



CRCNA CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Overview

The CRCNA is committed to keeping children safe. We believe that all children have a right to be safe at all times, and that all children have equal rights to protection from all forms of abuse, neglect, and exploitation. Over the past few decades, we have all become increasingly aware of the particular risk of abuse and exploitation to children by those in positions of power and trust, including international and faith-based settings.

Scope

This policy is intended to apply to any work implemented or funded by the CRCNA, all CRCNA staff and volunteers.

Purpose

The policy applies to all people employed by, volunteering for, or providing services to the CRCNA or any of its agencies. Rather than adding to risks that children already face, the intention of this policy is to assist the CRCNA to value, support and protect children and childhood. This policy seeks to reduce risks to children as a result of the work of CRCNA agencies and ministries and to ensure that acts of abuse are identified and dealt with if they occur. It also seeks to reduce the risk to the CRCNA staff and volunteers of suspicion and allegation.

Principles

While compliance with applicable law is required, the philosophical basis of the Child Safeguarding Policy is informed by three main sources: a reading of Christian scriptures, CRCNA inherit values, and an understanding of good ministry practice:

- Christian scriptures teach that children and youth are to be cared for and protected; created in the image of God; belong to God and to God's family; are called and equipped by God; and are to be cared for and protected. We are called to nurture the faith of our children and youth; our faith is also nurtured by their example.
- The CRCNA has a commitment to the whole person, which encompasses not just physical, social, spiritual and emotional needs, but also understands needs and opportunities of a range of life stages.
- As an organization involved in community both domestically and internationally, we understand that effective ministry engages God's people of all ages, including children and young people. In other words, Jesus' welcome of the "these little ones" informs good ministry.

Policy

The CRCNA takes a zero tolerance approach to child abuse, respects children's right to participate, and will ensure priority is always given to the best interests of the child. Staff and volunteers are expected to take the same approach when developing and implementing programs and projects.

Whenever there are conflicting interests, the CRCNA will prioritize the rights, needs and welfare of the child will always come first – meeting the principle of the 'best interests of the child'.

Staff and volunteers will adhere to all child protection laws. This includes travel and work, as well as international laws and conventions in relation to all forms of child abuse and child exploitation, including but not limited to: child sex tourism, child sex trafficking, child labour, and child pornography.

Standards for Safeguarding Children

a) Safe Ideas

The CRCNA's Child Safeguarding Policy outlines the essential ideas, principles and standards that staff and volunteers and partner organizations are expected to work within. Guidelines that develop the ideas in this policy document and describe its implementation will be developed and regularly updated to ensure that they meet the needs of the organizations and keep up with good practice. This policy will be reviewed every three years.

b) Safe Behavior

The CRCNA has developed and will maintain a Code of Conduct that details acceptable and appropriate behavior for staff and volunteers. All staff and volunteers will be expected to sign and abide by the Code of Conduct annually.

c) Safe Plans

Any and all programs of the CRCNA agencies and ministries that engage children will include an assessment. As part of assessing and managing risks to children within our work, the CRCNA will identify aspects of local law relating to the protection of children and ascertain the resources available in various locations and jurisdictions for notification and assistance in the event that abuse is reported or suspected.

All Communications, including the use of images and children's information, will be undertaken in accordance with The CRCNA's Code of Conduct.

d) Skills for Safeguarding

All CRCNA and its agencies staff, volunteers and partners will be made aware of the Child Safeguarding Policy, including how to report a concern about abuse of children in CRCNA run or funded programs.

The CRCNA will communicate its Child Safeguarding Policy to relevant stakeholders, including children, in a form that is accessible for them and appropriate to their context and level of contact.

In addition, training will be made available to staff, tailored to the frequency and intensity of their contact with children in their work.

e) Reporting and Investigating Child Protection Concerns

Canada's provinces and territories all have child welfare agencies. These agencies, grouped together,

cover the entire country and are called the Canadian child welfare system. In Ontario under section 125 of the Child, Youth and Family Services Act **every person who has reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is or may be in need of protection must promptly report the suspicion and the information upon which it is based to a Children's Aid Society**. This includes persons who perform professional or official duties with respect to children, such as health care workers, teachers, operators or employees of child care programs or centres, police and lawyers. In 2018 the age of protection was raised to include youth up to 18 years old.

