Child Protection and Abuse Response Policy

Creation Explorers Group

**Introduction**

We commit ourselves to treasuring our children as precious members of God’s family. We acknowledge our responsibility to protect them, to create safe environments in co-op activities, and to respond if they are being hurt.

**Definitions**

Physical abuse: when a child has a non-accidental injury

Emotional abuse: when a parent always blames or rejects the child

Sexual abuse: when an adult uses a child as a part of any sexual act

Emotional neglect: when a child is not given the chance to feel loved, wanted, and secure

Physical neglect: when a child is not given their basic needs

**Child abuse prevention within our co-op:**

1. Maintain a safe co-op facility
	1. For all children’s classes and programs, at least two qualified, unrelated adult volunteers must be present in each classroom at all times.
	2. Any activity for youth or children conducted outside of the co-op schedule will have at least two qualified, unrelated adults providing supervision.
	3. Youth under eighteen providing childcare must have an adult available for supervision.
	4. Physical discipline will not be used. If a child misbehaves, adults will redirect or use verbal guidance. The child will be taken to his or her parent for any further action.
	5. Diaper changing and Rest Room Procedure
		1. Nursery: Diapers must be changed in the presence of at least two other volunteers.
		2. Pre-K: At least two adults must accompany the child (and at least one other child) to the rest room and wait outside the bathroom door unless the child requires assistance.
		3. K-8th: Any child needing to use the restroom shall go with another child of the same age and sex. A female volunteer will accompany the pair to the restroom and wait outside the closed bathroom door until the children are finished.
2. Personnel issues
	1. Each year, co-op parents will be given a copy of this child protection policy and must agree to abide by it.
	2. A background check will be conducted on all parents who will have contact with children.
	3. Co-op parents must affirm that they have no history of perpetrating child abuse.
3. Deal appropriately with allegations of abuse
	1. If a child discloses abuse or if child abuse is suspected, Child Protective Services or the police will be notified.
	2. If an individual is not sure if a situation requires reporting, they should contact a Co-op Executive Board member immediately.
	3. The alleged offender will be removed from all responsibilities involving children or youth while the allegations are being investigated.
	4. All parents whose children may have had contact with the alleged offender will be notified within forty-eight hours that there have been allegations and that the allegations have been reported to the proper authorities.
4. Policy for known sexual offenders
	1. Any individual convicted of a sexual offense may not be involved in activities for children or youth, formal or informal. They will not be allowed any unsupervised contact with children.

This policy will be available to all Co-op families. Parents and all individuals working with youth or children will be given a copy of this policy.