



“Proclaiming Christ in all we say and do.”

## **Children/Youth Mission Statement**

We at Hillcrest Evangelical Free Church believe that working in Children and Youth Ministries is a privilege, honor, and high calling. We are committed to providing excellent top quality programs within a safe and secure environment for every child.

*Matthew 19:13-15 states "Then little children were brought to Jesus for Him to place His hands on them and pray for them. But the disciples rebuked those who brought them. Jesus said, 'Let the little children come to Me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.' When He had placed His hands on them, He went on from there."*

*In Matthew 18:1-6 the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" He called a little child and had him stand among them. And He said. 'I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoever welcomes a little child like this in My name welcomes Me. But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.'"*

The Bible is clear that Jesus values children. He welcomed them and warned those who might want to do harm to them. Our commitment is to teach those who minister to children: how to demonstrate the love of Christ, how to provide a safe environment for them to learn about Christ, and how to avoid the traps that Satan would use to destroy a child's life.

The Children & Youth Ministry of Hillcrest Evangelical Free Church is thankful for the many activities that the Lord has allowed us to provide for our children and the many volunteers that He has raised up to teach them. While we encourage members and nonmembers to visit and observe what we are doing to teach the Bible to the children, we also believe that it is in the best interest of the child and their parents to establish clear procedures for those working in Children and Youth Ministries. Our goal is that every classroom and activity will be a place of safety, warmth, love, and concern for each child who attends.

Unfortunately, in today's world, child abuse and molestation are on the rise, sadly, even affecting some churches. To best ensure the safety of our children and youth; to protect our volunteers and paid staff from false accusation; and to safeguard the reputation of our church and the Christian community, the Hillcrest Staff and Board members have instructed that child abuse prevention and intervention policies and procedures are to be fully implemented by all departments and workers whether paid or volunteer.

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# I.

## What is Abuse?

There are many forms of abuse. They include physical abuse, neglect, mental abuse and sexual abuse.

### A. Physical Abuse

Physical abuse constitutes any physical injury to a child which has been caused by other than accidental means, including any injury which appears to be at variance with the explanation given for the injury. Physical abuse includes reckless or negligent use of drugs during pregnancy which results in the birth of an infant with addictions or impairment. Non-accidental physical injuries may appear as bruises, burns, fractures, bites, cuts, sprains, internal injuries, and auditory, dental, ocular, or brain damage.

### B. Neglect

Neglect is negligent treatment or maltreatment of a child which causes actual harm or substantial risk of harm to a child's health, welfare, and safety. Neglect includes but is not limited to:

Failure to provide adequate supervision such that a child is endangered; an act of exploitation such as requiring a child to be involved in criminal activity; failure to provide life necessities such as food, clothing, shelter, nurturance; abandonment or desertion of a child. "Medical neglect" is the failure to provide necessary medical care, including the withholding of medically indicated treatment from disabled infants with life-threatening conditions. "Emotional neglect" is the failure to provide emotional nurturing, physical and cognitive stimulation needed to prevent serious developmental deficits.

### C. Mental Abuse

Mental abuse is harm to a child's ability to think, reason, or have feelings. A child who has been mentally injured is one who has been the victim of cruel or unconscionable acts or statements or who suffers from a caretaker's failure to provide necessary nurturance or protection.

Mental abuse has a harmful effect on a child which can be observed.

Parental behaviors which can cause mental injury fall into a pattern of emotionally destructive actions usually taking one or more forms: rejecting, terrorizing, ignoring, isolating, or corrupting. Acts of parents which may result in mental injury include, but are not limited to, habitual ridicule, scape-goating, deprivation of food or water, exposure to violence, threats to health or safety, torture, and confinement.

### D. Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse is any incident of sexual contact including, but not limited to, rape, sodomy, incest, and sexual penetration with a foreign object.

Sexual abuse also includes all of those contacts and interactions in which a child is used to sexually stimulate or gratify another person and includes exposing oneself before a child,

exposing the genitals of a child, fondling, and forcing, permitting, or encouraging a child to watch pornography or sexual activities.

Sexual abuse occurs whenever a person (*adult or child*), who occupies a position of power within a relationship due to age, size, experience, authority or deception, initiates or engages in sexual interaction with a child. Threats or bribery are often used to get a child to participate.

Though children are sometimes physically hurt during a sexual assault, the injury may not be apparent. Therefore, special attention should be paid to the behavioral indicators.

Sexual abuse is not always a crime of adults toward children. Approximately 25 percent of the child sexual abuse incidents involve offenses committed by juveniles.

