

Purple: Needs to be discussed
Yellow: Revised, needs DMC approval

Grain of Wheat Church Community
Safe Church Policy – Jan. 2018- DRAFT
Regarding the prevention of sexual and other abuse
(Adapted from Blossom Hill Mennonite Church community);

Purpose

This policy has been established to:

1. Help ensure a safe, loving, and open atmosphere for children, youth and vulnerable persons, as well as adults who work with them, as they worship, study, play, and are nurtured in their Christian faith.
2. Serve as a guide for the prevention of childhood sexual and other abuse by setting and enforcing standards of ethical behavior.
3. Protect adults involved with children and youth activities.

According to our understanding of Biblical faith and what it means to be a faith community, we strive to follow Christ in word and deed. We are called by Christ to act with integrity and love in all our relationships, and to avoid exploitation of vulnerable people or the abuse of positions of power within the church or family. The combination of abuse and misuse of religious authority is a very destructive form of abuse. This policy reflects our desire to honour God and all those who worship and fellowship with Grain of Wheat Church-Community.

This policy stems from our awareness that abuse has been, and continues to be, a major problem in society. Statistics show that the church is not immune to this problem; in fact, close communities can be especially vulnerable because they are naturally trusting and unsuspecting institutions.

This policy outlines Grain of Wheat's position on our expectations for appropriate behavior regarding the care and supervision of children and our position on abusive behaviours. Our goal is that all who attend Grain of Wheat are able to pursue community and worship in a safe environment where staff and volunteers are protected from false or wrongful allegations.

Definitions

Under section one of the Manitoba *Child and Family Services Act*, **abuse** means an act or omission by any person where the act or omission results in:

- (a) physical injury to the child,
- (b) emotional disability of a permanent nature in the child or is likely to result in such a disability, or
- (c) sexual exploitation of the child with or without the child's consent.

An **Approved Adult** is anyone over 20 years of age who has satisfied the requirements of this Safe Church Policy. An Approved Adult can be an employee or non-employee of the congregation. Approved Adults include, but are not limited to all staff, Sunday School teachers, atrium teachers, youth mentors, youth group leaders, and nursery volunteers.

Policies and Procedures

Selection of Approved Adults

To protect the children/youth in our care, the following guidelines are established for those who desire to work with children/youth less than 18 years of age:

1. Be 20 years old.
2. Attend GoW regularly for a minimum of six months.
3. Complete an interview with a Safe Church Member
4. Complete an Approved Adult application form. (see appendix)
5. Sign and comply with our Ministry Agreement. (see appendix)
6. Attend a congregation-authorized training session which covers
 - * the Safe Church Policy
 - * procedures to follow for all children and youth activities
 - * appropriate steps to report an incident of child abuse
 - * provincial laws regarding child abuse.
7. Complete a Manitoba Criminal Record Check (including a vulnerable persons sector search) and a Manitoba Child Abuse Registry Check. After the initial checks are completed they will be considered valid for five years provided the candidate regular attends and participates in GoWC-C life. Both checks must be submitted to GOW within 60 days of receipt from official authorities.

Volunteers who have attended for fewer than six months may work with children if an Approved Adult is also present.

Applications and completed forms will be kept confidential in a locked box which will be kept by the designated “application and clearance” member of the safe church committee. Applications may be made available to the chair of the Safe Church Committee. The application and clearance member of the Safe Church Committee will share reference contact information with other safe church members to facilitate reference checks. Clearances are confidential and will only be made available to the designated members on the Committee and Servant Leaders if additional discernment is required. All documentation must be kept on file indefinitely.

Training and Renewal/Review of Approved Adult Applications:

We conduct training for all people working/volunteering in children's and youth ministry and other workers in positions of trust with minors or vulnerable adults. The purpose of this training is to provide understanding in the issue of abuse, abuse prevention and the legal responsibility to report actual or alleged incidents, this **initial** training includes a complete review of the GOWC-C Safe Church policy. Additionally, approved adults will sign a new ministry agreement every September and will annually attend a **refresher** training on GOWC-C safe church policy. This training will occur in September or October.

Approved Adult supervision

In a Sunday school situation, while two adults are preferable, it is acceptable to have one approved adult provided that there are windows to see into the classroom and/or an open door and/or a designated monitor circulating periodically from room to room throughout the session.

The nursery should always be attended by at least two Approved Adults. The glass in Sunday school room doors must never be covered. If a Sunday school room does not have a window, the door must be kept ajar. When rooms and closets are not in use they must be kept locked during children's programs.

In all church activities involving children and youth (except Sunday School and youth mentoring- see full description below), no fewer than two unrelated Approved Adults should be present. Every attempt will be made to provide for this ratio.

