



Child Protection Policy

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Table of Contents

Vision and Mission	3
Volunteer Expectations and Safety Priority	4
Parameters & Limitations of Policy and Identification	5
Preventative Measures of Protection Before Children are in Our Care	6
Protective Measures for Children in Our Care	8
Security and Emergency Responses	14
Neglect & Abuse Prevention, Reporting & Response	18
Appendices	27
Appendix 1: Inappropriate and Appropriate Touch	27
Appendix 2: Child Abuse Reporting Form	28
Appendix 3: Child Abuse & Neglect Reporting Guidelines in California	30

Our Vision: Generations of Godliness

4 “Listen, Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is One. 5 Love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. 6 These words that I am giving you today are to be in your heart. 7 Repeat them to your children. Talk about them when you sit in your house and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. 8 Bind them as a sign on your hand and let them be a symbol on your forehead. 9 Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. (Deuteronomy 6:4–9).

14 But as for you, continue in what you have learned and firmly believed. You know those who taught you, 15 and you know that from childhood you have known the sacred Scriptures, which are able to give you wisdom for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. (2 Timothy 3:14–15).

Our Mission: To Glorify God

The children’s ministry of ECHO Church (“the church”) exists to glorify God by:

- Maintaining a safe and secure environment for our children.
- Supporting and encouraging parents who are primarily responsible for teaching biblical truths to their children (Ephesians 6:4)
- Making the whole counsel of Scripture known to children with special emphasis on the Gospel (Deuteronomy 6:6-9; Romans 1:16-17)
- Praying for the children and relying on the Holy Spirit to regenerate their hearts through the faithful teaching of His Word (Romans 10:17; Ephesians 2:4-10)
- Living faithfully before the children and modeling for them how Christians are called to respond to God, interact with each other, and with the world around us (Matthew 5:16; 1 Corinthians 11:1)
- Encouraging children to learn to serve and to not just be served (Mark 10:43-45).
- Maintaining the highest ethical standards such that volunteers and teachers always live and serve above reproach, protecting the reputation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- Preparing children to one day walk with God as adults, which means getting them ready to be a part of the Sunday gatherings and Lord willing, one day, a fully participating adult member.

Staff and Volunteer Expectations

All children's ministry staff and volunteers share a particular responsibility for:

- Loving the children as Christ loves them
- Setting an example of proper Christian conduct in the way we live our lives
- Ministering to the children
- Understanding that the care of children is not a right, but a privilege; and this privilege embodies responsibilities to God for ministering to and caring for the children

Prioritizing Child Protection and Safety

Our first concern is that children be safe while they are in our care. To this end we:

- Screen all children's ministry volunteers
- Perform background checks on all church staff and members, regardless of whether or not they have direct contact with children.
- Require training for all children's ministry staff and volunteers
- Use parent authentication identification system
- Employ scheduling procedures and volunteer/child ratios that optimize safety
- Employ hall monitors to promote and maintain safety in the building.
- Equip each room with a first aid kit
- Educate our staff and volunteers to recognize suspected child abuse and to require them to understand and follow any applicable reporting laws and to encourage them to report suspected abuse to church officials
- Adhere to a healthy child policy for admittance to children's ministry
- Adhere to a two-volunteer room policy
- Equip our volunteers to know how to evacuate children safely in case of an emergency

Parameters and Limitations of Child Protection Policy

This child protection policy applies to children (from 1 years old to 8 years old) who are voluntarily placed by parents under the responsibility of the church for the church's Sunday gatherings or specific children's ministry-related church-sponsored activities (parenting and marriage seminars, bible studies held at the church building with accompanying childcare, Vacation Bible School, Backyard Bible Club, Awana, etc.). Any form of abuse, harm, neglect, or other problems related to children at home, school, or in any bible-study, activity, or venue not directly related to children's ministry at ECHO Church is not covered by this policy.

Personnel Identification

Adults are individuals eighteen years or older.

Minors are individuals under eighteen years of age (under CA law and for most state laws).

Staff are the paid employees of the church. All full-time church staff are required to receive a background check regardless of whether or not they have direct contact with children.

Volunteers are adults who work with children and are not in the employment of the church. All volunteers who serve in children's ministry are required to go through both the children's ministry training and screening procedures before they serve. Volunteers include childcare workers, team leaders, hall monitors, teachers, coaches, coordinators, and anyone else who serves the children. The term 'volunteer' will be used throughout this policy manual as an all-encompassing term for anyone who serves the children and is not church staff.

Helpers are minors who are 9 to 17 years old and are assisting in some area of children's ministry alongside an adult. Helpers do not count towards the adult-to-child ratios. Helpers must be children of members; may or may not themselves be a member the church; will not go through childcare training but will be vetted by the children's ministry staff. Helpers will be supervised by the adult volunteers in the same room.

Deacons/Deaconess refer to the church's deacons of children's ministry and childcare. They are elected officers of the church who serve the church by assisting in childcare and children's ministry. Just like the volunteers, all deacons are required to go through both the children's ministry training and screening procedures.

Pastors/elders are elected officers of the church who serve the church by providing teaching and leadership to the congregational as a whole. They must go through both the children's ministry training and screening procedures if they are to serve in children's ministry, just like any other volunteer.

Preventative Measures of Protection Before Children are in Our Care

Ensuring a safe environment begins long before Sunday services. Every applicant who wishes to serve in children's ministry is required to go through a screening process and attend childcare training.

Screening Procedure

To ensure safe and quality care, ECHO Church has established a screening procedure to approve all volunteers to work with our children:

- All volunteers must be members of ECHO Church in good standing for at least three months.
- All volunteers must be eighteen years of age or older.
- Children or youth who are at least 9 years old and younger than 18 are welcome to be helpers (subject to the approval and direction of the Children's Ministry Administrator), but they are always in addition to the adult volunteers.
- All volunteers must have completed ECHO Church's childcare training, including child abuse prevention training.
- All volunteers must have been recommended by or in consultation with the pastor/elders of ECHO church.
- Criminal records checks and other appropriate screening checks will be completed.
- All completed records of screening procedures will be kept securely.
- All volunteers must repeat the screening procedures and criminal background checks every three years.
- All volunteers must have read and agreed to the ECHO Child Protection Policy and must confirm by signature.

ECHO Church reserves the right to reject any applicant for volunteer service or dismiss an existing volunteer for any reason, including, but not limited to, refusing or failing to complete screening; failing to provide requested information; providing information that is subsequently determined as false or misleading; sin or suffering issues that compromise the applicant or volunteer's ability to care for children; any criminal report or charge; obtaining information from references or criminal record checks that suggest that the applicant is not suitable to help with children. Any volunteer, helper, deacon, staff or pastor (or any ECHO Church member) who learns of or has knowledge of misconduct by an applicant must report that knowledge to the Children's Ministry Administrator and/or the pastor(s) who oversees children's ministry. He or

she also must be personally responsible for any legal obligation that he or she may have to disclose such information to the authorities.

