



Child Abuse Prevention/ Response Handbook

Northern California Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

A production of the Risk Management Department

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Child Abuse Prevention/ Response Handbook

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Introduction

In following the instructions of our Lord Jesus Christ to “let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these” (Matthew 19:14), it is the purpose of the members and staff of every Seventh-day Adventist Church to provide a safe and secure environment for preschoolers, children, youth and mentally handicapped persons entrusted to our care. We do this to encourage those preschoolers, children, youth, and their families to come to a saving relationship with Jesus Christ, and to grow in their relationship with Him.

A safe and secure environment includes a formal, written policy to help prevent the occurrence of child abuse and to require the reporting suspected child abuse. The following policy and procedures are for the protection of our preschoolers, children, youth, employees, volunteers and our entire church family at each of our congregations in the Northern California Conference.

This policy shall apply to all current and future workers, compensated and/or volunteer, who will have the responsibility of supervising the activities of preschoolers, children, youth, and mentally handicapped persons.

This Handbook consists of three sections. In the first, the types of child abuse and neglect, and the indicating signs associated with each, are described. In the second, the requirements for responding to a reasonable suspicion of child abuse are detailed. And lastly, this Handbook details the steps that each congregation should take to prevent incidents of child abuse at church or church functions.

A safe and secure environment includes a formal, written policy to help prevent child abuse.

Definitions

For the purpose of this policy the following definitions shall apply:

- “*Preschooler*,” “*child*,” “*children*,” “*youth*,” and “*minor*” shall be defined as any individual under the age of 18, or whose mental capacity is that of a minor.
- “*Adult*” shall be defined as any individual at least 18 years of age.
- “*Worker*” shall be defined as any adult who serves as a volunteer and/or paid position given the responsibility of working with or caring for minors.
- “*Teenage Worker*” shall be defined as any worker at least 14 years old, but under the age of 18, enlisted to assist with the care of minors.
- “*Child Abuse*” shall be defined as verbal, physical, emotional, or sexual abuse of a preschooler, child, youth, or minor.
- “*Criminal Background Check*” (CBC) is the procedure specified by the Northern California Conference of Seventh-day Adventists to check the background of adult employees or volunteers for criminal activity.

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1. What is Child Abuse?

Child abuse may be defined as any act, or act of omission that endangers or impairs a child's physical or emotional health or development. It is the act, rather than the degree of injury, that determines the need for reporting and intervention by medical and other professionals, including pastors. The California Child Abuse Reporting Act defines child abuse as:

- Physical abuse
- Physical Neglect
- Sexual Abuse
- Emotional Maltreatment



Definitions of child abuse according to the California Child Abuse Reporting Act.

Indicators of each form of suspected child abuse are listed in this section to help church personnel and volunteers recognize and meet their responsibilities under this policy and the Child Abuse Reporting Act. A copy of the pertinent provisions of the Child Abuse Reporting Act are found at the end of this Handbook in *Appendix A*.

Physical Abuse

"Child abuse means a physical injury which is inflicted by other than accidental means on a child by another person." (Penal Code § 11165.6) Inflicted child abuse most often occurs as a result of severe corporal punishment. Physical abuse usually happens when a frustrated or angry parent or other caregiver strikes, shakes or throws a child. Intentional assaults such as burning, biting, cutting, poking, twisting limbs or otherwise torturing a child are also included in this category of child abuse. Indicators of physical abuse can be physical or behavioral.

Physical Indicators

The type and location of an injury can help to distinguish accidental injuries from suspected physical abuse. Typical locations of injuries resulting from abuse are the back surface of a child's body from the neck to the knees, injuries to the face. Injuries to the shins, elbows, knees or forehead are not typical locations of injuries sustained from abuse.

Types of injuries:

- | | | |
|---------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| • Bruises | • Burns | • Bite Marks |
| • Abrasions | • Lacerations | • Head Injuries |
| • Internal Injuries | • Fractures | |

Behavioral Indicators

The following behaviors are often exhibited by abused children:

- Child is frightened of parent(s) caretaker(s) or. At the other extreme, is overprotective of parent(s) or caretaker(s).
- Child is excessively passive, overly compliant, apathetic, withdrawn or fearful or, at the other extreme, excessively aggressive, destructive or physically violent.
- Child and/or parent or caretaker attempts to hide injuries; child wears excessive layers of clothing, especially in hot weather; child is frequently absent from class or avoids activities in which changing of clothes would be required.

- Child is frightened of going home.
- Child is clingy and forms indiscriminate attachments.
- Child is apprehensive when other children cry.
- Child is wary of physical contact with adults.
- Child exhibits drastic behavioral changes in and out of parental/caretaker presence.
- Child is hyper vigilant.
- Child suffers from seizures or vomiting.
- Adolescent exhibits depression, self-mutilation, suicide attempts, substance abuse, or sleeping and eating disorders.
- A statement by a child that an injury was caused by abuse.
- Knowledge that the child's injury is unusual for the child's specific age (e.g. any fracture in an infant).
- Knowledge of the child's history of previous or recurrent injuries.
- Unexplained injuries, or injury explanation contains discrepancies or is inconsistent with the type or severity of injury.
- A parent or caretaker who delays seeking or fails to seek appropriate medical care for their child's injury.

Physical Neglect

Neglect is the negligent treatment or maltreatment of a child by a parent or caretaker under circumstances indicating harm or threatened physical harm to the child's health or welfare. California Law defines two categories of neglect: *severe neglect* and *general neglect*.

Severe neglect means the negligent failure of a parent or caretaker to protect the child from severe malnutrition or a medically diagnosed non-organic failure to thrive. It also includes situations in which the

California Law defines two categories of neglect: severe neglect and general neglect.

parent or caretaker willfully causes or permits the body or health of the child to be endangered. This includes the intentional failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter or medical care.

General neglect means the negligent failure of a parent or caretaker to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical care or supervision where no physical injury to the child has occurred.

Indicators of Physical Neglect

Neglect may be suspected when one or more of the following conditions exist:

- Child is lacking adequate medical or dental care.
- Child is often sleepy or hungry.
- Child is often dirty, demonstrates poor personal hygiene or is inadequately dressed for the weather conditions.
- There is evidence of poor or inadequate supervision for the child's age.
- The conditions in the home are unsafe or unsanitary.
- Child appears to be malnourished.
- Child is depressed, withdrawn or apathetic, exhibits antisocial or destructive behaviors, shows fearfulness, or suffers from substance abuse, speech, eating or habit disorders (biting, rocking, whining).

While some of these conditions may exist in any home, and do not, by themselves, indicate neglect, the extreme or persistent presence of these factors may indicate a degree of neglect. Disarray and untidiness do not mean that a home is unfit, but extreme conditions which, to a reasonable person, present a significant health risk to a child, may constitute severe neglect and require intervention.

Sexual Abuse

California law defines child sexual abuse as acts of sexual assault or sexual exploitation of a child. Child sexual abuse encompasses a broad spectrum of behaviors and may consist of many acts over a long period of time or a single incident. Sexual abuse includes any sexual activity with a child - whether in the home by a caretaker in a day care situation, in a foster/residential setting, at church or at a church function 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 at least four years older than the victim.

Child sexual abuse may be violent or non-violent and includes behaviors that involve touching and non-touching aspects.

Child sexual abuse is criminal behavior that involves children in sexual behaviors for which they are not personally, socially, and developmentally ready. All child sexual abuse is an exploitation of a child's vulnerability and powerlessness in which the abuser is fully responsible for the action.

Child sexual abuse may be violent or non-violent.

Sexual exploitation of a child includes conduct or activities related to pornography depicting minors and promoting prostitution by minors.

Indicators of Sexual Abuse

Indicators of sexual abuse can surface through a child's history, physical symptoms and behavior. Some of these indicators, taken separately, may not mean a child has been sexually abused. Rather, they are listed below as a guide and should always be examined within the context of other factors.

History

- The single most important indicator is disclosure by the child to a friend, classmate, school or Sabbath School teacher, pathfinder leader, friend's mother or other trusted adult. The disclosure may be direct or indirect, e.g. "I know someone..." or "What would you do if...?" or "I heard something about somebody..." It is not uncommon for the disclosure by children experiencing chronic sexual abuse to be delayed. Children rarely fabricate these accounts, and they should always be taken seriously.
- The child wears torn, stained or bloody underclothing.
- Knowledge that a child's injury/disease (genital trauma, sexually-transmitted disease) is unusual for the child's age group.
- Pregnancy of a young girl or a sexually transmitted disease. However, pregnancy of a minor, in and of itself, does not constitute a basis for a reasonable suspicion of sexual abuse.

Physical Symptoms

- Sexually transmitted disease.
- Genital infection.
- Physical trauma or irritation to a child's genital area.

- Difficulty in walking or sitting due to genital or anal pain.
- Psychosomatic symptoms (stomachaches, headaches).

Sexual Behaviors in Children

- Detailed and age-inappropriate understanding of sexual behavior.
- Inappropriate, unusual or aggressive sexual behaviors with peers or toys.
- Compulsive indiscreet masturbation.
- Excessive curiosity about sexual matters.
- Unusually seductive with classmates, teachers or other adults.
- Excessive concern about homosexuality, especially by boys.

Emotional Maltreatment

Emotional maltreatment consists of emotional abuse and emotional deprivation or neglect.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse may include verbal assaults such as belittling, screaming, threats, blaming, sarcasm; unpredictable responses or inconsistency; continual negative moods; constant family discord; use of religious teachings or traditions to intimidate or coerce, employing fear of God to enforce behavior.

Mandated reporters (teachers, health professionals, child care providers, pastors, etc...) may report suspected emotional abuse. However, suspected cases of severe emotional abuse that constitute willful

cruelty or unjustifiable punishment of a child must be reported by mandated reporters.



Mandated reporters may report suspected emotional abuse.

Behavioral Indicators of Emotional Abuse

- Child is withdrawn, depressed or apathetic.
- Child is clingy and forms indiscriminate attachments.
- Child "Acts Out" and is considered a behavioral problem.
- Child is overly rigid in conforming to instructions.
- Child suffers from eating, sleeping or speech disorders.
- Child displays signs of emotional turmoil, including rocking, whining).
- Suffers from enuresis (bed wetting).

These behaviors may, of course, be due to other causes, but are still cause for concern regarding the emotional wellbeing of the child and may indicate abuse.

Emotional Deprivation

Emotional deprivation may be defined as "the deprivation suffered by children when their parents or caregivers do not provide the normal experiences producing feelings of being loved, wanted, secure and worthy."

Behavioral Indicators of Emotional Deprivation.

- Child refuses to eat adequate amounts of food and is very frail.
- Child is unable to perform normal learned functions for a given age (walking, talking, etc.).

