

# **Policies, Procedures, & Guidelines**

## **for Student Leaders in Children's Ministry**

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# Preface

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## **Audience**

The audience of this document is *minors (under 18)* serving in children's ministries at Queensway Baptist Church.

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this document is to provide a clear standard for how we operate and conduct ourselves as student leaders to children. Though this document is indeed quite large, every sentence has been carefully considered to offer the most complete set of policies, procedures, and guidelines in as few of words as possible. Therefore we urge everyone who works with children to read and absorb every page so that we might provide the most effective and safe ministry possible.

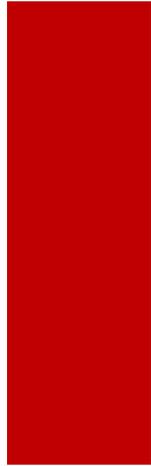
## **Documents & Forms**

This document makes frequent reference (*in italics*) to other documents and forms pertaining to children's ministry at Queensway Baptist Church. These documents (including a copy of this document) can be found at <http://www.queensway.org/leadership-documents>.

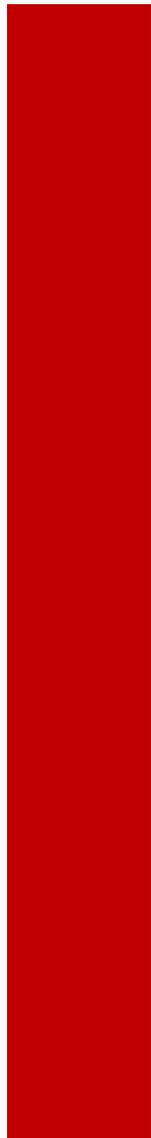
## **Revisions of this Document**

Due to the always-developing nature of children's ministry, this is a continually working document and is subject to revision at any time. All active ministry personnel will be notified of revisions to these policies when they occur.

All revisions of this document must be approved by the Church Council of Queensway Baptist Church or its delegate.



# **Emergencies**



# Fire

## Plan Ahead

- **Know where fire extinguishers & fire pull stations are located.** Please refer to the *Emergency Floor Plan*.
- **Know your fire escape route.** Although fire escape routes are posted in every classroom, try to memorize the escape route from the rooms you commonly serve in.
- **Know the fire meetup location: the James Hillier School sign.** After the building is evacuated, everyone must cross the street *safely* and meet there.
- **Know the building address: 211 Saint George St.** This will be vital if you ever need to call 9-1-1.
- **Keep escape routes clear.** If you notice an obstruction within the escape routes, please notify pastoral staff or a member of the Property Management Committee as soon as possible.

## Emergency Procedure

### If you discover a fire:

- If it is a small fire and you have been trained in the use of a fire extinguisher, first activate the fire alarm and then attempt to extinguish the fire.
- If you cannot extinguish the fire or the smoke presents a hazard, leave the fire area.
- Close all doors behind you.
- Activate the fire alarm at the closest pull station (usually located at emergency exits).
- Evacuate using the nearest exit.
- Proceed to the fire meetup location (see above).

### Upon Hearing the fire alarm:

- Have everyone line up with one ministry staff at the head of the line and one at the tail.
- Take the Ministry Clipboard, which should include the attendance sheet.
- Leave the building via the fire escape route for your room.
- Close all doors behind you.
- Proceed to the fire meetup location (see above).

### Upon Arrival at the Fire Meetup Location:

- Have someone with a cell phone call 9-1-1.
- Take attendance and ensure everyone has evacuated. *If someone is missing DO NOT enter the building. Notify the fire fighters when they arrive of any missing people.*

### If you cannot escape the room:

- If smoke is heavy in the corridor it may be safer to stay in your area - close door and place a wet towel at base of door.
- Crouch low to the floor if smoke enters the room.
- Move to the most protected area of the room and partially open the window for air. Close the window if smoke comes in.
- Call the Brantford Fire Department, using 9-1-1, tell the communications operator where you are located. Wait to be rescued - remain calm - do not panic or jump.

