

1 **Bethel College Mennonite Church**  
2 **Abuse Prevention and Response Policy**  
3 October 2021  
4

5 Approved by the Bethel College Mennonite Church congregation on November 21, 2021.  
6

7 **Introduction**  
8

9 Bethel College Mennonite Church (BCMC) seeks to provide a healthy and protective  
10 environment for all in our midst. We seek to care and support persons who have  
11 experienced abuse and sexual violence. We acknowledge that churches are places where  
12 abuse occurs. We also acknowledge that we do not know people's prior experiences and  
13 traumas. Statistics tell us that 1 in 3 women and 1 in 6 men experience some form of  
14 sexual violence in their lifetime. Statistics also say that between 20-25% of people sitting  
15 in pews on Sunday morning are survivors.  
16

17 BCMC commits to work toward the prevention of abuse. When abuse occurs, we commit  
18 to address it in a way that centers around the needs of survivors. We commit to allowing  
19 each adult survivor to guide the process. More than a policy is needed to confront sexual  
20 violence in our church. This policy is not an end in itself, it is a framework to use as a  
21 guide when responding to the unique needs of each survivor and situation. Upholding the  
22 needs of survivors is less about policy and more about actions and attitudes toward  
23 compassion and care for survivors.  
24

25 **This policy has been developed to:**

- 26 • Reduce the risk of incidents of abuse
- 27 • Cultivate a safe place for reporting
- 28 • Create a clear direction for a trauma-informed response to abuse reports
- 29 • Offer a safe place for healing
- 30 • Develop a supportive community
- 31 • Educate BCMC regarding abuse, trauma, power dynamics, etc.  
32

33 The Abuse Prevention and Response Committee (APRC) is responsible for monitoring  
34 and implementing this policy and is accountable to the Church Board.  
35

36 **Institutional Practices and Accountability**

- 37 • Representatives from the APRC will initiate individual or group meetings to address  
38 program concerns or individual needs as they arise.
- 39 • The APRC will make sure prevention guidelines are being followed.
- 40 • This policy will be posted on the church website. Hard copies will be located in the  
41 church office and library.
- 42 • The APRC will review this policy annually and update it as needed.
- 43 • Community reporting information and resources will be posted in all bathrooms.  
44  
45  
46

47 **Terms Used in this Policy**

48  
49 **Accountability Partners:** Made up of Congregants assigned by the APRC. Two (or  
50 more if applicable) Accountability Partners will be assigned to offenders.  
51 Accountability Partner roles will be to communicate and respond to questions from  
52 the offender, be present with the offender while on church property, and offer  
53 spiritual support to the offender.

54  
55 **Approved Adult:** Any adult (including Employees) who works with minors or  
56 vulnerable adults. Must have a Volunteer/Employee Registration Form on file, yearly  
57 signed Abuse Prevention Covenant, up to date background check (for youth sponsors,  
58 mentors, and Employees), and yearly training on the Abuse Prevention and Response  
59 Policy.

60  
61 **Care Team:** Made up of Congregants assigned by the APRC. One (or more if  
62 applicable) Care Team members will be assigned to a survivor(s). In the event a  
63 collective trauma is taking place within our congregation that is triggering to  
64 survivors, a care team can also be formed for survivors as a group or individually.  
65 The Care Team member roles will be to provide spiritual and emotional support,  
66 communicate with and respond to questions, requests and other needs as they arise.  
67 The APRC may assign additional Care Team members to respond to the spiritual and  
68 emotional support of other congregants impacted.

69  
70 **Congregant:** In this policy, any individual claiming BCMC as their church, whether  
71 a full member, a wider-fellowship member, or a non-member that participates in the  
72 life of BCMC.

73  
74 **Leadership Roles:** In this policy, any individual (paid or voluntary), that sits on any  
75 committees or commissions, or works with children and youth.

76  
77 **Offender:** In this policy “offender” refers to any individual who has a current or  
78 historical record of substantiated abuse from a legal, third party, or church  
79 investigation (asked to sign a limited access agreement at another congregation or  
80 organization) or for whom a report of abuse had been filed.

81  
82 **Survivor:** In this policy “survivor” refers to the person who has disclosed abuse or  
83 the person someone suspects has suffered abuse.

84  
85 **Vulnerable Adult:** In this policy “vulnerable adult” refers to a person over the age of  
86 18 who is unable to independently care for themselves or protect themselves against  
87 significant harm or exploitation.

