

# **CHILD ABUSE AND PROTECTION**

## **POLICY AGAINST CHILD ABUSE**

EFC-MAYM supports and maintains a **zero tolerance** policy against child abuse and neglect. Child abuse and neglect include physical or mental injury, sexual abuse, negligent treatment, or maltreatment. Sexual abuse is defined as unwanted sexual activity forced on a person by another through coercion or threats.

It is against the law and against EFC-MAYM's policy for any volunteer or employed staff, male or female, to physically, sexually, or mentally abuse or neglect any child.

EFC-MAYM reserves the right to refuse membership, to dismiss, or to exclude from affiliation with EFC-MAYM any volunteer or employee who is or has been convicted, or is known or is reasonably suspected to have been involved in child abuse or neglect of any child.

EFC-MAYM will neither condone nor tolerate:

- Infliction of bodily injury upon any child or physically or sexually abusive behavior towards a child.
- Physical neglect of children, including failure to provide adequate safety measures, care, and supervision.
- Emotional mistreatment of children, including verbal abuse and/or verbal attacks.

EFC-MAYM Youth Program staff members have been trained to recognize behaviors intended to “groom” children for sexual abuse. These behaviors will be immediately investigated and reported to the appropriate authorities.

## **REPORTING & INVESTIGATIONS**

Child abuse is a serious crime, and EFC-MAYM intends to prosecute child abuse in any form to the fullest extent of the law. You are under these obligations as a volunteer:

### **1. Reporting requirements**

All volunteers and employees shall immediately report and document any incident of abuse or violation of the two-adult policy of which they have knowledge or which they have observed. Any person making such a report shall keep the information strictly confidential.

### **2. Incident of abuse defined**

An “incident of abuse” means any occurrence in which any person:

- Has threatened to inflict or has inflicted physical injury upon a child, youth worker, or vulnerable adult, other than by accidental means, or is reasonably suspected to have done so.
- Commits or allows to be committed any sexual offense against a child, youth, or vulnerable adult, or is reasonably suspected to have done so.
- With respect to a child, youth, or vulnerable adult makes any kind of sexual advance, or makes a request for sexual favors, or engages in sexually motivated physical contact, or is reasonably suspected to have done so.

- Exposes a child, youth, or vulnerable adult to verbal, visual, or physical conduct of a sexual nature, or is reasonably suspected to have done so.
- Has threatened or has inflicted non-accidental trauma or physical injury caused by punching, beating, kicking, biting, burning or otherwise harming a child, youth worker, or vulnerable adult.
- Has neglected to provide needed food, clothing, shelter, medical care, or supervision to the degree that the child, youth worker, or vulnerable adult's health, safety, and well-being are threatened.

### 3. Imminent threat

In all cases where an imminent threat of continued or actual abuse exists, any witness shall immediately contact an EFC-MAYM Youth Program staff member to request that immediate steps be taken to ensure the safety of the alleged victim. After the safety of the alleged victim has been secured, the person witnessing or with knowledge of the incident of abuse shall complete a written report of the incident of abuse and submit the report to the Youth Superintendent (or in his/her absence other appropriate staff or member of the Board of Elders).

### 4. Obligation to report to Law Enforcement

In all cases where any volunteer or staff member has reasonable cause to believe that a child or youth, known to the volunteer or staff member in a professional capacity, has been or may be abused or neglected by either known or unknown persons inside or outside of EFC-MAYM, the worker shall make a report to the local law enforcement agency's child abuse investigators within 24 hours of the determination of reasonable cause. If the volunteer or staff member is in doubt regarding whether a report should be made, he or she shall telephone the agency anonymously and discuss the situation with an investigator to determine whether the report should be made. The volunteer or staff member shall make a written record of the name and the title of the investigator with whom he or she spoke and the recommendation made by the investigator, then submit a copy of the written record to the Youth Superintendent.

### 5. Internal Reporting Procedure

The person reporting an incident of abuse shall contact the Youth Superintendent (or in his/her absence, other appropriate staff or any member of the Board of Elders). The reporter shall provide information regarding all relevant facts with respect to the incident of abuse. Upon receiving a report of an incident of abuse, the person receiving the report, together with the reporter, shall complete a written report of the incident and submit a copy of the report to the appropriate authorities. However, in all cases where the alleged wrongdoer is the person to whom a report should be made, he or she shall be considered absent for the purposes of this reporting and the report should be submitted to an EFC-MAYM member of the Elders Board.