- Child displays antisocial behavior or is unresponsive or withdrawn.
- Child constantly seeks out and “pesters” adults for attention and affection.
- Child displays exaggerated fears.

When parents or caregivers ignore their children because of the parent’s or caregiver’s abuse of drugs or alcohol, psychiatric disturbances, personal problems or other preoccupying situations, serious consequences may occur. However, these situations are not reportable as child abuse or neglect unless they constitute a form of legally defined abuse. Therefore, it may be necessary to develop a coordinated application of church-based resources to alleviate the causes or effects of emotional deprivation.

What is Not Child Abuse?

A number of situations or circumstances are not considered to be child abuse under California Law. These include:

- Injuries caused by two children fighting during a mutual altercation.
- Injury caused by reasonable and necessary force used by a peace officer acting within the course and scope of his or her employment as a peace officer.
- Voluntary sexual conduct between minors who are both under the age of 14, and who are of similar age and sophistication.
- Pregnancy of a minor, regardless of age, does not, in and of itself, constitute the basis of a reasonable suspicion of sexual abuse.

II. Child Abuse Response Procedure

While there are specific legal requirements for reporting suspected child abuse that must be followed, dealing with suspected child abuse within a congregation requires additional steps in order to protect other children within our churches and promote healing and restoration within a congregation traumatized by the occurrence of abuse. Of course no set of policies and procedures can address every possible situation that may arise. Therefore, pastors are encouraged to contact the Conference Risk Management Department if they have questions concerning how to respond to a particular situation:



Call the Risk Management Department at (925) 685-4300 ex. 1237 if you have any questions about a particular situation.

What Does the Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Law Require?

The Child Abuse Reporting Law (Penal Code § 11166) requires certain professionals and lay persons, who have a special working relationship with children, to report known or suspected child abuse to the proper authorities. Part of that law provides as follows:

“...any child care custodian, health practitioner, employee of a child protective agency, child visitation monitor, firefighter, animal control officer or humane society officer who has knowledge of or observes a child, in his or her employment, whom he or she knows or reasonably suspects has been the victim of child abuse, shall report the known or suspected instance of child abuse to a child protective agency immediately or as soon


as practically possible by telephone and shall prepare and send a written report thereof within 36 hours of receiving the information concerning the incident... For the purposes of this article, "reasonable suspicion" means that it is objectively reasonable for a person to entertain a suspicion, drawing when appropriate on his or her training and experience, to suspect child abuse."

Required Reporting Procedure

Mandated reporters must report known or suspected incidents child abuse or neglect to a child protective service agency or local law enforcement office immediately or as soon as practically possible by telephone. The following information must be provided at the time of the call:

- The name of the reporter (which is confidential with limited exceptions);
- The name of the child;
- The present location of the child, if known;
- The nature and extent of the injury; and
- Any other information, including that which led the person to suspect child abuse, requested by the child protective agency.

The telephone report must be followed within 36 hours by a written report to the child protective agency to which the telephone report was made. The written report must be filed on Department of Justice Form SS 8572, a sample of which is found at the end of this Handbook in *Appendix B*.



A telephone report must be followed by a written report.

Church Response Procedures

1. The pastor, church representative, facility administrator and/or board shall take all reports of child abuse and sexual misconduct seriously and exercise the utmost care to prevent further harm. All available pastoral and or counseling resources should be extended to the victim(s), the accused and those other persons impacted by the situation.
2. All reports of suspected child abuse or sexual misconduct at church or at a church-sponsored activity or involving a paid employee or church volunteer shall be reported immediately to the Conference Human Resources Department.
3. If there are inquiries by the media concerning a report of suspected child abuse, the pastor and/or facility administrator shall consult with the Conference Communications Department and the Risk Management Department prior to responding to the inquiry. Confidentiality and the privacy of those involved must be safeguarded.
4. The pastor, church representative and or facility administrator shall make every effort to document all relevant information concerning a report of suspected child abuse/sexual misconduct or sexual offender attending church or church activities and all steps taken in response to the report (Except that churches shall not conduct a separate investigation of a report of suspected child abuse).
5. Once the suspected abuse has been reported to the appropriate child protective agency as described above, fully cooperate with the investigating authorities and allow legal due process to proceed.
6. A pastor or other church representative shall not attempt to interview any children involved in the reported abuse (reported victims, witness, etc) but shall leave that task to the child protective

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6. A pastor or other church representative shall not attempt to interview any children involved in the reported abuse (reported victims, witness, etc) but shall leave that task to the child protective

agency or law enforcement personnel who are trained to do so because any such attempt may be perceived as interfering with the official investigation and/or an attempt by the church to influence the outcome of an investigation. Prior to reporting an incident of suspected child abuse, a pastor or other church representative may conduct a limited investigation for the sole purpose of determining whether or not there is a reasonable suspicion of child abuse. However, once the pastor or church representative has established that there is a reasonable suspicion that child abuse has taken place, such investigation shall cease and the suspected abuse reported as required.

7. If the accused is a church member or is attending church or church activities, the pastor and an elder shall:
 - a) Meet with the accused as soon as possible (within 72 hours of receiving the report). If the accused is of a different gender than the pastor, an elder or other qualified church leader of the same gender as the accused shall accompany the pastor.
 - b) The accused shall be treated with dignity and support;
 - c) In the discretion of the pastor, the spouse or other family members of the accused may be included in all or part of the meeting at the request of the accused;
 - d) The accused shall be informed that the suspected child abuse has been reported to the appropriate authorities and that the results of their investigation are pending.
 - e) The accused shall be informed that, for their protection and for the protection of the children of the church, they shall have no contact with children at church or church activities pending the results of the investigation;
 - f) The accused shall be informed that they are being temporarily relieved of his or her church duties, if any, pending the results of the investigation.
 - g) Inform the accused that, in the event the report is found to be unsubstantiated, those duties may be restored and that in the case of a substantiated report, the matter shall be referred to the church board/ business session for action concerning the permanent removal of those duties pursuant to the Church Manual;
 - h) The accused shall also be informed that an elder will be assigned to monitor their behavior and whereabouts while at church or church functions. If the accused is female and a female elder is not available, a qualified female leader shall be appointed to do this monitoring;
 - i) The accused shall be given a written letter expressing the church's support for them as well as its concern for their family and children, if any, and detailing the restrictions and monitoring requirements discussed above;
 - j) Document all discussions and correspondence in a confidential file.
8. If the accused is a paid church employee and is being placed on administrative leave pending the results of an investigation, contact the Conference Human Resources Department for specific guidance for continuance of compensation during the period of investigation.

9. If the suspected child abuse victim is not a member of the accused's immediate family, the pastor and an elder shall:
 - a) Meet with the reported victim's parent(s) as soon as possible (within 72 hours of receiving the report). In the case of a single parent of a different gender than the pastor, the pastor shall be accompanied by an elder or other qualified church leader of the same gender as the parent;
 - b) The reported victim's parent's shall be treated with dignity and support;
 - c) The parent(s) shall be informed that the report has been made to the appropriate authorities; that the accused has been informed that, pending the results of the investigation, they are to have no contact with children at church or church activities and that the accused has been temporarily relieved of any church duties;
 - d) Counseling services for the reported victim and impacted family members shall be offered;
 - e) Other support services shall be offered as appropriate and needed (e.g.: child care or transportation assistance if needed for counseling sessions)
 - f) Document all discussions and correspondence in a confidential file.
10. At the conclusion of the investigation, the church board in business session shall determine whether or not the report of suspected abuse was substantiated. A report of suspected child abuse shall be considered to be substantiated in the following circumstances:
 - a) An admission by the accused as to the substantial truth of the report of suspected of child abuse; or
 - b) A finding by a juvenile or criminal court of the substantial truth of the report of suspected child abuse; or
 - c) A finding by the church board in business session as to the truth of the report of suspected child abuse pursuant to the provisions in the Church Manual governing church discipline (Chapter 14).
11. If the report of suspected child abuse is found to have been substantiated as provided above, the pastor and the church leadership shall:
 - a) Continue to treat the abuser with dignity and support, making it clear to them that they are welcome to continue in fellowship provided that they are willing to abide by the restrictions and monitoring requirements as established by the church board in business session.
 - b) Notify the Conference Human Resources Department of the results of the investigation and any information available concerning other churches the individual may be attending.
12. Distribute a letter informing the church family of the situation and instructing parents to take reasonable steps to protect their children, such as accompanying them to and from Sabbath School classes and supervising them at church functions.

III. Child Abuse Prevention

In the first section of this Handbook we defined what child abuse is, and is not. In the second section we described a plan for responding to incidents of child abuse. This final section is devoted to preventing child abuse from occurring within our churches or on church functions. It was deliberately decided to describe this plan for child abuse prevention in the final section of this Handbook, so that those utilizing this Handbook would have a renewed commitment to preventing abuse within our congregations after having gained an understanding of what child abuse is and the comprehensive steps that must be taken when it occurs.

Child abuse prevention begins with the selection of workers who have been systematically screened and approved before being allowed to serve in a ministry involving children. It then guides those workers with a set of rules of conduct

which are proven to protect not only the children in their care, but also to protect the workers themselves from unfounded accusations of child abuse. Lastly, this plan for child abuse prevention demonstrates the church's commitment to demonstrating its love for all its members and guests, particularly the most vulnerable among us.

This final section is devoted to preventing child abuse from occurring.

Worker Enlistment

All paid church employees will be required to complete a standard employment application. These applications are available from the Conference Human Resources Department.

Whether a paid employee or a volunteer, each worker desiring to work with minors, also will be required to complete a Volunteer Ministry Information Form which is specifically designed for workers who will be working with minors. This form must be fully completed and signed, and also includes an authorization for conducting a criminal background check (CBC). A sample of this form is found at Appendix C of this Handbook.

After an application is received, prior employment and volunteer service and personal references will be checked. It is suggested that, at a minimum, personal references are telephoned and a written memorandum is made of the contents of those telephone conversations, and that prior employment and church service references be contacted in writing.

Paid workers on any church school campus who will have contact with students are also required by state law to submit to a CBC. It is also recommended that volunteer workers on church school campuses who will have contact with children be required to submit to a CBC. However, the circumstances of each volunteer position should be reviewed in determining whether or not to require the criminal records background check. For example, a church member who volunteers to do maintenance work at a school may be expected to have less contact with students than a volunteer offering to coach a school athletic team.

Churches desiring a CBC on other paid workers or volunteers should contact the Conference Human Resources Department.

While not required by law, churches desiring a CBC on other paid workers or volunteers should contact the Conference Human Resources Department for the information concerning the local law enforcement agency proving that service and the appropriate steps to follow to obtain the report.