## II. What Are the Indicators of Child Abuse?

***A WORD OF CAUTION: ALWAYS LOOK FOR A CLUSTER OF INDICATORS—ONE OR A FEW IS NOT ENOUGH TO BE "REASONABLE CAUSE" FOR REPORTING SUSPECTED ABUSE.***

### A. Physical Abuse:

#### 1. Possible Physical Indicators:

- a) Bruises and welts on face, lips, mouth, torso, back, buttocks, or thighs in various stages of healing.
- b) Bruises and welts reflecting shape of article used (*electric cord, belt buckle*).
- c) Cigar or cigarette burns, especially on soles, palms, back, or buttocks.
- d) Immersion burns (*sock-like, glove-like, doughnut shaped on buttocks or genitalia*).
- e) Burns patterned—like electric element, iron, or utensil.
- f) Rope burns on arms, legs, neck, or torso.
- g) Lacerations to mouth, lips, gums, eyes, or external genitalia.
- h) Fractures of skull, nose, or facial structure in various stages of healing; multiple or spiral fractures.

#### 2. Possible Behavioral Indicators:

- a) Wary of adult contacts.
- b) Apprehensive when other children cry.
- c) Behavioral extremes such as aggressiveness or withdrawal.
- d) Frightened of parents.
- e) Afraid to go home.

### B. Neglect

#### 1. Possible Physical Indicators:

- a) Consistent hunger, poor hygiene, inappropriate dress.
- b) Consistent lack of supervision.
- c) Unattended physical/emotional problems or medical needs.

#### 2. Possible Behavioral Indicators:

- a) Begging, stealing food.
- b) Extended stays at school (*early arrival and late departure*).
- c) Constant fatigue, listlessness or falling asleep in class.
- d) Alcohol or drug abuse.
- e) Delinquency.
- f) States there is no caretaker.
- g) Shunned by peers.

## What Are the Indicators of Child Abuse?, Cont.

### C. Mental Abuse:

#### 1. Possible Physical Indicators:

- a) Failure to grow.
- b) Speech or sleep disorders.
- c) Forced to dress in "opposite sex" clothing.

#### 2. Possible Behavioral Indicators:

- a) Behavior extremes: aggression/violence to self or others or withdrawal.
- b) Habit disorders (*sucking, biting, rocking*).
- c) Attempted suicide.
- d) Conduct disorders (*antisocial, runaway, firesetting, destructive*).
- e) Emotional neediness.

### D. Sexual Abuse:

#### 1. Infants and Preschoolers:

- a) Being uncomfortable around previously trusted persons.
- b) Sexualized behavior (excessive masturbation, sexually inserting objects, explicit sex play with other children, etc.).
- c) Fear of rest rooms, showers, or baths (common locations of abuse).
- d) Fear of being alone with men or boys.
- e) Nightmares on a regular basis or about the same person.
- f) Abrupt personality changes.
- g) Uncharacteristic hyperactivity.
- h) Moodiness, excessive crying.
- i) Aggressive or violent behavior toward other children.
- j) Difficulty in sleeping or relaxing.
- k) Clinging behavior which may take the form of separation anxiety.
- l) Passive or withdrawn behavior.
- m) Pain, itching or bleeding in genital area.

#### 2. Pre-Adolescent Children:

- a) Being uncomfortable around someone previously trusted.
- b) Specific knowledge of sexual facts and terminology beyond developmental age.
- c) Sexualized behavior (*Excessive masturbation, sexual acting out with other children on a regular basis, seductive toward peers and adults, etc.*).
- d) Wearing multiple layers of clothing, especially to bed.
- e) Parentified behavior (*pseudo-mature, acts like a small parent*).
- f) Fear of being alone with men or boys.
- g) Fear of rest rooms, showers or baths.
- h) Constant, unexplained anxiety, tension, or fear.
- i) Frequent tardiness or absence from school, especially if excuses are always written by the same person.
- j) Attempts to make herself ugly or undesirable (*such as poor personal hygiene*).
- k) Eating disorders (*obesity, bulimia, anorexia*).
- l) Self-conscious behavior, especially regarding body.

