

# NAIM ABUSE PREVENTION POLICY

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## SECTION I

### INTRODUCTION:

The purpose of this policy is to confirm NAIM's commitment to:

- a) A safe environment by preventing harm to those in our care, and
- b) The protection of our children's and youth ministry workers from false or wrongful allegations, and
- c) Zero tolerance for abuse, harassment or neglect.

### 1. Definitions

1.1 Physical abuse is defined as the deliberate use of physical force intended to result in bodily injury, physical pain, impairment or suffering, or to cause the feelings of intimidation. Physical abuse may include but is not limited to such acts of violence as striking (with or without an object), hitting, beating, pushing, shoving, shaking, slapping, kicking, pinching and burning.

1.2 Sexual abuse is any sort of non-consensual sexual contact or when a person is exploited for the sexual gratification of another person. Sexual abuse can happen to men or women of any age.

1.3 Child sexual abuse is "any sexual act with a child performed by an adult or an older child." Child sexual abuse could include a number of acts, including but not limited to:

#### Contact

- Touched in sexual areas (mouth, breasts, buttocks, anus, and genital area)
- Forced to touch another's sexual areas
- Held in a sexual way
- Anally or vaginally penetrated

#### Non-contact

- Shown sexual videos
- Being flashed/exposed to sexual body parts, in person or through technology
- Forced to listen to sexual talk
- Forced to pose for seductive photos
- Forced to look at sexual body parts of another person

1.4 Emotional abuse is any act including confinement, isolation, verbal assault, humiliation, intimidation, or any other treatment which may diminish the sense of identity, dignity, and self-worth.

1.5 Child neglect happens when a child's physical, developmental, emotional or psychological needs are not met. This would include but is not limited to failing to provide proper food, clothing suitable for the weather, supervision, a home that is safe and medical care as needed.

**1.6 Harassment** refers to an ongoing or persistent form of discrimination that is similar to bullying in that someone hurts another person through cruel, offensive and insulting behavior. The following are types of harassment/bullying:

- Physical bullying: using physical force or aggression against another person (e.g., hitting)
- Verbal bullying: using words to verbally attack someone (e.g., name-calling)
- Social/relational bullying: trying to hurt someone through excluding them, spreading rumours or ignoring them (e.g., gossiping)
- Cyberbullying: using electronic media to threaten, embarrass, intimidate, or exclude someone, or to damage their reputation (e.g., sending threatening text messages).

**1.7 Improper touching** is physical contact that violates any expression of appropriate love and care.

Examples but not limited to:

- Kissing a child, coaxing a child to kiss you, extended hugging and inappropriate tickling
- Touching a child in any area that would be covered by a bathing suit
- Carrying older children or having them sit on your lap
- Prolonged physical contact
- Seductive or suggestive contact
- Any physical contact of any kind that is done for the pleasure or satisfaction of care providers
- Any touching used to express power or control over a child.

**1.8 Improper Discipline** is taking action that inappropriately and/or harmfully attempts to control a child/youth. It is reflected in any deliberate infliction of pain in order to punish or in retribution for a perceived offence. Some examples are: excessive yelling or screaming, verbal threats of punishment, and corporal punishment of any kind, e.g. spanking, paddling, caning, pelting. By contrast, proper discipline involves establishing clear boundaries of acceptable behavior and maintaining such behavioral expectations with kind and firm expressions of authority.

**1.9 Position of Trust**, for the purposes of this policy, is the role of responsibility entrusted to Ministry Personnel by parents/guardians to care for, influence, and exercise authority over a child/youth under the age of majority.

**1.10 Ministry Personnel** are NAIM staff (employees and screened volunteers such as Covenant Volunteers, Interns and SMIers) who engage in NAIM's mandate to fulfill the Great Commission among First Nations/Native American peoples.

**1.11 Community Volunteer At Large** is a volunteer who is not with any church or organization who may volunteer to help at a youth camp or activity.

1.12 Record Check for Volunteers is equivalent to a standard Criminal Record Check including a Vulnerable Sector Search (VSS) for the primary screening. Subsequent record check screening may be necessary if prompted by the initial screening.

## 2. Understanding NAIM's responsibility

We recognize the tremendous responsibility we have to reflect who God is to all people. He is gracious, kind, loving, merciful, righteous, holy and just. NAIM Ministry Personnel endeavor to reflect God and to lovingly (and appropriately) care for the children/youth under our influence and responsibility.

Child abuse is a crime, and is especially severe when it occurs while a child/youth is in a Christian setting. Ministries are particularly vulnerable. "For this reason, it is essential that NAIM develop clear policies and procedures that will serve to protect not only the children and youth, but also those who work with them and the ministry as a whole." (PTP – pg. 21)

"Should an allegation of abuse make it to the courts, in their legal decisions, the court will determine if the organization exerted sufficient control over their operations. (PTP – pg. 24)

## 3. General Guideline/Principle for reducing risk of abuse and allegations

Every reasonable effort is to be made so that NAIM ministry personnel are never alone with a child/youth or vulnerable person at any time.

