

LUCKNOW COMMUNITY CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

Abuse Prevention Policies and Procedures

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Lucknow Community Christian Reformed Church

Lucknow, Ontario

Our Vision

Keep the Faith

Grow the Faith

Share the Faith

Our Mission

God is calling the Lucknow Community Christian Reformed Church to vibrant worship based on God's Word which will enable us to be a light in our community through strong fellowship and acts of service.

Introduction

Abuse is a very real and quite often, a very devastating occurrence leaving no sector of society untouched. No group, religion, culture, or class of people is immune.

As a family of believers we share the responsibility to care for and to protect one another. Through our creation God bestowed upon us an inherent special concern for children and the vulnerable members of society (Matthew 18 :6-9)

Although we cannot hope to eliminate abuse in the church by writing a policy statement for the care of one another, we hope to implement a few preventative measures. Through observing these measures we can keep our church a place where children are able to learn in safety; and all those involved with ministering to others are able to do so without the threat of false accusation or suspicion.

Mandate

These policies and procedures apply to everyone in the Lucknow Community Christian Reformed Church. (Lucknow CCRC) and pertain to all on-and off-site activities. Lucknow CCRC Council, through the Abuse Response Team ensures that volunteers and paid staff adhere to this policy.

LUCKNOW COMMUNITY CRC ABUSE PREVENTION POLICY

General Prevention Policies

Screening Process

- 1) To be considered for any volunteer position in the church, the volunteer should have been a member in good standing of the church for at least six months.
- 2) Council appointed person will interview, either by phone or in person potential volunteer, specifically asking potential volunteer to sign declaration of Agreement and Understanding (Appendix 3) and to have a police check done. Appointed person will also do a reference check (Appendix 7)
- 3) Police checks are required for all paid staff and volunteers in leadership positions who have the potential to be in one-to-one contact with children, youth, elderly, developmentally challenged, etc. Cost, if any will be reimbursed by the church. Police checks will be updated every three years.
- 4) All documents from this screening procedure are to be kept in a file in a secured location in church office. Access to these files will be given to Pastor, Administrative Assistant and Abuse Response Team (A.R.T.)

General Discipline

Volunteers/Staff are to avoid activities that could easily lead to allegations of abuse or harassment such as:

- 1) Individual photography of children to be used for photographer's personal use.
- 2) Vehicle transportation by workers alone with unrelated youth
- 3) Improperly supervised sleepovers

Volunteers/staff involved in the ministry of the church shall communicate any items of concern or incidents to the program supervisor. (Appendix 4)

Any guest speaker/instructor for a particular church group/function shall be supervised / accompanied by that particular group's / function's leader at all times.

Out of program or off-premises activities between children/youth and church workers are discouraged. If necessary for a worker and a youth to meet by themselves, they shall meet in a public place. A parent or other person will drive the youth to and from the meeting place.

All classroom, office, nursery, kitchen, meeting and library doors shall have a window.

The scheduled serving deacon is the Hall Monitor.(Appendix 5) The H. M. shall observe the activities of the classrooms and nursery rooms periodically while class/church services are in progress; and when necessary shall give or go for assistance as needed.

The H.M. shall take note that all of the rules and procedures of the Abuse Prevention Policy of this church that apply are being met.

Safety Guidelines

Concerns or any violations of the Abuse Prevention Policy must be written, reported (Appendix 4) and brought to the attention of the program supervisor who will notify A.R.T. immediately. A consent/Release form need to be signed by parents/guardian at the beginning of the season. (Appendix 6)

