

**LANGLEY IMMANUEL CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH**  
**SAFETY POLICY AND PROCEDURE**  
**Revised April 2016**

***Preamble***

Langley Immanuel CRC is meant to be a sanctuary for all people. We place our trust in God, and likewise desire to foster trust in all our relationships. However, we recognize that we live in a broken world. Situations that break trust, such as abuse, can and do arise. Abuse of power must be condemned and eradicated, and measures of prevention put in place.

Thus, Langley Immanuel CRC has a spiritual, moral and legal obligation to provide a secure, safe environment for adults and children participating in programs under the authority of the church. While recognizing that abuse of adults is as equally unacceptable, this document is intended to outline policies and procedures as they relate to children. Likewise, this document does not address the imperative need to support and rehabilitate the offender, but dwells entirely on the victim or potential victim.

***Purpose***

This policy is intended to assist Langley Immanuel CRC's Council, leaders and the congregation in:

1. Establishing a safe environment for all
2. Protecting children from abuse
3. Protecting the church from loss of testimony
4. Protecting leaders from false accusation, litigation, loss of ministry/career
5. Protecting the church from litigation

It is hoped that the policies herein will further the reality of the church as a "sanctuary" and a place of safe ministry. To this end, Langley Immanuel CRC:

1. Will educate ourselves around the issues of abuse so as to recognize the signs and respond appropriately
2. Support the victim and remain accountable to one another for our actions, and
3. Above all, must be seriously concerned with the need of prevention and protection for the potential victims of abuse

## ***Policy and Procedures***

See Appendix 1 for definitions of terms, which are universally applied in this document.

### **A. Ministry Personnel**

1. Volunteers over the age of 18, who work with children, **MUST** complete a RCMP criminal record check every 5 years.
2. Volunteers over the age of 18 must be members of adherents for a minimum of 6 months at Langley Immanuel CRC. They have agreed to be subject to the authority of the church and received Council approval for the position.
3. Volunteers must agree to comply with this policy. If a volunteer fails to comply, the individual will be required to relinquish responsibility in that program (see Appendix 1 for definition)
4. Volunteers that have an interest in a particular ministry are expected to meet with the leader of the ministry to determine their gifting and suitability. Council approval is required.

### **B. Education**

1. All new leaders shall participate in training, led by a qualified and appointed individual, directed at issues of:
  - Safety policies and practices
  - Abuse identification and prevention
  - Abuse reporting obligations
  - Any other related issues deemed appropriate by Council
2. Leaders shall read resource material as prescribed by Council directed at issues of safety.

### **C. Correction Policy**

1. Abuse (see Appendix 2 for more detailed information) is not permitted
2. Corporal punishment (see Appendix 3 for more detailed information) is not permitted
3. Abusive verbal correction (see Appendix 3 for more detailed information) is not permitted
4. Concerns about a child's behaviour, or the inappropriate response to a child's behaviour are to be reported to the program coordinator (see Appendix 1 for definition)

5. The parent (see Appendix 1 for definition) is to be informed whenever a child misbehaves beyond mild correction, or if a pattern of misbehaviour increases. The parent should also become involved where appropriate.
6. Appropriate assistance should be provided (by the program coordinator or qualified person designated by council liaison) in situations where misbehaviour is an ongoing problem
7. Expectations and correction of children's behaviour must reflect their age and level of comprehension
8. Children are to be reminded of the kind of behaviour that is acceptable for the setting
9. Appropriate methods of correction are to be reviewed with new leaders and with all leaders before programs begin a new season. Periodic reminders are to be given as needed.
10. Correction should consist of one or more of the following options:
  - Helping the child focus on another, more acceptable, behavior
  - Distracting the child with another activity
  - Isolating the child from others if another volunteer is available to assist
11. When in doubt, or attempts have been unsuccessful, leaders should get help
12. For more detailed information, see Appendix 3

#### **D. Program Guidelines**

1. There will be a contact person in place (one for each ministry and the serving elder) during the worship service, as specified by the program coordinator. The duties of this person will include a check on the program and providing assistance whenever requested, required or the program coordinator or Council liaison deems necessary
2. Any new program that is developed to benefit children will be subject to this policy
3. See Appendix 4 for specific policies applying to specific programs
4. All programs should have two leaders present, including one adult (age 19 or older)
5. The risk of abuse increases in a one-on-one contact between leader and child. See Appendix 5 for guidelines.

