

ANCASTER CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH (ACRC)

“SAFE CHURCH MINISTRY”

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

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DOCUMENT DEFINITIONS:

- **ACRC:** means Ancaster Christian Reformed Church
- **Church:** means the Ancaster Christian Reformed Church
- **Volunteer:** A worker including program leaders/supervisors, elders, and deacons who are not paid for their work
- **Employee:** Any worker who is paid by ACRC
- **Board of Directors:** Has responsibility for all resources including personnel
- **Council:** Elected elders and deacons
- **Child, Youth:** A person under the age of 18 years
- **Vulnerable Adult:** intellectually disabled adult (e.g. Friendship Program)
- **Helper:** A person under 16 years old

RESOURCES

- Bonnie Nicholas and Website, CRCNA Safe Church Ministry
- Children's Aid Society (Website), Hamilton, Ont.
- Maranatha Christian Reformed Church, York, Ont.
- Plan To Protect by C. Wiebe, M. Bissell and J. Cates, Winning Kids Inc, 2011
- Preventing Child Abuse: Creating a Safe Place by Beth Swagman, 2009
- Robertson Hall Insurance

**Ancaster Christian Reformed Church (ACRC)
POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR PREVENTION OF CHILD ABUSE AND RESPONDING TO
ALLEGATIONS OF CHILD ABUSE**

I. INTRODUCTION

At baptism we are reminded of these words of Jesus Christ: "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these." (Mark 10:14) As the congregation of ACRC we respond to the following question: "Do you, the people of the Lord, promise to receive these children in love, pray for them, help instruct them in the faith, and encourage and sustain them in the fellowship of believers?" by answering: "We do, God helping us." (Christian Reformed Church Form for Baptism of Children). The bible says: "... if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea." Mat.18:6.

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).

ACRC (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, vulnerable adults and the volunteers and employees who participate in Church programs. Policy and procedures must be in place to qualify for legal liability insurance coverage. **The Council Chairperson signs the Abuse Prevention Declaration required by Robertson Hall, ACRC's insurance provider.**

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 behaviour 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. Coercion (physical, psychological, or emotional) distinguishes sexual abuse. Sexual abuse can take many forms including fondling, 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." Children's Aid Society of Hamilton, Ontario, 2014. (Based upon: Section 72 of the Child and Family Services Act). See also Appendix A Warning Signs of Abuse.

III. STATEMENT OF POLICY

The Church is committed to:

1. **providing a safe environment** for children, youth and vulnerable adults in the care of the Church and **protect them from harm** (physical, sexual, emotional and neglect).
2. **protecting volunteers and employees** in child, youth and vulnerable adult programs of the Church from false allegations
3. **a zero tolerance for abuse or neglect:** Any abuse of children, youth or vulnerable adults 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 B for Safe Church Team Terms of Reference.

IV. PROCEDURES

- **Mandatory screening** for all volunteers and employees in child, youth and vulnerable adult programs of the Church. See Appendices C-F.
- **Initial training for new and annual refresher abuse prevention training for all volunteers and employees** participating in child, youth and vulnerable adult programs of the Church and signing of Code of Conduct and Understanding and Agreement with the Policy and Procedures following training. See Appendix G.
- **Written procedure for discipline** (including no corporal punishment or inappropriate touching). See Appendix H.
- **Written procedure for transportation** including written parental consent for off-premises or overnight activities and field trips. See Appendix I.
- **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 washroom breaks, parental sign-in/out for nursery/children's programs (under grade 1). "Two unrelated adults rule" and/or open doors and/or windows in classrooms. A designated monitor(s) circulate from room to room for surveillance and to protect workers against false allegations. See Appendix J: Guidelines for Specific Programs.
- **Written protocol for response to and for reporting suspected abuse** to child protective agencies or police authorities. See Appendix L.
- **Annual audit** re implementation of the Abuse Prevention Policy including report to Council and the Board of Directors.

