

ALEXANDERWOHL MENNONITE CHURCH

SAFE CHURCH POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR ABUSE PREVENTION & RESPONSE

PURPOSE STATEMENT

The Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church is committed to providing an environment that is safe and healthy for persons of all ages to learn about and experience God's love. We seek to have an environment of hospitality for all persons that is free of abuse and teaches and encourages respect, value and worth in Christ.

This policy will serve as our guide for being proactive in preventing abuse and addressing abuse, if it occurs, in an open and transparent way that brings healing and hope. We commit to learning together how all members, staff and volunteers can care for and protect each other—especially our children, youth and vulnerable adults.

All members, staff and volunteers who are entrusted with the care of children, youth and vulnerable adults shall abide by the guidelines in this policy.

DEFINITIONS

1. Physical Abuse: Any non-accidental physical injury causing substantial risk of impairment of physical well-being or physical harm inflicted or allowed to be inflicted upon a person by another person.
2. Emotional Abuse: A pattern of verbal, unspoken messages (such as gestures), or written language insinuating another person is worthless, bad, unloved or undeserving of love or care. This may include disparaging and derogatory terms.
3. Sexual Abuse: Abuse in which a person of less maturity or power is tricked, coerced or bribed into sexual contact. The imbalance of power between the victim and perpetrator is critical in the determination of abuse. The power imbalance may result from the perpetrator's greater age, size, position, experience or authority or may be peer-to-peer. Examples of sexual abuse include but are not limited to unwanted touch or verbal sexual advances, fondling, intercourse, incest, the sexual exploitation of the victim and exposure to pornography or prostitution. This includes the use of social media or messaging platforms.
4. Spiritual Abuse: Spiritual abuse is a form of psychological and emotional abuse that occurs within a religious or spiritual context. It involves using spiritual beliefs, practices, or authority to manipulate, control, or harm others. This can happen in personal relationships, religious institutions, or faith communities.
5. Vulnerable Adult: Any person aged 18 or over who is, or may be, unable to take care of him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.

6. Alleged Offender/Offender: A person who causes or has been accused of causing physical, emotional, sexual or spiritual harm to another person, including but not limited to a legal conviction.

POLICY FOR THE PREVENTION OF ABUSE

1. No form of abuse will be tolerated.
2. Any persons who have been convicted of a misdemeanor or felony in regard to verbal, physical, sexual or psychological abuse will not be eligible to work with, or have contact with, children or youth or vulnerable adults. This includes the following convictions but is not limited to: rape, indecent liberties, unlawful voluntary sexual relations, indecent solicitation, aggravated indecent solicitation, electronic solicitation, sexual exploitation of a child, unlawful sexual relations, lewd and lascivious behavior, internet trading in child pornography, endangering a child, aggravated endangering a child, abuse of a child, contributing to a child's misconduct, incest, aggravated incest, abandonment of a child, aggravated abandonment of a child, unlawful transmission of a visual depiction of a child, promoting travel for child exploitation, or similar crimes from this jurisdiction or other jurisdictions.
3. Other convictions impacting the safety of children, youth or vulnerable adults will also be considered depending on the volunteer's role. For example, if convicted of Driving Under the Influence (DUI) or Driving while Intoxicated (DWI) within the past 5 years prior to a church event, the person will not be allowed to drive passengers for a church-related event.
4. Persons who have been accused of such incidents, as listed in #2 above, will not be permitted to work with, or have contact with, children and youth during an investigation. If the individual is exonerated, consideration will then be given to the individual's continuing work with children or youth by the Response Team (if applicable), Safe Church Committee and the Board of Deacons.
5. All persons working with children, youth or vulnerable adults will be required to complete a background check before beginning their role. (*See Appendix B for background check process.*) In addition, pastors and hired staff will be asked to complete a background check (if one for pastors is not already on file with MC USA).
6. Refusal to complete a background check will be a reason to deny or discontinue an assignment.
7. Failure to pass a background check will be a reason to deny or discontinue an assignment. Decisions will be made by the Safe Church Committee, in consultation with the Board of Deacons.
8. The background check process will be repeated every five years. If a person stops in their role and then starts again, we will not require another background check before the five-year repeat unless they have left the state or regularly attended another church.
9. All persons who work with children, youth or vulnerable adults are required to complete training on safety and abuse prevention including information on:
 - Recognizing signs and symptoms of abuse;
 - Responding to a report of abuse;

- Procedures for reporting abuse;
 - Behavioral expectations for volunteers, staff and leaders in child and youth programs; and
 - Location and use of first aid and safety equipment.
- 10. Volunteer training will occur on an annual basis. The Safe Church Committee will be responsible for planning the training in consultation with the Board of Education.
- 11. Each year, volunteers will be asked to read the Safe Church Policy and sign a covenant to abide by the policy. *(See Appendix A: Safe Church Participation Covenant for All Volunteers.)*
- 12. Any person refusing to sign the covenant will not be allowed to work with our children and youth.
- 13. Persons new to the Alexanderwohl faith community will have a waiting period of at least six months before being considered for teaching/working with children or youth.
- 14. For community events with adult volunteers outside of Alexanderwohl and Tabor Mennonite Church, volunteers will be required to do the following before receiving approval to work with our children, youth and vulnerable adults:
 - Provide one reference from their church leadership or a community reference for review by the Safe Church Committee (no friend or familial references accepted).
 - Pass a background check through Alexanderwohl's process.
 - Complete an interview. *(See Appendix C for interview questions)*
 - Complete training by our Safe Church Committee and sign the required covenant.