# Severe Allergy

## Plan Ahead

- ▶ **Know the allergies of the people in your group.** Allergy information is available on the group roster and/or sign-in/sign-out sheets (where applicable).
- ▶ **Do not serve food or drink that someone has a known allergy to.**
- ▶ **Never use peanuts in your snacks.** QBC is a peanut-aware facility.
- ▶ **Know where the group roster is located.** This information will be needed to notify parents and to notify emergency crews of vital information.

## Signs & Symptoms of Severe Allergic Reaction (Anaphylaxis)

### Most Dangerous Symptoms:

- ▶ Trouble breathing caused by swelling of the airways (including a severe asthma attack).
- ▶ A drop in blood pressure causing dizziness, light-headedness, feeling faint, or passing out.

### Other Symptoms:

- ▶ Skin system: hives, swelling, itching, warmth, redness, rash.
- ▶ Respiratory system (breathing): coughing, wheezing, shortness of breath, chest pain/tightness, throat tightness, hoarse voice, nasal congestion, trouble swallowing.
- ▶ Gastrointestinal system (stomach): nausea, pain/cramps, vomiting, diarrhea.
- ▶ Cardiovascular system (heart): pale/blue colour, weak pulse, passing out, dizzy/lightheaded.
- ▶ Other: anxiety, feeling of "impending doom", headache, uterine cramps, metallic taste.

## Emergency Procedure

Have one ministry staff stay with the person having an allergic reaction (must be an adult), and have another notify emergency crews.

### For the ministry staff notifying emergency crews:

- ▶ Take the group roster.
- ▶ Call 9-1-1. Use the closest phone available (locations are on the *Emergency Floor Plan*), preferably a cell phone.
- ▶ Notify the ministry supervisor on site.
- ▶ Notify the parents. If the parents are on site, notify them in person. If not, call them using phone numbers on the roster.
- ▶ If the parents are unavailable, call the emergency contact on the roster.

### For the ministry staff staying with the person:

- ▶ Have the child/youth give themselves epinephrine (e.g., EpiPen, Twinject or Allerject). If he/she is hesitant, hold the injector along with him/her (over their hand) and guide their hand to push the injector into his/her outer thigh.
- ▶ Have them give themselves a second dose of epinephrine in 5-15 minutes if available and if the reaction continues or gets worse.
- ▶ Stay with the person until emergency crews arrive.

# Medical

## Plan Ahead

- ▶ **Know the medical conditions of the people in your group.** Medical information is available on the group roster.
- ▶ **Know where the group roster is located.** This information will be needed to notify parents and to notify emergency crews of vital information.

## First Aid Procedure

First aid is for **minor injuries** (see "Definitions" section).

- ▶ Have one ministry staff attend to the injured person. This ministry staff should preferably be one with first aid training and preferably not the primary ministry staff of the classroom/group.
- ▶ If there is a specified first aid location for the program, have 2 ministry staff escort the child to the first aid location.
- ▶ Treat the injury using supplies from the first aid kit.
- ▶ Notify parents at the earliest convenience.

## Medical Emergency Procedure

This procedure is for **major injuries** (see "Definitions" section). Have one ministry staff stay with the injured person (must be an adult, and preferably one with first aid training), and have another notify emergency crews.

### For the ministry staff notifying emergency crews:

- ▶ Take the group roster.
- ▶ Call 9-1-1. Use the closest phone available (locations are on the *Emergency Floor Plan*), preferably a cell phone.
- ▶ Notify the ministry supervisor on site.
- ▶ Notify the parents. If the parents are on site, notify them in person. If not, call them using phone numbers on the roster.
- ▶ If the parents are unavailable, call the emergency contact on the roster.

### For the ministry staff staying with the injured person:

- ▶ If you are first-aid-trained, provide care per your level of training until emergency crews arrive.
- ▶ Ensure the scene is safe and reassure the injured person that help is on the way.
- ▶ Do not move the injured person unless absolutely necessary.
- ▶ Stay with the injured person until emergency crews arrive.
- ▶ If the decision is made to transport the child/youth to the hospital, the ministry supervisor should accompany them. Stay with the child until the parents arrive.

