

# verticalyouth ministries

## Abuse and Harassment Policies and Guidelines

### Types of Abuse

#### **Physical:**

Bruises, welts, burns, scratches, or bite marks, which are often explained away as accidental. Marks will appear in peculiar clusters, such as patterns consistent with teeth or fingernails. Wounds may appear in various stages of healing. There may be reluctance on the part of the child to discuss the "suspected" abuse and tendency will be to hide the marks that are a result of the abuse.

#### **Emotional and Psychological:**

Symptoms are less obvious than those of physical abuse. Symptoms are usually observed in the behavior of the child. The child may seem unusually adult or juvenile, hard to get along with in general, or even unusually submissive. (It is important to note that these behaviors either separately or simultaneously do not always indicate abuse. Some signs may occur as part of the maturation process of the child or the result of a different problem.)

#### **Neglect:**

Child may be emotionally, psychologically or physically developmentally impaired. Medical and dental needs may be unmet. Child may be inappropriately dressed for the weather or activities. The child may have the ongoing condition of being unclean, tired or in trouble at school. Often times the student may be a "loner" may steal or beg.

#### **Sexual:**

Sexual abuse consists of any sexual exploitation of children under the age of 18 by an adult or a person 4 years older than the victim even if the child seems to be consenting. This form of abuse includes fondling, incest, rape, murder, assault, oral stimulation, genital or anal stimulation or non-violent sexual stimulation. Child sexual abuse can be inflicted in ways other than the physical assaults listed above. It can take such forms as witnessing adult sexual relations, indecent exposure, verbal sexual stimulation, peeping toms, exhibitionism, or obscene phone calls. Involving children in pornography or prostitution are also forms of child sexual abuse.

### Guidelines

Any verbal or non-verbal sexual interaction with a child is inappropriate. Appropriate expressions of love and support include touching; however, children must be physically respected.

As much as possible, use the buddy system when working with individual youth. Let another adult know where you are.

One on one interaction should only be male-male and female-female only.

Never take a member of the opposite sex home by yourself.

**Special note:** Keep a log of any unusual events or incidents involving a child that might indicate abuse.

## **Reporting**

Reporting child abuse or even suspected child abuse is the law. You can be held responsible in the future if a victim informs anyone of authority that you were aware of the abuse and did not report it. If you need to report proven or suspected abuse, notify your supervisor immediately. The report must be made within 24 hours after you receive knowledge of the abuse.

**Note:** Never promise a student you will keep a secret if they confide in you.

# Harassment Policy

We are committed to providing a work environment free of unlawful harassment. Company policy prohibits sexual harassment because of race, religious creed, color, national origin or ancestry, physical or mental disability, medical condition, marital status, age, sexual orientation or any other protected basis includes, but not limited to the following behavior:

1. Verbal conduct such as derogatory jokes or comments, slurs or unwanted sexual advances, invitations or gestures;
2. Visual conduct such as derogatory or sexually oriented posters, photography, cartoons, drawings or gestures;
3. Physical conduct such as assault, unwanted touching, blocking normal movement or interfering with work because of sex, race, or any other protected basis;
4. Threats and demands to submit to sexual requests as a condition of continued employment, or to avoid some other loss, and offers of employment benefits in return for sexual favors;
5. Retaliation for having reported or threatened to report harassment.

If you believe you have been unlawfully harassed, we urge you to report the incident immediately. Follow the procedure so that your complaint can be resolved quickly and fairly:

1. When possible, confront the harasser and persuade him/her to stop.
2. Provide a written complaint to your own supervisor or to any other ministry supervisor or the Executive Director as soon as possible after the incident. Include details of the incident(s), names of individuals involved and the names of any witnesses.
3. Supervisors will refer all harassment complaints to the Executive Director (if not the accused). The company will immediately undertake an effective thorough and objective investigation of the harassment allegations.
4. If the ministry determines that unlawful harassment has occurred, it will take effective remedial action in accordance with the circumstances. Any employee the ministry determines to be responsible for unlawful harassment will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination.
5. Whatever action the ministry takes against the harasser will be made known to the employee lodging the complaint. The ministry will take appropriate action to remedy any loss to you resulting from harassment.
6. The ministry will not retaliate against you for filing a complaint and will not tolerate or permit retaliation by management, employees or co-workers.

**We encourage all staff members to report any incidents of harassment stated by this policy immediately so that complaints can be quickly and fairly resolved. You should be aware that the Federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and the California Department of Fair Employment and Housing investigates and prosecutes complaints of prohibited harassment in employment. If you think you have been harassed or that you have been retaliated against for resisting or complaining, you may file a complaint with the appropriate agency. The nearest office is listed in the telephone book.**