

1st Church Preschool
111 Church Drive
Cheshire, CT 06410

Teachers and staff of 1st Church Preschool are made aware of their responsibilities as mandated reporters and the signs of physical and emotional abuse and/or neglect. Parents are reminded on their Enrollment Contract that State law requires Preschool/Child Care Center staff to report any signs of suspected abuse and neglect as mandated reporters.

1. It is the responsibility of all child care programs and this includes us here at 1st Church Preschool, Inc., to prevent the abuse and neglect of children enrolled in the program.
2. Abuse of a child as defined by Connecticut General Statutes, means the child has had a physical injury or injuries inflicted upon them other than by accidental means or that are at variance with the history given of them or as a result of a condition which is the result of maltreatment such as malnutrition, sexual molestation, deprivation of necessities, emotional maltreatment or cruel punishment.

Neglect of a child includes being abandoned or being denied proper care and attention physically, emotionally, or morally, or is permitted to live under conditions, circumstances or associations injurious to their well being, or has been abused.

3. Any person paid to care for children in a public or private day care center which is licensed by the State of Connecticut is a mandated reporter in order to protect children whose health and welfare may be adversely affected through injury and neglect. Any mandated reporter who has reasonable cause to suspect or believe that any child under the age of 18 is in danger of being abused or has had non accidental physical injury inflicted upon him by a person responsible for such child's health, welfare and care, **must report** or cause a report to be made, and will be fined if they fail to do so.

An oral report shall be made by the mandated reporter within 24 hours of suspecting or believing that a child has been abused or neglected by telephone or in person to the Commissioner of Children and Families or a law enforcement agency. A mandated reporter shall also notify the person in charge of such institution or facility (the Director) if there is abuse or neglect by a member of the staff and the Director shall immediately notify the child's parents or person who is responsible for the child's care, that a report has been made. A mandated reporter who is member of the staff of a child care facility must also submit a **written report** to the Commissioner of Children and Families within 48 hours of the oral report as well as to the person in charge of such facility.

The oral and written reports shall contain if known:

- 1) Name and address of the child and his parents or other person responsible for his care
 - 2) the age and gender of the child
 - 3) the nature and extent of the child's injury or injuries, maltreatment, or neglect
 - 4) the approximate date and time of the injuries, maltreatment, or neglect
 - 5) information concerning any previous injury or injuries, maltreatment or neglect of the child or his siblings
 - 6) the circumstances in which the injuries, maltreatment or neglect came to be known to the reporter
 - 7) the name of the person or persons suspected to be responsible for causing such injury
 - 8) whatever action if any was taken to treat, provide shelter or otherwise assist the child
4. The Department of Children and Families Hotline telephone number to call for reporting abuse or neglect is 1-800-842-2288
 5. Any staff who should witness or become aware of abuse or neglect of a child enrolled in the program must follow the procedures as a mandated reporter listed above and within 24 hours call the Commissioner of Children and Families and report the situation to the Director.
 6. The Administrator or Director of the program shall be informed of any and all concerns or any suspicion of abuse or neglect and support staff as mandated reporters, to call and make a report. The Director will then inform parents, guardian, or person responsible, right away of the allegation of abuse or neglect that have been made.
 7. If a child shows signs of injury requiring medical attention, the school nurse will be notified to come as soon as possible and provide any medical attention beyond what our First Aid trained staff are able to do, and to document and witness such injuries for a report to be filed. If there are severe injuries requiring immediate medical attention beyond our capabilities, 911 will be called to come and provide immediate medical intervention while the Director also notifies the parent or guardian.
 8. Because 1st Church Preschool, Inc. has a zero tolerance policy for abuse or neglect of any child by any staff member or volunteer, provisions will be made to immediately relieve any staff person whom allegations of abuse and neglect have been made against, of their responsibilities with children until all allegations have been investigated. If the staff person is found to be guilty of such charges, they will be terminated of their teaching position. As with all allegations of abuse and neglect, a written report shall be made (see #3) and given to the Director who shall immediately notify the child's parents that a report has been made and the report shall also be sent to the Executive Head of the State of Connecticut Licensing Agency, i.e. The Department of Public Health, Child Licensing Program.
 9. Any person, institution or agency which, in good faith, makes or does not make a report shall be immune from any civil or criminal liability provided such person did not perpetrate

or cause such abuse or neglect. Any person, institution or agency that knowingly makes a false report of child abuse or neglect shall be fined.

10. All staff will be given this Abuse and Neglect Policy and a copy of the report of Suspected Child Abuse/Neglect with training in the procedures and expectations involved at a staff meeting. Each September, at the opening staff meeting of the new school year, the policy will be reviewed and staff retrained to include new staff, and answer questions that may arise. If situations or questions remain, the Director may call the Department of Children and Families to schedule an in-depth training session for the entire staff so all questions and issues can be more fully addressed.
11. Records shall be maintained on all incidents that cause concern about any child with regard to possible abuse or neglect, noting bruises, marks, remarks, uncleanness, etc. in order to show number of incidences, a progression, or a pattern. Any situations that require a call and report to be filed about abuse or neglect to the Department of Children and Families will be documented and a yellow copy of the report form will be added to the child's file with copies made to the Director and to the child's parents. Social Service Consultant will be contacted and informed of concern.
12. A statement stating that childcare workers are mandated reporters and a brief outline of our policy will be stated in the Parent Handbook and our Parent Contract Form for parent's information. Our detailed policy will be posted for parents to see on the Parent Resource Center Bulletin board, along with Grievance and other procedures.

Workshops on the responsibility of mandated reporters will be provided to all new teachers and reviewed regularly. It will include the procedures, forms, and specific information about the actual parameters and indicators of typical signs of abuse or neglect as defined by the State of Connecticut. This will also be expanded upon in the next revision of the Parent Handbook so all parents will be very aware of this fact.

Teachers are also held accountable for appropriate interactions with children at all times. Federal and State background checks are conducted prior to employment. Teaching staff never use threats or derogatory remarks. Food is never withheld or threatened to be withheld as a form of discipline. No teacher is ever to use physical punishment such as hitting or shaking nor engage in psychological abuse or coercion.

Teachers also document observations of inappropriate or challenging behaviors exhibited by any child. These are discussed with parents, and when necessary, a plan is developed to assist the students and parents. This plan may include consultation with outside support programs. During Parent Conferences we listen to and problem-solve with parents, sharing ideas on what we see works with their child and help with any issues or concerns they or we, may have.

Finally, information is available for our parents about appropriate styles of discipline for young children, making them aware of the difference between effective discipline and punishment.