



Mosaic Intercultural Church London

Abuse Prevention Policy

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Table of Contents

1. What is Abuse?
2. Who Are Potential Perpetrators of Abuse?
3. Who are Potential Victims?
4. What are Potential Indicators of Abuse?
 - Aside: What About Mutually-Consented Romantic Interest?
5. What Forms of Abuse are We Preventing?
 - 5.1 Physical Abuse
 - 5.2 Sexual Abuse
 - 5.3 Emotional Abuse
 - 5.4 Child Neglect
 - 5.5 Verbal Abuse / Harassment
 - 5.6 Spiritual Abuse
6. General Abuse-Prevention Procedures at Mosaic
 - 6.1 Avoid Being Completely Alone – the “Two-Adult Rule”
 - 6.2 Keep One-on-One Ministries Between People of the Same Gender
 - 6.3 Waiting Period
 - 6.4 Screening - Criminal Record Check and Background Reference Check
 - 6.5 Annual Review and Audit
7. Abuse Prevention for those involved with Ministries to Children and Youth
 - 7.1 No Corporal Punishment
 - 7.2 Accepting and Releasing Children from Programs
 - 7.3 Washroom Policy
 - 7.4 Contacting Children and Youth Off-Premises
 - 7.5 Internet Access

7.6 No One-on-One Photography

7.7 Consent Forms

7.8 Sleepover Guidelines

8. Reporting Suspected Abuse or Accidents

9. Managing Harassment

10. What Procedures will be Initiated if Someone is Accused of Abuse?

INCIDENT REPORT FORM FOR SUSPECTED OR POSSIBLE ABUSE

Mosaic Intercultural Church London Abuse Prevention Policy

We are committed to ensuring that Mosaic provides a safe environment for people to grow and to serve. In our desire to protect those within our care, we have a zero-tolerance policy for abuse, harassment, and neglect. We also have procedures that protect leaders from false accusations.

1. What is Abuse?

Abuse may be defined as the violation of healthy and appropriate interpersonal boundaries. It is not necessarily a single behaviour but may also be a pattern of behaviour that involves the inappropriate exercising of power by a person in authority over another person.

2. Who Are Potential Perpetrators of Abuse?

Anyone in a leadership position within a church is at risk of committing abuse because the authority or influence they hold constitutes power which may be used to hurt rather than help someone else.

3. Who are Potential Victims?

Anyone who can be exploited by a person in a position of power is a potential victim. The most likely examples include: minors (infants to youth), females,

and people who are weak and/or vulnerable.

Another category of victim are falsely accused leaders, usually males, in positions of authority.

4. What are Potential Indicators of Abuse?

Indicators are signs, symptoms or clues found in various combinations or on their own, that point to possible abuse or neglect.

Indicators do not PROVE that a vulnerable person has been abused.

Aside: What About Mutually-Consented Romantic Interest?

People in trust relationships (e.g. ministry leaders, especially those working with children and youth) have power granted to them by the person expecting the leader or minister to use this authority to care for or help them. Since consent in these circumstances is not freely given because of the power differential in the relationship, consent has no bearing on whether the sexual actions are abusive. In these cases, there is no such thing as mutual consent—the caregiver or leader is always responsible.

Sexual abuse excludes normal affectionate behaviour such as a handshake or a quick hug, or normal comforting behaviour such as taking a person's hand or a firm touch on the arm or shoulder. However the development of a romantic relationship between a church leader and someone under their care does have the potential to include an element of abuse, particularly in cases where a significant difference in age or maturity exists.

This presents a special challenge to single adults in Christian ministry since their church provides a network of social relationships which may become the primary, and indeed, ideal context in which to develop a romantic relationship.

Mosaic wishes to respond to this reality in a wise and compassionate manner: Single adults in leadership at Mosaic are urged to approach romantic involvement with another member of the congregation with wisdom and caution. While the development of these kinds of relationships is not discouraged, the leader is strongly urged to seek the protection and accountability of openly

sharing with an Elder (or member of the pastoral team) appropriate information about the unfolding relationship.

5. What Forms of Abuse are We Preventing?

5.1 Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is any physical action which results in, or may result in, a non-accidental injury, e.g. pushing, grabbing, pinching, scratching, biting, hitting, kicking, shaking, throwing, burning, choking, poisoning, etc. Physical abuse includes any other improper or unwelcome form of touching or physical discipline.

