

Strathroy East Christian Reformed Church

Abuse Prevention Policy

Approved August 2013 (Updated for September 2019)

The Purpose

We, the members of Strathroy East CRC, believe we must have policies and procedures to protect all members and participants in church activities from all forms of abuse. We believe that we must adhere to guidelines and procedures to respond appropriately to acts of abuse and support both the victim and perpetrator in the healing process.

Our congregation has adopted the following discipline or abuse prevention policy for the following reasons:

- a. to reduce the incidence of minors being subjected to abusive discipline or behavior.
- b. to reduce the risks of volunteers and/or staff persons being accused of abusive discipline or behavior.

"Therefore as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourself with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience". Colossians 3:12

Committee Mandate

The Strathroy East Christian Reformed Church Abuse Prevention Committee will:

- develop guidelines to protect all its members and participants from all forms of abuse and harassment with the ministries of the church;
- develop procedures and guidelines to help victims with the healing process;
- develop procedures to respond positively to abusers.

All guidelines and procedures shall communicate the beliefs that:

- the church community will not tolerate any form of abuse;
- dealing with abuse must be proactive and if necessary reactive;
- an emphasis must be placed on healthy relationships;
- expectations within relationships shall promote healing among survivors and perpetrators.

Definitions of Abuse/Terms/ Provincial Law

Physical abuse - is any intentional act that results in physical pain or injury regardless of whether an obvious physical symptom such as a wound or bruising results. Physical abuse also includes physical neglect, which means not doing what one is supposed to be doing to meet the physical needs of someone in his or her care. Physical abuse may be a single event or a chronic pattern of behavior. Physical abuse is often followed by a request/threat to the victim to not tell anyone what happened, not to report the discipline, or not to show anyone a mark or a bruise.

Emotional abuse/ Harassment - is any attempt to control another person's life through threats, fears, and/or deprivation in such a way that it impairs a person's God-given sense of self worth. Excessive criticism, ridicule, yelling, threat of physical abuse, or centering out an individual for public humiliation is unacceptable. Any person who persists in such behavior which he/she knows or should know to be unwelcome may be guilty of harassment.

Sexual abuse - is any sexual action taken by one person against or in the presence of another who is an unwilling participant or observer of such action. Physical contact is not a necessary element of sexual abuse. Suggestive speech, pornographic material, public exposure of genitals, and requests for sexual contact all represent forms of sexual abuse which do not involve physical contact. Sexual abuse includes any inappropriate

sexual encounter, even if consensual at the time (e.g. between parent and children, teachers and children, pastors and counselee) All sexual activity between an adult and a child is considered to be sexual abuse regardless of whether or not the adult participant believes that the child has consented to the activities, and regardless of the intentions of the adult participant.

Spiritual abuse – may be understood as emotional or psychological abuse committed by a spiritual leader/leaders who cause harm or threaten harm to a person’s welfare or well-being by a chronic or intentional pattern of behavior ordinarily contrary to the role expectations of the spiritual leader’s office.

Discipline policy (for all church youth programs) Posted in various locations throughout the church.

1. Corporal punishment (slapping, hitting, and pushing) is not permitted.
2. Abusive verbal discipline (yelling, hurling insults, and threatening) is not permitted.
3. Parent(s) or guardian(s) are to be informed and involved whenever a child/youth misbehaves beyond minor correction, or if a pattern of misbehavior increases.
4. Concerns about a child's behavior or the appropriate response to a child's behavior must be reported to the program supervisor.
5. An aide or a parent/guardian must be involved in classrooms where misbehavior is an ongoing problem.
6. Expectations of children/youths' behavior must reflect their age and level of comprehension. Similarly, discipline must reflect their age and level of comprehension.
7. Children are to be reminded of the kind of behavior that is acceptable for the setting. Older children and youth may benefit from having these expectations in written form.
8. Appropriate forms of discipline will be reviewed with volunteers/staff before church-sponsored programs begin a new season. Then periodic reminders are to be given as needed.
9. Whenever possible, leaders should try to avoid having to discipline a child/youth by choosing one or more of the following options:
 - a. Distract the child/youth with another activity
 - b. Help the child/youth focus on another more acceptable behavior.
 - c. Isolate the child/youth from others if another volunteer/staff is available to assist
10. For young children, time-outs should not last longer (in minutes) than the age of the child. For example, a three-year old should not have to sit for a time-out any longer than three minutes.
11. When nothing seems to be working, staff/volunteers/leaders should get help before losing their cool.
12. Volunteers/staff will participate in an annual information and/or training program on some aspect of child abuse to be determined by the Safe Church Team.

POLICIES FOR SPECIFIC CHILD/ YOUTH/VULNERABLE PEOPLE PROGRAMS

Nursery /Little Lambs & Little Critters Program /Coffee Break (up to Grade 1)

Those 18 years and older must sign the "Code of Ethics" and will require a police check every five years. The police checks will only be viewed by the Safe Church Committee and the Church Administrator. All police checks will be held in strict confidence and locked in the church.

1. All volunteers must have been members or have attended Strathroy East CRC regularly for the last six months and/or have filled in an application for a screening process.
2. Group or program leaders will propose names of volunteers to the church council for screening. Council is responsible for approving the individuals. It is the church’s right to exclude anyone for any reason.
3. Minors (17 and younger) may volunteer for service, provided that an adult is present. Minors may not care for child(ren) without adult supervision.
4. There should be at least two attendants serving at a time. These two cannot both be male or related within the immediate family (immediate family members such as mother/daughter or wife/husband or father/son). The two volunteers must stay in the nursery or classroom until all children are gone. A volunteer should not supervise a child alone, or in a private or isolated area. Program must be cancelled or combined if adequate supervision cannot be provided. This will decrease the potential for inappropriate behavior by volunteers, and will reduce the risk of false accusations.
5. All volunteers must wear a name tag each meeting while working with children.

