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# CHILD SAFETY, ABUSE PREVENTION, & REPORTING POLICY

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## Table of Contents

A. Policy Statement	1
B. Screening	1
C. Prevention	3
1. Child and Youth Best Practices	3
2. Church Attendance by Identified Sex Offenders	9
D. Reporting Abuse, Abandonment or Neglect	9
1. Recognizing Abuse or Neglect	9
2. Reporting Suspected Abuse, Abandonment or Neglect of a Child	10
3. Documentation Form	11
E. Employment or Volunteer Action	11
<b>ACKNOWLEDGMENT</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>APPENDIX A: ABUSE DOCUMENTATION PROCESS CHART</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>APPENDIX B: SIGNS OF PHYSICAL AND SEXUAL ABUSE AND NEGLECT</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>APPENDIX C: WHAT TO DO IF A CHILD TELLS YOU ABOUT ABUSE</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>APPENDIX D: WHAT TO DO AFTER THE REPORT IS MADE</b>	<b>20</b>

**Calvary Chapel Church, Inc.**  
**Child Safety, Abuse Prevention & Reporting Policy**

- A. **Policy Statement.** At Calvary Chapel Church, Inc., we are committed to safeguarding the spiritual, emotional, and physical well-being of children.

The Bible lays the foundation for this task. In Isaiah 40:11 (NIV), the Scriptures say God “tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart....” Jesus expressed his concern for children in Mark 10:14 (NIV), saying, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.” Proverbs 31:8-9 calls on God’s people to care for those who are afflicted and needy, and further says the strong should protect the weak.

Therefore, we are steadfast in our commitment to protect and defend those individuals whom God has entrusted to our care. To support this goal, please carefully review the following policies and procedures that help ensure the safety of children and protect them from abuse and neglect.

Our hope is that these best practices for child safeguarding and abuse reporting protocol create an environment where kids are safe, and families can thrive. Advocating for children is near to the heart of God. Together, we will protect the most vulnerable in our care, praying we are equipped and knowledgeable in the process.

This document applies to all employees of the Church, including Calvary Christian Academy, as well as all volunteers. All references to Calvary Chapel Church, Inc. in this policy includes Calvary Christian Academy and all satellite campuses and will be referred to collectively as the “**Church.**” This Child Safety, Abuse Prevention, and Reporting Policy hereafter will be referred to as the “**Policy.**”

This Policy is governed by the Child and Vulnerable Adult Safety Team (the “**CVAST**”). The CVAST consists of the Director of Child and Vulnerable Adult Safety and those other members appointed by the Executive Leadership Team. A current list of CVAST members is kept of file in office of the Executive Pastor of Administration.

- B. **Screening.**

*A prudent man foresees evil and hides himself, But the simple pass on and are punished. — Proverbs 22:3 (NKJV)*

*For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts.... All these evil things come from within and defile a man.” — Mark 7:21, 23 (NKJV)*

As a ministry that cares for children and youth, we are obligated to exercise “due diligence” with regard to protecting our people. Pre-employment background screening is mandatory for all Church staff and for volunteers who have unsupervised access to children in connection with their ministry duties. By performing background checks on our volunteers and staff, the ministry is:

1. safeguarding the starting point of the volunteer process that will, in many instances, ward off sexual predators, and
2. comforting the minds of discerning parents by showing the church is pro-active in protecting children.

The employee application and screening process will be conducted through the Human Resources department according to its policies and procedures. Volunteers for ministry programs serving children will be subject to the following application and screening requirements:

1. **Volunteer Safety Application.** This form will be completed by the potential volunteer. It asks specific questions that are designed to elicit responses that would reveal any red flags. This step in the process will be done on-line.
2. **Reference Form.** This form will be completed by the potential volunteer at the same time as the application. Each volunteer must provide the contact information for three individuals who can provide a character reference for them. This step in the process will be done on-line.
3. **Volunteer Statements and Agreed Code of Conduct.** This form will be completed by the potential volunteer at the same time as those above. This form is designed to clarify for the potential volunteer the Church's expectations of approved volunteers. It shows them we are aware and trained to be on the lookout for potential abusers. This step in the process will be done on-line.
4. **Background Checks.** The potential volunteer will then be sent an email to begin the background clearances through Protect My Ministry, or other background screening services employed by the Church. This will include their release of liability for the background checks. This step in the process will be done on-line. Criminal screening results will be processed according to the Church's Criminal History Screening Policy.
  - a. If an applicant has criminal charges on their record, we have enhanced screening tools to obtain additional information to assess alternative volunteer options that may be available for these individuals. Enhanced screening will involve obtaining additional screening information or conducting interviews.

