

# Lendrum Mennonite Church

## Safe Place Policy

Revised April 2021

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# Lendrum Mennonite Church

## Safe Place Policy

### Executive Summary

#### Highlights of the commitments of Lendrum Mennonite Church (LMC)'s Safe Place Policy:

1. We commit to creating a safe, nurturing, and respectful environment for all adults, youth, and children who participate in the congregational life of LMC. One expression of this commitment is the development and administration of our Safe Place Policy.
2. We commit to overseeing and implementing this Safe Place Policy in an on-going, up-to-date manner, through clear administrative processes and policy application.
3. We commit to facilitating safe and respectful programming for our children and youth through comprehensive screening and training of volunteers, and by providing effective supervision and appropriate care at all times.
4. We commit to nurturing safe and respectful relationships between adults in our congregation through the practice of healthy boundaries and transparent interactions.
5. We commit to creating and continually improving our facility and our equipment so that it supports safe, accessible, and respectful interactions for congregants of all ages and abilities.
6. We commit to responding to allegations, disclosures, and concerns in a timely and respectful manner. We commit to holding community members, adherents, and staff accountable for their behaviour, and restoring right relationships whenever possible.
7. We commit to raising awareness and educating our entire community about our standards of conduct and our church's policies and procedures so that Lendrum Mennonite Church is a safe and respectful community for all.

# Lendrum Mennonite Church

## Safe Place Policy

### Section 1: Policy Statement

#### Policy Rationale and Background

It is the commitment of LMC to provide a safe, nurturing, and respectful environment in which all adults, youth, and children may worship and grow in love and faith. The original policy was approved by LMC in 1999, revised in 2013, and expanded and revised in 2020.

The following procedures are intended to meet LMC's legal obligations under the laws of Canada and the Province of Alberta and to uphold a moral and ethical standard of behaviour that fits our beliefs as a Christian community. It is our desire to protect all people who participate in the congregational life of LMC from all forms of abuse and misconduct.

#### Scriptural Basis

There are many biblical passages that encourage respectful behaviours between people. The teaching found in 1 Corinthians 12-13 emphasizes the importance of recognizing the diversity of the body of Christ and the necessity of treating all members with love, honour, and respect. The Safe Place Policy at LMC is grounded in the scriptural teaching that every person is created in the image of God, every person has gifts to contribute to the building up of the community, and every person should strive to live out the love of Christ in every circumstance.

#### Cultural Basis

Building Christian community is relational work. Sometimes, this can create situations where power imbalances or personal vulnerabilities have the potential to create unsafe spaces. The Safe Place Policy serves as a reference and a guide for those engaging in the ministry of the church by identifying healthy, respectful ways of engaging, by setting out appropriate screening and training procedures, and by outlining processes for bringing forward allegations, disclosures, and concerns for the health of the community.

#### Definitions

**Abuse:** characterized by themes of power and control; any action, conduct, threat or gesture by one individual toward another that could reasonably cause physical or psychological harm, injury or illness. Abuse may include: sexual, physical, emotional, psychological, financial and/or spiritual abuse or neglect of a person.

**Allegation:** is an accusation or claim of wrongdoing, misconduct or abuse

**Bullying:** an act of force, coercion, threat or domination, where there is an imbalance of physical or social power

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**Caregiver:** The parent, grandparent, guardian, or responsible adult who brought a child or youth to the church program

**Children/minor/youth:** any individual under the age of 18 is considered a minor by Alberta law.

**Concern:** a situation where an individual may observe or experience circumstances that are unsettling or may be overt or covert examples of boundary-crossing

**Disclosure:** the process of making facts or information about abuse or harm known.

**Discrimination:** any act, omission or threat to an individual's basic human rights that adversely affects the individual's well-being and causes humiliation or intimidation.

**Emotional/Psychological Abuse:** conduct, comments or actions that impact an individual's sense of worth and safety. Examples include: threat of harm, abandonment, humiliation, isolation.