Possible Physical Indicators of Physical Abuse

In Vulnerable Person

- Bruises, welts, lacerations, or abrasions in suspicious locations (nose and eyes, neck, back of torso, buttocks, back of legs) or suspicious shapes (regular patterns, teeth marks, handprints, imprint of articles used)
- Burns from cigars, cigarettes, electrical devices, rope or restraint
- Head Injuries (hair patches pulled out, eye injury)
- Fractures/dislocations (multiple injuries in various stages of healing)
- Injuries, such as the above, in suspicious locations on the body, or in suspicious shapes

Possible Behavioral Indicators of Physical Abuse

In Vulnerable Person

- Unlikely or inconsistent explanations for injury
- Denial that injury exists
- Resistance to being touched
- Extremely aggressive or extremely withdrawn
- Dressed inappropriately to hide bruises

Caregivers are vague about the cause of injury

Caregivers give inconsistent explanations of the injury

5.2 Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse is any sexual involvement between a person in ministry and someone of lesser authority under their care, whether consented to or not:

- inappropriate chasing or grabbing
- inappropriate touching (including extended hugging or tickling, kissing, touching an area normally covered by a bathing suit, having an older child or youth sit on your lap, etc.)
- brushing up against someone, or creating situations where this is likely to happen
- using a person for sexual gratification or any sort of touching or grooming intended to make a person become sexually responsive
- inappropriate sexual remarks, suggestive joking, or sharing of sexual fantasies
- sexually suggestive gestures or clothing
- undressing someone physically or mentally, or undressing in front of them, masturbating with someone, having sexual intercourse, oral sex, or forced sex

Possible Physical Indicators of Sexual Abuse

In Vulnerable Person

- Frequent psychosomatic complaints with no apparent physical cause
- Foreign bodies in the genital, rectal, or urethral openings
- Vaginal infections, odour, or discharges
- Torn, stained or bloody underwear
- Pain or difficulty sitting down, urinating or walking

Possible Behavioral Indicators of Sexual Abuse

In Vulnerable Person

- Age-inappropriate sexual drawings, play, or descriptions
- Nervous or hostile behaviour towards adults
- Resists being undressed, or when undressing shows apprehension, even fear of being changed

In Possible Abuser

- Acts extremely overprotective
- Discourages social contact of a child with adults or peers
- May display jealousy of a child's relationships with peers or other adults

Appropriate Displays of Affection between leaders and children / youth

Side hugs, shoulder-to-shoulder hugs, pats on head, shoulders or back, handshakes, high-fives, touching hands, faces, shoulders, and arms

Inappropriate Displays of Affection between leaders and children / youth

Even in fun or horseplay, it is not appropriate for adults to engage youth or children in frontal hugs, kisses, touching chests or any area between waist and knees

Showing affection in isolated areas of a building or outdoors, one-on-one or male/female wrestling, piggy back rides, tickling, and massaging are all prone to misinterpretation and should be avoided

5.3 Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is systematically making a person feel inferior or inadequate; tormenting, threatening, stalking or repeatedly disturbing someone.

Possible Indicators of Emotional Abuse

In Vulnerable Person

- Facial expression and body carriage may reveal feelings of sadness, lack of confidence, confusion, discouragement or under-the-surface anger
- In addition, the stress associated with emotional abuse can appear in a

variety of physical complaints

Possible Behavioural Indicators of Emotional Abuse

In Vulnerable Person

- Suffers from severe developmental lags without an obvious physical cause
- Severe symptoms of depression, anxiety, withdrawal, aggression or self-destructive behaviour
- Play may model negative behaviour and language used at home
- Unusual fearfulness of the consequences of their actions

In Possible Abuser

- Tends to blame, belittle or find fault with the child before learning the truth of the situation
- Calls the child names and publicly humiliates the child
- Actively refuses to help the child
- Constantly withholds physical and verbal affection from the child
- Ignores the child's attempts to interact
- Makes excessive demands of the child beyond his/her age and ability

5.4 Child Neglect

Child neglect is failing to provide adequate care and supervision to a minor entrusted to you.

