



EDITED BY JORGE MONTES, ESQ.

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APOSTOLIC ASSEMBLY'S STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES
FOR THE PREVENTION OF CHILD ABUSE
AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT TRAINING MANUAL

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TRAINING MANUAL



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**APOSTOLIC ASSEMBLY
OF THE FAITH IN CHRIST JESUS**

**Published by the
Secretary of the
Christian Education
Bishop Jose G. Zuniga**

**Editor
Jorge Montes, ESQ**

**Design by
Dominic Moschetti**

**5401 Citrus Ave. Fontana CA 92336
United States of America
www.apostolicassembly.org
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CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION

Policy Statement

In following the instructions of our Lord Jesus Christ to *“let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these”* (Matthew 19:14), the members, staff, clergy, and other officials of the Apostolic Assembly of the Faith in Christ Jesus (“the Assembly”) churches seek to provide a safe and secure environment for minors and vulnerable adults entrusted to our care. If we are to encourage them and their families to enter into a saving relationship with God by being baptized in the name of Jesus Christ and to grow in their relationship with Him, we must ensure that we provide a secure and nourishing environment.

We believe that the church must be a safe space where these groups can thrive without fear of abuse and harm. Ensuring a safe and secure environment requires formal written policies and procedures regarding the prevention of child abuse. This manual lays out the procedures to prevent child abuse and the steps that should be taken if abuse occurs. These policies and procedures are intended to promote the protection of children and vulnerable adults as well as employees, volunteers, and Children’s Ministries in every local church and district.

Protecting the Vulnerable from Abuse

Churches need to be prepared at all levels. Some may think our church is too small to worry about these safety concerns or that within our church, everyone “knows” one another. However, it is important to make plans and develop safety policies as a means of prevention, rather than as a reaction to the occurrence of abuse. With the incidences of child abuse in other international churches, the eyes of the world are now on all churches. It is our intent to ensure that the church remains a sanctuary for all who are weary and need rest. We must lead the world in keeping children safe by maintaining a zero-tolerance policy on child abuse of every kind. The cause of the Gospel may be at stake.

Some churches tend to take the biblical concept of trusting God without a sound biblical firmness. They think nothing bad can happen to Christians. Although Jesus promises many things about His care and provision for us, we must not be unwise regarding the safety of our children and vulnerable adults. When Jesus sent his disciples out on their first missionary venture, He sent them out in pairs and told them they were like sheep among wolves. He also told them bad things would happen to them, but that He would be with them (Matthew 10:16-19). There is no automatic protection from evil for Christians. We are to watch and be ready. There will always be unforeseen circumstances that need to be dealt with. Above all else, the Church must protect the most vulnerable in our ministry.

Scope. The policies and procedures laid out in this manual shall apply to all current and future workers, compensated and/or volunteers, who work with or will have the responsibility of supervising the activities of minors and vulnerable adults. These policies and procedures must be followed in all church settings and related Assembly events including cell groups and other off-site gatherings.

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CHAPTER 2: CHILD ABUSE DEFINITIONS

For the policies and procedures outlined in this manual, the following definitions shall apply:

Minor/Child:

An individual under the legal age of consent, or majority. See Age of Consent table on page 36 for the specific age of consent in your state.

Child Abuse:

Any verbal, physical, emotional, or sexual mistreatment of a minor. See Forms of Child Abuse on page 9 for additional information.

Child Sexual Abuse:

Any illegal sexual act upon a child, including rape, incest, fondling, indecent exposure, and prostitution, or allowing a child to be used in any sexually explicit visual material. See Forms of Child Abuse on page 9 for additional information.

Pornography:

Materials such as writings, books, pictures, or audio visuals that depicts erotic behavior and is intended to cause sexual excitement.

Pedophilia:

A psychiatric disorder in which an adult has sexual fantasies about or engages in sexual acts with a minor.

Paraphilia:

A pattern of recurring sexually arousing mental imagery or behavior that involves unusual and especially socially unacceptable sexual practices (such as cruelty or pedophilia) that are considered deviant from the established norm.

Adult:

An individual that is at least eighteen (18) years of age.

Vulnerable Adult:

An individual aged eighteen (18) or over whose ability to protect themselves from violence, abuse or neglect is significantly impaired through physical or mental disability or illness, through old age or otherwise.

Staff Member:

Any adult who serves as a volunteer and/or in a paid position who is given the responsibility of working with or caring for minors or vulnerable adults.

Legal Counsel:

The Apostolic Assembly's principal attorney and primary source of legal advice and consultation.

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CHAPTER 3: FORMS OF CHILD ABUSE

Child Abuse.

An abused or neglected child is one whose health and welfare is harmed or threatened with harm when their parent, guardian, or other person exercising custodial control or supervision of the child engages in one or more of the following:

1. Creating, inflicting or allowing to be inflicted upon the child, physical or emotional injury other than for accidental reasons.
2. Engaging in a pattern of conduct that makes it difficult to care for the immediate/ongoing needs of the child including, but not limited to, incapacity due to alcohol or drug use.
3. Continually or repeatedly failing or refusing to provide essential care and protection of the child that is appropriate for the age or mental state of the child.
4. Committing or allowing to be committed upon the child an act of sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, or prostitution.
5. Abandoning or exploiting the child.
6. Failing to provide the child with adequate care, supervision, food, clothing, shelter, education, or medical care necessary for the child's well-being.

For definitions specific to your state, the following Child Welfare Information Gateway link can be used: <https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/systemwide/laws-policies/statutes/define/>

Child Sexual Abuse

El abuso sexual de un niño es un delito en todos los estados de los Estados Unidos. El abuso sexual infantil es cualquier actividad sexual con un niño, ya sea en el hogar por el cuidador, en una situación de guardería, en un entorno de crianza/residencial, o en cualquier otro entorno, incluyendo en la calle por una persona desconocida para el niño. El abusador puede ser un adulto, un adolescente u otro niño.

1. All child sexual abuse is an exploitation of a child's vulnerability and powerlessness in which the abuser is fully responsible for the action. Victims range in age from infants to teenagers.
2. Child sexual abuse is criminal behavior that involves children in sexual behaviors for which they are not personally, socially, and developmentally ready.
3. Child abuse may be violent or non-violent. It may include behavior that involves contact, including fondling of genitals and breasts, oral, vaginal, or anal sex, indecent exposure, voyeurism and sexual exploitation, but may involve non-touching, such as speaking sexually inappropriate things to a minor or exposing them to pornographic material. It may consist of a single incident or of many incidents over a long period of time.
4. While the age of consent in each state varies, individuals under that age do not have the legal capacity to grant consent to sexual activity. Any adult who engages in any form of sexual activity with such a minor is committing a crime that must be reported by mandated reporters. See Mandatory Reporting on page 19.

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CHAPTER 4: PROHIBITED CONDUCT WITH CHILDREN

Prohibited Behavior.

The following are to be considered abuse. Any commission of these acts will result in penalties up to, and including, criminal prosecution to the fullest extent of the law or being reported to a local child protection service. All federal, state, and local regulations should be followed concerning the reporting of suspected abuse. The following acts or omissions are violations of this manual's policies and procedures and will not be tolerated or accepted, and are to be immediately reported to the designated program staff and church official, after the safety of the minor involved has been assured.

1. Any display or demonstration of sexual advances or sexual activity, abuse, insinuation of abuse, or evidence of abusive conduct between any person and a minor.
2. Infliction of emotional or physically abusive behavior including bodily injury to a minor.
3. Pornographic and/or obscene materials made available to a minor, or that the minor is recklessly exposed to.
4. Being under the influence of illegal or illicit drugs or alcohol, or abusing over the counter or prescription medicine, while providing supervision of minors during all activity or functions of the local church Children's Ministries.

While not necessarily considered abuse, the following acts or omissions are violations of this manual's policies and procedures and will not be tolerated or accepted, and are to be immediately reported to the designated program staff and church official, after the safety of the minor involved has been assured:

1. The presence or possession of pornographic and/or obscene materials at functions of the local church Children's Ministries events, and the viewing or dissemination of pornographic materials on church computers.
2. The presence, or being under the influence, of illegal or illicit drugs or alcohol, or abusing over the counter or prescription medicines, while leading or participating in a function for minors of the local church Children's Ministries events.
3. Any other violations considered to be morally irresponsible as clarified in the moral clause/agreement found on the children's workers applications. See copy of Children's Ministry Application on page 38.

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Prohibited Discipline.

Name-calling, intimidation, humiliation, cursing, screaming, denial of food or sleep, threatening physical harm, corporal punishment, hitting, unnecessary rough handling, bullying and cyberbullying, and any other unusual treatment that may be considered physical punishment is prohibited. Additionally, no child shall directly discipline another child. Disciplinary problems should be reported to the worker's coordinator/supervisor and the church official, or to the child's parents or guardians.

Prohibited Communication.

1. Verbal. Adults are prohibited from engaging in inappropriate verbal communication including, but not limited to, risqué jokes and sexual innuendo.

2. Physical. Adults are prohibited from engaging in intimate/romantic/sexual contact that is directed towards children. Staff should avoid sitting children on their lap, kissing them, or hugging or having excessive physical contact with children.

