

## **Section 2.17: Abuse and Reporting of Abuse**

**Scope: All national office and Clause B District employees of the EFCA.**

The EFCA directs all of its employees (whether or not they are mandated reporters) to report their knowledge or belief of the abuse of minors or vulnerable adults to their local law enforcement agencies, including but not limited to county child protection agency, county welfare agency, municipal police, or county sheriff's department as soon as practical, except in instances where such a report would violate established and legally recognized confidentiality requirements or restrictions. In such cases of confidentiality matters, the EFCA should be advised of the existence of the confidentiality claim. For further information, please contact Human Resources.

Laws vary from state to state regarding definitions of abuse and neglect of children and vulnerable adults. Reporting requirements vary as well. The EFCA has developed its own internal policy regarding child abuse to be reviewed and complied with in addition to any legal reporting requirements.

**EFCA Policy on Child Abuse.** The EFCA affirms biblically healthy parenting and adult/child relationships. The definitions in this policy should not be interpreted to prohibit or restrict such relationships.

The vulnerability of children should never be violated, therefore the EFCA prohibits all staff and volunteers from engaging in any form of neglect or abuse described in this policy.

### **Child Abuse Defined.**

Neglect - the failure by a person responsible for a minor's care to provide a minor with necessary food, clothing, shelter, or medical care when reasonably able to do so. Neglect also includes the failure to protect a minor from conditions or actions which imminently and seriously endanger the minor's physical and mental health when reasonably able to do so.

Neglectful conditions may include or be shown by:

- inadequate care or supervision
- lack of reasonable care for a physical or mental condition
- abandonment
- malnutrition

Physical Abuse - any act which results in *non-accidental* physical injury.

- Such acts may include (but are not limited to): slapping, punching, beating, kicking, biting, pinching, shaking, burning, holding under water, or pulling hair.
- Physical Abuse does not include reasonable and moderate physical discipline of a minor by the minor's parent or legal guardian which does not result in an injury.

Social and Emotional Abuse - the failure to provide a developmentally appropriate, supportive environment. Patterns of belittling, scapegoating, threatening, ridiculing, exclusion, or other forms of rejection may constitute social or emotional abuse.

Sexual Abuse - sexual activity with a child which includes, but is not limited to:

- Verbal: sexual threats, solicitation, innuendoes, sexually explicit language (whether on the telephone, in person, or via the Internet) or any verbal expression with the intent to arouse or stimulate.
- Visual: indecent exposure, taking or showing suggestive pictures or pornographic materials, peeping, leering, exhibitionism, and voyeurism.
- Physical: physical contact (or penetration by penis, fingers, or any other body part or object) with clothed or unclothed genitals, pubic area, buttocks, or female breast; rubbing, holding, or kissing for the purpose of sexual gratification; self-touching or masturbation in the presence of a victim; or causing a child to perform any of these acts.

Child-to-Child - Should both the victim and the alleged abuser be under the age of eighteen, conduct is considered abuse if there is a difference in age of three or more years or a significant power, trust, or responsibility differential between them (as with a babysitter). If neither of these exists, it is considered “inappropriate behavior” and not abuse.

### **Procedures.**

Screening: The hiring process for all full and part-time regularly scheduled EFCA personnel will include background checks. Background checks are also required for on-call personnel and volunteers whose duties may include interaction with minors.

No applicant or volunteer ever convicted of a sexually-related crime is eligible for service in a position with direct relation to children or youth.

### **Response Process:**

Reporting: Any EFCA personnel who have any reasonable suspicion or allegation that a child is currently or has historically been the victim of child abuse by any EFCA personnel, child, or volunteer is obligated to complete an incident report (form on Yammer or contact HR@efca.org) and submit it to HR@efca.org. All known or suspected abuse or inappropriate behavior must be reported, including both those initiated by adults and those initiated by other children.

The law may require that knowledgeable parties report their knowledge to civil authorities.

Reporting to Red Flag Reporting: Reporting of any type can be made anonymously or by name to Red Flag Reporting: [www.RedFlagReporting.com](http://www.RedFlagReporting.com) or call at 1-877-647-3335. Client code for Red Flag Reporting is EFCA.

Because of the seriousness of these issues, the EFCA encourages those subject to this policy to err on the side of reporting information known to them if there is any question.

Failure to report as required by this policy may result in discipline up to and including termination of employment.

The EFCA will not retaliate against any staff member because he or she has made a good faith report to the EFCA or a public agency pursuant to this policy.

Inquiry: All reports of possible child abuse will be accepted by EFCA leadership and taken seriously. The EFCA Ethics Committee will initiate an inquiry team that will take all necessary action to assess both the child's safety and any misconduct claim in a timely, unbiased, and confidential manner, according to established procedures.

**Outcomes:**

If the report is substantiated and it is determined that the behavior met EFCA's definition of abuse, the perpetrator will be terminated. EFCA leadership will report the issues to the authorities, in accordance with the law.

If the behavior does not meet the EFCA's definition of abuse, but does involve inappropriate behavior, it will be handled according to protocol for personnel misconduct up to and including possible termination.

If the report is unsubstantiated, the EFCA will work to restore the good name and reputation of the accused. A person making a false accusation may be subject to discipline, including possible termination.

If a finding of abuse or inappropriate behavior is found in a child-to-child case, an action plan will be initiated, and parents will be accountable for follow through. Failure to do so will result in termination of their relationship with the EFCA.

The EFCA is committed to providing support for all personnel involved in a child abuse inquiry as well as working to secure appropriate and effective follow-up care.