**Financial Abuse:** when in a position of power, using influence or control over an individual's money or property, it may be without permission, in a fraudulent manner, or with coercion or boundary-crossing.

**Harassment:** an inappropriate conduct, comment, display, action or gesture infringing on an individual's basic human rights. It may be repeated, or a single occurrence that has a lasting harmful effect.

**Misconduct:** conduct, comments or action that are unacceptable, improper or offensive. May not reach the legal standard of a criminal offense.

**Pastoral Sexual Misconduct:** A sexual or romantic contact which occurs concurrently with the pastor-congregant relationship. When a pastoral relationship turns into a romantic relationship, especially if spiritual counseling has been involved, there is generally a power imbalance between the parties that suggests that meaningful consent is unlikely.<sup>1</sup> This means that these types of relationships are not condoned or permitted because the victim is unable to give true consent as a result of their position within the relationship.

**Physical Abuse:** any intentional action or physical behavior that causes injury, trauma, suffering or bodily harm. Physical discipline or punishment is not permitted at LMC.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.faithtrustinstitute.org/> (follow "About the Issues" hyperlink; then follow "Clergy Ethics & Sexual Abuse by Clergy" hyperlink; then follow "Q&A" hyperlink).

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**Power dynamics/ unequal power:** the inequality inherent in a relationship between two individuals where one is in a position of power, trust, authority or leadership, and the other in a position of vulnerability. Abuse in this context is the misuse of power and/or breach of trust and fiduciary responsibility by the person with the greater power.

**Sexual Harassment/abuse:** conduct, comment, display, action, gestures or contact of a sexual nature that causes offence or humiliation, whether consensual or not.

**Spiritual/Religious Abuse:** emotional and psychological harm inflicted on an individual characterized by a systematic pattern of coercive and controlling behavior using the teaching of the religion and may be justified for spiritual reasons.

**Vulnerable person:** an individual who may be at a greater risk of harm or abuse for reasons including but not limited to: age, cognition, mental status, ability

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### Section 2: Safe Place Coordination Team and Screening Procedures

#### Safe Place Coordination Team: Composition and Procedures

**1. The Safe Place Coordination Team (SPC Team) is a group of individuals responsible for administrating and implementing the Safe Place Policy on behalf of LMC.**

- a) **Composition** – The SPC Team will consist of no less than three and no more than five people:
- a) a representative/ coordinator of the Children or Youth programming,
  - b) a representative from the Discipleship Commission,
  - c) a representative from the Caring Commission, and
  - d) a representative of the congregation at large appointed by the Board.
  - e) A Pastor in an advisory capacity.

The team will have gender and age balance (i.e., at least one woman and one man, and at least one younger-aged person and one older-aged person). The representatives appointed by the Board will be selected based on this need for gender and age balance. The composition of the team will be approved by the Board and the names of those serving on this team will be shared with the congregation.

- b) **Term** – These individuals are asked to commit to an extended period of team (at least 3 years) in order to protect confidentiality and maintain continuity of records.

**2. The SPC Team has three Primary Areas of Responsibility**

- a) **Administration** – The SPC Team will update the Safe Place Policy on a regular basis (every 3 years) and will implement necessary screening and procedures (police checks, reference checks, etc.) for volunteers and paid staff.
- b) **Training & Education** – The SPC Team will provide appropriate training for volunteers and will educate the congregation at large about the policy.
- c) **Response** – The SPC Team will be the first point of contact for receiving and responding to allegations, disclosures, and concerns. The SPC Team will have training to determine the appropriate level of confidentiality, type of response, and particular process as outlined in Section 6.

**3. Additional Areas of Responsibility**

- a) **Check Nominations for Elected Positions** – A list of all volunteers being put forward for the annual nominations slate should be provided to the SPC Team before going to the congregation in the event a confidential matter impacts an individual's ability to stand for nomination. The SPC Team will inform the Nominations Committee if there are any concerns with those on the nominations list.