- m) Reluctance to go home after school.
- n) Abrupt personality changes
- o) Child acquires toys or money with no explanation.
- p) Wetting of bed or clothing after being "*broken*" of that problem.
- q) Nightmares on a regular basis or about the same person.
- r) Change in sleeping habits (*tries to stay up late or seems constantly tired*).
- s) Moodiness, inappropriate crying.
- t) Unusual need for assurance of love.
- u) Regressive behavior (*fantasies and/or infantile behavior*).
- v) Uncharacteristic aggressive or violent behavior.
- w) Tendency to seek out or totally avoid adults.
- x) Inability to relate to peers.
- y) Running away, especially in a child normally not a behavioral problem.

### 3. Adolescents:

- a) Sexualized behavior (*promiscuity, prostitution, sexual abuse of younger children, etc.*).
- b) Running away, especially in a child normally not a behavioral problem.
- c) Drug and alcohol abuse.
- d) Suicidal gestures or attempts.
- e) Self-mutilation.
- f) Extreme hostility toward a parent or caretaker.
- g) Parentified behavior (*pseudo-mature, acts like a small parent*).
- h) Self-conscious behavior, especially regarding body.
- i) Wearing multiple layers of clothing, especially to bed.
- j) Eating disorders (*usually obesity*).
- k) Nightmares or other sleeping problems.
- l) Constant fear or anxiety.
- m) Delinquent behavior.
- n) School problems (*academic or behavioral*).
- o) Defiance or compliance to an extreme.
- p) Friends tend to be older.

### 4.) Family Indicators of Child Sexual Abuse:\*

- a) Role reversal between mother and daughter.
- b) Extreme over-protectiveness or jealousy toward a child by a parent (parent sharply restricts a child's contact with peers and adults outside the home).
- c) Inappropriate sleeping arrangements (*child sleeps with a parent on a regular basis or with both parents where she is exposed to sexual activity*).
- d) Prolonged absence of one parent from the home (*through death, divorce, etc.*).
- e) Mother who is often ill or is disabled.
- f) Extreme lack of communication between caretakers.
- g) Inordinate participation of father in family (*father may interact very little with family members or may insist on being in charge of all family activities*).
- h) Extreme paternal dominance of spouse (*for instance, mother is not allowed to drive or talk to school personnel, etc.*).
- i) Work or activity schedules which result in a caretaker (*especially male*) spending large amounts of time alone with a child or children.
- j) Extreme favoritism shown to a child (*father may spend a lot of time and attention on*

- one daughter/son.)*
- k) Severe overreaction by a parent to any sex education offered a child.
  - l) Caretaker who has been sexually abused as a child.
  - m) Geographic isolation of family.
  - n) Overcrowding in a home.
  - o) Family has no social or personal support systems.
  - p) Alcohol or drug abuse within a family.

\*A BETRAYAL OF INNOCENCE by David B. Peters, Word, Inc., 1986.

### III.

## What Does the Law Say Regarding Reporting Abuse?

### A. Who must report?

According to NE Statutes: s. 28-710 to 28-727 "Abused or Neglected Children and Abused Unborn Children" Includes "Persons Required to Report", "Any public or private official having reasonable cause to believe that any child with whom the official comes in contact has suffered abuse, or that any person with whom the official comes in contact has abused a child shall report or cause a report to be made..." (See Addendum pg. 21)

These public or private officials include but are not limited to:

- Physician-
- School employee
- Police officer
- Psychologist\*
- Clergyman\*
- Day care provider
- Attorney\*
- Licensed professional counselor

\*A psychiatrist, psychologist, clergyman or attorney shall not be required to report information communicated to him/her by a person if the communication is privileged under NE Statutes: s. 28-710 to 28-727 "Abused or Neglected Children and Abused Unborn Children" Includes "Persons Required To Report". (See Addendum pg. 21)

Reporting should be considered a request for an assessment of a suspected incident of abuse. A report is not an already established fact, but rather the request for assessment into the condition of a child. It is not up to the individual or our church to investigate to determine if abuse has occurred. It is the beginning of a helping process for children and families. All Nebraskan citizens are encouraged to report suspected cases to Child Protective Services (800-652-1999) and/or law enforcement (Seward Police, 402-643-2579) (Seward County Sherriff, 402-643-4578).

### B. Will my report be confidential?

The reporter's identity will remain confidential to the full extent allowable by law. If court action is initiated, the reporting person may be called as a witness or the court may order that the reporter's name be disclosed. Only people with first hand knowledge of the child's situation can provide testimony proving that abuse has occurred.

