

Sunnyside Christian Reformed Church

SAFE CHURCH POLICY

1. Introduction

- A. Vision: Sunnyside Christian Reformed Church (SCRC) is committed to providing a safe, nurturing, and secure environment in which adults and children may worship, grow and serve God; and when abuse has occurred, the response is compassion and justice that foster healing.
- B. Scope: This policy is intended to systematically prevent all forms of abuse and the misuse of power within our congregation and ministries.
- C. Purpose
 - 1. To ensure that all reasonable steps have been taken to provide a safe, healthy environment for children, youth, vulnerable adults and the volunteers and employees who participate in SCRC programs and activities. This Policy demonstrates that we will not tolerate any acts of harm to our children, or other vulnerable persons in our care.
 - 2. To educate staff, leaders, and volunteers about abuse, the dynamics of power, and especially the responsibility required by people in positions of power.
 - 3. To satisfy requirements from insurance companies and to limit the risk of abuse or harm.
 - 4. This Policy applies to all volunteers and employees at SCRC and to all church-sponsored activities and programs.
 - 5. The SCRC will maintain a Safe Church Team to provide leadership regarding this policy and implementation of this policy.

2. Definitions

A. Misconduct

As a church, we are committed to holding our leaders and volunteers to the highest standard of behavior. Therefore, the following definitions of abuse go beyond legal definitions to include any form of ungodly conduct, misuse of power, misuse of spiritual authority, sexually inappropriate behavior, neglect, and abuse of office. These are behaviors that violate the trust and well-being of individuals and the community of believers, and they taint the office held by the offender.

- 1. **Physical Misconduct** is: Threatened harm or non-accidental injury inflicted on a minor or vulnerable adult. Offensive or harmful contact with an adult. Physical misconduct is sometimes a single event, but more often a chronic pattern of interacting with a minor or an adult.
- 2. **Sexual Misconduct** is: Exploiting or grooming (preparing) a minor or an adult – regardless of consent or circumstances – for the purpose of sexual touch, sexual activity, or emotional intimacy with the result of either sexual gratification or power and control over the minor and/or adult. Unwelcome touch, sexual activity, or emotional intimacy between co-workers, co-volunteers. Sexual touch, sexual activity, or emotional intimacy between a supervisor and a subordinate who serve together in a church program or church ministry. The development of or the attempt of a ministry leader to develop a sexual or emotional relationship with a participant in the ministries of the church.
- 3. **Emotional Misconduct** is: A pattern of behavior in which a person insults, humiliates, and manipulates an individual or group in order to establish or

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maintain control over them. Emotional misconduct includes: Threatening a person's safety, property, or loved ones. Isolating a person from family, friends, and acquaintances. Demeaning, bullying, belittling, shaming or humiliating a person. Delivering constant criticism. Emotionally blackmailing or harassing a person.

4. **Spiritual Misconduct** is: A form of emotional and psychological abuse, characterized by a systematic pattern of coercive and controlling behavior in a religious context. Spiritual misconduct may include manipulation and exploitation by appeal to religious convictions and beliefs, censorship of decision making, requirements for secrecy and silence, coercion to conform [inability to ask questions], or requirement of obedience to the abuser.
- B. **Power**: Power is the ability to influence or affect an outcome. We all have power as human beings; some of us are given more power as a result of our role or our status within a community. When power is stewarded well, it brings flourishing to all people as an expression of the shalom of the kingdom of God.
- C. **Abuse of power**: Abuse of power is misusing power to harm another person or using power and influence for personal gain at the expense of another person. Power can be used to harm another person intentionally or through ignorance, subtly or overtly, to advance one's own desires without regard for the needs or desires of others in ways that disturb the flourishing of others. At the core of all types of abuse are behaviors related to acquiring, maintaining, and misusing power and control. The same power dynamics show up in all types of abuse, whether it be sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse, or spiritual abuse.
- D. **Child/children**: Washington State Law (RCW 26.44.00) defines child or children as any person under the age of eighteen years.
- E. **Child Abuse or Neglect** (as defined by Washington State Law): RCW 26.44.00 defines Abuse or Neglect as: "Abuse or neglect" means sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, or injury of a child by any person under circumstances which cause harm to the child's health, welfare, or safety, excluding conduct permitted under RCW 9A.16.100; or the negligent treatment or maltreatment of a child by a person responsible for or providing care to the child. An abused child is a child who has been subjected to child abuse or neglect as defined in this section.
- F. **Safe Church Team**: The Safe Church Team shall have at least 2 member, and all individuals having experience or training reflecting competency on one of more of the following: Abuse of Power; Trauma Informed Care or Ministry; Health Boundaries; Circle of Grace program; and/or Domestic Abuse/Intimate Partner Violence.
- G. **Ministry Leader**: Any person, paid or volunteer, ordained or unordained, in a position of leadership over an area or aspect of ministry in SCRC. (This could include pastors, directors, elders, deacons, Sunday School director, Gems leaders, Cadet leaders, youth leaders, Nursery leader, Sprouts Leaders, etc.)
- H. **Ministry Staff Leader/Pastor**: Any paid staff, pastor, or director who has a position of spiritual authority over other volunteers or members of the church.
- I. **Adult Volunteer**: Any volunteer over the age of 18 who leads or assists ministry programming.
- J. **Helper**: A youth who assists a volunteer in a program. Must be 13 years of age or older.
- K. **Vulnerable Adult**: A person over the age of 18 who is unable to protect himself or herself from abuse, neglect, or exploitation because of a mental or physical impairment or advanced age.
- L. **Unrelated Adult**: an unrelated adult is defined is not from the same immediate family.

