

SAFE CHURCH POLICY

Sherman Street Christian Reformed Church
Updated, SEPTEMBER 2019



PURPOSE

Sherman Street Christian Reformed Church (SSCRC) sees all people as image-bearers of God and worthy of dignity and respect. SSCRC provides a variety of programs and activities to the congregation and the surrounding community. All people who participate in an SSCRC program or activity have the right to a safe environment.

We acknowledge the potential for abuse in our fallen world, but still we seek to prevent it. Children, young people, and vulnerable adults are at the greatest risk to be victims of abuse. SSCRC will not tolerate abuse in any form. Abuse of both children and adults happens in many forms, including physical, verbal, emotional and sexual abuse, neglect, clergy abuse and domestic violence.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure appropriate measures are in place to reduce the risk of abuse as well as to provide instruction on what to do if an incident involving abuse occurs. It is common to be unsure if a situation is abuse. The tendency in faith communities to under or not report abuse is very common. This policy is in place to provide guidance and instruction about reporting and responses to ensure people of Sherman Street Church are safe.

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

For any emergency in progress, please call 911

Sherman Street Church Office	616-452-7034
Grand Rapids Police Non-Emergency Number	616-456-3400
Children's Protective Services (CPS) Hotline (24 hours)	855-444-3911
Adult Protective Services Hotline (24 hours)	855-444-3911
Safe Haven Ministries Domestic Violence Shelter & Support Svcs (24 hrs)	616-452-6664
YWCA West Central Michigan (24 hour hotline)	616-454-9922
Alzheimer's Support Hotline (24 hours)	800-272-3900
24-Hour National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (Crisis Hotline)	800-273-TALK (8255)
Pine Rest Church Assistance Program	616-281-6305
Christian Reformed Church Safe Church Ministry	616-224-0735
GRPD Family Services Team Sgt. Chad McKersie, Sgt. Alan Ort	616-632-6100

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DEFINITIONS

Important: *These definitions do not cover all possibilities. If you have any concerns, please report them either to authorities or to a Safe Church Committee member. Reporting is the first step and prevents any single person or isolated group from determining next steps.*

24/7 hotline: All domestic violence organizations operate a 24/7 hotline, which can be used by victims and survivors regardless of whether or not they are ready to leave the relationship. At Safe Haven, friends, family, and church staff/volunteers can also utilize the hotline for support: 616-452-6664. The YWCA Hotline for sexual assault or domestic abuse is 616-454-9922.

Abuse: There are many types of abusive behavior:

Physical Abuse: Abusive behavior ranges from slapping, pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, and biting, to more severe forms such as choking, severe spanking, beating, hitting with an object, burning, stabbing and shooting. It sometimes appears as a single event but can also be a chronic pattern of behavior.

Sexual Abuse: The exploitation of a person, or sexual intimacy forced on a person, for the sexual stimulation or gratification of another person. Sexual abuse can refer to taking advantage of a child, youth, or vulnerable adult who is not capable of understanding sexual acts or resisting coercion such as threats or offers of gifts. Examples of sexual abuse involving physical contact include fondling body parts (under or over clothing) such as breasts, crotch, buttocks or sexual organs, intercourse, oral or anal sex. Sexual abuse includes touching any area normally covered by a swimsuit, for sexual purposes, even if the touch is outside of the clothes. Sexual abuse sometimes may not involve physical contact (see “Non-physical sexual abuse” below) and may occur after a person is pressured verbally, or through intimidation or misuse of authority, to consent or submit to unwanted actions. Examples include being worn down by someone who repeatedly asked for sex or showed they were unhappy; feeling pressured by being lied to, or being told promises that were untrue; having someone threaten to end a relationship or spread rumors; and sexual pressure by use of influence or authority.

Non-physical Sexual Abuse: This type of abuse does not include physical contact between the perpetrator and the victim. This occurs against a person without his or her consent, or against a person who is unable to consent or refuse. Examples of non-physical sexual abuse include people exposing themselves, obscene telephone calls or texts, peeping toms, and requests to engage in sexual activity (where no physical contact occurs).

Emotional abuse: Attempting to control a person’s life through words, threats, and deprivation. Emotional abuse weakens a person’s mental and physical ability to resist, cuts off his or her contacts with others, and causes a gradual loss of self-esteem - all of which reinforce a sense of helplessness and dependence on the abuser.

Financial abuse: Making or attempting to make a person financially dependent, e.g., maintaining total control over financial resources and withholding access to money, are some forms of financial abuse (also called economic abuse).

Spiritual abuse: the misuse of Scripture, church doctrine/practice, or spiritual authority to improperly influence or control the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors of another person. An example of spiritual abuse is forcing someone to participate in an altar call.

Abuse of Power: The act of using one's position of power in an abusive way. This can take many forms, such as taking advantage of someone, gaining access to information that shouldn't be accessible to the public, or manipulating someone with the ability to punish them if they don't comply.

Adult: a person at least 18 years of age.

Appropriate conduct: conduct that one could reasonably assume would be acceptable and permissible by the child's parent or guardian.

Batterer Intervention Program: A therapy modality used to treat individuals that use abuse in their relationship. In Kent County, the YWCA West Central Michigan and The Men's Resource Center both offer Batterer Intervention Programs.

Child abuse: harm or threatened harm to a child's health or welfare that occurs through non-accidental physical or mental injury, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, or maltreatment.

As it pertains to Michigan Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS), Child Protective Services, the following criteria must be met in order for the incident to be assigned for investigation:

- The alleged victim is under 18 years of age
- The allegations minimally meet the child abuse and neglect definitions in the Child Protective Law

If you learn of or suspect child abuse or neglect, report the incident to CPS via the 24/7 hotline: 855-444-3911. The DHS-3200 should be completed after the report has been reported via the hotline. A copy of this form can be found in the appendix pg. 53.

For a complete overview of Child Abuse as outlined by DHHS and the Child Protective Law, visit: www.michigan.gov/mdhhs and click on the Abuse & Neglect tab.

Child care provider or caregiver: all staff and volunteers who work in any capacity with children at or through Sherman Street.

Child, youth, adolescent: A person under 18 years of age.

Clergy/pastoral/church leader/church staff/council member-elder or deacon abuse: Abuse by a church leader is more than sexual misconduct because it has occurred within the professional context of this person's call to serve. Sherman Street's leaders should show a standard of exemplary boundaries, morale and character. Power differences exist in all relationships based on many factors (See Abuse of Power Definition). Church leader abuse happens when this person exploits their power to satisfy personal needs. It is always the role of the church leader to be responsible for their actions. Church leader abuse is especially harmful to victims because faith is an integral part of a person. Such a violation causes deep harm to the person and their faith. (Definition adapted from www.elca.org/safeplace, 1997 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, "Healing in

Congregations after Clergy Sexual Abuse: A Resource to Assist Synodical Leaders and Local Congregations.”) See pg. 25 of this policy for procedures regarding reporting.

Confidentiality: The preservation of privileged information with the intent to respect the high value of respecting personal information or experiences. By necessity personal and private information is disclosed in a professional, personal or pastoral relationship. Confidentiality needs to be broken when a person finds out about a suspicion of harm or abuse to a child, vulnerable adult or clergy abuse even when this person asks you not to tell someone. At all times names of victim(s), details of abuse should be protected and only disclosed in context of promoting safety and on a need to know basis. Confidentiality can be best maintained by using this policy and the Safe Church Response Team. Individual decisions to not follow procedure - including releasing information without following policy - even with good intentions, can cause further harm to the victim and jeopardize legal outcomes.

DHS-3200: This is the form that is completed after the incident of child abuse or neglect is reported to CPS via the 24/7 hotline (855-444-3911). This form can be found in the appendix (page 53) along with instructions for completing and sending this report.

Domestic violence: Any behavior that is used to maintain power and control in an intimate relationship Domestic abuse and dating violence/abuse are additional terms that are often used interchangeably. In the state of Michigan, domestic violence is defined as physical abuse. Therefore, someone may experience domestic violence, but the police might not intervene if it is not physical or sexual. Below are behaviors that fall under the larger umbrella terms of domestic violence and/or sexual violence. Their definitions can be found above:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Non-physical sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Financial abuse
- Spiritual abuse

Grooming: Grooming is a method used by abusers of building trust with a child and adults in an effort to gain access to a child and time alone with her/him (note: sexual abuse can happen even when the perpetrator is not alone with a child). In extreme cases, offenders may use threats and physical force to sexually assault or abuse a child. More common, though, are subtle approaches designed to build relationships with families. The offender may assume a caring role, befriend the child, or even exploit their position of trust and authority to groom the child and/or the child’s family. These individuals intentionally build relationships with the adults around a child or seek out a child who may have fewer adults in her/his life. This increases the likelihood that the offender’s time with the child is welcomed and encouraged.

The grooming process does not occur with just the intended victim. Offenders may groom not only the child but also their family and even the local community, who may act as the gatekeepers of access.

Immediate physical danger: Someone is in immediate physical danger if their life is at risk or they are in immediate risk of physical harm.

Mandated reporter: Michigan Child Protection Law requires certain professionals to report their suspicions of child abuse or neglect to Children's Protective Services (CPS) at the

Department of Human Services (DHS). These people are mandated reporters and have established relationships with children based on their profession. Members of the clergy are mandated reporters in the state of Michigan.

Mandated reporters are required BY LAW to make an immediate verbal report to CPS and a written report within 72 hours when they suspect child abuse or neglect. The identity of the reporter is kept confidential. Failure of a mandated reporter to immediately report suspected abuse or neglect is a crime, punishable by a fine and imprisonment, in addition to liability for civil penalties.

While clergy are not mandated reporters in the case of vulnerable adults in the state of Michigan, Sherman Street expects that our clergy will report. Sherman Street also expects that anyone working in or on behalf of the church will report both to authorities and to the Safe Church Response Team any suspicion of abuse or neglect to children or vulnerable adults.

Power differential is the inherently greater power and influence that pastoral leaders or helping professionals have as compared to the people they help. Power differentials exist in all relationships based on cultural standards. Some examples are age, race, gender and education. Understanding both the value and the many impacts of the power differential is the core of ethical awareness. In situations of abuse it is relevant to understand the power differential in the relationship.

Reporting: When this policy refers to reporting a concern or incident, it means to contact a civil authority, such as the police or Child Protective Services, to make a formal report of your concern or incident. When desired, a Safe Church Committee member can help with this reporting process.

- The authorities are properly trained to screen reports and decide whether and what actions should be taken
- The authorities collect and coordinate information. They are able to see how one suspicion fits in with the larger picture.
- Reporting a suspicion is not the same thing as knowing positively that something criminal has happened. The authorities are trained to determine this and to decide what next steps, if any, need to be taken.

Reasonable Suspicion: When reporting, you need only to have a reasonable suspicion that abuse or neglect is present, not knowledge, confirmation or proof. Suspicion includes but is not limited to: witnessing an act of abuse, a disclosure of abuse, or signs of abuse in a child or vulnerable adult. *Adults should make a report instead of investigating an incident themselves.*

Safety Planning: Steps someone can take to reduce the likelihood of violence. While it does not completely eliminate the chance of violence, engaging in safety planning can be important for victims and survivors of domestic violence. For examples of safety planning, please see the appendix, page 46.

Trauma Bonding: Is a strong emotional attachment between an abused person and his or her abuser, formed as a result of the cycle of violence and grooming. Trauma bonding is unhealthy. Only the treating therapist to the abused person should suggest the victim is doing this as it is highly sensitive. The purpose of sharing this definition is so that there can be understanding that responses from victims may be complicated and not understandable by those on the outside.

Volunteer: any person providing any services, care, guidance, assistance or supervision in a Sherman Street function, activity, event or program.

Vulnerable Adult: Michigan statute defines a vulnerable adult as an individual age 18 and older who is unable to protect himself or herself from abuse, neglect or exploitation because of a mental or physical impairment or because of advanced age.

SAFE CHURCH COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

The Safe Church Committee (SCC) oversees the implementation of the Safe Church Policy. The Committee also is a resource for victims of abuse, families of victims, and the congregation.

- The SCC will be composed of at least five members: The Director of Ministries to Children and Youth, the Ministries Coordinator, a liaison to Elders, and at least two knowledgeable and aware members of the congregation.
- The SCC will meet at least quarterly.
- The Safe Church Policy will be reviewed yearly by the SCC before the ministry year starts in September. The Administrative Council will review and approve the policy yearly as well.

