

# **SAFE CHURCH POLICY**

## **ABUSE PREVENTION POLICY OF**

**BETHANY CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH OF FENWICK**

**Revised September 2015**

# BETHANY CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH OF FENWICK ABUSE PREVENTION POLICY

## Introduction

### Purpose

The Church has a spiritual, moral and legal obligation to provide a safe environment for children and adults participating in Church programs.

As a body of believers, the Bethany Christian Reformed Church of Fenwick, Ontario proclaims that "love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres" (I Corinthians 13: 6, 7). Therefore, every man, woman and child, regardless of age, cultural background or sex, when in contact with the people and ministry of Bethany CRC of Fenwick, will find an environment free from physical, sexual, and emotional abuse.

An Abuse Prevention Policy is intended to outline the obligations of the Church to children and to all church members under its care by prescribing certain policies or procedures designed to minimize the risk of abuse. The information provided in this document is expected to be a guideline for the protection of participants, church leaders and volunteers of all Church sponsored programs. It is anticipated that the policies in this statement will further the reality of the Church as a "sanctuary" and as a place of ministry. Abuse must be condemned and every reasonable step taken to eliminate the risk.

In light of the above, Bethany CRC publicly affirms the following:

Bethany CRC seeks to live the new life in Christ. It is our hope that our church community will be a place of *God's* presence in the *world*. Therefore, we strive to create an environment in our church that nurtures each person's dignity and safety so that everyone can grow and mature as the Creator intended. We acknowledge, however, that we live in a broken world, and that one of the signs of that brokenness is the violation of boundaries for healthy relationships. When sin of this nature occurs, appropriate action is required. We must strive to achieve justice, protect victims, promote the healing of those who have been abused, and work towards the repentance and healing of the abuser.

### Definitions of Abuse/Terms/ Provincial Law

**Physical abuse** - is any intentional act that results in physical pain or injury regardless of whether an obvious physical symptom such as a wound or bruising results. Physical abuse also includes physical neglect, which means not doing what one is supposed to be doing to meet the physical needs of someone in his or her care. Physical abuse may be a single event or a chronic pattern of behavior. Physical abuse is often followed by a request/threat to the victim to not tell anyone what happened, not to report the abuse, or not to show anyone a mark or a bruise.

**Emotional abuse/Harassment** - is any attempt to control another person's life through threats, fears and/or deprivation in such a way that it impairs a person's God given sense of self worth. Actions such as excessive criticism, ridicule, yelling, and threat of physical abuse or centering out an individual for public humiliation are unacceptable. Any person who persists in such behavior which he knows or should know to be unwelcome may be guilty of harassment.

**Sexual abuse** - is any sexual action taken by one person against or in the presence of another who is an unwilling participant or observer of such action. Physical contact is not a necessary element of sexual abuse. Suggestive speech, pornographic material, public exposure of genitals and requests

for sexual contact all represent forms of sexual abuse which do not involve physical contact. Sexual abuse includes any role inappropriate sexual encounter, even if consensual at the time (e.g. between parent and children, teachers and children, pastors and counselee) All sexual activity between an adult and a child is considered to be sexual abuse regardless of whether or not the adult participant believes that the child has consented to the activities, and regardless of the intentions of the adult participant.

## **OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES**

Protocol and guidelines have been set up in advance to guide an Abuse Incident Response Committee to respond to specific incidents of abuse or harassment. If an allegation involves a church leader, the Classis Abuse Response Team would become involved at the request of the Church Council to which the alleged perpetrator belongs.

New members should wait at least one year before being assigned to a leadership position.

Those who are involved in a leadership role in the church, all leaders and volunteers of children's and youth programs, and anyone involved with vulnerable people, are required to complete and show an approved Police Check before taking on responsibility.

