Immanuel Mennonite Church
Child Protection and Abuse Response Policy:
Reducing the Risk of Child Sexual Abuse

Updated December 2023

We recognize that child sexual abuse is a serious problem in our world and acknowledge that religious institutions are particularly vulnerable to incidents of child sexual abuse for many reasons: we seek to be welcoming, non-exclusionary and very accepting; we rely upon volunteers to carry out much of our work; we are vulnerable to loss of membership; and we may carry a false sense of security. However, as we desire to embody Christ's peace and compassion we are compelled to create a policy that reflects our value to protect the vulnerable, including children.

As the church of Jesus, we strive for a higher level of human relationships than is explicit in broadly applicable institutional or legal guidelines. The theological basis of our Child Protection and Abuse Response Policy at Immanuel rests on the words and actions of Jesus that are embraced in the community of faith following Pentecost. The words and actions that most clearly demonstrate Jesus's radical inclusion of children occur in the context of Jesus blessing the children (Matt. 19:13-15) and his harsh condemnation of those who cause a child to stumble or sin (Matt. 18:6) .

As followers of Jesus we lament the evil of Christian communities where children are not safe from predators or those who, for any reason at all, allow children or adults to be subjected to sexual misconduct in any form. We also lament the lack of accountability, transparency, integrity, trust and honesty within congregations that makes a rigorous practical policy necessary. A church where children are not only safe, but included and blessed is a feature of the Kingdom. The Child Protection and Abuse Response Policy can help us live the life of Jesus and the Kingdom in 21st century America.

For the safeguarding of our children and our church workers, we will work at preventing child sexual abuse through the procedures contained in this document. Complaints of sexual abuse (sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, or sexual assault) or child abuse will be taken seriously and dealt with in a spirit of compassion and justice. In order to carry out the procedures contained in this document, the Immanuel Leadership Team, in consultation with the Christian Formation Coordinator(s), will appoint a Child Protection Coordinator (CPC) for a three-year term, with a two term limit. The duties of the Child Protection Coordinator are to review the Child Protection and Abuse Response Policy annually, look out for its implementation, and communicate with the pastor, leadership team, other congregations, and outside experts on policy and training (Attachment 8) . This policy should be revised once during each term of the Child Protection Coordinator, most reasonably halfway through the CPC's term.

The congregation should have access to this policy through various methods. It should be available on the IMC website. Hard copies should be posted in areas of care such as: the nursery, inside the cabinet of children's church supplies, and in the foyer of the church. A summary sheet highlighting some basic ideas and procedures should be made available to all parents. A notification which reminds the congregation of its existence as well as other relevant information should be made available to all regular attenders through church mailboxes.

I. SCREENING PROCESS

Screening is to be used with all applicants and church workers, full-time, part-time, compensated or volunteer, including clergy, according to the guidelines set forth below prior to working with children or youth.

A. Screening Form (Attachment 1)

Screening forms will be completed in conjunction with the start of an assignment, along with an interview with the child protection coordinator. After the interview, two non-familial written references may be required. Screening form must be completed again if more than a year break is taken from serving with children and youth.

B. Reference Checks (Attachment 1)

All applicants and church workers, compensated or volunteer who will work with children or youth will be required to provide reference information which may be checked. A written and dated record of the contact will be made by the Child Protection Coordinator and kept on file in the church office or church digital file storage system. When checking references the Child Protection Coordinator should ask 1) How long have you known _____ and in what capacity? and) Do you have any concerns about _____ working with children?

C. Annual Agreement for Church Workers (Attachment 3)

All workers will be given a copy of the Child Protection Policy and Abuse Response, and will be required to annually sign the document "Annual Agreement of Church Workers". This helps to ensure that those serving in such roles are continually aware of the importance of these policies and how they have been updated. These revisits should be completed between April and August each year for church workers at IMC.

D. Background Checks

All church workers who have contact directly with children and youth must give permission for an annual background check. The pastor, Child Protection Coordinator and congregational chair will review the background check results of other applicants, and the congregational chair and Child Protection Coordinator will review the pastor's background check results. An export of results will be kept up to date in the church digital file storage system in addition to records kept by the chosen background check service provider.

If someone is unable to grant permission for a background check, they may serve if two other approved workers are present, if they have completed the Screening Form (Attachment 1) and annual agreement (Attachment 3), and if the circumstances as to why they cannot grant permission for a background check are understood by the Child Protection Coordinator, Christian Formation Coordinator and Leadership Team.