### C. Can I be sued if I report the abuse?

NE Statutes: s. 28-710 to 28-727 "Abused or Neglected Children and Abused Unborn Children" provides that anyone participating in good faith in the making of a report of child abuse and who has reasonable ground for making the report, shall have immunity from any liability, civil or criminal, that might otherwise be incurred or imposed with respect to the making or content of such report. Any such participant shall have the same immunity with respect to participating in any judicial proceeding resulting from such report." (See Addendum pg. 21)

## IV.

### What Do I Do In The Case of Reported or Suspected Child Abuse?

#### A. What To Do When A Child Reports His/Her Victimization To Me

1. Believe the child. Although children can lie about this, you should treat the information as legitimate.
2. Do not question the child. Leave this to the professionals.
3. Assure the child that what has happened is not his/her fault, and that you are glad he/she told you. Be supportive and reassuring.
4. Tell the child you are sorry he/she is hurt and scared and that you will try to protect him/her from further abuse.
5. Report abuse to Director of Children's Ministries, Youth Minister, or other minister as appropriate. For reporting procedures, refer to [C. Reporting Procedures], below.

#### B. What To Do When I Suspect Child Abuse

1. Refer back to pages 3-8, "Definitions of Abuse and Indicators of Abuse". Ask yourself the Question(s): "Are there a '**cluster**' of indicators evident in the child?" and "Is there '**reasonable cause**', based on the indicators and the behavior of the child, to suspect child abuse?"
2. Do not question the child about your suspicions.
3. If you are convinced there is "reasonable cause", report your suspicions to the Director of Children's Ministries, Youth Minister, or other minister as appropriate. For reporting procedures refer to [C. Reporting Procedures] below.

#### C. Reporting Procedures

1. Immediately notify Someone in your chain of command, Christian Education Director, Youth Pastor, Ministry Leader or other leader as appropriate.
2. The reporter completes a written "Suspected Incident of Child Abuse" form (page 23) with the help of the Christian Education Director, Ministry Leader or other leader as appropriate.
3. The minister or Director of Children's Ministries contacted with the report of abuse or suspected abuse will place a call to Child Protective Services and a law enforcement agency so that the person reporting the abuse or suspected abuse can make the oral report to the authorities.

According to Nebraska State law the person making a report of abuse or suspected child abuse will make an oral report by telephone to the local office of the Child Protective Services (800-652-1999). If the offender is a caregiver or family member, call Child Protective Services first. If the child appears to have been injured sexually or physically or you suspect the child is in a dangerous situation, call the local law enforcement responsible for the area where the suspected abuse occurred.

4. The minister or director of the given children's/youth ministry contacted with the report of abuse or suspected abuse will contact the necessary legal agencies. (ie: the police, insurance, attorney)

#### **D. Responsibility to the Child after Abuse Has Been Established**

1. **Continue to support** the child. Never question the child about why he/she did not tell sooner nor make any statements that might imply guilt.
2. **Reassure the child** that what happened was not his/her fault and does not make him/her a bad person.
3. **Do not encourage** the child to forget about the abuse.
4. **Allow the child to talk** about what happened any time he/she desires to do so. When you respond, remember to be calm and matter-of-fact. **Do not ask questions.**
5. **Do not be surprised or upset** by expressions of anger or love toward the offender. Depending on the relationship of the offender to the victim, the child may still love the offender even though he/she is very angry about what that person did.
6. **Protect the child's privacy by not divulging the incident of child abuse** to anyone after the proper people have been notified.

**NOTE:** Our greatest concern is the safety of our children at Hillcrest Evangelical Free Church. A secondary purpose is to protect the church, its reputation and resources.

It is important to know that many allegations are not presented until years after an incident. Families usually pursue court judgments only after approaching the church or organizations and receiving no acknowledgment or validation of their trauma. It is often alienation that drives them to the courtroom. Be sure to be sensitive and show the same concern for, and attention to, a report of misconduct that happened several years ago, as you would for a recent event.

**Hillcrest Evangelical Free Church  
Children's/Youth Ministry**

**Suspected Incident of Child Abuse**

**Report Form**

Name of the child/youth \_\_\_\_\_ DOB \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name of parent/guardian \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Alleged Suspects Name/Address/Phone/Identifying Information \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Location of the suspected abuse (county/city) \_\_\_\_\_

Are there other children in the home who could be at risk?  
If yes, names and ages \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Nature of the suspected abuse:

- Physical     Sexual     Mental     Neglect

Narrative description of the suspected abuse  
(Please include facts and course of events as necessary)  
(Use the back of this page if needed)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of filer