V. SCREENING PROCEDURE FOR VOLUNTEERS AND EMPLOYEES

The screening procedure is:

- **written application**
- **interview**
- **reference check and**
- **police record check** 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, youth, or vulnerable adults. This also applies to all those in leadership/supervisory positions who conduct meetings with children, youth or vulnerable adults. **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 member of the Ancaster Christian Reformed Church (ACRC) for a period of **six months** before they can begin volunteering. This policy may be waived, in the sole discretion of the Church, if the applicant provides three references, one of which must be from their “home” (most recent) church.

B. Personal Interview

An interview shall be conducted with all first time applicants to assist in assessing the applicant's supervisory and/or leadership skills. Whenever possible, the individual who will supervise the applicant should conduct the interview. Administrative Committee rep(s) will interview non-pastoral employees. Council/Search Committee rep(s) will interview potential pastoral employees. 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.

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 member of ACRC 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.

D. Criminal Record Check

1. **Purpose of the police record check (“PRC”)**: To help ensure that those who are responsible for teaching and leading children/youth under 18 years of age and vulnerable adults do not have a previous history of abuse.
2. **All applicants, age 16 and over**, will be informed by the leader of the relevant program at the time of inquiry, that it is the policy of ACRC to receive a PRC prior to approving appointment, and thereafter, **every five years**. (Note: A PRC will not be requested of the applicant until such time as the Church is satisfied that the applicant is otherwise acceptable for the position)
3. The Safe Church Team for the Church facilitates the PRC process, ensures the applicant understands the type of information being requested and the process to be followed.
4. The Safe Church Team will ensure that the information will only be used for the purposes designated in the Police Vulnerable Sector Check Application made with local police services and will not be disseminated to any other person or agency. (Note: The information in the check should not be disclosed to anyone other than the applicant because it will contain information from the Pardoned Sexual Offender Database. That information is only legally available to certain individuals. It should only be disclosed to third parties under court order or after consultation with legal counsel).
5. Once the search has been completed, the applicant will be required to personally attend the Police Station to receive the information or have the information mailed to them.
6. The Safe Church Team will review each PRC and decide if it discloses any information which would make the applicant inappropriate for the position. The names of successful applicants may be forwarded to Council for appointment.

7. If the PRC is not clear, the circumstances of the information 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 original PRC or a copy will be kept on file. The expense incurred will be reimbursed by the Church if requested. The original PRC or copy of the PRC will be kept on file as proof the PRC was done and also as backup should anyone question the suitability of an applicant. If the applicant requests the original be returned to him/her, then the Safe Church Team member who receives the PRC 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 PRC and all applicant material shall be stored indefinitely in a locked file with limited access.

Note:

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

13. 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.

14. 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.

VI. TRAINING FOR VOLUNTEERS AND EMPLOYEES

All volunteers and employees serving in ministries for children, youth and vulnerable adults must complete the initial and annual refresher 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.
2. The Safe Church Team working with each program supervisor is responsible for ensuring that all volunteers in the program have signed Appendix G.
3. ACRC will hold on file the annually signed Code of Conduct and Understanding and Agreement Forms.

VIII. GENERAL PROCEDURES

1. **The Parking Lot/Hallway Monitor's duties** will include monitoring classrooms and hallways during Church services, collecting the attendance sheets from each classroom and taking them to the Church office for filing.
2. **All Church sponsored events and meetings away from the Church premises** are to follow these same guidelines outlined in this policy. All offsite program/ministry activities are to be approved in advance by Ministry Council, and noted in their minutes.
3. **Audit of implementation and review of abuse prevention policy**
The Safe Church Team will:
 - **ensure an annual audit of the implementation of the policy and procedures** is conducted and findings are reported to Council and the Board of Directors.
 - **review the abuse prevention policy every third year** (2014, 2017, 2020 etc) and also when they become aware of any change in provincial legislation that affects the policy.

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. **Anyone who has reasonable grounds to suspect a child has suffered abuse or neglect is required by law to report the suspicion and the information which it is based to a Children's Aid Society in accordance with the *Child and Family Services Act, Section 72 (1)*.** Such suspicion should also be reported to the police.

