

## TYPES OF CHILD ABUSE

Generally, child abuse is categorized in five primary forms: physical abuse, emotional abuse, neglect, sexual abuse, and ritual abuse:

1. **Physical Abuse** Abuse in which a person deliberately and intentionally causes bodily harm to a child. Examples may include violent battery with a weapon (knife, belt, strap, and so forth), burning, shaking, kicking, choking, fracturing bones, and any of a wide variety of non-accidental injuries to a child's body.

2. **Emotional Abuse** Abuse in which a person exposes a child to spoken and/or unspoken violence or emotional cruelty. Emotional abuse sends a message to the child of worthlessness and of one not only unloved but also undeserving of love and care. Children exposed to emotional abuse may have experienced being locked in a closet, being deprived of any sign of parental affection, being constantly told they are bad or stupid, or being allowed or forced to abuse alcohol or drugs. Emotional abuse is often very difficult to prove and is devastating to the victim.

3. **Neglect** Abuse in which a person endangers a child's health, safety, or welfare through negligence. Neglect may include withholding food, clothing, medical care, education, and even affection and affirmation of the child's self-worth. This is perhaps the most common form of abuse.

4. **Sexual Abuse** Abuse in which sexual contact between a child and an adult (or another older and more powerful youth) occurs. The child is never truly capable of consenting to or resisting such contact and/or such sexual acts. Often the child is physically and psychologically dependent upon the perpetrator of the abuse. Examples of sexual abuse may include fondling, intercourse, incest, and the exposure to child pornography or prostitution.

5. **Ritual Abuse** Abuse in which physical, sexual, or a person or persons responsible for the child's welfare, inflict psychological violations of a child regularly, intentionally, and in a stylized way. The abuser may appeal to some higher authority or power to justify the abuse. The abuse may include cruel treatment of animals or repeated threats of harm to the child, other persons, and animals. Reports of ritual abuse are often extremely horrifying and may seem too grim to be true. Children making such reports must not be ignored.

## **INDICATORS OF CHILD ABUSE**

The following characteristics may be indicators of abuse, although they are not necessarily proof. Individually, any one of the indicators may be a sign of a number of other more or less serious problems. When these indicators are observed in a child, they can be considered as warning and lead you to look into the situation further.

### **Possible Signs of Physical Abuse**

1. Hostile and aggressive behavior toward others
2. Fearfulness of parents and/or other adults
3. Destructive behavior toward self, others, and/or property
4. Inexplicable fractures or bruises inappropriate for child's developmental stage.
5. Burns, facial injuries, pattern of repetitious bruises

### **Possible Signs of Emotional Abuse**

1. Exhibits severe depression and/or withdrawal
2. Exhibits severe lack of self-esteem
3. Failure to thrive
4. Threatens or attempts suicide
5. Speech and/or eating disorders
6. Goes to extremes to seek adult approval
7. Extreme passive/aggressive behavior patterns

### **Possible Signs of Neglect**

1. Failure to thrive
2. Pattern of inappropriate dress
3. Begs or steals food; chronic hunger
4. Depression
5. Untreated medical conditions
6. Poor hygiene

### **Possible Signs of Sexual Abuse**

1. Unusually advanced sexual knowledge and/or behavior for child's age and developmental stage
2. Depression – cries often for no apparent reason
3. Promiscuous behavior
4. Runs away from home and refuses to return
5. Difficulty walking or sitting
6. Bruised/bleeding in vaginal or anal areas
7. Exhibits frequent headaches, stomachaches, and extreme fatigue
8. Sexually transmitted diseases

## **CODE OF CONDUCT**

This Code of Conduct defines individual responsibilities as Ministers, leaders, employees or volunteers to meet the expectations of St. Mark Presbyterian Church with respect to behavior or conduct in the service of the ministries the church, especially those which serve children, youth and vulnerable adults.

### **General Requirements—**

Each person subject to this Code shall

1. Act as a team member in fulfilling ministry objectives
2. Treat children, youth and vulnerable adults with respect, and fairly without regard to race, age, gender sexual orientation or religion
3. Practice those behaviors we regard as necessary and positive as well as to refrain from those behaviors which have been defined as prohibited.