Note: Tabor Church approved volunteers are accepted because their safe church training process meets Alexanderwohl standards.
- 15. Children and youth will receive annual education on personal safety and abuse prevention. The Safe Church Committee will be responsible for planning this education in consultation with the Board of Education.
- 16. The Safe Church Committee will ensure that all documents related to training, covenants, references, background checks and parent/guardian permission forms will be stored in a confidential, locked location in the church office. Incident reports of suspected abuse and Response Team documents will also be retained in this locked location. Access to these documents will be limited to the pastors and the Safe Church Committee.
- 17. The Safe Church Committee will monitor public sexual offender registries on a regular basis.
- 18. Individuals seeking information related to Safe Church documents or questions must contact a member of the Safe Church Committee (not the church office).

Policy for Pastors

1. MC USA requires pastors to go through an extensive vetting (including a background check) as part of the initial credentialing process and when transitioning from one church position to another.
2. Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church is committed to selecting pastors who are eligible for credentialing by the Western District Conference within MC USA.

3. Western District Conference requires pastors with active credentials to complete periodic training included, but not limited to, updated education on the denominational and local church policy, issues relating to recognizing and responding to abuse, healthy boundary training, and reporting procedures and protocols. Denominational and conference staff work together to determine the timing and content of such training.
4. Alexanderwohl pastors are also required to follow the same protocol for safe church training as other volunteers and hired staff within the congregation, including the annual covenant to abide by this policy.

FACILITY SAFETY

1. All classroom doors on our church campus will have windows. If a classroom door does not have a window, then the door will be kept open.
2. Pastoral and employee offices will also have windows in the doors.
3. A first aid kit is available in the following locations: Church office, Sunday School Office, nursery, kitchen, Shelter House and Youth House. A list of church members who are medical personnel or have CPR training will also be kept in the Sunday School office.
4. A printed emergency guidance response plan is provided in each classroom as well as additional spaces throughout the church campus. This packet includes emergency guidance plans, facility emergency maps, church contact information, student rosters, and student/family contact information.
5. An AED (automated external defibrillator) is available in the south lobby by the restrooms for use in emergency medical situations.
6. Guidelines are posted in all restrooms & nurseries for diapering/toileting.

GUIDELINES FOR RISK MANAGEMENT WITH VOLUNTEERS/TEACHERS/MENTORS

1. Appropriate Interpersonal Boundaries: Adult leaders of children and youth shall set good examples of appropriate ways to relate to each other. These include respect and nurturing behaviors that do not interfere with another's privacy. Appropriate touch with children and youth always involves giving the child or youth a choice. These guidelines also apply to interactions between adults.
2. Two Adult Rule: There will be at least two adults present during any church activity involving children and youth, except in the case of:
 - An emergency when only one adult is present, a designated adult will do "spot checks" of the activity to ensure that the activity is observable and interruptible.
 - In the Mentor Program, as its one-to-one nature constitutes a unique exception to this guideline.
 - The nursery during worship services, where one approved adult volunteer and one approved minor volunteer may serve.
3. Age Requirements: Adults ages 24 and over may work with persons of all ages. Persons under the age of 18 who work with children must do so with adult supervision. Young adults ages 18-23 may work with children 5th grade and younger; when working with

youth 6th-12th grades, they must be supervised by an adult and not given the sole responsibility for any group.

4. All persons ages 18 and older must complete annual Safe Church training to be approved. Junior high and high school age volunteers working with children will be approved by participating in an annual modified training provided by the Safe Church Committee.
5. Use of a Church Nursery Identification Procedure: Nursery workers shall clearly identify the child and the child's parent or legal guardian. Children will only be released to a properly identified and pre-authorized adult.
6. Guidelines for Church/Youth Programs and Activities:
 - Children and youth will have written parent/guardian permission for participation in church-sponsored programs and activities. (*See Appendix H: Alexanderwohl Children & Youth Ministry Registration and Medical/Liability Release Form.*)
 - In the mentoring program, an annual signed parent/guardian consent form will be signed and a copy given to the mentor coordinator and mentor. (*See Appendix G: Parent/Guardian Consent form for Mentoring Relationship.*)
 - Interactions between an adult and minor should be interruptible and observable, not isolated.
 - No adult should spend time with a minor in an unsupervised one-on-one situation. The exception is between mentor and mentee with prior parental/guardian permission (*Appendix G*).
 - No adult shall transport a minor in a vehicle alone on a church-sanctioned trip. The exception is the Mentor Program with prior parental/guardian permission (*Appendix G*).
 - Parents/guardians should always be informed prior to mentor/mentee activities and transportation.
 - Mentors are encouraged to meet with their mentee in public places.
 - The Mentor Program Coordinator will provide new mentors, mentees and parents/guardians with guidelines for developing their relationship in healthy ways.
7. Youth Conversation in the Youth House or Shelter House: Pastors, youth sponsors and teachers will meet with youth in these locations only when a second adult is present in the building.
8. Overnight Youth Activities: The church-authorized chaperone(s):
 - Will strive to always keep youth in a safe environment.
 - Will monitor situations to preserve the youth's integrity and safety.
 - Will inform parents/guardians about the itinerary and activities of the trip and will secure permission for the youth/children to participate (electronic copies of permission forms to be kept in the church office).
 - Youth & parents/guardians will sign a covenant of expectation.
 - Adult chaperones may stay in the same room as mixed or same gender groups of youth, dependent upon lodging accommodations. The preferred ratio would be at least 1 adult to 3 youths in a lodging situation. Under no circumstances will there be a 1:1 adult/youth lodging arrangement or shared bed space. Youth of the same