Any prospective worker that has prior incidents of sexual misconduct or child abuse will not be allowed to serve in any capacity where they would have contact with minors.

Only qualified representatives of the church, as approved by the pastor and/or the church board, will

have access to the CBC and reference responses. Recommendations will be given by this individual(s) to the Nominating Committee as to the qualification of applicants.

Standard interview questions will be developed and used in personal interviews with volunteer 'and' employee applicants, after reviewing the applications of the applicant and checking all references, and receiving a CBC, if applicable. Sample interview questions are provided in *Appendix D* of this Handbook. These interview sheets will be filled out with the results of the interview and kept in the employee personnel file, with the reference checks and the applications.

Criminal background check reports should not be kept more than 30 days after receipt. A separate file will be maintained permanently on each worker, whether paid or a volunteer. The personnel files for each employee are to maintained at the Conference Human Resources Department. Each church should keep its own records concerning its volunteer workers. No volunteer will be allowed to work with minors until they have been a member of the church for a minimum of six months, or a regular attendee for a minimum of one year.

When an employee or volunteer is engaged to work with minors, they will be photographed. For employees, the photos will be kept in the person's employment file at the Conference Human Resources

Employees or Volunteers engaged to work with minors will have their picture taken and the photo will be kept on file.

Department. Photos of volunteers should be kept with the volunteer's file at the church office. Photographs should be updated every two years or as deemed necessary.

At the applicant's request, the church shall allow the applicant to review his/her transcript at the church, but in no event shall the church allow the applicant to retain and/or copy his/her transcript. The church shall immediately notify the Conference Human Resources Department if an internal grievance (applicant dispute) is filed by an applicant because of incorrect information or other reasons related to information provided to the church.

Worker Training

Each new worker will be given the legal definition of child abuse in writing, as well as the policy of the church on reporting child abuse. New workers also will be required to read the written materials available on this subject to help them gain an appreciation for the reality of the concern. This will help workers identify child abuse in the future if they see signs of it.

Volunteer Ministry Information Form

Employees, teachers, and volunteers of activities or programs for children and youth of the church will be required to complete a Volunteer Ministry Information Form (Appendix C) providing personal and confidential information necessary to perform security background checks and reference checks on each individual worker. While this process understandably trespasses into the privacy of our lives, the security of our children outweighs the personal invasion inherent with such investigation and disclosures. All personal information voluntarily disclosed, the results of all security background and reference checks, or the refusal of any person to participate in a program or activity in lieu of such disclosure requirements will be maintained in the strictest of confidence.

Whether disclosed voluntarily or by result of the security background check, the following items will automatically disqualify a volunteer from participating in the leadership, sponsorship, or supervising of any

activities or programs with minors: Any conviction for:

- Criminal homicide;
- Aggravated assault;
- Crimes related to the possession, use, or sale of drugs or controlled substances;
- Sexual abuse;
- Sexual assault (rape);
- Aggravated sexual assault;
- Injury to a child;
- Incest;
- Indecency with a child;
- Inducing sexual conduct or sexual performance of a child;
- Possession or promotion of child pornography;
- The sale, distribution, or display of harmful material to a minor;
- Employment harmful to children;
- Abandonment or endangerment of a child;
- Kidnapping or unlawful restraint;
- Public lewdness or indecent exposure; and
- Enticing a child.

All charges for these crimes, or charges, or convictions for any other crimes not listed above will be reviewed by those trained by the church interpretation of the criminal history record transcript and approved by the church for reviewing applicant transcripts. Only qualified and approved persons (as stated above) may view information obtained on the criminal background check transcript.

Prohibited Acts and Omissions

The following acts or omissions are violations of this policy and will not be tolerated or accepted during any church activity or program, and are to be immediately reported to the designated program staff after the safety of the child, children, youth, or minor involved has been assured.

- Any direct observations or evidence of sexual activity in the presence of or in association with a minor.
- Any display or demonstration of sexual activity, abuse, insinuation of abuse, or evidence of abusive conduct towards a minor.
- Sexual advances or sexual activity of any kind between any person and a minor.
- Infliction or physically abusive behavior or bodily injury to a minor.
- Physical neglect of a minor, including failure to provide adequate supervision in relation to the activities of the church.
- Mental or emotional injury to a minor caused or exacerbated by a worker.
- The presence or possession of obscene or pornographic materials at any church function.
- The presence, possession, or being under the influence of any illegal or illicit drugs or alcohol.
- The consumption of or being under the influence of illegal or illicit drugs or alcohol while leading or participating in a church function.

Worker Supervision

The church will adopt the “unrelated two adult” rule, which means no adult shall be left alone with a child, and requires a reasonable ratio of adult workers to be maintained in each situation involving the supervision of children.

Church staff members and volunteer directors will supervise activities on an on-going basis and make unannounced visits into classes or other program sites from time to time. Supervisors shall complete a log to

show which rooms, activities, time, and date the class or activity was visited.

Church staff members and volunteer directors will supervise activities on an on-going basis.

An identification system shall be adopted so that the adults who drop off a child are the same adults who pick up the child. Permission slips will be available for adults to sign, authorizing the release of the child(ren) to other adults.

Parental permission shall be obtained in advance for involvement in church sponsored programs, activities or whenever an adult might be spending time alone with a child in an unsupervised situation.

- A door without windows shall remain open at all times.
- Use a “check-in/check-out” procedure for all kindergarten-aged children and younger.
- A list of Caregiver Guidelines (Found at Appendix E) will be posted in the church office or in each room where activities or programs for minors are conducted.
- Educate all volunteers and paid workers with minors as to the church’s policies and procedures concerning this matter.

Occasional Volunteer Workers

Those who only volunteer occasionally also must go through the entire volunteer screening process. There are to be no exceptions to this rule.

Teenagers under the age of 18 wanting to serve as teen workers in any capacity with activities, studies, or programs for preschoolers or children will need to complete a Volunteer Ministry Information Form and go through the training. Criminal background checks are not permitted for teenagers due to state confidentiality laws concerning juvenile court records.

Workers’ Responsibility for Child Abuse Reporting

Any church worker, whether paid or volunteer, having cause to believe that a child’s physical or mental health or welfare has been or may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect shall report their belief in accordance with this procedure. Non-accusatory reports (reports that identify the victim of abuse or neglect whether or not the person responsible for the abuse or neglect is known) shall be made to the local or state law enforcement agency by calling 911 or local police or sheriff’s department.

- 1) Fully comply with the child abuse reporting requirements as set forth in Section II of this Handbook.
- 2) The church also should immediately contact the Conference Risk Management Department to report the occurrence.
- 3) In instances where child abuse is confirmed and a member of the ministerial staff is the perpetrator, the immediate supervisor should be also contacted and advised.
- 4) This procedure is not only required as a condition of your job or volunteer position, but also is required by law.

Conclusion

Churches need to be prepared. This is the legal reason for creating safety policies, but there's a deeper, more significant reason - to protect children. Policies are only printed expressions of the value placed on children. If the only reason for safety policies is to protect the organization, the church has missed Jesus' passion for children.

Some people may think that our church is too small to worry about these safety problems or that our church "knows" everyone. Remember that it's much easier to make plans and develop safety policies as a means of prevention, rather than wait until they are needed as a reaction to an abuse case.

Some churches tend to take the biblical concept of trusting God to an extreme. They think nothing bad can happen to Christians. Although Jesus does promise many things about His care and provision for us, we must not be unwise regarding children's safety. When Jesus sent His disciples out on their first missionary venture, He sent them out in pairs and told them they were like sheep among wolves. He also told them that bad things would happen to them, but that He would be with them (Matthew 10:16-19).

There is no automatic protection from evil for Christians. We're to watch and be ready. Accidents will always happen. *There* will always be unforeseen circumstances that need to be handled. Therefore, churches should build sturdy safety-policy fire blocks into the walls of its ministry to protect children.

It is the desire of the Northern California Conference that each congregation be known as a loving body of Christians through the implementation of this child abuse prevention policy. Adoption and implementation of these provisions will enable each congregation to provide a more safe and secure environment for each individual of our church family and its guests in which to worship and fellowship together.

Further questions concerning child abuse prevention and reporting or this Handbook may be directed to the Risk Management Department of the Northern California Conference.



Telephone: (925) 685-4300 Ext. 1237



E-mail: riskmgmt@nccsda.com

Website: ncc.adventist.org

Appendices

Appendix "A".....California Child Abuse Reporting Act

Appendix "B".....Child Abuse Reporting Form

Appendix "C".....Volunteer Ministry Information Form

Appendix "D".....Interview Questions

Appendix "E".....Caregiver Guidelines

Appendix "F".....Statement on Child Abuse by the General Conference of SDA's

Appendix "G".....Volunteer Management & Screening Guidelines - NAD - Adopted 11/3/03

**PENAL CODE
SECTIONS 11164-11174.4**

11164. Title

(a) This article shall be known and may be cited as the Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act.

(b) The intent and purpose of this article is to protect children from abuse and neglect. In any investigation of suspected child abuse or neglect, all persons participating in the investigation of the case shall consider the needs of the child victim and shall do whatever is necessary to prevent psychological harm to the child victim.

11165. Child

As used in this article "child" means a person under the age of 18 years.

11165.1. Sexual Abuse; sexual assault; sexual exploitation

As used in this article, "sexual abuse" means sexual assault or sexual exploitation as defined by the following:

- a) "*Sexual assault*" means conduct in violation of one or more of the following sections: Section 261 (rape), subdivision (d) of Section 261.5 (statutory rape), 264.1 (rape in concert), 285 (incest), 286 (sodomy), subdivision (a) or (b), or paragraph (1) of subdivision (c) of Section 288 (lewd or lascivious acts upon a child), 288a (oral copulation), 289 (sexual penetration), or 647.6 (child molestation).
- b) Conduct described as "*sexual assault*" includes, but is not limited to, all of the following:
 - (1) Any penetration, however slight, of the vagina or anal opening of one person by the penis of another person, whether or not there is the emission of semen.
 - (2) Any sexual contact between the genitals or anal opening of one person and the mouth or tongue of another person.
 - (3) Any intrusion by one person into the genitals or anal opening of another person, including the use of any object for this purpose, except that, it does not include acts performed for a valid medical purpose.
 - (4) The intentional touching of the genitals or intimate parts (including the breasts, genital area, groin, inner thighs, and buttocks) or the clothing covering them, of a child, or of the perpetrator by a child, for purposes of

sexual arousal or gratification, except that, it does not include acts which may reasonably be construed to be normal caretaker responsibilities; interactions with, or demonstrations of affection for, the child; or acts performed for a valid medical purpose.

