**Sample Teen Challenge Policies related to Abuse**

The following policies are provided strictly as samples for your review, as you write policies and procedures to use at your own ministry. We are not recommending that you simply copy these policies for your center. Your policies need to be based on the laws of your state, as well as Biblical principles that relate to this issue.

**Global Teen Challenge**

**Policies and Procedures Manual 2009 Edition**

**STUDENT RIGHTS**

**A. Student Rights Policies**—A student rights policy shall be set forth in written form. It shall be written in clear, simple language, appropriate to the student population. The written policy shall prohibit the abuse, neglect, and exploitation of students. Times of fasting may be suggested by the ministry, however students shall not be forced or coerced to fast.

**B. Applicant Acceptance of Student Rights**—Before entering the program each applicant shall sign the *Student Entrance Agreement* (Form 112), accepting the policy and procedures governing student rights as set forth in the Student Manual.

**C. Student Rights Violations Reporting**—There shall be a written procedure that ensures compliance with the following:

1. Any staff member or volunteer who has any knowledge of an alleged incident involving acts or omissions which may constitute abuse, neglect, or exploitation shall make an immediate verbal report to the Executive Director or his designee.

2. Any alleged incident of abuse shall be handled in accordance with state and/or local laws. Mandatory reporting of alleged abuse is normally required by law.

3. The staff member or volunteer involved shall submit a written incident report to the Executive Director within 24 hours, who shall inform the Board of Directors.

**D. Student Grievance Rights**

1. Students shall have the right to seek remedy for any grievance. They shall submit the grievance in writing and shall have as­sistance in writing it if they are unable to read or write. The method for filing a complaint is:

a. Students may grieve directly to any staff member.

b. Students or persons acting on their behalf shall provide the Program Director with a written narrative report describing the grievance.

2. The grievance shall be investigated and documented within 24 hours (72 hours on weekends) and there shall be a decision rendered within 7 days.

3. There shall be documentation in the facility’s records of the receipt, investiga­tion, and any action taken regarding the grievance.

4. Some of the following types of behavior shall be cause for a student or person on the student’s behalf to file a grievance with the Program Director:

a. Physical abuse of one student by another.

b. Violation of student rights by staff personnel.

c. Physical abuse of a student by staff personnel.

d. Inappropriate sexual behavior by staff personnel.

**Teen Challenge, Sacramento, California Abuse Reporting Policy**

1. **Sexual Abuse Reporting**

Reports of current incidents of sexual harassment, abuse, or exploitation will be taken very seriously. An employee or volunteer of Sacramento Valley Teen Challenge, who has any knowledge of an incident involving any Sacramento Valley Teen Challenge student, staff, or volunteers which may constitute abuse or harassment shall make an immediate verbal report to their Director. The Director will investigate and make a full written report within 24 hours to the Executive Director. The Director shall verbally notify the Executive Director immediately, however. If the authorities need to be notified, the Executive Director shall do so.

**Teen Challenge of the Mid-South - Mandatory Reporting Training**

**Chattanooga, TN USA**

Revised 1/14

NOTE: The following policies at this Teen Challenge center are based on the specific laws of their state, which may be significantly different from your state.

**What is Mandatory Reporting?**

Mandatory Reporting is the duty to report abuse, physical injury, neglect and denial or deprivation of care of a minor.

**The Mandatory Reporting Law of the State of Tennessee**

***TCA 37-1-403 (i) {1}***

"Any person who has knowledge of or is called upon to render aid to any child who is suffering from or has sustained any would, injury, disability, or physical or mental condition shall report such harm immediately if the harm is of such a nature as to reasonably indicate that is has been caused by brutality, abuse, or neglect, or that, on the basis of available information, reasonably appears to have been caused by brutality, abuse, or neglect."

**Why do we focus on this law?**

Our willing compliance with the mandatory reporting law is critical in the ministry of Teen Challenge to safeguard our students, their families, the ministry and the population in general.