Phone Numbers

Hamilton Police Services, Child Abuse	905-546-3858
Children's Aid Society:	905-522-1121
CAS after-hours emergency	905-522-8053

3. **The person who made the report must also inform the Safe Church Team as soon as possible.** 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 CAS or police, or a criminal charge of child abuse has been laid, ACRC 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/CAS are investigating an allegation of abuse or neglect of a child or a vulnerable adult, against a non-ordained employee or volunteer, the Safe Church Team will notify the President of the Board of Directors. The President will then inform the Board of Directors and Council and immediately suspend the person from his/her position, pending the police/CAS investigation. Suspension is carried out with pay (for employees) and without prejudice. The Board of Directors 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 Board of Directors should seek advice from the police, CAS, legal counsel and/or other experts, in terms of how to handle the situation. If the President of the Board of Directors is believed to have a conflict of interest, the Vice President of the Board of Directors should be notified to take the action prescribed above.

2. Criminal Charges:

If a criminal charge related to abuse or neglect of a child or vulnerable adult has been made against a non-ordained employee or volunteer, the Safe Church Team will notify the President of the Board of Directors who will then notify the Board of Directors and Council and immediately suspend the person from his/her position, with pay (for paid staff) and without prejudice. The Board of Directors 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 Board of Directors should seek advice from the police, CAS, 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 or vulnerable adult against the non-ordained person are dropped, or if there is no conviction of the charges, the Board of Directors will meet to decide if a suspension should be lifted, subject to the concurring advice of Council. A suspension may be lifted when the Board of Directors, in consultation with the Council, the police, CAS, 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 offence related to abuse or neglect of a child or a vulnerable adult, 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 offence related to abuse or neglect of a child or a vulnerable adult, 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, evangelist, ministry associate, elder or deacon, whether paid or volunteer.

1. Allegations:

When the Safe Church Team becomes aware that the police/CAS are investigating an allegation of abuse or neglect of a child or a vulnerable adult against an ordained person, the Safe Church Team will notify the President of the Board of Directors who will then notify Council and immediately suspend the person from his/her position, pending the police/CAS investigation. Suspension for paid staff is carried out by the Board of Directors on the advice of Council with pay. All instances of suspension are without prejudice. Suspension of an office-bearer is carried out in accordance with Church Order, Articles 78-84 and their Supplements. The Board of Directors 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 Board of Directors should seek advice from the police, CAS, legal counsel and/or other experts. If the President of the Board of Directors is believed to have a conflict of interest, the Vice President of the Board of Directors 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 or a vulnerable adult has been made against an ordained person, the Safe Church Team will notify the President or Vice President of Board of Directors, who will then notify Council. The Council will consider the case and immediately suspend the person from his/her position. Suspension for employees is carried out by the Board of Directors on the advice of Council with pay. All instances of suspension are without prejudice. Suspension of an office-bearer is carried out in accordance with Church Order, Articles 78-84 and their Supplements. The Board of Directors 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, Council should seek advice from the police, CAS, 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 or a vulnerable adult against the ordained person are dropped, or if there is no conviction on the charges, the Council will meet to decide if a suspension should be lifted. A suspension may be lifted when the Council in consultation with the Board of Directors, police, CAS 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 offence related to abuse or neglect of a child or a vulnerable adult, 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.

Ancaster Christian Reformed Church
APPENDIX A
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 haemorrhage
- abdominal injuries

Behavioural 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 behavioural 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 behavioural 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.

Behavioural Indicators:

- excessive masturbation in young children
- sexual knowledge of behaviour 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 behaviour, 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

Behavioural Indicators:

- habit disorders, such as biting, rocking head banging, thumb sucking in an older child
- poor peer relationships
- behavioural extremes (overly compliant or demanding, withdrawn or aggressive)
- self-destructive behaviour, 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

Behavioural 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

Ancaster Christian Reformed Church APPENDIX B: 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 Council and Board of Directors of the Church.

