

KELLOGGSVILLE SAFETY AND ABUSE PREVENTION POLICIES

PURPOSE STATEMENT

The Christian Reformed Church has taken steps to increase awareness concerning physical, emotional and sexual abuse. They have a Director of Safe Church Ministry and have published extensive materials in an attempt to educate individual congregations concerning abuse prevention.

The council of Kelloggsville CRC also believes it is important to develop policies and procedures for preventing abuse. In 2007 the council approved these Safety and Abuse policies. In annual reviews since that time, some revisions have taken place to update the policies to increase efficiency without sacrificing safety.

A Child Protection Team (CPT) has been created to monitor and effectively implement the policies. The CPT is comprised of three unrelated individuals including two congregation members and one designated staff person.

The Child Protection Team (CPT) is led by Joy Howard – staff person

GOALS

The goals of the Child Protection Team (CPT) are:

1. To make Kelloggsville Church's ministries and building a safe, secure place for children, youth, staff and volunteers to grow in their relationship to God.
2. To provide staff and volunteers with appropriate guidelines and protection to carry on effective ministry
3. To create an environment of acceptance, love and compassion for all.

WHY ARE SAFETY POLICIES IMPORTANT?

[<http://www.christianitytoday.com/childrensministry/articles/sexualabusein the church.html>]

Sexual predators will gravitate to activities and organizations where fewer protective measures are in place. The church should lead the way in promoting a protective culture that is easily obvious to parent and offender alike.

Every church has a vested interest in proactively communicating:

- This church is serious about protecting children
- This church will require applications and reviews
- The church will screen effectively
- The church will train all staff members and volunteers to recognize and report inappropriate behavior
- This church will skillfully monitor the behavior of staff members, volunteers, and children
- This church will expect ALL staff and volunteers to understand and comply with policies and procedures designed to prevent abuse.

When a pro-active church communicates effectively, sexual offenders will opt out of church programming, because "it's just too hard here."

Perhaps someday offender access will be "too hard" in every church.

GENERAL POLICIES

Discipline Polices

1. Corporal punishment (slapping, hitting, pushing) is not permitted.
2. Abusive verbal discipline (yelling, hurling insults, threatening) is not permitted.
3. Parent(s) are to be informed and involved whenever a child/youth develops a pattern of misbehavior.
4. Expectations of children's/youth behavior must reflect their age and level of comprehension. Similarly, discipline must reflect their age and level of comprehension.
5. Children are to be reminded of the kind of behavior that is acceptable for the setting. Older children and youth may benefit from helping to develop appropriate behavioral expectations and having these expectations in written form.
6. Appropriate forms of discipline are to be reviewed with volunteers/staff before church-sponsored programs begin a new season. Then periodic reminders are to be given as needed.
7. Whenever possible, leaders should choose one or more of the following options before implementing other forms of discipline:
 - distract the child/youth with another activity
 - help the child/youth focus on another more acceptable behavior
 - isolate the child/youth from others if another volunteer/staff is available to assist

Transportation Policies

This policy applies to those who, while serving in or attending ministry to youth, may transport non-related youth in church-sponsored programs.

1. Every effort must be made to inform and secure permission from parents/guardians ahead of time if children or youth will be leaving the church for an event. A contact cell phone must be provided to parents/guardians so that leaders can be contacted during an offsite event if there is an emergency or change in plans.
2. At least two of the following procedures should be in place:
 - a. Two adults are present and seated in the front seat of the vehicle when transporting youth
 - b. At least two youth are present in the vehicle
 - c. Youth are seated in the back seats of the vehicle
 - d. Drivers log-in each pick up and drop off; logs are turned into program supervisor
3. Adults must have a valid driver's license and proof of insurance before transporting youth; drivers who routinely transport youth will have their driving record reviewed prior to the beginning of each church year.
4. All those who transport participants during the hours of a ministry activity must submit a Church Driver Application Form.
5. The van, which is owned by the church, can only be used for church functions and shall not be used for personal use. It must be reserved in advance by contacting the church. The use of the van will be on a first-come, first-served basis. It will be the responsibility of the user to visually inspect the van before it leaves the parking lot to assure it is in good safe working order. The user must also verify that the capacity of the van is not at any time exceeded (15 passengers, including driver). The driver of the van must have a valid driver's license and must be a member* of the church. The driver must be licensed and at least 21 years old. The van must be cleaned and the gas tank must be full when it is returned.
 - *Council has approved the following membership definition for policy use:
 - 1) Worships at least 2 times per month with the KCRC congregation;
 - 2) Participated in the life and ministries of KCRC;
 - 3) Financially supports the ministry of KCRC.
6. Drivers need to abide by state and provincial requirements for car seat use, seatbelt use and air bag safety.
 - a. Youth are to wear seat belts whenever the vehicle is in service. Drivers may not transport more youths than available seatbelts.
 - b. Where required by law, car seats must be available for younger children.
 - c. For safety, youth under the age of 10 may not sit in the front seat if there is a passenger-side airbag
 - d. Until children are 8 years old or 4'9" they must use a booster seat and ride in the back seat with both the vehicle's lap and shoulder belt fastened. Booster seats are available in the church van.