- gender may share bed space with each other provided they are comfortable doing so and parents/guardians have given written permission.
9. Diapering/Toileting: Parents should encourage children to use the bathroom prior to attending class or a church event. When diapering or toileting, a parent/guardian will be contacted to assist their child. If this is not possible, younger children will be escorted to the restrooms by an adult. Children will be encouraged to be as independent as possible. If a child needs assistance, the adult may help while ensuring that all their actions are observable and interruptible by other adults.
 10. Discipline Guidelines: The general policy for Christian education at Alexanderwohl is to maintain a positive, friendly learning atmosphere.
 - Discipline is meant to guide and educate. Physical discipline is never appropriate.
 - Treat children in polite and respectful ways.
 - Clearly state your expectations; don't assume children know what is expected
 - Focus on positive behavior. Acknowledge what the children are doing well.
 - Give choices whenever possible.
 - Understand your own triggers. These are behaviors a child displays that may especially frustrate you. Recognizing how your "buttons" might be triggered enables you to respond constructively when interacting with the child.
 11. Trauma-Informed Classroom Practices: All behavior is a form of communication; stress/trauma comes from places out of our control. We can provide a safe environment for children.
 - Our brains are wired to heal through connection and relationships. Begin the classroom time with some connection and getting-to-know-you activities. Include children who do not regularly attend Alexanderwohl or children who are from communities/schools other than Goessel.
 - Use a check-in or sharing process at the beginning of class: "Are you mad, sad, glad, or afraid?" "What is a high/low so far today?"
 - Have a "safe place" in your classroom where a child can go to regulate if they are not ready to participate (maybe a corner with a pillow and some fidget tools).
 - Use mindfulness activities to help calm an active class. Examples include: breathing (inhale and exhale as you trace around your fingers on your hand); grounding (find 5 things you can hear, 4 things you can see, 3 things you can feel, 2 things you can smell, and 1 thing you can taste); or reflection activities (e.g., Nexting—what is the next thing you are looking forward to?).
 - Take "brain breaks" such as movement activities.
 - Ask: "What do I need to know to help you right now?"
 - Meet families and children where they are; drop your own biases and just care about them.

USE OF ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION BETWEEN ADULTS, YOUTH AND CHILDREN

Electronic communication (including but not limited to e-mail, social media, texting, and cell phone conversations) provides a unique challenge and opportunity for those working with children and youth. Social media can take away personal connections. Adults should consider if

there are better ways to communicate with children and youth that will build up relationships in a healthy manner.

1. Adults must consult the youth's permission form and always follow parent/guardian requests for electronic communication and photo releases. *(See Appendix G: Parent/Guardian Consent Form for Mentoring; refer also to Appendix H electronic form)*
2. All electronic communication will occur between appropriate daytime and evening hours (7 am-10 pm), unless it is an emergency, in which case the parents/guardians will be notified.
3. Minors will never be referenced by name or labeled with other identifying information on any social media or website locations.
4. All communication between adults and minors should be traceable. Facebook, Twitter, e-mail and texting are traceable. Snapchat and other such communications/apps are not traceable and thus are prohibited.
5. All writers are urged to be cautious about autocorrect and encouraged to always proofread electronic communications before sending.
6. Avoid language or content that builds an inappropriate intimacy. Remember: "You are not the child/youth's peer; you are an adult. Your communication should reflect this."
7. An adult should not initiate one-on-one text, phone, email or social media messaging with a minor. Group messaging (including parent/guardian) is the recommended method. An exception can be made for mentors with their mentees, provided the mentee's parent/guardian has given prior written permission *(Appendix G)*.
8. The adult should inform parents/guardians or another trusted adult of any troubling conversations involving a minor. The exception would be concern of abuse by the parent/guardian.
9. It is the adult's responsibility to report any concern of abuse as directed in this Safe Church policy.

PROCESS FOR REPORTING AND HANDLING A COMPLAINT OF ABUSE

All congregants should be directed to call 911 if they have a reasonable suspicion that someone is in immediate danger.

