

Palmerston Christian Reformed Church

Safe Church Policy

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Safe Church Policy – Palmerston Christian Reformed Church

I. INTRODUCTION

At creation, God bestowed upon the human race an inherent dignity since we have been created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27 – Genesis 5:1; Genesis 9:6; James 3:9). Among other things, this dignity implies a mutual responsibility to care for and protect one another. Jesus, himself showed a special concern for all whom he met, including children and vulnerable members of society (Matthew 18: 2, 10, 14). The Church has a spiritual, moral and legal obligation to provide a safe and secure environment for all who participate in its ministries.

This policy is intended to assist in:

- Making Palmerston CRC of Palmerston a safe place to be involved;
- Protecting the vulnerable person from abuse;
- Protecting the staff, volunteers and helpers from false accusation, litigation, and/or possible loss of ministry/career;
- Protecting the Church from litigation and loss of testimony.

A. COMMITMENT TO REVIEW

Amendments will be made to these policies and procedures at the discretion of the Council of Palmerston Christian Reformed Church in order to maintain its legal compliance, operational effectiveness and obligations to various ministries. On behalf of the Council of Palmerston Christian Reformed Church, the Safe Church Team will review this policy on an annual basis.

B. TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. “Church” is Palmerston Christian Reformed Church (PCRC) of Palmerston.
2. “Adults” are individuals 18 years of age and older (as per Ontario law).
3. “Minors” are individuals under the age of 18 years (as per law in Ontario).
4. “Volunteers” are non-paid adult individuals (18 years of age or older) who serve in a ministry and/or who have direct contact with Minors of Vulnerable Persons. Persons who are 16 years of age and older who have done Profession of Faith are also considered a “volunteer”. A couple (husband and wife) or two adult family members may serve as Volunteers at the same time, provided a third non-related Volunteer/Helper is also present.

5. "Vulnerable Persons" include, but are not limited to: Minors, Disabled Persons (cognitively and physically) and the Elderly.
6. "Helpers" are Minors aged 12-17 years who assist Volunteers.
7. "Member" is any baptized or confessing member of PCRC.
8. "Adherent" is a non-member who is a supporter of the life, belief, and ministries of the Church.
9. "Staff" are individuals paid by the church to fulfill a specific mandate.
10. A "Friend" is a person with disabilities participating in the Friendship Group.
11. A "Caregiver" is someone assigned by the residence (e.g. group home) of a Friend.
12. A "Guardian" is a person who is legally responsible for the care of a Minor or Vulnerable Person.

C. DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE

1. "Physical abuse" is any non-accidental human act that results in physical pain or injury to a person whether or not it leaves a cut or wound, or a mark or a bruise. Physically abusive behavior ranges from slapping, pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, and biting to more severe forms like choking, severe spanking, beating, hitting with an object, burning, stabbing and shooting. In other words, physical abuse is any intentional means of inflicting pain or injury to another person. It is sometimes a single event, but can also be a chronic pattern of behavior.
2. "Physical neglect" is not doing what one is supposed to be doing to meet the physical needs of someone in his or her care. Neglect interferes with or prevents a person's normal development.
3. "Sexual abuse" is the exploitation of a person or any sexual intimacy forced on a person for the sexual stimulation or gratification of another person. Sexual abuse can refer to taking advantage of a person who is not capable of understanding sexual acts or resisting coercion such as threats or offers of gifts. Sexual abuse may or may not involve physical contact. Examples of non-physical sexual abuse include people exposing themselves, displaying pornographic material, photographing a person for pornographic materials, obscene telephone calls, "peeping Toms," and requests to engage in sexual activity (where no physical contact occurs). Examples of sexual abuse involving physical contact includes fondling of body parts such as breasts, crotch, buttocks, or sexual organs; intercourse; oral and anal sex.
4. "Emotional abuse" is attempting to control a person's life through words, threat and fear, destroying a person's self-worth through harassment, threats, humiliation and deprivation. Emotional abuse weakens a person's mental and physical ability to resist, cuts off his or her contact with others, and causes a gradual loss of self-esteem all of which reinforce a sense of helplessness and dependence on the abuser.

