

To: Sunday School Teachers and Sponsors  
From: The CMC Discipling Commission and Pastoral Team  
Date: January 7, 2011  
**RE: Information packet on Child Sexual Abuse**

In 2002, the Discipling Commission wrote a church policy outlining the steps we take to “provide a reasonably safe environment” for our children and youth as they participate in church programs. In your role working with children or youth at CMC, you should be aware of the information in the following documents:

1. **Discipling Commission Policy: Reducing the Risk of Sexual Abuse for Children**--This policy, as mentioned above, outlines the procedures and methods we use at CMC to help protect children. You may be aware that most of these standards have been in use for several years now; however, we want to stress the importance of maintaining these standards.
2. **Memo of Understanding for Work with Children and Youth (*for members or non-members*)**—Every person who works in CMC programs for children or youth will be asked to complete this memo, which will then be kept in a confidential file in the church office.
3. **Definitions**--This document defines child sexual abuse, giving examples of inappropriate behavior. It also lists signs to look for that may indicate a child is a victim of abuse.
4. **Reporting and Response Plan**—As we worked on the previous papers, we learned that teachers and sponsors—anyone who works with children—have a legal obligation to report observations or suspicions of abuse. This final document details the steps you should take if you are aware of or suspect abuse.

We ask you to carefully read these documents. We do not have a record of your completed forms and ask that you complete the papers as soon as possible. **Please note that the Memo of Understanding must be signed in front of a witness.** To honor the confidentiality of this process, you may bring it to the office where a pastor will witness your signature. If you have any questions, please contact one of our pastors or a Discipling Commission member.

While we are working at this process, I want to highlight one other area that we need to be mindful of. When Sunday school teachers are helping children with their toileting needs, it is necessary to keep the restroom door partially open. In that way we can be sure that children are “within sight and sound.” Also, if there are female teachers, it would be best to have them go with the girls and male teachers go with the boys. If you have any questions about this, please let me know.

*We thank you for your commitment to the nurture of our children and youth.  
Each week our church is blessed by your gifts of care, love and teaching.*

## **Reducing the Risk of Sexual Abuse for Children at College Mennonite Church**

**Objective:** To provide a reasonably safe environment for the children and youth at College Mennonite Church as they interact with adults in Sunday school and other Discipling Commission programs.

**Rationale:** We cannot assume sexual abuse will not occur simply because we are a church. We need to be clear about what steps we have taken and will continue to take as we try to protect our children and youth.

### **Procedures:**

**a.** CMC members who work in CMC programs for children and youth must complete and sign the Memo of Understanding for Work with Children & Youth.

**b.** Orientation for new members will include information on what CMC does to provide a reasonably safe environment, explaining our need for such a prevention plan. The Memo of Understanding for Work with Children and Youth will be explained and distributed during orientation. Membership also includes a formal interview with a pastor and an elder as well as requiring a referral from a former pastor/congregation, when applicable.

**c.** Non-members who want to volunteer in CMC programs for children or youth must complete and sign the Memo of Understanding for Work with Children and Youth (For Non-members). Non-members with criminal child abuse violations will not be allowed to work with children or youth at CMC.

**d.** During the membership interview (noted above) or at any later time, a pastor and elder will address concerns, if any, regarding a history of abuse. In the case of a history of abuse, the potential/current member, pastor and elder will compose a confidential, written statement for church files addressing the specifics of what that person's involvement as a volunteer in church programs will be. Members with criminal child abuse violations will not be allowed to work with children or youth at CMC

### **Worker Supervision**

**a.** Two adults should be present for all church activities for children and youth. This reduces the risk of molestation as well as reducing the risk of false accusations.

**b.** Church workers should obtain parental permission before spending time alone with a child, i.e., as a mentor or as a pastoral counselor. Parents must also give permission for their children to participate in special trips or activities.

**c.** There should be windows in the doors of rooms in which activities are taking place.

**d.** Children should be adequately supervised from the time they are dropped off for activities until their parent or authorized guardian picks them up.

### **Worker Orientation**

Workers will be given a training packet, which will include: a copy of this CMC policy, the Memo of Understanding, and information on how to identify and report abuse.

### **Response Plan**

**a.** Any volunteer or staff member who has reason to believe that a child is a victim of child abuse or neglect, or is a victim of a sexual offense, must report this belief to the pastor with whom they work most closely and to the local child protection services or local law enforcement agency. This contact information is detailed in the Reporting and Response document of the training packet.

**b.** Once a volunteer or staff member has reported knowledge or suspicion of sexual abuse, the pastors and elders will follow through with the procedures outlined in the CMC Policy on Sexual Misconduct.

Submitted by CMC Discipling Commission

**MEMO OF UNDERSTANDING FOR WORK WITH CHILDREN & YOUTH**

*For Non-Members – Confidential*  
**College Mennonite Church**

All persons involved in the supervision or custody of minors at CMC must complete this form to help the church provide an environment as safe as possible for those children and youth who participate in our programs and use our facilities.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Present Address \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Name of church of which you are a member \_\_\_\_\_

Church Address \_\_\_\_\_

Church Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Pastor \_\_\_\_\_



**Work Experience**

Have you had any experience working with children, either in a volunteer capacity or paid position? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If so, list the organizations—or other settings—in which you have worked with children.

