

**OVERVIEW OF THE
BLOOMING GLEN MENNONITE CHURCH
CHILD PROTECTION REPORTING POLICY
FOR TEACHERS, GROUP LEADERS AND VOLUNTEERS**

Blooming Glen Mennonite Church has revised the Child Protection Reporting Policy in an effort to act appropriately when there is reason to suspect abuse of a child/youth in the care of a Blooming Glen Mennonite Church staff person or volunteer in compliance with Pennsylvania state law.

This brief overview is intended to act as an aid to those responsible for teaching and leading our children and youth. The complete policy may be found in the church office for those interested in reading the full policy. Pastoral staff or the Blooming Glen Child Protection Team (CPT) is available for any concerns about this policy or implementing it.

For our purposes, the term abuse is defined as sexual, physical or emotional abuse, neglect or exploitation of a child under the age 18. Sexual abuse is defined as the persuasion or coercion of any child to engage in or to assist any other person to engage in sexually explicit conduct. This includes rape, sexual assault, indecent exposure or any form of sexual exploitation of children or youth. It also includes photographing, videotaping, computer depiction of, or filming of any sexually explicit conduct.

Church staff and volunteers will follow these guidelines if there is suspected abuse or if approached by a child about an incident:

- It is required by law to report the incident **immediately** to Child Line (1-800-932-0313) OR submit a report electronically via the Child Welfare Portal (www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis)
- Report the incident to someone on the pastoral staff and the Blooming Glen Child Protection Team (CPT). Reporting should be done in a discreet and confidential manner. It should be understood by all involved that **reporting reflects care and concern** rather than disloyalty or recrimination. The church is not in a position to determine guilt but must be an advocate for the child/youth in any concerning situation. Reporters are protected from legal and civil liability if the report is made in good faith.

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- Stay calm and listen to the child.
- Take the child’s word seriously and secure the child’s safety. If the child is in imminent danger, seems fearful to return home after disclosure of abuse, has evidence of physical trauma or needs immediate medical attention, call 911.
- Give emotional support, reminding the child that he/she is not at fault and that he/she did the right thing in telling you about the problem.
- Assure the child that you will do everything you can to help, but **do not** tell the child that you will not tell anyone. Explain that in order to help, you must tell some other people. Do not ask leading questions of the child and do not make any suggestions to the child about what may/may not have occurred. Simply write down what the child says.
- Maintain complete confidentiality with regard to all conversations with the child. If you have occasion to speak with the accused adult, these conversations should also be held in confidence.
- If the alleged offender is a credentialed pastor, the members of the Child Protection Team will follow up with any necessary further reporting of misconduct.
- If any details of the incident become public, the Child Protection Team will appoint a designated spokesperson to be responsible for handling all communications.
- Reporting an alleged incident can be an emotional drain for the person reporting. Should the person reporting an alleged incident need support, they may contact a member of the pastoral staff for further help in personally dealing with the situation.

Child Protection Team

Maureen Gingerich, Charlotte Hunsberger, and Rick Kratz

revised June 6, 2015

 [Please sign, date, detach and return to Jen Hunsberger, Children Ministry Director’s mailbox]

***I have read and agree to abide by the Child Safety Guidelines and the
 Child Protection Reporting Policy.***

Print Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____