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date/Time

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of receiver

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date/Time

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Contact on CPS Hotline

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date/Time

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Law Enforcement Contact

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date/Time

**V.**

## What Can the Church Do To Prevent Child Abuse?

### A. Preventive measures through screening potential workers.

1. In order to safeguard our children and our youth, to protect the reputation of our church and the Christian community, we are committed to screening all potential workers and employees at Hillcrest Evangelical Free Church. Potential workers and employees must apply in writing to work with children or youth. Forms are available through the church office or the staff persons directly responsible for Children's and Youth ministries.
2. All applications must be approved in writing and/or direct permission by the church Staff, Children's Education Director, or ministry leader i.e., Nursery coordinator, AWANA Commander, before they may participate as a worker in any capacity at any function involving minors. All persons under the age of 18 working with children and youth of Hillcrest Church must also be interviewed and approved by staff and/or ministry leaders as well.
3. All volunteer applicants seeking to work with children or youth must be approved and agree to serve under the authority of Hillcrest Evangelical Free Church.

(This may seem like an unnecessary encumbrance to our ministry, especially when experienced workers transfer to our church and could go through the screening process and begin immediately. However, experts say this may be one of the most effective ways of protecting our children. With this rule in place, potential offenders often will not wait that long to gain access to children or youth. They often move to another church where workers are needed and volunteers are given immediate and often unsupervised access.)

4. All Applications for Children's Work and any references are maintained in a confidential file and locked in a cabinet at the church by the designated church staff member. There will be strict control on who is able to review these files. The application can be reviewed by the applicant if they so choose to.
5. All new workers will be given a copy of this policy, which they must read and sign.
6. A criminal background check will be performed through a state law enforcement agency with respect to any candidate seeking to work with children or youth.

## **B. Preventive Measures through policies, procedures, and training of workers**

### **1. Appropriate Touching:**

We at Hillcrest Evangelical Free Church believe it is imperative to set guidelines for policies and procedures in dealing with the many activities available for children and youth. We want to be as specific as possible in what is appropriate or inappropriate behavior in dealing with children and youth. However, **in setting these standards we do not want to diminish the value and importance of touching the children and youth in our care. We want to be careful that our conduct is appropriate for the age group we work with.**

The following are guidelines in working with children/youth:

- a. For the sake of propriety and to avoid any possible unnecessary suspicion, we ask that all workers refrain from kissing any child.
- b. Appropriate touching is very important. Babies need to be held, youngsters need to be comforted and teens need affirmation. Each requires touching. But what is appropriate for one age group is not always appropriate for another.
  - 1) **Infants** need to be patted, held and hugged.
  - 2) **Toddlers and Pre-schoolers** also need to be hugged or held from time to time.
  - 3) **School-age children and teens** need a caring affirming touch from an adult. However, care should be taken with this age group to avoid any contact that could be misinterpreted. In general, touching should be limited to handshakes, a pat on the arm, or shoulder or a quick "side-to-side" hug. Children of this age should not be held on a lap or knee and should rarely be drawn to the chest in a hug or embrace, Before hugging a child/youth mutual permission should be given (ie) "*You look like you could use a hug. May I give you one?*" Any touch with a youth would be in respect to an established appropriate relationship with that youth by the worker.

Children of all ages do need to be touched. But that is not our primary purpose in the short time period they are in our care and we must be careful not to present any situation that might allow, or appear to allow, any inappropriate actions.

### **2. Classroom Procedures:**

**A. The general rule in working with children/youth is the two-adult standard. (Two adults or youth 18 years of age.)**

If at all possible, in every classroom of children, nursery through high school two adult workers should be present at all times; this safeguards against child abuse and false accusations of workers by children/youth. It also enhances team teaching and helps in case of emergencies. No worker should be alone with a child/youth in a classroom. However, situations may arise where these standards cannot be met. Such exceptions should only be permitted on an emergency basis. In such cases the adult in charge will use the best judgment in dealing with the situation. For example: When a worker is alone with a child/children and there are no windows in the room giving visibility in the hallway, the worker should have the door open. SEE ADDENDUM LAST PAGE.

### **B. Premises Monitoring.**

Classrooms will be monitored when there is any scheduled activity.

### 3. **Dismissal Procedures:**

**General guidelines:** Children (nursery - Kindergarten) should be dismissed to their own parents. If the person picking up the child is unknown to the worker responsible for dismissal, the worker should ask the person for identification. This can be done by a driver's license or verification by another worker or by a child identifying the adult.

