



Calvin
Christian Reformed Church

Abuse Prevention Policy
Version 7.0

Table of Contents

1.	Introduction	3
2.	Definitions	3
3.	Guiding Principles	4
4.	Policies for all Church Programs.....	5
4.1.	General Risk Reduction Strategies	5
4.2.	Discipline in Church Programs	6
4.3.	Screening.....	6
4.4.	Transportation of Minors.....	7
4.5.	Training and Information.....	7
5.	Codes of Conduct	8
5.1.	Code of Conduct for Pastoral Staff.....	8
5.2.	Code of Conduct for Non-pastoral Staff	9
5.3.	Code of Conduct for Elders, Deacons, and Other Pastoral Care Workers	9
5.4.	Code of Conduct for Youth Program Leaders	10
6.	Policies for Specific Programs	10
6.1.	Childcare/Nursery	10
6.2.	Church School Program	11
6.3.	GEMS and Boys' Club	11
6.4.	Clubs for Teens and Young People.....	12
6.5.	Friendship Group.....	12
7.	Accountability.....	13
8.	Abuse Prevention Committee	14
9.	Reporting of Abuse	14
9.1.	General Policies.....	14
9.2.	Protocol for Reporting Abuse.....	15
Appendix A -	Calvin Christian Reformed Church - Abuse Prevention Pledge.....	17
Appendix B -	Record of Adoption and Revision of Abuse Prevention Policy	18

1. INTRODUCTION

Calvin Christian Reformed Church, as one expression of God's family, strives to be a community where every person is treated with respect and embraced in love, regardless of age, race, gender, or socio-economic status. We are committed to creating an environment that nurtures the dignity and safety of every person.

We acknowledge that sin still finds expression within our church. One expression of sin is the misuse of power and abuse of other people. The spiritual root of all forms of abuse is the irresponsible use of power, including the betrayal of trust within the body of Christ. We celebrate that Christ died to set us free from the bondage of sin. But, until Christ returns, Calvin Church needs to take deliberate measures to guard against the sin of abuse. The following abuse policy is one of those measures.

2. DEFINITIONS

Abuse: Calvin CRC accepts the definitions of abuse adopted by the Synod of the CRC in 1992:

- **Physical Abuse:** any non-accidental act that violates the dignity of the image of God in another person, inflicting dehumanizing pain or injury. Physically abusive behaviour also includes physical neglect, which means not doing what one is supposed to be doing to meet the physical needs of someone in his or her care.
- **Emotional Abuse:** any attempt to control another person's life through words, threats, fears, and/or deprivation in such a way that it impairs a person's God-given sense of self-worth.
- **Sexual Abuse:** any sexual experience forced on one person by another, which may or may not involve physical contact between people. Sexual abuse also includes any role-inappropriate sexual encounter, even if consensual at the time.

Safe Church Team: A team appointed by Classis Eastern Canada of the Christian Reformed Church to respond to allegations of abuse within congregations, provide advice to church councils on appropriate actions, and promote abuse prevention within the classis.

Adult: A person who is eighteen years of age or older.

Calvin CRC, Calvin Church, the church, or the congregation refers to Calvin Christian Reformed Church of Ottawa, Canada.

Children/Youth: In general, these terms are used to refer to all children under the age of eighteen. Specific age designations for specific policies are identified in the relevant section for each program.

Council or Church Council: The body of elders and deacons of Calvin Church who serve as its highest governing body, with responsibility for supervising the life and doctrine of the congregation.

Friend: is a person with intellectual disabilities participating in the Friendship Group.

Leaders: Persons who give leadership in any of Calvin's ministries/programs, including but not limited to church school teachers, Friendship group leaders, youth group leaders and counsellors and leaders of short-term activities.

Member: A person who has formally joined Calvin Church or who participates regularly in the worship and the community life of Calvin Church.

Ministries: Programs or activities accountable to the leadership of Calvin CRC.

Ministry Board: The supervisory body for all church programs, with responsibility for implementation of the abuse prevention policy in church programs.

Minor: A person who is considered not fully responsible/accountable by reason of age, as defined in the relevant statutes of the Province of Ontario.

Ministers/Pastor: Anyone called and ordained to serve as ministry personnel at Calvin Church.

Nursery Attendant: A volunteer supervising infants and children in Calvin CRC's Nursery.

