



Policies and
Procedures for the
Prevention of abuse

Safe Sanctuaries Purpose



- Following Safe Sanctuaries policy protects the children and youth of the church, as well as the adult who serve in these ministries.
- Having these policies in place acts as a deterrent to predators who seek out vulnerable organizations.

The objective of Safe Sanctuaries

- Our objective is to educate non-professionals to detect child abuse and to take precautions and steps to help prevent the potential for child abuse and neglect in our environment.
- The process for each volunteer includes visiting with the pertinent staff member, completing this training, and consenting to a background check.
- Each volunteer should update their training every 2 years.
- Questions?

Child Abuse Happens



- ❑ 3 million cases reported every year
- ❑ 681,000 proven cases
- ❑ Real numbers may be even higher due to under reporting
- ❑ Each week, CPS received 60,000 reports; half of those come from childcare and law enforcement professionals. 60% of those warrant investigation.

What we will learn...



- Definitions and effects of child abuse
- Warning signs and symptoms associated with child abuse
- Typical methods of operation of child molesters
- Recommended rules and procedures when working with children
- Steps to take if abuse is reported

What is child abuse?



- Child abuse is any act or failure to act on the part of a parent or caretaker that results in the serious physical or emotional harm, death, sexual abuse, or places a child in imminent risk of serious harm even if the caretaker did not intend for may harm to occur.
- Some states also identify abandonment and parental substance abuse as child abuse or neglect.
- Child abuse can be physical, sexual, emotional in nature or caused by neglect.

What is Physical Abuse?



- Physical Abuse results from non-accidental infliction of a physical injury on a child or minor which is inappropriate or overly punitive. Punching, kicking, biting, shaking, throwing, choking, or harming the child in some other physical manner are all examples of actions which constitute potential child abuse.
- Physical abuse can result even without intent, and can also result from placing a child in a dangerous situation.
- Appropriate and reasonable physical discipline is not considered abuse.

What is Sexual Abuse?



- Defined by the federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, sexual abuse is the exploitation of a child or minor to gratify improper sexual drives.
- Sexual abuse can occur even without physical contact between the adult and child, including sexualized behavior, comments or suggestions; also inducing a child to participate in or simulate a sexual act with another child.
- Showing visual materials that are sexually explicit or suggestive in nature.

What is Emotional Abuse?

- Emotional abuse involves a pattern of behavior that negatively impacts the emotional development of a child or the child's sense of self-worth.
- May also involve ongoing threats and constant verbal criticism.
- Ongoing and prolonged withholding of guidance, love, or support can create emotional abuse.
- Typically, the behavior must be ongoing to constitute emotional abuse.

What constitutes neglect?

- ❑ Neglect involves failing to provide for a child's basic needs such as food, clothing, or shelter.
- ❑ Failing to provide proper medical care when needed is also neglect.
- ❑ Failing to provide proper supervision, or allowing a child under one's care to use alcohol or drugs is also neglect.
- ❑ Placing the child in, or failing to remove the child from a situation in which the child would be exposed to a substantial risk of sexual conduct would also be considered neglect.

Warning Signs of Child Abuse

- In order to effectively deal with child abuse, it is important to recognize the signs that child abuse may be taking place.
- Common signs can be physical or behavioral in nature.
- However, it is important to recognize the presence of one or more signs is not proof that child abuse is taking place. One or more signs appearing repeatedly is a stronger indicator.

Physical Indicators



- Bruises, bites, burns, broken bones, black eyes
 - Inconsistent with activity for a child of that age
 - Inconsistent explanation of injury between the child and the parent or caretaker
 - Parent has a history of abuse
 - Effort to conceal signs of injury

General Indicators



- Extreme changes in behavior such as aggression or passivity
- Delayed emotional or physical development
- Attempted suicide or self-harm
- Use of alcohol or drugs
- Depression
- Sudden changes in appetite
- Paranoia\Fear of adults

Signs of Sexual Abuse



- Child has difficulty walking or sitting
- Pain or itching in the genital area
- Unexplained bedwetting and/or nightmares
- Depression and/or attempted suicide
- Unusual sexual knowledge
- Sexually transmitted diseases
- High risk behavior

How do Child Molesters Operate?

- Majority of molesters are known by the children they abuse and typically in positions of authority
- Most attempt to gain access through volunteering in youth activities
- Attempt to create situations where they are alone with a child
- Adhering to our Safe Sanctuaries policy and requiring background checks deters potential abusers.

Recommended Procedures

- Always have at least 2 non related adults involved in all activities
- If 2 is not possible, doors should stay open and a monitor should be floating in the halls
- Adults should remain in line of sight with each other
- Instruct children and youth should use a buddy system
- Eliminate one on one contact between adults and children or youth that is not in direct view of another caretaker

Recommended Procedures

- Doors should remain open unless 2 adults are present
- Children should never be left alone
- No person in authority should be less than 18 years of age
- Respect the personal space of children and youth
- Background checks are performed on all adults working in ministries involving children and youth

Reporting abuse

- If you suspect abuse has occurred, or if a child reports abuse to you, you should:
 - Report the incident to the supervisor in your ministry area.
 - Together, you and that supervisor will confer with the senior pastor and take the necessary steps to involve law enforcement and state agencies.
 - Confidentiality should be protected.

Reporting Abuse



- Media Response: If an investigation or allegation of abuse should come to the attention of the media, a response shall come from the Senior Pastor or a spokesperson of the church or as designated by the Senior Pastor. Refer all inquires to the spokesperson.

Summary



- Be mindful of the signs of abuse.
- Follow the 2 adult rule.
- Report violations and abuse.
- Safe Sanctuaries provides protection for children and youth, the adults who serve them, and the church.