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Please communicate with Safe Church Team or Senior Pastor with questions regarding unrelated adult.

3. General Protection Policy and Expectations of Ministry Leaders and Volunteers

- A. Any person in a leadership role, including employees, should be a professing member of SCRC for at least six months before assuming a leadership role. Any exceptions to this rule must be approved by Executive Board.
- B. Any person in a volunteer position, outside of leadership, should be a professing member of SCRC, or have attended Sunday worship services for at least 6 months. Exceptions must be approved by SCRC Senior Pastor.
- C. All ministry leaders, pastors, staff, council members and adult volunteers will agree to a criminal background check at the beginning of their time of service. The form to consent to authorize background checks will be available on the SCRC church website, www.suncrc.org . All information provided on the consent form is secure.
- D. The following information will be required for background checks: legal name and other aliases, current and previous addresses, social security number, date of birth, ethnicity, gender, phone number, and email address. All information received via background checks will be confidential. Information will be available only to the Senior Pastor and to those who are directly responsible for making the selection of the ministry leader, volunteer, or staff (employee).
- E. Background checks will be required every 2 years after initial check. Church support staff will update list and send reminders when 2 year renewal of background checks are due. It is the responsibility of SCRC support staff to complete all background checks and communicate completion with ministry leaders
- F. Any employee or volunteer with a previous history of sexual misconduct or physical assault, or misdemeanor or felony conviction of child abuse, or pleading no contest to any misdemeanor or felony charge will not be allowed to serve in any positions working with children, youth, or other vulnerable populations.
- G. All ministry leaders, pastors, staff, council members and adult volunteers must attend yearly training session on the Safe Church Policy and affirm they have read the policy. This may be completed by viewing the video training on the SCRC website and affirming policy has been reviewed, or by attending an in-person training. Training will be required at the beginning of each church program year.
- H. It is the responsibility of ministry leaders to provide an updated list of volunteers and to communicate with volunteers regarding Safe Church Policy and to assure completion of background check. Ministry leaders will be notified by SCRC support staff when volunteers have completed background checks and attended/reviewed Annual Safe Church training.
- I. Any person outside of SCRC who wishes to volunteer in ministries with children and youth must complete the following items:
 - 1. Complete Background check and annual Safe Church training.
 - 2. Provide a reference from the Pastor of the church they attend which addresses regular attendance at church (6 month minimum) or verification of church membership, statements addressing faith in Jesus Christ as personal Savior, and their assessment of person's abilities and character regarding working with youth and children. This must be submitted to SCRC pastor prior to volunteering
- J. Door windows are not to be covered for any reason. When working with a child one-on-one, the room door should be left open.

