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What follows is a draft of a template for a Child Protection Plan for a Congregation or Conference-Related Ministry.

**This policy template is not intended for use independent of training and consultation by the Franconia Mennonite Conference Child Protection Leadership Team.** In collaboration with the Team, this policy may be adapted to each congregation/organization's particular circumstances. While adopting the full set of policies contained herein is recommended, the Franconia Mennonite Conference Child Protection Leadership Team recognizes that not every congregation/organization will be willing or able to immediately adopt this policy in its entirety due to its extensive scope.

Respectfully Submitted by Julie Prey-Harbaugh

on behalf of the Child Protection Leadership Team of Franconia Mennonite Conference

# [XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization]

## Child Protection Plan

Completed by

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*Working together to build safe spaces for children in Christ's name.*

*[XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization] is a member of  
Franconia Mennonite Conference and Mennonite Church USA  
“Equipping leaders to Empower others to Embrace God’s mission.”*

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## I. INTRODUCTION

“Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these” (Matthew 19:14). These well-known words of Jesus give us a picture of God's love for young people – inviting, welcoming, empowering, and safe. We see Jesus’ open arms outstretched toward the young ones the disciples were trying to turn away; a posture of blessing and care. In the previous chapter, Jesus even goes so far as to say, “whoever welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me” (Matthew 18:5), making this act of providing nurturing spaces for children an especially holy one. As in so many other ways, God incarnate in Jesus shows us how to be faithful followers of Christ through our relationships. We are called to invite children to be among us. We are called to bless them. In doing so, we welcome God into our lives.

For this welcome to be truly extended to children in the context of our congregations, our churches must be places of refuge and safety. Young people must feel free to come in their inexperience, immaturity, and vulnerability with the expectation that they will not be harmed. They must also have confidence that if they have been harmed, they will find healing.

At Franconia Mennonite Conference, we believe that “to be effective in ministry we face the challenge of cultivating healthy patterns and relationships, and addressing directly unhealthy ways of relating among us. Our witness to Jesus and the ministry of reconciliation entrusted to us are directly related to the quality of our relationships and the ways we structure our life in the body of Christ. (John 13:34-35, Rom. 12:1-13, Col. 3:1-17).” Ensuring that our congregations are truly sanctuaries for our children is part of encouraging these healthy relational patterns. By working together toward safety for children in our churches, we share a common intention for their well-being. This shared priority widens our welcome of children, makes more certain that they will be blessed to be among us, and strengthens the spirit of God in our midst.

Jesus not only calls us to welcome children, but also calls us to “become like little children” (Matthew 18:3) ourselves, so we too can experience the reign of heaven that belongs to them. We are to come to God with vulnerability, curiosity and that spirit of openness that gives little ones their vibrancy, creativity, resilience, and joy. If we can take this attitude as we do the work of child protection, we may find healing for the hurts of our childhood, deeper connection with one another, and peace in knowing we have been faithful to the most vulnerable ones among us.

May the process of protecting the children in the care of your congregation or organization be marked with the hopeful spirit of young people as we travel together on this journey toward growth in caring, trust, and wholeness.

The Child Protection Leadership Team of Franconia Mennonite Conference

## II. GENERAL CHILD PROTECTION

### A. Child Protection Philosophy

[XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization] places a high priority on the safety of all children within its care. While recognizing that each area of a comprehensive child protection program is essential to the proper functioning of a high-quality youth ministry, special attention will be given to child abuse prevention and recovery.

[XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization] commits to a collaborative, strategic approach to child protection, which includes identifying and addressing the threats and opportunities the [congregation/organization] faces. The views and participation of personnel at all levels of the [congregation/organization], including volunteers, will be welcomed as [XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization] identifies child protection priorities and implements strategies for modifying, retaining or financing risk.

This collaborative effort culminated in the creation of the following Child Protection Plan. The most recent version of the Plan was presented to the [Governing Body] for its review on [date]. It was approved by [Governing Body] on [date].

### B. General Safety Principles

1. [XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization] will at all times operate in compliance with local, state, and federal laws and regulations.
2. [XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization] adheres to the policies and standards of Franconia Mennonite Conference and Mennonite Church USA in matters related to the health, safety, and well-being of those impacted by its ministry.
3. All adults involved in [XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization] bear responsibility for the health, safety, and security of children and youth under the age of 18. This is a primary responsibility of the [Church Council or other governing board], [pastor or director], volunteers, and program staff.
4. Child Protection activities are multi-faceted and include:
  - a. Thoughtful screening, selection, and training of both volunteers and employed staff.
  - b. Creation and implementation of policies, standards, guidelines, and procedures as guides for planning.
  - c. Maintaining safe and secure facilities.
  - d. Establishing procedures to be followed in the event of an emergency.
  - e. Maintaining clear communications channels.

- f. Purchasing insurance coverage as a financing mechanism for certain risks, while recognizing that insurance is not a substitute for vigilance in planning and implementing programs.

### **C. Child Protection Goals**

[XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization] seeks to create and sustain a safe environment that enables caring ministry and the creation of meaningful opportunities for individual and community involvement using the tools of non-profit Child Protection principles and strategies.

[XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization] further commits to ensuring an appropriate response to all incidents that threaten or violate the spiritual, physical, social, psychological, emotional, or sexual well-being of children in their scope of influence.

### **D. Responsibility for Child Protection Policy**

1. [Church Council or other governing board]
  - a. Approves child protection goals, adopts annual operating objectives with child protection included.
  - b. Adopts annual budget with child protection in mind.
  - c. Reviews committee and ministry reports to determine compliance with the child protection plan.
  - d. Ensures compliance with policies and standards recommended by Franconia Mennonite Conference and Mennonite Church USA.
  - e. Adopts and establishes policies and standards.
  - f. Reviews the [congregation/organization]'s insurance program periodically.
  - g. Reviews the [congregation/organization]'s child protection plan annually.
2. Legal Counsel for the [congregation/organization]
  - a. Serves as advisor to the [Church Council or other governing board] in legal matters, making referrals to specialists on an as needed basis.
  - b. Advises [Church Council or other governing board] on contracts, agreements, forms, etc.
3. [Pastor or Director]
  - a. Keeps the [Church Council or other governing board] apprised of emerging concerns and opportunities to improve child protection in the [congregation/organization].

4. Franconia Mennonite Conference Child Protection Leadership Team
  - a. Implements trainings related to child protection strategies for staff, volunteers, parents and children at [XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization].
  - b. Assists [XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization] child protection leadership team in reviewing its child protection policy as needed.
  
5. [Congregational/Organizational] Child Protection Leadership Team
  - a. Champions [congregation/organization]-wide effort to protect children of [XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization] and engage leadership, parents, and other members/attendees of [XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization] in child protection activities.
  - b. Convenes periodically to review the [congregation's/organization's] emerging problem situations and corresponding child protection strategies.
  - c. Evaluates the insurance program in collaboration with [Church Council, other governing board or other entity].
  - d. Serves as Response Team in the event of any “unusual incident” or report of suspected child abuse.
  - e. See page [ ] for a detailed description of the responsibilities of the [Congregational/Organizational] Child Protection Leadership Team.
  
6. Insurance Program for [XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization]

Liability package from [XXXX Insurance] currently covers:  
[List coverage categories here (i.e. injury, hired auto, sexual abuse, mental health) with a description of coverage details in layperson’s terms for easy reference.]

### III. SAFETY POLICIES

#### A. Facilities

In collaboration with its insurance company, [XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization] will inspect its entire facility at least annually to ensure that it is safe for children and youth to occupy. For a safety audit checklist, see [page \_\_\_\_\_ of this manual].

#### B. Information Management

##### 1. Access to Confidential Information

- a. [XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization] has files on children/youth, families, staff, and volunteers that contain confidential information. Therefore it is essential to limit access to certain records to only those whose positions require access. Confidential information in paper form will be stored in locked file cabinets and in a locked room during non-working hours. All should use good judgment and common sense in protecting confidential information.
- b. The [administrative assistant/office manager/secretary] will oversee a system to limit access to electronic records based on duties and responsibilities in the [congregation/organization]. Access will also be protected through the use of passwords. Access will be modified from time to time as work assignments change.
- c. Any employee or volunteer who intentionally obtains unauthorized access to records shall be subject to discipline, up to and including termination. Any volunteer or employee who accidentally obtains access to confidential records should inform [the pastor/director] immediately.

##### 2. Internet Guidelines

- a. A Technology Policy or Acceptable Use Policy will be developed and distributed that establishes reasonable boundaries for acceptable use of the Internet at [XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization] and provides examples of misuse in member/participant guides, materials to parents, and staff/volunteer manuals. [A copy of this policy can be found ...].
- b. [XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization] will refrain from featuring any information on its website that could result in inappropriate access to children/youth. The names, schools, phone numbers, home addresses, and/or email addresses of children or youth will not be included on the website. Parental permission for photos to be displayed on the website will be obtained. See annual and activity permission forms located on page [\_\_] of this manual.
- c. Young people using the computers at [XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization] will be protected from inappropriate material on

the web using end-user software, server-based blocking, or limiting to child-friendly websites.

### **C. Human Resources and Child Protection**

[XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization] integrates Child Protection into its staff and volunteer recruitment, screening and selection process by:

1. Communicating to prospective volunteers the [congregation/organization]'s requirements and expectations.
2. Designing position descriptions that support the identification of appropriate screening tools based on the risks associated with a particular position. [XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization] uses job descriptions for both paid and volunteer positions in the [congregation/organization]. These documents are developed by [the Human Resources Committee (or similar) and/or the Child Protection Leadership Team] and updated on an as needed basis. See page [ ] of this manual for job descriptions.
3. Employing a basic, enhanced or rigorous screening process based on an analysis of the position. For example, a volunteer position requiring contact with vulnerable members/attendees (such as children) warrants a rigorous screening process consisting of an application, interview, reference checks, and criminal history and possibly other records checks.

### **D. Screening Employees and Volunteers**

Screening is to be used with all applicants, including clergy, for full-time, part-time, compensated or volunteer work within the [congregation/organization]. Screening must be completed according to the guidelines below prior to working with children or youth.

1. The "Six Month" Rule [for congregations only]
  - a. Volunteers will be permitted to work with youth or children only after they have been regular attendees of the church for 6 months. "Regular attendee" status is determined by [the date a church mailbox is given to the individual].
2. Applicant Age Requirement
  - a. Approved volunteers who work with children or youth must be 18 years of age or older. Young leaders (age 14-18) may be approved to work as assistants to adult leaders, but not as leaders in charge of any group of children/youth or individual child/youth. All leaders must be at least five years older than the children/youth for whom they have responsibility.
3. Written Application
  - a. A written application will be completed prior to assignment. [See page \_\_\_ of this policy manual for the appropriate form.] The application

will include a detailed authorization and release form giving permission for the release of criminal history and child abuse history information. Applicants who are expected to serve as drivers for program participants as a part of their position will be required to release their motor vehicle record as well. [See page \_\_\_ of this policy manual for the appropriate form.]

- b. As part of the application process, prospective children's/youth workers will also complete the Children and Youth Worker Covenant [See page \_\_\_ of this policy manual for the appropriate form.], demonstrating their willingness to abide by the child protection policy of [XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization].
- c. Persons who have a break in service from [XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization] of 6 months or more shall submit to screening procedures before returning to any position of responsibility for children and youth. [XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization] reserves the option to repeat background checks of any staff person or volunteer at the discretion of its leadership.

#### 4. Face-To-Face Interview

A face-to-face interview will be completed prior to assignment by [designated team of two people, listed here]. Guidelines for this interview can be found on [page \_\_\_ of this policy manual].

#### 5. Reference Checks

All applicants will be required to provide information for three references, which will be checked. The references should be unrelated to the applicant, and be able to speak to the applicant's ability to work with children and youth. A written record of the contact will be kept on file in the church office. [See page \_\_\_ of this policy manual for the appropriate forms.]