- a. **Nursery:** Dismissal is to be done according to the nursery policy.
- b. **Two Year Olds Through Kindergarten:** Dismissal is to be done according to the nursery policy.
- c. **First through Second Grade:** Dismissed to parents.
- d. **Third, Through Sixth Grades:** These children can be dismissed on their own. **This is a privilege, not a right and can be revoked at any time by a parent or teacher.** Parents are encouraged to designate a place where they will meet their child.

### 4. **Restroom Procedures:**

- a. **Two Years Through Kindergarten:**  
There are restrooms in the classroom, where the child can go to on their own. A teacher will assist the child if there is a need, but with the door open, avoiding being alone with the child.
- b. **First Through Sixth Grade:**  
Children first through sixth grade should be encouraged to use the restroom before coming into the classroom. However, if one or more children need to use the restroom during class time, two of the same gender shall go together without the assistance of an adult.

### 5. **Transportation Procedures:**

These are the general policies that should be followed. Use your best judgment:

- a. Parental permission is required whenever children are being transported in church-approved vehicles. Written permission is preferable.
- b. All workers should never transport a child to church sponsored activities without another adult present. If it is unavoidable, every effort should be made to gain parental permission. That permission should be documented in writing. Such situations/exceptions should be rare and should not be allowed to reoccur.
- c. All drivers to church sponsored activities for children and youth must be approved by the Director of Children's Ministries, or Director of Youth Ministries.
- d. For Church events, we prefer that parents deliver and pick up their children. Any carpools organized by the parents are the parents' responsibility, not the churches.

- 6. Retreats, Trips and Overnight Activities:**
- a. In order to insure proper supervision, all overnight activities and retreats must be approved in advance by the Director of Children's Ministries, or Director of Youth Ministries. A signed permission slip should be secured from each child/youth attending.
  - b. Anyone who has an official role as volunteer staff in children/youth ministries is considered "*on duty*" at any church event and should conduct themselves accordingly. (Any contacts with children/youth apart from church sponsored events or activities must be considered personal and the church will be released and held harmless from any responsibility, penalty or claims for any action by such parties.)
  - c. At overnight retreats, one or two adults should be assigned to every sleeping area depending on ratio of children/youth to adults. Anyone under 18 must not be considered a supervisor or adult chaperon.
  - d. Children/youth workers should not counsel minors in a bedroom or sleeping area or other secluded rooms. A worker may get out of "*ear shot*" for personal discussion, but not get out of sight of others—stay in public places.

## VI. What Is Our Response to the Offender?

- A. **Once accused, the alleged offender must immediately step down from any leadership position or any other duties that would put the accused person in contact with children/youth.** This would include being a sole performer or member of a group performing or making presentations. This step is to be taken once charges have been made. If charges do not lead to conviction, review will be made to determine if appropriate to return to leadership.
- B. **If the accused is found to be guilty, the offender must fully comply with the legal process and all restrictions and requirements placed upon them by the legal system.** Any violation of these legal conditions will be considered a violation of the church's restoration efforts. Offender must provide a copy of any judgments, conditions of parole, or other documents listing restrictions or requirements as a result of conviction.
- C. **The convicted offender must enter into a counseling program and complete that program to the satisfaction of the counselor.** We strongly suggest that the offender commit to a continual professional counseling program for life.
- D. **The convicted offender will be placed under the oversight of a pastor or elder to monitor progress.** Offender will report to pastor/elder at least monthly. Pastor/Elder will interpret and enforce guidelines.
- E. **The convicted offender will be required to write an acknowledgment and apology for the pain caused, directly or indirectly, to the victim, victim's family, and offender's own family.**
- F. **The convicted offender may participate in the fellowship of Hillcrest Evangelical Free Church in the worship services and in a Sunday school class. Offender must receive authorization from overseeing pastor/elder to participate in any other church function. Offender must enter church facilities in the most direct route from the parking lot.**
- G. **The convicted offender will be advised that should he/she desire to relocate his/her membership to another congregation or begin attending another church during the period of their sentence, parole, probation or treatment, Hillcrest Evangelical Free Church will, in response to our Christian, ethical, and moral duty, seek to inform the leadership of the other congregation of the factual conditions of the offender's situation.**
- H. **The convicted offender will be assured that it is the desire of the leadership of Hillcrest Evangelical Free Church, if there is evidence of a repentant heart on the part of the offender, to love, support and encourage the offender as he/she goes through this difficult and healing time in their life.** It is hoped that by the offender accepting the responsibility and consequences of his/her behavior, receiving professional treatment and receiving the renewal and healing of God in his/her life, one day he/she will be restored to full fellowship at **Hillcrest Evangelical Free Church**. However, this will not include working with children/youth.

