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## VUM Policy – Child Protection

### Purpose of Policy

To:

- provide a safe environment for both children and adults during activities associated with Vancouver Urban Ministries (VUM); and to
- comply with the law

### Definitions

Child (vulnerable person) – a person under the age of 19, or who are 19 or older but dependent on a parent.

Helper/Volunteer – a volunteer who lends assistance to and acts under the direct supervision of a staff member or worker. However, a helper must not, except in emergency situations, be working with children alone or without a worker present. An example of a helper could be a parent volunteer for an activity.

### Statement of Policy

It is VUM's policy to:

- Follow approved procedures in the selection and recruitment of staff, Board members and workers.
- Implement operational procedures in all programs and events in which children are under VUM's direct care, to reduce the risk of harm to these children.
- Obtain application form, conduct an interview (for new music teachers), and undertake criminal and reference background checks on all staff and workers.
- Provide instruction to staff and workers regarding implementation of our policies and procedures including abuse prevention and protection.
- Provide supervision and support for staff, workers, and helpers/volunteers.
- Have a procedure for reporting instances of injury, harm or abuse.
- Annually review our policies and procedures for compliance with legal requirements and good practice.
- Require all staff, Board members and volunteers to review the Child Protection Policy on an annual basis for personal awareness of their responsibility.

Revision Date: Sept 2024

(by Esther Leung)

PROCEDURES FOR IMPLEMENTING VUM'S CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

**A. Applicability**

For Eagle Youth Music School, there is a mandatory policy for either a parent, appointed guardian, or designated sibling who is 19 years or older to be present for the duration of the music lesson.

At this time, VUM does not conduct activities specifically for children ages 5 years or younger (eg. nursery services are not provided). If such services are to be provided, these procedures will be revised accordingly.

**B. Responsibility**

1. It is the responsibility of the Music School Director to implement these procedures.
2. It is the Executive Director's responsibility to:
  - a. Ensure an initial training session for the staff, workers, and helpers on these procedures;
  - b. Evaluate the performance of the Eagle Youth Music School Director in implementing these procedures.

**C. Selection and Recruitment of Staff Members, Workers and Helpers**

VUM seeks to bring transformation to those who are the most vulnerable in our community. Therefore, it is our spiritual responsibility to do everything within our power to protect and ensure the safety of each individual we serve. We will not tolerate any form of abuse, harassment, or neglect (see appendix E for definitions) of our clients or volunteers. We will endeavor to not only protect those we serve, but also protect our volunteers from false accusations.

**3. C.1. Initial Screening**

VUM Board requires all staff, Board members and volunteers to undergo a screening process before working with participants, which will include an application form, interview and criminal record check. When recruiting workers from other churches, it is the responsibility of the VUM to have assurance from each network church of their compliance to these standards.

Application Form - The worker and volunteer application process will include, but does not need to be limited to the following:

- Signed worker/ online volunteer application form
- Background References check (There will be a minimum of two reference checks. ) – See Appendix B.

Interview Process - An interview process must be a part of the screening process for new volunteers.

**Criminal Record Check** - VUM will not use individuals with past criminal code convictions for offences as listed below. They will not be accepted for a direct service position with any clients. These offences include, but are not limited to, the following with exclusion timeframes listed:

Lifetime Ban	Any type of sexual assault
	Invitation to sexual touching
	Sexual interference or sexual exploitation
	Procuring sexual activity
	Indictable criminal offences for youth abuse
	Court Order forbidding the individual to have contact with children under the age of 14
	Any convictions related to child pornography
Five Year Ban	Any Assault (1, 2, 3)
	Any weapons offence
	Conviction under any controlled drugs and substance act
	Criminal Driving offence
Banned until resolved through the judicial system	Outstanding convictions or charges pending for any violent offence
	Outstanding convictions or charges pending for criminal driving offences, including but not limited to impaired driving.
	Outstanding convictions or charges pending for sexual offences

Volunteer placement is made on the basis of the position requirements, the skills and experience of the applicant, two satisfactory references and criminal record check.

#### **4. C.2 Storage of Applications and References**

All applications, interviews, and references will be held in the highest confidentiality. The original or a copy of the original criminal record check must be attached to application form. All records will be indefinitely kept on file.

