



Waterloo Christian Reformed Church Safe Church Policy

1. 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.

2. Mandates

The following mandates apply to everyone in the Waterloo Christian Reformed Church (WCRC) and pertain to all on- and off-site activities as well as to programs working under the auspices of the WCRC. The Council of the WCRC, through its Safe Church Committee, ensures that the ministry providers adhere to this policy and its mandates. A **ministry provider** is a person who serves in any capacity, paid or unpaid, within the WCRC or any program operating under the auspices of or affiliated with the WCRC.

2. 1. Mandate for Ministry Providers

Ministry providers:

- are screened according to an established protocol for the position. *[Appendix 1]*
- participate in orientation and ongoing training that focuses on abuse awareness and prevention.
- refrain from harassment or sexual harassment of volunteers, employees or any other individuals with whom they may work or serve in their role as ministry providers of the Waterloo Christian Reformed Church *[for definition of harassment see Appendix 12]*.
- support the policy of the Waterloo Christian Reformed Church that seeks to create and maintain an environment free from harassment and sexual harassment of or by its ministry providers and employees.
- sign the Memorandum of Agreement which states that they understand and agree to abide by the policy. Failure to honour that agreement will result in suspension or termination of the person's position. *[Appendix 5]*
- must report any suspicion or knowledge of abuse of a minor or other vulnerable individual (a child under the age of 18). *[Appendix 6]*
- complete a criminal record check or vulnerable sector check every five years if they are 18 years of age or older.

2. 2. Mandate for Ministry Providers Regarding Discipline and Conduct

- Physical discipline is unacceptable in all circumstances. Physical restraint is acceptable only when necessary to prevent harm to the person restrained or to others. *[See Appendix 8 for Guidelines for Appropriate Discipline]*



- 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 discipline beyond that described in *Appendix 8* is necessary, they refer that concern to the minor's parent(s) or guardian(s).
- Ministry providers record all incidents of restraint or discipline in an incident report. *[Appendix 7]*
- Ministry providers supervise or transport a single minor only with parental permission and with two adults, unrelated to one another present.
- Two adults, unrelated to each other, must be present in any situation of contact with a single minor or vulnerable adult for all program activities.
- Ministry providers immediately refer health concerns and injuries to a minor's parent(s) or 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. This is to prevent there being any appearance of "grooming" *[See definition in Appendix 11, under Sexual Abuse]*.
- Ministry providers report and respond to abuse following the directives of Ontario legislation; in situations not covered by Ontario law, ministry providers follow the policy of WCRC. *[Appendix 6]*

2. 3. Mandate for the WCRC Safe Church Committee

WCRC Safe Church Committee 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.
- guidance to the church leadership in order that it may provide appropriate support to offenders and the offended.
- WCRC Safe Church Committee maintains records of criminal record checks, vulnerable sector checks and orientation and training records.
- WCRC Safe Church Committee reviews its procedures and policies every two to three years (with subsequent approval by the Council of the WCRC as needed).

2. 4. 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 when the nursery is in use.
- Programs for the youngest children occupy rooms closest to washrooms.
- Stewardship Ministry conducts regular reviews to ensure safety and cleanliness of facilities.



3. Program specific regulations

The Team Leader or Program Leader ensures that Release Forms are completed to authorize legitimate use of images and voice recordings of participants [Appendix 9] and that Consent Forms for all off-site activities [Appendix 10] are completed and kept on file.

3. 1. 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 or guardian.
- Children are picked up by a parent or 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 areas; exceptions may apply in emergency situations.
- Diaper changing facilities 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.

3. 2. 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 are supervised while they are waiting 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 [Appendix 10].
- Should a child need to be transported in a car, he or she will be driven by a responsible adult accompanied by another unrelated adult.

3. 3. Church School

The Ministry Leader and Superintendent ensure that:

- Children under Grade 1 are signed in and out by parents/guardians.
- If classroom helpers under the age of 18 are present, they assist under the supervision of the adult teacher at all times.

3. 4. Refugee/Newcomer Sponsorship and Settlement Committee(s)(includes Community Refugee Sponsorship Group)

Volunteers and ministry providers who work with Refugees/Newcomers:

- Recognize and acknowledge that refugees of **all** ages are deemed “vulnerable persons” and that policies, procedures and protective measures are understood to apply to adults as well as minors.



**Waterloo CRC
Safe Church Committee**

- Follow and abide by all the rules and regulations of the Waterloo CRC Safe Church Policy and its Appendices.
- Complete and commit to following any and all required orientation(s) and training module(s) that the Waterloo CRC or its affiliates may deem pertinent (e.g., initial orientation session, various training modules from World Renew).