When reporting the abuse or neglect of a minor child or vulnerable adult, only reasonable suspicion is necessary. The reporter does not need to have evidence or proof. The reporter should not do their own investigation.

1. If a minor child or vulnerable adult discloses abuse or abuse is suspected, the person to whom the child/vulnerable adult disclosed or who has the suspicions will immediately make a report to Kansas Protection Report Center (1-800-922-5330) and/or local law enforcement. *(See Resources later in this policy for further information)*
2. In addition, the person with a suspicion of abuse will make a report to a pastor, deacon or a member of the Safe Church Committee using the Alexanderwohl "Incident Report Form for Suspected Abuse" *(Appendix D)*.

3. No one from the church shall attempt to interview the victim further. Support and empathy should be offered but trained interviewers must do any further questioning.
4. A pastor will follow up on the well-being of the individual within a timely manner. The pastoral team will ensure that the suspicion or an alleged abuse has been reported to local authorities and/or DCF and may make their own report to local authorities.
5. A pastor should inform the Board of Deacon chair, the Congregational Chair, and the Safe Church Committee that an abuse allegation has been reported.
6. The church may seek legal counsel when appropriate.
7. Steps may promptly be taken to work with the church's legal counsel and law enforcement regarding any communication with the media. The Deacon Board Chair and the Congregational Chair will name one representative to speak to the media on behalf of the church.
8. If the alleged offender/offender attends Alexanderwohl, or the alleged offense occurred through Alexanderwohl or church-related activities/organizations, a Response Team may be formed by the Board of Deacons. This team will develop a plan of response for the victim(s), family members and the congregation, as well as the alleged offender if they are part of the congregation. As a guideline, the Response Team shall consist of a pastor, a deacon, a Safe Church committee member, and 1-3 others as needed. Response Team members should not have a familial or close relationship with those involved. If possible, a person on the response team would have experience working with abuse reports and/or vulnerable individuals.
9. The Response Team is advised to consult with qualified professionals, resource agencies and the Western District Conference. The needs of the victim(s) will be at the center any process.
10. If the alleged offender is in a position working with children, youth or vulnerable adults, they will immediately be relieved of these duties. In-person attendance at church services and activities may be suspended. A pastor and a deacon together will meet with the alleged offender to inform them of this action.
11. The Response Team will notify all parents/guardians connected to the congregation whose children may have encountered the alleged offender. This notification will happen in a timely manner.
12. The Response Team will inform the congregation of the process with respect to matters that are not confidential, or limited by any ongoing legal process, to allow individuals to hear directly rather than from news media or outside sources. It is important for the church to focus its efforts on addressing the present incident, offering care and support to those specifically involved, and taking steps to keep the congregation informed as necessary and helpful for the health and safety of all. A trigger warning will be provided to known survivors within the congregation prior to communicating information.
13. In instances where the evidence is inconclusive, the Response Team, Safe Church Committee and Board of Deacons will take action depending on the information available.
14. If appropriate, a Limited Access Agreement will be created specific to the individual for participation in congregational life (see "Limited Access Agreement" section later in the body of this document).

15. If a Response Team is still active three years after formation, the Board of Deacons will consult/re-evaluate with the team to determine if members wish to continue or new members should be added.
16. The Board of Deacons, in consultation with a Response Team, will determine if the Response Team can be discontinued.
17. If a new complaint arises involving different individuals while an ongoing Response Team is still active, a different Response Team may be named for the new complaint.

If the Complaint is Against a Participant of Our Congregation, But the Complainant Does Not Attend Our Congregation

It is advisable to follow all applicable steps above, both for the protection of children and survivors within and outside of the congregation. The Western District Conference Safety Liaison (CSL) must be informed of the complaint.

If a Complaint is Against a Pastor

1. If you believe that a pastor or non-credentialed pastor has engaged in misconduct or abuse, contact the Western District Conference (WDC) Safety Liaison at WDCConferenceSafety@mennowdc.org or 316-283-6300; or contact the Mennonite Church USA Denominational Minister for Church Safety at MichaelD@MennoniteUSA.org.
2. Complaints of misconduct can be filed anonymously. For integrity within the process, allegations of abuse/misconduct must contain enough information to allow the accused to provide a reasonable opportunity to respond to the specific allegations.
3. A complaint against a pastor is handled in keeping with the process outlined in the MC USA [Prevention and Accountability Resource](#). A copy of this resource is available online and in the Alexanderwohl church library. Following this policy process allows the area conference to provide outside, non-biased support to our congregation and all involved.
4. The DMCS will notify congregational leaders and other pastoral staff that a misconduct complaint has been received.
5. Upon notification from the CSL, the DMCS will work with the congregation leaders to place the reported offender on a non-disciplinary leave of absence until the completion of all investigations and MC USA has sufficient information to make a determination concerning the ministerial credentials of the reported offender.
6. Following consultation with the DMCS and area conference CSL, church leadership will make an announcement to the congregation.
7. The non-disciplinary leave of absence will be with pay and benefits because it is without prejudice. During this leave, the pastor will not be allowed to attend the congregation as a participant, or contact or meet with members/participants of the congregation outside of the building, even if the alleged abuse is historical and took place in another congregation.

