

Palmerston Christian Reformed Church

Safe Church Policy

August 2013
Revised April 2015
Revised January 2019
Revised 2022

CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION	3
A. Commitment to Review	3
B. Terms of Reference	3
C. Definitions of Abuse	4
II. GENERAL SAFE CHURCH POLICIES	5
A. Reducing Risk	5
B. Ministry to Minors Volunteer Procedure	5
C. Education	5
D. Discipline Policy (Applicable to All Ministries Involving Minors and Friends)	6
E. Transportation policy	6
III. POLICIES FOR SPECIFIC MINISTRIES	7
A. Nursery	7
B. Children’s Worship/Church School/VBS/Summer Sunday School/Little Lambs	8
c. GEMS (Girls Everywhere Meeting the Saviour) and Cadets	9
D. Youth Ministry	10
E. Coffee Break/Story Hour and Other Ministries Involving Minors	10
F. Friendship Ministry	11
G. Pastor, Elder, Deacon or Pastoral Care Workers Visitation Policy	12
H. New Ministries	13
IV. OCCURRENCE/INDIDENT/ABUSE REPORTING PROCEDURES	13
A. General Policies	13
B. Protocol for Reporting Abuse	13
C. Occurrence/Incident Reporting and Response Guide	14
GENERAL APPLICATION (Screening Form for Volunteers)	20
MINISTRY LEADER/HEAD COUNSELOR (Screening Form for Ministry Co-ordinators)	23
POLICY ATTESTATION FORM	29

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.
13. The “Council” is the spiritual authority and governing body of Palmerston Christian Reformed Church.
14. A “Ministry Coordinator” is the individual designated by the Council to lead and direct a specific ministry of the church.

C. DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE

1. Physical abuse is any deliberate physical force or action that results or could result in injury to a vulnerable person. It can include actions such as slapping, pushing, biting, beating, burning, choking, and kicking.
2. Neglect is the failure to provide the basic things that keep a vulnerable person safe and healthy. It can include the failure to provide things such as food, sleep, medical attention, safety, and supervision.
3. Sexual abuse is any sexual exploitation of a vulnerable person. The vulnerable person may cooperate out of fear, a desire to please, or because they lack the capacity to understand the act or resist coercion. It may or may not include physical contact. It includes actions such as invitation to/requests for sexual activity, displaying or making pornographic materials, indecent exposure, watching a child undress for sexual gratification, fondling for sexual purposes, obscene communication (phone, in-person, or digital), and oral, anal, or vaginal sex.
4. Economic abuse is the control or exploitation of a vulnerable person using money or property. It includes actions such as controlling, exploiting, or sabotaging income, destroying belongings, and coercing to sign documents.
5. Emotional abuse is a pattern of behaviour that attacks the well-being, development, and self-worth of a vulnerable person. It includes excessive, aggressive, or unreasonable demands that exceed the capacity of the vulnerable person. Emotional abuse includes actions such as excessive criticizing, teasing, belittling, rejecting, ignoring, harassing, and isolating.
 - a. Spiritual abuse is a form of emotional abuse characterized by coercive and controlling behaviour in a religious context. It is an abuse of power and authority. It includes actions such as using shame to manipulate and exploit, coercing to conform, restricting legitimate questions, and controlling by Scripture.
 - b. Verbal abuse is a form of emotional abuse wherein oral, gestured, or written language is used to assault, dominate, manipulate, or degrade. It includes put-downs, name-calling, humiliation, gaslighting, and silent treatment.

II. GENERAL SAFE CHURCH POLICIES

A. REDUCING RISK

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. (see Appendix B)
2. All Staff and Volunteers 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. Non-compliance and removal from ministry determinations are made by Council.
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. These determinations are made by Council.
6. Any Volunteer may withdraw their application at any time without prejudice.
7. The Council 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 annual Safe Church Training.
2. All Staff, Volunteers, and Helpers are required to annually read the Safe Church Policies and complete a form (Appendix C), acknowledging familiarity with the Palmerston CRC Safe Church policy and the implications and requirements.
3. A short summary of the Safe Church Policy will be made available on the Church website.