## SECTION II

### 4. NAIM Ministry Personnel

#### 4.1 Recruiting and Screening:

See NAIM Policy Handbook Chapter 3 Section B for recruiting and screening procedures. Section B includes information on the process, qualifications, applications form, reference checks, interviews, police records check, training and approval/acceptance.

#### 4.2 Abuse Prevention Training

All ministry personnel will:

- have an initial training on abuse prevention, and
- undergo annual refresher training.

#### 4.3 Criminal Record Check/Screening

All staff will be screened before they begin their ministry. This screening will include a Vulnerable Sector Search (VSS) for the primary screening. Subsequent check will be a Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC) check for ministries in Canada and the equivalent in the United States. As mentioned above, further details related to screening can be found in the NAIM Handbook of Policies and Procedures in Chapter 3 Section B.

Follow-up checks will be done a minimum of every 5 years. The reports will be kept locked in the permanent HR file.

### 5. Screening and Training for Volunteers

5.1 Volunteers coming with a Church or other non-profit organization. See Section 9.7 below.

5.2 Volunteers from Community Organizations and Entities. See Section 9.6 below.

5.3 Community Volunteers At Large (CVAL).

If the CVAL is going to be in a Position of Trust or are an Ongoing Volunteer (e.g. weekly/monthly events), then they will need a Record Check and the Abuse Prevention Training.

If the CVAL is not going to be in a Position of Trust (e.g. kitchen help at a camp), they will need to get a Record Check if possible. The Abuse Prevention Training is available and is also encouraged.

Contact the office regarding information for record checks for volunteers.

### 6. Operational and Premise Procedures

6.1 Staff will make every reasonable effort to have at least two screened adult leaders present when interacting with one or more teens, whether on premises, grabbing a coffee together or during some other off-premises activity, event or mentoring program. As a general rule, these adults should not be related.

6.2 If a one-on-one interaction is necessary, it is to be done in an open or public area that is visible to others. Ministry Personnel are encouraged to mentor youth in small group settings and in teams.

6.3 Any sponsored youth event should always have a leader-to-youth ratio of no less than one leader to eight youth, particularly if it is outside, near public roads or off-premises. The higher the risk, the greater the supervision required. For example a wilderness hiking trip may require a 1:4 ratio or lower. As well, if you have any special needs persons in your care, leader-to-youth ratio should be adjusted.

6.4 Copies of valid driver's licenses and insurance coverage must be provided by all drivers. All drivers must have a minimum driving history of 5 years. Under no circumstances can a driver be 21 years or younger. We strongly recommend that drivers be 25 years of age or older.

6.5 Every effort should be made to have a third person in the vehicle, preferably two unrelated adults with one or more minors as passengers when ministry personnel are driving youth to and from activities.

6.6 During any counseling session between an adult ministry leader and youth, the best practice is to keep the door of the counselling room open for the entire session. Ideally, the session will be conducted at a time when others are nearby. Consider counselling in a group setting whenever possible, where witnesses to the conversation and interaction are present.

6.7 Sleepover events should include the approval of your supervisor. As with all NAIM functions a signed parental permission slip is required. The "two adult" rule must be followed. Separate sleeping quarters for males and females must be arranged and leader must be awake for as long as youth to ensure monitoring of safe behavior, no sharing the same bed between any adults and youth, leaders must not change in front of youth.

6.8 "Horseplay" and inappropriate touching is not acceptable for adults to engage in with youth even in fun. Piggyback rides are to be discouraged, especially with older children and youth.

6.9 Appropriate displays of affection would include side/shoulder-to-shoulder hugs, and pats on the hand, shoulder or back, handshakes, high-fives when youth are accepting of such expressions. For children appropriate displays of affection would include bending down to child's eye level; listening to him/her carefully, taking a child's hand and leading him/her to an activity, holding a child by the shoulders or hand to keep his or her attention while you redirect the child's behavior. Holding a pre-school child who is upset is acceptable.

6.10 Appropriate verbal interaction would include positive reinforcement, appropriate jokes, encouragement and praise. Avoid any form of name calling, adults having sexually oriented inappropriate conversations, involving youth in personal problems of leaders, having secret elements of any relationship, compliments related to physique or body development, cursing, off-colour or sexual jokes, shaming, belittling, derogatory remarks or harsh language that may frighten, threaten or humiliate.

6.11 It is not acceptable to expose children/youth to restricted, adult or age-inappropriate media.

6.12 You should never be alone with a child taking photos of them.

6.13 Unscreened visitors will not be placed in positions of trust with children/youth.

6.14 Washroom supervision should be age appropriate with the following recommendations:

- Pre-grade one should only be taken to the washroom by a parent or guardian.



