

# STANDARD Operating Procedures Potential Abuse/Neglect

CEDARCREEKCHURCH

To be completed by a staff member of CedarCreek Church with the cooperation of the person reporting the incident.

## VISION

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- To ensure the appropriate conversations and documentation occur when a report must be made on behalf of CedarCreek Church to the authorities regarding the potential abuse and/or neglect of a minor or a mentally handicapped guest under the age of 21.
- We only need to suspect that abuse or neglect is occurring; physical proof or other forms of validation are not required. It is the responsibility of the children's service agency to determine if abuse or neglect is in fact occurring.
- All mandated reporters have the legal obligation to report any suspicion of abuse or neglect. A list of state mandated reports can be found below.
- This standard was developed with Campus Staff in mind; however, all CedarCreek Church Staff are asked to follow this process.

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- The potential harm of a minor or mentally handicapped guest under the age of 21 is reported to the appropriate authorities who can help and our organization has documented the details of the situation.

## STANDARDS

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- If abuse or neglect is suspected, talk with your Direct Report immediately. Send an email to your Direct Report, Campus Pastor, Ministry Director, HR Director and the respective Executive Directors to notify all parties of the situation. This working thread will ensure all communication and documentation has occurred.

Whenever abuse or neglect is suspected, a report must be made to local law enforcement and/or the State Public Children's Service Agencies within 24 hours.

If the guest seems to be in immediate danger, a Staff Member will notify local law enforcement immediately, in addition to the leadership staff above.

- Once the report is made a Staff Member will complete the Suspected Abuse/Neglect Form and submit to HR. | **See suggestions below**
- The Campus Pastor will work with the Staff Member involved to create a Care Note including details of the situation and confirming a report was made.
- If the church's involvement in a report or investigation is questioned by a family member, the Staff Member should listen and refer them back to the person's original point of contact (the agency that contacted them) in a professional and honest manner. Please use compassion and discretion:

"Who did you say contacted you again? I'm sorry that I don't have any additional information for you, but I'm sure the (caseworker/agency they mentioned) will be able to give you all the

The church should not reveal any information pertinent to the report made to local law enforcement and/or the State Public Children's Service Agencies.

The church should avoid prying into family matters and should never betray a minor's confidence to the parents. (Ex. "Your child said...")

- If there are concerns other than potential abuse or neglect, guardians may be contacted by the Campus Pastor, Ministry Director, or their designee. For example, the presence of a mark/bruise, or any other concern, does not mean that abuse or neglect is suspected. Sometimes a clarifying conversation will reveal an explanation. Depending on the circumstance, a Care Note may be necessary to document the situation.

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#### SYSTEMS/RESOURCES:

- Suspected Abuse/Neglect Reporting Form
- Database
- Below are links to helpful information about how to recognize potential abuse or neglect

##### **Physical Abuse**

<http://ship.oh.networkofcare.org/ph/library/article.aspx?hwid=tm4936#tm4936-sec>

##### **Sexual Abuse**

<http://ship.oh.networkofcare.org/ph/library/article.aspx?hwid=tm5007#tm5007-sec>

##### **Emotional Abuse**

<http://ship.oh.networkofcare.org/ph/library/article.aspx?hwid=tm5075#tm5075-sec>

##### **Neglect**

<http://ship.oh.networkofcare.org/ph/library/article.aspx?hwid=tm5032#tm5032-sec>

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#### SUGGESTIONS:

- Helpful reminders:
  - If you're not sure if abuse or neglect may be occurring, that's a sign that you should report. We don't want to be in a situation where we suspected, but didn't help.
  - Our report can help authorities have a more complete picture of a family situation; contributing to past or future reports.
  - If a family is healthy, they will eventually be grateful for the attention. If a family is unhealthy, we may not be in a position to meet their primary needs or this could provide a catalyst for a healthy next step.
- It is helpful to gather information about the family and the situation before making a report. Use the Abuse/Neglect Reporting Form to document all conversations. Consider the following:
  - You may request to be an anonymous reporter. You can share your identity for the purpose of follow up with the investigation but we recommend asking that your name not be shared beyond that.
  - The name, age, gender and address of the guest you suspect is being abused or neglected.
  - The current location of the guest or where the minor might be during the week. (Ex. daycare or school)
  - The name and address of the parent/guardian/caretaker.
  - Any immediate risk to the guest or caseworker going out to ensure the guest's safety such as whether or not there are dogs and/or weapons in the home, if any residents have criminal histories and if anyone has any mental health concerns.

The name of the person you suspect is abusing or neglecting the guest and the address if available.

The reason you suspect the guest is being abused and/or neglected; a description of the injury, neglect or threatened harm to the guest.

Any other information which may be helpful to the investigation.

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#### MANDATED REPORTER:

A mandated reporter is someone required by law to report if they suspect or know that child abuse and/or neglect is occurring. If the mandated reporter fails to report it is considered a misdemeanor. Ohio's mandated reporters include:

Attorneys

Audiologists

Child care workers

Children Services personnel

**Clergy: A leader designated by any church acting in an official capacity, other than a volunteer (CedarCreek Church Staff)**

Coroners

Day care personnel

Dentists

Nurses

Physicians including hospital interns and residents

Podiatrists

Psychiatrists

School authorities, employees and teachers

Social Workers

Speech Pathologists

Animal Control Officers/Agents

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References and Language for the Standard provided by:

Ohio Job and Family Services: <https://jfs.ohio.gov/ocf/reportchildabuseandneglect.stm>

Ohio Revised Code: 2151.421

Ohio Revised Code: 2151.99