

Community Reformed Church

POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR PREVENTING CHILD
ABUSE AND RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS OF CHILD
ABUSE

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DOCUMENT DEFINITIONS

Church/CRC: Community Reformed Church of Charlevoix, MI

Volunteer: A worker including program leadership/supervisors, elders, and deacons who are not paid for their work.

Employee: Any worker who is paid by CRC.

Child/Youth: A person under the age of 18 years.

Helper: A person under 18 years old.

Ordained person: Any person ordained to any office for which ordination is required, including minister, elder or deacon, whether paid or volunteer.

RESOURCES

- Christian Reformed Church Safe Ministry (network.crcna.org/safe-church)
- Mennonite Church USA - Dove's Nest Organization (Dovesnest.net)

Community Reformed Church

POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR PREVENTION OF CHILD ABUSE AND RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS OF CHILD ABUSE

I. INTRODUCTION

Community Reformed Church makes every effort and takes all possible precautions to create a safe place for children to grow in Jesus Christ and to understand His love and acceptance and enjoy activities. Our policy is to nurture children by properly equipping compassionate, responsible adults, and helpers. This policy covers every ministry in the church involving children under the age of eighteen. To best ensure the safety of our children and youth, to protect our volunteers and paid staff from false accusation, and to safeguard the reputation of our church and the Christian community, this Policy is implemented.

Why do we need abuse prevention and response to allegations, policy and procedures?

We live in a broken, sinful world. “Churches need to understand that there are people who prey on children and they do not look any different than anyone else...the sexual, physical and emotional abuse of children and youth in the church is a reality with which we must deal – it can happen in any church. No organization is immune... (Rev. M. McCormick, Dr. L. Mitchell, Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches).

CRC (the “Church”) has a spiritual, moral and legal obligation to ensure that all reasonable steps have been taken to provide a safe, healthy environment for children, youth and the volunteers and employees who participate in Church programs.

II. WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT?

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is any deliberate physical force or action that results, or could result in injury to a child. It can include hitting, shaking, burning, etc.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is a pattern of behavior that attacks a child’s emotional development and sense of self-worth. It includes excessive, aggressive, or unreasonable demands that place expectations on a child beyond his or her capacity. Emotional abuse can also include a caregiver’s failure to provide their child(ren) with love, emotional support and guidance.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse occurs when a child is used for the sexual gratification of an adult or older child. Sexual abuse can take many forms including inappropriate touching, sexual intercourse, or exposure to sexual activity.

Neglect

Neglect is the failure to meet a child's basic needs for food, clothing, shelter, sleep, medical attention, education and protection from harm. It can also mean a failure to provide for the child's emotional needs, attention and supervision. *See Appendix P*

III. STATEMENT OF POLICY

The Church is committed to:

- 1. Providing a safe environment** for children and youth and in the care of the Church and protect them from harm (physical, sexual, emotional and neglect).
- 2. Protecting volunteers and employees** in child and youth programs of the Church from false allegations.
- 3. A zero tolerance for abuse or neglect:** Any abuse of children and youth under the supervision of Church volunteers or employees will not be tolerated.

The Church will maintain a Safe Church Team that will provide leadership regarding the implementation of this policy. *See Appendix I*

IV. PROCEDURES

- **Mandatory screening** for all volunteers and all church employees, including child and youth helpers.
- **Initial training for new and annual refresher abuse prevention training for all volunteers and employees** participating in child and youth programs of the Church and signing of Code of Conduct and Understanding and Agreement with the Policy and Procedures following training. *See Appendix D*
- **Written procedure for discipline** (including no corporal punishment or inappropriate touching). *See Appendix E*
- **Written procedure for transportation** including written parental consent for off premises or overnight activities and field trips. *See Appendix J*
- **Safe physical premises:** The Church will maintain the physical structure of the facilities to reduce the risk of child abuse in the church building including adequate lighting inside and outside of building and open doors and/or windows in rooms where children's programs take place.

- **Safe supervision** including age appropriate supervision of bathroom breaks, parental sign-in/out for nursery. “Two unrelated adults rule” and/or open doors and/or windows in classrooms. A designated monitor(s) circulates from room to room for surveillance and to protect workers against false allegations. *See Guidelines for Specific Programs, Appendix M*
- **Written protocol for response to and for reporting suspected abuse** to child protective agencies or police authorities. *See Appendix A*
- **Annual audit** regarding implementation of the Abuse Prevention Policy including report to Consistory.

V. SCREENING PROCEDURE FOR VOLUNTEERS, STAFF, AND EMPLOYEES

The screening procedure is:

- Volunteer/Employee Application
- Interview
- Reference check and
- Criminal Background Check

Note: All four of the above confidential screening documents are to be kept indefinitely in a locked file with limited access.

A. Volunteer/Employee Application

All applicants are required to complete and submit the application form to the Safe Church Team and it is then given to the church office for filing. Note: A person must be a regular attender of CRC for a period of six months before they can begin volunteering. This policy may be waived, in the sole discretion of the Safe Church Team , if the applicant provides three references, one of which is preferred from their “home” (most recent) church. Application for children/youth ministry work must be completed. *See Appendix B-1*

B. Interview

An interview shall be conducted with all applicants to assist in assessing the applicant’s supervisory and/or leadership skills. The individual who will supervise the applicant should conduct the interview. The interviewer will complete the interview form and recommend the names of suitable applicants to the Safe Church team. The completed form is given to the church office for filing. *See Appendix Form B-2*

C. Reference Check

First-time applicants are required to provide names of two references. References will be contacted by the ministry/program leader. The completed form is given to the church office for filing. If the applicant has not been a regular attender of CRC for at least six months, then **three references** are required (one of which is from their “home” church). References can be from

previous pastors, teachers, employers, friends and colleagues. The completed form is given to the Church office for filing. The need for a reference check may be waived at the discretion of the Safe Church Committee for a volunteer who has a long standing relationship with the church. *See Appendix Form C*

D. Criminal Background Check

1. Criminal background checks are required for adult volunteers and employees (hereafter referred to as “applicants”) and anyone 16 years and over in a leadership/supervisory position involving work with children or youth. This also applies to all those in leadership/supervisory positions who conduct meetings with children/youth.

2. The purpose of the criminal background check (“CBC”) is to ensure that those who are responsible for teaching and leading children/youth under 18 years of age do not have a previous history of abuse.

3. **All applicants, age 16 and over**, will be informed by the Ministry Lead at the time of inquiry, that it is the policy of CRC to receive a CBC prior to approving appointment, and thereafter, **every five years**. (Note: A CBC will not be requested of the applicant until such time as the Safe Church Team is satisfied that the applicant is otherwise acceptable for the position)

4. The Ministry Lead facilitates the CBC process, ensures the applicant understands the type of information being requested and the process to be followed.