- 1) Corporal punishment (slapping, hitting, pushing) is not permitted.
- 2) Abusive verbal discipline (e.g. Yelling, hurling insults, threatening) is not permitted.
- 3) Parent(s)/legal guardians are to be informed and involved whenever a child/youth misbehaves beyond minor correction, or a pattern of misbehavior increases.
- 4) Concerns about a child's behavior or the appropriate response to a child's behavior should be reported to the program supervisor.
- 5) An aid or a parent should be involved weekly in classrooms where misbehavior is an ongoing problem.
- 6) Expectation of children/youth's behavior must reflect their age and level of comprehension. Similarly, discipline must reflect their age and level of comprehension.
- 7) Children/youth are to be reminded of the kind of behavior that is acceptable for the setting.
- 8) Appropriate forms of discipline are to be reviewed with the volunteers/staff before church-sponsored programs begin a new season.
- 9) Appropriate forms of disciplining a child /youth are:
 - a) distract the child/youth with another activity;
 - b) help the child/youth focus on another more acceptable behavior;
 - c) Isolate the child/youth from others if another volunteer/staff is available.
- 10) Ordinarily volunteers may not physically restrain a child/youth. Parents need to be notified immediately if behavior requires assistance.
- 11) For young children, time-outs should not last longer in minutes than the age of the child.
- 12) When nothing seems to be working, staff/volunteers should get help before "losing their cool."
- 13) When carpooling, ideally, one adult should not be left alone in a vehicle with one minor or youth. If unavoidable, a phone call to the last drop off point should be made from the second last drop-off, so that there is an accountability of time traveled.
- 14) A ratio of one adult to ten minors is recommended, with a minimum of two adults per function.

Nursery Program Guidelines

- 1) The child should be picked up from the nursery immediately after the church service or activity . Only a parent or designate may pick up and drop off the child.
- 2) For the Sunday School program and VBS the child should be picked up immediately after the program ends.
- 3) In the nursery, the two-person rule must be followed if at all possible: two approved persons, one being an adult must always be present. If they are immediate family, then a third volunteer must be present.
- 4) Minors may volunteer for service, provided that an adult / responsible youth 16+ years old is present.
- 5) Attendants may take children from the nursery only for good reason, such as in case of illness. Any significant medical problem should be reported immediately to the child's parent(s) and/or legal guardian. Any child with obvious signs of a known communicable disease/condition will not be received into the nursery or a classroom.
- 6) Volunteers are not to give or apply any medication.
- 7) During diaper changes, topical medications should be used only when instructed by the parents.
- 8) A parent should be contacted when an injury, accident or medical emergency occurs. Any accident resulting in injury should be reported to the ministry leader in charge. (Appendix 4)
- 9) For children who do not require assistance in the bathroom, the adult attendant must remain outside the bathroom in the nursery. For children who require assistance, the adult attendant must assist the child with all the doors ajar. The diapering of an infant or toddler must take place on the change table in the nursery, in the presence of another attendant. The main washrooms are not to be used to change diapers.
- 10) Only one adult member of a family should serve in the nursery at a given time. A couple (husband and wife) should not serve in the nursery at the same time.
- 11) An adult or minor who is not scheduled as a nursery attendant for that particular service may not spend time in the nursery room(s) during or after the service. Parents, siblings and/or legal guardians are permitted to personally care for their own child/siblings.
- 12) Diaper changing and hand washing procedure will be posted in the nursery washroom.
- 13) The receiving and releasing of infants and toddlers shall be documented by an adult volunteer
- 14) The General Discipline Guidelines apply to nursery programs.

Sunday School, Nursery, Story Hour and Catechism Programs

- 1) Only one adult member of a family should serve in a classroom at a given time. A husband and wife should not serve together.
- 2) In Sunday School and Catechism classes only one volunteer is required with assistance from the hall monitor if required.
- 3) Nursery, Story Hour should have two volunteers if at all possible. One of them being an adult.
- 4) Only person 16+ of age may assist children (ages up to 4 years if necessary) with bathroom needs. Bathroom assistance is conducted as in the nursery policy.
- 5) Children in Kindergarten through third grade must use the buddy system when going to the bathroom. (same sex, same age)
- 6) Whenever a class is in session, the classroom door window shall not be obstructed. This allows a clear view into the classroom for observation by supervisors/hall monitor
- 7) The General Discipline Guidelines apply to Sunday School, Nursery, Story Hour and Catechism Programs