Enhanced screening information may include one or more of the following records, which can be obtained from the arresting agency, prosecutors office, or local court handling the Applicant's case. The Applicant shall be made responsible for obtaining the records for the Church to review.

- 1) A copy of the police report
- 2) A copy of the probable cause affidavit
- 3) A copy of the indictment
- 4) A copy of the court disposition
- 5) A copy of the conditions of probation/parole

Interviews with the arresting officer, the prosecutor, and the probation/parole office can also be extremely helpful. Contact with these individuals should be made by the person who will also conduct the interview with the Applicant. The Applicant can be made responsible for providing contact information for each of the potential references. Once this information is obtained, compare it to the information provided by the Applicant and use it to guide additional discussions

with the Applicant to determine his or her continued involvement in church ministry and/or presence on Church property.

- b. Applicants with sexually-based offenses on their record, or if they are registered as sexual predators/offenders, will not be permitted to work or volunteer with the Church, however, we have alternative opportunities that may be available for these individuals to be ministered to which will be discussed later in this Policy.
5. **Personal Interview.** Each potential child volunteer will complete a face-to-face interview with a leader within their chosen ministry. The interview questions are specifically designed to uncover any potentially dangerous attitudes or behaviors in the volunteer. This is the only step in the screening process that will need to be done in person. During the interview, applicants can be questioned about their criminal history screening results and requested to provide any additional information that may be needed to complete the screening, including information needed to complete the enhanced screening described above.
  6. **Abuse Awareness Training.** Each applicant is required to view a series of video trainings. These videos focus on safe boundaries with kids, practices in ministry settings, and procedures to handle policy violations. [Click here to watch Calvary training videos.](#)
- C. **Prevention.** We can help protect our church body by being watchful and wise as we look for ways to educate our staff and volunteers and hold accountable those who may try to harm the vulnerable in our flock.

*Give justice to the weak and the fatherless; maintain the right of the afflicted and the destitute. Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked. — Psalm 82:3-4 (ESV)*

For staff and volunteers who regularly work with children, the Church promotes a heightened awareness of abuse indicators. All new staff members and volunteers working with children will receive regular in-service training, in addition to their initial education. This training includes safe practices, policy reinforcement of abuse prohibition, prevention, reporting obligations, identification of potential victims of alleged or suspected abuse, identification of grooming behaviors exhibited by potential abusers, and identification of indicators that may suggest an individual has greater risk factors for abuse or neglect.

1. **Child and Youth Best Practices.** These principles apply to church services and related activities. Calvary Christian Academy has its own policies and procedures on childcare as outlined in the CCA Handbook.
  - a. **General Principles for All Ages.**
    - 1) Individuals interacting with children or youth should never be alone with a single child and/or out of the line of sight of other leaders, students, volunteers or parents.
    - 2) If meeting with a single child or youth in an office, the door should remain open. An adult should never be alone with a child or youth in an office setting when there are no other adults present, such as after hours.