5. "Spiritual abuse" is any use of someone's spiritual (religious) position to control or dominate another person. For example, spiritual abuse occurs when shame is used in an attempt to get someone to support a belief, or to fend off legitimate questions. Spiritual abuse also occurs when a misplaced sense of loyalty to a religious leader is fostered and even demanded. Misusing Scripture to maintain a position of dominance or hiding behind "secrecy" are forms of spiritual abuse.
6. "Verbal abuse" is any use of language that causes someone harm. Criticism, cursing, recounting past offences, expressing negative expectations, and yelling are all forms of verbal abuse. The level of abuse can be gauged by the frequency, volume and emotional weight given to the words.
7. "Economic abuse" is the misuse or misappropriation of a person's financial resources.

II. GENERAL SAFE CHURCH POLICIES

A. REDUCING RISK

In order to reduce risk:

1. Every effort will be made to ensure that Helpers are in the presence of Staff or a Volunteer.
2. One on one meetings between Volunteers/Helpers and Minors and/or Vulnerable Persons shall not be conducted except for brief periods of time and in a location open to view.

B. MINISTRY TO MINORS VOLUNTEER PROCEDURE

1. All Volunteers are required to complete a Volunteer application form.
2. All Staff shall complete a Police Vulnerable Sector Check to be renewed every 5 years.
3. If a Volunteer stops ministry involvement for a period of one year or longer a Volunteer Application Form must be completed prior to renewed active ministry involvement.
4. All Staff and Volunteers must agree to comply with the Church's Abuse Prevention Policy and, if non-compliant, the individual will be required to relinquish his/her responsibility in the ministry.
5. Anyone with a history of allegations or convictions of abuse/neglect of vulnerable persons shall be prohibited from leadership and any involvement in ministries in which this person could pose a risk.
6. Any Volunteer may withdraw their application at any time without prejudice.
7. The Church reserves the right to deny any Volunteer for any reason.
8. Ordinarily, Volunteers must be Members or Adherents for a minimum of six (6) months prior to serving in ministry with Minors.

9. All information obtained will be held in the strictest confidence and secured with limited access. Access is restricted to the Lead Pastor, Chair of Safe Church Team and Office Administrator or as otherwise required by law.

C. EDUCATION

1. All Staff, Volunteers, and Helpers shall participate in Safe Church Training.
2. All Staff, Volunteers, and Helpers are required to read and understand Safe Church resource material.

D. DISCIPLINE POLICY (APPLICABLE TO ALL MINISTRIES INVOLVING MINORS)

1. When a minor misbehaves beyond minor correction, or if a pattern of misbehavior continues, the ministry leader must keep a written record of the contact made using the Occurrence/Incident Report.
2. A Parent/Legal Guardian or suitable Volunteer/Helper should be regularly involved where disruptive behavior and/or misbehavior is an ongoing issue.
3. Discipline must reflect the Minor's age and level of comprehension.
4. Minors are to be reminded of the kinds of behavior that are unacceptable for a given ministry setting.

E. TRANSPORTATION POLICY

1. Drivers must have a current valid Ontario driver's license (full G license preferred) that has not been suspended or revoked for any reason.
2. Drivers may be required to adhere to the Safe Church Policy.
3. Drivers and passengers, regardless of age, must at all times wear a seatbelt.
4. Passengers who are Minors must be properly secured in a seat that is appropriate for their age and size (e.g., a child's car or booster seat).
5. All passengers must remain seated while the vehicle is in transit.
6. All passengers must obey the driver and other Volunteers in transit.
7. Drivers are expected to use their good judgment to drive at a safe speed with the flow of traffic.
8. Minors must adhere to the provincial licensing requirements when transporting other minors.
9. Proof of insurance is required in each vehicle.
10. No Staff member or Volunteer may travel one on one with a Minor unless Parental/Legal Guardian permission is granted.

