

# CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

## LITITZ CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN

### Statement regarding abuse:

God embraces children with love, placing their nurture and care in our hand. We believe that children should be safe from all forms of abuse and neglect. We, the church, will be advocates for children and establish clearly defined safeguards, policies and procedures for their protection.

*(Child Abuse Prevention Handbook, A Manual for the Church of the Brethren, 1991.)*

We recognize the seriousness and sinfulness of physical, sexual and emotional abuse. This type of mistreatment violates the very image of God. It causes serious damage to the soul, body and spirit of the one abused. It also causes harm to the soul and spirit of the abuser. If abuse does occur, we will seek and support healing measures for the abused and abuser.

Recognizing God's love and concern for children/youth, it is our desire to reflect God's love to those in our care. We believe it is our responsibility to:

1. Protect the children/youth to whom we minister from being physically, sexually, or emotionally abused while under our care.
2. Guard our workers from being falsely suspected or accused of wrongful behavior toward a child/youth.
3. Educate workers in ways to recognize abuse and in appropriate reporting procedures.
4. Be good stewards not only of those entrusted to our care, but also of our assets.

### What constitutes child abuse?

There are three kinds of child abuse: physical, sexual and emotional. Physical abuse is inflicting bodily injury on a child. Sexual abuse is using a child in or exposing a child to sexual activities, with or without his/her consent. And emotional abuse is demanding that the child do more than he/she is able to do, severely criticizing or humiliating him/her for not living up to a demand, or placing upon him/her such unclear requirements that the child cannot understand what he/she is supposed to do.

*(From A Cry for Help)*

### Guidelines for workers with children/youth:

- Attend the church for at least six months before becoming involved in children's/youth ministry.
- Complete and sign a "Service Application." Sign and submit a "Children's Ministry Covenant" annually.
- Attend training for Lititz Church of the Brethren's Child Protection Policy.
- Begin ministry after approval from the screening committee (Pastor of Christian Nurture, Pastor of Youth Ministries and an appointee of the Christian Education Commission.) Screening may include things such as an interview, reference checks, Criminal Records Check and Child Abuse Clearance Form. Any person with a history of abuse of children will not be approved as a children/youth worker.
- Hold a valid drivers license and car insurance (for those transporting children and youth) and obey all traffic laws, including speed limit and use of seatbelts.

## Guidelines for ministry with children/youth:

- **Two-Adult Rule:** At least two approved adults should be present during any church-sponsored program, event, or ministry involving children/youth. If it is not possible for two adults to be present in the same room, an adult “roamer” may monitor activity in the rooms and bathrooms. Youth may serve as the second person in children’s ministry after having completed the above steps for approval as workers.
- **Open Door Policy:** When there is no window in the classroom door or if the window is obstructed, the door should be left open so that persons passing by can observe.
- **Parental Permission:** Parents should be well informed of all information regarding the events in which their children/youth will be participating. A consent form should be signed yearly by parents. In a situation where an adult has a legitimate reason to be alone with a child/youth, parental consent should be obtained.
- **Overnight Rule:** All adult chaperones (supervisors, sponsors, parents, and helpers) must be approved by the screening committee before they can accompany children/youth on an overnight activity. Parental permission will be obtained for all overnight activities.
- **Expressions of Affection:** Adults must use caution when allowing expressions of affection toward children/youth. True expressions of affection contribute to a warm healthy relationship. Adult workers should NOT stop loving and touching the children, rather remember to place reasonable limits on physical interaction. Workers should:
  - Respect a child’s/youth’s refusal of affection.
  - Be aware/sensitive to what makes a child feel uncomfortable.Touching or observation of private areas (except as necessary, such as changing diapers) or any kiss close to the mouth is inappropriate.

Any change from above guidelines must be pre-approved by the appropriate supervisor on a case-by-case basis.

## GUIDELINES FOR REPORTING SUSPECTED ABUSE:

- We believe that all workers in ministry with children/youth have a personal responsibility and moral obligation to report any suspected abuse to pastoral staff (Pastor, Associate Pastor, Pastor of Christian Nurture and Pastor of Youth Ministries).
- The volunteer or paid staff making observation or receiving disclosure of suspected abuse will contact a member of the pastoral staff of Lititz Church of the Brethren to report the observation or disclosure immediately. After having reported the suspected abuse to the pastoral staff, the observer should not discuss it with anyone else.
- Appropriate investigation and action will be taken according to established guidelines. (Reference: “Congregational Ethics and Ethics in Ministry Relations – 1996”).

# DEFINING CHILD ABUSE

To create a safe, Christian, nurturing environment for children, we need to know the symptoms or signs of child abuse, whether it be physical, sexual, or emotional. In this way, we can be instrumental in preventing further abuse. Also, knowing what signs to report in a suspected abuse case is a safeguard against being sued for neglecting or ignoring or not reporting possible abuse situations. One or two symptoms is not a reason for major concern. Multiple symptoms are a better indicator of possible abuse.