- 3) Private conversations between an adult and a child or youth must take place in a setting where there is visibility by other adults.
- 4) It is never ok to ask a child or youth to keep a secret.
- 5) All touch between a volunteer or student leader and a child or youth should be observable by others. Appropriate touch between a volunteer or student leader and a child or youth include:
  - a) Pat on the shoulder
  - b) Holding hands (only in a group prayer setting)
  - c) Side hug
  - d) High five
  - e) Fist bump
  - f) Hand shake
- 6) Every child or youth should be free to say “no” to any unwanted touch. We respect all children’s personal boundaries, even if they are unable to verbalize it. Examples of inappropriate touch include, but are not limited to:
  - a) Full frontal hug
  - b) Touching the middle or lower back
  - c) Touching any private areas, including the buttocks
  - d) Touching the front torso, including chest and stomach
  - e) Touching on the thigh
  - f) Any other touch that causes discomfort to the person being touched
- 7) Volunteers and student leaders may not use questionable language such as curse words, crude jokes or sexually explicit compliments.
- 8) All movies shown in a classroom or the middle/high school rooms must be pre-approved by the Team Leader.
- 9) Children in wheelchairs should never be transferred unless instructed otherwise by the parent.
- 10) Only trained and certified volunteers are permitted to restrain a child/youth who is a danger to him/herself or others.

11) The Church encourages the older students to become student leaders for the younger children/youth. These student leaders will be assigned to an overseer and given specific work assignments. They must remain in the area in which they serve.

b. **Newborns – 5<sup>th</sup> Grade.** The Church adheres to a “Sight/Sound” policy for all newborns – 5<sup>th</sup> grade. This means that children in our care will be within sight of an approved staff/volunteer at all times, except when using the restroom where they will be within hearing distance of a volunteer. The purpose of sight supervision is to ensure all children can always be seen by an approved adult leader to ensure the safety of all in our care. By providing sight supervision, an approved adult leader can move closer for sound supervision as needed to observe situations of concern. Sound supervision allows the adult leader to hear what's happening and allows them to address any concerns with a child immediately. The procedures below will help ensure each child has sight supervision at all times.

1) **Drop Off/Pick up Procedures.**

- a) Children must be signed in by an adult. The adult will be given a check-out sticker if they do not already have an automated one from the kiosk.
- b) Children will be supervised at all times once they are checked in.
- c) Children will not be released without a parent check-out sticker.
- d) If the adult seeking to pick up a child does not have the check-out sticker, a Team Leader must be notified to verify that the person is approved to pick up the child.
- e) It is preferred that children are picked up by an adult, but an older sibling may pick up a child if they are at least 12 years of age, seem responsible, and have the check-out sticker.

2) **Supervision Ratios.** Before accepting a child into any childcare room, the following requirements must be met:

- a) There must be a minimum of two, non-related volunteers in the room.
- a) At least one volunteer must be a female.
- b) At least one volunteer must be over the age of 18.
- c) Windows must remain uncovered and accessible to parents for viewing their children.
- d) Male volunteers are not permitted to hold a child on their lap.

The following volunteer/child ratio chart will outline the best practice minimum standards that must be maintained at all times as well as the aspirational standards that we strive to provide for each age group.

Age Group	Best Practice Minimum Standard	Aspirational Standard
Nursery (0-12months)	1 volunteer/4 children	1 volunteer/2 children
Toddlers (12 – 24 months)	1 volunteer/5 children	1 volunteer/3 children
2 year olds	1 volunteer/7 children	1 volunteer/4 children
3 – 5 year olds	1 volunteer/12 children	1 volunteer/7 children
Kindergarten – 5 <sup>th</sup> Grade	1 volunteer/15 children	1 volunteer/8 children

3) **Restroom Policy.**

- a) Only female volunteers, ages 16 or older, will be permitted to change diapers or assist younger children who require bathroom assistance, while being in the line of sight of another volunteer.
- b) Diapers should never be changed on children older the 4 years. If a child is in diapers over the age of 4 and needs to be changed, the parent/adult who checked them in will need to be called to change them.
- c) For grades 3 and below, it is preferable for all the children in a particular group go to the restroom at the same time. The volunteers will stand outside the restroom with the door propped open and within hearing distance.
- d) Children in 4th grade and above should be given privacy when using the restroom. They should be accompanied by an adult of the same gender who remains within hearing distance.
- e) If the restroom is not very close to the classroom, one adult should stand outside the restroom to watch and listen to the children, while a second adult watches the first adult, so as not to leave children with only one adult watching the group.
- f) Male student leaders are not permitted to use the restrooms in the children’s ministry area.
- g) All youth in the King’s Kids classroom will be escorted to the restroom by two female volunteers in order to provide assistance as necessary.

