

Abuse Prevention Policy

Introduction

I understand that Grow Church, Inc. is a safe place for children and vulnerable adults and that Grow Church, Inc. complies with all Federal and State laws regarding reporting suspected child abuse. As an Employee of Grow Church, Inc., I understand that suspected abuse is to be reported. I also understand the four types of abuse defined below:

- Physical: a physical act directed at a child or vulnerable adult that causes injury.
- Sexual: contact or interactions between a child and an adult, or another child, when the child is being used for sexual stimulation of the perpetrator or another person. This includes exploitation through photographs, videos, or other communication methods.
- Emotional: acts or omissions by the parent or other caregivers that have caused, or could cause, serious behavioral, cognitive, emotional, or mental disorders.
- Neglect: failure to provide for the basic needs of a child or vulnerable adult. This includes adequate adult supervision, medical attention, housing, food, and clothing. Most cases of physical neglect involve inadequate adult supervision that has caused harm to the child or vulnerable adult or places them in danger of such harm.

Sexual misconduct is against the law and will not be tolerated. It is important that all Grow Church, Inc. Employees and Grow Team Members understand and implement these guidelines to help prevent abuse against children. The following includes the purpose and definitions for these guidelines, the outlines of protection and prevention, and an acknowledgement to be signed by those people working with children.

Purpose

These procedures designed to reduce the risk of sexual abuse in order to:

- Provide a safe and secure environment for kids, students, adults, members, Grow Team Members, visitors and Employees.
- Assist Grow Church, Inc. in evaluating a person's suitability to supervise, oversee, and/or exert control over the activities of kids and students.
- Satisfy the concerns of parents and Employees with a screening process for Employees and Grow Team Members.
- Provide a system to respond to alleged victims of abuse and their families, as well as the alleged perpetrator.
- Reduce the possibility of false accusations of abuse made against Grow Team Members and Employees.

Protection and Prevention



The following screening procedures are to be used with Employees and Grow Team Members who are entrusted with the care and supervision of minors or a person who directly oversees and/or exerts control or oversight over minors. All information collected should be maintained in confidence.

- State and Federal Criminal Background Check (for individuals 18 and older): Grow Church, Inc. will conduct a criminal background check on all Employees and Grow Team Members who are entrusted with the care and supervision of minors or a person who directly oversees and/or exerts control or oversight over minors. All criminal background checks will be updated periodically.
- The release statement attached to this document must be signed by the individual working with kids or students.

Confidentiality

Information obtained through the screening, application, reference check, interview, and criminal background check will be kept in confidence, unless otherwise required by law. All information discovered or obtained through the above-referenced means will be kept in a secure location and access to it will be restricted if possible.

Supervision Procedures

Unless an extenuating situation exists, Grow Church, Inc.:

- Will have adequate number of screened and trained Employees or Grow Team Members present at events involving minors. Supervision will increase in proportion to the risk of the activity.
- Will monitor facilities during activities involving kids.
- Will release minors only to a parent or guardian and utilize sign-in and sign-out system.
- Will obtain written parental permission, including a signed medical treatment form and emergency contacts, before taking minors on trips and should provide information regarding the trip.
- Will use two Employees when transporting minors in vehicles.
- Will require that young kids be accompanied to the restroom and the Employee or Grow Team Member wait outside the facility to escort the child back to the activity. Whenever possible, the escort will be the same sex as the minor.
- Will encourage minors to use a “buddy system” whenever minors go on trips off of Grow Church, Inc. property.
- Will screen all Employees and Grow Team Members and approve those individuals in advance for any overnight activities.

Behavioral Guidelines for Religious Organization Employees

All Grow Team Members and Employees will observe the following guidelines:

