

# **CALVARY CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH**

## **SAFE CHURCH POLICY**

**Section 8.1 of Calvary Council Handbook**

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**8.1 SAFE CHURCH POLICY**

Calvary Christian Reformed Church, as one expression of God’s family, strives to be a community where every person is treated with respect and embraced in love, regardless of age, race, gender, or socio-economic status. We are committed to creating an environment that nurtures the dignity and safety of every person.

We acknowledge that sin still finds expression within our church. One expression of sin is the misuse of power and abuse of other people. The root of all forms of abuse is the irresponsible use of power, including the betrayal of trust within the body of Christ. We celebrate that Christ died to set us free from the bondage of sin. But, until Christ returns, Calvary Church needs to take deliberate measures to guard against the sin of abuse. The following Safe Church Policy is one of those measures.



### **8.1.1 SAFE CHURCH COMMITTEE (SCC) MANDATE**

#### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of the SAFE CHURCH COMMITTEE (SCC) of Calvary Church is:

1. To provide leadership in the creation of a safe environment for worship, learning and fellowship for all members and visitors of Calvary CRC.
2. To provide education resources and training for the recognition and prevention of abuse for youth leaders, volunteers, and staff who participate in church-related programs and activities and assist in the on-going implementation of preventive measures.
3. To put into motion a protocol when there is evidence or suspicion of abuse by a person in a leadership position

#### **RESPONSIBILITY**

The responsibility of the committee is:

1. To review the Safe Church Policy and procedures and recommend to the Administrative Team such changes as will be of benefit to the Calvary family.
2. To monitor implementation of the policy in all programs and activities that takes place under the auspices of Calvary Church.
3. To develop forms and procedures to facilitate consistent terminology and record keeping.
4. To maintain the records of signatures, reference checks, and police checks required under this policy. These records will be stored in a locked cabinet in the church.
5. To recommend training resources.
6. To monitor and keep a record of participation in Safe Church training.

**MEMBERSHIP**

SCC will consist of a minimum of four persons, including both genders, who will serve for a maximum of six consecutive years. Terms may be extended if availability of new volunteers is limited. One of the members will be appointed as Chair. The Pastor is a member in an advisory capacity. In addition, the Administrative Team will assign one of its members as a representative to the team.

**FUNCTIONING**

SCC meets as needed, at least once each year, and also communicates by e-mail. Decisions are made by consensus. Minutes of meetings are recorded. SCC reports at least once each year to the Administrative Team on the work of the committee and measures taken for the safety of the church family. Persons assigned to SCC will be provided with such training as is necessary to enable them to perform their tasks with wisdom and effectiveness.

**POLICY STATEMENT**

Calvary Church will strive to create a safe environment for worship, learning and fellowship for all members and visitors of Calvary CRC and in particular for the youth, volunteers, and staff who participate in programs and activities through on-going implementation of the following preventive measures:

1. Adoption and adherence to the Safe Church Policy for all church programs and activities.
2. Ensure that the Policy is read and that applicable forms are completed. The forms will be retained in a secure location under the direction of the Safe Church Committee (SCC).
3. Implementation of specific policies designed for each program.
4. Adoption of a protocol to be followed when there are allegations of abuse against any person or when evidence of abuse is recognized.
5. Regular training in awareness of abuse and use of the protocol.



### 8.1.2 DEFINITIONS

**Abuse:** Calvary CRC accepts the definitions of abuse adopted by the Synod of the CRC in 1992 and 2010.

**Physical Abuse:** any non-accidental act that violates the dignity of the image of God in another person, inflicting dehumanizing pain or injury. Physically abusive behaviour also includes physical neglect, which means not doing what one is supposed to be doing to meet the physical needs of someone in his or her care.

**Emotional Abuse:** any attempt to control another person's life through words, threats, fears, and/or deprivation in such a way that it impairs a person's God-given sense of self-worth.

**Sexual Abuse:** Sexual abuse is any sexual action taken by one person against or in the presence of another who is an unwilling participant or observer of such action. Physical contact is not a necessary element of sexual abuse. Suggestive speech, pornographic material, public exposure of genitals and requests for sexual contact all represent forms of sexual abuse which do not involve physical contact. Sexual abuse includes any inappropriate sexual encounter, even if consensual at the time (e.g. between parent and children, teachers and children, pastors and counselee). All sexual activity between an adult and a child is considered to be sexual abuse regardless of whether or not the adult participant believes that the child has consented to the activities, and regardless of the intentions of the adult participant.

**Administrative Team:** The supervisory body maintaining and administering records, policies and procedures regarding staff personnel, with responsibility for implementation of the Safe Church Policy in church programs.

**Adult:** A person who is eighteen years of age or older.

**Calvary CRC, Calvary Church, the church, or the congregation:** refers to Calvary Christian Reformed Church of Ottawa, Canada.

**Children/Youth:** In general, these terms are used to refer to all children under the age of eighteen. Specific age designations for specific policies are identified in the relevant section for each program.



**Council or Church Council:** The body of elders and deacons of Calvary Church who serve as its highest governing body, with responsibility for supervising the life and doctrine of the congregation.

**Leaders:** Persons who give leadership in any of Calvary's ministries/programs, including but not limited to church school teachers, Youth group leaders and counsellors, leaders of short-term activities, and office bearers (elders and deacons).

**Member:** A person who has formally joined Calvary Church or who participates regularly in the worship and the community life of Calvary Church.

