

SAFE CHURCH POLICY MANUAL

Gateway Community Church

Protection and Care for Everyone

January 2026



**Helping People to Love
and Serve Jesus**

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1.0 | VISION

As a community of Christ-followers, we at Gateway Community Church seek to be a place where each person can experience the love, compassion, healing and forgiveness that God pours out on us in Jesus Christ. This means being a congregation where we can worship and grow in faith, free from abuse and where those who have been victimized by mistreatment can receive support in their journey toward healing. In instituting this policy, we commit to protecting and supporting the value and dignity of each person, especially the most vulnerable among us, and to being a community that makes every effort to prevent abuse in our midst.

Gateway Community Church strives to be Biblically serious, community driven and relentlessly missional. We will embody God's Word and Reformed doctrine, as we live in community with one another, and, as we do whatever it takes to reach people for the gospel. This is who we are striving to be, by God's grace. Even when we fall we pray that, with God's help, we will fall forward.

2.0 | PURPOSE

Gateway Community Church has a spiritual, moral, and legal obligation to provide a secure, safe environment for all adults and children participating in the church's ministries. This policy is intended to assist the church's staff and volunteers in:

- Protecting the vulnerable person from abuse,
- Protecting the workers from false accusations, litigation, loss of ministry or career,
- Protecting the church from litigation and loss of testimony.

The policy will reflect these core values by:

- Educating staff, leaders, and volunteers about abuse, the dynamics of power, and especially the responsibility required by people in positions of power.
- Ensuring that clergy, elders, deacons, staff members, and volunteer leaders are following appropriate boundaries and have appropriate structures of accountability and support.
- Providing a safe place for any person to come forward with a disclosure of abuse and receive help.
- Equipping the church leadership and congregation with clear guidelines for how to respond effectively with justice and compassion to situations of abuse.
- Creating opportunities to talk about abuse and increase awareness. Abuse thrives in silence and secrecy, and we must not let it thrive in our communities (Eph. 5).
- Practicing the diligence required as the church and also to abide by the laws of our province and country.
- Satisfying requirements from insurance companies and to limit the risk of abuse or harm.

It is hoped that this policy will help the church be a place of sanctuary and of ministry. Any and every kind of abuse of any person must be condemned and needs to be eradicated from the Church's organization.

3.0 | DEFINITIONS

3.1 DEFINITIONS OF MISCONDUCT

As a church, we are committed to holding our leaders and volunteers to the highest standard of behavior. Therefore, the following definitions of abuse go beyond legal definitions to include any form of ungodly conduct, misuse of power, misuse of spiritual authority, sexually inappropriate behavior, neglect, and abuse of office. These are behaviors that violate the trust and well-being of individuals and the community of believers, and they taint the office held by the offender.

3.1.1. Physical Misconduct is:

- Threatened harm or non-accidental injury inflicted on a minor or vulnerable adult, or offensive or harmful contact with an adult;
- Physical misconduct is sometimes a single event, but more often a chronic pattern of interacting with a minor or an adult.

3.1.2. Sexual Misconduct is:

- Exploiting or grooming (preparing) a minor or an adult – regardless of consent or circumstances – for the purpose of sexual touch, sexual activity, or emotional intimacy with the result of either sexual gratification or power and control over the minor and/or adult;
- Unwelcome touch, sexual activity, or emotional intimacy between co-workers, co-volunteers, or
- Sexual touch, sexual activity, or emotional intimacy between a supervisor and a subordinate who serve together in a church program or church ministry.
- The development of or the attempt of a ministry leader to develop a sexual or emotional relationship with a participant in the ministries of the church.

3.1.3. Emotional Misconduct is:

- A pattern of behavior in which a person insults, humiliates, and manipulates an individual or group in order to establish or maintain control over them.
- Threatening a person's safety, property, or loved ones;
- Isolating a person from family, friends, and acquaintances;
- Demeaning, bullying, belittling, shaming, or humiliating a person;
- Delivering constant criticism; or
- Emotionally blackmailing or harassing a person.

3.1.4. Spiritual Misconduct is:

- A form of emotional and psychological abuse, characterized by a systematic pattern of coercive and controlling behavior in a religious context.
- manipulation and exploitation by appeal to religious convictions and beliefs,
- censorship of decision making,
- requirements for secrecy and silence,
- coercion to conform,
- requirement of obedience to the abuser,
- the suggestion that the abuser holds a 'divine' position,
- isolation as a means of punishment.

3.2 DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE OF POWER

3.2.1. Power: Power is the ability to influence or affect an outcome. We all have power as human beings; some of us are given more power as a result of our role or our status within a community. When power is stewarded well, it brings flourishing to all people as an expression of the shalom of the kingdom of God.

3.2.2 Abuse of power: Abuse of power is misusing power to harm another person, or using power and influence for personal gain at the expense of another person. Power can be used to harm another person intentionally or through ignorance, subtly or overtly, to advance one's own desires without regard for the needs or desires of others in ways that disturb the flourishing of others. At the core of all types of abuse are behaviors related to acquiring, maintaining, and misusing power and control. The same power dynamics show up in all types of abuse, whether it be sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse, or spiritual abuse.

3.3 DEFINITIONS OF PEOPLE, TEAMS, AND ORGANIZATIONS

3.3.1 Vulnerable Adult: A person over the age of 18 who is unable to protect himself or herself from abuse, neglect, or exploitation because of a mental or physical impairment or advanced age.