### **Role of leaders**

Program leaders are responsible to make sure that everyone in their program is aware of this safety policy and complies with this safety policy. The leaders will ensure the following:

1. A "Team" approach to children's/youth ministries is used.
2. "Out of program" contact between children/youth and leaders/volunteers are discouraged.
3. Corporal punishment is prohibited.
4. Both permissible and unacceptable forms of touching and disciplining of children are explained.
5. Health, safety and sanitation issues are addressed for infants and toddlers in nursery programs.
6. Avoid activities that can lead to allegations of abuse or harassment.
7. Transportation is the responsibility of the parents.
8. All workers should sign a Code of Conduct/Ethics form agreeing to comply with policies and procedures and ensure that a Police check has been completed
9. Keep documentation on file indefinitely for all workers and volunteers.
10. Obtain parental consent and permission for off premises and unusual activities.
11. Incident report forms must be completed for **all** reports of suspected abuse.
12. Police checks are required for all drivers for organized outings.
13. Serious Driving offenses may preclude a person from driving children and youth while involved in organized programs.
14. To be responsible/cautious in use of social media.

## **GENERAL POLICIES -program procedures, protocol**

### **General Discipline Guidelines**

1. Corporal punishment such as slapping, hitting or pushing, is not permitted.
2. Abusive verbal discipline such as yelling, insulting or threatening others is not permitted.
3. Parent(s) 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 behaviour or the inappropriate response to a child's behaviour **must** be reported to the program supervisor.

5. An aide or a parent should be involved weekly in classrooms where misbehaviour is an ongoing problem.
6. Expectations of children/youths behaviour must reflect their age and level of comprehension. Similarly, discipline must reflect their age and level of comprehension.
7. Children are to be reminded of the kind of behaviour that is acceptable for the setting. Older children and youth may benefit from having these expectations in written form.
8. Appropriate forms of discipline are to be reviewed with volunteers/staff before church-sponsored programs begin a new season.
9. Whenever possible, leaders should try to avoid having to discipline a child/youth by choosing one or more of the following options:
  - (a) Distract the child/youth to another activity.
  - (b) Help the child/youth to focus on other more acceptable behaviour
  - (c) Isolate the child/youth from others if another volunteer/staff is available to assist.
10. For young children, time-outs should not last longer (in minutes) than 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.
11. When nothing seems to be working, staff/volunteers/leaders should get help before "losing their cool."

#### **A. Nursery/Toddler, Heart to Heart**

1. All babysitters and nursery assistants are to sign a Code of Conduct/Ethics form in advance of their first babysitting experience in the church nursery to confirm understanding of an intention to keep children safe.
2. All babysitters over the age of 18 are to have a police clearance done and approved.
3. There shall be no fewer than two nursery attendants during any service. The more children in the nursery, the more attendants are needed.
4. Minors may be nursery assistants, provided they are in the presence and supervision of an adult volunteer. At least one adult volunteer must serve in each nursery room as scheduled and more adults as needed for greater numbers of children.
5. Diapering of children must take place at the designated change area. The bathroom door on the nursery side must be open at all times when a toddler is using the facilities.
6. Attendants may not take a child from the nursery/toddler area for any reason other than fire. In case of illness, serious distress, or medical emergency, the problem should be reported immediately to the parent/guardian.
7. Members of the same family are allowed to serve in the nursery/toddler rooms together only if there is also an assistant present who is not family related. An unrelated adult or minor who is not scheduled as a nursery attendant for that particular service may not spend time in the nursery rooms during the service unless arranged with the nursery coordinator. i.e. A person related to a child in the nursery may need to stay for specific reasons but a friend of a volunteer cannot stay unless pre-approved.
8. A parent, guardian, or designated person is to introduce their child to the Nursery volunteer and inform the sitter of any special needs involving their child. A parent/guardian or designated person is responsible to pick up the child from the nursery or toddler room.
9. If a Nursery volunteer is not able to help when they are scheduled they must find a replacement. An adult is replaced by an adult and a minor volunteer with a minor.
10. The General Discipline Guidelines apply to Nursery Programs.
11. A designated monitor will circulate in nursery/toddler rooms periodically or may observe from the hallway. A designated monitor could be someone such as an usher, the youth elder, nursery superintendent, or mother of the month, or Safe Church Team Member.
12. The Nursery coordinator shall be responsible to monitor the nursery guidelines.
13. Follow designated Nursery procedure re drop off and pick up of children.

