

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY 1.1

Provided by



for _____ Mennonite Church

Created _____

Last revised _____

Current Child Protection Team

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

The agreement to use this policy template requires the church to obtain a legal review upon completion.

Attorney _____

Date Reviewed _____

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Part 1

Child Abuse Prevention- Worker Certification Training

Protecting our children from abuse and neglect is a shared responsibility that does not solely rest with our government child-care agencies. Rather, it requires the collective working together of all entities involved with childcare. That means families, churches, schools, ministries, and anyone who has responsibility for the care and guidance of children. We must work together to provide a safe environment for our children to grow into the man and woman God has designed them to be and thrive in that relationship. We must work together to help each other provide safety nets for children and families that are facing challenges within our communities and neighborhoods.

The first, and most important, protection for our children is for parents to have an open and close relationship with their children. Parents need access to the hearts of their children. Have age-appropriate conversations with your children about healthy relationships and their sexuality. There are resources available to help parents with these conversations.

Statement regarding abuse: _____ Mennonite Church recognizes the seriousness and sinfulness of all abuse. This type of mistreatment violates the very image of God. It causes serious damage to the mind, body, soul, and spirit of the one abused. It also causes harm to the mind, soul, and spirit of the abuser.

Through our policies and guidelines, we seek to make our church worship and program environment a safe place for all who worship and fellowship with us. We attempt to *prevent* abuse by adopting worker supervision and certification policies and guidelines that minimize the opportunities in which abuse could occur. We will attempt to *protect* children by mandating practices and behaviors of those who work with children.

If abuse does occur, we will seek to follow Christ's example, in that he addressed evil with the ultimate goal of bringing accountability, wholeness, and healing to all. To do that, we will *respond* according to legal requirements and seek and support healing measures for the victim and also for the alleged perpetrator.

Scriptural basis for protecting and caring for children

Matthew 18:2-6 *He called a little child and had him stand among them. And he said: "I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoever welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me. But if any one causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea."*

Mark 10:13-16 *People were bringing little children to Jesus to have him touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it. And he took the children in his arms, put his hands on them and blessed them."*

Matthew: 18:10 *See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I tell you that in heaven their angels always see the face of my Father who is in Heaven.*

Psalms 127:3 *Children are a gift from the LORD, they are a reward from him.*

Isaiah 60: 18 *No longer will violence be heard in your land, nor ruin and destruction within your borders. You will call your walls Salvation, and your gates, Praise.*

DEFINITION OF ABUSE

Definitions of abuse from the **Pennsylvania Child Protective Services Law (CPSL [Title 23 PA.C.S. Chapter 63]**, as amended December, 2013, to be effective December 31, 2014, as follows:

Intentionally, knowingly or recklessly doing any of the following:

1. **Physical abuse** Causing bodily injury through any recent act or failure to act. Creating a reasonable likelihood of bodily injury to a child through any recent act or failure to act. Bodily injury is impairment of physical condition or substantial pain.

The following are “per se” acts of child abuse (meaning the act itself, apart from the outcome, is considered child abuse).

- Kicking, biting, throwing, burning, stabbing or cutting a child in a manner that endangers the child.
- Unreasonably restraining or confining a child, based on consideration of the method, location or the duration of the restraint or confinement.
- Forcefully shaking a child under one year of age.
- Forcefully slapping or otherwise striking a child under one year of age.
- Interfering with the breathing of a child.
- Causing a child to be present at a location while a violation of 18 PA.C.S. §7508.2 (relating to operation a methamphetamine laboratory) is occurring, provided that the violation is being investigated by law enforcement.

2. Fabricating, feigning or intentionally exaggerating or inducing a medical symptom or disease which results in a potentially harmful medical evaluation or treatment to the child through any recent act.

3. **Mental abuse** Causing or substantially contributing to serious mental injury to a child through an act or failure to act or a series of such acts or failures to act. Serious mental injury is a psychological condition, as diagnosed by a physician or licensed psychologist, including the refusal of appropriate treatment, that:

- (1) renders a child chronically and severely anxious, agitated, depressed, socially withdrawn, psychotic or in reasonable fear that the child's life or safety is threatened; or
- (2) seriously interferes with a child's ability to accomplish age-appropriate developmental and social tasks.

4. **Neglect** Causing serious physical neglect of a child. Serious physical neglect is any of the following when committed by a perpetrator that endangers a child's life or health, threatens a child's well-being, causes bodily injury or impairs a child's health, development or functioning:

- (1) A repeated, prolonged or unconscionable egregious failure to supervise a child in a manner that is appropriate considering the child's developmental age and abilities.
- (2) The failure to provide a child with adequate essentials of life, including food, shelter or medical care.

5. Causing the death of the child through any act or failure to act.
6. **Sexual abuse** Causing sexual abuse or exploitation of a child through any act or failure to act. Creating a likelihood of sexual abuse or exploitation of a child through any recent act or failure to act. Sexual abuse or exploitation is any of the following:
 - (1) The employment, use, persuasion, inducement, enticement or coercion of a child to engage in or assist another individual to engage in sexually explicit conduct, which includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 - (i) Looking at the sexual or other intimate parts of a child or another individual for the purpose of arousing or gratifying sexual desire in any individual.
 - (ii) Participating in sexually explicit conversation either in person, by telephone, by computer or by a computer-aided device for the purpose of sexual stimulation or gratification of any individual.
 - (iii) Actual or simulated sexual activity or nudity for the purpose of sexual stimulation or gratification of any individual.
 - (iv) Actual or simulated sexual activity for the purpose of producing visual depiction, including photographing, videotaping, computer depicting or filming.

This paragraph does not include consensual activities between a child who is 14 years of age or older and another person who is 14 years of age or older and whose age is within four years of the child's age.

The following are per se acts of child abuse:

Leaving a child unsupervised with an individual, other than the child's parent, who the actor knows or reasonably should have known:

- Is required to register as a Tier II or Tier III sexual offender under 42 PA.C.S. Ch. 97 Subch. H (relating to registration of sexual offenders), where the victim of the sexual offense was under 18 years of age when the crime was committed.
- Has been determined to be a sexually violent predator under 42 PA.C.S. §9799.24 (relating to assessments) or any of its predecessors.
- Has been determined to be a sexually violent delinquent child as defined in 42 PA.C.S. §9799.12 (relating to definitions)

Any of the following offenses committed against a child (Criminal code)

- (i) Rape, as defined in 18 PA.C.S. § 3121 (relating to rape).
- (ii) Statutory sexual assault, as defined in 18 PA.C.S. § 3122.1 (relating to statutory sexual assault).
- (iii) Involuntary deviate sexual intercourse, as defined in 18 PA.C.S. § 3123 (relating to involuntary deviate sexual intercourse).
- (iv) Sexual assault, as defined in 18 PA.C.S. § 3124.1 (relating to sexual assault).
- (v) Institutional sexual assault, as defined in 18 PA.C.S. § 3124.2 (relating to institutional sexual assault).