5. The Ministry Lead will ensure that the information will only be used for the purposes designated and will not be disseminated to any other person or agency.

6. The Ministry Lead will review each CBC and decide if it discloses any information which would make the applicant inappropriate for the position. The names of successful applicants may be forwarded for appointment.

7. If the CBC is not clear, the Ministry Lead will bring the CBC to the Safe Church Team for direction and may be discussed with the Applicant. If the Safe Church Team decides that the Applicant is not appropriate, the Applicant is informed, and the process ends.

8. **Whether the applicant is accepted or not, the copy will be kept on file in the church office.**

The CBC will be kept on file as proof the CBC was done and also as backup should anyone question the suitability of an applicant. If the applicant requests a copy be given to him/her, then the Safe Church Team member who receives the CBC shall be responsible for making a copy, clearly indicating on the copy the date and time the copy was made and signing the copy. The CBC and all applicant material shall be stored indefinitely in a locked file with limited access.

Note:

- **If a person is convicted of a sexual offense**, then he/she will **never** be able to volunteer with any of the child or youth programs in the Church.

- **If a person is suspected of child abuse**, then he/she must take a leave of absence from their role until an investigation has been completed. If, after an investigation has been concluded, it is determined that the person has been involved in abuse of a child, the person will be immediately dismissed from his/her current role.
- **If a volunteer or employee is removed or dismissed from their position or office** he/she should not be considered for re-entry or reinstatement without the advice of legal counsel.

9. The cost of the criminal background check is covered by the church.

VI. TRAINING FOR VOLUNTEERS AND EMPLOYEES

All volunteers and employees serving in ministries for children and youth must complete initial and annual training on preventing child abuse and responding to allegations policy and procedures.

VII. CODE OF CONDUCT AND DECLARATION OF UNDERSTANDING AND AGREEMENT

1. Following the training, all volunteers and employees are required to sign the “Code of Conduct and Declaration of Agreement and Understanding Form.” Appendix D
2. The Safe Church Team working with each Ministry Lead is responsible for ensuring that all volunteers in the program have signed the Code of Conduct and Declaration of Agreement and Understanding Form.
3. The CRC office will keep securely these signed Code of Conduct and Understanding and Agreement Forms. *See Appendix D*

VIII. GENERAL PROCEDURES

1. **All Church sponsored events and meetings away from the Church premises** are to follow these same guidelines outlined in this policy.
2. All children on church premises who are not participating in a church sponsored youth activity must be under the care and supervision of a parent or guardian at all times. Children are not allowed to be wandering about the facility as this creates a safety/abuse risk for the child and liability for CRC.

IX. PROCEDURE FOR RESPONDING TO AND REPORTING ABUSE

1. It is essential to take allegations of child abuse seriously:
 - Stay calm and do not overreact.
 - Presume the child is telling the truth
 - Listen to, support and reassure the child
 - Tell the child you are glad s/he told you.

- Advise the child that others will have to be involved.
- Advise the proper authorities. Keep the information confidential.
- Do not make promises you cannot keep.
- Do not make judgements about the alleged abuser.
- Volunteers, staff or leaders should never interview the concerned child in detail about any signs or symptoms and must never suggest to the child that s/he has been abused.

2. The person who made the report must also inform the Senior Pastor immediately. The reporter must keep the information confidential. An incident report form will be completed and kept on file.

X. HANDLING ALLEGATIONS OF CHILD ABUSE AGAINST A VOLUNTEER OR EMPLOYEE

When an allegation of child abuse has been reported to the Michigan Child Protective Services (CPS) or police, or a criminal charge of child abuse has been laid, CRC also needs to act. This section describes the procedures to be followed by the Church.

Volunteer or Non-Ordained Employee

1. Allegations:

When the Safe Church Team becomes aware that the police/CPS are investigating an allegation of abuse or neglect of a child, against a non-ordained employee or volunteer, the Safe Church Team will notify the Senior Pastor. The Senior Pastor will then inform the consistory and immediately suspend the person from his/her position, pending the police/CPS investigation. Suspension is carried out with pay (for employees) and without prejudice. The Senior Pastor will immediately contact the Church's insurance provider to report the incident in order to satisfy all the conditions of the Church's liability policy and to avoid jeopardizing any available coverage. In addition, the consistory should seek advice from the police, CPS, legal counsel and/or other experts, in terms of how to handle the situation. If the Senior Pastor is believed to have a conflict of interest, the Vice President of consistory should be notified to take the action prescribed above.

2. Criminal Charges:

If a criminal charge related to abuse or neglect of a child has been made against a non-ordained employee or volunteer, the Safe Church Team will notify the Senior Pastor who will then notify the consistory and immediately suspend the person from his/her position, with pay (for paid staff) and without prejudice. The Senior Pastor will immediately contact the Church's insurance provider to report the incident in order to satisfy all the conditions of the Church's liability policy and to avoid jeopardizing any available coverage. In addition, the consistory should seek advice from the police, CPS, legal counsel and/or other experts.

3. Allegations which do not result in charges or charges dropped or no conviction:

If the allegations do not result in a criminal charge, or the criminal charges related to abuse or neglect of a child against the non-ordained person are dropped, or if there is no conviction of the charges, the consistory will meet to decide if a suspension should be lifted. A suspension may be lifted when the consistory, in consultation with the police, CPS, legal counsel, and/or other experts consider it safe and proper to do so.

4. Conviction:

In the event a volunteer is convicted of an offense related to abuse or neglect of a child, the volunteer shall be permanently suspended from any further role in the Church. In the event an employee of the Church is convicted of an offense related to abuse or neglect of a child, the employee shall be terminated without further pay.

Ordained Person

Note: Ordained person means ordained to any office for which ordination is required, including minister, elder or deacon, whether paid or volunteer.

1. Allegations:

When the Safe Church Team becomes aware that the police/CPS are investigating an allegation of abuse or neglect of a child or adult against an ordained person, the Safe Church Team will notify the Senior Pastor or Vice Chair of the Consistory who will then notify consistory and immediately suspend the person from his/her position, pending the police/CPS investigation. Suspension for paid staff is carried out by the consistory with pay. All instances of suspension are without prejudice. Suspension of an office-bearer is carried out in accordance with Church Order. The Senior Pastor will immediately contact the Church's insurance provider to report the incident in order to satisfy all conditions of the Church's liability policy and to avoid jeopardizing any available coverage. In addition, the consistory should seek advice from the police, CPS, legal counsel and/or other experts. If the Senior Pastor is believed to have a conflict of interest, the Vice President of Consistory should be notified to take the action prescribed above.