### **General Prohibitions—**

The following behaviors are prohibited at all times:

1. Display affection toward a child/youth/vulnerable adult in privacy
2. Use profanity or tell off-color jokes
3. Discuss their sexual encounters with or around youth or children or in any way involve children in their personal problems or issues
4. Date or become romantically involved with vulnerable adult, youth or children
5. Use or be under the influence of illegal drugs while in the presence of children or youth or vulnerable adult
6. Possess sexually oriented materials, including printed or online pornography, on St. Mark property or at St. Mark events
7. Have secrets with vulnerable adults, youth or children
8. Stare at or comment on vulnerable adults', youth or children's bodies
9. Engage in inappropriate or unapproved electronic communication with children/youth/vulnerable adults
10. Work one-on-one with children/youth/vulnerable adults in private setting
11. Abuse youth/children/vulnerable adults in any way including (but not limited to) the following:
  - a. Physical abuse: hit, spank, shake, slap, unnecessarily retrain
  - b. Verbal abuse: degrade, threaten, curse
  - c. Sexual abuse: inappropriately touch, expose oneself, or engage in sexually oriented conversations
  - d. Mental abuse: shame, humiliate, act cruelly
  - e. Neglect: withhold food, water, shelter
  - f. Permit children/youth to engage in the following: hazing, bullying, derogatory name-calling, ridicule or humiliation or sexual activity.
12. Manipulate or exploit a vulnerable adult in any way

## Specific Interaction Standards

1. **Approval and Affection** – In providing approval or affection, the following guidelines apply:

<b><i>Appropriate Physical Interactions</i></b>	<b><i>Inappropriate Physical Interactions</i></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Side hugs</li><li>• Shoulder-to-shoulder or “temple” hugs</li><li>• Pats on the shoulder or back</li><li>• Handshakes</li><li>• High-fives and hand slapping</li><li>• Verbal praise</li><li>• Pats on the head</li><li>• Touching hands, shoulders, and arms</li><li>• Arms around shoulders</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Kisses</li><li>• Showing affection in isolated area</li><li>• Wrestling</li><li>• Tickling</li><li>• Allowing a child to cling to an employee’s or volunteer’s leg</li><li>• Any type of massage given by or to a child</li><li>• Any form of affection that is unwanted by the child or the employee or volunteer</li><li>• Compliments relating to physique or body development</li><li>• Touching bottom, chest, or genital areas</li></ul>

2. **Verbal Interactions** – The manner of speaking with children/youth/vulnerable adults establishes respect. The following guidelines apply:

<b><i>Appropriate Verbal Interactions</i></b>	<b><i>Inappropriate Verbal Interactions</i></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Positive reinforcement</li><li>• Appropriate jokes</li><li>• Encouragement</li><li>• Praise</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Name-calling</li><li>• Discussing sexual encounters or in any way involving children in the personal problems or issues of employees and volunteers</li><li>• Secrets</li><li>• Cursing</li><li>• Off-color or sexual jokes</li><li>• Shaming</li><li>• Belittling</li><li>• Derogatory remarks</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Harsh language that may frighten, threaten or humiliate children</li> <li>• Derogatory remarks about the child or his/her family</li> </ul>
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3. **Out of Program Contact** - the following forms of outside contact are appropriate and inappropriate:

<b><i>Appropriate Outside Contact</i></b>	<b><i>Inappropriate Outside Contact</i></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taking groups of children on an outing</li> <li>• Attending sporting activities with groups of children</li> <li>• Attending functions at a child's home, with parents present</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taking one child on an outing without the parents' permission</li> <li>• Visiting one child in the child's home, without a parent present</li> <li>• Entertaining one child in the home or employee or volunteer</li> <li>• A lone child spending the night with an employee or volunteer</li> </ul>

4. **One-on-One Interactions** – Because most abuse occurs when an adult is alone with a vulnerable adult, youth or child, private one-on-one meetings are prohibited unless approved in advance by parents. When so permitted, the following guidelines shall apply:

<b><i>One-on-One Interaction Guidelines</i></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When meeting one-on-one with a vulnerable adult/youth/child, always do so in a public place in full view of others.</li> <li>• Avoid physical affection that can be misinterpreted. Limit affection to pats on the shoulder, high fives, and handshakes.</li> <li>• If meeting in a room or office, leave the door open or move to an area that can be easily observed by others passing by.</li> <li>• Inform other employees and volunteers that you are alone with a vulnerable adult/youth/child and ask them to randomly drop in. (Ask to be supervised.)</li> <li>• Document and immediately report any unusual incidents, including disclosures of abuse or maltreatment, behavior problems and how they were handled, injuries, or any interactions that might be misinterpreted.</li> </ul>

*To the extent any of these guidelines may appear to be in conflict, the spirit of them is that one shall seek to be under the supervision of others while meeting privately with a child.*

## **Social Media – Electronic Communications –**

**General Social Media Policy** -- No Minister, employee, or volunteer shall create or use a media site (web, Facebook, YouTube, or similar) in the name of or purporting to represent the St. Mark without the explicit permission of the Communications Committee, Director of Christian Education or Pastor. When clergy or staff, acting in their capacity as a representative of the St. Mark, lead or coordinate a group activity using social media, each may use only official St. Mark sites/channels when they have been made available by the St. Mark. These may include web pages, Facebook, e-mail and similar means.