- (vi) Aggravated indecent assault, as defined in 18 PA.C.S. § 3125 (relating to aggravated indecent assault).
- (vii) Indecent assault, as defined in 18 PA.C.S. § 3126 (relating to indecent assault).
- (viii) Indecent exposure, as defined in 18 PA.C.S. § 3127 (relating to indecent exposure).
- (ix) Incest, as defined in 18 PA.C.S. § 4302 (relating to incest).
- (x) Prostitution, as defined in 18 PA.C.S. § 5902 (relating to prostitution and related offenses).
- (xi) Sexual abuse, as defined in 18 PA.C.S. § 6312 (relating to sexual abuse of children).
- (xii) Unlawful contact with a minor, as defined in 18 PA.C.S. § 6318 (relating to unlawful contact with minor).
- (xiii) Sexual exploitation, as defined in 18 PA.C.S. § 6320 (relating to sexual exploitation of children).

Any recent act or failure to act is defined as occurring within the last two years.

Information about Sexual Abuse

(from *Reducing the Risk*, 3rd Edition)

The full extent of sexual abuse of children in our country is not known. Conservative estimates suggest that between 500,000 and 1,500,000 children are sexually abused each year, although the actual number is likely to be higher, since we know a high percentage of cases go unreported. A national retrospective study found that 27 percent of adult women and 16 percent of men reported experiencing some form of sexual victimization as a child. Over 25 percent indicated this occurred before the age of nine.

Sexual abuse of children occurs in all demographic, racial, ethnic, socio-economic and religious groups. Strangers account for less than 20 percent of the abusers. Estimates indicate that when a known assailant commits the abuse, half of the time it is a father or stepfather, and the rest of the time it is a trusted adult who misuses his or her authority over the child. (Richard R. Hammar, J. D., LL. M., CPA and Marian V. Liautaud)

Sexual abuse of children robs victims of their childhood and can potentially scar its young victims for life. Too often in the past, the effects of abuse were minimized or dismissed. Children were viewed as being resilient. But recent research has shown that children can suffer significant pain from even a single abusive incident. Abused children can display a wide range of negative symptoms in the aftermath of abuse, including abnormal fears, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), aggressive behavior, sexual acting out, depression, diffused sexual identity, and poor self-esteem (Kendall-Tackett, Williams and Finkelhor, 1991). The occurrence of a sexually transmitted disease is also a possible outcome.

The degree of damage depends upon several factors, including the intensity, duration, and the frequency of the abuse. In addition, the relationship of the perpetrator to the child matters. If the abuser is a known and trusted authority figure in the child's life, the degree of impact increases dramatically.

Consequences of the abuse can plague victims into adulthood. Outcomes studies of adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse suggest the following potential effects: sexual dysfunction, eating disorders, substance abuse, promiscuity, disassociation from emotions and possible perpetration of sexual abuse on others (Geffner, 1992).

Facts and Statistics on Sexual Abuse

(2011 information taken from TeenHelp.com website)

- 1 in 4 girls (25%) are sexually abused by the age of 18.
- 1 in 6 boys (17%) are sexually abused by the age of 18.
- Most sexual abuse victims (7 in 10, or 70%) know their abuser. It is generally a family member, or someone close to the family.
- Of female Americans who are raped, 54 percent of them experience this type of sexual abuse for the first time before they are 18.
- Boys and girls can be sexually abused at any age; however, most sexual abuse occurs between the ages of 7 and 13.
- Teenagers account for 51% of all reported sexual abuse.
- 69% of the incidences of teen sexual abuse occur in a residence.
- 23% of all sexual offenders are under the age of 18.
- Female victims of teen sexual abuse are more likely than others to experience eating disorders, suicidal behavior, pregnancy and risky sexual behaviors.
- Females account for 20 percent of the sexual abuse of boys under the age of 14.

Who sexually abuses children?

There is a growing understanding that sexual abusers are likely to be people we know, and could well be people we care about. They are family members or friends, coaches, neighbors, or babysitters – most hold responsible positions in society. Some people who abuse children have adult sexual relationships and are not solely, or even mainly, interested in children. Abusers come from all socio-economic classes, ethnicities, and religious backgrounds. Abusers may be homosexual or heterosexual. Most are men, but some are women. Below are the two main types of sexual offenders of children:

Situational molesters

- 1) not primarily attracted to children for sexual gratification
- 2) usually have adult sex partners, but seek out children for sexual activity for a variety of reasons

Preferential molesters (sometimes known as pedophiles)

- 1) primarily attracted to children; the most dangerous category of child molester
- 2) highly skilled at grooming; deceptive, and committed to a lifestyle of seducing children
- 3) engage in activities that are predictable and ritualized
- 4) generally access a child through friendship with adults with whom a strong trust bond is present; often victims do not disclose and no one ever knows

While "stranger danger" is real, it is important to recognize that the majority of child abuse takes place at the hands of someone known to both the child and the parents. Hence, protection of children cannot focus solely on protection from strangers.

For more detailed information about the types and categories of child sex offenders, go to http://www.smart.gov/SOMAPI/sec1/ch3_typology.html.

The “Grooming Process”

Five Phases of the Behavioral Dynamics of Child Sexual Abuse

(Information taken from Safe Church program /Samaritan Counseling Center, Lancaster, PA)

The Engagement Phase: In this phase, the offender makes a conscious decision to engage the child in a relationship of trust by using various strategies. Once the child’s trust has been gained the offender subtly drives a wedge between the child and the parent(s) and tests the child to see if he or she will keep non-sexual secrets. Engagement may last for months before any sexual contact is initiated. It is not uncommon for an offender to also “groom” the parents of the child he or she wishes to molest in order to gain their trust.

The Sexual Interaction Phase: Throughout this phase, the aggressor and the child engage in sexual activities that generally progress from kisses to sexual intercourse. Many types of molestation leave very little or no physical evidence.

The Secrecy Phase: Throughout this phase, the aggressor wants to maintain sexual contact with the child and he does not want to be caught. Threats of various kinds join hands with secrecy in this stage, which may last days, weeks, months, years or even an indefinite period of time.

The Disclosure Phase: This phase marks the time when the sexual relationship between the aggressor and the child is revealed, either by accident or on purpose. How adults respond in this phase is critical.

The Suppression Phase: If the parents or caregivers are not able to cope with the child’s disclosure, unhealthy denial sets in and takes various forms, including ignoring what happened or blaming the child,. When this happens, the child may begin to retract or minimize the abuse, as the child typically believes it is his/her fault.

Why Children Don't Tell

Below are some of the most common reasons children give for not telling:

- Shame or embarrassment
- Self-blame – they feel responsible
- Prior victimization
- Fear of loss, punishment or other consequences
- Fear that no one will believe them
- Attachment and loyalty to the offender
- Cultural rules about privacy
- Instruction to secrecy
- Domestic violence
- May believe s/he is protecting sibling from abuse
- Doesn't want to break up the family

Children often feel a sense of guilt over the abuse, and they may also experience self-destructive thoughts, or a loss of trust or self-esteem. Some of these signs may not even be obvious until the children reach adulthood. At first, they may deny that anything has happened when asked, or they will not tell the whole story the first time.

REMEMBER: Sexual abuse can happen to any child in any community. If the parent's first reaction toward the child is disbelief, the child may wonder if his/her feelings are mistaken. Children do not want to cause problems for their parents and will not tell about abuse, thinking that they are "protecting" their moms and dads. Also, they fear that telling will make people angry with them.

