



**Orchard View Alliance Church
Janesville, Wisconsin**

Child / Youth

**Protection & Abuse
Policy & Prevention**

Information and Training Manual

Orchard View Alliance Church
Janesville, Wisconsin
September 2007

Forward

We live in a time and culture that is unlike anything we have known. It is for this very reason that we need to take drastic steps to protect our children/youth, but also to protect the leaders, teachers and helpers from false accusations as they minister to the children/youth.

Proverbs 22:6 calls us to “train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it. It is important that we, at Orchard View Alliance Church, take every opportunity to train children with this solid spiritual foundation. The time spent with each individual is critical to his or her spiritual development.

The Christian and Missionary Alliance encourage local churches to do everything possible to provide a safe and secure ministry environment for every individual, at every age level.

This document is a supplement to the main text **SAFE PLACE** published by the Christian and Missionary Alliance Division of Church Ministries, Christian Education Ministries Office. The main text of that document will remain the primary statement of authority and will be the reference for further details in this information and training manual.

This manual, along with the parent document **SAFE PLACE** is not intended to create an attitude of mistrust or to hinder the ministry to children/youth, but rather to insure that we do everything we can to protect our children from anyone who may attempt to hurt them. It is also intended to be used to inform and train the church leadership, child/youth leaders, teachers, workers and helpers.

To provide a positive atmosphere for Christian development, great care must be taken to ensure that staff, volunteers and helpers meet the highest standards. It is our goal to make sure that every person who comes in contact with a child is a qualified and a safe worker. In order for this to happen, we ask every prospective worker to take the time to read this document, fill out the forms and sign where indicated.

Thank you for sharing our concern in having safe and loving Christian ministries.

A BACKGROUND OF UNDERSTANDING

Church leaders are responsible for providing a safe and secure environment for the ministries of their local churches. This responsibility includes recruiting and training volunteers, providing proper supervision, maintaining a safe facility, and caring for the specific needs of children/youth. One of the biggest needs in creating a safe place is to safeguard against child abuse.

In order to have an effective ministry in the twenty-first century, the church of Jesus Christ must recognize the culture in which it ministers. This will allow the church to provide Biblical perspectives and answers to the needs and questions being asked. Furthermore, it must also be aware of the dangers that could render it ineffective and strategically approach these, taking the necessary precautions to protect its testimony while staying on the cutting edge of ministry. One such issue is that of child sexual abuse. If authentic Biblical ministry is to take place, it will demand wisdom in addressing the culture in which the church ministers.

Consider **some of the sad facts:**

- 22% of Americans have been victims of child sexual abuse, although one third of them did not tell anyone at the time and lived with the secret well into adulthood.
(L.A. Times survey, Aug. 1985, cited in B.S.A. video 'A Time to Tell')
- Current research indicates that 25-33% of girls and 10-17% of boys will be sexually abused by the age of eighteen.
(For Kids Sake, Kent County Council for Prevention of Child Abuse)

(These numbers are 1 in 7 boys and 1 in 3 girls in the Boy Scouts of America research "A Time to Tell")
- Sexual abusers are not easily identifiable outwardly, i.e. they are wolves in sheep's clothing.

Some common misconceptions about child molesters are that they are dirty old men or strangers. A child molester could be anyone. Most are very ordinary in outward appearance. The fact that a child molester can occupy a position of respect in the community, is usually known by the victim, and often close to the victim's family makes it difficult to accept the idea that he or she could be a molester. (BSA Youth Protection Manual Pg. 159).

According to a report titled Child Molesters: A Behavior of Analysis published in 1986 by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children in cooperation with the Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Pedophiles are frequently the 'nice guy' in the neighborhood who likes to entertain the children after school or take them on day or weekend trips." A pedophile knows how to talk to children, and how to listen to them. In fact, he can relate to children better than to adults. He seduces his victims by being attentive, giving them gifts, and sometimes treating them better than their own parents do. Sadly, he often targets children who are already victims of emotional or physical neglect. He uses his status as an adult and an authority figure to seduce and later to control his victims. (Cub Scout Youth Protection Guidelines, pg. 147)

- Over eighty percent of the time, the abuser is someone known to the victim.
- Most abuse takes place in the context of an ongoing relationship.
- Twenty percent of sex offenders begin their activity before the age of eighteen.
- Child abusers often are married and have children.
- If abuse occurs in your church, a respected member will most likely be the molester.
(Reducing the Risk of Child Sexual Abuse in Your Church. pgs. 15 and 17)

Sexual abuse does occur in churches. With most youth organizations implementing screening and protective procedures, the abusers are leaving these environments and seeking safer fields, i.e. the trusting and welcoming church.