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- b) **Other** – The SPC Team may take on additional responsibilities in consultation with the Board and the congregation.

### **Recruitment, Screening, and Administrative Procedures**

1. The SPC Team will work together with ministry team leaders to recruit, screen, train, and follow-up with all congregational members and adherents working with children, youth, or vulnerable adults (such as Sunday School teachers, those doing home visitations, etc.).

This process includes:

- a) **Adherence to a six-month waiting period** – The volunteer will have regularly attended the congregation for 6 months prior to being considered for service in a position of trust with children, youth, or vulnerable adults.
- b) **Completion of a Ministry Information Form** – Each volunteer will complete a form which will be kept on file in the church office and updated as needed. A ministry team leader or SPC Team member will have a conversation with the volunteer about themselves and their reason for volunteering upon completion of the form.
- c) **Criminal Record Check (CRC)** – A Criminal Records Check including a vulnerable sector search will be run every 3 years for all volunteers over the age of 16. They will be kept on file in the church office. The cost incurred (if any) for CRC's requested by LMC will be borne by the church.

**If there is no criminal record of any sort, the volunteer may be considered for ongoing service in the church.**

**If there is a record or information that raises some concern, the SPC Team and the volunteer will discuss the matter.** If the offense is other than child or sexual abuse, the volunteer may proceed with ministry in the church, provided the SPC Team is in agreement.

The following are criteria to consider when evaluating the information:

- The number and type of convictions
- The age and circumstances of the offender at the time of the offense.
- The length of time between past criminal activity and the present
- The conduct and circumstances of the individual since the offense
- The likelihood of the individual repeating the offense.

**If the offense is related to abuse of children or of a sexual nature, the volunteer may not be involved in ministry with children, youth or vulnerable adults on behalf of LMC.**

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- SPC Team confidentially communicates to the individual that they are not eligible for the volunteer position, and without disclosing specific reasons, informs the ministry team lead of this decision.
- d) **Training** – (see section 7)
- e) **Follow-up** – Ministry leaders should thoroughly review these policies and procedures as part of their pre-fall program planning. Attention should be given to follow-up at the 6-month marker:
- Has screening and training been completed?
  - Are policies and guidelines being implemented?
  - Are there any challenges that require attention?
2. The SPC Team will work with the church office in the administration of the documents required for recruitment, screening, and training.

This administration includes:

- a) Maintenance of **confidential** records of all volunteers who have completed the screening process. These files are accessible by members of the SPC Team and pastoral staff. These files must be kept for a minimum of 7 years from the last date of volunteering.
- b) Maintenance of a master list of individuals who have completed the screening and training process.
- c) Production of an annual list of congregational volunteers serving with children, youth, vulnerable adults.

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### Section 3: Children and Youth Programs

#### Records

A registration form for all children and youth under 18 who participate in LMC ministries will be kept in a binder in the church office. This form shall include the names, phone number and addresses of parents, emergency contact information, allergies, consents, etc.

#### Health & Safety Guidelines

1. ***Sick Children and Youth*** – A child or youth who is ill and could therefore expose others to illness, should not be received into ministry programming at LMC. Any child or youth with a known communicable disease will be asked to remain absent from LMC ministry programming until symptoms resolve. If a child or youth becomes ill during ministry program, their caregiver will be contacted immediately.
2. ***Medications*** – Staff and ministry leaders at LMC are not to give or apply any medication. If a child or youth needs medicating, the caregiver must give it. No medication will be left in the classroom or with a ministry volunteer. In specific cases (i.e. peanut allergies, ventilators, etc.) arrangements should be made with written instructions and the permission of the child's or youth's parent.
3. ***Basic First Aid*** – A well-stocked First Aid Kit will be kept in the Nursery, Sunday School Area, and Youth Room. In the event of minor injuries, a ministry volunteer will assist an injured child or youth and provide a clear explanation to caregivers at the time of pick up.
4. ***Emergencies*** – If a child or youth sustains a severe injury during ministry programming, the ministry volunteer in charge will contact 911 and then call the caregivers. An incident report will be prepared to be kept on record.

