

Henry Fork Service Center

Child Protection Policy and Procedures

Throughout this document a child, youth, or young person is defined as one who is less than eighteen years of age, developmentally disabled, or in any way compromised in making adult decisions. Executive staff will include the Executive Director and Program Director.

I. Our Mission

The mission of the Henry Fork Service Center is to make God's love visible in our community.

II. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide a caring and secure environment for young people and the adults in ministry to them through Henry Fork Service Center regardless of where that ministry takes place.

III. Biblical Foundation

Henry Fork Service Center seeks to express God's love of young persons and to provide for their personal wholeness in Christ. The Bible is foundational to all policies, procedures, and ministries. In Mark 10:13-16 Jesus teaches us explicitly that young persons have the right and the keys to the Kingdom of God. He demonstrated this through blessing and touch. Our goal in response to this Biblical mandate is to maintain a safe, secure, and loving place where children may grow and learn.

IV. The Law

Under Virginia Section 63.1-248.2, an abused child is defined as one who is less than eighteen years of age, whose parents or other persons responsible for his/her care creates or inflicts or threatens to create or inflict, or allows to be created or inflicted upon such a child a physical or mental injury by other than accidental means, or creates a substantial risk of death or disfigurement, or impairment of bodily or mental functions.

This includes the following:

- Failure to provide the care necessary for health;
- Abandonment;
- Commits or allows sexual exploitation;
- Is endangered or neglected.

Child abuse may be physical, sexual, emotional, or mental, and may be the result of actions or failure to act (e.g., lack of care for a child).

Section 63.2-1509 of the Virginia Code states that "The following persons who, in their professional or official capacity, have reason to suspect that a child is an abused or neglected child, shall report the matter immediately to the local department of the county or city wherein the child resides or wherein the abuse or neglect is believed to have occurred or to the Department's toll-free child abuse and neglect hotline: any person licensed to practice medicine or any of the healing arts; any hospital resident or intern, and any person employed in the nursing profession; any person employed as a social worker; any probation officers; any teacher or other person employed in a public or private school, kindergarten, or nursery school; any person providing full-time or part-time child care for pay on a regularly planned basis; any mental health professional; any law-enforcement officer or animal control officer; any mediator eligible to receive court referrals pursuant to 8.01-576.8; any professional staff person, not previously enumerated, employed by a private or state-operated hospital,

institution, or facility to which children have been committed or where children have been placed for care and treatment; any person associated with or employed by a private organization responsible for the care, custody, or control of children; any person who is designated a court-appointed special advocate pursuant to Article 5 (9.1-151 et seq.) of Chapter 1 of Title 9.1; any person, over the age of 18 years, who has received training approved by the Department of Social Services for the purposes of recognizing and reporting child abuse and neglect; and any person employed by a local department defined in 63.2-100 who determines eligibility for public assistance.”

In addition, EVERYONE SHOULD report any known or reasonably suspected child abuse immediately. Any report is confidential and the person making the report is immune from liability for making such a report, unless it is proven that such a person acted in bad faith or with malicious intent.

V. Definition of Child Abuse

Child abuse is an act committed by a person, care giver, or person in a position of trust (even though he/she may not care for the child on a daily basis) that is not accidental and that harms or threatens to harm a child’s physical or mental health or welfare. Definitions and explanations of child abuse are from the Virginia Department of Social Services.

VI. Reducing the Risk of Child Abuse or Injury

In an effort to create the safest possible environment for young persons wherever ministries and activities of Henry Fork Service Center take place, several abuse prevention measures will be utilized. These measures include: screening paid workers for past child abuse convictions or records of child abuse that have been expunged, provision for regular training on child abuse issues to paid and volunteer staff members, use of the two leader rule, standards of appropriate classroom discipline, and open classrooms.