2. Criminal Charges:

If a criminal charge related to the abuse or neglect of a child has been made against an ordained person, the Safe Church Team will notify the President or Vice President of Consistory, who will then notify consistory. The consistory will consider the case and immediately suspend the person from his/her position. Suspension for employees is carried out by the Consistory with pay. All instances of suspension are without prejudice. Suspension of an office-bearer is carried out in accordance with Church Order. The Senior Pastor will immediately contact the Church's insurance provider to report the incident in order to satisfy all conditions of the Church's liability

policy and to avoid jeopardizing any available coverage. In addition, Consistory should seek advice from the police, CPS, legal counsel and/or other experts.

3. Allegations which do not result in charges or charges dropped or no conviction:

If the allegations do not result in a criminal charge, or the criminal charges related to abuse or neglect of a child against the ordained person are dropped, or if there is no conviction on the charges, the Consistory will meet to decide if a suspension should be lifted. A suspension may be lifted when the police, CPS, legal counsel, and/or other experts consider it safe and proper to do so.

4. Conviction:

In the event an ordained person is convicted of an offense related to abuse or neglect of a child, the ordained person shall be deposed according to Church Order, Articles 78-84 and their Supplements and their employment shall be terminated without further pay.

Physical Abuse or Neglect That May Have Occurred in the Community

1. Report to supervisor and Senior Pastor who will report to Michigan Child Abuse.

2. Anonymous reports can be made by ANY observer

3. Child Protective Services Program: 1-855-444-3911

APPENDIX A: INCIDENT OF SUSPECTED ABUSE REPORT - CONFIDENTIAL

This report form is for the purpose of recording any incident of suspected abuse reported to the Safe Church Team.

Name of person making report: _____

Position: _____

Date of report: _____

Phone number: _____

Date of incident: _____

Description of incident: (time of occurrence, what occurred, who was involved, location, etc.)

Name(s) of any other potential witnesses:

Action taken: (note dates)

Signature of person making report: _____

=====

Name of Safe Church Team member receiving this report: _____

Date received: _____ Today's Date: _____

APPENDIX B-1: APPLICATION FOR CHILDREN'S/YOUTH MINISTRY WORKER

This application is to be completed by all applicants for any position (volunteer or compensated) involving the supervision or custody of minors. This is not an employment application form. Persons seeking a position in the church as a paid employee will be required to complete an employment application in addition to this screening form. The information obtained on this form is being used to help the church provide a safe and secure environment for those children and youth who participate in our programs and use our facilities.

PERSONAL

Name Last: _____ First: _____ Middle: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Soc. Security # _____

Identity must be confirmed with a state driver's license or other photographic identification (attach photocopy of document). DL # and Soc. Sec. # are required for the Criminal Background Check.

Are you a Christian? (Circle) Yes or No Baptized? (Circle) Yes or No

Present Address: _____

How Long at Address? _____

Previous
Address: _____

How Long at
Address? _____

Home Phone: (____) _____ Work Phone: (____) _____

Marital Status:

Married _____ Single _____ Engaged _____ Separated _____ Divorced _____ Widowed _____

Do you have a valid driver's license? (Circle) Yes or No

If yes, please list your driver's license number and classification: _____

Have you been convicted of a traffic offense in the past 5 years? (Circle) Yes or No

(Relevant as it relates to transportation of children)

Leaving any of the following questions unanswered would indicate that you prefer to discuss them with the designated interviewer. Answering yes or leaving any of the questions unanswered may not automatically disqualify an applicant.

Have you ever been charged and/or convicted of a criminal offense? (Circle) Yes or No

(If yes, please explain ~ attach a separate page, if necessary.)

Have you ever been charged and/or convicted of child abuse or a crime involving actual or attempted sexual molestation of a minor? (Circle) Yes or No

(If yes, please explain ~ attach a separate page, if necessary.)

CHURCH HISTORY AND PRIOR MINISTRY EXPERIENCE

Name of church of which you are a member: _____

List (name and address) other churches you have attended regularly during the past 5 years:

List all previous church work involving children or youth (list each organization's name and address, type of work performed, and dates):

List all previous non-church work involving children or youth (list each organization's name and address, type of work performed, and dates):

List any gifts, callings, training, education, or other factors that have prepared you for work with children or youth:

MINISTRY PREFERENCE AND AVAILABILITY

Please indicate the type of work with children or youth you prefer:

Age Preference:

- ☐ Where Needed
- ☐ Nursery
- ☐ Preschool
- ☐ Grades K-4
- ☐ Jr. High
- ☐ High School

Please indicate the date you would be available to begin: _____

What is the minimum length of commitment you can make? _____

APPLICANT'S STATEMENT

The information contained in this application is correct to the best of my knowledge. I authorize any reference or churches listed in the application to give you any information (including opinions) that they may have regarding my character and fitness for children's or youth work. In consideration of the receipt and evaluation of this application by Community Reformed Church, I hereby release any individual, church, youth organization, charity, employer, reference, or any other person or organization, including record custodians, both collectively and individually, from any and all liability for damages of whatever kind or nature which may at any time result to me, my heirs, or family, on account of compliance or any attempts to comply with this authorization. I waive any right that I may have to inspect any information provided about me by any person or organization identified by me in this application.

Should my application be accepted, I agree to the policies of Community Reformed Church, and to refrain from unscriptural conduct in the performance of my services on behalf of the church.

I further state that I HAVE CAREFULLY READ THE FOREGOING RELEASE AND THE CONTENTS THEREOF AND I SIGN THIS RELEASE OF MY OWN FREE ACT. This is a legally binding agreement that I have read and understand.

Applicant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature (if under 18): _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX B-2: VOLUNTEER/EMPLOYEE APPLICANT INTERVIEW FORM
CONFIDENTIAL

This interview form is for the purpose of recording information obtained during the interview of a prospective volunteer by the Program Supervisor. Form to be completed by the interviewer. It must be kept on file permanently.

Name of Applicant being interviewed: _____

Applicant's Phone number: _____

Position being applied for: _____

Name of the
interviewer(s): _____

Date of interview: _____

Description of interview: (brief summary of your assessment of e.g. the applicant's maturity, education/knowledge, experience, skills, ability to work with others, responsibility, suitability to serve in the position applied for, etc)

Interviewer's recommendation:

Signature of person making report: _____

=====

Name of Safe Church Team member receiving this report: _____

Date
received: _____

APPENDIX C: VOLUNTEER/EMPLOYEE APPLICANT REFERENCE CHECKS

Name of Volunteer: _____

REFERENCE #1

Name of Reference: _____ Phone #: _____

Date of Contact: _____ Person Contacting the Reference: _____

Method of Contact: Phone ____ or Personal Conversation ____ or Letter ____

How long have you known the applicant? _____ In what capacity? _____

Summary of Contact (Strengths, weaknesses, how does the applicant relate to others, children/youth, follow through on commitments, how does the applicant respond to supervision, any conduct you would call into question, any concerns with applicant working with children/youth?)