## **Social Media Communications –**

In order to extend the life of the Church, enhance communication and develop participation of young people in the life of the St. Mark and its ministry, St. Mark will authorize certain persons to manage the official website, Youth Instagram page and organization Facebook page.

Persons who shall create public pages on behalf of St. Mark programs are responsible to monitor communications and to assure that employees and volunteers do not have private (and possibly inappropriate) conversations with youth/children.

Parents of youth/vulnerable adults will be given the option to agree to Social Media, Text and Web Release on the Youth Permission Form (APPENDIX G) to sign for listing the name of the youth and the specific media outlets that St. Mark Youth Director and adult sponsors are approved to use as a means to communicate with and/or post video or pictures of the youth.

Persons having Facebook privileges on behalf of St. Mark, shall treat unsolicited communication or “friending” from vulnerable adults/youth/children underage as an unauthorized text message. No reply may be given except to indicate by a posting that accepting a “friend” invitation by under-age children is a violation of the Code of Conduct.

If a child reveals abuse or inappropriate interactions with an adult, the person must report this information in the manner of any “suspected abuse”.

When using Facebook/Instagram/Snap Chat (or the like) to communicate with youth/children, the authorized employee or volunteer shall inform parents/guardians of each child that the latter is communicating with the person via social media, providing the parent/guardian the opportunity to disapprove or to participate in a Group.

## **Social Networking Code of Conduct –**

Each person who leads using the resources of social media shall apply this Social Networking Code of Conduct:

- Prohibit comments that are, or could be construed by any observer, to be harsh, coercive, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating.
- Prohibit sexually oriented conversations or discussions about sexual activities.
- Prohibit private messages between employees and volunteers and children.
- Prohibit posting inappropriate pictures (for example, sexually suggestive, exploitive or voyeuristic) or inappropriate comments on pictures.
- Provide children and their parents with this Social Networking Code of Conduct.
- Encourage parents to play a role in monitoring their children's interactions with employees and volunteers.
- Continuously remind children how to interact appropriately through social networking sites.
- Deny participation by individuals who repeatedly violate the Code of Conduct.

At the institution of the use of social media, the authorized employee or volunteer shall present this Social Networking Code of Conduct to children (or other client group) and parents/guardians.

## **PROCEDURES FOR CHILDREN, YOUTH AND VULNERABLE ADULTS ATTENDING ST. MARK EVENTS**

### **Definition/ages—**

Nursery: includes both Infants and Pre-k Students

Infants: Birth to age 2 years

Pre-K Students: 3 – 5year old children, who have not entered kindergarten

Elementary Students: Kindergarten – 5<sup>th</sup> grade

Youth: 6<sup>th</sup> grade – 12<sup>th</sup> grade

Vulnerable Adults: 18+ years, lacking capacity to care for or protect themselves from harm due to illness, age or disability or adults under “legal guardianship”

### **Regular On-Campus Events—**

This includes Sunday school classes, nursery care, youth meetings, etc.

- Nursery children (APPENDIX I Nursery Caregiver Guidelines)
  - will be signed-in and out by parent/guardian/appointed adult on Nursery Sign-in/out Sheet (APPENDIX E) with a nursery employee.
  - Infant ratio = 1 caregiver/ 2 infants (always at least 2 caregivers)
  - Pre-K student ratio= 1 caregiver/ 6 pre-k children (always at least 2 caregivers)
  - First-time families receive Nursery Policy book (APPENDIX H) and Complete the current year Child Permission Form (APPENDIX F).
  - Nursery children should always be in the presence of a caregiver.
  - Only Nursery personnel and child's parents are allowed in the specified rooms. Parents will be able to observe their children/infants. Teens and other well-intentioned visitors to the nursery are not permitted without permission from the nursery coordinator, elder for Christian Ed or DCE.
  - Safe handwashing technique is to observed at all times; the use of vinyl gloves for diaper changing; hand washing before and after food preparation. (Soap and running water, not hand sanitizer.) Also, wash caregiver and children's hands when coming in from playground.