7. The transportation policy is in place from the time the ministry begins until the time it ends. Church supervision will not be enforced for:
 - a. adults who transport family members to and from church-sponsored events
 - b. parents or guardians who request or give permission for an individual with a valid driver's license to transport non-related youth.

Building Safety Policies

- A safety team is in place during morning worship services. In the event of emergencies, they will be the lead group providing response and directions during the emergency.
- The safety team will make annual reviews of the building for the purposes of making it a more secure and safe environment during all public activities.
- When a ministry is using the building, the leader of that ministry is required to take responsibility for securing the building prior to, during and after the ministry event.
- Whenever possible, ministries should monitor and use a single entrance during arrival, lock the entrance once ministry is underway and observe pick up and departure of participants.
- After evening ministries, it is recommended that participants leave in pairs or groups when going to their cars in the parking lot.

VIGILANT - We all need to commit to an attitude of vigilance concerning the safety in and around this building. We need to be vigilant about security for every person who enters this parking lot and building. If you have concerns – **PLEASE ACT!**

SPECIFIC AGE AND MINISTRY APPROPRIATE POLICIES

INFANT – 2ND GRADE [Nursery, 2's & 3's, Children's Worship, Moppets, Tutoring Thursdays, Impact]

1. NURSERY: There will be an adult coordinator present at all times, plus an adult helper and additional helpers who may be minors. IF a CPR trained person is required immediately in the nursery during worship, the coordinator will punch "00" into the number system on the screen.
2. Whenever church activities for this age group are in session, two volunteers, including at least one adult, should be present.
3. 2's & 3's: A competent, dependable teenager can be considered an "adult" for this age group only. The application from the teenager will be reviewed by the ministry coordinator based on history and experience with children. Final approval will come from the Children's Ministry Director.
4. Only one adult member of a family should serve at a given time. A couple (husband and wife) should not serve at the same time unless a third attendant is present.
5. Any significant medical problem must be reported immediately to the child's parent(s).
6. Only adults may assist children with bathroom needs. An adult assistant attending a child in the bathroom must keep the bathroom door ajar. Children should be encouraged to use the bathroom facilities before and after class.
7. PRE-K THROUGH 2ND: Children should not leave the classroom except for illness, to use the bathroom facilities, or other compelling reasons.
8. The diapering of a child must take place under the observation of another attendant.
9. NURSERY: An adult or minor who is not scheduled as an attendant at that particular service may not spend time in the nursery rooms during or after the service. Exemptions would be nursing mothers or parents who have been summoned to the nursery to be with their child.
10. The Discipline Policy applies to all ministries and church activities in this age group..
11. NURSERY: Additional policies regarding communicable diseases, injury procedures and other pertinent information are located in the nursery parent's handbook

3rd-5th GRADES [Impact, GEMS, Cadets, Tutoring Thursdays]