## Developing a Supportive Community: Guiding Principles

**Awareness of Power Dynamics:** Like many social structures, our church contains power dynamics. These dynamics create the capacity to influence another person's actions, beliefs, or behavior. Examples of situations that create power dynamics include age, leadership status, economic status, privilege, family connections, and length of attendance at BCMC. We commit together to not use our power to harm others, whether intentionally or unintentionally.

**Awareness of Triggers:** When new abuse reports are made, sexually violent scripture is shared in worship, etc., we commit to issuing trigger warnings to the whole congregation listening, and informing known survivors in our congregation prior to these being shared in corporate settings.

**Healthy Boundaries:** We commit to maintaining appropriate physical, emotional, spiritual, and sexual boundaries, and to take action when boundaries are threatened or violated.

**Practicing Consent:** Consent refers to the permission each individual gives to others for something to happen. Because we do not know the depth of everyone's stories and past experiences, we will practice respect and consent with touch and participation. Consent must be freely given, reversible at any moment, enthusiastic and not coerced, regarding something specific in the moment, and informed by the person giving consent (i.e. children or a person under the influence of alcohol/drugs can't consent to everything).

**Trauma-Informed Practices:** Individuals who have experienced abuse are our family members, our friends, our co-workers, members of our congregations, and others we know and love, and we understand they will carry the trauma of abuse for the rest of their lives. Unexpectedly reliving painful memories without mental preparedness, or consent to do so, can further harm a survivor. Knowing this, we commit to our continued growth of being a trauma-informed congregation.

**Transparency and Truth-telling:** A courage to pursue and honor the truth, no matter how uncomfortable. Statistics say that every 68 seconds someone is sexually assaulted and only 310 out of every 1000 sexual assaults are ever reported. We must believe victims when they share events that have happened to them, no matter how hard or uncomfortable it may make us. We must honor the courage a victim has in coming forward.

**Victim Blaming:** Holds the victim accountable for the crime that was committed against them. This happens anytime someone questions what a victim could have done to prevent the crime that happened to them. The crime would not have happened, however, if there was not a perpetrator.

139 **II. Abuse Prevention**

140

141 **A. Guidelines for Working with Minors**

142

143 1. **Consent will be practiced.** Physical contact will be a choice for recipients,  
144 allowing children and adults to have the opportunity to not participate. A verbal or  
145 nonverbal “no” will always be respected. Physical touch will not include excessive  
146 body contact or contact for extended periods of time.

147 2. **No physical discipline** (hitting, slapping, spanking) will be used. Yelling and other  
148 forms of verbal abuse are also prohibited. A child’s behavior is a way for them to  
149 communicate something to the adults around them. When we look at their behavior as  
150 a way to communicate something, we take responsibility to figure out what a child  
151 needs rather than blaming them for their behavior. We will practice redirection for the  
152 child and respectful verbal communication as a way to guide the child’s behavior.  
153 The parent or guardian will be contacted if more support is needed.

154 3. **Two unrelated Approved Adults** (immediate family group) will be present during  
155 any church activity involving minors, except in the case of the mentor program (the  
156 one-to-one nature of the mentor program constitutes a unique exception to this  
157 guideline).

158 4. **One-to-one mentoring** activities will be publicly visible to others. Mentors and  
159 legal guardian(s) will set communication expectations at the beginning of the  
160 relationship. Before private one-to-one contact between an Approved Adult and  
161 minor occurs (e.g. transportation, Mojo’s meeting, frisbee golf, etc.), a legal  
162 guardian(s) is to be informed (e.g. phone call, text, or email). Because one-to-one  
163 relationships can open avenues for grooming behavior to take place, we will work  
164 towards regular education and communication with volunteers, families, and minors  
165 about healthy relationships and boundaries.

166 5. **Interruptible locations.** There will be a window in the door of all offices and  
167 classrooms. Any conversations that need to happen one-to-one between an adult and  
168 minor will take place in an “interruptible location” (e.g. nursery where there are  
169 windows for others to observe, a private corner of the sanctuary, the front yard of the  
170 church).

171 6. **Bathroom protocol.** Minors will be encouraged to use bathroom facilities before  
172 and after classes or other programs. Any Approved Adult other than the child’s  
173 caregiver assisting a minor in the bathroom will stand outside the door. If a minor  
174 needs assistance, a second Approved Adult will be present. It is recommended, when  
175 possible, that two Approved Adults (if no legal guardian(s) is present) will be present  
176 when changing diapers or checking for injuries under minor’s clothing or diapers.  
177 The Approved Adults present will notify the legal guardian(s) that the contact or  
178 bathroom visit occurred.

179 7. **Off-property activities or overnight** functions involving minors will be scheduled  
180 with knowledge of the Faith Formation Commission and written approval of a legal  
181 guardian(s). At least two unrelated Approved Adults will be present.