Long Term Effects of Childhood Sexual Abuse

Childhood sexual abuse has been correlated with higher levels of the following emotional, mental and behavioral disorders in adults:

- | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| • depression | • dissociative patterns |
| • guilt, shame, self-blame | • repression, denial |
| • eating disorders | • sexual problems |
| • somatic concerns | • relationship problems |
| • anxiety | |

For more information on this topic, read article by Melissa Hall and Joshua Hall (2011) at https://www.counseling.org/docs/disaster-and-trauma_sexual-abuse/long-term-effects-of-childhood-sexual-abuse.pdf?sfvrsn=2.

Recognizing Child Abuse

Recognizing Indicators of Child Abuse

The physical signs of child abuse include bruises, burns, or broken bones. However, not all signs of abuse, even physical or sexual, are visible. There are also behaviors that may indicate that child abuse has occurred. Many of these indicators may also occur in children who have not been abused, and they may not be seen in children who have been abused. Use discretion and discernment.

There are a variety of ways the trauma of abuse is experienced. We recognize the trauma another person is experiencing by the physical indicators we can see and the behavioral indicators we can experience. The earlier child abuse is identified, the earlier help can be given to help children and families minimize the long-term effects. Early detection can also help avoid additional incidents of child abuse and decrease further traumatization.

These are considered child abuse even if there is no evidence: Unreasonable restraining or confining a child. Forcefully shaking a child under one year of age. Forcefully slapping or striking a child under one year of age. Kicking, biting, throwing, burning, stabbing, or cutting a child in a manner that endangers a child.

There are four different kinds of abuse. They are sexual, physical, mental, and neglect. For the different kinds of abuse, there are both physical and behavioral indicators. These are *indicators* and do not always or immediately imply that abuse is occurring.

Child Sexual Abuse

Physical Indicators

Sleep disturbances
Bed wetting
Difficulty in walking or sitting
Difficulty in urinating
Pregnancy
Positive testing STD/HIV
Excessive or injurious masturbation
male or female

Behavioral Indicators

Sexually promiscuous
Developmental age-inappropriate
sexual play and or drawing
Cruelty to others
Cruelty to animals
Fire setting
Anxious
Withdrawn

Child Physical Abuse

Physical Indicators

Unexplained injuries
Unbelievable or inconsistent explanation of injuries
Multiple bruises in various stages of healing
Bruises located on face, ears, neck, buttocks,
back, chest, thighs, back of legs and genitals
Bruises that resemble objects such as hand, fist,
belt buckle or rope
Injuries that are inconsistent with a child's age and
development level
Burns

Behavioral Indicators

Fear of going home
Extreme apprehensions/vigilance
Pronounced aggression or passivity
Flinches easily or avoids
being touched
Play includes obscene behavior or
talk
Unable to recall how injuries
occurred or account of
injuries is inconsistent with
nature of injuries

Child Mental Abuse

Physical Indicators

Frequent complain
Nausea, stomachache, headache, etc.
Bed wetting
Self-harm
Speech disorders

Behavioral Indicators

Expresses feelings of inadequacy
Fear of trying new things
Overly compliant
Poor peer relationships
Excessive dependence on adults
Habit disorders (sucking, rocking, etc.)
Eating disorders

Child Neglect

Physical Indicators

Lack of adequate medical or dental care
Often hungry
Lack of shelter
Child's weight is significantly lower than what is normal for his/her age and gender
Developmental delays
Persistent (untreated conditions, lice, diaper rash)
Exposure to hazards (illegal drugs, rodent/insect infestation, mold)
Clothing that is dirty, inappropriate for weather, too small or too large

Behavioral Indicators

Not registered in school
Inadequate or inappropriate supervision
Poor impulse control
Frequently fatigued
Delinquent behavior
Mistrusting

The effects of trauma can be long-lasting. A report from Child Welfare Information Gateway explains that children who experienced abuse or neglect can suffer from the following long term effects. It does not mean they are forever damaged, however, but the extent of trauma needs to be determined early in the counseling and healing process.

Physical

Chronic health condition
Impaired brain development

Psychological

Poor emotional health
Cognitive difficulties
Social difficulties

Behavioral

Delinquency and criminality
Substance abuse
Abusive behavior

Reasonable suspicion

Reasonable suspicion is more than a hunch. The Child Protection Services Law states a person needs to have a reasonable cause to suspect a child is a victim of abuse to make a report. It is a determination you make, based on your knowledge of the circumstances, your observations, your familiarity with the individuals, and your feelings about the incident.

Observations: Think about indicators of abuse or red flags, behavior and demeanor of the child, behavior and demeanor of the adults. Has there been a series of observations that begin to form a pattern that you notice?

Familiarity: Consider the knowledge you have about the individuals, the family situation, or relevant history or similar prior incidents.

Feelings: Think about your feelings and personal biases and consider how they influence your conclusions and actions.

Identify the facts of the incident or pattern of events. What do you know? Consider your observations about Who, What, How, and When.

Recovery Process for Victims of Sexual Assault

Recovery from sexual assault is not a smooth, linear process. Although recovery here is presented in “stages,” a survivor doesn’t move from stage 1 to stage 2 to stage 3 in a simple manner until he/she is “recovered” and then leaves it all behind. The healing process may be accurately imagined as an upward spiral in which a survivor moves toward recovery but moves back and forth through the different stages. For example, survivors may tap into denial at any time as a way of coping with other life stresses, or a survivor who has recovered greatly may suddenly be overwhelmed by an event and find the sexual assault consuming him/her again. This is completely expected and is not moving “backwards” in recovery; rather it often provides a new perspective on familiar feelings, or an opportunity to work through feelings which may have been too difficult at an earlier time.

It is important to keep in mind that recovering from sexual assault is an individual process. There is no prescribed time frame for healing. Survivors each recover at their own pace and in their own way.

Before the assault happens, life is composed of many different aspects – school, work, home, relationships, activities, dreams and family. After the assault happens, these normal aspects of the person’s life become overshadowed by thoughts/flashbacks of the assault, accompanied by a sense of shame and guilt over what happened. Victims will often go into a period of denial regarding the assault, so they can continue to “function as usual.” Attempts, often very successful, are made to maintain other aspects of life and suppress the assault. Survivors often try to not think about it or attempt to treat it as insignificant. Below are the stages a person will go through when coming out of denial.

Awareness: Often as a result of flashbacks, isolation, depression, or other stressors, an awareness of the assault sets in and seems to be all consuming. This is most often when help is sought, because attempts to “go it alone” prove to be too difficult or impossible. For a while it seems that the assault is the only aspect of the person’s life.

Healing: In this stage, the person is able to start talking about and processing the assault in a “safe setting,” often with a therapist, counselor, friend or pastor. The person’s life will even out a bit, if only because the highs and lows of the roller coaster feeling balance each other out. During this stage, there are short (to longer) periods of time when the person is not being consumed with thoughts about the sexual abuse.

Ongoing Recovery: As a degree of healing happens, the assault will take its place in the overall scope of the survivor’s life. While the assault will always be a part of the survivor, sometimes it will become aggravated and require more attention, but then it will take its place again. The work the survivor has done to recover can become a source of insight, political action or personal growth. The ultimate goal would be for the survivor to go beyond surviving and become a stronger, more knowing, more self-trusting, and more hopeful person.

For more information go to: www.care.uci.edu/Sexual-Assault/

Mandated Reporting

Who are mandated reporters?