Police check: A search by the police for records of criminal convictions, using a national database. Police checks are one screening tool in abuse prevention policies.

Vulnerable Person: A person who on account of mental or physical impairments or temporary distress has special needs for protection.

Youth programs: Any activity which is sponsored by the leadership of Calvin Church for the benefit/education of children and youth. Official church youth programs can be identified as those for which participation is requested or urged via the weekly bulletin, or any flyer printed with the knowledge or consent of members of the pastoral team or ministry board of Calvin.

3. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. All people are image bearers of God, worthy of respect, and therefore must be treated in a manner that respects dignity and does not demean them in their own eyes or in the eyes of others. Human sexuality is also a gift of God to be respected, valued and celebrated.
2. Abuse of any person is not acceptable and will not be tolerated. We will strive to foster the development of healthy relationships and prevent abuse in our ministries. To the best of our ability, we will avoid situations that may give rise to abuse, unfounded allegations of abuse, or the appearance of impropriety.
3. All members of Calvin CRC are urged to be vigilant against abuse and will be held accountable for their words and actions. Those who violate the standards of conduct expected of them will be subject to disciplinary measures by Calvin CRC.
4. While parents have the primary responsibility for the care and nurture of their children, Calvin CRC and the larger community also share in the responsibility to protect and promote the well-being of all children.
5. By the grace of God, healing is possible for victims of abuse. Healing is assisted through the ministry of the church and wise counselling, which should be offered as early as possible.
6. By the grace of God, forgiveness and restoration to church fellowship is possible for repentant offenders and can be assisted through the ministry of the church and wise counselling. In some cases, however, appropriate long-term restrictions may be necessary.

7. Authority vested in the leadership of Calvin Church, both ordained and non-ordained, must be exercised with the highest of ethical standards. Leaders have a special responsibility to take preventive and corrective measures.
8. When reports of suspected abuse occur, appropriate investigative and corrective actions will begin without delay. All actions will support healing, repentance, and restoration of the abused and the abuser. For abusers, these actions may include disciplinary measures, up to and including denial of volunteer or paid positions and other privileges of church membership. After satisfactory resolution, suitability for return to a volunteer or paid position will be reviewed. Should an abuser leave the congregation prior to an adequate resolution of the issues involved, Calvin will advise the receiving church of the outstanding issues, while maintaining appropriate discretion and confidentiality.
9. Abuse is also a crime punishable under federal and provincial laws in Canada. The Bible teaches respect for the mandate of civil authorities to maintain justice; we pledge to co-operate with them in the implementation of laws prohibiting abuse. All allegations of abuse of a minor will be reported without delay to the Children's Aid Society and/or police, as required by provincial law. As a church, however, we will not leave the matter of abuse and its impacts to the law courts and social services alone, because abuse and healing also have a spiritual dimension. The church has its own calling, as Christ's ambassadors, to offer protection for children, warn against the abuse of authority, and provide a healing ministry for those whose lives have been affected by the sin of abuse.

4. POLICIES FOR ALL CHURCH PROGRAMS

This policy applies to all programs and activities held within Calvin Church facilities on a regular basis.

4.1. General Risk Reduction Strategies

Access: All rooms used for meetings will have windows in or near the doors. Windows will not be covered or obstructed at any time.

Supervision: Two or more adults should be present for all activities involving minors or vulnerable persons, though not necessarily in the same room. When only two adults are present for an activity involving only one or two participants, the activity should be done in a context that is visible to others or the adults should not be from the same family.

Meetings: Adults will meet one on one with minors or vulnerable persons only in public spaces or locations where they are clearly visible to others. Meetings for the purposes of pastoral care should occur in a public space or with the accompaniment of another pastoral worker or spouse (with exceptions discussed in 5.1(2) and 5.3(3)). All leaders and volunteers are expected to exercise discretion and avoid situations that may lead to perceptions of impropriety.

Hallways: During worship services the hallways will be monitored to guard against improper conduct.

Out-of-Town trip: Any leader of Calvin CRC, who travels out-of-town on Calvin CRC business with one other person, will report in writing the name of his/her traveling companion to his/her ministry head or chair of governing body within 2 weeks of completing the trip.