## Our Response to Serving the Victim(s) and Families

- A. **The victim(s) and their family members will be cared for by the pastors and elders of Hillcrest**

**Evangelical Free Church. The leadership will seek to provide counseling support and restoration for the victim(s) and their family members as needed. Hillcrest Evangelical Free Church will do whatever possible to minister effectively to the victim(s) and their families as they weather through the difficulties that arise.**

Our Goal is to bring all parties involved to full restoration with all the care and concern possible. In the case of an unfortunate event where abuse is involved, we want victims of such offenses to know that we are here to counsel, heal, restore and resolve every aspect with the greatest of love and counsel. Our hope is that Hillcrest is a place of safety and uttermost care to everyone who would walk through our doors.

## VII. Summary and Signature

The Church Staff and Director of Children's Education has been given the authority and the responsibility by the Board of Elders at Hillcrest Evangelical Free Church to oversee the training, implementation, and supervision of the policies and procedures pertaining to Child Abuse Prevention and Intervention within Children and Youth Ministries.

Any accusations will be taken seriously, will be investigated thoroughly, and will be reported to legal authorities as required. Should an employee or volunteer be accused of sexual misconduct, they must comply with the investigations and step down from ministry with children or youth immediately.

We ask that all paid and volunteer staff work together for the safety of our children. All workers should be knowledgeable of possible symptoms of abuse and share concerns of any child's behavior with the children's or youth ministry leader. If you observe any inappropriate conduct or relationships between any worker and a member of the youth group or a child, please notify the children's or youth director, or an elder so an investigation can be carried out. Questionable or inappropriate behavior often precedes acts of child molestation. You are encouraged to warn each other when questionable behavior is displayed.

Finally — it is so obvious that it seems ludicrous if not inappropriate to say it, and yet so important that it cannot go unsaid: A worker must not, under any circumstance, at any time, make any comments of a sexual nature or behave in any inappropriate sexual manner.

These policies may seem extreme for a church. Unfortunately many churches that relied solely on blind-trust and relationships have suffered tremendous, lasting trauma to one or more of their children, or to adults when falsely accused. There is also the risk of public humiliation, media scrutiny, or attack, and civil judgments of millions of dollars.

Our purpose is not to develop a cold, sterile environment but to provide a safe environment where the ministries and activities of our children and youth can continue unimpeded to the glory of God.

Will you join us in safely ministering to our children and youth?

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I agree with the need to provide a safe haven for children of all ages when involved in ministries and activities of Hillcrest Evangelical Free Church. I have received and read all the Hillcrest Church procedures. I understand and agree to comply with these guidelines.

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

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

## **APPENDIX I**

### **Child Sexual Abuse Knowledge Inventory\***

*Please indicate whether the following statements are true or false.*

1. Child sexual abuse always involves physical contact with children.
2. Most child molesters are male.
3. Child molesters are usually strangers.
4. Victims of sexual abuse suffer no long term effects.
5. 1 out of 5 molesters begin their activity before age 18.
6. Only a small percentage of victims are male.
7. Most churches screen workers for potential molesters.
8. Church leaders can not be held liable for child sexual abuse.
9. Some child sexual abuse victims have won settlements of over \$1,000,000 from churches.
10. A child molester who has experiences a religious conversion no longer presents a threat to children.
11. Child sexual abuse is a criminal offense in all 50 states.
12. A child molester may have over 500 victims in a lifetime.
13. Churches have in the past been supportive of victims of child sexual abuse.

Correct answers:

- |      |       |       |
|------|-------|-------|
| 1. F | 6. F  | 11. T |
| 2. T | 7. F  | 12. T |
| 3. F | 8. F  | 13. F |
| 4. F | 9. T  |       |
| 5. T | 10. F |       |

\*Byron Kehler, Agape Youth & Family Ministries

## **APPENDIX II**

# **How To Respond To Your Child**

### How To Prevent A Child From Being Molested (Or Worse)

#### **TEACH YOUR CHILDREN:**

1. No one has the right to touch the private parts of their body or make them feel uncomfortable. **THEY HAVE THE RIGHT TO SAY NO!**
2. To tell you if anyone asks to or has taken their picture.
3. Adults don't come to children for help. Adults ask adults for help.
4. Never go near a car with someone in it. Never get in a car without your permission.
5. To make you aware of any unusual discussions or strange requests.
6. Tell you when any adult asks them to keep a "secret".
7. Tell you of gifts and money given to them.
8. Never to go into someone's home without your knowledge.
9. When away from home, scared or uncomfortable, they have the right to use the phone without anyone's permission.
10. Tell you of any situation where a statement or gesture is made about sex or love.
11. Never to answer the door when alone.
12. Never admit to anyone over the phone that they are home alone.
13. That you will always believe them about molestation and will protect them from further harm. (PARENTS: Children seldom lie about molestation.)

