



Faith CRC
Safe Church Policy

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Vision:

Faith CRC recognizes that we are a reflection of God's love to those in our care, and we take seriously our responsibility to them. This policy considers the best interest of our children, youth and vulnerable adults while also protecting the best interests of all leaders who take part in their education, development and growth. Any ministry of Faith CRC, be it on-site or off-site, shall follow these same guidelines. Every leader (as defined below) of children, youth, and vulnerable adults under the sponsorship of Faith CRC must follow these policies and procedures.

Scope:

This policy is intended to systemically prevent all forms of abuse and the misuse of power within Faith CRC's congregation & ministries.

Definitions:

Child(ren): Birth through grade 8

Youth: Grade 9 through grade 12

Vulnerable Adult: An adult who, for any reason, is unable to take care of him/herself or unable to protect him/herself from significant harm, abuse or exploitation. While the term 'Vulnerable Adults' often refers to individuals above the age of 60 or dependent adults this policy expands that term to include women and men in a state of crisis.

Crisis: An unplanned event or series of events that may cause difficulty, trouble or danger to a person's physical or emotional wellbeing, property, systems and reputation.

Group/s: Any number of "Children", "Youth", and/or "Vulnerable Adults". (Faith CRC's "groups" currently include but are not limited to: Cadets, GEMS, Kingdom Builders, Mile Markers, Youth Group, Friendship Bible Study, Project Serve, Coffee Break, Coffee Break Nursery, Coffee Break Little Lambs, Coffee Break Story Hour, Vacation Bible School, Church Nursery, Elevate, Kids of The Kingdom, Kids Hope USA).

Program Point Person: Any individual, paid or volunteer, who leads or oversees any church program designed to minister, teach, or supervise children, youth, or vulnerable adults. The church programs currently include: Cadets, GEMS, Kingdom Builders, Mile Markers, Youth Group, Friendship Bible Study, Project Serve, Coffee Break, Coffee Break Nursery, Coffee Break Little Lambs, Coffee Break Story Hour, Vacation Bible School, Church Nursery, Elevate, Kids of The Kingdom, Kids Hope USA.

Approved by Council, October, 2023

Reviewed & Revised - 5/10/24

Leader/s: Paid staff OR volunteers (18 years or older) who assist, coordinate, or teach, or work closely with any of the aforementioned groups, individuals, or vulnerable adults.

Triangle Rule: Is utilized in groups for accountability and safety for all members; 2 or more children, youth, or vulnerable adults meet with 1 adult or 2 or more non-related adults meet with 1 child, youth or vulnerable adult.

Physical Abuse: Non accidental physical injury that occurs because of unreasonable corporal punishment whether or not it leaves a wound, mark, or bruise. Examples of physically abusive behavior: slapping, punching, kicking, severe spanking and burning. Physical abuse can be a single event or a chronic, recurrent pattern of behavior.*

Neglect: Failure to provide a child or dependent adult with basic necessities of life (i.e food, clothing). Medical neglect is a failure of caregivers to meet a child or dependent adult's basic health care needs. Neglect interferes with a child's normal physical development.*

Sexual Abuse: Any activity sought to attain sexual gratification with a child or dependent adult. Sexual abuse includes taking advantage of a child or dependent adult who is not capable of giving consent, understanding sexual acts or resisting coercion such as threats, offers, or gifts. Sexual abuse may or may not involve physical contact.*

Emotional Abuse: Attempting to control a child or significant other's life through words, threats, and fear; destroying a child or spouse's self-worth through harassment, threats, and deprivation. Emotional abuse weakens a child or significant other's mental and physical strength, limits or cuts off his/her contact with others, and causes a gradual loss of self-esteem all of which reinforce a sense of helplessness and dependence on the abuser.*

Spiritual Abuse: Attempting to exert power and control over someone using religion, faith, or beliefs. Spiritual abuse can happen within a religious organization or a personal relationship.