F. Employees or Volunteers With Certain Criminal Violations Will Not be Accepted

If the criminal records check shows a criminal history which the applicant or volunteer did not disclose on the screening form or during the interview, his or her services will not be accepted. If the criminal records check reveals criminal convictions which were already disclosed on the screening form and in the interview, the Church will use its discretion in determining whether the individual's services will be utilized. **A known sexual**

offender or someone with a criminal history of child abuse or neglect will not be approved to work with children in any capacity.

G. Age Guidelines

Approved workers must be 18 years old or older. Young people under 18 need to work under the supervision of an adult approved worker.

II. PREVENTION MEASURES PERTAINING TO CHURCH WORKERS AND FACILITIES

A. Classroom Doors All classrooms and other areas used by minors must have a window in the door or the door must be left open during use.

B. Two-Person Rule

A minimum of two approved workers should be in areas where children are present.The nursery provides an exception because of its clear visibility from multiple angles. A third worker who has not been approved by background check can still serve if two other workers are available. Anyone unable to complete the background check still needs to complete the annual agreement.

C. Bathroom Guidelines

- Diapering- A parent will be contacted to change a diaper. If a parent cannot be reached, two approved adults must be present when clothes or diapers are being changed.

- Toddlers, Preschoolers- Parents should encourage younger children to use the bathroom before and after classes or other activities so that parents can assist as needed.

- When downstairs in the childcare center, children can use the Roberta Webb bathrooms with the door propped. Adult workers should assist toddlers or preschoolers only when necessary. If assistance is required, the approved adult must leave the door open and be within sight of the other church worker as they assist the child.

- For the protection of all, no approved worker or helper should ever be alone with a child in a bathroom with the door closed and never be in a closed bathroom stall with a child.

- IMC recommends that children under the age of eight should be accompanied to the bathroom by the child's caregiver during the church service. This recommendation is on the basis that the church front doors are unlocked during the service and there is no focused monitoring of the foyer which provides direct access to the bathroom entrances.

D. Procedure for Beginning and End of Class or Nursery Care

Children's parents or caregivers should put them in the care of the teacher by bringing them directly to the Sunday School classrooms. Children and youth teachers should be in the classrooms at least 10 minutes prior to the start of class. Children should not be sent downstairs alone. Parents or caregivers should be available immediately at an arranged time to monitor the return of their children. (e.g.- Sunday School ends at 10:15

a.m.). Teachers and nursery volunteers should maintain supervision before and after the event until all children are in the custody of their caregivers.

E. Overnight or off-site events

Two approved workers should be present during any church activity involving minors which takes place overnight or off-site. When working with youth, both workers must be at least 21 years old. A completed parental medical release MUST be on hand in such circumstances (Attachment 4c/5c). If a worker will be transporting a child, a signed permission is required and a copy should accompany the driver. Drivers need to complete "Driver Form" (Attachment 2). Note that situations of transportation also require the two-adult rule.

F. Parental Notifications

Annually, the Child Protection Coordinator should also provide a parental summary sheet to parents of youth and children (Attachment 4a/5a) that are covenanting members. The full policy should be made available as desired and also posted on the church website. Parents should be asked to complete"Parental Information Form" (Attachment 4b/5b).

Any one-on-one mentoring between a church worker and child must have parental consent. Additionally, for any one-on-one mentoring to begin, the Christian Formation Coordinator, church Leadership Team and Child Protection Coordinator shall be notified advance

G. Education

The church will utilize prevention curriculum such as *Circle of Grace* in order to teach children to expect safety and care for themselves and others, and to know what to do when they feel unsafe. The Christian Formation Coordinator and Child Protection Coordinator will collaborate to plan these efforts. It is recommended that a child safety curriculum be used every other year in order to allow all children to receive developmentally appropriate teaching related to abuse prevention.

H. Report Suspicious Behavior Immediately

Any inappropriate conduct or relationship between a church worker or volunteer and a member of the youth group or a child should be reported immediately to a pastor, Child Protection Coordinator or congregational chair. Inappropriate behavior of an employee will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. Inappropriate behavior of a volunteer will result in the volunteer being dismissed from the program or his or her services no longer being used. Depending on the circumstances, the Church may also report the employee or volunteer's behavior to the proper authorities. (See also section IV).

III. UNDERSTANDING, IDENTIFYING AND RESPONDING TO ABUSE

Definition of abuse

Sexual abuse can be physical (including unwanted touching), verbal or nonverbal, offensive gestures, or comments about a person's body. Child Sexual abuse includes behaviors that involve touching, but also may not involve touching; for example, showing pornography to a child or verbal sexual comments are abusive. The abuser may be an adult, an adolescent, or another older child.

Other examples of abuse include but are not limited to fondling; oral, genital, and anal penetration; intercourse;

forcible rape; obscene phone calls; exhibitionism; allowing children to witness sexual activity.