Vacation Bible School

- 1) All VBS activities will be conducted with at least two staff /volunteers, at least one of whom is an adult. They should not meet with a child without another adult or leader nearby to observe.
- 2) Classrooms held in off-site facilities such as a parsonage, activity building, or school should adhere to the same safety guidelines as in classrooms in the church building.
- 3) Church volunteers/staff transporting a child, when necessary, must have parental permission to do so. (Appendix 6) The number of passengers in any given vehicle will not exceed the number of seat belts in use
- 4) In the event that volunteer/staff use their home for a neighborhood VBS club, a child's parent must give signed consent for the child to meet at that home. (Appendix 6) Two volunteers/staff, at least one an adult must conduct in-home programs. Children using in-home programs must be able to use the washroom facilities without assistance. Children using in-home programs must be able to walk home.
- 5) General discipline Guidelines apply to Vacation Bible School

GEMS, Boys Club

- 1) Gems and Cadet leaders should identify abusive behaviors among minors in their program and have a policy to discourage these behaviors.
- 2) Leaders should provide adequate supervision of respective Club members or guests. Each Cadet and GEMS function should be supervised by at least two persons, an adult leader and another volunteer at least four years older than the Club members.
- 3) Leaders and Club members may meet privately once or twice and thereafter only with the permission of a parent and/or another with another leader in attendance. Any such meeting should occur in a public place.
- 4) If a child needs significant medical attention, the parent(s) /legal guardian should be notified immediately.
- 5) Club members should not arrive more than ten minutes before the start of the class. Neither should they stay longer than 10 minutes after the end of the program.
- 6) Any Club activities away from the church facilities/out of town/overnight should be conducted in general compliance with the aforementioned policies. Leaders or designated volunteers transporting a child must have parental permission to do so (Appendix 6). The number of passengers in any given vehicle will not exceed the number of seat belts in use.
- 7) Appropriate displays of affection between Club leaders and their Club members is often part of conveying support and encouragement to one another. Such displays can be misinterpreted and for that reason, such displays of affection should be limited to such actions as a brief hug, an arm around the shoulder, an open-handed pat on the back, a hand clasp or a light touch to the forearm. A leader's or Club member's right to refuse any of these will be respected.
- 8) The General Discipline Guidelines apply to the GEMS and Boys Club programs.

Youth Program

- 1) Each year Youth Group Leaders should sponsor a class about abuse for members of our Youth Program. The content and structure of this class should be approved by the SCT. Topics for this class should include date violence, biblical guidelines for dating relationships, awareness of the signs of abuse, a teenager's response to a teenage victim or abuser, and/or prevention of abuse.
- 2) Youth Group Leaders may meet privately with a youth group member once or twice and thereafter only with the permission of a parent and/or with another youth leader in attendance. Any such meeting should only occur in a public place.
- 3) Regardless of the relative ages, it is never appropriate for a youth group leader and a youth group member to date each other. Similarly, a youth group leader should not date the close friend of a member of the youth group.
- 4) In the context of group activities, youth group leaders should provide supervision of the youth in their care. Youth group leaders should not hold a youth group function without appropriate or sufficient supervision. Youth group functions should be under the supervision of at least two adults. These could be two youth group leaders or a leader and the other being an adult volunteer. These guidelines also apply to activities away from the church site. Youth leaders or program volunteers transporting a youth must have parental permission to do so (Appendix 6) For Youth overnight activities youth must have parental permission. (Appendix 6)

- 5) Appropriate displays of affection are often part of conveying support and encouragement to one another. Displays of affection between youth leader and youth group member should be limited to such actions as a brief hug, an arm around the shoulder, an open-handed pat on the back, a handclasp, a handshake or a light touch to the forearm. These displays of affection should be restricted to public areas, Youth group leader's or members right to refuse such a display will be respected.
- 6) Gifts, phone calls or letters directed to a youth group member by a youth group leader or exchanged should only be ministry related.
- 7) The General Discipline Guidelines apply to the Youth Group.

