



ACS POLICIES/ CHILD ABUSE TRAINING INFO

PUBLISHED 2017-18

(REFERED TO IN THE ACS VOLUNTEER APPLICATION)



Albany Christian School

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**ALBANY CHRISTIAN SCHOOL
CHILD & YOUTH ABUSE
PREVENTION POLICY**

Policy at-a-Glance

1. We check references for all paid staff who have contact with minors.
2. We conduct criminal background checks of all paid staff and volunteers who work with minors.
3. We train all volunteers and paid staff who work with children or youth to understand the nature of child abuse and methods of abuse prevention.
4. We train all volunteers and paid staff who work with children or youth in how to carry out our policy to prevent child abuse.
5. Our paid staff and volunteers are informed of state law requirements regarding child abuse and our responsibility for reporting incidents.
6. We have a reporting procedure for a suspected incident of child abuse that follows the requirements of our state law.
7. We have insurance coverage available in case a child abuse complaint occurs.
8. We have a defined response plan to be implemented in case an allegation of child abuse is made against someone in our organization.
9. We take our policy to prevent child abuse seriously, and we are committed to its enforcement for the safety and security of all of our children, staff, volunteers and parents.

Introduction

To help protect children, **Albany Christian School** has adopted the following Child and Youth Abuse Prevention Policy. It is important that all **Albany Christian School** paid staff and volunteers understand and implement these guidelines to help prevent abuse against children. The following includes the Purpose and Definitions for these guidelines, the outlines of Protection and Prevention, and an Acknowledgement to be signed by those people working (paid and volunteer) with children.

Purpose

This policy and ensuing procedures are designed to reduce the risk of child abuse in order to:

1. Provide a safe and secure environment for children, youth, adults, members, volunteers, visitors, and paid staff.
2. Assist **Albany Christian School** in evaluating a person's suitability to supervise, oversee, and/or exert control over the activities of children and youth.
3. Satisfy the concerns of parents and staff members with a screening process for paid staff and volunteers.
4. Provide a standard system of conduct to respond to alleged victims of abuse and their families, as well as the alleged perpetrator.
5. Reduce the possibility of false accusations of abuse made against volunteers and paid staff.

Definitions

The following terms used herein are defined as follows:

1. *Paid Staff*: Any teacher, administrator, or employee who is paid by **Albany Christian School** and engaged in or involved in activities and who is entrusted with the care and supervision of minors or a person who directly oversees and/or exerts control or oversight over minors or adults.
2. *Children/Youth/Minor*: Any person who has not reached his/her 18th birthday or the age of majority as defined by state law.
3. *Adult*: Any person who has reached his/her 18th birthday or as defined by state law.
4. *Volunteer*: Means any unpaid person engaged in or involved in **Albany Christian School** activities and who is entrusted with the care and supervision of minors or a person who directly oversees and/or exerts control or oversight over minors or adults.

5. *Sexual Abuse*: The employment, use, persuasion, inducement, enticement, or coercion of any minor or adult to engage in, or assist any other person to engage in, any sexually explicit conduct or any simulation of such conduct for the purpose of producing any visual depiction of such conduct or rape, and in cases of caretaker or inter-familial relationships, statutory rape, molestation, prostitution, or other form of sexual exploitation of minor or adult, or incest with a minor or adult, or as defined by federal and state law. This includes and is not limited to unwelcome sexual remarks, jokes, advances, leering, whistling, or sexual gestures; sexual touching, fondling, molestation, assault, or other intimate physical contact; compelling another person to engage in a sexual act by threats or fear or undue influence; and providing or displaying pornographic materials to another person.
6. *Child Emotional Abuse*: Verbal or nonverbal conduct including mental exploitation, degrading communication, or humiliating or threatening conduct that may or may not include bullying or as defined by state law.

Protection and Prevention

Volunteer and Employee Screening Procedures

The following screening procedures are to be used with paid staff and volunteers who are entrusted with the care and supervision of minors or a person who directly oversees and/or exerts control or oversight over minors. All information collected should be maintained in confidence.

1. *Employment Application and Volunteer Application*: Any paid staff and volunteers who will work with a minor must complete the Employment Application and/or the Volunteer Application. The release statement attached to the Application must be signed by the individual completing the Application to apply for and qualify for service.

Our Employment Application includes questions regarding:

- Current and previous residence addresses.
- Current and previous employment, including addresses, dates, duties, titles, and reasons for leaving.
- Names and addresses of schools attended and degree(s) earned.
- References from previous employers and organizations that serve children.
- Pending criminal charges (where not prohibited by state law).
- Criminal history information.

Our Volunteer Application includes questions regarding:

- Name and contact info.
- Criminal history information.

Applications include a statement, which the applicant should acknowledge in writing, certifying that statements provided in the application are true and complete, and any misrepresentation or omission may be grounds for rejection of the applicant or for dismissal if he or she is employed. This statement authorizes **Albany Christian School** to contact any individual or organization listed in the application.

2. Review all statements made in the application, paying specific attention to any gaps in time and irregular employment patterns or unexplained absence. Pursue these gaps with employers listed and in a subsequent interview.
3. Conduct interviews with qualified applicants.

If detrimental information is uncovered but the applicant remains desirable, discuss this information with the applicant. In the event the applicant is ultimately hired or accepted as a volunteer, document the reasons for overriding the prior information.

Whenever possible, **Albany Christian School** will have a second staff member participate in the interview.