SAFE CHURCH RESPONSE TEAM

- When an incident occurs, a group of at least five people will be notified and charged with coming up with a plan for responding to the situation. This group is called the Safe Church Response Team (SCRT):
 - Chair of Safe Church Committee
 - Elder Liaison to SCC
 - Pastor
 - Safe Church Committee Representative(s)
 - District Elder of victim/survivor
 - District Elder of alleged perpetrator
- If one of the members of the SCRT or a relative is involved in the situation being discussed, another member will be appointed to take their place.

VOLUNTEERS AND STAFF: SCREENING PROCESS

The following people are required to complete the screening process:

- Staff (paid and unpaid)
- Council Members
- All children & youth ministry volunteers over the age of 16
- All volunteers over the age of 16 who work with vulnerable adult ministries
- McCarty House members

Screening will take place prior to a person's involvement with these ministries. Screening will take places as follows:

VOLUNTEERS & STAFF

- Complete a Volunteer and Staff Safe Church Profile Form: The form (pg. 33) includes references and a signed statement indicating awareness of and agreement with the safety policy. If a form is not on file, the adult will not be able to continue in their position.
 - Every year, volunteers and staff will have to sign off on the Safe Church Policy. This involves reviewing the policy and initialing their Safe Church Profile form.
 - Profile forms will be good for five years, after which a new one must be filled out.
- Pass A Criminal Background Check through IChat (www.michigan.gov/ICHAT) and clear Central Registry (www.michigan.gov/mdhhs).
 - A Central Registry check will be done once at the beginning of a staff or volunteer's term.
 - An IChat check will be done each August before the ministry year begins.
- Yearly Training: Each fall, the SCC will provide a yearly policy training/ review for all staff and volunteers. If a person is unable to attend, the ministry leader will follow up with that volunteer and present the information. If a staff/volunteer joins in the middle of the year, they will attend the next training offered.

COUNCIL:

- Elder and deacon nominees will complete a Safe Church Profile Form and a criminal background check will be run before they are allowed to let their name stand for office.

STAFF: In addition to the above steps,

- All paid staff must complete a comprehensive background check through HireRight. Note for 2018: The Personnel Committee will be asked to complete these for all current staff.
- All paid staff must complete a Sherman Street Code of Conduct form, which will be kept on file (appendix pg. 37).

Any applicant may withdraw without prejudice from the screening process.

Anyone that does not clear a background check through Central Registry will be prevented from working with minors, including childcare.

The church reserves the right to deny an applicant a volunteer position for any reason, including past problematic behavior.

In the interest of protecting our children and vulnerable adults, Sherman Street Church will not allow individuals convicted of certain offenses to volunteer or work with children or vulnerable adults. There are no exceptions. The Safe Church Committee reserves the right to lengthen the exclusion time, but will not shorten it. The SCC also reserves the right to make decisions on a case-by-case basis about offenses not listed here that cause concern. However, in a desire to extend grace, the committee will consider individuals who have been excluded from these ministries for service in other areas.

Permanent Exclusions

Any felony involving or relating to:	Any misdemeanor involving/relating to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● intent to cause death or serious impairment● cruelty or torture● vulnerable adult abuse● child abuse or neglect● criminal sexual conduct● use of a firearm or dangerous weapon● controlled substances● diversion or adulteration of a prescription drug or other medication	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● the use of a firearm or dangerous weapon with the intent to injure● the use of a firearm or dangerous weapon that results in a personal injury, or a misdemeanor involving the use or threat of force or violence● vulnerable adult abuse● criminal sexual conduct● cruelty or torture, unless the offender was less than 16 years of age at the time of conviction● abuse or neglect

Ten Year Exclusions

from the time sentencing was completed

Any misdemeanor involving/relating to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● assault● fraud● home invasion● embezzlement● negligent homicide● larceny

Five Year Exclusions

from the time sentencing was completed

Any misdemeanor involving/relating to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● possession or delivery of a controlled substance● simple assault● retail fraud in the 3rd degree

SAFE CHURCH POLICY: ALL MINISTRIES

VOLUNTEERS – PROGRAM NUMBERS

If the number of volunteers for a specific program does not follow the Safe Church Policy requirements, the program should be canceled or postponed. (If only one volunteer shows up for food pantry, it is cancelled since there is a requirement for two.)

For the following programs, two or more adult volunteers must be present.

- Food Pantry
- Food Truck
- Friendship and Fun Nights
- Hospitality Events
- McCarty House members should not be alone with a child in the house unless specifically hired to babysit.

Specific guidelines for children, youth and vulnerable adult programs can be found in the next section of the policy.

VOLUNTEER BEHAVIOR

If a volunteer shows signs of abusive behavior or demonstrates behaviors that are unacceptable towards participants, they will be asked by the ministry leader or staff member to excuse themselves for the remainder of the activity time. The ministry leader or staff member would then report the incident, via the Incident Report (appendix pg. 39) to the Safe Church Response Team within 24 hours.

COUNSELING POLICY

All one-on-one counseling by employees or volunteers in the church will take place in spaces that are readily observable to others (i.e. offices with windows, public spaces).

Sherman Street will not recommend marriage or couples counseling when abuse is present. If during counseling abuse becomes known, counseling of the couple will end and individual counseling will be recommended.

CHILDREN & YOUTH DISCIPLINE POLICY

1. Corporal punishment (slapping, hitting, and pushing) is not permitted.
2. Abusive verbal discipline (yelling, hurling insults, threatening) is not permitted.
3. Parent(s) are to be informed and involved whenever a child/youth misbehaves beyond minor correction or if a pattern of misbehavior increases.
4. Concerns about a child's/youth's behavior or the appropriate response to a child's/youth's behavior should be reported to the program supervisor.

5. An aide or a parent should be involved weekly in classrooms where misbehavior is an ongoing problem.
6. Expectations of children's/youths' behavior must reflect their age and level of comprehension. Similarly, discipline must reflect their age and level of comprehension.
7. Children are to be reminded of the kind of behavior that is acceptable for the setting. Older children and youth may benefit from having these expectations in written form.
8. Appropriate types of discipline are to be reviewed with volunteers/staff before church-sponsored programs begin a new season, with reminders given as needed.
9. Whenever possible, leaders should try to avoid having to discipline a child/youth by choosing one or more of the following:
 - a. redirect the child/youth to another activity
 - b. help the child/youth focus on another more acceptable behavior
 - c. take the child/youth aside if another adult volunteer/staff person is available to assist
10. For young children, time-outs should not last longer (in minutes) than the age of the child. (A 3-year-old should not have to sit for a time-out longer than 3 minutes.)

BATHROOM ASSISTANCE POLICY

1. Youth under age 16 may not take other children who are not their siblings to the bathroom.
2. When assisting preschoolers, stand outside and leave the bathroom door open a crack while the child uses the bathroom. If the child asks for help, before going inside, prop open the door to the room or hall if there is no window on the door.
3. Children in kindergarten through 2nd grade should use the buddy system when going to the bathroom.
4. Infant/toddler diapering must take place in the nursery room under the observation of another adult. (This does not apply to the parent or older sibling of the child being diapered).

OFFSITE POLICY

1. On program trips requiring transportation:
 - a. Children in 6th grade or younger: two unrelated adults must be in the vehicle with the child or children.
 - b. 7th-12th graders and vulnerable adults: The "rule of three" must be observed. There should be at least one screened adult with two or more children or vulnerable adults, or two screened adults if there is only one child or vulnerable adults being transported.

2. Seatbelts must be used by each individual on the trip.
3. For any offsite activity, a permission slip must be signed by the guardian for each child who goes on the activity. The Family Emergency & Consent Form (*appendix pg. 35*) can be used as a permission slip.
4. The policies outlined for church programs regarding discipline, incident reporting, and bathroom visits also apply to offsite trips and meetings.

INCIDENT POLICY

An Incident Report (*appendix pg. 39*) will be filled out for any injury or potentially injurious occurrence or suspected abuse/neglect within 24 hours of the incident. Parents or caregivers will be informed of the incident as soon as possible after its occurrence. [If the parent/caregiver is the one suspected of abuse/neglect do not notify them.] A copy of the report will be kept on file in the church office.

SAFE CHURCH POLICY: CHILDREN & YOUTH MINISTRIES

NURSERY AND CHILDCARE FOR EVENTS

1. Two unrelated volunteers (one of which must be an adult, the other must be 16 or older) must be present when nursery or childcare is provided.
2. When class is in session, the view of the classroom will remain unobstructed. (Do not cover window in door or block views in other ways.)
3. There needs to be at least a 1:4 ratio of volunteers to infants or toddlers.
4. An adult or minor who is not scheduled as a nursery volunteer for that particular service may not spend time in the nursery room(s) during provided childcare times unless attending their own child or specifically requested by a nursery volunteer.
5. Minors age 12 or older may volunteer in the nursery as an additional helper.
6. The Discipline, Incident Reporting, and Bathroom Assistance policies apply.
7. If a staff member or volunteer arranges private childcare for their children with a caregiver while they are working or performing a task at church, an Onsite Child Care Waiver/Consent form must be on file (appendix pg. 67).

PRAISE & PLAY and CHILDREN'S WORSHIP (2 Years Old – 2nd Grade)

1. Two unrelated volunteers must be present when these classes are in session. In Praise & Play and the 4 year-old and Kindergarten classes of Children's worship, one must be an adult, the other must be 16 or older. In the First and Second Grade classes of Children's Worship, the second volunteer can be a youth helper under the age of 16.
2. When class is in session, the view of the classroom will remain unobstructed. (Do not cover window in door or block views in other ways.)
3. During class, a child should not leave the room without an adult volunteer or hall monitor accompanying them. Kindergarteners, first and second graders should use the buddy system when going to the bathroom.
4. Due to possible misinterpretation, displays of affection between ministry volunteers and children should be limited to such actions as a brief side hug, an arm around the shoulder, an open-hand pat on the back, a handclasp, high five or fist bump, or a light touch to the forearm. A volunteer's or child's right to refuse any of these will be respected.
5. The Discipline, Incident Reporting, and Bathroom Assistance policies apply.

CHURCH SCHOOL (3rd-6th Grades)

1. There should be at least one adult volunteer in every classroom.
2. The classroom door should allow an unobstructed view of the classroom.

3. The superintendent(s) of Church School should monitor church school classrooms and assist teachers and students as needed during class.
4. Children should not leave the classroom except for illness, to use the bathroom, or for other compelling reasons.
5. Due to possible misinterpretation, displays of affection between ministry volunteers and children should be limited to such actions as a brief side hug, an arm around the shoulder, an open-hand pat on the back, a handclasp, high five or fist bump, or a light touch to the forearm. A volunteer's or child's right to refuse any of these will be respected.
6. The Discipline, Incident Reporting, and Bathroom Assistance policies apply.

**WEDNESDAY NIGHT KIDS CLUB, AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMMING,
AND SUMMER PROGRAMS**

1. The program leader should provide adequate supervision of children. Each program session should be supervised by at least two persons, an adult leader and another volunteer at least four years older than the oldest child in attendance.
2. Children should not leave the classroom except for illness, to use the bathroom, or for other compelling reasons.
3. Children attending programming should not arrive more than ten minutes before the start of the class/program, nor should they stay longer than ten minutes after the class/program.
4. Due to possible misinterpretation, displays of affection between ministry volunteers and children should be limited to such actions as a brief side hug, an arm around the shoulder, an open-hand pat on the back, a handclasp, high five or fist bump or a light touch to the forearm. A volunteer's or child's right to refuse any of these will be respected.
5. Leaders may meet individually with a child attending programming with the permission of a parent. Any such meeting should occur in a public place (the narthex during a Sunday morning, a coffee shop, etc.).
6. The Discipline, Incident Reporting, and Bathroom Assistance policies apply.

SHOCKS (7th-8th Grades), IMPACT CLUBS AND HIGH SCHOOL (9th-12th Grades)

1. Youth group leaders should not hold youth group functions without appropriate supervision. Youth group functions should be under the supervision of two or more youth group leaders.
2. Youth group leaders may meet individually with a youth group member with the permission of a parent. Any such meeting should occur in public.

3. Regardless of the relative ages, it is never appropriate for a youth group leader and a youth to date each other or be involved intimately. This includes kissing, holding hands, fondling, sexting or any other intimate behavior. Similarly, a youth group leader should not date a close friend of a member of the youth group.
4. Due to possible misinterpretation, displays of affection between ministry volunteers and children should be limited to such actions as a brief side hug, an arm around the shoulder, an open-hand pat on the back, a handclasp, high five or fist bump or a light touch to the forearm. A volunteer's or child's right to refuse any of these will be respected.
5. No youth group leader may engage in actions (e.g., giving gifts, phoning, and texting) that promote an intimate or emotionally dependent relationship with a youth group member.
7. The Discipline and Incident Reporting policies apply.