8. The Board of Deacons will appoint an appropriate designated person or small group to meet with the pastor placed on leave so the pastor does not feel isolated and is also held accountable for their behavior during the leave.
9. The Board of Deacons and Congregational Chair, in consultation with other church boards, will make plans to cover the pastor's responsibilities and care for the congregation during the leave of absence.
10. The congregation will be informed of the ongoing process and final outcomes.

PROCESS FOR A KNOWN OFFENDER SEEKING FELLOWSHIP IN OUR CONGREGATION

Offenders are diverse; viewing all offenders through a single lens is not helpful and hinders the church's ability to respond with wisdom and compassion.

1. The offender will be asked to share their story with the Board of Deacons and pastors.
2. The offender will not attend worship or any other church activity while the Board of Deacons studies and discerns the feasibility of this offender being integrated into the life of the congregation.
3. If integration is the decided goal, the Board of Deacons will develop a Limited Access Agreement for the offender in consultation with the Safe Church Committee. (See "Limited Access Agreement" section of this policy for further information.)
4. The Board of Deacons will name an Accountability Group of 2-3 individuals who will support the offender while participating in the life of the congregation.
5. The responsibility for inclusion and exclusion of an offender rests with the Board of Deacons.
6. The Board of Deacons may provide financial assistance from the Caring Fund to help the offender utilize outside resources to help in the healing process.

CAREGIVING FOR SURVIVORS

Each survivor of abuse is on their own journey of healing and must be allowed to direct their own healing process.

1. If the survivor requests the assistance of a support person or group, the pastoral team and/or Deacon Board may form this group in consultation with the survivor. It will be the role of the support person or group to:
 - Listen and encourage with compassion;
 - Guard confidentiality;
 - Help determine whether outside assistance is needed or helpful;
 - Empower the survivor to use tools and resources to support their journey; and
 - Listen to the survivor's needs regarding integration or reintegration of an offender into congregational life.
2. The Board of Deacons may provide financial assistance from the Caring Fund to help the survivor utilize outside resources to help in the healing process.

3. The pastors and/or Deacon Board may also provide care for secondary victims associated with the survivor, as needed. One or more congregational members may be asked to serve as their support person. Financial assistance from the Caring Fund may be provided to uphold the caregiving ministry for families.
4. Known survivors in the congregation will receive a trigger warning before any announcements about a Limited Access Agreement.

LIMITED ACCESS AGREEMENT

1. The Limited Access Agreement (*Appendix E*) will be designed specifically for the offender. It will take into consideration any legal obligations the offender must fulfill and set forth limits designed to protect all individuals within the congregation.
2. If a Response Team is working with an offender, the team will create a Limited Access Agreement. The team will consult with the Safe Church Committee; it will be approved by the Board of Deacons and the Church Council will then be informed. If a Response Team is not involved, the initial Limited Access Agreement will be created by the Board of Deacons in consultation with the Safe Church Committee and the Church Council will be informed.
3. The Limited Access Agreement may be modified over time (either decreasing or expanding participation). Any modifications will be discussed and approved by the Board of Deacons; the Church Council will then be informed.
4. To be transparent, the congregation will be notified that a Limited Access Agreement is in place. The initial Agreement and any later modifications will be available to view upon request.
5. Known survivors in the congregation will receive a trigger warning before any announcements about a Limited Access Agreement.
6. The offender will cooperate with the named Accountability Group to ensure that guidelines are followed.
7. Refusal of the offender to sign and comply with the Limited Access Plan will exclude the offender from any participation with the congregation.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Recognizing the importance of trust with the congregation, each Safe Church Committee member will sign a confidentiality covenant upon beginning their role and upon completion of their term(s). Board of Deacons members also sign a deacon covenant of confidentiality.

POLICY REVIEW

This document will be reviewed annually in January by the Safe Church Committee, and after any incident is processed and reviewed by the parties involved. (*See Appendix F: Incident Review Summary Form.*) Revisions will be shared with the Board of Deacons and the Board of Education for discussion and approval. Final affirmation will be given by the Church Council and shared with the congregation.

LOCATION OF THIS POLICY

This policy will be available on the church website, in the Sunday school office and church library, and posted in both church lobbies.