4. Contact all listed references and employers for paid staff. Inquire as to the reason the applicant left and ask for any information that might help determine the applicant's suitability for the position. If a response is not received within a reasonable period of time, follow up and keep notes if possible.
5. *Criminal Background Check*: **Albany Christian School** will conduct a criminal background check on all paid staff and volunteers who are entrusted with the care and supervision of minors or a person who directly oversees and/or exerts control or oversight over minors. All criminal background checks will be updated periodically.

Confidentiality

Information obtained through the screening, application, reference check, interview, and criminal background check will be kept in confidence, unless otherwise required by law. All information discovered or obtained through the above-referenced means will be kept in a secure location and access to it will be restricted if possible. These materials will be archived.

Supervision Procedures

Unless an extenuating situation exists, **Albany Christian School**:

1. Will have adequate number of screened and trained paid staff or volunteers present at events involving minors. Supervision will increase in proportion to the risk of the activity. The ratio for a supervised activity is 1 adult chaperone per 10 students.
2. Will monitor facilities during activities involving children.
3. Will release minors only to a parent or guardian and utilize sign-in and sign-out sheets.
4. Will obtain written parental permission, including a signed medical treatment form and emergency contacts, before taking minors on trips and should provide information regarding the trip.
5. There will be at least two students in a volunteer's vehicle when transporting minors in vehicles, unless a volunteer is transporting one's own child.
6. Will require that young (K3-3rd grade) children be accompanied to the restroom and the paid staff or volunteer wait outside the facility to escort the child back to the activity. Whenever possible, the escort will be the same sex as the minor.
7. Will encourage minors to use a "buddy system" whenever minors go on trips off of **Albany Christian School** property.
8. Will screen all paid staff and volunteers and approve those individuals in advance for any overnight activities.
9. Will designate a "confidential counselor" to whom any minor can go at any time, without special permission, to discuss any problems he or she is having.

Behavioral Guidelines for Albany Christian School Paid Staff

All volunteers and paid staff will observe the following guidelines:

1. Do not provide alcoholic beverages, tobacco, drugs, contraband, or anything that is prohibited by law to minors.
2. To the extent possible, **Albany Christian School** events that are co-educational will have both male and female chaperones.
3. Whenever possible for school events other than classroom instruction, at least two unrelated paid staff or volunteers will be in the room when minors are present. Doors will be left fully open if one adult needs to leave the room temporarily and during arrival to the class or event before both adults are present.
4. Speaking to a minor or minors one-on-one should be done in public settings where paid staff or volunteers are in sight of other people.
5. Avoid all inappropriate touching with minors. All touching shall be based on the needs of the individual being touched, not on the needs of the volunteer or paid staff. In the event a minor initiates physical contact and/or inappropriate touching, it is appropriate to inform the minor that such touching is inappropriate.
6. Never engage in physical discipline of a minor. Volunteers and paid staff shall not abuse minors in any way, including but not limited to physical abuse, verbal/mental abuse, emotional abuse, and sexual abuse of any kind.
7. If you recognize an inappropriate relationship developing between a minor and adult, maintain clear professional boundaries and refer the minor to another individual with supervisory authority.
8. If one-on-one counseling/care is necessary, avoid meeting in isolated environments.
9. Anyone who observes abuse of a minor will take appropriate steps to immediately intervene and provide assistance. Report any inappropriate conduct to the proper authorities and officials of **Albany Christian School** for handling.

Disqualification

No person may be entrusted with the care and supervision of minors or may directly oversee and/or exert control or oversight over minors who has been convicted of the offenses outlined below, been on a probated sentence or received deferred adjudication for any offense outlined below, or has presently pending any criminal charges for any offense outlined below until a determination of guilt or innocence has been made, including any person who is presently on

deferred adjudication. The following offenses disqualify a person from care, supervision, control, or oversight of minors:

1. Any offense against minors as defined by state law.
2. A misdemeanor or felony offense as defined by state law that is classified as sexual assault, indecency with a minor or adult, assault of a minor or adult, injury to a minor or adult, abandoning or endangering a minor, sexual performance with a minor or adult, possession or promoting child pornography, enticing a minor, bigamy, incest, drug-related offenses, or family violence.
3. A prior criminal history of an offense against minors.

Sexual Offender Status at Albany Christian School

Albany Christian School will not allow a person known to be a sexual offender to remain or hold any volunteer or paid position at the school.

Response to Sexual Abuse

Albany Christian School will respond promptly to investigate any accusation of sexual abuse. All accusations of sexual abuse will be taken seriously. It is important to be appropriately respectful to the needs and feelings of those who allege sexual abuse and those who have been accused of sexual abuse.

When an allegation is made involving sexual abuse, the person reporting the complaint is to be told about the guidelines and the procedures to be followed. The Executive Director or an appointed person will begin investigating the allegations and may use the assistance of legal counsel or other consultants. If the Executive Director or appointed person is the individual accused of sexual abuse, then the **Albany Christian School's** Chairman of the Board will conduct the investigation. The investigation will be conducted as follows:

1. Report the incident to appropriate authorities in accordance with the state mandatory reporting laws.
2. Report the matter to **Albany Christian School's** insurance carrier.
3. Cooperate with authorities and the insurance carrier.
4. **Albany Christian School** may suspend (with pay for paid staff) the alleged offender while a confidential investigation is being conducted.
5. An official of **Albany Christian School** (and legal counsel or other consultants) will then meet with the governing body of **Albany Christian School** and present a report on their investigation, which will include findings and recommendations of actions.