- 4) **Responding to Inappropriate Behavior.** When you need to stop a child who is touching inappropriately, it is very important to communicate a boundary for the child and for yourself. Give them the option of an appropriate touch such as, “You may hold my hand.” Consistency is very important. If the child continues the behavior, alert your overseer so you can discuss why the child is continuing the behavior. If a child uses inappropriate language, calmly say, “We don’t use that word here.” You may also ask where they learned the word or what they think it means. Corporal (physical) punishment is never to be used as discipline.

c. **Grades 6 – 12.**

1) **Drop Off/Pick Up Procedures.**

- a) Middle and high school students do not need to be signed in or out by a parent/adult.
- b) All youth will be supervised at all times within in the youth area.
- c) Middle school students will not be permitted to leave the youth area unescorted until the end of youth service. A volunteer will be stationed at the exit.
- d) High school students are permitted to come and go from the youth area unescorted. During service times, they will be encouraged to remain in the youth area. Campus security personnel will monitor the main church facilities. If high school youth are found loitering in unsupervised areas, they will be directed to either the main sanctuary, youth area or café.

2) **Supervision Ratios.** Youth leader/student ratios should be two leaders/20 students. When the leaders and students are broken out into small groups, the ratio can be 1 leader/10 students as long as the group is in the line of sight of another group.

3) **Restroom Policies.**

- a) All youth must use the restroom that corresponds to their gender at birth.
- b) A volunteer of the same sex as that of the bathroom designation will be stationed at each unlocked bathroom in the youth area. They will remain outside the restroom but within hearing distance.
- c) For children in King's Kids, special circumstances on occasion may exist that call for a male to accompany the children to the restrooms.

4) **Appropriate Communication between Youth Leaders and Students.** Any communication between Youth leaders and students (whether in person, on the phone, email, text, or on social media) should at all times be encouraging and edifying.

- a) **Verbal Communication.** Leaders may not use questionable language such as curse words, crude language, or inappropriate jokes or comments. Additionally:
  - i. Leaders may not comment on a student's physical development.
  - ii. Leaders may not infer that a student's physical appearance will make them attractive to the opposite sex.
  - iii. Leaders may not use any sexual language or make a sexual connotation.

- iv. Leaders may not flirt with the students.
  - v. Leaders may not make any crude or obscene hand or body gestures.
  - vi. Leaders may not make fun of any student.
- b) **Communication via Email, Text or Social Media.** When communicating to students via technology and social media (including but not limited to email, texting, messaging, and/or social media apps), leaders should adhere to the following guidelines:
- i. This type of communication is only permissible if staff and volunteer leaders agree to accountability and phone/device checks.
  - ii. Individual communications are discouraged in general, and are only permitted with a student of the same sex.
  - iii. Communication with a student of the opposite sex may only be done through a group email, text, message or chat.
  - iv. Late night or early morning communications should only be done in an emergency and with an overseer's knowledge.
- 5) **Gift-Giving.** If gifts are given, they must be given to every student, even if distributed privately. If a leader becomes aware of a specific need by a student, the need should be shared with staff so it may be met without the gift coming from a specific person.
- 6) **Off-site Events.**
- a) **Local Event.** At various times, the Church will host off-site events for our middle and high school youth, such as laser tag, bowling, miniature golf, etc. During off-site events volunteers will be stationed at the entrances and bathrooms.
  - b) **Overnight Trips.** There are times when the middle and high school students may participate in overnight retreats or summer camp events. The following guidelines will be adhered to while on an overnight trip:
    - i. There should be at least two adult male and two adult female leaders for any Church overnight event involving students of both sexes, with a maximum ratio of 1 leader/6 student.
    - ii. At least one adult leader must be a Church staff member.
    - iii. If a leader is sleeping in the room with students, there should be a maximum ratio of 1 leader/3 students. At no time shall there be a 1 leader/1 student ratio.
    - iv. Leaders may not share a bed with a student.

c) **Transportation.** If leaders desire to transport students in their personal vehicles, they must comply with the Church's Vehicle and Driver Policy at all times. Specifically, but not limited to:

- i. Leaders may only transport students in their personal vehicles with written permission from the parent/guardian.
- ii. Leaders should not be alone in the car with a student, there should be at least 3 people at all times.