Domestic Abuse:

- Physical abuse or force against a spouse in a way that ends up injuring that person or putting them at risk of being injured.*
- Mental, psychological, or emotional abuse that can include verbal or nonverbal actions or behaviors that impacts the significant other in ways that damages their self-worth, autonomy, emotional wellbeing and sense of safety. While physical abuse might seem worse, the impact of verbal and emotional abuse are significant. Studies show that verbal or nonverbal abuse can be much more emotionally damaging than physical abuse.*
- Sexual abuse, violence and/or exploitation against significant other.*

- Economic abuse or financial abuse leaving the spouse with limited or no access to the family's money. It implies that the abusive partner maintains control of the family finances, deciding without regard for the other person how the money is to be spent or saved.*
- Religious abuse refers to using the significant other's religious beliefs to manipulate them.*

**Information gleaned from Preventing Child Abuse, Beth Swagman, CRC Publications, Polk County Health Services and Iowa Department of Human Services*

Leader Approval and Selection

- A. All Leaders and paid staff must sign the Faith CRC Leadership Commitment on a yearly basis ([Appendix F](#)).
- B. All Program Point Persons must attend a safe church training on a yearly basis.
- C. All individuals who are being considered as new Leaders within the Youth Group, Mile Markers, Kingdom Builders, Kids of the Kingdom, Kids Hope USA, GEMS, Cadet ministry programs, must be approved by Faith CRC's church council prior to their time of service.
- D. Prior to their time of service, or within the last three years, Profession of Faith Mentors, Elders, Deacons, and Leaders within the Youth Group, Mile Markers, Kingdom Builders, Kids of the Kingdom, Elevate, Kids Hope USA, Friendship Bible Study, Project Serve, GEMS, or Cadet ministry programs will agree to, and have a completed and approved, criminal background check on file with the church. Faith CRC reserves the right to reject any applicant for any reason, including a prior criminal record.
- E. All Vacation Bible School Leaders will sign and adhere to the Union Vacation Bible School Code of Conduct and Faith CRC's Safe Church Policy.

Process for Receiving a Background Check

- A. All criminal background check results will be received and reviewed by the Lead Pastor. In the event that the Lead Pastor is unable to perform this duty, the Chair of Council will perform this task.
- B. If a background check reveals no prior convictions the following steps will be administered:
 - a. The point person who requested the background check will be notified that the background check has been “approved” and the individual in question has been cleared to serve in the leadership role requested.
 - b. The background check results will be printed and filed according to the procedures laid out in this Safe Church Policy.
- C. If a background check reveals any conviction(s) in the form of a misdemeanor:
 - a. The background check results will be printed and filed according to the procedures laid out in the Safe Church Policy.
 - b. The Lead Pastor, having read the report, will share the results of the background check with the individual’s district elder. In the event that the individual does not attend Faith CRC, the lead pastor will invite an elder of his choosing.
 - i. If the only conviction(s) present on a given background check is a simple misdemeanor(s) that is more than twelve years old, the lead pastor in conjunction with the district elder may, at their discretion, approve an individual for service without initiating steps c-h below.
 - c. The Lead Pastor and district elder will initiate an in-person interview with the individual to provide the individual with a copy of the background check results, to indicate what came back on the report, and to gather background information and other necessary details for the convictions on the report. Questions from [Appendix H](#) will be utilized during this interview.
 - d. The Lead Pastor and district elder who met with the individual will provide the church elders with a report concerning the convictions and follow-up interview. This report will keep the person's identity anonymous. A special meeting may need to be called for the sole purpose of dealing with the report.
 - e. The church elders will deliberate on the matter, seeking additional information from the interview or subsequent questions needed answered before making a final decision regarding the individual’s ability to serve/continue serving in various capacities.
 - f. During this process the individual in question will be considered “pending approval” and the Lead Pastor or district elder will inform the point person who requested the background check that the individual in question is “pending approval”.
 - g. All individuals with convictions or concerning histories must obtain majority

approval from the church elders to begin service. All church elders and the Lead Pastor must be a part of the vote.

- h. The Lead Pastor or district elder will contact the individual and the requesting point person with the decision regarding the individual's availability to serve/continue serving in various leadership capacities.
- D. If a background check reveals any conviction(s) in the form of a felony:
- a. The same steps applied in the case of a misdemeanor conviction (steps a-g above) will also be applied in the case of a felony conviction(s). Additionally, the following is required to be presented to the church elders to be considered as a volunteer:
 - i. A signed letter from a mental health therapist indicating that the person is fit to serve in the desired position.
 - ii. An individualized commitment of accountability and support outlining the terms and conditions under which the person may volunteer or participate in church related events.
 - b. Felony convictions involving minors or those who have been found to have had inappropriate sexual relationships with minors will not be allowed to serve in ministries with children.