Warning signs of Possible Sexual Abuse

- Has nightmares or other sleep problems without an explanation
- Seems distracted or distant at odd times; "spacing out"
- Has a sudden change in eating habits
- Has trouble swallowing/ frequent sore throats
- Sudden mood swings: rage, fear, insecurity or withdrawl
- Writes, draws, play or dreams of sexual or frightening images
- Develops new or unusual fear of certain people or places
- Refuses to talk about a secret shared with an adult or older child
- Suddenly has money, toys or other gifts without reason
- Thinks of self or body as repulsive, dirty or bad

Responding to a Child Who Makes a Disclosure of Sexual Abuse

- **Believe the child.** Children seldom lie about being sexually abused. Offenders often convince children no one will believe them if they tell. Be aware that disclosures often come in small segments over time.
- **Reassure the child that telling you was the right thing to do.** Offenders may threaten children with dire consequences for telling someone. Emphasize that sexual abuse is never the fault of the child, and that the adult--not the child-- has done something wrong.
- **Be truthful and don't make promises you can't keep.** Children might fear repercussions for themselves or siblings or consequences for the adults. Because of this, they might ask for you to promise secrecy before disclosing something. Do not promise these things.
- **Don't ask for extensive detail or take an "investigative" stance.** Ask for only those questions needed for clarification. Be a supportive listener, and let the child use their own words to describe what happened.
- **Let the child or young person know what you will do next.** Child abuse often leaves children feeling disempowered and lacking control in their own life. Making sure the child is fully aware of each step can make the process less intimidating and can help return a sense of power and safety. If the child is old enough, he or she can talk directly to CPS when you or the mandated reporter makes the call.
- **Do not confront the person believed to be an abuser.** It could put you, the child or others at risk. CPS or the police will take necessary action. Make sure to report the disclosure to the pastor, child protection coordinator, or congregational chair.

IV. REPORTING PROCEDURES

A. Mandated reporters

The Code of Virginia imposes a reporting mandate, or requirement, on any individual who comes into contact with children in the course of his or her work or professional practice and has "reasonable cause to suspect" that

the minor has been abused. These individuals are known as "mandated reporters." The mandate to report says

that a person, who in the course of his or her duties with the organization, has "reason to suspect that a child is an abused or neglected child" (Code of Virginia 623.2-1509A) will report this matter immediately. A mandated reporter need not make a first-hand observation of the suspected child abuse victim. Second-hand reports of abuse must be reported to the proper authorities if the mandated reporter has "reasonable cause to suspect" that child abuse has occurred. The mandate to report applies to all suspected child abuse, not just abuse that has been perpetrated by someone within the church. Possible abusers could include parents, relatives, older siblings, neighbors, coaches, school teachers, family friends and other children. Failure to report suspected abuse by a mandated reporter can result in fines or a Class 1 misdemeanor. Church pastors and staff are not considered to be mandated reporters in Virginia. However, for the purposes of this policy, we will consider pastors the equivalent of mandated reporters. The individual reporting the conduct is protected from legal and civil liability if the report is made in good faith (VA Code 63.1-248.3). To help make the congregation aware of the pastor's role as a mandated reporter, this information should be provided in the yearly notification of the policy. This will avoid situations where someone might be surprised when abuse is disclosed and then not held in confidence.

Approved adults under this policy are not mandated reporters under Virginia law. However, volunteer church workers will immediately report any suspected abuse to a pastor, or someone who will report to the pastor. The pastor will make the report and inform the Child Protection Coordinator, the Christian Formation Coordinator, and Congregational Chair of the reports.

Information about mandated reporting is available here: https://www.dss.virginia.gov/abuse/mr.cgi

B. Report suspicious behavior immediately

Church workers may become aware of abuse or neglect of the children under our care. In the event that an individual involved in the care of children at Immanuel Mennonite becomes aware of suspected abuse or neglect of a child under his/her care, they should report this immediately to a pastor, the Child Protection Coordinator or congregational chair.

C. Line Of Reporting for Suspected Abuse within the church

1. Any inappropriate conduct or relationship between a church worker or volunteer and a child/youth should be immediately reported to a pastor, the Child Protection Coordinator or the congregational chair. The person receiving the report should document the suspected abuse by completing an Incident report (attachment 7). If an incident is reported that does not rise to the level of making a mandated report, the pastor will inform the child's parents or guardians of the concern. The individual alleged to be the perpetrator of the abuse or misconduct will immediately be removed from their position and instructed to remain away from Church premises and church functions during the investigation.