6. An official of **Albany Christian School** will meet with the alleged perpetrator and notify him/her of the results of the investigation and recommendations for actions.
7. An official of **Albany Christian School** will meet with the alleged victim, along with his/her parents or guardians, and notify them of the results of the investigation and recommendations for actions.
8. During the investigation, an official of **Albany Christian School** shall maintain contact with the alleged victim and his/her parents or legal guardian, and inform them of the actions taken and assist them in their process of healing.
9. An official of **Albany Christian School** (and legal counsel or other consultants) may meet with the alleged perpetrator, the alleged victim, and any others with knowledge of relevant facts.
10. Communicate with criminal and civil legal counsel of **Albany Christian School**.
11. Communicate with those affected by the alleged perpetrator.
12. Hire a consultant or assign a spokesperson to respond to media or prepare a statement for the media if the need shall arise, subject to the approval of **Albany Christian School 's** attorney.

Child and Youth Abuse Prevention Policy Acknowledgment

These guidelines have been designed to guide and assist you when working with minors. The information establishes general practices and guidelines and should not be construed in any way as a contract of employment or continued employment. **Albany Christian School** reserves the right to make changes in the content or application of this program and to implement those changes with or without notice.

The terms defined herein are defined for the purposes of the program and do not suppose or establish a legal relationship. These terms are not defined for the purposes of creating a legal relationship with **Albany Christian School** or any related or associated entity and instead are to be used with this document.



ACS Volunteer Policy

ACS Mission

“Albany Christian School exists as a ministry of Willamette Community Church to partner with families **to educate students with excellence**, from a biblical perspective”, that they might personally experience God’s love, grow into Christian maturity and bridge to a local church for a lifetime of learning.

We value the time we have to teach our students and we are committed to protecting the learning environment, as well as protecting our students from harm. The following policy guidelines grow out of these commitments.

Checking In and Out

If you are volunteering in the classroom, you must **sign in** on the visitors countertop computer using Sycamore at the Elementary School Office and **pick up your volunteer badge**. Before leaving the school, you must **sign out** on the same computer using Sycamore and return your badge to the office.

If you forget to pick up your volunteer badge, you can expect a staff member in the building to give you a friendly reminder. This is for the safety of our students and staff.

Teachers have designated time slots for volunteers in their classroom. Observing students outside of those hours is not considered volunteering. If you would like to observe in a classroom, you must schedule an appointment at the Elementary School Office.

ACS Standards of Behavior

Volunteers at Albany Christian School or any school event are **under the guidance and direction of the ACS teachers and staff**. Discipline or concerns about student conduct should be immediately brought to the teacher’s attention. It is ACS policy that no volunteer may be alone with a student at any time other than one’s own child.

Volunteer Options

1. **Classroom Help** – Teachers have allotted times for general classroom help each week based on their needs. Volunteers can sign up for a time slot at the Elementary School Office or with the classroom teacher.
2. **Classroom Projects/Activities** – Every teacher has various projects and activities, depending on the grade level, which they need volunteer help to complete.

Volunteers can sign up for projects at the Elementary School Office or with the classroom teacher.

- a. **Example** – Some grades celebrate birthdays by month. If you signed up to help out with birthday parties you would be contacted once a month to help out with a birthday party.
3. **Field Trip Chaperones** – Volunteers can sign up to be field trip chaperones in the Elementary School Office or with the classroom teacher.
 - a. **Reminder** – “Field trips are a class experience and all students are to travel together as a class. . . . No person other than teachers, students, or chaperones may attend ACS field trips. Chaperones are responsible for our students and **may not bring student siblings along.**”
4. **PTO Events**
 - a. Teacher Appreciation
 - b. Pop Corn Days
 - c. Last Day of School Party
 - d. Raffles
 - e. Greeters
5. **Fundraising/Activities**
 - a. Annual Auction
 - b. Walk-A-Thon
 - c. Spelling Bee
 - d. Speech Meet
 - e. Grandparents Day
 - f. Track Meet



ALBANY CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

Child Abuse Training

Section 1

SEPTEMBER 8, 2016
ALBANY CHRISTIAN SCHOOL
420 Third Ave Albany, OR 97321

7 Ways to Prevent Child Abuse

1

The burden of prevention has been resting for years on the smallest shoulders in our society: the children who are most vulnerable, least powerful, and least likely to be able to protect themselves from a powerful adult. This is especially true when considering that the majority of sexual abuse (93%) happens at the hands of an adult well known to the child. When children are abused by adults they are also confused by the fact that this person is supposed to be a protector, a caretaker, and worthy of trust simply by being an adult (after all, we also teach children to obey adults, which can be very confusing). Child abusers are very often "experts" at emotional manipulation of children, gaining their trust well in advance of the actual abuse. In light of these facts (and many others), it is clear that the time has come for adults to assume responsibility for protecting children. Their shoulders were not built for carrying such weight.

The following facts and the "7 Steps to Protecting Our Children From Sexual Abuse" are directly quoted here with the permission of the nonprofit organization From Darkness to Light. This is an invaluable resource that is well worth "bookmarking."

STEP 1:

"Learn the facts and understand the risks. Realities - not trust - should influence your decisions regarding your child."