APPENDICES

- A: Safe Church Annual Participation Covenant for All Volunteers
- B: Background Check Process
- C: Safe Church Committee Interview Questions for Community Volunteer
- D: Incident Report Form for Suspected Abuse
- E: Example Form for a Limited Access Agreement
- F: Incident Review Summary Form for Suspected Abuse (for Safe Church Committee Use)
- G: Parent/Guardian Consent Form for Mentoring Relationship
- H: Alexanderwohl Children & Youth Ministry Registration and Medical/Liability Release

RESOURCES FOR SURVIVOR SUPPORT

- Safe Hope Shelter 24-hour helpline: 316-283-3191
- Prairie View (mental health services and counseling): 316-284-6400
- Prairie View Crisis Line: 800-362-0180
- Wichita Area Sexual Assault Center Crisis Line: 316-263-3002
- National Sexual Assault Hotline: 800-656-4673
- National Suicide Hotline: 800-273-8255
- 988 Suicide & Crisis Hotline: 988
- CASA: A Voice for Children: 316-284-6909
- SANE (Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner) nurses are specially trained in the comprehensive care of a sexual assault survivor; SANE exams are offered at Wesley Medical Center (316-962-2000) and Via Christi Hospital (316-268-5000)

POLICY RESOURCES

MC USA Safe Church Website:
<https://www.mennoniteusa.org/ministry/church-vitality/safe-church/>

MC USA: [Prevention and Accountability Resource](#)

For more Kansas information on reporting abuse, mandated reporters, and tips for making reports: <https://www.dcf.ks.gov/services/PPS/Pages/KIPS/KIPSWebIntake.aspx>.

Janna Duerksen, USD 411 Counselor, "Trauma Informed Practices" (see page 6 of policy)

518 POLICY REVISIONS

519

520 Initial Policy Established by Congregation in August 2004

521 Revised September 2007

522 Electronic Communication Section Revised 2015

523 Major Policy Revision Approved by Church Council August 2026

Appendix A

ALEXANDERWOHL MENNONITE CHURCH

ANNUAL SAFE CHURCH PARTICIPATION COVENANT FOR ALL VOLUNTEERS

WORKING WITH CHILDREN, YOUTH & VULNERABLE ADULTS

The Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church congregation is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all children, youth, vulnerable adults and volunteers who participate in ministries and activities sponsored by our church.

The Safe Church Policy reflects our congregation's commitment to preserving this church as 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 person working with children, youth and/or vulnerable adults at Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church, I have read and agree to observe and abide by all policies stated in the Alexanderwohl Safe Church Policy.
- I agree to participate in annual training and education events related to protection and abuse prevention that are sponsored or provided by Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church.
- I agree to follow the two-adult guideline whenever supervising children or youth at church-sanctioned events and outings. I will not spend one-on-one time alone with a minor or transport a minor alone for church-sanctioned events. Exception: the formal Mentor/Mentee Program relationship.
- I agree to obtain parental/guardian permission for church-sponsored programs or activities.
- I agree to promptly report abusive or inappropriate behavior by following the procedure provided in the Alexanderwohl Safe Church Policy.

Please answer each of the following questions:

1. Have you ever been convicted of any criminal offense? ____ Yes ____ No

If yes, please explain fully:

2. Have you ever been **accused** of any crimes against a person, including rape, incest, sexual exploitation of a minor, sexual or physical assault of a minor? ____ Yes ____ No

If yes, please explain fully:

3. Have you ever been **convicted** of any crimes against a person, including rape, incest, sexual exploitation of a minor, sexual or physical assault of a minor? ____ Yes ____ No

If yes, please explain fully:

4. Have you ever resigned from employment or been disciplined or terminated by any employer for reasons related to sexual misconduct or abuse of children, youth and/or vulnerable adults? ____ Yes ____ No

If yes, please explain fully:

5. Other than the above, is there any fact or circumstance involving you or your background that would call into question your being entrusted with the supervision, guidance, and care of children, youth and/or vulnerable adults? ____ Yes ____ No

If yes, please explain fully:

6. Do you consent to a background check every five (5) years, understanding that failure to complete a background authorization form when requested to do so will result in immediate suspension and/or termination of duties or position? ____ Yes ____ No

I understand that a member of the Safe Church Committee may check the sex offender registry and/or contact the local police for more information about my background.

This information will be available only to those responsible for screening staff and volunteers or participating in a response team, or as required by law.

By signing below, I affirm the truth of the above statements and information given.

Signature

Date

Printed Name

Address: _____ Email: _____

Preferred Phone Contact: _____

If under the age of 24, date of birth: _____

Appendix B
ALEXANDERWOHL MENNONITE CHURCH
BACKGROUND CHECK PROCESS

The Safe Church Committee and Board of Education will compile a list of individuals who are required to complete background checks. This list will include all teachers of children and youth (Sunday School, Midweek and Vacation Bible School), mentors, youth sponsors, music leaders for children and youth, children's story tellers during the worship service, nursery staff, childcare and church staff. Others may be added as deemed appropriate. Volunteers under the age of 18 will not be on this list.

The Safe Church Committee will submit names and email addresses of the individuals to be background checked to the agency conducting the process.

Volunteers will be contacted by the agency to confidentially supply their own information via email or phone directly to the agency, as well as give their consent to the background check. The Safe Church Committee will not be privy to the information supplied by volunteers.

Offenses or convictions that could potentially affect the safety of children, youth or vulnerable adults will trigger review by the Safe Church Committee. *(See page 2 of the Alexanderwohl Safe Church Policy for a specific but not exclusive list.)*

The Safe Church Committee will receive results of the background checks directly from the agency.