2. **Church Attendance by Identified Sex Offenders.** If it is determined through the screening process or anytime thereafter, that an individual is designated as a sexual offender under F.S. 943.0435 or a sexual predator under F.S. 775.21, or another state's comparable statute; or an individual who admits to having sexual urges towards a minor or vulnerable adult and has acted upon those urges; or an individual who is determined by the Church to exhibit predatory or sexually deviant behavior toward children or vulnerable adults, then 1) the person will not be permitted to work or volunteer at the Church and 2) the person will not be permitted to attend church services or events at any of the Church campuses.

There may be individuals who have questionable charges on their background screening results or who have admitted to having deviant sexual desires, but do not meet the criteria set forth above. In these circumstances, the Church may require the individual to participate in a series of assessment and discipleship, as outlined in the Church's Criminal History Screening Policy, in order to fully assess if they are able to attend church services or events.

D. **Reporting Abuse, Abandonment or Neglect.** There are many Scriptures that advise us to seek wisdom diligently. Deuteronomy 13:14 says to "investigate thoroughly and inquire carefully" (NET). We are not to brush off rumors or allegations but instead we ought to be watchful, asking questions if something doesn't seem right. We must be purposeful in examining a person's heart when they are seeking to volunteer, especially among the vulnerable. Proverbs 20:5 says, "The purposes of a person's heart are deep waters, but one who has insight draws them out" (NIV). Based on these Scriptures, and our duty to follow the rule of law, any case of suspected abuse, abandonment or neglect requires immediate action.

1. **Recognizing Abuse or Neglect.** The Florida Statutes defines what constitutes abuse or neglect in the state of Florida. The complete definition can be found in [F.S. 39.01](#). Below is a summary of abandonment, abuse and neglect as defined by F.S. 39.01:

- a. **Abandonment.** Abandonment occurs when the parent or guardian of a child, while able, has made no significant contribution to the child's care and maintenance or has failed to establish or maintain a substantial and positive relationship with the child. The official charge for abandoning a child in Florida's is "unlawful desertion of a child," which occurs when a caregiver deserts a child under circumstances in which he or she knew (or should have known) that the desertion exposes the child to unreasonable risk of harm.
- b. **Abuse.** Abuse occurs when any willful or threatened act results in the injury, harm or significant emotional impairment of a child, such as repeated injuries, injuries requiring medical treatment

or actions that produce a discernable and substantial impairment in the ability to function within the normal range of performance and behavior.

- 1) **Physical Abuse.** Physical abuse can include, but is not limited to, striking a child with a hand, fist or other object; burning or scalding; cuts, lacerations or bites; asphyxiation, suffocation or drowning; or significant bruises or welts. Corporal punishment of a child by a parent or guardian does not constitute abuse when it does not result in harm to the child. Physical abuse can range in severity from minor to fatal. Any injury requiring medical treatment is outside the range of normal discipline.
  - 2) **Sexual Abuse.** Sexual abuse of a child ranges from noncontact sexual behavior such as making obscene phone calls, exhibitionism, voyeurism, and lewd photographs to direct sexual contact. Sexual abuse between children is possible and is considered to have occurred when the sexual behavior occurs without consent, without equality, or as a result of coercion. Violent sexual abuse means forcible rape, sodomy, oral sex. Non-violent abuse means fondling, touching sexual organs, or sex play.
- c. **Neglect.** Neglect occurs when a parent or guardian fails to supply a child with adequate food, clothing, shelter, or healthcare, although financially able to do so or although offered financial or other means to do so. The inability to provide food, clothing, shelter or healthcare to a child due to poverty does not constitute abuse unless the parent or guardian fails to accept or follow through with any services offered to meet these basic needs. In addition, a parent or guardian who, by reason of the legitimate practice of religious beliefs, does not provide specified medical treatment for a child may not be considered abusive or neglectful for that reason alone. This refusal based on religious practice must still be reported to the department.
2. **Reporting Suspected Abuse, Abandonment or Neglect of a Child.** Florida law requires that any person who knows or has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is being abused, abandoned, or neglected shall report such knowledge or suspicion to the Florida Department of Children and Families (“DCF”) Abuse Hotline at:

