be taken seriously, care must be taken to protect all those who are vulnerable in the situation. If a complaint is not substantiated, care must be taken to restore the credibility of the respondent and continue to provide guidance for the complainant. No action will be taken against a person making a report unless it is made maliciously or without reasonable grounds for belief.

Annex A  
To Protection Plan

**Definitions**

(From the Alberta Child, Youth & Family Enhancement Act [2000])

1. **ABUSE:** Abuse is the non-accidental injury, sexual exploitation, neglectful treatment or maltreatment of a person under any circumstances which harms or puts at risk the person's health, welfare, or safety.
2. **ABUSE:** Abuse is the misuse of power by someone who is in a position of authority over another person. Types of child abuse include:
  - a. Physical – Physical abuse is when a child receives substantial and observable injury to any part of the child's body as a result of the non-accidental application of force or an agent to the child's body that is evidenced by a laceration, a contusion, an abrasion, a scar, a fracture or other bony injury, a dislocation, a sprain, hemorrhaging, the rupture of viscous, a burn, a scald, frostbite, the loss or alternation of consciousness or physiological functioning or the loss of hair or teeth
  - b. Sexual - Sexual abuse is when the child is inappropriately exposed or subjected to sexual contact, activity or behaviour by the person having charge of the child or by another person, where the person having charge of the child knows or should know of the possibility of sexual abuse and fails to protect the child. Sexual abuse includes exposure to pornographic images, incest, rape or other sexual intrusion.
  - c. Verbal - Verbal abuse includes excessive yelling, belittling, or unkind teasing.
  - d. Emotional - Emotional abuse is when the child has suffered emotional harm and demonstrates it by severe anxiety, depression, withdrawal, self-destructive or aggressive behavior and the child's parent or person having charge of the child does not provide services or treatment to remedy or alleviate the harm. Emotional abuse includes coldness, withdrawal, rejection, threats, humiliation, exposure to domestic violence, failure to provide loving attention, or supervision of normal living experiences.
  - e. Neglect – Neglect is failure to adequately care and provide for the child, supervise the child or protect the child. Also, if the child requires medical treatment to prevent or alleviate physical harm or suffering and the child's parent or the person having charge of the child does not provide the treatment or refuses to provide the treatment.
3. **ASSAULT:** Assault is any intentional use of force or threat of use of force against another person without his or her consent.
4. **SEXUAL ASSAULT:** Sexual assault is any form of assault involving some form of sexual activity. Kissing, sexual contacts, fondling or sexual intercourse with another without his/her consent is sexual assault. Sexual assault also includes intercourse with children under the age of sixteen, incest, bestiality and gross indecency. Further sexual offenses against children include: sexual

interference, invitation to touching, sexual exploitation of a young person, exposing genitals to a child, exposing the child to pornographic images, and indecent acts.

5. **SEXUAL MISCONDUCT:** Sexual misconduct is sexual harassment, sexual exploitation, sexual abuse or any other sexual activity (including but not limited to sexual intercourse) in which a person with power or authority takes advantage of the vulnerability of a person under his/her care. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the person with authority shall not be held responsible for an act of sexual assault perpetrated against her/himself by a person under his/her care.

## Staff Conduct & Behaviour

- 1. Introduction.** These guidelines are written to protect both campers and staff, so that everyone can have an enjoyable time at camp. They are written to prevent abuse, assault or harassment at camp, as well as false accusations. Staff must be role models of integrity at all times.
  
- 2. Relationships:**
  - a. Staff should not pursue or participate in a relationship beyond friendship with a camper, as they are in a position of leadership and authority.
  - b. If a staff member suspects that a camper is seeking a relationship beyond friendship they are responsible to limit contact with that camper. If the camper is pursuing a relationship or displaying sexual affection, the staff member should report the incident to the Director.
  - c. Staff should support each other and intervene if one of them acts inappropriately with a camper or another staff member.
  - d. Staff who are in a romantic relationship with each other should conduct themselves so that campers would not be aware of the relationship.
  
- 3. Appropriate Touch:**
  - a. Only touch children in safe places on their bodies, avoiding private places. The back, head and shoulders may be acceptable. The buttocks, breast, thighs and groin are not acceptable.
  - b. Do not hug anyone who appears resistant about being touched.
  - c. Respect everyone's personal boundary; everyone is different.
  - d. Do not allow campers to sit on a staff member's lap.
  
- 4. Privacy:**
  - a. Staff should uphold a camper's desire for privacy whenever appropriate.
  - b. Staff should be discrete in their personal affairs (e.g. changing, showering).
  - c. Staff should always model Christ-like modesty in their dress.
  
- 5. Limiting Alone Time:** Private discussions with a camper should be held in a private yet visible area, or with more than one staff member in attendance. Avoid speaking alone in cabins or other private areas.