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- K. While appropriate display of affection is often part of conveying support and encouragement, such displays can be misinterpreted. Therefore, displays of affection should be limited to such actions as a brief shoulder to shoulder hug (avoid full body to body contact), an arm around the shoulders, an open-hand pat on the back, a handclasp or handshake, or a light touch to the forearm. Children, youth, vulnerable adults, employees and volunteers have the right to refuse any display of affection. This will be respected at all times.
- L. Physical contact with children should be age and developmentally appropriate. Lap-sitting is only appropriate with children 5 years and younger. Encourage older children to sit next to you. Consideration should be given to developmental age of child.
- M. If you observe a ministry leader, volunteer, or employee not following the Safe Church Policy, utilize Matthew 18 principal first. Notify the Safe Church Committee for support if needed. Due to the potential for harm, anyone consistently not following the Safe Church Policy must be disclosed to the Safe Church Team.
- N. Insurance availability requires there be policy and procedure for screening, reporting and responding to allegations of abuse.
- O. All ministry leaders, pastors, and volunteers are required to report any suspected abuse of a minor (physical, sexual, emotional, neglect) to the civil authorities (Child Protective Services and Law Enforcement if appropriate) and to the Safe Church Team.
- P. All Pastors, ministry leaders and volunteers are required to use their access to the church internet and technology belonging to the church (computers, laptops, cell phones, etc) in ways that are legal, reflect godly conduct, and conform to network etiquette and laws.

4. General Guidelines for Safe Supervision of Children and Vulnerable Adults

These guidelines are designed to protect all children (0-18 years of age), and vulnerable adults from harm while attending and participating in all SCRC programs and church-sponsored events.

- A. **Two-Adult Rule and The Rule of Three:** At all church-sponsored functions involving the supervision of children or vulnerable adults, either the Two Adult Rule or the Rule of Three will be practiced. No staff or volunteers should be alone with a single child or vulnerable adult in locations where they cannot be clearly observed by others.
 1. **The Two-Adult Rule:** At least two, unrelated, screened adults must be present at every function and in each classroom, vehicle, or other enclosed area during all activities involving children or vulnerable adults.
 2. **The Rule of Three:** The Rule of 3 is followed when there is not capacity to abide by the 2 Adult Rule. The Rule of 3 states at least 3 individuals must be present at every function and during all activities involving children or vulnerable adults. When the Rule of 3 is used, there must be another unrelated screened adult volunteer nearby, monitoring the group. The 3rd individual should be another adult, or a youth at least 13 years of age or older. There should also be clear unobstructed view into the room or space being used.
- B. **One-to-One Meetings:**

In children and youth ministry, there are times when a pastor, ministry leader or volunteer may need to meet one-to-one with a child or youth. If this is necessary, the following safe protocols should be followed.

 1. When possible, the meeting should only take place between a child and ministry leader/volunteer, or pastor of the same gender.

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2. The meeting should take place in a public place (i.e. restaurant, coffee shop, bookstore, etc) with the permission and knowledge of the parents.
3. The ministry leader, volunteer or pastor should notify the director of the ministry or another designated church leader, and also record the meeting in a log or in meeting minutes which are available for review.
4. Ministry leaders, volunteers and pastors should consult with the Safe Church Team as needed.

C. Transportation:

Transportation protocols apply to adults, 21 years and older, while serving in ministry to children 18 and under, and vulnerable adults, who may transport non-related persons in the course of SCRC sponsored programs.

1. Any person who transports a child (0-18 years of age) for any church sponsored event must be 21 years or older, have a copy of current insurance and driver's license on file with SCRC.
2. To transport children, there must be an adequate safety belt for each passenger and they will be work any time the car is moving, following Washington State law.
3. When transporting children, two adults should be present and seated in the front of the vehicle. Child/children are always seated in the back seat(s) of the vehicle.
4. Adults or minors who transport family members are not subject to the transportation policy.
5. Transportation by one adult leader and one minor/child should be avoided. In the event that it is unavoidable, the following provisions should be in place:
 - a. One adult driver and 2 children present and sitting in the back seat(s).
 - b. At least 2 children are present in the vehicle and always seated in the back seat.
 - c. Clear consent from the parents/guardians of the child is received.
 - d. Clear communication with the ministry leader when the adult volunteer leaves with the child and when the child has safely arrived and is no longer in their care or supervision.

D. Discipline:

When children or youth act out during church events, ministry leaders and volunteers will take care to address the misbehavior in ways that are consistent with the following guidelines:

1. Parents are to be informed whenever a child misbehaves beyond minor correction or if a pattern of misbehavior develops.
2. Corporal punishment is not permitted (spanking, pinching, hitting)
3. A second adult or parent should be involved in classrooms where misbehavior is an ongoing problem.
4. Whenever possible, leaders should address disruptive behavior by: redirecting the child to another activity or helping the child focus on a more acceptable behavior.