Youth Volunteers

We value the role that our teens and young adults have in providing care for the younger children and see them as an important part of the child/youth team. In situations where people under 20 years old are providing childcare, at least one Approved Adult should also be present. Any person, 16 years of age or older who is placed in a position of trust will be required to have a child abuse registry check and criminal record check completed (youth under 18 years of age require parental permission in order to obtain the checks). "Positions of trust" are defined as leadership roles that may place the individuals in situations where they are involved in making decisions about the health or welfare of those in their care, may require them to provide intimate care of babies, infants and younger children (i.e. diaper changing in a nursery, trips to the washroom, supervision in higher risk sports, recreational or off-premises activities) or may find themselves alone with those in care, even if only for a short period of time. Youth will be asked to complete a youth volunteer form and attend a youth volunteer introductory safe church training and yearly review trainings.

Release of Care in Sunday School Setting:

All children, seven years or younger, will be walked by the Sunday School teacher directly out of the worship space into the Sunday School Room. When the Sunday School class is over the teacher will walk the children back to the worship space and visually confirm that they have returned to their parents. The Sunday School teacher will ensure that children eight years and older have returned to the worship space after the Sunday School class has ended.

Youth mentoring Program:

Youth mentors are same-gender, Approved Adults, chosen by 12-year old youth and their parents to provide friendship and companionship for youth throughout their teenage years. Youth mentors are discerned by the Youth Connector and their Listener and approved by the Safe Church Committee. Mentors are offered to youth to facilitate their spiritual growth and maturity, complementing the role of parents. These relationships are an exception to the policy of needing two Approved Adults present for all activities with youth. It is expected that parents will be made aware of and approve of, planned youth/mentor activities or one-to-one meetings with the youth connector. The more light shining on a relationship, the safer it is. Our goal is to make mentorship a public and honored part of the life of Grain of Wheat Church-Community.

a) Mentorship Accountability:

Youth Mentors must meet the requirements to become an Approved Adult as well as:

1. Must attend Grain of Wheat regularly for a minimum of 5 years
2. Must be part of a Seed Group for at least 3 of those 5 years

3. Will be interviewed by a member of the Safe Church Committee

b) Covenant:

1. A meeting will be held at the beginning of each year, which mentors, protégées, and parents of protégées will be required to attend.
2. During this meeting Mentors, protégées and parents will sign a covenant that outlines: the purpose of mentorship, what is appropriate in the context of a mentorship relationship and what is not, options for addressing any concerns, and their commitment to do their best to fulfil the purpose of mentorship.

c) Oversight

1. All members of Grain of Wheat Church-Community are encouraged to take ownership of the mentorship program and to enquire, particularly with the mentor, about how the relationship is going and to intentionally build relationships with youth in our community.
2. Parents will do regular informal check-ins with youth and will assume the primary responsibility for monitoring the youth/mentor relationships.
3. The Safe Church Training for Approved Adults will include a section that broadly describes the purposes of mentorship, reviews the mentorship covenant and lists the mentor/ protégées pairings.
4. The Youth Connector will ensure that informal check-ins occur on a regular basis and one formal check-in occurs per year. A formal check-in would include going over a list of pre-established questions designed to gather information about how the mentorship relationship is going. See Appendix for formal questions.
5. The Youth Connector will ensure that an annual formal check-in with mentors occurs to ask about how the mentorship relationship is going and to address any concerns. A formal check-in would be include going over a list of pre-established questions designed to gather information about how the mentorship relationship is going. See Appendix for formal questions.
6. The Youth Connector will organize annual or bi-annual meetings with mentors to discuss difficulties, brainstorm different ways to fulfil the purpose of mentorship, and to hear any concerns
7. The Youth Connector will provide youth, mentors and parents with multiple people who could be approached to discuss feelings of discomfort or concern.
8. The Youth Connector will follow up on any intimations that things are not going well, either to improve the relationship or to help the protégée find a new mentor and to communicate clearly to the mentor why the protégée is switching mentors
9. If there is any concern that inappropriate actions are occurring within the mentoring relationship, the mentoring relationship will be suspended immediately, the designated reporting member of the Safe Church committee will be contacted within 24 hours, and the Safe Church Committee will begin conversations with the individuals concerned and follow any applicable protocol established by the Grain of Wheat Church-Community Safe Church Policy.

D) Guidelines/Boundaries for Mentorship relationships

1. Mentors will communicate to parents specific details of where they are going, what they will be doing, and what the timeline is for the activity
2. Mentors will plan their meetings/activities with protégées so that they will not be completely alone. i.e. in a public place or in the home with others present. **UNDER DISCUSSION**
3. Mentors will abide by the social networking policy-- if protégée sends a long message via email or text, mentor will respond in brief and suggest a follow-up in person. Suggested revision: “We value meeting youth where they are at and recognize that many youth prefer electronic methods of communication. We prefer that mentors meet face to face with youth to give counselling or advice. We ask that both mentors and proteges work to ensure that electronic communication does not become the primary means of communication”. **UNDER DEVELOPMENT IN SUB-COMMITTEE**
4. Mentors will be careful when sharing about their lives, making sure to share information which is appropriate to the youth’s mental, emotional and spiritual maturity and relevant to the conversation. Mentors should not share information that may cause the youth to feel stressed or concerned for their mentor’s well-being.

** See Appendix for procedure under which Youth Connector facilitates mentor selection.

Appropriate touch

Children need love. At times, this can be appropriately expressed through physical touch, such as hugging, a pat on the back, an arm around the shoulder, holding an infant or toddler, etc.