2. The pastor will immediately make a verbal report of any abuse by calling the Virginia Department of Social Services. In Harrisonburg, call the Harrisonburg Rockingham Department of Social Services (DSS) at 540-574-5100 or the Child Protective Services (CPS) Hotline at 1-800-552-7096. DSS will contact the local law enforcement agency immediately upon receiving a report of suspected child abuse.

3. Following the report of suspected abuse to DSS or the CPS Hotline, a pastor will inform the parent or guardian. If the parent or guardian or someone within the family is the alleged abuser, DSS or law enforcement will make the first contact about the allegation.

4. The Church will fully cooperate with the investigation of the incident by civil authorities.

5. The pastor will also share the report with the Child Protection Coordinator and the Congregational Chairperson.

6. The Congregational Chair will notify the church insurance company within 24 hours and comply with the insurance company's requirements for incident reporting. In any event, an incident report will be prepared for the Church using the incident report form (attachment 7).

7. Pastoral care will be arranged for any who desire it.

8. If the accused person has ministerial credentials, the district pastor shall report to the chairman of the Faith & Life Commission of Virginia Mennonite Conference and the Leadership Team will contact the VMC Intervention Team and follow their guidelines.

9. The Virginia Mennonite Conference Intervention Team (a group formed as needed by the conference) will be in communication with the accused utilizing the resources of outside professional and/or legal advisors. The VMC Intervention Team shall cooperate fully with state and legal entities for resolution and restitution.

V. RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE

A. Maintain Adequate Records

The following records will be kept up-to-date by the Child Protection Coordinator and kept on file in the church office or church digital file system.

- Up-to-date worker's screening forms (files/electronic)
- Checked references and screening forms (files/electronic)
- A complete approved worker list (electronic)
- Updated limited access agreements (files/electronic)

B. Spokesperson

To protect the child and the accused, information regarding the complaint and the investigation will be limited to only those with a need to know in the Church organization. One person will be designated as the church spokesperson who will have the responsibility to respond to inquiries from law enforcement, social services, the media and the congregation. The Pastor will be the Church's spokesperson to the media concerning incidents of

abuse or neglect unless he/she is alleged to be involved, in which case the Leadership Team, minus the pastor, will name another spokesperson. The Church will seek the advice of legal counsel before responding to media

inquiries or releasing information to the congregation or publically. All other Church representatives should refrain from speaking to the media.

C. Prepare A Position Statement

A clear position statement of our church regarding child sexual abuse will be developed for public use when an allegation occurs. It will include our policies and established safeguards.

D. Emotional Response

The church will avoid inappropriate responses to allegations including denial, accusations and minimizing the events.

E. Use An Attorney

The church may choose to have counsel present when the spokesperson is answering any investigational questions from the police or social service agencies.

F. Reporting guidelines and telephone numbers

Virginia Department of Social Service--
In Harrisonburg, call the Harrisonburg Rockingham Department of Social Services (DSS) at 540-574-5100 or the Child Protective Services (CPS) Hotline at 1-800-552-7096.
. http://www.dss.virginia.gov/family/cps/mandated_reporters.cgi
https://www.dss.virginia.gov/files/division/dfs/cps/intro_page/publications/general/B032-02-0280-00-eng.pdf

VI. OFFENDERS IN THE CONGREGATION

A. Relating to a congregant convicted or charged with child sexual abuse

In compiling this document we hope to make steps to protect children and make steps to preclude offenders contact with children while still being a supportive church community. We recognize that if we turn away a person from participating in the life of the church who discloses that he or she is a sex offender, it may drive him or her to another congregation and discourage disclosure in another church or by another person. The offender who isn't known, but who has children's trust, poses a greater threat to children than a known sex offender.

It is extremely important that in cases where a recovering offender or someone charged with a sex offense is known in the congregation that the community operates with extreme care and intention. Situations when the victim and offender are both in the congregation must be addressed differently than those where a recovering offender needs ongoing accountability but has been offense free for many years. The church needs to partner with victims, local professionals and the offender and in order to frankly discuss and discern for the safety of the congregation. The church will strive to show grace and mercy as the offender strives for repentance and

accountability. The aim will be to help those who have offended experience not only remorse but true repentance and structure that will support their behavioral changes and the safety of all.

It will be the responsibility of the Child Protection Coordinator along with the pastor and a member of the leadership team or their designee to write the limited access agreement along with the offender. The policy should be written as soon as it becomes apparent that a policy is required, but if possible before the individual begins worshiping with the congregation. The policy should be revisited and updated as needed annually. The congregation will make use of limited access agreements (Attachment 6 provides a sample.) as needed to hold the dignity of the offender while limiting their involvement in the church life. If the offender should decide to worship with another congregation within 2 years of last attendance at IMC, the pastor will seek to inform the leadership of that congregation of the conditions of the limited access agreement at Immanuel.