E. Guidelines for using Electronic Communication and Social Media (Messaging, Email, Texting, and all forms of Social Media):

Electronic communication (email, texts, messaging) and use of social media has become the preferred means for communication for many people. While seeking to use technology to encourage connections between ministry leader/volunteers and children, it is important to provide guidelines that safeguard children from potential abuse and protect leaders/volunteers. To that end, all ministry staff leaders and volunteers will abide by the following in their interactions with children.

1. Communication with children should take place between 7am and 9pm, unless in an

- emergency.
2. Parents must give permission for electronic communication via the Annual Children and Youth Permission Slip form (See Appendix D). Once permission is given, staff, ministry leaders, and volunteers can hold email addresses and cell phone numbers in their care.
 3. Email, messages, texts, or phone calls should be short. Group texts and reminders should be sent whenever possible, versus individual texts. Ongoing conversations or lengthy personal communications should not be done through email or text.
 4. Staff, ministry leaders or volunteers may not use any image (photo) of a child without written consent of the parents via the Annual Children and Youth Permission Slip form. Images and photos will only be used in ways that protect the value and dignity of those pictured.
 5. If any electronic communication raises any child protection concerns, the staff, ministry lead, or volunteer will notify the ministry lead (if a volunteer), Senior Pastor or Safe Church Team.
 6. When a ministry leader or volunteer leaves a ministry involving children, due to misconduct of any kind, Senior Pastor and Safe Church Team will ask that the volunteer not contact any child, and that all contact information be removed from the volunteer's devices.

F. Guidelines for Social Media Groups

Ministry groups may have a Social Media group, provided they follow these guidelines:

1. The group must be "closed" or "private" so that it is not public information.
2. The group must be monitored by at least 2 staff/volunteers who have admin rights.
3. Young people, staff, ministry leader, and volunteers may become members of this group provided they are 13 and older.
4. While direct 1:1 messages should be limited between youth and staff, ministry leaders and volunteers, communication can occur openly through comments and posts on the group page.
5. Church events can be posted on the page.
6. Care should be taken to not include personal identifiable information of any child under the age of 18 on the group page. (full name, home address, email address, cell phone number)

5. Program-Specific Guidelines

A. Nursery Guidelines

These nursery guidelines are designed to protect children from harm while they are placed in the care of nursery volunteers during church related events. These guidelines apply to all SCRC activities which provide a nursery as part of their program. (In addition to **General Guidelines** listed above in Sections 3 and 4)

1. Only adults who are screened and have completed the Safe Church policy training will be able to serve as adult volunteers in the nursery. There will be 2 adult volunteers (age 18 and over) assigned for Sunday morning church services and any nursery during a church related event. The 2 adults will not be from the same immediate family.
2. No child should be left unattended in the nursery at any time.
3. Parents must check each child in to the nursery via the electronic program provided, "Planning Center Check-Ins". If the computer system is unavailable, a paper check-in will be available. Planning Center Check-Ins generates a name tag

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- for child and parent with matching number/letter identification. Parents are able to provide special instructions when signing their child in using this system.
4. Children in infant and toddler nurseries are to be picked up only by their parents, or by the person who brought them. Children will be dismissed after proper identification has been made, either because the adult nursery volunteers know the parent or upon the receipt of the Planning Center Check In tag, which matches their child's name tag.
 5. Nursery volunteers will not change diapers. Parents will be notified of child needing diaper change via cell phone and will return to nursery to complete diaper change.
 6. Diaper changing policy will be posted at nursery check in, clearly visible to parents or guardians.
 7. An adult nursery volunteer should provide minimal assistance for a child who is able to use the bathroom (bathroom located inside nursery room). Only one child should use the bathroom at a time.
 8. Accidents or illnesses must be reported immediately to the child's parent or guardian. An **Accident or Incident Report Form** (Appendix D) must be filled out in case of an accident or injury, including one copy for the parents and one copy for the Nursery Coordinator.
 9. Volunteers will follow expectations set by Nursery Coordinator. Youth volunteers/assistants must be age 13 or older and do not replace the 2 adult screened volunteers.