## 1. PHYSICAL ABUSE

*Physical signs* of physical abuse might include:

- Bruises and welts
- Lacerations and abrasions
- Abdominal injuries, evidenced by constant vomiting, localized tenderness, and or a swollen abdomen
- Burns, especially patterned and dry burns
- Frequent and/or unexplained fractures and skeletal injuries

*Behavioral signs* of physical abuse might include:

- Talking about abuse
- Expressing explicit or implicit fear of adults
- Displaying behavior extremes such as aggressiveness or withdrawal
- Avoiding physical contact with others
- Wearing unseasonal clothing to hide injuries

## 2. SEXUAL ABUSE

The precise legal definition of child sexual abuse or molestation varies from state to state, but in general includes any form of sexual contact or exploitation in which a minor is being used for the sexual stimulation of the perpetrator. In a more common sense, child sexual abuse is:

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

National Resource Center on Child Sexual Abuse, 1992

Child sexual abuse may be violent or non-violent. All child sexual abuse is an exploitation of a child’s vulnerability and powerlessness in which the abuser is fully responsible for the actions.

Child sexual abuse is criminal behavior that involves children in sexual behaviors for which they are not personally, socially, and developmentally ready.

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

*Types of abuse that involve touching include:*

- Fondling
- Oral, genital, and anal penetration
- Intercourse
- Forcible rape

*Types of sexual abuse that do not involve touching include:*

- Verbal comments
- Pornographic videos
- Obscene phone calls
- Exhibitionism
- Allowing children to witness sexual activity

*Physical signs of sexual abuse may include:*

- Lacerations and bruises
- Nightmares
- Irritation, pain, or injury to the genital area
- Difficulty with urination
- Discomfort when sitting
- Torn or bloody underclothing
- Venereal disease

*Behavioral signs of sexual abuse may include:*

- Anxiety when approaching church or nursery area
- Nervous or hostile behavior toward adults
- Sexual self-consciousness
- “Acting out” of sexual behavior
- Withdrawal from church activities and friends

*Verbal signs may include the following statements:*

- I don't like (a particular adult).
- (A particular adult) does things to me when we're alone.
- I don't like to be alone with (a particular adult).
- (A particular adult) fooled around with me.

### **3. EMOTIONAL ABUSE**

*Physical signs of emotional abuse are less apparent or obvious than in instances of physical or sexual abuse. Physical signs of emotional abuse may include:*

- Speech disorders
- Lags in physical development
- Failure to thrive: listlessness, unresponsiveness

*Behavioral signs of emotional abuse may include:*

- Unpleasant behaviors: hard to get along with, demanding, destructive, cruel, causes trouble, won't let others alone
- Avoids others, is unusually shy, anxious to please, is too submissive

- Shows low self-esteem: accepts unpleasant treatment from others without protest
- Either inappropriately adult – takes charge of other children; or inappropriately infantile – sucks thumb, rocks constantly

#### **4. NEGLECT**

*Physical signs* of neglect may be evident when the child:

- Appears tired, listless, almost always dirty for days at a time
- Goes to school without breakfast, often without lunch or lunch money
- Wears dirty or inappropriate clothes
- Seems often to be alone for long periods of time
- Obviously needs glasses, dental care other medical attention

*Behavioral signs* of neglect may be evident when the child:

- Is frequently absent from or late to school
- Begs or steals food
- Causes trouble in school by often not doing homework, using alcohol or drugs, engaging in vandalism or sexual misconduct



# SERVICE APPLICATION

## Lititz Church of the Brethren

**Confidential:** This information will be treated as strictly confidential. Only those persons having a legitimate need to know such information will have access to this form.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

Marital Status \_\_\_\_\_ Members in household (please include ages of any children):

Present Employer \_\_\_\_\_

Work Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have any training / experience which equips you for a special area of ministry? Please explain.

Do you have any hobbies and / or interests that you would want to share?

How long have you been attending Lititz Church of the Brethren? \_\_\_\_\_

Membership status: ( ) Member ( ) In process ( ) Non-member

List previous churches attended regularly in the past five years (include list of activities involving ministry with children or youth):

List any previous and current ministry involvement at Lititz Church of the Brethren:

Please make a brief statement about your faith commitment.

Have you ever been investigated, accused, or convicted of child abuse? \_\_\_\_\_  
If yes, please explain:

Have you ever been convicted of a felony or misdemeanor or had that conviction stricken from your record? \_\_\_\_\_ If yes, please describe the circumstances.

(Optional for those attending Lititz Church of Brethren more than two years.)  
Please list individuals outside of your family and the church pastoral staff who can be personal references and / or comment on your past interaction with minors. These people may be contacted.