Under the Child Protective Services Law, mandated reporters are:

- adults (18 and older), *paid or unpaid*, who work with children or supervise staff who do
- adults who come in direct contact with children in a program, activity, or service
- adult volunteers in a setting with children

If a mandated reporter has a reasonable suspicion that abuse has occurred, they are required by law to report it to the proper authorities immediately.

A reasonable suspicion is more than “a hunch”. It is a determination that is made, based on the following factors:

- your overall knowledge of the circumstances (who, what, when, where and how)
- your observations (the pattern of “red flags,” the behavioral indicators, and the overall demeanor of the child and the alleged perpetrator, if known).
- your familiarity with the individuals involved (the family situation, relevant history and/or similar prior incidents)
- your overall feelings about the incident (your “gut” feeling, and your personal instincts). Be aware, though, of how your personal biases can and do influence your conclusions and actions.

All _____ Mennonite Church staff and Children and Youth volunteers are considered to be “mandated reporters”, and have a personal responsibility and moral obligation to report any and all suspected abuse, under the law. _____ Mennonite Church volunteers are mandated reporters both within, as well as outside, the church context.

“Reporting out”

Mandated reporters must report all incidents of alleged or suspected child abuse directly to the state authorities immediately after the incident occurred or was reported to staff or volunteers. This is considered “reporting out.” The two ways to “report out” are listed below in order of preference.

1. The preferred method of reporting out is to file a report online on the Child Welfare Portal at www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis. This method allows the fastest response time, as it funnels the information directly to the first available and most appropriate professional to handle the case.
Note: Before a report can be made, the person must pre-register on the portal (address above.) After you pre-register, you can file a report directly through the portal. There is no follow up report needed if you file online.
2. The other method available to file a report of child abuse (preferably ONLY for those who do not use computers or have access to one at that time) is to call the PA ChildLine at 1-800-932-0313 immediately after the incident occurred or was reported to you. Within two days after you file your report over the phone, you will also need to follow up with a written report (CY-47 form) to Children and Youth services in the county where the alleged abuse took place.
3. The information you will be asked to supply, electronically, will be similar to the information requested on form CY 47 in Appendix 2 on page 34 of this policy.

“Reporting up”

- After a mandated reporter files a report of child abuse to the state authorities (reporting “out”), the law also requires that mandated reporter to notify the designated person in charge of the institution in which the incident of abuse occurred. This is called “reporting up.”
- This means that after you report an incident of alleged abuse to the authorities, you must also report the incident to _____ Mennonite Church's Pastor or Congregational Chairman. If the alleged perpetrator is the Pastor or Congregational Chair, then _____ District's Bishop/Overseer must be contacted.
- Note: If a mandated reporter reports on a situation outside of their institutional setting, there is no formal “report up”. However, a best practice could involve doing one, or both of the following:
 - ✓ Let the institutional head, where the alleged abuse was noted, know you made a report.
 - ✓ Ask the ChildLine intake person about who to “report up” to.
- If a congregation comes under investigation by CPS and/or the district attorney's office, then that congregation should consult an attorney before the pastor gives *any* statements.
- After the volunteer reports “out” and “up”, the incident should not be discussed with anyone else. The state authorities will do the investigation and take the necessary and appropriate action from that point on.

Frequently Asked Questions about Mandated Reporting

Q. If I make a report, is my identity protected?

A. The identity of the person making the report is kept confidential, with the exception of being released to law enforcement officials or the district attorney's office.

Q. What happens if a mandated reporter fails to report a case of suspected child abuse?

A. It is considered a criminal act to willfully not report an incident of child abuse. Convictions range from a misdemeanor to a felony, based on the person's prior offenses and criminal record.

Q. Am I protected from civil and criminal liability if I make a report of suspected child abuse?

A. Yes, a person making a report of suspected child abuse is immune from civil and criminal liability as long as the report was made in good faith.

Q. May I report suspected abuse if you are not a Mandated Reporter?

A. Yes. Anyone who is concerned about the safety of a child is encouraged to make a report. Individuals are encouraged, although not required by law, to make a report of suspected child abuse to ChildLine by calling 1-800-932-0313.

Q. Am I protected from employment discrimination if I make a report of suspected child abuse?

A. Yes. You are protected from reprisals of any kind including demotion and job loss.

Do's and Don'ts upon hearing a disclosure of abuse

(adapted from an article in NRCCSA by C. Curtis Holmes, Ph.D.)

DO....

1. Practice your response and know what to do BEFORE you are in the real situation.
2. Become familiar with _____ Mennonite Church's Child Protection Policy and the reporting procedures.
3. Speak with the child in a comfortable setting to him/her (nursery, Sunday school room, etc.) Let the child know he/she was brave to share this information with you.
4. Tell the child you will do everything within your power to see that he/she is kept safe. (Do NOT promise the child that it will never happen again.)
5. Prior to making a report, gather as much of the following information as you can quickly obtain:
 - Name, parents' names, siblings and alleged perpetrator
 - Birthday(s) or approximate age(s) of child(ren)
 - Address and phone number of the alleged victim(s)
 - Nature of incident (what happened, when, where, who was involved, etc.)
 - How you became aware of the incident (witness, told by someone else)
 - Factors that put the child at risk (continuing contact with perpetrator, disabilities or limitations, history of domestic violence)
- When hearing the child's story...
 - Pay attention to your body language.
 - Let the child know that you hear what they are saying and that you care about them.

DON'T....

- Do NOT allow yourself to be talked out of reporting out.
- Do NOT ever try to talk a child out of what he/she is saying.
- Do NOT attempt to find out the details while the child is in the presence of other children.
- Do NOT stand over the child while he/she is telling you about the abuse. This may make the child feel crowded or dominated.
- Do NOT show shock or disbelief through your words or body language while the child is talking. The child may interpret this to mean that you find the CHILD unacceptable rather than the ACT.
- Do NOT try to determine the validity of the child's story. This is the responsibility of Child Protective Services.
- Do NOT talk or relay any information about these allegations to friends, relatives or advocates.
- Do NOT ask leading questions of the child or suggest to a child that you think he/she may have been abused. This can be damaging and is problematic in cases in which abuse DID happen but the information was elicited through the use of leading questions.

NOTE: If you believe the child is in imminent danger, call 911 immediately.

What happens after a report is made?

From the State authorities:

- Within 48 hours, the Children and Youth agency will visit the child and interview the child and any other necessary persons.
- A “Needs Assessment” will be done to determine what level/kind of services the child or family will need.
- Within 60-70 days, a determination will be made whether there is enough evidence to substantiate the case within the confines of the law. The terms used to describe the results of the investigation are listed below...

Unfounded – Cases where there is a lack of evidence that the child was abused or it was determined that the child was not abused. (Note: An Unfounded status does not always mean that the incident did not occur.)

Indicated – The children and youth agency found that abuse occurred based on medical evidence, the investigation, or admission by the perpetrator. The case may or may not proceed to judicial action depending on the strength of the evidence.

Founded – There has been a judicial adjudication that the child has been abused.

Substantiated – Cases that have been indicated or founded.

