ClearView Christian Reformed Church
Oakville, Ontario

Safe Church Policies and Abuse Prevention Manual

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1. INTRODUCTION

ClearView Christian Reformed Church (ClearView Church), as one expression of God's family, strives to be a community where every person is treated with respect and embraced in love, regardless of age, race, gender, ability, or socio-economic status. We are committed to creating an environment that nurtures the dignity and safety of every person.

ClearView Church (the "church") believes it has a spiritual, moral, and legal obligation to ensure that all reasonable steps have been taken to provide a safe, healthy environment for everyone (children, youth, vulnerable adults and the volunteers and employees who participate in our programs, ministries or are employed by the church). The creation and adherence to the Safe Church Policies and Abuse Prevention Manual ("the policy") is one of those measures.

2. STATEMENT OF POLICY

ClearView Church will strive to create a safe environment for worship, learning and fellowship for the participants, volunteers and staff involved in programs and activities. The policy, as a tool, is intended to help prevent misuse of power and incidents of abuse within our congregation and ministries and to assure that the church's response to an allegation or instance of abuse will be just and compassionate for all involved.

The purpose of the policy is to:

(a) **Educate** staff, leaders, and volunteers about safe church matters/processes including abuse, the dynamics of power, and especially the responsibility required by people in positions of power and leadership.
(b) Ensure that pastors, office bearers, staff members, and volunteers are adhering to appropriate boundaries and have structures of **accountability** and **support.**
(c) Reflect the high value and **dignity** that Jesus places on those who are vulnerable.
(d) Provide a **safe** place/process for any person to come forward with a disclosure of abuse and receive support.
(e) Equip the church leadership and congregation with clear **guidelines/processes** for how to respond effectively with justice and compassion to situations of abuse.

The Safe Church Policy is written to align with Canadian law as well as satisfy requirements designated by church insurance policies. Every effort has been made, in drafting this policy, to account for circumstances that could arise in any given program, ministry, or working relationship. In the event, that a circumstance is not covered by this policy, volunteers and staff are encouraged to respond in the spirit of this policy.

ClearView Church will not tolerate any form of abuse (e.g., physical, sexual, emotional, spiritual) as defined herein. ClearView Church will deal with abuse swiftly, confidentially, decisively, and biblically. The policy applies to any persons (e.g., pastors, staff, office bearers, program leaders, and volunteers etc.) serving the church in any capacity, including any of its programs or ministries. Though immediate action may be taken when an abuse is "alleged to have taken

place" (such as requiring the accused to step aside from duties involving the vulnerable sector) the accused will be assumed to be not guilty until an investigation is undertaken and completed. In the event, that charges of abuse against any person is substantiated, such person will be subject to disciplinary actions (e.g., restriction or prohibition from engaging in church activities and in the case of employees, disciplinary action up to and including termination).

3. DEFINITIONS

3.1 Power:

Power is the capacity to influence others to act or believe in a certain way. Power is the ability to influence or affect an outcome. When someone is dependent on a person in some capacity (e.g., programming, supervision etc.) a relationship of power exists. While everyone navigates various forms of power, some are given more power because of their designated positions, roles, and responsibilities (e.g., leaders).

3.2. Abuse of Power:

Abuse of power is at the core of all types of abuse (e.g., physical, emotional, sexual, spiritual). Abuse of power is when someone misuses their authority or capacity to influence to take advantage of, coerce, or harm others. Abuse of power can be used to harm another person intentionally or through ignorance, subtly or overtly, to advance one's own interests without regard for the needs and flourishing of others.

3.3 Vulnerable Person:

A vulnerable person is an individual who because of their age, disability, or other circumstances, whether temporary or permanent, is in a position of dependence on others, or are otherwise at a greater risk than the general population of being harmed by someone in a position of authority or trust relative to them.

3.4 Misconduct:

Misconduct is a violation of healthy professional or personal boundaries between ministry staff/volunteer and those in a church community or ministry participants. Behaviours considered inappropriate, or as a misconduct, are those that may be seen by a reasonable observer to be violating healthy ministry boundaries.

3.5 Physical Abuse:

Physical abuse is defined as any intentional act resulting in physical pain or injury regardless of whether an obvious physical symptom such as a wound or bruising results. Physical abuse also includes neglect, which is a failure to provide for another person's basic human needs. Physical abuse can be a single event or a chronic pattern of behaviour.

3.6 Emotional Abuse:

Emotional abuse consists of excessive criticism, shaming, ridicule, intimidation, blackmailing, threatening a person's safety, property, loved ones, or unwarranted isolation.

3.7 Spiritual Abuse:

Spiritual abuse is a form of emotional abuse characterized by a systematic pattern of coercive and controlling behaviour in a religious context for personal gain, which may include manipulation and exploitation by appeal of convictions and beliefs, the requirement of secrecy and silence, coercion to conform and, censorship for decision making.

3.8 Sexual Abuse:

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

All sexual activity/grooming/exploitation, without exception, between an adult and a child under the age of 16, is considered sexual abuse regardless of whether the adult participant believes that the child has consented to such activities and regardless of the intentions of the adult participant. Sexual touching, sexual activity, private intimacy between a supervisor and a subordinate (regardless of age) who serve together in church ministry is regarded as an abuse of power and sexual abuse.

3.9 Physical Neglect:

Physical neglect is failing to meet the physical needs of a person in one's care.

3.10 Intimate Care:

Intimate care encompasses areas of personal care which most people usually carry out for themselves, but some people are unable to do so because of age, impairment, or disability. Individuals may require help with eating and drinking and other aspects of personal care such as toileting.