182 8. **Medical Release and Liability Waivers.** Legal guardian(s) of minors who  
183 regularly participate in church activities will complete a Medical Release and

184 Liability Waiver form annually, to be filed in the church office. A legal guardian of  
185 minors with irregular participation will complete forms on a per event basis.

186 9. **First Aid kits** can be found under the sink in the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor kitchenette, in The  
187 Gathering Place, in the church office, and basement storage cabinet near the south  
188 entrance of the fellowship hall. A list of church members who are medical personnel  
189 or have CPR and/or First Aid training will be kept with all First Aid kits and at the  
190 back of the sanctuary. The Deacons Commission, in collaboration with the Office and  
191 Facilities Manager, will be responsible for updating this list and regularly checking  
192 the supplies in each first aid kit. Arrangements will be made to offer CPR and AED  
193 training for church employees and others who are interested, especially those  
194 appointed by the church to work with minors.

## 195 196 **B. Approved Adult Volunteers**

### 197 198 1. Volunteer Training and Accountability

- 199 a. Approved Adult Volunteers must have an active and positive  
200 involvement at BCMC for at least six months prior to submitting a  
201 Volunteer Registration Form. Exceptions must be approved by the  
202 APRC. (examples: Interns, IVEPers, MVS, college students)
- 203 b. All volunteers interested in working with children or youth must  
204 complete the following annually:
  - 205 i. Read this policy in full
  - 206 ii. Participate in a Safe Sanctuary Training at BCMC
  - 207 iii. A Volunteer Registration Form
  - 208 iv. Sign the Abuse Prevention Covenant
- 209 c. All mentors and youth sponsors are required to authorize and undergo  
210 an APRC approved background check before working with minors. In  
211 addition, all staff and volunteer names will be checked against the  
212 Mennonite Abuse Prevention List.
- 213 d. Congregants who work with minors will be at least five years older  
214 than those they are helping. Minors may volunteer to help with  
215 children's programs under the supervision of two Approved Adults.

## 216 217 **C. Pastoral and Congregational Care**

218  
219 1. Usual settings for one-to-one pastoral care visits by designated employees and  
220 Deacons include the following: a public place, a church office with a window for  
221 observation, or a person's home under certain circumstances. The pastor or  
222 Deacon will keep a log of all pastoral care visits. If the recipient is a minor, the  
223 Pastors are authorized to provide caregiving one-to-one with prior written or  
224 verbal consent of legal guardian(s).

225 2. Employees shall not engage in long-term counseling (no more than 3-4 visits),  
226 but rather refer persons to a counseling agency. Employees and Deacons may  
227 remain in supportive contact with persons requiring specialized psychological,  
228 medical, or legal counsel, but will not attempt to provide such counsel  
229 themselves.

230 3. Anyone who is appointed to provide pastoral and congregational care is  
231 required to give adequate attention to their own spiritual, emotional, and physical  
232 well-being to maintain a healthy attitude towards ministry. The Staff  
233 Congregation Relations Committee (SCRC) will be responsible for monitoring  
234 this.

### 235 **III. Abuse Response**

236  
237  
238 *Guiding questions: How do we honor the disclosure of abuse? How do we honor this survivor*  
239 *and not retraumatize them while keeping the community safe? The needs of the survivor will be*  
240 *kept as the central focus at all times. This is particularly important in whether and how abuse is*  
241 *disclosed to others.*

#### 242 243 **A. When abuse is reported and/or credibly suspected and the victim is under the** 244 **age of 18:**

245  
246 1. If the minor has serious injuries or is in immediate danger the reporter will call  
247 911 or the appropriate local law enforcement. If a reporter would like assistance  
248 with this step or any of the following steps, they can contact a representative from  
249 APRC for assistance. Call the church office (316-283-2667) for help locating the  
250 contact information of current APRC members.

251 2. The person disclosed to or who has suspicions (reporter) will immediately  
252 make a report to the 24-hour hotline of the Kansas Protection Report Center (1-  
253 800-922-5330). The reporter can also call 911 or notify the police for a more  
254 immediate response to the situation as KPRC may not be able to address the  
255 report quickly. It is important that KPRC has an official report on file.

256 3. The reporter (or a representative from APRC) will notify a non-offending  
257 member of the minor's family (if it is safe to do so) and an APRC representative  
258 that the report has been made.

259 4. The APRC will inform church board leadership about the report that was made.

260 5. The APRC will appoint a Care Team within 48 hours who will respond to the  
261 survivor's wellbeing as well as their non-accused family members. The survivor  
262 and their Care Team will be consulted with throughout the whole process.

