

**SAFE CHURCH POLICY: A Plan to Protect Young People and Adults**  
**Erb Street Mennonite Church, Waterloo, Ontario**



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## Statement of Policy

### Purpose

The purpose of this document is to ensure that Erb Street Mennonite Church (hereinafter referred to as ESMC) (both the organizational events and the property) is a safe place for all people. The intent of the policies and procedures outlined herein is to protect everyone within our congregation (including but not limited to children, youth and vulnerable adults) from harm including harassment, neglect and abuse, especially where there is a power imbalance. The policy also protects adults who work with these groups from false allegations, and the church from unnecessary litigation.<sup>1</sup>

### Basis of this Policy

The church has spiritual, moral, legal and societal obligations to ensure a safe environment for all young people and adults participating in church programs. Spiritual and moral obligations are reflected in various scriptures.<sup>2</sup> As a congregation we accept the call to nurture and care for our congregants (in particular young people and vulnerable adults). Recognizing the fallibility of humans, the congregation accepts its responsibility to implement clear policies and procedures to minimize the risk of abusing not only those who are vulnerable but everyone within our congregation. We accept responsibility to educate and engage in prevention activities to actively create a safe space for all.

There are also legal and societal obligations that demand that we protect young people and adults with special physical, psychological, and/or emotional needs and/or limitations (hereinafter referred to as vulnerable persons). As secular organizations are called to clarify and enforce procedures to ensure safe environments, so too must the church. Indeed, the church can provide positive testimony to the community by adhering to standards that are equal to or exceed society's requirements.

Beyond these obligations, the following also shapes the faith and practices of ESMC documents:

- A Plan to Protect Our Children, Youth & Leaders<sup>3</sup> (MCEC)
- Vision: Healing and Hope<sup>4</sup> (MC Canada Vision Statement)
- Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective<sup>5</sup> (Herald Press)
- Erb Street Mennonite Church Vision Statement (2004)<sup>6</sup>

***Note:** The Safe Church Committee acknowledges that education and resources are needed to provide congregants with prevention strategies and thus intends to devote energy towards further developing a prevention strategy and accompanying documents. For now, please refer to Shalom Counselling Services (<http://www.shalomcounselling.org/>), the Ontario Human Right Code website (<http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/learning/learning>) and Appendix I for related Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) resources.*

### Tenets of the Policy

ESMC hereby adopts a policy of zero tolerance of behaviours<sup>22</sup> defined below, by any “person (employee, member, or volunteer) towards children, youth or adults” (Robertson Hall Abuse prevention letter, pg 4). All reported concerns of abuse or harassment will be investigated. Further, all workers should be aware that Ontario law requires, through the Child, Youth and Family Services Act (CYFSA),<sup>7</sup> that abuse and neglect of children must be reported to civil authorities.<sup>8</sup>

Historically, survivors of sexual abuse and harassment have often not been believed, despite statistics that show that people falsely report sexual harassment and abuse with the same low frequency as any other crime ([www.sascwr.org](http://www.sascwr.org)). Therefore, ESMC will take a survivor centered approach, aiming to put the rights of each survivor at the forefront of all actions and ensure that each survivor is treated with dignity and respect. We aim to “establish a relationship with the survivor that promotes their emotional and physical safety, builds trust and helps them to restore some control over their life” (<https://www.unicef.org/eca/media/15831/file/Module%202.pdf>)

The policy is comprised of the following aspects:

- Screening
- Practices and Procedures (including training)
- Premises
- Responding
- Photos, Video and Internet

## Definitions

**Abuse:** to use wrongly, to maltreat, to injure. It is the misuse of power by a person in a position of trust. Abuse may take various forms: physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and spiritual abuse (see below for definitions)

**Adult:** anyone eighteen (18) years of age or older

**Assault:** to cause bodily harm by inappropriately applying force to another person; to attempt or threaten to apply force; or, to accost or impede another person while openly carrying a weapon.

**Child or children:** anyone under the age of consent, which in Canada is 16.

**Child neglect:** the failure to meet a child’s basic needs for food, clothing, shelter, sleep, medical attention, education, and protection from harm<sup>22</sup>.

**Church member:** in this policy church member refers to any person who is an employee or volunteer for any activity involving position of power or interaction with children, youth or vulnerable persons.