3.11 Safe Church Position Titles:

3.11a Safe Church Team (SCT):

The SCT's mandate is to:

(a) Maintain an up-to-date Safe Church Policy and propose updates or revisions to Council as needed.
(b) Ensure all volunteers and staff in church ministry involving children, youth, and other vulnerable sectors have completed an appropriate police record check.
(c) Ensure that ministry leaders and staff have accessible Safe Church screening procedures for volunteers.
(d) Ensure that all data collected for Safe Church purposes is secured for confidentiality.
(e) Ensure training and accessibility to the current Safe Church Policy for ministry staff and volunteers.
(f) Ensure that church members are aware of the Safe Church Policy and reporting procedures.
(g) Be accountable to the ClearView Church Council and to report to Council any matters that may breach or contradict the Safe Church Policy.

3.11b Abuse Response Team (ART):

The ART's mandate is to:

(a) Coordinate the church's response to all allegations of abuse in accordance with the guidelines set out in this policy.
(b) Direct the person making an allegation of abuse to fill out an Incident Report (Appendix D) and report to the relevant authorities (e.g., Children's Aid Society, police).
(c) Inform the liability carrier if the alleged abuser is a church volunteer/employee.
(d) Establish a care plan for the persons involved.
(e) Prepare for disclosure to the church community if deemed appropriate by the Church Council.
(f) Take the necessary steps to preserve the confidentiality (including documentation) of the alleged victim and perpetrator.
(g) Keep confidential any documentation and/or record of all those who are admitted or convicted abusers for reference purposes.

The ART shall be made up of at least five members consisting of the pastor, a Council member, a pastoral care elder, and two other members of the congregation. This group shall be inclusive of gender. If the abuse allegation involves a member of the ART, that individual will remove themselves from all response duties. The ART is accountable to ClearView Council and should report to them on a regular basis.

4. GENERAL SCREENING GUIDELINES AND EXPECTATION OF MINISTRY STAFF, LEADERS, AND VOLUNTEERS

All volunteers/employees who wish to participate in a church ministry in which they regularly lead, supervise activities, and engage with children, youth, or other vulnerable persons (e.g., nursery, Sunday School, Youth, GEMS, Cadets, Friendship, Pastoral Care) must:

(a) **Have regularly attended ClearView Church for a period of at least 6 months*** before they begin volunteering.
(b) **Submit an application for Involvement in Ministry –** All new volunteers will be required to complete and submit the approved Application for Involvement in Ministry Form (Appendix C) to the Ministry Supervisor/Staff.
(c) **Have a Personal Interview –** An interview, will be conducted with all new volunteers prior to Ministry involvement. Whenever possible, the supervisor/staff of the Ministry shall conduct the interview. As per the hiring procedures, all staff will also be interviewed by Church leadership for their Ministry roles.
(d) **Provide a minimum of two references** as deemed necessary. All paid staff are required, as part of the application process, to provide references. *All volunteers who wish to work in ClearView's various ministries/programs but are not regular (6 months minimum) attendees will be required to provide a minimum of two references with their application. References can be obtained from previous employers, friends, pastors, and colleagues.
(e) **Provide a current Police Record Check –** All prospective volunteers/staff aged 18 years or older must obtain an appropriate Police Record check from their community police service (e.g., Halton, Peel). This Record Check must be updated every five years.

For reasons of confidentiality, only the Safe Church Team, the Church administrator, and the Ministry supervisory leader requesting the Police Record check will review the criminal background checks.

If the volunteer/employee is approved, the original Police Record check will be kept confidentially and in perpetuity and stored in a locked file.

If the verification is not approved (e.g., reveals a record of abuse, assault etc.) then the volunteer/employee will be disqualified from service. The original Police Record check will be returned to the volunteer/employee. The Safe Church Team will keep a copy of this Record Check as proof that a Police Record check was done and as a record should there be any question regarding the suitability of a volunteer/employee.

ClearView Church collects screening information to demonstrate due diligence in its hiring and appointing of volunteers and staff. As there is not statute of limitations with respect to individuals who may seek civil action all screening documents will be kept confidential and in perpetuity by the church. In the unlikely event of abuse allegations,

such documents will be used to provide a legal defense for the church, its directors, and other leaders.

(f) **Attend/complete a yearly training/information session** on the Safe Church Policy organized by the Safe Church Team and/or a Supervisory Ministry Leader before commencing volunteer/staff duties.
(g) **Complete and submit an Annual Code of Conduct** (Appendix B) – This is an annual declaration and agreement with ClearView Church Safe Church polices.

5. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR SAFE SUPERVISION OF CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND VULNERABLE ADULTS:

5.1 Discipline:

(a) Misconduct/Abuse (as defined in Section 3) by a volunteer/employee in the execution of their ministry duties is not permitted.
(b) Parent(s) or legal guardians will be informed and involved at the discretion of the supervisor if a child/youth/vulnerable adult misbehaves beyond minor correction or if a pattern of misbehaviour develops.
(c) Concerns about a child/youth/vulnerable adult's inappropriate behaviour or how to respond to challenging behaviour will be discussed with the supervisory leader or ministry staff leader.
(d) Additional supports (e.g., aide) should be involved in classrooms or programs where misbehaviour is an ongoing pattern.
(e) Expectations of children/youth/vulnerable adult's behaviour must reflect their age and level of comprehension. Similarly, discipline must reflect their age and level of comprehension. Appropriate forms of discipline for children/youth/vulnerable adults may include:
    - Speaking to the child/youth/vulnerable adult in a controlled manner about their inappropriate behaviour and helping them focus on a more acceptable behaviour.
    - Reminding the child/youth/vulnerable adult about the rules and expectations of the group.
    - Distracting the child/youth/vulnerable adult with another activity.
    - Briefly isolating the child/youth/vulnerable adult from the others if a volunteer/staff is available to assist/support (a child is never to be left alone).
    - Asking the Ministry director/staff and/or parent/guardian to attend/observe the program/class/activity.
    - Documenting (Appendix D - Incident Report) continued infractions/challenges as necessary and submitting to the Ministry Leader/Supervisor.