B. Membership:

The Safe Church Team consists of four members (two male and two female if at all possible). The Children and Youth Director/Pastor and three additional members will be appointed by Council for a three-year term (one time renewable for a total of 6 consecutive years).

C. Mandate:

1. To ensure mandatory initial and annual refresher education and training regarding abuse prevention and response to allegations of abuse for volunteers and employees involved in child, youth and vulnerable adult programs in the Church.
2. To be designated representatives of the Church with the local police services for the purpose of facilitating the criminal record check procedure.
3. Safe Church Team members will assist and be a resource to program supervisors to ensure implementation of screening procedures for volunteers and employees involved in child, youth and vulnerable adult programs in the Church (application form, interview, reference checks, and police record check). Confidential screening documentation including police record checks should be kept on file indefinitely.
4. 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 record check.
5. To provide direction and support in abuse situations.
6. To ensure that up-to-date reference material concerning abuse issues is available in the Church. The organization should be Christian and Canadian if possible, including copies of this policy, Plan to Protect by Winning Kids and other references recommended on the CRCNA Safe Church website.
7. To ensure that confidential information being handled is maintained with extreme confidentiality and stored in a locked cabinet in the church office.
8. Ensure that an annual audit of the implementation of the abuse prevention policy and procedures is normally conducted by 2 non-Safe Church team people and a report is submitted to the Council. Note: The Council Chairperson must sign the Abuse Prevention Declaration required by Robertson Hall, ACRC's insurance provider.
9. Review and update the child abuse prevention policy and procedures every 3 years (2014, 2017, 2020 etc). Professional advice on amending and improving the policy is to be sought when necessary.

**Ancaster Christian Reformed Church
APPENDIX C: TABLE OF SCREENING REQUIREMENTS**

PROGRAM	POSITION	INFO SHEET	POLICE CHECK	PERSONAL INTERVIEW	CODE OF CONDUCT
Nursery	Supervisor(s)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Attendants	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Helpers	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Sunday School	Supervisor(s)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Leaders	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Helpers	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Cadets/GEMS	Supervisor(s)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Leaders	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Jr. Leaders	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
FISH	Leaders	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Helpers	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Friendship	Supervisor(s)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Leaders	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Helpers	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
VBS	Supervisor(s)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Leaders	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Helpers	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
	Nursery	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Coffee Break	Supervisor(s)	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
	Leaders	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
	Story Hour Leaders	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Nursery	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Church Staff	Pastors	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Paid staff	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Elders, deacons	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Janine's Team	Members	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Monitors	Parking Lot/Hall	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Library	Leaders	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

**APPENDIX E: 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 Board of Administration for prospective non-ordained employees or by the Council rep/Calling Committee for prospective ordained employee. 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: _____

Ancaster Christian Reformed Church

APPENDIX F: 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 applicant? _____ In what capacity? _____

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

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 applicant? _____ In what capacity? _____

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

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 applicant? _____ In what capacity? _____

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

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

Ancaster Christian Reformed Church

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

- 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 Ancaster Christian Reformed Church's Preventing Child Abuse and Responding to Allegations Policy.

- 2. I agree:**
 - to abide by its mandates, and to the following Principles of Conduct.

- 3. I commit to:**
 - attempt to live a Christ like lifestyle in word and deed, and to model this to those in my care
 - be a member in good standing in a Christian Church
 - uphold the teachings of the Christian Reformed Church
 - submit to the governing authorities of Ancaster Christian 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: _____

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APPENDIX H: DISCIPLINE

1. Corporal punishment (slapping, hitting, 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, or if a pattern of misbehaviour increases.
4. Concerns about a child's continued misbehaviour shall be discussed with the program supervisor.
5. An aide, parent or legal guardian should assist the leader in classrooms where misbehaviour is an ongoing problem.
6. Expectations of children's/youth's behaviour 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 behaviour that is appropriate for the setting. Older children and youth may benefit from having these expectations in written form.
8. Appropriate techniques of behaviour 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 behaviour
 - 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".