**Consent:** “Consent is an agreement to engage in an activity; it occurs when you ask, or give, permission to do something. People use consent in their daily life, including giving and asking for consent for food or drink, physical touch, to take a picture, or to participate in an activity. In the context of sexual activities, consent refers to giving voluntary permission to engage in a sexual activity. Consent:

- Is a freely given enthusiastic yes
- Is ongoing, continuously discussed
- Can be taken away at any time

Consent must be asked for and given at each stage of a sexual interaction and/or when there is a shift from one sexual activity to another (e.g., persons move from hugging to – {get/give consent} – kissing). Consent must be given voluntarily. Even if a person has consented to sexual activity in the past, consent must be asked for each time. There is no voluntary consent when:

- You are asked repeatedly until you give someone the answer they want to hear.
- Someone uses their power or authority to manipulate your answer.
- When you are intoxicated or incapacitated.”

(from <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safe-campus-bc/what-is-consent>)

**Emotional abuse:** a pattern of behaviour that attacks a child, or another person’s emotional development and sense of self-worth. It includes excessive, aggressive or unreasonable demands that place expectations on a person beyond their capacity. Examples include attempts to control, constantly criticizing, teasing, belittling, insulting, rejecting, ignoring or isolating the individual.

**DARVO** refers to a reaction perpetrators of wrong doing, particularly sexual offenders, may display in response to being held accountable for their behavior. DARVO stands for "Deny, Attack, and Reverse Victim and Offender." The perpetrator or offender may Deny the behavior, Attack the individual doing the confronting, and Reverse the roles of Victim and Offender such that the perpetrator assumes the victim role and turns the true victim -- or the whistle blower -- into an alleged offender. This occurs, for instance, when an actually guilty perpetrator assumes the role of "falsely accused" and attacks the accuser's credibility and blames the accuser of being the perpetrator of a false accusation. (from <https://dynamic.uoregon.edu/jjf/defineDARVO.html>)

**Harassment:** repeated subtle or overt action, particularly by a person in a position of authority, which causes the recipient to feel attacked, demeaned, intimidated or manipulated. The Ontario Human Rights Code defines harassment in subsection 10(1) as "engaging in a course of vexatious comment or conduct that is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome.” (from <http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/ontario-human-rights-code>)

**Improper discipline:** inappropriate and harmful attempts to control a child or another person. Improper discipline includes yelling or screaming at children, threatening them or physically hurting them. By contrast, proper discipline involves establishing clear boundaries of acceptable behaviour and maintaining such behavioural expectations with firm and kind expressions of authority.

**Improper touching:** not consensual touching. This includes:

1. “Unwanted sexual intercourse or other sexual acts
  2. Unwanted touching of intimate areas of another’s body, such as the breasts or buttocks
  3. Unwanted touching of non-intimate areas of another’s body, depending on the circumstances
  4. Gestures or acts that could be interpreted as sexual solicitation
- Touching that is inappropriate based on relationship, for example, sexual touching involving an adult and a child” (<https://www.jpllaw.net/sex-crimes/inappropriate-touching#:~:text=Unwanted%20touching%20of%20non%2Dintimate,an%20adult%20and%20a%20child>)

**Physical abuse:** deliberate physical force or action that results, or could result, in non-accidental injury to a child or person. It can include punching, slapping, beating, shaking, burning, biting or throwing someone. It is different from what is considered reasonable discipline.

**Sexual abuse/assault:** any sexual exploitation of a child or another person, whether consensual or not, by another person. Physical, psychological or emotional coercion is intrinsic to sexual abuse. It is against the law to touch a child or vulnerable person for a sexual purpose; to encourage or force a child or vulnerable person to touch another person in a sexual way; to encourage or force a child or vulnerable person to participate in any sexual activity; or tell a child or vulnerable person to touch him or herself for an adult's or child's sexual purposes. Sexual abuse can take many forms: for example, sexual intercourse, exposing private parts, indecent phone calls, fondling for sexual purposes, watching a child undress for sexual pleasure, allowing a child to look at or perform in pornographic pictures or videos or to engage in prostitution.

**Spiritual abuse:** the manipulation and exploitation of others by the misuse of spiritual privilege, authority and power.<sup>9</sup>

**Survivor centred approach:** A survivor-centred approach aims to put the rights of each survivor at the forefront of all actions and ensure that each survivor is treated with dignity and respect.