(f) In the case where all appropriate forms of discipline are deemed unsuccessful or ineffective, a decision regarding the child/youth/ vulnerable adult's resumption in a program will be confirmed or denied after discussion with the Ministry director, program leader, volunteers, and parents/guardians.

(g) Regarding discipline, concerns about a leader's or a volunteer's misconduct must first be discussed between the leader/volunteer and the program supervisor. **Note:** this does not apply if the inappropriate behaviour is an allegation of abuse, in which case it must be reported to the appropriate authorities (e.g., Halton Police, Children's Aid Society). If the problem remains unresolved, the Ministry director will be informed, and appropriate action will be taken as per advice of the ART and/or Council.

5.2 Supervision:

(a) **Two adult rule** and **rule of three:** At all church-sponsored functions involving the supervision of children, youth, or vulnerable adults, either the "two adult" rule or the "rule of three" will be adhered to. No staff or volunteers should be alone with a single child, youth, or vulnerable adult in locations where they cannot be clearly observed by others.
    - The Two Adult Rule: At least two, unrelated screened (See Section 4) adults must be present at every function and in each classroom, vehicle, or other enclosed area during all activities.
    - The Rule of Three: It is acceptable to have three individuals present at every function and in each classroom, vehicle, or other enclosed area. One of the three must be a screened adult (See Section 4). If children are under the age of 6 years, the second individual must be at least 12-years of age.

(b) One-to-One Meetings: There are times when a Ministry leader/volunteer seeks to meet one-to-one.
    - When possible, the meeting should take place in a public space. In the case of meeting with a minor, knowledge and permission from parents/guardian is required.
    - When possible, the meeting should take place between a participant and leader/volunteer of the same gender.
    - The meeting shall be documented (Appendix E) by the Ministry leader/volunteer and reviewed by the Ministry director/staff.

5.3 Transportation:

(a) This policy applies to adults (25+ years and with 5+ years driving experience) who may transport non-related children/youth/vulnerable adults in the course of church-sponsored programs.

(b) Adults must have a valid driver's license and proof of insurance before transporting children/youth/vulnerable adults. Drivers will have their driver's

license and insurance reviewed by the relevant Ministry Director (e.g., Youth, Cadets) prior to activities/events.

(c) Drivers must abide by the provincial requirements for seatbelt use, car seats, and airbag safety.

(d) The following procedures must be in place:
- The Rule of Two or The Rule of Three must be in place.
- Children/Youth/Vulnerable Adult are seated in the back seat of vehicles.
- Drivers for church-sponsored activities/events will complete and submit Meeting/Visitation Log (Appendix E) to be reviewed by the relevant Ministry director.

(e) Adults or minors who transport related children/youth/vulnerable adults to church-sponsored events do so without the implied approval of the church and do so at their own initiative and risk. By taking such a voluntary initiative, they hold the church harmless from all liability.

(f) Parents or guardians who permit minors to transport non-related minors to church-sponsored events, do so at their own risk and without the implied approval of the church. They agree to hold the church harmless from all liability.

5.4 Electronic Communication (e.g., Social-Media, Email, Texting etc.):

Digital citizenship is defined as the norms of responsible behaviour related to the appropriate use of digital technology. These norms and responsibilities are an expectation of anyone who is actively participating or leading a ministry at ClearView Church.

All virtual social gathering platforms such as Zoom, Teams, Google Meet, Google Hangouts and others may be used by ClearView Church staff, leaders, and volunteers for ministry use. For the purposes of this document, specific guidelines (Appendix G) are given for Zoom, however, the same guidelines are recommended for all social gathering platforms.

The following guidelines for electronic communication shall be observed:

(a) All users of digital technology at ClearView Church will do so in a lawful, responsible, and ethical manner consistent with the purpose for which it is intended.

(b) Parental/guardian consent will be required for all those under the age of 18 who are invited to online ministry events.

(c) All users will ensure that photos, videos, or images of an individual/group are not posted online/shared digitally unless consent (Appendix H & I) from the individuals (over the age of 18) or parental consent (for those under the age of 18) has been obtained. Photos, videos, recordings, or images cannot be taken using any device unless authorized.

(d) Volunteers/staff/leaders are forbidden to post or distribute identifiable information of any child, youth, or vulnerable adult. Personal identifiable information includes but is not limited to:
    - full name
    - home address
    - email address
    - telephone number
    - or any information that would allow someone to identify or contact a person that would jeopardize their safety or well-being in any way.

(e) Ministry leaders will ensure that all online dialogue and interactions with those in the ClearView Church congregation or the community will be for ministry purposes only.

(f) Ongoing conversations or lengthy personal communications should not be conducted online (e.g., email, text) or through social media.

(g) Social media interactions by Ministry leaders should be professional and reflect Christian character and values.

(h) The setting up and monitoring of video conferencing communication, such as Zoom or Face Time etc., shall be the responsibility of the Ministry leader. During these sessions, it is the Ministry leader's responsibility to remain online and oversee the communication of all involved. If a Ministry event has concluded, the Ministry leader who has set up the conference will be the one to terminate the call. If members of the conference (that are over the age of 18) wish to gather online to continue communicating without the Ministry leader, this must be set up independently and will no longer be under the accountability of ClearView Church.

(i) Clear guidelines should be made known to parents/guardians and participants about the nature and expectations of an online event (e.g., maintaining respectful conversations, observing appropriate dress codes, where possible leaders and participants should be in a public place, and be respectful of other household member's privacy when meeting).

(j) In online gatherings involving those under the age of 18, a minimum of two adults are to be present from the beginning of the virtual meeting until the end of the meeting.