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

1. All discipline shall be given with love and dignity, for the purpose of restoration to the ministry wherever possible and to create a safe space for all involved in the ministry.
2. When behaviour escalates to involving or reporting to Parent(s)/Legal Guardian, the Volunteer or Ministry Co-ordinator will record the contact and preceding behaviour using the Occurrence/Incident Report.
3. Should a Minor or Friend's behaviour require intervention or consequences, the following list offers examples of appropriate responses that should not necessarily be perceived as progressive or exhaustive, that may be utilized in the Ministry setting. Ministry Co-ordinators, Volunteers, and Helpers shall consider age and maturity in responding to the problematic behaviour.
 - a) Give a verbal reminder of the rules.
 - b) Withdraw or delay privileges.
 - c) Redirect or minimize attention given to the behaviour.
 - b) Involve another Volunteer, Guardian, or Caregiver.
 - c) Request that the Minor or Friend take a time out. Remain aware of safety and supervision needs.
 - d) End the meeting.
 - e) Ask the Minor or Friend not to come to the program until an agreement is reached about acceptable behavior.
4. Yelling, threatening, intimidation, shaming, and any physical punishment (hitting, slapping, etc.) are unacceptable forms of discipline in all Church ministries.
5. Whenever possible, ensure that discipline is witnessed by another Volunteer or Helper and at a minimum given in a public space. Avoid any disciplinary situation in a private or isolated 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 are required to adhere to the Safe Church Policy.
3. Drivers and passengers, regardless of age, must wear a seatbelt while the vehicle is in transit.
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 and be free of the influence of drugs and alcohol.
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 transport an individual Minor unless Parental/Legal Guardian permission is granted. While written consent is preferred, verbal permission is permissible provided that the consent is witnessed/heard by another Staff or Volunteer.
11. In case of breakdowns or emergencies, the Ministry Coordinator must be notified.
12. In case of emergency, the applicable Ministry Coordinator will have a copy of all medical release forms readily available in an accessible location .

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 or Legal Guardian or unless there is the case of imminent danger to the Minor and/or the Volunteer or Helper.
4. Only scheduled Volunteers/Helpers and parents of Minors in care are permitted in the nursery area during nursery hours.
5. Should a scheduled Volunteer or Helper be unable to fulfill a scheduled commitment, the Volunteer, Helper, or Ministry Coordinator will find a screened replacement.
6. Once the ministry has commenced, the nursery doors should be secured to prevent Minors from unplanned exits.
7. Supervision:
 - a) It is recommended that at least two Volunteers and one Helper be in the nursery with no more than eight Minors. When the number of Minors exceed this ratio appropriate additional Volunteer(s) or Helper(s) is(are) required.
 - b) Nursery cannot be provided if adequate supervision is unavailable.
8. A married couple or two adult family members may serve in the nursery as Volunteers at the same time, provided that a third non-related Volunteer/Helper is also present.
9. Minors must be picked up immediately after the event.
10. Washroom Policy:
 - a) For Minors who do not require assistance in the washroom, the Volunteer or Helper shall remain outside the washroom.

- b) For Minors who require assistance, the Volunteer or Helper shall assist the child with the washroom door open.
 - c) The diapering of a Minor will take place in the appropriate diaper changing areas.
11. In the case of a medical emergency, call 911. 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. Church School attendees will be released to their Parents/Legal Guardians at the worship service. Parents/Legal Guardians will indicate on the VBS registration forms if their children are walking home, otherwise 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 minimum ratio for Minors over the age of 6 is 2 Volunteers and 1 Helper per 15 or 1 Volunteer and 2 helpers per 15 Minors after which Volunteers and Helpers are added as necessary and as are suitable to the activity/program.
5. 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.
6. Volunteers or Helpers may not remove a Minor from the ministry area unless in the case of imminent danger to the Minor; another Minor; and/or a Volunteer or Helper, or as previously arranged by the Ministry Coordinator with the approval of the Parents(s) or Legal Guardian.
7. Registration records must be maintained and available for all Minors attending VBS. These records will include: contact information, emergency contacts, names of all persons to whom the Minor may be released, and any parental instructions (e.g. diet, etc.).
8. Washroom policy:
 - a) For Minors who do not require assistance in the washroom, the Volunteer or Helper shall remain outside the washroom.
 - b) For Minors who require assistance, the Volunteer or Helper shall assist the Minor with the washroom door open.
9. In the case of a medical emergency, call 911. 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.

