

# Mandated Reporter Training Guide



## Mandated Reporters

### Who is a mandated reporter?

- A person who holds a license or is certified to practice in any health-related field in the state of PA.
- School employees
- An individual paid or unpaid, who is that part of a regularly scheduled program, activity or service, accepts responsibility for a child.
- Employees of a social services agency
- An employee of a public library
- Those who are supervised by mandated reporters
- An independent contractor who provides a service to an agency, institution, or organization that is responsible for the care, supervision, guidance, or rehabilitation of children.
- An attorney affiliated with an agency, institution, or organization that is responsible for the care, supervision, guidance, or rehabilitation of children.
- **Those who have direct contact with children.**

### Who reports abuse?

- **You do. As a court mandated reporter YOU report the abuse.**
- Telling a supervisor is not enough with new laws.
- You must report the abuse/suspected – you are responsible to follow the law.
- Why? There have been several high profile cases in the state of PA where abuse was reported to a supervisor and the supervisor failed to take action.
- By you reporting abuse/suspected abuse, this ensures action has been taken.

### When to report:

- **When there is reasonable suspicion – you do not need to be 100% sure if there is abuse, only serious suspicion.**
- The new laws require the **person who suspects abuse** to make the call, not go through a chain of command, supervisors or “point person”.
- You make the call and report the situation to the supervisor.

- You can report third party information if you have a reasonable suspicion.
- Age Limits: once a child turns 18 they are considered an adult. If abuse occurs 18 and over you are no longer required to report. However if the incident occurred prior to age 18 and the child is not 18-20, **you are required to report.**
- **When reporting abuse or suspected abuse call: ChildLine 800-932-0313**
- **How to Report:**
  - Call ChildLine: 800-932-0313
  - What they will ask:
    - Are you a mandated reporter?
    - Your contact information
    - Your statements
    - Information on how to locate the child
  - Wording is important
  - Give as many facts as possible
  - Reduce opinions and keep to the facts
  - Do not taint the information
  - Do not coerce the child to provide you with evidence or statements
  - When in doubt give as much information as possible

## Reporting Abuse – Your Protection:

- Immunity from civil or criminal liability
- If you make the report cooperate with the investigation
- Testify if needed
- **Confidentiality – your information will not be shared** (i.e. Child and Youth Services cannot say that you made the call or give your information out to others).
- Identity as a reporter is kept safe
- **Failure to report:**
  - Act 179 allows: First violation – up to 1 yr. in prison and/or \$2500 fine

- Second and subsequent violations – up to 2 yrs. In prison and \$5000 in fines.

*Failure to report allows the abuse cycle to continue. Please report even if you are unsure. ChildLine is trained to decide on the actions related to the call.*

## Recognizing Child Abuse and Neglect: Signs and Symptoms

The first step in helping abused or neglected children is learning to recognize the signs of child abuse and neglect. The presence of a single sign does not prove child abuse is occurring in a family; however, when these signs appear repeatedly or in combination you should take a closer look at the situation and consider the possibility of child abuse.

The following signs may signal the presence of child abuse or neglect.

The Child:

- Has not received help for physical or medical problems brought to the parents' attention.
- Has learning problems (or difficulty concentrating) that cannot be attributed to specific physical or psychological causes.
- Is always watchful, as though waiting for something bad to happen.
- Lacks adult supervision.
- Is overly compliant, passive, or withdrawn.
- Comes to school or other activities early, stays late, and does not want to go home.

The Parent:

- Shows little concern for the child.
- Denies the existence of—or blames the child for—the child's problems in school or at home.
- Asks teachers or other caretakers to use harsh physical discipline if the child misbehaves.
- Sees the child as entirely bad, worthless, or burdensome.
- Demands a level of physical or academic performance the child cannot achieve.
- Looks primarily to the child for care, attention, and satisfaction of emotional needs.

The Parent and Child:

- Rarely touch or look at each other.
- Consider their relationship entirely negative.
- State that they do not like each other.