Training

All children's ministry staff and volunteers must attend ECHO Church's children's orientation before they are allowed to work with the children. Additional training sessions will be scheduled for existing volunteers to update them on policies and procedures. Full-time staff who do not have direct contact with children will receive training on child protection policies. Parents with questions about childcare training are welcome to attend these sessions.

Arrival and Departure Times

Volunteers should be ready to accept children 15 minutes prior to the start of any session, so that parents have enough time to transition their children before the session begins.

Parents are encouraged to pick up their children immediately after the conclusion of the session. In the event that a child is not picked up within 15 minutes of the end of the session, volunteers will ask the Hall Monitor or Childcare leader to locate the parents.

Signing a Child In

Any parent who would like his/her child to participate in a children's ministry program will sign the child in to the appropriate classroom, nursery, or activity when he/she arrives, granting permission for the child to participate in that ECHO Church event or program. The parent should also use this opportunity to note any allergies or special needs the child may have. For more details on our procedures for caring for children with allergies, please see the "Snacks and Food" section below. Check-in and check-out of children applies to all children.

Current ECHO classrooms are currently broken into two groups: Toddlers (1-3 years old) and Kids (4-8 years old). Note that no current classes allow for care of children prior to 1 year old and 9 years and older. These children are encouraged to stay with their parents during ECHO services. Alternatively, they can also volunteer and assist with the groups as helpers.

Deacons, team-leaders, and staff have the right to refuse any child at check-in. Some reasons might include potential illness, behavior that endangers other children, the room being closed because the adult child ratio, or anything else that might impair our ability to maintain a safe and secure environment for the children.

A parent or designated guardian must be in one of the church buildings at all times while their children are checked-in.

Parental Authentication

In order to protect the children in our care, each child must be signed into his/her class by a

parent or guardian.

Upon signing the child in, the parent/child will receive two labels. One of these labels will be placed on their child with a unique code and the other label will be given to the parent or guardian with the same code. This label will be needed for parent or guardian to sign out their child.

At the end of the session when the parent/guardian comes to pick up the child:

1. The children's ministry volunteer will bring the child to the door and check the labels and code before releasing the child to the parent.
2. Upon checkout, we recommend that parents remove and destroy child labels. This will prevent certain risks like potential strangers referring to a child by name and potentially luring them away from their parents.

Only the parent/guardian who signed the child into the class is authorized to pick up the child.

The exceptions to this are:

1. In the event of an emergency that would result in neither parent/guardian being available to sign out the child at the end of a session, the child will be released to the care of an elder, deacon, or staff member of ECHO Church.
2. A member can send their spouse to pick up their children.
3. A member parent may make prior arrangements with the Children's Ministry Administrator (or any deacon/deaconess) to allow for someone other than him/herself or his/her spouse to pick up the child at the end of a session.

Divorce, Separation, or Custody Visitation

In a situation where the parents are divorced or separated, the volunteers should only release the child to the parent who brought this child to check-in. If the other parent or anyone else attempts to check-out the child, the volunteer or staff should immediately contact the pastor responsible for children's ministry or the Children's Ministry Administrator. If a parent presents a court order for a child, the police must also be present and we are to release the child to police custody. In any of these circumstances, the volunteer or staff should immediately contact the Children's Ministry Administrator and a pastor.

Protective Measures for Children in Our Care

Two Volunteer Rule

For all children's classes and programs, at least two qualified, unrelated adult volunteers must be

present in each classroom at all times.

Helpers are always in addition to and supervised by the volunteer adults. Helpers are never to be left alone at any time with children without the presence of at least two adult volunteers.

Staff, deacons and volunteers must never leave a child alone in a classroom.

Two male volunteers may not serve together in the same room without a female volunteer also being present. The only exception to this rule is when a male Hall Monitor temporarily substitutes for a female volunteer who is taking children to the restroom.

A staff member, deacon or volunteer may take children out of the nursery or classroom only for a compelling reason, such as to use the bathroom or in cases of illness, emergency, or evacuation.

Staff or volunteers should not have private one-on-one meetings with a child. When a meeting on the church premises is necessary, it should be done with at least one other adult present, and held with the knowledge and consent of the staff and the parents.

Visibility

When children's classes or programs are in session, the interior doors and windows should allow for unobstructed views from the outside of everyone inside the room.

The Hall Monitor is a qualified male or female volunteer whose duties are not limited to any one classroom. Hall Monitors generally move about the hallways and buildings during scheduled session times to observe any unusual activity and be of service to volunteers (e.g., locating parents or substituting temporarily for another volunteer). The Hall Monitor and each classroom are equipped with a walkie-talkie to facilitate communication. A Hall Monitor is on duty during Sunday morning, evening services, and all applicable ECHO events.

Child to Volunteer Ratios

In addition to always having at least two volunteers present, the following ratios are maintained during the regularly scheduled weekly meetings of the church:

- Toddlers: Age 1- Age 3: 1 Adult to every 4 children
- Kids: Age 4- Age 7: 1 Adult to every 8 children

Once a ratio is met, additional children should not be accepted into a classroom if doing so would exceed the ratio unless and until additional volunteers are added. If for any reason the ratio is exceeded, deacon(s)/deaconess(es) of Childcare, Children's Ministry Administrator or the Hall Monitor should be notified and asked for more volunteers in order to maintain these ratios. Whenever age-groups are combined, the ratio is determined by the age of the youngest child.

Diaper Changing and Restroom Procedure

1 Year Old-3 Years Old (Toddlers)

Parents of children with dirty diapers are asked to change their children *prior* to signing them into the classroom. Volunteers will change diapers at least once or as needed during service. Both men and women are allowed to change diapers. Diapers must be changed in the presence of at least one other volunteer.

For those children who are potty trained, parents should take their children to the restroom prior to signing them into a class. For children who are potty trained, the process outlined below for the Kids group will be followed.

4-8 Years Old (Kids)

If a child is not potty trained for this age group, this should be communicated to the volunteers. Parents should take their children to the restroom prior to signing them into a class. At check-in and drop-off, parents should let the volunteers know if their child is potty training. In the event that a child needs to use the rest room, the volunteers will call the Hall Monitor. The hall monitor will step into the hallway in order to have visibility in to and support the classroom (to maintain appropriate child to volunteer ratios) and to also observe the bathroom door and await the female volunteer who will assist children using the restroom.

The female volunteer takes the child and at least one other child to the restroom (but no more than the adult child ratio allows). The volunteer should wait outside the closed restroom stall door unless the child requires assistance. The child and the volunteer must wash their hands with soap and water (or anti-bacterial hand sanitizer) before returning to the classroom.