4.2. Discipline in Church Programs

All discipline is carried out in love, not anger. The goal of discipline is change in behaviour, never vengeance. The following guidelines apply for all children's and youth programs:

1. Corporal punishment is not appropriate under any circumstances.
2. Abusive verbal punishment (insults, yelling) is not permitted.
3. Concerns about recurring behavioural issues will be reported to the program supervisor.
4. When a young person misbehaves beyond the need for minor correction or persists in a pattern of misbehaviour, the parent or guardian will be informed and involved in remedial response.
5. If young persons misbehave, leaders should try to:
 - distract them with another activity;
 - help them focus on other acceptable behaviour;
 - isolate them from others; time-outs should be age-appropriate.
6. When misbehaviour is an ongoing problem, an aide should be provided for the classroom.
7. Evidence of abusive behaviour will be reported, using the established protocol (see section Reporting of Abuse on page 14).

4.3. Screening

1. Appointments to leadership positions of programs involving minors and vulnerable persons will be made by or on behalf of the Ministry Board with the concurrence of the Abuse Prevention Committee.
2. Any member of the congregation who has reason to think that any staff or volunteers of Calvin might not be acceptable for work with young or vulnerable persons should inform a member of the Abuse Prevention Committee, the pastoral team or a Ministry Board member.
3. All paid staff will submit a completed police check before they assume their responsibilities.
4. Before taking a leadership position, volunteers with less than two years' membership in Calvin Church, will be requested to consent to a reference check

with congregation(s) of previous membership or a police check. Calvin Church will pay the costs of such checks.

5. Written reports of police and reference checks will be placed in a permanent, confidential file in a secure location in the church, to be consulted only by members of the Abuse Prevention Committee, the Chair of the Ministry Board and the Clerk of the church. These documents will be kept on file for at least fifty years as a record of due diligence. Any paid or volunteer staff member may request to see the content of his or her file.
6. When large numbers of volunteers are needed for short-term activities, such as Vacation Bible School, those who will not have opportunity to meet alone with children will be exempt from the provisions of paragraph 4.3(4) above. Everyone will be provided with a copy of the abuse prevention policy and expected to comply with it. In advance of the event, the leader will recommend to the Abuse Prevention Committee which positions can be exempt; the decision of the Abuse Prevention Committee will be final.
7. If a police check reveals past criminal activity which has no bearing on possible relationships with children and vulnerable adults, the Abuse Prevention Committee may approve that person for activities with children/youth or adults.
8. If any member of the congregation is restrained by court order from being alone with a child, the Abuse Prevention Committee and Ministry Board will be responsible to take steps that comply with such orders.

4.4. Transportation of Minors

NOTE: Arrangements to transport minors between home and church by someone other than the parent or guardian will be considered a private arrangement, not a church arrangement subject to this policy.

1. Persons who chauffeur minors for church activities must be familiar with and concur with this policy. An activity leader may deny someone permission to serve as chauffeur for any particular activity and the leader's decision will be final.
2. Transportation for church activities will be arranged in advance as much as possible. There will not be fewer than three persons at a time in the vehicle, except upon the specific request of a parent or guardian at the beginning or end of a route.

4.5. Training and Information

1. All members of Calvin Church will be asked to become familiar with this policy and to suggest improvements.
2. All leaders must:
 - attend a workshop on abuse prevention within first year of service, in order to receive training on preventive measures and recognition of the signs of abuse;

- annually review Calvin's policy and procedures pertaining to abuse;
 - make themselves aware of resources available to help them meet their responsibilities.
3. Minors and vulnerable persons will be informed of these policies through appropriate educational materials in their programs, including information on protecting themselves and getting help when needed.

5. CODES OF CONDUCT

5.1. Code of Conduct for Pastoral Staff

Pastoral staff is called by God and the congregation to serve Calvin CRC as spiritual leaders and advisors, in accordance with their ordination. Members of the congregation - in particular those who seek counsel - look upon pastors as spiritual advisors, mentors, and role models, to be trusted by both children and adults. Abuse of that trust can have a devastating effect on the lives of individuals and on the life and ministry of the congregation. To help ensure trust is maintained, pastoral staff will abide by the following guidelines:

1. **Boundaries**

Pastors, together with their governing body (elders and deacons), will develop and review boundaries for pastoral care and counselling relationships, including such matters as:

- counselling expertise
- time to be spent with counselees
- referrals to appropriate outside agencies

Individual cases will be reviewed with the person designated to supervise a pastor's work.

2. **Meetings and Visits**

Pastoral meetings may be held in church offices when others are in the building. When no one else is in the building such meetings will be held in public places, such as a coffee shop or in the church fellowship hall, which is easily visible to persons outside the building.

