

CHILD SEXUAL OR PHYSICAL ABUSE

Steps to Reporting

- 1) Volunteers are not mandated reporters if:
 - a) there is a procedure for the volunteer to tell a supervisor who is a mandated reporter
 - b) and the volunteer agrees to follow that procedure.
- 2) Staff Pastors are mandated to report suspicion of specific abusive behavior listed on “Definition of Abuse” to DCFS.
- 3) Volunteers can avoid being the only one who knows.

When a person says, “I need to tell you something I have not told anyone before. But first you must agree not to tell anyone else.”

Explain that as a volunteer you are unable to do that. In order to best serve this person’s needs you need to reserve the right to ask for assistance.

You can assure the person that if you feel you need to ask for assistance,

- a) it will only be to a specifically named staff pastor
- b) only after the person has been informed that you, the volunteer is going to talk with the staff pastor

- 4) If the person describes being involved in any behaviors listed as abuse or if they have witnessed those behaviors in someone else:

You, the volunteer can give the person some choices about how to proceed.

- a) They can call DCFS with you and/or a staff pastor present.
- b) They can talk to a staff pastor with you.
- c) They can talk with a professional counselor with you present.

The volunteer needs to be present to verify DCFS, or a mandated reporter has been told what the volunteer was told.

- 5) If the person is unwilling to take any of those steps, you need to immediately inform them that you must tell a staff pastor the specific abuse behavior described because you have previously agreed to do so as a volunteer of the church. Again, give the choices listed in #4.

- 6) Ask the person if you can refer a counselor and/or include one of their trusted friends to support them. They may decline. Ask if there is anything you can do to help them further.

- 7) As a volunteer, you do not have the responsibility to counsel a person through this. Your pastoral coach can help as you decide what level of support and involvement you want to have.

Definition of Abuse

Child abuse is the treatment of a child under the age of 18, often in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust, or power that endangers or impairs the health or welfare of a child.

Types of Abuse

1. Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse is the involvement of a child in sexual activity with an adult or another child (as defined above) which includes but is not limited to:

a. Verbal: Remarks which include sexual threats, solicitation, sexually explicit language (whether in person, on the telephone, or via text messaging or the internet) or any verbal expression with the intent to arouse or stimulate.

b. Visual: Indecent exposure, showing or taking of suggestive pictures, pornographic material of genitals, or the showing of unclothed persons, any sexual activity or simulated sexual activity such as masturbation or intercourse, peeping, leering or staring.

c. Physical Touching: Physical contact (or penetration by penis, fingers, or any other body part or object) with a person's clothed or unclothed genitals, pubic area, buttocks, or in the case of a female, breast, or causing a child to perform any of these acts. Masturbation in front of or to the victim, rubbing, holding or kissing for the purpose of sexual gratification.

2. Physical Abuse and Neglect

Physical abuse is any act that results in a non-accidental physical injury. Such acts may include, but are not limited to: slapping, punching, beating, kicking, biting, shaking, burning, holding under water, pulling hair, or holding against one's will.

Neglect happens when a parent or responsible caretaker fails to provide adequate supervision, food, clothing, shelter or other basics for a child.

Child-to-Child Cases: Should both the victim and the alleged offender be under the age of 18, it will typically be considered abuse if there are more than three years difference (1095 days or more) between the children or there is a difference in responsibility, trust, or power between them. If there is less than three years age difference and there is not a significant difference in responsibility, trust, or power between them, what would normally be defined as abuse will be considered inappropriate behavior.

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR VOLUNTEERS

As someone who ministers to young people, I will maintain a professional role and be mindful of the trust and power I possess as a minister to young people. To achieve this, I will:

- Never touch a minor in a sexual way or other inappropriate manner.
- Never be alone with a minor in a residence, sleeping facility, or any other closed room.
- Never share a bed with a minor.
- Never take an overnight trip alone with a minor.
- Never introduce sexually explicit or pornographic topics, vocabulary, music, recordings, films, games, web sites, computer software, or entertainment.
- Never provide drugs, alcohol, or tobacco to a minor.
- Never use, possess, or be under the influence of illegal drugs.
- Never use alcohol when engaged in ministering to a minor.
- Never engage in physical discipline for behavior management of minors. No form of physical discipline is acceptable.

Measures to Aid Observance of the Code of Conduct

To help me keep the promises in the Code, I will:

- Report any suspected child abuse to the proper authorities.
- Avoid physical contact when alone with a minor. Physical contact with minors can be misconstrued, especially in private settings.
- Avoid overnight stays with a minor unless there is another adult present in a supervisory role.
- Refrain from giving expensive or inappropriate gifts to a minor.
- Avoid meeting privately with minors in rooms, offices, or similar areas where there is no window or where the door cannot remain open. If one-on-one pastoral care of a minor is needed avoid meeting in isolated locations.

- Exercise caution in communicating with minors through e-mails or the internet. Only share work/ministry related e-mail addresses with minors. Do not participate in chat rooms with minors.
- Ensure that all activities (extra-curricular, catechetical, youth ministry, scouting, athletics, etc.) for which you are responsible have been approved in advance by the appropriate administrator.
- Have an adequate number of adults present at events. A minimum of two adults in supervisory roles must always be present during activities for minors.
- Release young people only to parents or guardians, unless the parent or guardian has provided permission allowing release to another adult.
- Avoid taking minors away from the church building for field trips, et cetera, without another adult present in a supervisory role. Obtain written parental permission before such activities. Permission slips should include the type, locations, dates, and times of the activity and emergency contact numbers.

Practical suggestions for identifying permissible and impermissible conduct

Conduct that May Be Permissible: Appropriate affection between Church personnel and minors constitutes a positive part of Church life and ministry. Nonetheless, any touching can be misunderstood and must be considered with great discretion. Depending on the circumstances, the following forms of affection are customarily (but not always) regarded as appropriate.

- Verbal praise.
- Handshakes.
- “High-fives” and hand slapping.
- Pats on the shoulder or back.
- Hugs.
- Holding hands while walking with small children.
- Sitting beside small children.
- Kneeling or bending down for hugs with small children.
- Holding hands during prayer.
- Pats on the head when culturally appropriate.

Conduct that is Not Permissible: Some forms of physical affection have been used by adults to initiate inappropriate contact with minors. In order to maintain the safest possible environment for minors, the following are examples of affection that are *not* to be used:

- Inappropriate or lengthy embraces.
- Kisses on the mouth.
- Holding minors over four years old on the lap.
- Touching buttocks, chests or genital areas.

- Showing affection in isolated areas such as bedrooms, closets, staff-only areas or other private rooms.
- Touching knees or legs of minors.
- Wrestling with minors.
- Tickling minors.
- Piggyback rides.
- Any type of massage given by minor to adult.
- Any type of massage given by adult to minor.
- Any form of unwanted affection.
- Compliments that relate to physique or body development.

VOLUNTEER CODE OF CONDUCT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM
Vineyard Christian Church of Evanston

Date _____

I have received a copy of the **Code of Conduct for Church Volunteers**. I have read and understand this Code of Conduct, and I agree to abide by it. I have also read and understand the “Measures to Aid Observance of the Code of Conduct” and the “Practical Suggestions” and will employ them to help me observe the code of conduct. A violation of this code can result in removal from leadership.

Signature

Print Name

Position

The signed Volunteer Code of Conduct Acknowledgement Form shall be kept in a general volunteer file at the Evanston Vineyard.