**Ministries:** Programs or activities accountable to the leadership of Calvary CRC.

**Ministry Team:** The supervisory body for all church programs.

**Minor:** A person who is considered not fully responsible/accountable by reason of age, as defined in the relevant statutes of the Province of Ontario.

**Minister/Pastor:** Anyone called and ordained to serve as ministry personnel at Calvary Church.

**Nursery Attendant:** A volunteer supervising infants and children in Calvary CRC's Nursery.

**Police records check:** A search by the police for records of criminal convictions, using a national database. Police Records Checks are one screening tool in abuse prevention policies.

**Safe Church Team:** A team of representatives of the Christian Reformed Churches within Classis Eastern Canada who are appointed by and report to Classis Eastern Canada with the mandate to:

1. Provide information, training and resources to individual churches on matters relating to the recognition, prevention and understanding of abuse,
2. Respond to allegations of abuse by ordained or un-ordained leaders within a congregation,
3. Provide advice to church councils on appropriate actions, and
4. Promote abuse prevention within the classis.

**Vulnerable Person:** A person who on account of age, language, mental or physical impairments or temporary distress has special needs for protection.



**Workplace Sexual Harassment:** a) Engaging in a course of vexatious comment or conduct against a worker in a workplace because of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression, where the course of comment or conduct is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome; or b) Making a sexual solicitation or advance where the person making the solicitation or advance is in a position to confer, grant or deny a benefit or advancement to the worker and the person knows or ought reasonably to know that the solicitation or advance is unwelcome. (Bill 132 Occupational Health and Safety Act of Ontario 2016)

**Youth programs:** Any activity which is sponsored by the leadership of Calvary Church for the benefit/education of children and youth. Official church youth programs can be identified as those for which participation is requested or urged via the weekly bulletin, or any flyer printed with the knowledge or consent of members of the Ministry Team of Calvary.

### 8.1.3 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The guiding principles of the SCC are:

1. All people are image bearers of God, worthy of respect, and therefore must be treated in a manner that respects dignity and does not demean them in their own eyes or in the eyes of others. Human sexuality is also a gift of God to be respected, valued and celebrated.
2. Abuse of any person is not acceptable and will not be tolerated. We will strive to foster the development of healthy relationships and prevent abuse in our ministries. To the best of our ability, we will avoid situations that may give rise to abuse, unfounded allegations of abuse, or the appearance of impropriety.
3. All leaders at Calvary CRC are urged to be vigilant against abuse and will be held accountable for their words and actions. Those leaders who violate the standards of conduct expected of them (as outlined in Codes of Conduct, section 7) will be subject to disciplinary measures by the Calvary CRC Administrative Team (refer to items 4.8 and 10.2.7).



4. While parents have the primary responsibility for the care and nurture of their children, Calvary CRC and the larger community also share in the responsibility to protect and promote the well-being of all children.
5. By the grace of God, healing is possible for victims of abuse. Healing is assisted through the ministry of the church and wise professional counselling, which should be offered as early as possible. Financial assistance when needed is provided by the Classis Eastern Canada Safe Church Team counselling fund. Confidentiality is respected.
6. By the grace of God, forgiveness and restoration to church fellowship is possible for repentant offenders and can be assisted through the ministry of the church and wise counselling. In some cases, however, appropriate long-term restrictions may be necessary.
7. Authority vested in the leadership of Calvary Church, both ordained and non-ordained, must be exercised with the highest of ethical standards. Leaders have a special responsibility to take preventive and corrective measures.
8. When reports of suspected abuse occur, appropriate investigative and corrective actions will begin without delay. All actions will support healing, repentance, and restoration of the abused and the abuser. For abusers, these actions may include disciplinary measures, up to and including denial of volunteer or paid positions and other privileges of church membership. After satisfactory resolution, suitability for return to a volunteer or paid position will be reviewed. Should an abuser leave the congregation prior to an adequate resolution of the issues involved, Calvary will advise the receiving church of the outstanding issues, while maintaining appropriate discretion and confidentiality.
9. Abuse is also a crime punishable under federal and provincial laws in Canada. The Bible teaches respect for the mandate of civil authorities to maintain justice; we pledge to cooperate with them in the implementation of laws prohibiting abuse. All allegations of abuse of a minor will be reported without delay to the Children's Aid Society and/or police, as required by provincial law. As a church, however, we will not leave the matter of abuse and its impacts to the law courts and social services alone, because abuse and healing also have a spiritual dimension. As Christ's ambassadors, the church has its own calling



to offer protection for children, warn against the abuse of authority, and provide a healing ministry for those whose lives have been affected by the sin of abuse.

#### **8.1.4 POLICIES FOR ALL CHURCH PROGRAMS**

This policy applies to all programs and activities held within Calvary Church facilities and/or sponsored by Calvary on a regular basis.

##### **8.1.4.1 GENERAL RISK REDUCTION STRATEGIES**

**Access:** All rooms used for meetings will have windows in or near the doors. Windows will not be covered or obstructed at any time.

**Supervision:** Two or more adults should be present for all activities involving minors or vulnerable persons, though not necessarily in the same room. When only two adults are present for an activity involving only one or two participants, the activity should be done in a context that is visible to others. If this is not possible, the preferred option would be to cancel the activity. If cancellation is not feasible, a member of the governing committee must be notified. i.e., Youth Ministries, Education, Safe Church.

**Meetings:** Adults will meet one on one with minors or vulnerable persons only in public spaces or locations where they are clearly visible to others. Meetings for the purposes of pastoral care should occur in a public space or with the accompaniment of another pastoral worker or spouse (with exceptions discussed in 6.1.2 and 6.2.3). All leaders and volunteers are expected to exercise discretion and avoid situations that may lead to perceptions of impropriety.

