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Safety Covenant Local Mennonite Church

[Local Mennonite Church] covenants to be a safe place for all of God's people. As followers of Christ, we renounce the culture of fear and suspicion that has so captured our part of the world. And so it is in a spirit of hope and faith that we enter this Covenant as a beginning toward enriching the safety of our people.

Given the preciousness of our children and youth and their potential vulnerability to abuse, we Covenant for their safety and full participation in our community. Out of our commitment to love and care for all of God's creation we make this Covenant to our children, youth, families and community. Over time we may modify or add to this Covenant.

We Covenant to:

- 1) Provide a six-month period in which we commit to getting to know new members and attendees before asking them to teach Sunday school, to help in the nursery, to be a youth sponsor.
- 2) Ensure that any person under 18 who works with children and/or youth is paired with someone older than 21.
- 3) Provide youth with Sunday school teachers that are at least five years older than the youth.
- 4) Provide a safe space for children and youth by requiring that doors remain open at all times in classrooms if there are no windows in the doors.
- 5) Cultivate an "open door" culture in which parents are encouraged at any time to drop-in and observe or participate in activities.
- 6) Provide a public setting as often as possible for pastoral counseling, especially with youth. When an office meeting is most appropriate, the door will remain open or the individuals will be easily visible through a window in the door.
- 7) Provide police background checks for all paid staff. **The lead pastor will be the only one with access to the police reports.** Background checks will be coordinated by the *[church governing committee]*.
- 8) Monitor our implementation of this Covenant. The *[church governing committee]* will provide oversight for implementation of this Covenant, assessing compliance and reporting to the congregation yearly at a congregational meeting.
- 9) Report incidents of abuse to the state authorities such as police and/or children's services.

Guidelines for Registering Staff and Volunteers

[Local Mennonite Church]

To provide a safe and nurturing environment for the children and youth who participate in our congregational programs the following guidelines have been established for those who want to work with our children and youth. The *[governing church committee]* and a designated individual will be responsible for implementing and monitoring the Safety Covenant with all church employees and/or volunteers.

- 1) All individuals who seek to volunteer with the children and/or youth will sign a memo of understanding.
- 2) All paid staff will agree to a police background check. **Only the lead/senior pastor will read the police background check and only the Chair of the congregation will read the lead pastor's background check.**
- 3) Volunteers will have attended *[Local Mennonite Church]* regularly for at least six months prior to volunteering for activities involving the supervision of groups of children (i.e. SS teachers, nursery workers, VBS teacher).
- 4) Volunteers will have attended *[Local Mennonite Church]* regularly for at least two years prior to volunteering for activities involving regular off-grounds supervision of groups of youth (youth sponsors) or individuals (youth mentors). **A police background check will also be required.**
- 5) Any person convicted of physical and/or sexual abuse will not be approved as a child/youth worker.

**Memo of Understanding
For Child and Youth Workers
(Volunteer and Staff)**

[Local Mennonite Church] is committed to providing a safe, secure and healthy environment for all children and youth who participate in its ministries and activities.

The Safety Covenant reflects our congregation's commitment to preserving this church 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 in this congregation:

- 1) Do you agree to promptly report to the pastor and the *[church governing committee]* any incident of abuse, including emotional abuse, neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse or, ongoing bullying/intimidation? _____yes _____no
- 2) If you are under the age of 18, do you agree to work under adult supervision at all times? _____yes _____no
- 3) Do you agree to observe and abide by the Safety Covenant and the guidelines regarding working with children and youth? _____yes _____no
- 4) If you will be working as a youth mentor or youth sponsor, or as paid staff, do you agree to allow *[Local Mennonite Church]* to conduct a background check, including a police report? _____ yes _____ no
- 5) Have you ever been charged with or convicted of sexual abuse? _____ yes
_____ no
- 6) Have you ever been charged with a crime involving child abuse, neglect, domestic violence, or other violence? _____ yes _____ no

If you have answered yes to either question 5 or 6, please return your form to a pastor or the *[church governing committee]* to ensure your confidentiality.

I have read the Safety Covenant and this memo of understanding, and I agree to observe and abide by the policies set forth therein.

Signature

Date

Print Full Name

Volunteer Position