- 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 6 boys will have been sexually abused by their eighteenth birthday. Consider this the next time you walk through a mall or down a street and see several or many children. Whenever you enter a classroom or ball game, look around and do the math. It is a sad reality...but one we can have a positive effect on.
- Only 1 in 10 children reports the abuse themselves. Those children who keep the abuse a secret or who tell and are not believed are far more likely to suffer psychological, emotional, social, and/or physical problems that will most likely follow them into adulthood.
- 22% of abused children are under 8 years old.
- The average age of abused children is 9.

Most likely, you know a child who either has been or is being abused.

It is also likely that you know an abuser! Most are not "strangers," but are our friends and family members.

- 34% of victims are abused by family members.
- 59% are abused by people the family judges to be trustworthy. In fact, it is a common tactic of abusers to first establish a trusting relationship with the parents of the child.
- Many young children are abused by larger, older children.
- Those who abuse children have no characteristics that "set them apart" for us to identify them as abusers. They look and act just like us and go out of their way to appear trustworthy.
- Those who sexually abuse children are drawn to places where they will have easy access to children (and are often those we judge to be "wonderful" with children) such as sports leagues, faith centers, clubs, and schools. It is important to be sure that the clubs, leagues, etc., where your child is involved has a policy about doing background checks on its volunteers.

STEP 2:

Minimize Opportunity - "If you eliminate or reduce one-adult/one-child situations, you will dramatically lower the risk of sexual abuse for your child."

- Remember that abusers often befriend the child and the child's family in order to gain their trust.
- Always look for group situations to involve your child in rather than placing your child alone with one adult.
- Strongly encourage policies limiting one-adult/one-child situations in all youth related activities such as faith groups, sports teams, and school clubs. Make sure parents/caregivers can observe or interrupt activities at any time. Also make sure that background checks have been done on all volunteers and others working directly with children.
- Insist that personnel (paid and volunteer) receive quality training on prevention, recognition, and reporting of child abuse.
- **Drop in unexpectedly when your child is alone with any adult!**
- Monitor your child's internet use. The internet has become a favorite means for pedophiles to interact privately with children. Their goal is to lure them into physical contact after gaining their trust.
- Set an example by personally avoiding one-adult/one-child situations with children other than your own.

STEP 3:

Talk About It - Children often keep abuse a secret, but barriers can be broken down by talking openly about it.

It's **VERY IMPORTANT** to understand why children don't tell.

- Children are afraid of disappointing their parents.
- Children are afraid of disrupting the family.
- The abuser sometimes threatens the child or a family member.
- The abuser shames the child, points out that s/he let it happen, or tells her or him that their parents will be angry.
- Some children who did not initially disclose abuse are afraid or ashamed to tell when it happens again.
- Some children are too young to understand. Many abusers tell children the abuse is "okay" or a "game."

Know how children communicate.

- Children who do disclose sexual abuse often tell a trusted adult other than a parent. Therefore, training for people who work with children in any capacity is very important.
- Children may tell "parts" of what happened or pretend it happened to someone else to gauge adult reaction.
- Children will often "shut down" and refuse to tell more if you respond emotionally or negatively.
- If your child does not talk to you, don't think it's a sign of poor parenting.

Talk openly with your child.

- Teach your child that it is your job to protect him.
- Teach your child that it is not her responsibility to protect others.
- Demonstrate daily that you will not be angry, no matter what your child tells you about any aspect of his life.
- Listen quietly. Children have a hard time telling parents about troubling events.
- Teach your child about her body, about what abuse is and, as age-appropriate, about sex. Teach her words that help her discuss sex comfortably with you.
- Teach your child that it is against the "rules" for adults to act in a sexual way with children and use examples.
- Start early and talk often. Use everyday opportunities to talk about sexual abuse.

STEP 4:

Stay Alert - Don't expect obvious signs when a child is being sexually abused. Signs are often there but you have to spot them.

Learn the signs.

- Physical signs of sexual abuse are not common, although redness, rashes, or swelling in the genital area, urinary tract infections, or other such symptoms should be carefully investigated. Also, physical problems associated with anxiety, such as chronic stomach pain or headaches, may occur.
- Emotional or behavioral signals are more common. These can run from "too perfect" behavior, to withdrawal and depression, to unexplained anger and rebellion.
- Sexual behavior and language that are not age-appropriate can be a red flag.
- Be aware that in some children there are no signs whatsoever.

If you find physical signs that you suspect as sexual abuse, have the child physically examined immediately by a professional who specializes in child sexual abuse. Note: If you live outside the area served by Kids First, Inc., call us for a CAC in your area or call the National Children's Alliance at 1-800-239-9950.

STEP 5:

Make a Plan - Learn where to go, who to call, and how to react.

Don't overreact. Just as you stay calm when your child breaks an arm and follow a plan you've made in advance for such emergencies, stay calm and follow a plan if your child reports abuse.

If you react with anger or disbelief, the response from the child may be the following:

- The child shuts down.
- The child changes his story in the face of your anger and disbelief, when, in fact, abuse may actually be occurring.
- The child changes his account around your questions so future tellings appear to be "coached." This can be very harmful if the case goes to court.
- The child feels even more guilty.

Note: VERY few reported incidents are false.

Offer support. It's very important to think through your emotional response before you're in a position where you suspect abuse. Hopefully, you'll never need to use the skills, but you will be prepared to respond in a supportive way if the need arises.