**1-800-96-ABUSE or 1-800-962-2873**

DCF will walk the caller through the process and make the determination if an investigation is justified and will let the caller know what to expect regarding follow up. Once the call is made, there is no need for further internal inquiry as DCF is now responsible for any follow-up investigation. You will need to be available and cooperative with their investigation if it does entail follow up.

If you have concern regarding the abuse, abandonment or neglect of a child, but you are not sure if you have reasonable suspicion, or if you have any question whatsoever about whether something is reportable under the law, the CVAAT as well as the Church Legal Counsel are available to assist you and are willing to do so immediately, in order to take appropriate action as required under the law and furtherance of this policy. For further explanation of how to gather the appropriate information, please refer to Appendix C of this policy.

Remember, the law does not require that an individual knows for certain that a child has been abused, abandoned neglected. All that is required is that they have a “reasonable suspicion” and that they report their “reasonable suspicion” in good faith to DCF.

Failure to report abuse, abandonment and/or neglect can lead to disciplinary action up to and including termination. A person who is required to report child abuse, abandonment or neglect and who knowingly and willfully fails to do so, or who knowingly and willfully prevents another person from doing so, commits a felony of the third degree. Employees who, in good faith, report abuse, abandonment, and/or neglect are immune from civil or criminal liability for reporting such information and for participating in any investigation.

A list of potential signs of abuse, abandonment and neglect can be found in the appendix. The appendix also provides helpful information to consider if a child tells you they are being abused.

3. **Documentation Form.** The Abuse Documentation Form should be completed every time the Church is made aware of a potential abuse situation, even if the final determination is made that the incident does not meet the level of reportable suspicion under the law. If the child is not in imminent danger, it may be helpful to complete the form prior to making the report to the DCF Abuse Hotline so that you have the form to use as a reference. When the child is in immediate danger, it is best to make the report first and then complete the Abuse Documentation Form after. Be sure to include the name and ID# of the DCF Abuse Hotline counselor on the Abuse Documentation form.

Once the Abuse Documentation Form is completed, employees should submit it to their immediate supervisor and the Director of the CVAAT accordingly. It is important that the person filling out the Abuse Documentation Form receive an acknowledgment in the form of their initials and/or signature on the form from their immediate supervisor upon receipt of the Abuse Documentation Form. Simply leaving e-mails, voicemails, text messages, etc. is not sufficient. The Abuse Documentation form must be completely filled out and reviewed and signed by all required parties listed on the form. Once completed and signed by all parties, a copy shall be submitted to the office of the General Counsel to be saved in the Church's permanent administrative files.

Please see the process chart set forth in Appendix A for an overview of the reporting procedures.

4. **Follow-up with Victim/Family of Victim.** When possible or appropriate, the Church desires to assist in the healing and restoration process of the victim and their family. If applicable, the CVAAT will provide referrals to appropriate private or public agencies or counselors that provide or arrange for the evaluation and care of alleged abuse victims and will implement measures to ensure confidentiality to the extent practicable.
- E. **Employment or Volunteer Action.** If the individual alleged to have committed the abuse, abandonment or neglect is a staff member or volunteer, appropriate measures will be taken that may include suspension from employment or service in ministry during the investigation process.

If the allegations are sufficiently well founded, the suspension will be without pay. Additional discipline up to and including termination may be taken if the allegations are substantiated. If the allegations are later deemed unfounded, or cannot be substantiated, the employee will receive pay retroactively for the days of suspension and may be reinstated. Just because an allegation cannot be substantiated does not mean nothing happened. The Church takes each allegation seriously and looks for long-term care for each person involved well beyond the investigative season. This helps ensure care and help are provided when needed to see lasting health spiritually, physically, emotionally, and mentally.