#### 6. Orientation and Training

- a. [The Human Resources Committee (or similar) at XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization] is responsible for designing and conducting an appropriate orientation session for new staff and volunteers. The orientation of a new staff person or volunteer must take place within the first [month] of employment or volunteer service. A typical orientation will include review of the [congregation's/organization's or program's] expectations of someone serving as a staff person or volunteer and a review of the Child Protection policy.
- b. All workers will also attend an annual training session led by the [Congregational/Organizational Child Protection Leadership Team] on the [congregation/organization]'s Child Protection policy.

7. Conditions of Acceptance for – and Grounds for Removal from – Positions Working with Children and Youth

Employees or Volunteers who match the following criteria will be disqualified for work with children and youth at [XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization]. These are also grounds for removal from a position working with children and youth:

1. Failure to complete the screening/application process.
2. Failure to accurately report criminal/child abuse history.
3. History of violence or any sexually exploitive behavior, including but not limited to a history of sexual abuse of children/youth.
4. Conviction for any crime in which children/ youth were involved.
5. Termination from a paid or volunteer position caused by any form of misconduct with a child/youth, including but not limited to inappropriate discipline or affection.
6. Drug or alcohol abuse.
7. Poor driving record (if the position requires transportation of children/youth).

**E. Supervision of Volunteers**

[XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization] has established clear lines of authority and supervision for the volunteers serving the [congregation/organization]. These are outlined in the job description for each position [see pages \_\_\_\_\_ of this policy manual]. Volunteer performance is monitored on an ongoing basis and evaluated more formally each year through the practice of a one-on-one meeting with the [pastor/ministry coordinator].

**F. Volunteer Dismissal**

1. Volunteers serving [XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization] may be dismissed at any time when [a pastor, director, or ministry coordinator supervising the volunteer] determines that:
  - a. The volunteer is indifferent with regard to the [congregation/organization]'s essential rules and requirements.
  - b. The volunteer cannot adequately perform the job for which they have been retained.
  - c. The volunteer's continued service presents an unacceptable danger to the [congregation/organization] or its personnel or clients.

2. At the time of dismissal departing volunteers will be provided with a letter thanking them for their past service and explaining the reason why their continued service is no longer required.
3. All volunteer dismissals will be reviewed by [the pastor(s) and elders] in advance of taking action.

## **G. Transportation**

### 1. Authorized Vehicle Use Policy

Providing transportation services to young people is a mission-critical function. However, the [congregation/organization] recognizes its responsibility to provide safe and efficient transportation. The following rules apply to all drivers and vehicles:

- a. Only people approved and authorized by [XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization] are permitted to drive either an [congregation/organization]-owned vehicle or any other vehicle on the [congregation/organization]'s behalf. All approved drivers must provide proof of their possession of:
  - (1) a valid driver's license,
  - (2) acceptable driving record, and
  - (3) personal automobile insurance.
- b. *Occasional drivers*: Those who rarely drive for children's/youth activities (less than once every three months) may be approved by filling out the Driving History/Record Release Form and Driver Agreement [see page \_\_\_ of this policy manual for the appropriate forms].
- c. *Regular drivers*: Those who frequently drive for children's/youth activities as part of their staff or volunteer position may be approved through the application process for their position. This process includes filling out the Driving History/Record Release Form and Driver Agreement [see page \_\_\_ of this policy manual for the appropriate forms].
- d. [Congregation/organization]-owned vehicles are to be used within the approved guidelines for use and are not to be driven for personal use without the permission of the [pastor/deacons/trustees (whoever is in charge of the vehicle)] or his/her designee.
- f. All persons who drive on [XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization]'s behalf are subject to oversight by their [pastor, ministry coordinator].
- g. Any complaints or information received by [XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization] about unsafe or illegal driving will be reviewed

to determine if any corrective action is needed. Such a review may require an updated Motor Vehicle Records check.

## 2. Driver Ineligibility

Those drivers who exceed the recommended guidelines for accidents or violations are ineligible to drive a vehicle owned by [\[XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization\]](#) or to drive a personal vehicle on [\[XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization\]](#)'s business.

A driver will not be approved if he or she has in his/her driving record in the past seven years:

- a. 1 major violation or
- b. 3 or more moving violations or
- c. 2 or more accidents or
- d. 1 at-fault accident and 2 moving violations.

## 3. Driver Training for those operating vehicles owned by [\[XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization\]](#)

[\[XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization\]](#) recognizes the importance of training its drivers. All approved drivers of a [\[congregational/organizational\]](#) vehicle must attend a driver orientation meeting prior to being permitted to drive for the [\[congregation/organization\]](#). In addition, all approved drivers of a [\[congregational/organizational\]](#) vehicle must participate in ongoing driver training programs as scheduled by the [\[congregation/organization\]](#) [\[note frequency of trainings\]](#).

## 4. Vehicle Selection

[\[XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization\]](#) does not permit 15-passenger vans to be used on the [\[congregation/organization\]](#)'s behalf. Permitted vehicles include minivans and other passenger vehicles designed to carry at least four passengers.

## 5. Vehicle Maintenance

It is the policy of [\[XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization\]](#) to inspect all vehicles, except personal vehicles, at least monthly. Vehicle operators/custodians are responsible for ensuring vehicles are serviced/maintained according to the manufacturer's recommended schedule. Any safety problems on vehicles owned by [\[XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization\]](#) will be reported by vehicle operators/custodians to the [\[designated individual\]](#) immediately for proper follow-up. Any safety problems on personal vehicles must be addressed by the owner before using the vehicle to transport children/youth of the [\[congregation/organization\]](#).

## 6. Accident Procedures

See Unusual Incident Section [on page \_\_\_\_] of this policy manual.

## **H. Child Abuse Prevention Overview**

[XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization] recognizes that child abuse is a serious problem. It is often committed by a person who is a caretaker of a child or in a position of trust and authority. Child abuse is not accidental and can be physical, sexual, mental, emotional, or spiritual. Detailed definitions of child physical, emotional, and sexual abuse can be found on [pages \_\_\_\_] of this policy manual.

While abuse in any form can be devastating to a child, of particular concern to [XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization] is child sexual abuse, which affects one in four girls and one in six boys in the United States. Because of the high levels of access and trust that are provided to workers in faith community settings such as [XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization] special care must be taken to prevent and address child sexual abuse. The following policies are intended to ensure that [XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization] serves young people in the safest environment possible by encouraging adults to take responsibility for their individual roles in child protection.

### 1. Guidelines for Child Abuse Prevention

#### a. Use a Team Approach – The Two-Adult Rule

- (1) Two approved adult workers will be present during any church activity involving minors. Preferably these adults would not be related. Approved young leaders (under age 18) may assist in classrooms with adult supervision, but may not substitute for the leadership of an adult and will never be left alone with a child or group of children.
- (2) Children over 5 will also use a “buddy system” when traveling throughout the building for activities such as using the restroom or locating a parent. Children under five will be accompanied to the restroom by an adult and given assistance as needed. The stall door should remain open.

#### b. Provide Adequate Personnel

Programs that involve children and youth will always include adequate supervisory personnel. Supervision will be maintained before and after the event until all children are in the custody of their parents or legal guardians.

##### (1) The following ratios will be observed:

- (a) Under 3 years of age: Two adults (preferably one of each gender), plus additional adults to match these ratios:

0 to 1 years: 1 adult to 5 children

1 to 3 years: 1 adult to 6 children

- (b) 3 years and over: Up to 20 children/youth, 2 adults (preferably one of each gender) plus 1 additional adult for every 1 to 10 additional children/youth.

Example:

- 20 children = 1 male and 1 female adult (at least)
- 21-30 children = 1 male and 1 female plus 1 extra adult
- 31-40 children = 1 male and 1 female plus 2 extra adults,
- and so on.

- (2) On all overnight events, a minimum of two screened workers will be in attendance, with at least 1 adult per room in sleeping arrangements. One-adult/one-child sleeping arrangements are prohibited, including sharing a bed in a room with other people.

c. Minimize One-Child/One Adult Situations

- (1) All interactions between children/youth and adults must be visible to others, preferably with more than one adult and more than one child present. If private conversation is required, it may occur out of earshot of others, but not out of sight. Activities will be observable and interruptible at all times.
- (2) All classrooms and other areas used by minors must have a window in the door or the door must be left open during use if this does not pose a safety risk. Open doors must be gated for classrooms of children under 5.
- (3) At least one (and preferably two – one male and one female) “Roving” Children’s/Youth Ministries team member will monitor the doors, circulate through the church and provide assistance as needed during worship, Sunday School, and other children’s/youth activities. [See page [\\_\\_\\_\\_\\_](#)] of this policy manual for job description.

d. Use Appropriate Discipline and Expressions of Affection

- (1) Use appropriate hugs and touches that are reassuring or comforting, not uncomfortable or hurtful.
- (2) Avoid total body-to-body hugs, touching in private areas or kissing on the lips.

- (3) Use warm, caring verbal comments.
- (4) Do not use demeaning or blaming comments, verbal put-downs, hurtful discipline or corporal punishment.
- (5) Use constructive, age-appropriate discipline suited to the behavior and the child.
- (6) Do not withhold food as a form of discipline.
- (7) Be aware of and sensitive to what makes a child feel uncomfortable.
- (8) Respect a child/youth's refusal of affection.

e. Obtain Parental Permission

Children and youth must have written parental permission for involvement in church sponsored programs or activities. See [pages \_\_\_\_] of this policy manual for annual and trip-specific permission forms. Church workers will obtain the consent of the child's parent or guardian by phone if an emergency situation necessitates that an adult will be alone with that child.

f. Use a Church Nursery Identification Procedure

Nursery personnel will clearly identify the child and the child's parent or legal guardian. Children will only be released to a properly identified and pre-authorized adult. See [page \_\_\_\_] of this policy manual for a copy of the Nursery Sign In/Out Sheet.

## IV. RESPONDING TO UNUSUAL INCIDENTS

All incidents in which a child/youth's safety is compromised or violated (i.e. accidents, injuries, altercations, etc.) will be considered an "unusual incident," requiring the completion of the Unusual Incident Form on [page \_\_\_\_] of this policy manual. The Unusual Incident Form must be completed and turned in to [the pastor/elder/ministry leader of XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization] by an involved adult, an adult witness to the incident, or any adult to whom the incident was reported within 24 hours of the occurrence of the incident. The [the pastor/elder/ministry leader of XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization] will share any Unusual Incident Report submitted to him/her with the Child Protection Leadership Team of [XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization].

Special instructions for certain scenarios are listed below:

### A. Vehicle Accident Procedures

Persons authorized to drive for [XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization] will follow this procedure if they are involved in an accident while driving any vehicle for the [congregation/organization]:

1. Tend to any medical needs. Call the police or ask a bystander to contact the police.
2. Do not discuss the accident or admit fault to any other driver involved or bystander.
3. Fill out the Unusual Incident Form with special attention to Vehicle Accident Information.

### B. Reporting Child Abuse

1. Know the Facts about Child Abuse
  - a. Using the introductory material on child abuse and childhood stress available for your reference on [pages \_\_\_\_] of this policy manual, assess the condition and situation of the child whom you suspect may be experiencing child abuse.
  - b. Learn more by reading some of the recommended materials on [pages \_\_\_\_\_] of this manual, or by attending trainings on the subject. [XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization], Franconia Mennonite Conference, and other local child-serving agencies may also offer relevant trainings for members of [XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization] and the wider community.
2. Discuss Suspicious Behavior Immediately

- a. All those involved in the ministries of [\[XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization\]](#) should be alert to inappropriate behavior by adults and older children/youth and signs of abuse.
- b. Any inappropriate conduct or relationship between a [\[church/organization\]](#) staff person or volunteer, or any family or community member and a child/youth should be reported immediately to [\[the Child Protection Leadership Team of the congregation/organization and pastor/director of the congregation/organization\]](#).
- c. Any suspicious behavior will be immediately investigated per the instructions below.