REFERENCE #2

Name of Reference: _____ Phone #: _____

Date of Contact: _____ Person Contacting the Reference: _____

Method of Contact: Phone ____ or Personal Conversation ____ or Letter ____

How long have you known the applicant? _____ In what capacity? _____

Summary of Contact (Strengths, weaknesses, how does the applicant relate to others, children/youth, follow through on commitments, how does the applicant respond to supervision, any conduct you would call into question, any concerns with applicant working with children/youth?)

REFERENCE #3

Name of Reference: _____ Phone #: _____

Date of Contact: _____ Person Contacting the Reference: _____

Method of Contact: Phone ____ or Personal Conversation ____ or Letter ____

How long have you known the applicant? _____ In what capacity? _____

Summary of Contact (Strengths, weaknesses, how does the applicant relate to others, children/youth, follow through on commitments, how does the applicant respond to supervision, any conduct you would call into question, any concerns with applicant working with children/youth?)

Name of Safe Church Team member receiving report: _____ Date received: _____

APPENDIX D: CODE OF CONDUCT AND DECLARATION OF UNDERSTANDING AND AGREEMENT WITH POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR PREVENTING CHILD ABUSE AND RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS OF CHILD ABUSE POLICY

1. I have:

- attended the required training or have received equivalent information on abuse awareness and my responsibility to report alleged abusive situations.
- read and understand CRC's Preventing Child Abuse and Responding to Allegations Policy.

2. I agree:

- to abide by its mandates, and to the following Principles of Conduct.

I commit to:

- attempt to live a Christ-like lifestyle in word and deed, and to model this to those in my care
- uphold the teachings of the Reformed Church
- submit to the governing authorities of Community Reformed Church
- protect the safety of those under my care and myself
- report any suspected abuse to the proper church authorities

My signature acknowledges my understanding and agreement with these guidelines and principles of conduct, as well as certifying that I have presented an honest account of myself and answered truthfully to all questions, and inferences.

Name (please print): _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX E: DISCIPLINE OF CHILDREN/YOUTH

1. Corporal punishment (slapping, hitting, and pushing) is not permitted.
2. Abusive verbal discipline (yelling, hurling insults, threatening) is not permitted.
3. Parent(s) or legal guardians of a child/youth are to be informed and involved whenever a child/youth misbehaves beyond minor correction, and/or if a pattern of misbehavior increases.
4. Concerns about a child's continued misbehavior shall be discussed with the program supervisor.
5. An aide, parent or legal guardian should assist the leader in classrooms where misbehavior is an ongoing problem.
6. Expectations of children's/youth's behavior must reflect their age and level of comprehension. Similarly, discipline must reflect their age and level of comprehension. For young children, time-outs should not last longer than 1 minute per the age of the child. For example, a three-year-old should not have to sit for a time-out any longer than three minutes.
7. Children are to be reminded of the kind of behavior that is appropriate for the setting. Older children and youth may benefit from having these expectations in written form.
8. Appropriate techniques of behavior management are to be reviewed with volunteer/paid staff before church-sponsored programs begin a new season. Then periodic reminders are to be given as needed.
9. Whenever possible, leaders should try to avoid having to discipline a child/youth by choosing one or more of the following options:
 - · distract the child/youth with another activity
 - · help the child/youth focus on other more appropriate behavior
 - · isolate the child/youth from others if another volunteer/staff is available to assist
10. When nothing seems to be working, volunteers, staff and leaders should get help before "losing their cool".
11. Addition Classroom Discipline Guidelines

All teachers and workers will use the following discipline measures. IF a child is behaving inappropriately, the teacher or worker will tell the child specifically what he/she is doing that is not acceptable and state what is expected behavior is, e.g. "We do not throw the blocks; we use blocks for building." If this measure is not effective, the child will be guided to another activity. If inappropriate behavior continues, the child may be placed at a table to work alone away from the other students. IF the child's disruptive behavior continues after these steps have been taken, the child may be taken to the Ministry Leader and left under such person's supervision. NO physical punishment or verbal abuse, e.g., ridicule, are to be used at any time. If isolating the child within the classroom or removal of the child from the room becomes necessary, the situation will be discussed with the child's parents or guardian as soon as possible.

APPENDIX F: YOUTH GROUP TRIP COVENANT

The following rules and guidelines are equally binding on adult leaders/chaperones and youth.

Non-Negotiable Rules

Any participant failing to abide by these rules will be sent home immediately at personal/family expense.

- No use of illicit drugs or alcohol
- Presence at and full participation in all group activities, including adherence to curfews and other time-related instructions
- No sexual misconduct (defined as exposure, touching, or inappropriate reference to body areas normally covered by undergarments)
- Must be in assigned rooms by designated time
- Coed visitation only in assigned community room
- Smoking and the use of tobacco products are not allowed to, from, or during any trip.
- Will not break any American laws in the United States or any other country.

Guidelines for Living in Christian Community

- Adults and youth will be equally responsible for performing assigned tasks in a timely and cooperative manner.
- Participants will be respectful, encouraging, and will maintain a positive attitude toward others at all times, recognizing Christ's presence in each other.
- Participants will be respectful of both common living spaces and the property of others.
- Participants will avoid the use of foul language, cursing, or any speech (including "humor") which puts down, makes fun of, or stereotypes other persons or groups.
- Sleeping areas for males and females will be separate.

Youth Participant's (or Adult Leader's) Statement: By signing this form, I pledge to honor God and respect others during this activity by following the rules and guidelines printed above. I understand that I cannot participate in the activity unless this completed form is on file.

x_____

Youth Participant's or Adult Leader's Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian's Statement: By signing this form, I agree to support the Covenant of Community Expectations printed above, and will accept responsibility for the payment of my child's return transportation should s/he break one of the non-negotiable rules.

x_____

Parent/Guardian's Signature

Date

APPENDIX G: MEDICAL INFORMATION

YOUTH INFORMATION *(Please Print)*

Youth Full Name _____ Nickname _____

Home Address _____

Home Phone _____ DOB _____

Parent/Guardian Contact Information

Parent/Guardian Name(s): _____

List all parent/guardian contact phone numbers in best order to be reached:

NON-PARENT/GUARDIAN EMERGENCY CONTACTS

Name: _____ Relation: _____

Phone(s): _____

PRIMARY CARE PHYSICIAN

Name: _____

Phone(s) _____ Fax: _____

Name of practice: _____

Date of last Tetanus shot (required) _____

INSURANCE INFORMATION

Medical Insurance Company: _____ Phone: _____

Policy/Group ID#: _____

Policy Holder's Name (please print): _____

Required: Attach a copy of medical insurance card here.