3. Online. Communication is a fundamental part of ministry. However, staff members are prohibited from communicating one-on-one with minors via instant message, email, social media, or any other online channel of communication, unless such communication is approved by the minor's parent or guardian.

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CHAPTER 5: SCREENING AND TRAINING FOR THE PREVENTION OF CHILD ABUSE

Screening of Staff Members Working with Minors and/or Vulnerable Adults.

An effective means of reducing the occurrence of child abuse is to screen staff members, compensated and/or volunteers, who work with or will have the responsibility of supervising the activities of minors and vulnerable adults. Screening procedures and requirements include the following:

1. All employees and volunteers must complete the Children's Ministry Application. See copy of the application on page 38
 - a) New applicants who are applying to work with minors in any capacity must provide two (2) personal references. References will be interviewed by ministry leaders.
 - b) New applicants must undergo a personal interview before being accepted into the position applied for.
 - c) Background checks are strongly encouraged for all applicants.
2. All who wish to work with minors are subject to observation in other church settings and during ministry activities to ensure compatibility with the standards and procedures of the Children's Ministry. Observations may take place between 3-6 months prior to a placement in the Children's Ministry.

Screening of Clergy.

Screening procedures and requirements for applicants seeking ministerial credentials include the following:

1. Any person seeking ministerial credentials must first be a part of the church family for no less than two years in order to be considered for any ministerial credentials.
2. All applicants applying for any type of ministerial credentials of the Assembly, whether a new or current applicant, must submit a yearly written application for the credentials they seek. Applicants will provide personal information including their name, address, phone number, and form of identification.
 - a) Any person currently serving as a Deacon, Minister (including, but not limited to, youth ministers), or Assistant Pastor/Co-Pastor for the Assembly must resubmit an application on an annual basis. A complete failure to submit a yearly application will result in the denial of their application and/or termination of any ministerial role with the Assembly.
3. New applicants who are seeking ministerial credentials must have a "sponsor" with their own ministerial credentials who is willing to vouch for them, their character, and moral and spiritual fitness to obtain the credentials they are seeking. Additionally, all applicants must provide two (2) personal references.
4. New applicants must sign a certification that he/she has not been arrested for or convicted of any crime involving child abuse or been diagnosed with any paraphiliac psychological condition (e.g., pedophilia, voyeurism or exhibitionism.)
5. New applicants who are seeking to become a Deacon, Minister (including, but not limited to, youth ministers), or Assistant Pastor/Co-Pastor of the Assembly must undergo a criminal background check.
 - a) No new applicant may serve in the above-mentioned capacities until they have submitted to a criminal background check and have met the Assembly's applicable standards. A person's unwillingness to submit to a criminal background check and/or failure to meet the Assembly's applicable standard shall result in the denial of their application and/or termination of their ministerial creden-

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tials and/or termination of any ministerial role they may have had with the Assembly. (For suggested criminal background services, contact Assembly headquarters.)

b) Proof and results of the required background check must be attached to and submitted with the yearly application.

Training of Clergy.

All Deacons, Ministers (including, but not limited to, youth ministers), or Assistant Pastors/Co-Pastors, and any person applying for any type of ministerial credentials of the Assembly, are required to complete an annual sexual abuse prevention training from an authorized training program. Authorized training programs are offered through 1) Darkness to Light, 2) annual training provided by the Assembly's Legal Counsel, or 3) training provided by local Districts, as long as the program is in conformity with the requirements outlined in this manual, including, but not limited to, the requirements outlined below.

1. Darkness to Light.

The Assembly has engaged Darkness to Light as a third-party training partner. Darkness to Light offers online training on child abuse prevention. The Assembly's official website provides a link that allows members to access and attend Darkness to Light's training program at a nominal cost.

2. Legal Counsel.

Districts may elect to attend the annual training session provided by the Assembly's Legal Counsel. Training includes sessions on the prevention of child abuse within the Assembly and the prevention of any type of sexual harassment. Classes are conducted in English and Spanish, as needed, to impart the training principles to participants.

3. Local Districts.

For a training program given by the Assembly to qualify as an authorized training program, it must be led, instructed, and imparted by qualified persons. In consultation with Legal Counsel, any District who wishes to offer an authorized training program is required to engage qualified personnel to administer the training.

a) "Qualified personnel" is limited to: lawyers, doctors, psychiatrists, psychologists, nurses, law enforcement professionals (including sheriff and police department personnel who are dedicated to a related unit), social workers, qualified and trained personnel from prosecutors' offices, family counselors, a domestic violence organization's staff, or Assembly staff that have been approved by the Legal Counsel to administer such training. Any training that is administered by an unqualified person or persons shall not satisfy the annual training component.

Those required to complete training must receive a Certificate of Completion from an authorized program, which must be submitted to the Assembly's credentials department. The certificate will be kept as part of each person's ministerial file. Failure to complete the required training and receive the certificate, or training from an unauthorized person or program, does not satisfy the annual training requirement and will result in an incomplete application. The annual deadline to complete the authorized training is December 31st of every year.

Each District is required to report to the Assembly the names of any person applying for any type of ministerial credential who have completed the required training. Those who do not appear on the submitted report will not receive the ministerial license applied for until they submit a Certificate of Completion from an authorized program that satisfies the annual training requirement. Each District's report is due on or before February 1st of every year.

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CHAPTER 6: CHILD ABUSE WARNING SIGNS AND PREVENTION STRATEGIES

Who are the Offenders? Child abusers cannot be stereotyped as they can come from any level of education and socio-economic background, can be social misfits or extremely popular, can be married or single, young or old, and can be male or female.

Child abusers are generally individuals that children trust, and experts estimate that only 20% of child abuse cases involve strangers. Abusers tend to exhibit great patience, working slowly and intentionally with children until they gain their confidence. They will often work with children for extended periods of time to reach the level of trust necessary to act on their crimes. They may start with ordinary behaviors before proceeding to test their limits on their interactions with children. These boundary pushing behaviors may include tickling, massaging, sharing risqué jokes, or horseplay until an “accident” happens where the abuser touches them inappropriately. Repeatedly engaging in these boundary pushing behaviors desensitizes the child to inappropriate contact.

After inappropriate behavior with a child, an abuser may threaten the child and order them not to say anything about the encounter. The abuser may extort or bribe the child to remain silent, or they may threaten bodily harm or scare them into silence by saying harm will result if the child says anything. Children may comply because of fear, shame, guilt, to be obedient, or perhaps because their cultural understandings discourage talking about sexual matters or stress a need to protect their family’s reputation. As a result, many will not communicate about abuse because they are afraid about potential consequences. Consequently, abusers often succeed in silencing the child.

Early Warning Signs. Child abuse can be difficult to detect. However, awareness of pre-abuse behaviors, can help detect the potential for abuse. Abusers will often use grooming techniques not only on their victims but also on “gatekeepers” such as the victim’s parents, guardians, and church staff. Due to the reality of who can be an abuser and the likelihood for victims to be silenced, it is important for staff members to be mindful of early warning signs and grooming behaviors to look out for that can prevent or reduce the incidence of child abuse.

The following can be signs of an adult engaging in, or attempting to engage in, an inappropriate relationship with a minor:

1. Failing or refusing to follow child-protection policies and procedures or accepted standards of appropriate affection toward minors.
2. Conducting off-site and/or late-evening meetings with minors.
3. Meeting alone with minors in isolated or secluded locations.
4. Wearing provocative or revealing attire when interacting with minors.
5. Focusing an unusual amount of attention on a minor or offering them special or secret gifts, compliments, and lavish attention.
6. Engaging in secretive/private relationships with minors.
7. Focusing an unusual amount of time on cultivating trust and friendships with gatekeepers.
8. Rationalizing “extra” time with a minor or insisting on one-on-one meetings with them.

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9. Gaining access to minors by finding or creating situations to be alone with them.
10. Offering gatekeepers gifts, compliments, and lavish attention when requesting permission for interactions with minors.
11. Exhibiting signs of stress, or drug or alcohol use.

Safe Practices for Preventing Child Abuse. Staff members should be mindful of their actions and surroundings to watch for physical, behavioral, and emotional boundary violations. Safe practices are not meant to inconvenience adult employees and volunteers but instead are instituted to protect children. They can also help protect adults from unfounded accusations. The following are policies and practices that must be followed:

Identification Systems

1. A "check-in/check-out" procedure is required for all kindergarten-aged and younger classrooms and events.
2. An identification system shall be adopted so adults who drop off a child are the same adults who pick up the child. Permission slips will be available for adults to sign, authorizing the release of the children to other adults.
3. Lists of workers who meet the organization's approval shall be posted for public viewing in an area where minors are located.

Team Teaching and Chaperoning

1. Two-person Rule. At least two unrelated adults should be present at every function, and in every classroom, nursery, vehicle or enclosed area, during every preschool, child, youth or ministry program or for the disabled.
 - a) Youth activities both on and off the church grounds should have two or more adult leaders who are known to the church and unrelated. If there are both boys and girls participating in the activity, then both male and female leaders should be present.
 - b) For activities off church grounds, another adult should know the staff members' whereabouts and whom they are meeting with. Staff members are strongly encouraged to prevent and/or limit their interactions with any minor parishioner without their parent or guardian present.
2. A concerted effort should be made to recruit sufficient volunteer teachers in order to ensure that a reasonable ratio of adult workers must be maintained in each situation involving the supervision of children.