3.3.2 Child: Children 0-11 years of age.

3.3.3 Youth: Children from 12 to 18 years of age.

3.3.4 Youth Helper: A youth, between the ages of 12-18, who assists an adult volunteer in a program.

3.3.5 Youth Volunteer: Non-paid individual, between the ages of 12-18, who serves in a child, youth, or adult program and/or who have direct contact with minors or vulnerable adults in their care or supervision. This role is higher than a youth helper, as they may be the eldest in the room, with a hallway monitor nearby.

3.3.6 Adult Volunteer: Non-paid individual, over the age of 18, who serves in a child, youth or adult program and/or who have direct contact with minors or vulnerable adults in their care or supervision.

3.3.7 Hallway Monitor: An adult volunteer/staff with the specific task of monitoring the halls, checking in on each group of children or youth that does not have two adults present.

3.3.8 Adherents: A person (adult or youth) in good standing with Gateway Community Church and given special permission by Church Leadership and Safe Church Procedures Team to volunteer in a ministry program.

3.3.9 Staff: Individuals paid by the church who serve in any capacity, function or role at the church including those who work in a child, youth or adult program and/or have direct contact with minors in their care or supervision.

3.3.10 Safe Church Procedures Team: The members of this team include, but are not limited to, staff leaders of ministries that involve Children and Vulnerable adults, as well as office administrator and facility manager, to ensure procedures and safety protocols are up to date.

3.3.11 Safe Church Incidents Team: The members of this team are selected by the Lead Pastor or their designee. *(If the Lead Pastor needs to recuse themselves for any reason, this responsibility falls to the chair of Governing Council).* They will review concerns and incidents on a case-to-case basis and may seek the help of council and Classis.

3.3.12 Child, Family and Community Services Act: The Child, Family and Community Service Act (CFCSA) in British Columbia serves to provide a legal framework for the protection and well-being of children, ensuring that they are safe, supported, and given the opportunity to grow up in healthy environments.

3.3.13 Ministry of Children and Families Development: MCFD works to ensure the safety of children who may be at risk of harm or abuse. It provides support and intervention when needed, in line with the Child, Family and Community Service Act (CFCSA), to protect children from neglect, abuse, or exploitation.

3.3.14 Church Sanctioned/Sponsored Events: Events that have been planned with staff approval, and follows the guidelines of our mission statement and safe church policies.

3.3.15 Ministry Programs: Ministry programs are organized groups, led by staff and/or volunteers, that take place regularly at the church. See appendix 13 for the current list.

3.3.16 Classis Safe Church Abuse Prevention Response Committee (APRC): A ministry of the CRC churches of British Columbia who respond to the issues of physical, sexual, emotional and abuse related concerns through preventative education and appropriate responding procedures.

4.0 | EXPECTATIONS OF VOLUNTEERS

All who serve in the life of the church are called to use their position and power in ways that are patterned after Christ himself. According to Philippians 2, Christ did not consider equality with God as something to be used to His own advantage, but He humbled himself and made Himself of no reputation. These guidelines are designed to help ministry leaders steward their position and power well and cultivate cultures that resist abuse.

4.1 All staff and adult volunteers who wish to work with children, youth and/or vulnerable adults must:

- Be a member in good standing of Gateway Community Church, or have been declared to be an adherent (definition on page 7) by the Lead Pastor, or the elders. If not yet a member, a volunteer will go through our screening process (see: Appendix 2) which includes an information card, including two references, which will be reviewed by the Safe Church Procedures Team.
- Have a criminal record and vulnerable sector check completed through Gateway within the last five years.
- Have completed the Safe Church quiz with a passing grade of 80% or higher.
- Attend abuse prevention training, and agree to comply with the church's abuse prevention policy and appendices.
- Attend the training session for the specific ministry of involvement where procedure documents are reviewed.
- Adhere to our code of conduct (Appendix 6).

4.2 All youth helpers and youth volunteers ought to:

- Be a child of a member of Gateway Community Church or have been declared to be an adherent (see definition on page 7).
- Attend abuse prevention training and comply with the church's abuse prevention policy.
- Attend the training session for the specific ministry of involvement where procedure documents are reviewed.

5.0 | GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR SAFE SUPERVISION

These guidelines are designed to protect children, youth, and vulnerable adults from harm while attending and participating in church-sponsored events. Each ministry that serves children, youth or vulnerable adults will have a separate procedures document that lays out how to specifically comply with the Church's policies. Volunteers in those ministries will be expected to attend training and to follow these procedures.

5.1 ADULT TO CHILDREN RATIOS

At all church-sponsored functions involving the supervision of children, youth, or vulnerable adults, either the Two Adult Rule or the Rule of Three will be practiced. No staff or volunteers should be alone with a single child, youth, or vulnerable adult in locations where they cannot be clearly observed by others.

5.1.1. The Two-Adult Rule:

- At least two, unrelated, screened volunteers (youth or adult) must be present at every function and in each classroom, vehicle, or other enclosed area during all activities involving children, youth, or vulnerable adults.

5.1.2. The Rule of Three:

- When there is not a capacity to abide by the Two-Adult Rule, it may be acceptable to use The Rule of Three: At least three individuals must be present at every function and in each classroom, vehicle, or other enclosed area during all activities involving children, youth, or vulnerable adults. One of the three must be a screened volunteer. If the child is under 6 years of age, the second individual must be at least 12 years of age, and at least four years older than the kid they're serving.
- When The Rule of Three is used, there must be another unrelated, screened adult volunteer nearby or in proximity monitoring the group. This is known as a hallway monitor. Additionally, there should be a clear and unobstructed view into the room/space where the supervision is taking place.