1. Whenever church activities for this age group are in session, two volunteers, including at least one adult, should be present.
2. Only one adult member of a family should serve at a given time. A couple (husband and wife) should not serve at the same time unless a third teacher or helper is present.
3. Children should not leave the classroom except for illness, to use the bathroom facilities, or other compelling reasons. An adult should monitor the situation when a child leaves the classroom.
4. Any significant medical problem must be reported immediately to the child's parent(s).
5. Adults in these ministries should identify abusive behavior among minors in their ministries and have a policy to discourage these behaviors.
6. Adults should provide adequate supervision of the boys and girls in their care. This supervision shall include ensuring that the boys and girls stay in their designated areas while the ministry is in session. Boys and girls should be supervised by at least two persons; an adult leader and another volunteer at least four years older than the oldest child/youth.
7. An adult leader may meet privately with a minor no more than 2 times in a ministry year. Such meetings may only occur with the permission of a parent/guardian. Any such meeting must occur in a public place. (GEMS, Cadets)
8. Boys and girls should not arrive more than ten minutes before the start of the class, nor should they stay longer than ten minutes after the class.
9. Events away from the church facility, out of town or overnight should be conducted in general compliance with the aforementioned policies.
10. While the appropriate display of affection between adults and youth is often part of conveying support and encouragement to one another, such displays can be misinterpreted. For that reason, displays of affection should be limited to such actions as a brief hug, an arm around the shoulder, an open-hand pat on the upper back, a handclasp, or a light touch to the forearm. A counselor's or counselee's right to refuse any of these will be respected.
11. Leaders in mid week ministries shall adopt and implement a drop-off/pick-up policy for girls and boys that must be approved by the Children's Ministry Director and/or the Director of Ministries.
12. The discipline policy applies to these ministries.
13. The transportation policy applies to these ministries.

KIDS' LIFE BIBLE CLUB AND KID'S HOPE USA [both meet at Kelloggsville SE Elementary]

1. All policies appropriate for the specific age groups in these ministries should be considered and implemented.
2. Teachers and mentors in these ministries should also familiarize themselves with the policies of Kelloggsville SE Elementary. Where those policies may differ from the policies outlined here, the school's policy should be followed.

6TH-12TH GRADES [Impact, GEMS, Cadets, MAD, TNT, Tutoring Thursdays]

1. Each year youth group leaders should sponsor a class about abuse for members of the youth group. Topics for this class might include date violence, biblical guidelines for dating relationships, awareness of the signs of abuse, a teenager's response to a teenage victim or abuser, or prevention of abuse.
2. Youth group leaders may meet privately with a youth group member once or twice and thereafter only with the permission of a parent. Any such meeting should occur in public.
3. Regardless of the relative ages, it is never appropriate for a youth group leader and a youth group member to date each other. Similarly, a youth group leader should not date the close friend of a member of the youth group.

4. Youth group leaders may be single or they may be married couples, although only one spouse need attend a youth group function. In the context of group activities, youth group leaders should provide supervision of the youth in their care. Youth group leaders should not hold a youth group function without appropriate or sufficient supervision. Youth group functions should not be under the supervision of only one youth group leader. These guidelines also apply to activities away from the church site.
5. While the appropriate display of affection between youth group leaders and young people is often part of conveying support and encouragement to one another, such displays can be misinterpreted. For that reason, displays of affection should be limited to such actions as a brief hug, an arm around the shoulder, an open-hand pat on the upper back, a handclasp, or a light touch to the forearm. A youth group leader's or a young person's right to refuse any of these will be respected.
6. The discipline policy applies to youth group ministries.
7. The transportation policy applies to the ministries for these ages and grades.

SCREENING POLICIES

1. All volunteer and paid staff serving in ministry to children and youth will submit an application and will be screened. The specific steps for screening will differ depending upon the position being applied for.
2. When a volunteer/paid staff person changes their position, additional screening steps may be required.
3. Volunteers and paid staff may not serve in ministry to children and youth until the application has been approved and the screening is complete. Any applicant for a volunteer position may withdraw at any time from the application process.
4. The church reserves the right to deny an applicant a volunteer position for any reason.
5. Any applicant with a previous history of sexual misconduct or physical assault, or misdemeanor or felony conviction of child abuse or pleading of no contest to any misdemeanor or felony charge will not be allowed to serve in ministry to children and youth.

DEVIATION POLICY

[Guidelines for handling unexpected situations or activities that require a ministry staff person or volunteer to deviate from the policies outlined in this document. For example, a van driver may need to leave for a pick up and the designated rider did not arrive on time.]

1. If an unexpected situation arises where the teacher/leader/staff person believes it is necessary to act "out of policy" in order to maintain the effectiveness of the ministry, a deviation report must be submitted to the CPT through the Director of Ministries outlining the decision that was made.
2. The information will be reviewed by the CPT on a case-by case basis to determine any inadequacies in current practices and policies. If a review indicates over time that the policy is too rigid, a revision may be considered. If the review indicates that a ministry is consistently "out of policy" the CPT will talk with the ministry leader to see what can be done to help alleviate the situation.