From the church:

- _____ Mennonite Church’s Pastor or Congregational Chairman will document the incident on a Suspicions of Abuse Log and place it in a confidential file.
- If the suspected child abuse happened on the grounds of _____ Mennonite Church, or by a _____ Mennonite Church staff member or volunteer, the Pastor or Congregational Chairman will need to report the incident to _____ Mennonite Church’s insurance company and consult with legal counsel.
- The LMC office only need be notified if the alleged abuser is the Pastor, Elder, Chairperson or another credentialed leader or staff person.
- Follow up will be made under the direction of the Pastor and Elders to support the alleged victim and family.
- If the alleged perpetrator is a _____ Mennonite Church attendee/member, efforts will also be made to care for and restore the alleged perpetrator.

NOTE: If _____ Mennonite Church comes under investigation by Child Protective Services and/or the district attorney's office, then _____ Mennonite Church should consult an attorney before the pastor gives *any* statements.

Part 2

Child Protection Team

The Child Protection Team prepares, maintains, and administrates the Child Protection policy. This team is made up of five members. It consists of a representative from _____ (adjust according to your context, the Children's Sunday School Superintendent, the Bible School Director, the Nurture Commission Coordinator, youth pastor, pastor, board chair). The Annual Checklist on the following page orders the tasks and duties during each calendar year.

- The Child Protection Team will meet at least annually to *review* the child protection policy and *report* to the Church Cabinet.
- The Child Protection Team meets as needed to *examine* all required checks for staff and volunteers as they are received and *verify* that all checks are no older than five years. *File* the checks.
- The Child Protection Team meets as needed to *maintain* the list of adults approved to work with children and youth. *File* old lists when replaced with a new list.
- The Child Protection Team will *schedule* and *execute* entry-level training and annual refresher training for staff, volunteers, and the entire congregation. *File* a list of training attendance.
- The Child Protection Team will *oversee* all the required secure recordkeeping for staff and volunteer background checks and records of training attendance. Records on any individual will be maintained for 50 years.
- The Child Protection Team will *supervise* the maintenance and filing of children and youth Sunday School attendance records.
- The Child Protection Team will *perform* an annual building "walk-through" to identify any places where inappropriate behavior could occur.
- The Child Protection Team will *monitor* any investigations generated by a report by a mandated reporter to Child Protective Services.
- The Child Protection Team will *supervise* the maintenance and control of a key list (or code access list) for the church building. *File* old lists when replaced with a new list.

The Child Protection Team will *include* an individual on the list of adults approved to work with children if the following items are in order:

1. The required background checks are in hand and include no disqualifying infractions and are no more than five years old.
2. Entry level training is completed and form executed, and refresher training is current.
3. Behavioral Guidelines outlined below are consistently followed.
4. Failure to satisfy all of the above requirements will prevent an adult from being added to the list or be grounds for removal of a person who is already on the list.
5. Substitutes and emergency fill-ins for classes, activities, and events will be drawn from the list of adults approved to work with children.

Annual Activities Checklist

The checklist below describes the annual duties of the Child Protection Team in order to keep the Child Protection Policy functioning. It is suggested that each year, a copy of this page is made, and dates are set/noted when the task is completed. File each completed annual checklist with the other child protection documentation.

Child Protection Team Activities for _____
(year)

- ☐ Meets annually to *review* policies and practices. Date _____
- ☐ *Reports* annually to _____ (Board, Cabinet) about the status of the child protection program.
Date _____
- ☐ *Examines* clearance forms for any new staff or volunteers and for refreshed checks.
- ☐ *Verifies* background check dates for returning staff and volunteers are not older than five years.
Date _____
- ☐ *Schedules and executes* the training for new staff and volunteers and a refresher class for returning staff and volunteers according to policy. Date _____
- ☐ *Files* the list of attendees to the annual training session with other child protection records.
Date _____
- ☐ *Maintains* the list of adults approved to work with children. Date _____
- ☐ *Performs* the annual building walk-through according to Child Protection Policy. Date _____
- ☐ *Oversees* recordkeeping. Date _____
- ☐ *Schedules and executes* with church leadership any all-church training regimens as desired and/or called for by the policy. Date _____
- ☐ *Reviews* notices on bulletin boards indicating that the congregation has a child protection policy and *schedules* pulpit and/or bulletin announcements about Child Protection Practices as called for by the policy. Date _____
- ☐ *Reviews* the maintenance and filing of children and youth Sunday School attendance records.
Date _____
- ☐ *Reviews* the maintenance and control of a key list (or code access list) for the church building.
Date _____
- ☐ *Files* the completed Annual Activities Checklist and *starts* a new Annual Activities Checklist.
Date _____

Part 3

Policy for Staff and Volunteers

for Staff

(Background checks and training requirements for Volunteers are different and explained below.)

Ministry Staff of _____ Mennonite Church must obtain and supply copies of the PA State Police Criminal Record Check, the PA Child Abuse History Clearance, and the FBI Criminal Background Check (requires fingerprinting) to the _____ (Child Protection Team, Pastor, Board). The copies will be filed by _____. The law requires new, updated checks every five years. Additionally, all new staff will complete three hours of state-approved training within six months of the issuance of a credential and refresh their training every five years with three hours of state-approved training thereafter. Training shall address, but shall not be limited to, recognition of the signs of child abuse and the reporting requirements for suspected child abuse. The costs associated with obtaining clearances will be paid by _____ (church, staff person). The certificate of completed training will be filed with the church child protection records.

Privileged Confidential Communications: In situations involving child abuse, there is no general rule in Pennsylvania that communications between a mandated reporter and a patient or client of that mandated reporter are privileged. The Child Protection Services Law did preserve a very narrow existing privilege relating to clergy *“who while in the course of his [or her] duties has acquired information from any person secretly and in confidence.”* Pennsylvania courts have interpreted the clergy-communicant privilege to apply only to confidential communications between a communicant and a member of the clergy in his or her role as confessor or spiritual counselor. We advise pastors to state clearly that they intend to report situations of child abuse learned about in any setting, including pastoral counseling settings, so as to dismantle any expectation of confidentiality about abuse. We also strongly advise any pastor who learns of child abuse in his or her role as confessor or spiritual counselor and who considers invoking the privilege on the part of the communicant to immediately consult legal counsel.

for Volunteers

For the protection of our children and youth at _____ Mennonite Church, we have established the following administrative guidelines for our “certification process” for all adults (eighteen and older) who desire to work with our children and/or youth or who supervise those who work with children, whether paid or unpaid.

- Any volunteer should be regularly involved in our congregation for at least 1 year before beginning to volunteer for any position in Children’s or Youth Ministry. Volunteers who have attended less than 1 year may be considered on an individual basis after personal references and State checks have been reviewed. (program exceptions: youth from outside our congregation sometimes serve as childcare workers, but they may only work with approved volunteers from the _____ Mennonite Church. Outside volunteers outside our congregation must provide _____ Mennonite Church with a copy of the required background checks.)
- Volunteers should be at least 18 years of age. A youth (12-17 years old) may serve as a volunteer if he/she is under the direct supervision of a certified adult. Youth workers (17 and under) do not need to complete the background checks and are not mandated reporters.
- Each applicant must complete an “Application for Children’s and Youth Ministry” form (in Appendix), which also asks for providing personal references.