**Youth:** person aged 16 or 17

**Vulnerable persons:** a person in need of special care, support or protection because of age, disability, risk of abuse or neglect. ESMC defines this as children, youth, elderly, the physically emotionally or mentally unwell, and those who have been traumatized. We encourage those adults who feel they belong in this category to identify themselves, otherwise we will respect privacy of personal information and use observable indicators and demographic characteristics to determine if an individual qualifies as a vulnerable person.

## Screening

ESMC has a mandatory screening process for adults, involved with each of its events, committees, volunteering and other activities involving children and youth and/or vulnerable adults who are in a position of power and/or trust over children, youth or vulnerable persons are subject to mandatory screening. Any staff person, church member or volunteer with power or authority over youth or children and/or vulnerable adults, or as identified by our insurer, will be subject to the screening assessment and procedures.<sup>10</sup>

This includes but is not limited to:

- All staff including paid and unpaid
- All ministers and lay pastors
- All volunteers working with children, youth and vulnerable adults
  - Teachers
  - Ushers, Visitation team
  - Designated monitors and care staff

- Sponsorship/refugee committee
- Gift Discernment committee
- LARC committee
- Safe Church committee
- All Church Council members and Elders

Screening procedure includes:

- A minimum six-month waiting period<sup>11</sup> before new member (or attendee) begins to work with children, youth or vulnerable persons and two main components: 1) vulnerable sector police background check; 2) Complete a Reference & Volunteer Covenant form (B).
- An interview (typically by Gift Discernment, Elders and/or Pastor(s) or Personnel) for new employees and volunteers<sup>22</sup>
- Criminal Records Check for persons 18 and over, prior to eligibility of employment or volunteering, including:
  - VSV - Vulnerable Sector Verification (also referred to as Screening, Scan or Check) including a query of Local Police Indices and National Pardoned Sex Offenders Database<sup>22</sup>
- Criminal Record Re-Checks for existing employees, church members, and volunteers involved in activities with children, youth and vulnerable persons every 5 years<sup>22</sup>.
- Reference Check: Safe Church Committee will complete and file a copy of the following forms for each employee, church member and volunteer: Covenant for Abuse Prevention (Appendix B), Reference Check (Appendix C).
- A general online name search for members with less than 5 years history at the church. This can include the Mennonite Abuse Prevention list: <https://www.themaplist.org/the-map-list/> and Record of Church History Check (Appendix D). All concerning information that is found will be recorded on the Record of Online Search (Appendix K) and be referred to Church Council for a decision.

The Safe Church Committee will:

- Record and file a summary of information obtained from Covenant for Abuse Prevention (Appendix B)<sup>12</sup>, Reference Check (Appendix C)<sup>13</sup>, and Record of Church History Check (Appendix D)
- Keep record of valid VSV background checks<sup>14</sup>
- These records will be kept indefinitely in the church office<sup>22</sup>

If person has a conviction on file through the Vulnerable Sector Verification or there is credible concerning information about their behaviour then they will not be allowed to work or volunteer in any capacity where they could be involved with children, youth and other vulnerable persons. Such information will be referred to Church Council to assess the information and finalize any related decisions.

## Program Practices and Procedures

To minimize the risk of harm coming to young people and/or vulnerable adults in the care of Erb Street Mennonite Church, ESMC's programs and personnel will abide by the guidelines outlined below:

