



# OAK HILL CHRISTIAN SERVICE CAMP

*Planting seeds that will grow*

Heather Ferguson, Interim Camp Manager

[www.oakhillcamp.org](http://www.oakhillcamp.org)

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## GUIDE FOR CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT REPORTING PROCEDURES

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Any camp volunteer or staff who suspects that a child is being abused or neglected has a moral and legal responsibility to act on behalf of the child. Section 63.2-100 of the Code of Virginia defines an abused or neglected child as any child under 18 years of age whose parent or legal guardian:

- Causes or threatens to cause a non-accidental physical or mental injury;
- Has a child present during the manufacture or attempted manufacture of a controlled substance or during the unlawful sale of such substance where such activity would constitute a felony violation;
- Neglects or refuses to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, emotional nurturing or health care;
- Abandons the child;
- Neglects or refuses to provide adequate supervision in relation to a child's age and level of development;
- Knowingly leaves a child alone in the same dwelling with a person, not related by blood or marriage, who has been convicted of an offense against a minor for which registration is required as a violent sexual offender; or
- Commits or allows to be committed any illegal sexual act upon a child, including incest, rape, indecent exposure, prostitution, or allows a child to be used in any sexually explicit visual material.
- An abused or neglected child is also a child who has been identified as a victim of sex trafficking.

In compliance with the Code of Virginia § 63.2-1509 et seq. if child abuse or neglect is suspected it shall be immediately reported to:

- A. The local department of social services where the child resides or where the abuse or neglect is believed to have occurred; (Hanover County Department of Social Services between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. at (804) 365-4100); or
- B. The Virginia Department of Social Services' toll-free child abuse and neglect hotline 1-800-552-7096; or
- C. The camp manager or camp dean. Any camp manager or dean to whom such report is made shall make the report as soon as possible, but no later than 24 hours, to Child Protective Services or the Hanover County Department of Social Services, and shall notify the camp volunteer or staff pursuant to 63.2-1509(A) that the report has been made, the name of the individual receiving the report, and the receipt of any communication or information pertaining to the report or action taken with regard to the report.

The reporter should give their name and phone number and be prepared to give the child's name, address, birth date, caretaker's name, alleged abuser's name and any other pertinent information requested. The complainant's name shall be confidential unless the court directs otherwise.

The Department of Social Services has the legal responsibility to receive and investigate suspected cases of abuse/neglect. The law gives the protective service workers authority to talk to the child and his siblings without parental permission, to photograph the child and to assume temporary custody of the child in instances where the child's life or health is in imminent danger. Social Services will make every effort to be readily accessible to the camp. Timely feedback will be given whenever possible.

Camp personnel shall fully cooperate with the Protective Service Worker in the detection and prevention of abuse/neglect. This cooperation includes permission for the social worker to interview the child at camp without the presence of camp personnel. If appropriate, the worker may request the presence of camp personnel. If the alleged abuse occurred at camp, the camp manager or dean must also notify the Camp Board within 24 hours of the report.

### **INDICATORS OF A CHILD'S NEED FOR PROTECTION**

Some forms of abuse may not leave obvious physical evidence. There are, however, behavioral signs that may indicate victimization. You should be alert to these signs of abuse:

- Changes in behavior, extreme mood swings, withdrawal, fearfulness, excessive crying and physical aggression.
- Nightmares, fear of going to bed or other sleep disturbances.
- Acting out inappropriate sexual activity or showing an unusual interest in sexual matters.
- Regression to infantile behavior.
- A fear of certain places, people or activities, especially being alone with certain people. Children should not be forced to give affection to an adult or teenager if they do not want to. A desire to avoid this may indicate a problem or may indicate that parents have cautioned the child against such behavior.
- Pain, itching, bleeding, fluid or rawness in the private areas.

You should note that some of these behaviors may have other explanations. A child who comes to summer camp is entering a strange environment and may experience homesickness or anxieties which can lead to behaviors such as these. Do not simply discount the behavior as homesickness, however. Immediately bring it to the attention of the camp manager or dean. You are in a position to be a comfort and aid to the campers placed in your care. Even if the child's behavior is a result of homesickness, his or her camp experience will be much more enjoyable if the cause of the distress is addressed.

### **Liability of the Reporter**

Section 63.2-1512 of the *Code of Virginia* protects a person, who either makes a CPS report or participates in a court hearing that results from a CPS report, from criminal and civil liability unless it is proven that the person acted with malicious intent.

### **Penalty for Failure to Report**

Mandated reporters who fail to report suspected child abuse or neglect, as soon as possible but no longer than 24 hours after having a reason to suspect a reportable offense, shall be fined not more than \$500 for the first incident and \$1000 for any subsequent incidents. Failure to report acts of rape, sodomy, or object penetration may result in being charged with a Class 1 misdemeanor. All such incidents are referred to the local commonwealth's attorney.

For additional information, please refer to "A Guide for Mandated Reporters In Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse And Neglect", Commonwealth of Virginia, Department of Social Services, Child Protective Services