

RALEIGH MENNONITE CHURCH
Child Protection Plan

POLICY STATEMENT FOR RALEIGH MENNONITE CHURCH-SPONSORED ACTIVITIES

RALEIGH MENNONITE CHURCH (RMC) expects all staff, volunteers and ministry personnel who work with children and youth in RMC settings to share a commitment to respect personal boundaries. RMC seeks to protect everyone from harm and abuse, and to enable those in the care of RMC staff, volunteers and ministry personnel, to learn and grow without fear of exploitation.

Molestation of minors is an increasing problem facing churches today. Unfortunately, churches have unique features that make them susceptible to incidents of child molestation (trust, opportunity, access, and need).

In order to provide a safe and secure environment for the children and youth of our congregation, and in compliance with our insurance carrier, RMC is implementing a policy and procedural steps to discourage/prevent child abuse. Child abuse can be in the form of physical, emotional, sexual or ritual abuse and also includes neglect. While the primary focus of this policy is sexual abuse, our congregation wants to be an advocate for children in any instance of abuse when the health and well being of a child is at stake.

Sexual abuse is any sexual activity with a child –whether in the home by a caretaker, in a day care situation, a foster/residential setting, or in any other setting including on the street by a person known or unknown to the child. The abuser may be an adult, an adolescent, or another child, provided the child is four years older than the victim. (National Resource Center on Child Sexual Abuse, 1992)

Child sexual abuse may be violent or non-violent. All child sexual abuse is an exploitation of a child's vulnerability and powerlessness in which the abuser is fully responsible for the actions. Child sexual abuse is criminal behavior that involves children in sexual behaviors for which they are not personally, socially, and developmentally ready. Child sexual abuse includes behaviors that involve touching and non-touching aspects.

The state of North Carolina defines child abuse as a non-accidental injury or pattern of injuries to a child. Child abuse includes non-accidental:

- Physical Abuse- examples of physical abuse include, but are not limited to: beating, harmful restraint, use of a weapon or instrument, or actions that result in or could result in serious physical injury.
- Sexual Abuse- any sexual behavior imposed on a juvenile. This involves a range of activities, including fondling the genital area, masturbation, oral sex, or vaginal or anal penetration by a finger, penis, or other object. It includes exhibitionism child pornography, and suggestive behaviors or comments.
- Emotional Abuse- expressing attitudes or behaviors toward a child that create serious emotional or psychological damage.
- Neglect can be defined as any serious disregard for a juvenile's supervision, care, or discipline.

In order to provide a safe and secure environment for our children and youth and to minimize the

ministry's and workers' vulnerability to unwarranted accusation, the following procedures have been adopted by Raleigh Mennonite Church and will be enforced.

SCREENING APPLICATION PROCESS

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

1. Screening Form: Will be completed and reviewed prior to consideration for a position and an interview will be conducted by a ministry leader to make certain that the worker will be appropriate for the ministry position, based on the information provided.
2. Reference Checks: If the person appears to be appropriate for the ministry work, whether compensated or volunteer, then at least two references will be checked to confirm the information provided on the ministry screening form. In addition, further checks with civil authorities may be conducted. A written record of the contacts will be kept on file in the church office.
3. Only persons who have attended the church for six (6) months or more will be permitted to be screened and participate in a volunteer capacity with children or youth through high school. The Nurture Commission chairperson has the discretion to waive the six month requirement.
4. All new workers will be trained after screening and prior to their work with children or youth. All current workers will attend an annual training session led by the Christian Education and Nurture Commission. Training will include information about, but is not limited to, the following:
 - the nature of physical or verbal sexual abuse of children
 - the congregational policy on child sexual abuse
 - possible symptoms which can alert one to abuse
 - instructions for reporting suspected child sexual abuse
 - signing of the Child Protection Plan Covenant
5. Completion of a Criminal Records Check Authorization Form: All candidates for volunteer and employee positions who work with children or youth will be required to complete a detailed authorization and release form, authorizing the release of criminal information.
6. No one with a criminal history of abusing or neglecting children or those who receive other derogatory information in a reference check will be permitted to work with children or youth (through high school). If the criminal records check reveals other criminal convictions, RMC will use discretion in determining whether the individual's services will be utilized.
7. Individuals who identify themselves as an adult survivor of child abuse on the volunteer application are encouraged to meet with a pastor or member of the Children and Youth Nurture Commission before working with children or youth.

GUIDELINES FOR CHURCH WORKERS AND FACILITIES

1. Programs in RMC Building

All rooms utilized in RMC on Sunday mornings and during whole church events by children and youth programs will have a door with a window. Activities must take place within sight of these windows and windows must be uncovered. Any RMC children or youth program/activity must be led by at least one screened RMC adult. During children or youth meetings that meet in the building other than Sunday morning, two screened adults must be present. When working with 6th-12th grade MYF, one worker must be at least 21 years old.

2. Obtain Parental Permission

Whenever possible, RMC will obtain written consent from children's parents on a yearly basis for participation in RMC activities and one-on-one situations that occur at times other than Sunday mornings. If a child arrives at RMC without a parent, consent will be implied.