- Prior to serving as a volunteer, each person must also go online and request his/her PA Criminal Record Check and PA Child Abuse Clearance. (The Child Protection Team will give instructions).
- The law requires new background checks for all volunteers every five years.
- Volunteers who have lived outside PA at any time during the past 10 years must submit to an FBI Fingerprint Record Check. Volunteers who have lived continuously in PA for the past ten years must sign a “Statement of Residence,” (in Appendix) acknowledging that they have never been convicted of any crime in another state or jurisdiction that would disqualify them from working with children in PA. The copies of these documents will be filed by the Child Protection Team.
- The costs associated with obtaining clearances will be reimbursed by the church to the individual.
- The record checks will be reviewed by the Child Protection Team. If anything, incriminating is found on these reports, the volunteer will not be eligible to serve as a volunteer. Any questionable information on the background checks noted by the Child Protection Team will be reviewed by the Team and a decision will be made regarding eligibility to serve as a volunteer. The volunteer will be informed personally about the problems by the pastor. All approved volunteers will be notified by a Child Protection Team member.
- All forms will be maintained in an orderly manner and kept in a locked file for a minimum of 50 years.
- Each volunteer is required by _____ Mennonite Church Mennonite Church to receive Child Protection training before working with children or youth at _____ Mennonite Church. Initial training includes the review of this Child Protection Policy and signing a statement saying they understand and agree to follow the _____ Mennonite Church Child Protection Policy. (See appendix for statement form.)
- Each certified volunteer adult is required to refresh their Child Abuse training annually. Training events for volunteers will be organized by the Child Protection Team. Training expectations can also be met by other options such as attending a class, online training, or viewing an approved DVD if the option is approved by the Child Protection Team. Records of training attendance or completion of alternate training will be maintained by Child Protection Team and kept for 50 years.

Guidelines for Children and Youth Workers

Supervision

1. At least two adults (both 18 years of age or older) must be present at every function or program involving children or youth. When possible, two persons (with one being 18 years of age or older) are encouraged to be in each classroom, vehicle, or other enclosed area when children and/or youth are involved. Instances where this is not possible would call for alternative measures to be taken (i.e. windows must remain uncovered, hallway monitor, or open classroom door).
2. Two or more adults must be assigned to monitor children and youth activities in areas separate from _____ Mennonite Church facilities. The adults assigned must have been previously approved through our ministry screening process.
 - a. Overnight Trips: Situations where volunteers are taking children and/or youth out of the area for overnight outings or long periods of time are to be carefully planned. Only known, proven volunteers who are on the approved adult list will be permitted to sponsor/chaperone the trips. In no circumstance will one adult be permitted to take children and/or youth on an overnight outing.
 - b. Any new volunteers who may be used as additional sponsors must also complete the mandated checks and complete the initial training.
3. Children and youth ministry volunteers must remain at their ministry location until all children and/or youth in their care have been picked up by an authorized person. No children or youth should

be released to find their parents or wait unattended for transportation. An approved child care worker may escort children to their parent.

4. All teachers should leave the classroom door open until two or more children arrive for class. In the event that only one child comes to a Sunday school class, that child will be taken to join another class.

Work Restrictions

1. For children age 6 or older, a screened adult will accompany them to the restroom, first making sure the facility is cleared, and wait outside the restroom for the child(ren).
2. Children age 5 or younger (boys and girls) should be assisted as needed in the restroom by a screened ministry adult.
3. Workers should avoid the appearance of impropriety, such as sitting older children on their lap, kissing, embracing others, or inappropriate touch, etc.

Discipline

1. Workers are never to spank, hit, grab, shake, or otherwise physically discipline anyone. Physical restraint should only be used in a situation where it is reasonably necessary to prevent an individual from physically harming himself or another individual. Clear, consistent, age-appropriate limits will be established to help children function appropriately.
2. Disciplinary problems should be reported to the ministry activity coordinator or supervisor or to a parent or guardian.

Injuries or Illness

1. People who are ill (with a fever, or a communicable disease that can be transmitted by cough or by touch) should not be permitted to participate in any ministry activity.
2. A suitable worker- one who has been previously approved through our ministry screening process- must be used to take the place of a worker who is ill.
3. Participants should be returned to their parents or guardian as soon as illness is discovered.
4. Ministry coordinators and supervisors who become aware of an injury to a worker or participant will take steps to ensure that proper medical attention is given to the injured person and provide for continued monitoring of the remaining activity participants.
5. People who have received an injury that is obviously minor should be given first aid as needed at the time of injury. The individual's parents or guardians should be notified of the injury when they pick up the injured person. Ministry workers should prepare a written Notice of Injury report whenever an injury occurs during a ministry function. (A first aid kit is located in the desk by the copier.)
6. Any injury that may require medical treatment beyond simple first aid should be given immediate attention. The parents or guardians of the injured person should be notified immediately, along with the ministry worker's coordinator or supervisor. If warranted by the injury, emergency medical personnel should be called.

Attendance Recordkeeping

1. All ministry functions involving children and youth should maintain an attendance list for every function. Record the date of the function, along with the names of all participants and ministry volunteers. The location of the function should be noted as well.
2. These attendance records will be filed and kept for 50 years.

Notice of Injury, Abuse, or Molestation

1. In accordance with the 2015 Pennsylvania Child Protective Services Law adult volunteer child workers are mandatory reporters. Mandated reporters who have reason to suspect that a child is a victim of abuse must themselves make an immediate and direct report to ChildLine. Reporting instructions are found on pages 15-18 of this policy.

Violation of Policy or Procedures

1. Ministry workers must promptly notify their ministry coordinator or supervisor when they or others do not follow the procedures mandated by this policy, whether intentional or unintentional.
2. Ministry coordinators, supervisors, and ministry leaders who become aware of a violation of an intentional and/or repeated violation of the procedures set by this policy are required to take all necessary steps to ensure future compliance with them. In the process of ensuring compliance with this policy, it may become necessary to remove workers from their positions.

Internal Investigation

1. This ministry organization considers any allegation of abuse or molestation a serious matter. Each situation will be fully investigated by the Pennsylvania Department of Child Welfare/Children and Youth Services.
2. Employees who are the subject of an investigation will be removed from their position, with pay pending completion of the investigation. Employees who admit to the abuse or molestation will be terminated consistent with the established employment practices of this ministry.
3. Volunteer subjects of any investigation will be removed from their positions pending completion of the investigation.
4. This ministry will permanently remove any employees or volunteers from their ministerial duties within the organization if they are found guilty of abuse or molestation. Whenever termination of employment is a factor, we also will consult with legal counsel.

Dealing with Law Enforcement, News Media

1. All ministry leaders, employees, and volunteers of this ministry will cooperate fully with law enforcement or governmental agencies investigating allegations of injury, abuse, or molestation.
2. The leadership of this ministry will seek legal counsel as soon as possible after we receive notice of possible abuse or molestation within the organization. Advice from legal counsel will be the basis for our response to the allegations.
3. One individual--a member of the leadership team, a staff member, a ministry leader, or attorney--will be the designated spokesperson to handle all inquiries from the news media. Our spokesperson will be the only person to convey information concerning the situation, doing so in a prudent manner to avoid compromising an ongoing investigation and to maintain the privacy of the individuals involved.

Disqualifiers for Working with Children

The Child Protective Services Law of 2014 disqualifies certain individuals from working with children. The law reads as follows below. _____ Mennonite Church will similarly disqualify any staff or volunteer from working with children who is named as a perpetrator of a founded report or was convicted of any of the following offenses.

§ 6344 (c) Grounds for denying employment or participation in program, activity or service.