In the event that a teacher or counsellor finds they are unexpectedly alone with any number of youths, the scheduled class/event need not be cancelled. In order to proceed, the following actions ought to take place:

1. The leader tailor the event to be a full group activity;
2. The activity ought to take place in a common area (i.e., in open view);
3. The minors ought to be told why a counsellor/teacher is not present (Unplanned absence);



4. If there are other adults in the building, they ought to be notified of the change in circumstances.

**Out-of-Town trip:** Any leader of Calvary CRC who travels out of town on Calvary CRC business with one other person will inform his/her ministry head or the chair of the governing body ahead of time.

#### **8.1.4.2 DISCIPLINE IN CHURCH PROGRAMS**

All discipline is carried out in love, not anger. The goal of discipline is change in behaviour, never vengeance. The following guidelines apply for all children's and youth programs:

1. Physical punishment is not appropriate under any circumstances;
2. Abusive verbal punishment (insults, yelling) is not permitted;
3. Concerns about recurring behavioural issues will be reported to the program supervisor;
4. When a young person misbehaves beyond the need for minor correction or persists in a pattern of misbehaviour, the parent or guardian will be informed and involved in remedial response;
5. If young persons misbehave, leaders should try to:
  - a. Distract them with another activity;
  - b. Help them focus on other acceptable behaviour;
  - c. Isolate them from others; time-outs should be age-appropriate.
6. When misbehaviour is an ongoing problem, an aide should be provided for the classroom;
7. Evidence of abusive behaviour by the teacher or leader will be reported, using the established protocol (**see Section 8.1.8 - Reporting of Abuse**).



### 8.1.4.3 SCREENING

The following are the guidelines for screening procedures followed at Calvary CRC:

1. Any member of the congregation who has reason to think that any staff or volunteers of Calvary might not be acceptable for work with young or vulnerable persons should inform a member of SCC or an Administrative Team member.
2. A Police Records Check must be provided by paid staff, any leaders with child/youth programs and other persons in responsible positions in our church every 5 years or as needed (i.e. short-term missions trips) If they are absent from our church for a period of six months or more and wish to continue as paid staff or volunteer leaders upon their return, they must reapply and provide a new Police Records Check.
3. All elders and deacons will provide a Police Records Check as soon as possible after ordination/installation. Nominees will be informed of this requirement when they are notified of their nomination.
4. All paid staff will submit a completed Police Records Check before they assume their responsibilities.
5. Anyone must be in regular attendance at our church for at least six months before they apply to volunteer with the child/youth programs in our church. They must complete the application form (Appendix 1.1), including references, review the Safe Church Policy, and provide a police records check.
6. When large numbers of volunteers are needed for short-term or occasional activities, such as Vacation Bible School or nursery duty, those who will not have opportunity to meet alone with children will be exempt from the provisions of Section 6.3(5) Everyone will be provided with a copy of the Safe Church Policy and is expected to comply with it. In advance of the event, the leader will recommend to SCC which positions can be exempt; the decision of SCC will be final.
7. A copy or the original reports of Police records checks and reference checks will be placed in a permanent, confidential file in a locked cabinet in the church, to be consulted only by



members of SCC, the Chair of the Administrative Team and the Clerk of the church. These documents will be kept on file for at least fifty years as a record of due diligence. Any paid or volunteer staff member may request to see the content of his or her file.

8. If a Police Records Check reveals past criminal activity which has no bearing on possible relationships with children and vulnerable adults, SCC may approve that person for activities with children/youth or adults.
9. If any member of the congregation is restrained by court order from being alone with a child, SCC and the Administrative Team will be responsible to take steps that comply with such orders.

#### **8.1.4.4 TRANSPORTATION OF MINORS**

The following applies to the transportation of minors for a Church related event.

NOTE: Arrangements to transport minors between home and church by someone other than the parent or guardian will be considered a private arrangement, not a church arrangement subject to this policy.

1. Persons who chauffeur minors for church activities must be familiar with and concur with this policy. An activity leader may deny someone permission to serve as chauffeur for any particular activity and the leader's decision will be final. Activity leaders must have written permission from parents for these outings.
2. Transportation for church activities will be arranged in advance as much as possible. There will not be fewer than three persons at a time in the vehicle, except by arrangement/agreement with the parent or guardian at the beginning or end of a route.
3. Counsellors or designated volunteers transporting a youth must have parental permission to do so, via a signed consent form. The numbers of passengers in any vehicle will not exceed the number of seat belts in a vehicle.



#### **8.1.4.5 TRAINING AND INFORMATION**

1. All members of Calvary Church will be asked to become familiar with this policy and to suggest improvements.
2. All leaders of child/youth programs must:
  - a. Receive training on preventative measures and recognition of the signs of abuse;
  - b. Annually review Calvary's policy and procedures pertaining to abuse;
  - c. Avail themselves of resources to help them meet their responsibilities.
3. Leaders of child/youth programs will be encouraged to make use of appropriate educational materials in their programs in order to inform minors and vulnerable persons on how to protect themselves and get help when needed.