Possible Physical Indicators of Child Neglect

In Vulnerable Person

- Consistent hunger or malnutrition
- Poor hygiene
- Clothing that is consistently dirty, unwashed, torn and/or inappropriate for weather

Possible Behavioural Indicators of Child Neglect

In Vulnerable Person

- Severe developmental lags without an obvious physical cause
- Demonstrates severe lack of attachment to parents
- Demonstrates indiscriminate attachment to other adults

In Possible Abuser

- Is very demanding of affection and attention
- Demonstrates little evidence of regular, healthy routines
- Consistently delivers a child to care very early and/or pick up very late
- Is unresponsive when approached by others with concerns regarding the child
- Appears to be very depressed or under great emotional stress

5.5 Verbal Abuse / Harassment

Verbal abuse/harassment is a pattern of insulting or disparaging remarks (sexist, racist, etc.) that communicates contempt or derision. It is any pattern of harassment, including unwelcome pursuing or contacting, that is offensive to the recipient and/or impedes their ability to do their job.

Appropriate Verbal Interaction

Positive reinforcement, appropriate jokes, encouragement and praise

Inappropriate Verbal Interaction

name-calling or labelling, sexually oriented conversations, compliments related to physique or body development, cursing, sexual or racial joking, involving youth in the personal problems of leaders, any secret elements of a relationship, shaming, belittling, or harsh language which may frighten, threaten, or humiliate

5.6 Spiritual Abuse

Spiritual abuse is any behaviour by a person in a position of authority and/or power that misuse divine or church authority, resulting in harm to people under their care. Spiritual abuse includes using spiritual language, spiritual practices or the name of God to control or harm another person:

- Forcing confession of sin
- Making people feel guilty, ashamed or afraid using spiritual language, for the sake of controlling them
- Leading people to unethical behaviour using the name of God or the leaders' position of spiritual authority
- Speaking dishonestly on behalf of God
- Making people believe they can only access God through the leader

6. General Abuse-Prevention Procedures at Mosaic

The basic idea in preventing abuse is to use the authority granted to you as a leader only to help a person, not harm them. If you find yourself in a ministry position where this is difficult or you are unsure what to do, remove yourself from the situation immediately and tell someone who can help—your pastor or one of the Elders are good choices.

Since abuse often involves some form of secrecy, the main forms of abuse prevention at Mosaic are our Key Practices of:

“Never Be Alone” and “Tell Someone”

6.1 Avoid Being Completely Alone – the “Two-Adult Rule”

All leaders in ministry, but males especially, should seek to avoid situations where they are completely alone with someone under their care or leadership, especially a minor or a member of the opposite gender. Non-sponsored (i.e. not intentionally ministry-related) contact with children and youth off the church premises is discouraged.

Meetings should always take place in a public location with two or more unrelated adults present. Classroom situations should be visible to those outside through a window or an open door. At least one other person (including a consenting parent in the case of a minor) should be aware of the time, place,

and nature of meetings and be able to join it at any time.

If you find yourself alone with a person under your care or leadership, especially a minor or person of the opposite gender (e.g. giving someone a ride home in your car), seek to bring a third person into the situation. You should also disclose the event to a friend or spouse or the minor’s parent as soon as possible afterwards.

6.2 Keep One-on-One Ministries Between People of the Same Gender

Whenever possible, one-on-one ministries should always be carried out between people of the same gender.

There are times when one-on-one ministry between people of different genders can be appropriate. This is considered a very high-risk situation, so the following guidelines must be in place to help protect all people involved:

Discern these situations carefully, in community with your circle of trust: your ministry partner(s), your supervisor(s), and/or your closest relations (spouse, good friend, or other person who knows you well and/or would be affected if you crossed boundaries).

Ensure that your ministry happens in a public and interruptible place.

Communicate regularly with your circle of trust concerning the ministry in question and your interactions with the individual.

Regularly evaluate the risk and benefit of the ministry in question, with the community, and make adjustments for the health and protection of all involved.

Tell someone immediately if you know boundaries have been crossed or are uncertain about whether boundaries have been crossed.

Summary: Helpful Boundaries for Abuse Prevention

As each of these boundaries is passed, the potential for abuse or a false accusation increases, so observing the remaining boundaries becomes increasingly

important.