### ***Guidelines for Children & Youth***

- a. A team approach is to be used in children's and youth ministries. Normally there are to be at least two unrelated adults (not married or immediate family) present for all activities involving young persons and vulnerable adults<sup>22</sup>. For overnight activities, there will be at minimum two adults: one male and one female.
- b. Consent forms<sup>15</sup> wherein parents give written permission for their children or youth to participate in off-site ESMC group activities will be gathered by Safe Church Committee and kept on file in the church office<sup>22</sup>.
- c. During children's and youth activities at the church, any unlocked door will be monitored.
- d. Corporal punishment is prohibited<sup>22</sup>.
- e. Activities that could easily lead to allegations of abuse or harassment, such as unsupervised internet access, vehicle transportation by workers alone with unrelated youth, or improperly supervised sleepovers, are to be avoided<sup>22</sup>.
- f. There will be at least two volunteers in the nursery when ESMC is providing childcare.
- g. A schedule of caregivers will be posted in the nursery.
- h. All children pre-grade 1 will have the dropping off adult sign them in and identify who can pick them up. Children will be released from the nursery only to an adult pre-identified for pickup. The authorized adult will have to sign for release of the child<sup>22</sup>.
- i. It is recommended that children in Senior Kindergarten or younger are accompanied by an adult if he/she needs to leave the classroom (i.e. washroom break). In case of washroom break, the adult remains outside the bathroom, and if the child requires assistance in bathroom, appropriate precautions need to be taken (e.g. a leader of the same gender helps, or a parent is located).
- j. When a person suspects abuse, negligence or harassment, they will report it to leadership and authorities as appropriate.

### ***Guidelines for Nurture & Healthy Relationships with children, youth and vulnerable adults***

Human warmth expressed through appropriate touch can foster a sense of acceptance, belonging and significance. We recognize our calling and responsibility to model healthy relationships with Jesus Christ and with all human beings. Healthy relationships have boundaries in which the safety and well being of young people, and vulnerable adults are ensured. Inappropriate touch can create feelings of violation, confusion and isolation that leave lasting scars. It is the responsibility of adults to maintain appropriate boundaries; this is not the responsibility of children or youth. The following are examples of ways in which adults can show warmth to vulnerable persons while protecting their own integrity.



- a. Make a point of showing affection in open places where others can see and share in the warmth. In determining whether the touching is of a sexual or inappropriate nature, ask yourself the question, “How would a reasonable observer interpret this touch?”
- b. Classrooms and meeting places should be managed to create a feeling of public space, yet be conducive to good teaching. Leave the windows in the room uncovered and the door standing open whenever possible.
- c. If you and a young person or vulnerable adult need to talk to each other in confidence, avoid isolating yourselves. Have another adult present or stay within view of the group. If you both must be in a room by yourselves, leave the door open.
- d. If the young person or vulnerable adult is hurting physically or feeling ill and needs to be examined ensure that another person of the same gender as the young person/vulnerable adult is present in the room with you. Do not force the person to remove clothing for an examination.
- e. If a person in your care is sad and needs to be comforted, you may, with their permission, show support by placing your arm around a shoulder and giving a gentle hug.
- f. Be cautious about any conversations that involve sex. Children may ask honest questions about sexuality and teenagers might seek advice. Listening, with respect for the child, is appropriate. When responding, be sensitive to the values and standards that are taught in the child’s home and to a discussion that may cause conflict or confusion with those standards.
- g. When supervising overnight group activities, observe extra safeguards. Ensure that congregational awareness and parental consent of the activity is clear. Under no circumstance shall less than two adults supervise an overnight event. Never allow only one adult to do bed checks. If sleeping space is to be shared, adults and children must have separate beds.
- h. Avoid situations in which you are alone with a child/youth/vulnerable adult changing clothing, such as swimsuits or sports clothes, in each other’s presence.
- i. Always respect the integrity of person(s) in your care. Allow the person(s) to back away from your well-intentioned affection. Some people, especially children, may feel fearful or distrustful of any physical contact.
- j. Use your common sense and good judgment to guide you in protecting the personal space and wellbeing of the person(s) in your care. If you are unsure then reach out to the Safe Church Committee for more resources and education.

The following forms have been created for mandatory use for all children, youth and vulnerable persons who attend church school programming:

- Church School Registration Form (Appendix E)
- Photo and Video Consent Form (Appendix F)

### ***Abuse Prevention Audit***

Every two years ESMC will perform an internal Abuse Prevention Audit<sup>22</sup>:

(from Roberson Hall Abuse Prevention Plan Checklist:

[https://robertsonhall.com/pdf/RH\\_Abuse\\_Prevention\\_Newsletter.pdf](https://robertsonhall.com/pdf/RH_Abuse_Prevention_Newsletter.pdf))

1. A qualified individual or group will be appointed by Church Council and Safe Church Committee (or congregation) and given power and authority as internal auditor to oversee all aspects of the audit procedure and to whom our children's and youth ministry leaders will have the responsibility to assist and cooperate. Ideally this individual or committee will be knowledgeable about abuse prevention but will be removed from the day-to-day operations of your youth and children's ministries in order to assure objectivity.