#### **8.1.4.6 ONLINE SAFETY REGARDING COMMUNICATIONS AND SOCIAL MEDIA**

1. Electronic communications and social media are used as tools to enhance ministry and fellowship within Calvary CRC, with care to prevent misuse and potential harm. Calvary CRC respects the right of all persons, including younger members, to privacy, to access information, and to communicate and reach out to others, as part of their development, including their spiritual development. At the same time, Calvary CRC will use measures to protect both participants and ministry leaders from potential harms, such as online bullying, violations of privacy, inappropriate sharing of information or photos, and exposure to exploitative materials or misleading or inaccurate information, is illegal or advocates illegal activity, contains personal information, photos, or signatures of another person without their explicit consent.
2. To achieve these goals, the following guidance will be followed:
  - a. Leaders of youth ministries and youth mentors are encouraged to include on-line safety as a discussion topic and develop good practices together within any youth groups.



- b. Keep use of electronic communication between leaders and participants limited in terms of time of connection, frequency, brevity, and specific purpose. As much as possible, ministry leaders should send group e-mails and texts, especially for children and adolescents. If a ministry leader needs to send one-on-one communications or respond to personal communications coming from an adolescent, they must keep a log of such interactions and review it on a monthly basis with one other church leader. Volunteer leaders should consult with a supervisor or another ministry leader about any on-line activity related to Calvary CRC that raises questions about its appropriateness.
        - c. Do not reveal or ask for personal information through electronic communication. Never reveal personal information about someone else without their explicit permission and only if you know it will not be used for any harmful purposes. If electronic means of communication are used for information and permissions for field trips, gatherings, etc., ensure it is a secure transmission between individuals and secure computer systems in Calvary CRC. Refrain from publishing the specific dates, times, and locations of gatherings and field trips involving young people to public sites or forms of transmission that would be accessible by those not entitled to that information or where unknown persons might access the information.
        - d. Do not send pictures of yourself, others, or a group over an electronic network or post them to a social media site without the prior informed permission of the persons involved, and, in the case of children under 12, the permission of their parents/guardians.
3. Users of Calvary CRC computers and online systems will not knowingly access, upload, download, store, display, distribute or publish any information that:
  - a. threatens, intimidates, demeans, discriminates, or suggests violence, hatred or sexual exploitation of another person.
  - b. uses abusive or inappropriate language.
  - c. contains material that belongs to others, without copyright permission or giving appropriate credit for content produced by others.



#### **8.1.4.7 POSTING OF DIGITAL MEDIA TO ONLINE PLATFORMS**

With today's technologies, the on-line posting of an individual's image on social media and other websites can lead to concerns about the individual's privacy and security. Controlling what pictures/videos are taken is difficult as many people have cell phones or other portable devices that can take pictures anywhere. To address this issue guidelines have been adopted.

#### **8.1.4.8 GUIDELINES FOR TAKING AND POSTING PICTURES/VIDEOS**

Technology now allows for easy taking and posting of pictures on the internet. To seek a balance between allowing its use to foster a friendly environment and promote the community and safeguarding the privacy of individuals the following guidelines have been adopted:

1. The following restrictions apply to the internet posting of pictures and videos taken during programs and activities of Calvary CRC:
  - a. Images where a person under 16 years of age is easily identified will not be posted without the written permission of a parent or guardian.
  - b. No GPS, specific address information, last names or other identifying information will be included in posted caption(s) or images or in the properties of the posted file.
  - c. Pastors and Ministry leaders will not, via social media, "tag" individuals in postings and will, to the extent possible, block tagging by others. ("Tagging" is connecting a person's social media profile, such as Facebook, to a posted image.)
  - d. Requests to remove a posted image or modify the posted image to obscure an individual's identity will be honoured.
2. Taking pictures or videos in the nursery or Church School classes is not allowed except by persons authorized by the SCC.
3. Pictures and videos taken at large group events are considered safe to post, provided opportunity is available for individuals to indicate they do not wish to have their own or their child's image posted. Notification of this opportunity may be included in event



announcements, an announcement at the event or included in the preservice announcements via projection and/or periodic publication of these guidelines.

4. Reasonable steps will be taken to honour requests by individuals who do not wish to have their own or their child's image posted. It is expected that these same individuals will try to stay out of camera view when they notice a picture being taken.

**NOTE:** Calvary CRC, its Council, staff and members cannot guarantee that these guidelines will always be followed and will not assume any liability for individuals who fail to respect them.

### **8.1.5 CODES OF CONDUCT**

The below noted subsections are the current Codes of Conduct of the various positions (paid and volunteer) at Calvary CRC.

#### **8.1.5.1 CODE OF CONDUCT FOR PASTORAL STAFF (INCLUDING YOUTH WORKER)**

Pastoral staff are called by God and the congregation to serve Calvary CRC as spiritual leaders and advisors, in accordance with their ordination. Members of the congregation - in particular those who seek counsel - look upon pastors as spiritual advisors, mentors, and role models, to be trusted by both children and adults. Abuse of that trust can have a devastating effect on the lives of individuals and on the life and ministry of the congregation. To help ensure trust is maintained, pastoral staff will abide by the following guidelines:

1. **Boundaries:** Pastors, together with their governing body (elders and deacons), will develop and review boundaries for pastoral care and counselling relationships, including such matters as:
  - a. Counselling expertise
  - b. Time to be spent with counselees
  - c. Referrals to appropriate outside agencies

Individual cases will be reviewed with the team designated to supervise a pastor's work.



