



Mandated Reporting and Volunteer Best Practices

What is a Mandated Reporter?

A mandated reporter is a person who, because of his or her profession or position of authority, is legally required to report any suspicion of child abuse or neglect to the relevant authorities. These laws are in place to prevent children from being abused and to end any possible abuse or neglect at the earliest possible stage.

Information provided by the MN Department of Human Services:

Anyone may report if they have witnessed or know of a minor or vulnerable adult who has been the victim of physical or mental abuse, neglect, financial exploitation or unexplained injuries. Anyone who reports abuse or neglect in good faith is immune from any civil liability. The reporter's name is confidential, accessible only upon consent of the reporter or by court order. If you are uncertain whether or not a situation should be reported you may call your local social service agency.

Reporting Child Abuse or Neglect in Scott County

Call **Health and Human Services Central Intake 952-496-8959** Monday - Friday 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. to file a report of child abuse or neglect. **Weekend or after hours reports can be made by calling 952-496-8484 or contacting your local law enforcement.** If there is imminent danger please call 911 to report.

What is the responsibility of Pastors, Staff, and Volunteers?

Pastors are classified as mandated reporters and are legally required to report suspected abuse or neglect. All mandated reporters who fail to report may be charged with a misdemeanor.

Church Staff are expected to act as mandated reporters and report suspected abuse or neglect. SOLLC personnel guidelines also require staff to confidentially notify an SOLLC pastor of any report they have made and/or to confidentially share concerns about suspected abuse.

Volunteers are expected to act as mandated reporters and report suspected abuse or neglect. We ask volunteers to confidentially notify a Children, Youth, and Family staff member or SOLLC pastor of any report they have made and/or to confidentially share concerns about suspected abuse.

*** * If you suspect a volunteer, staff member, or pastor is involved in or covering up abuse or neglect, you should report it without notifying SOLLC staff or pastors. You always have the right to report abuse or neglect without notifying SOLLC staff or pastors.**

Potential Signs of Abuse or Neglect

SIGNS TO WATCH FOR IN CHILDREN

- Seem unduly afraid of their parents
- Often have welts, bruises, untreated sores or other injuries
- Have injuries which seem to be inadequately treated
- Show evidence of poor overall care
- Be given inappropriate food, drink or medication
- Exhibit behavioral extremes
- Is wary of physical contact, especially with adults
- Exhibits a sudden change in behavior
- Takes over the role of the parent, protective or otherwise, attempting to take care of the parents or younger sibling's needs
- Have learning problems that cannot be diagnosed
- Arrive at church too early and remains after programs conclude rather than going home
- Always tired and sleep often during program
- Inappropriately dressed for the weather

SIGNS TO WATCH FOR IN CAREGIVERS

- Reluctant to give information about the child's injuries or condition
- Respond inappropriately to the seriousness of the child's condition
- Fail to seek timely/appropriate medical care for the child
- Too critical of the child and seldom if ever discuss the child in positive terms
- Unrealistic expectations of the child, demanding behavior that is beyond the child's years or ability
- Believe in the necessity of harsh punishment for children
- Lack understanding of the child's physical, emotional and psychological needs
- Misuse of alcohol or drugs

Some of the children and students we work with do not, for various reasons, have healthy or appropriate boundaries. It is essential for both the protection of the child and volunteer that everyone demonstrates healthy boundaries. Be conscious of all emotional, physical, social and spiritual boundaries in your volunteer leadership. Always ask for consent as it communicates that a child's decision and sense of well-being matters. If you are unsure of a situation, behavior, or potential abuse or neglect, please communicate this confidentially with CYF staff so we can support you and participant.

Incident Reports:

All incidence of injury, inappropriate behavior, aggression, or safety concern must be written up for your safety and the safety of each participant. Please ask a CYF staff member for an incident report form and complete it the same day the incident occurred.

Basic Leader Do's & Don'ts

Do

- Positive Reinforcement
- Compliments
- Sympathy and Empathy
- Reinforcing Rules and Boundaries
- Helping
- Guiding
- Appropriate Humor
- Asking for Help or Participation
- Reinforcing Teamwork

Don't

- Offensive Humor
- Hurtful Sarcasm
- Making fun of someone
- Put downs
- Sharing Inappropriate Personal Information
- Criticizing or Shaming
- Threatening
- Ostracizing
- Favoritism

Never

- Isolate or meet alone with a child on or off campus.
- Provide (or offer to provide) transportation unless it is approved by caregivers and CYF staff.
- Give or loan money or gifts.
- Share contact information including phone, email, social media, etc.
- Never threaten consequences or punishment at any time. Always ask CYF staff to intervene in behavioral concerns beyond simple redirection.

Please be aware that you are in a mentorship relationship at all times. Our role is to support children, youth, and families in a safe and supportive space!

Confidential Background Checks

Creating a safe environment for our children and adolescents is a priority at SOLLC. All adult volunteers working with minors are required to submit to a confidential criminal background check every other year. All information is confidential and follow up will only occur should something flag on your report. Please use the link below or go to the [sollc.org](https://www.sollc.org) CYF page to complete your confidential background check.

<https://www.sollc.org/connect/children-and-youth/volunteer-background-checks>