- Do not provide alcoholic beverages, tobacco, drugs, contraband, or anything that is prohibited by law to minors.
- To the extent possible, Grow Church, Inc. events that are co-educational will have both male and female chaperones.
- Whenever possible, at least two unrelated Employees or Grow Team Members will be in the room when minors are present. Speaking to a minor or minors one-on-one should be done in public settings where Employees or Grow Team Members are in sign of other people.
- Avoid all inappropriate touching with minors. All touching shall be based on the needs of the individual being touched, not on the needs of the Grow Team Member or Employee. In the event a minor initiates physical contact and/or inappropriate touching, it is appropriate to inform the minor that such touching is inappropriate.
- Never engage in physical discipline of a minor. Grow Team Members and Employees shall not abuse minors in any way, including but not limited to physical abuse, verbal/mental abuse, emotional abuse and sexual abuse of any kind.
- If you recognize an inappropriate relationship developing between a minor and adult, maintain clear, professional boundaries and refer the minor to another individual with supervisory authority.
- If one-on-one pastoral care is necessary, avoid meeting in isolated environments.
- Anyone who observes abuse of a minor will take appropriate steps to immediately intervene and provide assistance. Report any inappropriate conduct to the proper authorities and officials of Grow Church, Inc. for handling.

Disqualification

No person may be entrusted with the care and supervision of minors or may directly oversee and/or exert control or oversight over minors who has been convicted of the offenses outlined below, been on a probated sentence or received deferred adjudication for any offense outlined below, or has been presently pending any criminal charges for any offense outlined below until a determination of guilt or innocence has been made, including any person who is presently on deferred adjudication. The following offenses disqualify a person from care, supervision, control or oversight of minors:

- Any offense against minors as defined by state law.
- A misdemeanor or felony offense as defined by state law that is classified as sexual assault, indecency with a minor or adult, assault of a minor or adult, injury to a minor or adult, abandoning or endangering a minor, sexual performance with a minor or adult, possession or promoting child pornography, enticing a minor, bigamy, incest, drug-related offenses, or family violence.

- A prior criminal history of an offense against minors.

Response to Sexual Abuse

Grow Church, Inc. will respond promptly to investigate any accusation of sexual abuse. All accusations of sexual abuse will be taken seriously. It is important to be appropriately respectful to the needs and feelings of those who allege sexual abuse and those who have been accused of sexual abuse.

When an allegation is made involving sexual abuse, the person reporting the complaint is to be told about the guidelines and the procedures to be followed. The Pastor or an appointed person will begin investigating the allegations and may use the assistance of legal counsel or other consultants. If the Pastor is the individual accused of sexual abuse, then a Grow Church, Inc official will conduct the investigation. The investigation will be conducted as follows:

- Report the incident to appropriate authorities in accordance with state mandatory reporting laws.
- Report the matter to Grow Church, Inc.'s insurance carrier. Cooperate with authorities and the insurance carrier.
- Grow Church, Inc. may suspend (with pay for Employees) the alleged offender while a confidential investigation is being conducted.
- An official of Grow Church, Inc. (and legal counsel or other consultants) will then meet with the governing body of Grow Church, Inc. and present a report on their investigation, which will include findings and recommendations of actions.
- An official of Grow Church, Inc. will meet with the alleged perpetrator and notify him/her of the results of the investigation and the recommendations for actions.
- An official of Grow Church, Inc. will meet with the alleged victim, along with his/her parents or guardians, and notify them of the results of the investigation and recommendations for actions.
- During the investigation, an official of Grow Church, Inc. shall maintain contact with the alleged victim and his/her parents or legal guardian, and inform them of the actions taken and assist them in their process of healing.
- An official of Grow Church, Inc. (and legal counsel or other consultants) may meet with the alleged perpetrator, the alleged victim, and any others with knowledge of relevant facts.
- Communicate with criminal and civil legal counsel of Grow Church, Inc.
- Communicate with those affected by the ministry of the alleged perpetrator.
- Hire a consultant or assign a spokesperson to respond to media or prepare a statement for the media if the need shall arise, subject to the approval of Grow Church, Inc's attorney.



Abuse Prevention Policy Acknowledgement

These guidelines have been designed to guide and assist you when working with minors or vulnerable adults. The information establishes general practices and guidelines and should not be construed in any way as a contract of employment or continued employment. Grow Church, Inc. reserves the right to make changes in the content or application of this policy and to implement those changes with or without notice.

The terms defined herein are defined for the purposes of the policy and do not suppose or establish a legal relationship. These terms are not defined for the purposes of creating a legal relationship with Grow Church, Inc. or any related or associated entity and instead are to be used with this document.

I have received a copy of the Grow Church, Inc.'s Child, Youth, and Vulnerable Adult Abuse Prevention Policy. I understand it is my responsibility to become familiar with and adhere to the information contained herein I understand that these policies are the property of Grow Church, Inc.

Printed Name

Signature

Date