

# **Breslau Mennonite Church**

# **Safe Place Guidelines**

**October 2017**

Updated Nov 2018

**226 Woolwich St  
Breslau, Ontario N0B 1M0  
519-648-2501  
office@breslaumc.ca  
www.breslaumc.ca**

# SAFE PLACE GUIDELINES

## I. MISSION

Breslau Mennonite Church assumes responsibility for being a place of worship, security, safety, caring, respect, trust, and redemption to be experienced by all. We recognize that there are incidents of broken boundaries specifically between adults and children that occur within society but also acknowledge that incidents do happen within our churches. The following is a statement of mission, goals, and policies proposed to take action towards prevention, education, and response to abuse within child and adult relationships. Facing the possibility and pain of abuse requires limitless courage which the Church is called to demonstrate.

The ethical mandate for Christian ministry with children is rooted in Jesus' gospel teachings. Jesus points to the child as the one who is the greatest in the kingdom. Jesus is consistent in his assertion of the specialness and value of children. He also points clearly to the responsibility of those around children to care for them. And Jesus said, "Let the children come to me for of such is the Kingdom of heaven... For as much as you have done it unto one of these, you have done it unto me."

Breslau Mennonite Church commits itself to:

- \* become a safe place of healthy relationships between adults and children
- \* encourage an atmosphere in which abuse, including physical, sexual, and emotional, may be discussed within the context of freedom and compassion.

## II. DEFINITIONS

\*see Appendix 1

## III. PREVENTION STRATEGIES

1. To provide education regarding prevention, and indicators of abuse, through training workshops to the church as a whole and all volunteers working with children. (e.g. Sunday School teachers, pastors, elders, nursery caretakers, parish nurse, mentors, and Young Adult sponsors.)
2. To educate the children on personal safety, healthy adult-child relationships, and steps to take if they have been harmed.
3. To follow policies and procedures that are set out below to assist and support the members of the congregation and its leadership to minister in healing and redemptive ways with these abuses.

## IV. CREATING A SAFE ENVIRONMENT

The church, by its very nature as Christ's presence on earth, should be a safe place for people.

Human warmth expressed through appropriate touch may foster a sense of acceptance, belonging, and significance. Inappropriate touch creates feelings of violation, confusion, and isolation which leave lasting scars. It is the responsibility of adults to maintain appropriate boundaries and not the responsibility of children and youth.

There are some useful principles which promote a safe environment and help to prevent abuse.

1. Adults and Children need to be taught where they can be touched and where they should not be touched. Children and youth also need to be empowered by the knowledge that adults will take them seriously when disclosing incidents of inappropriate touch.

### 1.1. Physical Contact

It is essential to be careful regarding behavior, language and physical contact when working with children, youth and/or vulnerable adults:

- Do not show favouritism when dealing with children, youth and/or vulnerable adults. Show a similar level of affection and kindness to all.
- Do not engage in or allow the telling of sexual jokes or behave in a way that promotes the sexual exploitation of others.
- Provide clearly stated consequences for inappropriate behavior. Stop inappropriate behavior early.

Be fair, consistent and reasonable, matching consequences to the age and ability to the child or youth.

- Do not use corporal punishment such as hitting, spanking or strapping.

### Appropriate and inappropriate touching

A touch can convey a multitude of positive messages and communicate care, comfort and love; however, it is important to distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate touching. It is also important to be aware of, and sensitive to, differences in interpretation to touching based on sex, culture or personal experience.

Some examples of appropriate touch:

- Love and care can usually be expressed in the following common sense ways:
- Holding or rocking an infant who is crying
- Affirming a participant with a pat on the hand, shoulder, or back
- Bending down to the child's eye level and placing a hand gently on the child's hand or forearm
- Putting your arm around the shoulder of a person who needs comfort
- Taking a child's hand and leading him or her to an activity
- Holding hands for safety when changing locations
- Shaking a person's hand in greeting
- Holding a child gently by the hand or shoulder to keep his/her attention as you redirect behavior
- Providing comfort with a wet, warm cloth.

Some examples of inappropriate touch:

- Kissing a child, youth or vulnerable adult or coaxing them into kissing you
- Extended cuddling
- Tickling
- Piggy-back rides
- Having others sit on your lap (except for babies and young toddlers)
- Touching anyone in any area normally covered by a bathing suit (except changing an infant's diaper)
- Hand holding, except for the examples listed above
- Stroking a child or youth's hair
- Hugging, where an adult knows or ought to have known that hugging is inappropriate.

1.2. Adults and Children must be granted the right to back away from any well intentioned touch.

1.3. One can easily consider the appropriateness of touch by asking themselves if they would be comfortable doing such an action in public.

1.4. Class rooms, offices, and meeting places have been designed to create a feeling of safety (e.g. windows installed in classrooms or doors or an 'open door policy').

## 2. Ratios of Children, Youth, Vulnerable Adults to Teachers and/or Leaders:

Here are suggested child, youth and vulnerable adult-to-leaders ratios in a regular program, but additional adults can be helpful if one adult needs to leave the program temporarily. When and where possible it is recommended to account for gender specific ratios (i.e. 1 male and 1 female). For the purpose of supervision, unless otherwise stated, an adult is defined as 18 years old, and recommended to be at least 5 years older than those they are supervising.