#### **Parents:**

1. Question any money or gifts your child brings home.
2. Ask your child who he is spending time with and of the activities they engage in.
3. Find out who their best friend is and why.
4. Be watchful of any strong bond that seems to develop between your child and an adult figure in their life. (Including friends, teachers, coaches, clergymen, etc.)
5. Avoid male babysitters as a rule.
6. Maintain constant and regular phone contact with your child whenever one of you is away from home.
7. Never leave your child unattended, day or night.
8. Never leave your child alone in a car. **IT ONLY TAKES A MINUTE.**
9. Be involved in any sports or activities your child has.
10. Beware of coaches or leaders who don't have a child of their own in the same group.
11. Listen when your child tells you they don't want to be/go with someone. **THERE MAY BE A REASON WHY.**
12. Never make your child submit to physical contact (i.e., hugs & kisses, etc) if they don't want to. **THEY HAVE THE RIGHT TO SAY NO.**
13. No one should want to be with your child more than you. When someone is showing your child too much attention, **ASK YOURSELF WHY.**
14. Be sensitive to any changes in your child's behavior or attitudes. Encourage an open communication with your child. Never belittle any fear or concern your child may express to you. Never compromise any private or confidential matter your child may share with you.

## ADDENDUM

The following is an addendum to the original policy to be inserted on page 11 Section A under the heading Classroom procedures.

- A. Perfect situation: Two adults in every room when working with children. These adults need to have gone through the policy and background checks.
- B. Not so perfect situation but the best that can be done: One adult (having gone through the policy and background check) and one minor as a helper (minor being 16 or older). Consideration of the minor's capabilities and maturity level must be taken before being allowed to work as a co-adult.
- C. Less than "not so perfect" but workable: One adult (having gone through the policy and background check) and one helper 11-17 if they have had the baby sitting training offered possibly through the local school and CPR training.

If you have only one adult in a class room with one helper being a minor there are 4 things to keep in mind.

1. Unannounced random checks for observation by someone from the department.
2. The minor (age 11-17) who is a helper is never left with the class alone. They may however, take one child to the restroom.
3. Windows on all class rooms.
4. Just because they may be 11 or above, consideration must be taken as to the minors capabilities and maturity level before being allowed to help.
5. Keep bathroom door open and wait for child at door to bathroom if at all possible. Some children will need help, when this happens keep the main door to the bathroom open.

All Departments should strive to be at the "Perfect" level. The "Less than 'not so perfect'" should be avoided if at all possible for obvious reasons.

Minors who are still in school do not need to go through the "child protection policy."

### **28-711. Child subjected to abuse or neglect; report; contents; toll-free number.**

(1) When any physician, any medical institution, any nurse, any school employee, any social worker, the Inspector General appointed under section [43-4317](#), or any other person has reasonable cause to believe that a child has been subjected to child abuse or neglect or observes such child being subjected to conditions or circumstances which reasonably would result in child abuse or neglect, he or she shall report such incident or cause a report of child abuse or neglect to be made to the proper law enforcement agency or to the department on the toll-free number established by subsection (2) of this section. Such report may be made orally by telephone with the caller giving his or her name and address, shall be followed by a written report, and to the extent available shall contain the address and age of the abused or neglected child, the address of the person or persons having custody of the abused or neglected child, the nature and extent of the child abuse or neglect or the conditions and circumstances which would reasonably result in such child abuse or neglect, any evidence of previous child abuse or neglect including the nature and extent, and any other information which in the opinion of the person may be helpful in establishing the cause of such child abuse or neglect and the identity of the perpetrator or perpetrators. Law enforcement agencies receiving any reports of child abuse or neglect under this subsection shall notify the department pursuant to section [28-718](#) on the next working day by telephone or mail.

(2) The department shall establish a statewide toll-free number to be used by any person any hour of the day or night, any day of the week, to make reports of child abuse or neglect. Reports of child abuse or neglect not previously made to or by a law enforcement agency shall be made immediately to such agency by the department.