If a background check shows an offense or conviction, the Safe Church Committee will review the situation to discern the feasibility of the volunteer's role. Decisions will be made by the Safe Church Committee in consultation with the Board of Deacons, and the volunteer will be informed.

The background check process will be repeated every five years. If a person stops in their role and then starts again, another background check will not be required before the five-year repeat unless the person has left the state or regularly attended another church.

Costs of the background check process will be covered by the church (not the volunteers or staff).

Results of background checks will remain confidential in the agency's online database, rather than in storage on-site at the church. Only the Safe Church Committee will have access to this database.

Recognizing the importance of trust with the congregation, each member of the Safe Church Committee will sign a confidentiality agreement upon beginning their role and upon completion of their term(s).

Appendix C

ALEXANDERWOHL MENNONITE CHURCH

SAFE CHURCH COMMITTEE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER

Each volunteer new to Alexanderwohl from another church or the community will be required to answer the following questions via a Google link or print copy. These questions will help our Safe Church Committee determine eligibility to work with children, youth or vulnerable adults in our congregation. The Safe Church Committee will then reach out to the volunteer and the provided reference to continue the interview process. The volunteer will then be required to complete and pass a background check, complete the Alexanderwohl Safe Church training and sign the covenant.

Name: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Address: _____ Email: _____

What is your home church? _____

What has been your church involvement?

Briefly describe your faith journey.

What has been your involvement working with children and youth?

Have you ever had a background check? ____ Yes ____ No

If yes, when & for what purpose? _____

Have you ever been accused of abuse? ____ Yes ____ No

If yes, provide full details:

How will you work to keep children and youth safe?

Please provide a church or community reference (cannot be a relative or a friend):

Name: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Address: _____ Email: _____

Appendix D
ALEXANDERWOHL MENNONITE CHURCH
INCIDENT REPORT FORM FOR SUSPECTED ABUSE

Fill out all items that apply.

1. Date of report: _____
2. Name of individual to whom the report of abuse was given: _____
3. Name of child/youth/vulnerable adult complainant: _____ Age _____
4. Name of individual accused of abuse: _____
5. Relationship of accused to child/youth/vulnerable adult complainant (paid staff, volunteer, family member, other): _____
6. Statement of individual reporting abuse (give a detailed summary of incident):

7. Pastor/Deacon/Safe Church Committee member to whom report was given:
 _____ Date / Time: _____
8. Date/Time Department for Children & Families (DCF) or Local Law Enforcement Report was made: _____
 DCF or Local Law Enforcement Report completed by whom: _____

 Signature of Individual Making the Report

 Date

 Signature of Pastor, Deacon, or Safe Church Committee Member

 Date

When completed, a copy of this form will be filed in a confidential/locked location.
 The report will be shared with appropriate church leadership according to this policy.

Appendix E
ALEXANDERWOHL MENNONITE CHURCH
LIMITED ACCESS AGREEMENT
(Example)

***NOTE: This document serves as an example and should be modified
for each unique situation.***

Based on credible, corroborated, and/or multiple reports of abuse that Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church has received, the following guidelines have been designed to reduce the risk to you and others while participating in our congregational life.

I, _____, agree to the following guidelines for the duration of my participation in Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church. These guidelines may be reduced, expanded or cancelled upon approval of the Church Council.

1. I will work with 2 or 3 designated accountability partners. One of these will accompany me each time I participate in church.
2. I will abide by the guidelines for my safe participation. *(Items may be added to or deleted from this agreement—specific to each unique situation.)*
3. I will not serve as a volunteer with children, youth or vulnerable adults.
4. I will not serve on any committee or board that works with children, youth or vulnerable adults.
5. I will not engage with children, youth or vulnerable adults.
6. I understand that the congregation will be informed of my Limited Access Agreement, as will new participants who regularly attend church services and activities.
7. If I break any guideline in this agreement, I will meet with my accountability partners, a pastor, Safe Church Committee, Response Team and/or the Board of Deacons *(specify the groups according to the individual's situation)* to discuss the violation and adapt my safety plan appropriately.
8. Depending on the violation and subsequent conversation, I understand that I may no longer be welcome to attend worship and congregational events at Alexanderwohl.

I have reviewed this covenant and agree to abide by its guidelines.

Signature	Printed Name	Date
Pastor	Printed Name	Date
Board of Deacons Chair	Printed Name	Date

780			
781			
782	Congregation Chair	Printed Name	Date
783			
784			
785	Safe Church Committee Chair	Printed Name	Date
786			
787			
788	Accountability Partner 1	Printed Name	Date
789			
790			
791	Accountability Partner 2	Printed Name	Date

ALEXANDERWOHL MENNONITE CHURCH
Appendix F — Incident Review Summary Form for Suspected Abuse
Safe Church Committee Use Only | Confidential

SECTION 1 REVIEW IDENTIFICATION

Review Date:

Incident Report Reference #:

Review Location:

Persons Present:

Form Completed By:

Role:

SECTION 2 INCIDENT SUMMARY

Reference Appendix D for full incident details. Record only what is needed for review context.