Pastoral Care

- 1) Pastoral Care refers to the ministry of Christian care done by Pastors, Elders, Deacons and other designated volunteers.
- 2) The Pastor and/or associates will engage pastoral care as part of the regular work of a Pastor. Except in cases of emergency this will take place in the context of a regular scheduled work week. Specific counseling will occur in a place where another adult is available. Meeting times should always be documented. Counseling with members/youth should only occur when another church staff person or adult is present or on duty. Outside of regular pastoral visitation, the Pastor may meet privately with church members in a public place.
- 3) Other office bearers and designated volunteers will engage in regular visitations of those under their care. Specific counseling with any member of Lucknow CCRC should be limited to once or twice without the prior approval of their respective accountability group.
- 4) An office bearer or designated volunteer may meet privately with an other church member/youth of opposite sex, but these visits should only occur in a public place. All visits should be documented. (name, date, start and end time)
- 5) Visits to sick, injured or shut-in people should normally be done by two people (e.g. Council member and his/her spouse)

Appendix1

DEFINITIONS

Physical Abuse

"Any intentional human act that results in physical pain or injury to another person" -- whether or not it is a cut or wound or leaves a mark or 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, any means of inflicting pain or injury to another person." (Agenda for Synod 1992, p 318)
Physical abuse can be discipline followed by a request/threat to the child/youth not to tell anyone what happened, not to report the discipline, or not to show anyone a mark or bruise.

Physical Neglect

Not doing what one is supposed to be doing to meet the physical needs of a person in his or her care. Neglect interferes with or prevents a child's normal development.

Sexual Abuse

"Sexual abuse generally includes any sexual intimacy forced on one person by another. Sexual abuse may or may not involve physical contact between people. Examples of non-physical contact sexual abuse include people exposing themselves, obscene phone-calls, or requests to engage in physical sexual contact with another, even though that physical contact does not occur. Non-physical contact sexual abuse of a child can include improper and suggestive speech, exposing a child to pornographic material, or masturbating in a child's presence. Sexual abuse involving physical contact includes fondling of body parts, intercourse, and oral and anal sex. Adult sexual abuse occurs when sexual relations are forced against a person's or partner's wishes, when sexual practices are uncomfortable or degrading, or when a person or partner is injured. Sexual abuse of a child takes place when, through non-physical contact or physical contact, the child participates in sexual activity that he/she cannot comprehend, cannot legally give consent to, or cannot resist. Threats or gifts often accompany the sexual abuse of children." (Wake Up: A Guidebook (Bethany Prod.) 1993)

Emotional/Psychological Abuse

Harming or threatened harm to a person's welfare or well-being by a chronic or intentional pattern of deprivation; manipulative threats, words or actions; harassment; or unnecessary and excessive attempts to control a person's behavior or thoughts. The term spiritual abuse may be understood as emotional/psychological abuse committed by a recognized spiritual leader who causes harm or threats of harm to a person's spiritual welfare or well-being by chronic or intentional pattern of behavior ordinarily contrary to role expectations of the spiritual leader's office.

Harassment

Any repeated improper behavior, both sexual and personal, that is offensive and unwelcome. Harassment can take many forms but generally it involves conduct, comment or display which is insulting, intimidating, humiliating, hurtful, demeaning, belittling, malicious, degrading; or otherwise causes offense, discomfort or personal humiliation or embarrassment to a person, or to a group of persons.

Harassment includes repeated harassment on the basis of race, ancestry, place of origin, color, ethnic origin, citizenship, religion, sex, sexual orientation, disability, age or marital/family status.

Volunteer

A person that serves any ministry at Lucknow CCRC

Paid Staff

A person that holds a payed position at Lucknow CCRC

Abuse Response Team (A.R.T.)

Ideally team should consist of at least three people. Qualified persons include past survivors, and/or those with experience in the field of social work and/or pastoral counseling and/or an interest in abuse issues.