(1) In no case shall an administrator hire or approve an applicant where the department has verified that the applicant is named in the Statewide database as the perpetrator of a founded report committed within the five-year period immediately preceding verification pursuant to this section.

(2) In no case shall an administrator hire an applicant if the applicant's criminal history record information indicates the applicant has been convicted of one or more of the following offenses under Title 18 (relating to crimes and offenses) or an equivalent crime under Federal law or the law of another state:

Chapter 25 (relating to criminal homicide).

Section 2702 (relating to aggravated assault).

Section 2709.1 (relating to stalking).

Section 2901 (relating to kidnapping).

Section 2902 (relating to unlawful restraint).

Section 3121 (relating to rape).

Section 3122.1 (relating to statutory sexual assault).

Section 3123 (relating to involuntary deviate sexual intercourse).

Section 3124.1 (relating to sexual assault).

Section 3125 (relating to aggravated indecent assault).

Section 3126 (relating to indecent assault).

Section 3127 (relating to indecent exposure).

Section 4302 (relating to incest).

Section 4303 (relating to concealing death of child).

Section 4304 (relating to endangering welfare of children).

Section 4305 (relating to dealing in infant children).

A felony offense under section 5902(b) (relating to prostitution and related offenses).

Section 5903(c) or (d) (relating to obscene and other sexual materials and performances).

Section 6301 (relating to corruption of minors).

Section 6312 (relating to sexual abuse of children).

The attempt, solicitation or conspiracy to commit any of the offenses set forth in this paragraph.

(3) In no case shall an employer, administrator, supervisor or other person responsible for employment decisions hire or approve an applicant if the applicant's criminal history record information indicates the applicant has been convicted of a felony offense under the act of April 14, 1972 (P.L.233, No.64), known as The Controlled Substance, Drug, Device and Cosmetic Act, committed within the five-year period immediately preceding verification under this section.

(c.1) Dismissal.--If the information obtained pursuant to subsection (b) reveals that the applicant is disqualified from employment or approval pursuant to subsection (c), the applicant shall be immediately dismissed from employment or approval.

Presence of Sexual Offenders in the Congregation

If a known sexual offender attends services at _____ Mennonite Church, then guidelines will be established on a case-by-case basis that fit the situation of the offender. Permission by the supervising county office to allow the sexual offender to attend services may be required. The supervising county office may also require training for the congregation and approval of the content of the training. Regardless, _____ Mennonite Church will require congregational training prior to welcoming the offender to the congregation. The congregation will be notified of the presence and identity of the sexual offender. _____ Mennonite Church will appoint a sponsor for each sexual offender who will accompany the sexual offender at all times while on the premises. The sexual offender may not have direct contact with children in any form. A covenant of understanding between the congregation and the sexual offender will be drawn up and signed by both parties. Any violation of the covenant of understanding will result in termination of attendance at _____ Mennonite Church.

Recordkeeping

The new legal requirements require careful recordkeeping. The following guidelines will provide a clear record trail of the execution of your child safety policy.

1. PA Criminal report, PA sexual abuse report, and FBI criminal record report, or Statement of Residence should be maintained for each paid staff person and volunteer in a secured file.
2. Applications for Children's and Youth Ministry should be filed.
3. A renewal process to refresh these reports every three years should be implemented and the updated reports filed for each paid staff person and volunteer in a secured file.
3. Records of attendance, training certificates and annual refresher training should be documented for each staff person and volunteer in a secured file.
4. Annual checklist of the activities of the Child Protection Team should be filed at the conclusion of each year.
5. All Lists of Approved Adults should be kept and filed.
6. All Key lists and/or key receipt forms should be kept and filed.
7. All records for each paid staff person, volunteer and the Child Protection Team should be maintained for 50 years.

Appendix 1

Resources and Contact Information

Contact Information

1. **ChildLine, 1-800-932-0313**
2. Child Welfare Portal, www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis/Public/home
3. LMC office, 717-293-5246
4. SafeChurch program, www.guideone.com/resources/guideavantage/safechurch/safechurch-resource-library
5. [PA Child and Youth Services directory](#)
6. Anne Martin, attorney, Gibbel, Kraybill, & Hess, LLP, 717-291-1700
7. Family Support Alliance, www.pa-fsa.org/
8. Keep Kids Safe USA www.keepsafe.us
9. National Child Protection Task Force, www.ncptf.org

Resources

1. Department of Public Welfare, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, [*The child protective services law: Title 23 Pa. C.S. A. Chapter 63*](#), Harrisburg, PA, 2014.
2. [*It's Not Just Jenna. Training Live Virtual or In-Person Trainings.*](#)
3. [*Hear Their Cries*](#), Faith Trust Institute, (48:03 video) 2004.
4. SafeChurch, [*Child & Youth Safety*](#)

Other Resources to Help Parents Have Age-Appropriate Conversations with Children

1. Martha Ann Shirk, [*When to Say No*](#), Weaverland Conference, 2009.
2. John Coblenz, [*God's Will for My Body*](#), Christian Light Publications, 1992.
3. Dennis Rainey, [*Passport to Purity*](#), Family Life Today, 2000.

State Approved Child Abuse Recognition and Reporting Training for Mandated Reporters

1. Pennsylvania Child Welfare Resource Center, 717-795-9048, for Mandated and Permissive Reporters, 3 hrs. Online, www.reportabusepa.pitt.edu, free.
2. Pennsylvania Family Support Alliance, 717-238-0937, for Mandated and Permissive Reporters. Online, 2 hours, www.pafsa.org/on-demand-online-training/, \$30.00. Virtual, 3 hours, www.pa-fsa.org/Mandated-Reporters/Mandated-Reporters-Training/Virtual-Training, FREE
3. Samaritan Counseling Center, SafeChurch Project, Lancaster, PA. www.samaritansafechurch.org, contact for cost information. 717-560-9969.

Criminal Background check

[Request a Criminal History Background Check](#) (Online)

[Child Abuse History Clearances](#) (Online)

Report of Suspected Child Abuse ([PDF online form](#))

[Keep Kids Safe](#), Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

[FBI Criminal History Background Check](#) (Online Information on how and where to apply)

LMC Credentialed Leaders Requirements

NOTE: LMC requires all leaders to complete the following background clearances for credentialing interviews. Credentialed leaders must submit copies of these background clearances and mandated training to their congregation every five years.