2. **Meetings and Visits:** All visits or meetings with single persons at home when no one else is present shall only be conducted when necessary. Such visits shall be included in the pastoral contact log.
3. **Pastoral Contact Log:** Pastors will maintain a confidential pastoral contact log, noting all persons with whom they meet in the course of their pastoral duties. This log will be available for review, on a confidential basis, by the governing body (elders and deacons). At year end the log will be filed in a sealed envelope, under lock in the archives, to maintain confidentiality. The pastor and a member of the Administrative Team or SCC must sign the seal of the sealed envelope.
4. **Confidentiality:** Information given in confidence must be respected and counselees assured of confidentiality. However, when personal safety, life, or the well-being of a minor is at risk, some information cannot morally or legally be held in confidence, and counselees will be informed of that.
5. All Pastoral Staff must review and adhere to the Code of Conduct for Ministry Leaders approved by Synod 2023 found herein as Appendix 1.3

#### **8.1.5.2 CODE OF CONDUCT FOR ELDERS, DEACONS AND PASTORAL CARE WORKERS**

1. **Confidentiality:** Information shared with elders, deacons, and other pastoral care workers will be held in confidence, except when the safety of someone is at risk; if needed for protection, information will be given to appropriate persons only and the person giving the information will be advised that it cannot be maintained confidential for safety reasons.
2. **Meetings with Young People:** Elders and deacons are encouraged to develop supportive relationships with young people and be available for spiritual advice; young people are encouraged to seek spiritual advice from any member of the pastoral care team. Meetings will be held in public places. If a one-on-one relationship leads to repeated visits, both parties will mutually decide on a third person to be informed for the purposes of support and mutual accountability.



3. **Visits or meetings with single persons** at home when no one else is present shall normally not be conducted. However, when such visits are necessary or desired, they shall be reported before the visit to a co-worker, an elder or deacon and at the next meeting of the governing body (elders and deacons) or the pastoral care team. The pastoral care provider will establish an accountability relationship with the Ministry Team and report on the number of visits and the general nature of them.
4. **Reporting:** All visits shall be reported at the next meeting of the governing body (elders and deacons) or the head of the pastoral care team (pastoral care workers)
5. All Elders, Deacons and Pastoral Care Workers must be familiar with and adhere to the Code of Conduct for Ministry Leaders approved by Synod 2023 found herein as Appendix 1.3

#### **8.1.5.3 CODE OF CONDUCT FOR YOUTH PROGRAM LEADERS**

The pledge in Appendix 1.2 serves as a code of conduct for youth leaders.

#### **8.1.5.4 CODE OF CONDUCT FOR PAID STAFF**

Church staff will conduct themselves in a professional manner and refrain from workplace sexual conduct as defined by Bill 132, Occupational Health and Safety Act covering workplace sexual harassment. (see definition of Workplace Sexual Harassment) OR (Bill 132 Occupational Health and Safety Act of Ontario 2016)

#### **8.1.6 POLICIES FOR SPECIFIC PROGRAMS**

##### **8.1.6.1 CHILDCARE/NURSERY**

1. Nursery attendants will be required to read the nursery protection procedures. These procedures, as well as the list of nursery caregivers, will be posted in the nursery.



**2. Nursery Attendants:**

- a. The nursery will always be staffed by at least two caregivers, who are not members of the same family, and one of whom is an adult. No person will be left alone in charge of the children unless another has gone to get a parent.
- b. Adults who are scheduled for nursery service must have another approved adult to replace them, should they be unable to serve. Youth aged 9-17 are welcome to volunteer for the nursery. Youth may not bring friends into the nursery.

**3. Registry:**

- a. Parents will be asked to sign in when they bring a child and provide each child with his or her name tag. They will also alert the attendants to any condition that may cause problems. They must inform the attendant if someone other than family is picking up their child.

**4. Specific Procedures:**

- a. Any medical problem that arises will be reported to the parent/guardian immediately.
- b. Diapers will be changed in view of others.
- c. Nursery attendants will not take a child from the nursery area to an area that is not visible from the main nursery room, except for the washroom.

**8.1.6.2 CHURCH SCHOOL PROGRAM**

1. The teacher will normally be positioned so that he or she can be seen easily through the windows.
2. A teacher plus an assistant, minimum age of 11, will be in charge of each class for ages three, four, and five. Consideration will be given to gender and age in the appointment of teaching teams. Only one member of a family may serve as a teacher or assistant in the same class.



3. Children should not leave during class time except for illness, bathroom privileges, or other compelling reasons.
4. Children under the age of six will be accompanied to the washroom. For children who do not require assistance in the cubicle, the attendant will remain in the washroom. For children who require assistance, the attendant will accompany the child to the washroom in the children's nursery.

### **8.1.6.3 GEMS AND CADETS**

1. Children should not arrive more than ten minutes before the start of their meetings and will be met by their parents/drivers immediately at the end of the program. Parents/guardians are asked not to leave a child when the doors are locked and no counsellor is present. No counsellor shall retain a child for a one-on-one meeting for more than ten minutes after the end of the program.
2. Counsellors should provide adequate supervision of groups. Each GEMS and Cadets function should be supervised by at least two persons, an adult leader and another volunteer at least four years older than the oldest members of the group they are assisting. See 5.1 Meetings regarding procedures in the event that a teacher or counsellor finds him or herself unexpectedly alone with a group of minors.
3. GEMS and Cadets leaders will identify abusive behaviours among participants in their program and implement strategies to discourage these behaviours.
4. If a child needs significant medical attention the parent and/or legal guardian should be notified immediately.
5. Any GEMS or Cadets activities away from the church facility, out of town, or overnight should be conducted in general compliance with the policies in Section 5.1 General Risk Reduction Strategies.
6. When children are billeted in private homes out of town, or we arrange billeting here for out-of-town children/youth, no fewer than two children per billet will be the rule.