6. An individual check-in/check-out system must be used for all parents/guardians and children. The parent or guardian who brings their child to the nursery or Little Lambs program is to introduce their child to the volunteers and inform the volunteers and record any special needs involving their child. The parent or guardian (or a family member 14+) that has signed in will be the only person able to pick up their child at the end of the service.
7. Some children may have some serious food allergies of which awareness has not been made. If an allergy exists, no food will be served or shared (the check-in/sign in sheet will include this question).
8. People, both adults and minors, who are not scheduled or appointed as a nursery attendant for that particular day may not spend time in the nursery room(s) during or after the service unless this person is in the care of the scheduled nursery attendant.
9. Only adults and teenagers are allowed to carry babies less than one year of age.
10. Whenever a children's program is in session the worship centre or classroom should allow for an unobstructed view of the room.
11. Report to another volunteer that you will be toileting a child. Leave washroom door ajar when washroom is in use. Babies' diapers should be changed on the change table in full view of other volunteers. For children who do not require assistance in the washroom, the adult attendant must remain outside the washroom. Children should be encouraged to use the bathroom facilities before and after class. Nursery washroom shall be used for all children up to grade 1.
12. Children should not leave the worship centre or classroom except for illness, bathroom assistance, or other compelling reasons. Any medical problems should be reported immediately to the child's parent(s) or guardian(s).
13. If a child cries uncontrollably for more than 10 minutes and cannot be comforted, then inform the parent or guardian.

Church School Program (Grade 1 to Grade 3)

All Church School volunteers 18 years and older must sign the "Code of Ethics" and will require a police check every five years. The police checks will only be viewed by the Church Administrator. The church administrator will engage the SCC if there are any concerns with Police Checks. All police checks will be held in strict confidence and locked in the church.

1. All volunteers must be members or have attended Strathroy East CRC regularly for the last six months or have filled in an application for a screening process.
2. Group or program leaders will propose names of volunteers to church council for screening. Council is responsible for approving individuals. It is the church's right to exclude anyone for any reason.
3. Minors (17 and younger) may volunteer for service, provided that an adult is present. Minors may not care for child(ren) without adult supervision. Minors must be 12 years of age.
4. Only one member of a family should serve in a particular room at a given time. There should be at least two attendants serving at a time and both cannot be male. The two volunteers must stay in the classroom until all children are gone. A volunteer should not meet or supervise a child alone, or in a private or isolated area. Program must be cancelled or combined if adequate supervision cannot be provided. This will decrease the potential for inappropriate behaviour by volunteers, and will reduce the risk of false accusations.
5. All volunteers must wear a name tag each meeting/program.
6. The parent or guardian who brings their child to the classroom is encouraged to introduce their child to the volunteers. Parents/Guardians must fill out a registration form (at the beginning of each year), and ensure that they inform the volunteers of any special needs involving their child. Children must wait until their parent or guardian picks them up. Parent/guardian must come within 10 minutes.
7. Whenever a children's program is in session the worship centre, or classroom should allow for an unobstructed view of the room.
8. Children should not leave the classroom except for illness, bathroom assistance, or other compelling reason. Any medical problems should be reported immediately to the child's parent(s) or guardian(s).
9. Children should be encouraged to use the bathroom facilities before and after class. Utilize a Hall Monitor to send child back to class program if needed.

10. If a child cries uncontrollably for more than 10 minutes and cannot be comforted, then inform the parent (if unknown, let Hall monitor find parents).
11. If a gift, phone call, or letter of a personal nature is being given to a child, volunteers must inform another volunteer within the church.

Senior Sunday School Program and Catechism (Grade 4 – Grade 8)

Those 18 years and older must sign the "Code of Ethics" and will require a police check every five years. The police checks will only be viewed by the Church Administrator. The church administrator will engage the SCC if there are any concerns with Police Checks. All police checks will be held in strict confidence and locked in the church.

1. All volunteers must have been members or have attended Strathroy East CRC regularly for the last six months or have filled in an application for a screening process.
2. Group or program leaders will propose names of volunteers to the church council for screening. Council is responsible for approving the individuals. It is the church's right to exclude anyone for any reason.
3. Minors (17 and younger) may volunteer for service, provided that an adult is present. Minors may not care for child(ren) without adult supervision.
4. One teacher in each classroom is acceptable providing there are hall monitors on duty to do periodic checks in the classroom.
5. Whenever a children's program is in session the worship centre, or classroom should allow for an unobstructed view of the room.
6. Children should not leave the classroom except for illness, bathroom assistance, or other compelling reason. Any medical problems should be reported immediately to the child's parent(s) or guardian(s).
7. If a gift, phone call, or letter of a personal nature is being given to a child, volunteers must inform another volunteer within the church.

Vacation Bible School (VBS) and Other Outreach Programs For Children

All volunteers and those 18 years and older must sign the "Code of Ethics" and will require a police check every five years. The police checks will only be viewed by the Church Administrator. The church administrator will engage the SCC if there are any concerns with Police Checks. All police checks will be held in strict confidence and locked in the church.

1. All volunteers must be members or have attended Strathroy East CRC regularly for the last six months or have filled in an application for a screening process.
2. Group or program leaders will propose names of volunteers to church council for screening. Council is responsible for approving the individuals. It is the church's right to exclude anyone for any reason.
3. Minors (17 and younger) may volunteer for service, provided that an adult is present. Minors may not care for child(ren) without adult supervision.
4. Only one member of an immediate family should serve in a particular room at a given time (immediate family members such as mother/daughter or wife/husband). The two volunteers shall not both be male. The two volunteers must stay in the room until all children are gone. A volunteer should not meet or supervise a child alone, or in a private or isolated area. Program must be cancelled or combined if adequate supervision cannot be provided. This will decrease the potential for inappropriate behavior by volunteers, and will reduce the risk of false accusations.
5. VBS teachers must be at least 16 years old as long as an adult is still present. All classrooms, must have 2 attendants at all times one may be a minor (min. age of 12).
6. All volunteers must wear a name tag each meeting/program.
7. Whenever a children's program is in session, the worship centre or classroom should allow for an unobstructed view of the room.
8. Children should not arrive more than ten minutes before the start of the meeting or activity, nor should they stay longer than ten minutes after the meeting or activity.
9. The exits shall be so supervised that no child shall be allowed to leave unless permission was given by parent/guardian on the registration form.

