



# SEXUAL MISCONDUCT AND ABUSE POLICY

## 1. PURPOSE

To establish proper preventative measures to protect individuals against sexual misconduct as well as to specify courses of action in the case of allegations or an actual incident regarding sexual misconduct.

## 2. STANDARD OF CONDUCT

All staff members, teachers, workers, volunteer or paid, full-time or part-time, of NorthStar Church are expected to comply fully with this policy and are considered Mandated Reporters of sexual misconduct, abuse and neglect. NorthStar Church will follow all procedures dictated relating to the State Child Protective Services and Law Enforcement notification. Any actions contrary to the church policy will be dealt with swiftly and may include disciplinary measures up to and including termination, as well as legal ramifications when applicable. Mandatory Reporter training will be periodically provided to staff members, teachers, and workers by trained and authorized personnel.

## 3. DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE

### A. Neglect

Negligent treatment or maltreatment means an act or a failure to act, or the cumulative effects of a pattern of conduct, behavior, or inaction, that evidences a serious disregard of consequences of such magnitude as to constitute a clear and present danger to a child's health, welfare, or safety, including but not limited to endangerment with a controlled substance.

When considering whether a clear and present danger exists, evidence of a parent's substance abuse as a contributing factor to negligent treatment or maltreatment shall be given great weight. It is 'endangerment with a controlled substance' if the person knowingly or intentionally permits a dependent child to be exposed to, ingest, inhale, or have contact with methamphetamine or ephedrine, pseudoephedrine, or anhydrous ammonia, including their salts, isomers, and salts of isomers, which are being used in the manufacture of methamphetamine, including its salts, isomers, and salts of isomers.

### B. Physical Abuse

Abuse or neglect means the injury of a child by any person under circumstances that cause harm to the child's health, welfare, or safety, or the negligent treatment or maltreatment of a child by a person responsible for or providing care to the child. An abused child is a child who has been subjected to child abuse or neglect.

**C. Sexual Activity**

May be violent or non-violent, touching or non-touching, and is an exploitation of a child's vulnerability and powerlessness. It involves children in sexual behaviors for which they are not personally, socially, and developmentally ready.

**D. Child Sexual Abuse**

Any sexual activity with a child—whether in the home by a caretaker, in a day care situation, a foster/residential setting, or any other setting, including on the street by a person unknown to the child. The abuser may be an adult, an adolescent, or another child, provided the child is four years older than the victim” (National Resource Center on Child Sexual Abuse, 1992).

**E. Sexual Misconduct**

Inappropriate behavior relating to or involving a sexual nature.

**F. Psychological, Emotional or Mental Abuse**

This form of abuse is characterized by a person subjecting or exposing another person to a behavior that may result in psychological trauma, including anxiety, chronic depression, clinical depression or post-traumatic stress disorder amongst other psychological problems. It is often associated with situations of power imbalance in abusive relationships, and may include bullying, gaslighting, abuse in the workplace, amongst other behaviors that may cause an individual to feel unsafe. It also may be perpetrated by persons conducting torture, other violence, acute or prolonged human rights abuse, particularly without legal redress such as detention without trial, false accusations, false convictions, and extreme defamation such as where perpetrated by state and media.

**4. PRE-SCREENING OF WORKERS**

- A. All paid workers, part time and full time, will fill out an application and a primary screening for volunteer workers application.
- B. All volunteer workers will fill out a primary screening for volunteer workers application.
- C. All workers, volunteer, paid, full-time and part-time, will be interviewed by the Lead Pastor or Family Pastor/Student Ministry Director.
- D. All workers, volunteer, paid, full-time and part-time, will provide a valid form of ID (i.e., state driver's license, social security card, or other acceptable form of ID).
- E. All full-time paid workers will agree and complete the request for a Criminal Records Check and undergo a criminal background check prior to any activity of employment with the church.
- F. All workers in a leadership position with direct relation to children must have gone through our orientation class and have been interviewed by the Family Pastor/Student Ministry Director.

- G. No applicant or volunteer ever convicted of a sexual related crime is eligible for service in a position with direct relation to children.
- H. Any applicant or volunteer who is a survivor of child abuse in the past must meet with a staff member prior to service in a position with direct relation to children.

## **5. COMMON SUPERVISORY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

- A. Two Adult Rule – minimum of two (2) adults in any setting or activity regarding children.
- B. Badges or signing in and out of children.
- C. Any supervisor is responsible to address suspicious behavior or any behavior that may be contrary to church policy and to document and report such occurrences to the proper authorities.

## **6. REPORTING PROCEDURES**

Any person can be a responsible person. If a student mentions any of the above acts to you, as a leader it is your responsibility to report it to the Family Pastor/Student Ministries Director so that they can handle the situation properly. If you hear something or see something, say something.

A report is required when a mandatory reporter has reasonable cause to believe that a child has suffered abuse or neglect. The Family Pastor/Student Director will take the proper steps in handling the issue with the authorities. A report will be made to CFSA in the state of which the minor resides.

Share all information (assumed or stated), and do not disclose any information to others not involved in the situation.

- A. All allegations must be taken seriously.
- B. All allegations should be reported to the established authority and/or Lead Pastor as immediately as possible.
- C. The established authority and/or Lead Pastor will notify the parents or legal guardian.
- D. All situations will be handled forthrightly with due respect for people's privacy and confidentiality.
- E. Full cooperation will be given to civil authorities when applicable. No accused will be addressed by anyone other than the established authorities and/or Lead Pastor until the safety of the child or victim is secured.

Information To Have Ready When Filing Report:

- Name and age of minor.
- Home Address or frequented locations of the minor(s).
- Specific parent/guardian causing abuse.
- Number of other siblings in the home and their ages if known.
- Details of the suspected incident, if known.

## **7. INVESTIGATION OF AN ALLEGATION**

All allegations will be investigated expeditiously by established authorities and/or the Family or Lead Pastor. Any accused worker will be relieved temporarily of his or her duties until the investigation is completed. All details, interviews, and information will remain confidential to those legitimately involved in the investigation. Any individual or group responsible for a breach in this confidentiality is subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination. No individual involved in an allegation or anyone responsible for investigating an allegation will be retaliated against.