Highest Security & Lowest Risk	“Two-Adult Rule” Never Be Completely Alone with Someone Under Your Ministry Care
	Avoid Cross-Gender One-on-One Ministry If ministry requires a one-on-one meeting, seek
	Meet in a Public or Interruptible Place
Lowest Security & Highest Risk	Last Resort: Disclose the Time, Place and Nature of the Meeting If you unavoidably find yourself alone (e.g. in a vehicle), use a cellphone to tell someone else about the situation immediately or as soon as possible after-

6.3 Waiting Period

Potential leaders who are new to the fellowship should expect a waiting period of six months before they begin to minister in a leadership capacity, especially to minors or other vulnerable people. Insurers have found this practice to be highly effective in protecting minors from abuse in church contexts.

6.4 Screening - Criminal Record Check and Background Reference Check

We want to protect those within our care by joining our Insurer in requiring that all staff and volunteers ministering to children, youth, or other vulnerable people be screened in the following 2 ways (results will be kept on file indefinitely):

Criminal Record Check

From a legal point of view, there is no difference between our church not bothering to check this information and knowingly allowing someone with a

criminal record to minister to minors. We appreciate that this process is inconvenient and are grateful for your cooperation and understanding. Instructions for obtaining this Criminal Record Check are attached.

Background Reference Check

This is for new workers who have not been a regular part of the fellowship for at least two years (please provide contact information for 2 references).

6.5 Annual Review and Audit

These abuse prevention procedures will be reviewed annually each Fall with appropriate staff and volunteers completing a clipboard sign off.

Each year, one of our Directors will complete an Internal Audit and report to the Board of Directors. An External Audit will be completed if necessary.

7. Abuse Prevention for those involved with Ministries to Children and Youth

(if this does not apply to you, please continue to section 8)

7.1 No Corporal Punishment

Any form of corporal punishment (e.g. spanking or any use of physical force) is prohibited. If efforts to redirect the child's behaviour are not effective, other solutions should be explored with the staff or the child's parents. If necessary, the child's parents should be asked to come and discipline their child or remove them from the situation.

7.2 Accepting and Releasing Children from Programs

Ministry leaders working with minors should pay attention to how the minor enters their care for a particular ministry and is returned safely again to the care of an appropriate guardian. Mosaic seeks to use the procedures of the Public School system as a guide for controlling entry and release from programs.

Nursery, Preschool, and 3-5yr olds in Sunday School

Parental sign-in and sign-out is required for each session. Only parents (or guardians) and authorized workers should have access to these spaces when children are present.

Sunday School (ages 6-12)

Daily attendance lists for each class should be kept. Parents should be asked to sign a Consent Form whenever the program requires their children to leave the church premises.

PreTeen and Youth Ministries

Annual Consent Forms will be used to cover regular events and activities, including those off the church premises. The parents of new youth will be asked to complete and sign one of these as soon as possible. Specific consent forms (and/or the venue's waiver form) are required for all events which involve unusual levels of physical risk or an overnight stay.

Ministries with large numbers of new or visiting children (e.g. neighbourhood baby-sitting or VBS)

Formal sign-in and sign-out required for Nursery and Preschoolers; controlled entry and release for older children.

7.3 Washroom Policy

All ministry volunteers should be aware that taking children to the washroom or changing diapers are seen as high-risk situations from the Insurer's point of view. If at all possible, the child's parents should be called to assist their child. If this is not possible, only leaders over the age of 16 who have been screened are permitted to assist young children in this way, and then only with another screened worker present.

Parents dropping off young children in the Nursery (0-2 years) or for Pre-Grade One programs (3-5 years) should be asked to ensure that their child has either been to the bathroom, can go by themselves, or has just had their diaper changed.

School aged children requiring assistance should be accompanied to the door of the washroom, which the worker should open to ensure that no one else is hanging around in the washroom and then wait outside in the hallway.

Children (ages 6 and up) may go on washroom breaks using the buddy system unaccompanied by a supervisor.

Suspicious activity by anyone loitering near or in the washrooms should be reported immediately.