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

1. Each GEMS and Cadet regular meeting shall 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 maintained and available for all Minors in attendance. These records will include: contact information, emergency information, names of all persons to whom the Minor may be released, and 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 will be supervised by at least two Volunteers. The ratio will be 2 Volunteers to every 15 Minors. Permission and Liability Waiver forms must be signed, prior to the event, 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. In the case of a medical emergency, call 911. 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 and be available for all Minors in attendance. These records will include: contact information, emergency information, names of all persons 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 a light 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. In the case of a medical emergency, call 911. 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. Should a Staff or Volunteer meet with a Minor for a one-on-one visit, all visits will be conducted in a public place. Volunteers will notify the Ministry Coordinator or another Volunteer prior to the one-on-one visit.

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, another Minor, and/or a 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. In the case of a medical emergency, call 911. 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 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

1. Group Meeting
 - a) If a Friend and Volunteer meet alone in a classroom, keep the classroom door open. If the classroom door needs to remain closed, the meeting will take place in a classroom with a window in the door allowing an unobstructed view of the room.
 - b) If possible, have pairs of Volunteers/Friends meet in adjacent rooms.
 - c) If the meeting room is large enough, more than one pair of Volunteers/Friends could meet at the same time.
 - d) A Volunteer shall be assigned to monitor the rooms where Volunteer/Friend pairs are meeting.
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 a Volunteer or Helper’s intimate life should not come up in a Friendship meeting.
4. Supervision Policies
- a) A Volunteer ratio for the Friendship Ministry is 1 Volunteer to 1 Friend, and is not to exceed 1 Volunteer to 3 Friends.
- b) A Volunteer/Friend ratio for off-site activities is 1:1, and is not to exceed 1:3
- c) Before and after Friendship Ministry, Volunteers and Guardians/Caregivers may be included in the ratio if they are supervising the Friends.

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/INCIDENT/ABUSE REPORTING PROCEDURES

A. GENERAL POLICIES

1. Evidence or suspicion of abuse by anyone in a leadership position or of a Minor shall be reported as required by law and handled with care. The Church's purposes in reporting are to stop the alleged abuse, to provide assistance and support for the victim, to hold perpetrators accountable and to begin the process of correction and restoration.
2. All efforts to respect confidentiality will be made. Unless required to do so by law or as necessary during an investigation, the name of a victim will not be disclosed without her or his consent. The Church 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. A member of the Safe Church shall offer to support the Staff, Volunteer, or Helper while they make the report.
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). Volunteers, Ministry Coordinators, Staff, and Helpers shall not encourage nor discourage legal action, nor shall those persons make commitments on behalf of the Church in any occurrence or incident. 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 shall be taken seriously. Any person who has reasonable grounds to suspect a Minor is or may be in need of protection shall report the suspicion and information to the Family and Children's Services of Wellington County (1-800-265-8300).

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 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. 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.

C. OCCURRENCE/INCIDENT REPORTING AND RESPONSE GUIDE

1. Occurrence/Incident reports are required when a Volunteer or Staff witnesses or is involved in the following situations: physical incidents and/or injury while on Church property or involved in a Church ministry, behavioural/discipline occurrences in which parents/legal guardians are notified, automobile accidents while involved with a Church ministry, abuse or suspicion thereof involving a Minor or Vulnerable Person.

2. Occurrence/Incident Reports will utilize the Occurrence/Incident Report in Appendix A for all reporting needs. If additional space is required, the Volunteer or Staff who is reporting may additionally utilize a blank paper.
3. The Volunteer or Staff who witnesses or is involved in the situation will complete the Occurrence/Incident Report as soon as possible after the incident. Whenever possible, this report shall be made the same day as the incident.
4. All Occurrence/Incident Reports shall be submitted to the Safe Church Committee and shall be utilized in the annual review of the Safe Church Policy and/or for additional future training for Staff and Volunteers.
5. All Occurrence/Incident Reports shall be reviewed by the Safe Church Committee to ensure appropriate notification and distribution.
6. All Occurrence/Incident Reports shall be stored in a locked cabinet at the Church.
7. The following chart shall serve as a guide in the responding to occurrences and incidents at the Church.