No Closed-door Policy

1. Parents of the children being served, as well as the clergy and professional staff of the church, have the right to visit and observe the program at any time, unannounced.
2. When minors are on Church campuses without their parent or guardian present, a door without a window must remain open at all times.

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No-go Zones (Secluded/Locked Premises)

1. Children five years of age or younger should be assisted as needed in the restroom by the child's parent or guardian, or a female worker.
2. For children over the age of five, at least one adult screened female should take girls to the restroom, and one adult screened female should take boys to the restroom. The adult should check to make sure the facility is safe before the child enters, and then wait outside the restroom until the child comes out.
 - a) Staff members should not be alone with the child(ren) inside the restroom. If the child(ren) require assistance, an additional screened adult should be present outside the restroom to monitor the assistance.
 - b) Ushers and church officials must make regular rounds to bathroom and other isolated areas of the facilities to ensure that there are no adults with children who are not their own, and to ensure compliance with the policies and procedures in this manual.

Institutional Precautions

1. Any new applicant applying to become a Deacon, Minister (including, but not limited to, youth ministers), or Assistant Pastor/Co-Pastor, and any person applying for any type of ministerial credentials in the Assembly, will be screened with references interviewed by ministerial leaders before an applicant is admitted or retained into ministry. Records of the application process will be documented in order to make them easily accessible for future reference.
2. Staff will receive training in the prevention of child abuse on an annual basis.
3. Although not required, background checks are encouraged for lay professionals and volunteers.
4. The congregation will maintain adequate and appropriate insurance coverage.
5. Areas that are not used for Church program purposes will be secured to prevent minors (without their parent or guardian present) from being isolated with a staff member.
6. Community organizations using the church facilities should follow Assembly guidelines.

Best Practices for Individual Pastoral Care. One-on-one Pastoral care is a fundamental part of ministry and close bonds with parishioners may develop. When it comes to youth ministry it is important to keep the potential for abuse in mind. Due to the close relationship that may develop there is an increased risk for inappropriate behavior to occur. Alternatively, this close contact with youth often means that Pastors and Ministers may be the first to directly observe abuse or be the first point of contact for minors to communicate about potential abuse. To protect a valuable ministry relationship, the following practices should be observed:

1. Pastors and Ministers are strongly encouraged to prevent and/or limit their interactions with any minor parishioner without their parent or guardian present.
2. Any planned one-on-one meetings with minors must be approved by the minor's parents/guardians. As a general rule, the duration and frequency of approved one-on-one meetings are to be limited to no more than 3 to 5 occasions per year for no more than 30 minutes at a time.

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3. Care must be taken to see that any one-on-one interaction must take place in a location where the adult worker and minor are both visible to other adults.
4. Pastors and Ministers should not engage in secretive/private relationships with minors.
5. It may be appropriate to embrace ministry youth in a reassuring manner that communicates acceptance/inclusion in the loving community of faith. However, an identical embrace might be inappropriate when youth share personal/sensitive information. The embrace may unintentionally convey an alternate form of intimacy. Sensitivity and discretion are necessary, and it is proper to ask before offering a physical embrace. It is recommended to hug side to side, instead of face to face. A pat on the shoulder may be most appropriate when you want to express concern and keep some emotional distance at the same time.
6. Pastors and Ministers should avoid boundary-pushing relationships.
7. Pastors and Ministers should avoid trying to “fix” any problems that are communicated to them by the youth as it may lead to misguided counseling advice, undermining a parent’s authority, and/or meeting away from ministry supervision.
8. Pastors and Ministers should reduce the risk of misconduct by including parents, staff, and other youth on any text message, email, or social media communication.
9. Pastors and Ministers should avoid meeting in homes and/or in bedrooms with minors without others present.

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CHAPTER 7: REPORTING CHILD ABUSE

How to Report Child Abuse or Suspected Misconduct. This section provides the necessary steps for reporting child abuse or suspected abuse. All reports of possible child abuse will remain confidential. Nothing in this section shall relieve any individual(s) of their obligation to report to the local authorities.

See **Mandatory Reporting** below.

Reporting Child Abuse

1. Staff members who become aware of an injury, abuse, or molestation of a minor connected with any ministry employee or volunteer, in any church setting or event, whether that incident has been disclosed by the minor or vulnerable adult as having happened at home or at any other location, must immediately inform their coordinator/supervisor of such injury, abuse or molestation. Alternatively, the staff member may report the alleged abuse directly to the Pastor of the local church.

2. Any coordinator/supervisor who becomes aware of an injury, abuse or molestation connected with any ministry event or staff member will immediately inform the Pastor of the local church of such injury, abuse, or molestation. The Pastor will then complete an "Incident/Notice of Injury Report." See copy of Incident/Notice of Injury Report and Instructions on page 40.

3. A Pastor who becomes aware of an injury, abuse or molestation connected with any ministry event or staff member will immediately notify the Assembly's Legal Counsel via the Assembly's Abuse Prevention Hotline. The hotline contact number is 1-312-850-9844 and is operated by the Assembly's Legal Counsel.

a) If the abuse takes place at a district activity or bible college, the Pastor will promptly notify (in consultation with Legal Counsel): 1) The District Supervisor, 2) The District or local insurance company, and 3) The applicable state child protection services.

1) The District Supervisor will notify by email, any case of child abuse to the Assembly President, Vice-President and/or General Secretary. If not already advised, the Assembly President, Vice-President and/or General Secretary will report the incident to the Assembly's Legal Counsel.

b) If the abuse takes place at a national activity, the Pastor will promptly notify (in consultation with Legal Counsel): 1) The Bishop President, 2) The national Church's insurance company, and 3) The applicable state child protection services.

1) The Pastor, Bishop, and Legal Counsel will consider the facts of the report to determine whether the circumstances of the report require a notification to child protective services. Any required reporting must be made by the Pastor.

Suspected Misconduct

1. All suspected injury, abuse, or molestation of a minor must immediately be reported directly to the Pastor, or to the appropriate coordinator/supervisor who must then inform the Pastor. If you see it, hear it, or observe it, you must report it.

2. Those who are concerned about potential abuse but are unsure about how to interpret the conduct, or whether that conduct should be reported, may contact the Assembly hotline to determine the appropriate steps to take.

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Mandatory Reporting. Almost all states mandate that the following must report incidents of abuse: a minister, or deacon, physician, nurse, teacher, school personnel, social worker, coroner, medical examiner, child-caring personnel, resident, intern, chiropractor, dentist, optometrist, emergency medical technician, paramedic, health professional, mental health professional, peace officer or any organization or agency for any of the above. Mandatory reporting laws apply to the Assembly and all Pastors and ministers of the Assembly are mandatory reporters. A mandatory reporter is not an investigator. The civil agencies fulfill that role. A mandatory reporter only gathers information and reports.

Mandatory reporters who have reasonable cause to believe that a child is neglected or abused, regardless of whether the person believed to have caused the neglect or abuse is a parent, guardian, person exercising custodial control or supervision of another person, or who has attended such child as a part of his professional duties shall, if requested, in addition to the report required in the **How to Report Child Abuse or Suspected Misconduct** section above, report to local child protection services, or its designated representative, in consultation with Legal Counsel. A report of suspected child abuse must be communicated to the appropriate authorities within 36 hours of receiving the information. Failure to do so could have criminal and/or civil consequences.

For child abuse and neglect reporting telephone numbers and/or websites specific to your state, the following Child Welfare Information Gateway link can be used:

https://www.childwelfare.gov/organizations/?CWIGFunctionsaction=rols:main.dspList&rolType=Custom&RS_ID=%205

Additional information and guidance can be found by contacting the ChildHelp National Abuse Hotline telephone number: **1-800-422-4453**.

When reporting to child protective services, it is helpful for the reporter to provide as much of the following information as possible:

- 1) the name and address of the child and the parent or person responsible for his/her care,
- 2) the child's age, sex, and race,
- 3) a description of the alleged abuse and neglect, including how long it may have been happening and the alleged person,
- 4) the name of the school the child attends,
- 5) the names of other people, especially children, in the home,
- 6) the reporter's relationship to the child, and
- 7) any other information that the person making the report believes may be helpful in the furtherance of the purpose of this section. Reports should be made even if you are unable to provide all the information listed in this section. The person reporting abuse to Child Protective Services is not required to give their name.

When gathering information, the mandatory reporter should have another adult present. Minutes should be taken of all meetings related to the incident. Unless either parent is suspected of having participated in the alleged abuse or neglect, the parent of the affected child shall be present during all meetings when the victim is present. The adults present should sign the minutes at the conclusion of the meeting.

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CHAPTER 8: RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS OF CHILD ABUSE

Detrimental Effects on Children. Child abuse may impact a child physically and emotionally. Upon discovering a case of abuse, the very first thing the staff member must do is to attend to the child's emotional and physical needs. If there is physical injury, the child must be given immediate medical attention. The presumption when attending a child who may have been abused is to believe them. Do not criticize, blame, or chastise the child. Approach the situation assuming, unless proven otherwise, that the child is telling the truth.