5.1.3. One-to-One Meetings:

- In children and youth ministry, there are times when a ministry leader or volunteer leader seeks to meet one-to-one with a youth or child. Because the imbalance of power is particularly pronounced when a child or youth is alone with an adult, it is crucial that ministry leaders and volunteer leaders follow safe protocols.
- The meeting should take place in a public place (i.e. restaurant, coffee shop, bookstore, etc.) with the documented permission and knowledge of the parents/guardians.

5.1.4. For Overnight Supervision:

- Please see Appendix 14: Overnight Procedures for Ministries (pg 34).

5.2 DISCIPLINE:

When children or youth act out during church events, ministry leaders and volunteers will take care to address the misbehavior. Physical discipline is unacceptable in all circumstances. Physical restraint is acceptable only when necessary to prevent harm to the person restrained or to others. See Appendix 7 for Guidelines of Appropriate Discipline.

5.2.1 Physical behavior: Behavior that is abusive or potentially abusive is not acceptable. Such behaviour includes but is not limited to pushing, scuffling, unwanted or suspect touching, and unwanted expressions of affection.

5.2.2 Verbal behaviour: Behavior or discipline that is abusive is unacceptable. Such behaviour includes but is not limited to shouting, threatening, insulting, and making degrading or humiliating comments.

5.2.3. Discipline: When ministry providers believe that discipline beyond that described in Appendix 7 is necessary, they refer that concern to the minor's parent(s) or guardian(s) and child.

5.2.4 Reporting: Ministry providers record all incidents as per guidelines in the incident report (Appendix 8)

5.3 TRANSPORTATION:

Volunteers must follow our Transportation Policy (Appendix 9) if they are to transport non-related children or youth in the course of a church-sponsored program. Drivers will need to have their full class 5 license, a current Volunteer Driver Form (Appendix 10), a copy of their current insurance (with 3rd person liability), and driver's license on file.

5.4 DIGITAL MINISTRY:

Gateway Community Church will follow guidelines for online ministry as outlined in Appendix 11: Digital Ministry.

5.5 PHOTOS, VIDEOS, AND SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY:

Individuals and families may opt OUT of being used on our website or social media. If they have not done so, all persons and families are opted in, allowing us to use photos or videos of them for our purposes whenever they are on our premises, or part of a Gateway-led ministry/event/mission project, etc. For more on our social media policy, see Appendix 12.

6.0 | RESPONDING TO ABUSE

The following steps are to be followed in cases of suspected abuse of a minor or vulnerable adult. See also Appendix 1: Provincial Definitions of Abuse and Neglect, and Appendix 3: Responding to a Disclosure of Abuse from a Child.

6.1 Immediate Danger: If a minor or vulnerable adult is in immediate physical danger (either on church property or off the property), then the police (911) should be notified immediately.

6.2 Abuse Uncertain? If you are uncertain of whether what you heard or saw constitutes evidence of abuse, consult with a member of the Safe Church Procedures Team, and see Appendix 4: Signs and Symptoms of Child Abuse. Also, you can refer to The B.C. Handbook for Action on Child Abuse and Neglect, and Appendix 5: Reporting Abuse.

6.3 Lawful Responsibility: All ministry leaders/volunteers who have a reason to believe of sexual, physical, or emotional abuse or neglect of a minor or vulnerable adult are responsible to report it to the appropriate ministry leader (*Provided that the ministry leader is not the one being accused. If so, please report to another staff member a part of the Safe Church Procedures Team*) and also make a report within 24 hours to the Ministry for Children and Families Development at 1-800-663-9122.

6.4 Contact SCPT: The ministry leader/volunteer who has reason to believe abuse should also contact the Safe Church Procedure Team to fill out an Incidence Report (Appendix 8).

6.5 Investigating Further: Neither the ministry leader/volunteer nor the Safe Church Procedure Team will try to investigate the abuse concerns. Additionally, they will not seek to notify the alleged offender of the allegations against him or her. These tasks will be left to the professional investigators.

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Appendix 1 | PROVINCIAL DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE

The Province of British Columbia has defined child abuse and neglect as the following:

Physical Abuse:

Physical abuse is a deliberate physical assault or action by a person that results in, or is likely to result in, physical harm to a child or youth. It includes the use of unreasonable force to discipline a child or youth or prevent a child or youth from harming him/herself or others. The injuries sustained by the child or youth may vary in severity and range from minor bruising, burns, welts or bite marks to major fractures of the bones or skull to, in the most extreme situations, death.

The likelihood of physical harm to a child or youth increases when the child or youth is living in a situation where there is domestic violence by or towards a person with whom the child or youth resides. Domestic violence is a pattern of intentionally coercive and violent behaviour toward an individual with whom there is or has been an intimate relationship. It includes physical abuse such as hitting, slapping, pushing, choking, assault with a weapon, locking out of the house or the threat of physical abuse.

Emotional Harm:

This is the most difficult type of harm to recognize. Under the Child, Family and Community Service Act, a child or youth is defined as emotionally harmed if they demonstrate severe:

- Anxiety;
- Depression;
- Withdrawal; or
- Self-destructive or aggressive behaviour.

Reason to believe that a child or youth needs protection from being emotionally harmed may arise due to emotional abuse from a parent. This may range from the parent ignoring to habitually humiliating the child or youth to withholding life-sustaining nurturing. Emotional abuse may occur separately from, or along with, other forms of abuse and neglect. Emotional abuse can include a pattern of:

- Scapegoating;
- Rejection;
- Verbal attacks on the child;
- Threats;
- Insults; or
- Humiliation.