Few topics create more emotion than that of child abuse, especially if it is sexual in nature. One cannot read a newspaper, watch a television program, or listen to the radio without facing the horror of another child having been murdered, kidnapped, or abused. The public reacts in anger, the victim suffers trauma, and the abuser, if incarcerated, is at risk for his or her own life.

Apart from the emotional upheaval and the personal trauma to those most personally affected, how do others respond? The legal system, both in the criminal and civil context, attempts to do justice. Those in positions of law enforcement and child protection attempt to fulfill their mandate ~'to serve and protect the best interests of the child.' Nevertheless, what of the church?

Unfortunately, the church has often been a place where those in authority have abused students. The church has in some cases even turned a blind eye to the abuse of students hoping the problem would die or go away. In other situations the church has, in its desire to be open to all, unwittingly also opened the doors to abusers, often without regard to the potential for harm to students.

Church and the Law Update,

Attorney Richard Hammer said, 'The child molester is moving toward the last institution of our society in which he is placed in immediate contact with potential victims with complete trust.' According to a report on the conference by the National and International Religion Report, Hammer says the sex-abuse lawsuits are "The greatest legal risk facing the church today." He goes on to say that, churches that resist screening their workers are being "reckless."

A. Understanding the Need

Fundamental Reasons for Developing and Implementing a Child Protection Policy

Though many of the reasons for developing and implementing a child protection policy could be identified as ‘pragmatic,’ it must be noted that the theological foundation and primary motivation is love — God’s love for the well-being of children, workers, the church of Jesus Christ, and the testimony of Jesus name.

These are also the focuses of love within the church of Jesus Christ— John 13:34-35 — “A new command I give you: Love One Another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

Acts 20:28-31 — ‘Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. By shepherds of the Church of God, which he bought with his own blood. I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. So be on your guard Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears.”

Matt. 19:14— Jesus said, ‘Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for the Kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.”

Mark 9:37 — “Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me.”

Local church leaders have a spiritual, moral, and legal obligation to provide a safe and secure environment for students participating in church ministries. The emotional, physical, and spiritual trauma to victims, the destructive consequences for abusers, and the devastating effects on the credibility of the name of Christ and church ministry, make it essential that the church take the appropriate steps to create a safe and secure environment and to prevent abuse from occurring.

B. Understanding Child Abuse

The specific definition of child abuse will vary from state to state; some general definitions are as follows:

1. Child abuse is defined as a non-accidental physical or mental injury of mistreatment caused by the acts or omissions of the child's parents or caretakers.
2. Abuse is categorized as physical, emotional, or sexual.
 - (a) Physical abuse means non-accidental injury of a child.
 - (b) Emotional abuse means chronic attitudes or acts that are likely to produce long-term, serious emotional disorders.
 - (c) Sexual abuse means sexual exploitation of a child, consensual or not, for the sexual gratification of the perpetrator or a third party. Some sexual offenses are fondling; oral, genital, or anal penetration; intercourse; forcible rape; exhibitionism; allowing children to witness sexual activity.
3. Neglect means failure of those responsible for the care of a child to meet the physical and emotional needs of the child to an extent that the child's health, development, or safety is endangered.
 - (a) Physical neglect means failure to meet the basic requirements for supervision, housing, clothing, medical attention, and nutrition.
 - (b) Emotional neglect means failure to provide the praise, love, nurturing and security essential to the psychological and social development of a child.

C. Understanding the Church's Responsibility

1. The scriptural and moral responsibility of **Alliance** churches.

The Church represents Jesus Christ and must demonstrate and model His love, concern, and holiness of life to everyone.

The Scriptures say:

- (a) "Avoid every kind of evil" -I Thessalonians 5:22
- (b) But among you, there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality because these are improper for God's holy people" -Ephesians 5:3
- (c) "But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea" -Matthew 18:6
- (d) "Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. . . Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the Law of Christ" -Galatians 6:1-2

Therefore, these guidelines are set forth to provide a safe and nurturing environment in which we can bring our students to the Savior. We view ourselves as partners with parents, seeking to provide quality care and instruction in our ministry to the family. All of the guidelines are designed to protect both student and volunteer and to promote spiritual growth, building healthy disciples at every age level. Everyone who teaches, helps, or cares for children/youth under the authority of a Christian and Missionary Alliance church is strongly encouraged to follow these guidelines and procedures. Be aware that this document represents minimum protection standards.

