

Duty of Care Policy

St. Paul's United Church

Based on United Church of Canada documents (see below)

Adopted July 2018

The United Church is committed to providing a safe environment for worship, work and study in all pastoral charges, congregations, institutions, agencies and organizations, or other bodies that operate under its name.

UCC Manual J.15, 2016

What Is a "Duty of Care"?

With respect to staff, volunteers, and participants in a ministry, a duty of care is the obligation to take reasonable care to avoid causing foreseeable harm to another person or his or her property.

In the administration of specific ministries, it is the responsibility of senior staff and board members or directors to exercise the care, diligence, and skill of a reasonably prudent person in the oversight of the organization's governance.

Theological Statement

Jesus came into the world to bring life in all its fullness. As followers of Jesus we are called to love one another (John 13:34-35), to share our gifts and resources, and to build a community of mutuality and respect (Acts 2:44-47). As a church, we have a primary duty to care for those who are marginalized, less powerful, or more vulnerable in our community (Deuteronomy 10 :17-19; Isaiah 61:1-2).

God intends that all people enjoy a life free from exploitation and abuse. Created in the image of God, everyone has a right to be treated with respect and protected from harm.

Documents:

UCC Duty of Care (September 2016)

UCC Faithful Footsteps (2000)

UCC Police Records Checks (July 2017)

UCC Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Procedure (July 2017)

POLICE INFORMATION CHECKS

Ministerial staff - UCC policy in place.

Lay staff - currently required to have a police check at time of employment.

This is monitored by the M&P Committee.

Police information checks are now required in our society for individuals working with vulnerable sector individuals, including children, seniors or disabled persons.

In case an issue arises leading to legal action, the congregation would be in a stronger legal position if all of its volunteers have undergone police record checks. The purpose is to prevent anyone who has committed a breach of trust, in regard to the care of vulnerable sector individuals, from transferring to a different jurisdiction and committing a similar offence.

VOLUNTEERS

This policy applies to any individual who has volunteered to work with children and youth (to age 18) in programs offered by St. Paul's United Church and any individual who is working with vulnerable sector individuals on behalf of St. Paul's. Vulnerable sector individuals include especially seniors and disabled people.

Other categories of volunteers may be asked to have a police information check at the request of the Board, e.g. M&P Committee members.

Procedures

Each volunteer is asked to obtain a police information check and this will be renewed every three years. The cost is nominal and will be paid by St. Paul's. The report resulting from the police check will be inspected by two official representatives of St. Paul's. These two individuals will then complete a form which certifies that they have seen the police record report. This form is kept on file by St. Paul's permanently.

The police check report form is returned to the volunteer (neither the original nor a copy is kept by St. Paul's). If the report indicates a conviction that would call the eligibility of the volunteer into question, this concern will be reported to the Ministry and Personnel Committee for their consideration. All individuals with access to the information contained in the police check report must sign a confidentiality agreement.

Implementation

In regard to individuals who have been visiting or working with children and youth on behalf of St. Paul's for many years (previous to 2018), the police information check is requested but voluntary. In regard to new volunteers, from this time forward, the police check will be mandatory.