General Guidelines for Safe Supervision of Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults

A. General Guidelines for Leaders:

1. Leaders will model Christian behavior within all relationships; abuse of any kind will not be tolerated.
2. Leaders will maintain appropriate relationships with group members. Leaders will not accept gifts, phone calls, electronic communication, or letters of an inappropriate nature, nor will Leaders initiate them. A Leader's ministry of gentle touch is appropriate with consent and in the presence of other people.
 - i. If Leaders receive inappropriate gifts, phone calls, electronic communication, or letters of inappropriate nature they will report it to a member of the Safe Church Team within 24 hours.
3. When multiple Leaders meet, they will attempt to meet in groups of three or more. If two members need to meet they will meet in a public space or at church during regular office hours.
4. All Leaders are required to report any allegations or suspicions of abuse ([Appendix A - Signs and Symptoms of Child Abuse](#), [Appendix B - Responding to a Disclosure of Abuse from a Child](#)) to a member of the Safe Church Team within 24 hours. It is not the responsibility of the reporting person to prove the alleged abuse, only to report the suspicion.

B. Guidelines for Meetings & Activities:

1. **Triangle Rule** → At all church sponsored functions involving the supervision of children, youth or vulnerable adults, the Triangle Rule will be practiced. If the group is unable to utilize the Triangle Rule that group will merge with another group similar to the group's age or will meet in a location that can be clearly observed by others.
2. **One-to-One Meetings** → In children and youth ministry, there are times when a Leader seeks to meet one-to-one with a youth or child. Because the imbalance of power is particularly pronounced when a child or youth is alone with an adult, it is crucial that Leaders follow safe protocols.
 - i. Scheduled one-on-one meetings between one adult and one child or youth shall take place in a public place (i.e. restaurant, coffee shop, bookstore, etc.) with the written consent (text, email, etc.) of the parents.
3. **Group Supervision** → Discretion will be used by Leaders to ensure that their group has adequate supervision for the meeting/activity type even if the event is off campus.

4. **Schedules** → Leaders will provide group program schedules to parents, including beginning and ending times for activities.
5. **Doors & Windows** → When meeting on campus, all classrooms shall have windows, window inserts, or leave the door ajar to provide clear visibility from the outside of each classroom.

C. Guidelines for Bathroom Assistance:

1. In regards to very young children:
 - i. If a second adult is not available when toileting assistance is required, the assistance shall be provided with an open door.
 - ii. When possible, diapers will be changed in the presence of another adult and/or with an open door.

D. Guidelines for Transportation:

1. Any Leader who transports a child or youth for any church sponsored event must be 21 or older.
2. To transport children or youth, there must be an adequate safety belt for each passenger and they must be worn any time the car is moving.
3. Drivers must abide by all traffic laws and safety regulations.
4. Transportation by one Leader of one child or youth shall be avoided. In the event that it is unavoidable, a written consent (text or email) from the parents/guardians of the child or youth must be received .
5. Any person providing transportation to children and/or youth who has not already signed a copy of the Safe Church Policy will be asked to sign a Volunteer Driver Form ([Appendix E](#)).

E. Guidelines for Discipline:

When children or youth act out during church events, ministry Leaders and volunteers will take care to address the misbehavior in ways that are consistent with the following guidelines:

1. Leaders will not use corporal punishment (spanking, pinching, hitting), hurtful language, or public humiliation as tools for discipline.
2. In situations where counseling or correction are needed, Leaders will use sound judgment with respect to location and timing. (For example, providing counseling and correction discreetly so as to not embarrass the child or youth).
3. Parents are to be informed whenever a child/youth misbehaves beyond minor correction or if a pattern of misbehavior develops.

4. An aide or parent will be involved in classrooms where misbehavior is an ongoing problem.
5. Whenever possible, Leaders should address disruptive behavior by:
 - i. Redirecting the child/youth to another activity
 - ii. Helping the child/youth focus on a more acceptable behavior
 - iii. Taking the child/youth aside if another adult volunteer/staff person is available to assist.

F. Guidelines for Electronic Communication (Social Media Messaging, Email or Texting)

All Leaders will abide by the following Electronic Communication and Social Media Usage policy in their interactions with youth and children.