1. Name of reference \_\_\_\_\_ Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship \_\_\_\_\_

2. Name of reference \_\_\_\_\_ Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship \_\_\_\_\_

**I hereby declare that the information contained in this application is correct to the best of my knowledge. I also authorize a representative of the screening committee to contact any individuals or organizations listed in this application, and authorize them to provide the information requested. I release them and Lititz Church of the Brethren from liability for doing so.**

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

Please return to the Pastor of Christian Nurture or Pastor of Youth Ministries.



# RECORD OF CONTACT WITH REFERENCE

## Lititz Church of the Brethren

Applicant Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Reference Name** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone #** \_\_\_\_\_

1. How long have you known the applicant and in what capacity?
2. Does the applicant work well with others?
3. Is there anything about the applicant's character that would exempt them from working with children and youth?
4. To your knowledge, has the applicant ever been involved in a situation where sexual or physical abuse has occurred?
5. How would you feel about having the applicant as a volunteer worker with your child/youth?
6. If there is any other information you would like to give concerning this applicant, please do so.

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

Additional comments:



**COVENANT FOR MINISTRY  
WITH CHILDREN / YOUTH**  
Lititz Church of the Brethren



*I accept the call to serve God through the leadership of the Christian Education Commission of the Lititz Church of the Brethren.*

*I remember how Jesus welcomed the children,  
took them in his arms and blessed them.*

*I know that I follow Jesus' example when I value children / youth  
and care for them with love and gentleness.*

*I recognize the importance of the responsibility entrusted to me.*

*I realize that my words and actions toward the children / youth  
will influence their faith in God and their lives for many years to come.*

*I promise to be responsible in my attitudes  
and actions toward the children / youth under my care.*

*I have carefully read and agree with the church's **Child Protection Policy**  
and have submitted a **Service Application**.*

*I accept the responsibility with gladness  
and will strive to fulfill it with eagerness and excellence.*

With the prayers and encouragement of the members of the Lititz Church of the Brethren, with the support pledged to me by the Christian Education Commission, and with God's guidance, I am committed to serve in ministry to children / youth according to the job description.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



## EDUCATING THE CONGREGATION

Our mission is to provide an environment for our children which is safe from all forms of abuse and neglect. To be both effective and successful in these efforts, the entire congregation must understand and embrace the policies which will lead to our goals. Therefore, it is essential to have a program to educate the congregation of the concerns and needs in this area.

A program to educate the congregation should include the following:

1. Share the facts. Child abuse is on the rise in this country and it is of epidemic proportions. It has touched every segment of our society including the church family.
2. Identifying the symptoms and signs of child abuse. Most of us would say it is a problem “out there.” We don’t want to think or talk about it and therefore most of us really don’t know much about abuse and neglect.
3. Identifying the potential impact of an allegation of abuse on our church. How would an allegation of abuse in our church impact the child; the child’s family; church membership; the integrity of the church leaders; the larger community of which we are a part; and the legal liabilities?
4. Communication of the need for a program to prevent child abuse can be shared and interpreted in many settings and must be reinforced through several educational opportunities. These may include, among others, the following:
  - a. Provide an elective Sunday School class for adults on the topic of child abuse and the need for a program to protect the children.
  - b. Hold a special meeting for the entire congregation to focus on a child abuse prevention program.
  - c. Hold a special meeting for parents dealing with issues of child abuse including recognition of signs of abuse; a healthy way of alerting children to certain dangers; and in general raising the awareness of the parents. This could include an educational session with the children using age-appropriate materials.
  - d. Hold a meeting for current church workers to educate them in the area of child abuse and raise their level of awareness.

Always be aware of other creative opportunities to reinforce the concerns in this area.



## **TRAINING CHURCH WORKERS**

An important element of success in the child abuse program is to train, on a regular basis, all church workers serving in the infant, children and youth ministries, including the workers currently serving. This training should be resourced by workers who have had experience in this area, such as a counselor, social worker or a representative from a child abuse/child protection agency or law enforcement agency.

The training topics should include, among others, a defining of abuse; the prevalence of abuse in the area; the causes and effects of abuse; and a focus on abusers including the general characteristics and traits of abusers. An explanation of the child protection laws of the state should be given along with the requirements which the law would place on the church. Also, a detailed explanation of the child abuse prevention program should be shared along with an outline of the procedures under which the program will be implemented.





# RESPONSE PLAN TO SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE

## Lititz Church of the Brethren

Following the report of any suspected child abuse to a member of the pastoral staff ( Pastor, Associate Pastor, Pastor of Christian Nurture and Pastor of Youth Ministries), pastoral staff shall begin a "Report Form" on the incident, documenting each conversation/contact as it takes place.