(k) Leaders of children, youth, or vulnerable adults should not have a group with those of only the opposite gender.

(l) If digital communication raises any child/youth/vulnerable adult protection concerns, the staff or volunteer will inform their supervisor.

(m) If a volunteer/staff leaves a Ministry due to misconduct, the volunteer/staff will be advised to remove the contact information of Ministry participants from all digital devices.

6. PROGRAM-SPECIFIC GUIDELINES FOR MINISTRIES AND PROGRAMS:

It is recognized that Ministry programming is dynamic and changing over time. Every effort has been made, in drafting this policy, to address a variety of circumstances that could arise in any given program, ministry, or working relationship. In the event, that a circumstance/program is not covered by this policy, volunteers and staff are encouraged to apply their best judgement using the spirit of this policy to guide them in best Safe Church practices.

a. Nursery Programs (Childcare – Infant, Preschool):

(a) The General Guidelines (Section 5) applies to the nursery programs.
(b) At least two attendants must serve, in nursery rooms, at all times. One screened adult must be in a nursery for every five children before an additional adult attendant is required.
(c) Minors (between the ages of 12 and 17) may volunteer as attendants provided that an adult is present. Minors may not care for children without adult supervision.
(d) Only one adult member of a family should serve in a nursery at a given time. A couple (husband and wife) should **not** serve together in the nursery program.
(e) If the designated volunteer/attendant cannot serve as scheduled, he/she may only find a substitute from an approved list of the nursery volunteers and will notify the supervisor of changes.
(f) Only parents/guardians and designated attendants are allowed in the nursery/childcare area.
(g) No child should be left unattended in the nursery at any time.
(h) Nursery doors and any area where children are being cared for must have doors with windows or an unobstructed view into the room.
(i) Only screened adults may assist children with bathroom needs. For children who do not require assistance in the bathroom, the adult must remain outside the bathroom. For children who require assistance, the adult attendant must assist the child with the door ajar. No one should ever be alone with a child in an unsupervised washroom or go into the cubicle with a child and shut the door. The diapering of an infant or toddler must take place in the nursery room/diapering station and within eyesight of other caregivers.
(j) The parent/guardian of any child requiring medical attention (e.g., illness, accident) must be notified as soon as possible. An Accident/Incident Report (Appendix D) must be completed in case of accident or injury to the Nursery Supervisor/Coordinator.
(k) No one may take a child from the nursery or childcare area without the consent of the parents (except as outlined above regarding assisting a child with bathroom needs).
(l) Children in infant or toddler nurseries must be picked up by their parents/guardians only. Children will be dismissed after proper identification is made to the Nursery supervision.

(m) Completed attendance records for all nursery attendants and children must be turned in to the office administrator for filing at the end of each year.

b. Sunday School Program (Grades 1-5):

(a) The General Guidelines (Section 5) applies to the Sunday School program.
(b) Only one adult member of a family should serve in a classroom at any given time. A couple (husband and wife) should not serve together in the same classroom during the Sunday School program.
(c) Whenever Sunday School is in session, two volunteers/staff, including, at minimum, one screened adult should be present in each classroom.
(d) Only screened adults/volunteers may assist children with bathroom needs. Children are not to be sent to the bathroom alone but should be accompanied by a buddy in the same age group, and of the same gender. If deemed necessary, a screened adult/volunteer may escort the children to the bathroom, prop the door open to ensure that everything is in order and remain outside the bathroom door and wait for the children before escorting them back to the classroom. No one should ever be alone with a child in an unsupervised washroom or go into the cubicle with a child and shut the door.
(e) Whenever Sunday School is in session, the classroom doors must allow for an unobstructed view of the room.
(f) Appropriate displays of affection are often a part of conveying support and encouragement to one another. In a public space, displays of affection between teacher/volunteer and child should be limited to such actions as a brief hug, an arm around the shoulder, an open-handed pat on the back, a handclasp or handshake, or a light touch on the forearm. Displays of affection should be restricted to public areas. A child's right or a teacher's right to refuse any of these will be respected.
(g) The parent/guardian of any child requiring medical attention (e.g., illness, injury) must be notified as soon as possible. An Accident/Incident Report (Appendix D) must be completed in case of accident or injury and submitted to the Sunday School Supervisor/Coordinator.
(h) Completed attendance records for all Sunday School teachers/volunteers and participants (children) are to be turned over to the office administrator for filing at the end of the season.

c. Summer Kids Camp (Kids Camp):

(a) The General Guidelines (Section 5) applies to the Kids Camp Program.
(b) All Kids Camp activities will be conducted with at least two volunteer/staff, at least one of whom is a screened adult acting in a supervisory role. A couple (e.g., husband and wife) should not serve together in the same classroom. Volunteers/staff should not meet alone with a child without another adult or leader nearby to observe.

(c) Children are not to be sent to the bathroom alone but should be accompanied by a buddy in the same age group, and of the same gender. If deemed necessary, a screened adult/volunteer may escort the children to the bathroom, prop the door open to ensure that everything is in order and remain outside the bathroom door and wait for the children before escorting them back to the classroom. No one should ever be alone with a child in an unsupervised washroom or go into the cubicle with a child and shut the door.
(d) Whenever Kids Camp is in session, classroom doors must allow for an unobstructed view of the room.
(e) Outdoor activities should adhere to the same safety considerations as classrooms in the church building. Children should not meet outside without adult supervision.
(f) Appropriate displays of affection are often a part of conveying support and encouragement to one another. In a public space, displays of affection between leader/volunteer and child should be limited to such actions as a brief hug, an arm around the shoulder, an open-handed pat on the back, a handclasp or handshake, or a light touch on the forearm. Displays of affection should restricted to public areas. A child's right or leader/volunteer's right to refuse any of these will be respected.
(g) The parent/guardian of any child requiring medical attention (e.g., illness, injury) must be notified as soon as possible. An Accident/Incident Report (Appendix D) must be completed in case of accident or injury and submitted Kids Camp Supervisor/Coordinator.
(h) Completed attendance records for supervisors/volunteers and participants (children) are to be turned over to the office administrator for filing at the end of the season.