In some cases the church reserves the right to exclude a person from all church activities. Some cases include:

- Refusal for the pastor, leadership team or designee and or Child Protection Coordinator to contact the treatment provider and parole officer.
- Refusal to go for a risk assessment with a qualified therapist.
- Report by a treatment provider that the individual is at too high risk for recidivism.
- Refusal to sign a Limited Access Agreement.
- Refusal to comply with the requirements of the Limited Access Agreement.

Once an individual decides that they can comply with these conditions, the process would begin again to reassess the individual and see if they could be welcomed into the life of the congregation anew.

B. Congregational Notification

The leadership team or a designee will inform the congregation that, if desired, they may inquire to the Leadership Team about whether there are those with a history of sexually abusing others worshiping within the church. This may be done by announcements (bulletins and church mailboxes) and verbally. It should be done annually. Names of individuals will be shared with parents and church workers who need to know in order to protect children. It is the responsibility of the Child Protection Coordinator to notify new families (parents, grandparents, caregivers, etc.) who have begun worshiping at the church of their right to know of offenders worshiping within the congregation within two months. The ways in which names and circumstances are shared more broadly with the congregation will be discerned by a decision of the leadership team.

We wish to acknowledge: Springdale Mennonite Church, Community Mennonite Church and Shalom Mennonite Church, Virginia, the Mennonite Church Canada, and the Samaritan Safe Church Project whose policies were borrowed and adapted.

Attachment 1

Immanuel Mennonite Church Screening Form

This form is being used to help the church provide a safe and secure environment for those children and youth who participate in our programs and use our facilities. This form is to be completed by all applicants for any role (volunteer or compensated) involving the supervision or custody of minors. This is not an employment application form. This screening should be completed at the start of an assignment.

Name _____Date _____

Address _____City _____ State ___ Zip _____

Primary Phone ( )_____ Other if applicable Phone ( ) _____ Email

_____

Preliminary Questions

1. Do you agree to allow IMC to conduct a background check?

_____ yes _____ no _____I completed a background check previously that can be obtained

2. Have you ever been convicted with a crime involving child abuse, neglect, domestic violence, or other violence? _____ yes _____ no If so, please explain. Use separate paper if necessary.

3. Have you ever been charged with a crime involving child abuse, neglect, domestic violence, or other violence? _____ yes _____ no If so, please explain. Use separate paper if necessary.

4. Have you ever been convicted of or pleaded guilty to another crime? ___ No ____ Yes If so, please explain. Use separate paper if necessary.

5. Do you agree to notify the Christian Formation Coordinator, pastor, or Child Protection Coordinator if charged with a crime in the future, during the time that you are serving as a church worker with children? ___ No ____ Yes

Please understand that your role might change or be relinquished if personal circumstances or decisions that you have made compromise your credibility to work with children.

7. Have you read "Immanuel Mennonite Church Child Protection Policy: Reducing the Risk of Child Sexual Abuse" and do you agree to observe the safeguards, procedures and protocols listed?

Applicant's Signature _____

Parent's Signature (if under 18 years old)_____

Prior History and Reference Information

I have been a regular attendee/ member at _____ (place of worship) since _____.

List (name, location, dates) other churches you have attended regularly during the past five years:

_____

_____

_____

List your previous work involving youth and children in the past 5 years. List each organization's name & location, type of work performed, and dates. Use separate paper if this space is not adequate.

Work & Organization	Location	Dates

Notes to be completed by CPC: time & method of contact and references' comments

Please list a pastoral reference from a previous church that we may contact:

Pastoral Reference

Name_____

Address_____

Telephone _____

Email_____

Relationship_____

Please list two other references that we may contact:

Reference 1

Name_____

Address_____

Telephone _____

Email_____

Relationship_____

Reference 2

Name_____

Address_____

Telephone _____

Email_____

Relationship_____

Attachment 2

Immanuel Mennonite Church DRIVER FORM

If you will be transporting children or youth by car, please complete.

Name of Driver:

Address:

Drivers License # State Issued Year, Make & Model of Vehicle

License Plate Number

Insurance Company's Name

I give my permission for my Auto Insurance Co., _____, to report to Immanuel Mennonite Church regarding my insurance record.

_____ _____

(applicant's signature) date

Please be aware that, as a volunteer driver, your insurance is primary.