TYPE OF INJURY	CARE TO BE PROVIDED	REQUIRED REPORTING	REQUIRED FOLLOW UP
1. Physical Injury (i.t. trip, fall, scrape, cut, etc)	<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 	
2. Critical Injury (i.e. broken bone, excessive bleeding etc.)	<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 Ministry Coordinator of injury and care/treatment provided • Ministry Coordinator to inform Senior Pastor, as soon as possible, of incident and care provided
3. Behavioural Incident/Discipline <i>(This includes any incident in which a parental/legal guardian is notified)</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete Occurrence/Incident report • Submit report to Safe Church Committee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform Ministry Coordinator of the events and any applicable discipline

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inform Parent/Legal Guardian of the events and any applicable discipline measures that were required 	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 Ministry Coordinator of injury and care/treatment provided Ministry Coordinator 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 Ministry Coordinator of injury and care/treatment provided
6. Abuse of a Minor <i>(including suspicion and/or allegations of abuse)</i>	<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 (including suspicion and/or allegations of abuse)	<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

Appendix A
OCCURRENCE/INCIDENT REPORT

For definitions, reporting time frame, and procedures see Palmerston Christian Reformed Church's Safe Church Policy. Section IV Part C of the policy provides specific detail on completing this report.

Date and Time of Incident/Occurrence _____

Date of Report Completion _____

Person filing report _____

Type of Incident/Occurrence (Please select from the following):

- Physical injury (trip, fall, scrape, cut, etc.)
- Critical Injury (broken bone, excessive bleeding, etc.)
- Behavioral Incident/Discipline of Vulnerable Person or Minor
- Abuse of a Minor, including suspicion or allegation thereof
- Abuse of a Vulnerable Person, including suspicion or allegation thereof
- Abuse of an Adult, including suspicion or allegation thereof
- Auto Accident

Person Involved in the Occurrence/Incident (name): _____

Person Involved in the incident is a(n), (please select one of the following):

- Minor
- Friend
- Adult (Volunteer, Helper, Ministry Co-ordinator, Staff, Member, or Adherent)
- Adult (visitor, or member of the community)

Location of Occurrence/Incident: _____

List any witness(es) to Occurrence/incident: _____

Describe the Occurrence/Incident: _____

Describe the response taken to the Occurrence/Incident:

Notifications (check all applicable to the Occurrence/Incident):

911, or other emergency service

Parent/Legal Guardian

Date and time of contact(s): _____

Name(s) of contact(s): _____

Family and Children’s Services of Guelph and Wellington County

Date and time of contact(s): _____

Name(s) of contact(s): _____

Other

Date and time of contact(s): _____

Name(s) of contact(s): _____

Additional action required by volunteers or church staff?

If yes, what action is required? _____

Signature of Volunteer: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Ministry Leader: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Safe Church
Committee Representative: _____ Date: _____

Appendix B
Screening Form For Volunteers

GENERAL APPLICATION

NAME:	
STREET ADDRESS:	
CITY:	POSTAL CODE:
EMAIL ADDRESS:	
PHONE NUMBER – DAY:	
PHONE NUMBER – EVENING:	
DATE OF BIRTH:	

What is the Ministry you wish to be involved in and why are you interested in being involved (include any gifts, skills, training, or education that might help you in the role)? _____

Do you have current CPR and First Aid training? Yes No

Do you have a valid driver's license? Yes No

Do you consider yourself to be a Christian? Yes No Unsure

What does it mean to be a Christian? _____

Are you a member of Palmerston CRC? Yes No

If no, are you a member of another church? Yes No

If yes, what church are you a member of? _____

How long have you been attending the church (whether Palmerston CRC or other)? _____

Are you involved in or volunteering with other present Ministry/Church initiatives or programs?

Please note all current involvement. _____

Information about Your Ability to Work with Minors/Vulnerable Persons

In order to provide a safe and secure environment for our Minors and Vulnerable Persons, we believe it is necessary to ask the following questions. Answering yes to any of the following questions may not necessarily disqualify you from volunteering with PCRC. Thank you for your honesty; what you share will be handled with care and dignity and will not be shared unless required by law.

Do you have any medical condition (including communicable diseases) which may impede your ability to provide appropriate care and/or supervision of Vulnerable Persons? Yes No

Do you currently struggle with an active addiction or lifestyle that may impact your ability to provide appropriate care or supervision of Vulnerable Persons? Yes No

Have you ever been charged with or convicted of any form of child abuse or assault of a Vulnerable Person? Yes No

Are you currently under discipline in your church community? Yes No

If you answered yes to any of the above questions, please explain on a separate sheet.