d. Cadets and GEMS Clubs:

(a) The General Guidelines (Section 5) applies to the Cadets and GEMS Program.
(b) Club leaders should provide adequate supervision of the participants. Each club function should be supervised by a minimum of two persons, a screened adult leader and another volunteer at least four years older than the oldest club member.
(c) Club members should not arrive more than 10 minutes before the start of club activities, nor should they stay longer than 10 minutes after the conclusion of club activities.
(d) Club activities that take place away from the church facility should adhere to the General Guidelines (Section 5) for supervision and transportation.
(e) Sleepovers, camping, or other overnight events will only be permitted when all supervisors/leaders are fully screened. There must be signed parental consent and permission for off-premises or overnight events. The two-adult rule applies at all times.

(f) Appropriate displays of affection between club leaders and participants are often a part of conveying support and encouragement to one another. In a public space, displays of affection should be limited to such actions as a brief hug, an arm around the shoulder, an open-handed pat on the back, a handclasp or handshake, or a light touch on the forearm. A child's right or a club leader's right to refuse any of these will be respected.
(g) The parent/guardian of any child requiring medical attention (e.g., illness, injury) must be notified as soon as possible. An Accident/Incident Report (Appendix D) must be completed in case of accident or injury and submitted to the Cadet/GEM's Supervisor/Coordinator.
(h) Completed attendance records for supervisors/volunteers and program participants are to be turned over to the office administrator for filing at the end of each season.

e. Youth Ministry:

(a) The General Guidelines (Section 5) applies to the Youth Ministry Program.
(b) In the context of group activities, youth group leaders should provide sufficient and appropriate supervision of the youth in the Youth Ministry Program. Youth group functions must be under the supervision of, at minimum, two screened, unrelated adult leaders. These guidelines also apply to activities held away from the church facility.
(c) Youth leaders may meet one-on-one with youth group members once or twice and thereafter only with the permission of the parents.
(d) Leaders should, if possible, meet with youth in a public space. Should a leader meet, in the context of their ministry role, with an individual youth, they must submit a Meeting Log (Appendix E) to be reviewed by the Youth Director.
(e) It is NEVER appropriate for a youth leader to date a member of the Youth Group. Similarly, a youth group leader should not date the close friend of a member of the Youth Group.
(f) Youth leaders will adhere to the Transportation guidelines (Section 5) and as directed by the Youth Director.
(i) Appropriate displays of affection are often a part of conveying support and encouragement to one another. In a public space, displays of affection should be limited to such actions as a brief hug, an arm around the shoulder, an open-handed pat on the back, a handclasp or handshake, or a light touch on the forearm. A youth's right or a leader's right to refuse any of these will be respected.
(g) Phone calls, letters, texts, or emails (communication) should be Ministry focussed and/or informational in nature. The giving of gifts to a group member by a leader should be Ministry related.
(h) Sleepovers, camping or other overnight events are permitted only with the appropriate supervision of screened adults. The two adult rule applies at all times.

(i) There must be signed parental consent and permission for all participants, under the age of 18 years, for off-premises or overnight events.
(j) The parent/guardian of any youth requiring medical attention (e.g., illness, injury) must be notified as soon as possible. An Accident/Incident Report (Appendix D) must be completed in case of accident or injury and submitted to the Youth Director.
(k) Completed attendance records for leaders/volunteers and participants are to be turned over the church administrator for filing at the end of each season.

f. Friendship Ministry:

(a) The General Guidelines (Section 5) applies to the Friendship Ministry Program.
(b) Adherence to the Policies and guidelines issued by the Friendship Ministries organization will be applied.
(c) A ratio of 1 mentor/volunteers to 3 Friends is suggested, a ratio of 1 to 1 is preferred during Friendship activities.
(d) When using the bathroom, if needed, Friends should be assisted/supervised by someone of the same gender in such a manner as to ensure privacy and safety.
(e) When Friends require personal assistance (e.g., toileting/intimate care) or need assistance with medical devices, their caregivers should provide the assistance. While mentors should not provide or assist in personal care, in the special case that volunteers need to support Friends (e.g., toileting, feeding, one-to-one interactions, medical devices, injury) in ways outside of a mentorship role, an Accident/Incident report (Appendix D) will be completed and submitted to the Friendship program supervisor.
(f) Appropriate displays of affection are often a part of conveying support and encouragement to one another. In a public space, displays of affection should be limited to such actions as a brief hug, an arm around the shoulder, an open-handed pat on the back, a handclasp or handshake, or a light touch on the forearm. A Friend's right or a leader's right to refuse any of these will be respected.
(g) In the event of a violent act, restraint must be a non-violent physical intervention. Should the victim fall to the ground, restraint must be released immediately. A call to 911 should be made if the situation warrants it.
(h) If corrections to a Friend's attitude and/or behaviour are deemed necessary the following are suggested:
    - Give a verbal reminder to follow the rules/appropriate behaviour.
    - Involve another leader, mentor, guardian, or caregiver.
    - Maintaining supervision, ask the Friend to leave the Worship Centre or foyer for a brief time for a time out.
    - Ask the Friend to not attend the program until an agreement can be reached about acceptable behaviour.
    - Ongoing problems beyond minor correction, parents/guardians and/or caregivers must be informed of the situation.