263 6. The APRC will follow up with the person who made the report within 48 hours  
264 to acquire and clarify information as well as provide necessary pastoral care.

265 7. The APRC will document all information received about the reported or  
266 suspected abuse and actions taken. At least 2 people will work together whenever  
267 possible.

268 8. In addition, and in consultation with the respective legal guardian(s) and  
269 appointed Care Team member(s), the APRC will notify the offender of the report  
270 and assign an Accountability Partner(s). The APRC will communicate with the  
271 Accountability Partner(s).

272 9. If the offender is active in the church community, the APRC will act to  
273 immediately suspend their church voluntary assignment/duties, and in-person  
274 attendance.

- 275 10. If anyone is closely related to the survivor or the offender, they will be  
276 relieved of their defined role in the response or during any proceedings regarding  
277 this report and will not be appointed to a caring or accountability role.  
278 11. Unless there is concern about interfering with the KPRC  
279 investigations/process, the APRC will inform congregants of the report and make  
280 an open call for other survivors to come forward. Verbal and written notification  
281 will take place and will include outside resources for reporting and/or counseling.  
282 Any known survivors in the congregation will be notified before informing the  
283 whole congregation. A trigger warning will be issued in case individuals would  
284 like the option to not be present during a verbal announcement.  
285 12. The pastors will work with the APRC to coordinate with other congregational  
286 and community resources as needed to assure that ongoing care is provided for  
287 others affected, triggered, or retraumatized by the report.  
288 13. The APRC will inform outside institutions whom the offender is involved  
289 (e.g. Their church, Camp Mennoscah, Rocky Mountain Mennonite Camp).  
290 14. When information has been substantiated, the APRC will make sure the  
291 survivor and Care Team know before reporting to other bodies.  
292 15. If reports of abuse are substantiated, and the offender desires to remain part of  
293 the church, the APRC will ask the offender to sign a Limited Access Agreement.  
294 16. The APRC and pastors will attend to the emotional and spiritual needs that  
295 arise throughout and after the process, always mindful of how the congregational  
296 process could impact and retraumatize survivors in our congregation.

297  
298 *If the victim or offender is not connected to BCMC, we encourage people who received a*  
299 *report of abuse or suspect abuse to follow steps 1 and 2 and any other steps that make*  
300 *sense to the specific case.*

301  
302 **B. When abuse is reported and/or credibly suspected where the survivor is an**  
303 **adult:**

- 304  
305 1. The reporter will seek consent of the adult survivor before reporting to local  
306 authorities, the APRC, or a pastor.  
307 2. If you are the survivor, you are encouraged to pursue any or all of the  
308 following:  
309 a. The survivor or the person who received the disclosure of abuse  
310 (Reporter) will, with survivor's permission, disclose concern with a  
311 representative from the APRC and/or a pastor. All efforts will be made to  
312 assure immediate safety and make sure any medical needs are addressed.  
313 The APRC and/or reporter will support the survivor in connecting with a  
314 safety plan and community services (e.g. advocacy, sexual violence crisis  
315 center, trauma-informed counseling) to help meet identified needs.  
316 b. The survivor will choose whether or not to involve law enforcement. In  
317 the case that the abuse involves a vulnerable adult, it will be reported to  
318 the KPRC (1-800-922-5330) and/or local Police, or respective state  
319 authorities.

- 320 c. If it is safe to do so and with the permission of the survivor, the offender  
321 will be notified of the report and assigned an Accountability Partner(s)  
322 within the congregation. If the offender is active in the church community,  
323 the APRC will act to immediately suspend their church voluntary  
324 assignment/duties, and in-person attendance.
- 325 d. Any and/or all of the above procedure steps listed in the abuse of a  
326 minor will be taken with direction and/or consent of the adult survivor.
- 327 3. If the survivor is not ready to go public with this information, the APRC will  
328 honor their story by assisting the survivor in seeking survivor-centered  
329 community resources.
- 330 a. Refer the survivor to outside organizations for additional assistance.  
331 (e.g. provide resources for trauma-informed counseling, refer them to Into  
332 Account or other survivor advocacy agencies, ask them what they need).
- 333 b. Documentation will be kept indefinitely in a secure location in case  
334 others come forward or when this survivor is ready to go public.
- 335 c. The APRC will continue to consider other steps to keep the wider  
336 community safe on a case-by-case basis.