10. Children should not leave the worship centre or classroom except for illness, bathroom assistance, or other compelling reason. Any medical problems should be reported immediately to the child's parent(s) or guardian(s).
11. A "Registration Form" must be filled out for each child upon registration.
12. Children up to grade one must use the nursery washroom under supervision of Nursery attendants. Children grade 1 and higher can use the regular washroom facilities.
13. If a gift, phone call, or letter of a personal nature is being given to a child/youth, volunteers must inform another volunteer within the church.
14. Volunteer/staff cannot physically restrain a child in their care. VBS leaders should ask for assistance if a child behaves in a manner that seems to require more assistance. If the leader determines that assistance is needed, the child's parent or guardian will be notified immediately and the child may be removed from the class until the parent or guardian arrives.
15. There will be periodical monitoring of hallways by a designated Hall Monitor. See "Hall Monitor Policy" for policy and procedures.

GEMS/ Cadets Programs

All GEMS/Cadet Counsellors must sign the "Code of Ethics" and will require a police check every five years. The police checks will only be viewed by the Church Administrator. The church administrator will engage the SCC if there are any concerns with Police Checks. All police checks will be held in strict confidence and locked in the church.

1. All GEMS/Cadet Counsellors must be members or have attended Strathroy East CRC regularly for the last six months or have filled in an application for a screening process.
2. Group or program leaders will propose names of volunteers to church council for screening. Council is responsible for approving the individuals. It is the churches right to exclude anyone for any reason.
3. All GEMS/Cadet Counsellors and volunteers must wear a name tag at each meeting/program.
4. At the beginning of the year, parents will be given a written policy of the behaviour conduct that is expected from their child.
5. A "Registration Form" and a "Transportation Consent Form" must be filled out each year for each child at the beginning of the program season.
6. Parents should be notified of all functions away from church facilities, including overnight functions. A written consent form will be sent home prior to a planned function and needs to be returned to the group leaders at least one week prior to the event. These functions require the approval of the program leader and parent/guardian and must have at least two leaders (non-immediate related) present at all times.
7. Leaders should provide adequate supervision for the youth. Each class function should be supervised by at least one person - an adult leader for grades 4-8. For grades 3 and under two volunteers are required one being an adult with the second may be a minor (min. age 12). Minors (17 and younger) may volunteer provided that an adult (non-immediate relative) is present. A hall monitor is required to supervise all groups overall throughout the evening.
8. A volunteer should not meet or supervise a youth alone, or in a private or isolated area. Program must be cancelled or combined if adequate supervision cannot be provided. This will decrease the potential for inappropriate behaviour by volunteers, and will reduce the risk of false accusations.
9. If a gift, phone call, or letter of a personal nature is being given to a youth, volunteers must inform another volunteer within the GEMS/Cadet program.
10. While the appropriate display of affection between GEMS/Cadet leaders and the youth is often part of conveying support and encouragement to one another, such displays can be misinterpreted. For that reason, displays of affection should be limited to such actions as a brief hug, an arm around the shoulder, and open-hand pat on the back, a handclasp, or a light touch to the forearm. A leader's or youth's right to refuse any of these will be respected.
11. Whenever a program is in session the worship centre or classroom should allow for an unobstructed view of the room.
12. Classrooms held in off-site facilities should adhere to the same safety considerations as classroom in the church building.

13. GEMS/Cadets should not leave the worship centre or classroom except for illness, bathroom use, or other compelling reasons. Any medical problems should be reported immediately to the youth's parent(s) or guardian(s).
14. GEMS/Cadets should not arrive more than ten minutes before the start of the meeting or activity, nor should they stay longer than ten minutes after the meeting or activity.
15. GEMS/Cadets must wait inside the church to be picked up. A counsellor must monitor the parking lot while youth are being picked up.

Youth Group

All Youth Group volunteers must sign the "Code of Ethics" and will require a police check every five years. The police checks will only be viewed by the Church Administrator. The church administrator will engage the SCC if there are any concerns with Police Checks. All police checks will be held in strict confidence and locked in the church.

1. All volunteers must be members or have attended Strathroy East CRC regularly for the last six months or have filled in an application for a screening process.
2. Group or program leaders will propose names of volunteers to church council for screening. Council is responsible for approving the individuals. It is the church's right to exclude anyone for any reason.
3. From time to time, the Safe Church Team will sponsor a class about abuse for leaders and members of the Youth group. Topics may include date violence, biblical guidelines for dating relationships, awareness of the signs of abuse, a teenager's response to a teenage victim or abuser, or prevention of abuse.
4. At the beginning of the year, parents will be given a written policy of the behaviour conduct that is expected from their child.
5. A "Registration Form" and a "Transportation Consent Form" must be filled out each year for each child at the beginning of the program season.
6. Parents should be notified of all functions away from church facilities, including overnight functions. A written consent form will be sent home prior to a planned function and needs to be returned to the group leaders at least one week prior to the event. These functions require the approval of the program leader and parent/guardian and must have at least two leaders (non-immediate related) present at all times.
7. Leaders should provide adequate supervision for the youth. Each class function should be supervised by at least one person - an adult leader. A hall monitor is required to supervise all groups overall throughout the evening.
8. A volunteer should not meet or supervise a youth alone, or in a private or isolated area. Program must be cancelled or combined if adequate supervision cannot be provided. This will decrease the potential for inappropriate behaviour by volunteers, and will reduce the risk of false accusations.
9. If a gift, phone call, or letter of a personal nature is being given to a youth, volunteers must inform another volunteer within the youth group.
10. While the appropriate display of affection between youth leaders and the youth is often part of conveying support and encouragement to one another, such displays can be misinterpreted. For that reason, displays of affection should be limited to such actions as a brief hug, an arm around the shoulder, and open-hand pat on the back, a handclasp, or a light touch to the forearm. A leader's or youth's right to refuse any of these will be respected.
11. Whenever a program is in session the worship centre or classroom should allow for an unobstructed view of the room.
12. Classrooms held in off-site facilities such as a parsonage, activity building, or school should adhere to the same safety considerations as classroom in the church building.
13. Youth should not leave the worship centre or classroom except for illness, bathroom use, or other compelling reasons. Any medical problems should be reported immediately to the youth's parent(s) or guardian(s).
14. Youth should not arrive more than ten minutes before the start of the meeting or activity, nor should they stay longer than ten minutes after the meeting or activity.