## **B. Sunday School**

1. All Sunday school teachers and helpers are to sign a Code of Conduct/Ethics form in advance of their first teaching experience in Sunday school to confirm understanding of an intention to keep children safe.
2. All Sunday school teachers over the age of 18 are to have a police clearance done and approved before taking on the role of a teacher.
3. All classes and activities will be conducted with at least two volunteers or staff, at least one of whom is an adult. When this is not possible, assistance from another person should be available immediately in case of emergency.
4. Volunteers or staff will not meet alone with a child without another adult or leader nearby to observe.
5. Children will not leave their classroom except for illness, to use the washroom, or other compelling reason.
6. Whenever classes are in session, the classroom door should allow for an unobstructed view of the room.
7. Classrooms held in off-site facilities will adhere to the same safety considerations as classrooms in the church building. Children will not meet in a confined space without adequate supervision.
8. Church volunteers or staff transporting a child in a vehicle must have written parental permission to do so.
9. The General Discipline Guidelines apply to Sunday School
10. The Sunday School Superintendent or other designated monitor will periodically circulate from room to room or observe from the hallway.

## **C. Gems and Cadets, Summer Day Camp**

1. All Cadet/Gems/Summer Day Camp leaders and helpers are to sign a code of conduct/ethics form in advance of their first Club experience in the organized program to confirm understanding of an intention to keep children safe.
2. All Cadet/Gems/Summer Day Camp leaders and helpers over the age of 18 are to have a police clearance done and approved in advance of taking a leadership role.
3. Counselors will provide adequate supervision of the Children in their care. Each Cadet and GEMS function will be supervised by at least two unrelated people, such as an adult leader and another volunteer. Summer Day Camp sessions will be adequately supervised with more than one volunteer for each group.
4. When counselors and members of their group need to meet for one-to-one contacts, such meetings should occur in a public place. A public place is a location where they can be easily observed by way of a door open or in a corner of the main area. One-to-one contacts should not be a regular practice.
5. Cadets or GEMS and Summer Day Camp participants should not arrive more than ten minutes before the start of class, nor should they stay longer than ten minutes after class. This point will be stressed to the parents as their responsibility. At least two Counselors are to wait until all participants are picked up.
6. Churches that plan Cadet or GEMS or Summer Day Camp activities away from the church facility, out of town, or overnight, will conduct such outings in general compliance with the aforementioned policies. Parents must give written consent for the youth to participate in off site activities.
7. While the appropriate use of touch is often part of conveying support and encouragement to one another, such displays can be misinterpreted. Therefore, displays of encouragement between youth leader and youth ought to be limited to actions such as an arm around the shoulder, an open-handed pat on the back, a handclasp or a handshake, or a light touch of the forearm. A

counselor or group member's right to refuse any of these will be respected. Non-physical alternatives include an encouraging compliment, a thumbs-up sign or a wink, etc.

8. The General Discipline Guidelines apply to Gems, Cadets, and Summer Day Camp.
9. A monitor or head counselor will periodically circulate from room to room or observe from the hallway during Cadet, Gems, and Summer Day Camp Programs.