MEDICATION:

List all medications the youth will take during any youth ministry trips, retreats, or events. This includes any prescription, non-prescription medications, herbal supplements and vitamins. Any participant under the age of 18 is required to give **ALL MEDICATIONS to the adult youth leader in their original containers with complete dispensing instructions before the start of the event. Youth are not permitted to carry any prescription or non-prescription medication and will be sent home at the parent/guardian's expense if they do.**

Medication Name	Dose	Treatment for	Dispensing instructions
<i>Example: Zyrtec</i>	<i>5mg</i>	<i>Seasonal allergies</i>	<i>Take one pill daily in the morning with food</i>

Over-the-Counter Medication Permission: Do you give permission for your child/youth to be given over-the-counter medication as needed and as directed on the label, to treat non-emergency medical conditions that do not require a doctor or hospital visit such as a minor headache, stomachache, or allergic reaction (i.e. Tylenol, Advil, antacids, Benadryl) while at a youth ministry event?

NO. Contact me or get medical help if my child has any minor medical concerns.

Parent signature_____

YES. I give permission for an adult youth leader to give my child approved over-the-counter medications as directed on an as needed basis to treat non-emergency medical conditions.

Parent Signature_____

MEDICAL CONDITIONS: Please answer in detail if applicable or write N/A. Attach additional pages if necessary.

1. List any medical conditions you have (asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, etc.):
2. List any allergies (drug/medicine, food, and/or environmental) and the severity and type of reaction:
3. Please explain any other pertinent information about the participant (i.e. physical, behavioral, or emotional) that would be important for the adult leaders to know.

APPENDIX H: COMMUNITY REFORMED CHURCH CONTINUING RELEASE OF LIABILITY AND INDEMNITY

2021-2022: Child Under 18

IMPORTANT – PLEASE READ CAREFULLY!

I, the undersigned, the parent and natural guardian of the child indicated below, give my consent for him/her to participate in activities and to utilize Community Reformed Church's facilities for events and/or for youth group/church activities in general. In giving this consent, I HEREBY ACKNOWLEDGE ON A CONTINUING BASIS AS FOLLOWS:

1. I acknowledge that youth group events and activities are potentially hazardous activities that involve risks and potential dangers to my child, including but not limited to: injuries that can result from activities and games. I also understand that participating in the CRC youth group activities includes various risks to my child, including, but not limited to falling. I accept all of the risks inherent in youth group activities.
2. I acknowledge that I am the sole judge of my child's abilities to participate in events, activities and competitions and agree to instruct my child as to their responsibility to conduct oneself within the limits of their natural abilities.
3. I acknowledge and understand that I can inspect the location and nature of activities before allowing my child to participate in activities. I am solely responsible for knowing and understanding my child's ability to participate in youth group activities and I agree that my child will not participate unless I am completely satisfied with the safety of the activity and conditions.
4. I acknowledge that my child is physically and fully capable of participating in youth group activities.
5. In consideration of my use and my child's use of CRC facilities and participating in church youth group activities in general, I agree that CRC and its employees, officers, representatives, directors, shareholders, agents and vendors or anyone associated with CRC will not be liable for the loss, injury or death related to my or my child's participation in church youth group activities in general. I hereby agree and release CRC from any and all liability as to my child's activities at CRC, including, but not limited to events, competitions, instruction and other CRC activities. I agree not to sue CRC.
6. In further consideration, I agree to release, hold harmless, indemnify, and defend CRC and its employees, owners, officers, representatives, directors, shareholders, agents and vendors or anyone associated with CRC from and against any and all lawsuits, claims, actions, losses and damages that I have or perceive myself or my child to have against CRC, including but not limited to allegations of negligence, carelessness, breach of contract, breach of statutory duty or other duty of care. I further agree to indemnify, hold harmless and defend CRC from damage, costs or expenses, including actual attorney fees and costs, without limitation which CRC sustains as a result of or related to any claims that I have or perceive myself or my child to have against CRC.
7. I acknowledge that I have read the CRC Youth Group Code and understand the responsibilities it imposes upon participants, including my child's, in these youth group activities.

I have carefully read the above agreement, release and indemnity agreement and understand that it is a contract which applies to all events and activities for one year from date of signing. I acknowledge all of its implications and the contractual responsibility I accept by signing this agreement. I further acknowledge the contagious nature of Covid-19 and voluntarily assume the risk that I and/or my child(ren) may be exposed to or infected by Covid-19 by participation; and that such exposure or infection may result in personal injury, illness, permanent disability or death. I understand the risk of becoming exposed to or infected by Covid 19 at CRC and understand the risk of becoming exposed exists and may result from the actions, omission, or negligence of the undersigned and others, but not limited to CRC employees and CRC guests.

Date: _____ Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____ Print Child's Name: _____

Street Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____

Child's DOB: _____ Sex: _____ Age: _____ Phone Number: _____

Parent/Guardian Email: _____

Revised 09/08/2021

APPENDIX I: SAFE CHURCH TEAM

A. Accountability:

The Safe Church Team is responsible for ensuring the implementation of this Policy and Procedures for Preventing Child Abuse and Responding to Allegations of Abuse. The Safe Church Team is directly accountable to the Senior Pastor in accordance with the Policy Governance Manual.

B. Membership:

The Safe Church Team consists of four members (minimum of two male and two females if at all possible). The Director of Children's Ministry, Minister of Youth, and a minimum of two additional members (CRC member or regular attender) will be appointed by the Senior Pastor for a two-year term (one time renewable for a total of 4 consecutive years). A chair will be designated on an annual basis by the team from within the team.

C. Mandate:

1. To ensure mandatory initial and annual education and training regarding abuse prevention and response to allegations of abuse for volunteers and employees involved in child and youth programs in the Church.
2. Safe Church Team members will assist and be a resource to ministry leaders to ensure implementation of screening procedures for volunteers and employees involved in child and youth programs at CRC (application form, interview, reference checks, and background check). Confidential screening documentation including background checks should be kept on file indefinitely.
3. To determine on an annual basis, those persons for whom documentation is required. For new volunteer/employee applicants – see above. For ongoing volunteers/employees: annual refresher abuse prevention and response to allegations of abuse training and sign code of conduct and declaration of understanding agreement, and every five years a criminal background check.
4. To provide direction and support in abuse situations.
5. To ensure that up-to-date reference material concerning abuse issues is available in the Church. The organization should be Christian and if possible, including copies of this policy, Plan to Protect by Winning Kids and other references recommended on the CRCNA Safe Church website.
6. To ensure that confidential information being handled is maintained with extreme confidentiality and all written documents with confidential information are stored in a secure location in the church offices.
7. Ensure that an annual audit of the implementation of the abuse prevention policy and procedures is normally conducted in the fall by 2 non-Safe Church team people and a report is submitted to the Senior Pastor and Governance Board.
8. Review, update, and gain approval from the Senior Pastor in accordance with the Policy Governance Manual on the child abuse prevention policy and procedures every 3 years. It is recommended that the

Senior Pastor include the Executive Team in the review the Child Abuse Prevention Policy every 3 years. Professional advice on amending and improving the policy is to be sought when necessary.