When expressing affection:

- a. Respect a child's/youth's refusal of affection
- b. Be aware of appropriate hand placement. A child/youth or an observer could misinterpret a pat on the bottom or a bear hug. Note that a body-to-body embrace; a touch on private areas (those areas covered by a bathing suit); or a kiss on the mouth is inappropriate.
- c. Discipline in the form of physical punishment (such as hitting or grabbing) is not permitted.

Diapering and bathroom assistance

In general, children should be encouraged to use the bathroom before and after classes or other activities. In this way parents can assist as needed. If child needs a diaper change or needs to go to the bathroom, an approved adult will bring them back to their parents.

Before and after services

Parents are responsible to monitor where their children are playing.

It is strongly recommended that parents accompany children to the washroom and do not allow them to play in the hallways as drug use and sexual activity are known to occur within the building.

General permission slips- Under Revision

At the beginning of the youth year (i.e. September) parents/guardians are required to fill out and sign a general information form, which includes pertinent medical information (including allergies), emergency phone numbers, and general consent for their child to participate in youth trips and events as planned by Grain of Wheat Church-Community. Parents will be notified in advance of specific individual events/activities and will complete, sign and return specific permission forms for overnight trips. These forms will be updated every year and filed with the youth connector or designate from the safe church committee.

Overnight activities

Overnight activities involving children/youth will be chaperoned by at least two Approved Adults. If the event involves children/youth of both genders, then there should be at least two Approved Adult of each gender (i.e. four Approved Adults).

For each overnight activity out-of-town, parents are required to complete a form that provides medical information, consent for the particular activity and emergency contacts. The original of each form will be taken on the trip and **a copy will be left with the Servant Leader member on the Safe Church Committee.**

Transportation

- Every effort will be made to avoid having a leader and an unrelated student alone in a vehicle
- If a student is in need of a ride, the best policy is for two leaders and two students to be present in the vehicle. Acceptable policy is for one leader and two youth to be present in the vehicle. If that is not possible, consent must be obtained from a parent/guardian. Departure and approximate arrival time will be clearly communicated to the parent/guardian.
- Yearly permission will be obtained from parents/guardians for youth and children to be transported by youth leaders.
- Those providing transportation for youth events must be 21 and have completed the graduated licensing requirements. All drivers must complete the Volunteer Driver's Agreement and sign the Driver's Contract (See Appendix).

Social Networking Policy

General policies and practices

1. Have parents sign appropriate waiver, attach Social Media Guidelines
2. Explain to students how you will behave on social media and why **(who will explain?)**
3. Keep office hours when using Social media – 3:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. on weekdays, 9:00 a.m. to 8 p.m. on weekends, and during youth events.
4. Encourage face-to-face conversation and positive personal relationships. Limiting electronic communication is counter-cultural, but it is important to be thoughtful about how we use electronic communication and to encourage youth to have both difficult and lighthearted conversations in person. Face-to-face communication limits misunderstanding and offers opportunity for the youth leader/mentor to sit with the youth in their pain or confusion, to demonstrate active listening and care in a way that is not possible through electronic communication. We ask that both mentors and

protegees work to ensure that electronic communication does not become the primary means of communication”.

Medium	Do	Do Not
Texting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exchange phone numbers with students. • Text about official events; brief encouragements. • Respond to emergencies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage in random conversations with students via texting. • Use text as your primary counselling or advice forum • Text excessively. • Use excessive acronyms or short hand. • Text outside of office hours.
Email	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exchange email addresses • Use for official information, brief encouragements. • Sending group photos. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage in random conversations. • Use it as your primary forum for conversation, advice, and counselling purposes • Exchange random photos. • Email excessively.
Facebook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create an official page using the name of your club. • Accept students as friends on personal FB pages if you have signed waivers from parents. • Send messages about events/times. • Engage in brief chats. • Post group photos. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask to be friends with students. • Accept friend requests from students whose parents have not signed waivers. • Engage in long personal chats with students. • Counsel students via FB chats • Allow yourself to be tagged on student pages. • Post photos of individual students.
Twitter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a group hashtag • Use for official notices, posting group photos • Create an official account. • Share group photos. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post photos of individual students. • Accept student followers on personal account. • Friend students on personal accounts. • Post photos of individual students.
Snap Chat, Skype, Ask FM, FaceTime		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not engage with students via these channels.

Education about Safe Church Policy

Still needs to be written after parent consultation has occurred.

Reporting suspected child/youth abuse

Volunteers/staff should inform the designated “reporting” member (Michelle Janzen) of the Safe Church Committee immediately when there is any reasonable cause to suspect that a child/youth under their care, guidance or supervision, or a child/youth not directly under their care, guidance or supervision, but involved in any church program or activity, has been alleged to be abused by anyone (including but not limited to the child/youth’s family, guardians, an Approved Adult or volunteer). The reporting designate will provide the volunteer/staff with the required reporting documents. (See appendix).

If the volunteer/staff desires, they may call ANCR (All Nations Coordinated Response): 204-944-4200 first, but the designate reporting member (Michelle Janzen) must be informed within 24 hours.