#### **E. Reporting and Responding to Abuse**

1. Langley Immanuel CRC, through its Council, assumes responsibility for reporting and responding to abuse that occurs in a program

2. Leaders, program coordinators and Council need to deal with all reports, evidence or symptoms of abuse as soon as possible, as outlined in Appendix 6
3. A leader should not conduct an investigation of the matter. The established reporting procedure is to be followed.

As per Chapter 46 of the Child, Family and Community Services Act of British Columbia, an individual is legally required to report child abuse (CFCSA Chapter 46 section 14 and

[http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/child\\_protection/pdf/handbook\\_action\\_child\\_abuse.pdf](http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/child_protection/pdf/handbook_action_child_abuse.pdf)

4. Further information is available as follows:

- Appendix 7: Signs and Symptoms of Child Abuse
- Appendix 8: Responding to a Child's Report of Abuse
- Appendix 9: Reporting Abuse
- Appendix 10: Responding to Parents Who Are Notified of an Abuse Report
- Appendix 11: References

## F. Insurance

1. Council will ensure an appropriate liability policy is in place

## ***Appendices***

### Appendix 1 – Definitions of Terms

1. **Leader:** An individual providing leadership in any capacity in one or more programs relating to children. This definition also includes:
  - Anyone who might regularly come into contact with children of a program (such as, but not limited to helpers and drivers)
  - The program's coordinator
  - Church staff (now consisting of, but not limited to pastor(s), interim or student pastors, counselor and church administrator)
  - An individual over the age of 19 providing ....see A .1 and A. 2
2. **Child/Children/Youth:** Anyone under the age of 19 participating in a program. Any reference to "child" also applies to "children".
3. **Program:** Any function of the church authorized by Council. This would include services such as the nursery.
4. **Program Coordinator:** The individual(s) directly responsible for the program and actively involved in the program. This person is ordinarily the one communicating with Council through the Council Liaison.
5. **Parent:** The child's parent, parents or legal guardian

### Appendix 2 – Definition of terms regarding child abuse (Source of definitions: [http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/child\\_protection/pdf/handbook\\_action\\_child\\_abuse.pdf](http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/child_protection/pdf/handbook_action_child_abuse.pdf))

1. **Physical abuse** Physical abuse is a deliberate physical assault or action by a person that results in, or is likely to result in, physical harm to a child. It includes the use of unreasonable force to discipline a child or prevent a child from harming him/herself or others. The injuries sustained by the child may vary in severity and range from minor bruising, burns, welts or bite marks to major fractures of the bones or skull to, in the most extreme situations, death.
2. **Sexual abuse** is when a child is used (or likely to be used) for the sexual gratification of another person. It includes:
  - » touching or invitation to touch for sexual purposes
  - » intercourse (vaginal, oral or anal)

- » menacing or threatening sexual acts, obscene gestures, obscene communications or stalking
- » sexual references to the child's body/behaviour by words/gestures
- » requests that the child expose their body for sexual purposes
- » deliberate exposure of the child to sexual activity or material, and
- » sexual aspects of organized or ritual abuse.

**3. Sexual exploitation** is a form of sexual abuse that occurs when a child engages in a sexual activity, usually through manipulation or coercion, in exchange for money, drugs, food, shelter or other considerations. Sexual activity includes:

- » performing sexual acts
- » sexually explicit activity for entertainment
- » involvement with escort or massage parlour services, and
- » appearing in pornographic images.

**4. Emotional abuse:** This is the most difficult type of harm to recognize. Under the Child, Family and Community Service Act, a child is defined as emotionally harmed if they demonstrate severe:

- » anxiety
- » depression
- » withdrawal, or
- » self-destructive or aggressive behaviour.

Reason to believe that a child needs protection from being emotionally harmed may arise due to emotional abuse from a parent. This may range from the parent ignoring to habitually humiliating the child to withholding life-sustaining nurturing. Emotional abuse may occur separately from, or along with, other forms of abuse and neglect. Emotional abuse can include a pattern of:

- » scapegoating
- » rejection
- » verbal attacks on the child
- » threats
- » insults, or
- » humiliation.

**5. Neglect** is failure to provide for a child's basic needs. It involves an act of omission by the parent or guardian, resulting in (or likely to result in) harm to the child. Neglect may include failure to provide food, shelter, basic health care, supervision or protection from risks, to the extent that the child's physical health, development or safety is, or is likely to be, harmed.

## **Appendix 3 – Handling Correction**

The leader teaches the child how to behave in a socially acceptable way, and in a manner that is Christ-like, by example. However, a child may sometimes engage in behaviour that leaders find unacceptable, or is contrary to the best interest of the program.