APPENDIX J: TRANSPORTATION

This procedure applies to adults who may transport non-related children or youth in the course of Church-sponsored programs.

1. The following procedures must be in place:

- A. Adults are to be present and seated in the front of the vehicle when transporting children or youth.
- B. At least two youth are present with the driver when transporting children.
- C. Children and/or youth are seated in the back seats of vehicles.

2. Adults must have a valid driver's license with no restrictions and proof of insurance before transporting children or youth;

3. Drivers need to abide by state of Michigan requirements for car seat use, seatbelt use and airbag safety.

- A. Except for school busses, children and youth must wear seatbelts whenever the vehicle is in motion. Drivers of private vehicles may not transport more children and - youth than seatbelts installed in the vehicle.
- B. Car seats must be available for younger children who require them by law.
- C. Children and youth under 12 years of age may not sit in the front seat where there is a passenger-side airbag installed.
 - a. *Michigan's law: Children younger than age 4 to ride in a car seat in the rear seat if the vehicle has a rear seat. If all available rear seats are occupied by children under 4, then a child under 4 may ride in a car seat in the front seat. A child in a rear-facing car seat may only ride in the front seat if the airbag is turned off. Children must be properly buckled in a car seat or booster seat until they are 8 years old or 4-feet-9-inches tall. Children must ride in a seat until they reach the age requirement or the height requirement, whichever comes first.*

4. Adults or minors who transport related children and youth to church-sponsored events do so without the implied approval of the Church and at their own initiative and risk. By taking such a voluntary initiative, they hold the church harmless from all liability.

5. Parents or guardians who permit minors to transport non-related minors to church related events do so at their own risk and without the implied approval of the Church. They agree to hold the church harmless from any and all liability.

Appendix K - VOLUNTEER DRIVER INFORMATION SHEET

(Drivers must be 21 years of age or older)

INSURANCE INFORMATION:

When using a privately owned vehicle, the insurance coverage is the limits of the insurance policy covering that specific vehicle.

Insurance Company: _____ Address: _____

Expiration date: _____

Liability limits of policy* _____ Policy # _____

*Please note: the minimal, acceptable liability limit for privately owned vehicles is \$100,000/\$300,000.

CERTIFICATION:

I authorize Community Reformed Church to access my driving record through the Michigan Department of State Bureau of Driver and Vehicle Records. The church will only disclose any information obtained from the Michigan Department of State Bureau of Driver and Vehicle records on a need to know basis.

I understand that as a volunteer driver, I must be 21 years of age or older, hold a valid driver's license, without restrictions, and have the required insurance coverage in effect on any vehicle used to transport students. I certify that the information given on this form is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Volunteers who transport children and youth to church-sponsored events do so at their own initiative and risk. By taking such a voluntary initiative, they hold the church harmless from all liability.

Driver's license #: _____

Driver's Signature

Date

Appendix L - GUIDE FOR VOLUNTEER DRIVERS

- Volunteer drivers include staff, volunteers and parents. Anyone driving students to a church sponsored activity in their own personal vehicle.
- Volunteer drivers must be at least 21 years of age and have no restrictions on their license.
- Volunteer drivers must fill out the Volunteer Driver Information Sheet and have it turned into the Church Office 24 hours in advance to drive to an activity.
- Volunteers will only be on the list for a year. For that reason, they will need to fill out a form each year.
- Staff will be kept on the list and checked on occasion. If an issue arises and a staff member is in question as to their eligibility to drive students, contact the Church Office.
- Volunteer driver will not smoke in vehicle.
- Volunteer drivers will not consume alcohol or drugs before or during activities where they may be required to drive.
- Volunteer drivers will follow all traffic laws and drive to weather conditions.
- Non-staff volunteer drivers will also need to fill out a Volunteer Form and turn it into the Church Office for approval.

APPENDIX M: GUIDELINES FOR SPECIFIC PROGRAMS

A. NURSERY PROGRAMS – BIRTH-4 YEARS

1. When dropping off their child(ren), a parent/guardian must sign their child in on the sign in sheets provided. There must be an information sheet on file for each child, including such things as the parents' and child's names, permission for diapering and/or bathroom assistance, allergy information and any additional instructions. Parents must list who has permission to pick up the child. No child will be released to a person not on the list.

2. Diaper and Toilet Guidelines

- Children four years of age or younger) boys and girls) should be assisted in the restroom as needed by an adult.
- The top of the Dutch door for the bathroom is left open and the bottom remains closed.
- Never touch a child's private areas except when necessary, as in the case of changing a diaper. Two adults will be present when changing a diaper.

3. The Nursery Committee will keep forms on file if any incidents have been reported.

4. At least one adult and one helper will be assigned to the nursery.

5. The helper must be at least age 12 and will be assigned at the discretion of the Director of Children's Ministry.

6. Female adult attendants will be responsible for changing diapers and will do that on the change-pad area located in the nursery bathroom. The change table must always be in full view. Female adult attendants will be responsible for taking children to the nearest bathroom and leave the top of the Dutch door open and the bottom closed.

7. Attendants must wear an identification badge.

8. Any person not picking up children, working as an attendant, or tending to their own child may not be in the nursery rooms.

9. Attendants must:

- arrive 15 minutes prior to the service in order to assist with the supervision of drop-off/sign in procedures.
- ensure the safety of the children during their stay in the nursery. They must provide
- safe activities and toys as well as provide a positive atmosphere.
- adhere to pick-up procedures and tight supervision. The attendant must be the last

- person to leave the nursery.

10. It is also very important that appropriate substitutions are made when unable to fulfill the obligation to be a nursery attendant. Adults must ensure that the female adult rule is in effect. Nursery attendants are to arrange substitutions with the Director of Children's Ministry.

11. Helpers must assist the attendant with the supervision of children and to provide a safe, positive atmosphere for the children. Helpers may not have friends/siblings join them if not previously scheduled.

12. If a child cries uncontrollably for a period of time and cannot be comforted, the parent must be called.

13. Nursery attendants may not take children out of the nursery without the permission of the Director of Children's Ministry.

14. If there are not two approved attendants available, the nursery will be closed.

15. Large windows between nursery rooms are important.

16. Completed attendance records for nursery must be turned in to the Director of Children's Ministries for filing.

17. Children in nursery can only be picked up by the person who dropped them off or the person indicated by the person dropping them off.

B. CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES Pre-School – 4th Grade

1. When dropping off their child(ren), a parent/guardian must sign their child in on the sign in sheets provided. Parents must list who has permission to pick up the child. No child will be released to a person not on the list.