7. Appropriate displays of affection between counsellors and their respective club members are often part of conveying support and encouragement to one another. Such displays of affection should be limited to actions like a brief hug, an arm around the shoulder, and open-handed pat on the back, or a handclasp, and they should not take place in private. A counsellor's or counselee's right to refuse any of these will be respected.

#### **8.1.6.4 CLUBS FOR YOUTH**

1. Youth group leaders will provide supervision for all functions. At least two leaders will be present; if a couple are leading, a third adult should be present.
2. Any activities away from the church facility, out of town, or overnight, will be conducted in general compliance with established policies found in Section 5.1 General Risk Reduction Strategies.
3. When youth are billeted in private homes out of town, or we arrange billeting here for out-of-town youth, no fewer than two youth per billet will be the rule.
4. Appropriate displays of affection between youth leaders and youth group members are often part of conveying support and encouragement to one another. Such displays of affection should be limited to actions like a brief hug, an arm around the shoulder, and open-handed pat on the back, or a handclasp, and they should not take place in private. A youth leader's or youth group member's right to refuse any of these will be respected.
5. Gifts, phone calls, or letters directed to a youth group member by a youth group leader or vice versa should only be ministry-related.

#### **8.1.6.5 HALL MONITOR**

Hall Monitor responsibilities are designed to maintain the safety and security of all persons in the church building gathered for church services at Calvary CRC. This includes Sunday mornings, and special Church services.



In order to be considered qualified to perform the duties/responsibilities of the Hall Monitor the scheduled person must be a current member of Calvary CRC council. The Hall Monitor must have a current Criminal Record history check, including vulnerable sector check.

The Hall Monitor for a church service cannot also be performing the duties/ministry of the:

- Officiating Elder;
- Media Projectionist;
- Sound Technician;
- Nursery or Sunday school teacher; or
- Choir/Musician.

The Hall Monitor should seat themselves toward the rear rows of the sanctuary in order to cause less disruption when leaving for “walk-through” checks and/or providing any required assistance.

#### **8.1.6.5.1 DUTIES OF HALL MONITOR**

1. Arrive at Calvary CRC no later than 15 minutes prior to the start of any church service;
  - a. In the event the scheduled Hall Monitor knows they will not be able to fulfill their duties/responsibilities, the Hall Monitor shall contact another qualified person prior to the commencement of the church service.
  - b. The church service will not commence until a qualified person is identified to be Hall Monitor.
2. Be aware of the locations of all fire extinguishers, first aid kits and defibrillators and ensure they are accessible.
3. Review the bulletin to identify the persons responsible for Nursery and Sunday School.
4. Be familiar with the policies in place for Nursery and for Church School, which can be found in the Council Handbook (Sections 7.15, 7.16) and this policy.
5. Visit the nursery 5 minutes before the service and identify yourself as the Hall Monitor.



6. Should the nursery attendant(s) require additional personnel or the scheduled person(s) do not arrive, the Hall Monitor will:
  - a. Notify the Nursery coordinator to locate a suitable replacement. If a replacement cannot be located, then;
  - b. Notify a parent to take over responsibilities of the Nursery. If no parent will volunteer, then;
  - c. Notify the Pastor and/or the Officiating Elder and an announcement will be made from the pulpit before commencing the church service that 'X' number of person(s) are required to assist in the nursery. Once enough persons are identified and have left the sanctuary, the church service can begin.
  
7. The Hall Monitor shall conduct several “walk-through” checks of the building at different times throughout a service. A “walk-through” consists of the following:
  - a. Checking the entire interior of the building including all empty/unlocked classrooms/offices.
  - b. Checking the exterior of the building by briefly scanning all areas of the parking lot.
  
8. Upon dismissal of Junior Sunday school children from the sanctuary, the Hall Monitor shall exit the sanctuary at the same time, checking in with the head Sunday school teacher/leader to confirm there is an adequate number of teachers and helpers. In the event there are not enough teachers and/or helpers the Hall Monitor shall either locate a suitable additional person to assist, or request from another Sunday school teacher to identify a suitable additional person.
  
9. Upon ensuring there are enough person(s) assisting with Sunday school, the Hall Monitor will check on the Nursery room before the first “walk-through”.
  
10. At the conclusion of the sermon when Senior Sunday school children leave for class, the Hall Monitor will ensure there are adequate teachers and check on each Sunday school room, the Nursery, and conduct another “walk-through”.



11. If after a church service begins a person or group enters the Church, the greeters, custodian or Hall Monitor will welcome them to Calvary CRC and provide assistance in locating a seat in the sanctuary. If the person or group requires something other than finding a seat, the Hall Monitor will ask the custodian (or any other person) to locate a second member of Council to assist in order to not leave the person or group unattended and the situation/request should be handled with at least 2 Council members present.

