

# **SAFE ENVIRONMENT POLICY**

## ***(PREVENTIE EN INTEGRITEITSBELEID: GEDRAGSCODE EN OMGANGSREGELS)***

STICHTING REDEEMER INTERNATIONAL CHURCH DELFT, October 2021

### **Church Details**

Voorstraat 107  
2611JM Delft

KvK nr. 73364274  
RSIN nr: 859487830

### **Mission Statement**

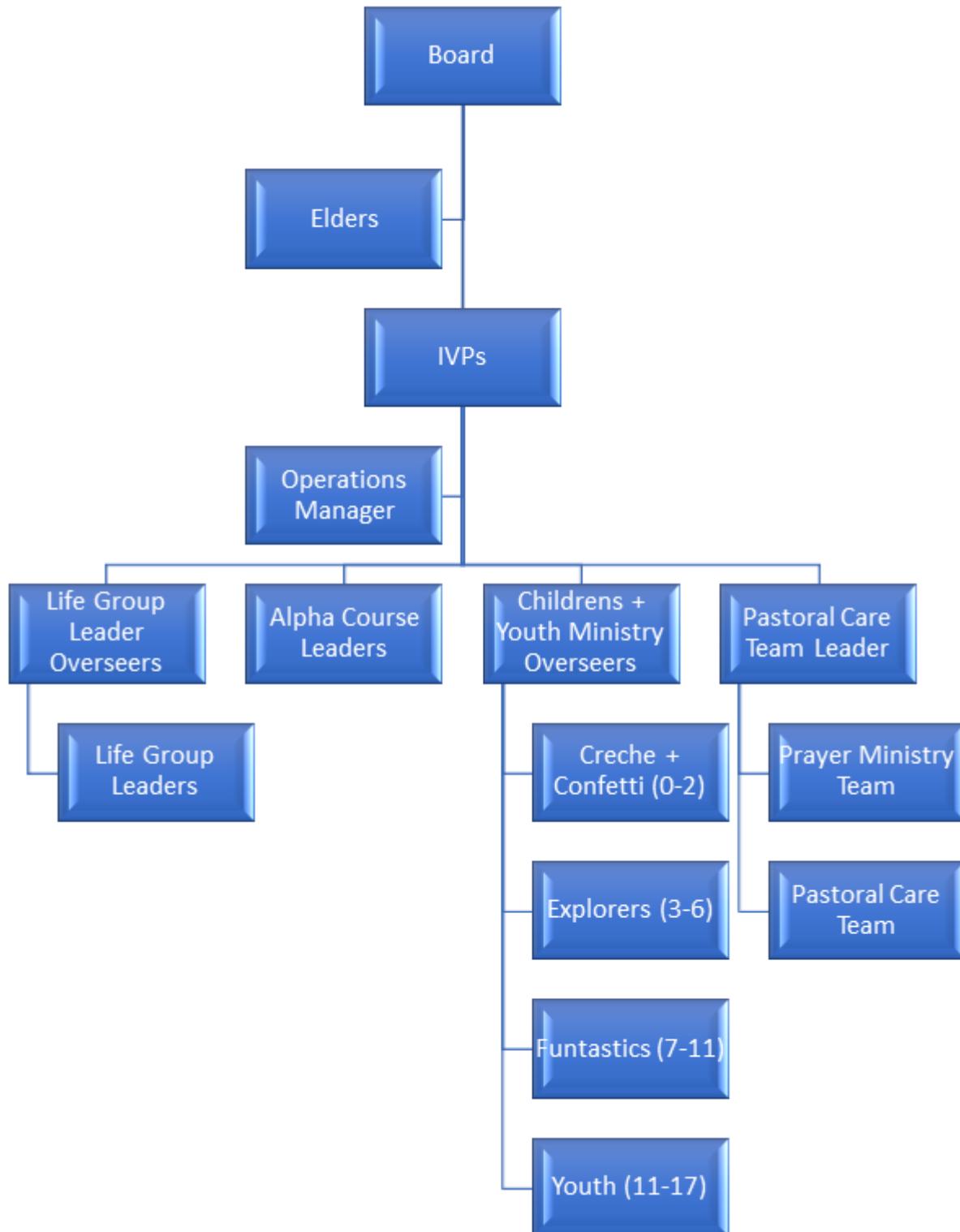
Redeemer International Church (Redeemer) recognises that its congregation and visitors include people of all ages including those considered to be vulnerable. They have much to give as well as to receive. The Church aims to provide a safe and secure environment within which everyone will be treated with respect and dignity as they are nurtured in developing the right relationship with God.