It is the responsibility of the VUM Executive Director or Administrator to ensure the storage of applications and references are kept private in this matter.

### 5. C.3 On-Going Screening

Each staff, Board member and volunteer will also be asked to sign an Annual Commitment Form (See Appendix E) and confirm they have read the Child Protection Policy.

## D. Implement Operational Procedures to Reduce Risk

### D.1a. Regular Activities

#### For in-person lesson

1. Prior to an activity, the responsible or organizing worker shall review the place of activity and the activities themselves and check for any hazards. If a hazard is identified, the activity shall be modified to minimize the risk of the hazard causing injury to persons participating in the VUM activity.
2. For all VUM activities, every effort shall be made to have at least two adults present, one of which shall be a worker.
  - a. Music School – During music lessons, the student must be accompanied by a parent or an appointed guardian or sibling who is at least 19 years of age.
3. Whenever possible, workers must avoid situations where they are alone with a child.
  - a. Music School – Under no circumstances will music teachers provide a lesson without a parent or an appointed guardian present.
4. Workers for the Tutoring Program should record the lesson plan and how the lesson was carried out. Attendance shall be recorded to account for the students and tutors present at each lesson.

#### For online lessons

1. For online music lessons, it is a mandatory policy for all children and volunteers who are minors to have an adult (parent, guardian or sibling over 19) present in the same room or general area during the lesson.
2. The audio and video of the device used for the lessons (such as laptop, tablet or phone) must be turned on so the adults can hear and monitor the lesson.
  - a. **Option** - if the child needs to be in a separate room for the lesson, the parent can log into the music lesson from another device (in another room but in the same household) so they can still monitor the lesson.
3. The online music lessons must not be recorded for privacy reasons.
4. Music teachers must ensure that situations do not occur where an adult is alone with a child.

5. Taking attendance: VUM will provide an online attendance sheet for music teachers to mark the attendance.

#### **D.1 Field Trips and Special Events**

1. Activities conducted away from VUM ministry sites shall be pre-approved by the Executive Director.
2. Activities conducted outside of Canada must be pre-approved by the Board of Directors with at least 4 months notice to ensure insurance coverage is effective.
3. Parents shall be notified at least one week prior to the outing.
4. All trips and outings must be supervised by at least two workers.
5. When transporting children is involved in an activity, VUM must receive consent from parents or parents/guardians must be present. All drivers must have a valid driver's license and current automobile insurance. The number of persons per car must never exceed the number of seat belts.
6. A completed and current Authorization and Consent form must be obtained or be in VM's files for all events, trips etc.

#### **D.2 Overnight Events**

1. A completed and current Authorization and Consent form is required for each child (see attached form).
2. All overnight activities shall be attended by at least 2 workers and shall have a minimum ratio of 1 worker or helper for every 5 children. If only 2 workers are available, they must be unrelated.
3. Each worker or helper shall have an assigned group of children for whom they will be responsible.

#### **D.3 Provide Instruction for Implementing Policies and Procedures**

1. All staff and workers shall receive a copy of the Child Protection Policy and Procedures.
2. A worker will provide instruction on the protection policy and procedures to new workers.
3. All persons receiving instruction on the child protection policy and procedures shall provide their name, and sign and date a record of this activity. Persons refusing to do so shall be dismissed. This record shall be provided to the ED.
4. Helpers shall be informed that VUM has a child protection policy as well as procedures to protect against abuse. The procedures do not permit helpers from being alone with children. This means that a helper cannot be in a situation with children whereby a worker is not close-by and the helper cannot be checked on by the worker at any time.

## E. Provide Supervision and Support (for Tutoring Programing only)

1. Workers and/or helpers shall work in pairs whenever possible. When this is not practical, a worker will be responsible for occasionally observing other workers or helpers carrying out the ministry, checking with them about needs and offering suggestions for improvement.
2. Each worker shall maintain a list of helpers who assist them.
3. Workers shall check-up on helpers throughout an activity.
4. Workers and helpers shall be informed of other workers who they can go to for assistance if needed.