To provide for the safety of those we serve, please answer the following questions:

	True	False
I have NOT had a conviction for an infraction involving drugs or alcohol (such as driving under the influence or driving while intoxicated) in the last three years.	_____	_____

I have NOT had two or more convictions for an infraction involving drugs or alcohol (such as driving under the influence or driving while intoxicated) in the last seven years.	_____	_____
I have had no more than three moving violations or accidents in the last three years.	_____	_____

Certification

I certify that the information given on this form is true and correct to the best of my knowledge. I understand driving for Immanuel Mennonite Church children's activities is a profound responsibility and I will exercise extreme care and due diligence while driving. I understand that as a volunteer driver, I must be 18 years of age or older, possess a valid driver's license, have the proper and current license and vehicle registration, and have the required insurance coverage in effect on any vehicle. Additionally, I agree as follows:

● to comply with all applicable state and local legal requirements, including observing posted speed limits, requiring that passengers wear seatbelts (and requiring children to use age-appropriate restraints), and not texting while driving;
● to observe the "two adult" rule;

● to not permit any child to sit in the front seat;
● to not drop off any child in a situation which is patently unsafe or where the child has communicated to the driver that he/she feels unsafe, and not drop off any child under 15 in a place that is unsupervised (in such cases, returning the child to the church and calling for assistance from the church).
● To report any citations/ summonses for moving violations, *and any accident*, to the Church Congregational Chair.
● I recognize that I am responsible for my own motor vehicle fines.

Driver name_____ Date _____ 14

Attachment 3a Annual Agreement for Church Workers

Immanuel Mennonite Church

Thank you for your commitment to children, youth, and the church in 20_____- 20_____

_____, Child Protection Coordinator

IMC is committed to providing a safe, secure and healthy environment for all children and youth who participate in its ministries and activities. The Child Protection Policy reflects our congregation's commitment to preserve this space as a holy place of safety and protection for all who would enter and as a place in which all people can experience God's love, healing and hope through relationships with others.

As a volunteer/staff member/ someone who interacts with babies, children and/or youth in this congregation:

1) Have you read the Immanuel Mennonite Church "Child Protection Policy: Reducing the Risk of Child Sexual Abuse", and do you agree to observe the safeguards, procedures and protocols listed? If so, sign below:

Applicant's Signature _____ Date _____

Parent's Signature _____ (applicant under 18 years old) Date _____

2) Do you agree to immediately report to the pastor, Child Protection Coordinator or congregational chair any incident of abuse, including emotional abuse, neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse or, ongoing bullying/intimidation? _____ yes _____ no

3) Do you agree to observe and abide by the Child Protection Policy and the guidelines regarding working with children and youth? _____ yes _____ no

4) If you are under the age of 18, do you agree to work under adult supervision? ___ yes ____ no ___ not under 18

5) Do you agree to notify the Christian Formation Coordinator, pastor, or Child Protection Coordinator if charged with a crime in the upcoming period in which you are serving in a role with children at IMC? _____ yes _____ no

6) Do you understand that you role might change or be relinquished if personal circumstances or decisions you have made compromise your credibility to work with children? _____ yes _____ no

Attachment 4a

Parent Summary of IMC Child Protection and Abuse Response Policy

Caring for the most vulnerable among us is a high calling given by God to the Church. For that reason, Immanuel Mennonite Church has created and aims to follow the IMC Child Protection and Abuse Response Policy. This sheet provides some of the most relevant information from that policy to parents. If you would like to know more about the full policy, it is available on the Immanuel Mennonite Church website or from the Child Protection Coordinator, _____.

Prevention Measures at IMC

Church Workers with Children
IMC uses a screening process that includes reference and background checks for all church workers who work with children. Workers are required to review our Child Protection and Abuse Response Policy every year. Persons with a criminal history of child abuse or neglect are not permitted to work with children.

Two-Workers Rule
IMC requires a minimum of two workers to be in areas where children are present. The nursery provides an exception because of its clear visibility from multiple angles. Note that situations of transportation also require the two-adult rule.

Bathroom Guidelines

Parents should encourage younger children to use the bathroom before and after classes or other activities so that parents can assist as needed. If children need diaper changes, parents are contacted to do this. If a parent cannot be reached, two approved adults must be present when clothes or diapers are being changed.

When in Sunday School, children use the Roberta Webb bathrooms with the door propped. Adult workers should assist only when necessary. If assistance is required, the approved adult must leave the door open and be within sight of the other church worker as they assist the child. For the protection of all, no approved worker is ever to be alone with a child in a bathroom with the door closed and never be in a closed bathroom stall with a child.