# Mental Health



## General Procedure

In Canada, 1 in 5 people will suffer a mental illness in their lifetime. Often these illnesses are of a more constant nature, but sometimes they bring about acute mental health episodes. Many of these episodes can rightly be considered an emergency situation, especially if you feel unqualified or unprepared to deal with whatever symptoms the child or youth is displaying.

In the case of a mental health emergency, follow the “Medical Emergency Procedure” above. **Do not hesitate to call 9-1-1 if you feel that someone is displaying signs of an acute mental health episode.**

Examples of mental health episodes include (but are not limited to) panic attacks, psychotic episodes, extreme irrational or uncontrollable behaviour, etc. Specific training on mental health disorders is beyond the scope of this document. For further information and resources on mental health, check out the Canadian Mental Health Association (<http://www.cmha.ca>) or the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (<http://www.camh.ca>).

## Suicide

Suicidal thoughts are often part of major depression. Through the course of caring for a child or youth, you may come to suspect that they might be thinking about taking their own life. Immediately seek the assistance of an adult leader.

## **Emergencies**

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.

Deuteronomy 6:4-7 (TNIV)



# **Program Operation**



# Day-To-Day Admin

## Ministry Clipboard

Every ministry program that involves children and youth will have a Ministry Clipboard prepared for them. It will contain a variety of documents to support your ministry.

- ▶ Ministry Checklist (described below).
- ▶ Group Roster (described below).
- ▶ Attendance sheet or sign-in/sign-out sheet (described below).
- ▶ *Emergency Floor Plan*.
- ▶ Blank copies of the *Incident Report Form* (incident reporting should be handled by adult ministry staff)

Ministry staff will be responsible for keeping the clipboards with the group. It must be returned to the church office mail slot at the conclusion of each program.

## Ministry Checklist

On top of the Ministry Clipboard will be a Ministry Checklist. It serves as a reminder to ministry staff of the administration duties required to be done at the beginning or end of the program. The Ministry Checklist must be filled out and signed by one of the ministry staff on duty before the Ministry Clipboard is returned to the church office.

## Group Roster

The group roster is a list of all children/youth who regularly attend the program. It also contains all the information received on their registration forms so that ministry staff may prevent and respond to emergencies. It is advised that each ministry staff person be aware of any youth that have medical conditions or severe allergies. For some programs, the group roster doubles as a sign-in/sign-out sheet.

## Attendance

Attendance must be taken for each program involving children or youth. There will be either an attendance sheet or a sign-in/sign-out sheet in your Ministry Clipboard. The ministry staff on duty must also be recorded on the attendance sheet or sign-in/sign-out sheet.

## Sign-in/Sign-out

- ▶ Programs involving children under Grade 1 are required to have a sign-in/sign-out sheet.
- ▶ Other programs may optionally implement a sign-in/sign-out sheet.
- ▶ Parents may indicate on their registration form or on the sign-in/sign-out sheet that their children in Grade 1 or above may self-release.
- ▶ Children in Grade 6 or above may always self-release, even without explicit parental permission.
- ▶ Sign-in/sign-out sheets will be considered attendance records.

# Registration



## Registration Forms

Parents/guardians of children and youth regularly involved in QBC programs must fill out a *Children & Youth Registration Form* for each program year. The program year starts on September 1st and goes until the following August 31st. The registration form is for:

- ▶ Collecting information about the children and their parents/guardians to help nurture relationships between ministry staff and the family.
- ▶ Collecting allergy, medical, and mental health information needed for emergencies.
- ▶ Releasing QBC and QBC ministry staff of liability in case of injury.
- ▶ Informing why this information is being collected (in compliance with Canadian privacy law).

Visitors will not be obligated to fill out a form on first attendance. After their second attendance, a registration form will be provided to be returned by their third attendance.

The *Children & Youth Registration Form* covers children and youth for events that happen on QBC property and off-site events that do not include travel or an element of risk in the activity. For off-site events that involve travel or an element of risk in the activity, a separate permission form will be required.

## Collection & Retention of Data

Registration forms, attendance records, and sign-in/sign-out sheets will be filed and kept permanently. For the sake of the privacy of this sensitive information, access to the information will be limited.