Canadian CRCNA staff must contact your local Children's Aid Society if they have concerns about a youth. Ontario's Child Protection Standards (2016) require every children's aid society to have protocols with the local police departments related to the investigation of allegations that a criminal act has been perpetrated against a child.

All Staff and Volunteers are required to report to their supervisor or to Human Resources, when they know of or have reasonable suspicion of abuse of a child or children. The supervisor, along with Human Resources will determine whether the concern being reported is handled as a complaint against a member of staff or volunteer, or whether it is dealt with in the context of a broader child protection program, and whether to involve legal counsel, law enforcement or other external parties. This policy details the procedure for confidential reporting of concerns about child safety, or allegations of abuse or non-compliance with this policy, and/or the CRCNA's Code of Conduct.

Child Safeguarding reporting procedures include the following minimum standards and should be read in conjunction with the Complaints Policy:

- Have clear procedures/guidelines for how staff and others should report a breach of the Code of Conduct by a staff member or other person associated with the CRCNA.
- Ensure that during any investigation, the safety of the child remains paramount, keeping in mind the best interests of the child at all times.
- Report any allegations or complaints to their supervisor or Human Resources (mandatory) and to management/authorities as appropriate.
- Human Resources in conjunction with Safe Church will review all reported cases, and determine whether a full investigation is necessary, ensuring that the safety of the child is the primary concern.
- If a staff member or other person associated with the CRCNA is alleged to have abused or exploited a child, they will be suspended from their post, or be assigned modified duties, until the investigation is concluded.
- Any member or other person associated with the CRCNA found to have abused or exploited a child will be dismissed from their post.
- Take any disciplinary measures necessary against staff or others if they are found to have any misconduct.
- Depending on the nature of the misconduct, provide support such as training and counseling, increased supervision or transfer to other duties, for staff whose behavior is unsuitable or incompatible with Christian kindness, but does not pose a significant risk to the safety of children, for example shouting at a child.
- Subject to all applicable legal requirements, the need to respond to any legal proceedings and as may be necessary for the proper investigation of an allegation, all information about child protection concerns and reports is to be kept confidential, discussed only with Human Resources and/or Safe church and any other parties designated by them according to reporting requirements.

The reporting process will be accessible for the CRCNA staff and volunteers and for children or families of children that may experience abuse in the course of the CRCNA program. All concerns and allegations

must be reported and followed up according to this policy, the Complaints Policy and requirements of relevant local laws. Human Resources, in consultation with other senior staff as appropriate, will determine the best response to concerns or allegations. This may include a report to an external authority or an internal investigation. The investigation may also recommend internal disciplinary measures, including dismissal. All information from reports and investigations will be carefully documented and stored confidentially.

f) Safe for All Children

The CRCNA staff and volunteers work across a range of jurisdictions, and are subject to state, regional, national and international laws. All children have equal and significant value, and should be safe within the programs or the CRCNA funded programs, wherever they come from.

g) Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed every three years. If there are any significant program or contextual changes, the policy may need to be reviewed more frequently. Child Safeguarding policy requirements are included in partnership agreements where children will interface with partner agencies, contractors, vendors, and consultants.

Key Terms

Abuse: Where the term “abuse” is used in this policy it should be understood to include sexual, physical and emotional abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

Child or Minor: A person under the age of 18 (a child according to the definition in the Convention for the Rights of the Child).

Child Protection: In its widest sense, child protection is a term used to describe the actions that individuals, organizations, countries, and communities take to protect children from acts of “harm”, maltreatment (abuse) and exploitation e.g., domestic violence, exploitative child labour, commercial and sexual exploitation and abuse, deliberate exposure to HIV infection, physical violence to name but a few.

Child Safeguarding: safeguarding is the set of internal facing, operational policies, procedures and practices that we employ to ensure that our organization itself is a child safe organization. This means we ensure that:

- Anyone who represents our organization behaves appropriately towards children and never abuses the position of trust that comes with being a member of our organizational family.
- Everyone associated with the organization is aware of and responds appropriately to issues of child abuse and the sexual exploitation of children.
- We create a child-safe environment in all of our activities by always assessing and reducing potential risks to children.
- We are driven by the duty of care that we have to children.

Contact with children: Any interaction with or proximity to children. This includes both intentional and incidental contact.

Working with children: Implementing activities directly with children.