B. Sprouts Guidelines (Children's Worship for ages 3- Kindergarten)

These guidelines apply for any pre-school aged church related program. (In addition to **General Guidelines** listed above in Sections 3 and 4)

1. Only adults who are screened and have completed the Safe Church policy training will be able to serve as adult volunteers in Sprouts. There will be 2 adult volunteers (age 18 and over) assigned for each Sunday Sprouts Worship service. The 2 adults will not be from the same immediate family.
2. No child should be left unattended in Sprouts at any time.
3. Sprouts Worship service begins at the same time as the regular worship service. (10:30am) Children may be dropped off 15 minutes prior to start of service.
4. Parents must check each child in to Sprouts via the electronic program provided, "Planning Center Check-Ins". If the computer system is unavailable, a paper check-in will be available. Planning Center Check-Ins generates a name tag for child and parent with matching number/letter identification. Parents are able to provide special instructions when signing their child in using this system.
5. Children in Sprouts are to be picked up only by their parents, or by the person who brought them. Children will be dismissed after proper identification has been made, either because the adult volunteers know the parent or upon the receipt of the Planning Center Check In tag, which matches their child's name tag.
6. Restroom procedure: If a child requests to use the restroom during Sprouts, one volunteer will take them to the nursery restroom (located across the hallway), where other adult volunteers are present. Children of preschool age should be able to use the restroom without assistance. If the child requests assistance, the adult volunteer may provide assistance, keeping the door to the bathroom open. The child will be instructed to wash their hands when toileting is complete. The volunteer will take them back to Sprouts.
7. Youth volunteers/assistants must be age 13 or older and do not replace the 2 adult screened volunteers.

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8. Accidents or illnesses must be reported immediately to the child's parent or guardian. An **Accident or Incident Report Form** (Appendix D) must be filled out in case of an accident or injury, including one copy for the parents and one copy for the Sprouts Coordinator

C. Guidelines for Church School on Sundays (Sunday School)

(In addition to General Guidelines listed above in Sections 3 and 4)

1. The Circle of Grace curriculum will be provided for 1-4 Sundays every year for all children attending Sunday School.
2. At least one screened adult will be with children at all times.
3. Two Adult Rule or Rule of Three will be practiced in Sunday School program. A monitor will be assigned to randomly observe Sunday School classrooms. (Normally Sunday School Coordinator/superintendent or their designee)
4. Accidents or illnesses must be reported immediately to the child's parent or guardian. An **Accident or Incident Report Form** (Appendix D) must be filled out in case of an accident or injury, including one copy for the parents and one copy for the Sunday School director.

D. Guidelines for GEMS, Cadets, Middle School, High School programs (Wyldlife and City Wide Youth Group) and Vacation Bible School

(In addition to General Guidelines listed in Sections 3 and 4)

1. Must follow the Two Adult Rule or Rule of Three at all activities.
2. Parents or Guardians must return the **Annual Children and Youth Permission Slip form** (See Appendix D) at the beginning of each church program year. Ministry leaders will inform parents of relevant policies and the Annual Children and Youth Permission Slip form via a letter or parent meeting. Ministry leaders will make every effort to collect Permission form as soon as reasonably possible.
3. During scheduled events or meetings, leaders should know where youth are at all times.
4. If using the Rule of Three, a monitor will be available to randomly observe classrooms or enclosed areas.
5. If a young person leaves an event without permission, the parents/guardians will be called immediately.
6. Children may not arrive earlier than ten minutes before starting time. Children will not be dismissed earlier than the stated time. At least two adults will remain after the meeting until all the children have been picked up. Written permission from the parent/guardian is necessary for an adult (other than parent/guardian) to take a child home.
7. GEMS, Cadets, VBS: Parents must come into church to pick up children (not wait in the parking lot).
8. Accidents or illnesses must be reported immediately to the child's parent or guardian. An **Accident or Incident Report Form** (Appendix D) must be filled out in case of an accident or injury, including one copy for the parents and one copy for the Ministry Leaders.
9. General Transportation Guidelines will be followed (Section 4. B. above). Specific permission from a parent/guardian is necessary for an adult volunteer to take a youth home from a meeting or event. If the parent does not pick up their youth or cannot be contacted, after a reasonable attempt to do so is made, an adult volunteer will take the youth home.

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Note: High School age youth may drive themselves and siblings to activities, with assumed permission from parents. Permission from parents can also be assumed if youth are transported to meeting or event with non-related youth. Ministry leaders should make every effort to confirm this with parents/guardians as soon as is reasonably possible.