### 3. Reporting Obligations

- a. Employed workers with children and youth are considered mandatory reporters of suspected child abuse or neglect. Title 23 Pa. CSA. §6311 [\[see page \\_\\_\\_ of this binder for information on this statute\]](#) details who is a mandatory reporter.
- b. In addition to any legal requirements for reporting suspected abuse, there is also a moral imperative to report in order to protect children from harm. Even if a church worker or volunteer is not a mandatory reporter of child abuse and neglect, any such person suspecting abuse or neglect is required by [\[XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization\]](#) to make a report.
- c. All workers should also know how to report this information to [\[congregational/organizational\]](#) leaders in a discrete and confidential way. All should understand that reporting reflects care and concern, rather than disloyalty or recrimination.
- d. Reporting procedures for all those involved in the ministries of [\[XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization\]](#) are outlined below. The individual reporting the conduct is protected from legal and civil liability if the report is made in good faith.

### 4. How to Report Suspected Abuse – In the event of suspected child abuse, the following steps will generally be taken:

- a. Initial Actions and Reports of Any Concerned Adult
  - (1) If a child verbally reports abuse to an adult or if an adult observes/suspects suspicious behavior between another adult or older youth and a child:
    - (a) Secure the child's safety: If the child is in imminent danger, seems fearful to return home after a disclosure of abuse, or needs immediate medical attention, call 911.
    - (b) Report the information immediately:

- i. Call the [person within the congregation/organization designated to make all calls to Childline], to inform him/her orally of your concern. He/she will document your concern in writing by completing form CY-47 in collaboration with you.
  - ii. Call the [pastor/director], to inform him/her orally of your concern, unless the person accused is the [pastor/director], in which case you should refer to the Franconia Mennonite Conference Ministerial Sexual Misconduct Policy and Procedure for more instructions.
  - iii. Call the [congregational/organizational] Child Protection Leadership Team at [contact person, phone number] to inform the Team of your concern.
  - iv. If the alleged offender is a credentialed minister, follow the process outlined in the Franconia Mennonite Conference Ministerial Sexual Misconduct Policy and Procedure, in addition to the reporting procedure outlined here.
- (c) Generally do not discuss the incident with anyone else, unless requested by the pastor or other authorities.
- (d) Tips to remember while acting on suspicions or report of abuse:
- i. Stay calm and listen carefully to the child.
  - ii. Take the child's word seriously and keep any physical evidence.
  - iii. Do not ask leading questions or probe for more details. It is appropriate to say, "Tell me more," or ask other open-ended questions.
  - iv. Give emotional support, reminding the child that he/she is not at fault and that he/she was courageous and right to tell you about the problem.
  - v. Express your own sincere emotions. Tell the child how sad you feel that this has happened. Tell him/her how sad God feels when a child is hurt.
  - vi. Assure the child that you will do everything you can to make the abuse stop. Explain that in order to help, you must tell some other people.

b. Designated Childline Contact Person's Actions and Reports

- (1) Be available at all times to receive a call from a concerned adult regarding the safety of a child in the care of [XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization].
- (2) When a call from a concerned adult has been received, call Childline: **1-800-932-0313**.
- (3) Complete form CY-47 [see pages \_\_\_\_ of this manual] in collaboration with the concerned adult and submit a copy of this form to:
  - the County Children and Youth agency according to Childline's instructions
  - the [pastor/director] (unless he/she is the person accused).
  - The [congregational/organizational] Child Protection Leadership Team.
- (4) Inform the [congregational/organizational] Child Protection Leadership Team of actions taken.

c. [Pastor/Director's] Actions and Reports

- (1) Maintain complete confidentiality with regard to all conversations with the child and the accused adult that can be construed as confidential communications. This includes maintaining confidentiality when completing the written documentation outlined below.
- (2) Report suspected child abuse as required by law. Clergy are mandated reporters in Pennsylvania, so it is your duty to ensure that child abuse is reported. Follow-up with the designated Childline contact person to be sure he/she made a report, then contact Childline yourself to be sure your legal requirement to report is fulfilled, and to avoid any possible penalties for failure to report.
- (3) Document every conversation and contact on the Pastoral Report Form [see page \_\_\_\_ of this manual]. Place documentation directly in a locked file accessible only to you.
  - (a) If the alleged offender is not a parent/guardian, notify the child's parents/guardians. If the alleged offender is a parent/guardian, seek advice from Childline and the Franconia Mennonite Conference Child Protection Leadership Team before contacting the home.
  - (b) If appropriate, outline the response procedure to the child and parents/guardians.

- (c) Speak directly with the child and anyone involved in reporting the incident for the purpose of assuring them that the child's safety is the main concern of [XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization] and its leadership.
- (4) Seek ongoing support for your work with the family:
  - (a) Cooperate with the County Children and Youth agency in any actions and/or pastoral care.
  - (b) Consult with an attorney and [name of insurance company].
  - (c) Report all findings and actions to the [congregational/organizational] Child Protection Leadership Team.
- (5) Continue to give pastoral care to all involved, as appropriate.
- (6) Tips to remember while acting on suspicions or report of abuse:
  - (a) Encourage the family to keep all documents and evidence.
  - (b) Work to ensure the safety of the child, in consultation with Children and Youth or the police, if they are involved.
  - (c) Assist the child and family with obtaining access to appropriate medical and counseling services.
  - (d) When in contact with the alleged offender, follow these guidelines:
    - i. Listen, be caring, and sensitive.
    - ii. Observe for behaviors such as denial, blaming, minimization, justification, jealousy, hostility and quick remorse.
    - iii. Ask questions such as who, where and when.
    - iv. If the alleged offender is not a parent of the child who reported abuse, provide no information about the child and his/her family, details of the reporting process (i.e. who reported) and who is responding to the child and his/her family.
    - v. Inform him/her that a team of people will be responding to his/her needs and the issues related to the allegations.
- d. Guidelines for Actions and Responsibilities of the Child Protection Leadership Team of [XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization]:
  - (1) If the alleged offender is a participant in the youth ministry of [XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization], remove him/her

temporarily from his/her duties and any environment that gives him/her access to children/youth during the investigation.

(a) Communicate with the Franconia Mennonite Conference Child Protection Leadership Team

- i. Call the Franconia Mennonite Conference Child Protection Leadership Team at [phone number] within 24 hours to inform them of the incident.
- ii. Provide regular updates to the FMC CPLT regarding the ongoing handling of the situation.

(b) Manage Public Communications

- i. Designate a spokesperson to be responsible for handling all communications with others in the [congregation/organization] not directly involved with the suspected abuse situation and the media. No one else should speak on behalf of the [congregation/organization].
- ii. In consultation with legal counsel and the Care Teams, provide necessary information to the congregation. Give updates as needed to minimize the spread of rumors. Keep dated copies of these statements on file in the church office.

(c) Organize Care Teams

- i. Name a Care Team to minister to the child and his/her family, in consultation with the child's family. Also offer a Care Team to minister to the accused and his/her family (assuming he/she is a member of the congregation.) See Care Team Guidelines below.
- ii. Receive recommendations from the Care Teams, make decisions about any disciplinary actions or accountability plans, and monitor their implementation.

(d) Attend to congregational healing process

- i. Make available to the congregation trained people who can help bring healing and assist congregational members in addressing needs.
- ii. Evaluate the process of dealing with incidents of suspected child abuse, revising policy as necessary.

e. Care Team Ministry

Each team will have three people, who have had previous training on child abuse and response procedures, and whose involvement does not

create a conflict of interest. Someone from the [\[congregational/organizational\]](#) Child Protection Leadership Team will serve as leader for each team.

- (1) Guidelines for the Care Team for the child and his/her parents (or guardians):
  - (a) Meet with the child and his/her family, assess further needs and explain the procedure to be followed.
  - (b) Offer support and care to the child and his/her family.
  - (c) Provide a list of qualified counselors/therapists and assist with securing financial help, transportation or other assistance, as needed, to access these professionals.
  - (d) In the case of multiple victims, provide an opportunity for these individuals to meet together, if they choose, for mutual support.
  - (e) Maintain confidentiality until the Care Teams and [\[congregational/organizational\]](#) Child Protection Leadership Team agree on further disclosure to the [\[congregation/organization\]](#) or others involved in the situation.
  - (f) Complete the Child and Family Care Team Form for each meeting, to document actions and decisions taken [\[see page \\_\\_\\_\\_\\_ of this manual\]](#).
  - (g) Report to the [\[congregational/organizational\]](#) Child Protection Leadership Team and recommend appropriate actions and follow-up.
  - (h) Work with [\[congregational/organizational\]](#) Child Protection Leadership Team and other involved [\[congregational/organizational\]](#) leadership in implementing these recommendations.
- (2) Guidelines for the Care Team for the alleged offender and his/her family:
  - (a) Meet with the alleged offender and his/her family, assess further needs and explain the procedure to be followed.
  - (b) Offer support and care to the accused and his/her family.
  - (c) Provide a list of qualified counselors/therapists and assist with securing financial help, transportation or other assistance, as needed, to access those professionals.
  - (d) Maintain confidentiality until the Care Teams and [\[congregational/organizational\]](#) Child Protection Leadership

Team agree on further disclosure to the [\[congregation/organization\]](#) or others involved in the situation.

- (e) Complete alleged Offender Care Team Form for each meeting, to document actions and decisions taken [\[see page \\_\\_\\_\\_ of this manual\]](#).
- (f) Report to the [\[congregational/organizational\]](#) Child Protection Leadership Team and recommend appropriate actions and follow-up.
- (g) Work with [\[congregational/organizational\]](#) Child Protection Leadership Team and other involved [\[congregational/organizational\]](#) leadership in implementing these recommendations.

#### 5. Response to Investigation

When the investigation by law enforcement (and Franconia Mennonite Conference Ministerial Leadership Committee, if applicable) is complete, the following steps will be taken:

- a. If the allegations are unfounded by Children and Youth and law enforcement agencies (and Franconia Mennonite Conference Ministerial Leadership Committee, if applicable), and the information discovered is not a cause for reasonable concern, the [\[congregational/organizational\]](#) Child Protection Leadership Team, in collaboration with the Care Teams and other involved [\[congregational/organizational\]](#) leadership, will:
  - (1) Share information about actions taken, as needed, with the child, his/her family and the congregation.
  - (2) Reinstate the accused to any position from which he/she had been removed due to the allegation.
- b. If the allegations are unfounded by the Children and Youth and law enforcement agencies (and Franconia Mennonite Conference Ministerial Leadership Committee, if applicable), but the information discovered remains a cause of reasonable concern, the [\[congregational/organizational\]](#) Child Protection Leadership Team, in collaboration with the Care Teams and other involved [\[congregational/organizational\]](#) leadership, will:
  - (1) Hold the offender responsible and accountable for the behavior.
  - (2) Require education and/or counseling to correct unhealthy behavior patterns.
  - (3) Remove the offender from environments where children and youth are involved for a stated period of time. Reinstatement to

any kind of ministry with children and youth will be dependent upon open and frequent communication between the [\[congregational/organizational\]](#) Child Protection Leadership Team and any treatment providers working with the offender.

- (4) Share information about actions taken, as needed, with the child, his/her family and the congregation.
- c. If the allegations are determined to be founded by Children and Youth and law enforcement agencies (and Franconia Mennonite Conference Ministerial Leadership Committee, if applicable), the [\[congregational/organizational\]](#) Child Protection Leadership Team, in collaboration with the Care Teams and other involved [\[congregational/organizational\]](#) leadership will:
- (1) Support all recommendations and requirements of those involved in the treatment and supervision of the offender.
  - (2) Support those seeking to provide for the needs of the child in medical care, counseling, etc.
  - (3) Permanently remove the offender from any environment where children and youth are involved.
  - (4) Require the offender to obtain specialized counseling.
  - (5) Protect others from harm and protect the integrity of the church's ministry.
  - (6) Monitor the progress and accountability of the offender through a Circle of Support and Accountability. For more information on setting up a Circle of Support and Accountability in your [\[congregation/organization\]](#), please contact the Franconia Mennonite Conference Child Protection Leadership team.

## **V. JOB DESCRIPTIONS FOR POSITIONS WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH**

### **A. Employed Staff**

### **B. Volunteer Positions**

### **C. Child Protection Leadership Team of [Congregational/Organizational]**

The Child Protection Leadership Team of [XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization] will serve as the primary planning, resourcing, support, and oversight group for the work of child protection and child abuse recovery at [XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization].