Procedure for Beginning and End of Class or Nursery Care

Children's caregivers should give them to the care of Sunday School teachers by bringing them directly to the Sunday School classrooms. Please do not send children downstairs alone. Parents should be available immediately at an arranged time to monitor the return of their children. (e.g.- Sunday School ends at 10:15 a.m.). Teachers and nursery volunteers should maintain supervision before and after the event until all children are in the custody of their caregivers.

Parental Notifications three

Annually, the Child Protection Coordinator will provide a parental summary sheet of the church policy such as this one to parents of youth and children. Parents are also asked to complete a Parental Information Form with basic information and emergency information on their children.

Overnight or Off-site Events

As with all church activities, those that take place overnight or off-site also require two approved church workers. When working with youth, both workers must be at least 21 years old. The completed parental medical release on the Parent Information Form must be on-hand for off-site activities. If a worker will be transporting a child, a signed permission is required, and a copy of this emergency information accompanies the driver.

Mentoring

At this time, IMC does not have any formal mentoring for children or youth. For any one-on-mentoring to begin between a church worker and child, there must be parental consent and other appropriate church leaders need to be included in plans in advance.

Education

The church currently uses the prevention curriculum *Circle of Grace* in order to teach children to expect safety and care for themselves and others, and to know what to do when they feel unsafe. This is taught within the theology of God's love for all of us and God's image in each person. Talk with the Child Protection Coordinator or Christian Formation Coordinator if you would like more information about the curriculum.

Reporting Procedures

Church workers are required to report any suspicious behavior towards children to the pastor, Child Protection Coordinator or Congregational Chair. If the report involves a church worker, that worker will be dismissed from their duties. Depending on the circumstances, the church may also report the individual to the proper

authorities. The pastor at IMC, for the purposes of church policy, is considered a mandated reporter to state authorities.

Offenders in the congregation
All parents will be informed of any sexual offenders in the congregation and their limited access agreements. Anyone in the congregation is free to inquire to the Leadership Team if there are those with a history of sexually abusing others worshiping within the church.

Policy Revisions
If you have any further questions regarding the policy, please contact the Child Protection Coordinator. We aim to make the policy a living document that is reviewed about every three years. Parent feedback is always encouraged! If you have an interest in being a part of the review committee please let the coordinator know.

Attachment 4b

Immanuel Mennonite Church Parent Information Form
- Updated yearly by parents with children who attend IMC

Child or youth's name_____
Date of Birth _____
Parent's/ Guardian's Name(s)_____
Address_____
Phone number(s) _____

Emergency contact name _____phone number _____
relationship to child_____

Health Information:
Please list any allergies, medications, and/or special instructions or helpful information people who work with your child should be aware of:
_____
_____

Please provide any of the following information you would like to be kept on record in the church office in case of an emergency:

Insurance Information:
Insurance Company_____
Contract/Group No._____
Person's name insurance is in_____

Medical Permission

If my/our child _____ requires treatment by a physician or hospital, while attending Immanuel Mennonite Church activities or being transported to or from activities, please make every effort to contact me/us at the above phone numbers. If I/we cannot be reached to authorize treatment, I hereby authorize the supervising adults to consent for treatment of my/our child.

_____ signature and date

If your child will be transported by persons from the church, please also complete the necessary transportation permission on the back.

Attachment 4c

Transportation Permission

Check **one** of the following:

___ If transportation by car or bus is provided for a church activity, I do not consent to my child being transported to/from the activity by vehicle, and I will be responsible for ensuring that an authorized individual drops my child off at the program and picks him/her up promptly at the end of the program.

___ If transportation by car or bus is provided for a church activity, I do consent to my child being transported to/from the IMC activity by vehicle.

_____ Parent signature date

Parents will be notified in advance of any trips that require transportation by an IMC church

volunteer. 19

Attachment 5b

Iglessia Menonita de Immanuel- Forma para Padres
(to be updated anualmente por los padres de ninos que asisten a IMC)

Nobre del niño(a)_____
Cumpleaño_____
Nombre de padre(s)_____
Dirección_____
Numero(s) telefonico(s)_____
_____ emergency contact
_____relationship to child_____

Health Information:
Please list any allergies, medications, and/or special instructions or helpful information leaders should be aware of:

_____

_____

Please provide any of the following information you would like to be kept on record in the church office in case of an emergency:

Informacion sobre el seguro:

Compania del seguro_____

Grupo/ numero del contracto_____

Person's name insurance is in_____

Permiso Medico

If my/our child(ren) _____ (name/s) require(s) treatment by a physician or hospital, while attending Immanuel Mennonite Church activities or being transported to or from activities, please make every effort to contact me/us at the above phone numbers. If I/we cannot be reached to authorize treatment, I hereby authorize the supervising adults to consent for treatment of my/our child.