The leader must appropriately intervene by interrupting or stopping inappropriate behaviour, and/or obtaining the assistance of another leader.

An adult can also intervene with inappropriate correction. The correction is intended to "catch the child's attention" and thus act as a deterrent and a reminder that the particular behaviour is inappropriate. Correction can turn into abuse when pain or injury results from the correction, or if it is used excessively in a short span of time.

### **Some Examples of Corporal Punishment:**

1. Slapping, kicking, punching, hitting, choking, pushing, shoving, hair-pulling, twisting, pinching
2. Correction that leaves a bruise, mark, wound or cut
3. Correction administered with any device or object (such as a paddle, spoon, stick, book)
4. Correction followed by a request/threat to the child/youth not to tell anyone what happened, not to report the correction, or not to show anyone a mark or bruise.
5. Confining the child

### **Some Examples of Abusive Verbal Correction:**

1. Correction that involves shouting or yelling, hurling insults or obscenities.
2. Correction that is intended to humiliate a child/youth
3. Correction by refusing to speak to a child
4. Correction that involves bribery, coercion, or threats
5. Correction followed by a request/threat to the child not to tell anyone what happened

## **Appendix 4 – Policies for Specific Child/Youth Programs**

### **A. Nursery Program**

1. Includes leaders and helpers.
2. A helper may be a child aged 12 or older provided:
  - agreement of the parent
  - approval of the program coordinator
  - adherence to this document.
3. Helpers may take children from the nursery to use the bathroom and in case of illness.
4. Any medical problem should be reported immediately to the child's parent and program leader.
5. For a child who does not require assistance in the bathroom, the helper must remain outside the bathroom. For children who require assistance, the helper must assist the child with the bathroom door ajar.

### **B. Children's Worship Time**

1. Includes leaders and helpers.
2. A helper may be a child aged 12 or older provided:
  - agreement of the parent
  - approval of the program coordinator
  - adherence to this document.
3. Helpers may take children from the nursery to use the bathroom and in case of illness.
4. Any medical problem should be reported immediately to the child's parent and program leader.
5. For a child who does not require assistance in the bathroom, the helper must remain outside the bathroom. For children who require assistance, the helper must assist the child with the bathroom door ajar.

### **C. Coffee Break**

1. For Story hour see Children's Worship Time (Section A)
2. For Nursery, see Nursery (Section B)

### **D. GEMS and Cadets**

1. GEMS and Cadet leaders must identify abusive behaviour among children in their program, such as bullying types of behavior. There will be zero tolerance to these behaviours.
2. Cadet and GEMS activities planned away from the church facility, out of town, or overnight should have documented permission from the parent, and one-on-one contact should be avoided

3. Children may not leave the area of the event, without the permission of a leader or parent
4. While the appropriate display of affection between leaders and the youth is often part of conveying support and encouragement to one another, such displays can be misinterpreted. For that reason, displays of affection should be limited to such actions as a brief hug, an arm around the shoulder, an open-hand pat on the back, a handclasp, or a light touch on the forearm. Each leader, Cadet and GEMS participant has the right to refuse any of these displays and this right will be respected.

## **E. Youth**

1. The same guidelines apply as GEMS and Cadets (Section D)
2. It is inappropriate for youth leaders to develop a relationship with youth
3. A program that is gender specific should have a leader of the same gender

## **Appendix 5 – One-On-One contact**

The risk of one-to-one contact will be reduced by:

1. Ensuring that two leaders are present at all times during a session
2. Notifying a parent before a scheduled one-to-one contact and asking permission when necessary to meet alone
3. Transportation of a single child should be avoided, unless two leaders are present
4. Parents should give consent for their child to be transported alone if circumstances require single transportation
5. A second leader must observe or be in sight of one-on-one contact

## **Appendix 6 – Responding to Signs, Symptoms and Reports of Abuse**

### **A. Responding to Signs, Symptoms, and Reports of Abuse**

Leaders who work in a program may become aware of suspected child abuse by witnessing an abusive incident, or having an alleged incident reported by the victim or by another child. Some children will not report an abusive incident because of their fear of the abuser, or because they believe they are to blame for the abuse. Other children are threatened by the abuser not to tell anyone of their experience, but volunteer/staff may observe signs and symptoms that may lead them to suspect abuse.