1. Communication shall not take place with children or youth between the hours of 9:00 PM and 7:00 AM unless there is an emergency.
2. Once parental/guardian permission is given via an annual Participation & Release Form ([Appendix D](#)), leaders can hold email addresses and phone numbers for the youth and children in their care.
3. Any electronic or phone communication between Leaders & children (birth through grade 8) must include the child as well as at least one guardian/parent.
4. Emails, messages, texts, or phone calls shall be short and usually be one-off communication to arrange a meeting or remind youth to attend an event.
5. If a digital communication raises any child protection concerns, the Leader will inform their Program Point Person.
6. When a volunteer leaves a ministry involving youth due to misconduct of any kind, staff shall request that this volunteer not contact any youth - and that all youth contact information must be removed from that Leader's devices.

G. Guidelines for Pastoral Visitation

Formal pastoral care is carried out by church representatives - ministers, elders, deacons, or a pastoral care team, on behalf of the church community. Such care is an important ministry of the church, reflecting the love, compassion, and presence of Christ to those who participate in the ministries of the church.

Some forms of pastoral care involve one-on-one visitation, such as with those who are experiencing a time of suffering or grief, with those who are housebound, or with those in the hospital. In these cases, pastoral visits are made to offer spiritual friendship, help, support, and contact with the community of faith. These visits may include practical help, giving information, and/or supporting people as they make difficult decisions. Listening well is fundamental to all good pastoral care.

The following guidelines are provided to ensure safe and healthy practices of pastoral visitation:

1. All elders and deacons must sign Faith CRC's Leadership Commitment Form on a yearly basis.
2. Whenever possible, two unrelated pastoral care visitors will meet with a congregant when the visit is in a private location.
3. Whenever possible, meetings shall take place in a public location.
4. All pastoral care visitors will honor the limits of their role in giving care, referring congregants as the situation requires to the services of counselors, spiritual directors, and others who are better trained and resourced to meet a congregant's needs.
5. The President of Council and/or the Admin Board is responsible for overseeing that risk is being assessed and these pastoral care guidelines are properly adhered to.

H. Safe Church Policy and Procedures for Working with Vulnerable Adults

- A. In rooms used for Pastoral counseling, a clear line of sight shall be maintained so that someone could see the Pastor at all times (i.e if walking by).
- B. Pastors will typically only offer counseling during office hours, with other people (e.g. secretaries, pastoral assistants) also in the office/building.
 - a. If a Pastor meets alone 1:1 with a congregant, they will either log their visit or text or call the President of Council before and after the visit.
- C. The Pastor will plan to check in monthly with another pastor or professional counselor about biases or temptations he may encounter while counseling individuals; in particular vulnerable women (e.g. single, in current marital crisis, recently divorced).
- D. If meeting (council visits, pastoral counseling etc.) with an individual who is in a state of crisis the Pastor and/or Leaders will offer that the person may have a supportive person present with them during the meeting for emotional support.

Safe Church Team Members

- A. The Safe Church Team will be composed of at least five members of the congregation, appointed by the Administrative Board.
- B. The team will be composed of members of both sexes.
- C. The Safe Church Team will elect its chair and secretary.

- D. Members of the Safe Church Team will include:
 - a. At least one member of the Administrative Board
 - b. At least one member with a leadership role in a youth ministry of the church
 - c. At least one member with a leadership role in the children's ministry of the church
 - d. Kids Hope USA Director
 - e. At least three additional members of Faith CRC. These additional members will serve three year terms that begin and end on May 31.
- E. The Safe Church Team will attempt to have two members present when receiving reports of suspected abuse.

Safe Church Team Responsibilities

- A. The Safe Church Team will annually review the Safe Church Policy each March and adjust as necessary. They will forward suggested changes to the church's Administrative Board for council approval.
- B. In collaboration with the church council, the Safe Church Team will annually conduct a random audit of various programs to ensure that the policy is being followed. This audit will include, but not be limited to:
 - a. A random walkthrough during group meetings to ensure that meeting guidelines are being adhered to and the Leaders have appropriate documentation on file with the church.
- C. The Safe Church Team will communicate any council approved changes with the church's Administrative Assistant.
- D. In August of each year, the Safe Church Team will distribute the Safe Church Policy and Leadership Commitment ([Appendix F](#)) to all Leaders.
- E. In collaboration with the church's Administrative Assistant and Program Point Persons, the Safe Church Team will distribute, collect, and store signed Leadership Commitments, background check documentation, and any volunteer driver forms (if applicable).
 - a. Background check documentation will be locked in a lock box inside the church safe. When background checks must be accessed at least two individuals will be present when doing so. A Safe Church team member along with a council member must be present if/when background check documentation must be accessed.
- F. In collaboration with the church's Administrative Assistant, during the month of February, the Safe Church Team will remind the congregation of our Safe Church Policy and invite congregation members to provide any suggestions to the Safe Church Team.
- G. The Safe Church Team will educate the congregation on Safe Church issues as necessary and appropriate.