2. A designated monitor will circulate periodically from room to room for surveillance and to protect workers against false allegations.

3. At least one adult should be in every room at all times.

4. Leaders need to be aware of how to contact the assigned monitor who would be available for help.

5. Only adult leaders may assist children with bathroom needs. It is recommended that each classroom have a leader and a helper. If the leaders must leave in order to assist a student to the bathroom, the helper must supervise the remaining students.

- Use the "Buddy System" when a child needs to use the restroom, take an additional child along with you.

- Check to see if anyone is in the restroom before letting the children enter.

- Never be alone with a child in an unsupervised bathroom and never go into a bathroom stall with a child and shut the door.

- An adult leader will remain outside the bathroom door and wait for the child before escorting him or her back to the classroom. Call the child's name if they are taking longer than seems necessary.
 - In light of the fact that most abusers are male, and for the protection of our male leaders, it would be wise for men to avoid assisting boys or girls of any age to the bathroom.
 - In the case of one adult leader, contact the monitor to help take children to the restroom
6. A group leader may not meet privately with a student except with the consent of the parent(s) or legal guardian and the knowledge of the Program Supervisor and then they will meet in a place where they are visible to others.
 7. Affection between leaders and students is often an expression of comfort, encouragement and support. However, it can be misinterpreted. For that reason, displays of affection will normally be limited to a brief hug, an arm around the shoulder, an open-handed pat on the back, clasping one another's hand, or a light touch to the forearm. A leader's or student's right to refuse affection will be respected.
 8. No inappropriate gifts, phone calls or letters will be exchanged between a student and a leader ("inappropriate" means that it would normally lead to embarrassment if seen or known about by any third party).
 9. Leaders will keep children in their classroom until the designated parent/guardian picks him/her up. At a minimum the leader must be stationed at the door to ensure children do not leave unattended.
 10. Helpers should be at least 12 years of age, and any person not working as a leader or helper may not be in the room unless permission is given by the Director of Children's Ministries.
 11. Completed attendance records, including names of leaders and assistants, must be completed at each session and will be turned into the Director of Children ministry.

C. JR. HIGH/HIGH SCHOOL MINISTRY 5th – 12th Grade

1. Adult leaders should view the youth with the eyes of Christ. Females are sisters and males are brothers in Christ. The leader is directly responsible to Christ for the way he/she treats Christ's family.
2. Adult leaders may be single or married.
3. Adult leaders are responsible to avoid sexual and unprofessional behavior such as sitting too close, giving seductive looks, telling sexual jokes or stories, giving "wedgies", kidding in a sexual manner, or focusing on another's physical appearance.
4. Adult leaders must always dress modestly.
5. **“Two non-related adult rule” and/or “open door policy” and/or windows in all classrooms.**
6. A group leader may not meet privately with a student except with the prior consent of the parent(s) or legal guardian and the knowledge of the Program Supervisor. This meeting will take place where they are

visible to others (i.e., McDonalds, at the church with the door open when others are present) and be documented. Prior consent is given via annual permission slip for activities.

7. Adult leaders should never drive alone with a youth unless written permission is given in advance by the parent or guardian. The adult leader must keep a log of pick-up and drop-off times.

8. An adult leader and a member of the youth group may not date or become involved in a romantic relationship (regardless of the ages involved). If this occurs, the leader will be removed from the program.

9. Displays of affection should be handled with caution with student permission and limited to a brief shoulder-to-shoulder hug, an arm around the shoulders, an open-hand pat on the back, a handclasp or handshake, or a light touch to the forearm. There must be no lingering touches. All of these displays of affection should be restricted to public areas, and an adult leader or youth group member's right to refuse such a display will be respected.

10. Completed attendance records, including names of leaders and assistants, must be turned in to the church office for filing at the end of each meeting/session.

D. STUDENT MENTORING GUIDELINES AND BOUNDARIES - BEST PRACTICES

1. Mentoring is a vital part of youth ministry. It is core to helping youth in the many and varied situations of their life. Youth leaders are in a position of ministry and responsibility. Given the inherent differences of age and position, a relationship between a youth worker and youth will inherently be imbalanced, making a "friendship of equals" impossible. Youth Workers must understand this. Community Reformed Church needs to be a safe space that encourages youth to develop healthy, Christ-centered relationships with transformative mentors in their Christian life. To ensure that such relationships are in fact safe and Christ-centered, and to avoid the possibility of misunderstanding and misinterpretation, it is critical that youth workers cultivate an atmosphere of hedges and transparency. These relationships must be handled in a healthy and safe way for the student and the youth worker.

2. The "never isolated" rule. Leaders should take care to always meet with students in the presence of a third party. When a youth worker is alone with a teen, they are placing their future in the teen's hands, since most authorities will give the benefit of the doubt to the teen, not the adult leader.

3. If a one-on-one mentoring/coaching relationship is necessary; it can be done in a healthy way. Meeting should be in an open, public place. Avoid physical affection that can be misinterpreted, and limit affection to pats on the shoulder, high-fives, handshakes, and fist bumps. If meeting in a room or office, leave the door open or move to an area that can be easily observed by others passing by. Meeting in public places or at the youth's home (with a parent present) are the best scenarios. Never meet in the youth workers home or car. Even if a student needs a ride, be cautious and responsible, and make sure you are not alone.

4. Best practice is that we initiate contact with the parents before there is any one on one counseling with their kids. Parents should text or send a note that they approve of the one on one mentoring. This permission should be copied and placed in a file.

5. The “opposite sex” rule This may seem obvious, but it is important to state: adult leaders should avoid developing close emotional relationships with teens of the opposite sex. Try to connect the youth with a same sex person for mentoring.
6. While the adult leader may counsel the teen regarding sexuality, it is critical to avoid building unhealthy emotional bonds. It is important the church help parents to navigate these discussions.
7. If an authority figure, such as a parent or law enforcement officer, requests information about a teen, the youth leader must fully disclose his or her knowledge of any safety issues. Failure to respond appropriately is not in the best interest of the student and may result in criminal charges against the worker.
8. Staff and volunteers should report any inappropriate or suspicious behavior to a ministry staff leader immediately. If a teen shares with a youth worker that they have been sexually abused, the worker must report this activity to ministry staff and other authorities and possibly to the state’s child protective services.
9. The “transparency” rule: Youth leaders need accountability where they can be absolutely transparent about their behavior. They should communicate with another youth leader as well as parents about their meetings with the youth.
10. Facebook, Twitter, Tick Tok, Instagram, “friending,” etc. can be used for individual contact. You can have a text or message that the whole youth group is on. Any communication that you have with the kids, in terms of whether the youth group is happening, where it’s happening, and changes of plans, is appropriate. Use of social media should always be documentable.