0-18 months	2 adults to 6 children <sup>1</sup>
2-5 years	2 adults to 12 children
Ages 5-14	2 adults to 15 children
Ages 15-18	2 adults to 15 children
Vulnerable adults	2 adults to 10 vulnerable adults

All volunteers and employees working with children, youth, or vulnerable adults are required to have submitted a Vulnerable Sector Check, and have attended BMC for 6 months (see section VIII for further information). Additionally, an Annual Criminal Records Declaration is to be completed.

In the case of a 1:1 mentor relationship with youth, the mentor must be 18 and at least 5 years older than the mentee, have a recent Vulnerable Sector Check, and provide parents with location of gathering and estimated time line. Cell phones should remain on and accessible.

3. If adults need to talk to a child in confidence, it is required to have another adult present. This protects both children and adults.
4. Recognizing that abuse often happens outside the building or formal programs, these principles extend to all BMC events, including those gatherings in homes, vehicles and public places. A BMC event is defined as an event sanctioned by the church and has been publicized (i.e. in the bulletin or on the church calendar).
5. **Parental Permission:** For the safety of children, youth, and leaders, it is important to receive permission from parents/guardians for their child's participation in activities. This includes activities such as Children's Sunday School, Summer Camp, and youth events. This permission is divided into two areas, assumed consent and informed high risk consent:

*Assumed Consent:* Children and Youth participating in regular BMC events or programs will be asked to fill out an assumed consent form (Appendix 2 and 3). This form provides the church and program leaders with necessary information, including medical information and emergency contacts. This form grants parental consent for activities whether on or off church premises which are not determined to be high risk, including transportation to events and the taking of photographs. The consent for each activity will be assumed when the parent/guardian brings the child/youth to the activity. These forms will be kept confidential, and made available to the supervising leaders.

*Informed High Risk Consent:* throughout the year there may be events which are considered higher risk. These events could include non-BMC sponsored events (i.e. MCEC Winter Youth Retreat), overnight trips, or events which require permission forms or signatures from another agency. This additional permission form can be found in Appendix 4.

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Care of Infants: there must always be 2 adults present, unless the child's parent is present. In this case, a youth (age 12 and up) can be one of the appropriate supervisors if the other supervisor is an adult.

## 6. **BMC Social Media Policy:**

BMC recognizes the benefit of inviting communication and learning via social media tools, while also acknowledging the wide reaching and publicly accessible nature of social media which can result in the potential for abuse and/or negative impact on individuals and the BMC community. These guidelines are intended to be a useful tool within all BMC ministries.

*Protection of Personal Information:* BMC's strives to ensure all personal information remains confidential. This is done through:

- Protecting the names and information of children and youth under 18, names will not be included in the online bulletin. Adults will be referred to using initials online.
- Any documents containing personal information that are accessible online will only be posted in the log-in section of the church website which requires password access.
- The church office will not give out personal contact information to anyone outside of BMC.

*Authorization:* When it comes to any and all BMC social media or online presence, oversight and resources are provided by BMC's Communications Committee and the Web Manager. Any social media presence representing BMC must be authorized by Communications Committee and the Web Manager. The same goes for any additions or changes to BMC's website. Any concerns arising from representing BMC online will be brought by Communications Committee to Church Council.

*Use of Social Media with Children and Youth:* social media and other electronic communications will likely occur for the purpose of BMC ministries with youth and children. In which case, any electronic or social media tools for communication with those under 18 should occur only when explicit parental consent has been granted.

*Use of BMC Wireless Connection:* This wireless network is provided as a free service by BMC. This public connection is intended for the limited personal, non-commercial use of congregants/visitors at BMC. In providing this free wireless connection, BMC may restrict access to certain sites considered to be illegal, malicious, or inappropriate.

- BMC does not guarantee the security of this wireless connection, participants use it at their own risk.
- BMC's wireless connection is password protected. Individuals will be provided with the password as needed.

## **V. EDUCATION**

As a church making a commitment to follow safe place guidelines for ministry with children and youth, an educational component is important. This educational component could take the form of a family education event, Christian education classes for adults, youth, children, and/or teacher training. These training events should be offered on a regular basis by the requisite committees (e.g.. annually). It is mandatory that all Sunday School teachers and youth sponsors attend the training events. See Appendix 5 for resources. A master copy of these Safe Place Guidelines are available in the church office.

## **VI. PROCEDURES FOR INVESTIGATING ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE AGAINST YOUTH AND CHILDREN**

The purpose of implementing procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse is to protect the innocent and the vulnerable, stop the abuse, and promote justice, restoration and healing. These procedures offer, for the victim and the offender, opportunities for the truth to be spoken, for any violation to be acknowledged or acquitted, for accountability to be exercised, and for compassion to be demonstrated in ways that serve justice and restorative healing.

Suspicious of potential child abuse may be raised in a number of ways, including:

- \* actually witnessing an abusive incident,
- \* observing physical or psychological signs
- \* symptoms of abuse with no actual report by the child,
- \* hearing a report from the victim or another child.