For those needing less help in this group, 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 rest room and wait outside the closed bathroom door until the children are finished. The children must wash their hands with soap and water (or anti-bacterial sanitizer) and return with the volunteer to their classroom. The Hall Monitor will be available to help observe and step into a classroom temporarily, if necessary, to maintain appropriate child to volunteer ratios.

If appropriate, any child needing to use the restroom may go on his or her own. Children must wash their hands with soap and water (or anti-bacterial sanitizer) and return immediately to their classroom.

Appropriate Correction

All children's ministry volunteers are responsible for providing a loving, respectful, and orderly atmosphere in which children can learn, play, and interact with others. This atmosphere should

be maintained by preparing beforehand, proactively directing children towards acceptable activities, verbally encouraging positive behavior, and, when necessary, correcting or redirecting inappropriate behavior.

Acceptable means of redirecting inappropriate behavior may include correcting the child verbally, withholding a certain privilege or activity for a brief time, or separating a child from the situation or problem for a brief time (particularly if his behavior is endangering or upsetting other children). During correction, a child should never be removed from the classroom. Correction should be discrete; in the classroom (not in the hallway); and never outside of the sight of others.

Steps of correction might include (depending on the age of the child): (1) removing the child from the situation or problem; (2) pointing out the problematic behavior; talking to the child about his/her sin and need for Christ; (3) praying for the child and redirecting to a new activity; (4) helping the child to reconcile with the offended children when appropriate. Volunteers should view misbehavior as an opportunity to introduce children to the gospel.

Children's ministry volunteers and staff members are strictly prohibited from using any form of corporal punishment such as slapping, kicking, punching, spanking, or hitting. They should never speak harsh words, insults, belittling comments, threatening words, or any other verbal humiliation to children.

If a child's behavior is uncontrollable or the child does not respond to the acceptable means of discipline indicated above, volunteer or staff should ask the Hall Monitor to call the parents. If the child assaults, harasses or bullies other children, misbehaves beyond minor correction, or has a pattern of misbehavior, the parents should be immediately called so the child can be removed. Volunteers, staff, or deacons/elders are allowed to physically restrain a child if he/she is physically endangering other children. Please report any of these problems (as well as the appropriate response taken to deal with the behavior) to a children's ministry deacon or the Children's Ministry Administrator.

Once a child is removed from children's ministry, reinstatement is possible at the determination of the pastor who oversees children's ministry and the Children's Ministry Administrator. A child may be reinstated if the risk of re-offense has been adequately reduced. After the session where a child is removed, two volunteers should write and sign a statement reporting the situation in detail and submit it to the Children's Ministry Administrator in case further investigation is necessary or the parent requests further information.

For further information regarding discipline, please speak with the Children's Ministry Administrator.

Physical Touch Policy

Two types of relationships are important to consider: volunteer-to-child and child/teen-to-child/teen.

Volunteer-to-Child

While appropriate physical contact with children can be an effective means of aiding in communication, redirecting attention, calming restlessness, or showing godly love and care, it can also be misinterpreted. Particularly in our interaction with children, we want to be blameless and above reproach. The following will help workers to avoid any compromise or concerns in this area.

- Always remain in open sight of other adults.
- Appropriate touch is positive physical contact that nurtures children and develops a sense of emotional security and maturity in their interactions with adults. Appropriate touch is applied to meet the needs of children and not the adults.
- Appropriate physical contact will vary according to the age of the child. What is appropriate for nursery children (holding, rocking, sitting on laps, etc.) will not be appropriate for grade school children.
- Inappropriate touch involves, but is not limited to coercion or other forms of physical contact which exploits the child's lack of knowledge, satisfies adult physical needs at the expense of the child, violates laws against sexual or physical contact between adult and child, and any attempt to modify child behavior with physical force.
- Only women can take children to the restroom.
- Sitting on laps is only appropriate for the Toddler Group.
- In general, a man will need to limit physical contact more than a woman in the same situation, especially when working with older children.
- Volunteers should refrain from rough-housing, wrestling, shoulder or piggy-back rides, rubbing, massaging, or any physical activity that might make a child feel unsafe or uncomfortable.
- Only touch children in "safe" areas and for brief time. "Safe" areas generally include hands, arms, shoulders, upper back, or gentle pats on the top of the head. Never touch a child on or near any region that is private or personal, unless when necessary while assisting in a diaper change or restroom visit.
- Never touch a child out of frustration or anger. Physical discipline is not an appropriate means of correcting someone else's child.

Child-to-Child

- No children of the opposite sex should ever be alone together while in children's ministry.

- No inappropriate touching (as defined above and in the appendix) of any kind will be accepted.
- Fighting will not be tolerated and any child participating in violent action will be dismissed from a class/program and placed into his or her parent's care.

Further guidelines on appropriate and inappropriate touch can be found in Appendix 1.

Parents in the Classroom

If a child would feel more at ease with a parent in the classroom, this is allowed temporarily (for a few minutes), especially for visitors or children who are going through separation anxiety. If this goes beyond a few minutes and the child cannot remain without the parents, the parents should remove the child from the classroom and are encouraged to sit with them in the gathering or at the entrance of the kid's ministry hallway. While accompanying their children, a parent should be kindly but firmly dismissed if the parent is causing difficulty or presenting concerns for the welfare of the class.

Food and Drink Policy

The primary mission of Children's Ministry at ECHO Church is to provide a safe and loving environment for the children entrusted to our care so that their parents may be fed spiritually without undue concern.

One of the ways we protect children is to limit the food and drink allowed in classrooms. Volunteers may not bring food or drink with them when they serve.

Outside of these things (an allergen free cereal, water, or a pre-approved class snack), volunteers will not provide any food to children EVEN with parental consent. Parents are responsible to communicate food allergens, restrictions, or preferences regarding whether they want their child to not have or to have a specific type of snack.

The only two current approved snacks are: Goldfish Crackers and standard Animal Crackers. These snacks and any possible changes will be communicated to parents prior to check in.

Why do we do this? The nature of childcare is very hectic and dynamic so we cannot guarantee that:

- (1) a child's bag will be properly marked at all times
- (2) the childcare volunteer will reach into the correct bag
- (3) another child won't grab food/drink and eat it
- (4) a child won't share his food/drink with other children

Also, some children will struggle with allergies or react adversely even to mere exposure to certain foods (like peanuts). So, we need to limit the types of foods and drinks used on the children's ministry classrooms.

Why don't we allow children to bring their own food with them and feed themselves? For the same reasons: we can't guarantee that volunteers will find/give the right food to the right child or that a child won't grab and eat another child's food or that a child won't share his food with other children.

So, what do we do? If a parent wants to feed their child something other than an allergen free cereal, water, or a class snack, that parent may check out their child, feed them outside the room then return them to the childcare room. This is the policy that we have established to ensure the safety of our children.