11. In case of breakdowns or emergencies, the leader of the applicable ministry or the Director of Youth Ministries must be notified.
12. In case of emergencies the applicable ministry leader will have a copy of all medical release forms which will be kept in an accessible location and readily available.

III. POLICIES FOR SPECIFIC MINISTRIES

A. NURSERY

1. The individual tagging/check-in/check-out system must be used.
2. Only a Parent or Legal Guardian may pick up and drop off a Minor. The person who has dropped off the Minor or their delegate will be deemed to be the Parent/ Legal Guardian.
3. Volunteers or Helpers may not remove a Minor from the nursery area without the permission of the Parent of Legal Guardian or unless there is the case of imminent danger to the Minor and/or the Volunteer or Helper.
4. Only regularly scheduled Volunteers/Helpers are permitted in the nursery area during nursery hours.
5. Once the applicable ministry has commenced, the nursery doors should be secured to prevent Minors from unplanned exits.
6. Supervision:
 - a) It is recommended that at least two ~~one~~ Volunteers and one Helper be in the nursery with no more than eight Minors before an additional Volunteer or Helper is required.
 - b) Nursery cannot be provided if adequate supervision cannot be provided.
7. A couple (husband and wife) or two adult family members may serve in the nursery as Volunteers at the same time, provided that a 3rd non-related Volunteer/Helper is also present.
8. Minors must be picked up immediately after any event requiring the use of the nursery.
9. Washroom Policy:
 - a) For Minors who do not require assistance in the washroom, the Volunteer or Helper must remain outside the washroom.
 - b) For Minors who require assistance, the Volunteer or Helper must assist the child with the washroom door open.
 - c) The diapering of a Minor will take place in the appropriate diaper changing areas.
10. If a Minor needs medical attention, the Parents(s)/Legal Guardian must be notified immediately. If, after making immediate efforts, the Parent(s)/Legal Guardian cannot be located immediately, they must be notified as soon as possible.

B. CHILDREN'S WORSHIP/CHURCH SCHOOL/VBS/SUMMER SUNDAY SCHOOL/LITTLE LAMBS

1. The individual check-in/check-out system must be used for Vacation Bible School. Attendance records must be kept for those children attending Children's Worship, Church School, Little Lambs and Summer Sunday School.
2. Only a Parent or Legal Guardian may pick up the Minor after Children's Worship. Church School attendees will be released to their Parents/Legal Guardians at the Service. Parents/Legal Guardians will indicate on the VBS registration forms if their older children are walking home otherwise younger children are to be picked up by their Parents/Legal Guardian/Designated Caregiver.
3. The Volunteer/Minor ratio minimal for pre-school Minors aged 30 months to 5 years is 1 Volunteer and 1 Helper per 8 Minors after which Volunteers and Helpers are added as necessary.
4. The Volunteer/Minor minimal ratio for Minors over the age of 6 is 2 Volunteers and 1 Helper per 15 or or 1 Volunteer and 2 helpers per 15 Minors after which Volunteers and Helpers are added as necessary as suitable to the activity/program.
5. Volunteers or Helpers may not remove a Minor from the ministry area unless in the case of imminent danger to the Minor and/or the Volunteer or Helper or previously arranged by the Superintendent of Sunday School and with the approval of the Parents(s) or Legal Guardian.
6. Registration records must be kept for all Minors in attendance at VBS and available at all times. These records include: contact information, emergency information, names of all person to whom the Minor may be released, as well as any special parental instructions (e.g. diet, etc.).
7. Washroom policy:
 - a) For Minors who do not require assistance in the washroom, the Volunteer or Helper must remain outside the washroom.
 - b) For Minors who require assistance, the Volunteer or Helper must assist the Minor with the washroom door open.
8. If any Minor needs medical attention, the Parents(s)/Legal Guardian must be notified immediately. If, after making immediate efforts, the Parent(s)/Legal Guardian cannot be located immediately, they must be notified as soon as possible.
9. A couple (husband and wife) or two adult family members may serve as Volunteers at the same time, provided a third non-related Volunteer/Helper is also present.