In the case of any suspected child abuse, BMC leadership will work alongside the authorities in ensuring the protection of victims and pastoral care for the entire congregation, according to the following procedures:

### **A. Partnering with the Authorities**

1. With the new amendment to the Child and Family Services Act, all persons who have a reasonable suspicion of abuse or neglect must directly report to the police and/or local Family and Children's Services (FACS) branch. This report may initially be on a consultative basis without revealing the identity of any person involved, but if the police or the FACS representative indicates that an investigation must be undertaken, then all pertinent information must be provided. Any delay in reporting or providing the appropriate information may place the child at further risk. For further guidance in determining whether to report, see Appendix 6: FAQs on Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect.
2. While it may, at times, be appropriate to ask a child how an observed symptom appeared (e.g., a bruise on the body), it is not appropriate to ask any leading questions which might suggest to a child that he/she has been abused or suggest names, places, or methods of abuse.
3. It is expected that any witness of symptoms or events raising concern regarding abuse of children must document their observations, including:
  - \* child's name, gender, age, address, school or childcare, if available
  - \* what you observed about the child, the child's family, and/or the child's surrounding
  - \* what the child said, if anything
  - \* the date and time relating to any of the above
4. This report should be written and signed as soon as possible after the appropriate reporting to the authorities. This report should then be provided to any one of the elders or pastors. A log of all follow up involvements regarding this concern should be maintained by those involved.
5. If, after a report is made to the Family & Children's Services or the police, the authorities choose not to investigate and, if there is still concern for the child's wellbeing, then the witness and other employees/volunteers or person generally in contact with the child in the church should be instructed to keep a written log of any further signs, symptoms or events that may indicate abusive behavior.

### **B. Congregational Procedures**

As stated above in point 4, anyone reporting abuse to the authorities should also consult with church leadership so that appropriate safety measures and pastoral care can be arranged.

1. All alleged incidents must be reported to an elder and a pastor together. The elder team will then be responsible for carrying forward these procedures. Information regarding alleged cases of abuse should be co-ordinated and disseminated to the congregation and public through one designated spokesperson.
2. Any report and subsequent documentation of suspected child abuse is to be considered and treated as confidential. Access to this information should be limited to the specified persons in the congregation responsible for providing leadership in this area, to the Family & Children's Services, and police, and when required, a church appointed lawyer and/or insurance carrier.

3. The notification of the child's parents of the suspicion of abuse must be carried out only in consultation with the Family & Children's Services or the police.
4. It is recognized that the witnesses to any suspicions of child abuse will require support, especially once a report is made to the authorities. Appropriate pastoral support is key to their well-being, and they should also be instructed on how to respond if the child, parents, or other interested parties contact him/her. Such instructions should include:
  - \* refraining from sharing any statement made by the child with anyone other than the authorities until the authorities have determined whether or not the child needs to be protected from contact with that person;
  - \* refraining from sharing with the parent, or any other person, information that has not been reported to the authorities.
  - \* refraining from attempting to convince a parent that the alleged abuse happened or did not happen;
  - \* listening to any information a parent or other party may offer about the suspected abuse, recording it immediately after the conversation and ensuring this additional information is reported in a manner consistent with the original report of suspected abuse;
  - \* assuring parents of the confidential nature of the report and the need to maintain confidentiality to the degree permitted by law.
5. Appropriate precautions must be undertaken to ensure that the victim and other children in the church are kept safe during the ongoing investigation by the authorities, which may include immediate suspension of alleged perpetrator pending outcome of investigation.
6. Plans for pastoral and possibly clinical support of all parties involved need to be developed as soon as the investigation is under way. Resources for children, parents, the accused, and the congregation are available via counselling services, church-related ministries, MCEC offices in Kitchener, police, and Family & Children Services.

## **VII. PROCEDURES FOR INVESTIGATING ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE IN CASES NOT INVOLVING YOUTH AND CHILDREN**

The same principles enshrined above apply to adult/adult relations as well, except that references to police and/or Family & Children's Services should be replaced with references to the Sexual Misconduct and Abuse Resource Response Team (SMARRT). SMARRT would be contacted by any one of the elders or pastors when receiving a reported allegation of abuse. SMARRT can be contacted through MCC. See Appendix 8: Support and Assistance for Abused and Neglected Elders.

## **VIII. ENSURING COMPLIANCE**

In accordance with the policy of our organization, all adults involved in programs with

- a) children,
- b) youth,
- c) and vulnerable adults,

will be required to:

1. read the Safe Place Guidelines,
2. Sign the Annual Criminal Records Declaration set out in Appendix 7,
3. Provide a Vulnerable Sector Check every 5 years.

The BMC Church Administrative Assistant along with those running the various programs will be responsible for distributing and collecting volunteer forms at the beginning of the school year. These forms will be kept in the main office along with the complete list of everyone who has filled them out and has provided a recent Vulnerable Sectors Check. Children's Ministry Team, Youth Ministry Team, Elders, Church Staff (including Custodian) and other committee chairs working with children, youth, and/or vulnerable adults are to submit a list to the Administrative Assistant of all volunteers that are working with children and/or youth in the coming year. Additionally, the Administrative Assistant will manage the Annual Criminal Records Declaration of all volunteers working with children, youth, and vulnerable adults.

Volunteers may submit their receipts for the cost of the Vulnerable Sector Check. An outline of the Vulnerable Sector Check Volunteer Form can be found in Appendix 9.

It will be the responsibility of the Vice Chair of Church Council to ensure yearly educational components are given to all volunteers, preferably at the beginning of each school year.



## Appendix 1

# UNDERSTANDING ABUSE

### Definition

Abuse includes, but is not limited to, the types defined below.

- \* includes physical, emotional and sexual abuse (see definitions below);
- \* all child abuse involves the misuse of power;
- \* misuse of power takes place when people take advantage of the authority or power they have over vulnerable people;
- \* vulnerable people includes adults with physical or mental challenges, seniors, children, and youth under 18 years of age.

Physical abuse is the act or intent of using physical force or action that results, or could result, in the injuring of a child or youth. It extends beyond reasonable discipline. Injury to a child or youth can be caused by over discipline, which is not acceptable, regardless of differing cultural standards on discipline.