(5) The intentional masturbation of the perpetrator's genitals in the presence of a child.

c) "*Sexual exploitation*" refers to any of the following:

(1) Conduct involving matter depicting a minor engaged in obscene acts in violation of Section 311.2 (preparing, selling, or distributing obscene matter) or subdivision (a) of Section 311.4 (employment of minor to perform obscene acts).

(2) Any person who knowingly promotes, aids, or assists, employs, uses, persuades, induces, or coerces a child, or any person responsible for a child's welfare, who knowingly permits or encourages a child to engage in, or assist others to engage in, prostitution or a live performance involving obscene sexual conduct, or to either pose or model alone or with others for purposes of preparing a film, photograph, negative, slide, drawing, painting, or other pictorial depiction, involving obscene sexual conduct. For the purpose of this section, "person responsible for a child's welfare" means a parent, guardian, foster parent, or a licensed administrator or employee of a public or private residential home, residential school, or other residential institution.

(3) Any person who depicts a child in, or who knowingly develops, duplicates, prints, or exchanges, any film, photograph, video tape, negative, or slide in which a child is engaged in an act of obscene sexual conduct, except for those activities by law enforcement and prosecution agencies and other persons described in subdivisions (c) and (e) of Section 311.3.

11165.2. Neglect; severe neglect; general neglect

As used in this article, "*neglect*" means the negligent treatment or the maltreatment of a child by a person responsible for the child's welfare under circumstances indicating harm or threatened harm to the child's health or welfare. The term includes both acts and omissions on the part of the responsible person.

a) "*Severe neglect*" means the negligent failure of a person having the care or custody of a child to protect the child from severe malnutrition or medically diagnosed nonorganic failure to thrive. "Severe neglect" also means those situations of neglect where any person having the care or custody of a child willfully causes or permits the person or health of the

child to be placed in a situation such that his or her person or health is endangered, as proscribed by Section 11165.3, including the intentional failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, or medical care.

- b) "*General neglect*" means the negligent failure of a person having the care or custody of a child to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical care, or supervision where no physical injury to the child has occurred.

For the purposes of this chapter, a child receiving treatment by spiritual means as provided in Section 16509.1 of the Welfare and Institutions Code or not receiving specified medical treatment for religious reasons, shall not for that reason alone be considered a neglected child. An informed and appropriate medical decision made by parent or guardian after consultation with a physician or physicians who have examined the minor does not constitute neglect.

11165.3. Willful cruelty or unjustifiable punishment of a child

As used in this article, "*willful cruelty or unjustifiable punishment of a child*" means a situation where any person willfully causes or permits any child to suffer, or inflicts thereon, unjustifiable physical pain or mental suffering, or having the care or custody of any child, willfully causes or permits the person or health of the child to be placed in a situation such that his or her person or health is endangered.

11165.4. Unlawful corporal punishment

As used in this article, "*unlawful corporal punishment or injury*" means a situation where any person willfully inflicts upon any child any cruel or inhuman corporal punishment or injury resulting in a traumatic condition. It does not include an amount of force that is reasonable and necessary for a person employed by or engaged in a public school to quell a disturbance threatening physical injury to person or damage to property, for purposes of self-defense, or to obtain possession of weapons or other dangerous objects within the control of the pupil, as authorized by Section 49001 of the Education Code. It also does not include the exercise of the degree of physical control authorized by Section 44807 of the Education Code. It also does not include an injury caused by reasonable and necessary force used by a peace officer acting within the course and scope of his or her employment as a peace officer.

11165.6. Child abuse or neglect

As used in this article, the term "*child abuse or neglect*" includes physical injury inflicted by other than accidental means upon a child by another person, sexual abuse as defined in Section 11165.1, neglect as defined in Section 11165.2, willful cruelty or unjustifiable punishment as defined in Section 11165.3, and unlawful corporal punishment or injury as defined in Section 11165.4. "*Child*

abuse or neglect" does not include a mutual affray between minors. "Child abuse or neglect" does not include an injury caused by reasonable and necessary force used by a peace officer acting within the course and scope of his or her employment as a peace officer.

11165.7. Mandated reporters of child abuse or neglect

a) As used in this article, "mandated reporter" is defined as any of the following:

- 1) A teacher.
- 2) An instructional aide.
- 3) A teacher's aide or teacher's assistant employed by any public or private school...
- 5) An administrative officer or supervisor of child welfare and attendance, or a certificated pupil personnel employee of any public or private school.
- 6) An administrator of a public or private day camp.
- 7) An administrator or employee of a public or private youth center, youth recreation program, or youth organization.
- 8) An administrator or employee of a public or private organization whose duties require direct contact and supervision of children....
- 14) An employee of a child care institution, including, but not limited to, foster parents, group home personnel or residential care facilities...
- 30) A child visitation monitor. As used in this article, "child visitation monitor" means any person who, for financial compensation, acts as monitor of a visit between a child and any other person when the monitoring of that visit has been ordered by a court of law....
- 31) A clergy member, as specified in subdivision (c) of Section 11166. As used in this article, "clergy member" means a priest, minister, rabbi, religious practitioner, or similar functionary of a church, temple, or recognized denomination or organization.
- 32) Any custodian of records of a clergy member, as specified in this section and subdivision (c) of Section 11166.

11165.9. Reports of suspected child abuse or neglect

Reports of suspected child abuse or neglect shall be made by mandated reporters to any police department or sheriff's department, not including a school district police or security department, county probation department, if designated by the county to receive mandated reports, or the county welfare department. Any of those agencies shall accept a report of suspected child abuse or neglect whether offered by a mandated reporter or another person, or referred by another agency, even if the agency to whom the report is being made lacks subject matter or geographical jurisdiction to investigate the reported case, unless the agency can immediately electronically transfer the call to an agency

with proper jurisdiction. When an agency takes a report about a case of suspected child abuse or neglect in which that agency lacks jurisdiction, the agency shall immediately refer the case by telephone, fax, or electronic transmission to an agency with proper jurisdiction.

11166. Report duty; time

a) Except as provided in subdivision (c), a mandated reporter shall make a report to an agency specified in Section 11165.9 whenever the mandated reporter, in his or her professional capacity or within the scope of his or her employment, has knowledge of or observes a child whom the mandated reporter knows or reasonably suspects has been the victim of child abuse or neglect. The mandated reporter shall make a report to the agency immediately or as soon as is practicably possible by telephone, and the mandated reporter shall prepare and send a written report thereof within 36 hours of receiving the information concerning the incident. The mandated reporter may include with the report any nonprivileged documentary evidence the mandated reporter possesses relating to the incident.

- 1) For the purposes of this article, "*reasonable suspicion*" means that it is objectively reasonable for a person to entertain a suspicion, based upon facts that could cause a reasonable person in a like position, drawing, when appropriate, on his or her training and experience, to suspect child abuse or neglect. For the purpose of this article, the pregnancy of a minor does not, in and of itself, constitute a basis for a reasonable suspicion of sexual abuse.
- 2) The agency shall be notified and a report shall be prepared and sent even if the child has expired, regardless of whether or not the possible abuse was a factor contributing to the death, and even if suspected child abuse was discovered during an autopsy.
- 3) A report made by a mandated reporter pursuant to this section shall be known as a mandated report.

Any mandated reporter who fails to report an incident of known or reasonably suspected child abuse or neglect as required by this section is guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by up to six months confinement in a county jail or by a fine of one thousand dollars (\$1,000) or by both that fine and punishment.

c) (1) A clergy member who acquires knowledge or a reasonable suspicion of child abuse or neglect during a penitential communication is not subject to subdivision (a). For the purposes of this subdivision, "penitential communication" means a communication, intended to be in confidence, including, but not limited to, a sacramental confession, made to a clergy member who, in the course of the discipline or practice of his or her church, denomination, or organization, is authorized or accustomed to hear those communications, and under the discipline, tenets, customs, or practices of his or her church,

denomination, or organization, has a duty to keep those communications secret.

(2) Nothing in this subdivision shall be construed to modify or limit a clergy member's duty to report known or suspected child abuse or neglect when the clergy member is acting in some other capacity that would otherwise make the clergy member a mandated reporter.

(3) (A) On or before January 1, 2004, a clergy member or any custodian of records for the clergy member may report to an agency specified in Section 11165.9 that the clergy member or any custodian of records for the clergy member, prior to January 1, 1997, in his or her professional capacity or within the scope of his or her employment, other than during a penitential communication, acquired knowledge or had a reasonable suspicion that a child had been the victim of sexual abuse that the clergy member or any custodian of records for the clergy member did not previously report the abuse to an agency specified in Section 11165.9. The provisions of Section 11172 shall apply to all reports made pursuant to this paragraph.

(B) This paragraph shall apply even if the victim of the known or suspected abuse has reached the age of majority by the time the required report is made.

(C) The local law enforcement agency shall have jurisdiction to investigate any report of child abuse made pursuant to this paragraph even if the report is made after the victim has reached the age of majority.

d) Any commercial film and photographic print processor who has knowledge of or observes, within the scope of his or her professional capacity or employment, any film, photograph, videotape, negative, or slide depicting a child under the age of 16 years engaged in an act of sexual conduct, shall report the instance of suspected child abuse to the law enforcement agency having jurisdiction over the case immediately, or as soon as practically possible, by telephone, and shall prepare and send a written report of it with a copy of the film, photograph, videotape, negative, or slide attached within 36 hours of receiving the information concerning the incident. As used in this subdivision, "sexual conduct" means any of the following:

(1) Sexual intercourse, including genital-genital, oral-genital, anal-genital, or oral-anal, whether between persons of the same or opposite sex or between humans and animals.

(2) Penetration of the vagina or rectum by any object.

(3) Masturbation for the purpose of sexual stimulation of the viewer.

(4) Sadomasochistic abuse for the purpose of sexual stimulation of the viewer.

(5) Exhibition of the genitals, pubic, or rectal areas of any person for the purpose of sexual stimulation of the viewer.

- e) Any other person who has knowledge of or observes a child whom he or she knows or reasonably suspects has been a victim of child abuse or neglect may report the known or suspected instance of child abuse or neglect to an agency specified in Section 11165.9.
- f) When two or more persons, who are required to report, jointly have knowledge of a known or suspected instance of child abuse or neglect, and when there is agreement among them, the telephone report may be made by a member of the team selected by mutual agreement and a single report may be made and signed by the selected member of the reporting team. Any member who has knowledge that the member designated to report has failed to do so shall thereafter make the report.
- g) (1) The reporting duties under this section are individual, and no supervisor or administrator may impede or inhibit the reporting duties, and no person making a report shall be subject to any sanction for making the report. However, internal procedures to facilitate reporting and apprise supervisors and administrators of reports may be established provided that they are not inconsistent with this article.
(2) The internal procedures shall not require any employee required to make reports pursuant to this article to disclose his or her identity to the employer.
(3) Reporting the information regarding a case of possible child abuse or neglect to an employer, supervisor, school principal, school counselor, coworker, or other person shall not be a substitute for making a mandated report to an agency specified in Section 11165.9.
- h) A county probation or welfare department shall immediately, or as soon as practically possible, report by telephone, fax, or electronic transmission to the law enforcement agency having jurisdiction over the case, to the agency given the responsibility for investigation of cases under Section 300 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, and to the district attorney's office every known or suspected instance of child abuse or neglect, as defined in Section 11165.6, except acts or omissions coming within subdivision (b) of Section 11165.2, or reports made pursuant to Section 11165.13 based on risk to a child which relates solely to the inability of the parent to provide the child with regular care due to the parent's substance abuse, which shall be reported only to the county welfare or probation department. A county probation or welfare department also shall send, fax, or electronically transmit a written report thereof within 36 hours of receiving the information concerning the incident to any agency to which it makes a telephone report under this subdivision.