337  
338 **C. When the report of abuse involves a BCMC employee or credentialed person.**  
339

- 340 1. The APRC will immediately inform the Staff Congregation Relations  
341 Committee (SCRC) in the case of a BCMC employee. The SCRC, with  
342 consultation from APRC and WDC (and third-party counsel if applicable), will  
343 immediately suspend the employee from all church duties. The SCRC will  
344 determine how and when to make an appropriate announcement to the  
345 congregation regarding the allegation and immediate suspension.
- 346 2. SCRC, with consultation from the APRC and WDC (and third-party counsel if  
347 applicable) will take the lead in ensuring that steps in this policy are followed.  
348 This includes assigning an appointed designee to be in direct communication with  
349 the employee during the process.
- 350 3. In the event a report of abuse of a credentialed individual in the congregation  
351 not currently employed by BCMC is made, the APRC will immediately inform  
352 WDC and church board leadership.
- 353 4. The procedure steps listed in the above sections for reporting will be followed  
354 accordingly.

355  
356 **D. When BCMC receives a concern regarding a person who may pose a safety risk**  
357 **for any reason and wishes to participate at BCMC:**  
358

- 359 1. The APRC will verify the information out of an abundance of caution. This will  
360 be done by checking the criminal and court records and other organizations that  
361 may have information about an offender and by other appropriate means.
- 362 2. The APRC will make a call to any victims to direct/assist them to community  
363 resources (e.g. trauma-informed counseling, survivor advocacy organizations).
- 364 3. The congregation will be informed of the reported safety concerns of this  
365 offender.



366 4. Survivors and parents/guardians will be consulted before asking the offender to  
367 sign a limited access agreement in order to participate in the life of the  
368 congregation.

369 a. The offender(s) will be required to sign a Limited Access Agreement in  
370 order to participate in congregational life and worship. The Limited  
371 Access Agreement is considered the baseline for such a document. Further  
372 restrictions may be added. See appendix for example.

373 b. If the offender does not agree to sign a Limited Access Agreement  
374 and/or if it is known that the offender will attend or is attending another  
375 congregation, a designated APRC member will contact and inform that  
376 congregation of the situation and nature of the abuse.

### 377 378 **E. Maintaining Records**

379  
380 1. The APRC is responsible for maintaining records required for this  
381 policy. Records will be organized and kept in a secure location.

382 2. Any records related to reports of incidents of abuse will be kept in a locked file  
383 cabinet and will be kept indefinitely in case future reports are related to people  
384 involved in past reports.

385 3. Individuals with access to the key for the records may include APRC Chair,  
386 Pastors, Deacon Commission Chair, Church Moderator, and SCRC Chair.

387 4. Volunteer Registration Form and background check records will be kept as  
388 long as the registrant is participating in the life of the church and for five years  
389 thereafter.

390 5. Employee records are kept separately in a secure location.

## 391 392 **IV. APPENDICES AND FORMS**

### 393 394 **A. Definitions**

395  
396 **Abuse of power:** Improper use of authority by someone who has more authority than  
397 those with whom they are interacting.

398  
399 **Child Abuse:** Any physical injury, physical neglect, emotional injury, or sexual act  
400 inflicted upon a child.

401  
402 **Domestic Violence:** Violent or aggressive behavior within the home, typically involving  
403 the violent abuse of a partner.

404  
405 **Emotional Abuse:** Attempting to control a person through the use of derogatory  
406 language, threats, intimidation, frequent insults/put-downs, manipulation, and gaslighting  
407 (intentionally undermining someone's reality). This may be spoken and/or unspoken  
408 cruelty.

409

410 **Grooming:** Grooming behaviors can take place online or in-person. People who use  
411 grooming behaviors are often trusted people in the community and in their victim's life.  
412 Grooming takes place in many different forms, but tends to follow similar patterns:

- 413 • **Victim selection:** Finding possible victims who are easy to access or more  
414 vulnerable.
- 415 • **Gaining access and isolating victims:** Abusers will find ways to isolate  
416 minors and separate them from others.
- 417 • **Trust development and keeping secrets:** Abusers will work to gain trust  
418 through special attention, gift-giving, and sharing of secrets.
- 419 • **Desensitization to touch and discussion of sexual topics:** Abusers will  
420 start out with "harmless" physical touch (hugging, wrestling, tickling, etc.)  
421 in order to move toward more sexual touch (massages, touching of private  
422 areas, etc.). Abusers may also discuss sexual relationships or topics to  
423 introduce opportunities for more sexual contact.
- 424 • **Attempt by abusers to make their behavior seem natural:** In order to  
425 avoid raising suspicion. Look for signs in relationships that include  
426 secrecy, undue influence or control, or pushes personal boundaries.