Transportation Policy

This policy applies to adults, while servicing in ministry to youth, who may transport non-related youth in the course of church-sponsored programs.

1. At least one of the following procedures must be in place:
 - a. Two adults are present and seated in the front of the vehicle when transporting youth;
 - b. At least two youth are present in the vehicle;
2. The following procedures must be in place;
 - a. Youth are seated in the back seats of the vehicle;
 - b. Driver's log-in each pick-up and drop off; logs are turned into the program supervisor.
3. The following procedures must be in place;
 - a. You must have a valid driver's license for a minimum of 5 years and be a minimum age of 25 years old.
 - b. Must have valid proof of insurance at least one million dollars in liability insurance.
 - c. Drive safely and with extra care. Particularly in "convoys" going off to events, it can be easy to get a little carried away and become a "rally driver." At moments like those, think of your "precious cargo." Ensure that the child arrives safely at the destination.
 - d. Travel a direct route to event.
 - e. Leader must ensure someone in the vehicle has a working cell phone.
4. Drivers need to abide by provincial requirements for car seat use, seatbelt use and airbag safety.
 - a. Youth are to wear seat belts whenever the vehicle is in service. Drivers may not transport more youths than available seatbelts;
 - b. Where required by law, car seats must be available for younger children;
 - c. For safety, youth under the age of 12 may not sit in the front seat if there is a passenger-side airbag.

Adults or minors who transport related youth to church-sponsored events are not subject to this policy.

The transportation policy does not extend to parents or guardians who request or give written permission for a minor with a valid driver's license to transport non-related youth.

Social Media

Social media is a reality in today's society. The instantaneous ability to communicate electronically has significantly infiltrated our lives today and how we communicate. It is essential for the church to engage in this area and ensure we do so with integrity.

'Risk Management and Christian Ministry do go together. Managing social media risks responsibly is about building a more effective ministry, one that enables leaders, ministers and volunteers to take advantage of the opportunities afforded by electronic communication. Managing risk is not about saying "no" to the ministry opportunities offered by social media; it's about saying "yes", responsibly and wisely.'

Definitions for the purpose of understanding following context:

Normal: Activity that happens on a regular basis, is typical.

Pattern: A repeated occurrence happening more than two times.

One-Off: Something done, or happening only once, not as part of a regular sequence.

Closed Group: It is known who is being communicated to. The communication involves at least two ministry leaders. The groups at least 3 people or more.

Internal: Communication or viewing remains within the East CRC Church building.

Private: One on one.

A. Onsite Digital Media Devices

All onsite digital media devices e.g. computers, WIFI, are controlled with pass codes. Access is limited to staff and ministry leaders for the purpose of advancing East CRC church ministries. Any usage that does not glorify the Lord and His kingdom work is not permitted.

B. Communication with Youth

Texting

Ministry leaders when using texting will normally contact youth in a closed group format. It is recognized that one-off communication can occur. If a pattern starts to develop where the communication is no longer a one-off communication the Ministry leader will address the issue by informing a second Ministry leader. The youth will be made aware of alternative healthy ways of communication.

Emailing

When emailing youth correspondence should be copied to the parent/guardian and Ministry leader.

Other electronic communication, some examples but not limited to; blogging, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, Pinterest, What's app or the next new thing. Youth Ministry leaders will refrain from using these as a form of private communication. Closed group discussions are permitted.

C. Safe Practice Guidelines

1. Communication normally should occur between 8 a.m. and 9 p.m.
2. Restrict content to facts, not feelings.
3. Questions should be kept simple requiring only a "yes" or "no" answer.
4. All obscene or bad language, bullying, off topic discussions and discrimination is prohibited. Any concerns of such conduct will be addressed by the leadership.
5. Phone calls and/or face to face meetings are utilized when dealing with emotionally charged conversation, pastoral care, counseling and/or when issues are of a confidential nature.

D. Photography

Pictures taken for the purpose of internal poster board displays or internal power point presentations are not part of Social media. Consent from parent(s)/guardian(s) is required when the photo is of a person under 18 years. Consent will be integrated into signed registration forms, or parental permission forms.

Ministerial Personnel, Office Bearers, Church Leaders

All Ministerial Personnel, Office Bearers and Church Leader volunteers must sign the "Code of Ethics" and will require a police check every five years. The police checks will only be viewed by the Church Administrator. The church administrator will engage the SCC if there are any concerns with Police Checks. All police checks will be held in strict confidence and locked in the church.

Please see complete guidelines available to Pastors and Church Leaders for further information.

1. Establish clearly-defined boundaries you are committed to maintaining in your interpersonal relationships.
 - a. Conduct counseling appointments within normally-scheduled daytime hours; have evening appointments only if others are present in the building or present at the appointment.

- b. Acknowledge the risk of meeting alone in a congregant's or counselee's home. Ministerial personnel or council members are encouraged to bring another office bearer or spouse to such a meeting, or encourage the counselee to have the presence of another person. The ministerial personnel or counsel member must discuss these options with the counselee prior to meeting.
 - c. Meet with a minor child or adolescent once or twice in a public place and thereafter only with the consent and knowledge of the minor's parent or guardian. Transporting a minor alone is prohibited as per policy.
 - d. Limit the display of physical affection to a brief hug or a pat on the back or forearm. Avoid misinterpretation of affection by choosing not to give gifts to counselees or parishioners.
2. Be accountable to a colleague, spouse, or Council to ensure that you are maintaining proper boundaries in your interpersonal relationships. Openly discuss the threats to those boundaries with a colleague, spouse, or Council.
3. Give adequate attention to your spiritual, emotional and physical well being. Maintain a healthy attitude towards your ministry. Be alert to negative attitudes in ministry and the potential for temptation and self destructive behavior. Listen earnestly to the feedback and counsel of others who supervise you or to whom you report, if they express concern about your behavior or attitudes.
4. Agree to do your work according to the specified guidelines of your profession and according to the requirements of the organizations or church's malpractice and liability insurance. Follow procedures as set out in attached flowchart, Schedule "A".