Internal Investigation. The following are guidelines for investigating allegations of child abuse or suspected abuse. All must maintain confidentiality of the investigation as much as possible throughout each of the steps listed below.

1. The Pastor who receives the initial report of potential abuse is responsible for investigating and confirming the facts reported, as well as the condition of the minor, on the same day on which the first report is made.
 - a) Data concerning the child's name, address, and other pertinent information will be obtained through discussions with the initial reporter and other staff members including the name and address of the person responsible for the minor's care.
 - b) Any church official, but especially all deacons and ministers who are mandated reporters, who have suspicion that abuse or molestation of a minor has occurred will ensure that the minor's parent or guardian is immediately informed that possible abuse or molestation is suspected.
 - c) Reports of abuse should not be treated as frivolous. The alleged victim must be listened to, comforted, and offered referrals to counseling and community services that provide support to the minor and their family. These measures must be taken immediately to ameliorate any lasting effects of the abuse on the child. Additionally, Church officials will inform the family of the steps being taken throughout the investigation and consistently keep them advised of the status of the investigation. Legal Counsel will assist in determining prudent and legal responses at every stage of the investigation. See Notifications below for additional information.
2. In consultation with Legal Counsel, the Assembly will conduct an immediate preliminary investigation into the alleged wrongdoing to determine whether there is a reasonable suspicion to believe that a minor has been subjected to child abuse, as that term is defined by the applicable state law where the alleged abuse occurred.
 - a) Upon the determination that there is reasonable suspicion that a child has been subjected to child abuse, the Assembly's Legal Counsel will instruct the appropriate party to immediately report the incident to all appropriate authorities, including, but not limited to, law enforcement, in the jurisdiction where the alleged offense occurred.
 - b) The church must take action in reporting any rational suspicion to either child protection services or local law enforcement authorities. All that the law requires is a rational suspicion or reasonable basis. Reporters are immune from prosecution if a report results as unfounded, unless it is concluded that they did so with bad intentions.

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Notifications.

Parents/Guardians. Parents and guardians must immediately be notified by the Pastor who receives the report of child abuse or suspected misconduct. The Parent/Guardian must be informed of the allegation, the parties involved, and of the internal investigation process. Parents/Guardians will be contacted by telephone in all cases where such information is available to the reporting Pastor. If no such information is available, all efforts must be made to obtain contact information as soon as possible.

Law Enforcement. If the complaint may involve a violation of federal or state laws regarding sexual abuse of a minor or incompetent adult, law enforcement officials must be notified. In consultation with Legal Counsel, church officials and/or employees with knowledge of such alleged abuse shall cooperate fully with law enforcement authorities, insofar as their official responsibilities permit.

Media Communications. If the media becomes involved in a reported incident, a public statement must be prepared in coordination with the Assembly's Legal Counsel. No one may address the media, unless designated by a church official and in consultation with Legal Counsel. The individual(s) designated shall respond to media inquiries and advise the congregation on media relations.

Congregational Healing. Congregations may experience significant impairment as a community in the wake of abuse allegations and for an extended period of healing. It is important to show support and concern for those impacted directly and indirectly by an allegation of abuse.

Written Statement to the Congregation. A person designated by a church official, in consultation with Legal Counsel, may prepare and present a written statement to the affected congregation, stating the relevant information while maintaining appropriate confidences. It is imperative that the local church emphasizes the Assembly's position on child abuse and concern for victims. The statement should also convey the extensive steps being taken to address the present occurrence and eliminate future risks, in order to provide a safe environment for children. All written statements, no matter who prepares them, will be read and approved by church officials before being presented.

Disciplinary Actions.

Failure to Comply with Policies and Procedures.

1. Staff members must promptly notify their coordinator/supervisor and the Pastor or district/national official, about those who violate this manual's policies and procedures.
2. Coordinators/supervisors or ministry leaders aware of a violation will take all necessary steps to ensure compliance with the policies and procedures by staff members and will remove them from their position if such a removal is warranted, or if the staff member poses a threat to others.
3. Deacons, Ministers, or Assistant Pastors/Co-Pastors who fail to report substantiated incidents of child abuse will be sanctioned by the Assembly after receiving due process per the Assembly's Constitution. Sanctions include one or more of the following: a reprimand, suspension, obligation to attend counseling and training on the prevention of child abuse, and potential removal from their Pastoral or ministry position.
4. An individual acting with malice who knowingly and intentionally makes a false report of child abuse or neglect, or a person acting with malice who coerces another person to make a false report of child abuse or neglect, will be subject to sanctions including, but not limited to, suspension or termination from church duties, or legal recourse.

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Removal. No individual is beyond suspicion and any alleged perpetrator will be disciplined accordingly and/or removed from their position with the Assembly after being given due process per the Assembly's Constitution.

1. Before Investigation. In cases where there is credible evidence of an imminent danger to a minor, the accused will be immediately terminated from their position and immediately reported to all appropriate authorities in the jurisdiction where the offense occurred, including law enforcement.

2. During Investigation. Upon determining that there is a reasonable suspicion to believe that child abuse has occurred, the Assembly shall not allow an alleged perpetrator to continue their role as a Church staff member for any Church District. The alleged perpetrator will immediately be put on a temporary suspension pending an internal investigation of the allegation.

3. After Investigation. In instances where the internal investigation results in a determination that there is a reasonable suspicion that a child has been subjected to child abuse, the alleged perpetrator will be immediately suspended or terminated, depending on the gravity and severity of the allegations. In instances where the internal investigation results in a determination that child abuse is confirmed, the alleged perpetrator will be immediately dismissed from their position.

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CHAPTER 9: ADMINISTRATION

Record Keeping and Retention.

Incident Report. A written “Incident/Notice of Injury Report” should be prepared when an injury occurs, or when there is suspicion of injury. The incident report must be completed by the local Pastor and immediately forwarded to the Assembly’s Legal Counsel. See copy of Incident/Notice of Injury Report and Instructions on page 40. All reports claiming abuse, illness, injury, misconduct of staff, or complaints related to any Assembly local church Children’s Ministries program, shall be kept by the Children’s Ministries Director or the Pastor. The church official and the government of the local church will review the reports annually.

Annual Review of Policies and Procedures. The Assembly will regularly review and potentially modify policies and procedures to combat and address the occurrence of child abuse. Changes will be made in accordance with the bylaws of the organization and in consultation with Legal Counsel. Any such modification(s) will be promptly conveyed to all persons affected by the modification(s).

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SEXUAL HARASSMENT PREVENTION

CHAPTER 10: INTRODUCTION TO SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Policy Statement

The Apostolic Assembly is committed to ensuring that all persons are treated with respect by providing a safe environment that reflects the dignity of all individuals. The Assembly has a moral obligation to break the silence of sexual abuse, harassment, and assault because it is a biblical mandate to care for and protect the most vulnerable as we exercise justice and mercy (Micah 6:8, Isaiah 1:17, Amos 5:24.)

In responding to this obligation, the Assembly will not tolerate any form of harassment of employees, or inappropriate behavior, committed by clergy, employees, or volunteers in any position under the Assembly's authority.

Scope

A perpetrator of sexual harassment can be anyone in the workplace. The policies and procedures laid out in this manual shall apply to all current and future workers, compensated and/or volunteers. The Assembly has an official sexual harassment policy. This policy must be printed and posted in every church bulletin board and published in church newsletters and websites. See copy of Sexual Harassment Policy on page 46.

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CHAPTER 11: SEXUAL HARASSMENT DEFINITIONS

For the policies and procedures outlined in this manual, the following definitions shall apply:

Adult: An individual that is at least eighteen (18) years of age.

Sexual Abuse: Any act committed with the intent to molest sexually, or to arouse or gratify, where the abuser touches or forces the abused to touch the genitalia, anus, groin, breast, buttocks, or the material touching of such intimate parts. It also can include sexual contact with vulnerable adults, even where that contact seems consensual.

Sexual Exploitation: Exploitation involves an imbalance of power, such as employer over employee, strong over weak, spiritual leader over parishioner, and so on. It can be overt, such as where favors are given in return for sexual favors. It can be more subtle, such as where a sexual relationship develops between a church worker and someone under him or her in a Pastoral, mentoring, or supervisory relationship. See Forms of Sexual Harassment on page 26 for additional information.

Sexual Harassment: Behavior of a sexual nature that is experienced by an employee in the workplace. In the Church, this is considered conduct between two adults who are affiliated with the church. There are two broad categories of conduct that is considered sexual harassment: quid pro quo harassment and hostile environment harassment. Additionally, harassment can take three forms: physical harassment, verbal harassment, and non-verbal harassment. See Forms of Sexual Harassment on page 26 for additional information.

Staff Member: Any adult who serves as a volunteer and/or in a paid position who is given the responsibility of working with or caring for minors or vulnerable adults.

Legal Counsel: The Apostolic Assembly's principal attorney and primary source of legal advice and consultation.