#### **D. Youth Groups, Catechism, Teen Club**

1. All Youth Group/Catechism/Teen Club leaders and helpers are to sign a Code of Conduct/Ethics form in advance of their first group experience in the organized program to confirm understanding of an intention to keep children safe.
2. All Youth Group, Teen Club and Catechism leaders and helpers over the age of 18 are to have a police clearance done and approved.
3. Each year youth group leaders will devote one session to the topic of abuse for members of the youth group. Topics for this discussion might include such topics as dating violence, biblical guidelines for dating relationships, awareness of signs of abuse, a teenager's response to a teenage victim or abuser, or prevention of abuse.
4. Youth leaders may meet with the youth one-to-one if necessary but should inform the parents after meeting once or twice. Any such meetings should occur in public, with a door ajar, or in a main area. In general, leaders should avoid one to one situations as much as possible. If it is not in the best interest of the child to notify the parents, a supervisor should be notified instead.
5. Regardless of relative ages, it is never appropriate for a youth group leader and a youth group member to date each other.
6. In the context of group activities, youth group leaders will provide sufficient supervision of the youth in their care. For all mixed-group activities away from the church site or on overnight outings, responsible male and female chaperones must be provided.
7. While the appropriate use of touch is often part of conveying support and encouragement to one another, such displays can be misinterpreted. Therefore, displays of encouragement between youth leader and youth ought to be limited to actions such as an arm around the shoulder, an open-handed pat on the back, a handclasp or a handshake, or a light touch of the forearm. Restrict these displays to a public area. A youth group leader's or member's right to refuse such displays of affection will be respected. Alternative non-physical displays of affection include a wink, a thumb's up or an encouraging compliment.
8. No persistent gift-giving, phone calls, or letters of a personal nature will be directed to a youth group member by a youth group leader, or directed to a youth group leader by a youth group member. Any gifts given should be ministry related.
9. The general Discipline Guidelines apply to Youth Groups, Teen Groups and Catechism groups.
10. Monitors will circulate through the hallway or from room to room periodically during youth groups/catechism programs. Drop in visits may be made at the location where the group is meeting.
11. In order to prevent any problems with transportation of youth to various events, we recommend that youth leaders check with the Church Secretary to confirm the list of possible drivers at the beginning of the season. The list can then be checked and returned with approved names of people who may be approached to drive. The Youth elder will ensure that youth leaders know about and follow this procedure.

#### **E. Ministerial Personnel, Office Bearers, Church leaders**

1. All Ministerial Personnel, Office Bearers, Church Leaders are to sign a Code of Conduct/Ethics form in advance of their installation to confirm understanding of an intention to keep children and vulnerable people safe.

2. All Ministerial Personnel, Office Bearers, Church Leaders are to have a police clearance done and approved. Please see complete guidelines available to pastors and Church leaders for further information.
3. Establish clearly defined boundaries which you are committed to maintaining in your interpersonal relationships. Conduct counseling appointments within normally scheduled daytime hours; have evening appointments only if others are present in the building or present at the appointment.
  - (a) Acknowledge the risk of meeting alone in a congregant's or counselee's home. Ministerial personnel or council members may choose to bring another office bearer or spouse to such a meeting, or the counselee may request the presence of another person. Inform secretary of schedule or note appointment in diary. Keep written documentation of contacts.
  - (b) Meet with a minor child or adolescent once or twice and thereafter only with the consent and knowledge of the minors' parent or guardian. Avoid transporting a minor alone.
  - (c) Limit the display of physical affection to a brief hug or a pat on the back or forearm. Avoid misinterpretation of affection by choosing not to give gifts to counselees or parishioners.
4. Be accountable to a colleague, spouse, or council to ensure that you are maintaining proper boundaries in your interpersonal relationships. Openly discuss the threats to those boundaries with a colleague, spouse or council.
5. Give adequate attention to your spiritual, emotional and physical well being. Maintain a healthy attitude towards your ministry. Be alert to negative attitudes in ministry and the potential for temptation and self destructive behavior. Listen earnestly to the feedback and counsel of others who supervise you or to whom you report if they express concern about your behavior or attitudes.
6. Agree to do your work according to the specified guidelines of your profession and according to the requirements of the organizations or church's malpractice and liability insurance.
  - a. Notify local police authorities, child protection agencies, and legal counsel when faced with allegations of abuse against a church member or church leader. Refrain from investigating these matters on your own.
  - b. Know the laws governing the reporting of Child Abuse within your community, organization or church. Failure to report is a Criminal act in many states and provinces, including Ontario.
  - c. Keep accurate records of all allegations brought to you and any actions taken thereupon.
  - d. Keep accurate records of any pastoral care sessions and maintain them in utmost confidentiality.
  - e. Conduct screening of all paid staff or volunteer staff that will have direct contact with children. Approval of Council is needed for all volunteers and leaders. The Church Council reserves the right to not accept or recommend a volunteer/leader for a specific program for any reason.
  - f. Ensure that Police checks are done for all paid staff and volunteer/leaders in advance of assuming the new role.