## What are the Different Types of Abuse

The following are some signs often associated with particular types of child abuse and neglect: physical abuse, neglect, sexual abuse, and emotional abuse. It is important to note, however, these types of abuse are more typically found in combination than alone.

**Signs of Physical Abuse**

Consider the possibility of physical abuse when the **parent**:

- Offers conflicting, unconvincing, or no explanation for the child's injury.
- Describes the child as "evil," or in some other very negative way.
- Uses harsh physical discipline with the child.
- Has a history of abuse as a child.

**Signs of Neglect**

Consider the possibility of neglect when the **child**:

- Is frequently absent from school.
- Is consistently dirty and has severe body odor.

Consider the possibility of neglect when the **parent**:

- Appears to be indifferent to the child.
- Seems apathetic or depressed.
- Behaves irrationally or in a bizarre manner.
- Is abusing alcohol or other drugs.

**Signs of Sexual Abuse**

Consider the possibility of sexual abuse when the **child**:

- Suddenly refuses to change for gym or participate in physical activities.
- Experiences a sudden change in appetite.
- Becomes pregnant or contracts venereal disease, especially if under the age of 14.
- Runs away.

Consider the possibility of sexual abuse when the **parent**:

- Is unduly protective of the child or severely limits the child's contact with other children, especially of the opposite sex.
- Is secretive and isolated.
- Is jealous or controlling with family members.

**Signs of Emotional Abuse**

Consider the possibility of emotional abuse when the **child**:

- Shows extremes in behavior, such as overly compliant or demanding behavior.
- Is either inappropriately adult (parenting other children, for example) or inappropriately infantile (frequent rocking, for example).

Consider the possibility of emotional abuse when the **parent**:

- Constantly blames, belittles, or berates the child.
- Is unconcerned about the child and refuses to consider offers of help for the child's problems.
- Overtly rejects the child.

**If you suspect abuse:**

Report the abuse or neglect promptly to the Pastor or Director of Children's Ministries and/or the Pastor of Youth Ministries. To preserve confidentiality, it is important to discuss the **incident initially only with any of these three individuals.**

**Safety and Supervision of Children and Youth**

Once children and youth ministry volunteers have been placed in an area of ministry, the following practices will be used to ensure the safety and security of children and youth under our supervision. The guiding principle for these guidelines is transparency in activities, programs, and individual situations with children/youth:

**Children's Ministry (children 6 weeks – 6th grade):**

- A minimum of two (2) screened adults will be present at every function or program involving children and sponsored by EBBC. This includes each classroom, vehicle, or other enclosed area. Youth volunteers should be assigned to classrooms where they are the third volunteer whenever possible. If this is not possible, the youth volunteer's parent should be made aware that the youth is serving as the second "adult" in a classroom. The youth volunteer and adult supervisor should adhere to all policies in place to protect youth and children as the youth volunteer is still a minor. For classes, events or activities that include a larger number of children, adult volunteers should be increased according to the needs of the group. Ministry staff will be responsible for monitoring how many volunteers are needed.
- Teachers should arrive at least 15 minutes before scheduled activity. Should children begin to arrive before both teachers, parents should be asked to remain until at least 2-screened adults are present.
- At least 2-screened teachers must remain at their assigned classroom or area until all children in their care have been picked up by a parent or other authorized person. Children should not be released to find their parents or wait unattended for transportation.
- A teacher will accompany children to the bathroom. Teachers will check the bathroom before children enter to ensure that no adults are in the bathroom. Teachers will remain near the bathroom door. Generally, teachers will not enter a bathroom stall to assist a child. For children over age 5, assistance will not be provided. For potty-trained children 5 and under, parents should be asked if the child needs assistance and how much. Teachers need to maintain classroom ratios if leaving the room is required for a child to go to the restroom. All children should be taken to the bathroom as an alternative to leaving one adult alone with children.
- Children in diapers will be changed as appropriate with diapers provided by the parent. Volunteers should inquire to determine if a parent wants to change the children themselves.
- Room safety: Inside and outside windows should be clear of obstructions. Doors without windows will remain open unless there is a window next to the door.
- Volunteers and staff should maintain appropriate boundaries with children and refrain from any behavior that could be considered inappropriate contact with children.
- Two or more adult volunteers when being transported by car will always accompany children. Adult volunteers cannot be alone transporting a child.