- H. The Safe Church Team will ensure that an up-to-date copy of the Safe Church Policy is posted on the church's website and hard copies can be obtained from the Administrative Assistant.

Reporting/Responding to Disclosures and Allegations of Abuse of Minors or Vulnerable Adults

The following steps are to be followed in cases of suspected abuse of a minor or vulnerable adult. See also [Appendix A](#): Responding to Disclosure of Abuse from a Child and the Safe Church Ministry [Responding to Abuse Toolkit](#).

1. All Leaders who have a reasonable suspicion of sexual, physical, or emotional abuse or neglect of a minor or vulnerable adult are responsible to report it within 24 hours to the Child Protective Services/Children's Aid Society (CPS/CAS) 24-hour hotline 1-800-362-2178. If you are uncertain of whether what you heard or saw constitutes evidence of abuse, consult with a member of Faith's Safe Church Team (see [Appendix A](#): Signs and Symptoms of Child Abuse for guidance).
2. If a minor or vulnerable adult is in immediate physical danger (either on church property or off the property) then the police (911) shall be notified immediately.
3. The Leader who suspects abuse shall also contact the Safe Church Team chairperson to fill out an incident report (see [Appendix G](#): Incident Report) in order to record their observations and follow-up actions. All documentation will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in the church office.
4. Neither the Leader nor the Safe Church Team chairperson will try to investigate the abuse concerns. Additionally, they will not seek to notify the alleged offender of the allegations against him or her. These tasks shall be left to the police and/or CPS/CAS.
5. The Safe Church Team chairperson shall inform the pastor and chair of council of the concerns or allegations of abuse. Note that confidentiality is important in all cases of abuse but especially when a minor is involved.
6. If the abuse happened during a church/ministry-sponsored activity or by a Leader, in addition to ensuring that the police and/or CPS/CAS have been contacted, the Safe Church Team chairperson shall notify the church's insurance agent and legal counsel.
7. Together with the pastor and the president of council, the Safe Church Team chairperson will develop a plan for responding to the abuse in ways that provide care for the one who has been victimized by abuse and respects the dignity of all involved. The plan will

include:

- a. Putting the Leader on administrative leave with or without pay (or suspending a volunteer) for up to 90 days or until the conclusion of the investigation, whichever is sooner.
 - b. Providing support and care for the minor and their family. This should be done in a way that puts the needs of the minor and his/her family first.
 - c. Determining who will be the primary contact with the police and/or CPS/CAS.
 - d. Determining how to deal with media inquiries.
 - e. Contacting the classical Safe Church Coordinator and/or the denominational Safe Church Ministry (safechurchministry@crcna.org) for further counsel.
8. After the accused has been contacted by the authorities and the investigation is underway, the elders will provide an opportunity for the accused to respond to the allegations.
 9. If the accused is found guilty or admits guilt, the elders may (1) subject a determined abuser (hereafter abuser) to further suspension, deposition, or termination of employment, or (2) take such other action against the abuser as the circumstances may dictate.
 10. Should the determined abuser be an office bearer, the elders will follow the specifications for admonition and discipline in the [Church Order, Articles 82-84](#).
 11. Subject to the best interest of the person victimized by abuse, the governing body shall notify the congregation in writing if they conclude that a church leader has perpetrated abuse. This notice shall protect the identity and confidentiality of any innocent parties, including the person who was victimized by abuse. This written communication will be pastoral, succinct, and objectively factual. Referencing public police reports, charges, or court verdicts may be used.
 12. If law enforcement decides not to investigate or charge an adult leader of the congregation who has been accused of abusing a child or vulnerable adult, an independent investigation will be considered in consultation with legal counsel and [Safe Church Ministry](#).