Emotional harm may also be caused by the child or youth living in a situation where there is domestic violence by or towards a person with whom the child or youth resides. Domestic violence may involve physical abuse, threats, verbal insults or psychological abuse such as stalking.

Sexual Abuse:

Sexual abuse is when a child or youth is used (or likely to be used) for the sexual gratification of another person. It includes:

- Touching or invitation to touch for sexual purposes;
- Intercourse (vaginal, oral, or anal);
- Menacing or threatening sexual acts, obscene gestures, obscene communications, or stalking;
- Sexual references to the child's or youth's body/behaviour by words/gestures;
- Requests that the child or youth expose their body for sexual purposes;
- Deliberate exposure of the child or youth to sexual activity or material; and
- Sexual aspects of organized or ritual abuse.

Sexual Exploitation:

Sexual exploitation is a form of sexual abuse that occurs when a child or youth engages in a sexual activity, usually through manipulation or coercion, in exchange for money, drugs, food, shelter or other considerations. Sexual activity includes:

- Performing sexual acts;
- Sexually explicit activity for entertainment;
- Involvement with escort or massage parlour services; and
- Appearing in pornographic images.
- Children and youth living on the street are particularly vulnerable to exploitation. Children and youth in the sex trade are not prostitutes or criminals. They are victims of abuse.

Neglect:

Neglect is failure to provide for a child's or youth's basic needs. It involves an act of omission by the parent or guardian, resulting in (or likely to result in) harm to the child or youth. Neglect may include failure to provide food, shelter, basic health care, supervision, or protection from risks, to the extent that the child's or youth's physical health, development or safety is, or is likely to be, harmed.



Appendix 2 | SCREENING PROCESS: VOLUNTEER FORM AND REFERENCE FORM

This **CONFIDENTIAL** form must be completed by applicants for any position (volunteer or compensated) that involves the supervision or instruction of minors and vulnerable persons. This is not an employment application. This form is being used by Gateway church to provide a safe and secure environment for those children and youth and vulnerable persons who participate in its programs and use its facilities.

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name: *last:* _____ *first:* _____ *middle:* _____

Address: *street:* _____ *city:* _____

prov: _____ *postal code:* _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Do you have a valid BC Drivers License: yes / no

If no, explain: _____

AREA OF MINISTRY YOU INTEND TO SERVE IN

CHURCH HISTORY AND PRIOR WORK

List the other churches you have attended regularly during the past five years?

Please indicate reason(s) for leaving other churches.

Please list all previous church work involving youth.

Please list all previous nonchurch work involving youth.

How do you communicate your authority to children and youth?

What methods of discipline might you use in your position with children and youth?

What training, if any, have you received in the care and nurture of children and youth?

List any gifts, education, or other factors that have prepared you for children and youth work?

Have you been convicted of a crime against another person?

Have you been disciplined by any church for misconduct?

PERSONAL REFERENCES

(Non-relatives, employers, supervisors, or church coworkers may be included)

Reference #1

Name: *last:* _____ *first:* _____ *middle:* _____

Address: *street:* _____ *city:* _____

prov: _____ *postal code:* _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Reference #2

Name: *last:* _____ *first:* _____ *middle:* _____

Address: *street:* _____ *city:* _____

prov: _____ *postal code:* _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

The information contained in this application is correct to the best of my knowledge. 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.

Upon consideration of this application, I release any individual, church or official, employer, reference, or organization from any and all liability of whatever kind or nature which may at any time result to me, my heirs, or family on account of compliance or any attempt to comply with this authorization.

I have carefully read the foregoing release and know the contents thereof, and I sign this release of my own free will. This is a legally binding agreement, which I have read and understand.

Applicant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please return this form to: Gateway Community Church office



Appendix 2 | VOLUNTEER REFERENCE FORM

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: *street*: _____ *city*: _____

prov: _____ *postal code*: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Name of person being referenced: _____

QUESTION ABOUT THE VOLUNTEER

How long have you known this person? _____

In what capacity have you known this person? _____

Have you ever observed this person interact with children? Please describe:

Do you have personal knowledge, or have you ever heard of this person having any problem with the abuse of drugs, alcohol, sex, or abuse of anything else? If yes, please explain.

Can you recommend that this person be in a position of caring for children without any concern, reservation, or hesitation? **Yes** **No** *Please explain:*

Is there any additional information that you think is important for our church to know about this person?

To the best of my knowledge, I believe the above information to be accurate.

Reference's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please return this form to: Gateway Community Church office

Appendix 3 | RESPONDING TO A DISCLOSURE OF ABUSE FROM A CHILD

When signs and symptoms of abuse or reports of abuse arise from a minor that has been served in a church ministry, volunteers/staff in that ministry may be the ones to notice or receive the report. It must be taken seriously. Some children will not report an abusive incident, either because they fear the abuser or because they believe they deserved the abuse. Other children are threatened by the abuser not to tell anyone of their experience, but volunteers/staff may observe signs and symptoms that may lead them to have reasons to believe of abuse.

A volunteer/staff person will not conduct an investigation of the matter. Instead, volunteers/staff will follow the established reporting procedure (see Appendix 4).

For informational purposes, the following set of guidelines pertains to information that a child may wish to disclose to an adult.