Background Clearances-Completed by the CANDIDATES-PA

1. **FBI Criminal Background Check:** *digital fingerprints must be made at designated locations; start process at:* <https://www.identogo.com/> Code: 1KG756 (employee)
2. **Pennsylvania State Police Criminal Record Check** online application at: <https://epatch.pa.gov/home>
3. **Child Abuse History Clearance** online application <https://www.compass.state.pa.us/CWIS>
4. **Mandated Reporting Training-Free** (4-6 hours to complete) Online training at: www.reportabusepa.pitt.edu (free to candidates in ALL States in the US) *Be sure to print a certificate when you complete the training. Mandated Training completed in the past 5 years is sufficient for a credentialing interview.*

Background Clearances-Completed by the Candidate-All other STATES (NOT PA)

1. **FBI Criminal Background Check:** *digital fingerprints must be made at designated locations in your State; start process at:* <https://www.identogo.com/> (Choose TSA if that is the only option available. It includes an FBI check) Or contact your local police or other government agency who process FBI checks.
2. **Criminal background and child abuse history clearance:** <https://www.protectmyministry.com/background-checks/personal/> (Choose Standard)
3. **Mandated Reporting Training-Free** (4-6 hours to complete) Online training at: www.reportabusepa.pitt.edu (free to candidates in ALL States in the US) *Be sure to print a certificate when you complete the training. Mandated Training completed in the past 5 years is sufficient for a credentialing interview.*

Autorizaciones de Antecedentes-Completadas por los CANDIDATOS-PA

1. **Verificación de antecedentes penales del FBI:** *las huellas digitales deben tomarse en lugares designados; iniciar trámite en:* <https://uenroll.identogo.com/> Código: 1KG756 (empleado)
2. **Verificación de antecedentes penales de la policía estatal de Pensilvania** solicitud en línea en: <https://epatch.pa.gov/home>
3. **Solicitud en línea de autorización de historial de abuso infantil** <https://www.compass.state.pa.us/CWIS>
4. **Capacitación obligatoria sobre presentación de informes :** gratuita (de 4 a 6 horas para completar) Capacitación en línea en: www.reportabusepa.pitt.edu (gratuita para candidatos en TODOS los estados de EE. UU.) *Asegúrese de imprimir un certificado cuando complete la capacitación. La capacitación obligatoria completada en los últimos 5 años es suficiente para una entrevista de acreditación.*

Autorizaciones de antecedentes: completadas por el candidato

1. **Verificación de antecedentes penales del FBI:** *las huellas digitales deben tomarse en lugares designados en su estado; iniciar proceso en:* <https://www.identogo.com/>
2. **La verificación de antecedentes penales y de abuso infantil:** <https://www.protectmyministry.com/background-checks/personal/> (Elija estándar)
3. **Capacitación obligatoria sobre presentación de informes :** gratuita (de 4 a 6 horas para completar) Capacitación en línea en: www.reportabusepa.pitt.edu



Verification of Receipt of Child Protection Policy Volunteer Signature Page

Volunteer's Name: _____

Contact information (address and phone):

All _____ Mennonite Church staff and children and youth volunteers are considered to be “mandated reporters” and have a personal responsibility and moral obligation to report any and all suspected abuse, under the law. _____ Mennonite Church volunteers are mandated reporters both within, as well as outside, the church context.

By signing below I am indicating that I have carefully read the Child Protection Policy of _____ Mennonite Church, and I agree to abide by it and to protect the health and safety of the children or youth assigned to my care or supervision at all times.

Printed name

Signature

Date

Initials of Child Protection Team reviewer _____ Date _____

STATEMENT OF RESIDENCE

Under the *Child Protective Services Law* each adult, paid or unpaid, who works with children; adult volunteers in a setting with children; or adults who come in direct contact with children in a program, activity, or service is a mandated reporter and must immediately report suspicions of child abuse or neglect.

Mandated reporters are required to complete the [Pennsylvania State Police Criminal Record Check](#) and the [Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearance Form](#)

Volunteers who would like to volunteer with children will need to complete the [FBI Criminal Background Clearance](#), which requires FBI fingerprinting. **Please note:** Effective January 1, 2025, the cost to register and obtain an FBI background check for Employees, Foster/Adoptive Parents will decrease from \$26.20 to \$24.95. The cost to register and obtain an FBI background check for the purpose of volunteering will decrease from \$24.20 to \$22.95.



Application for Children and Youth Ministry

_____ Mennonite Church

Name: _____

Contact information (phone, email): _____

Age range: ☐ 18 or younger ☐ 19–25 ☐ 26 or older

Have you lived in PA for 10 years or more? ☐ Yes ☐ No

In which children's/youth program(s) do you want to become involved?

What skills would you bring to the children's/youth program?

What other children's/youth work experience do you have? (Please list)

Organization	Program	Dates	Contact
--------------	---------	-------	---------

_____	_____	_____	_____
-------	-------	-------	-------

_____	_____	_____	_____
-------	-------	-------	-------

_____	_____	_____	_____
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Have you at any time ever:

• Been arrested for any reason? ☐ Yes ☐ No

• Been convicted of, or pleaded guilty or no contest to, any crime? ☐ Yes ☐ No

• Engaged in, or been accused of, any child molestation, exploitation, or abuse? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Are you aware of:

• Having any traits or tendencies that could pose any threat to children, youth, or others? ☐ Yes ☐ No

• Any reason why you should not work with children, youth, or others? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If the answer to any of these questions is "yes," please explain in detail:

Church Participation

What churches have you attended in the past five years?

Church name attended	Pastor's name	Years
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References (Other than relatives). Please provide at least two.

Name	Relationship	Address	Phone
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Children's/Youth Work Verification and Release

- I recognize that _____ Mennonite Church is relying on the accuracy of the information I provide on the Children's/Youth Work Application form. Accordingly, I attest and affirm that the information I have provided is absolutely true and correct.
- I authorize _____ Mennonite Church to contact any person or entity listed this application, and I further authorize any such person or entity to provide the organization with information, opinions, and impressions relating to my background or qualifications. I voluntarily release the organization, and any such person or entity listed on the application from liability involving the communication of information relating to my background or qualifications.
- I authorize the organization to secure the PA State Police Criminal Record Check, the PA Child Abuse History Clearance and, if required, the FBI Criminal Background Check (requires fingerprinting).
- I have carefully read the policy and procedures of the organization, and I agree to abide by them and to protect the health and safety of the children or youth assigned to my care or supervision always.

Printed name:

Signature

Date

Appendix 2 Best Practices



Review the following list of best practices and add any as they apply or seem to help as you implement your child protection policy. Delete this Appendix after reviewing and implementing useful suggestions into your policy.

1. Form a small child protection team (3-6 members) to guide child protection implementation and processes that have oversight by the Church Board, Church Council, or Leadership Team.
2. Create, implement, and execute a child protection policy in your congregation that allows compliance with changes to *Child Protective Services Law*. Make provision for an annual review by the child protection team and annual review by church leadership.
3. Design a process to develop and maintain a list of adults approved to work with children and youth. The child protection policy will exhaustively describe the requirements to become an approved adult.
4. Provide entry-level and annual refresher training for all staff, volunteers and the entire congregation. The *Child Protective Services Law* does not appear to require training for all mandated reporters in a church setting. Unless the church runs a day-care center, most church staff and volunteers are not required to undergo mandated training. Best practice, however, suggests annual training for new and returning staff and volunteers be incorporated into the child protection policy.
5. Conduct all children's activities, regardless of size, by staffing each room with two approved adults. In lieu of two adults in every room or location, provide a roving usher or other approved adult who checks in at each room or location throughout the time of the event.
6. Provide rooms used for children and youth ministry with windows in the doors or require that the doors remain open at all times during activities. Develop a bathroom visit supervision policy.
7. Maintain a functioning and up-to-date building access list for building keys and/or access codes. The child protection policy should clearly state that keys and codes are not to be shared with anyone.
8. Communicate visibly and repeatedly in the congregation that there is a functioning child protection policy in place. This can include bulletin board postings, bulletin announcements, new members class information, and pulpit comments and announcements.
9. Annually survey the building in order to identify areas where improper behavior could occur without notice by anyone walking by.
10. Determine if and how your congregation would work with attendees or members who are prior child abuse offenders or sexual offenders.