# General Policies



## **Photos & Videos**

Any photos or videos displayed in public places (e.g., bulletin boards, flyers, the QBC website, the QBC Facebook page) of children and youth less than 18 years old must have parental permission. Our *Children & Youth Registration Form* contains a standard waiver to allow QBC to use photos and videos in public places without identifying information. Additional written parental permission is required if identifying information is to be included with the photo or video.

## **Medication**

- ▶ If a child or youth brings medication, we must encourage them to keep it in their possession. Ministry staff should only carry medication for children or youth in consultation with their parents.
- ▶ Ministry staff are not to administer any medication without specific parental consent and instructions.
- ▶ Medication is not to be left in any room.

# Health & Sanitation

## Illness

Ministry staff, children, and youth are encouraged to stay home if they have:

- ▶ Fever.
- ▶ Vomiting.
- ▶ Croupy or productive cough (a cough that produces mucus).
- ▶ Undiagnosed or infectious rash (diaper rash excluded).
- ▶ Diarrhea.
- ▶ Cold or flu.
- ▶ Stomach virus.
- ▶ Profuse nasal discharge.
- ▶ Eye infection (draining).

## Lice

Ministry staff, children, or youth who currently have live lice or nits present in their hair must not be allowed to attend any children or youth programs. Parents will be notified of this policy when registering their children and reminded once a year.

## Hand Washing

In order to prevent the communication of disease, ministry staff must always wash their hands in the following situations:

- ▶ After changing a diaper.
- ▶ After going to the washroom or assisting a child in a washroom.
- ▶ After wiping your nose or after wiping a child's nose.
- ▶ Before food preparation.

Have a child wash their hands:

- ▶ After going to the washroom.
- ▶ After contact with nasal secretions.
- ▶ Before eating.

## Toy Cleaning

Toys in classrooms regularly used for children in Kindergarten and under must regularly be cleaned and disinfected.

- ▶ **Once per month**, all hard toys must be wiped with disinfecting cleaning solution. Plush/stuffed toys must be run through a washing machine.
- ▶ **Once per week**, all toys that have gone in the **mouths of children** must be cleaned. In the nursery there is a bucket where toys that have been in the mouth can go. At the end of each session, ministry staff must soak these toys in disinfecting cleaning solution.

## Carpet Cleaning

The carpets of classrooms regularly used for children in Kindergarten and under must be cleaned once per year.

# Washrooms

## Diaper Changing Procedure

This procedure will be posted in diaper changing areas.

- ▶ Keep the door to the diaper change area open, or open the window in the door (there must be clear lines of visibility between you and other ministry staff).
- ▶ Wash your hands.
- ▶ Place baby on a clean, disposable change pad.
- ▶ Remove soiled diaper and place in the Diaper Genie.
- ▶ Follow parent's instructions regarding application of powder or lotion.
- ▶ Put clean diaper on baby.
- ▶ Dispose of disposable change pad.
- ▶ Spray diaper changing area with bleach solution (1 part bleach, 9 parts water).
- ▶ Wash your hands.

## Preschool Washroom Procedure

It is recommended that ministry staff invite groups of children to go to the washroom together.

- ▶ If a child asks to go to the washroom, ask the rest of the group if they need to go as well.
- ▶ Gather the children at the door before heading off to the washroom.
- ▶ Two ministry staff must escort the children to the washroom.
- ▶ The two ministry staff must stand by the washroom door and keep the door open unless a child needs assistance.
- ▶ If a child needs assistance, one ministry staff must stay by the door and keep it open. The other may assist the children as needed, taking their privacy into consideration. NEVER close the door behind you when entering a washroom stall with a child.
- ▶ Ensure the children wash their hands.
- ▶ Escort the children back to the group when finished.

## Grades 1-5 Washroom Procedure

It is recommended that ministry staff invite groups of children to go to the washroom together.

- ▶ If a child asks to go to the washroom, ask the rest of the group if they need to go as well.
- ▶ Gather the children at the door before heading off to the washroom.
- ▶ Two ministry staff must escort one child to the washroom. If two children need to use the washroom, one ministry staff is sufficient.
- ▶ The ministry staff must stand by the washroom door and keep the door open. Do not enter the washroom.
- ▶ Escort the children back to the group when finished.