10. A separate Permission Form must be completed for offsite overnight events.
11. A minimum of two adult chaperones are required for an overnight event. If the event is co-ed, then there must be one chaperone of each gender. Sleeping areas will be off-limits to members of the opposite gender.
12. Each activity whether at church or away from church will be conducted in accordance with the Safe Church Policy.
13. For Wyldlife and City Wide Youth Group: all adult leaders and volunteers must meet the criteria listed in General Protection Policy and Expectations of Ministry Leaders and Volunteers. If background screening is completed by volunteer or leaders home church, proof must be provided to SCRC Ministry leader.

6. Pastoral Care Visitation Guidelines (Includes Pastors, Elders and Deacons)

Formal pastoral care is care carried out by church representatives – ministers (pastors), elders, or deacons, on behalf of the church community.

Some forms of pastoral care involve one-on-one visitation, such as with those who are experiencing a time of suffering or grief, with those who are housebound, or with those in the hospital. In these cases, pastoral visits are made to offer spiritual friendship, help, support, and contact with the community of faith. These visits may include practical help, giving information, and/or supporting people as they make difficult decisions.

The following guidelines are provided to ensure safe and healthy practices of pastoral care visitation:

- A. All ministers(pastors), elders, and deacons must take the annual Safe Church Policy training.
- B. Pastoral Care visits should be conducted in the morning, afternoon or early evening.
- C. If possible, 2 unrelated pastoral care representatives will meet with a congregant or person in need, when the visit is in a private location.
- D. If a pastoral care visitor meets alone 1:1 with a congregant, they should inform SCRC office staff of their visit location and when they will return. If visit is in an assisted living or long term care facility, the visitor should sign in to the log provided by the facility.
- E. Visits made in the previous month will be recorded in the elders or deacons minutes during their monthly meeting. For Pastors and Elders, visits are recorded by the Elder Clerk in the minutes. For Deacons, the Deacon Secretary will record visits in the minutes.
- F. In the interest of confidentiality, all records of pastoral care visits should be kept secure and respectful of privacy. Records should be minimal, including the name of the person visited, the date, and a brief indication of the reason for the visit.
- G. When a pastoral care visitor believes the person being visited may have a 'dementia-like' condition, information will be left at the visit with the name of the visitor(s), address of church, and contact must be left at the residence or facility.
- H. All pastoral care visitors will honor the limits of their role in giving care, referring congregants as the situation requires to the services of counselors, spiritual directors, and others who are better trained and resourced to meet a congregant's needs. The

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Executive Board and Council chair is responsible for overseeing that risk is being assessed and these pastoral care guidelines are properly adhered to.

7. Reporting Suspected Abuse

- A. Washington State Law requires that certain persons (this includes any practitioner, professional school personnel, registered or licensed nurse, social worker, psychologist, pharmacist, or employee of the Department of Social and Health Services) working with children are mandated to report any abuse or suspicions of abuse (RCW 25.44.030) to the proper law enforcement agency or to the Department of Social and Health Services. Church staff, volunteers, and Pastors are not specifically mentioned, but case studies have included them.
- B. All Allegations: Employees and volunteers are required to report any allegations of misconduct or any suspected abuse to the Safe Church Team lead, Pastors, or to the ministry leader (who will report the allegation to the Safe Church Team lead and/or Pastors) Individuals should report to the Safe Church Team lead or Executive Board President if the Pastors are involved in the allegation. It is not the responsibility of the reporting person to substantiate the alleged misconduct or suspected abuse, but only to report the suspected abuse or incident.
- C. The report shall be made at the first opportunity, but no longer than 48 hours after there is reasonable cause to believe that the child or vulnerable adult has suffered abuse or neglect.
- D. Any staff or volunteer who witnesses any abuse or neglect, or suspects that abuse or neglect is occurring, must report it to Child Protective Services, and law enforcement as necessary. This also applies when a child discloses abuse or neglect to the adult staff member or volunteer.
- E. The Safe Church Team must be notified as soon as possible. The Safe Church Team will assist the staff member or volunteer with the reporting process.
- F. It is not appropriate for any ministry leader or volunteer to confront or go to the person involved in the case of suspected or observed child abuse or neglect, due to the potential for harm, and confidentiality breach.
- G. See Appendix A for reporting phone numbers.
- H. See Appendix C for Abuse Warning signs: what to look for when abuse is occurring.