(i) Completed attendance records for leaders/volunteers and participants (Friends) are to be turned over the church administrator for filing at the end of each season.

g. Pastoral Care:

(a) Pastoral care refers to the Ministry of Christian care done by pastors, elders, deacons, and other designated volunteers. Such care is important in the church, reflecting the love, compassion, and presence of Christ to those who participate in the ministries of the church. While this Christian care is extended to all members of the congregation, there are times when pastoral care may involve a vulnerable person, who because of their age, disability, or other circumstances, whether **temporary** or **permanent,** are in a position of dependence on others, or are otherwise at a greater risk of being harmed by a person in a position of authority or trust relative to them.

(b) Pastors and Ministry staff engage in pastoral care as part of their roles at ClearView Church. Specific counselling/visitation may take place in the pastor's office, in the church, or a place agreed upon by all parties involved. It is recommended that pastoral care visits take place in a public setting. However, if this is not reasonable or practical (e.g., infirmity), the pastor/staff may meet privately with a member in their home.

(c) Office bearers (elders, deacons) and other designated volunteers appointed in Pastoral Care Ministry may engage in regular visitation of those under their care. Specific visitation/pastoral care with any member of ClearView Church must be limited to two times without the prior approval of the respective accountability group (pastor or ministry supervisor/coordinator). While it is encouraged for elders and deacons to visit/work together in pastoral care, this is particularly important with members of the opposite sex or youth. Elders and deacons may meet privately with church members, but it is recommended that these visits occur in a public place. However, if this is not reasonable or practical (e.g., infirmity), an office bearer/pastoral care may accommodate a member's request to visit in their home.

(d) While pastoral care often involves a casual or occasional contact with the congregant members, there are times when pastoral care includes a more formal interaction such as a visit, meeting, phone/Zoom call etc. When this is the case, staff/volunteers must log (Appendix E) their visit noting all persons with whom they met in the course of their pastoral visit. All Pastoral Care logs (Appendix E), completed by pastoral care staff/volunteers, will be submitted to the church office administrator (through Church Centre) within 48 hours of a meeting with a member and kept confidential and available for review only by their Ministry Supervisor.

(e) Maintaining member privacy (not disclosing names), logged pastoral care visitations with members will be reviewed regularly by the Supervisor and at pastoral care meetings. If there are circumstances of the visit which indicate

challenges beyond the capacity for the pastoral care, staff/volunteers to negotiate, they will connect with their Supervisor/Lead Pastor for next steps/support. When personal safety, life, or well-being are indicated, the appropriate authorities (e.g., police, Children's Aid) will be contacted.

(f) When a pastoral care team member discerns that the person being visited may have dementia like condition or a limited memory capacity, a pastoral card (name, church, contact information) should be left in the residence or care facility.

(g) All volunteers appointed for the role of pastoral care must honour the limits of their role in giving care, referring church members, as the situation requires, to services of others who are better/professionally equipped to meet the needs of the member.

(h) The Pastoral Care team staff/leader, Safe Church Team leader, or Council chair is responsible for overseeing that risk is being assessed and there is adherence to the pastoral care guidelines.

7. RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE:

a. Obligation to Disclose or Report:

(a) When a staff/volunteer becomes aware of abuse or has reasonable grounds to suspect that person (child or adult) is being abused, they are to report such information to their Ministry leader/supervisor, a pastor, or a member of the Abuse Response Team (ART). If a minor or vulnerable adult is in immediate physical danger, then the police (911) will be notified immediately.

(b) It is the **responsibility/obligation of the staff/volunteer who observed and/or received a disclosure of abuse**, under the *Ontario Child, Youth and Family Services Act* (Section 125), **to report** to the Halton Children's Aid Society (905 333-4441) any suspicions of physical, sexual, emotional abuse or neglect of a minor (child/youth). Any allegations of sexual abuse are to be reported to the Halton Regional Police (905 825-4777).

(c) When a Ministry leader or pastor becomes aware of an allegation of abuse, he/she shall notify the ART.

(d) If the disclosure of abuse and/or neglect has been made known to Ministry leaders, pastors, or directly to the ART by the perpetrator, then the perpetrator shall be strongly encouraged to immediately self-disclose to the appropriate authorities (e.g., Halton Children's Aid Society, Halton Regional Police). A member of the ART or a pastor may accompany the alleged perpetrator. Where the perpetrator declines to self-disclose, then disclosure shall proceed as per 7.1 (a) and (b).

(e) An Incident Report Form (Appendix D) of the observation/disclosure is required and submitted to Ministry Supervisor/ART and shall be kept confidential.

b. Response of the Abuse Response Team (ART):

When the ART becomes aware of an allegation of abuse, it shall:

(a) Immediately direct the person who observed and/or received disclosure of abuse to make a report to the relevant authorities as per 7.1 (a) and (b) and to complete and submit an Incident Report (Appendix D).
(b) Inform the insurance liability carrier if the alleged abuser is a church staff or volunteer.
(c) Establish a Christian care plan for the individual(s) involved:
    - Suspend or put on leave the accused from their duties without prejudice, for up to 90 days, until the conclusion of the investigation.
    - Obtain legal advice/counsel.
    - Provide support and care for the victim of abuse and their family.
    - Determine the primary contact for communication with police and/or Child Services.
    - Determine who will negotiate media inquiries.
    - Contact the Classical Safe Church coordinator and/or denominational Safe Church Ministry (safechurchministry@crcna.org) for further counsel.
(d) In coordination with ClearView Church Council, discern appropriate communication/disclosure with the church community.
(e) Take all the necessary steps to preserve the confidentiality of the alleged victim and perpetrator.
(f) Keep a confidential record of all those who are admitted or convicted abusers for the reference purposes for future ministry positions.

c. Responding to an Alleged Child Victim:

Following the disclosure of an abuse allegation to the Halton Children's Aid Society and/or to the Halton Regional Police, the ART shall:

(a) Inform the child victim and/or the victim's parents/guardians of the Safe Church policy and procedures in responding to abuse.
(b) Offer pastoral care and support to promote spiritual, emotional, and physical healing.
(c) Encourage continued therapeutic/medical interventions, including qualified Christian counselling trained with matters of abuse. The parent/guardian shall make the call for referral.

d. Responding to an Alleged Adult Victim:

The ART shall:

(a) Inform the victim of the Safe Church policy and procedures in responding to abuse.

