

## Kidron Mennonite Church

### Child Protection and Abuse Response Statement of Policies

Each child is a unique gift from God. Jesus placed a high value on children during his earthly ministry. We seek to make all of our church activities and facilities safe, especially for children. It is our responsibility as adults to do all we can to protect children.

According to Ohio law, abuse can be:

1. *physical abuse* -- an unexplainable, non-accidental injury to the child,
2. *emotional and mental abuse* -- continual scapegoating or rejection of a child resulting in disturbed behavior, and
3. *sexual abuse* -- any sexually oriented act, practice, contact, or interaction in which the child has been used for sexual stimulation of an adult.
4. *Neglect*--is typically defined in two ways. Emotional neglect occurs when a caregiver fails to provide opportunities for normal experience that produce feelings of being loved, wanted, secure, and worthy. Physical neglect is when a caregiver fails to provide basic needs or a safe and sanitary living environment for the child.  
(<http://codes.ohio.gov/orc/2151.03>)

Definitions:

- Volunteer=an individual 18 years or older
- Regular/regularly=on a planned/foreseeable basis
- Unsupervised=without another volunteer (see above) in the vicinity (room or 30 feet/visible outdoors)

#### **Child abuse prevention within our church community**

We must be prepared in both knowledge and practice to prevent all types of child abuse and neglect. This policy applies to all church ministries including but not limited to Sunday School, children's and youth activities, mentoring, and nursery. **We commit to:**

1. Provide resources:
  - a. Parents, Sunday School teachers and leaders of other activities involving minors will have access to the child protection policy and guidelines for volunteers in their interaction with children. These documents will be available 24/7/365 on our website ([kidronmennonite.com](http://kidronmennonite.com)) and made available in print format at the annual leader meeting.
  - b. Parents will receive information about how to keep children safe within the church building.
2. Provide a safe church facility for children:
  - a. Windows are in all doors where children or youth ministry is conducted (i.e. Sunday School rooms, pastor's office).
  - b. First Aid kits are available: 1) Southeast Cloakroom (on top of mailboxes), 2) Second floor Education Center by mailboxes 3) Fellowship Hall kitchen (by the stove) 4) the Back Door
  - c. In the event of an emergency that requires evacuation, caregivers/leaders will be responsible for taking the children in their care to a designated meeting place (the pavilion or Fellowship Building in case of facility emergency). Teachers will text parents their location as soon as possible. Parents/guardians should meet their children there as soon as possible. In the Education Center, evacuation routes are posted next to the doors of each room.
3. Provide safe and adequate supervision to children:
  - a. Nurture Committee members are KMC long-term, active attenders (3+ years) who work in conjunction with the Minister of Education to select teachers and aides with appropriate qualities to lead. All workers must complete a Children/Youth Ministry Volunteer Registration.
  - b. A youth (18 years or younger) will never regularly teach/care for children alone without a supervising adult available.
  - c. Each teacher and leader of children will have access to the congregation's Child Protection and Abuse Response Policy and be required to acknowledge that they have read and will abide by the policy.
  - d. Each child participating in KMC children's ministry programs will be supervised at all times until the child is returned to the care of the parent or adult responsible for the child. Exception: if parents authorize their child to be released on his/her own after Sunday school or activity. Parents are responsible to supervise their children when they are on the church premises and not engaged in an organized children's event.
  - e. Regular adult to child ratios are at least 1:4 for infants and toddlers, 1:8 for two-year-olds through kindergartners, and 1:10 for elementary-aged children. Occasionally this ratio may increase due to last-minute cancellations by volunteers

or to unexpectedly large numbers of children participating in a program or event.

- f. A “two-adult rule,” especially at overnight activities involving children and when activities are being conducted in homes or other private locations will be followed. A child will not be isolated with an adult; toileting assistance will only be done by an adult woman or authorized relative
  - g. A parent must always be notified ahead of time and give consent for their child to be transported away from church facilities.
  - h. Discipline provided by KMC volunteers or staff will be age-appropriate. Techniques will include redirection, verbal reminders, time out, or loss of privileges. Parents/guardians will be informed of chronic or extremely disruptive or dangerous behavior. A KMC volunteer or staff member will never administer physical punishment.
  - i. Children will not be transported (except in an emergency situation) without securing written or verbal permission from a parent/guardian in advance. In most cases, this will be in the form of permission to transport on the annual children’s registration form.
  - j. Every child who regularly attends a KMC children’s ministry program or special event should have a completed registration form which includes an Emergency Medical Authorization and Waiver of Liability prior to the child attending the program or event. New guests attending weekly programs may be temporarily exempted from this requirement. Medical Authorization forms will be updated annually. Forms that are outdated will be shredded.
  - k. Children who receive minor injuries while in the care of a KMC volunteer or staff member will be treated at the location of the event, and parents/guardians will be informed. Children who receive more serious injuries while in the care of a KMC volunteer or staff member will be treated at the location until a reasonable attempt has been made to contact the parents/guardians. If a parent/guardian cannot be located, the child will be treated according to the Emergency Medical Authorization.
  - l. Communicable disease prevention: Any child who displays the following symptoms within 24 hours prior to the program or event should not attend the program or event: temperature of 100 degrees or higher, extremely runny nose or runny nose with yellow or greenish discharge, diarrhea, vomiting, excessive coughing, questionable rash, exposure to contagious illness, sore throat, stomach ache.
4. Attend to related personnel issues:
- a. A background check, including child abuse and sex offender registries and criminal history, will be conducted on all church staff, including the pastor and custodians, before hiring. The church reserves the right to conduct a background check including fingerprinting for any volunteer working with children in the congregation. These background checks must be conducted in all the states the individual has lived in the previous 20 years.
5. Deal appropriately with offenders and allegations of abuse:
- a. When a child discloses abuse or child abuse is suspected, the Minister of Education or lead pastor will be notified immediately. Child Protective Services (330-345-5340) or the police (911) will be contacted as appropriate depending on the nature of the abuse.
  - b. All new volunteers are required to be background checked.
  - c. Returning volunteers will be background checked at least every 5 calendar years.
  - d. If a KMC volunteer is suspected of abuse, the alleged offender will be removed immediately from all responsibilities involving contact with children until the conclusion of an investigation. All parents whose children may have come into contact with the alleged offender will be notified within 48 hours that allegations have been made and reported to the authorities.
  - e. When child abuse allegations have been made, pastoral care will be offered to all involved, by the pastor and/or appropriate referrals will be made by the pastoral staff.
  - f. Any individual who is known to have been convicted of child abuse will not be allowed any unsupervised contact with children, and will be prevented from being involved in children’s or youth ministry.
  - g. All parents of children and youth in the church must be notified if there is a registered sex offender attending church activities at the time this information becomes known. New families to the church must be notified of this information within 2 months of their beginning to attend church.

This policy is administered by the Minister of Education in conjunction with the church staff and Nurture Committee. Questions and concerns can be addressed to [Kris@kidronmennonite.com](mailto:Kris@kidronmennonite.com) or 330-857-3461.