1. If a child asks to talk with you privately at church, ask if you can have another adult in the room (Three-person rule) If the individual only wants to speak to you, let a hallway monitor know where you are and choose a room with a window in which to speak privately.
2. Listen carefully to what the child tells you and respond in a supportive, nonjudgmental manner. Disclosing abuse is a scary thing for children, and they need to know they are supported.
3. Do not appear frightened or disgusted by the child's story, since this may cause the child to stop talking or to believe you are upset with him or her.
4. Avoid asking leading questions. Examples of what you could ask: "Can you tell me more?" "Is there anything you need to add?" Do not try to convince the child that the story isn't true or that it didn't happen the way he or she reports it did.
5. Do not attempt to assess the truthfulness of the child's disclosure—that will be for trained professionals to decide. Assure the child you believe him/her and that you care about him/her. Always be gracious and thank them for sharing.
6. Tell the child that whatever happened was not his or her fault and reassure the child that he/she does not deserve to be hurt by anyone.
7. Do not tell or suggest to the child that he or she has been abused.
8. Reassure the child that he or she did the right thing by telling you.
9. Do not promise not to tell anyone. Tell the child that you need to find help so the incident can be prevented from happening again.
10. Do not frighten the child by talking about police involvement or medical examinations to verify the complaint. Instead, share with the child that other people need to know what happened and that they will talk to the child later.
11. Do not ask the child to remove any clothing to reveal such bruising or evidence.
12. Develop a care plan of supporting the child who may have disclosed or exhibited signs, etc. The Classis Safe Church APRC is available to support that conversation and planning.

Appendix 4 | SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF ABUSE

Signs and symptoms of abuse can vary depending on the type of abuse (physical, physical neglect, emotional, sexual), the age of the individual, and the circumstances of the situation. There are common indicators to look for, particularly with regard to children or vulnerable adults. Here are the signs and symptoms (but not limited to) for each type of abuse:

Types of Abuse	Description	Signs and Symptoms
Physical Abuse	Intentional use of physical force causing harm or injury (e.g., hitting).	Unexplained injuries, bruises, burns, fear of adults, flinching, or withdrawal.
Physical Neglect	Failure to meet basic physical needs, including food and medical care.	Malnutrition, poor hygiene, inappropriate abandonment.
Sexual Abuse	Any sexual act imposed on a child without consent, including exploitation.	Age-inappropriate sexual knowledge, fear of specific individuals, or physical injuries.
Emotional Abuse	Verbal assaults, criticism, or manipulation affecting emotional well-being.	Low self-esteem, social withdrawal, anxiety, depression, or frequent emotional outbursts.

Appendix 5 | REPORTING ABUSE

As per Section 14.1 of the Child, Family, and Community Services Act of British Columbia, any individual who has reason to believe a child is at risk of abuse is legally required to report it. An investigation of said symptoms and reports must only be conducted by Ministry for Children & Families Development (MCFD) personnel, who are trained to investigate child abuse complaints, and/or by local police.

The church assumes responsibility for responding to abuse that occurs in church-sponsored ministries and events only, and to ensure a safe place for all. In any case, the church will ensure sufficient training for safe ministries and support for volunteers/staff for reporting abuse in any circumstance.

Reporting Abuse Procedures for Child Protection

Each person who has reason to believe that a child (under the age of 18) is or may be in need of protection will immediately report the belief and the information upon which it is based to the local Ministry of Children and Family Development, in compliance with the Child, Family and Community Services Act.

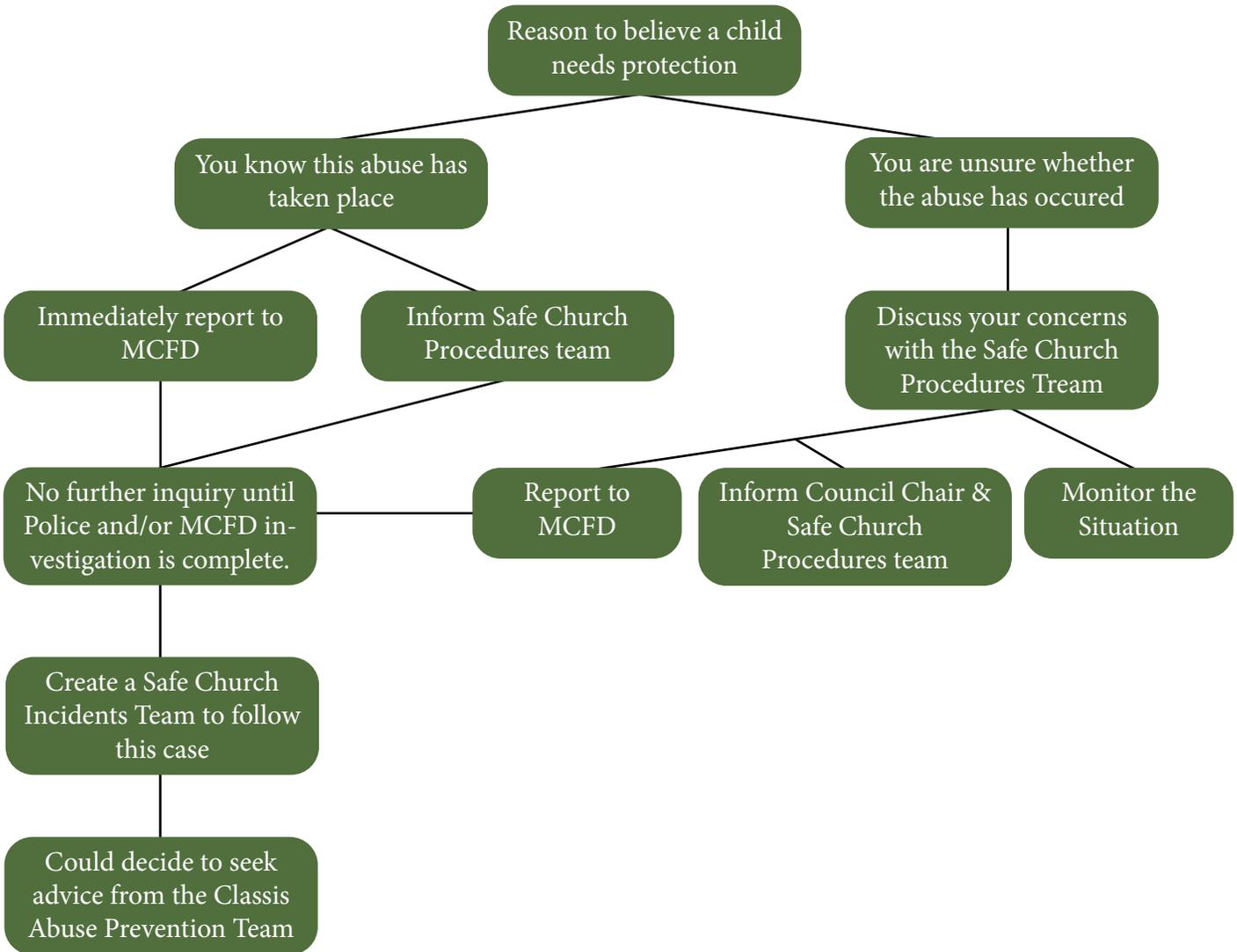
In addition, that person shall also report the occurrence to the Safe Church Procedures Team, and from here, the team would decide whether to share with the chair of council and the Safe Church Incidents Team. The Safe Church Incidents Team could then decide whether or not to seek advice from the Classis Abuse Prevention Team.