8. Responding to Allegations and Suspected Abuse

- A. When an allegation is made, the **Accident or Incident Report** must be completed to document the incident. The form is available on the church website at www.suncrc.org. The information will be kept confidential.
- B. Response to any allegation of misconduct must be done in compliance with the Safe Church Policy. Confidentiality will surround the process.
- C. The Classical Abuse Response Team may be contacted to help a church through the situation.
- D. The Pastors and Executive Board are kept informed throughout the process, unless they are involved in the allegation.
- E. Executive Board may decide to remove the accused from their position until the investigation has been completed.
- F. If the allegations are not substantiated, every effort will be made to restore the accused.
- G. If the allegations are proven true, the person is removed from their position.
- H. The Safe Church Team may recommend appropriate disciplinary measures to the Executive Board who will then proceed in keeping with Church Order.

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- I. There is a contractual obligation to our insurance company to report any situation that may bring liability against our policy. This must be done within 24-48 hours from the initial report of possible abuse or neglect.
- J. Criminal Proceedings: If criminal proceedings are involved, the Safe Church Committee shall promptly revisit the matter at the conclusion of the criminal proceedings and take other action as the circumstances dictate.
- K. Compassionate Response for those Involved: The Safe Church Team, in communication with Executive Board will appoint a wise, experienced Liaison(s) to minister with compassion to all the individuals and families involved. Expectations are for regular contact (at least monthly) until all investigations, criminal proceedings have been completed. Communication and Support should continue after completion of proceedings for a period of time to be determined with the persons involved. This should be done in consultation with legal counsel.

Appendix A: Useful Phone Numbers for Reporting Abuse or Neglect

- Child Abuse/Neglect Reporting 1-855-420-5888
- Adult Protective Services 800-459-0421: living at home or somewhere other than a residential care facility.
- Complaint Resolution Unit 800-562-6078: living in a nursing home, adult family home or boarding home.
- Law enforcement agency – dial 911

Yakima County Police Department Contacts	
City	Non -Emergencies
Grandview	(509) 882-2000
Granger	(509) 854-2656
Mabton	(509) 894-4096
Moxee	(509) 575-8850
Selah	(509) 698-7347
Sunnyside	(509) 836-6200
Tieton	(509) 673-0200
Toppenish	(509) 865-4355
Union Gap	(509) 248-0430
Wapato	(509) 877-3161
Yakima	(509) 575-6200
Zillah	(509) 829-6199
Sheriff's Office	(509) 574-2500
EMERGENCIES PLEASE CALL 9-1-1	

Appendix B: Signs and Symptoms of Child Abuse School Age

Note: Children rarely exhibit just one sign indicating that they are the victims of abuse. Some symptoms may also represent typical developmental changes, or the after-effect of other kinds of trauma in their lives. Conversely, it is possible for abuse to be taking place without the appearance of any symptoms because of the child's ability to mask or deny what is very confusing and painful to acknowledge. Generally, several symptoms appearing at once *may* be an indication of abuse.

- Complaints of pain, irritation, soreness, redness on the child's bottom; smearing feces on walls or objects
- Pattern of injuries, multiple injuries, injuries about the face or neck; failure to complain about or explain an obvious physical discomfort; hiding bruises
- Unusual fears: a familiar person, a particular room, a particular object, or fear of new experiences
- Poor concentration in classroom; inability to focus
- Exhibiting adult-pleasing behaviors, striving for perfection, acting miserable if failing
- Engaging in self-injury, engaging in excessive masturbation or masturbation in a public setting
- Acting enraged and out of control; expressing anger through destruction
- Shyness or fear about physical touch
- Exhibiting sexual behavior beyond comprehension or maturity level; behaving in a sexual manner with other children or adults
- Exhibiting signs of needing to be in control of others or situations; bullying others
- Hostility and distrust of adults, mood swings and irritability, violent disruptions
- Acting out, including hoarding food and toys, lying, stealing, assaulting
- Frequent absences from school or other scheduled events because of being punished
- Low self-esteem, particular sensitivity to criticism
- Hyper-vigilance, excessive and suspicious watching of other people; easily startled
- Preoccupation with fire and setting fires
- Eating disorders, use of laxatives, unexplained and dramatic changes in weight

Appendix C: Responding to a Disclosure of Abuse from a Child

For informational purposes, the following set of guidelines pertains to information that a child may wish to disclose to an adult.