#### Nursery/Preschool Ministry Procedures

1. ***Two Volunteer Rule*** – For all nursery/preschool ministry programming, at least two adult volunteers must be present at all times.
2. ***Drop-off and Pick-up*** – Nursery aged/preschool children are never to be dropped off in the nursery or classroom without a ministry volunteer present. If only one ministry volunteer is present, the door to the room must be left open until the second volunteer arrives. Ministry volunteers must release children directly to their designated caregiver at the end of the program time.
3. ***Attendance*** – All nursery/preschool children must be signed in at the time of drop-off. Ministry volunteers must also sign in and record their names on the attendance sheet. This attendance sheet must be kept on file permanently and should be turned into the church office in December and again in June.

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4. **Diaper Changing** – If at all possible, it is strongly encouraged that diaper changing is done by the child’s caregiver. If this is not possible, diaper changing must always take place in clear view of another nursery/preschool volunteer.
5. **Washroom Guidelines** – Nursery/preschool children must not be sent to the washroom unaccompanied. When preschool children need assistance in the washroom, an adult may enter the washroom cubicle to assist only when a second adult is within visual contact. If this is not possible, inform another adult when taking a child to the washroom and when returning. Refrain from closing outer doors or cubicle doors to maintain sight-lines.

#### **Elementary Children’s Ministry Procedures**

1. **Two Volunteer Rule** – For all elementary children’s ministry programming, at least two adult volunteers must be present at all times. In the event older elementary programming has only one adult volunteer, additional adult(s) must be in close proximity and the door to the classroom or activity space must remain open at all times.
2. **Drop-off and Pick-up** – Elementary children are never to be dropped off in classrooms or for activities without a ministry volunteer present. If only one ministry volunteer is present, the door to the room must be left open until the second volunteer arrives. Ministry volunteers must keep younger elementary children in the classroom or designated activity space until their caregiver comes to pick them up. Older elementary children may be released to find their parents if this is deemed safe and appropriate by the volunteer and the caregiver.
3. **Attendance** – Attendance must be taken of all elementary children at the time of drop-off. Ministry volunteers must also sign in and record their names on the attendance sheet. This attendance sheet must be kept on file permanently and should be turned into the church office at the end of December and again at the end of June.
4. **Washroom Guidelines** – Elementary children should not be sent to the washroom alone, but should be accompanied by a ministry volunteer or a buddy. Ministry volunteers must not enter closed spaces, but prop the outer door open and supervise to ensure everything is in order.

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### Youth Ministry Procedures

1. **Two Volunteer Rule** – For all youth ministry programming, LMC adheres to a two-volunteer rule at all times. In the event youth programming has only one adult volunteer, additional adult(s) must be in close proximity and the door to the classroom or activity space must remain open at all times.
2. **Attendance** – Attendance must be taken of all youth at the time of drop-off. Ministry volunteers must also sign in and record their names on the attendance sheet. This attendance sheet must be kept on file permanently and should be turned into the church office at the end of December and again at the end of June.
3. **Special event and overnight** – All special or overnight activities conducted away from church property should be pre-approved by the Chair of the Discipleship Commission and the Pastor Advisory on the SPC Team. Parents should be notified at least one week prior to the outing and any relevant paperwork completed and collected in advance of the activity. All trips and outings must be supervised by a minimum of two approved leaders. For mixed gender groups of youth, it is suggested there be at least two adult supervising volunteers; one man and one woman.
4. **Personal Relationships between Leaders and Youth** – Relationships of a romantic or sexual nature between leaders and youth are prohibited. If both parties desire to pursue such a relationship, the leader shall resign from their position and the relationship be disclosed to the SPC Team.
5. **Transportation** – Youth shall not be alone in a vehicle with a leader, unless they are related, such as a parent and child. If a leader is providing transportation to youth, there should be at least three people in the vehicle.