The Team will work in collaboration with the Child Protection Leadership Team of Franconia Mennonite Conference as necessary. One important goal of this collaborative work will be to create structures for the Child Protection Initiative that build it into the ongoing mission and work of the [congregation/organization] as it relates to direct services to children. The Team will implement all [XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization]'s child

protection policies and procedures, relying on the Child Protection Leadership Team of Franconia Mennonite Conference for trainings, other resourcing, and assistance in responding to incidents that compromise or violate the safety of children or youth at [XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization].

1. Members of the [XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization] Child Protection Leadership Team commit to:
  - a. Becoming well-versed in the language, issues, policies and procedures of child protection and child abuse recovery.
  - b. Meeting 1-2 times monthly for 6 months for training, planning, and team building. (Frequency of regular meetings will likely lessen as the team and the Child Protection Initiative becomes established).
  - c. Processing written applications and conducting interviews for potential candidates for work in children's and youth ministry at [XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization].
  - d. Representing the Child Protection Leadership Team of [XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization] as necessary at to the congregation and meetings of congregational leadership.
  - e. Monitoring all activities at [XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization] involving children to ensure policy compliance.
  - f. Serving as the Response Team for incidents of safety violation at [XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization]. The responsibilities of a Response Team include, but are not limited to:
    - Establishing a plan for receiving incident reports from members and regular attendees at [XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization].
    - Reporting incidents according to the outlined response plan.
    - Communicating openly and frequently with other Child Protection Leadership Team members and collaborating with law enforcement, child advocacy professionals, and Franconia Conference Leadership as appropriate to address any incident requiring ongoing follow-up.
    - Supporting involved parties in a safety violation (lay leaders, parents, children, etc., including anyone suspected of maltreatment or negligence of children) throughout any disciplinary or legal process that follows the report.
    - Maintaining strict confidentiality for the involved child(ren) and person(s) suspected of maltreatment or negligence toward the child(ren). This does not imply keeping confidentiality from law enforcement when a report to Childline is merited, nor does it

prohibit seeking the assistance of other qualified professionals as necessary.

- Handling communications with congregation/organization, the community, and the media as determined necessary through planning with the leadership of [XXXX Memnonite Church/Organization], law enforcement and child advocacy professionals.
2. Members of the Child Protection Leadership Team may also wish to:
    - a. Plan trainings and implement them.
    - b. Organize and offer worship services with special themes related to children's ministries, abuse recovery, and child abuse prevention.
    - c. Lead discussions on human sexuality.
  3. Traits of a first-rate team member:
    - a. Respected in the congregation and community
    - b. Team player
    - c. Good listener
    - d. Compassionate/empathetic
    - e. Courageous and calm in crises
    - f. Perseveres through challenging situations and resistance
    - g. Demonstrates self-care in times of stress
    - h. Has clear criminal and child abuse background checks within the past year
  4. The following qualifications of team members are preferred:
    - a. Professional experience dealing with children's issues
    - b. Teachers, daycare providers, after school program staff, social workers, youth ministers, pediatricians, and others with work experience serving children.
    - c. Anyone who has experience creating/implementing child protection plans in a congregation or other child-serving organization.
    - d. Personal experience as a survivor of child abuse or concerned friend or family member of an abuse survivor. Adequate progress in recovery and social support should be demonstrated to ensure continued personal safety and healing.

## **VI. FORMS**

In creating this policy manual, it was the intention of the Franconia Mennonite Conference Child Protection Leadership Team to provide not only recommendations for policy, but also the tools and educational materials needed to implement the policy properly.

The “tools” are found in the forms section of the policy manual template. They may be used as presented, or customized as necessary.

**Form A**

**CHILDREN/YOUTH VOLUNTEER APPLICATION, P. 1**

Application Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Position Sought: \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address \_\_\_\_\_

Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Highest Level of Education \_\_\_\_\_

**My employment/volunteer experience in the past five years includes:** (Attach additional pages as necessary.)

***Employer/Organization*** \_\_\_\_\_

Your position/Title \_\_\_\_\_

Dates of Involvement (starting, ending) \_\_\_\_\_

*Employer/Organization*  
Address \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Person \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

***Employer/Organization*** \_\_\_\_\_

Your position/Title \_\_\_\_\_

Dates of Involvement (starting, ending) \_\_\_\_\_

*Employer/Organization*  
Address \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Person \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

***Employer/Organization*** \_\_\_\_\_

Your position/Title \_\_\_\_\_

Dates of Involvement (starting, ending) \_\_\_\_\_

*Employer/Organization*  
Address \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Person \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

## CHILDREN/YOUTH VOLUNTEER APPLICATION, P. 2

### Other Experience

Special training, skills, hobbies:

Groups, clubs, organizational memberships:

Prior experience not previously mentioned specific to working with children and youth:

### References

Please list three people (outside of your family) who know you well and can attest to your character, skill, and dependability in general, as well as in relation to how you work with children and youth. You may duplicate one of the contacts in the “previous experience” section.

Contact Name	Organization	Relationship to you	Phone

### Personal history and motivation

Why do you want to volunteer for this position?

Have you ever been exposed to an incident of child abuse or neglect? \_\_\_No \_\_\_Yes

If yes, how did you feel about the incident? Also, please describe any actions you took to address it.

**CHILDREN/YOUTH VOLUNTEER APPLICATION, P. 3**

Describe how you were disciplined as a child:

What methods do you use to discipline children?

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## CHILDREN/YOUTH VOLUNTEER APPLICATION, P. 4

### Disclosure

**I have never been found guilty, or pled guilty or no contest, to a criminal charge.**  True  Not true

If not true, give a short explanation of the charge on the back of this page. (Please indicate the date, nature, and place of the incident leading to the charge; where the charge was filed; and the precise disposition of the charge.)

**No civil lawsuit alleging actual or attempted sexual discrimination, harassment, exploitation, or misconduct; physical abuse; child abuse; or financial misconduct has ever resulted in a judgment being entered against me, been settled out of court, or been dismissed because the statute of limitations has expired.**  True  Not true

If not true, on the back of this page, give a short explanation of the lawsuit. (Please indicate the date, nature, and place of the incident leading to the lawsuit; where the lawsuit was filed; and the precise disposition of the lawsuit.)

**I have never terminated my employment, professional credentials, or service in a volunteer position or had my employment, professional credentials, or authorization to hold a volunteer position terminated for reasons relating to allegations of actual or attempted sexual discrimination, harassment, exploitation, or misconduct; physical abuse; child abuse; or financial misconduct.**  True  Not true

If not true, give a short explanation on the back of this page. (Please indicate the date of termination; name, address, and telephone number of employer or volunteer supervisor; and nature of the incident(s) leading to your termination.)

**Is there any fact or circumstance involving you or your background that would call into question your being entrusted with the responsibilities of the position for which you are applying?**  Yes  No

If yes, please provide a brief explanation on the back of this page.

#### ***Read carefully before signing this application:***

The covenants between persons seeking sanctioned volunteer positions in Christian community require honesty, integrity, and truthfulness for the health of the church. To that end, I certify that the answers given by me to all questions on this application and any attachments are, to the best of my knowledge and belief, true and correct and that I have not knowingly withheld any pertinent facts or circumstances. I understand that any misrepresentation or omission may be grounds for rejection of consideration for, or termination from, the position I am seeking to fill. I acknowledge that it is my duty in a timely fashion to amend the responses and information I have provided if I come to know that the response or information was incorrect when given or, though accurate when given, the response or information is no longer accurate.

Beginning sanctioned volunteer relationships in Christian community with an open exchange of relevant information builds the foundation for a continuing and healthy covenant between employees or volunteers and the church they seek to serve. To that end, I authorize [XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization] and/or its agents to make inquiries regarding all statements I have set forth above. I hereby consent to permit [XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization] to contact anyone it deems appropriate to investigate or verify any information provided by me to discuss my suitability for a volunteer position, including my background, volunteer experience, education or related matters. I expressly give my consent to any discussions regarding the foregoing and I voluntarily and knowingly waive all rights to bring an action for defamation, invasion of privacy, or similar cause of action, against anyone providing such information. I further authorize all persons, schools, companies, organizations, and law enforcement agencies to supply all information concerning my background and to furnish reports thereon and I hereby release them and any organization affiliated with [XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization] from any and all liability and responsibility arising from their doing so.

[XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization]'s hiring and authorized volunteer recruitment process involves the distribution of information regarding applicants with those persons in a position to recruit, secure, and supervise the position I am seeking to fill. To that end, I authorize [XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization] and its agents to circulate, distribute, and otherwise share information gathered in connection with this application to such persons for these stated purposes. I understand that [XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization] will share with me information it has gathered about me, if I request it to do so.

---

Applicant's signature

---

Date

---

Parent's or Guardian's signature for applicants under 18

---

Date

**Form B**

**DRIVING HISTORY/RECORD RELEASE FORM  
(for applicants over age 21)**

Driver Name \_\_\_\_\_

License Number \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

**Check any statement that describes an event in your driving history over the past 7 years.**

**Major violations**

- Manslaughter or negligent homicide using a motor vehicle
- Driving while license is suspended or revoked
- Operating a motor vehicle for the commission of a felony
- Aggravated assault with a motor vehicle
- Permitting an unlicensed person to drive
- Reckless driving
- Fleeing or evading police or roadblock
- Resisting arrest
- Racing
- Hit and run (bodily injury or property damage)
- Failure to report an accident
- Illegal passing of a school bus
- Having a license suspended related to moving violations
- Other violations considered serious by state law, specifically:

\_\_\_\_\_

**Moving violations**

- |  |                 |
|--|-----------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Speeding                               | <i>Quantity</i> |
| <input type="radio"/> Improper lane change                   | _____           |
| <input type="radio"/> Failure to yield                       | _____           |
| <input type="radio"/> Failure to obey traffic signal or sign | _____           |
| <input type="radio"/> Careless driving                       | _____           |

**Accidents**

- |                                |                 |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| <input type="radio"/> No fault | <i>Quantity</i> |
| <input type="radio"/> At fault | _____           |

**Driver Agreement**

If approved as a driver for [XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization], I agree to:

1. Maintain a valid inspection on my vehicle
2. Require the use of seatbelts by all occupants
3. Refrain from the use of cell phones while driving
4. Report any incident involving my car or its passengers during activities sponsored by [XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization] within 24 hours of the incident, using an Unusual Incident Form.

I certify that all information on this form is true and correct to the best of my knowledge. I give permission to representatives of [XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization] to obtain my motor vehicle record from state authorities to verify the contents of this form. I expressly give my consent to any discussions regarding the foregoing and I voluntarily and knowingly waive all rights to bring an action for defamation, invasion of privacy, or similar causes of action, against anyone providing, or seeking such information.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Driver's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Form C

### Instructions for Completing the Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearance

Please read the instructions prior to downloading the form. To request a supply of the forms, please call (717)783-6211.

1. Type or print clearly and neatly in ink **Section I** only.
2. Address must be Applicant's current home address.
3. All information must be completed in full. (The form asks for all previous names, addresses, and household members since 1975). This information must be provided to the best of your knowledge and belief. If necessary, attach additional pages.
4. Application must be signed.
5. Enclose a \$10.00 money order for each application. No cash or personal checks accepted. Agency or business checks are acceptable.
6. Do not send any postage paid return envelopes.
7. Application should be placed in a business-sized or larger envelope prior to mailing.
8. One block must be checked for Purpose for Clearance. Do not check more than one block.
  - A. Check the Volunteer Block if performing a service (paid or unpaid) for organizations such as Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Boy Scouts, Little League or churches. A copy of your Criminal Record Check results obtained within the past year must be attached. Do not send original Criminal Record results. If you are not a Pennsylvania resident, you must also attach a copy of your FBI results obtained within the past year. This block should not be checked for anyone volunteering in schools.
  - B. Check the School Block if seeking to have involvement within a school (public, private vocational, technical, nursing) for any reason.
  - C. Check the Foster Care Block if applying for foster parenting or custody of a child.
  - D. Check the Adoption Block if in the process or planning to adopt a child.
  - E. Check the Child Care Block if planning to work in a day care setting or if all other blocks do not apply.
  - F. Check the CWEP Block if you are participating in a Department of Public Welfare training program. The signature and phone number of the County Assistance Representative is required.
9. Clearance results will be mailed to you within 14 days from the date that the clearance is received in our office. There will be no replacements after 90 days. Failure to comply with the above instructions will cause considerable delay.