If a pastoral care relationship requires **repeat visits**, an accountability review will be established with the governing body (elders and deacons). Should the reason or frequency of visits be questioned by the governing body (elders and deacons), visits will be suspended and advice sought from a third party with relevant expertise. The governing body and/or the third party may also contact the individual who was visited, with discretion.

Visits or meetings with persons at home when no one else is present shall normally not be conducted. However, when such visits are necessary or desired, they shall be reported before the visit to a co-worker, an elder or deacon and at the next meeting to the chair of the governing body (elders and deacons). Such visits shall also be included in the pastoral contact log.

3. **Pastoral Contact Log**

Pastors will maintain a confidential pastoral contact log, noting all persons with whom they meet in the course of their pastoral duties. This log will be available for review, on a confidential basis, by the governing body (elders and deacons). At year end the log will be filed in a sealed envelope, under lock in the archives, to maintain confidentiality. The pastor and a member of the Ministry Board or the Abuse Prevention Committee must sign the seal of the sealed envelope.

4. **Confidentiality**

Information given in confidence must be respected and counselees assured of confidentiality. However, when personal safety, life, or the well-being of a minor is at risk, some information cannot morally or legally be held in confidence, and counselees will be informed of that.

5.2. **Code of Conduct for Non-pastoral Staff**

Support staff persons are called to serve God by helping Calvin Church function effectively as a family of God.

1. **Meetings:** One on one meetings with members or visitors will be held in public places, such as a coffee shop or in the church fellowship hall, which is easily visible to persons outside the building.
2. **Reporting:** Any behaviour that makes improper or questionable use of church facilities will be reported to the appropriate supervisor.

5.3. **Code of Conduct for Elders, Deacons, and Other Pastoral Care Workers**

1. **Confidentiality:** Information shared with elders, deacons, and other pastoral care workers will be held in confidence, except when the safety of someone is at risk; if needed for protection, information will be given to appropriate persons only and the person giving the information will be advised that it cannot be maintained confidential for safety reasons.
2. **Meetings with Young People:** Elders and deacons are encouraged to develop supportive relationships with young people and be available for spiritual advice; young people are encouraged to seek spiritual advice from any member of the pastoral care team. Meetings will be held in public places. If a one-on-one relationship leads to repeated visits, both parties will mutually decide on a third person to be informed for the purposes of support and mutual accountability.
3. **Visits or meetings with persons at home** when no one else is present shall normally not be conducted. However, when such visits are necessary or desired, they shall be reported before the visit to a co-worker, an elder or deacon and at the next meeting to the chair of the governing body (elders and deacons). The pastoral care provider will establish an accountability relationship with the governing body (elders and deacons) and report on the number of visits and the general nature of them.

5.4. Code of Conduct for Youth Program Leaders

The following pledge serves as a code of conduct for youth leaders:

1. My first priority is prayerfully to seek the welfare of the children/youth and promote their healthy development spiritually, physically, socially, and educationally.
2. The activities for which I am responsible will be done to help children/youth grow in faith, become disciples of Christ, and develop loving, caring, and responsible ways of living.
3. I will keep parents informed about the program I am teaching and what time it begins and ends.
4. I will not knowingly do anything that will damage a child or youth's trust, and I will try to protect the child/youth from all forms of abuse while he or she is in my care.
5. I will work with the children/youth to set agreed guidelines for acceptable behaviour within the group, and expect them to act on the basis of agreed guidelines. If a child consistently breaks the guidelines, I will seek help from other youth leaders and parents to assist me in responding to the child.
6. I will try to offer comfort and help to a child/youth who is distressed and will encourage the child to find appropriate help for his/her needs.
7. I will ensure that, when I need to meet with a child/youth alone, the discussion will be in an open area such that others can at all times see me with the child. Furthermore, I will inform my activity supervisor and/or the parent(s) or guardian of such meetings.
8. I will endeavour to avoid focussing on one child repeatedly for praise or special attention.

6. POLICIES FOR SPECIFIC PROGRAMS

6.1. Childcare/Nursery

Nursery attendants shall annually review Calvin's policy and procedures pertaining to abuse prevention.