PREMISES

Open door policy for all Children/Youth/Vulnerable people programs including windows in doors in the church building.

Designated monitors will periodically circulate from room to room or observe from the hallway for safety and to protect against false allegations. This can be done by designated people such as head GEMS/Cadet counselor, person in charge of organized group, usher, Sunday school coordinator, nursery mother of the month, etc.

Maintain a safe environment on the premises i.e. by adequate lighting, keeping storage rooms locked when not needed during children's programs.

HALL MONITORS

All hall monitors must be an adult member or an adult that has attended Strathroy East Christian Reformed Church regularly for the 6 months or have filled in an application for a screening process. Hall monitors will require a police check every five years.

1. On Sunday or whenever Strathroy East CRC has a church service, a designated hall monitor has to be present.
2. At least one hall monitor will conduct checks whenever a children/vulnerable/youth program is in session. If absent, a substitute must be another hall monitor.

Duties of the hall monitors:

1. Every 15 minutes check all the classrooms in session until the program ends and all the children/vulnerable/youth are gone. A check is defined as looking through the classroom window.
2. Periodically check bathrooms until the program ends and all the children/vulnerable/youth are gone. A check is defined as opening the bathroom door.
3. Periodically check unoccupied classrooms until the program ends and all the children/vulnerable/youth are gone. A check is defined as opening the classroom door and turning on the lights.
4. Hall monitors will direct children/vulnerable/youth found in the hallways to their classroom or to their parents.
5. Hall monitors must immediately report urgent concerns or suspicions to a designated security person (such as a leader or teacher) and to the appropriate ministry leader. A "Critical Incident Response Form" must be filled out either by the hall monitor or by the supervisor within four hours of the concern or suspicion. A member of the SCT should also be immediately notified.
6. All hall monitors need to wear a Hall Monitor tag and complete the Hall Monitor Checklist.

TRAINING

All new volunteers must read the Abuse Prevention Policy and sign and acknowledgement that they have reviewed and understand the policy and procedures, prior to commencing volunteer activity. The Abuse Prevention Policy will be available to all leaders and to anyone who wishes to have a copy.

Formal Abuse Prevention Training is made available through the presentation of resource materials, videos, "in-house" seminars etc. as needed.

Annual refreshers and reassessment of the Abuse Prevention Policy is mandatory for all volunteers.

GUIDELINES FOR HANDLING AND REPORTING ABUSE ALLEGATIONS

History

The absence of a procedure for handling abuse allegations has discouraged abuse victims from coming forward. Some who did, were reminded that forgetting is good and forgiving is better. Some were told that proceedings would follow Matthew 18:15-17. Dealing in such a way with the victim often exacerbated the problem rather than bringing justice. Requiring the abused person to forgive and forget re-victimized them because they struggled with the guilt of not being able to forgive such a heinous crime. Furthermore, sometimes the victim was required to forgive even though the perpetrator had not repented nor confessed the sin. By not being held accountable for their actions, the abusers quite often continued to abuse again. When the abused person is forced or coerced into facing his/her abuser, the abused person feels like a victim once again.

Duty To Report

Every person in Ontario is required under *The Child & Family Services Act* to promptly report his/her belief that a child (under 16 years of age) is or may be in need of protection. " if a person, including a person who performs professional or official duties with respect to children, has reasonable grounds to suspect one of the following, the person shall forthwith report the suspicion and the information on which it is based to a society" *CFS*A s.72(1) – contact CAS London Middlesex 519-455-9000

Persons Must Report Directly

The person who has the reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is, or may be in need of protection, must make the report directly to a children's aid society. The person must not rely on anyone else to report on his or her behalf. *CFS*A s.72(3) A SCC member will be available for support if requested.

Ongoing Duty To Report

A person must report any additional or new information, even if that person has reported previous information about the same child and family. *CFS*A s.72(2)

Why People Do Not Report

"I must have made a mistake." "It's not really any of my business." "I'll deal with it next week." "I'm overreacting." "What if I am wrong?" "It's not my responsibility."

We have a fear of getting involved, making a mistake, feeling vulnerable, confronting disagreement or facing possible criticism. Move past your fear and realize that you may be the only person who cares enough to help a child in need. Further information about the type of situations that must be reported is available from the Safe Church Team or from the local Children's Aid Society. "Reasonable grounds" are what an average person, given his or her training, background and experience, exercising normal and honest judgment, would suspect. The Children's Aid Society will decide if the information provided will require an investigation or intervention or may make suggestions about how the child and family can be helped in other ways if necessary.

Protection from Liability

All persons, in making a report of suspected child abuse to a Children's Aid Society, are protected in law against civil action unless the person is proven to have acted maliciously or without reasonable grounds for the belief or suspicion. *CFSA s.72(7)*

Failure to Report

The penalty imposed upon certain professionals and officials for failure to report a suspicion of child abuse emphasizes that the child's safety must take precedence over all other concerns, including confidentiality of information and all other provincial statutes. Any professional who fails to report his/her suspicion of a child's abuse where that information was obtained in the course of his or her professional or official duties is liable, upon conviction, to a fine of up to \$50,000 or imprisonment for a term of not more than 2 years or to both *CFSA s.72 (4), (6.2)*

SUMMARY OF PROCEDURES TO DEAL WITH CASES OF ABUSE

Do Not Confront the Abuser

A. Personal steps required **immediately:**

1. Document evidence observed, disclosed, or suspected on Critical Incident Form.
2. Report evidence to Program Leader who must contact Council chairperson. If leader is the accused, go directly to Council chairperson.
3. Report to Children's Aid Society if abused person is under age 16.
4. Report to Strathroy Caradoc Community Police Service if abused person is 16 years or older.
5. Accused will be suspended by program leader.
6. While proper authorities investigate, continue to support the victim or person affected.
7. Ensure confidentiality for the benefit of both the alleged victim and the alleged perpetrator.
8. Refrain from making any public statements.
9. Refer to – Schedule "A" Flowchart and Schedule "B" - Advisory Panel Process Chart.