When the reporting designate is informed of suspected abuse, he or she will assist the volunteer in following the guidelines defined by the Manitoba Child and Family Services Act:

- (a) Immediately contact ANCR with your concerns, the agency worker will inform you what initial steps are planned
- (b) If you think the child is in immediate danger, contact the police.
- (c) Check with the ANCR worker prior to reporting to parents

The reporting designate will notify a member of the Servant Leadership Team (typically the SLT safe church representative) immediately after becoming aware of an allegation. While all SLT members may not be privy to the details of the specific allegations, at least two members, along with the reporting designate will work together to coordinate a response; the third SLT member will at minimum be made aware that a response is being coordinated.

Response to the Reporting of suspected child/youth abuse

All allegations of child/youth abuse or serious physical neglect will be taken seriously. All allegations will be treated in strict confidence. All reporting steps taken will be documented, including a log of phone calls, personal visits, and written reports; including the immediate completion of an incident reporting form. All communications regarding the report of child abuse shall attempt to protect the dignity and privacy of those persons affected by the report including the alleged child/youth victim and the person suspected of child abuse, while at the same time ensuring that persons in responsibility and law enforcement authorities remain fully informed. Without admitting legal liability or making public statements prior to obtaining legal counsel we will assure a compassionate response to all involved parties. **Where will reporting documents be stored? Locked box with Michelle?**

The congregation will cooperate with government authorities investigating allegations of abuse. The initiative for investigating alleged abuse resides with ANCR and/or the police and shall not be carried out by the congregation.

As required by our insurance company, we will immediately require that the person alleged to have committed the offense be suspended from any paid or volunteer work associated with GOWC-C. The chair of the personnel team will be responsible for communicating the situation

and details of the suspension to the person in question. Additionally, the chair of the personnel team, in consultation with the designated reporting member of the safe church committee and the designated servant leader will consult with a lawyer and will report the incident to our insurance company.

Additionally, these steps will be followed:

Mediation will be offered to parents and others if needed.

Pastoral team will give support to those directly involved.

Pastoral team will provide support and care to others, ie: witnesses.

Outside support and counselling services will be accessed and paid for if needed.

Providing community for known sexual offenders

Should someone with a known history of sexual offending wish to participate in the life of GoWCC safety measures and plans will be put into place on a case by case basis.

Safe Church Committee (SCC)

The SCC will include a servant leader, a Sunday School/Atrium committee representative, a Pastoral Team representative, and one member appointed at large (see appendix for current members). The SCC should include at least one male and one female member.

The committee will:

1. Implement and enforce this Safe Church Policy.
2. Review the Safe Church Policy with the congregation once a year.
3. Review and revise the Safe Church Policy as needed, but at least every two years.
4. Provide training for all staff and Approved Adults regarding child abuse and this policy.
5. Maintain a list of Approved Adults.
6. Monitor Approved Adults to ensure that policies are being followed.
7. Be accountable to the Decision Making Circle
8. Be kept apprised of investigations.
9. If needed, oversee the support and accountability of known sexual offenders attending the church, by assigning a supervisor and covenant partners and setting boundaries.
10. Keep file of General permission slips up to date and accessible to those who need them.

The designated “application and clearance” member of the safe church committee will:

1. Review all applications for Approved Adults.
2. Collect and review all completed clearances.
3. Maintain all clearances.
4. Complete and make available, upon request of an individual, his/her own Criminal Record and Child Abuse checks.

Michelle Janzen is designated as the member to receive and process reports of suspected abuse. This member is called the “reporting” designate.

The SCC chair will be appointed by the Decision Making Circle and will:

1. document that required forms are received for all applicants.

2. have access to applications but not clearances.
3. chair committee meetings.
4. ensure that annual congregation-authorized training sessions are held

Annual Review of Safe Church Policy

In May of each year the Safe Church Committee will do an internal audit on the efficacy of the safe church policy implementation and report it's finding to the GOWC-C decision making circle. See appendix for the Safe Church Policy Review Document.

Appendix

Definitions

Taken from the Manitoba Government “Reporting of Child Protection and Child Abuse – Handbook and Protocols for Manitoba Service Providers’

The Three Recognized Forms of Child Abuse

Child abuse is a serious problem that knows no social, economic, religious, cultural, racial or ethnic barriers. Knowing about the various forms of child abuse is critical to ensuring the safety and well-being of children. The CFS act points to three recognized forms of child abuse:

- physical abuse
- emotional abuse defined as an emotional disability of a permanent nature
- sexual abuse including sexual exploitation

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse can be a deliberate or intentional assault or act by a person that results in, or is likely to result in, physical injury or harm to a child. It can be the outcome of physical punishment, including spanking. The injury may be the result of a single incident or a pattern of episodes and can range in severity from soft tissue injury, bruising, burns, welts, or bite marks to major bone fractures, skull injuries and, in extreme situations, the death of the child. An act of omission (ex: where there is a failure to act or intervene when a child is being abused) can also constitute a form of abuse, especially if the lack of action results in the child continuing to be abused or neglected. It is also important to note that any physical punishment which results, intentionally or unintentionally, in injury or tissue damage to a child is considered physical abuse and may result in a criminal charge. Punishment resulting in an injury is reportable to a CFS agency. Increasingly, countries around the world are prohibiting physical punishment of children. Research clearly demonstrates that physical punishment is associated with an increased risk for negative outcomes, including increased aggression, antisocial behaviour, mental health issues and physical injury.