Taken from Family Children's services .....Chapter 46, section 13 and 14

When protection is needed:

13 (1) A child needs protection in the following circumstances:

- (a) if the child has been, or is likely to be, physically harmed by the child's parent;
- (b) if the child has been, or is likely to be, sexually abused or exploited by the child's parent;
- (c) if the child has been, or is likely to be, physically harmed, sexually abused or sexually exploited by another person and if the child's parent is unwilling or unable to protect the child;
- (d) if the child has been, or is likely to be, physically harmed because of neglect by the child's parent;
- (e) if the child is emotionally harmed by
  - (i) the parent's conduct, or
  - (ii) living in a situation where there is domestic violence by or towards a person with whom the child resides;
- (f) if the child is deprived of necessary health care;
- (g) if the child's development is likely to be seriously impaired by a treatable condition and the child's parent refuses to provide or consent to treatment;
- (h) if the child's parent is unable or unwilling to care for the child and has not made adequate provision for the child's care;
- (i) if the child is or has been absent from home in circumstances that endanger the child's safety or well-being;
- (j) if the child's parent is dead and adequate provision has not been made for the child's care;
- (k) if the child has been abandoned and adequate provision has not been made for the child's care;
- (l) if the child is in the care of a director or another person by agreement and the child's parent is unwilling or unable to resume care when the agreement is no longer in force.

(1.1) For the purpose of subsection (1) (b) and (c) but without limiting the meaning of "sexually abused" or "sexually exploited", a child has been or is likely to be sexually abused or sexually exploited if the child has been, or is likely to be,

- (a) encouraged or helped to engage in prostitution, or
- (b) coerced or inveigled into engaging in prostitution.

(1.2) For the purpose of subsection (1) (a) and (c) but without limiting the circumstances that may increase the likelihood of physical harm to a child, the likelihood of physical harm to a child increases when the child is living in a situation where there is domestic violence by or towards a person with whom the child resides.

(2) For the purpose of subsection (1) (e), a child is emotionally harmed if the child demonstrates severe

- (a) anxiety,
- (b) depression,
- (c) withdrawal, or
- (d) self-destructive or aggressive behaviour.

Duty to report need for protection

14 (1) A person who has reason to believe that a child needs protection under section 13 must promptly report the matter to a director or a person designated by a director.

(2) Subsection (1) applies even if the information on which the belief is based

- (a) is privileged, except as a result of a solicitor-client relationship, or
- (b) is confidential and its disclosure is prohibited under another Act.

(3) A person who contravenes subsection (1) commits an offence.

(4) A person who knowingly reports to a director, or a person designated by a director, false information that a child needs protection commits an offence.

(5) No action for damages may be brought against a person for reporting information under this section unless the person knowingly reported false information.

(6) A person who commits an offence under this section is liable to a fine of up to \$10 000 or to imprisonment for up to 6 months, or to both.

(7) The limitation period governing the commencement of a proceeding under the Offence Act does not apply to a proceeding relating to an offence under this section.

If a young child breaks the law

15 (1) A police officer may take charge of a child and deliver him or her to a parent if the police officer considers that the child

(a) is under 12 years of age, and

(b) has acted in a manner prohibited by law or has failed or refused to act in a manner required by law.

(2) If the child has killed, assaulted or endangered another person, the police officer must report the circumstances to a director, and, in any other case, may report the circumstances to a director.

Finding out if a child needs protection

16 (1) On receiving a report about a child under section 14, 15 or 27, a director must determine whether to refer the report to another director.

(1.1) If, under subsection (1), the director makes a determination to refer the report to another director,

- (a) he or she must refer the report promptly, and
- (b) the other director must assess the information in the report.
- (1.2) If the director does not refer the report to another director, he or she must assess the information in the report.
- (2) After the assessment under subsection (1.1) (b) or (1.2), the director may
  - (a) offer support services and agreements to the child and family,
  - (b) refer the child and family to a community agency,
  - (b.1) conduct an assessment of the family respecting
    - (i) the child's safety, and
    - (ii) whether it is necessary to provide to the family available services to
      - (A) support and assist the family to care for the child, and
      - (B) make the family safe for the child, or
    - (c) investigate the child's need for protection.
- (3) The director must make all reasonable efforts to report the result of the assessment under subsection (2) (b.1) or investigation under subsection (2) (c) to
  - (a) the parent apparently entitled to custody of the child,
  - (b) the person who reported the information that led to the assessment or investigation, and
  - (c) any other person or community agency if the director determines this is necessary to ensure the child's safety or well-being.
- (4) In addition, the director may report the result of the assessment or investigation to the child if he or she is capable of understanding the information.
- (5) Subsections (3) and (4) do not apply
  - (a) if reporting the result of the assessment or investigation would, in the opinion of the director, cause physical or emotional harm to any person or endanger the child's safety, or
  - (b) if a criminal investigation into the matter is under way or contemplated.”