Release of Information and Declaration of Intent

As a Volunteer or Staff of PCRC, I consent to providing a personal Police Vulnerable Sector Check with this application (if applicable), for purposes of my protection against any false allegations and for the protection of those I serve. I consent to such an investigation with the understanding that the results will be treated with the utmost confidence, subject to the requirements of the law. (This paragraph only applies to those 18 years and older).

I understand that if my character or morals should be inappropriate and/or criminal at any time during my volunteer service, PCRC may terminate my assistance.

I understand that PCRC is responsible for the welfare of any person or persons entrusted to my care, and thus I will cooperate fully with ministry leaders and PCRC staff in the fulfillment of my duties. If, at any time I find that, for any reason, I am unable to support the policies and procedures of PCRC, I will gracefully and quietly resign my volunteer position. If my supervisors find that I am in conflict with any of the policies and procedures and we are not able to resolve the issue, I will gracefully and quietly agree to resign my volunteer position.

I agree to adhere to the policies and procedures adopted by PCRC and will report any deviations from the policy that I become aware of.

I hereby acknowledge that the information contained in this application for volunteering at PCRC is correct to the best of my knowledge. I agree to update the information in this document if any pertinent information changes.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Name (print): _____

Approval Process (For Office Use Only)

1. Police Vulnerable Sector Check completed (date received): _____
2. Safe Church Policy Training (date completed): _____
3. Screening Form completed (date completed): _____

Screening Form for Ministry Co-Ordinator's

MINISTRY LEADER/HEAD COUNSELOR VOLUNTEER APPLICATION

NAME:	
STREET ADDRESS:	
CITY:	POSTAL CODE:
EMAIL ADDRESS:	
PHONE NUMBER – DAY:	
PHONE NUMBER – EVENING:	
DATE OF BIRTH:	

What is the position and Ministry you wish to be involved in and why are you interested in being involved (include any gifts, skills, training, or education that might help you in the role)? _____

Do you have current CPR and First Aid training? Yes No

Do you have a valid driver's license? Yes No

Do you consider yourself to be a Christian? Yes No Unsure

What does it mean to be a Christian? _____

Are you a member of Palmerston CRC? Yes No

If no, are you a member of another church? Yes No

If yes, what church are you a member of? _____

How long have you been attending the church (whether Palmerston CRC or other)? _____

Are you involved in or volunteering with other present Ministry/Church initiatives or programs?
Please note all current involvement. _____

Information about Your Ability to Work with Minors/Vulnerable Persons

In order to provide a safe and secure environment for our Minors and Vulnerable Persons, we believe it is necessary to ask the following questions. Answering yes to any of the following questions may not necessarily disqualify you from volunteering with PCRC. Thank you for your honesty; what you share will be handled with care and dignity and will not be shared unless required by law.

Do you have any medical condition (including communicable diseases) which may impede your ability to provide appropriate care and/or supervision of Vulnerable Persons? Yes No

Do you currently struggle with an active addiction or lifestyle that may impact your ability to provide appropriate care or supervision of Vulnerable Persons? Yes No

Have you ever been charged with or convicted of any form of child abuse or assault of a Vulnerable Person? Yes No

Are you currently under discipline in your church community? Yes No

If you answered yes to any of the above questions, please explain:

References (Required for Ministry Co-ordinators. Must be unrelated to applicant.)

Reference 1

Name	
Phone Number (day time):	(Evening):
Email Address:	
Relationship to Applicant	

Reference 2

Name	
Phone Number (day time):	(Evening):
Email Address:	
Relationship to Applicant:	

Release of Information and Declaration of Intent

I hereby give Palmerston Christian Reformed Church (PCRC) permission to contact persons named as references to ascertain my suitability for volunteering at the PCRC. I release all such references from liability for any damage that may result from furnishing such evaluations to you.

I also consent to and have included a Police Vulnerable Sector Check (if required) with this application, for purposes of my protection against any false allegations and for the protection of those I serve. I consent to such an investigation with the understanding that the results will be treated with the utmost confidence, subject to the requirements of the law. (This paragraph only applies to those 18 years and older).