A person who has a reason to believe that a child may be in need of protection from abuse, but is unsure as to whether or not abuse has actually occurred, should discuss their concerns and the information on which it is based with the Safe Church Procedures Team. He/she is not to be coerced into either making a report or not.

Prior to reporting the occurrence, if necessary, and pursuant to the Child, Family and Community Services Act, no volunteers/staff shall, apart from complying with paragraphs 1 and 2 above, conduct any investigation or question any individual(s). Any information obtained and any report pursuant to paragraphs 1 and 2 above shall be considered and treated as **CONFIDENTIAL** information by the church.

No investigation or inquiry shall be conducted where a report has been made to the MCFD until their investigation, or an investigation by police has been completed, unless otherwise authorized by MCFD or the police.

REPORTING PROCEDURES WORK FLOW



Appendix 6 | CRC CODE OF CONDUCT FOR VOLUNTEERS

Ministry leaders are all officebearers (ordained ministers, commissioned pastors, elders, and deacons), church staff, volunteers, staff members, and members of the Council of Delegates. Ministry leaders have been empowered by God and the church to serve the body of Christ for good. They are called to resist all temptations to abuse their power through the misuse of position, authority, or influence.

Abuse of power is often defined as misusing power to harm another person or using power and influence to take unjust advantage of another person. All abuse by ministry leaders within the church is also spiritual abuse and has spiritual impacts that often heighten the harm caused to individuals and to the family of God. For more on the use and misuse of power, see the report of the Addressing the Abuse of Power Committee (Acts of Synod 2019, pp. 587-615).

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

Relationships:

- 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: 1-11; Mark 10:31, Phil. 2:2; Tim. 4:2). This includes refraining from swearing.
- I will respect, love, and treat with integrity and truthfulness people of every position, status, race, ethnicity, gender, age, or ability.
- I will maintain appropriate emotional, physical, and sexual boundaries in all relationships.
- I will keep all my relationships free from inappropriate, unwanted physical contact, emotional or sexual intimacy, sexual comments, gestures, or jokes.

Safety:

- 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.
- I will report known or suspected cases of physical, sexual, or emotional abuse or neglect of minors or vulnerable adults to the proper authorities.
- 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.
- I will refrain from alcohol, tobacco and drug use when in my role of leadership over children and vulnerable people.

Ministry Leadership:

- I will promote truthfulness, transparency, and honesty in all of my work.
- I will use my power, authority, and position to build up the community of believers and seek first the kingdom of God.
- I will preach, teach, admonish, or discipline in ways that are Biblical and Christlike, promoting flourishing and well-being of those to whom I am ministering (2 Tim. 3:16).

- I will refrain in my care from using references to Scripture or God to manipulate, coerce, or threaten another person.
- I will disclose any perceived or actual conflict of interest.

Confidentiality:

- I will maintain and uphold confidentiality appropriately, which means I will hold in confidence whatever information is not mine to share.
- I will not use information shared with me in confidence in order to elevate my position or to depreciate that of others.
- I will follow all Safe Church regulations, which state that if there is good reason to believe that a child may harm themselves or others, or there is suspected abuse (physical, sexual or emotional), then the information may not stay private.

Technology:

- I will use all access to the church internet and technology belonging to the church (computers, laptops, cell phones, etc) in ways that are legal, reflect godly conduct, and conform to network etiquette, laws, and courtesies.

Policies:

- I will fulfill the requirements of Gateway’s policies as found in the safe church policies and appendices.

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 —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.

I also understand the following:

- If a person is convicted of a sexual offence, then he/she will never be able to volunteer with any of the child or youth programs in the Church.
- If a person is suspected of child abuse, then he/she will be requested to step down from their role until an investigation has been completed. If, after an investigation has been concluded, it is determined that the person has been involved in abuse of a child, the person will be immediately dismissed from his/her current role.
- Determination of abuse or sexual misconduct will be at the discretion of the governing body. Regarding risks to ministry, boundary concerns and other matters of consideration, the church council has the responsibility to remove or restrict any person when there are known risks and boundary concerns.
- If a volunteer or employee is removed or dismissed from their position or office he/she should not be considered for re-entry or reinstatement without a full review consistent with the same criteria found in CRCNA Church Order Article 84.