- Believe the child and make sure he knows it.
- Don't ask questions. This could be confusing to the child, make her upset, and could damage criminal prosecution of the offender.
- Assure the child that it's your job to protect him and that you'll do everything you can for him.
- Report in all cases of suspected abuse, whether inside or outside the family. The child's safety is much more important than any emotional conflict you may have to face. Remember: you are the adult.
- Don't panic. Sexually abused children who receive psychological help can and do heal.

7 Ways to Prevent Child Abuse

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Remember: Oregon is a mandatory reporting state. Act on suspicions and report. Report to the local police or sheriff's department or to the Department of Social Services.

STEP 6:

Act on Suspicions. A child's wellbeing may depend on it.

If you are in a situation where you suspect abuse but do not have any proof, you may be reluctant to report. Many of us do not trust our "gut" feelings, even though they are most often right. A child cannot afford for you to take the chance that it is wrong. If you are still reluctant, please call one of the following:

- Kids First, Inc. within the 7 counties we serve.
- The National Children's Alliance at 1-800-239-9950 for a CAC in your area (or visit their website, listed on our links page).
- From Darkness to Light at 1-866-367-5444.
- Childhelp USA Child Abuse Hotline at 1-800-422-4453.

STEP 7:

Get involved.

Volunteer and financially support organizations that fight the tragedy of abuse:

- Your local Child Advocacy Center
- Prevention Programs
- Crisis information and referral services
- Rape crisis centers

Use your voice and your vote (children do not have this right) to make your community a safer place for children.

- Ask your elected officials what legislation they are supporting to protect children.
- Support legislation that protects children (contact Prevent Child Abuse NC for more information on current legislation. See web address on links page).
- Demand that local government put more money into efforts to fight child abuse.
- Contact members of Congress.
- Write letters to the newspaper in your area.



ALBANY CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

Child Abuse Training

Section 2

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Recognizing Child Abuse

2

Helping a Child: recognizing the signs of child abuse and neglect

Many people are afraid of reporting child abuse. They think, "I don't want the person I reported to know," or, "I'm afraid it will come back to haunt me," or, "it's not my business." Ironically, if you asked people if they should help if seeing a nearby car accident, most will say yes. But in a case of suspected child abuse, that thinking may be different. Why? Because of prevalent attitudes that someone else's children are either "their responsibility" or "their property."

Without aware adults, some children might never receive help. Be an advocate for children by knowing the signs of abuse and reporting child abuse. Remember, you are reporting suspicion of child abuse. Even if you aren't sure, it's better to let authorities check it out. You might save a child's life!

You should know about these signs...

When you have concerns for a child's well-being, the indicators listed below may help guide you in your thought process. Many of these "symptoms" or "signs" could be caused by things other than abuse or neglect. Generally, these indicators do indicate that a child's safety may be at risk and, at the very least, the situation should be assessed by a professional who is able to determine the causes of these symptoms and offer the help and assistance necessary to reduce the risk to a child.

Signs of Physical Abuse

Physical Indicators:

- Unexplained bruises and welts on the face, throat, upper arms, buttocks, thighs or lower back in unusual patterns or shapes which suggests the use of an instrument (belt buckle, electric cord) on an infant in various stages of healing that are seen after absences, weekends, or vacations.
- Unexplained burns, cigarette burns, especially burns found on palms, soles of feet, abdomen, buttocks; immersion burns producing "stocking" or "glove" marks on hands and feet; "doughnut shaped" on buttocks or genital area.
- Rope burns.
- Infected burns indicating delay in treatment; burns in the shape of common household utensils or appliances.

Behavioral Indicators:

- Behavioral extremes (withdrawal, aggression, regression, depression).
- Inappropriate or excessive fear of parent or caretaker.
- Antisocial behavior such as substance abuse, truancy, running away, fear of going home.
- Unbelievable or inconsistent explanation for injuries.
- Lies unusually still while surveying surroundings (for infants).
- Unusual shyness, wariness of physical contact.



Recognizing Child Abuse

2

Signs of Sexual Abuse

Physical Indicators:

- Torn, stained or bloody underclothes.
- Frequent, unexplained sore throats, yeast or urinary infections.
- Somatic complaints, including pain and irritation of the genitals.
- Sexually transmitted diseases.
- Bruises or bleeding from external genitalia, vagina or anal region.
- Pregnancy.

Behavioral Indicators:

- The victim's disclosure of sexual abuse.
- Regressive behaviors (thumb-sucking, bedwetting, fear of the dark).
- Promiscuity or seductive behaviors.
- Disturbed sleep patterns (recurrent nightmares).
- Unusual and age-inappropriate interest in sexual matters.
- Avoidance of undressing or wearing extra layers of clothes.
- Sudden decline in school performance, truancy.
- Difficulty in walking or sitting.

Signs of Emotional Abuse

Physical Indicators:

- Eating disorders, including obesity or anorexia.
- Speech disorders (stuttering, stammering).
- Developmental delays in the acquisition of speech or motor skills.
- Weight or height level substantially below norm.
- Flat or bald spots on head (infants).
- Nervous disorders (rashes, hives, facial tics, stomach aches).

Behavioral Indicators:

- Habit disorders (biting, rocking, head-banging).
- Cruel behavior, seeming to get pleasure from hurting children, adults or animals; seeming to get pleasure from being mistreated.
- Age-inappropriate behaviors (bedwetting, wetting, soiling).
- Behavioral extremes, such as overly compliant-demanding; withdrawn-aggressive; listless-excitabile.