Section 43 of The Criminal Code of Canada states that a parent is “justified in using force of correction...if the force does not exceed what is reasonable under the circumstances.” The Supreme Court of Canada has noted seven criteria to distinguish between reasonable and abusive corrective force with children. Physical punishment of children is deemed reasonable if:

- it is administered by a parent (teachers are not permitted to use corporal punishment)
- the child is between the ages of two and 12, inclusive
- the child is capable of learning from correction
- it constitutes minor corrective force of a transitory and trifling nature

Remember:

A child is anyone under
18 years of age. 18

- it does not involve the use of objects or blows or slaps to the head
- it is used for “educative or corrective purpose” and does not stem from a

caregiver's frustration, loss of temper, or abusive personality

- it is not degrading, inhuman, or harmful

In Manitoba, foster parents or service providers working in residential care facilities are not allowed to inflict any form of physical punishment towards children in care. Service providers can communicate to parents and guardians that physical punishment as a form of discipline is ineffective and associated with negative outcomes. They can also provide information on constructive ways of responding to parent-child conflict and help parents to understand and communicate with their children more effectively.

Sexual Abuse Including Sexual Exploitation

Sexual abuse, including sexual exploitation is when a child is used for the sexual gratification of another person with or without the child's consent. Typically, most sexual abuse reports involve situations where a child is abused within the immediate or extended family system. However, a child may be sexually abused and exploited by others outside the family, including a known adult, peer or stranger. The perpetrator may be either the same or the opposite sex as the victim. Young children and children with disabilities are especially vulnerable to sexual abuse, as they may not have the language or knowledge to understand or tell others that they are being abused. Boys are as susceptible to sexual abuse as girls, but appear to be far more reluctant to disclose their situation. In addition, children living on the street are at high risk of experiencing sexual exploitation. Children exploited in the sex trade are not prostitutes or criminals. They are victims of abuse.

Sexual abuse includes:

- touching or an invitation to touch for sexual purposes
- oral, anal or genital penile penetration or intercourse
- anal or genital digital or other forms of penetration
- genital contact or touching without penetration
- fondling of a child's breasts, buttocks, or other body parts
- indecent exposure or deliberate exposure of the child to sexual activity or material
- sexual acts involved in organized or ritual abuse
- any acts that are used for sexual gratification

Children exploited in the sex trade are not prostitutes or criminals. They are victims of abuse.¹⁹

Sexual exploitation is a form of sexual abuse that occurs when a child becomes engaged in sexual activities as a result of coercion or manipulation, in exchange for money, drugs, food, shelter or other considerations. Sexual exploitation can involve:

- performing sexual acts in exchange for the basic necessities of life (ex: survival sex)
- involvement in sexually explicit activity for entertainment
- involvement with escort or massage parlour services

- appearing in pornographic images

Child pornography constitutes a pervasive form of sexual exploitation. When children are involved in child pornography they continue to be further victimized since the pornographic representations (ex: photographs, films, videos) can be distributed through the Internet or cell phones. All children under 18 years of age must be protected from sexual exploitation and pornography. In Manitoba, it is mandatory to report all forms of child pornography. Section 1(1) of The Child and Family Services Act:

Family Services Act defines child pornography as:

- (a) a photographic, film, video or other visual representation, whether or not it was made by electronic or mechanical means,
 - (i) that shows a child engaged in, or depicted as engaged in, explicit sexual activity, or
 - (ii) the dominant characteristic of which is the depiction, for a sexual purpose, of a sexual organ of a child or the anal region of a child,
- (b) any written material, visual representation or audio recording that advocates or counsels sexual activity with a child that would be an offence under The Criminal Code (Canada);
- (c) any written material whose dominant characteristic is the description, for a sexual purpose, of sexual activity with a child that would be an offence under The Criminal Code (Canada), or
- (d) any audio recording that has as its dominant characteristic the description, presentation or representation, for a sexual purpose, of sexual activity with a child that would be an offence under The Criminal Code (Canada). For more information about prevention programs related to child abuse, visit the

Kids In the Know Program offered by the Canadian Centre for Child Protection:

kidsintheknow.ca/app/en/

If you have come across an image of child pornography, you need to make an online report to www.cybertip.ca. If you know a child under 18 years of age who has been (or is) involved in child pornography or other forms of sexual exploitation, you have the legal duty to report the incident to your local child and family services (CFS) agency. If you think the child is in immediate danger, call 911 or your local police.²⁰

Age of Consent in Canada

The age of consent refers to the age at which a young person can legally consent to sexual activity. All sexual activity without consent, regardless of age, is a criminal offence. As stipulated in The Criminal Code of Canada, the age of consent for sexual activity is 16 years. This means, for example, that if a 55-year old adult became sexually engaged with a 15-year old, that adult would no longer have a defence that the teenager consented to that activity. The age of consent applies to all forms of sexual activity, ranging from sexual touching, to kissing, to sexual intercourse. The age of consent is 18 years where the sexual activity exploits the young person – when it involves prostitution, pornography or occurs in a relationship of authority, trust or

dependence (ex: with a teacher, coach or baby sitter). Sexual activity can also be considered exploitative based on the nature and circumstances of the relationship, such as the young person's age, the age difference between the young person and their partner, how the relationship developed (quickly, secretly, over the Internet) and how the partner may have controlled or influenced the young person.

