



NORTH LANGLEY
COMMUNITY CHURCH

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY & PROCEDURES

21015 96th Ave. Langley, BC V1M 2Z3

CONNECTING PEOPLE WITH THE LIFE CHANGING POWER OF JESUS CHRIST



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STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY

North Langley Community Church (hereafter referred to as NLCC) has a spiritual, moral and legal obligation to provide a secure environment for children under the age of 19, participating in church programs that are under the auspices and authority of NLCC. It is our responsibility to safeguard their trust and to offer an environment consistent with the Word of God we are proclaiming.

Child abuse is a criminal act as well as a violation of God's moral law within the trusted context of relationship, therefore, everyone who teaches, helps or cares for children and/or youth under the auspices of NLCC is required to follow the guidelines and procedures as defined in this document in an effort to:

North Langley Community Church has zero tolerance for abuse, harassment, and neglect.

- Protect all persons from abuse.
- Protect church staff and volunteer workers from any false allegations of abuse.
- Limit the extent of a church's legal risk and liability due to allegations of abuse.
- Comply with the Child, Family and Community Service Act of British Columbia. Under BC law, persons have a duty to report if there is a reason to believe a child has been, or is likely to be, abused or neglected. "Reason to believe" means that you believe a child could be at risk based on what has been seen or information you have.

Everyone who teaches, helps or cares for children and/or youth under the auspices of NLCC is required to follow the guidelines and procedures as defined in this document. This plan is designed to assist church leaders in their recruiting of volunteers and to provide for the safety of the children served by these volunteers to the greatest extent possible.

The names and addresses of parents and children will be carefully maintained. NLCC will always have adequate records of workers' applications, references and screening forms. They will be up-to-date and accessible. Records will be kept indefinitely for all workers.



DEFINITIONS OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Child abuse can take different forms. It may be physical, sexual, emotional or the result of neglect. All child abuse involves the misuse of power which takes place when people take advantage of the authority they have over vulnerable people. Vulnerable people include adults with physical or mental disabilities and children.

1. PHYSICAL ABUSE

Any physical action by a person that could or does harm a child. It includes:

hitting	kicking	slapping
shaking	burning	pinching
biting	choking	throwing
shoving	whipping	

It also includes unreasonable force to punish children or prevent them from harming themselves or others.

i. Physical Indicators

frequent bruises	cigarette burns	immersion burns
rope burns	poorly explained injuries	patchy hair loss
grip marks		

ii. Behavioural Indicators

disclosure of abuse	fear of going home	apathy
fear of adult approach	sadness	fear of adult disapproval
tension	low self-esteem	tantrums
rages	wearing inappropriate clothing	difficulty cooperating with peers
resistance to change or to rules	reluctance to explain injuries	demanding and aggressive
passive and compliant		

iii. Parent or Caretaker's Behaviour

- history of abuse
- inadequate knowledge of child's development
- unrealistically high or low expectations
- low tolerance level
- never happy with child's performance
- substance abuse
- hostile or suspicious of attempts to talk about child
- attempts to conceal child's injuries
- illogical reasons for child's injuries
- lack of self control

2. EMOTIONAL ABUSE

The most difficult kind of abuse to define and recognize, it is best described as a pattern of harmful behaviour. It includes any attitude or action by an adult that is likely to have serious, negative emotional effects on a child. Emotional abuse can include a patterns of:

insults	blaming	rejection
threats	humiliation	verbal attacks
scapegoats		

Emotional harm can result from emotional abuse. It can also happen to children who witness violence in their homes.