Recognizing Child Abuse

2

Signs of Neglect

Physical Indicators:

- Poor hygiene, including lice, scabies, severe or untreated diaper rash, bedsores, body odor.
- Squinting.
- Unsuitable clothing; missing key articles of clothing (underwear, socks, shoes); overdressed or underdressed for climate conditions.
- Untreated injury or illness.
- Lack of immunizations.
- Indicators of prolonged exposure to elements (excessive sunburn, insect bites, colds).
- Height and weight significantly below age level.

Behavioral Indicators:

- Unusual school attendance.
- Chronic absenteeism.
- Chronic hunger, tiredness, or lethargy.
- Begging for or collecting leftovers.
- Assuming adult responsibilities.
- Reporting no caretaker at home.

This information provided courtesy of Lorain County, Ohio Children Services, through their website, www.childabuse.net. Albany Christian School provides this information as a service, and no listing of abuse or neglect indicators can include all signs. Please use your best judgment.



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Child Abuse Training

Section 3

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Guidelines for Helping Children Experiencing Abuse or Neglect

3

Every adult involved in the life of a child plays a critical role in helping maintain that child's safety. It is important to recognize your vital role and learn how to help protect the children in your life from abuse and neglect.

If you suspect that a child is a victim of abuse or neglect and you are unsure whether the child's situation has been reported to child protective services (CPS), you should report your concerns to your local CPS agency. Refer to [*What Should I Know about Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect?*](#), another fact sheet distributed by the American Humane Association, to learn about reporting suspected child abuse or neglect.

What Happens Once a Report Is Made?

After receiving a report of child abuse or neglect, CPS will use that information, along with any previous history of involvement with the family, in order to determine the best course of action. If CPS determines that the report does not meet the legal standards of child abuse or neglect, or there is not enough evidence or information to investigate the report, CPS will usually refer the family to another agency that will provide the family with appropriate services (e.g., counseling, parenting skills classes, substance abuse programs). Alternatively, the information you share might lead CPS to begin a family assessment or investigation. Depending on the laws in your state and your relationship with the child, you may have the opportunity to communicate with a CPS worker regarding the child's progress. Educators and school personnel, in particular, are an excellent resource and may be asked to share additional information to help determine the facts of a case and develop a treatment plan for the child and family.

Any party discussing a child abuse case must adhere to the principles of confidentiality, since details of a case may be shared only with appropriate parties as designated by law. This protection by the law protects both the child and family from rumors, judgments and stereotyping that may further isolate and alienate them, and thus negatively affect intervention efforts.

Should You Still Have Contact With the Family?

Depending on the nature of your relationship with the child or family, you might continue to have regular contact with the family after a report has been made. Please know that you are just as important to the family's recovery as you are to the child's. Appropriate interactions with parents who are suspected of child abuse or neglect will have a positive influence on the family's ability to recover. The following are guidelines for interacting with the child's family:

- Be objective and supportive. Remember that most parents want to be good parents but may need additional help, encouragement and guidance.
- Be an active listener. Do not blame, accuse or make judgments about family members or their situations.
- Offer your support in any way in which you feel comfortable. Families in these situations can greatly benefit from social support, which could include anything from babysitting to carpooling to just offering to listen.
- Limit your conversations to the activities that involve you. It is not your responsibility to investigate suspected child abuse or neglect.
- Address the family in a manner that is consistent with your role or relationship with the family. If you are an educator, be professional and objective. If you are a friend, family member or neighbor, be friendly, helpful, supportive and understanding. Do not allow yourself to be placed in an adversarial role if the parents become defensive, argumentative, accusatory or upset.
- Encourage parents and provide them with information about educational programs on parenting, job skills and child development; programs and activities for children; and counseling, alcohol/drug abuse or adult education and enrichment programs, if this seems appropriate given the nature of your relationship. (You can even offer to join them and take advantage of the opportunity to learn new skills.)

Remember, families experiencing abuse or neglect issues are often under a great deal of stress in multiple areas of their lives. Your interaction, involvement or support can be an important stress reducer for the child and for the parents.



Guidelines for Helping Children Experiencing Abuse or Neglect

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The following tips can help you develop a nurturing relationship with any child who may be suffering from negative self-esteem or who is being abused or neglected. Children need positive adult role models; therefore, your warmth, empathy and interest can help a child see adults in positive, supportive and caring roles.

Listen

- Be an approachable, patient and supportive listener. Listen without being critical or negative toward the child or the child's parents.
- Show that you understand and believe what the child says, even if it is difficult. Make sure to not blame, punish or accuse the child of doing anything wrong.
- Let the child know that you are there for him or her to talk to openly, should he or she wish to do so. Leaving an open line of communication is much more beneficial to the child than pressuring him or her to self-disclose or reveal his or her experiences of abuse or neglect before he or she is ready to talk about it.

Empathize

- Validate the child's feelings, emotions and experiences. Do not belittle or minimize the child's feelings; he or she has those feelings for a reason.
- Affirm the child's decision to confide in you. Tell the child that he or she is doing the right thing by talking to an adult whom he/she trusts. Let the child know that you are there for him or her and want to help keep him/her safe.
- Assure the child often that he or she is not to blame. Child victims may believe that the abuse or neglect is their fault.
- Don't overreact. Stay calm. Fear and anger are normal reactions, but you may frighten the child and prevent him or her from confiding in you in the future if you become agitated.
- Do not talk negatively about the abuser in front of the child. Remember that child victims of abuse may be very loyal to their abusers, especially if the abuser is a parent. Despite the pain they may feel as a result of the abuse, many children still love their parents and want to be loved and wanted by them.