Responding to Allegations of Abuse of Adults

If an adult (the claimant) reports abuse to a member of a Safe Church Team, the pastor, or a member of the council, the Safe Church team leader, the pastor, and the elders (or a few

members of the council) will do the following¹:

1. Assign the claimant an advocate who can walk alongside, support, and represent the claimant throughout the reporting and investigation process.
2. Meet with the claimant and/or the advocate to hear the complaint, the impact it has had on the complainant and what the claimant feels needs to happen for them to feel safe at Faith CRC again. The claimant may present their testimony orally but shall also submit their statement in writing or alternatively, an incident report ([Appendix G](#)) can be filled out at the meeting and signed by the claimant. The written statement or incident report will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in the church office.
3. Suspend the accused from their duties without prejudice until the allegations have been investigated.
4. Based on the information gathered, develop a plan for assessing the veracity of the allegations. Ordinarily, the plan will involve at least one of the following processes:
 - a. An informal response led by a designated investigation team who meets with the accused to follow up on the allegations.² The conversation shall include:
 - i. A report of the event as the claimant experienced it
 - ii. An account of how the claimant was impacted by the accused's actions
 - iii. An opportunity for the accused to respond to the allegations
 - iv. A request that the accused not contact the claimant directly until further notice.
 - v. A report of the conversation, detailing the accused's response that is filed with the incident report ([Appendix G](#)).
 - b. An advisory panel process exploring the gravity and probability of the allegations of abuse (the classical Safe Church Coordinator or the denominational Safe Church Ministry office is available to help assemble the panel)
 - c. An independent investigation into the allegations of abuse (the denominational Safe Church Ministry office will keep a list of reputable investigators). It is strongly recommended that councils make use of a third party investigator when:
 - i. The accused is a prominent leader in the community or region such that impartiality is especially elusive;
 - ii. The accusations consist of multiple victims or multiple jurisdictions;
 - iii. Real or perceived conflicts of interest make impartiality especially elusive.

¹ Officebearers who participate in following up on allegations of abuse are required to take abuse of power training or abuse awareness training. Safe Church Ministry (safechurchministry@crna.org) offers a 60-minute online orientation and training on abuse awareness and response.

² This option is only appropriate when both the nature of the incident and/or the harm done are relatively minimal. The claimant must agree to this informal response.

- d. If the accused is an office bearer, the elders/council will follow the [Guidelines for Handling Abuse Allegations Against a Church Leader](#) and include the Health Church Advocate (i.e., formerly known as church visitors) as an advisor in their initial deliberations about the best way forward.
5. Based on the information gathered (and the recommendations of the informal investigation team, the advisory panel or the third party investigators), the Safe Church Team leader, claimant's advocate, pastor, and elders (or a few council members) will determine a plan of action for responding to abuse. If the allegations are found credible, the plan will include:
 - a. A determination of appropriate measures of discipline and opportunities for restoration. This could include suspension of church leadership for a period of time, counseling, abuse of power training, mentoring, oversight and accountability, a written apology to the claimant, or if an office bearer is involved, deposition.
 - b. A plan for providing ongoing care and accountability for the accused.
 - c. A plan for providing ongoing care and support for the claimant.
 - d. Provisions for counseling for the claimant.
 - e. If the claimant desires, an opportunity to participate in a restorative conversation with members of the council, members of the church, and/or, the accused (Information on Restorative Circle Processes may be found at crcna.org/safechurch/restorative).
6. Throughout the process, every effort will be made to protect the confidentiality and dignity of the claimant and the accused.
7. The classical Safe Church Coordinator and the denomination Safe Church Ministry office are available for support, counsel, and resources throughout the process.

Availability of Safe Church Policy

- A. A current copy of the Safe Church Policy is always available on Faith CRC's website.
- B. Parents, guardians, or any member of the congregation are welcome to submit suggestions for improving the Safe Church Policy to the Safe Church Team.

APPENDIX A SIGNS & SYMPTOMS OF CHILD ABUSE - SCHOOL AGE

Note: Children rarely exhibit just one sign indicating that they are the victims of abuse. Some symptoms may also represent typical developmental changes, or the after-effect of other kinds of trauma in their lives. Conversely, it is possible for abuse to be taking place without the appearance of any symptoms because of the child's ability to mask or deny what is very confusing and painful to acknowledge. Generally, several symptoms appearing at once *may* be an indication of abuse.