A. Staff and Volunteer Screening

Any individual wishing to work as staff must have an application on file. Following the completion of the application, each person shall be interviewed by two persons, the Executive Director and a member of the Personnel Committee for the Board of Directors. The Program Director may fill in for the Personnel Committee member if no such member is available. Before beginning service, each employee or volunteer will be asked to sign a statement indicating that he/she has never been convicted of child abuse nor had such a conviction expunged (Sworn Statement of Affirmation). Also, each candidate must complete a Department of Social Services Central Registry Check and a criminal background check, as well as complete a drug test. Each person must pass all of these requirements in order to begin service with children or youth. Any individual wishing to volunteer must meet with the Executive Director or the Program Director. Volunteers will work under the direction of staff members and will not be left unsupervised with children at any time.

B. Ongoing Training

Staff and volunteers working with children will be required to attend a session on child protection offered or approved by the Henry Fork Service Center before beginning work. All persons who wish to continue working with children or youth will be required to attend training at least once each year.

C. Two leader rule

Leaders will be assigned in teams of two or more individuals for all children and youth activities. The two leader rule applies to all groups that meet at the Henry Fork Service

Center premises and involves children or youth. If the group is separated by rooms or facilities, each subgroup will have two leaders. Leaders will be at least five years older than the oldest child or youth present.

If any group stays overnight at the Henry Fork Service Center, or if a sponsored group leaves the premises for an overnight activity, two or more leaders, at least five years older than the oldest youth, must be present. If the group is of mixed gender, at least one leader must be male and one must be female.

The Henry Fork Service Center will have a 5:1 student-teacher ratio for the Preschool program and a 10:1 student-teacher ratio for each Afterschool program classroom.

D. Mentoring and Consultation

Any one-on-one mentoring or consultation between an adult and a child, or a parent, will be conducted in a room or area that is in plain view of others with doors open. If necessary, an additional staff member will observe the consultation.

E. Classroom Discipline

All teachers and substitute staff will follow the Henry Fork Service Center Discipline Policy. All volunteers will notify classroom teachers of a problem and the classroom teachers will adhere to the Discipline Policy. Please see the Discipline Policy located at the end of the Child Protection Policy.

F. Open Classrooms

Classrooms may be visited without prior notice by visitors, Henry Fork Service Center board members, or tour groups, at any time; however, all visitors must report to the office upon arrival to ensure all safety procedures are followed in the event of an emergency. All visitors must be accompanied by a member of the staff while children or youth are present in the building.

G. Restroom Policy

Children who attend the Henry Fork Service Center are expected to be potty-trained. For safety reasons, no staff member or volunteer shall enter the preschool restroom or restroom stall with a child. Staff and volunteers may assist in adjusting underwear and/or swim suits if a child asks for help, but may not help students change.

H. Driver rules

Staff and volunteers who are responsible for transporting children in Henry Fork Service Center vehicles must:

- Be licensed and fully insured
- Have not been convicted of more than one moving violation in the past 12 months
- Have not been convicted of driving under the influence or driving while intoxicated in the past ten years
- Be physically able to undertake the driving assignment, including being tested and not taking any medications that may cause drowsiness
- Understand that he/she is responsible for the safe operation of the vehicle
- Ensure that all occupants are properly restrained using approved seatbelts and child restraint seats before the vehicle is moving
- Have necessary medical and emergency care forms for the occupants of the vehicle during field trips. If more than one vehicle is in use for the same destination, all forms must be on at least one of the vehicles, with all drivers having a method of

communication between vehicles. All forms will be kept in the office during day-to-day transportation of children to and from Henry Fork programming.

- Ensure that the vehicle has an adequate first aid kit available and accessible
- Drive within the posted speed limits
- Not drive to the point of fatigue or drowsiness
- Take regular breaks on long trips. During longer trips, there will be at least two staff or approved volunteer drivers on each vehicle. The drivers will alternate throughout the trip
- Use extra caution, employ more frequent breaks, and alternate drivers more frequently when driving at night, in inclement weather, or any other time visibility is reduced

I. Discipline Policy

All children and parents must be instructed in what is appropriate behavior and the consequences of failing to abide by the rules of appropriate behavior. All households will be supplied with a copy of the Henry Fork Service Center Discipline Policy and Rules and Procedures. Any child or parent who refuses to comply will not be allowed to participate in Henry Fork Service Center activities until compliance is agreed upon.

VII. Reporting Child Abuse

Henry Fork Service Center is required by Virginia State Law to report any suspected and alleged cases of child abuse. This will be done discreetly and confidentially to ensure the rights of the alleged victim and the accused are protected.