C. GEMS (GIRLS EVERYWHERE MEETING THE SAVIOUR) AND CADETS

1. Each GEMS and Cadet regular meeting should be supervised by at least one Volunteer provided that another Volunteer monitors the facility and observes all activities during the ministry.
2. Registration records must be kept for all Minors in attendance and available at all times. These records include: contact information, emergency information, names of all person to whom the Minor may be released, as well as any special parental instructions (e.g. diet, etc.).
3. At least 2 GEMS or Cadet Volunteers must be at the ministry location 10 minutes prior to the ministry start time and must remain at the location until all Minors are picked up.
4. Minors should be picked up within 15 minutes of the end of any activity. If not picked up within 10 minutes, a counselor/leader will telephone the Parent(s)/Legal Guardian to ensure someone is coming to pick up the Minor.
5. GEMS and Cadet activities planned away from the Church facility/property, out of town, or overnight should be supervised by at least two Volunteers. The ratio ought to be 2 Volunteers to every 15 Minors. Permission and Liability Waiver forms must be signed for offsite activities by the Minor's Parent(s)/Legal Guardians.
6. Volunteers or Staff transporting a Minor for purposes of these ministries must have Parental/Legal Guardian permission to do so and must meet the stipulations of the Transportation Policy.
7. Each Volunteer, GEMS, or Cadet participant has the right to refuse any displays of affection and their decision will be respected. While the appropriate displays of affection between Volunteers, GEMS or Cadet participants are often part of conveying support and encouragement to one another, such displays can be misinterpreted. For that reason, displays of affections should be limited to such actions as a brief hug, an arm around the shoulder, a handclasp, or a light touch to the forearm and only when consented to by the other person.
8. At the end of any ministry activity:
 - a) Volunteers/Staff may only release a Minor into the care of the designated Parent(s)/Legal Guardian or a person designated by the Parent(s)/Legal Guardian.
 - b) The Minors cannot leave the Church building or sponsored activity unless accompanied by the Parent(s)/Legal Guardian or a person designated by the Parent(s)/Legal Guardian.
 - c) Parents must come inside to pick up their Minors.
 - d) When applicable, Minors must wait inside the Church building to be picked up.
9. If a Minor needs medical attention, the Parents(s)/Legal Guardian must be notified immediately. If, after making immediate efforts, the Parent(s)/Legal Guardian cannot be located immediately, they must be notified as soon as possible.

D. YOUTH MINISTRY

1. Each Youth Ministry activity should be supervised by at least one Volunteer provided that another Volunteer/Staff monitors the facility and observes all activities during the ministry.
2. Volunteers must contact a parent before a planned one-to-one visit with a Minor.
3. Youth Ministry activities planned away from the Church facility/property, out of town, or overnight should be supervised by at least two Volunteers/Staff. The Volunteer/Minor ratio in these ministries is 1 volunteer per 15 Minors.
4. Volunteers or Staff transporting a Minor for purposes of these ministries must have Parental/Legal Guardian permission to do so and must meet the stipulations of the Transportation Policy.
5. Registration/Liability Waiver records must be kept for all Minors in attendance and available at all times. These records include in part: contact information, emergency information, names of all person to whom the Minor may be released, as well as any special parental instructions (e.g. diet, etc.).
6. Each Volunteer/Staff and Minor has the right to refuse any displays of affection and their decision will be respected. While the appropriate displays of affection between Minors and their leaders are often part of conveying support and encouragement to one another, such displays can be misinterpreted. For that reason, displays of affections should be limited to such actions as a brief hug, an arm around the shoulder, a handclasp, or alight touch to the forearm and only when consented to by the other person.
7. Participants should be picked up within 15 minutes of the end of any activity. If not picked up within 10 minutes, a Volunteer/leader will telephone the Parent(s)/Legal Guardian to ensure someone is coming to pick up the Participant. On the first such occurrence, a letter with appropriate information will be sent to the Parent(s)/Legal Guardian.
8. If a Minor needs significant medical attention, the Parents(s)/Legal Guardian must be notified immediately. If, after making immediate efforts, the Parent(s)/Legal Guardian cannot be located immediately, they must be notified as soon as possible.

