



A Focus on Leading with Care

Summer programs are one of the ways that we reach out and answer the call to help others grow in faith and the love of Christ. As we prepare for VBS, intergenerational events, camp, fellowship, etc. this summer, it is important to consider that many participants will be new to our congregations and buildings, and we must be prepared to provide them a safe place and offer a positive experience.

While it is important to evaluate risk and facilities, recruit and train leadership, and provide supervision in all cases, summer programs should consider the following from Chapter 3: Putting Policy into Practice of *Leading with Care*, specifically 3.7: Examine Safety and Prevention Areas, sections e-g, on pages 23-25.

The following sections are only part of the Church's policy on the protection of children, youth and vulnerable adults. Free copies of the policy are available from Canadian Ministries or at www.presbyterian.ca/leading-with-care

Off-site activities and overnight events

Special outings, day trips, service projects and weekend camps are an important part of children/youth /vulnerable adult ministry. They help people grow physically, emotionally, and spiritually, give youth a chance to learn social and leadership skills, and provide social opportunities for vulnerable adults. The following guidelines must be taken with these activities/events and an activity form signed (see 4.5).

Day excursions

- A teacher/leader must assess the risk of the activity and submit that assessment in writing to the Leading with Care or other appropriate committee for approval prior to the activity.
- Parents/guardians/caregivers must be notified prior to the outing.
- Written consent and medical forms are required for each child/youth/vulnerable adult participating in activities/events (see 4.5).
- [At least] One teacher/leader should have a cell phone and the phone numbers of where the parents of the children/youth can be contacted during the excursion. The teacher/leader should have a copy of the completed consent forms with them.
- All daytime excursions must be supervised by a minimum of two [non-related] teachers/leaders. Additional support workers might be necessary to accompany vulnerable adults.
- When transportation of children/youth /vulnerable adults is needed for an activity, all drivers must have a valid driver's license, valid automobile insurance and must be screened volunteers or paid staff. The number of persons per vehicle must never exceed the number of seat belts or car seats.
- [At least] one teacher/leader should have First Aid training.

Notifications to parents/guardians should be in writing. Complete and signed consent forms should be returned by the parents/guardians for every participant; this information remains confidential. These forms must be duplicated so that both the home site and leader of the excursion have copies.

Overnight activities/events

Follow all requirements listed in daytime excursions plus the following:

- Each children/youth/vulnerable adult is required to follow pre-established codes of conduct signed by the parent/guardian /caregiver and the child/youth/vulnerable adult.
- If the group is comprised of children/youth/vulnerable adults of both genders, teachers/leaders of both genders must be present.

- Each leader should have an assigned group of children/youth/vulnerable adults for whom they will be responsible during the overnight event.
- All facilities in which an overnight function is housed must be equipped with smoke detectors and inside release doors. All members of the group should be made aware of fire exits and fire procedures as required by provincial/regional standards.
- No adult should be alone with a single child/youth/vulnerable adult.
- If a day or overnight includes trips to a pool, lake or hot tub, all municipal/provincial/federal regulations regarding safety and supervision must be adhered to.

Billeting youth in private homes

Billeting reduces costs and allows youth to meet new people. Here are some things to keep in mind when billeting youth:

- Children under 14 years of age should not be billeted.
- The people offering billeting must be known, trusted members of the congregation.
- Billet youth in groups of at least two.
- The contact information (telephone number, address) of the individual with whom the youth will be billeted must be obtained by the group leader.

It may not always be possible to billet in groups of at least two. If it is necessary to billet a youth alone, hosts would require a police records check and the risk assessment guide and factors found on pages 20-21 should be considered.

Health

While congregations/ministries cannot always avoid having ill children/youth/vulnerable adults in their programs/ministries, several measures can be taken to promote good health and reduce infection.

i. Allergies

When children/youth/vulnerable adults register for a program, inquire about allergies. Post this information so that it will not be overlooked. If your program serves meals or snacks, post the menu so the parent/caregiver can see it. Avoid foods identified as serious allergens such as peanut butter, chocolate and nuts of any kind. Popcorn can be dangerous for young children.

ii. Injury

If a participant is injured while participating in a program/ministry or activity, the teacher/leader must arrange to get the person to medical care. If necessary, call 9-1-1. If the child/youth/vulnerable adult is bleeding, the teacher/leader should protect himself/herself and all others from the blood. For all injuries, even if the person does not need medical attention, a leader must complete a general incident report (see 4.6) and report the incident to the injured person's parent/guardian /caregiver. General incident reports should be stored in a locked metal cabinet.

iii. Infectious diseases

Teachers/leaders must ask parents/guardians to not let their children and youth attend church programs if they have symptoms and diseases which are known to be infectious, such as: diarrhoea, vomiting, fever, rash, open sores, skin or eye infection, scarlet fever, measles, mumps, chicken pox, whooping cough, head lice.

Ministries are encouraged to post helpful signs (e.g. "This is a nut free zone").

Whatever your congregation is planning this summer, remember to lead with care.

For helpful forms, checklists, and more information on *Leading with Care* visit www.presbyterian.ca/leading-with-care.

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