2. The internal auditor will be provided with specific guidelines (including but not limited to Roberson Hall Abuse Prevention Plan Checklist:

[https://robertsonhall.com/pdf/RH\\_Abuse\\_Prevention\\_Newsletter.pdf](https://robertsonhall.com/pdf/RH_Abuse_Prevention_Newsletter.pdf)) to survey the various ministries, programs and events, which will include, but not necessarily be limited to, review of our physical premises (e.g. windows in all classrooms), our operational procedures (e.g. "two adult" rule), our training of all new and existing workers (e.g. awareness of the prevention plan and duty to report abuse) and our screening procedures (e.g. minimum 6 months of attendance prior to eligibility<sup>22</sup>, personal interview and references<sup>22</sup>, criminal record checks<sup>22</sup>, etc.) With respect to screening, a random number of new and existing workers will be confidentially surveyed by the auditor to ensure that they have been properly screened and trained.

3. The results of the survey will be summarized and reported to Church Council and Safe Church Committee by the internal auditor, outlining the areas of full compliance, partial compliance and non-compliance, along with a recommended "to-do" list in order to achieve maximum compliance.

4. The Church Council and Safe Church Committee will review and ratify the internal auditor's report and propose an action plan to achieve maximum compliance within a reasonable time frame. This action plan may include temporarily shutting down noncomplying programs and events while staff or individual leaders remediate the problem areas. Remediation may include following up on outstanding or overdue screening documentation and initial or refresher training for workers. This may also include changes to operational procedures, building modifications and checking with legal counsel or insurance provider for clarification of any outstanding liability or coverage issues. Once the non-compliant areas have been satisfactorily addressed, staff or leaders should formally report back to the Church Council and Safe Church Committee in order to confirm full compliance with our organization's abuse prevention plan.

## Premises

Facilities at Erb Street Mennonite Church which discourage abuse include:

- windows in all doors to classrooms, offices, library, the nursery and other common meeting areas
- buzzer-controlled entry system, and key fob system that records entries
- adequate lighting inside when occupied and all entrance doors from dusk to dawn.
- church library and website displaying Safe Church Policy

## Training And Education

Prevention through training and education is key to creating a safe environment for worship and work. As such, Erb Street Mennonite Church has appointed a Safe Church Committee which will:

- Ensure that a current copy of the policy is on the website, available on site<sup>16</sup>, all congregants know about the policy.
- Annually train existing and new employees, all church members (as defined above), and volunteers so they have a thorough understanding of their responsibility to maintain this policy.<sup>17, 22</sup>
- Keep a copy of this policy in the church office, library, and website for easy accessibility
- Ensure that a summary of this policy is available to all volunteers of children/youth Sunday School and Vacation Bible Camp each year.<sup>18</sup>
- Educate employees, church members and volunteers about their legal obligation to report suspected abuse and to recognize and identify the signs and symptoms of abuse, neglect, harassment and molestation.
- Education will be provided to children, youth and adults of ESMC, either as a Sunday School class or other planned event/workshop (ex. Workshop by Sexual Assault Support Centre of Waterloo Region).
- Provide ongoing education as needed.

## Responding

Suspicion of harassment and abuse will be taken seriously. If suspicion arises from conversation with a child/young person/vulnerable adult, *be sure to avoid intrusive or leading questions* since such questioning could interfere with an investigation and/or cause undue stress. Ontario Law requires that anyone who suspects on reasonable grounds that a child (under age 16) is in need of protection must forthwith report the suspicion and information on which it is based to the local child protection agency (refer to Child, Youth and Family Services Act (2017), section 125 or its replacement). ESMC further requires that if such suspicion involves personnel or programs under the auspices of ESMC, it shall also be reported to a pastor, or anyone on Church Council or Safe Church committee, or anyone else that ESMC has put in place for the purpose of responding to such concerns. Suspicion for harassment or abuse towards non-vulnerable adults will also be subject to the same guidelines as those for child/young persons/vulnerable adults.