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APPENDIX I: TRANSPORTATION

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

1. At least two of the following procedures must be in place:
 - A. Two adults are 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.
 - D. Drivers log in each pick-up and drop off; logs are turned into the Program Supervisor.
2. Adults must have a valid driver's license and proof of insurance before transporting children or youth; drivers who routinely transport children and youth will have their drivers' record reviewed by the Safe Church Team prior to the beginning of each church year.
3. Drivers need to abide by state and provincial requirements for car seat use, seatbelt use and air bag 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.
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.

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APPENDIX J: GUIDELINES FOR SPECIFIC PROGRAMS

A. NURSERY PROGRAMS (including Coffee Break and VBS)

1. When dropping off their child(ren), parents should sign their child in on the sign in sheets provided indicating the child's number and including such things as the parents' and child's names, permission for diapering and/or washroom assistance, allergy information and any additional instructions.

Attendants will indicate on the form if the child was changed or taken to the bathroom and by whom. Other incidents will also be reported on this form. (The Nursery Committee will keep these forms on file if any incidents have been reported.) Parents will then receive two numbered tags: one for the child to wear and one for the parent or person over the age of 12 designated by the parents. Only the individual with the tag can claim the child at pick-up time. Only one person may enter the nursery room for that/those particular child(ren).

2. At least one adult and one helper will be assigned to each of the three nurseries. In general, the Infant room (0-12 months old) will be staffed by 2 female adults and one helper, the Crawlers (1-2 years old) will be staffed by 2 adults (at least 1 being female) and one helper, and the Toddlers (2-3 years old) will be staffed by 1 adult (male or female) and 2 helpers. Spouses will not be scheduled on the same day, and at least 1 adult should not be an immediate family member of the other attendants.
3. The helper must be at least age 12 and will be assigned at the discretion of the Nursery Committee. The Toddler room will be used as the nursery during the evening service. The helper and the adult should not be from the same immediate family.
4. Female adult attendants will be responsible for changing diapers and will do that on the change-pad area located in front of the window separating the nursery rooms. The change table must always be in full view. Female adult attendants will be responsible for taking children to the nearest bathroom and will leave the door slightly ajar when in use.
5. Adult attendants must wear an identification badge.
6. Any person not picking up children or working as an attendant may not be in the nursery rooms.
7. Attendants must:
 - arrive 20 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.
8. 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.

9. 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.
10. The Church will maintain a "Mother of the Month" program. This person will be designated as a leader and will be assigned by the Nursery Committee and is responsible for:
 - a. reminding congregational members of their turn to act as nursery attendant.
 - b. remaining in the nurseries until appropriate attendants have arrived.
 - c. assisting in the supervision of drop-off and pick-up times when possible.
 - d. laundering the linens from the nursery.
11. If a child cries uncontrollably for a period of time and cannot be comforted, the parent must be called.
12. Nursery attendants may not take children out of the nursery, except for bathroom needs.
13. Large windows between nursery rooms are important.
14. Completed attendance records for worship services, Coffee Break and Vacation Bible School nursery attendants and children must be turned in to the church office at the completion of each session (daily) for filing.

B. GEMS AND CADETS

1. Group members should be encouraged to arrive not more than 10 minutes before the start of the class and should not stay longer than 15 minutes after class. If not picked up within 10 minutes their parents are to be called to ensure someone is coming. Members must wait in the presence of a leader.
2. **“Two non-related adult rule” and/or “open door policy” and/or windows in all classrooms. A designated monitor circulates periodically from room to room for surveillance and to protect workers against false allegations.**
3. Permission of a parent or legal guardian is required when taking members off the church site.
4. A group leader may not meet privately with a group member 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., Tim Horton's, at the Church premises with the door open when others are present) and be documented on an attendance sheet (date, time, purpose).
5. Affection between leaders and group members is often an expression of encouragement and support. However, it can be misinterpreted. For that reason, displays of affection will normally be limited to a brief shoulder-to-shoulder hug, an arm around the shoulder, an open-hand pat on the back, clasping one another's hand or a light touch to the forearm. A leader's or member's right to refuse affection will be respected.