3. Provide Adequate Personnel

Raleigh Mennonite sponsored activities and programs that involve children and youth should always include adequate supervisory personnel. Supervision should be maintained before and after the event until all children are in the custody of their parents or legal guardians or until children who live in the neighborhood and walk home are off of church property. Church workers should not send children or youth outside alone to find their parents or to await transportation.

4. Use a Church Nursery and Children/Youth Program Identification Procedure

RMC personnel should clearly identify the child and the child's parent or legal guardian. If children are brought to church and the nursery by a minor (older sibling or friend because no parent is present), a form will be sent home with the older sibling or friend to get permission from the younger child's parent or guardian for them to be at church and in the care of the minor. An attempt will be made to obtain the guardian's phone number so a follow-up call can be made by RMC nursery coordinator or Sunday School coordinator.

5. Appropriate Touch

Adults should never touch a child's private parts except when necessary as when changing a diaper. Workers should avoid the appearance of impropriety such as sitting older children (age 9 or above) on their lap, kissing or embracing others, etc.

6. Discipline

Workers are never to spank, hit, grab, shake or otherwise physically discipline anyone. Report disciplinary problems to the workers' supervisor or to a parent or guardian. Workers may use gentle physical restraint where children are a danger to themselves or others.

7. Substitute Workers

A suitable person who has been screened as a volunteer by the above screening process must be used as a substitute worker.

8. Discuss Suspicious Behavior Immediately

All workers should immediately report to one of the pastoral staff any signs or behavior which seems abusive or concerns regarding inappropriate relationships between an adult and youth/child.

Symptoms of Child Abuse –what to watch for:

Physical Signs:

- Lacerations
- Nightmares
- Irritation, pain, injury to the genital area
- Difficulty with urination
- Torn or bloody underclothing
- Sexually Transmitted Disease

Behavioral signs:

- Anxiety when approaching church or other particular place
- Nervous or hostile behavior toward adults
- Sexual self-consciousness (withdrawal to touch)
- Easy to anger
- “Acting out” play of sexual behavior with other children
- Withdrawal from church activities and friends

Verbal Signs:

- I don’t like (a particular worker)

REPORTING ABUSE OR MOLESTATION

1. Any ministry leader, who becomes aware of any possible abuse or molestation of a participant, will take the following actions: Immediately notify the pastor/servant leader, and along with the pastor/servant leader immediately inform the participant’s parent or guardian of the occurrence. A Notice of Injury form will be filled out.

2. Any cases involving legal minors need to be reported to appropriate authorities. In the State of North Carolina, any abuse of a person 18 years of age and younger is reported to Child Protective Services.

3. The pastor/servant leader will promptly contact North Carolina Department of Child Protective Services to provide a written opinion as to whether RMC should report the abuse or molestation to law enforcement authorities. The written opinion should be obtained within 24 hours of when the ministry leader first becomes aware of the abuse or molestation.

4. Other agencies that could be contacted following the Department of Child Protective Services written opinion could be RMC’s insurance carrier, and the overseer of Eastern Carolina District, employed through Virginia Mennonite Conference. The overseer shall report to the chairman of the Faith & Life Commission of Virginia Mennonite Conference and the Ministry Team will contact the VMC Intervention Team and follow their guidelines.

5. The accused will be suspended from responsibilities during the investigation of alleged abuse.

6. RMC shall cooperate fully with state and legal entities for resolution and restitution.

OTHER INFORMATION

What Is Sexual Abuse?

- any demeaning/exploitative behavior of a sexual nature
- it may include threats of such behavior
- abusive sexual acts are primarily acts of power

It may include:

- unwanted sexual attention in the form of remarks, jokes or innuendo about a person's body, clothing, or sexual activity
- displaying of suggestive or pornographic material
- unnecessary physical contact such as touching, patting, pinching, or punching, and physical assault
- indirect or explicit invitations to engage in sexual activities which may include a promise of reward for complying or a threat of reprisal for not complying

Sexual abuse or harassment happens with no preference for age, race, appearance, or occupation.

Girls and boys are victims. It may involve the abuse of:

- a child in the congregation by a minister or volunteer.
- a child by an older child

WHAT SEXUAL ABUSE IS NOT

Sexual abuse does not mean showing appropriate signs of affirmation. Pangrazi and Dauer (1992) identify forms of good touch as being "social reinforcers." Good touch reinforces students' positive actions and makes them feel special and good about themselves and their accomplishments. Examples of good touch include hugging, high fives, pats on the back, shaking hands, and arms around shoulders

Pangrazi, R.P. and Dauer, V.P. *Dynamic Physical Education for Elementary School Children, Tenth Edition*. New York: Macmillan, 1992, 723 pp.