- Infants should have their diapers changed by a parent or guardian. If not possible, then a screened staff should do so in the presence of at least one other unrelated screened staff.
- School age children requiring assistance should be accompanied to the door of the washroom, which the staff should open to make sure no one is hanging around in the washroom and then wait outside the door in case they are called for help; or hear anything suspicious.
- Ministry personnel are to be responsible for washroom supervision.
- Older children may go on washroom breaks using the buddy system unaccompanied by a supervisor if your hallways and washrooms are checked regularly by ministry personnel who takes notice of suspicious activity, including strangers (adults or teens) lingering in halls or washrooms.

6.15 Staff will assure that adequate/appropriate lighting exists inside and outside of buildings where children's/youth activities take place.

## 7. Social Networking

7.1 Ministry personnel demonstrate and model purity, integrity, transparency and accountability in all forms of social networking, e.g. email, texting, personal messages, etc.

7.2 No "private" communications with a minor (under 18) are to be secretive. Parent or guardians should be made aware of the fact that there are exchanges via whatever form of social media is being used.

7.3 Parent/guardian **MUST** be made aware of private social media communication of any kind with children under 13 years of age.

7.4 Unsupervised access to the internet on staff-controlled computers and devices is not allowed.

## SECTION III

### 8. Responding and Reporting to Allegations and Suspicions of Abuse

8.1 All allegations, disclosures and/or suspicions of abuse will be taken seriously and will be reported as required by law.

NAIM Staff/Volunteers is not allowed to ask any leading questions of a child. It is important that you make it clear to the child that whatever they say to you will be reported immediately to the authorities, including the police.

8.2 Staff and volunteers are required to **IMMEDIATELY**:

1. Notify immediate supervisor and fill out an Incident Report (found on the NAIM staff website).
2. In cooperation with the supervisor, fulfill statutory reporting obligations to child protective agencies and/or police authorities for the geographical area of ministry.

Government regulations vary by country and province/state, staff and volunteers are responsible to know what the law/regulations are.

8.3 Details and requirements are outlined on the incident report form. The report must be submitted to the Supervisor, the Operations Director, the Executive Director and the person responsible to communicate with insurance and legal counsel as soon as reasonably possible. Reports will be kept permanently unless otherwise directed by legal counsel.

8.4 NAIM is committed to maintaining appropriate confidentiality for the alleged victim and alleged perpetrator. No ministry personnel except the Executive Director are to speak to the media. In cases where an accusation of an abuse has been made against a staff member or when a child/youth was involved in an NAIM activity, a designated employee will contact the insurance company and legal counsel.

8.5 Staff will be immediately suspended for allegations of abuse pending the outcome of the investigation.

8.6 All investigations will be carried out by police or appropriate government agent.

8.7 Without admitting legal liability or making public statements NAIM assures a compassionate response to the alleged victim and their family.

## SECTION IV

### 9. Miscellaneous Policies

#### 9.1 Internal Audit

A review of the policy will be completed annually and reported to the Board of Directors.

#### 9.2 Permission Slips

9.2.1 NAIM has an "Informed Consent" form for registration, release and permission to be used by all ministries. This form must be updated annually for all participants in NAIM ministries. Forms are to be completed and signed by the legal guardian of the child or youth. Forms are to be sent to the NAIM office for permanent storage.

9.2.2 For special "off-site" events or trips, a signed "Informed Consent" must be completed for the specific activity noting any elevated risk activities.

#### 9.3 Volunteer Drivers

Occasionally special events require extra drivers. Volunteer drivers must complete the Volunteer Driver Agreement form. When only children and youth are being transported, it is necessary for a

screened staff member to accompany a volunteer driver – unless the volunteer driver has been trained in NAIM's Abuse Prevention Training. No one should be driving alone with a child or group of children or youth; however, you could drive in a caravan so that no one is actually alone with the children or youth even though there is one adult driving in each vehicle.

#### 9.4 Attendance Records

A record will be kept of participants and Ministry Personnel at all NAIM sponsored ministry events (youth groups, day clubs, camps, etc.). These logs will be sent to the NAIM office and kept on file permanently.

#### 9.5 Forms

*Forms are found in the NAIM Policy Handbook, Chapter 12 Section K*

9.5.1 Informed Consent form

9.5.2 Incident Report form

9.5.3 Suspected Abuse Report form

9.5.4 Volunteer Driver Agreement

9.5.5 Church Partnering Agreement

#### 9.6 Partnering within Communities

NAIM works in partnership with various community organizations and entities (bands, friendship centres, youth and sports agencies, etc.) who take responsibility for their own staff/volunteers including screening, training, and liability.

#### 9.7 Partnering Churches

All churches who partner with NAIM by providing volunteer workers must have their own screening process (which includes criminal record checks) and training. As well, churches must have appropriate liability insurance and accept full responsibility for the members of their team.