The Criminal Code provides a close-in-age or peer group exception to the age of consent. This exception permits 14 and 15 year olds to engage in sexual activity with a partner who is less than five years older than they are, and with whom there is no relationship of trust, authority or dependency or any other exploitation of the young person. If the partner is five years or older than the 14 or 15 year old, any sexual activity will be considered a criminal offence unless it occurs after they are married to each other. There is also a close-in-age exception for 12 and 13 year olds. This means that a 12 or 13 year old can consent to sexual activity with another young person who is less than two years older and with whom there is no relationship of trust, authority or dependency or other form of exploitation of the young person.

The Criminal Code protects 16 and 17 year olds against sexual exploitation. As well, 16 and 17 year olds cannot consent to sexual activity that involves prostitution or pornography, or any form of sexual exploitation. If you think a child under 18 years of age is being (or has been) abused, you have the legal duty to report your concern to your local child and family services (CFS) agency. For a list of CFS designated intake agencies, go to: manitoba.ca/intakeagencies or see page 151 of this handbook. If you do not know the number of your local CFS agency, or it is after working hours, you can call the province-wide intake and emergency after-hours child and family services telephone number at 1-866-345-9241. If you think the child is in immediate danger, call 911 or your local police.²¹

The Compliant Victim

Survivors of child sexual abuse often find it difficult to place the blame for their abuse where it really lies: on the shoulders of the perpetrator. The offender may be a person that the child loves, such as a parent or a family member. The offender may also be a person that the child's parent loves, such as a step-parent. The abuser may twist aspects of the abuse so that the child is made to feel at fault or somehow complicit in the abuse. The child may be told that the abuse is their fault. The abuser may mask the abuse as punishment, entwine the abuse together with expressions of love and affection, or even manipulate the child to initiate incidents of abuse. A child cannot truly understand the power play and the control that the perpetrator has in these situations and will often take that self-blame and internalize it. This can lead to feelings of worthlessness, guilt, depression, self-hatred, inability to self-care and risky behaviours. Offenders have a special ability to identify and exploit children's vulnerabilities. For example, younger or compromised children are especially vulnerable as they do not have the language or knowledge to understand or tell others what is happening. Children who rely on the offender for care, love, affection or other things will also be vulnerable to the demands of the abuser. Offenders use a range of strategies to engage the child in a relationship where the abuse can

happen and to desensitize the child to sexual abuse and exploitation. This is sometimes called the grooming process. Grooming usually begins with subtle behaviours that do not appear to be inappropriate, and that may in fact indicate that the adult (offender) is very good with children. Understanding the many ways in which abusers target their victim and groom them for the sexual abuse can be one step towards placing the blame where it belongs and releasing it from the shoulders of the child. Some grooming strategies include:

- **Gaining trust:** The offender may take steps to gain the trust of the child's parent or guardian, to gain access to the child. The perpetrator will also begin to spend more time with the child, listening to them, treating them as special, or giving them compliments, presents or favours.
- **Isolation/secretcy:** The offender will isolate the child from their siblings and protective parent(s) or caregiver(s). The favouritism shown to the victim often promotes alienation from siblings. Statements like, "Mom wouldn't understand how special we are together" and "Ours is a special love that others wouldn't understand" contribute to a climate of secrecy.
- **Testing the child's boundaries:** A process of desensitization is used to test the child's resistance and engage them in the abuse. Offenders may use touching as a game or introduce sexual touching as accidental. They may blur the boundaries of ordinary affection so the child confuses this with the abuse. This often occurs around the child's daily activities (ex: dressing or bathing). The perpetrator will try to gain compliance of the victim by assuring the child of the rightness of what they are doing through statements such as: "This is a way we can show we love each other...I am teaching you...It's not doing any harm."

Throughout the process of engaging the child in the abuse, the offender is evaluating whether the child has been groomed sufficiently (ex: whether they will keep compliant and maintain secrets about the abuse).