Symptoms of Child Abuse –what to watch for (repeated from earlier in this document):

Physical Signs:

- Lacerations
- Nightmares
- Irritation, pain, injury to the genital area
- Difficulty with urination
- Torn or bloody underclothing
- Sexually Transmitted Disease

Behavioral signs:

- Anxiety when approaching church or other particular place
- Nervous or hostile behavior toward adults
- Sexual self-consciousness (withdrawal to touch)
- Easy to anger
- "Acting out" play of sexual behavior with other children
- Withdrawal from church activities and friends

Verbal Signs:

- I don't like (a particular worker)

- (a particular worker) does things to me when we are alone
- I don't like to be alone with (a particular worker)
- (a particular worker) fooled around with me
- (a particular worker) makes me nervous

*Original document affirmed on November 27, 2006.
Document was revised August 30, 2010*

Parent/Guardian Consent Form

I, _____ am the parent or legal guardian of
(Name of parent or guardian)

_____ (hereinafter "my child").
(Name of minor)

And I am informed of the activities offered by Raleigh Mennonite Church, (herinafter RMC) located at 1116 N. Blount St. in the city of Raleigh, County of Wake, and State of North Carolina.

I agree to the following statements, indicated by a check mark:

___ I consent for my child to attend and participate in age-appropriate activities provided by RMC.

___ I give permission for my child to be transported in a private vehicle operated by an adult attendee (21 yrs. or older) of RMC in order to attend activities sponsored by RMC.

___ I understand that it may be occasionally necessary for my child to be in a one-on-one situation with church staff/volunteers who are their assigned mentor, small group leader, youth sponsor, youth-program volunteer from RMC and to be transported in a motor vehicle by the aforementioned mentor or small group leader.

Medical Release:

___ If my child requires treatment by a physician or hospital, while attending RMC activities or trips, please make every effort to contact me/us at the phone numbers below. If I/we cannot be reached to authorize treatment, I hereby authorize youth/children advisors of the specific RMC activity, to consent for treatment of my/our child.

Insurance Information:

Insurance Company _____

Contract/Group No. _____

Person's name insurance is listed in _____

___ I release RMC and their staff and volunteers from any and all claims for damage to persons or property sustained by or any person claiming through the named child, resulting from any accident, occurrence, or condition n or upon the premises of RMC or such other premises as may be used while participating in RMC activities.

Additional Information: (Please list allergies, medical conditions we should be aware of, and/or activities your child should be excluded from)

Signature of parent or guardian

Date

Emergency contact

Relationship to participant

RALEIGH MENNONITE CHURCH

Screening Application for Volunteers and Employees working with Children and Youth
CONFIDENTIAL (to be reviewed by members of the Children and Youth Nurture Commission and/or Pastor)

This form is being used to help Raleigh Mennonite Church provide as safe and secure an environment as possible for those children and youth who participate in our programs and use our facilities. It also serves to protect our adult volunteers. This form is to be completed by all applicants for any position (volunteer or compensated) involving the supervision or custody of minors. This is not an employment application form.

Personal

Full Name _____ Phone (day) _____ (evening) _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Are you under 18? _____

What training and/or experience do you have in working with children and/or youth? (Please list)

Organization	Type of Work	Dates	Contact Person
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

In which area of children/youth program do you intend to become involved and why?

Have you at any time ever:

- Been arrested for any reason? Yes No
- Been convicted of, or pleaded no contest to, any crime? Yes No
- Engaged in, or been accused of, any child molestation, exploitation, or abuse? Yes No

Are you aware of:

- Having any traits or tendencies that could pose any threat to children, youth, others? Yes No
- Any reason why you should not work with children, youth, or others? Yes No

If the answer to any of these questions is "yes," please explain in detail: _____

(Please attach additional pages if more space is needed)

Abuse or molestation while a minor

Some people have experienced abuse as children. If that has been your situation, we encourage you to contact the pastor or a member of the Children and Youth Nurture Commission for conversation before working with children.

Church Activity

What church or churches have you attended in the past five years? Please include your time at Raleigh Mennonite

Church name	Pastor's name	Years attended
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

References (other than family members)

Record of contact (for use by Nurture Commission rep. Notes should include rep's name, date, and pertinent comments)

Name _____

Address _____

Email Address _____

Phone _____

Relationship _____

Name _____

Address _____

Email Address _____

Phone _____

Relationship _____

Name _____

Address _____

Email Address _____

Phone _____

Relationship _____

Agreement / Covenant

The information provided above is correct to the best of my knowledge. I authorize any references or churches listed above to provide information they may have regarding my character and fitness for work with children or youth. I also authorize any further background checks to be made if deemed necessary by the pastoral staff of Raleigh Mennonite Church.

I have read the Child Protection Plan of Raleigh Mennonite Church and agree to abide by the policies set forth in that document.

Applicant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Pastor/Ministry Leader Signature: _____ Date: _____

Notice of Injury Report

Any ministry leader, who becomes aware of any possible abuse or molestation of a participant shall complete a Notice of Injury Report for each participant involved. In addition, the pastor and/or servant leader will be notified immediately, and the participant's parent or guardian will be notified immediately.

Name of reporting adult _____ Date of Report _____

Name of child _____

Record of pastor/servant leader notification: _____ (name/date of person notifying)

Record of parent/guardian notification: _____ (name/date of person notifying)

Name(s) of all children and/or adults involved in the incident:

Date of incident _____

Location where incident occurred: _____

Description of incident:

Other information: