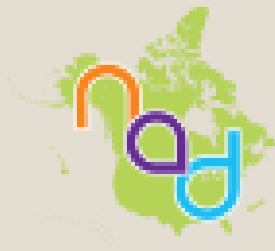


# NAD Child Protection Policy



**North American Division**

YOUTH & YOUNG ADULT MINISTRIES

[NADYouthSafety.org](http://NADYouthSafety.org)

As leaders, we have been called by God to take care of His flock. Therefore, we have civil duty to protect the children and youth entrusted to us.

“The Seventh-day Adventist church should be a safe place to bring our children. Everyone involved in work with children who are minors must meet all church and legal standards and requirements.”

(Church Manual, Edition 18, pages 168-169)

**FB 20 Child Protection and Volunteer Screening Policies  
Policies and Procedures for Children and Youth Ministries  
NAD Working Policy**

**In this training we will review the following:**

- 1. Objectives**
- 2. Volunteer Selection and Management**
- 3. Ministry to Sex Offenders Within the Church**

**#1**

Objectives

# 1. Objectives

- a. The Seventh-day Adventist Church has a moral and civil duty to protect the children and youth entrusted to its care.
- b. The church is committed to providing safe worship and educational environments to help children and youth learn to love and follow Jesus Christ.

## Cont... Objectives

- c. Jesus placed a high value on the protection of children (Matthew 18:1-6); therefore, child protection is an essential element in all church-sponsored children's activities.

## Cont... Objectives

- d. All volunteers referenced in this section include all adults, over the age of 18, involved in any capacity in children and youth ministries and activities, and all church ministry leaders and officers voted or appointed by the local church consistent with the SDA Church Manual; volunteers voted or appointed by the conference, union, or the North American Division and its affiliates, as well as all registered volunteers either from within or outside the North American Division voted or appointed to serve in the territory.

# #2

## Volunteer Selection and Management

*The work of volunteers is essential to the successful accomplishment of the Church's mission and ministry. The management policies and procedures employed to supervise the work of volunteers must be consistent with the mission of the church or school and must support its successful achievement.*



## a. Selection and Screening and Management

- i. It is the responsibility of the local church and/or school to select, screen and manage trustworthy individuals to fill volunteer positions in ministry for children and youth activities.
- ii. In selecting individuals for volunteer positions, only persons who support the mission of the organization should be recruited.

- iii. The church shall adopt a practice that no adult will be considered for a volunteer leadership role in a church-sponsored ministry or activity until he/she has held membership in the congregation or has been known by the organization for a minimum of six (6) months.

- iii. All volunteers are required to participate in a screening procedure that will include a signed Volunteer Ministry Information Form, names of three (3) personal references and a criminal background check wherever possible. Individuals who submit incomplete forms will not be considered for a volunteer position.

- v. Background screening should be completed before the volunteer is allowed to serve.
  
- vi. All volunteer leaders, regardless of their previous experience, shall submit to the screening procedure provided by the church. The volunteer screening procedure should be updated for each individual every three (3) years.

- vii. The local church or school is responsible for the cost of implementing these screening procedures. The local conference may provide financial assistance at their discretion.
  
- viii. It is the duty and responsibility of the church to maintain all volunteer information on a confidential basis at all times.

## b. Supervision of Volunteers

- i. Failure to comply with the established volunteer **guidelines and code of conduct** will result in the volunteer being asked to terminate participation in the ministry.

- ii. All allegations of inappropriate conduct** involving a minor will be promptly investigated by the leadership of the church. The church will respect the rights of all parties involved in the alleged incident and treat all matters concerning the situation discreetly, confidentially, and in accordance with local child abuse reporting laws.
  
- iii. Appropriate corrective action** - discipline, counsel, or removal from ministry - will be taken when necessary.

## c. Orientation and Training of Volunteers

- i. Provide all volunteers with an understanding of the ministry's mission and the expectation the church has for its accomplishment in a safe and abuse-free manner.



## Cont... Orientation and Training of Volunteers

- ii. Explain and provide in writing the expectations, code of conduct, and rules to be followed by volunteers in relation to supervision and interaction with children and youth. Reaffirm that alleged incidents of child abuse will be investigated and reported to authorities in accordance with local law.

## Cont... Orientation and Training of Volunteers

- iii. All volunteers will be required to participate in educational courses on child abuse (physical and sexual) and the necessary steps to be taken to prevent the occurrence of child abuse incidents.
  
- iv. Training should include instructions on appropriate methods of physical contact to affirm children.

# #3

## Ministry to Sex Offenders Within the Church

*The Church has a responsibility to provide worship opportunities and ministry to individuals who have previously engaged in inappropriate sexual conduct or physical abuse involving children or youth. When an offender wishes to be actively involved with the Church the following practices will be followed:*

## Cont... Ministry to Sex Offenders within the Church

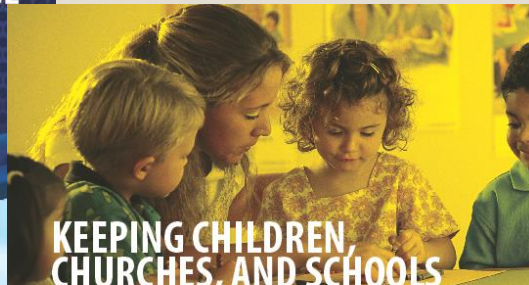
- a. The individual agrees to attend adult Sabbath School, worship services, and other church related activities on a chaperoned basis and will not interact on a personal basis with any child under the age of eighteen (18).
  