*(Excerpts taken from Guidelines for Ministerial Personnel in their Interpersonal Relationships in Child Abuse Prevention Program by Beth Swagman.)*

## **STAFF/ LEADERSHIP SCREENING PROCESS**

Group or program leaders will propose names of volunteers to Council for review and screening. Council is responsible for appointing acceptable people to the programs. All church leaders/volunteers are to have completed a Police Check and to have been approved in advance of accepting a position of leadership. A clear Police Check does not automatically mean that council will approve a placement. Council is responsible to use their best judgment and common sense

when assigning a person to a certain position. It is the Church's right to exclude anyone for any reason.

### **STEPS TO TAKE TO SCREEN ALL NEW LEADERS/VOLUNTEERS:**

1. Designated Church agents are responsible to act as liaison between Niagara Regional Police Service and Bethany Christian Reformed Church. At the present time, Mr. Frank Bouwers and Mr. Cor Van Soelen are the designated liaison agents. They will facilitate providing your signed clearance consent forms to the Police Department. You are responsible for picking up the completed form from the Police station and to give it to the designated Church liaison agents. If there are any incidents on the clearance form, the incidents will be individually assessed to confirm whether or not the person would pose a risk to children or vulnerable people. When the Police clearance form is approved your name will be added to the approved list. The Church secretary will hold a list of only the approved names. She will have no knowledge if anyone has been denied the ability to be a church volunteer or leader based on a Police check.
2. When a person is nominated to a position of leadership, the person's name is presented to Council for screening by the Youth Elder or person responsible for presenting the list to Council.
3. The Church secretary has a list of persons who hold an approved police clearance.
4. The Youth Elder or other person responsible will check the list with the Church Secretary to confirm that the persons each have an approved police check ready.
5. If the potential leader's name is not on the list, the Church Secretary will arrange to give the nominated person a police clearance request form and they in turn should give the signed consent form to the Church Liaison agents, who are currently Mr. Frank Bouwers or Mr. Cor Van Soelen. They will make arrangements to have the Clearance done.
6. The nominated person will pick up the form from the Police station when it is completed and give it to the designated Church Liaison agents.
7. If an immediate police clearance form is needed, the person should speak with the designated Church Liaison Agents to make arrangements to go to the Police Station to make an immediate request, pick it up within a few days and then provide it to the Church Liaison Agents. There will be extra cost for an immediate clearance.
8. If the Clearance form shows no risk to children or vulnerable people, the person's name will be added to the approved list and the person may serve as a leader or volunteer if appointed by Council.
9. A completed Code of Conduct/Ethics forms shall be given to the Church Secretary in advance of starting a position of leadership.
10. No Person is to begin duties until a Police Clearance form is done and approved and the Code of Conduct/Ethics form signed.
11. Any new leader or volunteer is to be a member of Bethany CRC for at least one year before being assigned to a leadership position.

### **PREMISES**

1. There is an open door policy for Sunday school; Catechism and Youth Groups. There are windows in all meeting room doors in the church building for safety.
2. Designated monitors will circulate from room to room periodically or observe from the hallway to ensure safety of all and to protect against false allegations against anyone. Designated monitors may be people such as head gems/cadet counselor, person in charge of organized group, usher, Sunday school coordinator, nursery mother of the month, youth elder etc.
3. A safe environment will be maintained on the premises by adequate supervision given by program leaders and volunteers, by use of adequate lighting, and by keeping storage rooms locked when not needed during children's programs.

## **TRAINING**

Copies of the Abuse Prevention Policy will be available to all leaders and to anyone who wishes to have a copy. New members of our church should be given a copy of this policy for information by their District Elder.

Formal Abuse Prevention Training is made available through the presentation of resource materials, videos, "in-house" seminars etc. as needed.