SAFE CHURCH POLICY: VULNERABLE ADULT MINISTRIES

GROUP MEETING POLICY

1. If a vulnerable adult and volunteer meet alone in a classroom, the door will be left open or the door will have a window with an unobstructed view of the room.
2. Due to possible misinterpretation, displays of affection between ministry volunteers and vulnerable adults should be limited to such actions as a brief side hug, arm around the shoulder, an open-hand pat on the back, a handclasp, high five, fist bump or a light touch to the forearm. Both the vulnerable adult and the volunteer can say "no" to physical affection and refrain from displays of affection. If a vulnerable adult is unable to verbalize "no", the volunteer should take careful notice of their body language and facial expression that may indicate discomfort with physical affection.
3. Volunteers will not make lewd or suggestive comments, or tell dirty or off-color jokes. They will not engage in discussion about one's intimate life.
4. Any volunteer who transports a vulnerable adult to a ministry activity will have a seat belt for each passenger to use.

BATHROOM GUIDELINES

1. If necessary, a vulnerable adult should be assisted by someone of the same gender in such a manner as to ensure his/her privacy and safety. This may require more than one volunteer.
2. When a vulnerable adult routinely needs bathroom assistance, or needs assistance with medical devices, caregivers should provide this assistance. Plans for assisting them should be made before attending a meeting.

CORRECTIVE ACTION

1. Corporal punishment (slapping, hitting, and pushing) is not permitted.
2. Abusive verbal discipline (yelling, hurling insults, threatening) is not permitted.
3. Physical restraint may be used only to prevent harm or injury to the vulnerable adult, volunteer(s), or other persons nearby. It should be used only after all other options to de-escalate the situation have been tried and are unsuccessful.
4. Whenever possible, leaders should try to avoid having to discipline a vulnerable adult by choosing one or more of the following:
 - a. redirect the person to another activity
 - b. give verbal reminders to follow the rules
 - c. help the person focus on another more acceptable behavior
 - d. take the person aside if another volunteer/staff is available to assist
5. If problems continue beyond minor correction, share them with a parent, guardian, or caregiver and inform them of how the situation has been handled.

RESPONDING: AFTER AN INCIDENT OR DISCLOSURE

A volunteer/staff member who has received first-hand information leading to reasonable suspicion of abuse is responsible to report it within 24 hours. Members of the Safe Church Committee are available to walk with you through this process.

If someone is in immediate physical danger (either on church property or off the property) then the police (911) should be notified immediately. Calling the police should always take priority over a report to CPS or APS.

In the event that a member, church worshipper, volunteer or staff member is unsure as to whether or not an emergency or act of abuse has been committed, the individual should immediately contact the chair of the Safe Church Committee (Ellen Jeltema) or a member of the Sherman Street Safe Church Response Team (see below).

It is common to not know if what you are hearing about is defined as abuse. It is also common to worry about hurting a ministry or the alleged abuser. You do not need to determine or decide these details at this time. It is expected that you will consult with a member of Safe Church Response Team or authorities to help make this decision. Reporting a suspicion is not the same thing as knowing positively that something criminal has happened. The authorities and Safe Church members are trained to determine this and to decide what next steps, if any, need to be taken. Respect for confidentiality while maintaining safety is the goal of this policy.

1. CHILDREN OR YOUTH (any person under 18 years of age) RESPONSE TO DISCLOSURE CHECKLIST

- If a child or youth is in immediate danger, contact police (911).
- If you suspect sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse or neglect you **must report** this to the Child Protective Services 24-hour hotline (855-444-3911).
 - Fill out a DHS-3200 if a report was made to CPS (appendix pg. 53) if requested by CPS when you make the call.
- Contact **at least one** of the following people from the Safe Church Response Team:
 - Chair of Safe Church Committee
 - Elder Liaison to SCC
 - Pastor
 - Safe Church Committee Representative
- Assist the Safe Church Response Team with filling out a Sherman Street Safe Church Incident Report (appendix pg. 39). Regardless of whether or not a report is made to CPS, an incident report should be completed. Any time a minor makes a disclosure of child abuse, domestic violence or dating violence that directly involves that child, an incident report should be completed. It is the job of the Safe Church Response Team to complete this form or complete it with the assistance of the person who has concerns.

2. VULNERABLE ADULT

Michigan statute defines a vulnerable adult as an individual age 18 and older who is unable to protect himself or herself from abuse, neglect or exploitation because of a mental or physical impairment or because of advanced age.

- If a vulnerable adult is in immediate danger, contact police (911).
- If you suspect sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse or neglect you **must report** this to the Adult Protective Services 24-hour hotline (855-444-3911).
 - Fill out a DHS-3200 if a report was made to APS (appendix pg. 53) if requested by APS when you make the call.
- Contact **at least one** of the following people from the Safe Church Response Team:
 - Chair of Safe Church Committee
 - Elder Liaison to SCC
 - Pastor
 - Safe Church Committee Representative
- Fill out a Sherman Street Safe Church Incident Report (appendix. 39) Regardless of whether or not a report is made to CPS, an incident report should be completed. Any time a vulnerable adult makes a disclosure of abuse, domestic violence or dating violence that directly involves a vulnerable adult, an incident report should be completed. It is the job of the Safe Church Response Team to complete this form or complete it with the assistance of the person who has concerns.

3. ADULT

- If an adult is in immediate danger, contact police (911).
- Do you suspect abuse by a clergy/pastor/church leader/elder or deacon? If yes, contact at least one of the following people from the Safe Church Response Team:
 - Chair of Safe Church Committee
 - Elder Liaison to SCC
 - Pastor
 - Safe Church Committee Representative
- Do you suspect domestic or partner violence? If yes, refer to Domestic Violence Response Plan for suggestions (appendix pg. 46).
- If you suspect abuse by a church leader, you must fill out a Sherman Street Safe Church Incident Report (appendix pg. 39). It is the job of the Safe Church Response Team to complete this form or complete it with the assistance of the person who has concerns. If you suspect domestic or partner violence, an incident report may be needed. Consult the Safe Church Response Team to discern.

IF CONCERNS DO NOT FIT INTO ONE OF THESE CATEGORIES, FOLLOW PROCESS TO CONTACT A MEMBER OF THE SAFE CHURCH RESPONSE TEAM.

RESPONDING: MANDATED REPORTERS

All Sherman Street staff, paid and unpaid, as well as volunteers working within the church or church programming with minors or vulnerable adults are expected to report using the mandated reporter guidelines for the state of Michigan.

PROCEDURES:

1. **As a mandated reporter, if you learn of or suspect child abuse or neglect, you are required by law to report this to Child Protective Services.** For a complete definition of child abuse, see *Definitions* found on 5.
2. Regardless of whether or not a report is made to CPS, an Incident Report should be completed, which can be found in the appendix (pg. 39). Anytime a minor makes a disclosure of child abuse, domestic violence or dating violence that directly involves that child, an incident report should be completed.
3. Incident Reports should be completed and submitted to a member of the Safe Church Response Team within 24 hours of the incident. The incident report will be reviewed within 2 business days by the Safe Church Response Team.

RESPONDING: INCIDENT REPORTS

Any time an issue arises pertaining to acts of violence (physical, verbal, emotion, sexual – witnessed or suspected), neglect, accident or medical emergency, staff and volunteers are to complete an Incident Report form, which can be found in the appendix. While not an exhaustive list, the following are some examples when an Incident Report should be completed:

- Any time a volunteer or staff member witnesses or suspects abuse or neglect of a child or vulnerable adult.
- Any time a staff or volunteer receives a disclosure from a minor or vulnerable adult regarding sexual abuse, domestic violence or neglect.
- Any acts of violence or aggression between intimate partners (adults or minors) that takes place on Sherman Street property or during a Sherman Street event/programming.
- An accident, injury or medical emergency happens on church property or during a church event.

An Incident Report should be completed and submitted to the Safe Church Response Team within 24 hours of the incident. You can find a copy of the Incident Report in the appendix (pg. 39).

An incident report should be reviewed by the Safe Church Response Team within 2 business days of the incident.

The Committee Reporting Structure outlined above provides an overview of who should receive the Incident Report. In the event that an Incident Report for cannot be located or completed due to circumstantial reasons, a verbal report should still be given following the same Reporting Structure.

RESPONDING: DOMESTIC VIOLENCE DISCLOSURES

Regardless of who receives a domestic violence disclosure, there are certain steps following this disclosure that should be universal. In addition to safety planning and connecting a victim with identified resources, all victims of abuse should be informed of the Safe Church Committee and the additional resource they may provide.

PROCEDURES:

1. A referral to the Safe Church Response Team should be made anytime someone receives a disclosure of domestic violence. Ultimately, it is the victim's decision as to whether they connect with an individual from this group, but the resource should always be offered by the individual receiving the disclosure.
2. If the victim does not want to be connected to the Safe Church Response Team, the individual receiving the disclosure should not break confidentiality.
3. Consult the detailed suggestions for responding to a domestic violence disclosure found in the appendix.
4. Safe Haven Ministries can be contacted at any time for help or advice. Their 24-hour hotline number is 616-452-6664.
5. If you suspect a child or vulnerable adult is being abused, neglected or exposed to violence, a report to CPS or APS must be filed.
6. In an effort to make the Safe Church Committee and Church Certification resource widely known and understood by the congregation, Sherman Street will utilize multiple platforms and approaches to inform congregants of the resource. The following are guidelines for how this will be achieved:
 - a. Communication during worship about these resources (on at least an annual basis)
 - b. Communication about this resource in congregant communication (i.e. social media, newsletter, website, etc.)
 - c. Safe Haven resources will be made available to congregants

RESPONDING: DISCLOSURES THAT INVOLVE CLERGY, STAFF OR COUNCIL MEMBERS

Any allegations of abuse by clergy, staff, or church council members will be reported to Elders within 24 hours of incident or knowledge of incident, following appropriate disclosure to authorities and the Safe Church Response Team. Following the report of abuse, council will proceed along denominational guidelines regarding discipline for office bearers as detailed in the CRCNA Church Order.

The Christian Reformed Church Synod, over time, has adopted guidelines as a supplement to the Church Order to equip churches to deal with an abuse allegation in a manner that is consistent with CRC beliefs and values. The current version of the Church Order can be found online at the CRCNA website (www.crcna.org).

The CRCNA Advisory Panel process may need to be executed, which happens with the help of Classis Grand Rapids East and the CRC Safe Church Office (616-224-0735). The Elders, along with the SCRT, will be responsible for executing this process.

See definition of clergy/pastoral/church leader/church staff/council member-elder or deacon abuse on page 4 of this policy.

See “Checklist for Safe Church Response Team” in the appendix (page 43) for detailed information on how to proceed.

TRAINING: CERTIFICATION & ONGOING TRAINING

PASTORAL & LEADERSHIP STAFF ONBOARDING

All pastoral and leadership paid staff are responsible for participating in basic domestic violence training as a part of their beginning employment with the church. Within six months of their hire date, staff should be able to: identify behaviors of an abusive relationship; understand how to safely and appropriately respond when domestic violence is present or identified; and know how and where to refer someone who is experiencing domestic violence.

PROCEDURES:

1. Newly hired staff members are to participate in the next available Domestic Violence Seminar, facilitated at Safe Haven Ministries on an at least quarterly basis. To register, visit: www.safehavenministries.org/events.
2. Newly hired staff members are to review the *Recognize, Respond, Refer Resource* that is located in the appendix.
3. Staff members that will be working directly with congregation members and worshipers are encouraged to foster relationships with their local domestic violence agencies. In an effort to strengthen these relationships and create open lines of communication for warm referrals, staff members are encouraged to set up a meeting with a member(s) of a local domestic violence agency within their first 6 months of employment.

CERTIFICATION & ONGOING TRAINING

In an effort to promote continued learning and a dedication to the best response and prevention of domestic violence, Sherman Street is committed to maintaining its Creating a Safe Haven Certification. It will also participate in an annual refresher training as a means of staying current within the topic of domestic violence.

