

TABERNACLE CHURCH OF NORFOLK

Abuse Policy and Procedure for Workers

Purpose: To reduce the risk of abuse among the children of Tabernacle Church.

Incidents of child abuse, and especially sexual abuse, are increasing at an alarming rate, not only in our society as a whole, but in our churches as well. In order to reduce the risk of such abuse occurring at Tab, this policy is specifically intended to:

1. Safeguard the children and youth of the church from sexual molestation and other forms of abuse to the best of our ability.
2. Protect the church staff and volunteer workers from potential allegations of abuse to the best of our ability.
3. Limit the extent of the church's legal risk and liability due to abuse.

The policy defines child abuse and addresses three critical areas which require attention: worker selection, reporting obligations, and responses to allegations.

Definition of Child Abuse: An act or omission in one of the following categories, which threatens the health or welfare of a child.

1. Any case in which a child exhibits evidence of skin bruising, bleeding, malnutrition, failure to thrive, burns, fracture of any bones and circumstances indicating that such a condition may not be the product of an accident.
2. Any case in which a child is subjected to sexual assault or molestation, sexual exploitation or prostitution.
3. Any case in which a child is in need of services because the child's parents, legal guardian or custodian fails to take the same actions to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical care or supervision that a prudent parent would.
4. Sexual abuse has been further defined as any criminal activity with a child – whether in the home by a caretaker, in a day care situation, or in any other setting, including on the street by a person unknown to the child. The abuser may be an adult, an adolescent, or another child, provided the child is four years older than the victim. It is criminal behavior that involves sexual behaviors for which they are not personally, socially, and developmentally ready.
5. Tabernacle also defines abuse as any behavior that is inappropriate Biblically toward children in word or action.

I. Recruiting and Selecting Church Workers

A. Screening will be required for the following church workers:

1. All volunteer workers, who work with minors, including but not limited to, the following:

Director of Children's Ministry
Youth Workers
Sunday School Teachers
Children's Church Workers
AWANA Workers
Nursery Workers
Children's Choir Workers
Child Care Providers

B. Selection Procedure – Requirements for Applicants

1. Must demonstrate Christ like actions and attitudes.
2. Must not have been convicted on any of the following: assaults, physical abuse, sexual offenses involving a minor, incest, rape, murder, kidnapping, child pornography, or sodomy.
3. Must complete the screening application form for children's or youth workers.
4. Must sign the Request for Criminal Records Check & Authorization.

II. Reporting Procedures for Children's Workers

A. All workers shall immediately report any suspicion of child abuse or neglect of which they have knowledge or observe within the scope of their duties to the Director of Children's Ministries, High School Director, or Middle School Director.

III. Responding to Allegations of Abuse

A. All allegations shall be taken seriously by the Director of Children's Ministries, High School Director, or Middle School Director.

B. After consideration the Director of Children's Ministries, High School Director, or Middle School Director may contact the Pastor and together they will pursue further investigation.