11166.05. Reporting infliction of mental suffering

Any mandated reporter who has knowledge of or who reasonably suspects that mental suffering has been inflicted upon a child or that his or her emotional well-being is endangered in any other way may report the known or suspected instance of child abuse or neglect to an agency specified in Section 11165.9.

11166.5. Information for mandated reporters

On and after January 1, 1985, any mandated reporter as specified in Section 11165.7, with the exception of child visitation monitors, prior to commencing his or her employment, and as a prerequisite to that employment, shall sign a statement on a form provided to him or her by his or her employer to the effect that he or she has knowledge of the provisions of Section 11166 and will comply with those provisions. The statement shall inform the employee that he or she is a mandated reporter and inform the employee of his or her reporting obligations under Section 11166. The employer shall provide a copy of Sections 11165.7 and 11166 to the employee.

11167. Contents of suspected child abuse report

- a) Reports of suspected child abuse or neglect pursuant to Section 11166 shall include, if known, the name, business address, and telephone number of the mandated reporter, and the capacity that makes the person a mandated reporter; the child's name and address, present location, and, where applicable, school, grade, and class; the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of the child's parents or guardians; the information that gave rise to the reasonable suspicion of child abuse or neglect and the source or sources of that information; and the name, address, telephone number, and other relevant personal information about the person or persons who might have abused or neglected the child. The mandated reporter shall make a report even if some of this information is not known or is uncertain to him or her.
- b) Information relevant to the incident of child abuse or neglect may be given to an investigator from an agency that is investigating the known or suspected case of child abuse or neglect.
- c) Information relevant to the incident of child abuse or neglect, including the investigation report and other pertinent materials, may be given to the licensing agency when it is investigating a known or suspected case of child abuse or neglect.
- d) (1) The identity of all persons who report under this article shall be confidential and disclosed only among agencies receiving or investigating mandated reports, to the district attorney in a criminal prosecution or in an action initiated under Section 602 of the Welfare and Institutions Code arising from alleged child abuse, or to counsel appointed pursuant to subdivision (c) of Section 317 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, or to the county counsel or district attorney in a proceeding under Part 4 (commencing with Section 7800) of Division

12 of the Family Code or Section 300 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, or to a licensing agency when abuse or neglect in out-of-home care is reasonably suspected, or when those persons waive confidentiality, or by court order.

(2) No agency or person listed in this subdivision shall disclose the identity of any person who reports under this article to that person's employer, except with the employee's consent or by court order.

- e) Persons who may report pursuant to subdivision (e) of Section 11166 are not required to include their names.

11172. Immunity from liability for reporting

- a) No mandated reporter shall be civilly or criminally liable for any report required or authorized by this article. Any other person reporting a known or suspected instance of child abuse or neglect shall not incur civil or criminal liability as a result of any report authorized by this article unless it can be proven that a false report was made and the person knew that the report was false or was made with reckless disregard of the truth or falsity of the report, and any person who makes a report of child abuse or neglect known to be false or with reckless disregard of the truth or falsity of the report is liable for any damages caused. No person required to make a report pursuant to this article, nor any person taking photographs at his or her direction, shall incur any civil or criminal liability for taking photographs of a suspected victim of child abuse or neglect, or causing photographs to be taken of a suspected victim of child abuse or neglect, without parental consent, or for disseminating the photographs with the reports required by this article. However, this section shall not be construed to grant immunity from this liability with respect to any other use of the photographs.
- b) Any person, who, pursuant to a request from a government agency investigating a report of suspected child abuse or neglect, provides the requesting agency with access to the victim of a known or suspected instance of child abuse or neglect shall not incur civil or criminal liability as a result of providing that access.
- c) The Legislature finds that even though it has provided immunity from liability to persons required or authorized to make reports pursuant to this article, that immunity does not eliminate the possibility that actions may be brought against those persons based upon required or authorized reports. In order to further limit the financial hardship that those persons may incur as a result of fulfilling their legal responsibilities, it is necessary that they not be unfairly burdened by legal fees incurred in defending those actions. Therefore, a mandated

reporter may present a claim to the State Board of Control for reasonable attorney's fees and costs incurred in any action against that person on the basis of making a report required or authorized by this article if the court has dismissed the action upon a demurrer or motion for summary judgment made by that person, or if he or she prevails in the action. The State Board of Control shall allow that claim if the requirements of this subdivision are met, and the claim shall be paid from an appropriation to be made for that purpose. Attorney's fees awarded pursuant to this section shall not exceed an hourly rate greater than the rate charged by the Attorney General of the State of California at the time the award is made and shall not exceed an aggregate amount of fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000). This subdivision shall not apply if a public entity has provided for the defense of the action pursuant to Section 995 of the Government Code.

- d) A court may award attorney's fees and costs to a commercial film and photographic print processor when a suit is brought against the processor because of a disclosure mandated by this article and the court finds this suit to be frivolous.

SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE REPORT

Orange County Child Abuse Registry
P.O. Box 14102, Orange, CA 92863-1502

To Be Completed by Reporting Party
Pursuant to Penal Code Section 11166

A. CASE
IDENTI-
FICATION

TO BE COMPLETED BY INVESTIGATING CPA

VICTIM NAME: _____

REPORT NO./CASE NAME: _____

B. REPORTING PARTY	NAME/TITLE _____												
	ADDRESS _____												
C. REPORT SENT TO	<input type="checkbox"/> POLICE DEPARTMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SHERIFF'S OFFICE <input type="checkbox"/> COUNTY WELFARE <input type="checkbox"/> COUNTY PROBATION												
	AGENCY _____					ADDRESS _____							
B. INVOLVED PARTIES	OFFICIAL CONTACTED _____					PHONE () _____			DATE/TIME _____				
	NAME (LAST, FIRST, MIDDLE) _____					ADDRESS _____			RACE _____				
SIBLINGS	PRESENT LOCATION OF CHILD _____												
	RACE _____					RACE _____							
PARENTS	1. _____				4. _____								
	2. _____				5. _____								
B. REPORTING PARTY	3. _____				6. _____								
	NAME (LAST, FIRST, MIDDLE) _____				BIRTHDATE _____	SEX _____	RACE _____	NAME (LAST, FIRST, MIDDLE) _____				BIRTHDATE _____	SEX _____
ADDRESS _____				ADDRESS _____									
HOME PHONE () _____				BUSINESS PHONE () _____				HOME PHONE () _____				BUSINESS PHONE () _____	
IF NECESSARY, ATTACH EXTRA SHEET OR OTHER FORM AND CHECK THIS BOX. <input type="checkbox"/>													
1. DATE/TIME OF INCIDENT _____				PLACE OF INCIDENT _____				(CHECK ONE) <input type="checkbox"/> OCCURED <input type="checkbox"/> OBSERVED					
IF CHILD WAS IN OUT-OF-HOME CARE AT TIME OF INCIDENT, CHECK TYPE OF CARE:													
<input type="checkbox"/> FAMILY DAY CARE <input type="checkbox"/> CHILD CARE CENTER <input type="checkbox"/> FOSTER FAMILY HOME <input type="checkbox"/> SMALL FAMILY HOME <input type="checkbox"/> GROUP HOME OR INSTITUTION													
(CHECK ONE OR MORE) <input type="checkbox"/> PHYSICAL <input type="checkbox"/> MENTAL <input type="checkbox"/> SEXUAL ASSAULT <input type="checkbox"/> NEGLECT <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER													
3. NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION:													
4. SUMMARIZE WHAT THE ABUSED CHILD OR PERSON ACCOMPANYING THE CHILD SAID HAPPENED:													
5. EXPLAIN KNOWN HISTORY OF SIMILAR INCIDENT(S) FOR THIS CHILD:													

1/93)

INSTRUCTIONS AND DISTRIBUTION ON REVERSE

DO NOT submit a copy of this form the the Department of Justice (DOJ). A CPA is required under Penal Code Section 11169 to submit to DOJ a Child Abuse Investigation Report Form SS-8583 if (1) and active investigation has been conducted and (2) the incident is not unfounded.

Police or Sheriff-WHITE Coop: C

Reporting Party-YELLOW coop

Appendix "B"

DEFINITIONS AND GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETION OF FORM 338572

I. REPORTING RESPONSIBILITIES

- No child care custodian or health practitioner or commercial film and photographic print processor reporting a suspected instance of child abuse shall be civilly or criminally liable for any report required or authorized by this article (California Penal Code Article 2.5). Any other person reporting a suspected instance of child abuse shall not incur civil or criminal liability as a result of any report authorized by this section unless it can be proved that a false report was made and the person knew or should have known that the report was false.
- Any child care custodian, health practitioner, commercial film and photographic print processor, or employee of a child protective agency who has knowledge of or observes a child in his or her professional capacity or within the scope of his or her employment whom he or she reasonably suspects has been the victim of child abuse shall report such suspected instance of child abuse to a child protective agency immediately or as soon as practically possible by telephone and shall prepare and send a written report thereof within 36 hours of receiving the information concerning the incident.
- Any child care custodian, health practitioner, commercial film and photographic print processor, or employee of a child protective agency who has knowledge of or who reasonably suspects that mental suffering has been inflicted on a child or its emotional well-being is endangered in any other way, may report such suspected instance of child abuse to a child protective agency. Infliction of willful and unjustifiable mental suffering must be reported.