Children who are emotionally harmed will often manifest:

depression	aggressive behaviours	anxiety
withdrawing from others	self-destructiveness	



3. SEXUAL ABUSE

Sexual abuse happens when a person uses a child for sexual purposes. It can include:

- sexually touching or inviting a child to touch
- intercourse (vaginal, oral, or anal)
- threatening sexual acts
- obscene gestures or communications
- stalking
- sexual references (words or gestures) to the child's body or behaviour
- asking the child to expose their body for sexual purposes
- exposing the child to sexual activity or material
- sexual aspects of organized or ritual abuse

i. Physical Indicators

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| pain or itching in genital area | urinary or bowel infections | vaginal odour |
| sexually transmitted disease | pregnancy under 19 | abdominal pain or discomfort |
| difficulty sitting or walking | | |

ii. Behavioural Indicators (Girls)

- | | | |
|-------------------------------|--|--------------------------------|
| promiscuous | poor self esteem | distrust of adults |
| overly compliant | perfectionist | substance abuse |
| overly mature | fear of closed places | inappropriate sexual knowledge |
| sexually provocative actions | lack of normal opposite sex attraction | social withdrawal or unease |
| preoccupations with fantasies | reluctance to go home/running away | |

iii. Behavioural Indicators (Boys)

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------|
| poor gender identity | self destructive behaviour | aggression |
| depression | preoccupation with body language | setting things on fire |
| reluctance to be involved with males | | |

4. SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

Sexual exploitation happens when a child becomes involved in sexual activity, usually through manipulation or coercion for things like money, drugs, food or shelter. Children in the sex trade are not prostitutes or criminals; they are victims of sexual exploitation. Sexual activities include:

- sexual acts
- sex for the purpose of entertainment
- escort or massage parlor services
- appearing in pornographic images

5. NEGLECT

Neglect is when a parent or guardian ignores or overlooks a child's basic needs—to the point where the child is, or could be, harmed. Neglect includes failing to provide a child with food, shelter, basic health care, supervision, nurturing or protection from risks.

6. HARASSMENT

NLCC is committed to providing a ministry environment free of harassment. Government laws prohibit harassment on the basis of:

- age, religious creed, skin color, physical or mental disability, medical conditions, marital status, sexual orientation, national origin or ancestry



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Harassment includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Verbal conduct such as derogatory jokes or comments, slurs or unwanted sexual advances, invitations or gestures.
- Visual conduct such as derogatory or sexually oriented posters, photography, cartoons, drawings or gestures.
- Physical conduct such as assault, unwanted touching, blocking normal movement or interfering with work.
- Threats and demands to submit to sexual requests as a condition of continued employment or offers of employment benefits in return for sexual favours.
- Retaliation for having reported or threatened to report harassment.

7. INAPPROPRIATE TOUCHING

- kissing or coaxing a child to kiss you
- tickling
- extended hugging
- touching a child in any area that would be covered by a bathing suit (except when assisting a child with toileting as outlined)
- carrying older children (Grades 4 & up)
- having older children (Grades 4 & up) sit on your lap
- being alone with a child
- any activity that could easily lead to allegations of abuse or harassment

8. IMPROPER DISCIPLINE

- yelling at the child
- spanking or hitting the child
- any confinement or restraints

9. SUBSTANCE ABUSE

In an effort to protect children, leaders and volunteers need to be aware of the effects of substance abuse. The following are some things you can be aware of.

i. Social Indicators

lying	theft	promiscuity
rebelliousness	antisocial behaviour	withdrawal
family history of substance abuse	changes in peer group	irritability or moodiness
consistent failure to meet obligations		
suspicion and aggression towards friends, teachers, parents		

ii. Physical Indicators

hangovers	hand tremors	sleeping difficulties and fatigue
red eyes, dilated pupils	vague, dull, confused	weight gain or loss
drawn appearance	lack of appetite	
changes in hygiene, dress, grooming		

iii. Behavioural Indicators

moodiness or withdrawal	low or deteriorating self esteem	loss of interest in activities
grandiose feelings	can't cope, easily frustrated	impulsive behaviour
depression, suicide attempts	confusion, poor memory	failure to meet obligations
paranoid statements and feelings	uncharacteristic irritability	



NLCC CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES

1. SCREENING OF WORKERS AND VOLUNTEERS

It is required that the volunteers support the doctrines and direction of NLCC and have been attending NLCC for a minimum of six months. The only exceptions are those who obtain special permission from the Children or Student Ministry Pastors, i.e. student interns or new staff.