**Form C, pg. 2**

INSERT Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearance Form (CY-113) HERE

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**Form D**

INSERT Pennsylvania State Police Criminal Records Check Form (SP4-164) HERE

DRAFT

**Form E**

**Children and Youth Volunteer Face-to-Face Interview Format**

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant Name \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer(s) \_\_\_\_\_

1. Why are you interested in this position?
2. How would you describe yourself?
3. What is there about children that makes you enjoy working with them?
4. Tell me about an experience where you had to discipline someone else's child.
5. What is there about this position that appeals to you most?
6. In what kind of supervisory style do you prefer to work?
7. What was your childhood like?
8. Tell me about any experiences you have had working with people unlike you.
9. How do you work through conflict?
10. Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offense? Please explain.
11. What do you hope to get from a volunteer experience?
12. What questions or concerns do you have about volunteering with [XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization]?
13. Is there any other information you would like to share about yourself?

General Impressions:

Concerns:

---

Interviewer(s)' signature(s)

Date

**Redirect Questions**

Used to clarify when an applicant indicates a history of child abuse or alcoholism

1. When did it occur? How old were you? (Look at duration/severity/recent nature/pattern of behavior)
2. What happened?
3. What was the resolution?
4. Where are you at with it today?
5. How might you use what you have learned as a volunteer in this program?

## Form F

# REFERENCE CHECK FORM

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant Name \_\_\_\_\_

Reference Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

### *Introduction*

We are considering \_\_\_\_\_ for the position of \_\_\_\_\_. His/her main responsibilities would include \_\_\_\_\_. In addition, there will be a lot of interaction with [children/youth].

### *Questions*

1. How long have you known the applicant?
2. What is your relationship to the applicant?
3. How would you describe the applicant's personal characteristics?
4. Describe how the applicant interacts with people in general.
5. How would you say the applicant relates to children?
6. What are his/her greatest strengths? What are his/her greatest weaknesses?
7. What tasks does he/she prefer to do?
8. Does the applicant follow through on commitments he/she has made?
9. Would you be comfortable having the applicant serve as a [mentor, Sunday School teacher, camp counselor, etc.] to your own child?
10. Have you ever seen this person discipline a child? If so, please describe what you saw him/her do.
11. Do you know of any traits or problems that would be detrimental in the applicant's ability to work with a child?
12. Why do you feel this would be the right position/opportunity for the applicant at this time?
13. What else that we haven't covered would you like to tell me that would give me a more accurate picture of this person's ability to do this particular job?
14. Is there anyone else you would recommend I call to learn more about this applicant's ability to work with children?

### *Closing*

If you think of anything else it is important for us to know before we place \_\_\_\_\_ in a position of responsibility for [children/youth], please feel free to call me at \_\_\_\_\_. Thank you for your time.

Reference check completed by: \_\_\_\_\_

## ADDITIONAL REFERENCE QUESTIONS

### *For Professional References*

1. When/where have you observed the candidate working with children or youth?
2. Does this candidate demonstrate that he/she has realistic expectations with regard to the behavior of children and youth? Please provide examples.
3. Does this individual ask for support from the supervisor or colleagues when needed?
4. Does this candidate enjoy working with children and youth?
5. How long did the candidate work with you? Why did he/she leave?
6. How well does the candidate communicate ideas and opinions to others?
7. How does the candidate handle frustration and criticism?
8. How does the candidate communicate with family members of the children and youth with whom he/she works?
9. Have there been any complaints regarding the candidate's care of his/her clients?
10. To your knowledge, has the candidate had any criminal convictions? If so, what are they?
11. Would you rehire this individual to work with children and youth?

### *For Personal References*

1. What skills do you feel the applicant demonstrates in working with children and youth?
2. How does the candidate respond in stressful situations?
3. To your knowledge, has the candidate had any criminal convictions? If so, what are they?

**Form G**

**CHILDREN AND YOUTH WORKER COVENANT**

[XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization] is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all children, youth, and volunteers who participate in ministries and activities sponsored by [XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization]. The following policy statements reflect our [congregation/organization's] commitment to be a holy place of safety and protection for all who enter and as a place in which all people can experience the love of God through relationships with others.

1. Anyone who has been named as a perpetrator of a “founded” report of child abuse (sexual abuse, physical abuse, or emotional abuse) shall not work with children or youth in any activity sponsored by [XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization].
2. Volunteers with children and youth shall observe the “two-adult rule” at all times so that no adult is ever alone with children and youth, and no young leader (age 14-18) is left to supervise children or youth without the presence of two adults.
3. Volunteers with children and youth shall attend regular training and educational events provided by the church to keep volunteers informed of church policies and state laws regarding child abuse.
4. Volunteers shall immediately report to their supervisor any behavior that seems abusive or inappropriate.

Please answer the following questions:

1. As a volunteer in this [congregation/organization], do you agree to observe and abide by all policies regarding working in ministries with children and youth? Yes No
2. As a volunteer in this [congregation/organization], do you agree to observe the "two-adult rule” at all times? Yes No
3. As a volunteer in this [congregation/organization], do you agree to participate in training and education events provided by the church related to your volunteer assignment? Yes No
4. As a volunteer in this [congregation/organization], do you agree to promptly report abusive or inappropriate behavior to your supervisor? Yes No
5. As a volunteer in this [congregation/organization], do you agree to inform a minister of this [congregation/organization] if you are ever convicted or accused of child abuse? Yes No

I have read this volunteer covenant, and I agree to observe and abide by the policies set forth above.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of volunteer

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Volunteer's printed name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

When entire application/reference check/background check process is complete and volunteer is approved:

\_\_\_\_\_  
[Pastor/Director's] signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Form H**

**UNUSUAL INCIDENT REPORT FORM**

Date of Incident: \_\_\_\_\_ Time of Incident: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of child/youth involved in incident: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of parent/guardian: \_\_\_\_\_ Date/time contacted: \_\_\_\_\_

Method of contact (phone call, verbal report in person, etc.): \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency contact information used (i.e. phone number): \_\_\_\_\_

Incident Details

Location of Incident: \_\_\_\_\_

Witnesses: Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Description of Incident:

Vehicle Accident Procedures:

- Record the name, address and driver's license number of the other involved drivers.
- Record the license plate(s) and make(s) of any vehicle involved in the accident.
- Record the police report number, police officer's badge number.
- Record the addresses of any witnesses.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of person completing form

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date/Time submitted

**Form I**

INSERT Child Abuse Report Form (CY-47) HERE

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**Form J**

**PASTORAL REPORT OF SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE**

1) Name and title (e.g. SS teacher, church member, paid staff) of person observing or receiving disclosure of possible child abuse:

\_\_\_\_\_

2) Child's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's age/ date of birth: \_\_\_\_\_

3) Name of person accused of abuse of child: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to child (e.g. church staff, church volunteer, family member, other):

\_\_\_\_\_

4) Reported to Pastoral Staff

a) Date/time of report \_\_\_\_\_

b) Summary:

5) Call to child's Parent/Guardian:

a) Date/Time of call: \_\_\_\_\_

b) Summary:

6) Initial conversation with child and parent/guardian:

a) Date/place of conversation \_\_\_\_\_

b) Child's statement (if appropriate, give detailed summary):

7) Call to local Children and Youth social service agency:

a) Date/Time of call: \_\_\_\_\_

b) Name and title of person contacted: \_\_\_\_\_

c) Recommendations made by agency worker:

d) Summary:

8) Call to legal counsel:

a) Date/Time of call: \_\_\_\_\_

b) Name and title of person contacted: \_\_\_\_\_

c) Recommendations made by agency worker:

d) Summary:

9) Call to insurance company:

- a) Date/Time of call: \_\_\_\_\_
- b) Name and title of person contacted: \_\_\_\_\_
- c) Recommendations made by agency worker:

d) Summary:

10) Other contacts:

- a) Date/Time of call: \_\_\_\_\_
- b) Name and title of person contacted: \_\_\_\_\_
- c) Recommendations made by agency worker:

d) Summary:

11) Name and title of person completing this form: \_\_\_\_\_

a) Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

b) Date/Time: \_\_\_\_\_

**Form K. 1.**

**MEETING SUMMARY,  
CARE TEAM for the CHILD/FAMILY**

1. Date of meeting \_\_\_\_\_
2. Child's name \_\_\_\_\_
3. Child's age/date of birth \_\_\_\_\_
4. Parents' names \_\_\_\_\_
5. Child's address \_\_\_\_\_
6. Parents' address \_\_\_\_\_
7. Name of alleged offender and relationship to child \_\_\_\_\_
8. Date and Summary of report received from Pastoral team/other persons:

9. Summary of the meeting:
  - a) Safety plans for the child
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - b) Needs of child and family

c) Referrals/recommendations

d) Response of child/family

e) Plans for future meetings

Signatures of persons at the meeting

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Relationship to the child

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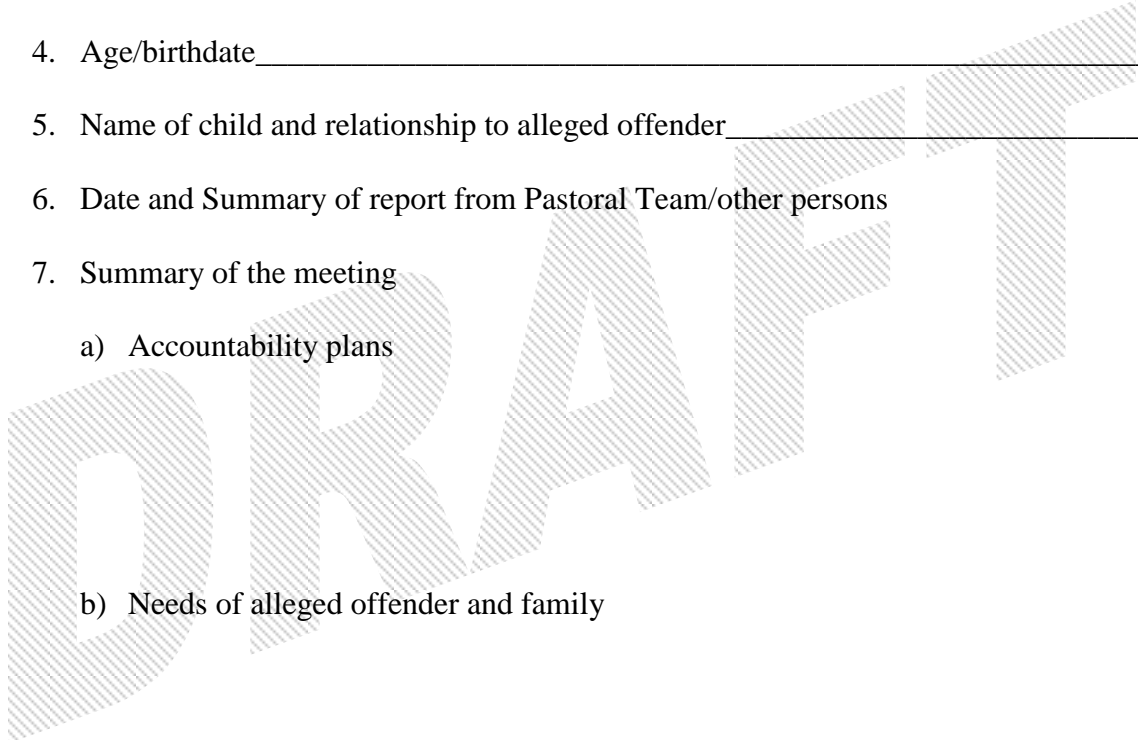
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**Form K. 2.**