1. The nursery protection procedures and the list of approved nursery caregivers will be posted in the nursery.
2. Nursery Attendants
 - The nursery will always be staffed by at least two approved caregivers, who are not members of the same family, and one of whom is an adult. No person will be left alone in charge of the children unless another has gone to get a parent.
 - Only persons on the list of nursery caregivers may serve as caregivers under normal circumstances. If extra assistance is needed and at least three persons who have signed the abuse policy are present, they may be assisted by a parent, grandparent, or sibling of a child in attendance, even though the additional person has not yet signed the Abuse Prevention Pledge
 - Adults who are scheduled for nursery service must have another approved adult to replace them, should they be unable to serve.

3. Registry

- Parents will be asked to sign in when they bring a child and provide each child with his or her name tag. They will also alert the attendants to any condition that may cause problems.

4. Specific Procedures

- Any medical problem that arises will be reported to the parent/guardian immediately.
- Diapers will be changed in view of others.
- Nursery attendants will not take a child from the nursery area to an area that is not visible from the main nursery room.

6.2. Church School Program

1. A teacher plus an assistant, minimum age of 11 will be in charge of each class for ages three, four, and five. Consideration will be given to gender and age in the appointment of teaching teams.
2. The teacher will normally be positioned so that he or she can be seen easily through the windows.
3. Children in Grade 2 and younger will only be released to a member of their immediate family, unless the parent/guardian has informed the teacher that someone else is authorized to pick up the child. Children in Grade 3 and older may be released to find their way to their parents/family if the parents have consented to this at the beginning of the year.
4. Children should not leave the classroom except for illness, bathroom privileges, or other compelling reasons.
5. Children under the age of five will be accompanied to the lavatory. For children who do not require assistance in the toilet, the attendant will remain in the lavatory. For children who require assistance, the attendant will assist the child with the cubicle door left ajar.

6.3. GEMS and Boys' Club

1. Boys and girls should not arrive more than ten minutes before the start of their meetings and will be met by their parents/drivers immediately at the end of the program. Parents/guardians are asked not to leave a child when the doors are locked and no counsellor is present. No counsellor shall retain a child for a one-on-one meeting for more than ten minutes after the end of the program.
2. Counsellors should provide adequate supervision of groups. Each Boys' Club and GEMS function should be supervised by at least two persons, an adult leader and another volunteer at least four years older than the oldest Boy or GEMS member.
3. GEMS and Boys' Club leaders will identify abusive behaviours among participants in their program and implement strategies to discourage these behaviours.

4. If a child needs significant medical attention the parent and/or legal guardian should be notified immediately.
5. Any Boys' Club or GEMS activities away from the church facility, out of town, or overnight should be conducted in general compliance with the policies above. When children are billeted in private homes out of town, or we arrange billeting here for out of town children/youth, no fewer than two children per billet will be the rule.
6. Appropriate displays of affection between counsellors and their respective club members are often part of conveying support and encouragement to one another. Such displays of affection should be limited to actions like a brief hug, an arm around the shoulder, and open-handed pat on the back, or a handclasp, and they should not take place in private. A counsellor's or counselee's right to refuse any of these will be respected.

6.4. Clubs for Teens and Young People

1. Youth group leaders will provide supervision for all functions. At least two leaders will be present; if a couple are leading, a third adult should be present.
2. Any activities away from the church facility, out of town, or overnight, will be conducted in general compliance with established policies. When youth are billeted in private homes out of town, or we arrange billeting here for out of town youth, no fewer than two youth per billet will be the rule.
3. Appropriate displays of affection between youth leaders and youth group members are often part of conveying support and encouragement to one another. Such displays of affection should be limited to actions like a brief hug, an arm around the shoulder, and open-handed pat on the back, or a handclasp, and they should not take place in private. A youth leader's or youth group member's right to refuse any of these will be respected.
4. Gifts, phone calls, or letters directed to a youth group member by a youth group leader or vice versa should only be ministry-related.

6.5. Friendship Group

1. **Transportation:** Transportation of Friends between home and church by someone other than the parent or guardian will be considered a private arrangement, not a church arrangement subject to this policy.
2. **Supervision Guidelines:** There needs to be adequate supervision before and after Friendship Group. A ratio of 1 volunteer or leader to 3 friends is suggested. During study sessions, a ratio of 1:1 is preferred.
3. **Bathroom guidelines:** If necessary, friends should be assisted by someone of the same gender in such a manner as to ensure their privacy and safety. This may require more than one leader.

