

1                                   **GUIDELINES FOR THE SAFETY OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH**  
2                                   **AT BETHEL COLLEGE MENNONITE CHURCH**

3                                   *Approved by Church Board - January 5, 2006*

4                                   *Revised by Church Board after Task Force review – November 2, 2017*

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6 Bethel College Mennonite Church (BCMC) should be a safe haven for all who enter here. All  
7 staff and volunteers representing BCMC shall conduct themselves in a manner that upholds the  
8 high standards of Christian ethics. They shall at all times be responsible for their actions when  
9 representing the trust and authority given to them by the congregation. Personal boundary  
10 invasions or misuse of power, including sexual abuse or harassment, will not be tolerated. In  
11 light of these beliefs, the following guidelines for the safety of children and youth will be  
12 followed. The Faith Formation Commission carries special responsibility to monitor these  
13 guidelines and propose future changes.

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15 **A. Guidelines for the safety of children and youth:**

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17 *Definitions:* "All those who work with children and youth" refers to persons such as Sunday  
18 school teachers, nursery workers, child-care providers, youth group sponsors, mentors, choir  
19 directors, choir accompanists, Journey Club leaders, Junior High Club leaders, and pastors.

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21 1) The Deacon Commission will ensure that first aid kits will be kept under the church boxes,  
22 downstairs in the kitchen and the education supply cupboard, and the upstairs kitchen.  
23 Arrangements will be made to offer CPR training at the church regularly for those who are  
24 appointed by the church to work with children and youth, and others who are interested. A  
25 list of church members who are medical personnel or have CPR training will also be kept in  
26 the church office and posted in the sanctuary.  
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28 2) All those who work with children and youth must complete an annual orientation that  
29 includes information about safety procedures at BCMC and sign a Safety For Children and  
30 Youth Covenant form agreeing to support and follow these guidelines and authorizing a  
31 background check. The orientation is organized by the Associate Pastor for Faith Formation  
32 and the Faith Formation Commission.  
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34 3) All those who work with children and youth must have participated in the congregation for at  
35 least one year prior to being appointed to this role. This is monitored by the Associate  
36 Pastor for Faith Formation and the Faith Formation Commission. An exception may be  
37 granted by action of the Church Board upon recommendation of the hiring team which  
38 includes the Lead Pastor.  
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40 4) Persons under the age of 18 who work with children and/or youth must work under adult  
41 supervision. This supervision may mean constant adult presence or periodic checks.  
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43 5) BCMC recommends that persons under the age of 18 who work with children be five years  
44 older than the children they are helping.

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- 6) BCMC recommends that two adults be present when working with children and youth. In situations where only one adult is present, another adult will roam and check in periodically. We acknowledge that the one-on-one nature of the mentor program constitutes a unique exception to this guideline. The Faith Formation Commission encourages mentors to plan activities that are public and to partner with other mentor pairs.
- 7) Annual orientation for mentors of youth will take place in order to keep relationships healthy and safe. The annual orientation is organized by the Associate Pastor for Faith Formation and the Faith Formation Commission.
- 8) There will be a window in the door of every classroom and office in the church building.
- 9) BCMC reserves the right to do a background check of anyone who desires to volunteer or work with children and youth in the church or is hired as an employee of the church.
  - a) Documentation of individual background checks will be given to the Lead Pastor and placed in the private personnel files of each individual hired. Documentation of volunteers will be maintained in a separate folder.
  - b) Background checks will be handled with concern for confidentiality, but negative information will be shared with the pastoral team (who may require additional levels of background checks).

<b>Type of Position</b>	<b>Minimum Requirement</b>	<b>Responsibility for Ordering and/or Conducting</b>
Pastoral staff	Screened by the Leadership and Development Team of Mennonite Church USA as part of the hiring process	
Non-pastoral staff including part-time choir directors	Background check including national sex offender search and national criminal database search conducted by company selected by pastoral team	Lead Pastor
Volunteers working with children and youth such as mentors, Journey Club, youth sponsors, Sunday School teachers	Check against National Sex Offender Website conducted by BCMC	Associate Pastor for Faith Formation

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69 10) Parents/Guardians of children and youth who regularly participate in church activities will  
70 complete a Medical Release and Waiver form annually, to be filed in the church office. This  
71 information will be made available as needed to those who volunteer to work with children  
72 and youth.

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74 11) Parents/Guardians of children and youth will be notified in advance of any trips off the  
75 church premises by the program sponsor (e.g. Journey Club, Junior High Club, Senior High  
76 Youth). A signed Trip Permission form from the parents/guardians will be collected at the  
77 beginning of each program year. No adult shall transport a minor in a vehicle alone on a  
78 church sanctioned trip unless the parent/guardian has given approval. Sponsors who  
79 volunteer to travel with children and youth on trips will be provided phone numbers of  
80 parents/guardians.

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82 12) Unless otherwise noted, the Associate Pastor for Faith Formation is responsible for  
83 monitoring that adequate records are maintained to show compliance with these guidelines.  
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#### 85 **B. Action plan for reporting suspected or alleged incidents of abuse**

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87 1) Those who volunteer to work with children and youth - or a child or youth - shall immediately  
88 report to Department of Children and Families (DCF) (1-800-922-5330) and the pastoral  
89 team any behavior that seems abusive or inappropriate whether witnessed or reported. If  
90 requested, a pastor will be available to witness the call. The pastoral team shall immediately  
91 inform the moderator or moderator-elect. (If the complaint is lodged against a pastor, the  
92 complaint should also be reported to the Ministerial Leadership Committee of the Western  
93 District Conference who will follow established guidelines delineated in the *Ministerial*  
94 *Sexual Misconduct Policy and Procedure* manual available in the church office and the  
95 church library).