However, it is recognized that in some situations volunteers do not attend NLCC, or do not espouse the Christian faith. These individuals will be required to undergo the same requirements of all volunteers, and as part of their recruitment and orientation and the leader will ensure that the volunteer is aware of the Christian orientation and purpose of the programs.

The following steps will be completed before any person works with a child under the age of 19:

- a. Complete an Application Form which will include at least two references.
- b. Complete a Criminal Record Check if over the age of 16. (Pick up forms from your ministry pastor or the church office).
- c. Have a personal interview with ministry staff.
- d. Attend training sessions that will include:
 - understanding the ministry and the issues that may confront them
 - instruction on safety, child abuse prevention and detection
 - procedures for reporting and recording any abuse, accidents
 - an annual refresher seminar on the contents of this manual
- e. Sign the “Child Protection Policy Acknowledgement” (page 17) agreeing to comply with church policies and guidelines, which includes acknowledgment that the Child Protection Policy has been reviewed and explained.

All ministry leaders working with children must wear a name tag which identifies them accordingly.

Anyone with criminal abuse violations will not be allowed to work with children or youth. Should any other reason arise why a person may not be suitable for a volunteer position, further investigation will take place. When it is determined that an individual is not suitable as a volunteer, it is recommended that a record to this effect be kept on file in the church office so that future recruiters are aware. The Pastor of Administration or ministry pastor will review the “not suitable” file when volunteers are being selected. An individual may provide evidence and references that support a reconsideration of the “not suitable” status.

2. IMPLEMENTATION OF CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Routines must be established for the training of all new workers who serve the church. New workers often begin together as a group at the start of a new quarter or educational period. Sometimes, however, a new worker becomes active after a program has already begun. A plan must exist to provide training for all workers, regardless of when they begin. All church members should be aware of basic policies concerning working with youth and children.

Department heads and/or ministry leaders should thoroughly review these policies and procedures as part of their pre-fall program planning.

- a. Each department should train its workers regarding these policies. Ensure that sufficient material exists for training and information. Are the policies printed and available?
- b. Review and explain the “Ministry & Modeling” section of the Volunteer Application Form.
- c. Ensure that workers are following the required policies and guidelines. Observe if any obstacles exist in complying with the policies.



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Thoroughly discuss each policy and procedure with your department heads and/or ministry leaders. Work through all concerns. If problems exist in the policies, they should be brought to the attention of the Pastor of Administration. Consider revisions, but changes must not sacrifice the integrity of the program. Work at developing a sense of unity before educating workers and volunteers.

iv. Nursery Volunteer Training Session

NLCC uses a number of volunteer workers in the nursery programs. Many of these volunteers may serve only a few hours each year. Special training sessions will be conducted for all volunteer nursery workers outlining nursery policy and procedures, behavioural guidelines, and where to find supplies.

3. SUPERVISION OF VOLUNTEERS

An important step in providing a safe and secure ministry environment is the supervision of volunteers. A supervisor of volunteers will be appointed for each ministry program and may be a church staff member or a leader of other volunteers.

Supervision can take place by checking through classroom windows to ensure that things are going well, planned formal and informal visits to the classrooms and by simply making rounds. Supervision provides leaders with opportunities to give direction, assist those who may be struggling or frustrated, as well as reinforcing and encouraging positive classroom management. If allegations of abuse were to be made, or charges were to be laid, the courts will look for a systematic and consistent process by which the church supervises its volunteers. These safeguards are not only to protect our children, but also our workers.

4. RECEIVING AND RELEASING OF CHILDREN

i. Sign-in/out Sheets

This sheet will include each child's first and last name, special needs, leader sign in and out and parent sign in and out. Space will be provided for a pager number for those in nursery and preschool.

ii. Release of Children

Children, Grade 5 and under are not to leave the classroom by themselves. They will only be released into the care of the child's parent or designate, who is over the age of 16.