- Activities and conversations with children should occur in non-private areas. Activities should be observable and able to be easily interrupted.
- Any organization of activities or events should take place through the child's parents. Permission slips and emergency forms must be obtained for a child to participate in any activities off site and emergency contact information must be completed for all children attending any children's ministry programs.
- For ministry programs or events that may include an overnight (i.e. camping trip, missions trip, or conference), adults will not be alone with children in a room or tent. At least 2 adults will be present in a room or tent with children or 1 adult will be present in a room or tent with 3 children. Adults and children should be of the same gender.

**Youth Ministry (6th/7th grade – 12th grade):**

EBBC recognizes that youth ministry is based on building relationships. This may lend itself to mentoring type relationships. EBBC encourages these relationships to be built with transparency and openness. The following policies should be maintained to increase this transparency:

- A minimum of two (2) screened adults or one (1) adult with 2 or more youth will be present at every function or program involving youth and sponsored by EBBC. This includes each classroom or other venues. For classes, events or activities that include a larger number of youth, adult volunteers should be increased according to the needs of the group. Ministry staff will be responsible for monitoring how many volunteers are needed.
- Adult leaders (screened) should arrive at least 15 minutes before scheduled activity. Should one youth arrive while only one volunteer is present, parent(s) should be asked to remain until at least 2 screened adults or a minimum of 2 youth are present. If youth arrive on their own, youth and the screened adult should wait in the most visible and public area until another volunteer or youth arrives.
- At least two (2) screened adults or one (1) adult with 2 or more youth must remain with youth until an approved parent has picked up all youth in their care or obtain other parent-approved transportation. In the case that only one screened adult is present during pick up both adult and youth will move to most visible and public place and will call the youth's parents to notify them that adult is alone with youth.
- Room safety: Inside and outside windows should be clear of obstructions. Doors without windows will remain open unless there is a window next to the door.
- Adults should maintain appropriate boundaries with youth and refrain from any behavior that could be considered inappropriate contact with youth. (i.e. youth should not sit on adults laps, if hugs are given, they should be side hugs, etc).
- Activities and conversations with youth should occur in non-private areas. Activities and conversations should be observable and able to be easily interrupted.
- Phone conversations and electronic communications should take place with as much transparency and openness as possible. Youth often choose to communicate with leaders via phone, e-mail, and texting. Whenever possible the youth's parent should be informed and give consent for this communication to take place. Youth leaders should notify the designated ministry supervisor so that the communication remains transparent.

- Adult leaders will generally not be alone with youth in a vehicle. Adults transporting youth need to have at least 2 youth per adult or 2 adults per youth. Exception: In last minute situations a parent may give an adult leader verbal permission transport a youth to or from an EBBC sponsored activity. This should not become routine transportation for youth.
- Permission slips and emergency forms must be obtained for a youth to participate in any activities off site and emergency contact information must be completed for all youth attending any youth ministry programs.
- For ministry events that may include an overnight (i.e. camping trip, missions trip, or conference), adults will not be alone with youth in a room or tent. Two adults or 1 adult and 2 youth and will be present in a room or tent with youth. Adults and children should be of the same gender.

## Board of Christian Education Recommendations

- Suspected Child Abuse Reporting
  - East Brandywine is requesting that if you or someone you know makes a report to Child Services, **you should report to a Pastor, Deacon, or Staff member of the church** so that it can be put on file after you report to Child Services.
  - The church will develop, facilitate and implement the following items:
    - Suspected Child Abuse Report
      - Completed by the reporting individual within 24 hours of the initial report
      - Provided to the ministry leader (Pastor, Deacon, etc.)
      - A written statement on what they observed, heard and/or believe may have happened to go along with the report
- “No talk clause”
  - Policy that in the event that something is reported that no member of the church talk with the news media, social networks, etc. but rather direct all communications to one common point person (\*Lead Pastor, Associate Pastor, etc).