2. The civil and legal liability of the church.

Increasingly, and often more dramatically, churches and their personnel/ (i.e., staff, directors, officers, and pastors) are being held accountable for the acts of individual abusers within the church, even though neither the church nor its leaders were aware of the abuse or condoned it. Churches are being sued in civil courts for damages sustained by victims and their families. Those victims and their families are attempting to hold churches accountable by alleging that;

- (a) The church is vicariously liable for the acts of its personnel, be they paid staff or volunteer staff, regardless of whether the church was itself negligent or even knew of the abuse.
- (b) The church was negligent in hiring or accepting personnel, whether paid or volunteer.
- (c) The church was negligent in supervising or monitoring its personnel or membership.

It is perhaps, if one is cynical, the pressure of being found liable to compensate victims of abuse along with the corresponding fear of embarrassment, which has caused churches to respond to the issue of child abuse more than it, is a newfound desire to otherwise address an age-old problem. Whatever the reason, it is timely for churches to now respond.

Church and the Law Update,

RECRUITING MINISTRY VOLUNTEERS

Properly screening potential volunteers is the first line of defense in providing a safe ministry environment. In order to be protected from liability, the church must show evidence that it has taken reasonable action in screening and supervising volunteers. If an abuse accusation occurs, “the courts will look for a process by which the church screens volunteers” before engaging them in service. A court can find the church negligent, and therefore legally liable, if it is less than systematic in its recruiting process. **Accurate record keeping is crucial.**

It should be noted that many insurance carriers exclude child molestation in their coverage, or if it is covered, the amounts for damages are far below what may be awarded by the court.

The Recruiting/Screening Process

Following, are the sequential steps in the process for recruiting/screening potential ministry volunteers. Included also is a detailed explanation of the criteria to be considered at each step. Since record keeping is critical, the forms necessary for completion of this process are either included in this document or are easily referenced in the **Safe Place** Manual.

When implementing a new screening process such as this, consideration must be given to current ministry volunteers. While they should not be exempt from the new screening process, they should be allowed sufficient time to comply with these policies.

A. Initial Committee Approval

A pastoral staff member or appointed layperson should recruit volunteers. His or her responsibility should be to present names of prospective volunteers to the discipleship committee (or church governing board and pastors) for approval prior to approaching the individual regarding a ministry assignment.

All volunteers should be church members in good standing or adherents in harmony with the doctrines and principles of the church and should be regular attendees for at least six months.

If the pastor, committee, or board member knows of reasons, why a person would not be suitable for a volunteer position, final approval or denial of the appointment will be made only after further investigation. It is recommended that those who have been convicted of child abuse and subsequently restored be directed to ministries that do not involve direct contact with children and youth.

Once committee approval has been secured, the prospective volunteer should be contacted, his/her interest in ministry assessed, and the remainder of the screening process completed.

B Volunteer Personnel Form

The Volunteer Personnel Form must be completed for all positions involving ministry to children and youth. The form requests personal, spiritual, and health-related information. All forms should be kept in a permanent file accessible only by the pastors, elders, or Discipleship Director and in such a manner, that confidentiality will be maintained. This form is a critical screening step in the process of protecting both the church and those in its care from legal action if a case of abuse occurs in which a church volunteer is involved.

C. Reference Check Record

Three personal references are requested on the Volunteer Personnel Form. These references should exclude relatives Orchard View staff. Each reference should be contacted by phone and asked to affirm the appointment of the volunteer. A record should be kept of the person making the phone call, the date of the call, and a summary of the references comments.

D. Criminal History Check/background check

The Volunteer Personnel Form includes a statement that grants permission to pursue a criminal records check with local, state, and government agencies. All applicants will receive a background check. The records will be placed in the applicants file, placed in a locked cabinet, and considered confidential.

Background checks will be provided by the Wisconsin Dept of Justice (DOJ)

Legal counsel has advised The Christian and Missionary Alliance that such a check is necessary whether for paid staff, nursery, day-care center workers, and Christian school workers or volunteers.