Important Phone Numbers

Children's Aid Society -London Middlesex	519-455-9000/ 519-858-5998
Women's Rural Resource Centre, Strathroy HelpLine	519-246-1526 1-800-265-5390
Strathroy-Caradoc Police Service	519-245-1250 (for non-emergencies)
Kids Help Phone	1-800-668-6868
Strathroy-Caradoc Police Service Emergency	911
Sexual Assault Centre	519-438-2272
Victim Services of Middlesex County	519-245-6660

Safe Church Team

A Safe Church Team will be appointed by council. This committee will be available to provide information about responding to abuse, offer information for education and training of new leaders and have resources and information available. This committee will be available for support as needed but any actual or suspected abuse must be reported immediately as outlined above.

The Safe Church Committee will meet at least two times per year it is suggested to meet prior to Classis meetings. One member should represent Strathroy East CRC at the bi-annual meetings of Classis Chatham Safe Church.

Every year one member of the team will rotate out of the position. Each member will hold a position for 3 years. The committee shall have a representative of each gender at all times.

Classis Safe Church Team

If a reported abuse involves a pastor, church leader or church staff, the matter will be reported to the appropriate authorities as listed above and to the Classical Safe Church Team.

Re-Entry or Reinstatement

A volunteer or church leader removed or dismissed from position or office should not be considered for re-entry or reinstatement without the advice of legal counsel. The legal liability that accompanies reinstatement and re-entry of known offenders compels the church to act prudently.

CODE OF ETHICS FOR VOLUNTEERS, STAFF, AND LEADERS IN CHILD AND YOUTH/VULNERABLE PEOPLE PROGRAMS

Believing that God is calling me to serve children/youth/vulnerable people in this congregation . . .

1. My first priority in teaching/supervising/leading children/youth/vulnerable, will be to seek the welfare of the children/youth/vulnerable physically, socially, educationally, and spiritually.
2. I will also try to understand and respect the child's/youth's/vulnerable persons' cultural background.
3. I will give the parent(s) or guardian(s) full information about the program I am teaching/supervising/leading, and what time it begins and ends.
4. I will not do anything that will damage a child's/youth's/vulnerable person's trust. I will try to protect the child/youth/vulnerable from all forms of abuse while he or she is in my care.
5. If I suspect that a child/youth/vulnerable may be hurt by the abusive actions or attitudes of another person, I will report that suspicion to a responsible person so that it can be investigated properly.
6. If I wish to talk to the child/youth/vulnerable alone, it will be within the sight and sound of other people.
7. I will answer a child's/youth's/vulnerable person's questions openly and honestly.
8. I will work with the children/youth/vulnerable to set some agreed upon guidelines for acceptable behavior within the group. I will expect the children/youth/vulnerable to act on the basis of those guidelines, and if a child/youth/vulnerable consistently breaks them, I will seek help from parents, guardians, and others to assist me in responding to the child/youth/vulnerable.
9. If a child/youth/vulnerable is distressed, I will try to offer comfort and help. I will encourage the child/youth/vulnerable to find the appropriate help for their needs.
10. I will pray for each person regularly and let them know that I care about them.

I hereby acknowledge receipt of the Strathroy East Christian Reformed Church's Abuse Prevention Policy and Response Flowchart.

I also have had a chance to review the policy and understand my duties as a volunteer. I am aware that the Safe Church Committee is available to answer any of my questions or concerns regarding this policy and flowchart.

Print Name: _____

Signature: _____

Volunteer/Staff Position: _____

Date: _____

Program Supervisor: _____

**STRATHROY EAST CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH CONFIDENTIAL
CRITICAL INCIDENT RESPONSE FORM**

Date: _____ Program: _____

Name of Person Making report: _____ Phone: _____

Address:

Child's/Youth's/ Vulnerable Person's Name:

Age: _____

Parent's or Guardian's Name(s) _____

Telephone: _____

Address:

What was witnessed/disclosed concerning this person? (Word-for-word if possible)

Name of any other potential witness:

Action Taken:

Signature of Person Making report: _____

Signature of Safe Church Committee Member _____

STRATHROY EAST CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

TRANSPORTATION CONSENT FORM FOR OFF-SITE OUTINGS

(To be filled out at the beginning of a new season)

GROUP: Cadets _____
GEMS _____
Youth _____
Other _____

This consent form authorizes the designated volunteers of Strathroy East Christian Reformed Church to transport my child(ren) to and from activities, involved with the above mentioned group and to take any action deemed necessary for the well-being of my child(ren) if immediately necessary.

Strathroy East Christian Reformed Church will ensure that your children will be transported by a volunteer who holds a valid Driver's License.

An acknowledgment Form will be sent home for all offsite outings.

Child(ren) Name(s): _____

Parent or Guardian: _____
(Please Print)

Signature: _____

Date: _____

STRATHROY EAST CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH
476 Metcalfe Street East
Strathroy, ON N7G 1R5

REGISTRATION FORM FOR CHILDREN PROGRAMS

Today's Date: _____

Name: _____

Current Age: _____

Address:

Mother's name: _____

Home Phone Number: _____

Work Phone Number: _____

Father's name: _____

Home Phone Number: _____

Work Phone Number: _____

Guardian's name: _____

Home Phone Number: _____

Work Phone Number: _____

Church program registered for: _____

Who will be responsible for dropping off and picking up the child? _____

Please note that child/youth/adult should be dropped off no earlier than 10 minutes before the class or event and be picked up no later than 10 minutes after the event is scheduled to end.

