

# Child Abuse Prevention Policy

*Adopted June 2024*

The Center Project is committed to providing a safe place for all LGBTQIA+ people to build community and access resources. It is especially important to us to protect and maintain a safe and supportive space for LGBTQ+ youth and for this reason, we have a zero tolerance policy regarding child abuse or neglect of any kind.

## **Purpose**

The Center Project is committed to providing a safe, supportive space for all LGBTQIA+ people, and we take seriously our responsibility to protect the health, safety, and wellbeing of the young people in our community.

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for Mandated Reporting and the screening of child abuse & neglect of all volunteers and employees who serve with youth at TCP.

This policy is written in accordance with Missouri Law.

## **Scope**

This policy applies to all employees, board members, volunteers, consultants, or anyone who serves with Prism or works in any way with youth at The Center Project.

## **Screening Volunteers & Employees for Child Abuse & Neglect**

All individuals working or volunteering with youth must register with the State of Missouri Family Safety Care Registry. Registration lasts a lifetime. TCP will cover the registration cost for individuals who are not already registered with the FSCR.

TCP runs all screenings for child abuse & neglect through this registry at the start of individuals' service and then continues annual screenings on all current staff and volunteers working with youth.

## ***Definition of Child Abuse & Neglect***

Abuse is any physical injury, sexual abuse, or emotional abuse inflicted on a child other than by accidental means...Victims of abuse shall also include any victims of sex trafficking or severe forms of trafficking.." ([Mo. Rev. Stat. 210.110](#))

Unlike the general definition above, regarding mandated reporting, "abuse is not limited to being inflicted by a person responsible for a child's care, custody and control...but shall also include abuse inflicted by any other person." ([Mo. Rev. Stat. 210.115](#))

Examples of abuse or neglect includes, but is not limited to physical or mental injury; acts or omissions that present a substantial risk of physical or mental injury; sexual abuse; failure to provide adequate food, clothing, or shelter; abandonment; and encouraging delinquent acts.

### *Volunteer & Employee Relationships with Youth*

1. Volunteers and employees serving youth at The Center Project are expected to be attentive to the signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect, and to report those signs as soon as they are observed.
2. There should be at least 2 adult volunteers or employees present during any youth programming.
3. At no time during any program or event may an adult employee or volunteer be alone with a youth, unobserved by other staff or volunteers.
4. Employees and volunteers should not build relationships with youth outside of Prism and The Center Project.
5. Volunteers and employees are prohibited from socializing with youth outside of Prism or The Center Project unless they are members of the same family. If there is a pre-existing relationship between youth and an adult volunteer or employee, this should be disclosed to Prism Coordinators and the TCP Board.

### **Mandated Reporting**

#### *Definition of Mandated Reporter*

A mandated reporter is a person who is legally required to report to Child Protective Services if they observe or suspect child abuse or neglect. Examples of mandated reporters include healthcare workers, social workers, daycare or child-care workers, and teachers or other school personnel. (Complete list of Mandated Reporters: [Mo. Rev. State. 210.115](#))

#### *Reporting Procedure*

All TCP volunteers are responsible for being vigilant regarding the safety of youth at TCP. If a volunteer or employee observes an act of child abuse, learns of child abuse occurring, or suspects someone is a victim of child abuse, they must report that abuse.

If you suspect child abuse or neglect, call 1-800-392-3738 to access the Missouri Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline. Volunteers or employees should also report suspected child abuse or neglect to TCP's President or Executive Board as is appropriate.

Additional hotlines:

School Violence - 866-748-7047

Human Trafficking - 888-373-7888

## **Training & Education**

All volunteers and employees serving with youth are required to complete the [Missouri Mandated Report Training](#), provided by Missouri Kids First.

[Missouri Guidelines for Mandated Reporters](#)

## **Protections**

Volunteers and employees who make good-faith reports of suspected or known abuse or neglect will be protected from adverse action regarding their employment or volunteerism.

Missouri law provides immunity from civil or criminal liability to those who are required to make reports with the Children's Division, any law enforcement agency, or the juvenile office ([Mo. Rev. Stat. 210.135](#)).

## **Screening Disclosure**

TCP will provide a copy of the results of FCSR screenings to any applicant on request. If items on the applicants' background check raise concerns, TCP will communicate directly with the applicant about those items.

## **Privacy**

The Center Project is committed to protecting the privacy of all individuals seeking employment with us. FSCR screening results will be kept confidential and only shared with individuals who have a need to review the information for employment & volunteer placement decisions. Results will be stored electronically.

## **Enforcement**

Any individual found to be in violation of this policy will be asked to immediately discontinue their service with TCP. Additional enforcement may include termination of employment and pursuit of legal action.

## **Review**

This policy will be reviewed and updated as necessary to ensure that it remains current and effective.

**Child Abuse Prevention Policy Agreement Statement**

I have read and understand TCP's Child Abuse Prevention Policy. (\_\_\_\_)

I understand my responsibilities as a volunteer or employee to maintain safe boundaries and interact appropriately with youth at The Center Project. (\_\_\_\_)

I understand my responsibilities as a volunteer or employee to report child abuse and neglect. (\_\_\_\_)

I understand that a violation of my responsibilities as a volunteer or employee at TCP may result in disciplinary action, including termination of my employment or volunteer service. (\_\_\_\_)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date