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CHAPTER 12: FORMS OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Sexual Exploitation. Feelings of attraction can develop from unequal relationships, giving rise to exploitation even where there is apparent consent from both individuals. This is why a romantic relationship between a Deacon, Minister, or Assistant Pastor/Co-Pastor (whose role as a spiritual advisor places them in a position of power) and a parishioner is fraught with danger, whether or not it involves sexual relations.

Historically, romantic relationships between a single clergy person and a single layperson with whom the clergy person has a Pastoral relationship have not been defined as sexual exploitation. However, such clergy dating could create feelings of resentment, competition, or rejection for other members of the church. While dating is allowed between lay staff and parishioners generally, because of the imbalance of power concerns, dating between a lay worker and those parishioners who participate in that worker's programs also is discouraged, and requires safeguards.

Harassment. The United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission ("EEOC"), the federal agency that oversees cases of discrimination, defines harassment as "...unwelcome conduct that is based on race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), national origin, age (40 or older), disability or genetic information."

1. Among other conduct, harassment may include offensive jokes, slurs, inappropriate references to stereotypes, name calling, physical assault or threats, intimidation, mockery, insults, and offensive imagery. Sexual Harassment. According to the EEOC, there are two broad categories of conduct that are considered sexual harassment: "quid pro quo" and "hostile work environment."

1. Quid pro quo. Quid pro quo refers to an illicit action perpetrated by someone who is in a position of power or authority over another (e.g., manager or supervisor over a subordinate). In this context, it involves expressed or implied demands for sexual favors in exchange for some benefit (e.g., a promotion, pay increase) or to avoid some detriment (e.g., termination, demotion) in the workplace. That is, an employee's hiring, pay, promotion or maintenance of a job is made contingent on his or her response to sexual advances.

2. Hostile Work Environment. Hostile work environment harassment arises when speech or conduct is so severe and pervasive that it creates an intimidating or demeaning environment or situation that negatively affects a person's job performance. This type of harassment can be perpetrated by anyone in the work environment, including a peer, supervisor, subordinate, vendor, customer or contractor. Hostile work environment situations are not as easy to recognize, given that an individual comment or occurrence may not be severe, demeaning behavior may occur that is not based on sex, and there may be long periods between offensive incidents. Hostile environment harassment results when unwelcome sexual conduct unreasonably interferes with an individual's job performance or creates a hostile, intimidating or offensive work environment.

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Harassment can take three forms:

- 1. Physical harassment.** Unwanted physical touching of the hair, body or clothing, or even purposefully brushing against someone. Prolonged hugs, especially front to front, or those with pelvic contact or rubbing the hands across the back, could constitute physical harassment, as could unwanted massaging of the shoulders, back or neck. Even behavior that is intended to be playful could be considered physical abuse.
- 2. Verbal harassment.** Making explicit comments or innuendos about one's own sex life, or asking questions about another's sexual behavior. Verbal harassment can include comments about a person's body or clothing that may be perceived as sexual, using nicknames with sexual connotations (such as "hunk" or "babe"), or making repeated requests for social engagements. It can also take the form of sexually oriented humor or language, or sending e-mails, telephone messages or other communications that contain such humor or language. It is important to note that appropriate conversational norms develop and evolve in every workplace or community over time. When in doubt about appropriateness, refrain from such conversations or seek counsel from an advisor.
- 3. Non-verbal harassment.** Displaying sexually suggestive visual materials, from cartoons to calendars, to displaying one's own body parts through lack of clothing or positioning of the body. It also includes making sexual gestures with hands or body movements and making facial expressions that communicate sexual or romantic interest.

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CHAPTER 13: PROHIBITED CONDUCT

Prohibited Conduct. Sexual harassment can occur in a variety of circumstances. The harasser can identify with any gender and have any relationship to the victim, including being a direct Pastor, supervisor, coworker, teacher, peer, or colleague. Prohibited conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:

1. Inappropriate, excess, or unwanted touching or physical contact.
2. Inappropriate jokes or comments referring to sexual acts or sexual orientation.
3. Threatening to fire an employee/volunteer if they do not engage in sexual activities.
4. Making conditions of employment/volunteer status or advancement dependent on sexual favors, either explicitly or implicitly.
5. Physical acts of sexual assault.
6. Unwanted sexual advances and repeatedly requesting dates or sexual favors.
7. Discussing sexual relations/stories/fantasies at ministry events or in other ministry settings.
8. Pressuring someone to engage in sexual activities.
9. Exposing oneself or performing sexual acts on oneself in front of others.
10. Sending, or making available, unwanted sexually explicit photos, emails, or text messages.
11. Making available offensive pictures or images for display in church settings.

Inappropriate Behavior. Employees and Staff must be mindful of boundary breaking behavior with parishioners such as physical, behavioral, and emotional violations. Inappropriate behavior includes:

1. Meeting alone in isolated places, whether in ministry settings or in other areas.
2. Wearing provocative or revealing attire at ministry events or in other ministry settings.
3. Meeting in homes and in bedrooms without others present.
4. Giving special or secret gifts.
5. Keeping secrets about the relationship.
6. Failing to adhere to uniform or accepted standards of affection.

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CHAPTER 14: SEXUAL HARASSMENT WARNING SIGNS AND PREVENTION STRATEGIES

Signs of Harassment. Experiencing sexual harassment may cause some survivors to face emotional, physical, mental, or spiritual health concerns. It is important to make note of these indicators, as they may signify that harassment has already occurred, or is currently taking place. The symptomology includes, but is not limited to, the following:

1. Emotional effects such as anger, fear, humiliation, shame, guilt, betrayal, violation, powerlessness and loss of control, withdrawal from others, and/or loss of interest in what once were enjoyable activities.
2. Mental health effects include anxiety, depression, panic attacks, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), difficulty concentrating, loss of motivation, substance abuse, and/or suicidal ideation.
3. Physical effects include increased stress levels, headaches, fatigue, sleep disturbances, regressive behaviors, eating disturbances, and/or self-injurious behaviors.
4. Spiritual effects include an inability to reconcile justice and God's love with evil works, arrested spiritual development, a sense of hopelessness, and/or feelings of guilt and self-loathing.

Early Warning Signs. It is important for staff members to be mindful of early warning signs and behaviors to look out for that can prevent or reduce the occurrence of sexual harassment. A power differential may exist between leaders and employees or parishioners, and it is important not to exploit the trust that develops from these relationships. The following can be signs that there may be a sexual boundary breakdown, or an increased potential for a breakdown to occur.

Personal Warning Signs.

1. Excessive self-disclosure by the minister/supervisor.
2. Excessive availability, including giving or receiving inappropriate gifts.
3. Undue anticipation of future visits, including rearrangement of one's schedule.
4. Excessive fretting about clothing or appearance.
5. Conducting one-on-one meetings at a secluded or private location.
6. Anything tying extra emotional energy to the meeting.
7. Fantasizing about the person.
8. Keeping secrets that go beyond the requirements of professional confidentiality.

Institutional Warning Signs.

1. There is very rigid or closed communication so that what happens takes place in secret, or away from others.
2. There is little or no supervision, particularly with new employees/volunteers.

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3. There is a controlling or charismatic leader in the church and disagreement would be seen as a betrayal of that leader.
4. The clergy/leader does not have friends outside the church.
5. Boundaries in an organization are not clear. When, for example, work and personal/social situations are consistently blended.

Lay workers: While there are no rules about lay coworkers having mutually agreed upon romantic relationships, they ought to be entered into very carefully so as not to disrupt the church. Secrecy in a relationship can be particularly dangerous.

Safe Practices for Preventing Sexual Harassment

Personal Evaluations.

1. If any of the above signs appear, a self-examination should be completed by asking yourself the following questions:
 - a) What can I learn about myself through the experience of my attention being drawn to this other person?
 - b) What is lacking in my marriage, love relationships, spiritual life, or within me that I believe an involvement with this person might satisfy?
 - c) Why am I vulnerable at this time to engaging in personal connections outside of my commitments, or to overstepping appropriate boundaries?
2. Seek counsel and Pastoral guidance from someone trained in the field of sexual misconduct if you find yourself at risk of acting on a romantic or sexual attraction to a parishioner or coworker.

Institutional Precautions.

1. Staff will receive Sexual Harassment training.
2. The congregation will maintain adequate and appropriate insurance coverage.
 - a) Areas that are not used for Church program purposes will be secured to prevent parishioners from being isolated with a staff member.
3. The congregation will develop appropriate guidelines for staff relationships and office arrangements (such as windows in doors) that protect against misconduct.
4. Community organizations using the church facilities should follow Assembly guidelines. See Screening and Training for The Prevention of Child Abuse on page 12 for additional information on the screening/hiring process for ministerial credentials.