Be a Positive Role Model

- Provide a lot of positive feedback and reinforcement to help build the child's self-esteem. As often as possible, tell the child how he or she positively contributes to your life, the child's family and the world. Talk about the child's potential and what he or she has to offer, and sincerely tell the child that he or she is good, smart and kind.
- Help the child learn conflict resolution skills by teaching or modeling them. Children who have been abused or neglected may be unfamiliar with non-violent ways of dealing with conflict.
- When a child acts in ways that seem strange, remember to look for the feelings behind the actions. Children may try to protect themselves from their negative feelings by pretending those feelings do not exist. Also, they may seek your attention through negative behaviors because they do not know how to gain your attention using positive ones. Look for opportunities to encourage and reinforce positive behavior.

Promote Positive Interaction

- Do not pity, overly-focus attention on or treat children who have experienced abuse or neglect differently from others with whom you are involved. Children who have been the victims of abuse or neglect want to be seen as "normal" and feel like other children.
- Foster the child's relationships with peers by encouraging extracurricular and school-related activities.
- Help build the child's confidence. Allow children to have possessions of their own (e.g., desk or work space, books, backpack, toys) and give them resources and opportunities to be successful at taking care of their responsibilities. All these acts can reinforce a child's resiliency and sense of well-being. Keep in mind, however, that these acts do not replace informing CPS if you suspect a child is being abused or neglected. Your first responsibility as a trusted adult is to make a report of your concern to CPS if you feel a child's safety is at risk.



ALBANY CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

Child Abuse Training

Section 4

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ALBANY CHRISTIAN SCHOOL
420 Third Ave, Albany OR 97321



Protecting children from abuse and neglect is a community responsibility. Most adults want to help children and their families, but are unsure how to get involved. Often, it can be as simple as helping out a neighbor who needs a break by watching his or her child for a few hours. At other times, you may have more serious worries or suspicions that a child may have already been harmed or neglected. Figuring out next steps can be a difficult and confusing process. What is most important is to not let discomfort and confusion interfere with helping children be safe, even if you must reach out to others for professional help.

In most states, professionals who work with children in any capacity are identified as “mandated reporters” and are required by law to report suspected child abuse or neglect. Approximately 18 states define mandated reporters more broadly to include any citizen who suspects that a child is being abused or neglected.

No matter your state laws, learning the appropriate ways to respond to suspected maltreatment and becoming an informed and involved community member are important first steps toward protecting children. Remember, it is the responsibility of all individuals and community members — not just mandated reporters — to respond to the suspected maltreatment of any child. Trust your instincts. Just as we all know to call 911 in a medical emergency, we need to have an action plan for times when we suspect children are being abused or neglected.

Why Don't Some People Report Child Abuse and Neglect?

Among the most frequently identified reasons for not reporting are lack of knowledge about child abuse and neglect and lack of familiarity with state reporting laws. Other reasons people don't report include:

- Choosing instead to effectively intervene independent of the formal system.
- Fear or unwillingness to get involved.
- Fear that a report will make matters worse.
- Reluctance to risk angering the family.
- Concern that making a report will negatively impact an existing relationship with the child or others.
- Belief that someone else will speak up and do something.

Although these feelings are understandable and it can be frightening to respond to suspected child abuse and neglect, the consequences of *not* reporting your worries to child welfare professionals could be seriously detrimental to a child's safety. In some cases, they might even be life threatening. So don't be afraid to call and ask for help. Your call will help child welfare professionals determine the most appropriate response, including whether or not an assessment or investigation of the situation is needed and what further supports may be beneficial or necessary. A trained set of eyes on the situation may be the best response when other efforts have failed or the seriousness of a situation requires it. It is not your responsibility to investigate, it is your responsibility to be involved and contact appropriate professionals when you have heightened concerns. The safety of a child is at stake.

What Can You Do If You Believe a Child Is Being Abused or Neglected?

An excellent way to help improve a situation for a child and create connections within your community is to **become comfortable involving yourself in the lives of others**. Whether it is helping to alleviate stressful situations you see in public places, such as helping a parent with a small child get through the checkout line at the grocery store, or offering to listen to an acquaintance who seems aggravated with his or her children, your support in even the smallest ways can make a huge difference in preventing possible harm to children.

Report your suspicions to your local child abuse or child protection hotline. Again, everyone has the right and responsibility to report any incidence of suspected child abuse or neglect at any time. You do not need to have “evidence” or actual knowledge of abuse when you make a report; all you need is **reasonable cause, suspicion or belief based on your observations**. Information to support your concern may include your firsthand observations or beliefs, your professional training or experience, or statements made to you by the child or parent. The more specific and concrete information you can provide, the better.



It is also important for you to know that all states have laws that protect reporters from legal liability as long as reports are made in good faith.

Whom Do You Call? Then What Happens?

To report suspected abuse or neglect, contact your local child welfare agency. Depending on where you live, this agency might be called Department of Social Services, Children and Family Services or Human Welfare. The contact number for your local child welfare agency can be found online at <http://www.childwelfare.gov/> If you feel that the child is in an emergency situation, however, call 911 or your local law enforcement agency immediately.