(b) Offer pastoral care and support to promote spiritual, emotional, and physical healing.
(c) Encourage continued therapeutic/medical interventions, including qualified Christian counselling trained with matters of abuse. The adult shall make the call for referral.

e. Responding to an Alleged Perpetrator who has NOT been convicted or who had NOT admitted to abuse:

The ART shall:
(a) Raise the allegation with the alleged perpetrator and ask for his/her response.
(b) Inform the victim of the Safe Church policy and procedures in responding to abuse.
(c) Offer pastoral care and support to promote spiritual, emotional, and physical healing.

7.6 Meeting with a Convicted or Admitted Perpetrator:

The ART shall:
(a) Inform the victim of the Safe Church policy and procedures in responding to abuse.
(b) Make the perpetrator aware that ClearView Church Council will take the necessary steps to protect others and of restoring the perpetrator.
(c) Offer pastoral care and support to promote spiritual, emotional, and physical healing.
(d) Insist on therapeutic/medical interventions, including qualified Christian counselling trained with matters of abuse.

7.7 Responsibilities of ClearView Church Council:

(a) Upon disclosure of an allegation of abuse and pending the outcome of an investigation, Council shall inform the alleged abuser, if holding a ministry staff position, church office bearer, or if in a position of trust/leadership, he/she shall be suspended from his or her duties.
(b) Upon confirmation of abuse, Council shall inform the abuser of their immediate removal from church staff, office bearer, or other positions of trust.
(c) After the ART confirms an abuse allegation, with the victim's and/or parent/guardian's consent, Council shall coordinate with the ART appropriate next steps such as communication to the church community.
(d) Make the congregation aware of support to any person who may come forward with further concerns or allegations.
(e) Promote prayer for healing.

Appendix A

Guidelines for Responding to a Child's Report/Disclosure of Abuse

- Take the child seriously when she/he tells the story.
- Avoid judgemental statements such as, "I think you just had a bad dream."
- Do not appear frightened or disgusted by the child's story since this may cause the child to stop talking or to believe that you are upset with him/her.
- Do not try to convince the child that the story is not true, or that it did not happen the way in which the child reported that it did.
- Do not make promises to the child that you will not tell someone what happened to him/her.
- Tell the child you want to find help so the incident can be prevented from ever happening again.
- Do not offer the child a reward for telling the story or promise a gift if the child tells another adult.
- Reassure the child that he/she does not deserve to be hurt by anyone.
- Do not frighten the child by talking about police involvement or medical examinations to verify the complaint; instead share with the child that other people need to know about what happened.
- Do not ask the child to show you bruises that are beneath the child's underwear or clothing; only observe those bruises that are accessible.
- Do not investigate the child's story; rather listen to the story and make notes immediately afterwards while it is still fresh in your memory.
- Do not tell the child that he/she has been abused.
- Offer to support the child and remind the child that you care for him/her.
- Follow through in consecutive weeks and months by speaking to the child and offering support.
- Abuse allegations are confidential/private and should be discussed only with the concerned parties and proper authorities.

Appendix B

Annual Code of Conduct and Declaration of Understanding and Agreement with ClearView Church Safe Church Policies

1. I have:
   - √ Attended/completed the required Annual Safe Church training.
   - √ A relevant and current (5 year) police record check (18+ years of age). I certify that there have been no changes in the past year regarding a current police record check.

2. I agree:
   - √ To abide by the guidelines and processes as written in the Safe Church Policy and to follow the described principles of conduct.

3. I commit to the best of my ability:
   - √ A Christ-like lifestyle in word and deed, and to model this to those in my care.
   - √ Promote truthfulness, transparency, and honesty in my ministry work.
   - √ Maintain appropriate boundaries in all ministry relationships.
   - √ Respect the governing authorities of ClearView Church.
   - √ Protect and promote the safety of those under my care and myself.
   - √ Report, as per Safe Church policy, any suspected abuse to the proper authorities.

My signature acknowledges my understanding and agreement with these guidelines and principles of conduct, as well as certifying that I have presented an honest account of myself.

Name (please print): _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix C

Application for Involvement in Ministry at
ClearView Church
(Confidential)

This application is to be completed by all participants for any volunteer position involving the supervision of minors and others who may be vulnerable. The church requires you to be aware of and follow the policies and procedures in relation to working with children and others who may be vulnerable. Training is provided for many areas of ministry. Our desire is to provide a safe and secure environment for all who participate in our programs.

Personal Information:

Name _____ Date: _____

Gender: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Address: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Email: _____

1. How long have you attended ClearView Church?

   _____ less than 6 months
   _____ more than 6 months

2. Are you a ClearView Church member?

   _____ yes
   _____ no

3. Would you describe yourself as a Christian?

   _____yes
   _____ no

4. How would you like serve/volunteer at ClearView Church?

_____

5. Please list any ministry experiences, gifts/skills, and/or training that have prepared you for working/volunteering in ministry at ClearView Church.

_____
_____

_____ I agree to securing a police record check before volunteering at ClearView Church (this excludes all those under the age of 18 years)

***Personal References (non-relative) –**

Following the criteria for references below, please provide a minimum of 2 people:

Person #1:

Name: _____Phone number: _____

Relationship: _____ Email: _____

Person #2:

Name: _____ Phone number: _____

Relationship: _____ Email: _____

***References** are required for all paid staff positions and those wishing to volunteer in ClearView's various programs and ministries who:

- Have not regularly attended ClearView Church for at least 6 months.
- Participate in ClearView's programs/ministries but attend other churches.

