

Policy for Reporting Child Abuse

Wolfville Baptist Church (WBC) responds to any allegation or suspicion of child abuse in compliance with the terms of the Children and Family Services Act of Nova Scotia, sections 22-26

<http://nslegislature.ca/legc/statutes/children%20and%20family%20services.pdf>

Protocol for Reporting Child Abuse

1. All members and adherents of WBC who have reason to believe that a child may be or is at risk of suffering abuse or neglect shall immediately upon receipt of information, make a report to the jurisdictional district office of the Department of Community Services at 902-678-6176 during regular business hours and ask to speak with the Child Protection Intake Worker. Evenings, weekends and holidays – please call the provincial toll-free number 1-866-922-2434. A worker is available 24 hours per day, seven days per week. **All persons aware of child abuse and neglect have a legal responsibility to ensure it is reported to Child Welfare Authorities.** For more information please refer to the document found at: <https://novascotia.ca/coms/families/changestoCFSA/Duty-to-Report.pdf>
2. A social worker may request further information from the referral source to determine if there are sufficient grounds to initiate a child protection investigation.
3. The church member or adherent who makes the call should inform the Pastor or designate, that a referral has been made to the Department of Community Services, unless the alleged perpetrator is the Pastor. In that case, the Associate Executive Minister of the Canadian Baptists of Atlantic Canada (greg.jones@baptist-atlantic.ca) should be notified immediately.
4. Church members and adherents are NOT TO INFORM PARENTS/GUARDIANS that a report of suspected abuse or neglect has been brought to the attention of a Child Welfare Office as this may place a child at risk of harm. The responsibility for notifying parents about an investigation rests with the investigator(s) – social worker or police.
5. Referral sources are confidential. Exemptions to this are when matters proceed to Family Court and the agency is required to provide full disclosure of their file. (Note: Referral sources can sometimes be identified on the basis of the information. Discuss with the social worker if this is a concern.)

6. Knowledge of suspected abuse or neglect of a child is confidential and is to be restricted to the person initiating the report and the Pastor or designate. Other church leaders, such as members of the Board of Christian Education, Personnel Committee or Deacons, may be informed at the discretion of the Pastor on a need to know basis.

A paper copy of the Children and Family Services Act will be available in the Church Office, and can be accessed on-line at;
<http://nslegislature.ca/legc/statutes/children%20and%20family%20services.pdf>

This protocol will be maintained by the Board of Christian Education and reviewed annually with appropriate professional consultation. For a more comprehensive view of our policies and protocol for reporting child abuse please refer to the document “Protecting the Children of God” in the office of the Pastor of Christian Education and Community Outreach.