

SECC CHILD PROTECTION AND SEXUAL MISCONDUCT POLICY

Southeastern California Conference (“SECC”) is committed to providing a safe environment for our children and youth. Any person known to pose a threat to children or youth, will be prohibited from working in any ministry involving children or youth. All employees, volunteers, and administrators of SECC must agree to follow and comply with the requirements as outlined below.

DEFINITIONS

For purposes of this policy, the terms “child” or “children” or “youth” includes all persons under the age of eighteen (18) years.

A “regular volunteer” is any 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.

“Employees” includes all employees, whether they work with children or not, including seasonal, occasional, and part-time employees.

“Sexual misconduct” refers to sexual behavior by an adult, volunteer, or employee, toward a minor. Sexual misconduct includes any type of touching for a purpose of sexually stimulating the adult or minor. It also includes conversation or comments by an adult that are sexual in nature and said for the purpose of sexual stimulation.

TRAINING ON CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT IDENTIFICATION AND REPORTING

Child abuse and neglect, as defined in CANRA, codified as California *Penal Code* §§ 11164-11174.3, includes: physical abuse, sexual abuse (including both sexual assault and sexual exploitation), willful cruelty or unjustified punishment, unlawful corporal punishment or injury, and neglect (including both acts and omissions).

An administrator, employee, or regular volunteer of SECC shall individually complete training in child abuse & neglect identification and training in child abuse & neglect reporting consistent with *Business and Professions Code* § 18975(a).

At this time, this required training can be completed through the free, self-administered training available at <https://mandatedreporterca.com/>. Prior to employment or volunteering with SECC, this training must be completed, and a certificate of completion must be returned to the Human Resources Department.

- Employees must complete the General Training (4 hours).
- Pastors must also complete the additional training specific for clergy (additional 2 hours).
- Volunteers are required to complete the two-hour training for volunteers (2 hours).

Employees will be paid for this training. This training will be repeated and completed every two (2) years throughout the course of an individuals' employment or volunteer engagement with SECC.

BACKGROUND CHECKS & SCREENING

All administrators, employees, and volunteers, including regular volunteers and occasional volunteers, must undergo a background check to identify and exclude any persons with a history of child abuse. SECC will carefully screen adults before employment begins – this will include a completed application, reference checks, and a background check as set forth below.

Before a background check is conducted, individuals will be asked to complete sign an authorization form allowing SECC to run the check. If an individual declines to sign the authorization form, he or she will be unable to work with children.

Screening Procedures

All employees, administrators, and regular volunteers who work with those under the age of 18 participating in our programs and activities shall undergo a Live Scan background check pursuant to Section 11105.3 of the *Penal Code* to identify and exclude any persons with a history of child abuse or other convictions that have been determined by the FBI that would preclude them from working with youth.

What constitutes a disqualifying offense that will keep an individual from working with children will be determined by the authorized Custodian of Records based on guidance provided by the FBI and DOJ. The background check authorization form and results will be permanently maintained in confidence on file at Human Resources Department for employees and at the Risk Management Department for volunteers.

When indicated by our screening procedures, candidates who pose a threat to children, youth, or vulnerable adults will be removed immediately from consideration for any ministry position involving children, youth, or vulnerable adults.

SUPERVISION

Reporting Child Abuse

SECC is committed to following the state and federal legal requirements for reporting allegations or incidents of sexual abuse or misconduct to appropriate law enforcement and child or adult protective services organizations. CANRA requires that employers of mandated reporters (as defined in the Act) promote identification and reporting of child abuse or neglect. It is the policy of SECC to comply with its obligations under the Act— to require all employees who are mandated reporters to immediately make required reports to a county child welfare department, child protective services or to local law enforcement agencies when reasonable suspicion of child abuse or neglect has occurred. Volunteers are encouraged to report known or suspected instances

of child abuse to appropriate law enforcement and/or child or adult protective services organizations.

When reasonable suspicion exists that an adult has committed sexual misconduct that rises to the level of child abuse as defined by law, a report must be made in the manner provided by law including notification to the appropriate child protection agency. A written report must then be sent within 36 hours by fax or electronically (if available). Written reports must be submitted on the California Suspected Child Abuse Form 8572.

All administrators, employees, and volunteers of SECC must cooperate fully with law enforcement or governmental authorities investigating abuse and neglect.

The Human Resources Director will conduct an independent investigation for any acts which fall outside the legal definition of child abuse or when an issue exists independent of any criminal investigation. This investigation will be conducted thoroughly and as confidentially as possible. Employment discipline decisions will be made in the same manner and following the same procedure as set forth elsewhere in this Handbook. If it appears necessary for the safety of children or is in the best interest of the Conference, the employee may be suspended without pay during the investigation.

Two Adult Rule

To the greatest extent possible, at least two mandated reporters, who have been screened and trained and are not related to each other, will be present whenever administrators, employees, or volunteers are in contact with or supervising children.

Open Door Policy

Classroom doors should remain open unless there is a window in the door or a side window beside it. Doors should never be locked while persons are inside the room unless for experiencing an emergency or emergency drill with procedures that dictate otherwise. Window shades in the door-side windows must also remain open at all times.

Reporting Sexual Abuse or Misconduct in the Workplace

SECC prohibits and does not tolerate sexual abuse or misconduct in the workplace. SECC provides procedures for its employees and volunteers to report such acts. Those reasonably suspected or believed to have committed sexual abuse or misconduct will be appropriately disciplined, up to and including termination of employment, as well as potentially face criminal prosecution according to the law.

SECC will take all allegations of sexual abuse or misconduct seriously and will promptly, thoroughly, and equitably investigate whether misconduct has taken place. SECC may utilize an outside third party to conduct an investigation of alleged misconduct. SECC will cooperate fully with any investigation conducted by law enforcement or other regulatory/protective services

agencies. SECC will make every reasonable effort to keep the matters involved in the allegation as confidential as possible while still allowing for a prompt and thorough investigation.

Violations

Violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action consistent with applicable SECC personnel policies, including up to termination of employment. Violation of the law requiring mandated reporters to promptly report suspected child abuse or neglect may result in individual criminal and civil penalties including fines, imprisonment, or both according to the law.