When friends routinely need assistance or need assistance with medical devices, caregivers should provide this assistance. Plans for assisting the friend should be made before attending the Friendship Group.

4. **Physical and Verbal Contact:**

A) Physical affection initiated by a volunteer or leader should be limited to side-to-side hugs, pats on the back or forearm, touching the back of the hand and gently squeezing the hand.

B) Both the friend and the volunteer/leader can say "no" to physical affection and refrain from displays of affection. If a friend is unable to verbalize "no", notice carefully their body language and facial expression that may indicate discomfort with physical affection.

C) It isn't appropriate to make lewd or suggestive comments to friends, or tell them dirty or off-color jokes. Details or discussions about one's intimate life shouldn't come up in a Friendship meeting.

5. **Corrective Action:** Consequences or corrections to attitude and/or behaviours are sometimes necessary in a Friendship meeting. If a leader thinks a correction or consequence is needed, these guidelines may help. They are not intended to be progressive steps of correction.

A) Give a verbal reminder to follow the rules, if appropriate.

B) Involve another leader, guardian or caregiver.

C) Ask the friend to leave the room for a few minutes and take a time-out.

D) End the meeting.

E) Ask the friend not to come to the program for a period of time until an agreement can be reached about acceptable behaviour.

F) If a situation arises away from the Friendship program, stay in a public setting because moving to a private or isolated setting may increase vulnerability for the leader and the friend. Use a cell phone to seek assistance or to relay what is happening to someone else.

G) If problems continue beyond minor correction, don't hesitate to share them with a parent, guardian, or caregiver and apprise them of how the situation has been handled.

Physical intervention including slapping, hitting, kicking, punching is not ever appropriate. Physical restraint may be necessary only to prevent harm or injury to the friend, leader, or other persons nearby. Lashing out in anger or verbal abuse will likely cause more harm to the other person and to the relationship.

7. **ACCOUNTABILITY**

Final responsibility for adherence to this policy rests with the Ministry Board, which will appoint an Abuse Prevention Committee for the purpose of monitoring implementation in all church activities. Procedures will be adopted, and revised from time to time, for the various activities/functions within the church. These steps will include, but are not necessarily limited to, the following:

1. All paid and volunteer leaders will be accountable to a supervisor or a supervisory committee.
2. All paid and volunteer leaders and nursery caregivers will sign the Abuse Prevention Pledge to indicate agreement with the abuse policy before assuming

their duties. To ensure that all remain familiar with the Abuse Prevention Policy, the pledge must be signed every 3 years or sooner at the discretion of the Abuse Prevention Committee.

3. Parents of children will be asked to familiarize themselves with the rules governing a particular activity when their child is enrolled in an activity or program.
4. The policy document and revisions approved by the Ministry Board will be dated and kept in a permanent file.

8. ABUSE PREVENTION COMMITTEE

The Ministry Board will appoint an Abuse Prevention Committee. The Committee will consist of a minimum of four persons, two female, two male, who will serve for a maximum of six consecutive years. In addition the Ministry Board may assign one of its members as liaison to the committee.

The mandate of the Committee is:

1. To review the Abuse Prevention Policy and procedures and recommend to the Ministry Board such changes as will be of benefit to the Calvin family.
2. To monitor implementation of the policy in all programs and activities that takes place under the auspices of Calvin Church.
3. To develop forms and procedures to facilitate consistent terminology and record keeping.
4. To review all appointments for leadership positions, paid and volunteer. The committee's objection to an appointment shall be binding, but may, in special circumstances, be appealed to the Ministry Board.
5. To maintain the records of signatures, reference checks, and police checks required under this policy. These records will be stored in a locked cabinet in the Archives Room.
6. To recommend training resources to the Discipleship Committee
7. To monitor and keep a record of participation in training for abuse prevention.
8. To report at least once each year to the Ministry Board on the work of the committee and measures taken for the safety of the church family.

Persons assigned to the Abuse Prevention Committee will be provided with such training as is necessary to enable them to perform their tasks with wisdom and effectiveness.

9. REPORTING OF ABUSE

9.1. General Policies

1. Evidence of abuse may never be hidden, but must be handled with care. The purpose of reporting is to stop the abuse, to provide assistance for the victim, and to hold perpetrators accountable and begin the process of correction and redemption.
2. Confidentiality will be respected and victims will be consulted before action is taken on their behalf. The name of a victim will not be made public without her or

his consent. We will not assume an alleged abuser is guilty before conviction or admission.