E. COFFEE BREAK/STORY HOUR AND OTHER MINISTRIES INVOLVING MINORS

1. Each activity should be supervised by at least one Volunteer provided that another Volunteer monitors the facility and observes all activities during the ministry.
2. Volunteers or Helpers may not remove a Minor from the ministry area without the Parental/Legal Guardian permission or in the case of imminent danger to the Minor and/or the Volunteer or Helper.
3. Activities planned away from the Church facility/property should be supervised by at least two Volunteers.

4. The Volunteer/Minor ratio for Minors attending Story Hour is a minimum of 2 Volunteers/Helpers for the first 10 Minors, after which Volunteers and Helpers are added as necessary.
5. Registration records must be kept for all Minors in attendance and available at all times. These records include: contact information, emergency information, names of all person to whom the Minor may be released, as well as any special parental instructions (e.g. diet, etc.).
6. Volunteers or Staff transporting a Minor for purposes of this ministry must have Parental/Legal Guardian permission to do so and meet the stipulations of the Transportation Policy.
7. At the end of any ministry activity, Volunteers/Staff may only release a Minor into the care of the designated Parent(s)/Legal Guardian or a person designated by the Parent(s)/Legal Guardian.
8. If a Minor needs significant medical attention, the Parents(s)/Legal Guardian must be notified immediately. If, after making immediate efforts, the Parent(s)/Legal Guardian cannot be located immediately, they must be notified as soon as possible.
9. Ordinarily, ministry activities take place in the Church building with all the appropriate Safe Church Policies enforced. However, in the event that a ministry activity takes place in a home, it is the homeowner's responsibility to ensure that adequate supervision is provided for any Minors on the premises.

F. FRIENDSHIP MINISTRY

Introduction

Friendship Ministries was created to encourage Friends – Adults and Minors with cognitive/developmental disabilities – to draw closer to God. The success of the ministry depends on numerous dedicated Volunteers who help Friends to develop fuller understandings of God's love and grace.

The design of the program places people in one-to-one interpersonal relationships. Unfortunately, it is in the context of close interpersonal relationships that persons with cognitive/developmental disabilities are often abused. Because of the potential risk of abuse in one-to-one relationships, the following guidelines are designed to reduce the risk of abuse so that meetings and social events will be enjoyable and safe for everyone.

General Guidelines for Friendship:

1. Group Meeting
 - a) If a Friend and Volunteer meet alone in a classroom, keep the classroom door open.
 - b) If possible, have pairs of Volunteers/Friends meet in adjacent rooms.

- c) If the meeting room is large enough, more than one Volunteer/Friend could meet at the same time.
- d) A Volunteer should be assigned to monitor the rooms where Volunteer/Friend pairs are meeting.
- e) If the classroom doors need to remain closed, each door should have a window with an unobstructed view of the room.

2. Washroom Guidelines

- a) If necessary, Friends should be assisted by someone of the same gender in such a manner as to ensure their privacy and safety. This may require more than one Volunteer.
- b) When Friends routinely need assistance or need assistance with medical devices, caregivers should provide this assistance. Plans for assisting the Friend should be made before attending the ministry.

3. Physical and Verbal Contact

- a) Physical affection initiated by a Volunteer should be limited to side-to-side hugs, pats on the back or forearm, touching the back of the hand and gently squeezing the hand.
- b) Both the Friend and Volunteer can say “no” to physical affection and refrain from displays of affection. While appropriate displays of affection between Friends and Volunteers are often part of conveying support and encouragement to one another, such displays can be misinterpreted. For that reason, displays of affections should be limited to such as a brief hug, an arm around the shoulder, a handclasp, or a light touch to the forearm and only when consented to by the other person. If a Friend is unable to verbalize “no”, notice carefully their body language and facial expression that may indicate discomfort with physical affection.
- c) It is not appropriate to make lewd or suggestive comments to Friends, or tell dirty or off-colour jokes. Details or discussions about one’s intimate life should not come up in a Friendship meeting.