If there are any questions regarding this Policy, it is imperative that the employee or volunteer seek guidance through their immediate supervisor or the Director of Human Resources.

This policy has been approved by the Board of Directors of Calvary Chapel Church, Inc. and is directed to be implemented as of the 8<sup>th</sup> day of February 2019.

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**Deborah Toderic, Secretary**

**THIS SPACE LEFT BLANK INTENTIONALLY**

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I have received and read a copy of this Policy, including the attached Abuse Documentation Form and Process Chart, and I understand their contents. I understand that the Church expressly reserves the right to change, modify, or delete provisions of this Policy. I further acknowledge it is my responsibility to review any updates to the Policy posted on the Church's Intranet or made available through the Human Resources Department or the ministry in which I serve. I acknowledge that I am responsible for upholding these policies while employed by the Church or volunteering in the Church's ministry programs.

I understand that violations of this Policy will subject me to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment or volunteer service in the Church's ministry programs.

I understand that this Policy does not replace my obligations under Florida law but is meant only to supplement them.

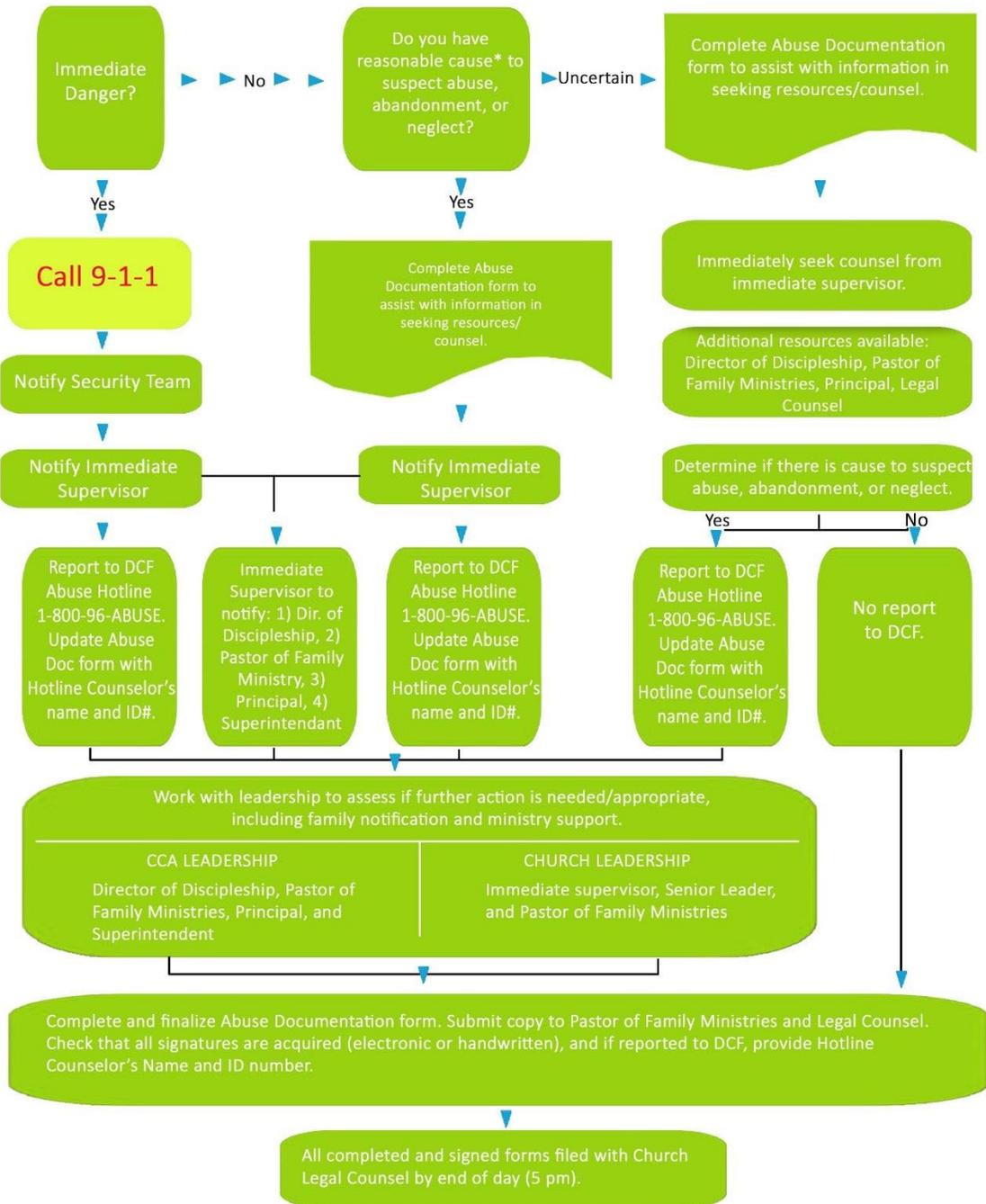
Ministry: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX A: ABUSE DOCUMENTATION PROCESS CHART**