## Grades 6 and Up

Children in Grades 6 and up may go to the washroom on their own.

## **Program Operation**

We were not looking for praise from any human being, not from you or anyone else, even though as apostles of Christ we could have asserted our prerogatives. Instead, we were like young children among you.

Just as a nursing mother cares for her children, so we cared for you. Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well. Surely you remember, brothers and sisters, our toil and hardship; we worked night and day in order not to be a burden to anyone while we preached the gospel of God to you.

1 Thessalonians 2:6-9 (TNIV)



# **Positive Environment**



# Discipline

## Prevention

Discipline is not just about correcting inappropriate behaviour. It starts with prevention. Here are some steps to prevent the need for corrective discipline:

- ▶ **Facilitate a loving, caring, and respectful environment.** Mutual love, care, and respect between all people is the first step to preventing situations where corrective discipline is required.
- ▶ **Be prepared.** Often discipline problems come about when children are unengaged. This can come about due to a lack of structure, lengthy transitions, or boredom. Being well-prepared will keep them engaged and minimize discipline needs.
- ▶ **Model self-discipline and structure.** If you are running through halls, climbing trees, or interrupting people, children will follow your example. Be a model for the kind of behaviour you expect in your group.
- ▶ **Be firm.** Your tone can make all the difference when correcting behaviour. Do not be mean, but be firm when correcting behaviour. If discipline is delivered meekly or with a smile on your face, it communicates, "What I'm telling you is not a big deal."
- ▶ **Be mindful of environment.** Consider environmental distractions, classroom arrangement, classroom size, etc. and try to eliminate as many distractions as possible.
- ▶ **Be clear, fair, and consistent with your expectations.** What goes for one should go for everyone (except possibly in the case of special needs). Consider spending some time at the beginning of each program year going over group expectations.
- ▶ **Be aware of special needs.** Special needs of your children should be included in the child roster. If you are unsure how to accommodate a particular child, talk to the parents or the ministry supervisor.

## Proper Discipline

- ▶ Begin by *politely* asking the child to stop whatever they are doing.
- ▶ Explain why the behaviour is unacceptable and instruct how to behave correctly.
- ▶ Explain consequences of unacceptable behaviour.
- ▶ Use non-physical methods of punishment (e.g., separating misbehaving children, time-outs, requiring children to sit/stand next to an adult).
- ▶ Encourage a child apologize to someone he/she has hurt.
- ▶ Talk to parents about consistent discipline issues.
- ▶ In cases of extreme or consistent misbehaviour, it is acceptable to have the ministry supervisor remove them from the group and contact parents to pick them up.

## Improper Discipline

- ▶ Never use physical (corporal) punishment (e.g., spanking, flogging, punching, kicking, caning).
- ▶ Never shout or yell.
- ▶ Never threaten or speak to children in a mean manner.
- ▶ Never punish by shaming or belittling a child's identity/character (e.g., "You are a bad person!" or "You are going nowhere in life!").

# Harassment

One of the primary reasons children remove themselves from church or church programs is because they have been made to feel like they are unwelcome by either **peers or ministry staff**. It is therefore of the utmost importance to make sure that each child feels like they are accepted in the group.

## Dealing with Bullying and Harassment

Bullying or harassing children or youth of any form over any medium (in person, on line, text, etc.) will not be tolerated. This includes bullying and harassment perpetrated by fellow children/youth and ministry staff alike. Bullying/harassment includes:

- ▶ Teasing.
- ▶ Insulting.
- ▶ Making fun of someone.
- ▶ Physically harming or shaming someone (e.g., tripping).
- ▶ Making someone feel like they do not belong.
- ▶ Making someone feel like their contribution is worthless.
- ▶ Forming cliques where certain people are not invited.
- ▶ Groaning or laughing at someone when they speak.

Ministry staff are not to make light of bullying, and should discipline children and youth in accordance with the "Discipline" section of this document. If you witness other ministry staff bullying or harassing children or ministry staff, notify the ministry supervisor immediately.