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

1. Michigan law requires "members of the clergy" as well as other professionals who work with children and who have "reasonable cause to suspect child abuse or neglect" to report such suspected child abuse or neglect to the Children's Protective Services unit of the Michigan Department of Human Services. Kelloggsville Church will comply with that statutory obligation.
2. Kelloggsville Church intends to cooperate with Children's Protective Services and applicable law enforcement official investigating alleged occurrences of child abuse or neglect.
3. Child abuse is defined as "harm or threatened harm to a child's health or welfare that occurs through non-accidental physical or mental injury, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, or maltreatment, by a parent, a legal guardian, or any other person responsible for the child's health or welfare or by a teacher, a teacher's aide, or a member of the clergy."

4. Child neglect is defined as “harm or threatened harm to a child’s health or welfare by a parent, legal guardian, or any other person responsible for the child’s health or welfare that occurs through either negligent treatment, including the failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, or medical care or placing a child at an unreasonable risk to the child’s health or welfare by failure of the parent, legal guardian, or other person responsible for the child’s health or welfare to intervene to eliminate that risk when that person is able to do so and has, or should have, knowledge of the risk.”
5. If an employee of Kelloggsville Church or a volunteer of Kelloggsville Church has cause to suspect child abuse or neglect, he/she shall inform the Child Protection Team (CPT). The employee or volunteer with first hand information may be asked to make a written report of the incident.
6. The CPT shall determine whether reasonable cause to suspect child abuse or neglect exists and, if so, the CPT shall report such suspected child abuse or neglect to the Children’s Protective Services unit of the Department of Human Services agency.
7. If any of member of the clergy or the CPT reports suspected child abuse or neglect to Children’s Protective Services and that report involves a paid staff member or volunteer of Kelloggsville Church, then that paid staff member shall be suspended with pay and the volunteer shall be suspended from any volunteer activities at Kelloggsville Church.
8. Regardless of the outcome of any investigation by Children’s Protective Services, any reinstatement of the staff member or volunteer shall be at the discretion of the Council under recommendation of the CPT and shall be on such term(s) as the Council and CPT deems appropriate including any or all of the following: compliance with Church Order Articles 78-84, submission of a psychologist’s or therapist’s written report, conditions or limitations upon the employment or service by the staff member or volunteer at Kelloggsville Church.
9. All documents, evidence, records or files submitted to or of the CPT shall be confidential. No one, other than members of CPT, shall have access to such documents, evidence, records or files without the approval of Kelloggsville Church’s Council.
10. Communication guidelines:
 - a. In the event of an abuse allegation, the council will appoint a designated spokesperson* that will be the only individual authorized to communicate with the media or anyone else outside the congregation regarding such allegation. Any individual holding an official position in the church who steps outside these boundaries is open to discipline.
 - b. The personnel records and volunteer profiles of Kelloggsville Church are confidential and may not be disclosed to a third party without legal authorization of employee or volunteer consent.
 - c. All media calls are to be referred to the designated spokesperson(s)* who will obtain deadline information, assess the reporter’s intention and respond with a statement such as:
 - “We have received allegations regarding the conduct of a Kelloggsville Church employee/volunteer. The allegations are of a very serious and sensitive nature and they are being carefully reviewed.”
 - “The employees and volunteers of Kelloggsville Church abide by a comprehensive set of policies and procedures to protect its members. These policies and procedures are being followed in this situation.”
 - “Kelloggsville Church personnel records for employees and volunteer profiles are confidential and may not be released to or discussed with any third party without appropriate legal authorization or employee/volunteer consent. Therefore, we will not comment at this time.”
 - d. “Off the record” remarks or personal opinions and conjecture are not permitted by anyone associated with Kelloggsville Church in regard to media releases.
 - e. Should the situation become public knowledge, the designated spokesperson or another appointed council representative will communicate with and inform the congregation:
 - that a situation exists
 - the Children Protection Team and council are addressing the situation
 - the details will be kept confidential
 - prayers are requested for all persons involved

*When needed, a spokesperson(s) will be designated to handle communication. This may be one or more of the following individuals: Pastors, Council President, Staff.