A. When abuse is reported to general staff or volunteers

Any time there is a case of suspected or alleged child abuse, Henry Fork Service Center staff and volunteers will adhere to the following procedures:

- Reassure the victim that any abuse is not their fault and commend them for coming forward and trusting you to report the incident
- Refrain from confronting the accused with the allegation
- Begin documenting any information that has been given regarding the abuse. This will not be shared with other staff or volunteers. It will be turned in to Executive Staff
- Notify Executive Staff of the incident and turn in any documentation that has been kept
- Pray for all persons affected by the allegation

B. When abuse is reported to Executive Staff

Once a case of suspected or alleged abuse has been reported, the Executive Staff of the Henry Fork Service Center will adhere to the following procedures:

- Reassure the victim that any abuse is not their fault and commend them for coming forward and trusting you to report the incident
- Refrain from confronting the accused with allegation
- Review any documentation that has been turned in
- Immediately notify Virginia Department of Social Services
- If there is an immediate danger, notify the Franklin County Sheriff's Department
- Notify the parents of the alleged victim, if the alleged perpetrator is not the parent
- Notify the parents of the alleged perpetrator, if a minor

- If the accused has assigned duties within the Henry Fork Service Center, that person must be informed of the allegation and temporarily relieved of duty until the investigation is concluded
- Observe strict confidentiality for both the alleged victim and the accused at all times
- Pray for all persons affected by the allegation

It is appropriate to show care and comfort for the accused as well as the alleged victim. No discrimination will be shown to the children. Because of this, general staff will not be notified of the accusation. The Executive Staff will only notify general staff of the accusation if it becomes necessary to do so.

B. *Spokesperson for the Henry Fork Service Center*

A member of the Executive Staff shall be the spokesperson for the Henry Fork Service Center. No outside media will be contacted and no statements provided to the media other than "Holding Statements" which are designed to show the Henry Fork Service Center is concerned, taking appropriate action, and protecting the rights and privacy of all concerned parties. The holding statements maybe phrased as follows:

- The Henry Fork Service Center is aware of the allegations and has implemented the procedures outlined in its Child Protection Policy in an effort to quickly resolve this matter.
- Our first obligation is to the people allegedly involved until the matter is fully resolved.
- The appropriate officials have been notified.

VIII. General Safety Procedures

A. *Cleaning Products*

All cleaning products will be stored out of reach of children in containers or separate areas that are locked.

B. *Utensils*

Sharp kitchen utensils or any other tool or object with edges which may harm a child will be stored or secured out of reach of children in containers or separate areas that are locked.

C. *First Aid*

1. First Aid Kits will be located in readily accessible locations in the building and made available for drivers to carry in vehicles, and the kits shall be updated periodically.
2. CPR, AED, and First Aid training will be made available periodically to all staff. Certification will be required for teaching staff.
3. No medical care other than emergency first aid will be provided. No medication of any kind will be administered. Exceptions will be made for children who must use an Epi-pen for severe allergies. Only staff who are trained in the administration of an Epi-pen will administer this drug. A trained staff member will be present any time children are involved in programming.
4. An accident report will be completed when any incident occurs on Henry Fork Service Center property. Parents will be notified of any incidents.

D. *Emergency Plans*

All staff and volunteers will adhere to the Emergency Plans and Procedures set forth by the Henry Fork Service Center. Emergency escape routes will be posted at intervals

throughout the building. Copies of the Emergency Plans and Procedures will be available at all times.

IX. Policy Review

The Child Protection Policy and Procedures of the Henry Fork Service Center shall be:

- Reviewed annually by the Executive Staff and Henry Fork Board of Directors
- Any changes or updates will be added upon review of the policy

X. Express Exceptions

A. *Emergency*

A leader may suspend adherence to this policy to meet the needs of an emergency. When the emergency is resolved the leader must resume compliance. The emergency and actions taken must be reported to the Executive Staff immediately.

B. *Inadvertent Failure*

If there is a circumstance where a leader inadvertently fails to abide by this policy, he/she must report the inadvertent failure to the Executive Director immediately.