**6. Assessing a Hurt or Sick Camper/Staff:** Examinations should be left to a designated health care staff member, unless the injury requires first aid. If it must be done in an emergency, another adult of the same sex of the camper will be asked to assist.

**7. Staff Responsibilities:**

- a. Staff need to be aware of a camper's health, hygiene, physical safety and emotional well-being.
- b. Staff must not put themselves in situations where their actions can be misinterpreted. When in doubt, check with the camp director.

**8. Discipline:**

- a. Staff must never hit a camper. Staff do have the responsibility to protect or remove a camper from a dangerous or explosive situation. While this may require the use of physical force to remove, restrain or protect a camper or staff member, it should always be in a manner appropriate to the situation. Any such occurrence should be recorded on an Incident Report Form (Annex H).
- b. Discipline using physical or emotional punishment, denial of basic needs (food, sleep, shelter, and clothing) or verbal abuse is not permitted.

**9. Counseling Issues:**

- a. Be sensitive to the feelings of the camper. Use communication skills to reach out to the camper. By doing so you are showing a healthy way to deal with feelings rather than acting them out.
- b. Staff should refrain from counseling and engaging in very personal conversations with campers of the opposite sex.
- c. Staff are not sex educators. Some questions about sexuality can be handled simply without explicit detail. If in doubt, consult with the camp director.
- d. Sexually explicit conversations should be avoided. Although these types of conversation are often of interest to children, staff should not contribute, and should aim to end the conversation.

**10. Respect:**

- a. Obscene jokes or sexually explicit material are unacceptable.
- b. Campers are to be treated with respect. Never call them names, insult them or do things to belittle or humiliate them, even in jest.
- c. Staff should use the same discretion and care of conversation, as indicated above, with other staff.

## **11.Non-Compliance**

- a. Any staff found to be breaching any provision in this annex will be subject to disciplinary action, including, but not limited to, termination of his/her position at Meadowlodge.
- b. Any observance of a staff member breaching any provision must be reported to the camp director.
- c. Any such occurrence should be recorded on an Incident Report Form (Annex H).



### **Camper Conduct Guidelines**

1. Camp directors must set clear behaviour expectations for campers at the beginning of each camp.
2. We will not tolerate abuse of campers by other campers, e.g. physical, emotional, verbal bullying. Any suspected or actual abusive behaviour should be discussed with the camp director and/or Camp Manager, and if necessary their respective Board representative, to determine appropriate remedial action.
3. Remember that instances of poor behaviour can become 'teachable moments' when both sin and salvation can be discussed.
4. Directors and counsellors must ensure supervision adequate for each situation. While this may present challenges during certain activities, camp directors should plan ahead for this, and make full use of other staff, such as speakers, activity assistants or junior counsellors, to monitor camper activity.
5. Any unusual incidents, including injuries, should be recorded on an Incident Report Form (Annex H).

### Recognizing Child Abuse

1. What constitutes reasonable grounds to report a suspicion of abuse? Reasonable grounds are what an average person, given his or her training, background and experience, exercising normal and honest judgement, would assume to be an action that needs attention. No action will be taken against a person making a report unless it is made maliciously or without reasonable grounds for belief.
2. The following characteristics may be indicators of abuse, although they are not necessarily proof. One sign alone does not constitute abuse and may simply be indicative of other issues. You need to watch for patterns or a combination of these warning signs.
3. Physical signs may include:
  - a. Unexplained lacerations, burns, or bruises
  - b. Recurring nightmares
  - c. Irritation, pain, regular discomfort, or injury to the genital area
  - d. Physical difficulty sitting
  - e. Torn or bloody underclothing
4. Behavioural signs may include:
  - a. Nervous, hostile, or rejecting behaviour toward adults
  - b. Hostile and aggressive behaviour towards others
  - c. Destructive behaviour toward self, others or property
  - d. Sexual self-consciousness
  - e. Acting out sexual behaviours or other expressions of sexual knowledge beyond that appropriate for the child's age
  - f. Withdrawal from others

**Note:** Information in this annex was drawn entirely from Plan to Protect, Weibe C., Bissell, M., Cates, J., Brake, J.S.; Word Alive Press, pages 168-169, & Appx.31.