- Complaints of pain, irritation, soreness, redness on the child's bottom; smearing feces on walls or objects
- Pattern of injuries, multiple injuries, injuries about the face or neck; failure to complain about or explain an obvious physical discomfort; hiding bruises
- Unusual fears: a familiar person, a particular room, a particular object, or fear of new experiences
- Poor concentration in classroom; inability to focus
- Exhibiting adult-pleasing behaviors, striving for perfection, acting miserable if failing
- Engaging in self-injury, engaging in excessive masturbation or masturbation in a public setting
- Acting enraged and out of control; expressing anger through destruction
- Shyness or fear about physical touch
- Exhibiting sexual behavior beyond comprehension or maturity level; behaving in a sexual manner with other children or adults
- Exhibiting signs of needing to be in control of others or situations; bullying others
- Hostility and distrust of adults, mood swings and irritability, violent disruptions
- Acting out, including hoarding food and toys, lying, stealing, assaulting
- Frequent absences from school or other scheduled events because of being punished
- Low self-esteem, particular sensitivity to criticism
- Hyper-vigilance, excessive and suspicious watching of other people; easily startled
- Preoccupation with fire and setting fires
- Eating disorders, use of laxatives, unexplained and dramatic changes in weight

APPENDIX B
RESPONDING TO A DISCLOSURE OF ABUSE FROM A CHILD

For informational purposes, the following set of guidelines pertains to information that a child may wish to disclose to an adult.

1. If a child asks to talk with you at church, provide a room (with a window) in which to speak privately.
2. Listen carefully to what the child tells you and respond in a supportive, nonjudgmental manner. Disclosing abuse is a scary thing for children, and they need to know they are supported.
3. Do not appear frightened or disgusted by the child's story, since this may cause the child to stop talking or to believe you are upset with him or her.
4. Avoid asking leading questions. Examples of what you could say: "Can you tell me more?" "Is there anything you need to add?" Do not try to convince the child that the story isn't true or that it didn't happen the way he or she reports it did.
5. Do not attempt to assess the truthfulness of the child's disclosure—that will be for trained professionals to decide. Assure the child you believe him/her and that you care about him/her.
6. Tell the child that whatever happened was not his or her fault and reassure the child that he/she does not deserve to be hurt by anyone.
7. Do not tell or suggest to the child that he or she has been abused.
8. Reassure the child that he or she did the right thing by telling you.
9. Do not promise **not** to tell anyone. Tell the child that you need to find help so the incident can be prevented from happening again.
10. Do not frighten the child by talking about police involvement or medical examinations to verify the complaint. Instead, share with the child that other people need to know what happened and that they will talk to the child later.
11. Do not ask the child to show you any bruises that are beneath the child's underwear or clothing; observe only those bruises that are accessible.
12. If you feel comfortable doing so, speak to the child and offer support in the following weeks and months.

APPENDIX D
PARTICIPATION & RELEASE FORM

We (I) give permission for our (my) child(ren),

Name of Child:	Grade of Child:	Child's Birthday:
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

to participate in Faith CRC's child and/or youth ministry events during the months of September 2024 through August 2025. In addition, we (I) hereby agree to hold harmless the church or any person in its organization for the result of any negligent, willful, or intentional acts of our (my) child(ren) which requires repair and/or reimbursement of expenses. Further, authorization and permission are given to Faith CRC to furnish the above participant(s) with any necessary food, lodging, and transportation to, from, and during any event according to Faith CRC's transportation policy. While our (my) child is attending an event, we (I) understand and accept that Faith CRC will provide supervision. Further, we (I), the parent(s)/guardian(s) of said participant(s), hereby grant permission to the pastor, youth leader, or an adult volunteer acting on the child's behalf to authorize medical treatment, including but not limited to emergency surgery or medical treatment. In the event of sickness or injury to our (my) child(ren), we (I) assume responsibility for all medical bills, if any occur.

Further, if it is necessary for our (my) child(ren) to return home due to medical reasons or disciplinary action, we (I) assume all transportation costs.