I understand that if my character or morals should be inappropriate and/or criminal at any time during my volunteer service, PCRC may terminate my assistance.

I understand that PCRC is responsible for the welfare of any person or persons entrusted to my care, and thus I will cooperate fully with ministry leaders and PCRC staff in the fulfillment of my duties. If, at any time I find that, for any reason, I am unable to support the policies and procedures of PCRC, I will gracefully and quietly resign my volunteer position. If my supervisors find that I am in conflict with any of the policies and procedures and we are not able to resolve the issue, I will gracefully and quietly agree to resign my volunteer position.

I agree to adhere to the policies and procedures adopted by PCRC and will report any deviations from the policy that I become aware of.

I hereby acknowledge that the information contained in this application for volunteering at PCRC is correct to the best of my knowledge. I agree to update the information in this document if any pertinent information changes.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Name (print): _____

Approval Process (For Office Use Only)

1. Interview Date: _____ (Interviewed by: _____)

Interview Method of Contact: phone call in person

Applicant Interview Questionnaire Guidelines

(all questions are oriented around creating and maintaining a safe spiritual, physical, and emotional environment for Vulnerable Persons, Volunteers, and Helpers)

1. Describe your relationship with God. How do you currently maintain and grow in that relationship?
2. Describe your relationship with Palmerston CRC. How do you currently maintain and grow in that relationship?
3. Describe a situation in the past, in which you didn't agree with a decision made or when you didn't get your way. How did you react? What did you do in response?
4. Are you comfortable leading people in prayer? In Bible study?
5. Why do you want to be a Volunteer at Palmerston CRC?
6. Tell me about your current and past volunteer experiences.
7. What have you enjoyed most and least about previous volunteer positions?
8. How much time can you realistically commit to volunteering in this role? Do you have the support of family or friends in this commitment?
9. What do you understand to be the responsibilities of being a good leader of this ministry?
10. What do you like/dislike about leading?
11. How would you describe your leadership style?

12. What does it mean to be a role model in this ministry?
13. What gifts, skills, and experience will help you to lead?
14. Describe your preparation process for meetings/gatherings.
15. What supervision needs do you see in this ministry? How might you work to maintain a safe physical space in this ministry?
16. How do you set and enforce boundaries and limits as leader? With Vulnerable Persons? With Volunteers and Helpers?
17. Describe a time when you were involved in conflict with an individual or group. How did you handle it? How would you support Volunteers, Helpers or Vulnerable Persons in addressing conflict?
18. What does it mean that all ministry environments need to be emotionally safe? How might you create and maintain that environment?
19. What helps you stay motivated?
20. What makes you feel appreciated?
21. How important is your own growth as a leader? What are the ways you hope to grow in and through this leadership experience? Are you open to participating in training opportunities?

Reference Check Sample Script and Questions

Hi _____,

My name is _____ and I am calling on behalf of Palmerston Christian Reformed Church. We would appreciate your assistance in providing us with a reference for _____. Do you have a few minutes now? I only have a few questions and all your answers will remain confidential unless required by law.

1. How long and in what context have you known the applicant?
2. Have you ever experienced the applicant working with or interacting with Vulnerable Persons? If so, please describe.
3. Would you have any concerns with the applicant working with Vulnerable Persons?

4. Apart from comments already given, do you have any reason to believe the candidate would or would not be suited to serve in the requested ministry position?
If so, please explain.

Record of Contact with References

<u>Reference Name</u>	<u>Date of Contact</u>	<u>Reference Checked By</u>	<u>Method (phone, in-person, email)</u>	<u>Summary of Comments</u>

Appendix C

Policy Attestation Form

The following form is available digitally on the Church website for all Volunteers to access.

This form is to be completed by all volunteers at Palmerston CRC. By completing this form, you acknowledge that you are familiar with the Palmerston CRC Safe Church policy and the implications and requirements for the position that you have volunteered for.

Confirmation of agreement

Please check the box that expresses your level of agreement with Palmerston CRC's Safe Church Policy. Please note: You must check one of the boxes.

- Yes, I have read the Safe Church policy and agree to abide by its requirements
- I have read the Safe Church policy but have some reservations about its applicability to my position
- I have read the Safe Church policy but am unable to abide by its requirements

Comments

Name

Ministry (ministries) being volunteered for

Date

Email