### **Policy Statement**

The Church:

- takes seriously the responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of all people entrusted to its care
- recognises that responsibility for Vulnerable Adults, Children and Young People lies initially with parents, guardians and carers.
- is committed to encouraging and supporting carers and parents
- considers the impact of its plans and decisions on everyone
- ensures that workers are responsibly appointed and given support and training
- adheres to good practice guidelines
- has detailed guidelines and procedures relating to suspicions or allegations of abuse, and ensures that these procedures are known to and followed by all workers

# Safe Environment Organisation: Redeemer Delft



## **Making this policy known**

At the first interview, all prospective volunteers (and employees) who will work with children, young people and vulnerable adults will be given access to this policy and asked to read it through carefully. It must be understood and signed before work begins (see Form below).

This policy should also be read alongside the **Recruitment Policy (*Aannamebeleid*)**: a separate document.

## **Policy update and development: *Stappenplan***

This policy will be continually updated. It is part of the *Stappenplan* produced by [veiligekerkerk.nl](http://veiligekerkerk.nl)

## **Meldpunt**

Redeemer participates in Stichting Evangelisch Meldpunt (SEM): <https://www.wijzijnsem.nl/>. The purpose of this is explained at 'Responding to abuse': para 3.3. below.

## **Code of Conduct and Behaviour (*Omgangsregels*) : All employees and volunteers**

The following code is to be observed by all employees and volunteers. Although only children are mentioned here (for the sake of brevity) it applies equally to all people, whether young or old.

- Treat all children with dignity and respect in your attitude, language, and actions.
- Avoid any physical contact which could be considered sexually suggestive.
- Respect the privacy of children in a way befitting their age when they are showering, toileting etc. Where appropriate, ask the child if help is required. Toddlers should not be accompanied to the toilet by men.
- Never engage in intrusive touching of a child in any form. Any physical contact with a child should be in public, should be related to the child's needs, should be appropriate to the age of the child and should normally be initiated by the child.
- Be aware of any excessive attention-seeking behaviour from children, especially any behaviour which is physical or overtly sexual and should not be drawn into such situations. Consult your team leader as soon as any such situation develops.
- If you have to give personal care to a child (eg. changing a child who has been sick) this should be done in a way in which the privacy of the child can be maintained while ensuring that there is no undue intimacy. If possible more than one adult should be involved or you should ensure that another adult is within earshot.
- Avoid any comments or remarks which could be construed as being sexually suggestive even in 'fun' and should avoid being drawn into any such conversation if a young person initiates it.
- Do not allow or engage in any scapegoating, ridiculing or verbally rejecting a child or young person or make discriminatory remarks of any kind. You should at all times try to present a positive, affirming role model for the children.
- Be aware of any potential bullying situations within a group and should remember that bullying can be verbal as well as physical. You should confront any bullying and should avoid appearing to give encouragement by ignoring it or laughing at remarks.
- Recognise the potential vulnerability of all workers both to temptation and to false allegations. You are accountable to other workers and they, in turn, are also accountable to you. If you see another worker acting in ways which might be misconstrued, you should speak to them first about your concerns and if necessary (for example: if they do not take heed) tell your team leader also.