427 This list was taken from RAINN, *Grooming: Know the Warning Signs*. You can learn  
428 more from their article here: <https://www.rainn.org/news/grooming-know-warning-signs>

429  
430 **Harassment:** Any repeated or continuing uninvited actions.

- 431 • **Sexual:** Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and/or  
432 verbal or physical conduct or written communication of an intimidating,  
433 hostile, inappropriate, or offensive nature.
- 434 • **Verbal:** Harsh or insulting language directed at a person. The most  
435 common way verbal abuse is used is in an attempt to control behaviors,  
436 thoughts, or feelings of another human being. Verbal abuse/harassment  
437 can also be subtle and there can be non-verbal abuse/harassment as well.
- 438 • **Media:** Harassment directed at a person or group through text, social  
439 media, email, or other electronic communication.

440  
441 **Incest:** Sexual relations between people who are too closely related to marry each other  
442 (parent, child, sibling, grandparent, uncle/aunt, etc.)

443  
444 **Marital Rape:** Sexual relations with one's partner without their consent. Consent needs  
445 to be given each time people engage in sexual relations.

446  
447 **Neglect:** Endangering a person's health, welfare, or safety through negligence -- failure  
448 or threatened failure to meet their needs.

449  
450 **Non-consensual sexual contact:** When a person, however slight, touches any part of  
451 someone else's body without their consent and/or by force. Sexual contact includes  
452 touching the breast, buttock, groin, or genitals or is any other bodily contact done in a  
453 sexual manner.

454

455 **Physical Abuse:** Infliction of physical harm or the causation of a child’s deterioration.  
456 This may include, but shall not be limited to, maltreatment or exploiting a child to the  
457 extent the child’s health is endangered.

458  
459 **Retraumatization:** A conscience or unconscious reminder of past trauma that results in  
460 re-experiencing the initial trauma event. It can be triggered by a situation, an attitude or  
461 expression, or by certain environments that replicate the dynamics of the original trauma.

462  
463 **Sexual Abuse:** When any person is forced, tricked, persuaded, enticed, or coerced into  
464 any sexual contact or interaction for the sexual stimulation of the abuser, or another  
465 person.

466  
467 **Sexual Assault:** Any type of sexual contact or behavior that occurs without the consent  
468 of the recipient. This includes when a person is forced, coerced, or manipulated into any  
469 unwanted sexual activity. The recipient reserves the right to change their mind at any  
470 point, even if they previously said yes. The absence of “no” does not equal “yes”. Each  
471 sexual encounter should include an enthusiastic “yes” by all involved.

472  
473 **Sexual Violence:** Any sexual act or attempt to obtain sexual act or unwanted sexual  
474 comments or acts that are directed against a person’s sexuality using coercion by anyone.

475  
476 **Spiritual Abuse:** Any attempt to exert power and/or control over someone using  
477 religion, faith, or beliefs. This can also happen when sexual abuse is mishandled in the  
478 church. In *The Subtle Power of Spiritual Abuse*, David Johnson and Jeff VanVonderen  
479 describe spiritual abuse with the following:

480 *It’s possible to become so determined to defend a spiritual place of authority, a*  
481 *doctrine or a way of doing things that you wound and abuse anyone who*  
482 *questions, or disagrees, or doesn’t ‘behave’ spiritually the way you want them to.*  
483 *When your words and actions tear down another, or attack or weaken a person’s*  
484 *standing as a Christian – to gratify you, your position or your beliefs while at the*  
485 *same time weakening or harming another – that is spiritual abuse.*

486  
487 **Stalking:** Engaging in a course of conduct (i.e. repetitive and/or menacing pursuit,  
488 following or interference with the peace and/or safety) at a specific individual that would  
489 cause a reasonable person to fear for their safety or the safety of others and suffers  
490 substantial, emotional stress.

491  
492 **Trigger:** Anything that might cause a person to recall a traumatic experience and put  
493 them back into the original event. This can then cause people to experience  
494 overwhelming emotions, physical symptoms, or thoughts. Triggers can happen on a  
495 subconscious level and people may not realize they are being triggered right away or why  
496 they may be feeling the way they are feeling.

497  
498 **Trauma:** The emotional and physical harm resulting from violent conflict, natural  
499 disasters or societal structures. It can affect individuals, families, communities and  
500 societies and can fuel continuing cycles of violence and prevent sustainable rebuilding.

501 Trauma affects the body, brain, beliefs and behaviors of individuals, communities and  
502 societies. Here are a few examples of trauma, but there are many different kinds of  
503 trauma that are not covered below.