The person who responds to your call will ask you several questions in order to provide the assessment or investigative team with sufficient information. Keep in mind that you do not need to know all the answers to make a report; you just need to be as comprehensive, specific and clear as possible with what you do know. Questions you may be asked include:

- What is your relationship to the child?
- What is the child's name, age and address? (If you don't know the answers to this question, you can provide descriptive information that will enable investigators to locate the child.)
- What is the suspected abuser's name, relationship to the child and address or license plate number?
- What are the names, address(es) and telephone number(s) of the child's parents?
- Can you describe the type of abuse you suspect, when it occurred and/or your reasons for suspecting abuse?
- What is the current location of the child?
- What is your assessment of the child's current level of safety?
- What can you tell us about the child's siblings and any related safety concerns?
- What are the names, addresses and telephone numbers of other witnesses?
- Are you aware of any previous situations of abuse or neglect and/or the family's involvement with the child welfare system?

Although anonymous reports can be made in every state, child welfare agencies generally discourage anonymity for many reasons. First, knowing the identity of the reporter can help the child welfare worker gather information during the investigative process to ensure the child's safety. Second, if the case goes to trial, the child welfare worker may need to rely on the reporter to be a crucial evidentiary witness.

Unfortunately, many child welfare agencies are severely underfunded and understaffed. Typically, reports of child abuse and neglect are prioritized based on whether the child is in immediate risk or danger. Be patient. You may have to call more than once. If you do, make sure you let the agency know that it is not your first time making a report on the family in question.

Who Investigates Complaints of Child Abuse and Neglect?

The state or county agency that provides child protective services has the legal authority and obligation to assess, investigate and evaluate reports of child abuse and neglect and to provide services when needed. During the early investigation stage, child welfare workers are responsible for determining:

- Whether abuse or neglect has likely occurred;
- Whether there is immediate danger or risk to the child;
- What the motivation, capacity and intent of the alleged perpetrator is; and
- What the ability of a non-offending caregiver is to protect the child in the immediate future.

If the child is in immediate danger, the child welfare worker may place him or her under emergency protective services, which may include in-home support and supervision or the temporary removal of the child to a safe alternative environment (e.g., with other family members or in foster care). If the child is removed from the home under these circumstances, the court and family must be notified and an emergency/temporary custody review hearing must be held, typically within 48 to 72 hours.

If the child welfare worker determines that there are safety concerns -- yet it is safe to leave the child in the home -- the worker is responsible for creating a plan to keep the child safe in that environment and for organizing or providing any needed support for the child and the family. Support may come from a variety of sources, including extended family, local community organizations and child protective services.



Reporting Abuse or Neglect

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What Happens to the Child and Family If a Report Is Substantiated?

After a more comprehensive assessment, the child welfare worker must determine whether abuse or neglect occurred. If the allegations of abuse or neglect are substantiated, the child protection agency and/or courts will evaluate the case and determine what level of intervention is necessary. Interventions are dependent on the severity of the circumstances and may include voluntary assistance and services, court-ordered supervision and services, out-of-home placement and -- as a last and complicated intervention -- termination of parental rights.

If a court orders the child to be removed from the home and placed under the supervision of the child welfare agency, two important federal laws come to bear. Both the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 (P. L. 105-89) and the Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980 (P. L. 96-272) legally mandate child welfare workers to make "reasonable efforts" to reunite the family whenever possible and establish timeframes for achieving this goal or another permanency solution. If, after a thorough investigation, it is determined that the child is in need of substitute care, the child may go to live with other relatives ("kinship care") or in an alternate care arrangement (e.g., foster care). The child would remain in this placement arrangement until it is determined that the child is no longer in danger in the home or until services can be provided for the child and family to ensure the child's safety.

In some cases, it is necessary for law enforcement to file criminal child abuse charges, depending on the nature and severity of the abuse or neglect. The range of legal penalties for child maltreatment varies from therapy for the perpetrator to incarceration.

Will You Be Able to Find Out What Happens to the Child?

One difficult conflict arises with the reporter's desire or need to know the outcome of the report, versus the family's right to privacy and confidentiality. Usually, if you are a family friend, neighbor or relative, and not part of the child welfare professional community, you will not receive detailed information about the report.

The child welfare agency may let you know whether the circumstances have been evaluated and whether the case has been opened for further investigation. Many times, however, child welfare agencies are overburdened with high caseloads and too many time demands, and therefore are unable to contact you with information regarding whether the allegations were substantiated. You may request information regarding the status of your report if the agency does not provide it voluntarily.

In some states, professionals who are mandated to report are provided greater detail due to their continued legal obligation, their role in assisting or treating the child and their ability to monitor conditions that might further endanger the child. Thus, most state laws entitle mandated reporters to be informed of the findings of the investigation and the services being provided to protect the child.

What Happens If You Report and the Case Is Unsubstantiated?

While only a small percentage of reports turn out to be deliberately false, some cases become classified as "unsubstantiated," which means there was not sufficient information regarding the allegation or the identity of the family to confirm abuse or neglect based on the state's legal criteria. Some cases are classified as unsubstantiated if no court action was taken and voluntary services were provided to the child. Criteria for substantiation vary among states because there is no uniform national system for case reporting.

Finally, on behalf of children everywhere, thank you for caring!