#### **8.1.6.5.2 HALL MONITOR CHECKLIST**

1. Arrive at Calvary CRC no later than 15 minutes prior to the start of any church service.
2. Be aware of the locations of all fire extinguishers, first aid kits and defibrillators and ensure they are accessible.
3. Review the bulletin to identify the persons responsible for Nursery and Sunday School.
4. Visit the nursery 5 minutes before the service and identify yourself as the Hall Monitor.
5. Should the nursery attendant(s) require additional personnel or a scheduled person does not arrive:
  - a. Ask the Nursery coordinator to locate a suitable replacement. If a replacement cannot be located, then;
  - b. Ask a parent to take over responsibilities of the Nursery. If no parent will volunteer, then;
  - c. Ask the Pastor and/or the Officiating Elder to make an announcement from the pulpit before the church service that 'X' number of person(s) are required to assist in the nursery. Once enough persons are identified and have left the sanctuary, the church service can begin.
6. WALK 1 – Dismissal of junior Sunday School/after children's message:



- a. Check in with the head Sunday school teacher/leader to confirm there is an adequate number of teachers and helpers. In the event there are not enough teachers and/or helpers:
    - i. Hall Monitor or a Sunday school teacher proceeds to the sanctuary to locate additional person(s) to assist.
  - b. Check on the Nursery, then
  - c. Complete a “walk-through” of the building:
    - i. Checking the entire interior of the building including all empty/unlocked classrooms/offices.
    - ii. Checking the exterior of the building by briefly scanning all areas of the parking lot.
7. WALK 2: At the conclusion of the sermon/dismissal of senior Sunday school, ensure adequate number of teachers, check on each Sunday school room, the Nursery, and complete a “walk-through”.
8. If during any church service, a person or group enters the Church, welcome them to Calvary CRC and provide assistance in locating a seat in the sanctuary.

### **8.1.7 ACCOUNTABILITY**

Final responsibility for adherence to this policy rests with the Council of Calvary CRC, which, through its Administrative Team, will appoint a Safe Church Committee (SCC) for the purpose of monitoring implementation in all church activities. Procedures will be adopted, and revised from time to time, for the various activities/functions within the church. These steps will include, but are not necessarily limited to, the following:

1. All paid and volunteer leaders will be accountable to the head/coordinator of the program/ministry with which they are involved.



2. All leaders of child/youth programs will sign the Safe Church Pledge (Appendix I.3) to indicate agreement with the abuse policy. To ensure that all remain familiar with the Safe Church Policy, the pledge must be signed every 3 years or sooner at the discretion of Safe Church Committee.
3. Parents of children will be asked to familiarize themselves with the rules governing a particular activity when their child is enrolled in an activity or program.
4. The policy document and revisions approved by the Administrative Team will be dated and kept in a permanent file.

### **8.1.8 REPORTING OF ABUSE**

#### **8.1.8.1 GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS**

1. Evidence or suspicion of abuse by anyone must be reported. The purpose of reporting is to stop the abuse, provide assistance to the victim and to hold the perpetrator accountable and thus begin the process of correction and redemption. Anyone who has evidence or disclosure of abuse should inform either a member of the SCC or the chairman of Admin Team.
2. Confidentiality is to be respected. No assumption of guilt is to be made before either an admission or conviction is made.
3. Calvary CRC recognizes and respects the right of a victim to pursue the legal process through civil courts. Spiritual and pastoral support will be provided by the church whether or not legal action is taken.
4. For accuracy, a written report of the alleged abuse should be submitted to the SCC
5. SCC will determine, in consideration of the victim, what course of action should be taken next. Options may include:
  - a. Referral to appropriate pastoral team member for pastoral counseling.



- b. Recommend to Admin Team to request SCT of Classis to establish a review panel  
or
  - c. Notify civil authorities.
6. SCC acts as in an advisory capacity. Any pastoral and/or disciplinary action will be undertaken by the designated authorities acting under the established rules of order of the CRC.

#### **8.1.8.2 SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

1. If the situation involves a person who is not a minor/ or who no longer is a minor even if the alleged incident took place when a minor, then reporting to outside authorities, is only done with permission of the victim.
2. If the situation involves a minor the incident must be reported to the civil authorities, under the provision of provincial law. If there is a question about the need to report, civil authorities can be contacted anonymously to inquire.
3. If the situation involves a vulnerable adult, then SCC will consider the need to notify civil authorities
4. If the situation involves a church leader, matters such as notification, temporary suspension of office and disciplinary measures will be handled in accordance with the process adopted by the Synod of the CRC (2016)

Further direction can be found by searching the RESPONDING to ABUSE TOOLKIT publications written by the Safe Church Ministry of CRCNA



Revisions:

Original document: Council approval: January, 2010

Revisions: March 2014 – Council approval: June 2014

January 2020 – Council approval: March 2020

February 2024 – Council approval: March 2024



### **8.1.9 APPENDICES**

Safe Church policy forms are available below.



**8.1.9.1 APPENDIX 1.1 – APPLICATION FOR YOUTH PROGRAM LEADERS**

I would like to serve in the following church ministry:

_____ Cadets	_____ Church School
_____ GEMS	_____ Youth Group

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of birth (d/m/y): \_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_

Phone No: \_\_\_\_\_

Reference 1 (Non relative)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

How long have you known this person? \_\_\_\_\_

Phone No: (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Reference 2 (Non relative)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

How long have you known this person? \_\_\_\_\_

Phone No: (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

I authorize the listed references to give you any information (including opinions) they have regarding my character and fitness for youth work. I waive any right I may have to inspect any information provided about me by any person identified in this application. I have read the Safe Church Policy.

I promise, with the help of God, to adhere to these guidelines.