Follow up with periodic refreshers and reassessment of the Abuse Prevention Policy.

Pamphlets about the Advisory Panel Process of the Classis Abuse Committee are available in the Church and from Abuse Prevention Committee Members in case of abuse allegations against a Church leader.

The Youth Elder is a liaison member of the Abuse Prevention Committee and is available to answer questions to Youth Leaders and Volunteers. Other Abuse Prevention team members are also available as needed.

## **GUIDELINES FOR HANDLING AND REPORTING ABUSE ALLEGATIONS**

### **History**

The absence of a procedure for handling abuse allegations has discouraged abuse victims from coming forward. Some who did were reminded that forgetting is good and forgiving is better. Some were told that proceedings would follow Matthew 18:15-17. Dealing in such a way with the victim often exacerbated the problem rather than bringing justice. Requiring the abused person to forgive and forget re-victimized them because they struggled with the guilt of not being able to forgive such a heinous crime. Furthermore, sometimes the victim was required to forgive even though the perpetrator had not repented nor confessed the sin. By not being held accountable for their actions, the abusers quite often continued to abuse again. If the abused person is forced or coerced into facing his or her abuser, the abused person feels like a victim once again.

**DUTY TO REPORT:** Every person in Ontario is required under *The Child & Family Services Act* to promptly report his/her belief that a child (under 16 years of age) is or may be in need of protection. "A person who believes on reasonable grounds that a child is, or may be in need of protection, shall share the belief and the information upon which it is based to a society." C.F.S.A. s. 72(1) Contact FACS Niagara 905-937-7731

**PERSONS MUST REPORT DIRECTLY** The person who has the reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is or may be in need of protection must make the report directly to a children's aid society. The person must not rely on anyone else to report on his or her behalf. CFSA s.72 (3)

**ONGOING DUTY TO REPORT** A person must report any additional or new information, even if that person has reported previous information about the same child and family. CFSA s72 (2)

### **WHY PEOPLE DO NOT REPORT**

"I must have made a mistake." "It's not really any of my business." "I'll deal with it next week." "I'm overreacting." "What if I am wrong?" "It's not my responsibility."

We have a fear of getting involved, making a mistake, feeling vulnerable, confronting disagreement or facing possible criticism. Move past your fear and realize that you may be the only person who cares enough to help a child in need. Further information about the type of situations that must be

reported is available from the Abuse Prevention Implementation Committee or from the local Children's Aid Society. "Reasonable grounds" are what average person, given his or her training, background and experience, exercising normal and honest judgment, would suspect. The Children's Aid Society will decide if the information provided will require an investigation or intervention or may make suggestions about how the child and family can be helped in other ways if necessary.

**PROTECTION FROM LIABILITY** All persons, in making a report of suspected child abuse to a Children's Aid Society, are protected in law against civil action unless the person is proven to have acted maliciously or without reasonable grounds for the belief or suspicion. [C. F. S.A. s. 72(7)]

**FAILURE TO REPORT** The penalty imposed upon certain professionals and officials for failure to report a suspicion of child abuse emphasizes that the child's safety must take precedence over all other concerns, including confidentiality of information and all other provincial statutes. Any professional who fails to report his/her suspicion of a child's abuse where that information was obtained in the course of his or her professional or official duties is liable, upon conviction, to a fine of up to \$1000. [C.F. S.A. s.72 (4), (6.2)]

## SUMMARY OF PROCEDURES TO DEAL WITH CASES OF ABUSE

### DO NOT CONFRONT THE ABUSER

#### A. Personal steps required **immediately**:

1. Document evidence observed, disclosed or suspected on Critical Incident Form.
2. Report evidence to Program leader who must contact council chairperson. If leader is the accused, go directly to council chairperson.
3. Report to Children's Aid Society if abused person is under age 16.
4. Report to Niagara Regional Police if abused person is 16 years or older.
5. The accused person will be suspended by program leader.
6. While proper authorities investigate, continue to support the victim or person affected.
7. Ensure confidentiality for the benefit of both the alleged victim and the alleged perpetrator.
8. Refrain from making any public statements.

### IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Children's Aid Society –FACS Niagara	905-937-7731
Distress Line	905-688-3711
Women's Place, Welland	905-788-0113
Niagara Regional Police Department	905- 735-7811
Niagara Regional Police Emergency	911
Kids Help Phone	1-800-668-6868

#### Bethany Safe Church Team

905-658-0631	Jeff Dam (chair)
905-733-8377	Kelly Dam (recorder)
905-658-0906	Peter Glasbergen
905-8928154	Karen Veldhuizen
905-892-3577	Jody Vanderstelt
905-788-1016	Jerry Kiers-Council liaison

As of December 20

Classical Safe Church Committee	905-931-5841	Colin Vander Ploeg
Bethany/Classis Safe Church Rep	905-931-5841	Colin Vander Ploeg

Abuse Prevention CRCNA-Grand Rapids 616-224-0735 Bonnie Nicholas  
[bnicholas@crcna.org](mailto:bnicholas@crcna.org)

Shalem (Salem) Christian Mental Health Network 905-528-0353  
[www.shalemnetwork.org](http://www.shalemnetwork.org)

Niagara Life Centre Ministries 905-934-0021  
[admin@niagaralifecentre.ca](mailto:admin@niagaralifecentre.ca)

Elisha House Pregnancy and Family Support Centre 905-735-9934

Family Outreach Ontario 1-888-809-0464  
Christian Addiction Support Services  
[info@familyoutreachontario.com](mailto:info@familyoutreachontario.com)

### **SAFE CHURCH TEAM**

A Safe Church Team has been appointed by Council. This committee, as listed above, will be available to provide information about responding to abuse, offer information for education and training of new leaders and have resources and information available. This committee will be available for support as needed but any actual or suspected abuse must be reported immediately as outlined above. The Council chairperson has the authority to call together a response team as needed.

### **CLASSICAL SAFE CHURCH TEAM**

If a reported abuse involves a pastor, church leader or Church Staff the matter will be reported to the appropriate authorities as listed above and to the Classical Safe Church Team. Pamphlets outlining the Advisory Panel Process are available on bulletin boards in the church.

### **RESOURCES**

Further information about abuse or prevention of abuse is available from among the following sources:

The Safe Church Team will have further information about Community Resources and Church Resources, about behavioral signs and symptoms of abuse and child development available. Information about Abuse Protocols of other CRC congregations is also available.

Prevention Resources  
[www.robertsonhall.com](http://www.robertsonhall.com)  
[www.reducingtherisk.com](http://www.reducingtherisk.com)

Bonnie Nicholas, Abuse Coordinator of the Christian Reformed Church of America/Canada is available for consultation as needed for situations involving abuse by church leaders.

Shalem Christian Counseling Services, Hamilton, Ontario (905) 528-0353

Preventing Child Abuse by Beth Swagman, CRC Publications, Grand Rapids, Michigan. 1997

Child Abuse Prevention Program, Child Abuse Prevention Program, by Beth Swagman, CRC Publications. 1995.

When CRC Ministers Abuse, The Banner, by Karen DeVries, Nov. 5, 2001

Agenda for Synod, 1994 Acts of Synod, 1994

Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence ([www.cpsdv.org](http://www.cpsdv.org))

The following brief outline is suggested for posting in areas where church programs are held.

### **DISCIPLINE/ABUSE PREVENTION GUIDELINES**

Love and respect one another

1. The protection of children and all members is a matter of fundamental concern.
2. Abuse of any kind known within the church community will not be tolerated.
3. Corporal punishment such as slapping, hitting, or pushing, is not tolerated.
4. Abusive verbal discipline such as yelling, insulting, or threatening, is not permitted.
5. Any form of sexual intimacy or abuse is not permitted during the course of any church program on or off church property.
6. It is essential to take allegations of abuse seriously.

*Posted by Bethany Safe Church Team*

## REFERENCES

Abuse Prevention Newsletter for churches and Christian organizations. Robertson Hall Insurance Inc. September 2005.