II. DEFINITIONS

- "Child care custodian" means a teacher; an instructional aide, a teacher's aide, or a teacher's assistant employed by any public or private school, who has been trained in the duties imposed by this article, if the school district has so warranted to the State Department of Education; a classified employee of any public school who has been trained in the duties imposed by this article, if the school has so warranted to the State Department of Education; an administrative officer, supervisor or child welfare and attendance, or certificated pupil personnel employee or any public or private school; an administrator of a public or private day camp; an administrator or employee of a public or private youth center, youth recreation program, or youth organization; an administrator or employee of a public or private organization whose duties require direct contact and supervision or children; a licensee, an administrator, or an employee of a licensed community care or child day care facility; a headstart teacher; a licensing worker or licensing evaluator; a public assistance worker; an employee of a child care institution including but not limited to foster parents, group home personnel, and personnel of residential care facilities; a social worker, probation officer, or parole officer; an employee of a school; a district attorney investigator, inspector, or family support officer unless the investigator, inspector, or officer is working with an attorney appointed pursuant to Section 317 of the Welfare and Institutions Code to represent a minor; or a peace officer, as defined in Chapter 4.5 (commencing with Section 830) or Title 3 of Part 2 of this code, who is not otherwise described in this section.
- "Health practitioner" means a physician and surgeon, psychiatrist, psychologist, dentist, resident, intern, podiatrist, chiropractor, licensed nurse, dental hygienist, optometrist, or any other person who is currently licensed under Division 2 (commencing with Section 500) of the Business and Professions Code; a marriage, family and child counselor; any emergency medical technician I or II, paramedic, or

medical technician I or II, paramedic, or other person certified pursuant to Division 2.5 (commencing with Section 1797) of the Health and Safety Code; a psychological assistant registered pursuant to Section 2913 of the Business and Professions Code, a marriage, family and child counselor trainee, as defined in subdivision (c) of Section 4980.03 of the Business and Professions Code; an unlicensed marriage, family and child counselor intern registered under Section 4980.44 of the Business and Professions Code; a state or county public health employee who treats a minor for venereal disease or any other condition; a coroner; a medical examiner, or any other person who performs autopsies; or a religious practitioner who diagnoses, examines, or treats children.

- "Commercial film and photographic print processor" means any person who develops exposed photographic film into negatives, slides, or prints, or who makes prints from negatives or slides for compensation. The term includes any employee of such a person; it does not include a person who develops film or makes prints for a public agency.

- "Child protective agency" means a police or sheriff's department, a county probation department, or a county welfare department. It does not include a school district police or security department.

III. INSTRUCTIONS

(Section A to be completed by investigating child protective agency)
SECTION A - "CASE IDENTIFICATION": Enter the victim name, report number or case name, and date of report.

(Section B through E are to be completed by reporting party)
SECTION B - "REPORTING PARTY": Enter your name/title, address, phone number, date of report, and signature.

SECTION C - "REPORT SENT TO": (1) Check the appropriate box to indicate which child protective agency (CPA) this report is being sent; (2) Enter the name and address of the CPA to which this report is being sent; and (3) Enter the name of the official contacted at the CPA, phone number, and the date/time contacted.

SECTION D - "INVOLVED PARTIES":

- a. PARENTS: Enter the name, physical data, address, and phone numbers of father/stepfather and mother/stepmother.
- b. VICTIM: Enter the name, address, physical data, present location, and phone number where victim is located (attach additional sheets if multiple victims).
- c. SIBLING: Enter the name and physical data of siblings living in the same household as the victim.

SECTION E - "INCIDENT INFORMATION": (1) Enter the date/time and place the incident occurred or was observed, and check the appropriate boxes; (2) Check the type of abuse; (3) Describe injury or sexual assault (where appropriate, attach Medical Report - Suspected Child Abuse Form DOJ 900 or any other form desired); (4) Summarize what the child or person accompanying the child said happened; and (5) Explain any known prior incidents involving the victim.

IV. DISTRIBUTION

- A. Reporting Party: Complete Suspected Child Abuse Report Form SS 8572. Retain yellow copy for your records and submit top three copies to a child protective agency.
- B. Investigating Child Protective Agency: upon receipt of Form SS 8572, *within 36 hours* send white copy to police or sheriff, blue copy to county welfare or probation, and green copy to district attorney.



Volunteer Ministry Information Form

SECTION I				Personal Information	
Name:			Email:		
Address:					
Home phone:		Work phone:		Volunteer position(s) interested in:	
Church membership:					
Churches attended in the last 5 years:					
Previous residence(s) for last 10 years (list dates at each address):					
Dates:		Address:			
Dates:		Address:			
Dates:		Address:			
Name of Emergency Contact & Relationship:				Phone:	
SECTION II				Health Information	
List any injury/disability/health factor that might limit your involvement in ministry activities, or impact the health of children (i.e., communicable diseases, physical limitations).					
SECTION III				Personal References	
List below three individuals (other than family members) who could recommend you for this volunteer ministry.					
Name		Street Address		City/State	Zip
1. Pastor					
2. Other					
3. Other					
*** OFFICE USE ONLY ***					
<input type="checkbox"/> Guidelines for Volunteers signed (attached, and copy given to applicant)					Date <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Date VMIF Received:		<input type="checkbox"/> Recommended		<input type="checkbox"/> Not Recommended	
Date of committee decision:					
Signature of chairperson:				Church Name:	

SECTION V**Background**

Birthdate:

Driver's License # *123456789* *(requested by a pastor as needed)* State: _____ Exp. Date: _____Car Insurance ☐ Yes ☒ No Willing to Provide Transportation ☐ Yes ☒ No

As a result of our concern for the safety and protection of children and youth, we require all potential volunteers to 1) complete and return this Volunteer Ministry Information (VMI) form, 2) consent to a voluntary criminal record check, and 3) read & agree to follow the **Guidelines for Volunteers**.

Have you ever been convicted of a felony?

☐ YES ☒ NO

Have you been denied legal custody of your children in any legal proceedings, including divorce decrees or settlements?

☐ YES ☒ NO

Have you ever been accused of, charged with, disciplined for, or convicted of any unlawful sexual conduct, abuse, child abuse, child neglect, and/or child sexual abuse?

☐ YES ☒ NO

Have you been required to register as a sex offender in any jurisdiction?

☐ YES ☒ NO

If you answered yes, please supply the date, place, type of conduct, disposition, and sentence, as applicable.

SECTION VI**Statement of Accuracy**

The information contained in this form is current to the best of my knowledge. I understand that this is strictly a volunteer position, and I expect no remuneration for services and time volunteered.

I authorize any persons giving a reference or churches listed in this form to disclose information that they may have regarding my character and fitness for serving in a volunteer ministry that may involve children or youth. I hereby release any individual, church, or organization from any and all liability for damages which may result to me, my heirs, or family for compliance with this authorization, and agree that the church may maintain this information. My signature on this form confirms my understanding and agreement that: In the event that allegations of criminal or sexual misconduct arise regarding my conduct while I serve in a volunteer capacity, the church will fully cooperate with any investigation. I further state that I have carefully read the foregoing release and understand the contents thereof, and that I sign this release as my own free act. This is a legally binding agreement, which I have read and understand.

Further, I have read and agree to follow the **Guidelines for Volunteers** and I give my consent for a voluntary criminal record check.

APPLICANT'S SIGNATURE: *

Date: _____

*Please be sure you have answered every question and signed your name above. Application cannot be accepted without a signature. Return this completed form to the pastor of your local church.

Purpose

The Volunteer Ministry Information Form assists churches in appointing the best possible individuals to serve within the various ministries the church offers. This form is part of a screening process which protects the volunteers, while also serving to protect children and youth from predators and the Church from liability. This record, once turned in, becomes the property of the local church. Applicants may request that a copy of their Volunteer Ministry Information Form be forwarded to another church should they move their membership.

Procedure

Copies of this Volunteer Ministry Information Form are available from the church office, or from www.nadadventist.org. Ministry leaders are responsible for distributing forms to prospective volunteers, and making certain that they have completed the screening process prior to serving.

The completed forms are returned to the church pastor, who passes them on to the Volunteer Screening Committee. This group, appointed by the church board, determines volunteer eligibility. The committee interviews applicants, checks references, and may request a criminal record check. The committee's recommendation, marked on page 1, is signed and dated. The committee gives a copy of the first page of this form to the ministry leader. The Applicant agrees to participate in any orientation or training programs conducted by the church or conference. The Volunteer Ministry Information Form shall be shared with another church entity only upon the applicant's written request. Any such requests will be attached to the original document and kept on file.

Policy

All information on this Volunteer Ministry Information Form is required by the North American Division. The information on this form shall be kept confidential and become a permanent record of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Volunteer records should be updated every three years. In the event of accusations against the applicant, opportunity shall be given for response by the accused. Such a response will also become a part of the record and must be attached to this form.

North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists12501 Old Columbia Pike • Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600 • Telephone: 301-680-6425 • Fax: 301-680-6464 • www.nadadventist.org

Applicant Screening Interview

Name of applicant _____ Date _____

The Volunteer Screening Committee conducts an in-person interview of each person who applies for a volunteer position. The following can be used as a prompt for the interview. This sheet, filled out by an interviewer, can serve as a record for the applicant's file.

www.childmin.com/Resources

1. **Personal information.** This basic information is already on the Volunteer Ministry Information Form but you should ask again about all statements made in the application, paying particular attention to:
 - a. Current and previous residence addresses,
 - b. Current and previous employment, including addresses, dates, duties, titles and reasons for leaving,
 - c. Names and addresses of schools attended,
 - d. Any gaps in time or irregular employment patterns or unexplained absences.
 - e. Note any discrepancies between the statement in the application form and those given orally here.

Remember, questions about age or ethnicity are illegal.

2. Tell us something that God has done in your life within the past 2 weeks.
3. How could you impact ministry in this church?

4. **Church membership history**—Where did you have church membership prior to transferring here?

Church name:	Town/State
Church name:	Town/State
Church name:	Town/State

5. **Membership of references**—Tell us how long you have known the persons you listed as references, in which of the churches named above were they members, and what church office did they hold?

a. First reference: Church:	Church office:
Date of reference request letter:	

Date of follow-up phone call:

- b. Second reference: Church:
Date of reference request letter:
Date of follow-up phone call:

Church office:

- c. Third reference: Church:
Date of reference request letter:
Date of follow-up phone call:

Church office:

www.childmin.com/Resources

All members of the screening committee should sign below:

signature

date

signature

date

signature

date

signature

date



GUIDELINES FOR VOLUNTEERS

Because our society is filled with pain, problems, and litigation caused by improper conduct of adults working with children and youth, it is imperative that those working with children at church have meaningful guidelines for conduct—to protect both themselves and those under their care. As a ministry volunteer, you want parents and others to feel comfortable and confident with you. Here are some practical guidelines:

1. ***Never leave unattended a child or group of children for whom you are responsible.*** Provide adequate supervision at all times, no matter what.
2. ***ALWAYS have at least one other adult 18 or older with you when ministering to children.*** If you find yourself in a situation where you are the only adult present, **UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES** should you allow yourself to be alone with one child.
3. ***Always ask a person's permission before touching*** him/her anywhere, even when responding to an injury or problem. This is especially true for any area that would normally be covered by a T-shirt and shorts. If an injury is within this area, make sure another adult works with you as you provide care.
4. ***Physical and verbal attacks are inappropriate*** and should not ever be used as discipline. “Time out” or “sit-in-that-chair” may be helpful methods with children.
5. ***Kids need to be touched appropriately.*** However, keep hugs brief and “shoulder-to-shoulder” or “side-to-side.” Always keep your hands at (not below) the shoulder level. A caregiver kiss is to the forehead or cheek only—not elsewhere. For small children who like to sit on laps, encourage them to sit next to you.
6. ***When taking small children to the bathroom***—take another adult along, or leave the door open.