Appendix 7 | GUIDELINES FOR APPROPRIATE DISCIPLINE

When children or youth act out during church events, ministry leaders and volunteers will take care to address the misbehavior in ways that are consistent with the following guidelines:

- Behavioural expectations are age appropriate, as is discipline for inappropriate behaviour.
- Children are to be reminded often of the kind of behaviour that is acceptable for the setting. When possible, youth are included in the development of rules and consequences for negative behaviour.
- When discipline is needed, leaders might try the following:
 - Distract the child/youth with another activity.
 - Help the child/youth focus on more appropriate behaviour.
 - Take the child/youth aside if another adult volunteer/staff person is available to assist.
- Concerns about the behaviour of a child/youth/participant are reported to the program leader and to the parents/guardian at the discretion of the program leader. See Appendix 8 to fill out an Incident Report.

Reminders:

- Corporal punishment is not permitted (spanking, pinching, hitting).
- Parents are to be informed whenever a child/youth misbehaves beyond minor correction or if a pattern of misbehaviour develops.
- An aide or parent should be involved in classrooms where misbehaviour is an ongoing problem.
- Appropriate types of discipline are to be reviewed with volunteers/staff annually.

Appendix 8 | INCIDENT REPORT

This form should be used to report and file a record of occurrences of accidents, complaints or concerns about behaviour, altercations, or any situation in which a person feels physically, emotionally, or sexually threatened or injured while participating in any program or activity under the auspices of Gateway Community Church.

Name of person who is the subject of incident: _____

Name of person reporting: _____

Date of incident: _____ Time of incident: _____ Date of Report: _____

Description of incident: (Use more paper if more space needed) _____

Program, Ministry or Activity: _____

Action taken:

- Staff leader informed
- Appropriate parent or guardian informed
- Others consulted or informed: _____
- Describe other actions taken: _____

Signature of person reporting: _____

Staff Name: _____ Staff Signature: _____

Note: if the incident involves actions with minors which may be interpreted as a form of abuse, you must report immediately within 24 hours to the Ministry for Children and Families Development at 1-800-663-9122 and inform the Safe Church Procedures Team.

Report is given to a staff member to give to the Safe Church Procedures Team.

Appendix 9 | TRANSPORTATION POLICY

This procedure applies to adults who may transport non-related children or youth in the course of church-sponsored programs.

No One-to-One Driving

As much as possible, *there will be no one-to-one driving of children, youth, and vulnerable adults*. In instances when transporting multiple children to different households, the last two children must be picked up at the same stop.

In the rare occasion that one-on-one driving must occur, all of the following procedures must be in place:

- Children and/or youth are seated in the back seats of vehicles. All road safety regulations must apply.
- Drivers shall have written consent from parents (text/email/written note), and advise parents of their arrival time.
- Drivers log in each pick-up and drop off; logs are turned into the Program Supervisor. These logs can be in a text or email to the Staff or Program Supervisor.

Driver Forms

Adults must have a completed Volunteer Driver Form (Appendix 10) filled in with the office. This includes:

- A valid, Class 5 driver's license
- Proof of 3rd person liability insurance.
- Proper seatbelt and carseat regulations:
 - Except for school buses, children and youth must wear seatbelts whenever the vehicle is in motion. Drivers of private vehicles may not transport more children and youth than seatbelts installed in the vehicle.
 - Car seats must be available for younger children who require them by law.
 - Children and youth under 12 years of age may not sit in the front seat where there is a passenger-side airbag installed.

Related Children & Youth to Driver

Adults or minors who transport related children and youth to church-sponsored events do so without the implied approval of the Church and at their own initiative and risk. By taking such a voluntary initiative, they hold the church harmless from all liability.

Household Arranged Driving To and From Events

Parents and or guardians who permit minors to transport non-related minors to church related events do so at their own risk and without the implied approval of the Church. They agree to hold the church harmless from any and all liability.

Appendix 10 | VOLUNTEER DRIVER FORM

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: *street*: _____ *city*: _____

prov: _____ *postal code*: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Driver's License No: _____ Class: _____

Check one:

Parent. If so, name of child: _____

Leader. If so, name of ministry: _____

Other. If so, describe: _____

Driving History:

List driving restrictions: _____

List any Motor Vehicle Act offenses for which you have been convicted within the last five years:

Driver's Declaration:

- I have attached a photocopy of my vehicle registration/insurance and driver's licence. The vehicle license number is _____ and is insured for a MINIMUM of \$2,000,000 Third Party Legal Liability.
- I agree to operate the vehicle safely in a legal manner and will comply with all laws and regulations in regards to cell phone use, speed limits, wearing seatbelts, and proper car seats if needed.
- I have a Criminal Record Check completed with the church
- If the above box is not checked off, I will drive with another adult in the vehicle that does have their Criminal Record Check completed with the church.
- If it is not possible to drive with another adult in the vehicle who has their Criminal Record Check completed with the church, I agree to caravan with another vehicle and never to stop on my own.
- I will promptly notify the ministry supervisor of any physical conditions, vehicle defects or road conditions that could affect driving safety.
- If I am driving a vehicle that I do not own, I will obtain permission to drive this vehicle from the vehicle owner or sign the correct forms if it is a rental vehicle.
- I will follow the Transportation policy as written by the church (Appendix 9).

I hereby certify that the information given in this application and the documentation attached is correct, complete, and true in every respect. Further, I agree to inform the church administration of any changes to the information contained in this application during the year.