## Playful Teasing ("Smack Talk", "Trash Talk")

"Smack talk" is using inflammatory or degrading words toward another person. We will never tolerate this kind of speech when used to *intentionally* demean someone.

However, it is often the case that these words are meant to be shared in a playful manner as jabs between friends. One could call it "playful teasing." Since this kind of talk is so culturally pervasive, it is often allowed unchecked. We do not want to strictly prohibit this kind of talk, but ministry staff should teach and monitor the following guidelines:

- ▶ **Only playfully tease close friends.** Without a strong relationship between two people, playful teasing can very easily come across as insulting or demeaning.
- ▶ **Never playfully tease about things that relate to one's identity.** If it is important to your identity that you are good at softball, being teased about a bad softball play will have a greater sting. Common items that relate to your identity are: race/ethnicity, gender, nationality, sexual orientation, religion, disability, talents/gifts.
- ▶ **Make sure positive speech far outweighs your playful teasing.** If all someone hears from you are playful jabs, and they never hear you say positive or uplifting things about them, it will be harder for them to know that you care.

## Positive Environment

### A Note On Sin Issues

As Christians living in a fallen world, we often find ourselves in the balance between truth and love. This is often a challenge when we encounter a child or child's family displaying behaviour or character that seems contrary to God's truth. In these cases, it is important to remember that you are in a very privileged position in this child's life. How you act and how you respond could determine their attitude toward church or God for the rest of their lives.

Therefore, if you encounter un-repentant sin in your ministry, please employ the following tips:

- ▶ **Never confuse sinful orientation with sinful behaviour.** God does not judge us for being oriented toward a particular sin. God judges how we respond to our sinful orientation.
- ▶ **If the person does not yet have a personal connection with Jesus, let your default position be love and acceptance.** Informing anyone of their sin will have no use unless they are personally connected with Jesus. Informing people of the gravity of their sin is a poor method of connecting them to Jesus.
- ▶ **Never allow anyone to think that your acceptance of them is conditional of their repentance.** Romans 5:8.
- ▶ **Always speak the truth in love.** The same truth can be communicated both as a loving correction by a concerned mentor, or an assault on them as a person.

### Discrimination

At QBC we are committed to fostering a welcoming environment for all people. Admittance to our programs is not conditional on one's race/ethnicity, gender, nationality, sexual orientation, religion, or disability. Neither is one's admittance conditional on their connection to a person or persons identified by a race/ethnicity, gender, nationality, sexual orientation, religion, or disability. Everyone deserves equal treatment and protection from bullying and harassment.

Only for ministry staff do we reserve the right to exclude certain individuals from serving in various ministries if we feel their lifestyle, character, or abilities are not suitable for a particular Christian ministry. For more information, see the *Conduct & Behavioural Expectations for Student Leaders* document.

## **Positive Environment**

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will.

Ephesians 1:3-5 (TNIV)



# **Definitions**

## **Definitions**

**Adult:** For the purposes of this document, an adult is defined as someone 18 years of age or older.

**Child:** For the purposes of this document, a child is defined as someone less than 18 years of age. Frequently the term “youth” will be utilized as a general term or alias for children in Grade 6 and up.

**Minor Injury:** This is any injury that is not a major injury.

**Major Injury:** This is an injury that has one of the following characteristics:

- ▶ Places life in jeopardy.
- ▶ Produced unconsciousness (or an altered state of consciousness).
- ▶ Results in substantial loss of blood.
- ▶ Involves the fracture of a leg or arm, but not a finger or toe.
- ▶ Involves the amputation of a leg, arm, hand or foot, but not a finger or toe.
- ▶ Consists of burns to a major portion of the body.
- ▶ Causes the loss of sight in an eye.

**Ministry Staff:** This includes paid and volunteer workers put in a position of trust of children or youth under 18 year old. It refers to adult and youth volunteers alike.

**Youth:** For the purposes of this document, a “youth” has no specific definition and is simply an alias for “child”. It is a general term to refer to a child in Grade 6 and up (see definition for “child”).

## Definitions

I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is true worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Romans 12:1-2 (TNIV)