7.4 Contacting Children and Youth Off-Premises

In general, church ministry leaders should avoid contacting or communicating with children and youth off the church premises. This includes meeting in person, phone calls, emails, texting, and social media.

Authorized Youth Leaders may use phone calls, emails, and texting to communicate event information and confirm attendance at events. Contact for any other purpose, e.g. supporting the young person at a sports event, or pursuing a common interest for the sake of developing a deeper relationship, etc. may only be pursued with expressed parental consent and disclosure to the ministry supervisor.

7.5 Internet Access

The church's WiFi network is password-protected. This password should not be shared with minors under the age of 18 to prevent unsupervised internet access.

7.6 No One-on-One Photography

Appropriate photos of children and youth participating in ministry activities may be taken and posted on church bulletin boards and the secure youth website.

Under no circumstances should leaders take individual pictures of youth or children without other people present.

7.7 Consent Forms

Youth Groups will require a signed general Parental Consent Form for participation in regular weekly activities both on- and off-premises. An additional Consent Form will be required for each specific event or activity with higher levels of physical risk or involving overnight stays.

7.8 Sleepover Guidelines

The two-adult rule must be strictly observed. Separate sleeping quarters for males and females will be provided. Leaders must remain awake as long as the youth, to ensure adequate supervision. Leaders must not share a bed with, nor change in front of children or youth.

8. Reporting Suspected Abuse, Red Flags or

Accidents

8.1 Duty To Report Suspected Abuse

Provincial Law requires anyone who has reason to believe that a child has been or is likely to be abused or neglected to report the situation directly to the Children's Aid Society (CAS) immediately.

To contact CAS, call: 519-455-9000 or visit their website at <https://www.caslondon.on.ca/>.

Reporting the abuse of a minor is a legal duty in Ontario and takes precedence over the need for ministry or professional confidentiality.

The potential abuser should not be confronted by anyone other than CAS unless CAS directs otherwise.

Mosaic requires all ministry volunteers to report and/or discuss any suspected abuse by a church-sponsored leader or volunteer to the Pastor or one of the Elders. An Incident Report Form should be completed for any incident which may be perceived as abuse or neglect. A blank sample form is provided for you in this package.

The situation is NOT to be discussed with other volunteers, parents, or any other person. All information regarding the child and the alleged abuser will be kept strictly confidential.

8.2 Reporting Red Flags

If you notice something that makes you uncomfortable, you should discuss it with your supervisor and fill out an Incident Report.

8.3. Accident Reports

Mosaic also requires all ministry leaders to complete an Incident Report Form for any ministry-related accident or injury which requires medical attention. These forms are available from any member of the Staff.

9. Managing Harassment

Confrontation: If you feel you are being harassed, you may either directly confront the perpetrator or discuss the issue with Andrew Karram

Incident Report: If the harassment continues, report it immediately to Andrew Karram. Together you will fill out a confidential Incident Reporting Form.

Follow-up: This will be followed up with further investigation by Andrew, and possibly his supervisor, to determine an appropriate course of action

10. What Procedures will be Initiated if Someone is Accused of Abuse?

Mosaic is fully committed not only to the prevention of abuse but also to investigating any allegations of abuse in order to provide justice and healing for the victim(s) as well as appropriate discipline and restoration of an offender.

The procedure below seeks to facilitate that process while simultaneously seeking to protect people in leadership ministries from the damaged reputation which a false accusation can cause.

For situations involving minors, please see section 8.1 on our Duty to Report.

The Elder to whom the alleged abuse has been reported will inform the other Elders in writing of the incident within 2 working days of the initial disclosure and will ensure that the Incident Report Form has been completed.

The Elders will appoint one of their members (or perhaps another qualified leader, if more appropriate), along with an accompanying member of the opposite gender if the alleged abuse is of a sexual nature, to interview the person making the accusation. This initial investigation will seek to discern whether the incident was either a minor misunderstanding or something serious which requires a full investigation. In the case of the former, biblical principles of reconciliation (Matt 18:15-17) will be followed in a private manner in an effort to bring clarity and healing to the situation.

If the alleged offense is believed to be of a serious nature OR the complainant is unsatisfied with the efforts to bring healing through the private process, the alleged victim(s) will be asked to write (or dictate) a formal, detailed, and signed complaint, and the process of a full investigation will be initiated. Without admitting legal liability, the complainant will be assured of the organization's concern and commitment to assist in the investigation.