E. Interview

An interview provides the Discipleship Director/Pastors or the appointed recruiter the opportunity to review important items from the Volunteer Personnel Form with the prospective volunteer. This allows for follow-up questions and a better understanding of the applicant. The interview also allows the potential volunteer to ask questions about various ministries or about the church's protection policies. The information given in the interview will be available to the Christian Education committee and therefore, has limited confidentiality.

F. Final Approval

Upon recommendation of the Discipleship committee or appointed recruiter, the applicant should receive final approval for volunteer placement from the church governing board. Prior to final approval, the applicant should have completed all of the necessary screening criteria described above.

TRAINING MINISTRY VOLUNTEERS

A. INITIAL TRAINING

All volunteers should be equipped with initial training regarding child safety and child abuse prevention. These policies need to be justified and well explained. It is important that the volunteer staff understand the procedures so that they will not only comply with the policies, but also support them. It is the responsibility of the local church to provide this training. Each approved volunteer must sign a form indicating that he or she has been trained and/or has read these materials and supports the church's policies.

B. CONTINUED TRAINING

Additional annual training should be offered to volunteers on the following Related topics:

1. Recognizing clues of neglect and physical abuse.
2. CPR and First Aid.
(Contact the American Red Cross for training information. Many volunteers may already have CPR certification. Keep current files of those who are certified.)
3. Disaster escape routes (fire, tornado, etc.)

Records should be kept of each volunteer's attendance at training events.

CREATING A SAFE ENVIRONMENT

All churches must be concerned for the safety of children/youth. At the same time, churches must be concerned with the safety and reputation of their adult and teen volunteers. Once properly screened and volunteers are working in church ministries, the next step in providing a safe and secure ministry environment is supervision of these volunteers. Carefully administered supervising procedures make it more difficult for abuse to occur. They also provide information to counter false accusations. Once again, the courts look for a systematic process by which the church supervises its volunteers.

A. STAFFING AND SUPERVISING

1. **Two-Adult Rule (Optional with open classrooms or classrooms with windows)**

A minimum of two adults should be present in any room, except in the event of an emergency. This standard not only helps provide for a safe and loving classroom, it also gives volunteers more encouragement, creativity, and flexibility. In addition, this arrangement allows for a blend of genders in each classroom, which makes for a richer teaching environment. The arrangement may require that grade levels be combined. Smaller churches may need to use one adult with one teen helper. (Note: Teens under 18 years of age shall not care for children alone.)

2. **Open Doors**

Doors should have clear glass windows that allow for an easy view of the classroom activities without interrupting the teaching process.

When it is necessary that only one adult teacher/leader is available, the door of that room should remain open even if the door has a window.

3. **Volunteer Age**

The use of adult volunteers (18 years of age and older) is recommended. However, some churches may find it necessary to use volunteers between the ages of 14 and 18, although a teen should never care for **children alone**.

4. Supervisory Staff

The supervisory staff whether Awana Commander, Sunday School Superintendent Discipleship Director or other ministry head should make regular checks on classrooms to ensure the rooms are properly staffed and functioning.

B. NURSERY (Three years and under only)

1. Volunteer Identification

All volunteers working with the children should wear either a nametag and if desired a smock or other clothes that clearly identifies them to others as staff members.

2. Child Registration

Sign-in forms should be at the entrance of the nursery/classroom door. Parents should record the child's name, their names. Special needs of the child should also be listed. The sign-in forms should be collected weekly and kept on file. In the case of an abuse allegation, these forms could be used to justify attendance.

Additionally, names and addresses of parents and children should be filed and carefully maintained.

3. Volunteer Registration

Volunteer sign-in forms should be in the nursery/classroom to record the name of each volunteer, the date/times, they entered and exited the room (beginning and end of event is sufficient) these forms should be kept on file. In the case of an abuse **allegation, the forms could be used to prove/disprove volunteer presence in the room.** The forms also substantiate use of the two-adult rule.

4. Releasing Children

We advise that the parent signing in the child be the one who picks up the child, unless prior arrangements have been made. The alternate parent **MUST** present the child's matching number and identify himself or herself to the attending nursery worker.

A sign-out line for the parent to initial may be included on the sign-in form. Additionally, it is suggested that parents do not enter the nursery unless requested to do so. This better enables the child-care staff to maintain order and provide the level of security that parents would expect.

5. Diaper Changing

A diaper changing procedure should be developed that utilizes universal precautions concerning blood-borne pathogens; the procedure should be posted near changing areas.