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### Section 4: Adult Programs

#### **Adult Ministry**

LMC is committed to providing a safe environment in which the dignity of each individual is respected, one that is free of inappropriate behavior, free of discrimination, harassment and all forms of abuse. All pastors, administrators, board members, volunteers, and congregants are expected to act in a manner that creates this type of safe environment.

#### **Pastors/Paid Staff/Leaders with Congregants**

It is the responsibility of pastors, paid staff and others in positions of leadership to be aware of potential power imbalances in relationships and to maintain healthy professional boundaries with members of the congregation, including both children and adults. See the Definitions Section of this Policy for clarification of these terms. In addition, pastoral staff will adhere to the ethical code of conduct of the church conference, particularly related to counselling relationships.

Basic principles of conduct include:

1. Meetings, conversations or pastoral care sessions will be conducted in appropriate settings, such as a public or visible space, or in a room with sound privacy but visibility from within the building.
2. Pastors, paid staff, and church leaders will maintain professional relationships with congregants, and refrain from becoming involved in personal, intimate or dependent relationships, inappropriate physical contact, or inappropriate interactions on social media.
3. Pastors, paid staff, and church leaders will not engage in physical, psychological, racist, written, or verbal harassment of staff, volunteers, or congregants, and will not tolerate such harassment by other church staff or volunteers.
4. Pastors, paid staff, and church leaders should avoid situations that might present a conflict of interest. Even the appearance of a conflict of interest can call integrity and professional conduct into question.
5. Pastors, paid staff, and church leaders have a duty to report their own ethical or professional misconduct and the misconduct of others.

LMC commits to supporting pastors, paid staff, and church leaders to maintain these ethical and professional standards through such measures as: clear job descriptions and church policies, regular performance evaluations, ensuring that workload and stress levels are manageable, guaranteeing paid and unpaid breaks from work as necessary, and financially supporting educational leaves and professional development.

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Given the particular role of the pastor within the community, each pastor will have a pastoral support team consisting of several congregants and at least one person from outside the LMC community who provide confidential feedback, support, and guidance as needed.

In addition, pastors will receive training in establishing and maintaining healthy boundaries, as a method of self-care and community care. The training will be founded on a theological and ethical discussion of power and vulnerability, and be provided through an organization approved by the SPC Team, such as the Faith Trust Institute. The SPC Team will review the ethical standards and code of professional conduct annually with the pastors.

(<https://www.faithtrustinstitute.org/healthy-boundaries>).

### **Vulnerable Adults**

A vulnerable adult is an adult aged 18 or over who, may require additional protections or support because of ability, age, or cognition, or may be unable to care for or protect themselves against harm or exploitation. These individuals may be at risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation.

LMC commits to treating vulnerable adults with dignity and respect, being sensitive to their unique characteristics, needs and abilities, presuming mental capacity and autonomy in participating in decision making.

### **Congregant to congregant**

LMC strives to foster an environment of respect for everyone, and expects that congregants treat each other, as well as pastors and staff members, appropriately. It is expected that peer interactions are free of discrimination, harassment, and all types of abuse. This includes, but is not limited to: unwanted comments about a person's physical appearance; unwanted touching; disregard for observing personal space; and, aggressive, disrespectful or degrading comments. LMC also denounces domestic violence in relationships and seeks to be a community that addresses unsafe living conditions within and beyond our congregational life.

Congregants who observe disrespectful or harmful behavior may call that individual to account or seek help in addressing the situation. If individuals witness or experience abuse, misconduct or concerns, they may report it by following the Procedures for Dealing with an Allegation, Disclosure or Concern, knowing that it will be dealt with in a sensitive and confidential manner.