Parent/Guardian Name (Please include both parent names if applicable): _____

Email: _____

Mom Cell Phone: _____ Dad Cell Phone: _____

Are there any individuals who you do not grant permission to pick your child(ren) up from church functions? If yes, please explain. ____ Yes ____ No

Explain: _____

PLEASE TURN OVER TO COMPLETE BACK SIDE

Any allergies or important student information that the church should be aware of? Please explain:

Emergency Contact (Non parent): _____

Emergency Contact Phone Number: _____

Relationship to Youth: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

PHOTO & MEDIA RELEASE FORM

I grant permission to Faith CRC to use photos, videos, or other media of my children in the following ways: Faith CRC's website, Social Media pages, PowerPoint presentations, and bulletin boards.

- Yes
- No
- Other: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature _____ Date: _____

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION RELEASE FORM

According to Faith CRC's Safe Church Policy, adult Leaders may only have email addresses and phone numbers of children and youth as long as the student's parent/guardian permits it. All communications between adult Leaders and children and youth will adhere to the [Guidelines for Electronic Communications](#) portion of the Safe Church Policy.

- I/We permit Faith CRC's Adult Leaders to ask for, hold, and use the cell number and email address of our (my) student(s).
- I/We do not permit Faith CRC's Adult Leaders to ask for, hold, and use the cell number and email address of our (my) student(s).
- Other: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX E
VOLUNTEER DRIVER FORM

This form is for any person recognized by leadership of Faith CRC who has agreed to be a driver for a church function while operating their own car or another licensed automobile. All adults who have not already signed Faith CRC's Safe Church Policy that will be transporting children and/or youth during church functions must complete this form.

Faith CRC's transportation guidelines are as follows.

- Any person who transports a child or youth for any church sponsored event must be 21 or older.
- To transport children or youth, there must be an adequate safety belt for each passenger and they must be worn any time the car is moving.
- Drivers must abide by all traffic laws and safety regulations.
- Transportation by one Leader of one child or youth shall be avoided. In the event that it is unavoidable, written consent (text or email) from the parents/guardians of the child or youth must be received .

By signing below, you agree to abide by the transportation guidelines listed above.

Name of driver: _____

Signature of driver: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX F
FAITH CRC CHURCH
LEADERSHIP COMMITMENT

Please identify the program(s)/role(s) you plan to hold this coming ministry year:

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Elevate Partner | <input type="checkbox"/> Kids of the Kingdom | <input type="checkbox"/> Mile Markers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kingdom Builders | <input type="checkbox"/> Cadet Leader | <input type="checkbox"/> GEMS Leader |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Coffee Break Leader | <input type="checkbox"/> Coffee Break Nursery | <input type="checkbox"/> Coffee Break Little Lambs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Coffee Break Story Hour | <input type="checkbox"/> Youth Group | <input type="checkbox"/> Elder |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Deacon | <input type="checkbox"/> Church Employee | <input type="checkbox"/> Program Point Person |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kids Hope Mentor | <input type="checkbox"/> Friendship Bible Study | <input type="checkbox"/> Project Serve |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Church Nursery | | |

- I believe that God has called me to serve in a leadership role at Faith CRC.
- I understand that I am a representative of Faith CRC and a reflection of Jesus Christ in all that I do and say.
- I agree to conduct myself in a manner that models for others an active and growing Christian faith.
- I understand that those I lead will look to me to support their growing faith in Jesus Christ.
- I will lead in love, pray for those I lead and encourage and teach them to the best of my God given abilities.
- I have received a copy of the Safe Church Policy for Faith CRC, I have read it, I understand it.
- I will follow the guidelines in [Faith CRC's Safe Church Policy](#) as they pertain to my role.
- If I'm an employee, I understand that my employment is at will and can be terminated at any time with or without cause. If I'm a volunteer, I realize that my role can be terminated at any time.

Leader Name: _____

Leader Cell #: _____

Leader Email Address: _____

Leader Signature: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX H
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. When did this incident take place?

2. Could you please describe the incident that led to the conviction(s) listed on the report?

3. Has the matter been closed and reconciliation been made? Please explain how this was done.

4. Is this symptomatic of a broader pattern of behavior in your life?

5. To what extent were others impacted by this incident? Explain.

6. In what ways, if any, does this incident impact (either positively or negatively) your ability to be in the position of leadership that you are applying for or been asked to serve in? Explain.

7. From your perspective, how likely are you to repeat this behavior or engage in behaviors that are similar to it?