\*Reasonable cause: to have knowledge of facts which, although not amounting to direct knowledge, would cause a reasonable person, knowing the same facts, to reasonably conclude the same thing.

## **APPENDIX B: SIGNS OF PHYSICAL AND SEXUAL ABUSE AND NEGLECT**

### **SIGNS OF PHYSICAL ABUSE**

The child may have unexplained:

- bruises, welts, cuts, or other injuries
- broken bones
- burns

A child experiencing physical abuse may:

- seem withdrawn or depressed
- seem afraid to go home or may run away
- shy away from physical contact
- be aggressive
- wear inappropriate clothing to hide injuries

### **SIGNS OF SEXUAL ABUSE**

The child may have:

- torn, stained or bloody underwear
- trouble walking or sitting
- pain or itching in genital area
- a sexually transmitted disease

A child experiencing sexual abuse may:

- have unusual knowledge of sex or act seductively
- fear a specific person
- seem withdrawn or depressed
- gain or lose weight suddenly
- shy away from physical contact
- run away from home

### **SIGNS OF NEGLECT**

The child may have:

- unattended medical needs
- little or no supervision at home
- poor hygiene
- appear underweight

A child experiencing neglect may:

- be frequently tired or hungry
- steal food
- appear overly needy for adult attention

### **LOOK FOR PATTERNS**

Serious abuse usually involves a combination of factors. While a single sign may not be significant, a pattern of physical or behavioral signs is a serious indicator and should be reported.

## **APPENDIX C: WHAT TO DO IF A CHILD TELLS YOU ABOUT ABUSE**

If a child tells you about abuse:

1. Be a good listener. Show that you understand and believe what the child tells you.
2. If the child asks you to keep a secret, tell them that for their safety, you cannot keep secrets when someone's safety is at risk.
3. Encourage but don't pressure him/her to talk. Ask open-ended questions.
4. If possible, be sure to get all the pertinent information required to make a report so that we do not have to follow up later with for further information. This would include, but is not limited to:
  - a. Identifying the type of alleged abuse, abandonment, and/or neglect.
  - b. Determining where, when and how often the incident occurred.
  - c. Determining the identity of the alleged abuser.
5. Be supportive. Tell the child he/she did the right thing by coming to you. Stress that he/she is not to blame. Let the child know that you want to help.
6. Don't overreact. This can frighten the child or prevent him/her from telling you more.
7. Do not talk negatively about the suspected abuser in front of the child.
8. Document and report it. Document your conversation as soon as you can. If possible, write down the child's exact words.

Don't delay. Never assume someone else will report the abuse. The sooner it's reported, the sooner the child and their family can be helped.

## **APPENDIX D: WHAT TO DO AFTER THE REPORT IS MADE**

1. Comfort the child or adult.
2. Reassure the child that the people who will be investigating the situation are there to help.
3. Continue to observe the child and the child's behavior in case the abuse reoccurs.
4. Determine if and or when a call to the family or caregiver will be made for ministry purposes.