**What is considered abuse?**

* Physical Abuse - *causing injury or pain to an individual by uninvited touching, hitting, biting, etc.*
* Sexual Abuse - *Fondling, intercourse, harassment or exploiting sex and its contents.*
* Emotional Abuse - *dehumanizing, demeaning, profanity and threats.*
* Programmatic - *The use of any restraint, chemical or unapproved technique.*

**What is considered neglect?**

* *A lack of attention to an individual*
* *Withholding medication*
* *Improper clothing for conditions*
* *Refusing food and drink*
* *Abandonment*

**Who is obligated by the law to report?**

* Any person who has knowledge of or suspects abuse or neglect of a child must report it.
* The law makes no distinction between professionals and non-professionals on the issue of reporting.

"Any person" is the key phrase both in the mandatory reporting law and the policy of Teen Challenge of the Mid-South. All Teen Challenge Staff and volunteers are expected to know and follow the law.

**When am I required to act?**

If you reasonably believe that a minor is, might be, or has been the victim of abuse, whether that belief is because of personal observation or disclosure from a third party, you should take action.

* If you "reasonably believe" that a minor has been the victim of:
* Sexual abuse
* Physical abuse
* Neglect
* You do not have to have proof that child abuse/neglect has occurred in order to report it. The law speaks to making reports based on "available information" and in a situation that "reasonably appears to have been caused by brutality, abuse, neglect, or sexual abuse".

**Who do I make the report to?**

If the victim is living with the suspected abuser:

* Report must be made directly to Department of Children's Services (1-877-237-0004) immediately

If victim is NOT living with the suspected abuser:

* Report all information by telephone immediately to Sheriff in the county where the child resides.

**What must I do?**

Call law enforcement (using 9-1-1) and Department of Children's Services (1-877-237-0004). The procedure for making a report is as follows:

* Call agency to make a report (DCS or Law Enforcement).
* Be prepared to give the following information
	+ Name and address of the minor and the parents or custodians of the minor, if known
	+ The minors age now and at the time of the alleged abuse
	+ The nature of the abuse (physical, sexual, emotional)
	+ The extent of the abuse (injuries, etc.)
	+ Name and address of the person suspected of perpetrating the abuse
	+ Where the abuse seemed to have occurred
	+ Any other information you have regarding the incident(s)

**When must I make the calls?**

Make the initial telephone report immediately

**What if I don't want to get involved?**

Tennessee Code Annotated 37-1-412 (a) states any person who knowingly fails to make a report of suspected child abuse commits a class A misdemeanor. A fine not to exceed $2,500 can be put in place.

**What do I do after making the telephone report?**

* If the child is in your care, see to the protection of the child until law enforcement arrives
* Inform your immediate supervisor *I* Center Director immediately
* Follow up with a written report to the Director

**What NOT to do if you observe abuse or receive a disclosure of abuse.**

* DO NOT fail to make a report for any reason
* DO NOT assume someone else knows of the abuse and has reported it
* DO NOT delay in making a report
* DO NOT investigate
* DO NOT report “guesses”, only report WHAT you saw.

**What CAN I ask?**

* You may ONLY ask the following questions IF the person sharing the information brings it up.
* Who?
	+ What happened?
	+ When did this happen?
	+ How did it happen?
	+ You CANNOT ask for more information (not even the last name of the person accused.
	+ Document exactly what is being said by the person - DO NOT ask for clarification
	+ If you do, it will be considered an investigation and you would be considered to be impeding the official investigation

**How can I prepare?**

* Know the Law and review this information regularly
* Have the phone numbers at hand

**Miscellaneous Information:**

* What if the allegation involves two 15 year olds involved in a sexual relationship?
* A report is not required if the conduct involves only minors who are fourteen, fifteen, sixteen and seventeen years of age and there is nothing to indicate that the conduct is other than consensual
* Always report even if the incident sounds similar to one already reported.
* It is not for you to decide - allow investigations!