Appendix 2

Reporting Abuse

Introduction

The Child and Family Services Act (1985) states:

- 1) Every person who believes on reasonable grounds that a child is or may be in need of protection must report promptly the belief and the information upon which it is based to a children's aid society (s.72.1).
- 2) A professional who in the course of his/her duties with respect to a child has reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is or may be suffering or may have suffered abuse shall report forthwith the suspicion and the information upon which it is based to a children's aid society. (s.68.3)
- 3) Abuse means: physical, sexual or emotional harm; risk of physical, sexual or emotional harm; as well as failure to care properly for a child. (neglect)

Assumptions:

Correct procedure in handling of (suspected abuse situations is of utmost importance to ensure an unhampered justice process and a minimum of harm to innocent persons.

Because correct procedure is at times a complicated matter it is best to involve a minimum of persons, and to have one knowledgeable and competent person coordinate the procedure.

Guiding Facts and Principles:

- 1) Where possible keep the victim informed
- 2) Incidents of sexual abuse are seldom isolated; if one person has been victimized it is likely that there are other victims.
- 3) The safety of vulnerable people must be given the highest priority by the church's leadership.
- 4) Mercy and compassion without justice are empty gestures. The perpetrator must be brought to a position of owning his or her problem, which will include aspects of repentance and remorse.
- 5) It is known that sexual abuse has life-lasting effects, with greater intensity for those victimized at younger ages.
- 6) Child sexual abuse is a misuse of authority and a mockery of God.
- 7) It is the church's legal duty not to impede, or interfere with the investigation of the civil authority, be it the Children's Aid or the Police.
- 8) The alleged abuser shall be made aware that if the alleged abuse is established, the Council takes responsibility for supervising a member of Lucknow Community Christian Reformed Church (LCCRC) who is in need of admonition and discipline (Church Order art. 78)
- 9) In Matthew 16:19 we are told that the church has a great responsibility in this regard. Jesus says "I give you the keys of heaven; whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

Procedure

The following procedures are followed in the Lucknow CCRC:

- 1) Anyone having suspicion on reasonable grounds of abuse of a child reports that suspicion immediately to Children's Aid Society of Huron County. (phone: 519-524 7356) and to the Lucknow CCRC A.R.T. The A.R.T. offers the reporting person support and facilitation in prompt reporting of the suspected abuse to Children's Aid Society, and to the Pastor/Chair of Council. Pastor/elders will respond as per: Response Procedures
- 2) Anyone who is unsure whether their observations qualify as “suspicion on reasonable grounds” consults with the A.R.T. who will **advise** further action.
- 3) Anyone reporting abuse does NOT approach either the alleged perpetrator or the alleged victim at any time to discuss concerns around the potential abuse situation. Investigation is the responsibility of Children's Aid Society and police. If an internal investigation is conducted it is coordinated by the the A.R.T
- 4) The A.R.T. Immediately advises the reporting person how to respond appropriately in the event the alleged perpetrator or alleged victim approach him/her to talk about the situation.
- 5) The A.R.T.. Reports the incident to a lawyer designated by council, and when/if necessary to the insurance company.
- 6) If the reporting person is uncomfortable approaching the A.R.T., or perceives the A.R.T. To be in a position of conflict of interest with respect to the information to be reported, the person discusses these concerns with the pastor of the congregation or, if absent with another designated person.
- 7) The A.R.T .reports minimal information to other persons or governing bodies within the congregation, strictly on a “need to know” basis. Need to know is determined by **any of the following**
 - a) Potential of litigation or other public liability for the congregation.
 - b) Danger to members of the congregation.
 - c) Need for the informed persons or governing bodies to take action with respect to the incident.

Appendix 3

Declaration Of Agreement and Understanding Of Lucknow Community Christian Reformed Church Abuse Prevention Guidelines

I _____ have read and understand the Lucknow Community
Name
Christian Reformed Church's Abuse Prevention Guidelines.

I agree to its regulations and mandates, and will adhere to them.

I realize this could result in suspension of my service duties if an allegation of abuse is made against me.

Additionally, I understand and agree that all allegations of physical and sexual abuse will be reported to agencies and law enforcement bodies in accordance with the laws of Ontario, or, when not covered by Ontario law, will be dealt with according to the policies and regulations of Lucknow Community Christian Reformed Church. I further acknowledge my responsibility to report another volunteer or any person whom I suspect, on reasonable grounds, has abused or is abusing a child.