Ongoing Care for Children with Allergies

Parents of children with allergies should talk with the Children's Ministry Administrator about how to handle any allergic reactions. Upon parental request, allergy information about children of members may be posted in the child's classroom.

No food except for the church-supplied an allergen free cereal and water will be permitted to be eaten anywhere in the classrooms.

If a parent desires to feed their child anything other than the provided snack at any time during the services, we ask that they administer the food personally to their individual child in designated locations such as the designated feeding room.

Security and Emergency Response

Emergency Situations

In emergency situations, if appropriate, 911 will be called to secure help and/or staff and volunteers will be summoned to the children's ministry floors to assist with the emergency.

Accidents, First Aid and Medical Emergencies

All classrooms are equipped with basic first aid kits. In the event of life-threatening injury or illness, emergency medical services will be called and parents should be located and informed immediately. Volunteers should complete an Accident Report Form for all injuries, whether major or minor prior to leaving the premises on the day of the accident. In the case of a medical emergency, a hall monitor will be sent to summon medical volunteers to the children's ministry rooms. Depending on the severity of the situation, someone may also call 911.

Evacuation Procedures

A team of key responders has been recruited by the Children's Ministry Administrator. The team practices evacuation procedures at least once a year.

In the event of a fire, a deacon/deaconess, staff, or volunteer should call 911 and also assist all children in immediately evacuating the building. Deacon/deaconess, team leader or staff will also summon the key responders to the children's rooms to assist staff, deacons, volunteers and teachers with evacuation.

Staff and key responders will help keep parents away from the children's floor. Parents should not report to the children's floors because they risk creating chaos and blocking the exit stairwells or halls for children. Instead, parents will meet their children in the designated areas outside of the church building. Evacuation information is located in all the rooms. Volunteers and parents should familiarize themselves with this information.

A Live Threat

A live threat includes a shooting or some other type of security hazard.

Step 1: Volunteers and Staff Evacuate Children

- As soon as staff, deacon/deaconess or a volunteer is confronted with a real threat, they should respond immediately.
- If it is safe to do so, the first course of action should be to evacuate the building.

Step 2: Volunteers and Staff Communicate the Danger

- When it is safe to do so, whoever sees or hears the live threat should notify the deacon/deaconess, team leader, or staff about the problem. Staff, the team leader or deacon/deaconess will then notify the remaining volunteers about the live threat.
- When it is safe to do so, staff, deacon/deaconess or volunteer should call 911. Give the following information:
- Location and the nature of the threat.
- If shots have been fired tell police we have an "active shooter." LA County Sheriff Police are trained specifically to respond to an active shooter.

Step 3: Hide.

- If running is not a safe option, hide in as safe a place as possible.
- Close the door, including the top portion of each door and pull the latch down.
- Barricade the doors with heavy furniture.
- Close and lock windows and close blinds.
- Turn off the lights.
- Silence all electronic devices.
- Maintain silence. Have children lie or sit on the floor away from the door. If possible, stay out of sight of any interior windows.

Step 4: Staff or Volunteers fight the Live Threat

- If neither running nor hiding is a safe option, as a last resort, when confronted by a shooter or some other danger, adults in immediate danger should consider trying to disrupt or incapacitate the shooter by using aggressive force and items in their environment, such as a fire extinguisher or chairs.
- Under no circumstances will a child be allowed to confront the potential danger. After the area has been made safe and secure by police, the Children's Ministry Administrator, the pastor who oversees children, or staff will communicate an "all clear" sign to anyone who is in lock-down mode.

Missing Child or Kidnapping

In the case of a missing child, the staff will first do a thorough check of the children's ministry floors to make sure the child is not in another part of the building. If the child is not found after a thorough check of the children's ministry floors then send a hall monitor to summon the key responders, each of whom will then block their assigned door until otherwise notified by staff or the pastor who oversees children. The hall monitor and other volunteers will continue to search for the child until they are found. If the child is not found, the staff or elders will call police to secure further help.

In the case of a kidnapping, staff, deacon/deaconess or the team leader should call 911 to secure help from the police and send the hall monitor to summon the key responders, each of whom will then block their assigned door until otherwise notified by staff or an elder.

Parent involvement in Emergency Procedures

The pastor who oversees children and/or the Children's Ministry Administrator will decide how and when to notify parents about security or emergency situations. Involving parents too early might cause unnecessary fears or panic. If an emergency does happen, parents will need guidance, pastoral care and counseling, so we rely on an elder or staff to walk with parents through difficult situations.

Healthy Child and Communicable Disease Policy

In order to prevent the spread of communicable diseases among the children, several guidelines are in place concerning disease.

1. Children with infectious diseases should be kept home until they are no longer contagious. If a child is exhibiting symptoms of illness such as fever, diarrhea, open skin lesions or blisters (as in chicken pox), or persistent nasal discharge, the parent should keep the child home or with them in the auditorium.
2. Volunteers will use disposable latex gloves and proper hygiene procedures to change diapers, wipe noses, and handle blood spills.
3. Hand washing or use of anti-bacterial hand sanitizer must be a regular habit for both children and Volunteers.
4. Toys and equipment should be washed and disinfected regularly.
5. ECHO is dedicated to preventing the spread of disease among the children. Team Leaders and the Deacon/Deaconess have the right to refuse a child on the basis of questionable symptoms. To

prevent this, parents are asked to comply with the *Healthy Child Policy* guidelines. A child should not participate in a class if and when any of the following exist:

- Fever, vomiting or diarrhea (Note: Children should be free of a fever, vomiting or diarrhea for 24 hours before coming to children's ministry.)
- Any symptom of scarlet fever, measles, mumps, chicken pox, or whooping cough
- Common cold – from onset of symptoms and one week thereafter
- Sore throat
- Croup
- Lice
- Any unexplained rash
- Any skin infection such as boils, ringworm, impetigo
- Pink eye or other eye infection
- Thick green, yellow or constant nasal discharge
- Any other communicable disease

Children who appear ill during a class will be kept at the nursery sign-in desk with a volunteer while the Hall Monitor locates the parents.

Please inform the Children's Ministry Administrator if your child appears to have contracted an illness while attending an ECHO event so that other parents may be notified if necessary. If a child contracts an illness and has been in contact with other children while at ECHO, it is the responsibility of parents to notify the Children Ministry Administrator.

Neither volunteers nor church staff may give any medication to any child. Parents of children with special needs are encouraged to contact the Children's Ministry Administrator *before* signing the child into class. This allows the staff to assess the needs of the child and assist parents in transitioning their child into a classroom setting.

Universal Precautions

Universal precautions are very effective for protecting both the children and volunteers from illness. These methods are employed such that all human bodily fluids are treated as if they carried infectious diseases. Universal precautions are applicable in any setting and should always be used.

