

## Child and Youth Safety Policy for Lombard CRC

Lombard Christian Reformed Church seeks to provide a safe and secure environment for the children and youth who participate in our programs and activities. By implementing the practices as described below. Our goal is to protect participating children and youth from incidents of misconduct or inappropriate behavior.

### **Definition of Abuse**

Under Illinois law, child abuse is defined to include inflicting or causing, allowing, or creating a substantial risk of physical injury, other than by accident, that causes death, disfigurement, impairment of physical or emotional health, or loss or impairment of any bodily function; committing or allowing to be committed any sex offense or torture; inflicting excessive corporal punishment; committing female genital mutilation; causing the sale or transfer of controlled substances; committing involuntary servitude or sexual servitude. Neglect happens when a parent or responsible caretaker fails to provide adequate supervision, food, medical treatment, clothing, shelter or other basics for a child. A child is anyone under the age of eighteen.

For purposes of Lombard CRC's policy, "child abuse" is any action or lack of action that endangers or harms a child's physical, psychological, or emotional health and development. Child abuse occurs in different ways and includes the following:

- Physical abuse—any physical injury to a child that is not accidental, such as beating, shaking, burns, biting or giving a child access to controlled substances.
- Emotional abuse—emotional injury when the child is not nurtured or provided with love and security, such as an environment of constant criticism, belittling, and persistent teasing.
- Sexual abuse—any sexual activity involving a child, including activities such as fondling, exhibitionism, intercourse, or pornography.
- Neglect—depriving a child of his or her essential needs, such as adequate food, water, shelter, and medical care.

### **Screening process for staff and volunteers**

1. Application form and training for all staff and volunteers 9<sup>th</sup> grade and above is required. Volunteer applications must be on file with references checked for all volunteers of programs/ministries involving children and youth before participating in the program. These are to be obtained by the ministry leaders.
2. Criminal background checks are required for all staff and volunteers involved in programs/ministries involving children and youth.
3. Elders must approve program/ministry leaders and paid staff.
4. Any ministry/program leader must be a regular attendee or member for at least six months.

### **Program/ministry policies**

1. Staff and volunteers will be given written or verbal training on abuse prevention and policy.
2. Corporal punishment is not permitted.
3. Abusive verbal discipline, such as insults and threatening, is not permitted.
4. Windows or half doors are required in classrooms and offices.

5. It is required that the Sunday School Superintendent, or another designated adult, walk around each week to check on the classes and assist with bathroom needs.
6. If there are three or less children/youth attending a class or group they should join with another class/group.
7. It is required that two non-related volunteers that are 16 years or older be present for Nursery and Children's Church. It is recommended for all other programs or classes with children 8<sup>th</sup> grade and under.
8. No teacher and student may be alone in a room with the door closed.
9. Overnight activities must have at least 2 non-related adult staff or volunteers present.
10. The adult to child ratio should be 1:10 for all activities.
11. Outside activities that need transportation require a male driver if the group is all male and a female driver if the group is all female.
12. Restroom guidelines:
  - a. For children under the age of five—volunteers should escort a group of children to the hallway bathroom. They should always go in a group, never taking a child to the bathroom alone if possible. The volunteers should check the bathroom first to make sure that it is empty, and then allow the children inside. The volunteers should then remain outside the bathroom door and escort the children back to the classroom. If a child is taking longer than seems necessary, the volunteer should open the bathroom door and call the child's name. If a child requires assistance, the volunteer should prop open the bathroom door and leave the stall door open as he/she assists the child.
  - b. For children over the age of five—at least one adult male should take boys to the restroom and at least one adult female should take girls. The volunteer should check the bathroom first to make sure the bathroom is empty, and then allow the children inside. The worker should then remain outside the bathroom door and escort the children back to the classroom.
  - c. For the protection of all, volunteers should never be alone with a child in a bathroom with the door closed and never be in a closed bathroom stall with a child. Parents should be strongly encouraged to have their children visit the bathroom prior to each class.

### Reporting abuse

1. Any knowledge of abuse **MUST be IMMEDIATELY** reported to the immediate supervisory personnel of the volunteer or staff person suspected of misconduct.
  - a. A list of staff and ministry leaders is attached.
2. It is appropriate for staff or volunteers to ask the child what happened.
3. After talking with the child, the staff or volunteer must fill out an incident report which summarizes the conversation with the child and other known information related to the incident
  - a. A copy of the incident report is attached.
4. If the child's parents/guardian are unaware of the incident, they will be notified by the ministry leader.
5. The written report should be presented by the ministry leader to the Lombard CRC Abuse Team within 24 hours of the reported incident.
6. If reasonable suspicion of child abuse exists, the Lombard CRC Abuse Team will report the incident to either the local police or DCFS.
7. The Lombard CRC Abuse Team member that reports the incident to the authorities will be designated as the liaison between the legal authorities and the church.

8. Until a course of action is developed by the Lombard CRC Abuse Team, no one with knowledge of the incident may speak to the alleged offender, alleged abuser or the witnesses about the incident.
9. The alleged abuser will be immediately placed on leave. They will be instructed to remain away from the program/ministry and to have no contact with the alleged victim or with witnesses.
10. The Lombard CRC Abuse Team and Elder Board will work together in resolving the situation.
11. A pastoral visit will be arranged for those who desire it. This should be for the purpose of providing pastoral support during the time of crisis and not for the purpose of investigating the incident or influencing the investigation.
12. Any person found guilty of abuse or neglect will be removed from any position working with children or youth.

**Reporting suspected abuse that has happened outside our programs/ministries**

Volunteers and staff may become aware of abuse or neglect that has happened to the children in our programs/ministries, while elsewhere. In the event that a volunteer or staff becomes aware of suspected abuse or neglect of a child, this should be reported immediately to a member of the Lombard CRC Abuse Team. The Lombard CRC Abuse Team will report the abuse or neglect to the authorities.

**Members of the Lombard CRC Abuse Team**

Pastor John Huizinga, Laura Kooima, Paul Zigterman, Marianne Kennedy, Jerry Frens and Angela Voss

**I have read and I understand the Lombard Christian Reformed Church abuse policy.**

**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

**Print Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

## **Supervisory Personnel**

Nursery – Jenny Ketelsen

Children’s Worship – Sandra Huizinga or Patty Hopp

Lower Grade Sunday School – Linda Meyer

Upper Grade Sunday School – Marianne Kennedy

Gems – Laura Tazelaar

Cadets – Bill Stob

Path/Rock – Stephanie Woldman

Coffee Break Nursery – ???

Story Hour - ????