PROCEDURES:

1. Every 3 years, Sherman Street will participate in Creating a Safe Haven recertification. This is an opportunity for new staff to receive comprehensive domestic violence training. This is also an opportunity to evaluate and make any needed changes to the church response plan. Our last training occurred in February, 2018.
2. On an annual basis, Sherman Street will participate in a topical refresher training, lasting approximately 90 minutes. The topic of the training can be determined by the church, based on current needs and trends. Participation in this training is open to staff, volunteers, and interested congregants/worshippers.
3. For those interested in supplemental resources, the following material is recommended. (copies of the books can be found in the SSCRC library, located in the church office):
 - a. *Domestic Violence: What Every Pastor Needs to Know*, Al Miles
 - b. *Is It My Fault: Hope and Healing for Those Suffering*, Justin S. Holcomb & Lindsey A. Holcomb

- c. *Violence Among Us: Ministry to Families in Crisis*, Brenda Branson & Paula J. Silvia
- d. *Why Does He Do That*, Lundy Bancroft
- e. *Wings Like a Dove* (film by Faith Trust Institute; this film can be rented at Safe Haven Ministries)

YOUTH & CHILDREN'S MINISTRY TRAINING

It is the responsibility of Sherman Street to ensure that appropriate measures are taken to prevent all forms of abuse against children and youth. It is also the responsibility of Sherman Street to appropriately intervene when known or suspected abuse is taking place. This includes children and youth who witness or experience forms of abuse at home. Additionally, adolescents are at greatest risk of experiencing dating abuse within their own relationships, emphasizing the importance that those working with this population have the skills and resources to talk about this topic and provide support should a minor disclose experiencing abuse.

PROCEDURES:

1. Paid and volunteer leaders working with children and youth will have opportunities to participate in periodic training focused on the prevention and intervention of child sexual abuse, adolescent relationship abuse, and appropriate prevention and intervention measures. Participation is highly encouraged and may be required for staff members.
2. Youth and children ministry leaders should feel equipped to recognize, respond and refer in cases of domestic and sexual abuse.
3. Staff, council members, and all volunteers working with minors or vulnerable adults are required to complete the appropriate background checks; see page 11 for more information.

TRAINING: CULTURE OF PREVENTION

RESOURCES & MATERIALS

As a way of creating a culture where victims of abuse feel safe coming to the church for support, Sherman Street partners with Safe Haven Ministries to have an array of domestic violence resources available to those in the church should they need the help.

PROCEDURES:

1. Tear-away bathroom flyers with the local domestic violence hotline are placed in the stalls of the bathrooms.
2. Safe Haven Ministries Program Brochures are made available in the main entry and office of the church.
3. Each staff member and volunteer has access to adult and adolescent resource cards to use should they be working with someone who is experiencing domestic violence.

DISCUSSION OF HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS/DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN PREMARITAL COUNSELING

If domestic violence is present in a dating relationship, it is likely to only escalate in marriage if there are no therapeutic interventions. Therefore, Sherman Street will encourage conversations around the identification of domestic violence in premarital counseling.

PROCEDURES:

1. Discussion of domestic violence should not be limited to physical abuse. During premarital counseling, the pastor will identify a range of unhealthy and/or abusive qualities that can be found in a relationship.
2. A definition of domestic violence should also include emotional, verbal, spiritual, sexual and psychological abuse.
3. By universalizing the education of healthy and unhealthy relationships, Sherman Street is promoting a culture of violence prevention.
4. At the root of all abuse is an imbalance of power and control. Thus, by talking about equality, trust and mutuality in a relationship, the pastor is laying the foundation for healthy relationships. This also helps to prevent a framework for the discussion on unhealthy or abusive relationships.

TEEN DATING VIOLENCE PREVENTION FOR YOUTH MINISTRY

On an annual basis, Sherman Street will invite Safe Haven Ministries into its youth ministry program to present its Teen Dating Violence Prevention Program.

PROCEDURES:

1. Youth (and parents if desired) will be encouraged to engage in the curriculum promoting healthy relationships.
2. Based on interest, Safe Haven can also facilitate a training on Starting the Conversation—a training targeted towards parents that focuses on initiating conversations with their child(ren) about dating and healthy relationships.
3. Our last session was held on May 6, 2018 for SHOCKS and High School Youth Group.

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SAFE CHURCH PROFILE FORM

Form Expires

/ /

Sherman Street Christian Reformed Church

This profile is to be completed by all staff and council members, and all volunteers who are involved in children's, youth, and/or vulnerable adult ministries. A criminal background check will also be conducted. This is in order to help the church provide a safe and secure environment for those who participate in our ministries and to protect those who work with them. Please complete and return this form to the office, and include a copy of your driver's license.

APPLICANT INFORMATION

Full Name:	
Address:	
Telephone:	Email:
Birthdate:	Other Names (aliases, maiden)
Driver's License #	Last four digits of your SSN:
How long have you attended Sherman Street Church?	Are you a member? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

For what ministry or ministries are you presently interested in serving?

RELEVANT HISTORY

List previous work involving children and/or vulnerable adults (identify place/organization and type of work):

I have been arrested for or convicted of child abuse (physical, sexual abuse, neglect, molestation or exploitation of a minor): <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	If you checked yes to any question, please explain:
I have been arrested for or convicted of abuse to a vulnerable adult (physical, sexual abuse, neglect, molestation or exploitation): <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Do you have any questions regarding your past or present behavior patterns when you interact with children or vulnerable adults? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	

PERSONAL REFERENCES (no relatives, employees, supervisors, or church coworkers)

Reference #1	Reference #2
Name:	Name:
Address:	Address:
Telephone:	Telephone:
Email:	Email:

APPLICANT'S STATEMENT

The information I have provided is correct to the best of my knowledge. I authorize any references or churches/organizations listed in this application and law enforcement agency to release information regarding my character and fitness for work in vulnerable adult, children and youth ministry. I have read and understand Sherman Street Christian Reformed Church's Safe Church Policy. I agree to its regulations and mandates, and will adhere to them. I realize that an allegation of abuse could result in suspension of my service duties within the church and additionally understand and agree that all allegations of physical and sexual abuse will be reported by the church and its leaders to the appropriate authorities (Children's or Adult Protective Services and local law enforcement department). My signature acknowledges my understanding and agreement with this policy. (Each year you will be asked to initial and date this form indicating that you are still in agreement with this policy.)

Signature: _____ Date: _____
 Initials: _____ Date: _____
 Initials: _____ Date: _____
 Initials: _____ Date: _____
 Initials: _____ Date: _____

=====FOR OFFICE USE=====

Date received:	ICHAT Background Check (to be done yearly): Date: _____ Date: _____ Date: _____ Date: _____ Date: _____	Yearly Training:
Reference Check #1:		Date: _____
Reference Check #2:		Date: _____
Training Attended:		Date: _____
Central Registry Check (every five years):		Date: _____
HireRite Check (staff only):		Date: _____

Additional notes:

FAMILY EMERGENCY & CONSENT FORM

2019-2020

Sherman Street Christian Reformed Church

Children:

Full Name:	Age:	Grade:	<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female
Full Name:	Age:	Grade:	<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female
Full Name:	Age:	Grade:	<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female
Full Name:	Age:	Grade:	<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female

Contact Information

Parent/Guardian #1	Parent/Guardian #2
Name:	Name:
Address:	Address:
Telephone:	Telephone:
Email:	Email:

Emergency Contact Information List the names of relatives/neighbor/friends in close proximity to the church to whom we may release your child or contact if you cannot be reached.

Contact #1	Contact #2
Name:	Name:
Telephone:	Telephone:
Relationship to Family:	Relationship to Family:

Medical Information I/we give permission to the adult in charge to secure needed emergency medical treatment for the children named above. In case of accident or injury during the activity, I/we release the adult in charge from all liability not covered by insurance.

Insurance Company:	Doctor:
Policy Number:	
Pertinent Medical Information for each child, including allergies, medications and dosage:	

Parent/guardian signature: _____ Date: _____

Field Trip Consent

Specific information about offsite activities will be communicated to parents in advance whenever possible. I give my permission for my child(ren) to participate in trips off church property arranged by Sherman Street Christian Reformed Church.

Parent/guardian signature: _____ Date: _____

Transportation Liability Release and Waiver

I confirm that I have authorized my child(ren) to participate in activities organized and/or approved by Sherman Street Christian Reformed Church (SSCRC).

I understand that:

- Children participating in SSCRC activities may be transported to and from activities by volunteers. I therefore consent to my child(ren) being transported by a volunteer affiliated with SSCRC.
- I understand that there are inherent risks involved in physical activity and that my child may therefore be exposed to those dangers and/or risks by participating in sports or other activities.
- I acknowledge and agree that SSCRC cannot guarantee my child's personal safety while participating in the above activities.
- Should my son/daughter/ward/ be injured or suffer property loss or damage while participating in the above activities, I release and hold harmless SSCRC, its council, employees, agents and volunteers from any and all claims, causes of action, demands, rights, damages, liability, costs and expenses, of every kind and description, known and unknown, which I now have or which I have ever had in the past or shall have in the future for such injuries, losses or damages.
- This is a legally binding release made to SSCRC.

Parent/guardian signature: _____ Date: _____

Transportation

With regard to local offsite activities, the following apply to the children named above (check all that apply):

- May drive to offsite activities (licensed drivers only)
- May have youth passengers in his/her car
- May ride in a vehicle in which a youth is driving

Only adult drivers will be utilized for out-of-town activities.

Parent/guardian signature: _____ Date: _____

General Information

Is there anything else you would like to communicate to ministry leaders (eg. special needs, learning challenges, concerns)?

SHERMAN STREET CODE OF CONDUCT

The mission and doctrines of Sherman Street Christian Reformed Church (SSCRC) form the foundation for our working community, and the success of the church in living out this mission is related directly to the competence, performance and conduct of its staff members. SSCRC asks each staff member to participate in this community by being accountable to and responsible for one another. It is, therefore, necessary for the church to support clearly stated expectations for performance and conduct, with consistent procedures both for review and resolution.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Staff members of SSCRC (that is, all employees of SSCRC) are expected to exemplify personal integrity, honesty, respect, humility, courage, generosity, gratitude, gentleness, kindness, patience and self-control in their words and actions. Many of these qualities are identified by the apostle Paul as the “Fruits of the Spirit”; (Colossians 3, Galatians 5), and staff members should strive with God’s help to demonstrate these virtues both in their professional activities and in their personal lives. Implementation of these standards and expectations is both an individual and a community responsibility.

Although each staff member is expected to strive to live out these virtues and to perform the tasks of his or her position in a satisfactory or exemplary manner, directors and supervisors are responsible for maintaining standards of performance and conduct, communicating and defining expectations and following the appropriate procedures for review and resolution. These procedures are outlined below.

APPLICATION AND LIMITATIONS

The standards of conduct in this document are not intended to be all-inclusive. They do, however, take the place of any policies previously published. Though the church wishes to make its standards clear and to impose corrective action procedures in a progressive manner, certain actions could result in suspension or immediate discharge. In such a case, the fact that the action has not been specifically covered in this document or that progressive discipline has not been applied shall not affect the appropriateness of the immediate discharge.

Staff members are subject to discharge for misconduct that includes but is not limited to such offenses that appear to have caused, or appear likely to cause, serious and lasting harm to another person or the church. Among the offenses that may fall into this category are: fraud; theft; insubordination; dishonesty; unacceptable job performance; unauthorized release of confidential church data or information; professional misconduct; abuse of a spouse, child, or other person; sexual misconduct, including sexual relations outside marriage; harassment; abuse or derogation on the basis of race, ethnicity, or gender; immoderate anger, slander, or verbal abuse; abuse of alcohol or other drugs; persistent use of profane or obscene language; and intentional destruction of the church’s property or another staff member’s property.

Staff members are subject to corrective action for other less serious misconduct such as, but not limited to, improper work performance, discourteous behavior, absenteeism, tardiness or other violations of church policies or standards of conduct.

REPORTING PROCEDURES

This process is designed to provide an orderly and discreet review for the resolution of work-related conflicts and violations of our code of conduct, including appeals for corrective actions and involuntary termination. Consistent with the handling of all performance and disciplinary matters, the church seeks to handle the process with discretion and sensitivity.

A staff member who feels wronged or who believes another staff member has violated the church's code of conduct should report this concern in writing to the Administrative Council. If necessary, the Administrative Council may seek outside legal advice. No retribution or other adverse action will be taken against any staff member for filing a complaint, and work accommodations will be made, if warranted, based on the nature of the complaint.

I understand and will abide by this code of conduct.