Important Points of Universal Precautions:

- Wash hands before and after any contact with bodily fluids, including wiping noses, changing diapers, cleaning vomit, and treating a blood spill.
- Always wear disposable gloves when dealing with any bodily fluids.
- Treat all soiled linen (i.e., sheets, clothing) as potential infectious agents.
- In rooms with children ages 23 months and below, remove toys that children have mouthed from the general play area. Set them aside to clean.
- At the end of the session, disinfect the room with Lysol disinfectant spray.

Neglect & Abuse Prevention, Reporting & Response

Definitions

What is child neglect and abuse? It is important to define our terms.

Child neglect is failure, whether intentional or not, of the person responsible for the child's care to provide for the child's basic needs such as adequate feed, clothing, medical and dental care, supervision, and/or proper education, or the failure to protect the child from harm.

Child abuse is any recent act or failure to act resulting in imminent risk or serious harm, death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual harm, or exploitation of a child by a parent or a caretaker who is responsible for the child's welfare.

Sexual abuse perpetrated by an adult is any contact or activity of a sexual nature that occurs between a child and an adult. This includes activity which is meant to arouse or gratify the sexual desires of the adult or child. Sexual behavior between a child and an adult is always considered to be forced whether or not the child consents to it.

Sexual abuse perpetrated by a child is any contact or activity of a sexual nature that occurs between children, with or without the consent of either child, when one child has power or perceived authority over the other child. This includes any activity which is meant to arouse or gratify the sexual desires of any of the children.

Sexual exploitation includes forcing a child or soliciting a child for the purposes of prostitution; and using a child to videotape or photograph pornography.

Child sexual abuse is any form of sexual contact with a minor, non-touching offenses, or sexual exploitation of a minor. This is criminal behavior that involves children in sexual behaviors for which they cannot be personally, socially, and developmentally ready.

Child spiritual abuse the use of spiritual authority (the Bible or church authority) to emotionally, physically, and/or sexually abuse a child.

Prevention

ECHO Church takes protection against and reporting of neglect and abuse very seriously. In an effort to prevent abuse and neglect, we:

- Educate and equip staff, deacons and volunteers about neglect and abuse, including entire team training every other year
- Adhere to the procedures and guidelines as set out in this policy manual. Many of the policies are written to protect children, including the two adult rule, visibility guidelines, and diaper and bathroom policy.

- Train and background check and screen volunteers prior to contact with any children. Screening includes filling out an application, getting feedback from references and requiring a criminal background check.
- Require all full-time staff to submit to a criminal background check within a month of joining staff.
- Repeat screening procedures and criminal background checks for full-time staff and volunteers at a minimum of every three years.
- Require volunteers and staff to be members for at least six months prior to serving in children's ministry.

Any instance of suspected or observed abuse or neglect should be handled with the following guidelines.

Child Protection Committee

The Child Protection Committee (CPC) consists of a pastor, the Children's Ministry Administrator, and any ECHO members who have been designated by the pastors. All members of the CPC stand ready to address the following: **1)** Any changes that occur in the Children's Ministry that would necessitate a change in the Child Protection Policy must be approved by the CPC and presented to the church **2)** all complaints and allegations of neglect and abuse in accordance with the ECHO Child Protection Policy, church covenant, constitution, and the laws of the state of California and surrounding jurisdictions. **3)** to review and make any necessary changes to the ECHO Child Protection Policy every three years and to present any updated policy to the church.

The current Child Protection Committee consists of the following ECHO members: Hannah Knott, Katherine Catapang, Nikki Ganaden, Danny Hernandez, Jason Lee (Children's Ministry Administrator), and Patrick Vestergaard (staff pastor)

Reporting of Neglect & Abuse

Point of Contact for Reporting

Anyone who suspects, witnesses, or has any reason to believe that a child has been or is likely to be neglected and/or harmed or threatened with abuse in any form should contact the Children's Ministry Administrator, the pastor who oversees children's ministry, or any pastor at ECHO. This reporting includes questionable behavior (overly flirtatious behavior, shoulder massages or other intimate acts, etc.) and/or possible offenses (volunteers observing actual abuse or possible evidence of abuse, like abrasions, lacerations, etc.).

Any person who serves as the initial point of contact is required to report *all* allegations and/or eye-witness accounts to the entire Child Protection Committee.

Guidelines for Mandatory and Permissive Reporters

In reporting of neglect or abuse to the authorities, it is important to distinguish between permissive and mandatory reporters. A mandatory reporter may include social workers, teachers and other school personnel, physicians and other health care workers, mental health professionals, childcare providers, law enforcement officers, and domestic violence workers.

Permissive reporters include anyone who is not a mandatory reporter, which will be the majority of ECHO's volunteers and staff. The church has a moral and ethical obligation to report any neglect and abuse, so if the person suspects or witnessed or has knowledge of neglect or abuse, the person *must* talk to the point of contact for reporting—the Children's Ministry Administrator, or the pastor who oversees children's ministry, or any pastor at ECHO.

If the person who suspects or witnessed or has knowledge of neglect or abuse is a mandatory reporter, he or she must follow the guidelines and laws set out for mandatory reporters. He or she must fulfill his/her obligations to the law, including reporting to Child Protective Services or the police. At no time will the mandatory reporter be prohibited from reporting, even if their consultation with staff or leadership in the church results in a disagreement.

If you are a mandatory reporter, it is important that you know whether you must report only in the context of your professional duties or whether the obligation to report also applies when you're away from your professional duties or functioning as a volunteer at our church.

If the person who suspects or witnessed or has knowledge of neglect or abuse is a permissive reporter, they should contact the Children's Ministry Administrator and/or the pastor who oversees children, or any ECHO pastor. Because permissive reporters do not have professional training or experience in recognizing abuse, and because some of ECHO's volunteers are single adults with very little or no experience with children, they are required to report first to the Children's Ministry Administrator, the pastor who oversees children, and/or any ECHO pastor. If reporting to Child Protective Services or police is deemed as warranted by the Child Protection Committee and the pastors then that person must report. At all times, this person will be required to fulfill their obligations to the law.

District and federal laws authorize civil or criminal penalties or civil liability for failing to report a reasonable suspicion of child abuse. In addition, obstructing or interfering with an investigation of child abuse can result in criminal charges.

The church will not tolerate any retaliation against a reporter who has a reasonable suspicion of neglect or abuse.

More Guidelines on Reporting

When available, the following information will be documented and reported when helpful:

- The name, age, gender, and address of the victim(s).
- The name, age, gender, and address of the alleged perpetrator/offender(s).
- The nature, frequency, date(s) and location(s) of the abuse alleged to have occurred.

- The relationship between the victim and the alleged perpetrator/offender.
- Other evidence that supports the allegations (eyewitness, medical exams, confessions, etc.)