Applicant's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date (d/m/y)

\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_



**8.1.9.2 APPENDIX 1.2 – CODE OF CONDUCT FOR YOUTH PROGRAM LEADERS**

Believing that God is calling me to serve children or youth in this congregation,

1. My first priority is prayerfully to seek the welfare of the children/youth and promote their healthy development spiritually, physically, socially, and educationally.
2. I will try to understand and respect the child’s/youth’s cultural background.
3. The activities for which I am responsible will be done to help children/youth grow in faith, become disciples of Christ, and develop loving, caring, and responsible ways of living.
4. I will keep parents informed about the program I am teaching and what time it begins and ends.
5. I will not knowingly do anything that will damage a child’s/youth’s trust, and I will try to protect the child/youth from all forms of abuse while he or she is in my care.
6. If I suspect that a child/youth may be hurt by the abusive actions or attitudes of another person, I will report that suspicion to a responsible person so that it can be investigated properly.
7. I will answer a child’s/youth’s questions openly and honestly.
8. I will work with the children/youth to set agreed guidelines for acceptable behaviour within the group, and expect them to act on the basis of agreed guidelines. If a child consistently breaks the guidelines, I will seek help from other youth leaders and parents to assist me in responding to the child.
9. I will try to offer comfort and help to a child/youth who is distressed and will encourage the child to find appropriate help for his/her needs.
10. I will ensure that, when I need to meet with a child/youth alone, the discussion will be in an open area such that others can at all times see me with the child. Furthermore, I will inform my activity supervisor and/or the parent(s) or guardian of such meetings.
11. I will endeavour to avoid focussing on one child repeatedly for praise or special attention.
12. I will pray for each child/youth regularly and let them know that I care about them.

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Signature

Date

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Volunteer/Staff position

Supervisor



### **8.1.9.3 APPENDIX 1.3 – CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MINISTRY LEADERS**

As a ministry leader, I will, to the best of my ability, commit to the following:

#### *Relationships*

1. I will speak and act, in all my personal and professional relations, in ways that follow the pattern of Christ, who used his power to serve (1 Pet. 5; Mark 10; Phil. 2; 2 Tim. 4:2).
2. I will respect, love, and treat with integrity and truthfulness people of every position, status, race, ethnicity, gender, age, or ability.
3. I will maintain appropriate emotional, physical, and sexual boundaries in all relationships.
4. I will keep all my relationships free from inappropriate, unwanted physical contact, emotional or sexual intimacy, sexual comments, gestures, or jokes.

#### *Safety*

1. I will actively promote a welcoming and respectful environment where all persons are treated with dignity and value, and where any form of abuse, bullying, or harassment is neither tolerated nor allowed to take place.
2. I will report known or suspected cases of physical, sexual, or emotional abuse or neglect of minors or vulnerable adults to the proper authorities.
3. I will support those who disclose physical, sexual, or emotional abuse in a way that empowers the person who has been victimized to seek out justice and healing.

#### *Pastoral Leadership*

1. I will promote truthfulness, transparency, and honesty in all of my work.
2. I will use my power, authority, and position to build up the community of believers and seek first the kingdom of God.
3. I will work within my trained competence, especially in counseling situations, and I will refer individuals to other professionals as appropriate.
4. I will preach, teach, admonish, or discipline in ways that are biblical and Christlike, promoting the shalom and flourishing of those to whom I am ministering (2 Tim. 3:16).
5. I will refrain in my pastoral care and counseling from using references to Scripture or God to manipulate, coerce, or threaten another person.
6. I will disclose any perceived or actual conflict of interest.



*Confidentiality*

1. I will maintain and uphold confidentiality appropriately, which means I will hold in confidence whatever information is not mine to share.
2. I will not use information shared with me in confidence in order to elevate my position or to depreciate that of others.

*Finances*

1. I will ensure that funds for which I am responsible, or which are under my control are used for their intended ministry purposes.
2. In all financial matters, including the acceptance of gifts, I will act with scrupulous honesty, transparency, and appropriate accountability.
3. I will appropriately use and encourage accepted accounting practices and regular reviews and/or audits of ministry funds.

In the event that I misuse my power, either intentionally or unintentionally, in my dealings with others, in word or deed—if I fail “to act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly” (Mic. 6:8) as outlined in the Scriptures and our confessions—I will acknowledge the harm that has been caused and the trust that has been broken, and I will actively seek restoration with justice, compassion, truth, and grace. I will humbly submit to the insight and accountability of the body that implements this Code of Conduct to ensure that I use any power entrusted to me fully in service to Christ.

In the beautiful hope of Christ’s transforming work, in all I do, I will seek to use my position, power, and authority prudently and humbly to support and encourage all the members of his body in my care.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



**8.1.9.4 APPENDIX 1.4 – SAFE CHURCH POLICY**

Section 1 (to be completed by signer; PLEASE print full name clearly)

I, \_\_\_\_\_, have read and understand the Safe Church Policy (2024) of Calvary Christian Reformed Church.

I agree to the regulations and mandates of the Safe Church Policy and will adhere to them.

I acknowledge that it is my responsibility to help ensure that Calvary’s ministries provide a wholesome, safe environment for all participants, and should I become aware of any activities that appear to be inappropriate, I will bring it to the attention of my program leader or the Safe Church Committee immediately.

I have been a member (attendee) of Calvary Christian Reformed Church for \_\_\_\_\_years.

I have received training in abuse prevention: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

I attended a Safe Church workshop: When (year): \_\_\_\_\_ Where: \_\_\_\_\_

I have read educational resources on abuse prevention: When (year): \_\_\_\_\_

Provided by: \_\_\_\_\_

Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_ When (year): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Section 2 (to be completed by a SCC member)

<b>Additional Documents Required</b>				
<b>Document</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Requested</b>	<b>Received</b>
Police Records Check				
Reference Checks				