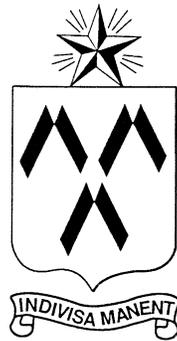


# Bethlehem University



This Statue of the Child Jesus atop De LaSalle Hall is the highest point on Bethlehem University's campus. The protection of children and young people and promotion of their rights is a priority of Bethlehem University.

## CHILD PROTECTION POLICY (CPP)

Adopted by Executive Council of Bethlehem University 22 October 2013

# POLICY STATEMENT

Bethlehem University sets as one its goals the promotion of the rights of children and young people. Therefore, Bethlehem University is committed to ensuring all possible measures are taken to promote the welfare of children, to champion their rights and to protect them from harm, exploitation and abuse. The policies and procedures of Bethlehem University will be consistent with all existing and future civil legislation on child protection and welfare.

## THE PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY

The vast majority of Bethlehem University Students are adults; a very small number of students turn 18 during their freshman year. The University has community outreach programs where students and staff come in contact with children. Children are routinely guests of the University.

The purpose of this policy is to keep all children associated with Bethlehem University safe. The policy communicates that the University is committed to keeping children and young people in their care safe. It makes clear to everyone that children must be protected, helps to create a safe and positive environment for children, and shows that the University is taking its duty of care seriously.

## ADVANTAGES OF IMPLEMENTING A CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

### 1. CHILDREN ARE PROTECTED

No policy can offer complete protection for children, but following this policy minimizes the risk to children of abuse and exploitation. A “child” means a person under the age of 18 years. An “adult” is a person 18 years of age and over.

### 2. BETHLEHEM UNIVERSITY FACULTY AND STAFF ARE PROTECTED

By implementing this policy all faculty and staff of Bethlehem University will be clear about how they are expected to behave with children and what to do if there are concerns about the safety of a child.

### 3. THE UNIVERISTY IS PROTECTED

By implementing this policy Bethlehem University makes a clear commitment to keeping children safe. The policy also aims to move the faculty and staff of Bethlehem University towards best practice in this area and deter potential abusers from joining the faculty and staff.

## UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES

What follows is a set of Underlying Principles that informs Bethlehem University’s policy on safeguarding children. These principles are consistent with our mission and professional commitment.

1. As Educators our first responsibility is to create safe environments for children and young people and to protect them from any form of harm or abuse.
2. Duty of Care: everybody has a responsibility to support the care and protection of children.
3. All children have equal rights to protection from abuse and exploitation. We must intervene on behalf of any child suspected of being abused.
4. Bethlehem University faculty and staff must first listen attentively and then offer a compassionate, just and prompt response to any person alleging any form of abuse. As Educators we have a responsibility of care both to the “victim” and to his or her family.
5. A staff member (or a student of adult age) accused of abuse also deserves to be treated with compassion.
6. Honesty and transparency should characterize all of our actions.

## ASPECTS OF CHILD ABUSE

The following are what is understood as abuse when dealing with children at Bethlehem University

**Physical abuse:** any actions that cause harm to children including exploitation of children in various forms of hard labor.. It also involves the failure to act to protect children.

**Emotional abuse:** this involves emotional ill-treatment of children such as confinement, isolation, verbal aggression or assault, humiliation or making demeaning, derogatory statements, intimidation, intentionally frightening or threatening the child, purposely subjecting the child to inappropriate behaviour or any other treatment which may diminish the sense of identity, dignity, and self-worth of the child.

**Sexual abuse:** this involves contact or interaction between a minor (18 years or under) and an adult when the minor is being used for sexual stimulation of the adult. This occurs when an adult engages a minor in any sexual activity, including direct sexual contact, as well as sexual non-contact, such as exhibitionism, and the distribution, downloading, and/or intentional viewing of child pornography.

**Neglect:** This includes physical neglect, denying or delaying medical care, failure and inability to provide adequate care and protection or inadequate supervision (leaving a small child unattended), keeping the child in a dangerous environment, or any omission where a child suffers significant harm or impaired development.

**Bullying** can be perpetrated by children or adults. “Bullying” means systematically and chronically inflicting physical hurt or psychological distress on one or more students or employees. It is further defined as: unwanted purposeful written, verbal, nonverbal, or physical behavior, including but not limited to any threatening, insulting, or dehumanizing gesture, by an adult or student, that has the potential to create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment or cause long term damage; cause discomfort or humiliation; or unreasonably interfere with the individual’s academic performance or participation, is carried out repeatedly and is often characterized by an imbalance of power.

## EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE

Everyone in contact with children has a role to play in their protection. They can only carry out this role confidently and effectively if they have the right attitude towards children, are sufficiently aware of child protection issues and have the necessary knowledge and skills to keep children safe. Education Institutions working with children have a responsibility to provide training and development opportunities for their staff to learn more about keeping children safe. There should be learning opportunities for staff to develop and maintain the necessary skills and understanding to keep children safe.

The following procedure will be followed when a new member of staff commences work at Bethlehem University:

1. All new candidates for employment at Bethlehem University will be required to sign a form declaring any ongoing or previous court convictions or investigations.

2. All staff will be provided with a copy of the Child Protection Policy for Bethlehem University when they are recruited and required to sign a document stating that they have received, read, understood and agreed to abide by the policy;
3. At the beginning of each school year the staff will review the CPP.
4. Every 3 years the Executive Council will review and if needed revise the CPP.

## CHILD PROTECTION OFFICER (CPO)

Bethlehem University has appointed a Child Protection Officer CPO whose responsibility is to:

1. Ensure that all faculty and staff are aware of the University's CPP and guidelines of behavior.
2. Provide periodic CPP in-service training for faculty and staff.
3. Receive and refer reports of abuse

The child protection officer for Bethlehem University at the time of the CPP's adoption is Dr. Michael Sansur, Executive Vice President (Clinical Psychologist). The identity and contact information of the CPO will be published in the Annual Personnel Directory

## GUIDELINES ON BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS CHILDREN

At Bethlehem University we believe that Children should experience a safe, positive and encouraging atmosphere. The written standards of behavior for everyone should define what acceptable and unacceptable behavior towards children is.

These guidelines help minimize opportunities for abuse and help prevent false allegations being made against faculty, staff, adult age students, and other representatives of the University. This policy also promotes a culture that ensures children are listened to and respected as individuals. Discrimination, prejudice, or oppressive behavior or languages in relation to any of the following are not acceptable: race, culture, age, gender, disability, religion, sexuality or political views.

Adults are expected to be positive role models for Minors, and act in a caring, honest, respectful and responsible manner that is consistent with the mission of the University. Adults covered by this Policy must conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the following expectations and to avoid conduct that could cause harm to Minors as follows:

1. DO supervise Minors at all times while on University property, in University facilities, or while participating in a University-sponsored off-campus activity.
2. DO NOT have one-on-one contact with a Minor outside the presence of others. If one-on-one interaction is required, meet in open, well-illuminated spaces or rooms with windows observable by other Adults, unless the one-on-one interaction is expressly authorized by a Program Director, Dean, or Department Chair or is being undertaken by a health care provider.
3. DO NOT meet with Minors outside of established times for University activities.
4. DO NOT invite Minors to your home.
5. DO NOT engage in any sexual activity, make sexual comments, tell sexual jokes, or share sexually explicit material with Minors, or assist in any way to provide access to such material.
6. DO NOT engage or allow Minors to engage you in romantic or sexual conversations, or related matters, unless required in the role of counselors or health care providers.
7. DO NOT engage or communicate with Minors through e-mail, text messages, social networking websites, internet chat rooms, or other forms of social media at any time except and unless there is an educational or programmatic purpose and the content of the communication is consistent with the mission of the University.

8. DO NOT touch Minors in a manner that a reasonable person could interpret as inappropriate. Touching should generally only be in the open and in response to the Minor's needs, for a purpose that is consistent with the University's mission, and/or for a clear educational, developmental, or health-related (i.e., treatment of an injury) purpose. Any resistance from the Minor should be respected.
9. DO NOT engage in any abusive conduct of any kind toward, or in the presence of a Minor, including but not limited to verbal abuse, striking, hitting, punching, poking, spanking, or restraining. If restraint is necessary to protect a Minor or other Minors from harm, all incidents must be documented and disclosed to the Child Protection Officer.
10. DO NOT share a bed or sleeping bag with a Minor.
11. DO NOT shower, bathe, or undress with or in the presence of a Minor or be present in a communal bathroom at any time when a Minor is showering or bathing.
12. DO NOT make pornography or films/pictures of violence and drug abuse in any form available to a Minor or assist them in any way in gaining access or allowing access to pornography and material showing violence or drug abuse.
13. DO NOT engage in intimate displays of affection towards others in the presence of Minors.
14. DO NOT use, possess, or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs while on duty or when responsible for a Minor's welfare, or when otherwise in the presence of a Minor during the course of your University duties.
15. DO NOT use a personal vehicle to pick up or drop off Minors participating in University activities unless the Minor's parent or legal guardian has provided written permission.
16. DO NOT engage in physical punishment or any other form of degrading or humiliating treatment.
17. DO have more than one Authorized Adult present in the vehicle when transporting Minors in a Program, except when multiple Minors will be in the vehicle at all times throughout the transportation.
18. DO report abuse, harassment, or exploitation of Minors to the Child Protection Officer, CPO.
19. DO immediately remove Minors from dangerous situations and, in such instances as appropriate, immediately notify the CPO.