What should a volunteer, staff, deacon or elder do when they suspect, hear about or observe what appears to be a sign or symptom of neglect or abuse?

Talk immediately with the Children’s Ministry Administrator and/or the pastor who oversees children. The volunteer, staff, deacon or pastor should document this information on the *Child Abuse Reporting* form, which is available in every classroom (see Appendix 2). After the Children’s Ministry Administrator or the pastor who oversees children serve as an initial point of contact, they are required to report *all* allegations and/or eye-witness accounts to the entire Child Protection Committee.

What should the Children’s Ministry Administrator or the pastor who oversees children say or do with the child who is allegedly neglected or abused?

Talk with the child and find out how the injury happened, though be careful of the level of detail you pursue. Asking for too much detail might be harmful for a child as it causes them to relive the abusive experience. If the child is describing what might be abuse, the objective is to obtain very general information that may help substantiate or alleviate the suspicion. Ask the child open-ended questions and get them to relay the event in their own words. Be careful to not suggest answers to the child and be sensitive to the fact that the child will be scared to tell the story, sometimes out of fear that it will upset adults or will not be believed. Write out a report that should include signs or symptoms observed, notations about bruises or injuries that are visible, a summary of the conversation with the child, and a description of any emotions expressed by the child. Do not ask the child to undress in order to show bruises or injuries that are not visible. Include all of this information on the *Child Abuse Reporting* form, which is available in every classroom.

What should volunteers or staff report when they hear of a story of abuse?

Note *what* the child said happened, *who* the child was with when it happened, *where* it happened, and *when* it happened. All of this should be documented.

What should a volunteer or staff do when they observe an incident that may be abusive?

Immediately intervene to protect the child; follow-up immediately with Children’s Ministry Administrator or the pastor who oversees children; write out a report about the incident; and act in accordance with all reporting laws. The volunteer or staff should keep an on-going log of the suspected person’s behavior and anything else that is relevant concerning that person or the child or their relationship.

How Can We Learn About the Different Laws, Regulations, and Guidelines in California?

Laws, regulations, and guidelines for reporting child neglect and abuse differ from state to state. For general information on guidelines for mandatory or permissive reporters in California, ask

the Children's Ministry Administrator for the summary page entitled *Child Abuse & Neglect Reporting Guidelines in CA* (see Appendix 3). For specific questions regarding your legal obligation under one or more of these laws, please consult with an attorney.

Response to Neglect & Abuse

ECHO Church will ensure that a caring response is always provided to any suspicion or witnessing of neglect or abuse. Every allegation of neglect or abuse will be taken seriously. Proper guidelines for handling such complaints will be followed diligently and exhaustively. The victim(s) and victim's family will be cared for by the church in whatever way is available. Situations will be handled forthrightly with due respect for all parties' privacy and confidentiality.

Who Should be Notified?

The church will seek professional assistance when deemed appropriate by the Child Protection Committee and the pastors of ECHO Church. Notification will be limited to those who need to know about the allegation and to those who can provide assistance in responding to neglect or abuse. The church may:

- Report suspicions or firsthand accounts or any knowledge of abuse to civil authorities.
- Full cooperation must be given to civil authorities.
- Notify church disciplers, counselors or medical personnel in order to obtain ongoing care for the victim(s) and victim's families.
- Notify an insurance agent, denominational leaders, or any other outside officials.
- Notify and consult with a church attorney.

How Will ECHO Respond to Allegations, Admission or Criminal Conviction?

Allegations of neglect or abuse, admission of child abuse by staff, elder, deacon, volunteer, helper, or any member of ECHO, or criminal conviction of abuse should:

- be reported to ECHO's pastors. This disclosure of abuse is to be done regardless of the source of the information and should be conveyed to the pastors within 48 hours of the allegation being made or the admission of child abuse or criminal conviction.
- result in immediate ineligibility and removal of the alleged perpetrator or criminal offender from being granted approval to participate in any activity or program involving children.
- The Child Protection Committee and the pastors of ECHO will decide on other appropriate responses to allegations, self-admission of guilt, or criminal conviction, some of which may include:
 - Contacting police or CPS.
 - Notification of staff, deacons and any volunteers.
 - Reporting allegations, self-admission or criminal conviction to the congregation during ECHO's Sunday gatherings or members' (business) meeting.
 - Barring from any activities or church programs with children or the children's ministry

area at the church building.

- The Child Protection Committee will designate ECHO members or staff, who will accompany the alleged perpetrator or criminal offender at all times while he or she is on ECHO's property or anywhere in ECHO's buildings. The alleged perpetrator will be notified of this requirement immediately after allegations are made known to staff or pastors.
- Disciplining and/or excommunication (removal from membership) of alleged perpetrator or criminal offender in a public members' (business) meeting by the congregation.
- Barring alleged perpetrator or criminal offender from any and all church property.
- Suspension or termination of a paid staff member or volunteer position.
- Acknowledging to another organization about allegations against or termination of staff, a pastor, deacon, volunteer, helper, or any member of ECHO for misconduct or abuse against children.

If staff, ECHO elders, or a member of the Child Protection Committee learns from CPS or police that allegations of neglect or abuse are being investigated or criminal charges have been filed, the ECHO pastors should:

- Be careful to not interfere with the investigation by police or CPS;
- Prevent contact between the accused and the accuser if appropriate;
- Remove the accused from activities or programs involving children, pending the outcome of the investigation.
- Appoint a member of the Child Protection Committee or the elder board to be a liaison with CPS and the police.

If an adult alleges an incident of neglect or abuse that happened when he was a child in an ECHO program, then:

- Members of the Child Protection Committee should hire a trained mental health professional (preferably who is not associated with the church) who can provide the Child Protection Committee with an assessment. The victim will have to provide consent for such an interview and to have the assessment released to the Child Protection Committee in confidence.
- If the accused is no longer a part of ECHO then the Child Protection Committee should consult with the pastors and legal counsel to determine legal and moral need to report to police or CPS and any other organization that the accused may be a part of since his departure from ECHO.
- Even if government officials are no longer bound to investigate due to a statute of limitations, ECHO should respond to *all* allegations with the care and diligence traced out in this policy manual.

Confidentiality

The church, as well as permissive or mandatory reporters, will maintain confidentiality to the extent that it deems appropriate for the care of its members and consistent with applicable law. Allegations and suspicion should be reported only to the persons specified in this policy manual.

Response to Media

If appropriate, the ECHO pastors will respond to the media. Normally, one pastor or member will be designated by the pastors to speak to the media on behalf of the church. A written statement should be distributed at the time of media disclosure. Great care should be taken to disclose only facts and not suspicion. Disclosed facts might include the nature of the abuse allegation and when the alleged abuse happened. Great care should be taken to protect the identity of all parties involved (the alleged abuser and victim). Alerting the media lets the alleged victim know that allegations will be taken seriously and gives other vulnerable members of the community a chance to be protected.

