

## Policy Regarding Police Record Checks

### **Introduction:**

The United Church of Canada has a legal, moral and spiritual duty to care for and protect participants in our church programs. This is a legal principle called “Duty of Care”, and church groups have been, and will be held legally responsible for ensuring reasonable measures are taken to ensure safety.

-from the Introduction to *Faithful Footsteps*, a handbook on screening procedures for positions of trust and authority

This policy governs how the Riverside United Church Council implements and oversees Duty of Care procedures to screen candidates for positions within the congregation, where there may be a risk of harm to participants as a result of a deliberate act or through carelessness or negligence.

The policy is to be interpreted in conjunction with guidance from the United Church *Manual, Faithful Footsteps*, other relevant handbooks for congregations, as well as various policies and procedures in place in this congregation.

### **Screening:**

Individuals holding positions in the church that involve unsupervised direct contact with vulnerable populations (e.g., children and the elderly), or who directly handle money and other financial instruments must maintain an up-to-date police record check.

This includes *inter alia*: Sunday School teachers; youth leaders; members of the Christian Development Committee; pastoral care workers; the Treasurer and signing officers; and staff members as determined by United Church personnel policies.

It does not apply to situations where specific processes are in place to mitigate risks. Examples include voluntary offering counters, and volunteers at the Christmas bazaar. Here there are well-established financial control procedures, including ensuring that multiple persons must be present.

### **Oversight:**

The Chair of Council and the Minister shall jointly be responsible for interpreting who should be subject to screening through a police record check, and for ensuring that the individuals are suitable candidates for holding the position, given the results of the screening.

The police record check is the property of the individual, and the contents are strictly confidential. The Chair of Council and the Minister shall verify that that the record check is in place and up to date. They shall maintain at the church timely confidential records of the status of the police record check for each individual holding a designated position of trust.

**Application:**

This Policy may be updated from time to time by the Council, and shall be in effect until amended or rescinded.

Nothing in this policy statement shall be interpreted as limiting the application of other procedures to identify, manage and mitigate risks to ensure the safe and sustainable operation of the church's ministries.

May 14, 2014