Be aware of the signs and symptoms of abuse; be aware of the legal requirements in your locality for reporting child abuse. In nearly all places, a caregiver can be held legally responsible for failing to report suspected or actual child abuse.

Be loving, kind, firm, and always thoroughly professional as a caregiver. Working with children and youth at church is not only a privilege; it is also a deep responsibility that must be approached with utmost care. As a volunteer you are expected to participate in orientation and training programs conducted by the church or conference.

Adventist Risk Management and the North American Division recommend the following rules for leaders. These serve as a protection to you and your ministry against charges of abuse:

- ***The volunteer screening rule.*** All volunteers must complete the screening process described on the Volunteer Ministry Information Form (available at www.nadadventist.org).
- ***The six-month rule.*** Do not recruit a volunteer who has been a church member for less than six months.
- ***The two-person rule.*** Have at least two adults present at all times.
- ***The glass window rule.*** If the door to a classroom does not have glass in or around it, the door should be left open, so that the teacher is in full view.

I, the undersigned, have read the guidelines listed above and agree to abide by them. I will obtain a copy of this signed form and keep it for reference.

DATE _____

SIGNED _____

STATEMENT ON CHILD ABUSE

GENERAL CONFERENCE OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

Child sexual abuse occurs when a person older or stronger than the child uses his or her power, authority, or position of trust to involve a child in sexual behavior or activity. Incest, a specific form of child sexual abuse, is defined as any sexual activity between a child and a parent, a sibling, an extended family member, or a step/surrogate parent.

Sexual abusers may be men or women and may be of any age, nationality, or socio-economic background. They are often men who are married with children, have respectable jobs, and may be regular churchgoers. It is common for offenders to strongly deny their abusive behavior, to refuse to see their actions as a problem, and to rationalize their behavior or place blame on something or someone else. While it is true that many abusers exhibit deeply rooted insecurities and low self-esteem, these problems should never be accepted as an excuse for sexually abusing a child. Most authorities agree that the real issue in child sexual abuse is more related to a desire for power and control than for sex.

When God created the human family, He began with a marriage between a man and a woman based on mutual love and trust. This relationship is still designed to provide the foundation for a stable, happy family in which the dignity, worth, and integrity of each family member is protected and upheld. Every child, whether male or female, is to be affirmed as a gift from God. Parents are given the privilege and responsibility of providing nurture, protection, and physical care for the children entrusted to them by God. Children should be able to honor, respect, and trust their parents and other family members without the risk of abuse.

The Bible condemns child sexual abuse in the strongest possible terms. It sees any attempt to confuse, blur, or denigrate personal, generational, or gender boundaries through sexually abusive behavior as an act of betrayal and a gross violation of personhood. It openly condemns abuses of power, authority, and responsibility because these strike at the very heart of the victims' deepest feelings about themselves, others, and God, and shatter their capacity to love and trust. Jesus used strong language to condemn the actions of anyone who, through word or deed, causes a child to stumble.

The Adventist Christian community is not immune from child sexual abuse. We believe that the tenets of the Seventh-day Adventist faith require us to be actively involved in its prevention. We are also committed to spiritually assisting abused and abusive individuals and their families in their healing and recovery process, and to holding church professionals and church lay leaders accountable for maintaining their personal behavior as is appropriate for persons in positions of spiritual leadership and trust.

As a Church we believe our faith calls us to:

1. Uphold the principles of Christ for family relationships in which the self-respect, dignity, and purity of children are recognized as divinely mandated rights.
2. Provide an atmosphere where children who have been abused can feel safe when reporting sexual abuse and can feel that someone will listen to them.
3. Become thoroughly informed about sexual abuse and its impact upon our own church community.
4. Help ministers and lay leaders to recognize the warning signs of child sexual abuse and know how to respond appropriately when abuse is suspected or a child reports being sexually abused.
5. Establish referral relationships with professional counselors and local sexual assault agencies who can, with their professional skills, assist abuse victims and their families.
6. Create guidelines/policies at the appropriate levels to assist church leaders in:
 1. Endeavoring to treat with fairness persons accused of sexually abusing children,
 2. Holding abusers accountable for their actions and administering appropriate discipline.
7. Support the education and enrichment of families and family members by:
 1. Dispelling commonly held religious and cultural beliefs which may be used to justify or cover up child sexual abuse.
 2. Building a healthy sense of personal worth in each child which enables him or her to respect self and others.
 3. Fostering Christlike relationships between males and females in the home and in the church.
8. Provide caring support and a faith-based redemptive ministry within the church community for abuse survivors and abusers while enabling them to access the available network of professional resources in the community.
9. Encourage the training of more family professionals to facilitate the healing and recovery process of abuse victims and perpetrators.

(The above statement is informed by principles expressed in the following scriptural passages: Gen 1:26-28; 2:18-25; Lev 18:20; 2 Sam 13:1-22; Matt 18:6-9; 1 Cor 5:1-5; Eph 6:1-4; Col 3:18-21; 1 Tim 5:5-8.)

This statement was voted during the Spring Meeting of the General Conference Executive Committee on Tuesday, April 1, 1997, in Loma Linda, California.

**YEAR-END MEETING
NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION COMMITTEE
Silver Spring, Maryland
November 3, 2003, 9:00 a.m.**

VM&CM/ARM/NAD&UnSec02YE/02YE/ARM/NADUn&GCO03YE/03YE to RJH

**578-03N VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT & SCREENING
GUIDELINES FOR THE LOCAL CHURCH & SCHOOL
OF THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH—
NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION**

VOTED: To adopt the Volunteer Management & Screening Guidelines for Local Churches and Schools, Adventist Youth Services and the Adventist Youth Network which read as follows:

1. Objective—

The Seventh-day Adventist Church desires to make its worship and educational environments free from abuse of all kinds. To achieve this goal in its ministry and educational programs the following guidelines have been developed for implementation throughout the North American Division.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is committed to providing a safe environment to help children learn to love and follow Jesus Christ. At this time, the disturbing and traumatic rise and recognition of physical and sexual abuse of children has claimed the attention of our nation, our society, and the Church. Adventist churches and schools which conduct programs for children and youth are not insulated from those individuals who abuse young people.

In keeping with the counsel of *The Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual*, it is the responsibility of the local church or school to select, screen and manage trustworthy individuals to fill volunteer positions in ministry and school activities.

“The local church should take reasonable steps to safeguard children engaged in church-sponsored activities by choosing individuals with high spiritual and moral backgrounds as leaders and participants in programs for children.” *The Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual*, Revision 2000 page 120

Therefore, the Seventh-day Adventist Church believes that it is important to take decisive steps to ensure that to the best of their ability, the local church, school, and the programs they sponsor, are safe and provide a joyful experience for children and youth.

2. Focus on Mission—

The work of volunteers is essential to the successful accomplishment of the Church's mission and ministry. The management policies and procedures employed to supervise the work of volunteers must be in keeping with the mission and must support its successful achievement. Therefore, the mission of the ministry should always be the focus of volunteer selection and of the management process. In selecting individuals for volunteer positions only persons who support the mission of the organization should be recruited. Individuals in leadership who are unwilling to support the volunteer management policies and practices should be discontinued.

3. Organizational Responsibilities—

- a. The Church has both a moral and civil duty to protect the children entrusted to its care from harm caused by physical or sexual abuse. The local community has an expectation that the local church or school will provide a safe haven for children who participate in the ministries or educational programs of the Church.
- b. It is recommended that appropriate levels of adult supervision will be provided by trained denominational employees or volunteers at all times. Wherever possible a minimum of two adults will be present to supervise activities involving minor-aged children.
- c. The local church or school will exercise reasonable care in the selection and supervision of personnel that will include:
 - 1.) Careful selection of employee(s) or volunteer(s) needed to supervise a specific ministry or activity.
 - 2.) Appropriate training and orientation of employed staff or volunteer(s) in order to provide proper supervision of the ministry or activity.
 - 3.) Each staff member or volunteer will receive a written copy of the policies and/or expected code of conduct that will be required of them.
 - 4.) The local church or school will be expected to provide proper oversight and management of employed staff and volunteer(s).
 - 5.) The local church or school will be expected to take appropriate corrective action to either discipline, counsel, or remove staff members or volunteer(s) when necessary.
 - 6.) The local church or school has a duty and must report all incidents of suspected child abuse in accordance with the law.

Volunteer Selection & Management—

- a. It is the responsibility of the local church or school to select individuals who will serve in volunteer positions.
- b. It is recommended that all volunteers will be appropriately screened before they are allowed to supervise children.
- c. It is recommended that the local church or school adopt a practice that no adult will be considered for a volunteer leadership role in a church or school sponsored ministry or activity until he/she has been a member of the congregation or known by the organization for a minimum of six (6) months.
- d. All volunteers should be invited to participate in a volunteer service orientation program conducted by the local church or school and submit to a screening procedure that will include the completion of a signed Volunteer Information Form.
- e. The local church or school should establish a small Volunteer Service Committee (3-5 members) of respected church leaders who will be responsible to review Volunteer Information Forms submitted and approve individuals to serve in a volunteer capacity for the organization.
- f. All volunteer positions at the local church or school should be evaluated to determine the appropriate level of screening that should be undertaken based on the potential level of interaction with children, taking into consideration, one-on-one activity, off-site programs, and over-night activities in which the volunteer may be involved for the organization.
- g. The appropriate level of screening should be completed before the adult is allowed to volunteer in a local church- or school-sponsored activity. In some cases the local conference may provide assistance in the volunteer screening process.
- h. The Volunteer Service Committee will notify the appropriate ministry or school leader and the adult volunteer when the application for volunteer service has been approved.

5. Protecting Confidentiality of Information & Records—

It is the duty and responsibility of all individuals involved in the screening, interviewing and selection process of volunteers to conduct themselves with utmost integrity and confidentiality. The information received concerning individuals who volunteer their services to the local church or school will be maintained at all times on a confidential basis by the organization. Information contained in the Volunteer Ministry Information Form will only be released to other church organizations upon the request and written authorization of the applicant.