### E.1 Definition of Abuse

1. As set out in the Child, Family and Community Service Act, every worker or helper/volunteer has a legal duty to report if they believe that a child “has been, or is likely to be, physically harmed, sexually abused or sexually exploited by a parent or by another person and the parent is unwilling or unable to protect the child, or if the child has been or is likely to be physically harmed because of neglect by the child’s parent” or if:
  - The child is emotionally harmed by the parent’s conduct;
  - The child is deprived of necessary health care;
  - The child’s development is likely to be seriously impaired by a treatable condition and the child’s parent refuses to provide or consent to treatment;
  - The child’s parent is unable or unwilling to care for the child and has not made adequate provision for the child’s care;
  - The child is or has been absent from home in circumstances that endanger the child’s safety or well-being;
  - The child’s parent is dead and adequate provision has not been made for the child’s care;
  - The child has been abandoned and adequate provision has not been made for the child’s care.
2. Historical Abuse – You must report if:
  - A child discloses past abuse to you.
  - You are an adult who was abused and have reason to believe that your abuser could be abusing other children.
  - You are a service provider that has reason to believe an alleged past abuser could be abusing other children.

3. Abusive behavior between children – notify parents or guardians of abusive behavior.
4. Abusive behavior between children – Decisions about whether to report need to be made on a case-by-case basis.
  - There is no need to report:
    - i. Normal sexual play or exploration between children of similar ages; correction should be given and parent advised
    - ii. Minor altercations or aggression between children;
    - iii. Any other activity that is in the bounds of normal childhood behavior
  - Factors to be considered when deciding whether or not to report:
    - i. The seriousness of the behavior
    - ii. The existence of a power imbalance between the children
    - iii. Whether the behavior result in harm to another child or other children
    - iv. The willingness and ability of the involved child's parent to respond appropriately
    - v. If the children are behaving appropriately for their age
    - vi. If the child involved is being coercive or exploitive
    - vii. Whether their behavior is impulsive or premeditated
    - viii. If the behavior is part of a pattern of domination, force, aggression (actual or threatened) or intimidation which endangers the physical or psychological well-being of another child.

#### **F. Procedure for Reporting Instances of Injury, Harm, or Abuse**

1. Any inappropriate conduct or relationships between workers or helpers and a child must be confronted immediately. Prompt warnings must be issued when appropriate, and the situation monitored very closely. Workers should note when a child appears aloof or withdrawn, or exhibits a marked personality change. This may indicate a problem that deserves attention. Note: Some conduct just deserves counsel and advice from a worker while other conduct requires reporting.
2. Workers or helpers/volunteers may be subject to suspension, without compensation, pending the outcome of an investigation.
3. Any allegations of injury, harm or abuse shall be reported immediately to the Executive Director and Music School Director. The Executive Director shall immediately inform the Chair of the Board of Directors of any serious and legitimate allegations. Any such instance involving the Executive Director shall be reported immediately to the Chair of the Board of Directors.

4. Legitimate allegations of suspected abuse shall be reported by the Executive Director immediately to the government's Child Abuse hotline 604-310-1234 and to the police, as is appropriate.
5. Document the information you have knowledge of regarding the incident and submit it to the Executive Director, but leave a detailed investigation to the police or government authorities. A form for this documentation is attached. (See Appendix D.)
6. Suspected abuse shall be reported as soon as practical to the insurance company (currently Brokerforce Insurance Inc. phone 1-800-263-9870).
7. All information related to allegations of abuse shall be kept confidential, except when disclosure is required by law.
8. The Executive Director shall be the only spokesperson for any allegation. If the allegation involves the Executive Director, then the Chair of the Board of Directors shall be the only spokesperson.

**G. Annually Review Policies and Procedures**

1. A review of the protection policy and procedures will be made annually. Based on this review, the protection policy and/or procedures will be updated, if necessary.
2. All workers shall receive annual refresher training on the child protection policy and procedures.

## **Appendix A      VOLUNTEER WORKER APPLICATION FORM**

**Music School Volunteer Application Form (2024 - 2025)**

<https://form.jotform.com/242280934605254>

## Appendix B REFERENCE CHECK FORM

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

\_\_\_\_\_ has listed you as a reference for volunteering at Vancouver Urban Ministries as a music teacher/tutor for inner-city students. VUM is a non-profit organization that helps inner-city students to achieve their full potential.

We hope that you will be able to answer the following questions as soon as possible. Please note that we cannot fully process the applicant's application until we have received your reply. Your timely reply would be most helpful, we appreciate your time and effort in advance.