Emotional abuse constitutes any pattern of hurting a child or youth's feelings to the point of damaging their self-respect. It includes, but is not limited to, verbal attacks, sarcasm, insults, humiliation or rejection. A child or youth who is emotionally harmed may demonstrate severe anxiety, depression, withdrawal, self-destructive or aggressive behavior.

### Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse occurs when a child or youth is used for sexual stimulation or gratification. Sexual activity between children or youth may also be considered sexual abuse if older or more powerful children or youth take sexual advantage of those who are younger or less powerful. Sexual abuse includes behavior that involves touching and non-touching.

Types of sexual abuse that fall under the category of touching include:

- \* Fondling;
- \* Oral, genital and anal penetration;
- \* Intercourse;
- \* Forcible rape.

Types of sexual abuse that fall under the category of non-touching include:

- \* Verbal comments;
- \* Pornographic videos;
- \* Obscene phone calls;
- \* Exhibitionism;
- \* Allowing children or youth to witness sexual activity.

Child neglect is defined as the failure of those responsible for the care of children or youth to meet the physical, emotional or medical needs to an extent that the child or youth's health, development or safety is endangered.

Harassment includes, but is not limited to, disturbing, worrying or unnerving, tormenting or distressing with annoying labour, care or misfortune. Harassment can take a variety of subtle or overt forms ranging from name calling to physical confrontation. The "accessory role," whether by silence, laughter, or non-intervention, implies indifference to a particular viewpoint or even tacit approval and is therefore also considered a form of harassment.

## **Symptoms of Abuse and Molestation**

Church workers and staff should be alert to the physical signs of abuse and molestation, as well as to behavioural and verbal signs that a victim may exhibit. A one-time event would not necessarily constitute a potential abuse case; sudden unexplained changes, however, would warrant investigation. Some of the more common signs are:

Physical signs may include:

- \* lacerations and bruises
- \* nightmares
- \* irritation, pain or injury to the genital area
- \* difficulty with urination
- \* discomfort when sitting
- \* torn or bloody underclothing
- \* venereal disease

Behavioral signs may include:

- \* anxiety when approaching church or nursery area
- \* nervous or hostile behaviour toward adults
- \* sexual self-consciousness
- \* "acting out" sexual behaviour
- \* withdrawal from church activities and friends

Verbal signs may include the following statements:

- \* I don't like (names a particular person)
- \* (Particular person) does things to me when we're alone
- \* I don't like to be alone with (particular person)
- \* (Particular person) fooled around with me

## Appendix 2

### Breslau Mennonite Church

226 Woolwich Street South, Breslau, Ontario N0B 1M0 Phone: 519-648-2501

Email: office@breslaumc.ca website: www.breslaumc.ca

Pastor: Eleanor Epp-Stobbe

### CHILDREN'S MINISTRY INFORMATION AND PERMISSION

Name of Child (1): \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ Age of Sept 2024 \_\_\_\_\_ Grade of Sept 2024 \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Child (2): \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ Age of Sept 2024 \_\_\_\_\_ Grade of Sept 2024 \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Child (3): \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ Age of Sept 2024 \_\_\_\_\_ Grade of Sept 2024 \_\_\_\_\_

Parents'/Guardians' Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ (home) \_\_\_\_\_ (cell)

Email Address(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Other adults who may be picking up or dropping off child(ren): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

#### Emergency Contact during Church and Sunday School Hour:

- I/we will probably be in the church building
- Other:

Secondary Emergency Contact Information (name and phone number): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Continued on back →

**Special interests and activities:**

**Allergies/medications/special considerations:**

**Photo Consent:**

Do you give consent for your child/children's photo to be taken and used in Breslau Mennonite Church media (e.g. newsletter, photo albums, PowerPoint Presentations, internet, bulletin board, etc)? All photos and video will be used for church purposes, and could be distributed, upon request, to families of persons in the photos or videos taken. It will be for private use only. Any internet posting by the church will not include names.

- Yes
- No

Comments/stipulations: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Parental Consent:**

I hereby give permission for my child/children listed above to participate in children's ministry at Breslau Mennonite Church. I understand that leaders will follow BMC Safe Place Guidelines to the best of their ability. I give leaders permission to procure treatment to the best of their judgement for any medical injury requiring immediate attention, and in such an event I will be contacted as soon as possible. I will not hold BMC or its leaders responsible for injury or damage to person or property while participating in this program.

Parent/Guardian Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

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

*All above information will be stored in a confidential file and shared with teachers and pastors as needed.*

## Appendix 3

### Breslau Mennonite Church

226 Woolwich Street South, Breslau, Ontario N0B 1M0 Phone: 519-648-2501

Email: office@breslaumc.ca website: www.breslaumc.ca

Pastor: Eleanor Epp-Stobbe

## YOUTH INFORMATION RECORD AND ASSUMED CONSENT

Name of youth: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade (Sept '24): \_\_\_\_\_ School: \_\_\_\_\_

Youth's Email (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

### EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION:

Parent's/Guardian's Name

Parent's/Guardian's Name

Home Phone #

Cell Phone #

Home Phone #

Cell Phone #

Address

Address

City, Postal Code

City, Postal Code

Email Address

Email Address

Emergency Contact Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Home #: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell #: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

### MEDICAL INFORMATION:

Youth's Health Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Doctor: \_\_\_\_\_

Allergies/sensitivities: \_\_\_\_\_

Medications: \_\_\_\_\_

Additional information: \_\_\_\_\_

**GENERAL PERMISSION AND ASSUMED CONSENT**

*Photo Consent:*

Do you give consent for your teenager’s photo to be taken and used in Breslau Mennonite Church media (e.g. newsletter, photo albums, PowerPoint Presentations, internet, bulletin board, etc)? All photos and video will be used for church purposes, and could be distributed, upon request, to families of persons in the photos or videos taken. It will be for private use only. Any internet posting by the church will not include names.