Upon receiving a report, the pastor(s), Church Council and the Safe Church Committee will (as long as they are not directly involved in the event except as witnesses):

- a. Ensure that Abuse Incident Report<sup>20</sup> form(s) has been completed<sup>22</sup> Note that it is not our place to do an investigation.
- b. Ensure that statutory reporting obligations under Ontario law are met<sup>22</sup>
- c. Commit to assisting in the investigation and take guidance from the investigator as to when it is appropriate to suspend the alleged offender
- d. Be mindful of not interfering with the investigation
- e. Make every attempt to maintain confidentiality in accordance with Ontario law<sup>22</sup>

- f. Express ESMC's concern for the alleged offender and alleged victim
- g. Coordinate care and support of all directly involved
- h. Suspend the alleged offender from duties, pending outcome of the investigation <sup>22</sup>
- i. Refrain from admitting liability or making public statements to the media without obtaining formal legal counsel <sup>22</sup>
- j. Share with the congregation appropriate information determined by and at the discretion of the pastor(s), Church Council, and Safe Church Committee.
- k. Contact ESMC's insurer and their appointed lawyer to satisfy the statutory conditions of our liability policy and to avoid jeopardizing any available coverage response. <sup>22</sup>
- l. The accused and alleged victim(s) must defer leadership involvement in this process.

## Photos, Video and Internet

All pictures and videos taken for church purposes will be used only in ESMC media (newsletter, media presentations in worship or other church settings, church website, etc.) No names of the vulnerable will be connected to any pictures on the website without specific permission for each instance.

For children, youth, and vulnerable adults, parents or guardians must give permission for photos and videos to be taken. Photo/video consent forms (Appendix F) will be collected from parents/guardians and kept on file by the Safe Church Committee.<sup>21</sup> Permission will last for a two-year period at which time it must be renewed. Permission may be revoked at any time by written statement.

## Endnotes/References (check appendix refs here)

1 Listowel Mennonite Church A Safe Church Policy: A Plan to Protect Children, Youth and Adults 's was used with permission as a basis for Erb Street Mennonite Church's Safe Church Policy.

2 "Whoever welcomes a child welcomes me" Matt 18:2-6; "Let the children come to me and do not hinder them" Mark 10:14; Luke 17:1-2; Micah 6:9; Ephesians 5:3; I Thess. 5:22; 2; II Cor. 8:9

3 Document prepared by Mennonite Church Eastern Canada, a copy of which is available in the church office and/or library

4 God calls us to be followers of Jesus Christ and, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to grow as communities of grace, joy and peace, so that God's healing and hope flow through us to the world. (Vision statement of MC Canada)

5 Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective, Herald Press, 1995; or, see Appendix 1 of A Plan to Protect Our Children, Youth & Leaders (2003)

6 See Appendix A. The vision statement is also available in the church office and/or library

7 For details, see CYFSA, especially section 125 in: <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/17c14>

8 The terms children and child refer to any person under the age of sixteen.

9 Definitions of abuse contained herein are based on those published by The Children's Aid Society of London and Middlesex.

10 Screening and implementation procedures are conducted by ESMC Safe Church Committee and ESMC Church Council.

11 The minimum period is at the discretion of ESMC's Church Council. Insurance requires a minimum of 6 months

12 See Appendix B.

13 See Appendix C.

14 Police checks are valid if they are not older than five (5) years. <sup>22</sup>

15 Appendix J

16 Safe Church guidelines related to our church facilities are monitored by the Property and Facilities Committee

17 Training procedures are organized by the Safe Church Committee.

18 Summaries for VBC and Sunday School are found in Appendix I.

19 Document prepared by Mennonite Church Eastern Canada, a copy of which is available in the church office and/or library.

20 See Appendix H

21 See Appendix F

22 Insurance requirement as of 2022

## Appendix A - ESMC Vision Statement (2004)

ROOTED, GROWING and BRANCHING Erb Street Mennonite Church is a welcoming and inclusive community of diverse persons each contributing uniquely to our common purpose of following Jesus Christ.

ROOTED: Called by God, renewed by Jesus Christ, and united and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we desire to be an active spiritual presence in the Region of Waterloo. As part of the larger Christian Church we are a living expression of Anabaptist values - revealing God's love, and demonstrating acceptance, peace, humility and hope. Together we discern and nurture our individual and collective journey of faith through prayer, music, worship, education and bible study.