Name of organization \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Name of organization \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor's Name \_\_\_\_\_

**References (other than a relative)**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

**Background Information**

This form will be kept in a confidential file and the following information will not be shared more broadly without consultation with you.

Have you ever been accused of or convicted of a crime other than minor traffic offenses?  
Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_ If yes, please explain:

Have you ever been accused of or convicted of child abuse or a crime involving actual or attempted sexual molestation of a minor?  
Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_ If yes, please explain:

Is there anything from your past that would limit your work with children and youth?  
Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_ If yes, please explain:



**STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT**

I commit myself to respect and treat well the children/youth at College Mennonite Church and to refrain from unscriptural or unlawful conduct in the performances of my services on behalf of the church. The information contained in this Memo of Understanding is correct to the best of my knowledge. I authorize any references from organizations or churches listed to give CMC information that they may have regarding my character and fitness for children/youth work. I release all such references from any liability for furnishing such evaluations to CMC, provided they do so in good faith and without malice. I waive any right that I may have to inspect references provided on my behalf.

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

Witness\_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_

**MEMO OF UNDERSTANDING FOR WORK WITH CHILDREN & YOUTH**

*For Members – Confidential*  
**College Mennonite Church**

All persons involved in the supervision or custody of minors at CMC must complete this form to help the church provide an environment as safe as possible for those children and youth who participate in our programs and use our facilities.

Name\_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_

Present Address\_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone\_\_\_\_\_



This form will be kept in a confidential file and the following information will not be shared more broadly without consultation with you.

Have you ever been accused of or convicted of a crime other than minor traffic offenses?  
Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_ If yes, please explain:

Have you ever been accused of or convicted of child abuse or a crime involving actual or attempted sexual molestation of a minor?  
Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_ If yes, please explain:

Is there anything from your past that would limit your work with children and youth?  
Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_ If yes, please explain:

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**Please review and sign the Statement of Commitment on the other side of the page.**

**STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT**

I commit myself to respect and treat well the children/youth at College Mennonite Church and to refrain from unscriptural or unlawful conduct in the performances of my services on behalf of the church. The information contained in this Memo of Understanding is correct to the best of my knowledge.

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

Witness \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## **Definitions**

### **What is Child Sexual Abuse?**

Child sexual abuse is any form of sexual contact or exploitation in which the minor is being used for the sexual stimulation of the perpetrator. According to the National Resource Center on Child Sexual Abuse, 1992, child sexual abuse is:

*Any sexual activity with a child—whether in the home by a caretaker, in a day care situation, a foster/residential setting, or in any other setting, including on the street by a person unknown to the child. The abuser may be an adult, an adolescent, or another child, provided the child is four years older than the victim.*

Child sexual abuse may be violent or non-violent. All child sexual abuse is an exploitation of a child's vulnerability and powerlessness in which the abuser is fully responsible for the actions. Child sexual abuse is *criminal behavior* that involves children in sexual behaviors for which they are not personally, socially or developmentally ready.

Child sexual abuse includes behaviors that involve touching and non-touching aspects.

Types of abuse that involve touching include:

- fondling
- oral, genital, and anal penetration
- intercourse
- forcible rape

Types of sexual abuse that do not involve touching include:

- verbal comments
- pornographic videos or pictures
- obscene phone calls
- exhibitionism
- allowing children to witness sexual activity

## **Signs of Sexual Abuse**

As a church worker, you should be alert to the physical signs of abuse and molestation, as well as to behavioral and verbal signs that a victim may exhibit. Some of the more common signs are summarized below:

*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 behavior toward adults
- Sexual self-consciousness
- “Acting out” of sexual behavior
- Withdrawal from church activities and friends

*Verbal signs may include the following statements:*

- I don’t like (a particular church worker)
- (A church worker) does things to me when we’re alone
- I don’t like to be alone with (a church worker)
- (A church worker) fooled around with me

The information in this document is quoted from:  
Hammer, Klipowicz and Cobble; Reducing the Risk of Child Sexual Abuse in Your Church, 1993, Church Law and Tax Report.

## **Reporting and Response**

### **Who should report child abuse?**

According to Indiana Code, Juvenile and Family Law:

*Any individual who has reason to believe that a child is a victim of child abuse or neglect must make a report to Child Protective Services or the local law enforcement agency.*

### **How do I make a report?**

1. Report your suspicions or observations to the CMC pastor with whom you work most closely.
2. Call the Division of Family and Children (DFS) for Elkhart Cty at: **574-293-6551**. If that line is unavailable, call Child Protective Services (CPS) at **1-800-800-5566**. This is a 24-hour, 7-day a week CPS hotline.

### **When I report, what information do I give to DFS or CPS?**

- Exact name, address and telephone number of the parent, guardian or custodian
- Exact description of what you saw or what the child said to you
- The more specific your information and the details you provide, the easier it is for DHS/CPS to assess the situation quickly.

### **What then?**

The pastoral team and the board of elders will follow through with whatever steps they believe are necessary to investigate and resolve the situation, following the guidelines outlined in CMC Policy on Sexual Misconduct.

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For further information see:

CMC Policy on Sexual Abuse and Harassment  
**Prevent Child Abuse** Indiana at [www.pcain.org](http://www.pcain.org)