Upon receiving the signed complaint, the investigating Elder will notify the

Mosaic Board of Directors, emphasizing the need to:

- maintain the confidentiality of both the alleged victim and the alleged perpetrator
- presume the innocence of the accused
- presume the good faith of the complainant

No statement admitting legal liability should be made. No statements should be made to the public without the church's legal counsel.

Police authorities and/or child protective agencies will be notified along with the church's legal counsel and Insurer.

The accused will be suspended from their church ministry (with normal benefits and pay) pending the results of the investigations. The accused will be instructed to avoid all contact with the alleged victim(s) until further notice.

If appropriate, given the nature of the investigation by external authorities, an internal investigation committee will be formed.

The Elders will conduct a full investigation, in a sensitive and confidential manner, into the incident to assess whether the complaint can be substantiated. The Elders may ask other qualified individuals to guide them in this investigation, particularly if one of the Elders, or a member of their family, is involved. Both the accused and the accuser will be encouraged to have a supportive advocate or lawyer present when meeting with the Elders.

In the case where criminal charges may be laid, the Elders' investigation will generally be delayed until a legal decision has been reached. Until then, the Elders will only decide whether the leader's suspension without prejudice (Step 6) should continue.

The Elders may eventually conduct a hearing in which all appropriate parties are present. The contents of these meetings will be held in strictest confidence.

The Elders will reach one of the following three decisions:

The allegations are unfounded. The accused will be declared innocent, as widely as the allegations were made.

The allegations point to 'boundary ignorance or carelessness' and appropriate

measures of remediation, perhaps including counseling, will be taken.

The allegations of abuse appear (with reasonable likelihood) to be true. This may be due to the weight of evidence, or because the accused cooperates with the investigation, confessing and acknowledging the abuse. The Elders will implement appropriate consequences of discipline which will likely involve:

- suspension (temporary or permanent) from leadership in ministry
- counseling for the offender, the victim, and their families
- measures of restitution and justice for the victim(s)
- a strategy for recovery

In the case of an unrepentant offender, the Elders may insist that he or she discontinue their fellowship with the congregation.

If the accused resigns from ministry at Mosaic and dissociates themselves from the congregation at any point after the receipt of the formal complaint (Step 4) but before the Elders' investigation is complete (Step 11), the investigation will be concluded with a notation being made that the leader resigned and ceased fellowship with 'allegations of abuse pending.'

If the accused is truly repentant, this process will ideally end in eventual restoration.

Mosaic Intercultural Church

INCIDENT REPORT FORM FOR SUSPECTED OR POSSIBLE ABUSE

Version 2021.08.19

Blank forms are located in the Office Portable at 910 Huron St and will be available at 1750 Huron as well.

Date: _____

Name(s) of Possible Victim(s) of Abuse: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number(s): _____

Name of Person Filing Report: _____

Nature of Suspected Abuse (physical, sexual, emotional, neglect, verbal, harassment, etc.): _____

Indications of Suspected Abuse

(incl. physical signs, facts, and details of the situation, attach additional pages if required): _____

Actions Taken and / or Actions Suggested (incl. dates and times): _____

The above information will serve as a guide and will be necessary if a formal

report is filed with the Police or the appropriate Government Agency. All information received will be kept strictly confidential.

Signature (person reporting)

Date

Signature (Elder)

Date

Trauma and Crisis Resources

“You seem to be hurting. Could I recommend support?”

Victim Services

Support and referrals to programs/services for victims of crime or trauma
519-661-5636

Tandem

24/7 Crisis Support Services and Intake Team for Children/Youth
519-433-0334

Reach Out

24/7 bilingual information and referral, support and crisis service
519-433-2023 (Call or text)

St. Joseph's Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Treatment Program

519-646-6100 ext. 64224

Children's Aid Society

London/Middlesex
519-455-9000

Family Services Thames Valley

Individual, couple, family and group counselling and support services
519-433-0183

Kathy Coolidge

Psychotherapist RP MDiv
855-912-2538

Be Safe App

To improve access to and coordination of mental health and addiction services
for youth and families
<https://besafeapp.ca/>