## **Interne Vertrouwenspersoon**

The Interne Vertrouwenspersoon (IVP)'s overriding responsibility is to oversee the church's Safe Environment Organisation. In accordance with best practice, Redeemer has two IVPs. They are: Josha Moerman ([josha@redeemerdelft.nl](mailto:josha@redeemerdelft.nl)) and Riemer te Velde ([riemer@redeemerdelft.nl](mailto:riemer@redeemerdelft.nl)) The primary reactive duty of the IVPs is to handle allegations brought to them and decide to who to refer this on to. They will also ensure this policy is complied with within the church. The IVPs are appointed by the Board of Redeemer.

## **Detailed Procedures**

### **Supervision (adult-to-child ratio)**

At any given event or Sunday meeting, we aim to have (at each childrens' and youth activity) a minimum of two adult workers (preferably both male and female) so that children can relate to workers of the same gender. Should there be more than 10 children present we will strive to increase the number of adult supervisors accordingly. Counselling or matters of a confidential nature should be conducted by an adult of the same gender as the child or young person present, with two leaders to one child in personal meetings.

Leaders of church activities, when parents are not present, should keep a register of names and should record arrival and departure of children.

### **Incidents**

An incident log should be maintained for all group activities. The activity leader should ensure that any incident which causes concern is recorded. This recording should include details of the incident, names of those involved, action taken and any future action required. The IVP will check these logs every 6 months.

Kids' and Youth workers on duty should be aware of who is on duty from the Emergency Response Team (BHV) and where the First Aid Kits are. A qualified First Aider (BHV) should be available at all activities and any First Aid must be administered by that person. Minor First Aid should be given either in public or in a room with the door ajar. If First Aid requires privacy, two adults should be present. All instances of First Aid should be recorded.

## **Outings & Overnight trips**

When children or youth are taken on outings, written parental consent should be obtained in advance, with contact details, medical details, doctor's phone number and medical insurance details. As far as possible, a child or youth should not be alone in a car with an adult. Where this is unavoidable for short journeys (e.g. the last of a group to be dropped off at home) the child should be asked to sit in the back of the car.

When groups are taken for overnight trips, care should be taken to ensure that sleeping arrangements are appropriate. All bedrooms/dormitories should be single gender and workers should not share sleeping accommodation with children.

## **Discipline**

The kids and youth workers have the right to verbally correct and discipline the kids or youth entrusted to their care. This should be done in a loving way and upbuilding way.

Physical punishment should NEVER be used on any child in your care. You should learn how to use positive discipline. Seek help if you have problems with discipline and control.

There may be occasions when it is necessary to restrain a child to ensure the physical safety of the child or of other children or workers. Such restraint should only be used in emergency, should last for as short a time as possible, should use only the minimum force necessary to ensure safety and should always be immediately reported to your kids/youth ministry leader. If safety permits, do not engage in restraint without another worker present. Always use your voice before you use your hands. If the situation allows, ask for help from the child's parents.

All problems encountered with discipline need to be reported to parents immediately if present in the building or afterwards preferably by a visit but if not by phone or letter. Any further discipline required needs to be in agreement with and consent from the parent and in conjunction with the stated rules of the group. Children need to be reminded about the rules of the group on a regular basis.

If children or youth do not listen to the kids or youth workers during an event, they can be sent back to the parents (when they are in the building), or parents can be called to pick up their child.

All parents and guardians should be informed of discipline procedures when the child or young person joins the age group and should be incorporated in any written information to parents.

## Counselling, coaching, discipleship

You should only be alone with a child, youth or vulnerable adult in exceptional circumstances. Coaching, prayer and discipleship should take place in a group environment.

- In a counselling situation with a child, youth or vulnerable person, where privacy and confidentiality are essential, you should make sure another adult knows the conversation is taking place as well as when and where. Another adult should be in the building, and where at all possible within sight and the person should know this. **All such counselling must generally be by an adult of the same gender.** The parent or carer must always be notified, except in cases where they are possibly causing harm to the person concerned.
- If you are seeing someone individually off-site for any reason (befriending, discipling etc) this should be with the knowledge of the group leader and with the parent/carer's consent. If possible, such meetings should be in public places and another adult of the same gender as the child should be present. No young person, child or vulnerable adult should be invited to your home alone.

