



## Waterloo Christian Reformed Church

### ABUSE PREVENTION AND RESPONSE POLICY

#### **Purpose Statement**

This policy expresses the church's mission to be Christ's ambassadors in a broken world, fostering repentance and comfort, and upholding the promise of reconciliation to God (2 Corinthians. 5:20; 7:10). The focus on prevention is intended as a visible sign of hope in a spiritual community free from every form of abuse.

#### **Mandates**

The following mandates apply to everyone in the Waterloo Christian Reformed Church (WCRC) and pertain to all on- and off-site activities. WCRC Council, through the Abuse Prevention and Response Team (APART), ensures that the Ministry Providers adhere to this policy and its mandates. A **ministry provider** is a person who serves in any program of the WCRC.

#### **Mandate for Ministry Providers**

Ministry Providers:

- are screened according to an established protocol for the position. *[App. 1]*
- participate in orientation and ongoing training that focuses on abuse awareness and prevention.
- sign a statement that they understand and agree to abide by the policy. Failure to honour that agreement will result in termination of the person's position. *[App. 4]*
- complete a police check every three years

#### **Mandate Regarding Discipline and Conduct for Ministry Providers**

- Physical discipline is unacceptable in all circumstances. Physical restraint is acceptable only when necessary to prevent harm to the person restrained or to others. *[App. 7]*
- Physical behavior that is abusive or potentially abusive is not acceptable. Such behavior includes but is not limited to pushing, scuffling, unwanted or suspect touching, and unwanted expressions of affection.
- Verbal behavior or discipline that is or may be perceived as abusive is unacceptable. Such behavior includes but is not limited to shouting, threatening, insulting, and making degrading or humiliating comments.
- When Ministry Providers believe that extra discipline of minors is necessary, they refer that concern to the minor's parent(s)/guardian(s).
- Ministry Providers record all incidents of restraint or discipline in an incident report. *[App. 6]*
- Ministry Providers supervise or transport a single minor only with another unrelated adult present and parental permission.
- Two unrelated adults must be present in any situation of contact with a single minor or vulnerable adult for all church activities.
- Ministry Providers immediately refer health concerns and injuries to a minor's parent(s)/guardian(s) for care. Exceptions may apply in an emergency situation when immediate response is required.
- Ministry Providers report, with rationale, to the program leader, when they give special attention or favours such as gifts, letters, phone calls and visits to individual minors.
- Ministry Providers report and respond to abuse following the directives of Ontario legislation; in situations not covered by Ontario law, the requirements follow the policy of WCRC. *[App. 5]*

## **Mandate for APART**

APART provides:

- ongoing education to keep the congregation informed of the importance, content, and meaning of the policy and its mandates.
- ongoing training on abuse awareness and prevention.
- clear communication on reporting abuse through signage, brochures, announcements, etc.

## **Mandate Regarding Facilities / Physical environment**

- All classrooms have doors with windows and mirrors where necessary to ensure a clear view of the entire room. Infant and toddler nurseries have divided doors; the upper door remains open.
- Programs for youngest children occupy rooms closest to washrooms.
- Stewardship Committee conducts regular audits to ensure safety and cleanliness of facilities.

## **Program specific regulations**

The Team Leader or Program Leader ensures that Release Forms for pictures that may be taken by the leaders or anyone assisting the leaders [App. 8] and Consent Forms for all off-site activities [App. 9] are completed.

## **Nursery**

The Team Leader ensures that:

- Names of children and caregivers present are recorded each week.
- Children are signed in and signed out by a parent/guardian.
- Children are picked up by a parent/guardian only, unless **prior** arrangements are made.
- Children are picked up within 10 minutes of the end of the service/activity.
- Children remain in designated appropriate areas; exceptions may apply in emergency situations.
- Change tables remain in clear view of other attendants and ministry providers.
- At least two adults, not related to each other, remain in the nursery at all times.
- A sanitary and healthy environment is maintained in the nursery area.

## **Youth Programs**

The Program Leaders ensure that:

- Parents/Guardians are regularly and fully informed of program guidelines.
- Equipment and materials are used and stored in a safe manner.
- Parents/Guardians pick up children within 15 minutes of the end of the program/activity.
- Children wait inside the church building or alternate facility to be picked up.
- Prior to any off-site or overnight activities, the ministry provider organizing the activity submits a written plan of supervision and care of participants to a Program Leader for approval. The ministry provider organizing the activity or the Program Leader obtains written parental/guardian permission for the participants, using the appropriate consent form. The Program Leader keeps the written plans and consent forms on file [App. 9].

## **Church School**

The Ministry Leader and Superintendent ensure that:

- Children under Grade 1 are signed in and out by parents/guardians.