6. No inappropriate gifts, phone calls, emails or letters will be exchanged between a group member and a leader ("inappropriate" means that it would normally lead to embarrassment if seen or known about by any third party).
8. The Program Supervisor is available to assist the other volunteers and make periodic checks of the rooms, hallways and bathrooms.
9. 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.

C. HIGH SCHOOL MINISTRY (FISH)

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 behaviour 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. A designated monitor circulates periodically from room to room for surveillance and to protect workers against false allegations.**
6. A group leader may not meet privately with a group member 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., Tim Horton's, at the church with the door open when others are present) and be documented on an attendance sheet (date, time, purpose).
7. Adult leaders should never drive alone with a youth. If an exception is necessary, the adult leader must inform the Youth Director/Pastor in addition to keeping 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 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. No gifts, phone calls, emails, notes or letters of a personal nature should be directed to a youth group member by an adult leader. If such a personal message is directed to an adult leader from a youth group member, the adult leader must inform the Children/Youth Director/Pastor immediately. Ministry related correspondence however, is encouraged.

11. 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. CHILDREN'S WORSHIP, KIDSKONNECT, VBS

1. **“Two non-related adult rule” and/or “open door policy” and/or windows in all classrooms. A designated monitor will circulate periodically from room to room for surveillance and to protect workers against false allegations.**
2. At least one adult should be in every room at all times.
3. Leaders/helpers in one room should not be from the same family. This is for the leaders' own protection
4. Leaders need to be aware of the location of other leaders who would be available for help.
5. Only adult leaders may assist children with washroom 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 washroom, the helper must supervise the remaining students.
 - Never be alone with a child in an unsupervised washroom and never go into a washroom cubicle with a child and shut the door.
 - In the case of one adult leader, a scheduled washroom break should be taken.
 - Only enter a cubicle to assist if there is a second adult within visual contact or if you have informed another adult that you are assisting someone and when you will return.
 - The outside washroom door must be propped open. Remain outside the washroom 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 washroom.
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 are encouraged to keep children seated until a 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.
11. Completed attendance records, including names of leaders and assistants, must be completed at each session and will be collected by the parking lot/hallway monitor who places it in the church office for filing.

E. FRIENDSHIP

1. **“Two non-related adult rule” and/or “open door policy” and/or windows in all classrooms. A designated monitor circulates periodically from room to room for surveillance and to protect workers against false allegations.**
2. The “two non-related adult rule” should be observed as much as possible.
3. Students’ homes must be informed about the place of an outside function, the name of the driver, time of pickup and the time of return.
4. All one-on-one sessions must take place in a group or at some place in the Fellowship Hall with another adult/leader present.
5. Hugs must only be given in the presence of others, be brief, appropriate and only when consented to by the other party.
6. In the event of a violent act, restraint must be non-violent physical intervention. Should the victim fall to the ground restraint must be released immediately. Call 911 if the situation is warranted.
7. If assistance is required in toileting, the washroom door should be kept slightly ajar or another leader should be informed.
8. A minimum of 2 leaders must stay until all the students are picked up to go home.
9. 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.

APPENDIX K: 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 recommended principles provide guidelines 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.

Recommendations:

1. Use prudent judgment in contacting youth through social media. The "home phone rule" is a basic rule to use. Normally do not text, chat, e-mail back and forth with youth when you would not normally call their home phone line (before 8 AM or after 9 PM).
2. Implement privacy settings and personal boundaries.
 - a. Create separate private and professional profiles on sites.
 - 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.
3. If you choose to use social networking to communicate with youth, we recommend that your ministry leader has full access to your profiles and correspondence is copied.
 - 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.
4. Principles should 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)
5. Any inappropriate material posted to your online groups should be deleted, addressed and reported to your ministry leader.
6. Video chatting is strongly discouraged and transcripts of on-line chats must be saved.
7. 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.

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APPENDIX L: 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: _____