Appendix D

Incident Report Form (Injury or Suspected Abuse)
ClearView Church
(Confidential)

This report form is for the purpose of recording any incident of injury or suspected abuse. The form shall be submitted to the relevant Ministry Supervisor/Director and/or to the Abuse Respond Team (ART).

Name of the Person making the Report: _____

Position: _____

Date of Report: _____ Phone number: _____

Date of Incident: _____

Description of the incident:(time of occurrence, what occurred, who was involved, location etc.)

_____
_____
_____
_____

Name(s) of any other potential witnesses: _____

Action taken (note dates):
_____
_____
_____

Signature of person submitting the report: _____

If Applicable, name of ART member receiving this report: _____

Date received: _____

Appendix E

Visitation/Meeting Log
ClearView Church
(Confidential)

Name: _____

Date of Visit/Meeting: _____

Ministry Role:

- Pastor/Staff
- Pastoral Care Elder
- Deacon
- Youth Leader
- Other _____

Visit/Connection Location:

- In-Person
- Phone
- Online (FaceTime, Zoom etc.)

Reason for the Visit:

- Connection visit
- Counsel – spiritual/emotional/financial
- Prayer
- Illness/hospital visit
- Shut-in
- Communion
- Other _____

Appendix F

Table of Screening Requirements

Ministry	Position	Application – Ministry Involvement	Interview – Ministry leadership	Police Record check (5 years)	Annual Safe Church Training	Annual Code of Conduct
ClearView Church Staff	Pastors	No (formal application process)	No (formal application process)	Yes	Yes	Yes
ClearView Church Staff	Adult staff	No (formal application process)	No (formal application process)	Yes	Yes	Yes
ClearView Church Staff	Staff under the age of 18 years (teen)	No (formal application process)	No (formal application process)	No	Yes	Yes
Nursery	Supervisor	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Adult Volunteer	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Volunteers under the age of 18 years	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Sunday School/Summer Kid's Camp	Staff	No (formal application process)	No (formal application process)	Yes (adults)	Yes	Yes
	Adult Volunteer	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Volunteers under the age of 18 (teen/LITs)	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Cadets/GEMS Clubs	Directors	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Adult Volunteers	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Volunteers under the age of 18 (teens)	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Friendship	Directors	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Adult Mentors	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Youth	Staff	No (formal application process)	No (formal application process)	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Adult Volunteers	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Office Bearers	Council, PCEs, Deacons	No (appointed)	No (appointed)	Yes	Yes	Yes

Appendix G

Tips for Using the Zoom (Virtual Meeting) Platforms for Online Communication

1. Leverage your settings: There are settings in Zoom that can help you keep your meeting safe. Lock down your meetings with passwords, mute attendees on joining, and lock down screen sharing so that an attendee is unable to take over the meeting with their screen without your permission. Set your Zoom meetings to use the 'waiting room', so that people joining do not have access to the meeting until a Host allows them in. If you are working with large groups, assign an additional person to manage the waiting room throughout the meeting.

2. Removing users: Should you encounter a situation where someone needs to be removed from the Zoom meeting, this can be achieved through your settings. (1) Click 'Manage Participants' at the bottom of the Zoom window. (2) Next to the person you wish to remove, click 'More'. (3) From the list that appears, click 'Remove' and 'Confirm'.

3. Share Zoom links carefully: Without any controls in place, a Zoom link will let anyone join. Use discernment about sharing your Zoom meeting link in public places like social media. Hackers and pranksters are searching for these public links and accessing meeting rooms will be a significant distraction for the ministry event and to the attendees.

4. Lock your meetings: Once a meeting has started and everyone is in attendance, you can (1) click 'Participants' at the bottom of your Zoom window. (2) In the participants 'pop-up' box you will see a button where you are able to 'Lock Meeting'. When you lock the meeting, new participants are unable to join even if they have the meeting ID and password. This is not necessary for most online meetings but may be a helpful tool to further protect the privacy of attendees/agenda of the meeting.

Appendix H

Media Release Form (Minor – under 18 years of age)

I, _____, (Parent/Guardian) herby grant ClearView Church the right to reproduce, use, exhibit, display, broadcast, and distribute photographs or electronic images and /or audio-video recordings of my child/ward _____ (child's name) taken _____ (date of event) for use in connection with the activities or services of ClearView Church for informational, promotional, or instructional purposes.

My child/ward was not paid to appear in these photographs, electronic images, and/or audio-visual broadcasts and will not receive any fees for their use now and in the future.

Name of Child/Ward (please print): _____

Name of Parent/Guardian (please print): _____

Signature of Parent/Guardian: _____

Date: _____

Appendix I

Media Release Form (Adult – 18+ years of age)

I, _____ , (name) herby grant ClearView Church the right to reproduce, use, exhibit, display, broadcast, and distribute photographs or electronic images and /or audio-video recordings of me taken _____ (date of event) for use in connection with the activities or services of ClearView Church for informational, promotional, or instructional purposes.

I was not paid to appear in these photographs, electronic images, and/or audio-visual broadcasts and will not receive any fees for their use now and in the future.

Name of Child/Ward (please print): _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Council Approval

Approved by ClearView Christian Reformed Church Council

Approval Date: December 12, 2023

Implementation Date: December 17, 2023

Chair of Council: Heather Van Laare

Signature: HVL

Vice-Chair of Council: Edith van der Boom

Signature: Edith M. van der Boom

For Safe Church Policy EvdB.

1/We have the authority to bind the Corporation.