Parents will not be allowed to the nursery or classroom when picking up their child unless requested to do so. This enables the staff to maintain order and provide a better level of security.

Children must have parental permission for involvement in church sponsored field trips or overnight events.

5. PARENTAL PERMISSIONS

Church staff or volunteer workers must obtain the consent of the child's parent or guardian before going out alone with that child, or spending time with the child in an unsupervised situation. Workers must also notify an appropriate church leader of such meetings in advance.

6. DISPLAYS OF AFFECTION

Physical touch is an important element in the communication of love and care. Volunteers need to be aware of and sensitive to differences in sexual development, cultural differences, family backgrounds, individual personalities and special needs. Physical contact with children should be age and developmentally appropriate. The following guidelines are recommended as pure, genuine and positive displays of God's love:



i. Appropriate Touch

Love and caring can be expressed in the following appropriate ways:

- bending down to the child's eye level and speaking kindly; listening to him or her carefully
- taking a child's hand and leading him or her to an activity
- putting an arm around the shoulder of a child who needs quieting or comforting
- taking both of the child's hands as you say, "You did such a good job!" (or "I'm so glad to see you. We've missed you!" etc.)
- patting a child on the head, hand, shoulder or back to affirm him or her
- holding a child by the shoulders or hand to keep his or her attention while you redirect the child's behaviour
- gently holding a child's chin to help him or her focus on what you are saying (important for children with attention deficit disorder)
- holding a preschool child who is crying

ii. Inappropriate Touch

- kissing a child or coaxing a child to kiss you
- tickling
- extended hugging
- touching a child in any area that would be covered by a bathing suit (except when assisting a child with toileting as outlined on page 12)
- carrying older children (Grades 4 & up)
- having older children (Grades 4 & up) sit on your lap
- being alone with a child
- any activity that could easily lead to allegations of abuse or harassment

7. CLASSROOM GUIDELINES

i. Supervision

Our desire is to provide a safe, loving classroom where the child feels comfortable and learning can take place. Therefore we recommend the following guidelines:

ii. Leader/Child Ratio

Adequate staffing is necessary to provide effective care and teaching. The suggested ratios are:

- One volunteer for every 2 infants (birth-twelve months)
- One volunteer for every 3 toddlers
- One volunteer for every 5 preschoolers
- One volunteer for every 7-10 elementary-age children

Classes may use high school students (Grade 10 or older) or have parents help on a rotational basis.

iii. Open Doors

The classrooms in the church building have doors with windows that allow ministry supervisors to look in occasionally without interrupting the teaching process. The classroom door will remain open when:

- there is no window in the door
- the class number of children is small (max 3)
- one leader leaves to take a child to the washroom



iv. Family Teams

Family ministry teams work well together and should be encouraged as a method of staffing. However, for the protection of this family unit, we recommend the presence of at least one other volunteer not related to the family.

8. DISCIPLINE AND ORDER

The word discipline does not mean punishment. It comes from the root word disciple, which means training that builds character, behaviour and values. Rather than seeking to merely maintain control or keep children quiet, the goal in managing children's behaviour will be to shape their character in such a way that they will become disciples.

i. Preventative Discipline

- Create a loving, caring atmosphere by arranging your environment for children to learn.
- Be respectful of the children and their needs.
- Establish and communicate realistic expectations for the children.
- Provide meaningful and age-appropriate activities.
- Be fair and consistent with all children.
- Focus on positive actions.
- Be aware of children with special needs.