I pledge that if I drive my own vehicle on behalf of Gateway Community Church, adequate insurance will always be in force; and I also understand that as a volunteer driver, the limits and coverages provided by my personal automobile insurance are applicable to any accidents or incidents that involve my vehicle, including those that occur while I am serving as a volunteer driver for Gateway Community Church.

Volunteer's signature: _____ Date: _____

OFFICE USE ONLY

I have reviewed this information and the attached documentation. In my review, I now:

- Authorize as a volunteer driver
- Do not authorize as a volunteer driver

Office Staff Name: _____

Office Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 11 | DIGITAL COMMUNICATION & VIRTUAL GATHERINGS

Ministries working with children and vulnerable populations will adhere to the following regarding digital communication.

All one-on-one digital communication with kids under 14 is not permitted.

For digital communication with youth 14 and older, the following is outlined.

Texting and Messaging:

- Parent permission: The leader of the ministry will communicate with parents of youth at the beginning of the year to let them know that some youth leaders provide their cell numbers to build relationships. Parents/Guardians may indicate if that is not permissible for their child.
- Adult Volunteers: You must keep records of all your text interactions and have them readily available upon request from the parent or an authorized staff member of Gateway. All images are to be appropriate and in context with Gateway's Code of Conduct for volunteers.
- Timing: Unless an emergency, interactions with youth will take place during normal times of the day (e.g. casually chatting with youth in the middle of the night is rarely appropriate).
- Reporting: Any incidences in misconduct, inappropriate behaviour, or other safety concerns should be reported immediately. See reporting process beginning on page 20.

Video-Calling:

- One-on-one video interactions are not permitted without parent/guardian consent.

Virtual Gatherings:

- All virtual gatherings will adhere to all safe church policies. This includes (but is not limited to):
 - Having announced times and dates in advance and taking attendance.
 - Two adults (not related to one another) present. If two adults are not present, the virtual host will drop into the various rooms at various times.
 - All adult volunteers will be screened through the Safe Church program, unless there is a presenter who has been affirmed by staff.
 - Code of Conduct applies to all volunteers.
- In addition, the following must apply:
 - Attention will be given to camera placement and to the background visible, as well as attire.
 - All scheduled online gatherings must be password-protected.
 - When using a platform where this is an option (e.g. Zoom, Facebook), the meeting should be recorded, with recordings saved for the same amount of time as permission forms and such documents are saved (as per churches' safe church policy).

Appendix 12 | SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY WITH MINORS

Gateway Community Church is committed to protecting the privacy and safety of minors on social media. Our priority is to create a safe and respectful digital space while maintaining the highest standards of ethical and legal responsibility.

Policy Overview:

Gateway Community Church follows an “opt-out” policy for using photos or videos of individuals on its website or social media. Unless individuals or families explicitly opt out, they are considered to have given consent when attending events on the premises or participating in ministry activities.

Best Practices:

- For adults and youth age 12 and older, photos/videos may be used freely, following the opt-out policy.
- For children 11 and under, Gateway Community Church aims to go beyond the policy by seeking parental consent before using their images.
- Preference should be given to using photos of adults over children when possible.

Implementation & Compliance:

- A confidential file will track those who have opted out, with controlled access of the Safe Church Procedures Team to ensure compliance.
- When in doubt, staff should seek explicit permission before using an image.
- Waivers and sign-up forms should only offer an “opt-out” option rather than asking families to “opt in” for media use, aligning with the organization’s policy.

Appendix 13 | MINISTRY PROGRAMS WITH VULNERABLE PEOPLE

Ministries of Gateway that include Vulnerable People:

- Nursery and Toddler Care (age 0-3)
- Story Hour (age 3-5)
- Kids Church (age 3-Grade 3)
- Summer Camp (ages 6-12)
- GEMS (girls grade 3-5)
- Cadets (boys grade 3-5)
- EDGE (grades 6-8)
- Summit (grades 9-12)
- Young Adults (age 18-25)
- Friendship (individuals with disabilities)
- Extreme Weather Shelter (vulnerable adults)

Appendix 14 | PROCEDURES FOR OVERNIGHT STAYS

Here are best-practice Safe Church protocols for overnight events (lock-ins, retreats, campouts, etc.).

All Safe Church protocols continue to apply.

A reminder of these protocols include (but are not limited to):

- Two-adult rule at all times (no adult alone with a child who isn't their own).
- Rule of 3 if two-adult rule isn't possible, and have a hallway monitor.
- Gender appropriate supervision: male leaders supervise boys; female leaders supervise girls.
- All volunteers have a criminal record check completed, are a member in good standing (or declared adherent), and have completed safe church training and ministry training.
- Never be alone with a child in the bathroom and only stand in the hallway outside of the bathroom / showers.
- Be aware of emergency procedures and have emergency contact information.
- Attendance must be documented, as well as transportation forms if off-site.
- Parents need to give written permission to have their child participate in an overnight event.

Sleeping Arrangements:

- Under no circumstances can a child sleep in the same bed as an adult.
- Adults should sleep in separate rooms if possible. If this is not possible, adults sleep in clearly defined areas. No adult sleeps alone with a child.
- Doors should be locked from the outside, with windows covered if to outside.
- All room assignments should be documented.

Changing Clothes:

- Youth and students should only change their clothes in bathroom stalls to ensure privacy.

Communication of Rules:

- Clearly communicate lights-out expectations, room checks, and consequences if children/youth are not sleeping.
- Establish rules for phone use, especially around evening hours, and if using it as an alarm clock or music to fall asleep.

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