

# **SAFE CHURCH POLICY (formerly “Safe Environment Policy”)**

## ***(PREVENTIE EN INTEGRITEITSBELEID)***

STICHTING REDEEMER INTERNATIONAL CHURCH DELFT, Dec 2022

### **Church Details**

Postbus 1088  
2600 BB Delft

KvK nr. 73364274  
RSIN nr: 859487830

### **Mission Statement**

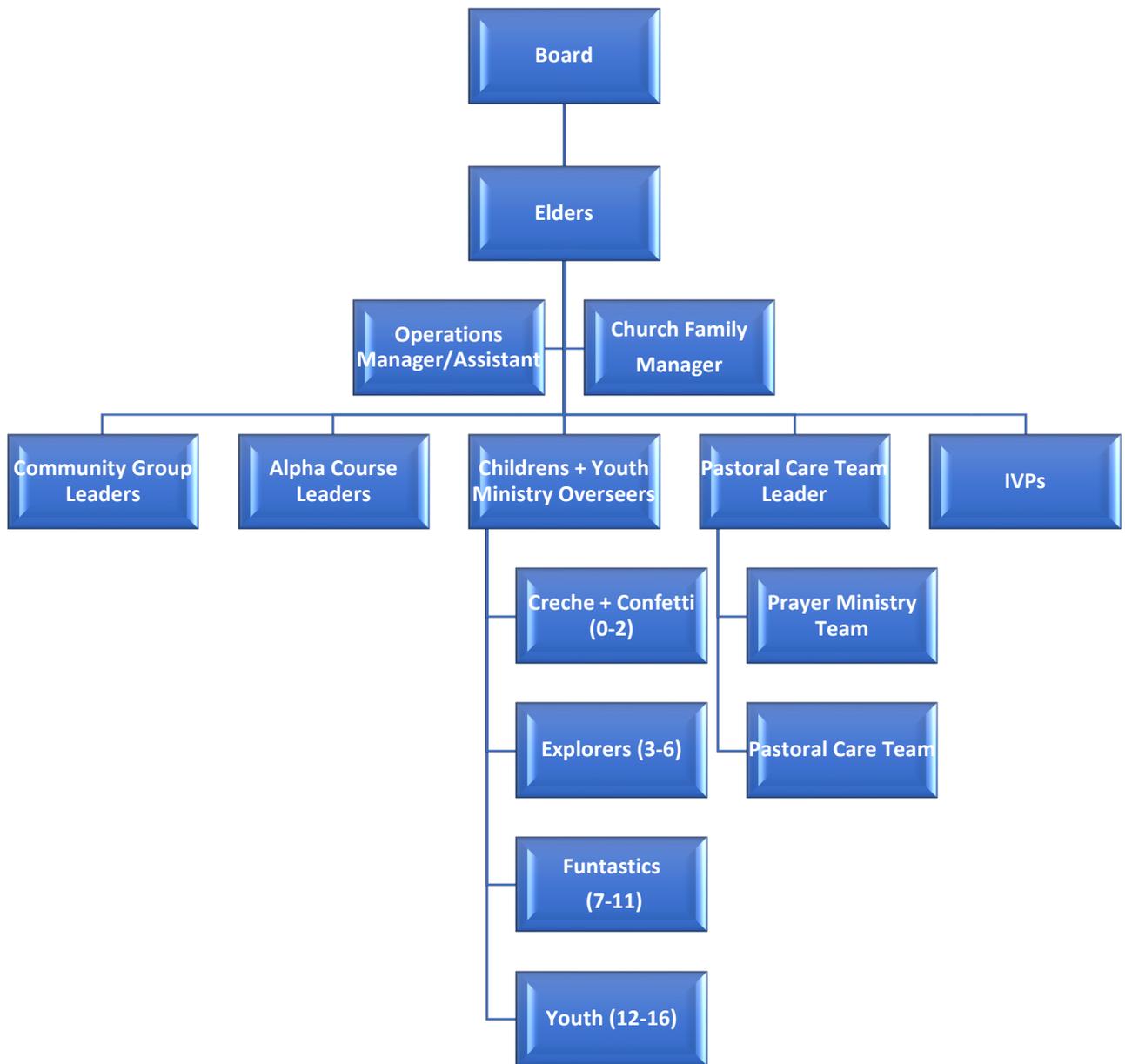
Redeemer International Church Delft (Redeemer) recognises that its congregation and visitors include people of all ages including those considered to be vulnerable. They have much to give as well as to receive. The Church aims to provide a safe and secure environment within which everyone will be treated 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 Church 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 must 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 [veiligekekerk.nl](http://veiligekekerk.nl)