### 6. Responding to the report

When someone receives a report of an incident of abuse, he or she shall immediately take steps to ensure the safety of the alleged victim. After the safety of the alleged victim has been secured, and after the report has been appropriately documented, the person receiving the report shall:

- Immediately contact the Youth Superintendent or any member of the Board of Elders who will then contact the parents or guardian of the alleged victim to inform them of the incident.
- Immediately contact the Youth Superintendent or any member of the Board of Elders who will -- within 24 hours of the report -- conduct an investigation and determine (along with the

Youth Superintendent) whether there is reasonable cause to believe that the abuse may have occurred.

- Take all reasonable steps necessary to ensure that the alleged wrongdoer has no contact with the alleged victim pending investigation.
- Take all steps necessary to ensure that the alleged wrongdoer is barred from further work with children, youth, or vulnerable adults pending the investigation.

### **Conclusion of no abuse**

If EFC-MAYM leadership concludes that there is not reasonable cause to believe the abuse may have occurred, EFC-MAYM leadership shall provide a written report, within 24hrs, to the Board of Elders documenting the conclusions reached and the basis for those conclusions. The contents of the report presented where no abuse was found shall be confidential except as directed by law enforcement officials.

### **Conclusion of abuse**

If EFC-MAYM leadership concludes that there is reasonable cause to believe that abuse may have occurred, EFC-MAYM leadership shall provide a written account to the Board of Elders.

The written report shall:

- Identify the alleged victim, the alleged wrongdoer, and all witnesses identified and contacted.
- Set forth the allegations and the steps taken to investigate the allegations.
- Set forth the facts revealed by each significant witness
- Set forth the suggested temporary actions to be taken by the board of Elders as well as recommendations of additional actions to be taken by the board of Elders.

In addition, EFC MAYM leadership shall:

- Report the incident of abuse to any other appropriate authorities
- Conduct all further investigations as directed by the Board of Elders

## **VOLUNTEER/CHILD PROTECTION**

EFC-MAYM Youth Program intends to ensure the health, safety, and well-being of volunteers and children. As a precaution and to ensure strict accountability from one adult to another, volunteers must follow these rules:

### **1. Two Volunteer Policy**

Two volunteers should remain together with children at all times. If a volunteer needs to leave a group of children, a support staff or staff member must be notified so that the two volunteer policy can be upheld.

### **2. Physical contact**

EFC-MAYM Youth Program is committed to protecting children in its care and recognizes that appropriate touch is part of a positive, nurturing environment in a healthy children and student ministry. The following guidelines are to be carefully followed by EFC-MAYM Youth Program volunteer staff.

Using good judgment, the following are appropriate ways to touch kids:

- An arm around the shoulder
- Walking hand in hand (2<sup>nd</sup> grade and younger)
- Short congratulatory or greeting hugs
- A brief, assuring pat on the back or shoulder
- Handshakes, high fives, and knuckles

The following are actions a volunteer should NEVER take:

- Never touch a child in anger or disgust
- Never touch a child in any manner that may be construed as sexually suggestive
- Never touch a child between the navel and the knee
- Never touch a child's private parts (with the exception of a diaper or bathroom procedures)
- Never carry a child piggy-back

Physical contact in any form should be above reproach. The personal behavior of staff members and volunteers must foster trust at all times.

Do not force physical contact, touch, or affection on a reluctant child. A child's preference not to be touched must be respected.

### 3. Taboo topics

Certain topics of discussion are best left for parents and their children (unless they are taught in a main session or lesson approved of by leadership). If you have a question about the propriety of discussing certain topics, speak with the teacher or leader in charge of the area in which you serve.

### 4. Verbal interactions

Verbal interactions between volunteers and children should be positive and uplifting. EFC-MAYM Youth Program volunteer staff should strive to keep verbal interactions encouraging, constructive, and mindful of their mission of aiding parents in the spiritual growth and development of children.

To this end, volunteers should not talk to children in a way that is or could be construed by any reasonable observer as harsh, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating. In addition, volunteers are expected to refrain from swearing in the presence of children.

### 5. Visibility & Security

It is important that all interaction between children and volunteers happens in a location where others can observe what is going on for safety and accountability purposes. At no time should a child and volunteer disappear behind a closed door with no visibility to outsiders.

## **INTOXICANTS**

Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from the use, possession, or being under the influence of alcohol, tobacco, or any illegal drugs while working with or supervising children or students at any EFC-MAYM Youth Program event.