4. Corrective Action

Consequences or corrections to attitude and/or behaviours are sometimes necessary in a Friendship meeting. If a Volunteer thinks a correction or consequence is needed, these guidelines may help. They are not intended to be progressive steps of correction.

- a) Give a verbal reminder to follow the rules, if appropriate.
- b) Involve another Volunteer, Guardian, or Caregiver.
- c) Ask the Friend to leave the room for a few minutes and take a time-out.
- d) End the meeting.
- e) Ask the Friend not to come to the program for a period of time until an agreement can be reached about acceptable behavior.

- f) If a situation arises away from the Friendship program, stay in a public setting because moving to a private or isolated setting may increase vulnerability for the Volunteer and the Friend. Use a cell phone to seek assistance or to relay what is happening to someone else.
- g) If problems continue beyond minor correction, do not hesitate to share them with a Parent, Guardian, or Caregiver and apprise them of how the situation has been handled.

Physical intervention including slapping, hitting, kicking, punching is never appropriate.

Physical restraint may be necessary only to prevent harm or injury to the Friend, mentor, or other persons nearby. Lashing out in anger or verbal abuse will likely cause more harm to the other person and to the relationship.

5. Supervision Policies

- a) A Volunteer ratio for the Friendship Ministry is 1 Volunteer to 1 Friend, not to exceed 1 Volunteer to 3 Friends.
- b) A Volunteer/Friend ratio for off-site activities is 1:1, not to exceed 1:3

Before and after Friendship, Volunteers and Guardians/Caregivers may be included in the ratio if they are supervising the Friends.

6. Volunteer Procedures

- a) All Volunteers are required to complete a Volunteer Application Form.
- b) All Volunteers must agree to comply with the Church's Abuse Prevention Policy and if, non-compliant, the individual will be required to relinquish his/her responsibility in the ministry.
- c) Anyone with a history of allegations or convictions of abuse/neglect of Friends or other Vulnerable Persons shall be prohibited from leadership and any involvement in ministries in which this person could pose a risk.
- d) Any Volunteer may withdraw their application at any time without prejudice.
- e) The Church reserves the right to deny any Volunteer for any reason.
- f) All information obtained will be held in the strictest confidence and secured with limited access. Access is restricted to the Senior Pastor, Chair of Safe Church Team and Office Administrator or as otherwise required by law.

G. PASTOR, ELDER, DEACON OR PASTORAL CARE WORKERS VISITATION POLICY

1. Staff, office bearers (elders, deacons) and pastoral care workers should exercise good judgment when visiting alone with parishioners of the opposite sex in the privacy of their own homes. It is wise to visit in pairs and/or use public places such as restaurants.
2. Each Staff member, office bearer, pastoral care worker and Member of the congregation has the right to refuse any displays of affection and their decision will be respected. While the appropriate display of affection between staff members, office bearers and members of the congregation are often part of conveying support and encouragement to one

another, such displays can be misinterpreted. For that reason, displays of affections should be limited to such actions as a brief hug, an arm around the shoulder, a handclasp, or a light touch to the forearm and only be consented to by the other person.

3. Consider requesting that an elder or deacon of the same sex be assigned to the person who needs frequent pastoral visits.
4. Pastors' offices should be equipped with windows in the doors and blinds that can be opened during pastoral visits.
5. The elders, deacons and pastoral care workers must report all pastoral visits to their respective coordinating bodies.

H. NEW MINISTRIES

Any new Church ministry that is developed to benefit Minors or Vulnerable Persons will be subject to this policy.