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### **Guidelines for Visitation and Transportation**

The following guidelines are designed for three specific groups: pastoral staff, office staff, and Caring Commission members. These guidelines cover interactions with congregational members, congregational adherents, and other individuals connected to Lendrum Mennonite Church. At present, there are no specific guidelines for pastoral staff (or office staff and Caring Commission members) in our Safe Place policy. The guidelines below are provided for the pastoral staff, office staff, and Caring Commission members as appropriate:

1. The pastoral staff and Caring Commission members should have discretion and autonomy as to when and where visitation of congregants occurs;
2. If visitation is requested to be in a home, the pastoral staff or Caring Commission members may seek a companion; for example, a pastoral staff person could request someone from the Caring Commission to accompany them on such visitation. The pastoral staff and Caring Commission members are free to decline a home visit or suggest an alternate location;
3. If visitation of any individual(s) becomes awkward or uncomfortable, the pastoral staff or Caring Commission member involved should discuss this matter with the moderator, and/or Caring Commission chair; and
4. All pastoral staff or Caring Commission members should not participate in visitation that they deem unsafe psychologically or physically or may lead to problematic consequences for them.
5. With regards to the matter of office and/or pastoral staff and/or Caring Commission members providing rides to congregants, they are under no obligation to provide such rides. If they choose to provide rides to congregants, the guidelines in items two through four above would apply—simply by substituting “visitation” for “providing rides for a congregant(s)” and making any grammatical changes necessary.

*[Visitation and Transportation Section originally approved by the LMC Board, October 16, 2019]*

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### Section 5: Equipment and Facilities Requirements

LMC commits to ensuring that the design of our facility provides a safe space for all those participating in activities in the building. The organization of our church space is designed to reduce the risk of interpersonal abuse or misconduct, and heighten the safety of all.

#### **High Visibility**

The best preventative measure is to have highly visible spaces, with few, if any, spaces which are closed off or hidden. Sight lines through internal windows should remain unobstructed at all times. Moveable walls will remain open unless more than two adults are present in a section.

To this end, the church building has features such as:

- Windows from the hallways into the nurseries and library
- Windows in or beside the doors of various offices and classrooms, including the pastors' offices
- An open concept children's program area

When renovations or new construction occurs, design elements that can enhance safety will be included such as glass doors or windows between rooms.

#### **Health & Safety Procedures**

Training in emergency response to critical health incidents, such as use of the defibrillator located in the foyer, and evacuation of the building in case of emergency, is undertaken by the Ushering group. These procedures are reviewed annually, and updated when necessary. The Ushers also ensure that the defibrillator and emergency first aid kits are complete and in working order.

Safety procedures directly related to the building (fire, power outages, natural disasters, etc.) are included elsewhere in the church policy. These are overseen by the Facilities Commission. The Ushers are responsible for evacuation plans and practice with congregants.

#### **Accessibility**

Program design and identification of ways to enhance accessibility for all who participate in activities at LMC are the purview of all ministry areas of our church and should be evaluated and assessed on an ongoing basis. Structural design related to accessibility of the space should be referred to the Facilities Commission. Hallways, entrances, and the access to the elevator should be kept clear for easy access of those using walkers, wheelchairs, or other mobility aids

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#### **Personal Information & Photographs**

Procedures related to the collection and the protection of personal information are overseen by the Church Office in coordination with the LMC Board. This includes the sharing or publication of contact information or photography posted online or in any congregational setting. Permissions will be sought through release forms that are kept on file in the Church Office or direct contact with individuals before sharing personal information.

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### Section 6: Procedures for Addressing an Allegation, Disclosure or Concern

#### Identifying Abusive Situations or Raising Concerns

1. Those who work in settings with vulnerable persons and children will be trained to identify indicators of possible abuse.
2. Concerns that are not obvious abuse but raise discomfort or may potentially be problematic, can be raised confidentially with members of the SPC Team.
3. Ways to report an allegation or concern will be clearly identified within all church programs and policies. These include:
  - a) A written or verbal report to the Safe Place Coordination Team or a member of the team. Eventually, written documentation is required.
  - b) A written or verbal report to an external third party designated by the church to receive reports, such as Cross Roads Counselling, <https://intoaccount.org/>.

