

**PROTECTING
OUR CHILDREN AND YOUTH,
AND OTHER VULNERABLE PEOPLE
AT BYRON UNITED CHURCH**

**Screening and Selection Procedures
of our *Liability Plan***

Revised, March 27, 2024

On September 21, 2010 the Session of Byron United Church approved a *Liability Plan* for our Church. This plan replaces the earlier *Vicarious Liability Plan* approved in September 2000. The main objectives of this new *Liability Plan* are:

- 1) To provide a safe and secure environment for the children/youth entrusted to the care of Byron United Church, and
- 2) To provide a safe and secure environment for all who use our facilities and programs.

One of the critical areas addressed within this *Liability Plan* for Bryon United Church is the screening of volunteers.

Why We have a Screening Process

Our screening process is designed to address the following:

- Careful recruitment and screening of staff and volunteers is one way to reduce the risk of harm to children, youth and other vulnerable people.
- Information provided helps us to find volunteers with interests and abilities suitable for working in and enhancing our programs for children and youth.
- Thorough screening procedures are one way to reduce the Church's exposure to all forms of liability.

How Our Screening Process Works

The Screening and Selection Policies and Procedures contained in the *Liability Plan* apply to all paid and volunteer workers involved in any manner with children/youth ministry on behalf of Byron United Church. A child/youth is defined as any child under the age of eighteen years.

The screening process includes the following:

- Defining the nature of the position and writing a **position description**. A template for volunteer position descriptions is included as Appendix 9 of the *Liability Plan*.

- The team that develops the position description will **determine the nature of the risk**, in consultation with the Element Facilitator, and provide a recommendation **to the Leaders' Board for approval**, prior to seeking applicants for the position. Appendix 5 of the *Liability Plan* provides information concerning risk assessments.
- An individual who wishes to volunteer in a program for children or youth is provided with an **Application Form** for Serving in Children/Youth Ministry (Appendix 1 of our *Liability Plan*).
- Prospective volunteers will be **interviewed**. This can be a very formal process or fairly conversational, depending on the position or task.
- The interview is followed by a process for contacting references provided by the applicant. The form to be used in the **reference checking process** is Appendix 2.
- **Police Records Checks** will be required for every position dealing with vulnerable persons (i.e., including but not limited to children and youth)
- For highest risk positions involving significant trust and vulnerable individuals, **additional safeguards** as are deemed necessary by the Session of Byron United Church may be required.
- A **Protection Oversight Team** within the Governance Element has overall responsibility for overseeing the screening and selection procedures.
- Volunteers are to be **Full Members of the Church or adherents**. Members or adherents need to have regularly attended our church for **at least six months** prior to being involved **alone with minors**.

Our Implementation Process

Our *Liability Plan* was approved by the Session on September 21, 2010 with implementation steps to be completed by December 01, 2011. This pamphlet is part of our implementation process to provide information about our screening program to the congregation, leaders, and parents/families of Byron United Church and others who use our programs.

Other steps in implementing our *Liability Plan* include:

- Copies of the *Liability Plan* have been distributed to all volunteers who will have oversight of children, youth, or vulnerable persons. The Plan requires that these volunteers sign an acknowledgement that they have read the Plan and agree to it.
- In November 2010, a Protection Oversight Team was formed consisting of Barbara Bentley, Tom Dean and Mary Neely. This team is responsible for managing the screening procedures of the Plan.
- Training materials for safety and supervision responsibilities of volunteers who work in programs for children or youth are provided to all new volunteers prior to their working with our young people. Our focus of this training is 'Safety for our Congregation'.
- In January, 2012, Session approved additional screening procedures for volunteers who visit seniors or vulnerable people to include **an application form** and **reference checking process**, in addition to the required **Police Records Checks** (Appendices 11 and 12 of the Plan). Training materials are provided for these volunteers also.

Additional Information About Our Screening Procedures

If you wish to read a copy of our Screening Procedures, please contact Shelley Mercer, Church Administrator for a copy of our *Liability Plan*. For specific questions about these procedures, please contact Anita Bacon, Ministry Facilitator.