**College Mennonite Church**

**Discipling Commission**

**Policy and Procedures related to Caring for Children:**

***Reducing the Risk of Sexual Abuse for Children at College Mennonite Church (2013)***

**Objective:** To provide the safest environment we can for the children and youth at College Mennonite Church.

**Rationale:** We cannot assume sexual abuse will not occur simply because we are a church. We need to be clear about what steps we have taken and will continue to take as we try to protect our children and youth.

**Procedures**

a. Members and Non-Members who work in CMC programs for children and youth must complete and sign the “Memo of Understanding for Work with Children & Youth.”

b. This document will be introduced with other CMC documents in one of the sessions in “Orientation for New Members.” Its use with anyone who works with children and youth will be explained.

c. No one with any criminal child abuse violations will be allowed to work with children or youth at CMC. A confidential statement will be placed in the perpetrator’s file.

d. If a person reveals a history of abuse as a victim, a pastor and elder (to be addressed by the CMC board) will address concerns and provide support. If there are concerns related to their potential work with children and youth, the individual, pastor and elder (to be addressed) will compose a confidential, written statement for church files.

e. If an accusation of abuse is made, the “Statement of Policy College Mennonite Church Sexual Misconduct and Harassment” will be followed.

**Worker Supervision**

a. Two adults will be present for all church activities for children and youth. This reduces the risk of molestation as well as reducing the risk of false accusations.

b. Church workers will obtain parental permission before spending time alone with a child, i.e., as a mentor or as a pastoral counselor. Parents must also give permission for their children to participate in special trips or activities.

c. There will be windows in the doors of rooms in which activities are taking place.

d. Children (through grades 5) will be supervised by two adults from the time they are dropped off for activities until their parent or authorized guardian picks them up or have provided other instructions.

e. When Sunday school teachers are helping children with their toileting needs, it is necessary to keep the restroom door partially open. In that way we can be sure that children are “within sight and sound.” Also, if there are female teachers, it would be best to have them go with the girls and male teachers go with the boys.

**Worker Orientation**

Workers will be given a training packet, which will include: a copy of this CMC policy, the Memo of Understanding, and information on how to identify and report abuse.

**Response Plan**

a. Any volunteer or staff member who has reason to believe that a child is a victim of child abuse or neglect, or is a victim of a sexual offense, must immediately report this belief to the pastor with whom they work most closely and to the child protective services or local law enforcement agency. This contact information is detailed in the Reporting and Response document of the training packet.

b. Once a volunteer or staff member has reported knowledge or suspicion of sexual abuse, the pastors and ***elders*** (to be addressed by CMC board) will follow through with the procedures outlined in the CMC Policy on Sexual Misconduct.

Submitted by CMC Discipling Commission