Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect/Policy

ST. JOSEPH ACADEMY

Department:	ECEC; SJA School; Volunteers
Number:	850.2 same as 920.1 and similar to 800.1
Effective Date:	July 24, 2013
Review Date:	July 24. 2026
Revised Date:	July 16, 2025
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I. Policy: St. Joseph Academy is committed to sharing and applying all the components of this policy. This policy outlines the Early Childhood Education Center of St. Joseph and St. Joseph Academy procedures on reporting child abuse and neglect, staff or volunteers being accused of abuse or neglect of a child, and situations where representatives from Child Protective Services (CPS) investigates a case at our organization.

II. Procedures:

A. **Definition of Sexual Abuse and Neglect:**
Sexual Abuse is when a child is engaged in a sexual situation with an adult or an older child.
Neglect is when a child's basic needs are not met for reasons other than poverty.

B. **Guiding Principles:**
The following guiding principles influenced the formulation of this policy.
- SJA is committed to selecting the best possible individuals to work and/or volunteer for the organization and to screen out individuals who are at risk of abusing children.
- SJA is committed to creating and maintaining an environment in which children and adults interact in safe an appropriate manner.
- SJA is committed to creating and maintaining an environment that safe guard against risk of abuse.
- SJA is committed to prevent, recognize and respond to inappropriate and harmful behaviors and reinforce appropriate behaviors on a timely basis.
- SJA is committed to provide staff and volunteers information and skill to help them prevent and respond to child abuse, sexual abuse, maltreatment and neglect.

C. **Background:**
The Department of Public Instruction (DPI) and the Department of Children and Families (DCF) consider **individuals working with children mandated reporters.** This means teachers and volunteers are required to report any suspicions of child abuse and neglect. It is not our responsibility to prove that a child is being abused or neglected, our job and responsibility is to report our suspicions.

D. **Reporting:**
Prior to contacting child protective services, you need to do the following:
- Document your observations. You can write your observations in the medical log and/or you can complete an incident report.
- Notify your immediate supervisor, as well as, President/ CEO of your suspicions. When age appropriate, the leadership staff may ask you to ask the child some open-ended questions about the incident, and/or it might be decided to ask the parent some additional questions.
- If it is deemed that this situation should be reported, the Director/ assistant Director or Principal will contact CPS.

Please note, informing the leadership staff does not alleviate your responsibility for reporting your suspicions to CPS. You are to follow up with the leadership team to see if the incident was reported. If they failed to report the incident and you feel that this incident should be reported, you are to contact CPS and make the report. The phone number for CPS is 414-220-SAFE.

E. **CPS Referral**

When you contact CPS, they will ask you a variety of questions. Be prepared to provide the following information:

1. The Child's Name.
2. The Child's Date of Birth.
3. The Parent or Guardian's Name.
4. The Parent's Home and or Work Phone Number.
5. The Child's Home Address.
6. If the Child has other Siblings that live in the Household.
7. Describe the Incident

CPS may contact the parent and or visit the child at the Center. CPS will not inform the parent of who made the referral.

F. **CPS Visit**

Typically, when a referral is made to CPS, they may visit the child's home, as well as, the Academy. In the event that CPS visits a child at the Academy, the Principal should be notified immediately. The Principal along with the child's teacher or primary care giver will meet with CPS. In the event of the Principal's absence, the assistant principal should be notified and meet with CPS along with the child's teachers.

In the event CPS wants to meet with the child alone, a space will be provided and an administrator will wait outside the door while CPS meets with the child.

G. **Staff or Volunteer Being Accused of Abuse or Neglect**

If an accusation of abuse and neglect is made against a staff member or volunteer, the leadership will conduct an investigation. Depending on the severity of the situation, the staff (volunteer) member may be removed from the classroom and or be suspended without pay until the outcome of the investigation.

The President/CEO, ECEC Director, or Principal will notify DPI or our licensing specialist of the accusation, as well as, inform him or her of the outcome. They will also notify the Human Resource Director who then will notify our insurance carrier. If the staff member is found guilty of the accusation, employment with St. Joseph Academy will be terminated immediately.

H. **Investigation of Abuse or Neglect of a Child Outside of SJA**

If a staff member is involved with a case of abuse or neglect that occurred outside the agency, the staff member must notify the Principal or ECEC Director immediately. The President/CEO will notify the proper authorities.

The disposition of the situation will be determined with input provided by DPI or our licensing specialist. Depending on the situation, the staff member may be suspended without pay until the outcomes of the case have been decided. If the staff member is found guilty of abuse or neglect or any misconduct involving a child, their employment with St. Joseph Academy will be terminated immediately. Any volunteer accused of abuse will not be permitted in the building until an investigation is completed and their name is cleared. In all investigations, SJA employees and volunteers are expected to cooperate fully with the proper authorities.

I. **Commitment Signature Sheet (Follows on next page.)**

St. Joseph Academy

CERTIFICATION and ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I have read and understand this document describing the **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES TO PROTECT CHILDREN AND YOUTH FROM ABUSE AND NEGLECT**. I understand that these apply to my employment, that I am a mandated reporter, and that I must follow all Laws, Regulations, Policies, Standards of Conduct and Code of Ethics to ensure that children are always safe when in my care.

_____
Signature

_____
Printed Name

_____
Position

St. Joseph Academy
Organization

_____
Date

The Human Resources Director of St. Joseph Academy is responsible for ensuring that all employees have signed this "Certification and Acknowledgement" form regarding the document

"POLICIES AND PROCEDURES TO PROTECT CHILDREN AND YOUTH FROM ABUSE AND NEGLECT". Signed forms are kept on file in the Human Resources Director Office at St. Joseph Academy.

Approved by: Tabatha Jones
President/CEO

Date 7/30/2020