Employee Signature

Date

INCIDENT REPORT

Sherman Street Christian Reformed Church

This form should be completed:

- If there is a disclosure, allegation or reasonable suspicion of abuse or neglect, whether at church or offsite.
- If someone becomes ill or receives an injury that requires First Aid or medical treatment while on church property or while participating in a church event offsite.
- If an unusual incident occurs that jeopardizes the safety of a person while on church property or participating in a church event offsite.

Submit completed form to the Ministries Coordinator, a Pastor or a Safe Church Committee member within 24 hours.

Date and Time of Incident: _____ **Date of Report:** _____

Name of Person Injured or Disclosing (one report per person)

Full Name:	
Street Address:	
Telephone:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Child or Youth <input type="checkbox"/> Vulnerable Adult <input type="checkbox"/> Adult	Age: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female	
<input type="checkbox"/> Member/Attender <input type="checkbox"/> Neighbor <input type="checkbox"/> Visitor <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Disclosure <input type="checkbox"/> Injury <input type="checkbox"/> Accident <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify)	

Incident Information

Date of Incident:	Time of Incident:	a.m. <input type="checkbox"/> p.m. <input type="checkbox"/>
Location of Incident: <input type="checkbox"/> Church property <input type="checkbox"/> Offsite (provide address)		
Description of Incident Location (e.g. front of Sanctuary):		
Was the information		
<input type="checkbox"/> Directly observed by me <input type="checkbox"/> Reported by someone else (who)		

Complete Description of Incident (please attach additional sheet if needed):

Action Taken

Check all that apply, add notes: <input type="checkbox"/> Provided First Aid _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Called 911 _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Taken to Hospital _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Called CPS/APS _____ <input type="checkbox"/> CPS 3200 Completed _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Notified Authorities _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Notified Parent/Guardian _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify) _____	Detailed explanation of Action Taken (who,what,when):
--	---

Person Creating Report

Full Name:	
Position at Sherman Street Church:	
Address:	
Telephone:	Email:
Signature:	Date/Time:

Other Individuals or Direct Witnesses Involved

Full Name and position at Sherman Street:	
Address:	
Telephone:	Email:
Signature:	Date/Time:

Full Name and position at Sherman Street:	
Address:	
Telephone:	Email:
Signature:	Date/Time:

STAFF REVIEWING THIS REPORT: This report should be reviewed by at least one member of the Safe Church Committee within 48 hours of incident. This staff person should notify the other members of the Safe Church Response Team immediately.

Name(Print): _____ Title: _____

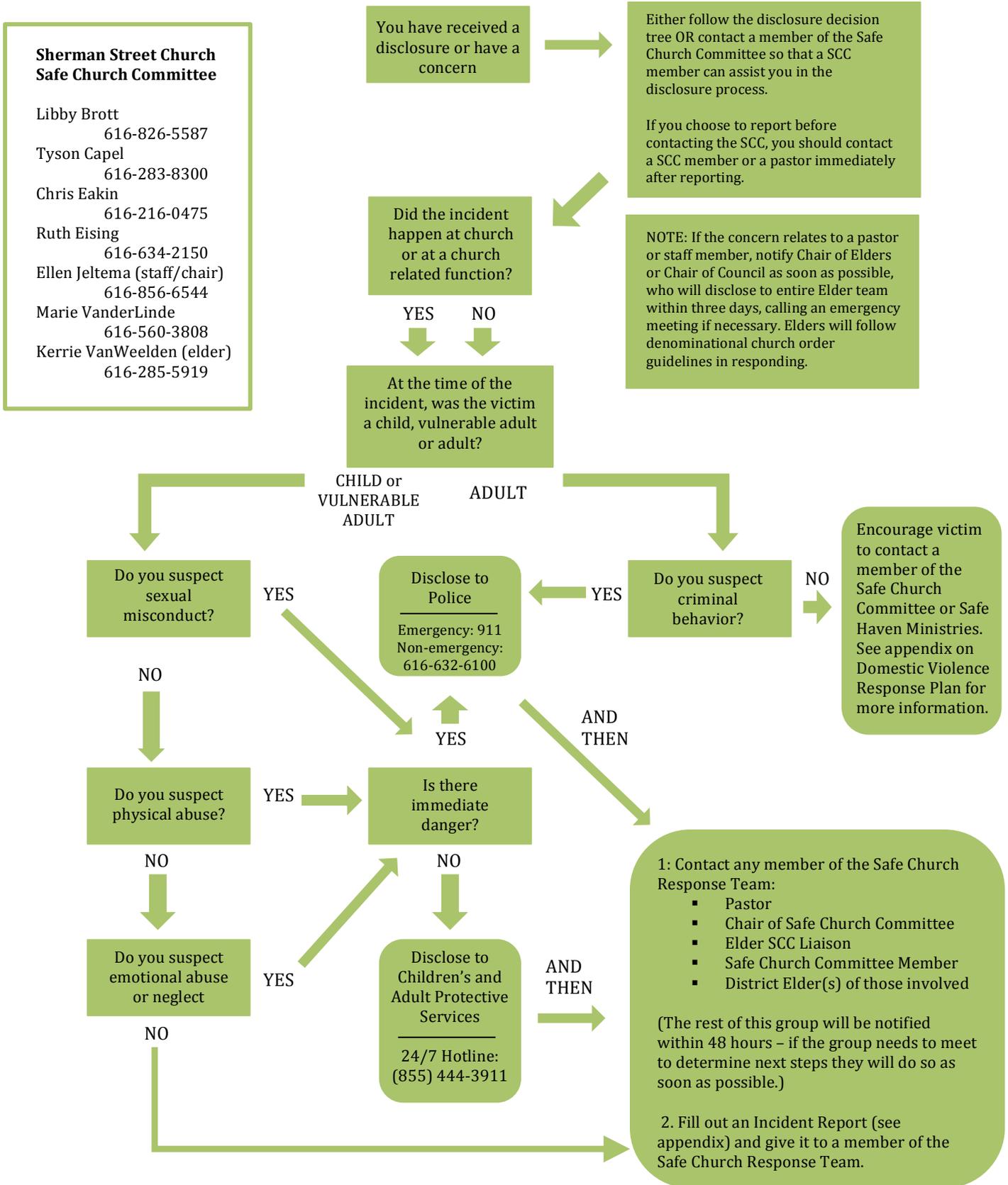
Signature: _____ Date/Time: _____

Safe Church Committee Actions:

Check all that apply, add notes: <input type="checkbox"/> Contact Safe Church Response Team _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Meeting Scheduled _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Contact Elder(s) _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Contact Insurance Co. _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify) _____	Detailed explanation of Action Taken (who,what,when):
---	---

DISCLOSURE DECISION TREE

Follow the diagram when a concern or report is raised. A volunteer or staff member who has received first-hand information leading to reasonable suspicion of abuse is expected to report it within 24 hours.



DISCLOSURE CHECKLIST

Follow this checklist or the disclosure decision tree when a concern or report is disclosed. A volunteer or staff member who has received first-hand information leading to a reasonable suspicion of abuse is expected to report it within 24 hours.

(Please note, in many cases the victim will not want you to report. In cases of the abuse of children or vulnerable adults, all ministry leaders and church staff are mandated reporters and MUST contact CPS, APS, or police. Cases of domestic violence between adults do not fall under these guidelines.)

- Did the incident happen at church or somewhere else? In either case, continue with checklist.
- Is anyone in immediate danger? If so, call 911.
- Who is in danger or affected?
 - Child or Youth
 - Call CPS if suspicion of abuse or neglect
 - Fill out a DHS-3200 as directed by CPS
 - Consult Appendix Resource (Responding to Children)
 - Vulnerable Adult (see definition in policy)
 - Call CPS if suspicion of abuse or neglect
 - Adult
 - Do you suspect criminal activity? Encourage victim to call police
 - Encourage victim to contact the Safe Church Response Team
 - Consult Appendix Resources (Domestic Violence Response)
 - Continue with checklist if victim is open to disclosure to the SCRT
 - Consider contacting Safe Haven for advice (616-452-6664)
- Contact a representative of the Safe Church Response Team:
 - Chair of Safe Church Committee
 - Elder Liaison to SCC
 - Pastor
 - Safe Church Committee Representative
- Fill out a Sherman Street Incident Report and give it to SC Response Team

CHECKLIST FOR SAFE CHURCH RESPONSE TEAM

When an incident happens, someone discloses to you or you are concerned:

- Is anyone in immediate danger? If so, call 911.
- Who is in danger or affected?
 - Child or Youth
 - Call CPS if suspicion of abuse or neglect
 - Fill out a DHS-3200 as directed by CPS
 - Vulnerable Adult (see definition in policy)
 - Call CPS if suspicion of abuse or neglect
 - Contact parent/guardian if applicable
 - Adult
 - Domestic Violence: See Appendix Resources on how to respond to cases of Domestic Violence.
 - Consider calling Safe Haven for advice (616-452-6664).
- Contact parent/guardian if applicable
- Contact Members of the Safe Church Response Team
 - Chair of Safe Church Committee
 - Elder Liaison to SCC
 - Pastor
 - Safe Church Committee Representative
- Contact District Elder(s) of involved parties: _____
- Fill out a Sherman Street Incident Report if one has not been completed already
- The SC Response Team and district elder(s) should meet within 2 business days to make a care and follow-up plan:
 - Review policy in detail to make sure it has been followed
 - Contact Safe Haven or the CRC Safe Church Office for advice if applicable
 - If accused is a staff member, council member or clergy, also contact Chair of Elders. Elders will call a meeting within three days of disclosure.
 - Consult CRCNA Church Order (www.crcna.org) for guidelines.
 - The CRCNA Advisory Panel process may need to be executed, with the help of Classis Grand Rapids East and the CRC Safe Church Office (616-224-0735)
 - Pastoral care for victim will be done by _____
 - Pastoral care for accused (if part of the congregation) will be done by _____
 - Is pastoral care needed for anyone else? _____
 - Contact insurance company if applicable
 - Make a communication plan that is consistent, deciding on method as well as timing.

PASTORAL CARE AND FOLLOW UP PLAN

(complete and attach to incident report)

Date: _____ Time: _____

Names of participants and roles in making this plan:

The SC Response Team and district elder(s) should meet within 2 business days to make a care and follow-up plan:

- Review policy in detail to make sure it has been followed.
- Contact Safe Haven, the YMCA or the CRC Safe Church Office for advice if applicable.
- Consider contracting with a trained mental health professional to assist in the process. Pine Rest has been used in the past for this.
- If accused is a staff member, council member or clergy, also contact Chair of Elders. Elders will call a meeting within three days of disclosure.
 - Consult CRCNA Church Order (www.crcna.org) for guidelines
 - The CRCNA Advisory Panel process may need to be executed, with the help of Classis Grand Rapids East and the CRC Safe Church Office (616-224-0735).
- Pastoral care for victim will be done by _____ (name of person) with this minimal frequency _____.
- Pastoral care for accused (if part of the congregation) will be done by _____ (name of person) with this minimal frequency _____.
- Is pastoral care needed for anyone else? if yes, care provided to _____ by _____ with this minimal frequency _____.
- Contact insurance company completed by _____. If not contacted, commented why contact is not needed in incident report.
- These person(s) is responsible for to ensure steps on this plan are followed and implemented. _____.

RESPONDING TO CHILDREN

SUGGESTIONS FOR RESPONDING TO A CHILD WHO DISCLOSES ABUSE

Take the child seriously. Do not try to convince the child that the story is not true or did not really happen that way. Do not suggest an alternative explanation (such as “Do you think you were you having a nightmare/dream?”).

Stay calm and reassuring. Do not overreact with fear, disgust, or anxiety, or the child may stop talking or may believe that you think they have been bad.

DO NOT promise not to tell anyone. Do say that you may need to tell people who will know how to help. Tell the child that you want to find help for everyone so that the child will be safe from the hurt.

Reassure the child that it WAS GOOD to tell someone.

Remind the child that whatever happened WAS NOT his/her fault.

Remind the child that he/she does not deserve to be hurt by anyone.

Do not frighten the child with talk about police or medical examinations.

Do not ask the child to show you any bruises that are beneath the child’s clothing.

DO NOT investigate; LISTEN closely and write down the information immediately after the conversation while it is still fresh in your mind.

Remind the child of your care.

If you feel it is appropriate, **pray with the child.** Keep the child, family, and situation in your own private prayers.

Follow up in later weeks and months by showing concern and support. This will help reduce the shame.