**MEETING SUMMARY,  
CARE TEAM for the ALLEGED OFFENDER**

1. Date of meeting\_\_\_\_\_
2. Name of alleged offender\_\_\_\_\_
3. Address\_\_\_\_\_
4. Age/birthdate\_\_\_\_\_
5. Name of child and relationship to alleged offender\_\_\_\_\_
6. Date and Summary of report from Pastoral Team/other persons
7. Summary of the meeting
  - a) Accountability plans
  - b) Needs of alleged offender and family
  - c) Referrals/recommendations
  - d) Response of alleged offender



e) Plans for future meetings

Signatures of persons at the meeting

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Relationship to the alleged offender

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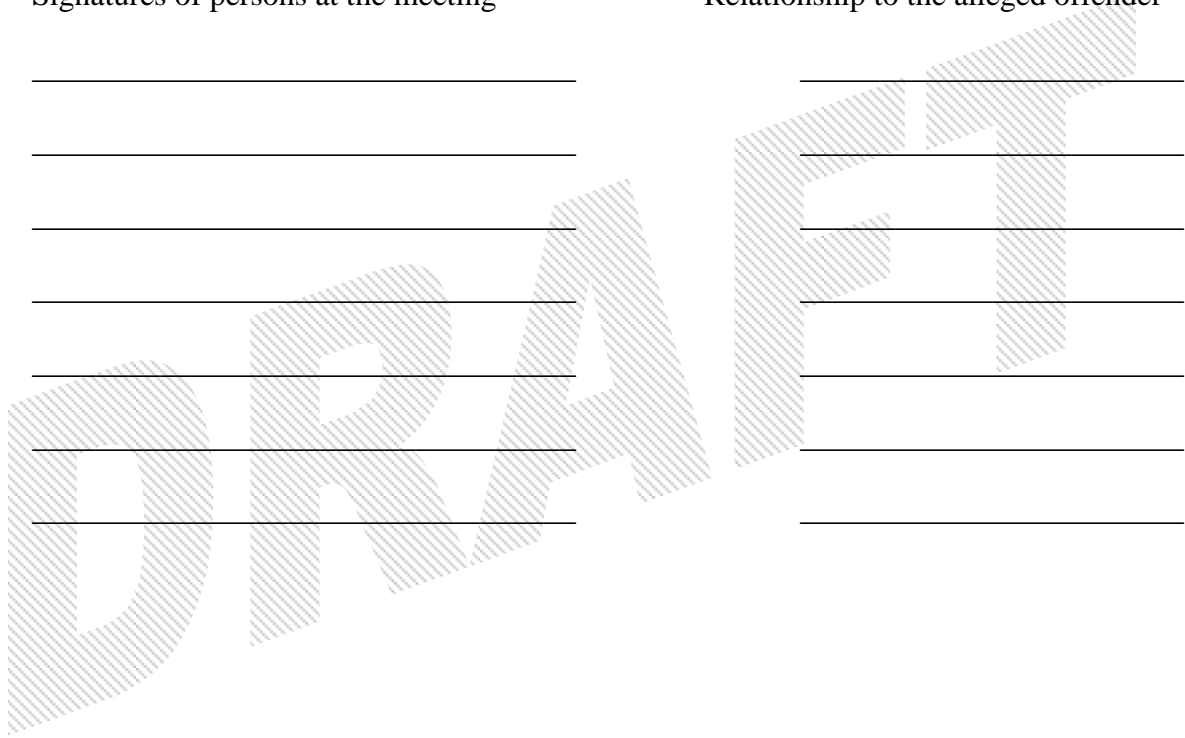
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**Form L**

**[XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization]  
YOUTH PERMISSION/WAIVER FORM**

**Name of Youth Participant** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent(s) or legal guardian(s) of youth** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address** \_\_\_\_\_  
(Street) (City) (State) (Zip)

**Home Phone** (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ **Work Phone** (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

**E-mail Address** \_\_\_\_\_

**Age of Youth** \_\_\_\_\_ **Birthdate** \_\_\_\_\_ **Grade** \_\_\_\_\_

**Functions & Activities**

*It is my understanding that participating in the programs and activities of [XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization] is a privilege. I acknowledge that there are certain risks associated with the activities including activity-related accidents and physical injury due to transportation-related accidents.*

**Release of Liability**

*By signing this Permission/Waiver Form, I assume all risks of the above named youth participating in the activities. I further release [XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization] and Its ministries, leaders, employees, volunteers and agents from any claim that my child may have against them as a result of injury or illness incurred during the course of participation in the activities.*

**First Aid & Emergency Medical Treatment**

*I recognize that there may be occasions where the youth named above may be in a need of first aid or emergency medical treatment as a result of an [XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization] accident, illness or other health condition or injury. I do hereby give permission for agents of [XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization] to seek and secure any needed medical attention or treatment for the youth named above including hospitalization. If in the agent's opinion such need arises, in doing so, I agree to pay all fees and costs arising from this action to obtain medical treatment.*

*I give permission for attending physician(s) and other medical personnel to administer any needed medical treatment, including surgery and again, I agree to pay for the medical treatment.*

**Medical History**

*Special medical needs or concerns (allergies, conditions, dietary needs, medications, etc.)*

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**Health Insurance Information**

(Insurance Co.)

(Policy Number)

(Medical Doctor)

(Phone Number)

**Emergency Contacts**

*Names of persons and telephone numbers to call in case of emergency:*

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*I represent that I am the parent/guardian of \_\_\_\_\_, who is under 18 years of age. I have read the above Permission/Waiver Form and am fully familiar with the contents thereof.*

*I give permission for the youth named above to participate in the activities of [XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization]. In consideration for allowing the participation of the youth in the activities of [XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization], I hereby consent to the Permission/Waiver Form, including the Release of Liability above, on behalf of the youth, and agree that this Permission/Waiver Form shall be binding upon me.*

*Photo permission: I also give permission for photos of the youth named above to be used in written and Internet publications.*

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(Signature of Parent/Guardian) (Date)

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(Signature of Parent/Guardian) (Date)

**Form M**

<b>TRIP PERMISSION FORM</b>	
Event _____	Date _____
Time _____	Cost _____
Location _____	
Method of Transportation _____	Leader's Cell Phone Number _____

**Release of Liability**

By signing this permission/waiver form, I expressly warrant that the child named above or I, if I am a participant, am capable of withstanding both the physical and mental demands of the activities discussed above. I also expressly assume all risks of the child or me participating in the activities, whether such risks are known or unknown to me at this time. I further release [XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization] and its ministers, leaders, employees, volunteers, and agents from any claim that my child may have or that I may have against them as a result of injury or illness incurred during the course of participation in the activities. This release of liability shall include (without limitation) any claims of negligence or breach of warranty. This release of liability is also intended to cover all claims that members of the child's or my family or estate, heirs, representatives, or assigns may have against [XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization] or its ministers, leaders, employees, volunteers, or agents.

I further agree to indemnify and hold harmless [XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization] and its ministers, leaders, employees, volunteers, or agents from any and all claims arising from my participation in its activities and programs, or as a result of injury or illness of my child during such activities.

I represent that I am the parent/guardian of \_\_\_\_\_, who is under 18 years of age. I give permission for the child named above to participate in the special event/activity described above. In consideration for allowing the participation of this child in the activities of [XXXX Mennonite Church/Organization] I hereby and consent to the Release of Liability above, on behalf of the child, and agree that this Trip Permission Form shall be binding upon me, my family, heirs, legal representatives, successors, and assigns.

*Photo permission: I also give permission for photos of the youth named above to be used in written and Internet publications.*

**Signature of Parent or Legal Guardian** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Print Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Emergency Contact Phone Number** \_\_\_\_\_



## Form O

# FACILITY SAFETY AUDIT CHECKLIST

### *Entrance*

- All stairs have handrails.
- Entrance and exit are at sidewalk level or onto same-level landing.
- All elevated areas (porches, landings) are fenced with vertical pickets less than four inches apart.

### *Hallways and Stairways*

- Areas are kept clean and unobstructed.
- Lighting is adequate.
- Exits are well-marked, lighted, and unobstructed.
- All sharp edges on corners or counters are covered.
- Safety glass is used in doors and windows.
- Stairways are carpeted and have a child-height railing on the right side for descending.
- Smoke detectors are working
- There is no visible peeling paint or lead-based paint.

### *Rooms and Storage Units*

- Electrical sockets are height and out of reach or securely covered.
- No electrical cords are dangling or covered.
- Cabinets or file boxes that contain cleaning solutions are locked.
- All hardware on cribs, tables, and bookcases is checked monthly to make sure certain screws and bolts are tight.
- Hot plates aren't used.
- Chairs or tables aren't used as ladders to hang items.
- No sharp corners are exposed on tables or other furniture.
- Toys are safe: no sharp areas, pinch points or small parts.
- Fire exit from room requires only one turn or pull-down action to open door.
- Accessible above-ground-level windows are protected with grills or screens.

- ❑ Hot surfaces, hot pipes, heaters, and vents are out of reach of children; space heaters aren't used.
- ❑ Lighting is adequate in all rooms.
- ❑ Trashcans are covered and secured.
- ❑ Floors are smooth, clean, and not slippery.

### *Kitchen*

- ❑ Sharp utensils are kept out of reach of children.
- ❑ All containers are clearly marked and have secure lids.
- ❑ Fire extinguishers are easily accessible.
- ❑ Items on shelving units are neatly organized, secure and not piled high.

### *Bathrooms*

- ❑ Cleaning supplies aren't accessible.
- ❑ Toilets and sinks are appropriate for use by children; step stools are provided.
- ❑ Water temperature for hand washing is maintained at 120° F or less.
- ❑ Floors are nonskid.

### *Outdoor Playground*

- ❑ Equipment is checked monthly for sharp protrusions.
- ❑ Bolts are covered; swings have soft seats.
- ❑ Ground is covered with loose-fill surface material.
- ❑ Play area is fenced; gate can be secured.
- ❑ Equipment is age appropriate; there are no spaces 3.5-9 inches where a child's head, leg, or arm could be trapped.
- ❑ Constant supervision is provided.
- ❑ No poisonous plants, trash or sharp objects are in the area surrounding the playground.

### *Toxic Chemicals*

- ❑ Kitchen and cleaning supplies have their own locked storage unit.

### *Computers, TVs, and Electrical Equipment*

- ❑ The equipment is flush against the wall, covering the electrical outlet.
- ❑ Only authorized people service the equipment.
- ❑ Liquids aren't allowed near equipment.
- ❑ Children are supervised while equipment is in use.

### *Supplies*

- ❑ Nontoxic art supplies, such as natural dyes and water-based products are used.
- ❑ Aerosol sprays and solvent-based glues are avoided.

### *Equipment*

- ❑ First aid kit is kept appropriately stocked and easily accessible.
- ❑ Sports equipment is safe and soft.

### *Fire and Severe Weather*

- ❑ Smoke detectors and alarm system are in place and working
- ❑ Fire evacuation instructions are posted visibly.

Adapted from *Injury Prevention and Control for Children and Youth* by the American Academy of Pediatrics, as cited in *The Season of Hope: A Risk Management Guide for Youth-Serving Non-Profits*, Nonprofit Risk Management Center, 134-137.

## VII. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

In creating this policy manual, it was the intention of the Franconia Mennonite Conference Child Protection Leadership Team to provide not only recommendations for policy, but also the tools and educational materials needed to implement the policy properly.

The “educational materials” are found in the additional information section of the policy manual template. They should be used as presented. Other useful information (i.e. informational handouts, bulletin inserts, etc.) should be added at the discretion of the [\[congregational/organizational\]](#) Child Protection Leadership Team for quick reference.

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## UNDERSTANDING PHYSICAL ABUSE

Physical abuse includes scalding, beatings with an object, severe physical punishment and violent shaking, according to *Understanding Child abuse and Neglect* by the National Research Council. Physical abuse also includes human bites, slapping, shaking and burning with cigarettes or other objects.

### *Behavioral indicators of physical abuse*

- Signs of childhood stress [see page \_\_\_ of this manual].
- Conflicting or changing stories about how the injury occurred.
- Delayed or inappropriate treatment of the injury.

### *Physical indicators of physical abuse*

A child who has been physically abused may exhibit suspicious injuries. The injuries attributable to normal childhood “wear and tear” are usually found on the leading edges of the body – shins, elbows, and forehead. Injuries associated with physical child abuse may be located in the oft tissues of the abdomen or on the back, or on backs of arms and legs – places not usually affected by normal childhood mishaps.