The diaper changing area should be located where at least one other worker can view the changing procedure.

Nursery workers 18 and older are the only staff members allowed to change diapers.

6. Rest Room Guidelines

We strongly recommend that parents take their children to visit the rest room prior to each class or service. This procedure should be communicated to parents at the beginning of each new school year and throughout the year.

- Classrooms should take scheduled rest room breaks
- Two adults should escort a group of children to the rest room. Some churches may not have two adults available for this duty. Therefore, we recommend that these churches appoint hallway or safety monitors (preferably female) to assist with rest room duties.
- Teen volunteers (those under 18 years of age) should not assist **children in the restroom.**
- If just one child must go to the rest room, the adult volunteer should escort the child and prop the outside door open. The volunteer should then remain outside the door and wait for the child before escorting him or her back to the classroom. The volunteer should call the child's name if he or she is taking longer than seems necessary.
- Never be alone with a child in an unsupervised rest room and never go into a cubicle with a child and shut the door.

If preschool children need assistance, an adult may enter the rest room/cubicle only under the following guidelines:

1. A second adult must be within visual contact. If this is not possible, another adult should at least be informed of the situation and notified when leaving with a child and when returning.

2. Only women should assist girls or boys in the rest room. In light of the fact that most abusers are male, and for the protection of our male volunteers, it would be wise for men to avoid assisting children in using the rest room.
3. The outside rest room door must be propped open. The adult must stand in the open cubicle doorway.

Please refer to Nursery policies and procedures further in depth details

C. HEALTH AND SAFETY GUIDELINES

1. Sick Children

A child who is ill and could therefore expose other children and workers to illness should not be received into the nursery or classroom. Some signs of illness are unusual fatigue or irritability, coughing, sneezing, runny nose and eyes, fever, vomiting, diarrhea, inflamed mouth and throat. A sick child policy should be posted and parents informed of this policy. Refer to Nursery Procedures and policies for exhausted list

2. Medications

- A** Volunteers/staff are not to give or apply ANY medications. If a child needs medication, the parent must give it.
- B** No medication will be left in the classroom, with a volunteer worker or with the child.
- C** Parents shall administer medication. In **EMERGENCIES ONLY**, arrangements should be made with written instructions from the parent. The medication is required to be in the original container/packaging and should include medical directions. Even in these cases, the medication should only be given by the volunteer if, the parent is unavailable.

3. Emergencies

- A** Procedures for emergencies (fire, tornado, etc.) Should be reviewed semiannually during volunteer training seminars.

- B** Infectious disease protection will be kept in the nursery for handling cuts, bloody noses, vomiting, etc. All volunteers should be trained in the proper use of the kit's contents. Each kit should contain a pair of disposable latex gloves, a foil packet with a disinfectant pads/wipes, two or three 4" x 4" gauze pads for blood absorption, and one or two Band-Aids. Place contents in a zip-closure plastic bag.
- C** In addition to the infectious disease protection, first-aid kits are available on each floor level of the church building. Each first-aid kit should contain a micro shield CPR mask, instant ice packs and quantities of the items mentioned above in the infectious disease kits.
- D** A parent should be contacted when an injury, accident, or medical emergency occurs.
- E** Any accident no matter what severity is required to be reported in writing in the "Accident Report Book" This is located in the closet on the first floor. Any serious injury should be reported to the ministry leader in charge. Details related to the injury shall be documented and forwarded to the Senior Pastor and Discipleship Director, with a copy to the church file.

D. PROPER DISPLAY OF AFFECTION

Physical touch is an important element in the communication of love and care. It is an essential part of the nurturing process that should be characteristic of our ministry with children/youth. Volunteers need to be aware of, and sensitive to, the special and differing needs and preferences of each individual child. Physical contact should be age and developmentally appropriate.

1. Appropriate Touch

The following guidelines are recommended as pure, genuine, and positive displays of God's love:

- A** Meet the child at eye level by bending down or sitting.
- B** Listen to him/her with your eyes as well as your ears.
- C** Hold the child's hand while listening or speaking to him or when walking to an activity.

- D Put your arm around the shoulder of a child when comforting or quieting is needed.
- E Pat a child's head, hand, shoulder, or back when encouraging.
- F Gently hold the shoulders or chin of a child when redirecting the child's behavior. This helps the child focus on what you are saying and is helpful with Attention Deficit Disorder children.
- G Hold a preschool child who is crying.