My signature acknowledges my understanding and my agreement to this policy.

Signature

Date

Appendix 4

INCIDENT REPORT

The Incident Report should be completed as soon as possible after the incident occurs and should include as detailed a description of the situation as possible.

Child's / Youth's Name _____ Phone Number _____

Address _____

Nature of Incident / Injury _____

Incident Date and Time

Incident Location _____ Event Title _____

All Leaders Present _____

What happened? _____

Why did it happen? _____

What action was taken? _____

Contacted Parent(s) / Guardian(s) y / n

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) Response: _____

Leader's Name _____ Signature _____

Witness's Name _____ Signature _____

Appendix 5

CIRCULATING HALL MONITOR

- 1) The Scheduled serving deacon is our Hall Monitor (H.M.)
- 2) The H. M. shall observe the activities of the classrooms and nursery rooms periodically while class/church services (AM and PM) are in progress
- 3) When necessary the H.M. shall give or go for assistance as needed
- 4) The H.M. shall take note that all of the rules and procedures of the Abuse Prevention Policy of this church that apply are being met
- 5) Concerns or any violations of the Abuse Prevention Policy must be written,(Appendix 4) and brought to the attention of the program supervisor and a member of the Abuse Response Team immediately.

Appendix 6

CONSENT/AUTHORIZATION FORM

I/we hereby give permission for _____
Name

To attend the activities of _____
Name of Group

of Lucknow Community Christian Reformed Church (LCCRC).

I / WE DO HEREBY RELEASE the LCCRC and the directors thereof, along with any paid staff or volunteers associated with the Lucknow Youth Ministries from any and all liability, claims or demands for personal injury, sickness or death, as well as property damage that occur while participating in the activities of the group.

FURTHERMORE WE / I HEREBY ASSUME all risk of personal injury, sickness, death, damage and expenses as a result of participation in the recreation and work activities involved in this ministry program.

I / WE ALSO HEREBY GRANT our / my permission for _____
Name

to participate fully in all activities, (with the only exceptions or restrictions being listed on the back of the form) and do hereby give permission to take the participant to a doctor or hospital and hereby authorize medical treatment, including but not limitation to surgery, or medical treatment, and assume the responsibility of all medical bills, if any.

FURTHER, should it be necessary for the participant to return home due to medical reasons, disciplinary action or otherwise, we hereby assume all transportation costs.

IN ADDITION, should the group travel outside of the province of Ontario, we will acquire additional medical insurance and forward information to the group directors as required.

I / We give permission to LCCRC to use the name's, photograph(s), whether still or in motion, and/or recording(s) of the voice of the participant listed below, within the Lucknow Christian Reformed Church for only non-commercial, legal purposes such as: posters, wall display, recorded song and church newsletter.

Print name of Participant _____ Date of Birth _____

Parent(s) / Guardian's phone number _____ Health Card Number _____

Family Doctor _____ Doctor's phone number _____

Emergency Contact _____ Phone number _____

MUST BE SIGNED IF PARTICIPANT IS 19 YEARS OLD OR YOUNGER by either:

Father

Mother

Legal Guardian

List below any allergies, medical conditions or medications that authorized personnel should be aware of:

Appendix.7

Form For Conducting A Reference Check

Name of applicant

Date and time of interview

Name of reference

Phone number of reference

Name of person conducting interview

Interview conducted in person
 by phone

Procedure:

- 1) Introduce yourself and explain the reason for your call.
- 2) Assure the person that their responses will remain confidential within the limits of the law
- 3) Obtain permission to ask a number of questions.

Questions:

How long have you known the applicant, and in what context?

1. (only if ministry position involves working with children)
Have you ever experienced the applicant working with or interacting with children? If so please describe.

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

Reviewed and adopted by L.C.C.R.C. Council Chair _____
date

Dated and signed by Chairperson of Council _____
signature