NLCC prohibits corporal punishment.

ii. Remedial Discipline

- Try to deal with problems on an individual basis.
- Explain to the child why the behaviour is unacceptable.
- Redirect the child to positive action.
- Explain the consequences of unacceptable behaviour by defining the correct way to behave as well as the result of the wrong behaviour.
- Offer choices that are acceptable to both you and the child.

iii. Classroom Rule Suggestions:

- one voice talking at a time
- quiet hands get answered
- use inside voices
- listen carefully to directions
- use good manners
- keep your hands and feet to yourself
- respect each other
- be friendly
- visit the washroom before class begins

9. WASHROOM AND DIAPER PROCEDURES

It is recommended that we communicate to parents the need to take their children to visit the washroom prior to each class or service. Doors into the washrooms will be propped open during any event involving children under 12. Never be alone with a child in a washroom and never go into a washroom cubicle with a child with the door shut.

i. Nursery Children

As a general rule, staff in the nursery will not be expected to change diapers. Parents will be called to the nursery and provided with an appropriate place to change diapers in the public washrooms. However, in the event that a diaper change becomes necessary, the following will apply:

- A diaper changing procedure will be followed that utilizes universal precautions concerning blood-borne pathogens. The procedure will be posted by the changing areas.



- Diaper changing must always take place in such a way that another nursery worker can easily see the child that is being changed, as well as the other children and workers in the room.
- Children must be 13 years of age or older, with appropriate training before being permitted to change infant's diapers.

ii. Preschool Children

If a child must go to the washroom, the adult volunteer must escort the child to the washroom. The volunteer will then remain outside the washroom door and wait for the child before escorting him or her back to the classroom. The volunteer should call the child's name if they are taking longer than seems necessary. If preschool children need assistance in the washroom, an adult may enter the washroom cubicle to assist, ensuring the washroom and cubicle doors remain open.

iii. School aged Children

Children/Youth in Grades 3-12 may go to the washroom on their own. Only allow one child at a time. Notify a supervisor or co-leader for children in Grades 1-2, who will remain outside the washroom door.

When a child is in obvious distress or if the child refuses to come out of the cubicle, discretion must be used in the implementation of assistance—it is recommended to get a second adult or supervisor.

10. HEALTH AND SAFETY PROCEDURES

i. Cleanliness

The Nursery (Li'l Ones Landing) will be sanitized weekly, which includes: cleaning all surfaces, toys, tables, trays, bedding, bibs and doors.

ii. Sick Children

A child who is ill will not be received into the nursery. Some signs of illness are:

- unusual fatigue or irritability
- coughing
- sneezing, runny nose and eyes
- fever
- vomiting
- diarrhea
- inflamed mouth and throat

Any child with a known communicable disease will not be received into the nursery or a classroom.

iii. Medications

It is the responsibility of the parents to administer any medication that a child may need. NLCC workers are not to give or apply any medication. Medications will not be left in the classroom. If medication is brought with the child and the parents are unavailable, it will be left with the ministry supervisor.

In extreme cases, where epi-pens or puffers are needed for allergies or asthma, arrangements will be made with an adult volunteer along with written instructions from the parent.

iv. First Aid Procedures

It is recommended that the appropriate pastor/leader arrange for first aid training for volunteers on an annual basis. A parent will be contacted when an injury, accident or medical emergency occurs.



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v. Injuries

Do not move the student if he/she is not moving on his/her own. If the student is moving, lead him/her out of the activity area. At least one witness as well as a leader will remain with the student for assistance, comfort and to confirm information on the incident report.

If the injury is severe and time is of the essence, immediately call an ambulance. A leader will accompany the child in the ambulance.

If a child needs to be driven to the hospital, a minimum of two individuals will accompany the injured person in the vehicle—the driver and another to care for the injured person.

If the parents cannot be reached, follow the instructions given on the consent form.

vi. Cuts or Injuries Involving Blood

Separate the injured child from the other children. Isolate the area where any blood may have dropped on carpet, toys, etc. Apply the following first aid measures:

- Wear latex gloves (available in the first-aid kit) and bandage the injury, avoiding contact with your mouth, ears and eyes.
- Carefully wipe up all blood and bloody bandages and remove to a secure, accessible waste removal receptacle.
- Wash away any blood on the floor or toys using a solution of one part bleach to ten parts water.
- Remove and properly dispose of latex gloves. Wash your hands carefully with sterilizing soap (available in first-aid kit).
- Inform the parents of any other child that may have come in contact with the blood.