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Best Practices for Individual Pastoral Care. One-on-one Pastoral care is a fundamental part of ministry and close bonds with parishioners may develop. Due to the close relationship that may develop there is an increased risk for inappropriate behavior to occur. To protect a valuable ministry relationship, the following practices should be observed:

1. Generally, the duration and frequency of approved one-on-one meetings are to be limited to no more than 3 to 5 occasions per year for no more than 30 minutes at a time.
2. Care must be taken to see that any one-on-one interaction must take place in a location where both adults are visible to other adults. Pastors and Ministers should avoid meeting in homes and/or in bedrooms without others present.
3. It may be appropriate, when comforting a parishioner to embrace that parishioner in a reassuring manner that communicates acceptance/inclusion in the loving community of faith. However, an identical embrace might be inappropriate when the embrace unintentionally conveys an alternate form of intimacy. Sensitivity and discretion are necessary, and it is proper to ask first before offering a physical embrace. It is always safer to hug side to side, instead of face to face. (A pat on the shoulder may be most appropriate when you want to express concern and keep some emotional distance at the same time.)
4. Pastors and Ministers should not engage in secretive/private relationships with parishioners. Pastors and Ministers should avoid boundary-pushing relationships. **See Prohibited Conduct** for examples of boundary pushing behaviors.
5. Be aware that there are sexually aggressive, emotionally needy, even predatory persons among parishioners who seek out leaders at church, conferences, and public places. Their purpose may be an inappropriate attachment and perhaps sexual misconduct. Always use prudence regarding times and places of meetings. Understand that the person in power is responsible for keeping appropriate boundaries even if pursued.
6. A clergy person cannot be both a spiritual advisor and suitor at the same time. In the event a romantic relationship does develop, steps must be taken to address the facts that when dating a clergy person, a parishioner loses their Deacon, Minister, or Assistant Pastor/Co-Pastor, and that secrecy surrounding such a relationship could harm the church.
 - a) At the very least, the clergy person must arrange for alternate Pastoral care for the involved parishioner. Such relationships might be possible if there is ongoing consultation with a Bishop. Additionally, in a multi-staffed congregation, a dating relationship might be possible where there is ongoing consultation between the Deacon, Minister, or Assistant Pastor/Co-Pastor and the Bishop.

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CHAPTER 15: REPORTING SEXUAL HARASSMENT

How to Report Sexual Harassment or Misconduct. The Assembly strongly encourages witnesses and potential victims to immediately report perceived harassment or misconduct. All allegations will be taken seriously by the bishop. If leaders learn of or suspect sexual harassment or misconduct by their clergy colleagues, they are required to report it. All reports of possible harassment will remain confidential. This section provides the necessary steps for reporting sexual harassment or suspected sexual harassment.

Reporting Sexual Harassment or Misconduct

1. The Assembly recognizes the sensitive nature of reporting allegations of sexual harassment or misconduct. It is important to ensure that reporters are comfortable in doing so. Allegations may be reported directly to the Pastor, or to the Pastor's spouse. If there is no spouse available, reports may be made to a designated female employee.
2. A Pastor, or Pastor's spouse, who learns of a sexual harassment incident in the church or a church sanctioned activity, must take immediate measures to address it. This should be done, if not immediately, within days of the incident. The Pastor, or Pastor's spouse, must complete the Assembly's Sexual Harassment Reporting form. See copy of the Sexual Harassment Reporting form on page 43. If the Pastor is the accused, then the report should be made to the bishop.
 - a) The Pastor in charge of a congregation is expected to take action to stop the harassing behavior, and to prevent any future misconduct. If the Pastor in charge is the accused, then the bishop will respond accordingly.
3. The Pastor, or Pastor's spouse, should meet with the victim to hear their version of the incident, the bishop or Pastor must also give the alleged offender notice of a separate meeting to inquire as to the veracity of the allegations. During this initial information gathering process the following should be ensured:
 - a) All parties should be identified.
 - b) Investigative questions should be "open" rather than accusatory.
 - 1) The victim should be asked to express their feelings (Ex. "How did the aggressor respond?")
 - 2) The accused must also have an opportunity to give their version of the event(s).
4. A Pastor who becomes aware of harassment connected with any ministry event or staff member will immediately notify the Assembly's Legal Counsel via the Assembly's Abuse Prevention Hotline. The hotline contact number is 1-312-850-9844 and is operated by the Assembly's Legal Counsel.
5. If the abuse takes place at a district activity or bible college, the Pastor will promptly notify (in consultation with Legal Counsel): 1) The District Supervisor and 2) The District or local insurance company.
 - a) The District Supervisor will notify by email, any case of abuse to the Assembly President, Vice-President and/or General Secretary. If not already advised, the Assembly President,

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Vice-President and/or General Secretary will report the incident to the Assembly's Legal Counsel.

6. If the abuse takes place at a national activity, the Pastor will promptly notify (in consultation with Legal Counsel): 1) The Bishop President and 2) The national Church's insurance company.

a) The Pastor, Bishop, and Legal Counsel will consider the facts of the report to determine whether the circumstances of the report require a notification to law enforcement authorities. Any reporting must be made by the Pastor.

Reporting Suspected Harassment or Misconduct

1. All suspected sexual harassment must immediately be reported directly to the Pastor, Pastor's spouse, or to the appropriate coordinator/supervisor who must then inform the Pastor. If you see it, hear it, or observe it, you must report it.

2. Those who are concerned about potential harassment but are unsure about how to interpret the conduct, or whether that conduct should be reported, may contact the Assembly hotline to determine the appropriate steps to take.

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CHAPTER 16: RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Internal Investigation. The following are guidelines for investigating allegations of sexual harassment or suspected misconduct. All must maintain confidentiality of the investigation as much as possible throughout each of the steps listed below. See **Reporting Sexual Harassment** above for additional information.

1. The Pastor, or Pastor's spouse, who receives the initial report of potential harassment is responsible for investigating and confirming the facts reported, as well as the condition of the potential victim, on the same day on which the first report is made.
 - a) Reports of harassment should not be treated as frivolous. The alleged victim must be listened to, comforted, and offered referrals to counseling and community services that provide support to them and their family. These measures must be taken immediately to ameliorate any lasting effects of the harassment. Additionally, Church officials will inform the victim of the steps being taken throughout the investigation and consistently keep them advised of the status of the investigation. Legal Counsel will assist in determining prudent and legal responses at every stage of the investigation.
2. In consultation with Legal Counsel, the Assembly will conduct an immediate preliminary investigation into the alleged wrongdoing to determine whether there is a reasonable suspicion to believe that harassment has occurred, as that term is defined by this manual and the applicable state law where the alleged harassment occurred.
 - a) Upon the determination that there is reasonable suspicion that harassment has occurred, the Assembly's Legal Counsel will instruct the appropriate party to immediately report the incident to all appropriate authorities, including, but not limited to, and if appropriate, law enforcement, in the jurisdiction where the alleged offense occurred.
 - b) If the investigation reveals that there is no evidence of harassment, this should be communicated to the parties and they should be given a copy of the sexual harassment policy.

NOTIFICATIONS.

Law Enforcement. While there are no mandatory reporting obligations, reports of sexual harassment should be discussed with Legal Counsel to determine if law enforcement authorities should be notified. In such cases, church officials and/or employees with knowledge of alleged sexual harassment shall cooperate with law enforcement authorities, insofar as their official responsibilities permit, and in consultation and direction of Legal Counsel.

Media Communications. If the media becomes involved in a reported incident, a public statement must be prepared in coordination with the Assembly's Legal Counsel. No one may address the media, unless designated by a church official and in consultation with Legal Counsel. The individual(s) designated shall respond to media inquiries and advise the congregation on media relations.

Congregational Healing. Congregations may experience significant impairment as a community in the wake of harassment allegations and for an extended period of healing. It is important to show support and concern for those impacted directly and indirectly by an allegation of harassment.

Written Statement to the Congregation. A person designated by a church official, in consultation with Legal Counsel, may prepare and present a written statement to the affected congregation, stating the relevant information while maintaining appropriate confidences. It is imperative that the local church emphasizes the Assembly's position on sexual harassment and concern for victims. The statement should also convey

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the extensive steps being taken to address the present occurrence and eliminate future risks, in order to provide a safe environment for all parishioners. All written statements, no matter who prepares them, will be read and approved by church officials before being presented.

DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS.

Failure to Comply with Policies and Procedures.

1. Staff members must promptly notify their coordinator/supervisor and the Pastor or district/national official, about those who violate this manual's policies and procedures.
2. Coordinators/supervisors or ministry leaders aware of a violation will take all necessary steps to ensure compliance with the policies and procedures by staff members and will remove them from their position if such a removal is warranted, or if the staff member poses a threat to others.
3. Deacons, Ministers, or Assistant Pastors/Co-Pastors who fail to report substantiated incidents of sexual harassment will be sanctioned by the Assembly after receiving due process per the Assembly's Constitution. Sanctions include one or more of the following: a reprimand, suspension, obligation to attend counseling and training on sexual harassment, and potential removal from their Pastoral or ministry position.
4. The assembly will not tolerate any form of retaliation against any person for reporting or cooperating in an investigation. In the event that retaliatory actions are reported, the Assembly will investigate the matter and take appropriate disciplinary action, including but not limited to, suspension or termination from church duties, or legal recourse.
5. An individual acting with malice who knowingly and intentionally makes a false report of sexual harassment, or a person acting with malice who coerces another person to make a false report of sexual harassment, will be subject to sanctions including, but not limited to, suspension or termination from church duties, or legal recourse.

Removal. No individual is beyond suspicion and any alleged perpetrator will be disciplined accordingly and/or removed from their position with the Assembly after being given due process per the Assembly's Constitution.