3. Evidence or disclosure of abuse of a person who is a minor must be reported to civil authorities, in keeping with the provisions of provincial law. Abuse of a person who is not/no longer a minor will be reported to outside authorities only with the consent of the victim, even if the abuse occurred while the person was a minor. In situations where the victim is a vulnerable person, it may be necessary to notify civil authorities.
4. All suspicion or disclosure of abuse must be brought to the attention of the Abuse Prevention Committee.
5. Calvin CRC recognizes and respects the right of a victim to pursue legal remedies through civil courts, independent of any action taken within the processes established by the CRC. Spiritual support, pastoral help, and other forms of appropriate engagement by the church will be provided, whether or not legal action is taken in a particular case

9.2. Protocol for Reporting Abuse

1. Anyone who has evidence or disclosure of abuse should inform a member of the Abuse Prevention Committee or the chair of Ministry Board.
2. For the purposes of accuracy, the person reporting is asked to write down as soon as possible what was observed or heard and submit it to the Abuse Prevention Committee in confidence.
3. A team from the Abuse Prevention Committee will, in consultation with the victim, as appropriate, determine what course of action will be taken, including:
 - referral to the appropriate pastoral team member as a matter requiring pastoral counselling;
 - recommendation that the Ministry Board request that the Safe Church Team of Classis establish a review panel, to engage in fact-finding and provide advice to the church consistory;
 - notification of civil authorities, if required under the provisions of provincial law.
4. The Abuse Prevention Committee operates in an advisory capacity to the designated authorities in the church. Any pastoral and/or disciplinary action will be taken by the designated authorities, operating under the established rules of order of the CRC.
5. If the situation involves a minor, the incident will be reported to the appropriate civil authorities, under the provision of provincial law. If pastoral staff is available and not implicated, they will call the appropriate authorities. If a member of the Abuse Prevention Committee is available, they will call the appropriate authorities. If neither is available, the person with evidence or disclosure should report, as required by the law. If there is a question about the need to report, advice can be obtained by calling the Children's Aid Society.

6. If the situation involves a vulnerable adult who may be subject to provincial trusteeship, the Abuse Prevention Committee will determine the need to notify civil authorities.
7. If the situation involves a church leader, matters such as notification, temporary suspension from office, and disciplinary measures will be handled in accordance with the process adopted by the Synod of the CRC. Depending on the circumstances and severity of the incident, suspension from a position, with pay for paid staff, may be temporary to allow time for further investigation, and will be done without prejudice as to the final determination. Suspension may include limitations or conditions on contact with children or other church members, pending the conclusion of a more formal hearing process. Disciplinary measures will be in accordance with the established policies of the Synod of the CRC, including, when appropriate, a permanent ban on holding pastoral office in the CRC.

Appendix A - Calvin Christian Reformed Church - Abuse Prevention Pledge

Section 1 *(to be completed by signer; PLEASE print full name clearly)*

I, _____, have read and understand the Version 7.0 of the Abuse Prevention Policy of Calvin Christian Reformed Church.

I agree to the regulations and mandates of the Abuse Prevention Policy and will adhere to them.

I acknowledge that it is my responsibility to help ensure that Calvin’s ministries provide a wholesome, safe environment for all participants, and should I become aware of any activities that appear to be inappropriate, I will bring it to the attention of my program leader or the Abuse Prevention Committee immediately.

I have been a member (attendee) of Calvin Christian Reformed Church for _____ years.

I have attended an Abuse Prevention Workshop: Yes _____ No _____

If yes: When (year): _____ Where: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Section 2 *(to be completed by an APC member)*

Addition Documents Required				
Document	Yes	No	Requested	Received
Police Records Check				
Reference Checks				

Appendix B - Record of Adoption and Revision of Abuse Prevention Policy

Version	Date	Status	Comments
1.0	April, 1999	Approved	Version adopted by Council
2.0	March 2005	Approved	Approved by Council
3.0, 4.0, 5.0	2006	In progress	Changes per APC meetings to be presented to the Ministry Board
6.0	Sept. 18, 2006	APPROVED by Ministry Board	
6.1 – 6.9	April 2007 – Sept. 2007	In progress	Various changes as per Auditors feedback, MB feedback and APC discussions.
7.0	Sept. 10, 2007	APPROVED by Ministry Board	