Medical information:

Health Card Number _____ (voluntary)

Are there any specific medical problems? _____ If so, please answer the following questions:

The person is allergic to _____

Describe other medical conditions: _____

The person is under medical care provided by:

Doctor's name: _____

Doctor's Phone Number: _____

Photographs

As a parent or guardian of this child, I hereby consent to the use of photographs/videotape taken during the course of the program's year for publicity, promotional and/or educational purposes (including

publications, presentation or broadcast via newspaper, internet or other media sources). I do this with full knowledge and consent and waive all claims for compensation for use, or for damages.

____ Yes, I give consent for East CRC to photograph my child for _____(program name) purposes and/or at events.

____ No, I do not authorize East CRC to photograph for my child for any event.

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____

Student's Name: _____

Confidential

**STRATHROY EAST CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH
NEW VOLUNTEER FORM**

STATEMENT OF APPLICANT FOR WORK WITH CHILDREN/YOUTH/VULNERABLE

It is essential that Strathroy East Christian Reformed Church provide a safe and secure environment for persons who participate in its programs and who use its facilities. All volunteers must be members or have attended Strathroy East CRC regularly for the last six months or have filled in an application for a screening process.

To help achieve this objective, this Statement will be completed by:

(a) Applicants for employment and volunteer positions in the Strathroy East CRC which involve ongoing contact with children/youth/vulnerable.

(b) Applicants for employment and volunteer positions who may, by virtue of their job responsibilities, be in proximity to children/youth/vulnerable in Strathroy East CRC program activities.

A. Personal Information

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Postal Code: _____

Telephone Number: Home: () _____

Work: () _____

B. Position Applying For:

Please indicate the type of program in which you are interested: _____

Please indicate the date you would be available: _____

C. Church Membership:

List other churches (if any) you have attended regularly during the past five years:

Prior Work With Children /Youth/Vulnerable

List all positions which you have held as a volunteer or an employee, that involved working with children/youth/vulnerable. Provide the name of each organization and indicate the approximate dates during which you held each position. It is policy of this church to contact references. Please provide names and phone numbers. If you have not held a position working with children/youth/vulnerable in the past, please leave two names and phone numbers of someone other than a family member as a reference.

To better achieve our "Statement" Strathroy East CRC requires all applicants to sign the Code of Ethics and to have a police check (cost will be covered by the church).

The information I have provided is accurate and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Applicant's signature: _____

Date: _____

Group Leader signature: _____

Date of Interview: _____

Sample: Permission Form for an Outing

Date: _____

Dears Parents/ Guardian

Strathroy East Cadets, along with their Cadet leaders, will be going to Western University on Monday April 28, 2008 for a fun time of swimming. They will be leaving Strathroy East Christian Reformed Church at 7:00 p.m. and will be returning to the church at 9:30 p.m.

Please return this permission form no later than Monday April 20, 2013.

If you need to get a hold of us that evening you can reach me (Joe Smith: Cadet Head Leader) on my cell #555-111-1111. Any questions please call me.

Joe Smith

----- Cut/Tear here -----

I give _____ (Cadet) permission to participate in the Cadet outing of
going to _____ (place) on _____ (date).

I also give my consent to the designated volunteers of Strathroy East CRC Cadets to transport
my child to and from this event.

Parent or Guardian signature _____

Health Card Number _____

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Swagman, Beth; "Preventing Child Abuse, A guide for churches"; CRC Publications, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Child and Family Services Act, RSO 1990, c. C. 11

Information taken from Abuse Policy of Riverside Christian Reformed Church, Wellandport ON and Maranatha Christian Reformed Church York, ON.

RESOURCES

Further information about Abuse or Prevention of Abuse is available from among the following sources:

The Safe Church Team will have further information about Community Resources and Church Resources, about behavioral signs and symptoms of abuse and Child Development available and information as outlined in Abuse Protocols of other CRC congregations available.

Preventing Child Abuse by Beth Swagman, CRC Publications, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1997

Child Abuse Prevention Program, Child Abuse Prevention Program, by Beth Swagman, CRC Publications, 1995
When CRC Ministers Abuse, The Banner, by Karen DeVries, Nov. 5, 2001

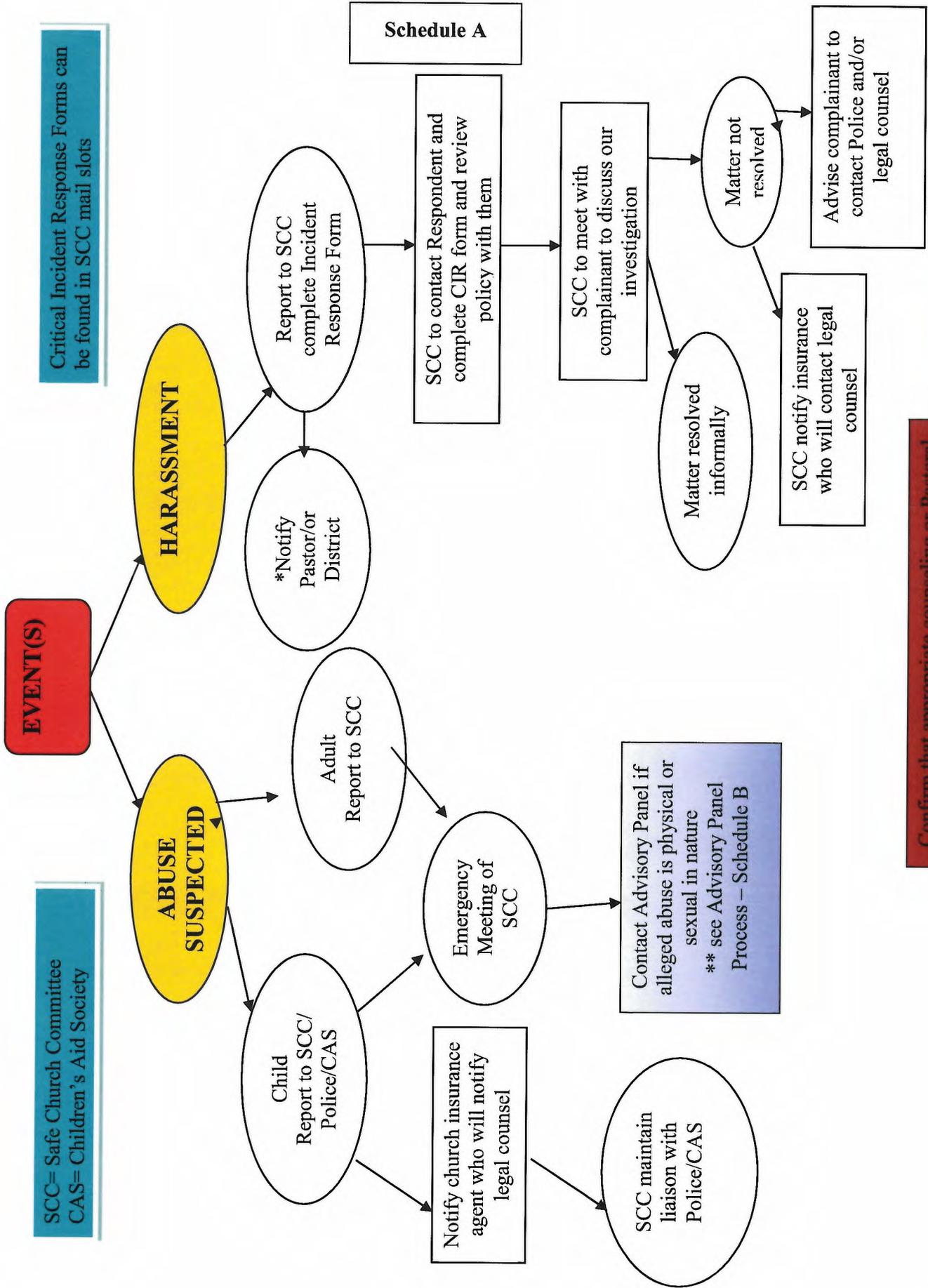
Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence (www.cpsdv.org)