Any suspected abuse should be reported to the appropriate authorities

Grand Rapids Police Non-Emergency Number 456-3400

Children’s Protective Services (CPS) Hotline (24 hours) 855-444-3911

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE RESPONSE PLAN

The following sections outline policies and procedures pertaining specifically to domestic violence. Refer also to the section on mandated reporters if these cases affect children and/or vulnerable adults (page 22).

RESPONDING TO AN ADULT DISCLOSURE OF ABUSE

Whenever a pastor, staff, or lay member of the church receives a disclosure of abuse, the following goals should always be regarded as top priority:

1. Safety for the victim and children
2. Accountability for the abuser
3. Restoration (if possible/desired by *both* parties) or mourning over the loss of the relationship

PROCEDURES:

1. **Staff are to always believe the story of a victim;** it is never the responsibility to determine the truth of a victim's story. Doing so often creates additional shame, barriers and even danger for the victim of abuse.
2. If a staff member or volunteer receives a disclosure, help to assess the current needs of the victim and/or the children. While only guidelines, the following questions can be used to initiate this assessment:
 - a. What can I do to help you?
 - b. Would you like me to provide you with some resources?
 - c. What does it look like for me to support you?
3. **Reach out to your domestic violence agency for help or advice. An agency like Safe Haven Ministries is available 24/7 and can always help brainstorm through a situation: 616-452-6664.**
4. When possible, plan for the short-term and long-term physical and emotional safety of the victim. Remember leaving an abuser can be a very dangerous time. Ultimately, the victim is the only expert in their situation and knows if and when they need to leave. Some questions you might consider asking to assess the safety of the victim include:
 - a. Who are some of the current support systems in your life that know about your situation or you feel safe talking to about your situation?
 - b. If you were to leave, have you thought about where you might stay? Leaving can be a very dangerous time, is this a place where you would be safe for the short-term? The long-term?
 - c. Is your abuser physically abusive? Has the physical violence escalated in the last year? Do you fear that your partner could become physically abusive if you were to try to leave? *(Answering yes to any of these questions potentially increases the danger they are in. If you haven't already, consider encouraging this person to meet with their local domestic violence agency to engage in additional safety planning. If they are unwilling, you can connect with the local domestic violence agency to receive additional support on how you can best engage in safety planning with this individual)*
 - d. It can be normal for someone to be very emotional when making a disclosure. If they are very emotional (e.g. hysterical, crying uncontrollably, etc.), consider engaging in some emotional deregulation activities. The purpose of these activities is to help ground them so they can better engage with you. The

purpose is not to take away the pain or emotions they are feeling. One way you can do this is asking the person if they would like to take some deep breaths with you. Guided breathing is one way to help calm individuals in crisis.

5. Ask the victim what they need, do not assume; and respect their choices, even if they are not the ones you would make.
6. If the victim makes the decision to stay with the abuser, and is willing, set up a plan to check in with the victim. For example, the victim might agree to check in every 3 days. If you do not hear from the victim within this time period, you have a plan in place for who you will call (i.e. an emergency contact or Police Welfare Check).
7. Even if the person is not ready to leave the abusive relationship, and regardless of whether or not physical violence is present, the person can still seek services from a local domestic violence agency. Consider providing the resource to Safe Haven's 24/7 hotline and encouraging them to meet with an advocate.
8. If the victim has made the decision to leave, help them to decide where they will stay and what the next steps will look like. Remember, not everyone qualifies for a domestic violence shelter, and there is not always room at a domestic violence shelter. Additionally, it is not always the safest option to allow someone to stay with you. While the church cannot prevent the laity from housing other individuals, approval must be obtained for any staff or volunteer wishing to house a victim of abuse.
9. Never confront an abuser by initiating a conversation with them, as this can put the victim in considerably more danger.
10. Do not attempt couples or marital counseling. This can increase the violence, especially if the victim is honest with the abuse that is taking place.

RESPONDING TO AN ADULT DISCLOSURE (when abuser attends the church)

This policy is a continuation of the previous policy regarding how to respond when the abuser also worships at the church. Abusers are often manipulative and can be effective in triangulating staff and pastors to remove accountability from their actions. It is important that above all, the church continues to hold abusers accountable, which in no way removes its ability to see them as children of God.

PROCEDURES:

1. Hold the abuser accountable for admitting that the abuse is a problem that stems from their desire to maintain power and control. It can be normal for an abuser to ask for forgiveness for their actions, but still lack accountability. For example, an abuser might say: "I know I should not have acted that way but (insert excuse)". This is not accountability.
2. As a church, Sherman Street will remain steadfast in its support of abusers as they seek specialized counseling to change their abusive behaviors. Currently, the only supported effective intervention for abusers is a Batterer Intervention Program.
3. If an abuser continues to make requests to meet with a pastor or staff member, it is the responsibility of this person to keep the conversation focused on their behaviors and not the excuses for their behaviors. If the staff members notices that the conversation is no longer focused on accountability and treatment, they will end the meeting/conversation. Below is some suggested language they may choose to use:
 - a. While I will always support your effort to get help, I unfortunately have to end this meeting because you are not taking responsibility for your actions.
 - b. Unfortunately, I cannot continue a conversation that is not focused on you taking accountability for your actions. While I will always support the steps you take to receive help, I cannot continue this meeting if we are not going to remain focused on solutions.
4. Sherman Street will not recommend marriage or couples counseling when abuse is present. If during counseling abuse becomes known, counseling of the couple will end and individual counseling will be recommended.
5. At times, an abuser might use the church or church staff to further intimidate, threaten or manipulate the victim. At the victim's request, the church may ask the abuser to not attend a particular service or program if it is determined that attendance in this service is creating an unsafe environment for the victim. If needed, the church can provide additional recommendations for where the abuser can worship.

RESPONDING TO AN ADOLESCENT DISCLOSURE (experiencing abuse in their own dating relationship)

Much like an adult disclosure of domestic violence, many of the same emotional and physical concerns are present for youth experiencing dating violence. However, with children and adolescents, there is often an added layer of honoring the trust of that child, while still respecting the trust parents also have in your relationship. Similar to other disclosures, here are some goals that should always be kept in mind when responding to a disclosure of an adolescent experiencing teen dating violence:

1. Safety for the victim
2. Communication with the victim's parents/guardians if the youth is in danger

In addition to following the developmentally appropriate responses outlined on pages 13-14 the following procedures should also be followed when receiving a disclosure from a youth.

PROCEDURES:

1. At the immediate onset of a disclosure, staff is to be upfront and transparent about their limitations around confidentiality and privacy, including their role as a mandated reporter. Remind the youth that this is not to dissuade their disclosure, but instead to be transparent about communication and legal obligations you have. For purpose of this policy, the below terminology is important:
 - a. Privacy: Any time a youth discloses abuse, you are to always maintain privacy, meaning that anyone you communicate to about their disclosure is on a need-to-know or legal basis.
 - b. Confidentiality: The idea that what a youth is telling you will not be told to anyone. The only times confidentiality can be maintained is if: the disclosure does not qualify your responsibilities as a mandated reporter; and you are not responsible for notifying their parent(s) because of the danger they are in.
 - c. Mandated reporter: As a mandated reporter, you are responsible to report a disclosure if you learn of or suspect child abuse or neglect. For a complete definition of child abuse, see *Definitions* found on page 5-9.
2. If the adolescent is being abused by a dating partner, and it does not qualify your role as a mandated reporter, but you believe the youth is in physical or emotional danger, you are to communicate this concern with their parent(s) or legal guardian(s). If they are in immediate physical danger, you are also to notify law enforcement. When possible, give the victim an active role in any and all communication with parents, considering any additional risks or challenges notifying parents might present for the adolescent (i.e. if the parent(s) does not allow dating, the youth has been sexually active, etc.)
3. If the abuser is active in the church and/or youth ministry, please continue to the next policy and procedure

RESPONDING TO AN ADOLESCENT DISCLOSURE (experiencing abuse in their own dating relationship) WHEN THE ABUSER ALSO ATTENDS THE CHURCH

When an abuser is also involved in the church or youth ministry, this can add an additional element of danger and/or fear for the victim. Similar to other disclosures, here are some goals that should always be kept in mind when responding to a disclosure of an adolescent experiencing teen dating violence:

1. Safety for the victim
2. Communication with the victim's parents/guardians
3. Communication with the perpetrator's parents/guardians
4. Accountability for the perpetrator

PROCEDURES:

1. In addition to the procedures outlined in the previous policy, it is also important to notify the abuser's parent(s)/guardian(s) if any abuse took place at or during church programming and/or the abuser's participation in church programming creates a threat or safety risk for the victim.
2. If the abuser committed a crime of abuse (see definitions) during church programming, the church should also notify law enforcement.
3. To understand the safety risk for the victim, it is important to understand what type of action steps the victim would like to see take place following a disclosure. Victims of abuse are often at risk of retaliation or increased violence if others learn about the abuse. For this reason, it is important to incorporate the victim into next steps and safety planning when at all possible. Some examples of steps the victim might request or may be suggested by the church include:
 - Avoid placing the victim in the same group for small groups, outings, etc. with the abuser
 - Increased supervision during programming
4. The goal of notifying the parent(s) of the abuser is to eliminate the abusive behavior. While it is not the responsibility of the church to investigate the truth of the disclosure, it is its responsibility to present the facts and ensure the safety of anyone making a disclosure. Below are some procedures for a meeting with the abuser's parent(s)/guardian(s):
 - The church takes a zero tolerance approach to violence which includes physical, but also emotional, technological, sexual, psychological and spiritual abuse. Failure to abide by this policy will result in someone's ineligibility to participate in youth ministry.
 - The church believes in redemption and healing, and will always support someone in this journey. Providing referrals to treatment, including therapy for the abuser is important.

RESPONDING TO A CHILD OR ADOLESCENT DISCLOSURE (witnessing abuse)

It is not uncommon for a child or youth that is witnessing abuse in the home to turn to a trusted adult for support. How you respond in these moments following a disclosure is crucial. Like many of the other disclosure policies, there are a few standards that must be upheld when responding to this type of disclosure:

1. Safety for the adolescent/child
2. Safety for the adult victim
3. Accountability for the abuser

PROCEDURES:

1. When children disclose abuse, it is **not** the job of the staff or volunteer to further investigate the disclosure. If abuse is taking place, it is important to not jeopardize the likelihood that they will not continue to tell their story in the appropriate setting (i.e. with law enforcement, Children Protective Services, etc.). It is also important that a child feels heard and safe. Therefore, if a child is making a disclosure, let them tell their story (without necessarily soliciting a more in-depth disclosure), thank them for telling their story (*"I am so glad you felt safe enough telling me that..."*), and then proceed with checking in with their parent/guardian (if safe) and reporting the incident to Child Protective Services (CPS).
2. If you believe a story you hear from a child requires a CPS report, it can be helpful to process this disclosure with an additional staff member to ensure that CPS should be called. It is also important to consider the safety implications of a CPS call, and whether there is a need for additional safety planning prior to the call. When domestic violence is in the home, calling CPS can increase the violence in the home (because the abuser will often be interviewed by CPS as well). If the child and/or the adult victim is still with the abuser, encourage the adult victim to get in contact with Safe Haven for additional safety planning support.
3. If domestic violence is present in the home, include this in your 3200 report to CPS.
4. Following a disclosure of domestic violence in the home, it is important to follow up with the adult victim, but not in the presence of the abuser. If possible, let the adult victim know if you have to make a report to CPS to allow them to take steps to keep themselves safe.
5. There is often a lot of guilt and denial surrounding the impact domestic violence has on children. It is normal for parents, including adult victims, to believe that their children have not been impacted by the violence that is taking place in the home. Ultimately, it is not your responsibility to change this viewpoint, however, it can be appropriate to provide emotional support for the impacts the abuse had on the parent and children.

TO BE COMPLETED BY MEDICAL PERSONNEL WHEN PHYSICAL EXAMINATION HAS BEEN DONE

20. Summary report and conclusions of physical examination (Attach Medical Documentation)		

21. Laboratory report	22. X-Ray	
23. Other (specify)	24. History or physical signs of previous abuse/neglect <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	
25. Prior hospitalization or medical examination for this child		
DATES	PLACES	
26. Physician's Signature	27. Date	28. Hospital (if applicable)
Department of Human Services (DHS) will not discriminate against any individual or group because of race, religion, age, national origin, color, height, weight, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, political beliefs or disability. If you need help with reading, writing, hearing, etc., under the Americans with Disabilities Act, you are invited to make your needs known to a DHS office in your area.		AUTHORITY: P.A. 238 of 1975. COMPLETION: Mandatory. PENALTY: None.