## **Meldpunt**

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

## **Code of Conduct and Behaviour (*Gedragscode en 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 everyone with dignity and respect in your attitude, language, and actions.
- The person with the more senior role is always responsible for safeguarding the purity of the relationship
- Avoid any physical contact which could be considered sexually suggestive.
- If you have to give personal care to someone (eg. physical needs), do so in a way in which maintains their privacy 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.
- 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 anyone. Any physical contact with a child, for example, 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 anyone, especially any behaviour which is physical or overtly sexual. You must not be drawn into any such situations. Consult your team leader as soon as any such situation appears to develop.
- Avoid any comments or remarks which could be construed as being sexually suggestive even in 'fun' and avoid being drawn into any such conversation, whoever initiates it.
- Do not allow or engage in any scapegoating, ridiculing, or discrimination. You should at all times try to present a positive, affirming role model.
- Be aware of any potential bullying situations within a group and remember that bullying can be verbal as well as physical. You must confront any bullying and not appear to condone it by ignoring it or laughing at it.
- 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 Vertrouwenspersonen (IVPs) develop and generate initiatives, in consultation with the Board of Redeemer, aimed at preventing the perpetration or experience of sexual abuse within the church. In this they use the Stappenplan Veilig Jeugdwerk.

The IVPs are the first point of contact in the event of allegations of sexual abuse:

- (1) by those in the church who have, or have had, an official role
- (2) and during the exercise of this role have been guilty, or are becoming guilty of such.

In accordance with best practice Redeemer Delft has two IVPs, appointed by the Board of Redeemer Delft. Currently they are: Josha Moerman ([josha@redeemerdelft.nl](mailto:josha@redeemerdelft.nl)) and Riemer te Velde ([riemer@redeemerdelft.nl](mailto:riemer@redeemerdelft.nl)).

## **Detailed Procedures**

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

At any given event or Sunday meeting, we aim to have (at each minors' activity) a minimum of two adult workers (preferably both male and female) so that minors can relate to workers of the same gender. Should there be more than 10 minors 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 minor present, with two leaders to one minor 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 minors.

### **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.

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 minors 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 minor 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 person 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 minors.

## **Discipline**

All workers have the right to verbally correct and discipline the people entrusted to their care. This should be done in a loving way and upbuilding way.

Physical punishment should NEVER be used on anyone 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 someone to ensure the physical safety of themselves and others. Such restraint should only be used in an 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 ministry leader. If safety permits, do not engage in restraint without another worker present. If the situation allows, ask for help from the person's parent/carer.

If someone refuses to cooperate with safety and disciplinary instructions, the worker should return them to their parents/carers. If the parent/carer is not present they should be contacted immediately.

All problems encountered with discipline need to be reported to parents/carers immediately if present in the building or afterwards (preferably by a visit) but if not by phone or letter.

All parents and carers should be informed both verbally and in writing of these procedures when someone joins an activity.

## **Counselling, coaching, discipleship**

You should never be alone with a minor or vulnerable adult. 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 always within sight (and the person must know this). All such counselling must 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. Such meetings must be in public places and another adult of the same gender as the child should be present. No minor or vulnerable adult should be invited to your home alone.

### **Digital Communications**

Before communicating digitally with minors, permission must first be sought from parents and carers. If such permission is granted, emails sent to minors must nevertheless also be copied to the parents/guardians/carers.

Communication with minors *individually*, via digital means and social media is not permitted. It is permissible for the youth leaders to have an Instagram group or something similar with the youth: this is the most transparent way of communicating. This group must contain, however, more than 1 adult worker and more than 1 youth.

### **Photo / Video Consent**

Parents and guardians must indicate in ChurchSuite their consent (or non-consent) for photos and videos of their children to be used in Redeemer Church media. They must also respect their children's wishes when setting these consents. Use of any such media will be strictly in accordance with Redeemer's [Privacy and Data Protection Policy](#).

All Childrens and Youth ministry leaders are to strictly observe these consent settings. First-time and occasional visitors are not expected to create and complete ChurchSuite accounts: until they have done so, no photos or videos of their children may be taken.

## **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** - 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](mailto:josha@redeemerdelft.nl)) or Mr Riemer te Velde ([riemer@redeemerdelft.nl](mailto: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@veiligthuishaaglanden.nl](mailto:info@veiligthuishaaglanden.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 persons) 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.wijzijnssem.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.

## **Safe Church Policy Agreement: Staff and Volunteers working with children, youth and vulnerable adults**

Name (BLOCK CAPITALS) .....

1. I understand the nature of the work I am to do with: *(name of group.....)*

2. I understand that I will be directly accountable to:

*Name of team leader/coordinator: (.....)*  
and that he/she will be responsible for directing me and supporting me in my work.

3. I have read and understand the Church's Safe Church Policy. I understand that it is my duty to contribute to the protection of everyone with whom I come into contact. I declare that I have never engaged in any form of child abuse including child pornography. I don't feel sexually attracted to children. I undertake to take the appropriate action if abuse is suspected, discovered or disclosed.

4. I understand that this document will be continually updated and I commit to comply wholeheartedly with it at all times. I commit to periodically undertake training as offered or recommended by the church.

**Signature.....Date.....Place.....**

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### **TEAM LEADER/COORDINATOR:**

**Name.....Signature.....**

**Date.....Place.....**