## Digital Communications

Before communicating digitally with children and persons under 18 permission must first be sought from parents/guardians. Emails sent to them must also be copied to the parents/guardians.

Communication via digital means (social media (e.g., Instagram) with the kids or youth *individually* is not permitted. An exception, however, would be messages regarding practical arrangements for ministry related purposes, such as: preparing a song for the next meeting.

It is allowed for the youth leaders to have an Instagram group or something similar with the youth. In this group there should be more than 1 youth worker and more than 1 youth. Communication via this medium is strongly preferred over sending a personal message to youth, as it is far more transparent.

If not communicating with kids or teens personally via digital means causes a challenge, this should be immediately discussed with the team leader or with the Childrens and Youth Ministry Overseers.

## **Incident Reporting Procedure (*Meldprotocol*)**

The reporting of incidents happens in three stages: recognition of abuse, responding to abuse, and recording of information. Below is specific to child abuse, but much of this can apply to anyone.

### **Recognising Abuse**

#### **Definition of child abuse**

Abuse is categorised into four categories and is defined as:

- Physical abuse: the child is hit, kicked, pinched, burnt etc.
- Psychological abuse (emotional): the child is rejected, terrorized, incited to behave in a strange or anti- social manner: extreme demands are placed on a person. The child may be psychologically neglected, isolated, ignored.
- Sexual abuse: the child is forced to endure sexual actions and/or to carry out sexual actions.
- Physical neglect: care (medical/physical) and/or safety is withheld from the child, or they do not get sufficient food or clothing.

#### **Signs of abuse**

The following signs may indicate abuse but they should not be taken in isolation. Do not jump to conclusions. There could be other explanations.

- Any injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them
- Any signs of self-harm. These might include cutting, substance abuse etc
- Injuries on parts of the body which are not normally exposed to falls, rough play etc
- Significant bruising over a period of time that the child is reluctant about or tries to cover up
- Illnesses or injuries which have not received appropriate medical treatment
- Inappropriate clothing and/or poor health and hygiene
- Eating disorders or significant weight loss
- Changes in mood or behaviour, particularly where a child withdraws or becomes clinging

- Unusual depression or aggression
- Sudden instances of running away, stealing or lying
- Frozen watchfulness or flinching
- Severe sleep disturbances with fears, phobias, vivid dreams or nightmares.
- Any allegations made by a child concerning abuse against them

It is important to record things as one off observations may be nothing but over time a pattern may emerge that needs dealing with. At the same time, there is such a thing (in the case of children) as bad parenting and this is not necessarily abusive.

## Responding to abuse

If abuse is suspected, disclosed or discovered:

**Do NOT Delay**

**Do NOT Start To Investigate**

**Do NOT Contact Alleged Abusers**

**Do NOT Discuss With Friends**

### 1. How to REACT to someone who wants to talk about abuse

If a child tells you about abuse they have suffered they have chosen you because they trust you and think you will know what to do to help. It is important that you react in a way which will be helpful and supportive to the child. It is not easy to give precise guidance but the following may be of help and should be followed wherever possible. Please also notify a team or ministry leader that you will be meeting with the child and make sure he/she is aware of when and where the conversation is taking place and is in the building should you need support.

**DO NOT** - agree to keep the information secret

**DO NOT** - say or suggest that you are shocked

**DO NOT** - say or suggest that you don't believe the child

**DO NOT** - ask questions

**DO NOT** - make false promises

**DO** - explain to the child at the outset that you may have to tell someone else if you think it is necessary

**DO** - remain calm and supportive

**DO** - show acceptance of what the child says

**DO** - reassure the child that they were right to tell you

**DO** - tell the child what you are going to do next

Immediately after the person has spoken to you, you should write down exactly what you have been told by the person. Use the person's words as much as possible. Do not add anything - even your own opinions or feelings or what you think might have happened. Date and sign these notes and keep them in a safe place (see 'Recording of Information' below).