INSTRUCTIONS

GENERAL INFORMATION:

This form is to be completed as the written follow-up to the oral report (as required in Sec. 3 (1) of 1975 PA 238, as amended) and mailed to Centralized Intake for Abuse & Neglect. Indicate if this report was phoned into DHS as a report of suspected CA/N. If so, indicate the Log # (if known). The reporting person is to fill out as completely as possible items 1-19. Only medical personnel should complete items 20-28.

Mail this form to:

Centralized Intake for Abuse & Neglect
5321 28th Street Court S.E.
Grand Rapids, MI 49546

OR

Fax this form to 616-977-1154 or 616-977-1158

Or email this form to DHS-CPS-CIGroup@michigan.gov

1. Date – Enter the date the form is being completed.
2. List child(ren) suspected of being abused or neglected – Enter available information for the child(ren) believed to be abused or neglected. Indicate if child has a disability that may need accommodation.
3. Mother's name – Enter mother's name (or mother substitute) and other available information. Indicate if mother has a disability that may need accommodation.
4. Father's name – Enter father's name (or father substitute) and other available information. Indicate if father has a disability that may need accommodation.
- 5.-7. Child(ren)'s address – Enter the address of the child(ren).
8. Phone – Enter phone number of the household where child(ren) resides.
9. Name of alleged perpetrator of abuse or neglect – Indicate person(s) suspected or presumed to be responsible for the alleged abuse or neglect.
10. Relationship to child(ren) – Indicate the relationship to the child(ren) of the alleged perpetrator of neglect or abuse, e.g., parent, grandparent, babysitter.
11. Person(s) child(ren) living with when abuse/neglect occurred – Enter name(s). Indicate if individuals have a disability that may need accommodation.
12. Address where abuse / neglect occurred.
13. Describe injury or conditions and reason of suspicion of abuse or neglect – Indicate the basis for making a report and the information available about the abuse or neglect.
14. Source of complaint – Check appropriate box noting professional group or appropriate category.

Note: If abuse or neglect is suspected in a hospital, also check hospital.

DHS Facility – Refers to any group home, shelter home, halfway house or institution operated by the Department of Human Services.

DCH Facility – Refers to any institution or facility operated by the Department of Community Health.

15.-19 - Reporting person's name - Enter the name and address of person(s) reporting this matter.



RECOGNIZE

Domestic abuse is a pattern of learned behavior that one person uses to control another in an intimate relationship.

- Domestic abuse can happen between past or current partners, spouses, or boyfriends and girlfriends.
- At the root of all domestic abuse is one person's need for power and control over another.
- Mental illness, substance abuse, and stress do not cause domestic abuse, however their use may intensify abusive behaviors.

FOUR TYPES OF ABUSE

1. **Physical:** Behaviors that can cause bodily harm to the victim or harm or destroy the victim's property.
2. **Psychological:** Behaviors that cause the victim to suffer emotionally, including isolation from friends and family.
3. **Sexual:** Forcing undesired sexual behavior onto the victim.
4. **Spiritual:** Using faith or religious beliefs to justify or perpetrate abuse, which often results in psychological trauma.



RED FLAGS OF ABUSE

A victim of abuse may:

- Have unexplained injuries, make excuses about injuries, or claim to be "accident prone."
- Be unusually cheery, hesitant, or tearful.
- Give puzzling reasons for not participating in activities.
- Become more and more isolated from his or her community, family, or friends.
- Not want people to visit his or her home.
- Make a suicide attempt or gesture.
- Exhibit unusual doubt and self-blame.
- Appear very depressed and/or anxious.
- Describe his or her partner as having a temper, a short fuse, or being moody.
- Have difficulty interacting with his or her children.

There is no one type of victim of abuse
or perpetrator of abuse.

IF YOU SUSPECT ABUSE, REACH OUT.

RESPOND

Is everything okay?

I'm worried about you.

Do you feel safe with your spouse?

Revealing abuse is scary. Here's what you can do when someone reveals abuse to you:

1. **Listen and Provide a Safe Space:** This is likely the first time the victim is revealing the abuse; this is a difficult and important first step.
2. **Offer Encouragement:** "You do not deserve to be abused."
"This is not your fault." "I am here for you."
3. **Honor Privacy:** A victim's safety may be compromised should the abuser learn that the victim has spoken to you and/or is contemplating leaving the relationship. If your church requires you to report all disclosures of domestic abuse, let the victim know immediately (preferably prior to disclosure). Explain your church's policy and process.
4. **Connect to Resources:** You do not need to be the expert; domestic violence agencies, like Safe Haven, provide immediate, confidential, safe, and specialized services for victims of abuse.
5. **Emphasize Safety:** Encourage the victim to call 911 if in immediate danger. Offer to help find a safe place to stay. Offer safety tips.

SAFETY TIPS FOR VICTIMS:

- Consider getting a personal protection order.
 - Connect with a local domestic violence agency to create a safety plan.
 - Ask neighbors to call the police if they hear or notice anything suspicious.
 - Have a code word when on the telephone to alert others that he or she is in danger.
 - Avoid using a home computer to look for domestic abuse information.
 - Pack important legal, medical and financial documents, medications and other important items should he or she need to leave the house immediately.
6. **Avoid Couple's Counseling:** Couple's counseling can put a victim in more danger and make abuse worse. Individual counseling with therapists specialized in domestic abuse and batterer intervention may be beneficial for both the victim and perpetrator.
 7. **Check In:** Ask the victim for ways that you can continue to provide support. What can you do to help? What can the church do to help?

REFER

**ON AVERAGE, EVERY DAY IN THE U.S.,
THREE WOMEN ARE KILLED BY THEIR
HUSBANDS OR BOYFRIENDS.**

Safe Haven Ministries offers confidential services, shelter, and support in Grand Rapids, MI, to women and children who have experienced domestic abuse.



**THE FIRST STEP IS A PHONE CALL.
HOTLINE: 616:452.6664**

FREE, CONFIDENTIAL, 24/7.

Safe Haven works with each client to:

1. Assess a victim's safety and learn about her situation.
2. Create a safety plan: Safe Haven gives a variety of options; she chooses which will work best for her situation.
3. Offer ongoing support: Safe Haven offers the following services to women and children whether or not they require Safe Haven's emergency shelter:
 - Support groups
 - Supportive counseling
 - Referrals (housing, legal, etc.)
 - Children's programs
 - Spiritual support

RECOGNIZE



1. At the root of all domestic abuse is one person's need for power and control over the other.
2. Although every abusive situation is different, the common element in all abusive situations is fear of one's partner.
3. Mental illness, substance abuse, and stress do not cause domestic violence; however, they may intensify abusive behaviors.

Cycle of Abuse

Domestic violence is often cyclical in nature. Survivors will say that their abuser often repeated three stages of abuse. These stages can last days, weeks, months, or years.

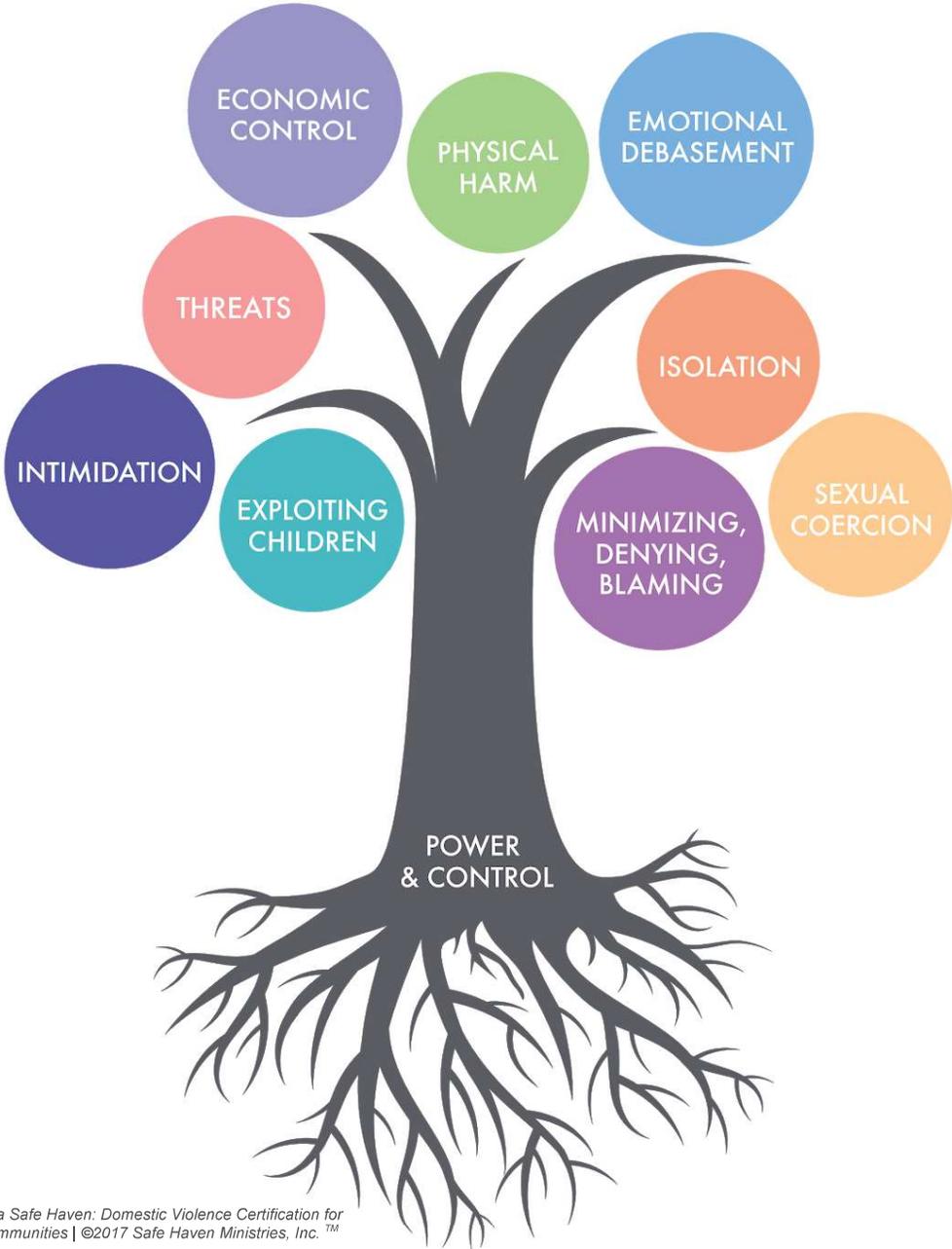


Types of Abuse			
PHYSICAL	PSYCHOLOGICAL	SEXUAL	SPIRITUAL
Behaviors that can cause bodily harm to the victim or harm or destroy the victim's property.	Behaviors that cause the victim to suffer emotionally, including isolation from friends and family.	Forcing undesired sexual behavior onto the victim.	Using faith or religious beliefs to justify or perpetrate abuse, which often results in psychological trauma.

Faith Communities | ©2017 Safe Haven Ministries, Inc.™

RECOGNIZE

BEHAVIORS ABUSERS USE



Creating a Safe Haven: Domestic Violence Certification for Faith Communities | ©2017 Safe Haven Ministries, Inc.™

RECOGNIZE

SIGNS OF ABUSE

Some victims of domestic abuse exhibit signs, while others go to great lengths to hide abuse.

PHYSICAL SIGNS

- Has unexplained injuries, makes excuses about injuries, or claims to be “accident prone.”
- Exhibits frequent vague physical symptoms and sickness.

CHANGES IN BEHAVIOR

- Acts unusually cheery, unusually hesitant, or tearful.
- Exhibits unusual doubt and self-blame.
- Acts very guarded while talking on the phone.
- Appears very depressed and/or anxious.
- Makes a suicide attempt or gesture.
- At work: has regular unexplained absences, often arrives late, or shows concern for leaving work on time.

SIGNS OF ISOLATION

- Gives puzzling reasons for not participating in activities, or becomes more and more isolated, possibly moving a long way away from family.
- Does not want people to visit his or her home.

LACKS AUTONOMY

- Pays careful attention to the time when away from home.
- Has limited spending money.
- Asks permission to do ordinary things.
- Receives constant texts and phone calls from his or her partner.

HAS STRAINED RELATIONSHIP

- Describes his or her partner as having a temper, a short fuse, or being moody.
- Has difficulty interacting with his or her children.
- Appears to be very fearful, jumpy, or overly careful in the presence of partner.

