



# NAIM Abuse Prevention Policy

VOLUNTEER Refresher Session



# INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the Abuse Prevention policy is to confirm NAIM's commitment to:

- a) A safe environment by preventing harm to those in our care,
- 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.





## 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 and Volunteers should endeavor to reflect God and to lovingly (and appropriately) care for the children/youth under our influence and responsibility.**



## Understanding NAIM's 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, NAIM has developed clear policies and procedures that will serve to protect not only the children and youth, but also those of us who work with them and the ministry as a whole.





## Understanding NAIM's Responsibility

- The General Guideline/Principle for reducing risk of abuse and allegations should be that every reasonable effort is made so that NAIM ministry personnel and volunteers are never alone with a child/youth or vulnerable person at any time.



## Criminal Record Checks

- All volunteers are to have a criminal record check on file -- either with NAIM or the church/organization with which they are associated.



# NAIM's Abuse Prevention Procedures for Volunteers



1



All staff and volunteers will make every reasonable effort to have at least two screened adult leaders present when interacting with one or more children/youth. As a general rule, these adults should not be related.



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.

### 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.



4



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.

5



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



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.

7



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.



7



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.

7



During any counseling session between an adult ministry leader and youth:

If they are disclosing any information about an abuse, you should immediately let them know that whatever they tell you is not strictly confidential and that if they are bringing to you any abuse allegation, you will have to notify the authorities.



8



## For Sleepover Events

- The “two adult” rule must be followed.
- Separate sleeping quarters for males and females must be arranged and the 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 clothes in front of any youth.

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“Horseplay” and inappropriate touching is not acceptable for adults to engage in with youth or children even in fun.

Piggyback rides are to be discouraged, especially with older children and youth.



### **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** age-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 preschool child who is upset is acceptable.





### **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.

12



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

13



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



14



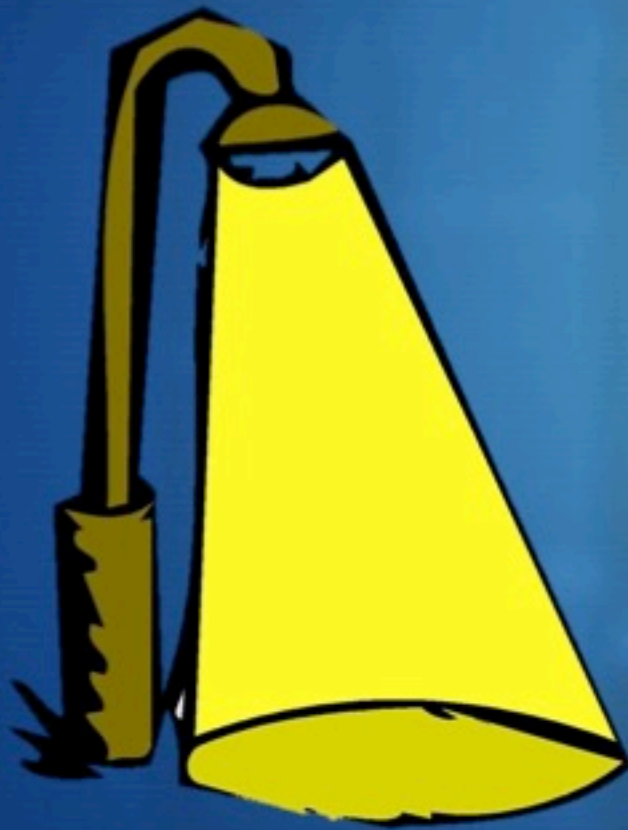
Unscreened visitors/  
volunteers will not be placed  
in positions of trust with  
children/youth. They are not  
allowed to be alone with any  
children/youth without another  
screened adult leader present.



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

- Pre-grade 1 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.

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





# Social Networking

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



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.

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

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



# Responding to and Reporting Allegations and Suspensions of Abuse





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

- Volunteers are required to IMMEDIATELY notify NAIM staff who will notify their immediate Supervisor/Regional Director and fill out an incident report.
- NAIM staff will then, in cooperation with the Supervisor/Regional Director, fulfill statutory reporting obligations to child protective agencies and/or police authorities for the geographical area of ministry.



- NAIM Staff/Volunteers are 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 may need to be reported to the authorities, including the police.



- NAIM is committed to maintaining appropriate confidentiality for the alleged victim and alleged perpetrator. No ministry personnel or volunteers 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.





# The END

- o Congratulations! You have finished the NAIM Abuse Prevention Policy Refresher course for Volunteers!
- o Please complete the Volunteer Agreement form for our records at NAIM.

THANK YOU!