Sexual Offenders in the Church

When an Alleged or Convicted Offender Attends ECHO or an ECHO Related Activity

If ECHO's pastors or children's ministry staff learn *in advance* that an alleged or convicted sexual offender is wanting to attend an ECHO service:

- The Child Protection Committee must decide whether to admit him or her to church services or ECHO related activities. Admission of the offender will be based on factors such as extent of prior convictions, and his or her willingness to follow guidelines set out by this policy. This is not a comprehensive list of admission criteria.
- A member of the Child Protection Committee (or a designated member of ECHO church) will contact the offender letting him or her know that he or she must be accompanied at all times while on ECHO's property or anywhere in ECHO's buildings and/or during duration of ECHO related activity.

If an alleged or convicted sexual offender participates in any ECHO related activity or public service that has the possibility of children being present:

- The pastor overseeing children's ministry, children's ministry staff, children's ministry deacons, the nursery team leader serving on that day, and hall monitor should be notified.
- The Child Protection Committee will designate ECHO members or staff, who will accompany the alleged perpetrator or criminal offender at all times while he or she is on ECHO's property or anywhere in ECHO's buildings.
- He or she will not be allowed in the education building during the public corporate gatherings.
- The Child Protection Committee will work with members to come up with guidelines for ECHO related activities that are not on church property, but elsewhere.

When an Alleged or Convicted Offender Attends Regularly

If he/she chooses to attend regularly:

- The pastors will be notified.

- The congregation will be notified in a public service of the church, most likely the members' (business) meeting. ECHO reserves the right to forbid someone from coming to the church for Sunday gatherings, programs, or activities. When participating in church activities outside of the church building, the same guidelines apply.
- The sexual offender should provide a member of the Child Protection Committee with the name of his/her probation officer. Someone from the Child Protection Committee will contact the probation officer and find out 1) more about the underlying offense – offenders tend to minimize their offenses, and 2) the specific terms of the probation in order to make sure the offender stays in compliance while at the church.

When A Sexual Offender Seeks Membership at ECHO

If the offender seeks membership at ECHO, the pastors and church retain a right to refuse membership. If the pastors and church offer membership to an offender, it will be conditional on his or her agreement to:

- Verify the history of offenses, convictions, and adjudication of sexual offenses and disclose them to the ECHO pastors and the members of the Child Protection Committee.
- A member of the Child Protection Committee contacting his/her probation officer to find out the underlying offense and the specific terms of probation.
- The Children's Ministry Administrator doing a thorough criminal background check. If the information provided by the offender differs from the information given by the probation officer or gathered by the Children's Ministry Administrator that will be grounds for denying membership.
- Disclosure of information to parents and the congregation. The information released to the church is at the discretion of the pastors. A letter detailing this information will be sent directly to all member parents.
- Refrain from any form of communication (including phone, IM, texting, email, social media or any type of technology), social fellowship, physical contact, mentoring, babysitting, or coaching with children or youth or participate in any activities or programs related to children or youth both inside and outside of the church.
- The Child Protection Committee will designate ECHO members or staff, who will accompany the alleged perpetrator or criminal offender at all times while he or she is on ECHO's property or anywhere in ECHO's buildings or in attendance at any church related services, activities, or gatherings that has the possibility of children being present.
- Any restrictions that pastors determine.
- Permission to notify the leadership, congregation, and parents of anything that the pastors deem significant for these groups to know.
- A warning that the church will report any suspected activity to civil authorities.
- A warning that any violation of the code of conduct (including allegations or suspicion of abusive behavior) can result in discipline and banning from the church facilities or any church related programs and activities.
- Sign a written document that details all of these items, plus anything else that the pastors or the Child Protection Committee deems important to include.

Other Guidelines About Sexual Offenders

If a convicted sexual offender applies for a volunteer or staff position, he or she will be denied by the church. Exceptions may only be made upon the approval of the pastors, full-disclosure to the congregation and a congregational vote.

If a sexual offender does not disclose a former allegation, conviction or adjudication, and it is revealed later, the offender will be removed from any paid or volunteer position immediately and may be removed from membership as well.

If a sexual offender is a minor, the church reserves the right to bar that minor from any children or youth activities, and will follow the guidelines set out above for any sexual offender who seeks participation in church-related public gatherings, programs or activities.

If a sexual offender leaves ECHO (as a member or regular attender) and begins attending another church, the pastors will disclose allegations or self-admission or criminal conviction of neglect or abuse to the leadership at the next church.

APPENDIX 1: Inappropriate and Appropriate Touch

Inappropriate Touching

- Shoving, hair pulling, shaking, slapping, pinching, biting, kicking, hitting, or spanking a child for any reasons.
- Squeezing of arm, neck, face, or any parts of the body.
- Tickling children in the Kids group (4-8 years old). It is over stimulating and is considered by some professionals to be a deceptive device that could lead to inappropriate touching.
- Children sitting on laps of adults is inappropriate for the Kids group (4-8 years old)
- Holding or restraining children on the lap. However, holding a child in the Toddler group (1-3 years old) is appropriate for short time spans when comfort is needed by the child or the child's behavior is out-of-control or endangering other children (this would apply for both groups).
- Touching a child in the genital areas except for younger and developmentally delayed children requiring a diaper change, bathing/washing and assistance with toileting procedures. Otherwise, touch in the genital area is only permitted by medical personnel in case of injury or suspected injury.
- Kissing a child on the lips, neck, or anywhere else. A child should never be allowed to kiss a staff member, volunteer, deacon or another child on the lips, neck, or anywhere else. Children are also not allowed to kiss one another.
- Slapping a child on the behind, even when playing.
- Fondling children, even in non-private areas.
- Carrying a child on the back unless the child is unable to walk.

Appropriate Touching

- A comforting pat on the shoulder and back, or allowing an emotionally distressed child to lean their head on your shoulder is appropriate.
- Back rub to help comfort, or put an irritable child to sleep is appropriate.
- High-Fives, handshakes, or the touching of two fists are appropriate and recommended touch, especially when interacting with older children.
- Holding hands is permitted with children when initiated by the child or when helping a child to walk, climb stairs, etc.
- Holding a child firmly with your hands to restrain him/her is appropriate when it is used to prevent a child from an accident, injury, hurting self, others, or you.

APPENDIX 2: Child Abuse Reporting Form

Instructions: If a volunteer, staff, deacon or pastor suspect, hear about or observe signs or symptoms of abuse, please: (1) Talk immediately with the Children's Ministry Administrator or the Pastor who oversees children; and (2) document any relevant information on this form.

This report should include signs or symptoms observed, notations about bruises or injuries that are visible, a summary of what the child said, and a description of any emotions expressed by the child. Do not go back and interview the child. Fill this form out based on whatever information has already been obtained.