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97 2) BCMC has many members who are mandated reporters, meaning that they are required by  
98 Kansas law to report if they have reason to think a child has been abused in any way or  
99 neglected (*see Appendix 1 below*). Besides those who are mandated to report abuse or  
100 neglect, anyone else can if they suspect it. Kansas Law provides immunity from lawsuits  
101 against reporters of child abuse, if the report is made without malice. Kansas Law requires  
102 that the reporter's identity may not be disclosed. The reporter is not mandated to give their  
103 name. When calling DCF (1-800-922-5330), reporters will be asked their name but they may  
104 state that they wish to remain anonymous.

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106 3) A victim response team will be appointed by the pastoral team to care for the victim in  
107 consultation with family. A pastor may be included on the victim response team. The  
108 pastoral team will collaborate to compile and hold a list of participants in the congregation  
109 who are available to care for victims of abuse.

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111 4) The church will cooperate fully with both DCF and Law Enforcement personnel.  
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- 113 5) Regardless of DCF investigation, the response team will respond with consideration for the  
114 victim and the victim's family.  
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- 116 6) The BCMC Church Board shall seek legal counsel as necessary in the process of dealing  
117 with the complaint.  
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- 119 7) Confidentiality of the investigation will be maintained as much as possible. The congregation  
120 shall be informed by the Lead Pastor and/or the Church Board Moderator of the  
121 investigation with respect to matters that are not confidential, so that the congregation will  
122 first hear about the investigation from within the church rather than from the news media.  
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- 124 8) The leadership of BCMC will promptly take steps to plan for a response to the media and  
125 attempt to speak to the media only through one contact person according to the BCMC  
126 Crisis Plan. This is imperative so that the church can emphasize its position on child abuse,  
127 concern for the victim and extensive steps the church is taking to address the present  
128 occurrence and to reduce the risk and provide a safe environment for other children.  
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### 130 **C. Pastoral Care**

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132 In the event of abuse or allegations of abuse, the pastoral team will coordinate with other  
133 congregational and community resources to assure that ongoing care is provided for both  
134 victims and those charged with abuse, as well as family members or others affected by the  
135 abuse.  
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### 137 **D. Forms for use with *Guidelines for the Safety of Children and Youth at Bethel College*** 138 ***Mennonite Church:***

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- 140 • Safety for Children and Youth Covenant form. To be signed by each person who works  
141 with children and youth and kept on file in the church office. The covenant form includes  
142 an authorization to conduct a background check.  
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- 144 • Authorization for Criminal Record Check. To be completed by all applicants for a paid  
145 position at Bethel College Mennonite Church.  
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- 147 • Trip Permission form (versions for Journey Club, Junior High Club, Sunday School,  
148 Youth Group). To be completed and returned to teacher/leader in advance of each new  
149 program year and to be kept on file in the church office.  
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- 151 • Medical Release and Waiver form. To be completed for all children and youth who  
152 regularly participate in church activities, including Vacation Bible School. To be reviewed  
153 at least annually, and updated as needed. To be kept on file in the church office. Those  
154 who work with children and youth will be given copies of the form for the children and  
155 youth currently under their leadership or care.  
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157 **Appendix 1: The following people are required by law to report to DCF:**

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- 159 • Licensed dentists
- 160 • People involved in postgraduate training in State Board of Healing Arts
- 161 • Licensed psychologist
- 162 • Licensed professionals or practical nurses examining, attending or treating a child under
- 163 the age of 18
- 164 • Teachers, school administrators or other employees of a school which the child is
- 165 attending
- 166 • Chiefs of administrative officers of medical care facilities
- 167 • Registered marriage and family therapists
- 168 • Persons licensed by the secretary of health and environment to provide child-care
- 169 services
- 170 • Licensed social workers
- 171 • Firefighters
- 172 • Emergency medical services personnel
- 173 • Mediators
- 174 • Law Enforcement officers

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176 **Appendix 2: Resources**

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- 178 • *Making Your Sanctuary Safe: Resources for Developing Congregational Abuse*
- 179 *Prevention Policies* (Mennonite Central Committee Women's Concerns)
- 180 • *Safe Sanctuaries: Reducing the Risk of Child Abuse in the Church* by Joy Thornburg
- 181 Melton (Discipleship Resources, 1998)
- 182 • *Safe Sanctuaries: Reducing the Risk of Abuse in Youth Ministries* by Joy Thornburg
- 183 Melton (Discipleship Resources, 2003)
- 184 • *Protection and Inclusion: Guide for Congregations on Safely Including Persons Who*
- 185 *Have Committed Sexual Offenders* (Dove's Nest)
- 186 ([http://dovesnest.net/sites/default/files/Protection\\_and\\_Inclusion.pdf](http://dovesnest.net/sites/default/files/Protection_and_Inclusion.pdf))
- 187 • BCMC's *The Crisis Plan* (stored in various locations in the church alongside first aid kits)