#### Process and Procedures

1. When an allegation, disclosure or concern is expressed (written or verbal), a preliminary inquiry will be undertaken in a timely manner by the SPC Team by speaking to all relevant parties to determine:
  - a) Whether the alleged victim is a child or an adult
  - b) Whether the alleged offender is a church leader (paid staff or appointed volunteer)
  - c) Whether there is reasonable cause to suspect that misconduct or abuse has occurredFollowing this initial gathering of information, the SPC Team will:
  - d) Inform the Board, if necessary
  - e) Consult legal counsel, if necessary
  - f) Consult LMC's insurance broker, if necessary
2. Based on the information gathered during the preliminary inquiry, a decision will be made about the next steps. These could include one of the following or other steps as deemed appropriate:
  - a) Reporting the situation to the appropriate authorities if there is a potential criminal offense and/or if a minor is involved. LMC will cooperate with legal authorities in these investigations as necessary.
  - b) A full external investigation conducted by the appropriate body identified by the SPC Team, such as the church conference or MCC Abuse Prevention Team.
  - c) A confidential meeting with the parties involved to clarify expected behaviour facilitated by the SPC Team or an external consultant, if needed.

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3. Once a course of action has been determined, the SPC Team will be responsible to implement it and provide follow-up as needed. The SPC Team will also be responsible for the associated communications, follow-up care, and record-keeping as outlined below.

### **Communications**

Communications of situations will be as transparent as possible with the congregation and public, while balancing the right to confidentiality as needed.

1. The SPC Team will share information with the congregation in coordination with the Church Board as needed.
2. Legal counsel and other specialist expertise will be sought to prepare any public or press statements as necessary.

### **Follow-up Care**

1. A primary focus of the SPC Team will be to ensure that those who have experienced abuse or misconduct will receive the pastoral and emotional care needed or requested, as well as any other types of social and health supports. This may be through the pastors within LMC or through outside specialists. The congregation will walk alongside and support the person in informal and formal ways, as possible. The family of the person who has experienced abuse or misconduct will also be supported.
2. Professional counselling for those who have perpetrated abuse or conducted misconduct will be provided as necessary or accepted.
3. The congregation can also experience secondary trauma from an allegation of abuse or misconduct within the church. The SPC Team will endeavor to provide guidance and support to the congregation in the sometimes long and difficult process of overcoming this experience.

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### Records

1. **Records** – All information received and efforts to respond will be documented.
2. **Confidentiality** – Any information received and all records shall be kept confidential. This means that only those who need to know will have access to these records and only to the records for the case in question. Those with a need to know may include, for example, the SPC Team, those filling positions that deal with vulnerable peoples and children, legal counsel, or authorities.

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### Section 7: Awareness and Education

#### **Education & Awareness**

LMC takes abuse prevention and the development of a safe and respectful community culture seriously. All congregants will be informed of and have access to the policies to help create awareness and accountability. Part of the awareness will include regular conversations, information and opportunities for engagement in the policies and themes of abuse. These may include some of the following components: bulletin inserts, congregational emails, keynote Sunday morning sermon, poster, presentation, or a Sunday School class series for children, youth or adults.

LMC Safe Place policies will be publicly posted on our website and in printed posters and pamphlets in our physical building. Contact information for the SPC Team will be up-to-date and easy to find.

#### **Resources Available**

For the most up-to-date resources, please see the MCC Abuse Response and Prevention website at: <https://abuseresponseandprevention.ca/> or the G.R.A.C.E. website (Godly Response to Abuse in the Christian Environment) <https://www.netgrace.org/resources>