For more information, please go to: pandys.org/index.html

Examples of Concerning Adult Behaviour

The following are examples of behaviours by adults towards children that may be of concern. Not all of these behaviours necessarily constitute an attempt to be sexually gratified by a child. However, these actions with loose, permeable boundaries must be addressed for the safety of children. It is important to watch for any of the following behaviours (pay attention to the frequency, intensity and any combinations of behaviours):

- deliberately walking in on a child who is changing or using the washroom
- asking or having a child watch the adult change or use the washroom
- 'accidentally' touching genitalia
- activities that involve the removal of clothing (massage, swimming, etc.)
- wrestling or roughhousing
- telling a child sexually explicit jokes
- teasing a child about breast or genital development
- discussing sexually explicit information while pretending to teach a child sex education

- bathing a child or showering with a child
- showing the child sexually explicit images or pornography
- looking at or taking pictures of children in underwear, bathing suits, dancewear, etc.
- making sexual comments or sharing inappropriate stories of sexual activity
- using physical restraint
- For more information, please go to: commit2kids.ca/app/en/home. Commit to Kids is a program that can be tailored to your organization to further enhance child safety.

Emotional Abuse and Child Neglect

Emotional abuse has long been one of the most difficult forms of abuse to define and recognize. Most often it is not limited to one single act but is associated with a pattern of serious, ongoing, negative attacks on a child's self-esteem. Emotional abuse, which can be as damaging as physical abuse, can range from:

- persistent rejection
- humiliation
- belittling and denigration²³
- rigid and/or unrealistic expectations accompanied by threats if not met
- threatening or perpetuating violence against a child's loved ones or objects
- witnessing domestic violence
- ridiculing for showing normal emotions
- threats
- insults
- scapegoating
- verbal attacks and put-downs

Generally, emotional abuse involves acts or omissions by people in contact with a child that are likely to have serious, negative emotional impacts. Emotional abuse may occur separately from, or along with, other forms of abuse. In Manitoba, to constitute child abuse, there needs to be evidence that the impact of the emotional abuse on the child is of a potentially permanent nature. While suspected emotional abuse may not require police intervention or medical examination, a CFS agency may need to collaborate with the police, medical facilities and others in gathering evidence to establish a serious and persistent pattern of abuse likely to cause emotional disability of a significant nature.

Child neglect is the failure of a child's primary caregiver to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, supervision, and/or medical care. Child neglect involves an act of omission by a parent or guardian, resulting in (or likely to result in) harm or imminent risk of harm to a child.

Youth Mentorship Selection Process:

At Grain of Wheat, when a child turns 12, they can choose to be matched up with a mentor. Before they turn 12, the Youth Connector contacts the parents of the child and explains the mentorship program to them. The parents are provided with a list of adults in Grain of Wheat who have been discerned by the Youth Connector and Listener to be appropriate for the role of mentor, and who have agreed to consider being a mentor if asked. The parents and child go over the list and discuss who might be an appropriate mentor for the child. The family then provides the Youth Connector with a list of three names in order of preference. If the family chooses someone who is not on the list, the Youth Connector will discuss their reasons for choosing that person and discuss the person's appropriateness and giftedness with their Listener. The Youth Connector will then approach the first person on the list and ask them if they would be willing and able to mentor the child, while ensuring that the adult understands the role of mentor. If they say no, the Youth Connector will go through the same process with the second name on the list, and so on. Once one of the people on the list agrees to be mentor, the Youth Connector contacts the youth and parents and tells them. The choice of mentor is also made public to the church community. This process can also occur with a teenager who did not receive a mentor at the age of 12, and would proceed in the exact same way.

Protegee Formal Check-in:

These questions are an expression of care and are designed to allow youth the opportunity to express any concerns or identify any issues they maybe experiencing.

The Youth Connector will share the following information at the beginning of the conversation (the intention is to normalize):

- that all youth are being called to check-in on the mentoring relationship, “I’m calling ALL the youth right now to check in on how the mentoring relationships are going.”
- that these calls will occur yearly, “I’m going to do this every year”
- as long as there are no safety concerns, anything shared will be confidential, unless the youth wants the information shared.

Questions:

- What was your favourite thing that you did with your mentor this year?
- What was the most helpful thing?
- Is there anything you wish you could change about this relationship?
- Do you have any other questions, concerns, or things you’d like to talk about?

Mentors Formal Check-in Questions:

- What is one thing you learned from your protégée this year?
- What do you appreciate most about them?
- What about this relationship is most life giving?
- Is there anything you are struggling with in your relationship with your protégée? Or something that you wish you could change (or want to work on changing)?
- Do you have any other questions, concerns, or things you’d like to talk about?

**SAFE CHURCH POLICY
IMPLIMENTATION REVIEW**

This is an implementation review form, not a policy review. The checklist is to be used in conjunction with the current Safe Church policy.

Purpose and Definition

Have we shared the purpose, the intent of the Safe Church Policy as part of our orientation?

Yes _____ No _____

Comment

Policy and Procedures

How well have we implemented our personnel guidelines?

Mark each: Yes or No

- _____ Be 20 or older
- _____ Attend GOW for 6 months
- _____ Complete interview with Safe Church Member
- _____ Complete an approved adult application
- _____ Sign and comply with Ministry Statement
- _____ Attend a congregation-authorized training session
- _____ Complete a Manitoba Criminal Check
- _____ Applications and completed Forms in locked box

Comment on any above _____

Training and Renewal/Review of Approved Adult Applications

Yes _____ ; No _____

Adult Supervision

Yes or No ?