1. If a child asks to talk with you at church, provide a room (with a window) in which to speak privately.
2. Listen carefully to what the child tells you and respond in a supportive, nonjudgmental manner. “I’m sorry this happened to you. I’m glad you told me”.
3. Reassure the child that he or she did the right thing by telling you.
4. Tell the child that whatever happened was not his or her fault and reassure the child that he/she does not deserve to be hurt by anyone.
5. Do not appear frightened or disgusted by the child’s story, since this may cause the child to stop talking or to believe you are upset with him or her.
6. Avoid asking leading questions. Examples of what you could say: “Is there anything more you’d like to tell me?” Do not try to convince the child that the story isn’t true or that it didn’t happen the way he or she reports it did.
7. Do not attempt to assess the truthfulness of the child’s disclosure—that will be for trained professionals to decide. Assure the child you believe him/her and that you care about him/her.
8. Do not tell or suggest to the child that he or she has been abused.
9. Do not promise **not** to tell anyone. Tell the child that you need to find help so the incident can be prevented from happening again. Share with the child that other people need to know what happened and they will talk to the child later.
10. Do not ask the child to show you any bruises that are beneath the child’s underwear or clothing; observe only those bruises that are accessible.
11. If you feel comfortable doing so, speak to the child and offer support in the following weeks and months.

Appendix D: Forms

All forms listed below are available on the church website at www.suncrc.org

Accident or Incident Report

Annual Children and Youth Permission Slip form

Annual Children and Youth Permission Slip Form

Parent's First and Last Name: _____

Parent's Email: _____

Parent's Phone: _____

I am the parent and/or the lawful guardian of the following minors:
List Children's Names

I understand that the GEMS, Cadets, Wyldlife and City Wide Youth (collectively "Youth Group") are organizations of the Sunnyside Christian Reformed Church.

As a Parent/Guardian, I hereby give my Permission for my Child(ren) to participate in the Youth Group events and all related activities during school year 2022-2023.

I also, here by give consent for my child(ren) to participate and attend off campus events, e.g., day trips, which may occur throughout the year.

I also, hereby release Sunnyside Christian Reformed Church and all adult leaders of the Organization and any other employees, servants, and agents of the Sunnyside Christian Reformed Church ("SCRC Agents") from any and all liability for any damage, injury or loss arising out of actions taken in good faith in connection with the Event, regardless of whether caused by the negligence of any party hereby released.

I also here by grant SCRC Agents permission to photograph my child and use any photographic/video likeness of my child for ministry-related purposes, such as our ministry's website, social media, bulletin boards and presentations.

I also hereby allow SCRC Agents to store my child's contact information electronically. My child's leaders may use it to communicate with my child about activities via email, text messages, phone calls and/or social media.

Select an Option:

Yes

No

Are there any medications, allergies, past medical history, or any activity or dietary restrictions we need to know about, including any recent injuries, illnesses, or other medical conditions that may cause additional and/or new injury when participating in any event?

CONSENT FOR EMERGENCY TREATMENT: In case of emergency, I hereby give permission to the physician selected by Sunnyside Christian Reformed Church leaders to hospitalize, secure proper treatment for and order injection, anesthesia, or surgery, for my child/ward as named above. In the event medical treatment is necessary, as stated, I give permission for my child to participate in all activities. If any changes occur, I will contact Sunnyside Christian Reformed Church at the above address. I, therefore, agree to assume as an explicit condition of my child's/ward's participation, any and all risks. I agree to hold harmless Sunnyside Christian Reformed Church, its personnel, or other individual transporting my child from any and all liability, claims, damages, and expenses that may arise due to participation of my child/ward in any activities of the above organization. I understand it is my responsibility to inform Sunnyside Christian Reformed Church leaders of my child's/ward's change in any medical history that may cause additional and/or new injury when participating in any and all events.

Select an Option

Yes

No

2nd Emergency Phone #: _____

If you have any concerns or queries regarding this form, please contact the church office through phone 509-837-5371 or email office@suncrc.org

Accident or Incident Report - Sunnyside Christian Reformed Church

Name of Person(s) Involved: _____

Address of Person (s) Involved: _____

Date and Time of Accident or Incident: _____

Name of Parent(s)/Guardian, if applicable: _____

Phone Number of Person(s) Involved: _____

Location of Accident/Incident: _____

Description of Accident or Incident (i.e. how injured, others involved, type of injury, disclosure of child, observed behavior or injury):

Action Taken: _____

Report Submitted by: _____ Date: _____

Relationship to Person/Child: _____

Report Reviewed by Safe Church Team Lead and Senior Pastor

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please return this form to the church office