- Yes  No

Comments/Stipulations: \_\_\_\_\_

*Driving Consent:*

I give permission for my teenager to be driven by a sponsor during events, with the understanding that those driving will follow BMC Safe Place Guidelines to the best of their ability.

- Yes  No

Comments/Stipulations: \_\_\_\_\_

I give permission for my teenager to be driven by other youth during events, with the understanding that those youth have met the proper requirements for their G2 licence.

- Yes  No

Comments/Stipulations: \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby give permission for my teenager listed above to participate in youth ministry at Breslau Mennonite Church. I acknowledge that by dropping my teen off at events, I am therefore giving permission for them to participate in the event. This assumed consent covers events at the church, overnight events at the church, and local off site events. Any high risk or overnight away events will require additional permission. I understand that leaders will follow BMC Safe Place Guidelines to the best of their ability.

I give leaders permission to procure treatment to the best of their judgement for any medical injury requiring immediate attention, and in such an event I will be contacted as soon as possible. I will not hold BMC or its leaders responsible for injury or damage to person or property while participating in this program.

Name of Parent(s): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Appendix 4

### Breslau Mennonite Church

226 Woolwich Street South, Breslau, Ontario N0B 1M0 Phone: 519-648-2501

Email: office@breslaumc.ca website: www.breslaumc.ca

Pastor: Eleanor Epp-Stobbe

## Permission Form for High Risk/Offsite Events

Event Details: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Dates: \_\_\_\_\_

Adult Leaders: \_\_\_\_\_

### 1. PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name of Youth \_\_\_\_\_ Grade (Sept '24): \_\_\_\_\_

Parent(s) Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent contact during event: phone # \_\_\_\_\_ email \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Contact during event: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone # \_\_\_\_\_ email \_\_\_\_\_

Has the youth filled out a BMC information sheet? YES NO

*If not please contact the church to request the form*

If yes, has there been any change to the youth's health, medications or other concerns?

NO YES (*please explain*)

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### 2. PARENTAL CONSENT

I hereby grant permission for my teen \_\_\_\_\_ to participate in the BMC sponsored event named above. I understand that leaders will follow BMC Safe Place Guidelines to the best of their ability. I give leaders of this event permission to procure treatment to the best of their judgment for any medical injury requiring immediate attention, and in such an event I will be contacted as soon as possible. I will not hold BMC or its leaders responsible for injury or damages to person or property while participating in the program.

Parent name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

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

*The above information will be kept with the leaders during the event, and stored in a confidential file at the church.*

## Appendix 5

To ensure an adequate understanding of abuse, all congregants are encouraged to read Let the Children Come: Preparing Faith Communities to End Child Abuse and Neglect, by Jeanette Harder (Herald Press: 2010). A copy is available in the church library.

Other helpful resources include:

### References:

Elder Abuse: What you Need to Know, by the Waterloo Region Committee on Elder Abuse. Available in church library.

Safe Place Handbook. Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches, Board of Church Ministries, Feb. 1996.

Broken Boundaries. Resources for Pastoring People. MCC Domestic Violence Task Force, 1989.

Five Ways Your Parish Can Work to Become a Safe Place. ELCA Commission for Women, 1989.

Melton, Joy Thronburg. Safe Sanctuaries: Reducing the Risk of Child Abuse in the Church. Nashville: TN, Discipleship Resources, 1998.

A Plan to Protect The Children, Youth, and Leaders at your Church PAOC 2003.

### Videos

*Bless our Children*: A 40 minute video produced by the Centre for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence, 1993. For those exploring the possibility of implementing a child sexual abuse prevention program based on the curricula listed below.

*Hear Their Cries*: A 48 Minutes video produced by the Centre for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence, 1992. A documentary on the role of clergy and lay leaders in preventing child abuse.

*Ask Before You Hug*: 31 minute video, produced by UM Com, 1995. This training video presents six difference situations that portray a range of inappropriate behaviour in church settings. It offers suggestions on how to act and re-act appropriately.

### Children's Curricula

Reid, Kathryn Goering. *Preventing Child Sexual Abuse: A Curriculum for Children Ages Five Through Eight*. Cleveland: OH, United Church Press, 1994.

Reid, Kathryn Goering with Marie M. Fortune. *Preventing Child Sexual Abuse: A Curriculum for Children Ages Nine Through Twelve*. New York: United Church Press, 1989.

For Adult Study

Anderson, Bill. *When Child Abuse Come to Church*. Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House Publishers. 1992.

Heggen, Carolyn Holderread. *Sexual Abuse in Christian Homes and Churches*. Waterloo, ON: Herald Press, 1993.

Videos and books available from Mennonite Church Canada's: CommonWord Bookstore and Resource Center, [www.commonword.ca](http://www.commonword.ca)



## Appendix 6

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ON REPORTING CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Taken from Let the Children Come: Preparing Faith Communities to End Child Abuse and Neglect, by Jeanette Harder,  
p. 171-175

#### 1. **What if I'm not sure?**

- \* Think about the facts -what did the child tell you? What did you observe? What did you hear? Don't second-guess the facts. Report what you heard and saw.
- \* Talk with someone who is knowledgeable about child abuse and neglect and/or the family (but don't let this delay you too long in making the report.)
- \* Think about the abuse from the perspective of the child(ren), not the possible abuser. Is the child safe? Does the child need protecting?
- \* Think about how you would feel if the child is hurt and you hadn't done anything
- \* If you decide not to report, write down what you observed and heard along with the date and save for future reference.