- 1. Before Investigation.** In cases where there is credible evidence of an imminent danger to a parishioner, the accused will be immediately terminated from their position and immediately reported to all appropriate authorities in the jurisdiction where the offense occurred, including law enforcement.
- 2. During Investigation.** Upon determining that there is a reasonable suspicion to believe that sexual abuse has occurred, the Assembly shall not allow an alleged perpetrator to continue their role as a Church staff member for any Church District. The alleged perpetrator will immediately be put on a temporary suspension pending an internal investigation of the allegation.
- 3. After Investigation.** When the internal investigation results in a determination that there is a reasonable suspicion that sexual harassment occurred, the alleged perpetrator will be immediately suspended or terminated, depending on the gravity and severity of the allegations. When the internal investigation results in a determination of confirmed sexual harassment, the alleged perpetrator will be sanctioned.
 - a) Sanctions include a rebuke, a demotion, a suspension, or termination. Any imposed sanctions will be formally communicated with a written letter. The victim may be told about what the decision was, but detail is not required.

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APPENDIX A: AGE OF CONSENT BY STATE

STATE	AGE OF CONSENT BY STATE	
	AGE OF CONSENT	ACCEPTABLE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN AGES
Alabama	16	2
Alaska	16	3
Arizona	18	2
Arkansas	16	3
California	18	0
Colorado	17	4
Connecticut	16	2
Delaware	18	0
Florida	18	0
Georgia	16	0
Hawaii	16	5
Idaho	18	0
Illinois	17	0
Indiana	16	0
Iowa	16	4
Kansas	16	0
Kentucky	16	0
Louisiana	17	3
Maine	16	5
Maryland	16	4
Massachusetts	16	0
Michigan	16	0
Minnesota	16	2
Mississippi	16	2
Missouri	17	0
Montana	16	0
Nebraska	16	0
Nevada	16	0
New Hampshire	16	0
New Jersey	16	4
New Mexico	16	4
New York	17	0
North Carolina	16	4
North Dakota	18	0
Ohio	16	0
Oklahoma	16	0
Oregon	18	3
Pennsylvania	16	4
Rhode Island	16	0
South Carolina	16	0
South Dakota	16	3
Tennessee	18	4
Texas	17	3
Utah	18	10
Vermont	16	0
Virginia	18	0
Washington	16	2
West Virginia	16	4
Wisconsin	18	0
Wyoming	16	4

Source: <https://www.legalmatch.com/law-library/article/age-of-consent-by-state.html>;
<https://worldpopulationreview.com/state-rankings/age-of-consent-by-state>

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APPENDIX B: EMPLOYMENT APPLICATION

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APPENDIX C: CHILDREN'S MINISTRY APPLICATION

APOSTOLIC ASSEMBLY CHILDREN'S MINISTRY APPLICATION

The Apostolic Assembly of the Faith in Christ Jesus ("the Assembly") is committed to ensuring a secure and nourishing environment. We believe that the church, of all places, must be a safe space where children can thrive without fear of abuse and harm. In following the instructions of our Lord Jesus Christ to "let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these" (Matthew 19:14), the Assembly seeks to provide a safe and secure environment for preschoolers, children, and youth entrusted to our care.

Thank you for your interest in serving in the Children's Ministry. This application is to be completed by all desiring to serve in any ministry position involving the supervision or custody of minors. It is being used to help the church provide a safe and secure environment for those children who participate in Assembly events and programs, as well as church facilities.

PART I. General Information

Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Telephone Number: _____ Email: _____

PART II. Spiritual and Personal Background

Have you been baptized in Jesus' Name? Yes No

How are you growing in your relationship with Christ? _____

How long have you attended our services? _____ Are you a member? Yes No

What previous ministries or work have you been involved in, especially related to children? _____

Have you ever been denied the opportunity to work with children at a church or in any other setting? Yes No

If yes, please attach a written explanation.

Have you ever been convicted of child abuse or a crime involving actual or attempted sexual molestation of a child? Yes No

If yes, please attach a written explanation.

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Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offense, including the illegal use or sale of drugs?

Yes No

If yes, please attach a written explanation.

PART III. Volunteer Services

List any training, education, or skills you have which you believe would be valuable in Children's Ministry? _____

Please select the position(s) you are interested in volunteering for (check all that apply)

Nursery Preschool 1st-3rd Grade 4th-5th Grade 6th Grade + Check-In/Greeter

What services can you volunteer for?

Sunday morning Sunday evening Special events

How often can you volunteer?

Only once Weekly Twice a Month Once a Month

Moral Agreement: The information contained in this application is correct to the best of my knowledge. I understand that this information will be used to determine my eligibility for a volunteer position. I also understand that personal information will be held confidential by the professional church staff. Should my application be accepted, I agree to refrain from morally irresponsible conduct in the performance of my services on behalf of the Assembly including, but not limited to, injurious, deceptive, scandalous, or obscene behavior.

I have received and read the Apostolic Assembly Child Abuse Prevention manual and I agree to abide by all policies.

Applicant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

*Return completed applications in a sealed envelope to the Children's Ministry Director.

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APPENDIX D: INCIDENT/NOTICE OF INJURY REPORT

APOSTOLIC ASSEMBLY INCIDENT/NOTICE OF INJURY REPORTING FORM

PART I. Interviewer and Reporter Information

1. Name of Interviewer: _____ Date: _____

Name of Interviewer: _____ Date: _____

2. Name of Complainant: _____ Date of Complaint: _____

Position: _____ Supervisor: _____

District: _____ Church: _____

PART II. Identification of Parties Involved

1. Name of Victim: _____

Victim's Date of Birth or Approx. Age: _____

Victim's Parent/Guardian Telephone Number: _____

2. Name of Suspect: _____

Age of Suspect: _____

Suspect Telephone Number: _____

Suspect Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

3. Name of Witness: _____ Date: _____

Name of Witness: _____ Date: _____

PART III. Authorities Notified

1. Has a church authority been notified of alleged abuse? Yes No

If yes, provide the name of the notified party and the date of notification:

Name: _____ Date: _____

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2. Have the civil authorities been notified of alleged abuse? Yes No

If yes, provide the following information:

Date: _____

Name of Civil Agency: _____

Name of Officer(s)/Representative(s) Assigned to Case: _____

Officer's Identification Number: _____

Case Number: _____

Contact Number: _____ ext. _____

Email: _____

What actions were recommended by the Officer/Representative? _____

PART IV. Incident/Injury

Note for interviewer: for each incident reported, ascertain and document what occurred. Try to get as many details as possible. This may be uncomfortable for the Complainant and sensitivity should be used when obtaining information. Open-ended, non-judgmental questions should be asked and use additional pages if necessary.

1. Date of Abuse: _____ Time of Abuse: _____

Location of Abuse: _____

Did the abuse happen more than once? Yes No

If yes, what date(s) and time(s) did they take place?

Date of Abuse: _____ Time of Abuse: _____

Date of Abuse: _____ Time of Abuse: _____

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Date of Abuse: _____ Time of Abuse: _____

2. Identify the inappropriate actions that took place (check all that apply):

Neglect Yes No

Emotional Abuse Yes No

Physical Contact Yes No

 Sexual contact Yes No

 Petting above the clothes Yes No

 Petting under the clothes Yes No

 Any form of penetration Yes No

If physical contact occurred, identify which body parts were touched: _____

Other (Specify) Yes No

If other actions not listed above took place, what were the actions? _____

3. Has the minor received counseling and/or medical services? Yes No

If yes, what services? _____

PART V. Additional Notes

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APPENDIX E: SEXUAL HARASSMENT REPORTING FORM

APOSTOLIC ASSEMBLY SEXUAL HARASSMENT REPORTING FORM

PART I. Reporter Information

1. Name of Complainant: _____ Date of Complaint: _____

Telephone Number: _____ Email: _____

Position: _____ Supervisor: _____

District: _____ Church: _____

PART II. Identification of Parties Involved

2. Name of
Victim: _____

2. Position: _____ Supervisor: _____

District: _____ Church: _____

Relationship to Complainant: Self Supervisor Co-Worker Other _____

4. Name of Accused: _____

Telephone Number: _____ Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Relationship to Complainant: Self Supervisor Co-Worker Other _____

5. Name of Witness: _____ Date: _____

Name of Witness: _____ Date: _____

Name of Witness: _____ Date: _____

PART III. Incident/Injury

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4. Date of Incident: _____ Time of Incident: _____

Location of Incident: _____

Did the harassment happen more than once? Yes No

If yes, what date(s) and time(s) did they take place?

Date of Abuse: _____ Time of Abuse: _____

Date of Abuse: _____ Time of Abuse: _____

Date of Abuse: _____ Time of Abuse: _____

Was the harassment previously reported? Yes No

If yes, to whom and on what date? _____

5. Please describe the conduct or incident(s) that is the basis of this complaint and your reasons for concluding that the conduct is sexual harassment. Please use additional sheets of paper if necessary and attach any relevant documents or evidence. _____

PART IV. Authorities Notified

3. Has a church authority been notified of alleged abuse? Yes No

If yes, provide the name of the notified party and the date of notification:

Name: _____ Date: _____

4. Have the civil authorities been notified of alleged abuse? Yes No

If yes, provide the following information:

Date: _____

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Name of Civil Agency: _____

PART V. Additional Notes

PART VI. Signature

Printed Name: _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____

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APPENDIX F: SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY STATEMENT

APOSTOLIC ASSEMBLY SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY

DEFINITION: WHAT IS SEXUAL HARASSMENT?