All information received during the volunteer screening process, including the Volunteer Ministry Information Form, will be maintained by the local church or school (unless otherwise directed by the local conference) on a confidential basis and kept in a locked file. All allegations of inappropriate conduct involving a child with an adult volunteer will be promptly investigated by the leadership of the local church or school.

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The local church or school will respect the rights of the child(ren) and the volunteer(s) involved and treat all matters concerning the situation discreetly, confidentially and in accordance with local child abuse reporting laws.

6. Screening for Volunteer Service—

“Effective screening of volunteers requires considering the mission of the organization and the activities of volunteers necessary to accomplish that mission. Designers of effective screening must also consider the willingness of volunteers to give up some of their privacy for a greater good. Screening must be thorough enough to impact child abuse, but should not intrude on the privacy of volunteers more than required for the safety of the children with whom they work. Every youth-serving organization should understand that even well screened volunteers may still pose a threat to the children with whom they work.” – The National Collaboration for Youth – Screening Guide for Volunteers

A. Basic Level – All Volunteers

1. Personal interview of the volunteer applicant by the leader of the ministry or school official to determine the individual's interest and desire to be of service to the organization
2. Complete a Volunteer Ministry Information Form with applicant's signature
3. The applicant for volunteer service will provide three (3) personal references
4. Local church or school Volunteer Service Committee responsible to review the information form and follow-up on personal references provided by the applicant.

B. Intermediate Level – Volunteers with High level of Interaction and Off-site Trips

1. All of the elements of Basic Screening should be applied
2. State Criminal History and Sex Offender Registry Check which may require fingerprinting and additional written permission from the applicant in order to obtain access to information from law enforcement or other agencies

C. Comprehensive Level – Volunteers with Direct One-on-One Interaction i.e. Big Brother/Sister Programs, In-home or Overnight Care Programs

1. All elements of the Basic and Intermediate Screening
2. FBI Criminal History Check
3. Home Visitation and Observation
4. Psychological Evaluation

Note: All volunteers must complete the Basic Level of screening. The local church or school is responsible for the cost of implementing these guidelines. In some areas, the local conferences may provide assistance with or conduct the formal screening of applicants at the Intermediate and/or Comprehensive Levels.

D. Minimizing Resistance to Screening & Achieving Cooperation

1. The focus should always be on the mission.
2. Invite adults to apply for the privilege of volunteering in the ministry and school program(s). Conduct an orientation program to acquaint interested individuals.
3. Jesus placed a very high value on the protection of children (Matthew 18:1-6), therefore child protection is an essential element in all church- or school-sponsored children's activities. Adult employees and volunteers will be expected to conduct themselves in accordance with Biblical principles at all times.
4. Set the example by having all volunteer leaders participate in the screening program even if they have been a volunteer for many years at your church or school.
5. Volunteer information should be updated every three (3) years.
6. Resist becoming involved in a prolonged discussion of why volunteer screening is a mandatory requirement at your church or school. Handle these types of questions in a private meeting with the individual who is raising the objection to the screening process.
7. Carefully review all Volunteer Ministry Information Forms to be sure that they are completed, including the signature of the applicant.
8. Personally invite a volunteer applicant to complete any missing information and resubmit the form for consideration. Any objections to specific questions on the form should be addressed with the applicant. Encourage the applicant to participate in the screening process in order to maintain the integrity of your volunteer program. Always keep the focus on your mission.
9. If the applicant continues to refuse to cooperate with your established screening process he/she should not be allowed to serve in a volunteer position involving children.

7. Code of Conduct for Volunteers—

Jesus loved to minister to children. Today, we have the privilege of volunteering our time, talents, and service in numerous ways to help fulfill the Gospel Commission. Therefore, volunteers must receive orientation and training in the following areas to effectively serve the local church or school:

- a. Provide all volunteers with an understanding of your ministry or school's mission and the expectation you have for its accomplishment in a safe and abuse-free manner.
- b. Explain and provide in writing the expectations, code of conduct, and rules that will be followed by all adult staff and volunteers in relation to their supervision and interaction with children.

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- c. Conduct awareness education concerning child abuse (physical and sexual) and outline the steps your church has taken to prevent the occurrence of child abuse incidents in its program. Reaffirm that alleged incidents of child abuse will be investigated and reported to authorities in accordance with local law.
- d. Conduct Good Touch – Bad Touch education and training on how to affirm children in an appropriate manner.
- e. Reinforce the Two-person rule – Never be the only adult supervisor or caregiver. Always have a minimum of two (2) adults present at all times during the supervision of children's activities.
- f. Reinforce the Open Door rule – If an activity is taking place in a room where the door does not have a glass viewing area, it should remain open, so the adult staff member or volunteer is in full view during the activity.
- g. Never leave children alone without supervision. Provide education on how to determine the appropriate level of supervision in order to conduct your program in a safe manner at all times.
- h. Make it clear that failure to comply with the established code of conduct and rules may result in the volunteer being asked to terminate participation in your program.
- i. Use professional members (teachers, physicians, attorneys, social workers, pastors etc.) of your church family and invite them to help you conduct the training of volunteers in order to bring credibility and support for your child protection efforts.

8. Opportunity For Service

As a volunteer you have the privilege of working with children, one of God's most precious gifts. Beyond protecting our children from abuse we also desire to empower volunteers to help children grow in their experience and understanding of Jesus and His saving grace. So we encourage you to walk with God daily, letting his love fill you up and spill over to the children and young people whom you serve.

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GUIDELINES FOR VOLUNTEERS

Because our society is filled with pain, problems, and litigation caused by improper conduct of adults working with children and youth, it is imperative that those working with children in the churches have meaningful guidelines for conduct—to protect both themselves and those under their care. As a ministry volunteer, you want parents and others to feel comfortable and confident with you. Here are some practical guidelines:

1. **Never leave a child or group of children for whom you are responsible unattended.** Provide adequate supervision at all times, no matter what.
2. **ALWAYS have at least one other adult 18 or older with you when ministering to children.** If you find yourself in a situation where you are the only adult present, **UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES** should you allow yourself to be alone with one child.
3. **Always ask a person's permission before touching him/her anywhere, even when responding to an injury or problem.** This is especially true for any area that would normally be covered by a T-shirt and/or shorts. If an injury is within this area, make sure another adult works with you as you provide care.
4. **Physical and verbal attacks are inappropriate and should never be used as discipline.** "Time out" or "sit-in-that-chair" may be helpful methods with children.
5. **Children need to be touched appropriately.** However, keep hugs brief and "should-to-shoulder" or "side-to-side." Always keep your hands at (not below) the shoulder level. A caregiver kiss is to the forehead or cheek only—not elsewhere. For small children who like to sit on laps, encourage them to sit next to you.
6. **When taking small children to the bathroom—take another adult along, or leave the door open.**

Be aware of the signs and symptoms of abuse; be aware of the legal requirements in your locality for reporting child abuse. In nearly all places, a caregiver can be held legally responsible for failing to report suspected or actual child abuse.

Be loving, kind, firm, and always thoroughly professional as a caregiver. Working with children and youth at church is not only a privilege; it is also a deep responsibility that must be approached with utmost care. As a volunteer you are expected to participate in orientation and training programs conducted by the church or conference.

Adventist Risk Management and the North American Division recommend the following rules for leaders. These serve as a protection to you and to your ministry against charges of abuse:

- **The volunteer screening rule.** The volunteers must complete the screening process described on the Volunteer Ministry Information Form (available at www.nadadventist.org).
- **The six-month rule.** Do not recruit a volunteer who has been a church member for less than six months.
- **The two-person rule.** Have at least two adults present at all times.
- **The glass window rule.** If the door to a classroom does not have glass in or around it, the door should be left open, so that the teacher is in full view.

I, the undersigned, have read the guidelines listed above and agree to abide by them. I will obtain a copy of this signed form and keep it for reference.

DATE _____

SIGNED _____

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**NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION
SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH
Volunteer Management & Screening Guidelines
FQA's – Frequently Asked Questions**

Why does the church need to screen volunteers who work with children?

Our mission is to provide a safe environment where children can learn to experience the joy of Christian worship and education. Jesus placed great importance on the conduct of adults who interacted with children in Matthew 18: 1-6. Society places a moral and legal responsibility on the Church to properly care for children and to supervise their activities as well as the conduct of adults to whom we have entrusted their care.

Are these NAD Volunteer Management & Screening Guidelines mandatory working policy?

No, These Guidelines are not presently NAD Working Policy. They are recommended guidelines to help provide conferences, local churches, and schools with guidance in establishing an effective volunteer management and screening program.

- One Size Doesn't Fit All: We recognize that the legal requirements and availability of information/resources in numerous jurisdictions cannot be summarized into one set of guidelines.
- Existing Programs: Some conferences already have established volunteer management screening programs and there is no need to duplicate or to change screening strategies already in place and working.

Why are the Guidelines for local church versus conference centralized?

The Guidelines have been developed in keeping with the Church Manual which indicates it is the responsibility of the local church to safeguard its children and to select individuals who will work with children. (See *The Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual* page 120) Therefore, the local church should be responsible for implementing its program for managing and screening the volunteers at its location. If a conference wishes to centralize or assist with this endeavor, the Guidelines also accommodate a centralized program format.

Are Criminal Background Checks required of all Volunteers?

NO, The Guidelines do not specifically require criminal background checks of volunteers. There may be certain volunteer positions that warrant this level of reference checking. Where appropriate and economically feasible they may be conducted with the permission of the individual who is applying for a volunteer position. Each organization will have to determine the means of access to this information, obtain the necessary personal information from the applicant and be responsible for the cost of the background check.

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Could the Church be held liable if it fails to obtain a Criminal Background Check on a Volunteer and an incident occurs?

- Volunteer Information Forms – One of the most effective tools in obtaining background information on the individual. Requiring this form demonstrates the organization's interest in protecting its children to the applicant. The organization learns more about the individuals who will be working with their children.
- Reference Checks – In many ways personal telephone or written contact to an applicant's personal references from previous locations of volunteer service may reveal better information than a criminal background check.
- Six-Month-Rule – Implementing a local church policy to allow for a six-month time period to observe and to become acquainted with an individual before placing them in a position of leadership also provides much information on the applicant and allows time for background screening and orientation.

How will the Church maintain confidential information on Volunteers?

It is the responsibility of the local church to maintain all volunteer records on a secure and confidential basis. It is recommended that only trusted church leaders who have demonstrated the ability to keep confidential information be asked to serve on the Volunteer Service Committee which will be asked to conduct the screening process. The information obtained on the Volunteer Ministry Information Form will only be released to other church organizations upon the written request of the volunteer applicant. In some organizations the maintenance of this information may be centralized at the conference level.

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