Any special event should be pre-approved by the church leadership.

vii. Accident Report Form

As soon as possible after any event, complete an Accident Report Form (located in the church office) and advise the church leadership of the incident so they can determine whether the church insurance company needs to be notified.

11. SPECIAL EVENTS, FIELD TRIPS AND OVERNIGHT POLICIES

In conducting these events, the church insurance policy needs to be consulted to ensure that liability coverage is sufficient. Any child participating in the event must have a completed:

- Parental Consent Form
- Medical Waiver

i. Supervision

All supervising adults must be approved volunteers. There will be a minimum of two leaders at all times on any field trip or overnight event and they must be unrelated. Each leader should have an assigned group of children for whom they will be responsible during the event. All youth activities will have both male & female leaders.

The recommended leader/student ratio is:

- one volunteer for every 5 school aged children (up to Grade 5)
- one volunteer for every 10 middle school students (Grades 6-8)
- one volunteer for every 10 high school students (Grades 9-12)

Children or youth may not leave overnight events/retreats without permission while it is in progress. Guys and girls are not allowed in each other's rooms/tents for any reason during youth group overnight events. Guys and girls are not permitted to sleep in a mixed group.



ii. Transportation

When the transporting of children is involved in an activity, all drivers must have a valid driver's license, current driver's abstract and current automobile insurance—no driver should have an "N" (new driver status). The number of persons per car must never exceed the number of seat belts.

12. GUIDELINES FOR YOUTH MINISTRY

Youth are older children, generally twelve to eighteen years of age. Therefore, the Child and Youth Protection policy also applies to them. Due to the unique needs and nature of activities in this age group, additional guidelines have been identified.

i. Modeling and Mentoring

When we become involved in ministry our lives become models. Leaders should be committed to maintain a consistent spiritual life including prayer, Bible reading, attendance at youth events, planning meetings and worship services. As role models, youth staff members/volunteers are expected to refrain from activities that are illegal or could be considered morally and Biblically questionable. The issue of integrity is critical in both modeling and mentoring.

ii. Contacting Opportunities

It is recommended that in contacting opportunities, leaders meet with two to three students at a time. Any one-on-one lunch or coffee appointments with students will only have the following requirements:

- Inform the Youth Pastor prior to meeting with the student as to where and when you will be meeting.
- Separate transportation to and from the meeting place must be used or parental permission granted.
- Meet in a public place.

At no time will anyone working with youth have a one-on-one meeting behind a closed, windowless door. For your protection and for the safety of the youth, keep the door at least partially open or meet in a room with a window in the door.

iii. Dating

At no time will anyone working with teens pursue a dating relationship with a youth member. Should a dating relationship already exist within the youth group, this may limit either of the dating partners from becoming a volunteer leader. In any event, efforts will be made to ensure compliance with policy with appropriate role modeling. Leaders/volunteers should always be cautious regarding students with 'crushes'.

REPORTING PROCEDURES

13. WHO MUST REPORT

Any person who has reasonable grounds to believe that a child (or children) is in need of protection is legally required to report the matter as outlined in this document. A person who knowingly fails to report in these circumstances is in violation of the law and may be found to have committed an offense.

For working definitions of abuse and neglect, see the "Definitions of Child Abuse" section on page 6.

Social workers designated to receive reports are trained to investigate and assess the need for intervention. Other professionals must not assume this function. A professional who does so and fails to report commits an offense. The Act protects an individual when a report is made. No action would be taken against a person making a report unless it is made maliciously or without reasonable grounds for the belief.



14. SUSPICIOUS BEHAVIOUR

Ministry leaders should note when a youth or child appears aloof or withdrawn, or exhibits a marked personality change. This may indicate a problem that deserves attention. Any inappropriate conduct or relationship between adult volunteer workers and a youth or a child will be confronted immediately and investigated. Warnings will be issued when appropriate and the situation monitored very closely. For suspected physical or sexual abuse, we will immediately suspend the adult worker’s services pending the outcome of the investigation.