## **2. Inform an IVP immediately.**

The best person to inform is an IVP, either: Miss Josha Moerman (josha@redeemerdelft.nl) or Mr Riemer te Velde (riemer@redeemerdelft.nl). They will know best how to respond further. If this is what you choose to do, record it in the incident log and leave it with them: your responsibility ends there, do not involve yourself further. If, for whatever reason, you are unable to inform an IVP then do the following:

## **3. If IVP unavailable - the THREE scenarios:**

Broadly speaking, there are three potential scenarios of concern, each needing a separate response:

### **1. Allegations of domestic violence, incest, abuse within a family**

If domestic violence, incest or other abuse within a family (i.e., not on church premises or during church events) is suspected, or if there is anything that gives serious concern about someone's welfare in a family situation, contact Veilig Thuis ('Safe at Home'):

#### **Veilig Thuis Haaglanden**

Westeinde 128

2512 HE Den Haag

**Telefoon:** 070-3469717. Is er direct gevaar? Bel dan met 112

info@veiligthuis Haaglanden.nl

It is possible to ask for advice from Veilig Thuis without having to name the person or the parents. If required, Veilig Thuis can record the details under the name of the person asking for the advice. If the church later on requires further advice about the same person, the details can thereby be retrieved without having to give the name of the person. If the church does eventually decide to report the matter officially then earlier recorded information will be available. Once a report is officially made to Veilig Thuis the responsibility for initiating help lies with Veilig Thuis. This is help for the family by agreement and may be through Veilig Thuis or other agencies.

If the matter is so serious that you think it is unsafe for the person to return home, you should inform your team leader, and if at all possible while the person

is still with you. Remember, that you have the right, as a member of the public, to contact Veilig Thuis or the police if you have serious concerns over the welfare and safety of a person. You can (anonymously) report a person's situation or ask for advice. In either situation you can choose whether or not to reveal the name of the person and his or her family.

## **2. Allegations of abuse (i.e., punishable offences (*strafbare feiten*))**

If the information disclosed concerns abuse, inform: your team leader, one of the elders, and the Police. In an emergency situation when you are unable to reach an appropriate person in the church you may have to take the step of informing the Police alone. If you believe the alleged abuse to be **acute or life-threatening** you should report it directly to the Raad voor de Kinderbescherming (Council for the protection of personren) or to the jeugd en zedenpolitie (Youth and Vice police) within 24 hours.

## **3. Allegations of inappropriate behaviour by leaders (meaning people in a leadership position of any sort).**

If the allegation concerns a leader (person or youth worker, life group leader or even a deacon or elder) and their relationship with an adult in the congregation, do not contact another leader, but rather contact the church's Meldpunt:

**Stichting Evangelisch Meldpunt (SEM):**

**Telephone:** 085 4881440 (within office hours) or email via:  
<https://www.wijzijnsem.nl/melden-contact>

SEM is a party external to the church and to New Ground. They may also be contacted for advice should there be any concerns of behaviour by a leader towards an under-age person. More over Redeemer's membership of SEM can be found on <https://www.redeemerdelft.nl/> at: Redeemer and Stichting Evangelisch Meldpunt (SEM)

After you have informed the appropriate person, you no longer have direct responsibility for dealing with the situation. The Social Services and/or police may want to interview you in the course of an investigation.

It can be distressing to hear of abuse for perhaps the first time and you may need support and reassurance yourself. The Elders will ensure that this support is offered. You should not share your information with anyone else. Confidentiality should be respected for the sake of the person and the family.

Your care and prayers will be invaluable to the person and the family in what may well prove to be a difficult and disruptive time for everyone. The church leaders will be responsible for any other issues of pastoral care, which arise from an abuse situation.

## **Recording of information**

Every team leader must keep, under the **strictest** security, an incident log accessible only to them and the elders. Anything causing concern during an event in their team activity (including injuries and first aid) must be recorded. These logs will also be made available to any lawful civil authority entitled to view them in the proper course of their investigation.