- A. Pastoral Staff shall follow-up on the report in the following ways:
- Speak with the child/youth/vulnerable adult involved. Staff may wish to have the volunteer staff reporting the incident present to ease the child. Staff should not question for details or ask leading questions.
  - Determine next steps. Pastoral staff may review plan for follow-up in any particular situation with legal counsel, prior to or during implementation follow-up.
  - Report disclosure, per result of consultation, to CHILDLINE at 1-800-932-0313. Although ordained clergy are not legally mandated to report confidential communication, we believe in most instances, reporting is a necessary part of moving towards wholeness for all involved (reference "Ethics in Ministry Relations 1996" approved by 1996 Annual Conference of the Church of the Brethren, Section III, O and T).
  - Notify parents/guardians of alleged abuse, contingent upon advice from Child Protective Services or law enforcement agencies when alleged abuser is parent/guardian.
- B If alleged abuser is a volunteer or paid staff of Lititz Church of the Brethren, the pastoral staff will request a Response Committee of at least two persons (at least one man and at least one woman). This committee, appointed by and accountable to pastoral staff, could include persons from the congregation with counseling experience, a pastor, a deacon, etc.)
1. The committee will contact the alleged offender to:
    - Present him/her with a formal complaint informing him/her of the time and nature of alleged abuse.
    - Outline procedure which will be followed.
    - Hear alleged offender's response (verbal or written).
  2. The committee will also:
    - Consult an attorney regarding compliance with state reporting laws, and cooperation with the investigation.
    - Make available a summary response to the complainant.
    - Notify liability insurance company.

- Remove alleged offender temporarily from position(s) while a confidential investigation is being conducted.

**If allegations are unsubstantiated:**

- Investigations will cease.
- Every effort will be made to exonerate, reconcile and restore said member.
- A public statement by the pastoral staff or Response Committee will be made if said member so chooses.
- The pastoral staff and Response Team will respond with love, care and concern to the complainant(s), to the congregation and to the accused and his/her family.

**If the allegations/investigations demonstrate poor judgment or unwise behavior but not abuse:**

- The pastoral staff and Response Committee will hold the offender responsible and accountable for this behavior. Grace and mercy will be extended in the context of repentance, accountability and justice.
  - Education and/or counseling will be required to correct behavior patterns.
  - Persons will be removed from susceptible church ministry settings for a period of six months.
  - Actions taken will be communicated to the complainant(s) and congregation as necessary.

**If allegations/investigations substantiate sexual abuse:**

**Ministry to the Victim:**

- Ministry will be done with sensitivity and care.
- Pastoral care and spiritual support will be provided:
  - One person will be named and offered to victim(s) to serve as an advocate and support and interpreter of the process.
  - A list of qualified counselors/therapists will be provided.
  - In the case of multiple victims, opportunity will be made for these persons to meet together for mutual support and prayer.

**Ministry to the Offender:**

- Specialized counseling will be offered by the pastoral staff, if appropriate (reference “Ethics in Ministry Relations 1996” approved

by 1996 Annual Conference of the Church of the Brethren, Section III,U).

- Individual will be permanently removed from susceptible positions in the church's ministry.
- Pastoral care and spiritual support will continue for the offender and family during rehabilitation.
- Rehabilitation will be monitored by the Response Committee; at the conclusion of rehabilitation there will be full reinstatement into church life with help to use spiritual gifts in non-susceptible ministries.

**Ministry to the Congregation:**

- The pastoral staff/Response Committee will report to Church Board any confirmed abuse and follow-up, including disciplinary action taken.
- Trained people will be made available to assist any in the congregation in addressing their concerns to bring healing.

**Ministry to the Accused/Offender's Family:**

- Ministry will be done with sensitivity and care providing support and prayer.
- One person will be named and offered to the family to serve as an advocate, support and interpreter of the process.
- A list of qualified counselors/therapists will be provided.



**REPORT OF SUSPECTED INCIDENT OF  
CHILD ABUSE**

**LITITZ CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN**

1. Name of worker (paid or volunteer) observing or receiving disclosure of child abuse: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Victim's name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Victim's age / date of birth: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Date/place of initial conversation with/report from victim: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Victim's statement – if appropriate, give detailed summary: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Name of person accused of abuse: \_\_\_\_\_  
Relationship of accused to victim (paid staff, volunteer, family member, other): \_\_\_\_\_
6. Reported to pastoral staff: \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. Date/time: \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Summary: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. Call to victim's parent/guardian: \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. Date/time: \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Name: \_\_\_\_\_

c. Summary: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

8. Call to local children and family service agency: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

a. Date/time: \_\_\_\_\_  
b. Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
c. Summary \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

9. Call to local law enforcement agency: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

a. Date/time: \_\_\_\_\_  
b. Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
c. Summary: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

10. Other Contacts: \_\_\_\_\_  
a. Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
b. Date/time: \_\_\_\_\_  
c. Summary: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_