GROWING: We create a place of refuge, support and guidance, so that all persons in our congregational community may find restoration and wholeness and be equipped to pursue God's calling for their individual lives. We commit ourselves, with God's help, to continuous spiritual growth as individuals and as a congregation.

BRANCHING: Through service and in sharing God's word with our neighbours across the street and around the world, we reflect and testify to the good news of God's love, so that we may all know God's justice and healing.

## Appendix B - ESMC Covenant For Abuse Prevention

*Information received will be kept confidential unless legally required to disclose*

In our desire to reduce the risk of abuse within our church, we believe this information is necessary to protect our children, youth, vulnerable persons, as well as our employees, members and volunteers. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

### PERSONAL INFORMATION

Full Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ email \_\_\_\_\_

How long have you attended Erb Street Mennonite Church? \_\_\_\_\_

If you have attended ESMC for less than five years, please provide the name, address, and phone number of your previous church(es) and the years you attended.

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### References

Provide the names and contact information of two references who are not relatives:

#### *Reference 1*

Name of reference (first and last name): \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to you: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ *Please circle preferred method of contact.*

#### *Reference 2*

Name of reference (first and last name): \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to you: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ *Please circle preferred method of contact.*

## Volunteer Covenant

I hereby acknowledge that the information contained in this application is correct to the best of my knowledge. I authorize any references or churches listed in this application to give any information they may have regarding my character and fitness for interacting with children, youth or vulnerable persons. Except in the case of the conscious giving of false information, I release all such references from liability for any damage that may result from furnishing such evaluation to ESMC.

I also acknowledge that I have read and I understand ESMC's Safe Church Policy: A Plan to Protect Young People and Adults and I agree to comply with the policies and procedures as outlined therein.

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Volunteer's Name, printed

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Signature of Volunteer \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



## Appendix C - ESMC Reference Check

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Contact: \_\_\_\_\_

Reference contact name: \_\_\_\_\_ Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Reference's phone number: \_\_\_\_\_ Relation to Volunteer: \_\_\_\_\_

### SUGGESTED QUESTIONS:

1. How long have you known this individual and in what capacity?
2. Do you have any concerns about this person working with children, youth or vulnerable people?
3. Please name one word that best describes the applicant.
4. Would you feel comfortable with this person looking after your child or a member of your family?

### ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

Name of Interviewer: \_\_\_\_\_ Position: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Method of Contact: (circle) video call, telephone, personal visit

## Appendix D - Reference Church History Check

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Contact: \_\_\_\_\_

Provided Church History: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Questions to ask each church:

- 1) Who can I talk to who best knows the person?
- 2) Time period person attended: \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) After informing them of the person's consent to this, and indemnity. Do you have any concerns about this person working with children, youth or vulnerable people?
- 4) Would you feel comfortable with this person looking after your child or a member of your family?

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

Name of Researcher: \_\_\_\_\_ Position: \_\_\_\_\_

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

## Appendix E - ESMC Church School Registration Form

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Birthdate: \_\_\_\_\_ Age (as of Sept) \_\_\_\_\_ School Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's/Guardian's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's/Guardian's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address (if different from above): \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's special interests and/or activities: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Allergies: \_\_\_\_\_

Dietary Restrictions: \_\_\_\_\_

Medical conditions (physical or mental): \_\_\_\_\_

Siblings attending Church School (Names & Ages): \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency contact information during Church School hour: \_\_\_\_\_

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

If Church School is in need of help in the following areas give me a call:

\_\_\_\_\_

Is there any other information that would assist us in working with your child/children?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Additional comments:

## Appendix F - ESMC Photo And Video Consent Form

I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby give consent for my child's/children's photo to be taken and used in ESMC media (e.g. newsletter, photo albums, PowerPoint presentations, internet, etc.) OR I, \_\_\_\_\_, withdraw my consent for photos to be taken of my child or children.

Name(s) of child(ren):

\_\_\_\_\_

Comments and/or stipulations: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Any images, photos, and videos will be used for church purposes, and could be distributed, upon request, to families of persons in photos or videos taken. It will be for private use only. Any internet postings by the church will not include names per our Safe Church Policy. This consent is valid for 2 years. I understand I can withdraw consent in writing at any time.