IV. OCCURRENCE/INDIDENT/ABUSE REPORTING PROCEDURES

A. GENERAL POLICIES

1. Evidence or suspicion of abuse by anyone in a leadership position or of a Minor must be reported and handled with care. The purposes of reporting are to stop the abuse, to provide assistance for the victim, and to hold perpetrators accountable and begin the process of correction and redemption.
2. All efforts to respect confidentiality will be made. Unless required to do so by law or as necessary in the course of an investigation, the name of a victim will not be disclosed without her or his consent. We will not assume an alleged abuser is guilty before conviction or admission. Every attempt will be made to protect and maintain the safety of the person alleging abuse and the alleged abuser.
3. Where there is evidence or disclosure of abuse the Family and Children's Services of the Wellington County (800-265-8300) must be notified immediately in keeping with the provisions of provincial law. Abuse of a person who is not/no longer a Minor will be reported to outside authorities only with the consent of the victim, even if the abuse occurred while the person was a Minor. In situations where the victim is a Vulnerable Person, it may be necessary to notify civil authorities.
4. All suspicion or disclosure of abuse must also be brought to the attention of the Safe Church Team or the Senior Pastor.
5. Palmerston CRC recognizes and respects the right of a victim to pursue legal remedies through civil courts, independent of any action taken within the processes established by the Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA). Spiritual support,

pastoral help, and other forms of appropriate engagement by the church will be offered, whether or not legal action is taken in a particular case.

B. PROTOCOL FOR REPORTING ABUSE

1. Signs and symptoms of abuse or reports of abuse from a Minor or a Vulnerable Person need to be taken seriously. Any person who has reasonable grounds to suspect a Minor (or a Minor who is a Vulnerable Person) is or may be in need of protection must report the suspicion and information to the Family and Children's Services of Wellington County (800-265-8300).
2. If the situation involves an adult Vulnerable Person who may be subject to provincial trusteeship, the Safe Church Team will determine the need to notify civil authorities.
3. An investigation of said symptoms and reports must be conducted only by people trained to investigate abuse complaints. In the case of a Minor, the trained investigators are representatives of local Police departments and the Family and Children's Services of Wellington County.
4. The person reporting should use the Occurrence/Incident Report and keep these guidelines in mind when completing the report. First, **do not** ask the person if he/she is/was abused. It is appropriate, however, to ask how the sign or symptom appeared. Second, **do not** interview the person in great detail about the signs or symptoms. These guidelines are in place because only trained investigators from the Police or Family and Children's Services of Wellington County are to make the determination as to whether or not abuse has taken place. Finally, it should be remembered that there is no liability for reporting suspected abuse.
5. Anyone who has evidence or disclosure of abuse must also inform a member of the Safe Church Team or the Senior Pastor. If the Senior Pastor is informed of an abuse situation, he will inform the Safe Church Team.
6. In all cases of abuse, whether of a Minor or a Vulnerable Person, and in addition to the civilian legal protocols that are followed (i.e., those initiated by protocols 1-3, above), the Safe Church Team will, in congruence with the established protocols for the Christian Reformed Church in North America and in consultation with the victim, as appropriate, determine what course of action will be taken, including:
 - a) recommendation that Council request that when a pastor or church leader is involved, the Safe Church Team of Classis establish a review panel, to engage in fact-finding and provide advice to the Council;
 - b) referral to the appropriate pastoral team member as a matter requiring pastoral counseling
7. The Safe Church Team operates in an advisory capacity to the designated authorities in the Church. Any pastoral and/or disciplinary action will be taken by the designated authorities according to the Church Order of the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

8. If the situation involves a Church leader, matters such as notification, temporary suspension from office, and disciplinary measures will be handled in accordance with the process adopted by the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church in North America. Depending on the circumstances and severity of the incident, suspension from a position, with pay for paid staff, may be temporary to allow time for further investigation, and will be done without prejudice as to the final determination. Suspension may include limitations or conditions on contact with children or other church members, pending the conclusion of a more formal hearing process. Disciplinary measures will be in accordance with the established policies of the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church in North America including, when appropriate, a permanent ban on holding pastoral office in the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