Agenda for Synod, 1994 Acts of Synod, 1994.

Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence ([www.cpsdv.org](http://www.cpsdv.org))

Child and Family Services Act, 2000, Ontario

DeVries, Karen. When CRC Ministers Abuse. The Banner, Nov. 5, 2001

Swagman, Beth. "Preventing Child Abuse, A guide for churches"; CRC Publications, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Swagman, Beth. Child Abuse Prevention Program. Grand Rapids: CRC Publications.

Information taken from Abuse Policies of Sarnia, Smithville, Montreal, Richmond Hill, Drayton, Forestview Community and Calvary Christian Reformed Churches.

## Appendix "A"

### CODE OF ETHICS/CODE OF CONDUCT FOR STAFF, VOLUNTEERS, AND LEADERS IN CHILD AND YOUTH PROGRAMS

Believing that God is calling me to serve children or youth in this congregation:

1. My first priority in teaching/supervising/leading children or youth will be to seek the welfare of the children/youth physically, socially, educationally, and spiritually.
2. I will also try to understand and respect the child's/youth's cultural background.
3. I will give the parent(s) full information about the program I am teaching/supervising/ leading including what time the program begins and ends.
4. I will not do anything that will damage the trust of a child or youth. I will try to protect the child/youth from all forms of abuse while he or she is in my care.
5. If I suspect that a child/youth may be hurt by the abusive actions or attitudes of another person, I will report that suspicion to a responsible person so that it can be investigated properly.
6. If I wish to talk to the child/youth alone, it will be within the sight and sound of other people.
7. I will answer the question of a child or youth openly and honestly.
8. I will work with the children/youth to set agreed-upon guidelines for acceptable behavior within the group. I will expect the children/youth to act on the basis of those guidelines, and if a child/youth consistently breaks them, I will seek help from parents and others to assist me in responding to the child/youth.
9. If a child/youth is distressed, I will try to offer comfort and help. I will encourage the child/youth to find appropriate help for their needs.
10. I will pray for each child/youth regularly and let them know that I care about them.
11. I have read and understand the expectations as presented and are in agreement with the Safe Church Policy.

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Volunteer/Staff Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Appendix "B"

# BETHANY CRC CRITICAL INCIDENT REPORT FORM

[USE OTHER SIDE IF NEEDED ON ANY ITEM BELOW]

Is this a (a) Medical Issue?  If so, please fill out Part A of this form  
(b) Safety or Safe Church Issue?  If so, please fill out Part B of this form  
(c) Other? (please explain)  If so, please fill out Part B of this form

Date of incident: \_\_\_\_\_ Today's date (if different) \_\_\_\_\_

**Person reporting:** \_\_\_\_\_ Your address & phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Church program/event & your role (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of person affected by incident:** \_\_\_\_\_

For minors, parent's name(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Were parents contacted? \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's address & phone: \_\_\_\_\_

## Part A (Medical issues)

Describe the incident (the facts, what happened): \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

What action steps were taken for the person (e.g. ambulance called, first aid, who did what)?

---

---

---

---

What was the person's condition when the emergency personnel arrived or when person left?

---

---



**Appendix "C"**

**BETHANY CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH**

**TRANSPORTATION CONSENT FORM FOR OFF SITE OUTINGS**

**GROUP:** Cadets \_\_\_\_\_ GEMS \_\_\_\_\_ Young People \_\_\_\_\_ Summer Day Campers \_\_\_\_\_

On (date) \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_ Group plans

an offsite outing to \_\_\_\_\_

for \_\_\_\_\_

This consent form authorizes the designated volunteers of Bethany Christian Reformed Church to transport my child(ren) to and from activities, involved with the above mentioned group and to take any action deemed necessary for the well-being of my child(ren) if immediately necessary.

Bethany Christian Reformed Church will ensure that your children will be transported by a volunteer who holds a valid Driver's License.

Health Card Number \_\_\_\_\_

Child(ren) Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Parent or Guardian \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_