#### 2. **Whom should I call?**

Family and Children Services of Waterloo Region: 519-576-0540, <http://www.facswaterloo.org/>

#### 3. **Will I have to give my name?**

Including your name and contact information when you report abuse is not required, but encouraged. The authorities may want to seek more information from you; when possible, they may share the outcome of their investigation with you. If the alleged abuse is found to be untrue by the authorities, the case will be closed and you as the reporter will not be held liable, as you were reporting in good faith. By law, the police cannot give your name to the family - this would only come up if the case were to go to court.

#### 4. **What will child protection authorities do?**

In the United States CPS will first assign a level of urgency to your report based on the safety of the child. If the child's safety is at immediate risk, particularly if the child is very young, CPS and local police may seek to locate the child immediately. If the child's safety is deemed to be at high to moderate risk, CPS may locate the child within two to fourteen days of your report. CPS may deem that the information is inadequate at this time and close the case without contacting the child or family. (Time frames vary by state or province.) If adequate information supporting abuse or neglect is given in your report, the authorities will investigate or assess the case by interviewing the child, then the siblings and parent(s), the alleged offender, and other parties, if needed. In this assessment, the authorities will gather evidence to determine the safety of the child and determine the likelihood that child abuse or neglect occurred, based on your state or province's definitions of child abuse and neglect. This stage may take two to six weeks.

Depending on the outcome of the assessment and available resources, child protection authorities will provide direct services or referrals to keep the child safe and strengthen the family. Sometimes a report to the authorities can be very helpful to families in accessing services that may not have been available without your report. (Procedures in your state, province or territory may vary somewhat from those described above.)

#### 5. **How quickly will the child be removed from the home?**

The goal of the authorities is not to remove children from families; the goal of authorities is to keep children safe. If it is deemed that a child's safety is at very high risk, the authorities will work in conjunction with the police to remove a child from the home.

## **6. Who do I tell: the child or parent?**

What you tell the child or parent(s) depends on many factors: your relationship with the child and family, the child's age, and the nature of the alleged abuse or neglect. You may want to tell the child and/or family that you are concerned about the child's safety and remind them of the responsibility to report child abuse and neglect. If a parent is not responsible for the alleged abuse, you can encourage the parent to make the report to CPS, therefore giving the parent the opportunity to be protective (you may want to make your own report as well). Telling the parents that you are making a report to CPS may be risky, especially if one parent is the alleged offender; this may put the child at greater risk or the family may disappear. When you make a report to CPS, let them know what you have told the parents. Ask what you should do or not do in regards to the child and family.

## **7. I'm feeling sad/confused/angry about reporting abuse - is this normal?**

Absolutely. Reporting child abuse or neglect feels awful. On one hand, you feel frightened for the child, but on the other hand, you wonder if you're making too big a deal of what you saw or observed. Perhaps you doubt your own eyes or ears. It doesn't help that it may feel like you're totaling on someone. You may also feel angry toward the alleged abuser.

Here are some tips on what you can do:

- \* Focus on the child's need for safety and remind yourself that you acted on the information you had available to you at that time.
- \* Remember that no child deserves to be hurt or placed in harm's way
- \* Seek the support of someone who is knowledgeable of child abuse and neglect and talk about your feelings (but remember to protect the confidentiality of the child and/or family).
- \* Write your thoughts and feelings in a journal.
- \* Hug your own family members.
- \* Do something that you find comforting: talk to a friend, exercise, listen to music, read a book.
- \* Immerse yourself in your regular daily activities

## **8. I've reported, now what do I do?**

As much as possible, resume your normal relationship with the child and/or family. Provide immediate assistance if that seems appropriate and possible. Continue to ensure the safety of the child and other children, to offer assistance to the family, and report further concerns, if needed.

## **9. What if the child protection authorities do nothing?**

The authorities may not respond as quickly as you wish or in the way that you wish. They must work within the constraints of their context and must find evidence of abuse or neglect in order to take action. You can report suspected abuse and neglect again later, and this time, more evidence may be available. In the meantime, remain available to the child and parents, as appropriate.

## **10. If the child is removed, can I care for the child?**

It is quite normal for you to want to take the child into your arms and into your home and protect him or her from any further danger. If the child cannot remain at home, the authorities will determine the best placement for the child. With the safety of the child at the center of their considerations, the authorities may place the child with a family member or family friend, in a foster home, or in a group home. You can let the authorities know of your desire to care for the child.

## Appendix 7

### Annual Criminal Record Declaration

*This form is not in lieu of a Vulnerable Sectors Check, rather it is an annual declaration of having a clear criminal record.*

I DECLARE, since the last Vulnerable Sectors Check collected by Breslau Mennonite church that: I have **no** convictions under the *Criminal Code of Canada* up to and including the date of this declaration for this a pardon has not been issued or granted under the *Criminal Records Act (Canada)*.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

## Appendix 8

# SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE FOR ABUSED AND NEGLECTED ELDERS

### Preventing Abuse

1. We as a Church should endeavour to provide education and training regarding prevention and recognition of abuse and ways to address abuse once it is established that someone is being abused.
2. We as a Church should endeavour to follow the policies and procedures set out herein thereby assisting and supporting the members of the congregation.