## **Appendix 7 – Responding to a Child’s Report of Abuse**

1. Take the child seriously when he/she tells the story
2. Avoid judgmental statements such as, "I think you just had a bad dream."
3. Do not appear frightened or disgusted by the child’s story, since this may cause the child to stop talking or to believe you are upset with the child
4. Do not try to convince the child that the story is not true or that it did not happen the way the child reports it did

5. Do not make promises to the child that you will not tell anyone what has been shared with you
6. Remind the child that whatever happened was not his/her fault
7. Remind the child that it was a good decision to tell someone what happened to him/her
8. Tell the child that you want to find help so the incident can be prevented from happening again
9. Do not offer a child a reward for telling the story or promise a gift if the child tells another adult
10. Reassure the child that he/she does not deserve to be hurt by anyone
11. Do not frighten the child by talking about police involvement or medical examinations to verify the complaint; instead, share with the child that other people need to know about what happened, and they will talk to the child later
12. Do not ask the child to show you any bruises that are beneath the child's underwear or clothing; only observe those bruises that are accessible. In some communities, removing a child's clothing even to confirm a report of abuse is a violation of the law.
13. Do not investigate the child's story; rather, listen to the story and take notes immediately afterwards while it is still fresh in your memory
14. Do not tell the child he/she has been abused
15. Offer to support the child and remind the child that you care about him/her
16. Follow through in consecutive weeks and months by speaking to the child and offering support

#### Appendix 8– Responding to Parent(s) Who Are Notified of an Abuse Report

1. Remain calm and non-judgmental
2. Anyone who makes a report to the police or child protection authorities is usually granted anonymity; do not identify the reporter unless you are given permission to do so
3. Do not share any statements made by the child with a parent or relative who is implicated by the child as an abuser. It is advisable not to share the child's statements with anyone other than the authorities until the identity of the abuser can be determined and authorities have

determined whether or not the child can be protected from contact with that person.

4. Do not attempt to convince a parent that the alleged abuse happened or did not happen; do not attempt to discredit the child nor cast suspicion on the alleged abuser
5. Do not investigate with a parent what may be happening in the home; and do not share information with a parent that has not been shared with the authorities.
6. Do not make promises to a parent about the outcome of the investigation.
7. Listen to any information a parent may offer about the incident and record it immediately after the conversation; report additional information to authorities through the reporting procedure outlined in the church's policy
8. Offer parent(s) support
9. Allow parent(s) to express their disbelief, anger, and grief (parent(s) may be in shock or denial at the mention of abuse allegations)
10. Do not minimize the type of abuse, its impact on the child, or its harm to the child
11. Assure parent(s) of the confidential nature of the report and the need to maintain confidentiality unless disclosure is necessary to protect the well-being of other children

#### Appendix 9: Protocols for reporting abuse specific to Langley Immanuel CRC.

1. In all cases an Incident Report must be filled out.
2. Admin Council is where the claim of abuse must be reported. Chair of Council or vice-chair, will make the call to the Government Ministry. A report of abuse cannot be stalled.
3. A volunteer in a particular ministry who suspects abuse must report this to the program coordinator, who in turn will immediately report to admin council designate. If the Council designate is unavailable; the leader has the responsibility to report to the Ministry of Children and Families. (Example: Coffee Break volunteer notices repeated bruising on child that looks suspicious. Reports to CB program coordinator. CB leader reports to Admin Council. Call made to Ministry of Children and Families.)
4. If it is not appropriate to report to the program coordinator or if the program coordinator is unavailable, the volunteer reports directly to Admin Council designate, appointed safe church team members and MCFD.

5. A program coordinator who is suspected of abusing a child or seen abusing a child, needs to be reported. The protocol remains the same. The program coordinator reports to Admin Council designate. Or a volunteer who is not the program coordinator is required to report to Admin Council designate.
6. Children and Youth need to know how to report abuse thus an educational component is required to let them know how this can happen.
7. “Boundary violations” need to be taken seriously and reported. Although these are not factual situations of abuse, they have the potential to be misread as “grooming” or “compromising” or “open to suspicion.”  
Example: Male driving a female home from a youth event.

### **References**

1. Child, Family and Community Services Act, Ministry for Children and Family, B.C. Chapter 46 section 13 to 16
2. How to Avoid Claims for Sexual Abuse and Harassment, David G. Thwaites, CCCC