- b. The individual will not be allowed alone in any building on church premises where activities involving children under the age of eighteen (18) are being conducted.

## Cont... Ministry to Sex Offenders within the Church

- c. If a child in the congregation approaches the individual on church premises or in public during a church sponsored activity the person will politely and immediately excuse themselves from the situation.
- d. The local church pastor and elders will meet personally with the individual and enter into a five-year covenant agreement that outlines the expected conduct to be followed at all times while on church premises or while involved in a church sponsored activity.

# Ministry to Sex Offenders Within the Church

## Resources



"Jay" was the president of a local college and an elder in the church. His wife volunteered as a teacher for children's ministries and the couple's teenage daughters were active in the youth group. When the family agreed to host a foreign exchange student, everyone at church welcomed the high school girl with open arms.

Six months later, the student disclosed to a school counselor that Jay had been sexually abusing her. When police interviewed Jay's daughters, one of them acknowledged that Jay had been abusing her as well. Jay adamantly denied that he "would never hurt a child," but when the allegations became public, another young woman said Jay had behaved inappropriately toward her during a church outing several years earlier.

As the criminal case went forward, people took sides. Some said they'd known Jay for years and refused to believe that he could have done any of the things the girls said he did. Other people supported Jay's wife and daughters and were angry that Jay's supporters were further victimizing the girls by accusing them of lying. Jay was eventually convicted and sentenced to prison but the church was left to deal with the aftermath of what he'd done and how people had reacted to the allegations. It took years for the church to get past the damage and just as the wounds were healing, Jay was released from prison.

Upon his release, Jay asked the pastor if he could return to church. The pastor told Jay he'd have to consult with the elders. Jay's family still attended the church and people had strong feelings about what he'd done and how they should respond to his request. No one knew how to handle the situation. Jay eventually opted to join a church that was not aware of his past, and perhaps, less prepared to deal with him.

Sex offenders can impact churches in a variety of ways. Even if the offenses didn't occur on church property or during a church-related

activity, the consequence can be disastrous. If the offender is a church leader, Pathfinder or Adventurer volunteer, teacher or if the repercussions are usually worse, especially if the offender "groomed" the victim and his/her family at church. Granted, there are many policies that will completely guarantee safety but there are things churches and schools can do to decrease risk and send the right message: "we are doing everything we can to protect children and will not tolerate abuse!"

Several years after "Jay" participated in sex offender treatment clinic, I treated a teacher who'd offended numerous boys in S-Adventist schools. His crimes were eventually discovered, but he'd molested dozens of boys in the North American Division. When released from prison, he was referred to sex offender the Oregon and told me he'd purposefully targeted schools he thought were "glibble and naive" and would "fall for my grooming tactics."

He said he determined which schools were the "easiest targets": pre-employment interviews and was usually able to see which windows in doors and classrooms that were "more secluded" at the schools. He was such an outstanding teacher and always he offered. In those days schools didn't conduct thorough reference checks they do now.

What I concluded from working with this particular offender's background checks, the "two person rule," windows in classroom doors and rules about appropriate boundaries between student teachers were all important, but that in-service training about behavior was probably most important. Background checks offer protection because, as mentioned in previous articles, only if offenders are over reported and prosecuted for their crimes.

Training helps everyone understand what's expected, reinforces the "no



### SEX OFFENDERS IN THE CHURCH: A LEGAL GUIDE

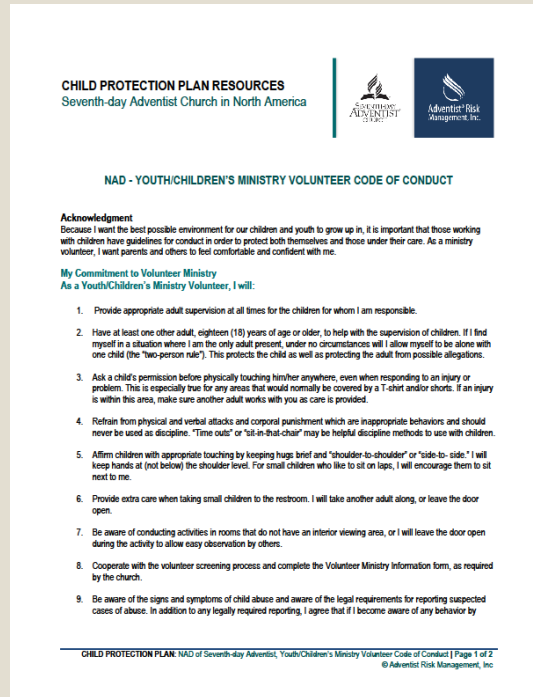
Karnik Doukmetzian  
Robert Burrow  
Victor Elliot

12501 Old Columbia Pike | Silver Spring, MD 20904

Video - Predator at the Door (Child Predators) - NADYouthSafety.org

# The Pastor is Responsible to...

Ensure that all church officers and volunteers comply with the North American Division's "Code of Conduct for Children and Youth Ministry volunteers."



For a complete Volunteer Code of Conduct training, visit the [NADYouthSafety.org](http://NADYouthSafety.org)



# Contact Staff

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