

TUMC's Safe Church Policy (in a nutshell)*

At Toronto United Mennonite Church we want a safe and nurturing environment in all our programs. Here's a summary of our expectations for anyone who works with children and youth.

1. All people who are in positions of trust or regularly work with children or youth must complete a Volunteer Registration Form.
2. Always respect a child's integrity. If you want to show physical affection or give comfort, do so in public, moderately and with the child's permission.
3. Corporal punishment is prohibited.
4. Classrooms and meeting room windows should be uncovered and doors left open when possible.
5. If you and a child need to talk in confidence, leave the door open and have another adult present or within view.
6. If a child is hurt and needs to be examined, ensure there's another person present of the same gender as the child. Never force a child to remove clothing.
7. Be cautious in situations that require a change of clothes, such as swimsuits or sports clothes.
8. Be cautious when having conversations that involve sex. Listen with respect and when responding, be sensitive to values and standards taught in the congregation and at home.
9. Use common sense and good judgment to guide you in protecting the personal space and wellbeing of the children and youth in your care.
10. Parental consent forms are required for all off-site and overnight activities.

IN GENERAL:

- Our facilities are designed for safety, with adequate lighting, locked supply closets, and windows in all doors to classrooms, offices, and the nursery.
- TUMC's children and youth ministries use a team approach, with at least two adults present for all organized activities.
- At least two volunteers, one of whom must be screened, will be present in the nursery when TUMC is providing childcare.
- Parents/guardians are responsible for diaper changes and bathroom care. If a parent isn't available when a child needs assistance urgently, a volunteer of the same gender will help the child, leaving the bathroom door open.
- Nursery and activity period volunteers will ensure that all children are safely delivered to their parent/guardian.
- Anyone who suspects abuse or harassment is responsible to follow reporting and documentation procedures outlined in the full policy, for investigation and follow-up by the Safe Church Policy Committee. If there are reasonable grounds, the concern will be reported to child protection officials or police as appropriate and required under Ontario law. At all times, TUMC will adhere to guiding principles of safety, accountability, truth, justice, and restorative healing.

* (To read the 11-page policy and rationale, please visit tumc.ca) [Sept. 2018: reduced to 1 page but retained all words]