_____ firma del padre o tutor/ fecha

If your child will be transported by persons from the church, please also complete the necessary transportation permission on the back.

Attachement 5c

Permiso de transporte

Marque uno de los siguientes:

___ Si necesite transporte en coche o autobús para asistir una actividad de la iglesia, **yo doy** permiso que mi hijo(a) sea transportado a/de la actividad IMC por vehículo. Los padres serán notificados antes de cualquier viaje que requiere transporte por un voluntaria de la iglesia IMC.

___Si necesite transporte en coche o autobús para asistir una actividad de la iglesia, **yo no doy** permiso que mi hijo(a) sea transportado a/de la actividad IMC por vehículo. Yo voy a proveer otros medios de transporte para que mi hijo(a) llegue a la iglesia o que sea recogido puntualmente al final del programa. Transporte ne debe ser

proporcionado por IMC

Attachment 6

Section VI of the Child Protection Policy addresses offenders in a congregation.

Sample Limited Access Agreement

Immanuel Mennonite Congregation has reason for concern that your contact with children and/or youth in our congregation potentially places both you and them at risk of incident or accusation. IMC thus stipulates the policy guidelines in this Agreement. Within these guidelines, IMC welcomes your participation in worship services and adult church groups. Your interactions will be limited in some ways. The guidelines are as follows:

Avoid all contact with children and youth on church property or at church-sponsored events including:
refraining from any contact with children and youth.
refraining from going into areas where children's activities are occurring.
not volunteering or chaperone for children or youth events.

remaining in the presence of an adult at all times when children are in the building.
not entering into conversations with children.
other: _____

You will have access to an appointed person or persons for support and problem solving around limited access. IMC will attempt to keep this matter as confidential as possible, while ensuring the church remains a safe place for our children. This will mean informing parents and childcare workers of the conditions of this agreement. This may mean informing the congregation. Please consider the pastor (s) and leadership team as contact persons should further questions arise.
****

Agreement
I have reviewed this policy and agree to abide by it or I will relinquish my participation and membership in this church.
_____ _____ Signature Date
_____ _____ Witness Date

Attachment 7

Incident Report

Immanuel Mennonite Church

(To be completed for events or allegations of injury, illness, property damage or abusive behavior)

Incident Date:_____ Time: _____ Reporting Date: _____ Location of Incident: _____Reporting Person: _____ Specific area where incident occurred:
IMC staff person in charge _____
IMC volunteer in charge _____

Description of incident or observed symptoms:

Actions taken:

Response of child or youth:

Individuals Involved or Others Present (complete for as many persons as applicable)

Name: _____

Cell phone: _____

How involved? _____

Did this person require medical attention and, if so, how was it delivered?

_____

_____

Duplicate "Individuals Involved or Others Present" if needed

Witnesses

Name: _____

Cell phone: _____

Comments:

_____

_____

Witnesses

Name: _____

Cell phone: _____

Comments:

_____

_____

Signature_____ **Date** _____ 24

Attachment 8

The duties of the Child Protection Coordinator are:

● Providing yearly notification to the congregation of the existence of the Child Protection Policy, the designation of IMC pastors as mandated reporters, and their ability to inquire about whether there are those worshiping the congregation with limited access agreements.
● Providing access to the policy to the congregation through various methods such as: on-line at the church website, paper copies with Sunday School resources, paper copies in the church nursery and foyer, and a summary sheet for parents
● Checking references of new church employees and workers, completing and filing the reference information

section on the screening form, and keeping up-to-date alphabetical files. (Church office) ● Keeping up-to-date alphabetical files of Annual Agreement of Church Workers (to be completed by child and youth workers annually)

● Keeping an electronic database of approved workers based on completed Annual Agreement of Church Workers

● Making sure that background checks are completed for new church workers, when screening is completed

● Along with the pastor and church congregations chair, approving the background checks of new church workers. Filing these in the church office alphabetically.

● Writing and updating limited access agreements with the pastor, a designee of the Leadership Team, and the member who is an offender

● Within two months, providing notification of those within the congregation with a history of sexual offence to parents or others who need to know in order to keep children safe

● Providing notification of persons within the congregation with a history of sexual offense to those within the congregation who need to keep children safe (teachers, mentors) ● As available, participating in applicable trainings or work to improve the safety of children at youth at IMC

● Having parents complete Parental Information Form once a year and updating these as needed with emergency information

● Convening meetings of an ad hoc committee once a term to review and revise the church policy. The policy revision is suggested to be about half-way through the Child Protection Coordinator's term.

The Child Protection Coordinator position is a three-year term with a two-term limit. It is an appointment made by the Leadership Team in consultation with the Christian Formation Coordinator.