\_\_\_\_\_ Parent's Name, printed

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Appendix G - ESMC: Specific Online Name Mention Consent Form

I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby give consent for my child's/children's name used in ESMC media (e.g. newsletter, photo albums, PowerPoint presentations, internet, etc.) for the following notification or event: \_\_\_\_\_.

Name(s) of child(ren):

\_\_\_\_\_

Comments and/or stipulations: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Name (printed) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Appendix H - ESMC Abuse Incident Report

Erb Street Mennonite Church (ESMC) is committed to providing a safe space for all people. Please fill out the details below to the best of your ability to describe the incident that took place - as soon as possible. Additionally, please refer to ESMC Safe Church Policy 2023, Shalom Counselling Services (<http://www.shalomcounselling.org/>), the Ontario Human Right Code website (<http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/learning/learning>) and Appendix I in the Safe Church Policy 2023 for related Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) resources.

It is expected that any witness(es) to observed symptoms or events raising concern including:

1. specific signs of observed symptoms,
2. any report of abuse made by the child or others, and/or any witnessed event that raised the suspicion, as well as
3. the date and time relating to any of the above, and

any response the child or people made to any of the above. Please print/type all responses.

Incident Date (MM/DD/YYYY): \_\_\_\_\_

Approximate Time of incident: \_\_\_\_\_ a.m./p.m.

Location incident occurred at: \_\_\_\_\_

Details: (describe below and on back of page for more room – just record the factual events. Record questions asked as well.)

Other Persons Present: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Person Making This Report (please print): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix I - Mennonite Central Committee Resources

*Note: we would like to expand the resource section to include supports for survivors, those accused, as well as their friends and family.*

The following resources were found by searching for relevant material under the topic “peace” on the MCC website:

Home: a safe place for all -

<https://mcccanada.ca/sites/mcccanada.ca/files/media/common/documents/2018-04-30home-asafeplaceforallweb.pdf>

Abuse: Response and prevention -

<https://mcccanada.ca/sites/mcccanada.ca/files/media/common/documents/abusepreventionguideweb.pdf>

Trauma & resilience -

<https://mcccanada.ca/sites/mcccanada.ca/files/media/common/documents/intersections0303.pdf>

Where is the peace? -

<https://mcccanada.ca/sites/mcccanada.ca/files/media/common/documents/intersectionswinter2013.pdf>

Understanding sexual abuse by a church leader or caregiver -

<https://mcccanada.ca/sites/mcccanada.ca/files/media/common/documents/2018-04-30understandingsexualabusebyachurchleaderbooklet18web.pdf>

Gender-based violence -

<https://mcccanada.ca/sites/mcccanada.ca/files/media/common/documents/intersectionssummer2013.pdf>

## Appendix J – ESMC General Off-site Consent Form

As parent or caregiver of \_\_\_\_\_

(Child(ren)'s Name(s)) I give consent for him/her/them to participate in off-site group activities sponsored by ESMC.

Parent's Name (printed) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

### Contact Information

Parent's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Home tel. number: \_\_\_\_\_

Address (Street Address, City, Postal Code): \_\_\_\_\_

Mobile number: \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Contact (alternate): \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency tel. number (alternate): \_\_\_\_\_



## Appendix K - Online research form

What was discovered about the person's history online or from the Mennonite Abuse Prevention list (<https://www.themaplist.org/the-map-list/>)? (Could ask for their 5-year residence history – this would help us recognize them online, and maybe help with church contacts.) Potentially concerning content will be copied to a results file. Minimum 20 minutes of search a member or more of the safe church committee.

We are looking for red flags: excessive interest in children, racist language, hate speech, etc.

MAPlist result – present in the database?: Y / N    link: \_\_\_\_\_

FB account name: \_\_\_\_\_ Reviewed history: \_\_\_\_\_ (or private)

Twitter account: \_\_\_\_\_ Reviewed history: \_\_\_\_\_ (or private)

Instagram account: \_\_\_\_\_ Reviewed history: \_\_\_\_\_ (or private)

TikTok account: \_\_\_\_\_ Reviewed history: \_\_\_\_\_ (or private)

YouTube account: \_\_\_\_\_ Reviewed history: \_\_\_\_\_ (or private)

General Google search – search terms used: \_\_\_\_\_

Members present in the search: \_\_\_\_\_