- *Burns* – Burns that may indicate a child has been abused include cigarette or cigar burns on the soles of the feet, palms of the hands, the back or genital areas. Other burns associated with abuse are friction or tether burns on the wrists, ankles or around the neck caused by rope used to tie the child. Wet burns on the hands and feet that appear glove-like or sock-like are caused by forcing the child to bathe in water that is too hot. Dry burns leave distinctive marks in the shape of the instrument used to inflict them, commonly electric irons, radiator grates and kitchen range heating elements.
- *Bruises* – Bruises of a variety of colors (black, blue, yellow, and green) that point up different stages in healing and thus infliction at different times often indicate abuse. Varied colored bruises on the abdomen, back or face are especially suspicious. Bruises, similar to burns, may also reflect the shape of the weapon used to inflict them.
- *Lacerations and abrasions* – Children usually have scraped knees, shins, palms or elbows – injuries that are very predictable. Cuts and abrasions in soft tissue areas on the abdomen, back, backs of arms and legs, or on external genitalia are strong indicators of physical abuse. Human bite marks, especially when they are recurrent and appear to be adult-sized, strongly suggest abuse.
- *Fractures* – Unexplained fractures generally signal abuse. A child with multiple fractures occurring at different times is almost certain to be a victim of abuse. Other signs include swollen or tender limbs and spiral fracture caused by jerking of the arms.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Nonprofit Risk Management Center, *The Season of Hope: A Risk Management Guide for Youth-Serving Non-Profits*, 52-53.

## UNDERSTANDING EMOTIONAL ABUSE<sup>2</sup>

Emotional abuse may be the most common form of abuse in youth-serving organizations. Although emotional abuse can seriously harm a child, it leaves no physical scars and very little other evidence. The abuse is most often verbal, making it very difficult to detect. Children themselves may simply quit a program, if they can, rather than submit to the abuse or report it.

The five forms of abuse listed by James Garbarino in *Emotional Maltreatment of Children* cover a wide range of actions. Each can hurt a child and some can lead to lawsuits.

- *Rejecting* – belittling, degrading and other forms of overtly hostile or rejecting treatment; shaming and/or ridiculing the child for showing normal emotions such as affection, grief or sorrow; consistently singling out the child to criticize, punish or to perform most of the household chores; publicly humiliating.
- *Terrorizing* – placing the child in unpredictable or chaotic circumstances, such as witnessing domestic violence; placing a child in a dangerous situation. Setting unrealistic expectations and threatening harm or danger if they aren't met; exploiting a child's fears and vulnerabilities; threatening violence against the child, the child's loved ones or objects.
- *Isolating* – confining the child or placing unreasonable restrictions on the child's freedom; placing unreasonable restrictions on the child's social interactions within the home or in the community or with another person responsible for the child's welfare.
- *Corrupting* – encouraging antisocial behavior such as criminal activities, prostitution, pornographic performances, or corrupting others.
- *Ignoring* – failure to express affection, caring and love for the child; being emotionally unavailable or uninvolved.

In most cases of emotional abuse, there are no physical signs of abuse.

### *Behavioral indicators of emotional abuse*

- *Developmental disorders* – deficits in growth or development
- *Habit disorders* – thumb-sucking, head-banging, or rocking
- *Conduct disorders* – antisocial or destructive behavior
- *Reactive behaviors* – hysteria, phobias, compulsions and hypochondria
- *Adaptive behavior* – inappropriately adult or infantile behavior
- *Neurotic behaviors* – speech disorders and sleep disturbances

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<sup>2</sup> Nonprofit Risk Management Center, The Season of Hope: A Risk Management Guide for Youth-Serving Non-Profits, 53-55.

- *Dramatic changes in school performance* – drop in grades, attendance problems or general functioning.
- *Suicidal behavior* – talking about, threatening, or attempting suicide

As with indicators for general childhood stress, these behaviors are indicators of a problem. The behavior may be caused by emotional abuse, or it may be induced by problems other than abuse. One way of checking is to call the parents' or caregivers' attention to the problem behavior and evaluate the reaction. If the parents/caregivers reject efforts to help the child or their response is apathetic or indifferent there may be grounds to make a report of suspected abuse.

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## UNDERSTANDING SEXUAL ABUSE

“Sexual abuse occurs whenever anyone with less maturity or power is tricked, trapped, coerced, or bribed into a sexual experience. It occurs whenever anyone disempowered by handicap, age, or situation is involved in an activity that is sexually stimulating to the perpetrator and which the victim does not fully comprehend or to which [he or] she is unable to give informed consent. The imbalance of power between victim and perpetrator is critical in the determination of abuse. The power imbalance may result from the perpetrator’s greater age, size, position, experience, or authority.

Most sexual abuse does not involve physical violence. It usually involves some form of coercion and a misrepresentation of the activity. Coercion is fueled by the perpetrator’s desire for secrecy, which is necessary to prevent intervention and also to allow him [or her] continued access to the victim.”<sup>3</sup>

Sexual abuse occurs with children as early as infancy. This abuse isn’t limited to penile penetration and encompasses acts that many of us have difficulty imagining. Nonetheless, molesters may commit any of the acts listed, which are based on the research of Kathleen C. Faller, a University of Michigan social work professor and a prosecution consultant on child molestation, who has been studying victims and perpetrators for 22 years.

### *Non-contact acts*

- Sexual comments to the child on the telephone, in notes and letters, in person or through computer online services.
- Exposure, such as the offender exposing his or her genitals to the child and masturbating in front of the child.
- Voyeurism, in which the offender secretly observes the child for sexual gratification.
- Showing pornographic material to the child
- Inducing the child to undress and masturbate in front of the offender

**Note: Some readers may find the next few lists offensive – and they are. Imagine your discomfort at reading them and compare this to the discomfort of a child who experiences any of them.**

### *Sexual contact (above or beneath clothing)*

- Sexual contact includes: fondling or touching the child’s genitals, breasts or buttocks; inducing the child to touch the offender’s intimate parts; or rubbing his or her genital against the child’s clothing or skin (called frontage).

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<sup>3</sup> Heggen, Carol Holderread. Sexual Abuse in Christian Homes and Churches. 20-21.

### *Penetration*

- Penetration includes: digitally (finger) penetrating the child's vagina or anus; inducing the child to place his or her finger in the offender's vagina or anus; placing an object into the child's vagina or anus; or having the child place an object into the offender's vagina or anus.

### *Oral Sex*

- Oral sex includes: tongue kissing; breast sucking, licking, and/or biting; cunnilingus or the licking, kissing, sucking, or biting of the vagina, or placing the tongue in the vaginal opening; fellatio or licking, kissing, or sucking the penis; or anilingus or licking or kissing the anal opening.

### *Penile Penetration*

- Penile penetration includes: vaginal intercourse; anal intercourse, or intercourse with animals by offender in front of victim.

### *Physical indicators of child sexual abuse*

Physical evidence of sexual abuse, if present at all, tends to be temporary. These signs could include the following:

- Difficulty in walking
- Torn, stained, or bloody underwear
- Pain or itching in the genital area
- Pregnancy
- Bruises or bleeding of the external genitals
- Sexually transmitted diseases

### *Behavioral signs of sexual abuse*

The behavioral signs of sexual abuse are likely to be present longer and more conspicuously than physical signs. Many sexually abused children exhibit the signs of childhood stress [\[see page \\_\\_\\_ of this manual\]](#) in addition to the behaviors associated with child sexual abuse.

- Exhibiting apprehension when sexual abuse is brought up
- Wearing lots of clothing, especially to bed
- Unwillingness to be left alone with a particular person
- Inappropriate understanding of sex for the child's age

- Fearing touch
- Drawing pictures with genitals
- Abusing animals
- Persisting in inappropriate sex play with peers or toys
- Cross-dressing
- Masturbating in public
- Engaging in prostitution

The presence of any of these indicators signals the *possibility* that sexual abuse has occurred. The indicators alone aren't conclusive evidence that a child has been molested.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Nonprofit Risk Management Center, [The Season of Hope: A Risk Management Guide for Youth-Serving Non-Profits](#), 55-57.

## SIGNS OF CHILDHOOD STRESS<sup>5</sup>

- *Dramatic changes in school performance:* a sudden drop in participation or grades, a punctual child becoming tardy or skipping school.
- *Changes in behavior:* either regressive, in which the child reverts to behavior typical of a younger age, or precocious, in which the child acts much older than his or her chronological age.
- *Sleep disturbances:* nightmares, insomnia, fear of the dark, fear of sleeping alone or excessive sleeping.
- *Changes in eating behavior:* anorexia, bulimia, and sudden increases or decreases in appetite.
- *Inappropriate fears:* fear of a person, familiar place, or activity.
- *Hostile language or aggressive behavior:* swearing, verbally wishing harm to others; or tripping, pushing, hitting, biting.
- *Overly compliant behavior:* willing to do whatever is asked, even if it is harmful to the child.
- *Depression:* hopelessness, withdrawal from family or friends, threats or attempts at suicide.
- *Delinquency or running away from home:* stealing from friends, shoplifting, spray-painting graffiti on buildings.

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<sup>5</sup> Nonprofit Risk Management Center, The Season of Hope: A Risk Management Guide for Youth-Serving Non-Profits, 50.

# Pennsylvania Child Protective Services Law

The following is a discussion of the PA Child Protective Services Law, as modified by Act 179. The Act was signed into law on November 29, 2006. This discussion can be found online at <http://www.jlc.org/news.php/35>.

For a full understanding of the Child Protective Services Law in Pennsylvania, see <http://jlc.org/File/publications/childabuseandthelaw.pdf> or order a copy of the publication "Child Abuse and the Law" from:

Juvenile Law Center  
The Philadelphia Building, 4th floor  
1315 Walnut Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19107  
Phone: 215-625-0551  
Toll Free in PA: 1-800-875-8887

## PERSONS MANDATED TO REPORT SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE

*23 Pa.C.S. Â§ 6311(A)*

"Persons required to report suspected child abuse.

- (a) General rule.--Persons who, in the course of their employment, occupation or practice of their profession, come into contact with children shall report or cause a report to be made in accordance with section 6313 (relating to reporting procedure) when they have reasonable cause to suspect on the basis of their medical, professional or other training and experience, that a child coming before them in their professional or official capacity is an abused child. Except with respect to confidential communications made to an ordained member of the clergy which are protected under 42 Pa.C.S. § 5943 (relating to confidential communications to clergymen), the privileged communication between any professional person required to report and the patient or client of that person shall not apply to situations involving child abuse and shall not constitute grounds for failure to report as required by this chapter.
- (b) Enumeration of persons required to report.--Persons required to report under subsection (a) include, but are not limited to, any licensed physician, osteopath, medical examiner, coroner, funeral director, dentist, optometrist, chiropractor, podiatrist, intern, registered nurse, licensed practical nurse, hospital personnel engaged in the admission, examination, care or treatment of persons, Christian Science practitioner, member of the clergy, school administrator, school teacher, school nurse, social services worker, day-care center worker or any other child-care or foster-care worker, mental health professional, peace officer or law enforcement official."

Prior to enactment of Act 179, the Child Protective Services Law ("CPSL") required persons who come into contact with children in the course of their profession, employment, or occupation, to make a report only when they suspected, based on their medical, professional, or training experience, a "child coming before them" in their official or professional capacity was a victim of child abuse. The current law eliminates the requirement that the child actually "come before" the individual to trigger the duty to

report. Rather, the new law mandates an individual to make a report when the person has reasonable cause to suspect that a child under the care, supervision, guidance, or training of that person, or "an agency, institution, organization or other entity with which that person is affiliated," is a victim of child abuse.

It is important to note that persons required to make the report of suspected child abuse are still be limited to those who come into contact with children in the course of practicing their profession, occupation, or in their employment. Moreover, the new law, as was the case under the old law, does not mandate the reporting of child abuse if an alleged perpetrator discloses to a professional that s/he has abused a child UNLESS the child victim is also under the care, supervision, guidance, or training of that same person, or an agency, institution, organization, or other entity with which that person is affiliated.