### **Reporting Procedures**

Any case of alleged, suspected, or actual abuse will be reported as soon as possible to the camp director. The camp director will take the following action:

1. Clarify the report with the person reporting, and start to document the incident(s) using the Suspected Child Abuse Report Form at Appendix 1;
2. Confirm whether or not the child has been physically injured, and if so arrange for appropriate medical care;
3. Meet with the child to obtain information about the incident;
4. If applicable, meet with the alleged offender to obtain information about the incident;
5. The camp director and the person reporting the abuse will contact the Province of Alberta Child & Family Services, Edmonton area 24-hour crisis line to submit a report:

**780-427-3390 or 1-800-638-0715**

Note: The Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act states that “any person who has reasonable and probable grounds to believe that a child is in need of intervention shall forthwith report the matter” to Child & Family Services. It is not up to the discretion of the individual to decide if intervention is required; we are required to report the matter and Child & Family Services and they will give instruction on how to proceed. They may or may not decide to act immediately. The Act also states that “no action lies against a person reporting”.

6. Contact the Camp Manager and/or Board representative to advise them of the situation, and whatever action was recommended at paragraph 5 (above);
7. If it has been determined that it is a reportable incident, contact the police and/or the Emergency 24-hour Child Abuse Hotline, as appropriate:

**1-800-387-5437**

8. Maintain control of the situation, including the safety and emotional support of those involved, until the arrival of the police and/or Child & Family Services, who will then take over. It is the responsibility of these agencies, and NOT Meadowlodge, to inform parents/guardians, and to conduct the investigation.
9. Cooperate fully with those conducting the investigation;
10. Keep the Camp Manager and/or the Board representative fully informed; and
11. Keep detailed notes about the incident, including contacts and timings.

**NOTE:** While this will become a high priority for the camp director, it is important that the other campers not be neglected during the process. As much as possible, the camp should

carry on according to plan. In order to maintain confidentiality, do not discuss the incident with the other campers (or staff not already involved in the issue) unless advised to do so by the investigating authorities.

Appendix 1  
To Annex E  
To Protection Plan

**SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE REPORT FORM**  
[Confidential when any portion is completed]

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME OF CHILD: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME OF PERSON FILING REPORT: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME OF PERSON RECEIVING REPORT (i.e. the person who first heard report from alleged victim):

\_\_\_\_\_

ALLEGED PERPETRATOR(S): \_\_\_\_\_

NATURE OF SUSPECTED ABUSE (Physical, sexual, emotional, neglect): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

INDICATIONS OF SUSPECTED ABUSE (Including facts, physical signs and course of events where necessary): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

ACTION TAKEN (Including dates, times, and to whom it was reported):

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

The above information will serve as a guide and will be necessary if a formal report is filed with the police or appropriate government agency. Use additional paper if necessary.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

(Person Reporting)

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

(Camp Director)

## Record Keeping

1. The registrar will maintain a separate folder for each camp with the following information:
  - a. Staff list, including additions and deletions;
  - b. Camper list, including additions or deletions;
  - c. Camper application forms;
  - d. Parental or guardian notes or permission slips - if any;
  - e. Suspected Child Abuse Report Forms (Annex E, Appendix 1) – if any;
  - f. Incident Report Forms (Annex H) – if any; \*
  - g. Injury or medical reports, as well as any medication forms; \*
  - h. Camper sign-in/out sheets; \*
  - i. Director's staff evaluation forms; and
  - j. Director's camp report.
2. Since many staff work at more than one camp, the registrar will maintain a separate annual staff folder containing the following information:
  - a. Staff application forms;
  - b. Staff Affirmation Forms (Annex G); \*
  - c. Background checks (e.g. police or social services) – if any;
  - d. Interview notes - if any; and
  - e. Incident Reports – if any.
3. At the end of each camping season the registrar will compile all the camp folders, along with the staff folder into a file for that year. Files are to be retained indefinitely in a locked filing cabinet in the camp office. Files will be treated as confidential, i.e. access on a 'need-to-know' basis only. Camp directors will have access to their respective camp files if requested. Board members will have access to all files as required.
4. Files will be maintained in paper format. Policy on transfer to digital format will be determined at a later date.

**Note** - \* indicates Amendment 1, 2014

**Annex G  
To Protection Plan**



51511 Range Road 215  
Sherwood Park, Alberta T8E 1H1  
(780) 992-4242  
[www.meadowlodgebiblecamp.org](http://www.meadowlodgebiblecamp.org)

**Staff Affirmation Form**

All staff members at Meadowlodge Bible Camp are to affirm that they have read, understand, and will comply with Section 4 of the Counsellor Handbook (Information on Child Abuse). Staff working directly with campers (e.g. directors, counsellors or junior counsellors) will affirm that they have read, understand and will comply with all provisions of the Counsellor Handbook.

Please sign one of the following statements, as applicable:

**Support Staff:** I \_\_\_\_\_, hereby affirm that I have read, understood and will comply with Section 4 of the Counsellor Handbook.

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Signature

Staff Position

Date

**Staff Working Directly with Campers:** I \_\_\_\_\_, hereby affirm that I have read, understood and will comply with the provisions of the Counsellor Handbook.

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Signature

Staff Position

Date