- 504 • Acute trauma: Is a powerful experience (e.g. natural disaster), but it has a  
505 time limit.
- 506 • Chronic trauma: Happens over a long period of time (e.g. poverty, racism,  
507 abuse), and there is no safe place to go.
- 508 • Communal trauma: Shared by a group of people (e.g. natural disasters,  
509 pandemics).
- 510 • Complex trauma: Occurs over a long period of time and there is no safe  
511 place to retreat (e.g. caregivers are abusers).

512  
513 **Trauma Informed:** Realizes the widespread impact of trauma and understands the  
514 potential path for recovery. Recognizes the signs and symptoms of trauma in clients,  
515 families, staff, and others involved with the system. Being trauma informed will require  
516 constant attention, caring awareness, sensitivity, and a cultural change at the  
517 organizational level. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends  
518 incorporating these 6 guiding principles when taking a trauma informed approach: safety,  
519 trustworthy and transparency, peer support, collaboration and mutuality, empowerment  
520 voice and choice, and cultural, historical, and gender issues.

521  
522

523 **B. Bethel College Mennonite Church Volunteer Registration Form**

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

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

Home phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of birth (must be 18 years or older): \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

Employer (If Applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

What volunteer role are you primarily interested in? \_\_\_\_\_

Why are you interested in working with children and youth?

\_\_\_\_\_

What qualities do you have that would help you work with children/youth?

\_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever been charged, convicted of, or pled guilty to a crime, either a misdemeanor or a felony (including, but not limited to drug related charges, child abuse, other crimes of violence, or theft)?      No              Yes

If yes, please explain fully: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever been involved with an incident of abuse or neglect that would impact your ability to follow this policy and guidelines?      No              Yes

If yes, please explain fully: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever been charged or accused of an ethics violation in relation to your occupation or while working with children/youth?              No              Yes

If yes, please explain fully: \_\_\_\_\_

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### C. Abuse Prevention Covenant

BCMC is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all who participate in ministries and activities sponsored by the church. The following policy statements reflect our congregation's commitment to preserving this church as a holy place of safety and protection for all who would enter. BCMC commits to be a place in which all people can experience the love of God through healthy relationships with others.

Please answer each of the following questions by circling your response:

1. As a Volunteer / Employee in this congregation, do you agree to observe and abide by BCMC's Abuse Prevention and Response Policy? yes / no
2. As a Volunteer / Employee in this congregation, do you agree to observe the Two Adult guideline at all times? yes / no
3. As a Volunteer / Employee in this congregation, do you agree to promptly report abusive or inappropriate behavior to the APRC? yes / no
4. As a Volunteer / Employee of this congregation, do you agree to inform the pastor (before beginning your assignment) if you have ever been convicted of or committed abuse or a violent crime? yes / no
5. As a Volunteer/Employee of this congregation, do you agree to complete a background authorization form when and if requested, understanding that failure to complete a background authorization form when requested could result in immediate suspension/and or termination of duties or position? yes / no

I have read and agree to observe and abide by the Abuse Prevention and Response Policy, and I agree to observe and abide by the policies set forth above.

Your signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_



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**E. LIMITED ACCESS AGREEMENT (example)**

**\*Note: This is a baseline agreement. Further restrictions may be added.**

Based on credible, corroborated, and/or multiple reports of abuse that we have received, we have concerns about your involvement at Bethel College Mennonite Church. The following guidelines are designed to reduce the risk to both you and others.

We welcome you as part of this congregation and your participation will be limited to ensure the safety of others.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, am entering this Limited Access Agreement with Bethel College Mennonite Church. It will be in effect for the duration of my participation with the church, unless the Abuse Prevention and Response Committee (APRC) revises or cancels it.

**Guidelines**

1. I will work with my accountability partners to create a safety plan that will include opportunities for growth for myself, care for myself when I interact with others, and that will hold myself accountable when I may be in a situation that could harm others
2. I will work with the 2 or 3 designated accountability partners. One of these persons will be with me each time I am participating in a church event. Family members or former abusers will not be assigned to be accountability partners.
3. I will not serve as a volunteer with children or youth. I will not serve on Church Board, Deacons Commission, Abuse Prevention and Response Committee, or any other committee or commission that works with children or youth (e.g. Faith Formation Commission, Education Service and Scholarship Committee, Bethel College Relations Team)
4. I will not engage with minors, vulnerable adults, or young adults.
5. I will write an APRC approved statement about my history of abuse. This statement will be shared with all active church participants.
6. I acknowledge that new participants to the church will be notified by a pastor of this information within two months of beginning to regularly attend the church.
7. If I re-offend, I understand that I will no longer be welcome to attend worship and congregational events of the church.
8. If I violate any part of this agreement, I will meet with my accountability partners, a pastor, and a representative from the APRC to discuss the violation and adapt my safety plan in order to change my behavior in the future.
9. After three violations, I understand I will no longer be welcome to attend worship and congregational events of the church.