- _____ Have two approved adults in classroom?
- _____ Or one approved adult with open door/window?
- _____ Nursery attended by two approved adults?
- _____ Rooms and closets locked if not in use during program?

Comments on above:

Youth Volunteers

Yes or No ?

_____ Have we incorporated youth volunteers?
_____ if so, has an approved adult been present?
_____ any person 16 or older, placed in a position of trust, has had an abuse registry check and a criminal check?

_____ Have completed a youth volunteer form and attended a youth volunteer introductory safe church training?

Comments on above _____

Release of Care in SS Setting

Yes or No?

_____ Have children, seven or younger been walked from worship area to SS rooms by SS teacher and back again to worship area?

_____ For children 8 and older, has SS teacher confirmed that children are in the care of parents?

Comment on above _____

Youth Mentoring Program (UNDER REVISION ??)

Appropriate Touch

Yes or No ?

_____ Has the information on touch and expressing affection been presented as part of the orientation?

_____ Has any "inappropriate touch" been observed?

_____ If so, has it been addressed?

Comments on above _____

Diapering and Bathroom Assistance

Yes or No ?

_____ Have parents been asked to assist their child in bathroom use?

Before and After Services

Yes or No?

_____ Have parents assumed the responsibility of monitoring their children?

General Permission Slips

Yes or No?

_____ Have permission slips been given out and collected?

Overnight Activities

Yes or No?

_____ Were at least two approved adults with the children?

_____ In the event of a two gender overnight trip, were two approved adults of both genders present?

_____ Was a completed parental consent form requested, including any health issues and emergency contacts?

Comments

Transportation

Yes or No?

_____ Every effort was taken to have two approved adults in the vehicle when transporting children/youth

_____ failing the above, every effort was made to have one adult and two youth present.

_____ failing that, consent was obtained from the parents, indicating schedule and arrival time.

_____ all drivers are 21 or older, with a valid drivers licence.

_____ all drivers have completed the "Volunteer Driver Agreement" (See Appendix ?)

Comments

Social Networking Policy (Appendix ??)

Yes or No?

_____ have parents signed appropriate waiver?

_____ have students been informed how you will behave on social media?

_____ staff/mentors has communicated when they would be available?

_____ staff/mentors have communicated their preference to relate face to face and why?

Education About Safe Church Policy (Future)

Reporting Suspected Child/Youth Abuse

Yes or No or N/A?

_____ Has there been any abuse reported?

_____ If so, was Michelle Janzen notified within 24 hours?

_____ If so, was ANCR immediately contacted?

_____ If so, was a Servant leader immediately contacted?

Comments

Response To The Reporting of Suspected Child/Youth Abuse

Yes or No or N/A ?

- _____ Have all abuse allegations been taken seriously? (followed up on?)
- _____ Have all abuse allegations been treated in strict confidence?
- _____ Have all reporting steps been documented and stored? i.e. phone calls, visits, written reports, etc.?
- _____ All communications has protected the dignity and privacy of all parties involved, both the abused and the person suspected of abuse?
- _____ All reporting documents are stored in locked box with Michelle?
- _____ Grain of Wheat cooperated with government authorities investigating the allegations?
- _____ The suspected abuser was immediately suspended from any of his/her responsibilities, as communicated by the chair of the personnel committee?
- _____ The pastoral team gave support to the persons/family effected?

Comment

Providing community for known sexual offenders

Yes, No or N/A

- _____ GOW has been informed of known offender wanting to relate to Community?

Safe Church Committee (SCC)

Insert Names

The committee shall consist of:

- _____ a Servant leader
- _____ a SS committee person
- _____ a Pastoral team representative
- _____ one member at large

The SCC Job Description:

Yes or No?

- _____ Implemented and enforced this Safe Church Policy (SCP)
- _____ Reviewed SCP with congregation once a year.
- _____ Reviewed and revised SCP as needed, at least every two yrs.
- _____ Provided training for all staff and Approved Adult regarding abuse.
- _____ Maintained a list of Approved Adults
- _____ Monitored Approved Adults to ensure that policies were followed.
- _____ Been accountable to the Decision Making Circle.
- _____ Been kept apprised of investigations.

_____ Oversaw the support and accountability of known sexual offender attending GOW.
_____ Kept file of General permission slips up to date and accessible to those who need them?

Comments

The designated “application and clearance” member of the SCC has:

Yes or No?

_____ Reviewed all applications for Approved Adults?
_____ Collected and Reviewed all completed clearances?
_____ Maintained all clearances?
_____ Completed and made available, upon request of an individual, his/her own Criminal Record and Child Abuse checks?

Comments

The SCC Chair, appointed by Decision Making Group, has done:

Yes or No?

_____ documented that required forms were received for all applicants?
_____ had access to applications, but not clearances?
_____ chaired committee meetings?
_____ ensured that annual congregational-authorized training session were held.

Comments

2017-2018 Safe Church Members:

Servant leader: Tessa Nussbaum

Sunday School/Atrium committee representative:

Pastoral Team representative: Jake Pauls

Member at large: Sarah Deckert, Amanda Dueck

Safe Church Committee Chair: Tessa Nussbaum