C. OCCURRENCE/INCIDENT/ABUSE RESPONSE GUIDE

TYPE OF INJURY	CARE TO BE PROVIDED	REQUIRED REPORTING	REQUIRED FOLLOW UP
<p>1. Physical Injury (i.t. trip, fall, scrape, cut, etc)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide first aid 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete Occurrence/Incident Report Submit report to safe church committee Inform Parent/Legal Guardian of injury and care provided 	
<p>2. Critical Injury (i.e. broken bone, excessive bleeding etc.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide first aid Call required emergency service Accompany individual to emergency care facility if warranted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete Occurrence/Incident report Submit report to Safe Church Committee Inform Parent/Legal Guardian of injury and care provided 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inform Lead Volunteer of injury and care/treatment provided Lead Volunteer to inform Senior Pastor, as soon as possible, of incident and care provided
<p>3. Behavioural Incident/Discipline</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete Occurrence/Incident report Submit report to Safe Church Committee Inform Parent/Legal Guardian of the events and any applicable discipline measures that were required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inform Lead Volunteer of the events and any applicable discipline measures that were required

TYPE OF INJURY	CARE TO BE PROVIDED	REQUIRED REPORTING	REQUIRED FOLLOW UP
4. Auto Accident	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide first aid • Call required emergency service • Accompany individual to emergency care facility if warranted • Report to insurer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete Occurrence/Incident report • Submit report to Safe Church Committee • Inform Parent/Legal Guardian of the event 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform Lead Volunteer of injury and care/treatment provided • Lead Volunteer to inform Senior Pastor, as soon as possible, of accident and care provided
5. Physical Incident <i>(i.e. Anaphylactic, allergic, seizure, etc.)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide first aid • Call required emergency service • Accompany individual to emergency care facility if warranted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete Occurrence/Incident report • Submit report to Safe Church Committee • Inform Parent/Legal Guardian of the event 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform Lead Volunteer of injury and care/treatment provided
6. Abuse of a Minor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report to Family and Children’s Services of Wellington • Report to Safe Church Team and Senior Pastor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete Occurrence/Incident report • Submit report to Safe Church Committee • Inform Parent/Legal Guardian of the event 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spiritual support, pastoral help, and other forms of appropriate engagement by the church will be offered to all involved • If the incident involves a Church leader disciplinary measures mandated by Synod will be followed in addition to any civil legal remedies
7. Abuse of a Vulnerable Person	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report to Safe Church Team and Senior Pastor who will determine the need to notify civil authorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete Occurrence/Incident report • Submit report to Safe Church Committee • Inform Parent/Legal Guardian of the event 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spiritual support, pastoral help, and other forms of appropriate engagement by the church will be offered to all involved • If the incident involves a Church leader disciplinary measures mandated by Synod will be followed in addition to any civil legal remedies

OCCURRENCE/INCIDENT REPORT

For definitions, reporting time frames and procedures see the Palmerston Christian Reformed Church Abuse Prevention Policy.

Date and time of occurrence/incident:

Name of Minor(s)/Vulnerable Person(s):

Names of Volunteer(s) involved:

Please select one of the following types of incidents (check box):

- Physical injury (trip, fall, scrape, cut, etc.)
- Critical Injury (broken bone, excessive bleeding, etc.)
- Behavioral Incident/Discipline of Vulnerable Person or Minor
- Physical Neglect
- Sexual Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Spiritual Abuse
- Verbal Abuse
- Financial Abuse
- Auto Accident

Events that preceded the occurrence:

Describe the occurrence:

Action taken following the occurrence:

What is the current status/condition of those involved?

Notifications:

Family and Children's Services of the Wellington County/Police contacted?

Yes No Date and time of contact(s): _____

Name(s) of contact(s): _____

Parent/Legal Guardian contacted?

Yes No Date and time of contact _____

Name of contact: _____

Other Notifications: (i.e. doctor, emergency personnel)

Yes No Date and time of contact _____

Additional action required by volunteers or church staff?

Yes No

If yes, what action is required? _____

Signature of Volunteer: _____

Date: _____

Signature of Ministry Leader: _____

Date: _____

Signature of Safe Church

Committee Representative: _____

Date: _____