684 I have reviewed this covenant and agree to abide by its provisions

685

686

687 \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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690

691 We, the designated representative of BCMC, have met with the party to this covenant to  
692 review the provisions of this covenant and its attachments.

693

694

\_\_\_\_\_  
Pastor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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\_\_\_\_\_  
Congregational Moderator

\_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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\_\_\_\_\_  
APRC Chair

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\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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\_\_\_\_\_  
Accountability Partner 1

\_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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\_\_\_\_\_  
Accountability Partner 2

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\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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\_\_\_\_\_  
Accountability Partner 3

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Print

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Date

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711 **F. Bethel College Mennonite Church Mennonite Digital Communication Guidelines**

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For many people, social media is a venue for communication, discussion, and community. There are positive aspects to various social media platforms, as well as potential areas of concern. We ask the BCMC community to observe these "social media best practices" when sharing about BCMC on your individual sites/platforms.

**Website**

1. The Office and Facilities Manager, Pastors, and related committees will write, select graphics, locate suitable links, and provide assistance to users of the site.
2. Information from church bulletins will be added to the site. Church news notes will be edited to exclude members' personal information such as: contact information, hospitalizations, health concerns, and other private matters.
3. Photos of members, including children, will be used unless the members have notified the Office and Facilities Manager that they would not like their photo used publicly. In captions, only first names will be used and all names of minors will be omitted.

**Other Social Media (blogs, Facebook, etc.)**

**Administrators**

The Office and Facilities Manager and Pastors are responsible for maintaining and updating BCMC's social media including: Facebook, etc. No BCMC social media sites are to be created by individuals not employed or contracted by BCMC without the prior conversation with staff and Church Board.

**Content**

The content of these social media sites will represent the current and upcoming events of the church, news, and commentary related to BCMC and will be reflective of the church mission statement.

**Posting information**

When sharing video or photos from church events, functions, or worship services, please be sensitive when tagging or revealing other participants' involvement without their expressed permission. When uploading photos or sharing information online, please refrain from posting confidential information pertaining to a Congregant or anyone being served by a ministry of this church. All Approved Adults are asked not to post any pictures or videos of BCMC activities where minors are pictured on their personal social media accounts when serving in your church appointed or volunteer position.

**Tagging**

If you would prefer not to be tagged, please let the church office know.

756 **G. Resource Page**

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758 **Medical:**

759 *SANE (Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner) nurses are specially trained in the comprehensive care*  
760 *of a sexual assault survivor.*

- 761 • NMC Health does not have any trained SANE and refers patients to Wichita
- 762 • Wesley Medical Center (offers SANE exam) **316-962-2000**
- 763 • Via Christi Hospital (offers SANE exam) **316-268-5000**

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765 **Safety:**

- 766 • Police Department (Emergency) **911**
- 767 • North Newton Police Department **316-283-3191**

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769 **Reporting:**

- 770 • Report suspected abuse, neglect or exploitation of a child or adult 24/7:
  - 771 ○ KPRC: Kansas Protection Report Center **800-922-5330**
- 772 • North Newton Police Department **316-283-3191**
- 773 • Western District Conference (ministerial misconduct) [http://mennowdc.org/report-](http://mennowdc.org/report-ministerial-misconduct-abuse/)  
774 [ministerial-misconduct-abuse/](http://mennowdc.org/report-ministerial-misconduct-abuse/)

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776 **Survivor Advocacy and Counseling**

- 777 • Safe Hope Shelter 24-hour helpline **316-217-1880** or **833-217-6004**
- 778 • National Sexual Assault Hotline **800-656-4673**
- 779 • Prairie View (mental health services and counseling) **316-284-6400**
- 780 • Into Account <https://intoaccount.org/survivors/>
- 781 • Wichita Area Sexual Assault Center Crisis Line **316-263-3002** or **877-927-2248**
- 782 • Prairie View Crisis Line **800-362-0180**
- 783 • National Suicide Hotline **800-273-8255**
- 784 • CASA: A Voice for Children **316-284-6909**

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786 **Medical & Legal Advocacy:**

- 787 • Wichita Area Sexual Assault Center **316-263-0185**
- 788 • Kansas Legal Services **800-723-6953**

789

790 **Other Resources:**

791 National Human Trafficking Resource Center **1-888-373-7888**