2. Inappropriate Touch

The following types of touch must be avoided:

- A Kissing a child or coaxing a child to kiss you.
- B Extended hugging including body-to-body and tickling.
- C Touching a child in any area that would be covered by a bathing suit (exception: properly assisting a child in the rest room).
- D Carrying an older child or sitting him or her on your lap (other than preschool)
- E Being alone with a child, unless door is open.

E. SPECIAL EVENTS AND OVERNIGHT POLICIES

Teachers/leaders are encouraged to have special activities in their homes, to plan social activities, and to involve their children/youth in field trips and service projects. However, precautions need to be taken with these activities.

The safety guidelines outline below should be followed.

Field Trips and Special Events

- A Off-site activities should be pre-approved by church leaders. Parents should be notified at least one week prior to the outing.

- B Parental consent and medical release forms are required for each child participating. Forms must be kept in leaders possession during trips and events at all times
- C All trips and outings should be supervised by a minimum of two approved, adult leaders.
- D All drivers transporting children during an activity must have valid driver's licenses and current automobile insurance. The number of occupants in the vehicle should not exceed the number of seat belts. Seat belts must be worn.

2. Overnight Events

- A All-overnight events must be made aware to church leaders.
- B Parental consent and medical release forms are required for each child participating. Forms must be kept in leaders' possession during all events.
- C All supervising adults must be approved volunteers,
- D There should be two adult leaders for every 10 children. Every leader should have an assigned group of children for which he/she is responsible.
- E Consult the church insurance policy or agent to ensure that liability coverage includes the off-site activity.

F. DISCIPLINE POLICY

A hands-off approach is necessary. Proper discipline includes both preventative care and corrective action, and it helps create a healthy learning environment. When inappropriate or disruptive behavior occurs, leaders/teachers shall follow **“3 warning policy” similar to the AWANA 3 count.**

If a child is being disruptive and is causing you as a teacher, leader or classroom helper to become distracted follow the 3 warning policy

1. Simple words of redirection, if the child continues to be disruptive and is still a distraction to the class then follow with step 2

2. Words of redirection with a warning that if it happens a 3rd time, their parent/guardian will be contacted, even after the proceeding steps the child is still disruptive move to step 3
3. Contact the parent/guardian to come and pick their child up. Inform the parent of why they have been contacted.

Throughout all of the steps, make sure that, the child understands and is clear what you are asking of them!

For discipline procedures during AWANA activities, refer to the AWANA "3 Count" Discipline Procedure. Contact Awana Commander to review

G. REPORTING PROCEDURES

If a teacher/leader or other church worker has any concerns regarding the safety of the children/youth, they should report this to the Discipleship Director and the pastoral staff. Any of these individuals will proceed in accordance with the procedures set forth in the Safe **Place** Manual.

WHAT TO REPORT

All volunteers and paid staff who are involved in ministry to children/youth should immediately report to the ministry head and the pastoral staff any items of obvious concern relating to child abuse or neglect of which they have knowledge or have observed within the scope of their duties. It is not the responsibility of the reporting person or the paid staff to substantiate any allegations or suspicions.

Signs of abuse to watch for are:

- (A) Unexplained bruises, burns, fractures, or abrasions (often in various stages of healing).
- (B) Consistent lack of supervision.
- (C) Consistent hunger, inappropriate dress, poor hygiene, unattended medical needs.
- (D) Extremes of aggression or withdrawal.
- (E) Moves with discomfort and shies away from physical contact.
- (F) Wears inappropriate clothing for the weather to cover body.
- (G) Withdrawn, depressed, listless.
- (H) Torn, stained, or bloody underwear.
- (I) Irritation of the mouth, genital, or anal area.
- (J) Difficulty sitting or walking.
- (K) Inappropriate sex play, acting out seductiveness, or promiscuity.
- (L) Sudden changes in school performance, appetite, or self-worth.

Abuse or neglect need not have occurred to a child/youth to be in need of protection. It is not necessary to wait until a child/youth has been harmed to intervene. When abuse or neglect can be reasonably anticipated and there are reasonable grounds to believe a child/youth is in need of protection, the necessity of reporting applies.

Confidentiality

In these matters, it is important to keep the information confidential at all **times**. **Therefore, all suspicions of abuse should be directed only to the ministry** head and pastoral staff. It is the responsibility of the pastoral staff to follow-up on the matter