Date of Incident:

Type of Incident:

Type(s) of Concern (check all that apply):

☐ Physical Abuse

☐ Emotional/Verbal Abuse

☐ Sexual Abuse

☐ Spiritual Abuse

☐ Boundary Violation

☐ Electronic/Digital Concern

☐ Neglect

☐ Other

Brief context for this review (roles/relationships, not names):

SECTION 3 POLICY COMPLIANCE & RESPONSE

Were required reporting steps followed? (DCF/law enforcement, Appendix D – Incident Report Form, pastor and leadership notification) Note any steps that were missed or delayed:

Was appropriate care offered to the person(s) harmed? What was done, and what may still be needed?

Did the Response Team and/or leadership act in accordance with policy? Note any gaps:

SECTION 4 WHAT WORKED / WHAT DIDN'T

What policies, safeguards, or practices helped prevent or limit this incident?

Where were the gaps? Consider: policy language, training, supervision ratios, facility layout, communication, documentation:

SECTION 5 IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN

List specific, actionable improvements. These will be tracked and reported to the Board of Deacons.

Recommended Action / Improvement	Responsible Party	Target Date

Does this incident require an unscheduled policy review?

- ☐ Yes — convene before January
- ☐ No — address at annual January review

SECTION 6 SIGNATURES

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830 *Signatures confirm participation in the review process.*

Signature:	Date:	Role / Title:
_____	_____	_____
Signature:	Date:	Role / Title:
_____	_____	_____
Signature:	Date:	Role / Title:
_____	_____	_____
Signature:	Date:	Role / Title:
_____	_____	_____
Signature:	Date:	Role / Title:
_____	_____	_____

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This document is restricted to the Safe Church Committee, pastors, and designated Response Team members.

Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church | Safe Church Policy Appendix F

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Appendix G**ALEXANDERWOHL MENNONITE CHURCH****ANNUAL PARENT/GUARDIAN CONSENT FORM FOR MENTORING RELATIONSHIP**

Name of Student _____

Address _____

Parent/Guardian's Name(s) _____

Home Phone(s) _____

Cell Phone(s) _____

Email Address(es) _____

As parents/guardians, we affirm the mentoring relationship between _____ and _____
_____. We are aware that they will be participating in a variety of activities together and give permission for our child to participate.

MEDICAL INFORMATION

Doctor's Name _____

Doctor's Phone No. _____

List any allergies or special medical problems your child may have:

INSURANCE INFORMATION

Insurance Company _____

Policy Number _____

Hospital Preference _____

RELEASE AND WAIVER OF LIABILITY

This consent form gives permission to seek whatever medical attention is deemed necessary and releases the Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church and its staff of any liability against personal losses of named child.

We, the undersigned, have legal custody of the student named above, a minor, and have given our consent for him/her to attend events being organized by the Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church.

We understand that there are inherent risks involved in any ministry or athletic event, and I/we hereby release the Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church, its pastors, employees, agents, and volunteer workers from any and all liability for any injury, loss, or damage to person or property that may occur during the course of my/our child's involvement whether or not such parties are negligent. In the event that he/she is Injured and requires the attention of a doctor, I/we consent to any reasonable medical treatment as deemed necessary by a licensed physician. In the event treatment is required from a physician and/or hospital personnel designated by the Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church, we agree to hold such a person free and harmless of any claims, demands, or suits for damages arising from the giving of such consent. I/We also acknowledge that we will be ultimately responsible for the cost of any medical care should the cost of that medical care not be reimbursed by the health insurance provider. Further, we affirm that the health insurance information provided above is accurate at this date and will, to the best of my/our knowledge, still be in force for the student named above. We also agree to bring my/our child home at my/our own expense should they become ill or if deemed necessary due to disciplinary action or other reasons.

We understand that in the event medical treatment is needed, every attempt will be made to contact immediately the persons listed on this form.

PERMISSION OPTIONS: The undersigned parent/guardian gives the following permissions:

Interactions:

- ☐ My child may participate in one-to-one, unsupervised interactions with their mentor.
☐ My child may only participate with their mentor in activities when other adults and/or youth are present.

Transportation:

- ☐ My child may ride in their mentor's vehicle to and from mentoring activities:
☐ without others present in the vehicle.
☐ only if other adults/youth are present.
☐ My child cannot ride in their mentor's vehicle to and from mentoring activities.

Communication:

- ☐ My child may participate in traceable electronic communication with their mentor.
☐ My child may not communicate electronically with their mentor.

SHARING OF INFORMATION: The undersigned gives permission for the child's mentor to receive a copy of this information form for use in case of emergency and to guide the mentoring relationship.

SIGNATURES OF PARENTS/GUARDIANS

SIGNATURE OF MENTEE

 _____ Date _____
 _____ Date _____

_____ Date _____

Appendix H

**ALEXANDERWOHL CHILDREN & YOUTH MINISTRY REGISTRATION
AND MEDICAL/LIABILITY RELEASE FORM**

The Board of Education will annually provide this form through an online link.
Parents/guardians use this form to register their children for programs at Alexanderwohl
(Sunday School, Midweek activities, Youth Group).