Sexual harassment includes any form of unwelcome or nonconsensual sexual advances, request for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical contact of a sexual nature, when:

- 1) submission to such conduct is made explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment;
- 2) submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting an individual; or
- 3) such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment. It may include but is not limited to:
 - Sexually oriented jokes, comments, verbal "kidding," or abuse
 - Suggestive, inappropriate, or graphic comments about a person's body, appearance, or actions
 - Sexually suggestive gestures or actions, including physical actions such as patting, pinching, constant brushing against another's body, or blocking another's movement
 - Subtle pressure for sexual activity or demands for sexual favors, whether or not accompanied by promise of reward or threat of punishment
 - Sexual assault
 - Condoning any of the above

STATEMENT OF CHURCH POSITION

- 1) The Apostolic Assembly of the Faith in Christ Jesus will not tolerate sexual harassment of any kind, whether quid pro quo (points 1 and 2 of the above definition) or hostile environment (point 3 of the above definition), and whether committed by an employee or a non-employee.
- 2) Employees or volunteer workers who are found guilty of sexual harassment will be disciplined immediately. Depending on the severity of the infraction, discipline may range from partial or total suspension of duties up to and including dismissal. However, discipline will not be administered without adequate proof of harassment.
- 3) Discipline not involving dismissal will be accompanied by a warning that any future incidents of harassment will not be tolerated and may result in immediate dismissal.
- 4) The church encourages victims to report incidents of harassment.
- 5) All complaints will be investigated promptly.
- 6) Persons filing a complaint will not suffer retaliation for doing so.
- 7) All complaints will be handled confidentially.
- 8) The church will follow up periodically with victims by asking if there have been any further incidents of harassment.
- 9) This policy will be communicated to all workers.

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PROCEDURE FOR COMPLAINTS

- 1) A complaint of sexual harassment should be brought to the Pastor. He should then take the following steps.
- 2) Arrange to minimize job-related or other necessary contact between the parties until the situation is resolved.
- 3) Conduct a complete investigation, including interviews with any other parties who may have knowledge of the incident(s).
- 4) During the interview, the Apostolic Assembly "Sexual Harassment Reporting Form" should be completed. This document can be found in the Apostolic Assembly website / Download Resource Center page.
- 5) Make a judgment regarding the allegations; determine and carry out appropriate disciplinary actions; notify accuser(s) of any disciplinary action(s) taken against the accused and advise him/her of their right to appeal.
- 6) Alleged victims or offenders who feel that they have not been satisfactorily dealt with during this process may appeal to the Pastor by submitting a written request to him. The Pastor shall arrange a meeting with those who initially interviewed the complainant, whose decision shall be final.
- 7) A complaint against the Pastor should be brought to the bishop of the supervising district.

**APOSTOLIC ASSEMBLY
OF THE FAITH IN CHRIST JESUS**

**5401 CITRUS AVE. FONTANA CA 92336
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
WWW.APOSTOLICASSEMBLY.ORG**

**ADDENDUM TO APOSTOLIC ASSEMBLY’S STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES
FOR THE PREVENTION OF CHILD ABUSE AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT
TRAINING MANUAL
(For California Churches Only)**

The following standards and procedures have been created for all Apostolic Assembly church administrators, employees, and regular volunteers located in the state of California. These standards and procedures are incorporated into and form a part of the *Apostolic Assembly’s Standards and Procedures for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Sexual Harassment Training Manual* to which this addendum is attached.

I. DEFINITIONS

For the policies and procedures outlined in this addendum, the following definitions shall apply:

Mandatory Reporter: A person who is required by state law to report suspected cases of child abuse or neglect to the appropriate civil authorities or social service agency. In California all members of the clergy are mandated reporters, including deacons.

Regular Volunteer: A volunteer who is 18 years of age or older and who has direct contact with, or supervision of, children for more than 16 hours per month or 32 hours per year.

Staff Member: Any person who is 18 years of age or older and who serves as an administrator, employee, or regular volunteer who is given the responsibility of working with or caring for youth/children.

Youth/Children: An individual under 18 years of age.

II. SCREENING AND TRAINING FOR THE PREVENTION OF CHILD ABUSE

An effective means of reducing the occurrence of child abuse is to screen staff members and volunteers who will work with or have the responsibility of supervising the activities of children and youth. Screening procedures and requirements include the following:

- A. Background Checks.** All administrators, employees, and regular volunteers shall undergo a background check via Live Scan, wherein the processing of fingerprints will be completed through the California Department of Justice. The background check requirement must be completed by and for the Apostolic Assembly and cannot be substituted by a background check completed for any external organization(s) and/or position(s). All Live Scan results will be sent to the General Secretary, the Assembly’s official Custodian. He, along with a designated employee, will maintain strict confidential records of background check results. In the event that someone’s background contains questionable information, the Assembly’s General Counsel will be contacted to review said records and assist in making a determination as to whether the individual is suitable to work with children or youth.

- B. **Training.** In an effort to ensure a welcoming and safe environment, all administrators, employees, and regular volunteers, regardless of position, are required to complete training in child abuse and neglect *identification*, as well as training in child abuse and neglect *reporting*. Training must be completed on an annual basis.

III. CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION STRATEGIES

- A. **Screening Results.** Any administrator, employee, or regular volunteer with a history of child abuse or neglect is excluded from working with or volunteering in youth services.
- B. **Two-person Rule.** If possible, at least two mandated reporters should be present at every youth/child activity and function, both on and off the church grounds, and in every classroom, nursery, vehicle, or enclosed area, during every youth/child ministry program. If there are both boys and girls participating in the activity/function, then both male and female leaders should be present.

IV. REPORTING AND RECORD-KEEPING

Reporting Child Abuse or Neglect

- A. Staff members who become aware of any abuse or neglect of a youth/child connected with any ministry employee or volunteer, in any church setting or event, whether that incident has been disclosed by the youth/child as having happened at home or any other location, must immediately inform their coordinator/supervisor of such abuse or neglect, or report it directly to their local pastor, bishop and the Legal Counsel.
- B. Any coordinator/supervisor who becomes aware of abuse or neglect connected with any ministry event or staff member will immediately inform the Pastor of the local church of such abuse or neglect. The Pastor will then complete an "Incident/Notice of Injury Report."
- C. A Pastor who becomes aware of abuse or neglect connected with any ministry event or staff member will immediately notify the Assembly's Legal Counsel via the Assembly's Abuse Prevention Hotline. The hotline contact number is 1-312-850-9844 and is operated by the Assembly's Legal Counsel.
 - 1) If the abuse takes place at a district activity or bible college, the Pastor will promptly notify (in consultation with Legal Counsel): 1) The District Supervisor, 2) The District or local insurance company, and 3) The applicable state child protection services.
 - i. The District Supervisor will notify by email, any case of child abuse to the Assembly President, Vice-President, and/or General Secretary. If not already advised, the Assembly President, Vice-President, and/or General Secretary will report the incident to the Assembly's Legal Counsel.

- ii. The Pastor, District Supervisor, and Legal Counsel will consider the facts of the report to determine whether the circumstances of the report require notification to child protective services. Any required reporting must be made by the local Pastor.
- 2) If the abuse takes place at a national activity, the Pastor will promptly notify (in consultation with Legal Counsel): 1) The Bishop President, 2) The national Church's insurance company, and 3) The applicable state child protection services.
 - i. The Pastor, Bishop, and Legal Counsel will consider the facts of the report to determine whether the circumstances of the report require notification to child protective services. Any required reporting must be made by the local Pastor.

Reporting Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect

- D. All suspected abuse or neglect of a youth/child must immediately be reported to a coordinator/supervisor or directly to the local Pastor, who will then investigate the matter. If you see it, hear it, or observe it, you must report it. Those who are concerned about potential abuse but are unsure about how to interpret the conduct, or whether that conduct should be reported, may contact the Assembly hotline to determine the appropriate steps to take.

Mandatory Reporting

- E. California Penal Code Section 11165.9.** Reports of suspected child abuse or neglect, after following the above steps, shall be made by mandated reporters to any police department or sheriff's department, not including a school district police or security department, county probation department, if designated by the county to receive mandated reports, or the county welfare department.

Record-Keeping

- F. Incident Reports.** A written "Incident/Notice of Injury Report" should be prepared when abuse or neglect occurs, or when there is suspicion of abuse or neglect. The incident report must be completed by the local church Pastor and immediately forwarded to the Assembly's Legal Counsel. All reports claiming abuse, illness, injury, misconduct of staff, or complaints related to any Assembly local church Children's Ministries program, shall be kept by the Children's Ministries Director or the Pastor. The church official and the government of the local church will review the reports annually.
- G. Record Keeping.** Each individual church location shall serve as the custodian of records for all documents related to the screening and training procedures of its administrators,

employees, and regular volunteers and said custodian shall assist in coordinating compliance with Assembly rules and State of California laws.