15. RESPONSE TO ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE

Be prepared in advance—no practical prevention strategy is 100% effective. An accusation of child sexual abuse may occur in any church. An effective response strategy recognizes the following underlying principles:

- All allegations are to be taken seriously.
- The alleged offender will be removed immediately from their position pending the outcome of the investigation.
- Situations must be handled forthrightly with due respect for privacy and confidentiality for the alleged victim and family, and alleged perpetrator.
- Full cooperation must be given to civil authorities under the guidance of our church lawyer.
- Adequate care must be shown for the well-being of victims and their families.
- The victim should not be held responsible in any way.

16. WHEN AN ALLEGATION OF ABUSE OCCURS

It is the responsibility of the pastoral staff to contact the local office of the Ministry for Children and Families. The only claim of confidentiality which overrides the legal duty to report is solicitor-client privilege. Thus physicians, clergymen and others who consider their professional relationships confidential for certain purposes are not exempt from the duty to report child abuse or neglect.

In the case of an actual allegation, follow these procedures:

- When the child comes to you, be sure to take his or her word seriously. Don’t deny the problem, but stay calm and listen to the child. Give emotional support, reminding the child that he or she is not at fault. Tell the child that he or she was right in telling you about the problem. Do not promise the child you will not tell anyone.
- As soon as possible after the incident comes to your attention, tell your ministry pastor. The ministry pastor will immediately notify the Executive Pastor. The Executive Pastor will consult the church’s lawyer. We will not admit legal liability or make public statements prior to obtaining legal counsel.
- Document the situation and all your efforts at handling the incident on the ‘Report Form Suspected Child Abuse’. It is important to keep the information restricted to those who need to be advised, therefore, all suspicions of abuse should be directed only to the pastor of that department or the Executive Pastor. A confidential written report with conclusions and action taken should always be made by the pastor heading up that ministry following a child abuse report. These reports should be kept in a confidential personnel file.

The Lead Pastor or his designate will be the only spokesperson for the church.

17. PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENTS OF ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE

The Lead Pastor or his designate will be the only spokesperson for the church. He will speak to the media and the congregation regarding the matter in a discreet, informed, truthful and diplomatic way. No one else is to speak to the media about the issue. If asked, the worker should direct them to the spokesperson.

In an allegation of abuse, until all of the facts are uncovered and the case is reviewed, the following statement is an example of a public response:

“It is always tragic when children are abused or exploited. NLCC is aware of the ever growing nature of child abuse.

NORTH LANGLEY COMMUNITY CHURCH CHILD PROTECTION POLICY



We have taken careful precautions to protect the children entrusted to our care. We are distressed by any accusation of child abuse. We will do everything in our power to address any needs in this situation. For the welfare of those involved, all information has been directed to the (insert name of appropriate agencies and authorities)."

This is a clear position statement of NLCC regarding child sexual abuse. The policies and established safeguards are included. A statement of "No comment" is not sufficient.

This is an opportunity to influence public opinion positively by emphasizing an awareness of the problem of child abuse, a concern for victims, and the extensive steps NLCC has taken to reduce the risk and provide a safe environment for children. It lets the media know that NLCC takes the risk of child abuse seriously, and have acted responsibly. NLCC will not engage in denial, minimization, or blame.

If it is proven that a ministry leader of NLCC has committed child abuse, the church will practice discipline according to Matthew 18:15-17, the policy manual of the church and the Ministry Covenant. The church must avoid any undue interference when a report of child abuse has been filed with the Department of Children and Families. The church should ask the agency how it can assist in helping and supporting the hurting child and his or her family. The church should maintain frequent communication and supportive relationships with those suspected or guilty of child abuse as long as these persons exhibit a willingness to listen, change and look to Christ for help. This does not exclude the need for hurting individuals to receive professional counseling.