### Education and Training of Staff and Volunteers

As a Church making a commitment to support and assist abused and neglected adults in our community, we will endeavour to host educational and training opportunities on a regular basis. The focus of the learning opportunities will be on preventing, recognizing and addressing abuse and neglect.

### RECOGNIZING ABUSE

Elder abuse is the mistreatment of an elderly person by someone he or she should be able to rely on. It can take different forms including:

1. Physical Violence: pushing, shaking, hitting, sexually molesting, rough handling, deliberate over/under medication or the improper use of restraints
2. Psychological Harm: threatening, bullying, name-calling, humiliating or degrading
3. Financial: withholding money, forcing the sale of property or possessions, theft, coercing changes in wills or misusing power of attorney responsibilities
4. Neglect: failing to provide adequate food, drink or medical attention; leaving an elderly person in an unsafe or isolated situation

### Risk Factors:

Any elder person may be a victim of elder abuse. Victims come from all walks of life, may be male or female, may be frail or in good health, and may be from varied ethno-cultural backgrounds. There are several risk factors including:

- \* A history of difficult family relationships, including past abuse;
- \* A suspected abuser has a history of poor adjustment e.g. emotional or psychiatric problems, substance abuse, antisocial behaviour, inability to sustain employment, inability to sustain other relationships;
- \* A suspected abuser is having difficulty coping with the stress related to caring for the elderly person, especially when there are other risk factors present; and
- \* An older person is socially isolated, especially when isolation is the result of cognitive or physical impairment.

### Signs of Elder Abuse

Elder abuse escalates the longer it continues. Signs of abuse are often subtle and many signs can also indicate other conditions such as physical or mental illness and sensory deprivation. It is important not to jump to conclusions; however, it is equally important not to ignore or justify the signs.

Signs that may be exhibited by the Elder person:

**1. Behaviour**

- \* Is anxious, withdrawn, agitated, evasive, depressed or suicidal
- \* Shows fear of potential abuser; behaviour changes when potential abuser enters/leaves room
- \* Is frail or cognitively impaired and attends emergency treatment alone, without regular caregiver

**2 Habits**

- \* Sudden/unexpected change in social habits
- \* Sudden/unexpected change in residence or living arrangements
- \* Unexplained or sudden inability to pay bills, account withdrawals, changes to the elder person's will and/or Powers of Attorney, or the disappearance of possessions
- \* Refusal to spend money without consulting caregiver
- \* Claims of being "accident-prone"
- \* Missed/cancelled appointments, especially medical appointments

**3. Health/Well Being**

- \* Sudden/unexpected decline in health or cognitive ability
- \* Decline in personal hygiene; skin ulcers
- \* Dehydration or malnutrition; sudden/rapid weight loss
- \* Signs of over/under medication
- \* Suspicious injuries: bruising in various stages of healing, on the face or eye area, the inner part of the thighs or arms, or around the wrists or ankles
- \* Sexually transmitted disease, itching, pain or bleeding in genital area, difficulty sitting or walking
- \* Explanation of injury or condition is: inappropriate to type/degree, vague or bizarre; or conflicting explanations are received from the elder person and the caregiver or the person suspected of abuse
- \* Unexplained delay in seeking treatment
- \* Denial in view of obvious injury
- \* Previous reports of similar injury

**4. Environment**

- \* Poor living conditions in comparison to assets
- \* Inappropriate or inadequate clothing
- \* Lack of food
- \* Lack of required medical aids, functional aids, or medications
- \* Evidence of locks or restraints
- \* Living in worse conditions than others in the home
- \* Involuntary separation from others in the home, friends or other family members

**Signs that may be exhibited by the Potential Abuser:**

- \* Is verbally aggressive, insulting or threatening toward the elder person
- \* Shows unusual degree of concern towards the elder person (either too little or too much)
- \* Speaks for elder person\_ does not permit the elder person's involvement in making decisions
- \* Is reluctant to leave elder person alone with professionals

### **Explore the causes and explanations for signs which suggest abuse by:**

- \* Talking to the older person, if possible alone (do not rely on the explanations given by others)
- \* Observing behaviour closely
- \* Using non-threatening questions to the elder person such as, "Are you getting all the help you need?" and to the caregiver, "Do you need more help looking after...?"
- \* Focusing on the unmet needs of the elder person as opposed to blaming or reprimanding the suspected abuser
- \* Being reassuring as guilt and shame are barriers to getting help

**Give every older person an opportunity to express concerns about being abused.** Do this by routinely asking non-threatening screening questions of every older person and of every caregiver, such as:

- \* Is everything going alright at home?
- \* Is there anything going on in your life that you'd like to talk about?
- \* Are you getting all the help you need?

Do not ask questions of this type if the older person is in the presence of someone who is suspected of abuse.

### **~Remember to document everything~**

#### **Assessment of Abuse**

Once abuse is strongly suspected a full assessment is required. A trusting relationship is necessary to obtain the information required to determine how to assist the family and the abused elder person. Once trust is built and established an assessment can begin.

There is no standard form of assessment - it can be one meeting or carried out over time. The assessment can include only the elder person or other individuals close to the elder person.

#### **What information you want to obtain:**

##### **1. The Abuse**

- \* What is it? How often?