Today's Date: _____

Name of Child: _____

Name of Parent/Guardian: _____

Name of Volunteer: _____

Check all that apply:

- Team Leader Notified
- Deacon(ess) Notified
- CMA Notified
- CM Pastor Notified

Signs or Symptoms of Abuse Observed:

Bruises or Injuries that are Visible:

Emotions expressed by the Child:

Summary of the Conversation with the Child:

Anything Else that is Relevant:

APPENDIX 3: Child Abuse & Neglect Reporting Guidelines in California

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families Administration on Children, Youth and Families Children's Bureau
<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/systemwide/laws-policies/statutes/manda/>

Introduction

The following guidelines are only intended to serve general educational purposes, and is not intended as a substitute for competent legal advice from an attorney familiar with the laws and regulations regarding child abuse and neglect in California. Each individual ECHO employee and volunteer is responsible for fulfilling his or her personal obligation to comply with the laws and regulations applicable to him or her with respect to reporting child abuse and neglect, and may need to consult with a legal professional in order to understand and comply with applicable laws and regulations. However, in determining any legal obligations that ECHO may have with respect to reporting child abuse or neglect, it may need the assistance of a staff person or volunteer to determine relevant facts and circumstances.

California Professionals Required to Report Penal Code § 11165.7

Mandated reporters include the following:

- Teachers, teacher's aides, administrators, and employees of public or private schools
- Administrators or employees of day camps, youth centers, or youth recreation programs
- Administrators or employees of licensed community care or child daycare facilities; Head Start program teachers
- Public assistance workers
- Foster parents, group home personnel, and personnel of residential care facilities
- Social workers, probation officers, and parole officers
- Employees of school district police or security departments
- District attorney investigators, inspectors, or local child support agency caseworkers
- Peace officers and firefighters, except for volunteer firefighters
- Physicians, surgeons, psychiatrists, psychologists, dentists, residents, interns, podiatrists, chiropractors, licensed nurses, dental hygienists, optometrists, marriage and family therapists, or social workers
- State or county public health employees who treat minors for venereal diseases or other conditions
- Coroners and medical examiners
- Commercial film and photographic print or image processors; computer technicians
- Child visitation monitors
- Animal control or humane society officers
- Clergy members and custodians of records of clergy members
- Employees of police departments, county sheriff's departments, county probation departments, or county welfare departments
- Employees or volunteers of a Court-Appointed Special Advocate program

- Alcohol and drug counselors
- Employees or administrators of public or private postsecondary institutions
- Athletic coaches, athletic administrators, or athletic directors employed by any public or private schools
- Athletic coaches, including, but not limited to, assistant coaches or graduate assistants involved in coaching at public or private postsecondary institutions

**Reporting by Other
Persons Penal Code §§ 11165.7; 11166**

Volunteers of public or private organizations whose duties require direct contact with and supervision of children are not mandated reporters but are encouraged to obtain training in the identification and reporting of child abuse and neglect and are further encouraged to report known or suspected instances of child abuse or neglect.

Any other person who reasonably suspects that a child is a victim of abuse or neglect may report.

For the purposes of this section, ‘any other person’ includes a mandated reporter who acts in his or her private capacity and not in his or her professional capacity, or within the scope of his or her employment.

**Institutional Responsibility to Report
Penal Code § 11166(h)-(i)**

When two or more persons, who are required to report have joint knowledge of a known or suspected instance of child abuse or neglect, and when there is agreement among them, the telephone report may be made by a member of the team selected by mutual agreement and a single report may be made and signed by the selected member of the reporting team. Any member who has knowledge that the member designated to report has failed to do so shall thereafter make the report.

The reporting duties under this section are individual; no supervisor or administrator may impede or inhibit the reporting duties, and no person making a report shall be subject to any sanction for making the report. However, internal procedures to facilitate reporting and apprise supervisors and administrators of reports may be established provided that they are not inconsistent with this article. The internal procedures shall not require any employee required to make reports to disclose his or her identity to the employer.

Reporting the information regarding a case of possible child abuse or neglect to an employer, supervisor, school principal, school counselor, coworker, or other person shall not be a substitute for making a mandated report to an agency specified in § 11165.9.

Penal Code §§ 11166; 11165.7

A report is required when:

- A mandated reporter, in his or her professional capacity or within the scope of his or her employment, has knowledge of or observes a child whom the reporter knows or reasonably suspects is the victim of abuse or neglect.
- Commercial film and photographic print processors have knowledge of or observe any film, photograph, videotape, negative, or slide depicting a child under age 16 engaged in an act of sexual conduct.
- Commercial computer technicians have knowledge of or observe, within the scope of their professional capacity or employment, any representation of information, data, or an image, including, but not limited to, any computer hardware, software, file, floppy disk, USB, data storage medium, CD-ROM, computer-generated equipment, or computer-generated image, that is retrievable in perceivable form and that is intentionally saved, transmitted, or organized on an electronic medium, depicting a child under age 16 engaged in an act of sexual conduct.
- For the purposes of this article, ‘reasonable suspicion’ means that it is objectively reasonable for a person to entertain a suspicion, based upon facts that could cause a reasonable person in a like position, drawing, when appropriate, on his or her training and experience, to suspect child abuse or neglect. ‘Reasonable suspicion’ does not require certainty that child abuse or neglect has occurred nor does it require a specific medical indication of child abuse or neglect; any ‘reasonable suspicion’ is sufficient. For the purposes of this article, the pregnancy of a minor does not, in and of itself, constitute a basis for a reasonable suspicion of sexual abuse.

Privileged Communications

Penal Code § 11166

The clergy-penitent privilege is permitted for penitential communications. This does not modify or limit a clergy member’s duty to report known or suspected child abuse or neglect when the clergy member is acting in some other capacity that would otherwise make the clergy member a mandated reporter.

Inclusion of Reporter’s Name in Report

Penal Code § 11167

Reports of mandated reporters shall include:

- The name, business address, and telephone number of the mandated reporter
- The capacity that makes the person a mandated reporter
- Reports of other persons do not require the reporter’s name.

Disclosure of Reporter Identity

Penal Code § 11167

The identity of the reporter shall be confidential and disclosed only:

- Among agencies receiving or investigating mandated reports
- To the prosecutor in a criminal prosecution or in an action initiated under § 602 of the Welfare and Institutions Code arising from alleged child abuse
- To counsel appointed pursuant to § 317(c) of the Welfare and Institutions Code
- To the county counsel or prosecutor in a proceeding under Part 4 (commencing with Section 7800) of Division 12 of the Family Code or § 300 of the Welfare and Institutions Code
- To a licensing agency when abuse or neglect in out-of-home care is reasonably suspected
- When the reporter waives confidentiality
- By court order