- Neither children nor caregivers are allowed to sit/stand on top of any equipment or furniture not designated for that purpose. Caregivers should model for the children behavior expected of them. Caregivers should not lie on the floor or roughhouse with the children.
- Socializing between caregivers is to be kept to a minimum and caregivers should not bring schoolbooks or other reading materials to the nursery. No cell phones should be brought out in the nursery except to contact parents or check permission form information.
- Elementary
  - Elementary students should be escorted to and from classes by parents, volunteers or staff.
  - Kindergarten – 2<sup>nd</sup> grade student Ratio = 1 adult / 15 students (additional youth or adult is preferred)
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> grade – 5<sup>th</sup> grade student Ratio = 1 adult / 20 students (additional youth or adult is preferred)
- Youth
  - Youth Ratio = 1 adult / 25 youth (2 adults always preferred)
  - Youth may be dropped off by parents or drive themselves to regular on-campus events. A Youth Permission Form (APPENDIX G) is required.
- Vulnerable Adults
  - Ratio = 2 adults/ 12 participants; is largely dependent on abilities of participants and should be considered
  - Vulnerable adults can be dropped off or if available, they can drive themselves to events
  - Parents/Guardians must complete “Jericho” Permission Form (APPENDIX J)

### **On-Campus Special Event Procedures—**

Special Events include, but are not limited to: Vacation Bible School, First Fridays, God’s Gift Factory and any drop-off event. These events usually include children from the community that are not members of St. Mark.

- Ratios are the same for special events as regular events.

- All children left on campus without parents must have Child Permission Form (APPENDIX F) on file. This permission form includes medical release, medical/dietary/special needs, photo release, and release of liability. It is updated annually and a new form should be filled out each year so information is kept up to date. Director of special event must have access to the form information.
- Nursery Children will be signed-in and out by parent/guardian/appointed adult on Nursery Sign-in/out Sheet (APPENDIX E) with a nursery employee.
- Elementary Children will be signed-in and out on a roster by parent/guardian/appointed adult.
- Youth do not require an adult to sign-in or out, however a Youth Permission Form with contact information for parents must be on file.

### **Off-Campus Event Procedures—**

Off-Campus Special Events include, but are not limited to: youth outings, All-Church Retreat, service projects, pool parties and riding on the St. Mark float during parade.

- Children and/or vulnerable adults attending off-campus events should be accompanied by parent or an adult designated by parent/guardian.
- Youth attending off-campus events should have permission from parent to attend and a Youth Permission Form (APPENDIX G) should be on file.
- Youth may not drive themselves to off-campus events when leaving from St. Mark without special permission from parent or youth director.
- For over-night events, youth will have at least one sponsor of each sex that is attending event. (ie. 2 female youth and 4 male youth = 1 male and 1 female adult sponsor), unless otherwise required by event.

## TEXAS FAMILY CODE

Vernon's Texas Statutes and codes annotated Family Code  
Title 5. The Parent-Child Relationship and the Suit Affecting the Parent-Child  
Relationship  
Subtitle E. Protection of the Child  
Chapter 261. Investigation of Report of Child Abuse or Neglect  
Subchapter B. Report of Abuse or Neglect; Immunities  
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Current through End of 1999 Regular Session

### S 261.101. Persons Required to Report; Time to Report

- (a) A person having cause to believe that a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been adversely affected by abuse or neglect by any person shall immediately make a report as provided by this subchapter.
- (b) If a professional has cause to believe that a child has been abused or neglected or may be abused or neglected or that a child is a victim of an offense under Section 21.11, Penal Code, the professional shall make a report not later than the 48<sup>th</sup> hour after the hour the professional first suspects that the child has been or may be abused or neglected or is a victim of an offense under Section 21.11, Penal Code. A professional may not delegate to or rely on another person to make the report. In this subsection, "professional" means an individual who is licensed or certified by the state or who is an employee of a facility licensed, certified, or operated by the state and who, in the normal course of official duties or duties for which a license or certification is required, has direct contact with children. The term includes teachers, nurses, doctors, day-care employees, employees of a clinic or health care facility that provides reproductive services, juvenile probation officers, and the juvenile detention or correctional officers.
- (c) The requirement to report under this section applies without exception to an individual whose personal communications may otherwise be privileged, including an attorney, a member of the clergy, a medical practitioner, a social worker, a mental health professional, and an employee of a clinic or health care facility that provides reproductive services.
- (d) Unless waived in writing by the person making the report, the identity of an individual making a report under this chapter is confidential and may be disclosed only:
  - (1). As provided by Section 261.201; or
  - (2). To a law enforcement officer for the purposes of conducting a criminal investigation of the report.

**As stated in Texas Family Code S261.101 Persons Required to Report; Time to Report (a) and (b), if you have cause to believe that a child's physical or mental**

**health or welfare has been adversely affected by abuse or neglect, you are to make a report immediately to Child Protective Services 1-800-252-5400**