APPENDIX N: SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Social Networking sites and media are a reality in the lives of our youth and adults. It is essential for the Church to engage in this area and ensure we do so with integrity and respect in order to provide as much protection for each other's privacy. The following principles should be followed for healthy boundaries for digital networking and communication. They are intended to raise awareness of issues and open doors with ministry teams. We encourage all ministry teams to discern which guidelines apply to their ministry.

1. All communications must be ministry related.
2. Use prudent judgment in contacting youth through social media. The "home phone rule" is a basic rule to use. Normally do not text, chat, email back and forth with youth when you would not normally call their home phone line (before 8 AM or after 9 PM).
3. Implement privacy settings and personal boundaries.
 - a. Create separate private and professional profiles on sites.
 - b. Do not invite students to view your private profiles.
 - b. Apply privacy settings that are consistent with all youth, across all platforms.
 - c. Review accessible content and photos frequently.
 - d. If a youth texts you after hours and it is not urgent, wait until morning to reply.
4. If you choose to use social networking to communicate with youth, we recommend that your ministry leader has full access to your profiles
 - a. Parents should be aware of how the leader utilizes social network platforms.
 - b. When possible, communication should be sent to entire groups, in public areas.
 - c. When ongoing pastoral communication is private, disclose the person's name and the frequency of contact with the parents and the ministry leader.
5. These principles must be implemented to govern digital groups, addressing:
 - a. Appropriate and inappropriate language and behavior.
 - b. Who may join and view group activity; when someone should leave the group.
 - c. Content that can be posted/published on the site
 - d. How and when are photos tagged (parental permission, signed consent form)
6. Any inappropriate material posted to your online groups should be deleted, addressed and reported to your ministry leader.
7. Video chatting is discouraged.
8. E-mails should communicate facts, not feelings. Any concerns of content are to be shared with Ministry Leader. Phone calls and face-to-face meetings are preferred when dealing with emotionally-charged conversations.

APPENDIX O: VIRTUAL MEETING POLICY

CRC recommends Zoom for virtual meetings. It offers both ample security features as well as ease of usage.

There are other actions that should be taken to protect your Zoom space. These include:

- Always password protect your Zoom meeting.
- Leaders and participants should always use a new meeting room each time they create a call on Zoom. This means that you should not use a personal meeting ID.
- Ensure that participants do not join the call before the host
- All attendees should be muted on joining the call
- Set up a 'waiting room' for student members to join
- Lock your meeting room after you have started the meeting so that people cannot join uninvited
- Don't publicize your meeting link on social media or any other public domain, such as your website
- Don't share a screenshot of the Zoom call publicly – especially when it shows the meeting ID or images of students
- For each call, identify an adult that can 'manage the room' and ensure that they have cross checked the above steps
- Notify attendees of a Plan B should a call have to be aborted at short notice
- In addition to the above, it is important to remind users to avoid sharing any personal information on Zoom calls, and that video and microphone functions are turned off unless required.
- Participants should be notified if a recording is going to be made of the meeting.

Leaders should be aware of any dangerous / worrisome things that may appear in the background or surroundings of the participants. These should be addressed with the leaders and reported to the Safe Church Team. Overt dangers should be reported to Child Protective Services. Refer page 11 of the Policy and Procedures Manual.

APPENDIX P: ABUSE WARNING SIGNS

What to look for when abuse is occurring

A. Physical Abuse:

Physical Indicators:

Unexplained bruises and welts are the most frequent evidence found:

- often of the face, torso, buttocks, back, or thighs;
- can reflect shape of object used (electric cord, belt buckle, etc.)
- may be in various stages of healing

Unexplained burns:

- often on palms soles, buttocks, and back
- can reflect pattern indicative of cigarette, cigar, electrical appliance, immersion or rope burn

Other unexplained injuries:

- lacerations, abrasions, human bite marks or pinch marks
- loss of hair/bald patches
- retinal hemorrhage
- abdominal injuries

Behavioral Indicators:

- requests or feels deserving of physical punishment
- afraid to go home and/or requests to stay in school, day care, etc.
- overly shy, tends to avoid physical contact with adults, especially parents
- displays behavioral extremes (withdrawal or aggression)
- suggests that other children be punished in a harsh manner
- cries excessively and/or sits and stares
- reports injury by parent
- gives unbelievable explanations for injuries

B. Sexual Abuse:

Unfortunately, many children do not report this form of abuse. They rely on adults to be aware of specific physical and behavioral indicators. A child who persistently shows several of the following characteristics may be experiencing sexual abuse. Remember, the most reliable indicator of child abuse is the child's verbal disclosure.

Physical Indicators:

- somatic complaints, including pain and irritation of the genitals
- sexually transmitted disease
- pregnancy in young adolescents
- frequent unexplained sore throats, yeast infections, or urinary infections.

Behavioral Indicators:

- excessive masturbation in young children
- sexual knowledge of behavior beyond that expected for the child's age
- depression, suicidal gesture
- chronic runaway
- frequent psychosomatic complaints, such as headaches and stomach aches
- drug or alcohol abuse
- avoidance of undressing or wearing excessive layers of clothing
- sudden avoidance of certain familiar adults or places
- marked decline in school performance

C. Emotional Abuse:

The signs of emotional abuse may be less obvious than other forms of maltreatment. Emotional abuse is suspected when a child exhibits impaired development, destructive behavior, or chronic somatic complaints that cannot be explained medically or circumstantially. A child who persistently shows several of the following characteristics may be experiencing emotional abuse.

Physical Indicators:

- eating disorders
- sleep disturbances, nightmares
- wetting or soiling by school-age children
- speech disorder, stuttering
- failure to thrive
- development lags
- asthma, severe allergies, or ulcers

Behavioral Indicators:

- habit disorders, such as biting, rocking, head banging, thumb sucking in an older child
- poor peer relationships
- behavioral extremes (overly compliant or demanding, withdrawn or aggressive)
- self-destructive behavior, oblivious to hazards and risks
- irrational and persistent fears, dreads or hatreds

D. Signs of Neglect:

A child who persistently shows several of the following characteristics may be experiencing neglect. Keep in mind, however, that cultural standards which differ from those prevailing in a community are not necessarily neglect.

Physical Indicators:

- height and weight significantly below age level with no plausible explanation
- inappropriate clothing for weather
- poor hygiene, including lice, body odor, scaly skin
- child abandoned or left with inadequate supervision
- untreated illness or injury
- lack of safe, warm, sanitary shelter
- lack of necessary medical and dental care

Behavioral Indicators:

- begging or stealing food
- assumes adult responsibility
- falling asleep in school, lethargic
- repeated acts of vandalism
- poor school attendance, frequent tardiness
- chronic hunger
- dull, apathetic appearance
- running away from home
- reports no caretaker in the home