## RESPONDING TO CHILD ABUSE ALLEGATIONS AND SUSPICIONS

In the event of a child disclosing an incident of abuse it is essential that this is dealt with sensitively and professionally by the staff member involved. The following are guidelines to support the staff member dealing with the report:

1. React calmly;
2. Listen carefully and attentively; take the young person seriously;
3. Reassure the young person that they have taken the right action in talking to you;
4. Do not promise to keep anything secret;
5. Ask questions for clarification only. Do not ask leading questions;
6. Check back with the child/young person that what you have heard is correct and understood;
7. Do not express any opinions about the alleged abuser;
8. Record the conversation as soon and in as much detail as possible. Sign and date the record;
9. Ensure that the child/young person understands the procedures which will follow;
10. Pass the information to the CPO; do not attempt to deal with the problem alone;
11. The appropriate reporting form should be used to keep a record of the incident. This should be filled in by the member of staff who receives the first report of the incident.
12. Treat the information confidentially.

## Reporting Child Abuse

The guiding principles in regard to reporting children abuse are summarized as follows:

1. The safety and well-being of the child or young person must take priority
2. Reports using the appropriate form should be made without delay to the CPO. (See Appendix 1)

The reporting procedure for dealing with disclosures, concerns or allegations of child abuse is outlined in the following steps:

1. The staff member who has received a disclosure of child abuse or who has concerns of abuse, should bring it to the attention of the CPO immediately and complete the appropriate reporting form.
2. In making a report on suspected or actual child abuse, the individual must ensure that the first priority is always for the safety and welfare of the young person and that no young person is ever left in an un-safe situation. Parents/guardians of the child will be informed of the allegation, concern or disclosure unless doing so is likely to endanger the child.
3. The CPO will assess and review the information that has been provided. The CPO will inform the Vice Chancellor of the University.
4. The CPO will report serious credible abuse allegations to the relevant department of the Palestinian Authority.
5. The Vice Chancellor will inform the Chancellor, Chair of the Board of Trustees, Chair of the Board of Regents and Patriarch of serious credible abuse allegations.

## Confidentiality

In matters of child abuse, a member of staff should never promise to keep secret, any information which is divulged. It should be explained to the young person that this information cannot be kept secret but only those who need to know, will be told. It is essential in reporting any case of alleged/suspected abuse that the principle of confidentiality applies. The information should only be shared on a “need to know” basis and the number of people that need to be informed should be kept to a minimum.

## IMPLEMENTING AND MONITORING OF THE STANDARDS

To keep children safe, policies, procedures and plans have to be implemented across all parts of the organization. Checks are needed to ensure this is happening consistently. The views of those involved inside and outside the organization can help to improve the effectiveness of any measures taken.

The Executive Council of the University will take responsibility for the implementing and monitoring of this policy. There will be a meeting on child protection once a year in which the implementation of the policy will be evaluated. Every third year there will be a review of the policy and necessary changes will be made. Should there be further changes in law with regard to child protection then these changes will also have to be part of this review process.

## CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENT TO ABIDE BY THE UNIVERSITY’S CPP

All faculty and staff members sign an annual contract including an agreement to “... adhere to the University policies and procedures as laid down in the Handbook for Administrative/Support and Service Staff (HASS) or the Academic Staff Handbook (ASH) and whatever other regulations are from time to time put into force by the University ....” The CCP is part of the HASS and ASH.

Adherence to this Child Protection Policy CPP, adopted by the Executive Council of Bethlehem University is a condition of employment.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Br Peter Bray". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined.

CPP approved by Br Peter Bray FSC, Vice Chancellor of Bethlehem University 22 October 2013.

**APPENDIX -1 BETHLEHEM UNIVERSITY'S REPORT OF SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE FORM**

**Date of Report:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Reporter's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Reporter's Contact Information:**

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Victim Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Victim Contact Information (if known – *do not* undertake your own investigation):**

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Campus or Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Suspected Abuser (if known):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Contact Information of Suspected Abuser:** \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Campus or Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Is the suspected abuser a University faculty or staff member, student, or volunteer?**

No \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ If yes specify \_\_\_\_\_

**Description of Suspected Abuse:**

Dates/Times (if known): \_\_\_\_\_

Locations (if known): \_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description (Basis for the report). Use additional pages if needed:**

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