
Talita Cumi Children's Home Child Protection Policy & Procedures

April 2011

Child Protection Policy

A. Preamble

We at Talita Cumi are committed to be Christ-like in action and attitude. We believe we are required by God to foster relationships of the utmost integrity, truthfulness and trustworthiness. Everyone who works with children and youth at Talita Cumi in any paid or voluntary capacity needs to operate within a carefully thought-out framework of good policy and practice that will ensure that children and youth are safeguarded and nurtured physically and emotionally as well as spiritually. Adults need to exercise the greatest care in their use of power and authority, never taking advantage of the trust others place in them.

Our Commitment:

- We will maintain high professional standards in all our situations. The wrongful exploitation of any relationship for self-gratification or other inappropriate purposes will not be tolerated. These standards also include doing our utmost to enhance the physical safety of the children and youth in our programs.
- We will properly recruit, train and support all those working with children/youth. All subjects will be subject to appropriate supervision.
- We will take allegations of abuse seriously and proceed with investigation and consequences.

B. Statement of Policy:

Talita Cumi is committed to:

- Ensuring that all staff involved with children/youth are given support
- Having clear procedures for dealing with concerns about possible abuse
- Protecting our staff from false and wrongful allegations

Talita Cumi recognizes that children are highly valued yet vulnerable members of the community. We take seriously the charge given by Jesus to welcome children (Luke 9:46-48), protect them (Matthew 18:1-14) and allow them free access to Him (Mark 10:13-16).

Accordingly, Talita Cumi adheres to the policy contained in this document. The Child Protection Policy sets out agreed guidelines relating to children in the following areas:

- Responding to any allegations of abuse, including those made against staff or board members, and volunteers
- Helping victims of abuse
- Striving to first provide and ensure safety to children and youth that may be victims

C. Definitions of Abuse

These definitions of abuse are provided to enable Talita Cumi staff, volunteers and board members to be able to identify unacceptable behavior including physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotions abuse, neglect and harassment.

1. Physical Abuse

- Physical force or harm to a child caused by a deliberate, non-accidental physical assault or action by an adult or significantly older or more powerful person. This includes the use of unreasonable force to discipline a child or to prevent a child from harming him/herself or others. Physical assault is considered to be a crime.

2. Sexual Abuse

- Sexual abuse is the use of a child or youth for sexual gratification. It includes sexual exploitation and sexual touching as well as non-touching abuse such as (a) exposure of a child or youth to sexual acts or materials; (b) invitations for touching; (c) menacing or threatening sexual acts, obscene gestures, obscene communication; (d) sexual references to the child's body or behavior by words or gestures; (e) requests that the child expose their body for sexual purposes.

3. Emotional Abuse

- Emotional abuse is a pattern of destructive behavior or verbal attacks by an adult on a child or youth. It can include rejecting, terrorizing, ignoring, unreasonable isolating, insulting, verbally attacking, humiliating or exploiting a child or youth.

4. Neglect

- Neglect is defined as an act of omission on the part of a parent or guardian [staff or volunteer] that is likely to result in physical harm to the child. Neglect includes the failure to provide for a child's or youth's basic needs: food, clothing, adequate shelter, supervision and medical care.

D. Selection and Training

All prospective staff, volunteers, and board members will be asked during their application process to make a signed declaration stating:

- Any charge or conviction or any criminal offense, or current criminal investigation
- Any court proceedings concerning any child they have had responsibility for any previous cause for concern regarding their conduct with children
- A willingness to cooperate with reference checks conducted by Talita Cumi Administration.

All employees must read and be familiar with this policy and procedures. All Talita Cumi staff, volunteers and board members will sign their commitment to our care of children.

E. Responding to Allegations of or Suspected Abuse

All cases of suspected child abuse must be responded to in a manner which best ensures the child's immediate and future safety.

Disclose Information to the Talita Cumi Child Protection Committee:

- Staff will respond to suspected abuse by writing down observations, impressions and communications which cause concern.
- No staff or board member, or volunteer will act alone about suspected abuse, but will report any concerns as soon as possible to the Talita Cumi Child Protection Committee.
- Incident reporting forms must be filled out for reports of abuse.

F. Leave/ Suspension

If a staff or board member, or volunteer is suspected of being the perpetrator of any form of abuse, he/she will immediately be suspended while the matter is being investigated.

Child Protection Procedures

A. Duty to Report Suspected Abuse

There may be a time when you suspect that a child has been a victim of abuse or neglect; or a child discloses such abuse to you. In any or these situations you are required, as a condition of your position with Talita Cumi to report your concerns to the Talita Cumi Child Protection Committee.

If a child discloses neglect or abuse to you the following steps should be followed:

- Believe the child and take their disclosure seriously.
- Listen openly and calmly to the child but do not ask leading questions.
- Reassure the child that you will do your best to get the right kind of help.
- Record the facts. Write down the child's name, the time and place of the conversation and what the child themselves told you.
- Report the disclosure to the Talita Cumi Director.
- Fill out an incident report.
- DO NOT contact or converse with the perpetrator about the disclosed information.
- Time is of the essence in ensuring the safety and well-being of children. Report immediately.

B. Code of Behavior

All the staff and volunteers, and board members that are involved with Talita Cumi Children's Home shall:

- Treat all children and young people with the respect and dignity befitting their age.
- Watch their own language, tone of voice and body language.
- Guide and discipline children without unreasonable physical punishment.

C. Confidentiality

Any specific incidents or reports of abuse will be confidential between the Talita Cumi Child Protection Committee and proper authorities involved within and around Talita Cumi.



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Responsibility Agreement

I, _____, have thoroughly read this, the **Talita Cumi Child Protection Policy**, and acknowledge my responsibilities and rights as stated in the policy. I agree to adhere to the terms of this contract and assume all liability for my actions while at Talita Cumi, releasing the Talita Cumi Children's Home of all legal responsibility.

Signature

Date