##### **2. The Family**

- \* Roles, relationships, values etc

##### **3. The Victim**

- \* Health/medical status and history
- \* Functional assessment
- \* Cognitive ability
- \* Problem solving ability
- \* Emotional status
- \* Ethno cultural values
- \* Financial assessments
- \* Perception of situation

##### **5. The Suspected Abuser**

- Health/medical status and history
- Emotional status
- Cognitive ability
- Attitude toward elder person
- Ability to meet their own needs and the needs of the elder person
- Perception of situation

## ADDRESSING ABUSE

To help determine which course of intervention is most appropriate ask yourself:

### 1. Is this an emergency?

An emergency is any situation in which the elderly person's safety, health or well-being is in imminent and serious danger. Serious danger may result from physical assault, the threat of imminent assault, the presence of life threatening medical problems or living in an unsafe environment. If there is an emergency, police and/or ambulance involvement may be necessary.

### 2. Does the person have sufficient cognitive capacity?

If the individual does not understand and is not able to make decisions, the intervention will emphasize taking protective actions. To ensure that the individual's values and wishes are respected, it is important to involve the individual to the extent that he or she is able and to involve other trusted family members and friends.

If an individual has limited understanding and is experiencing serious harm due to abuse and there are no other family members willing and able to make decisions contact the Guardianship Investigations Unit of the Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee.

### 3. Is the victim ready to act?

An informed choice by a mentally competent individual to stay in an abusive situation must be respected.

An informed choice means the individual understands the situation, the options available, the consequences of pursuing those options and the ability to choose freely. If the individual is saying he or she does not want things to change, but there is a question about whether this is an informed choice, pursue this further and attempt to refocus the intervention.

Instead of working with the older person directly on abuse issues, try to provide assistance to improve the elder person's sense of worth and self-confidence. Find out what small changes the older person would like to make and then provide support and assistance towards these goals.

### If the elder person is resisting all efforts of intervention:

- \* Express concern for his or her well-being;
- \* Provide a number to call for help;
- \* Inform the individual about elder abuse: that it is a problem affecting thousands; that it gets worse the longer it continues; that there is help; and that the individual is not alone;
- \* Arrange a follow-up visit; and
- \* Develop a safety plan.

### Approaches to Intervention

Once the situation is understood, begin to work with the cognitively capable elder person to resolve the problem. Build on strengths:

- \* Educate on abuse - abuse is never acceptable; options available for responding to the situation
- \* Support - be nonjudgmental and open minded; listen and try to understand the person's needs and wants
- \* Explore options - let the elder person know there is help and the options available
- \* Build social networks/reduce isolation - increase the number of people who are able to provide positive support; provide opportunities to build self-esteem
- \* Encourage responsibility for safety - encourage the elder person to develop a safety plan
- \* Relieve the caregiver - when caregiver stress is a factor in the abuse, it may be relieved by services designed to provide respite and assistance. Options include home health and home support services, day programs, respite admissions or placement in a Long-Term Care Home.
- \* Be open-minded with the abuser - appreciate that the elder person usually wants to maintain the relationship with the abuser. Avoid being judgmental about care giving efforts.

- \* Multi-agency or multi-disciplinary approach - The person who recognizes the abuse may be advised or assisted by other agencies and professionals who have experience working with people affected by abuse. The person who recognizes the abuse can contact the Director and the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care Homes or a regional or national Committee on Elder Abuse.

**Protective Measures**

- \* Bring outsiders into the home - In many cases, abuse will subside when it is open to public scrutiny. Introducing home health or home support services and re-establishing family ties and visits, may all serve this purpose. In some cases, but not all, commencing a police investigation serves as a deterrent, even if no charges are laid.
- \* Separate the abuser and victim - the most intrusive, and often least desired option is to separate the abuser and victim. However, separation does provide needed safety and security for the victim. Options include removing the elder person from the home by finding alternative accommodation or long-term care placement. Another option is to remove the abuser by using legal options such as peace bonds or restraining orders.
- \* Report -You can report the suspected elder abuse to the Director of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care Homes.

NOTE: Many forms of elder abuse are crimes under the Criminal Code of Canada. Some of these include: assault, forcible confinement, fraud, theft and failure to provide basic necessities of life.

**REFERRAL TO OTHER AGENCIES FOR ASSISTANCE**

Waterloo Wellington Community Care Access Centre	519-748-2222
Waterloo Regional Committee on Elder Abuse	519-883-2280
Community Support Connections	519-772-8787
Ministry of Health & Long-term Care	1-866-532-3161
Waterloo Regional Police Services	519-653-7700
Elder Abuse Response Team	519-579-4607
Victim Services of Waterloo Region	519-585-2363 (After Hours 519-570-5143)
Office of Ontario Public Guardian & Trustee	1-800-366-0335

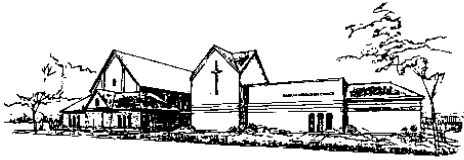


## Appendix 9

# Breslau Mennonite Church

226 Woolwich Street  
Breslau, Ontario N0B 1M0

phone 519-648-2501  
e-mail: [office@breslaumc.ca](mailto:office@breslaumc.ca)  
[www.breslaumc.ca](http://www.breslaumc.ca)



[Insert Date]

This verifies that (include name & address) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

is a volunteer at Breslau Mennonite Church and will be working with the vulnerable sector.

Breslau Mennonite Church offers programming for all age groups and has active children's, youth, and seniors' ministries. We ask that all who work or volunteer with the vulnerable sector complete the "*Police Records Check for Service with the Vulnerable Sector*".

Sincerely,

[Pastor's Name]  
[Title]  
Breslau Mennonite Church