### Reference check questions

- 1) What is your relationship to the applicant and how long have you known him/her?
- 2) Can you describe a time where the applicant displayed good communication/ interpersonal skills?
- 3) Can you describe a time where the applicant displayed good problem-solving skills?
- 4) How does he/she react to working under pressure or in a stressful environment?
- 5) In your opinion, what are some qualities that would make the applicant a good music teacher? Have you observed his/her teaching others?
- 6) Do you think this individual is suitable to work with inner city "at risk" students? Would you have any concerns or hesitations?
- 7) In your opinion, what are some qualities that the applicant can improve on?

Sincerely,

<insert name of the person sending email>

## Appendix C AUTHORIZATION AND CONSENT FORM

Information received is confidential and is being gathered for the purposes of serving your child while in the care of Vancouver Urban Ministries (VUM). Any medical information collected here serves to authorize VUM, and its staff, workers, and volunteers, to obtain medical assistance in emergencies.

For the calendar years 2024 o 2025

<b>Child's Information</b>
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Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

School \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Parents or Guardian's name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

In case of emergency, contact \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Does your child have any allergies, physical, emotional, mental, behavioral concerns or limitations that our staff should be aware of? If Yes, please explain.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Waiver and Release

I/we, the parents or guardians named above, authorize Vancouver Urban Ministries (VUM) staff, workers or volunteers to sign consent for medical treatment and to authorize any physician or hospital to provide medical assessment, treatment or procedures for the participant named above.

I/we, named above undertake and agree to indemnify and hold harmless VUM staff, volunteers, officers, directors and agents from and against any loss, damage, injury or death suffered by the participant as a result of being part of the activities of VUM program/activities, as well as of any medical treatment authorized by the supervising individuals representing VUM. This consent and authorization is effective when participating in or traveling to and from events of VUM. This includes off-site events and events requiring intense physical activity.

I/we, named above undertake and agree to indemnify and hold harmless VUM staff, volunteers, officers, directors and agents from any actions, suits, claims, demands whatsoever arising from any negligent, wrongful, or illegal act or omission of the participant in respect of any VUM activity.

I/we agree that if any provision of this form is invalid, then such provision will be severed from this form and the remaining provisions shall remain in force.

### Use of your child's pictures

I/we give permission for my children/family photo to be taken and used for VUM promotion material.

### Signature

I have read, understood and agree with the above and sign it to cover all of Vancouver Urban Ministries' activities. Activities for the program effective from date signed through September 30, 2023.

Parent/Guardian's Signature X \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Purposes and Extent

Vancouver Urban Ministries is collecting and retaining this personal information for the purpose of enrolling your child in our programs, to assign the student to appropriate groups, to develop and nurture ongoing relationships with you and your child, and to inform you of program updates and upcoming opportunities in our ministries. This information may be maintained indefinitely. If you wish Vancouver Urban Ministries to limit the information collected, or to view your child's information, please contact us.

**Appendix D INCIDENT DOCUMENTATION FORM**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Name of Child: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Nature of Suspected Abuse (physical, sexual, emotional, neglect):

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Indications of suspected abuse:

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Action taken (including date and time):

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The above information shall be kept CONFIDENTIAL.

Signature of Person Reporting:

Signature of Executive Director

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**a.**

**APPENDIX E: Staff and Volunteer Annual Commitment Form**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**VUM Commitment to Child, Youth and Adult Protection**

VUM seeks to bring transformation to those who are the most vulnerable in our community. Therefore it is our spiritual responsibility to do everything within our power to protect and ensure the safety of each individual we serve. We will not tolerate any form of abuse, harassment, or neglect of our clients or volunteers.

In light of this commitment I have read, understand and will uphold all the elements of the Child Protection Policy. I understand that unacceptable behaviour may lead to disciplinary action or even immediate dismissal without warning.

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

Annual Renewal	Date	Signature
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____

**VUM Confidentiality Agreement**

I promise to protect the privacy and confidentiality of everyone who has requested or who may request assistance from VUM.

I agree not to disclose or discuss specific or identifying information concerning any client or source of verification to any unauthorized person or persons outside my sphere (VUM, phone volunteer, contact person or other).

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

Annual Renewal	Date	Signature
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____