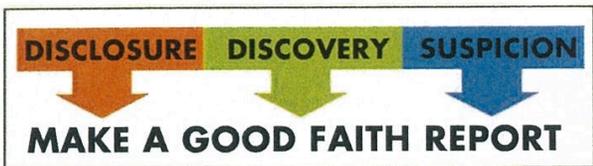
REPORTING CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

HOW DO I REPORT?
Report to the police or child protective services, or both. Generally, if the suspected offender is in the home with the child, it is better to contact child protective services.

IF THE CHILD IS IN IMMEDIATE DANGER CALL 911

State laws require that you have reasonable suspicion that abuse is occurring. That means you do not need proof of sexual abuse to make a good faith report to authorities.

Reasonable suspicion means you have witnessed physical or behavioral signs of maltreatment, either in the child or parent/caregiver, or both. OR, you have received a disclosure from a child about abuse, neglect, or boundary violations toward them.



WHAT INFORMATION DO I NEED TO MAKE A REPORT?

Necessary Information

- Child's name, address and age
- Parents' name and address
- Nature of the abuse

Helpful Information*

- Perpetrator's name
- Details of the abuse

*If the child does not readily supply this information, do not continue to question or investigate. It could interfere later with the investigation.

A child just disclosed sexual abuse to me.
WHAT DO I DO NOW?

1. Say, "I believe you," and "It's not your fault."

- DO** remain calm.
- DO** ask open-ended questions: "Then what happened?"
- DON'T** make promises. Say, "We're going to get the help we need."

2. Conduct a "minimal fact" interview.

- DO** let them use their own words.
- DON'T** ask leading questions or probe for details.

3. Report immediately.

- DO** tell law enforcement and/or child protective services.



FALSE SEXUAL ABUSE REPORTS MADE BY CHILDREN ARE RARE*

Source: D2L.org/Statistics

Do not ask the child leading questions or try to draw out information.

Asking too many questions about abuse may cause distress in the child, and can interfere with prosecution of the alleged offender.

Some guidelines for reporting abuse:

- Do not investigate on your own - Especially do not investigate physical signs beyond those that can be seen in daily interactions.
- It is best not to contact parents about your report, especially if a parent or household member is the suspected abuser. This could put the child at further risk or lead to the destruction of evidence.
- Even though your report may not result in legal action, the investigation may cause other services to take place, like counseling or the provision of necessities for the child.

Sometimes the investigating professionals may not be able to gather enough evidence to act on your report. Still, your report may become part of a series of reports that can lead to action later.

When talking with children about **SIGNS OR DISCLOSURES:**

When talking with children about signs or disclosures:

- Find a private place.
- Drop to eye level, or sit next to the child.
- Remain calm; keep a pace that is patient and slow.
- Ask the child about the sign in a simple, open-ended style. "I'm worried about you. You seem really afraid and sad." Or, "Is anything bothering you?"
- Listen to the response. Repeat what the child just said with a question inflection. "Your daddy touched your privates?"
- Listen to the response. Let them use their own words and repeat their words exactly again, followed by, "Is there anything else?"
- Reassure the child that he or she has done nothing wrong.
- Tell the child, "I care about you."
- When you are completing the conversation, tell the child, "This took a lot of courage. I'm proud of you for telling me."

Refrain from behaviors that will frighten the child, put him or her on the defensive, or cause him or her to relive the abusive events.

- Don't ask questions that begin with "W" like "who, where, when" or "why."
- Don't overreact or make negative statements about the abuser.
- Don't make judgments or conclusions about the child or the abuser.
- Don't interrogate, investigate, or delve deeply into the events.
- Don't ask leading questions or make suggestions about what happened. For example, ask, "How did you get hurt?" rather than asking, "Did someone do that to you?"
- Don't make promises that the information will be kept confidential.
- Don't make any broad promises about the future.

Make your report immediately and include:

- Name of the alleged child victim.
- Age of the child.
- Address where the child can be located.
- Contact information for the child's parents or caregivers, if known.
- Types of suspected abuse or neglect.
- Reason for making the report, including specific signs of maltreatment and whether it is part of an ongoing pattern.
- Other children in the home, if known.
- Name of the alleged perpetrator, if known.
- The emergency nature of the report and whether the child is in imminent danger.
- Name, phone number, and address of the reporter.

When known, the following should also be shared with child protective services:

- Exact time the child disclosed abuse, if there was a disclosure.
- Whether the perpetrator is aware of the report.
- Whether the non-offending parent was notified of the report.
- Last occurrence of the offense.

Report immediately. But first, take a few moments to jot down some notes in two categories.

Category 1: What is the action, or failure to act, on the part of the parent or caregivers?

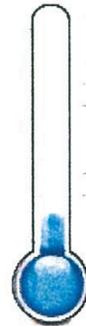
Category 2: How are these actions or failures to act affecting and hurting this child?



Degrees of Risk

Establishing safety:

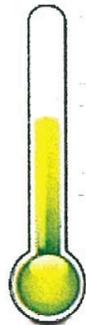
- Reassure your child that children are the bosses of their own bodies
- Establish rules about privacy and consent
- Practice saying "no," "don't touch me," and "don't do that"
- Teach children to also tell a safe adult if a touch made them feel uncomfortable
- Talk to children about sexual development and proper names for private body parts
- Practice asking for consent/permission when touching another child
- Talk to other family members about your family's safety rules



Concerning behaviors in adults and older youth:

- Being overly interested in a child
- Looking for alone time with a child
- Giving special attention or treatment to a child
- Not respecting a child's "no" or ignoring a parent's request to stop the activity
- Encouraging silence or secrets with children

ACTIONS TO TAKE: Pay attention and say something during these situations. These are opportunities to interject and prevent future abuse!



Child sexual abuse is:

- Touching a child's private parts
- Asking a child to touch anyone else's private parts
- Exposing private parts to a child
- Showing pornographic materials to a child
- Taking photos or videos of children in sexual poses or taking part in sexual activities
- Having any type of inappropriate sexual conversations with a child

ACTIONS TO TAKE: Call the Michigan child abuse hotline - 1-855-444-3911. If there are immediate safety concerns, also call 911.





901 Michigan NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49503 • (616) 336-5160 • www.cac-kent.org

KENT COUNTY COMMUNITY RESOURCE LIST

Abuse and Neglect:

MDHHS CENTRALIZED INTAKE 1-855-444-3911

Local Law Enforcement Agency (911)

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES - (616) 248-1000 / www.michigan.gov/dhs

FAMILY FUTURES- Providing Mandated Reporter trainings. (616) 454-4673

Advocacy:

CHILDREN'S ASSESSMENT CENTER - (616) 336-5160 / www.cac-kent.org

KENT COUNTY COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATE PROGRAM - (616) 632-5311 /

www.casakentco.org

DOMINICAN SISTERS- (616) 459-2910

EVE'S ANGELS- Info@evesangels.org

HISPANIC CENTER OF WEST MICHIGAN- (616) 742-0200

RED CORD COMMUNITY- Lorilyn@redcordcommunity.org/Redcordcommunity.org

WOMEN AT RISK INTERNATIONAL- (616) 855-0796

Basic Needs:

ACCESS OF WEST MICHIGAN - (616) 774-2175 / www.AccessofWestMichigan.org

CATHOLIC CHARITIES WEST MICHIGAN - (616) 456-1443 / www.cssgr.org

DEGAGE MINISTRIES - (616) 454-1661 / www.degageministries.org

GLEANERS OF WEST MICHIGAN - (616) 784-3250 / www.wmgleaners.org

KIDS FOOD BASKET - (616) 363-2777

NORTH KENT SERVICE CENTER - (616) 866-3478

THE SALVATION ARMY - (616) 459-9468

Domestic/Family Violence:

LIFE GUIDANCE SERVICES - (616) 954-1991 / www.lifeguidanceservices.org

RELIEF AFTER VIOLENT ENCOUNTERS - (616) 527-3351

SAFE HAVEN MINISTRIES - (616) 452-6664 / www.safehavenministries.org

Emergency:

POISON HELP - 1(800) 222-1222

Health and Wellness:

CHERRY STREET HEALTH SERVICES - (616) 235-7272 / www.cherryhealth.org

FIRST STEPS - (616) 632-1011 / www.firststepskent.org

HEALTH DEPARTMENT - (616) 632-7100 / www.accesskent.com/health

HELEN DEVOS CHILDRENS HOSPITAL OF SPECTRUM HEALTH - (616) 391-9000 / www.helendevoschildrens.org

PLANNED PARENTHOOD - (616) 774-7005 / www.ppwnm.org



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Legal and Mediation:

DISPUTE RESOLUTION CENTER OF WEST MICHIGAN - (616) 774-0121 / www.drcwm.org
LEGAL ASSISTANCE CENTER - (616) 632-6000 / www.legalassistancecenter.org
SILENT OBSERVER PROGRAM - (616) 454-9110 / www.silentobserver.org
COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICES OF WEST MICHIGAN- (616) 929-5716
HISPANIC CENTER OF WESTERN MICHIGAN- (616) 742-0200
JUSTICE FOR OUR NEIGHBORS WEST MICHIGAN- (616) 301-7461
LEGAL AID OF WEST MICHIGAN- (616) 774-0672
MICHIGAN MIGRANT LEGAL ASSISTANCE- (616) 454-5055

Mental Health:

CHILDREN'S ASSESSMENT CENTER - (616) 336-5160 / www.cac-kent.org
NETWORK 180 ACCESS CENTER - (616) 336-3909 / www.network180.org
YWCA WEST CENTRAL MICHIGAN- (616) 459-4681 / www.ywcawcmi.org
ARBOR CIRCLE CORPORATIONS - (616) 456-7775 / www.arborcircle.org
PINE REST CHRISTIAN MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES - 1(800) 678-5500

Support Services:

CHILDREN'S ASSESSMENT CENTER - (616) 336-5160 / www.cac-kent.org
BRAINS - (616) 365-8920 / www.brainspotential.com
BETHANY CHRISTIAN SERVICES - (616) 224-7540 / www.bethany.org
D.A. BLODGETT - ST. JOHNS - (616) 361-5227 / www.DABLODGETTSTJOHNS.org
FAMILY TREE THERAPIES - (616) 447-7799 / www.familytreetherapies.com

Websites for more information on child sexual abuse and/or trauma:

CHILDREN'S ASSESSMENT CENTER / www.cac-kent.org
DARKNESS TO LIGHT / www.d2l.org
STOP IT NOW / www.stopitnow.org
THE MAMA BEAR EFFECT / www.themamabeareffect.org

Sherman Street Christian Reformed Church

This form is to be used for times when a staff member or church volunteer arranges child care for their children with a caregiver(s) while they are working or performing a task.

Safe Church Child Care Event Policy should be followed in the following events: there are more than 2 families represented in the caregiving arrangement, this is a planned church event, or SSCRC is paying caregivers. See SSCRC Safe Church Policy for further definition.

Children:

<i>Full Name:</i>	<i>Age:</i>	<i>Grade:</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female
<i>Full Name:</i>	<i>Age:</i>	<i>Grade:</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female
<i>Full Name:</i>	<i>Age:</i>	<i>Grade:</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female
<i>Full Name:</i>	<i>Age:</i>	<i>Grade:</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female

Contact Information

<i>Parent/Guardian #1</i>	<i>Parent/Guardian #2</i>
<i>Name:</i>	<i>Name:</i>
<i>Address:</i>	<i>Address:</i>
<i>Telephone:</i>	<i>Telephone:</i>
<i>Email:</i>	<i>Email:</i>

Liability Release and Waiver

I confirm that I have authorized my child(ren) to be supervised by the caregiver of my choice. I agree that I will not use this process if this is a Sherman Street Event, defined by more than 2 families using child care, or when the church pays for the child care.

I understand that:

- It is my responsibility to determine if the caregiver is a safe and trustworthy person capable of providing care in the situations and environments arranged. I agree that the choice of this caregiver is not arranged by SSCRC.
- Should my son/daughter/ward be injured or suffer property loss or damage while participating in the above activities, I release and hold harmless SSCRC, its council, employees, agents and volunteers from any and all claims, causes of action, demands, rights, damages, liability, costs and expenses, of every kind and description, known and unknown, which I now have or which I have ever had in the past or shall have in the future for such injuries, losses or damages.
- This is a legally binding release made to SSCRC and good for one year and should be signed yearly.

Parent/guardian signature: _____ Date: _____