### **Abuse by Perpetrators and Non-perpetrators**

*23 Pa.C.S. Â§Â§ 6311(A), 6368(D)*

Previously, mandated reporting provisions only required reporting of suspected child abuse when the person alleged to be hurting a child was a "perpetrator," which is defined under the CPSL as either a parent, a person over the age of 14 residing in the home of the child, a person responsible for the child's welfare, or a paramour of a parent or caregiver. Act 179 now requires reports of suspected abuse committed by any person, not only those who fall within the definition of perpetrator. When a report is made to ChildLine regarding abuse by a person not within the CPSL's definition of perpetrator, the county child welfare agency must immediately notify the District Attorney's Office, its designee or other law enforcement official.

### **Privileges**

*23 Pa.C.S. Â§ 6311(A),*

Prior to the enactment of Act 179, the only confidential communications exempted from mandated reporting were those made to a member of the clergy. The new law extends this exemption to confidential communications made to an attorney which are protected by 42 Pa.C.S. Â§Â§ 5916, 5928. Except for these privileged communications to clergy and attorneys, a professional who is required to report child abuse as is outlined above is not exempt from reporting on the basis of any statutory or common law privilege.

## **Penalties for Failing to Report Suspected Child Abuse**

*23 Pa.C.S. Â§ 6319*

Prior to enactment of Act 179, when a person willfully failed to report suspected child abuse, s/he committed a summary offense with the first violation and a misdemeanor in the third degree for any subsequent violation. Under the new law, the penalties are greater in that it is a misdemeanor in the third degree for the first failure to report and a misdemeanor in the second degree for all subsequent violations.

## **Defining Child Sexual Abuse or Exploitation**

*23 Pa.C.S. Â§ 6303(A)*

The definition of child sexual abuse or exploitation was previously limited to the employment, use, persuasion, inducement, enticement, or coercion of a child to engage in or assist in sexually explicit conduct, or any simulation thereof, for the purpose of producing some sort of visual depiction, or the rape, sexual assault, involuntary deviate sexual intercourse, aggravated indecent assault, molestation, incest, indecent exposure, prostitution, statutory sexual assault or other form of sexual exploitation.

The new definition retains almost all of this language except that it does NOT include statutory sexual assault in the list of offenses. Moreover, the new definition adds that sexual abuse or exploitation includes the employment, use, persuasion, inducement, enticement, or coercion of a child to engage in or assist in any sexually explicit conduct, not just that done for purposes of visual depiction.

## **CHILD ABUSE AND CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECKS**

### **Background Checks for Employees in Occupations with Child Contact**

*23 Pa.C.S. Â§Â§ 6344.1, 6344.2*

With the enactment of Act 179, prospective employees in "occupations with a significant likelihood of regular contact with children, in the form of care, guidance, supervisions, or training" must be subjected to background checks. This includes social service workers, hospital personnel, mental health professionals, members of the clergy, counselors, librarians, and doctors. If listed in the ChildLine register as a perpetrator of child abuse in the last five years, or if convicted of those offenses listed in 42 Pa.C.S. Â§ 6344(C), which includes criminal homicide, aggravated assault, kidnapping, rape, statutory sexual assault, or involuntary deviate sexual intercourse, that person must be denied employment. The same rule also now applies to individuals who wish to operate a family day-care home and any individual 18 years of age or older residing in the home for at least 30 days in a calendar year.

## **Background Checks of Prospective Foster and Adoptive Families**

*23 Pa.C.S. Â§ 6344(A), (C)(1), (O), and(P)*

Currently, only individuals in prospective foster or adoptive homes who are over the age of 18 are subject to background checks. Act 179 broadens this, requiring a background check for any individual 14 years of age or older who has resided in the home for at least thirty days during a calendar year. If a founded report of child abuse or conviction of one of the serious enumerated offenses is revealed in the check, the foster or adoptive home will not be approved.

## **CHANGES IN THE CRIMINAL CODE**

### **Endangering the Welfare of a Child**

*18 Pa.C.S. Â§ 4304(a)*

Prior to Act 179, the offense of endangering the welfare of a child was limited to parents, guardians, and persons supervising the welfare of a child who violate a duty of care, protection, or support. Under the new law, any person who supervises or employs a person who is responsible for the welfare of a child under age 18 can also be charged with endangering the welfare of a child if s/he violates this duty. Furthermore, those individuals who, in their official capacity, interfere with the making of a mandatory child abuse report can be charged with endangering the welfare of a child.

## **CHANGES IN OTHER RELATED STATUTES**

### **Child Sexual Abuse – Statute of Limitations**

*42 Pa.C.S. Â§ 5552*

Currently, district attorneys may pursue the criminal prosecution of an alleged perpetrator of child sexual abuse up until the alleged victim reaches thirty years old. Act 179 extends the statute of limitations to allow criminal prosecution until the alleged victim's fiftieth birthday.

### **Sex Offender Information Available Online**

*42 Pa.C.S. Â§ 9795.4(d.1)*

Previously, the Megan's Law registration statutes did not require availability of the offender's full address, merely the county, hometown, and zip code. Act 179 now requires that the offender's street address be included in the information available online, as well as information about where the individual was incarcerated, a detailed description of the individual, a description of the offense and conviction, and a notations as to whether the individual's victim was a child, while still protecting the identity of the child.

## *What to do when someone in your [congregation/organization] is accused of abuse*

### **1) Remain open-minded.**

The natural human instinct is to recoil from alleged horror, and to immediately assume that the allegations are false. But the overwhelming majority of abuse disclosures prove to be true. In every case, the proper and Christian response is to remain open-minded.

### **2) Pray for all parties involved.**

Every person involved deserves and needs prayerful support.

### **3) Let yourself feel whatever emotions arise.**

You may feel angry, betrayed, confused, hurt, worried and sad. These are all natural, "typical" responses to an allegation of sexual abuse. None of these feelings are inappropriate or "bad." Don't "kick yourself" for feeling any of these emotions.

### **4) Remember that abuse, sadly, is quite common.**

It's far more widespread than any of us would like to believe. Experts estimate that 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 6 boys will be sexually abused in their lifetimes.

### **5) Don't try to "guess" or figure out who the accuser is.**

Sexual abuse victims need their privacy to recover from their trauma. Openly speculating about who is alleging abuse is essentially gossiping, and helps to create a hostile climate that will keep other victims from coming forward.

### **6) If you do know the victim(s), protect his/her/their confidentiality.**

There are many good reasons why abuse victims are unable to publicly come forward. Often, the person wants to keep other friends or family members from suffering too. Don't compound the pain he/she is in by disclosing his/her identity to others.

### **7) Understand that abuse victims often have "troubled" backgrounds (i.e. drug or alcohol problems, criminal backgrounds, etc.)**

Instead of undermining the credibility of accusers, these difficulties actually enhance their credibility. (When someone is physically hurt, there are almost always clear signs of harm; so too with sexual abuse. The harm, in this case, however, is reflected largely in self-destructive behaviors.)

### **8) Don't allow the mere passage of time to discredit the accusers.**

There are many good reasons why abuse victims disclose their victimization years after the crime. In most instances, victims come forward when they are emotionally able to do so, and feel capable of risking disbelief and rejection from precious loved ones, including family members, church leaders, other authorities, and fellow Christians. Sometimes, they are psychologically able to do so only after they have become adults, or their perpetrator has died, moved or been accused by someone else. Sometimes, they have been assured that their perpetrator would never be around kids again, but have learned that this isn't the case. In other cases, it takes years before victims are able to understand and/or acknowledge to themselves that they have been sexually violated. This is a common defense mechanism.

**9) Ask your family members and friends if they were victimized.**

Many times, abuse victims will continue to "keep the secret" unless specifically invited to disclose their victimization by someone they love and trust. Even raising this topic can be very uncomfortable. It must be done, however, if there is a chance that the alleged offender had access to children besides the one(s) accusing him/her. It may be very awkward and your family members may even act resentful at first. But soon they will remember that you really care about them, and will see your question as a sign of that care.

**10) Mention the accusation to former members/attendees of the [church/organization] and former leaders now living elsewhere.**

They may have information that could prove the guilt or innocence of the person facing allegations. This is especially important because sometimes abuse victims or their families move away after experiencing abuse.

**11) Contact the police or prosecutors.**

If you have any information (even if it's "second hand" or vague) that might help prove the guilt or innocence of the accused, it can be helpful if you disclose that information to the authorities. This is one way that as a Christian you can help seek justice and protect others from harm. Remember: abuse thrives in secrecy. Exposing sexual crimes is difficult, but ultimately healing.

**12) Don't allow other members/attendees of the [church/organization] to make disparaging comments about the person(s) making the allegation.**

Remember, the sexual abuse of children has terribly damaging effects. Critical comments about those who make allegations only discourage others who may have been hurt. Such remarks prevent those who need help from reaching out and getting it. Show your compassion for abuse victims. Tell your fellow members/attendees of the [church/organization] that hurtful comments are inappropriate. Remind them that they can defend the alleged offender without attacking his/her accuser.

**13) Educate yourself and your family about sexual abuse.**

There are many excellent books and resources on the subject.

**14) If you want to show support to the accused offender, do it PRIVATELY.**

Calls, visits, letters, gifts, and prayers - all of these are appropriate ways to express your love and concern for the accused offender. Public displays of support, however, are not. They only intimidate others into keeping silent. In fact, it is terribly hurtful to victims to see people openly rallying behind an accused offender. Even if the accused offender in a particular case is innocent, somewhere in the community is a young girl being molested by a relative or a boy being abused by his coach or youth leader. If these children see adults they love and respect publicly rallying around accused perpetrators, they will be less likely to report their own victimization to their parents, the police, or other authorities. They will be scared into remaining silent, and their horrific pain will continue.

**15) Don't be blinded by the pain you can see.**

The trauma of the accused offender, and those who care about him/her, is obvious, especially if this person is a well-known person in your [church/organization] or the community. Please try to keep in mind the trauma of the accuser too. Because you rarely

see his/her pain directly, it's important to try and imagine it. This helps you keep a balanced perspective.

**16) Try to put yourself in the shoes of the alleged victim.**

In the gospels, Jesus calls us to identify with the hurting, the vulnerable, the innocent, and the hurting. Try, as best you can, to imagine the shame, self-blame, confusion and fear that afflict boys and girls (and the men and women they become), who have been victimized by trusted adults in their lives.

**17) Use this painful time as an opportunity to protect your own family.**

Talk with your children about "safe touch," the private parts of their bodies, who is allowed to touch those parts, what to do if someone else tries, and who to tell. Urge your sons and daughters to have similar conversations with your grandchildren.

**18) Turn your pain into helpful action.**

In times of stress and trauma, doing something constructive can be very beneficial. Volunteer your time or donate your funds to organizations that help abused kids or work to stop molestation.

**19) Keep in mind the fundamental choice you face.**

On the one hand, at stake are the FEELINGS of a grown up (the accused offender). On the other hand, at stake is the PHYSICAL, EMOTIONAL, PSYCHOLOGICAL, SPIRITUAL AND SEXUAL SAFETY of potentially many children. If one has to err in either direction, the prudent and moral choice is to always err on the side of protecting those who can't protect themselves: children. Remember too that it's easier for an adult to repair his reputation than for a child (or many children) to repair his/her psyche and life. Another way to look at this: Being falsely accused of abuse is horrific. But actually being abused, then being attacked or disbelieved is far worse.

**20) Ask your pastor to bring in an outside expert or a therapist who can lead a balanced discussion about sexual abuse.**

Therapists understand and can answer the questions you and other members of your [church/organization/community] are facing, and help you deal with the emotional impact of this trauma, too.

*Adapted from "What to do when your priest is accused of abuse,"  
by SNAP (Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests)  
[http://www.snapnetwork.org/links\\_homepage/when\\_priest\\_accused.htm](http://www.snapnetwork.org/links_homepage/when_priest_accused.htm)*

## **VIII. TRAINING OUTLINES**

- A. Child Protection Orientation**
- B. Driver Orientation**
- C. Parent/Family Education**

**DRAFT**

## IX. BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR POLICY CONTENTS

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