Classis Chatham Safe Church Counseling Fund, Mrs. Marianne Kingma, Westmount Strathroy CRC,
jmkingma7@gmail.com 519-245-0139;

Faith Trust Institute www.faithtrustinstitute.org 1-877-860-2255;

SCC= Safe Church Committee
CAS= Children's Aid Society

Critical Incident Response Forms can be found in SCC mail slots



Confirm that appropriate counseling or Pastoral Care has been offered to families involved

*Person not involved with event

SCHEDULE B

What is the Advisory Panel Process?

One of the mandates of the classis safe church team (SCT) is to provide an *Advisory Panel Process* when allegations of abuse are brought by an adult against a church leader.

The process is to be followed when:

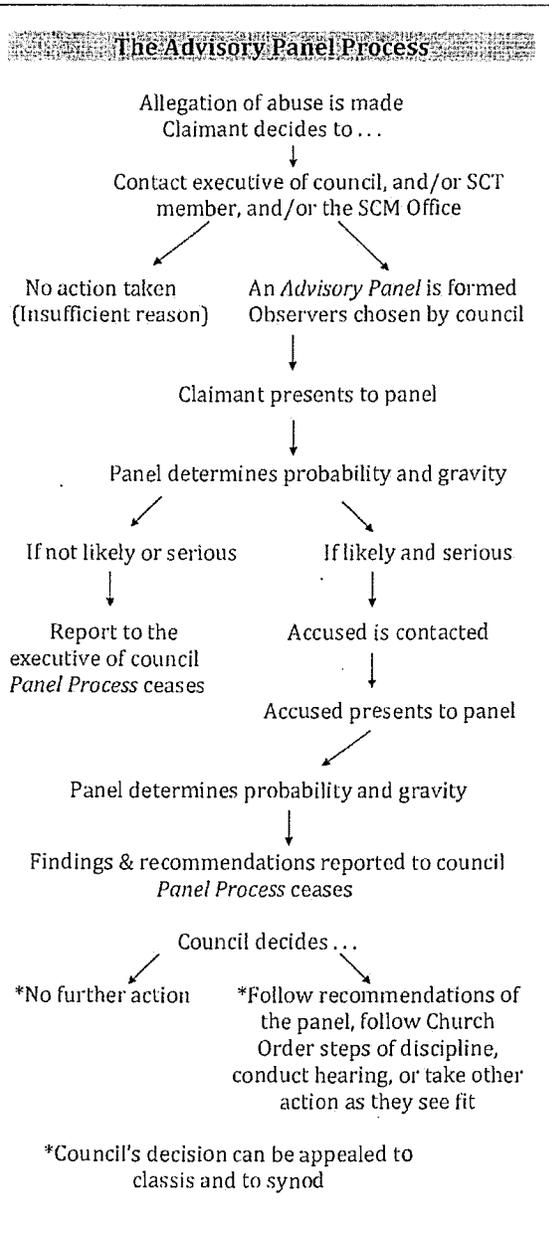
- a) the claimant is a legal adult (there is no statute of limitations, so alleged abuse may have taken place when claimant was a child or adolescent)
- b) the alleged abuse is physical or sexual in nature, and involves a CRC church leader

The process is to be ecclesiastical in nature and does not prevent the claimant from taking criminal or civil action if deemed necessary.

The claimant may request a safe church advocate or may bring an advocate of his or her own choosing into the process. The advocate is to be present at the panel hearing and when the report is presented to council. The advocate and the claimant are allowed to attend any subsequent ecclesiastical meetings where the allegations are discussed.

Members of the panel must be safe church team members that have been specially trained in the *Advisory Panel Process*. They may not be members of the congregation of either the accused or the claimant, nor may they have any ongoing affiliation with the accused or the claimant. Panel members will be asked to sign a confidentiality agreement. The *Advisory Panel Process* guidelines must be followed closely to maintain the integrity of the process. They are designed with important safeguards for all parties.

For more information and complete guidelines, please contact Safe Church Ministry or find them on the website: www.crcna.org/safechurch Safe Church Ministry is available to provide consultation to all parties during an *Advisory Panel Process*.



Safe Church Ministry - Bonnie Nicholas, director - 616-224-0735 - bnicholas@crcna.org