

SEXUAL ABUSE PREVENTION

As an employee/volunteer of Joy-El Ministries you are considered a Mandated Reporter who is required by law to report suspected child abuse.

Sexual abuse definition – Any tricked, forced, manipulated or coerced sexual activity for the pleasure of the abuser. Abuse can be physical, verbal or visual.

Peer to peer abuse definition – Sexually harmful behavior between children involving an aggressor and a child who does not seek or want the sexual interaction.

In most states you can be convicted of sexual abuse without ever touching a child.

Statistics show:

- 1 in 4 girls will be sexually abused before the age of 18.
- 1 in 6 boys will be sexually abused before the age of 18. This number can vary from 1 in 4 to 1 in 8 because boys are less likely to tell than girls.
- 2 out of 3 abuse victims don't tell until adulthood (average age 34-35) if they ever tell.
- 90% of victims know and trust their abuser.

We don't want abuse to happen at a Bible Adventure/CIA program.

How does abuse happen and where is the breakdown?

- Failure of staff/volunteers to recognize risky/grooming behavior.
- Failure of staff member to communicate to leadership.
- Failure of leadership to receive the information.

5 words we don't want to hear – “**Now that you mention it...**”

“Now that you mention it...I did observe him go into the room alone with a student”.

“Now that you mention it...he did seem to give that student a lot of gifts”.

“Now that you mention it...I saw some pictures over the weekend on Facebook”.

Grooming – the offender will appear to be the model staff/volunteer. They will gain the trust of their superiors, fellow staff/volunteers, parents, etc. (They are the gatekeepers.)

What should you be looking for?

- They will tend to be pretty popular with the students.
- They will typically pick one student – usually one that is on the fringe.
- They tend to be more touchy with students.
- They will give gifts.
- They will plan “student-magnet” activities to draw students in.
- They will break the rules. We don't typically catch abusers abusing, but we will catch them breaking rules (ex. being alone with a student in a room with a closed door and no windows, alone in the bathroom with a student).
- They will acknowledge breaking a rule, but will rationalize the reason it occurred.

- They will jokingly introduce sexual conversation with their students as well as “accidental” nudity.
- Playful, inappropriate touching – wrestling, etc.

We don’t want to lose the essence of our ministry – one-on-one discipleship. So **what actions we can take?**

- A staff/volunteer and student should never be alone in a room with no windows or a closed door.
- There should not be any less than 2 volunteers/staff in a room or vehicle with students.
- Always use appropriate physical behavior – high five, pat on back or shoulder or brief side hug.
- Avoid inappropriate touches (touching anywhere that would be covered by a bathing suit)
- Avoid inappropriate conversations with students and each other - comments or jokes that are sexual or degrading.
- Create an environment where we model appropriate behavior. That means consistency from all staff/volunteers.

If you observe inappropriate behavior by another staff/volunteer

Please report this to the School Coordinator, Equipping Coordinator, Director of Bible Adventure/CIA or CEO immediately. It should not be discussed with anyone else, including full-time staff.

If you suspect sexual abuse of a child is occurring:

In PA call ChildLine at 1-800-932-0313 (line is available 24/7) to make a report. After making the call, you must follow up with an electronic report or a written report on the CY-47 Form (Report of Suspected Child Abuse) within 48 hours of making the oral report.

OR

Submit the report directly to ChildLine via the Child Welfare Information Solution portal.

In West Virginia call the Dept. of Health and Human Resources Centralized Intake at 1-800-352-6513.

In Maryland call the Dept. of Human Services at 1-800-917-7383.

After making the report, you must tell the person in charge of the program (Equipping Coordinator, Assistant Director, Director of Bible Adventure/CIA or CEO. That person is then responsible to facilitate the organization’s cooperation with any investigation and assists the mandated reporter with any concerns.