

COMMUNITIES IN SCHOOLS OF CALDWELL COUNTY VOLUNTEER / MENTOR POLICY

GENERAL PURPOSE STATEMENT

Communities in Schools of Caldwell County (CISCC) seeks to provide a safe and secure environment for the children and youth that participate in our programs and activities. By implementing the following practices, our goal is to protect the children and youth participating in CISCC from incidents of misconduct or inappropriate behavior while also protecting our Volunteers/Mentors from false accusations.

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

SELECTION OF VOLUNTEERS/MENTORS

All Volunteers/Mentors who desire to work with the children participating in our programs and activities will be screened. This screening includes the following:

a. Written Application

All persons seeking to volunteer to work with children must complete and sign a written application in a form to be supplied by CISCC. The application will request basic information from the applicant and will inquire into previous experience with children, previous CISCC affiliation, reference and employment information, as well as disclosure of any previous criminal convictions. The application form will be maintained in confidence on file at the CISCC office.

b. Personal Interview

Upon completion of the application, a face-to-face interview will be scheduled at the CISCC office with the applicant to discuss his/her suitability for being a Volunteer/Mentor.

c. Reference Checks

Before an applicant is permitted to work with children, at least two of the applicants' references will be checked. These references should be of an institutional nature as opposed to personal or family references, preferably from organizations where the applicant has worked with children in the past. Documentation of the reference checks will be maintained in confidence on file at CISCC.

d. Criminal Background Check

A criminal background check is required for all Volunteers/Mentors. Before a background check is run, prospective workers and volunteers/mentors will be asked to sign an authorization form allowing CISCC to run the check. If an individual declines to sign the authorization form, she or he will be unable to volunteer for CISCC.

What constitutes a disqualifying offense that will keep an individual from volunteering with children will be determined by the Volunteer/Mentor Review Committee on a case-by-case basis in light of all the surrounding circumstances that are known to the Volunteer/Mentor Review Committee. Generally, convictions for an offense involving children and/or for offenses involving violence, dishonesty, illegal substances, indecency and any conduct contrary to our mission will preclude someone from being

permitted to Volunteer/Mentor with the CISCC program. Failure to disclose a criminal conviction on the application form will also be a disqualifying event. The background check authorization form and results will be maintained in confidence on file at the CISCC office.

TWO ADULT RULE/ CONTACT WITH CHILDREN

It is our goal that a minimum of two unrelated adults will be in attendance at all times when Volunteers/Mentors are interacting with children during our programs and activities. CISCC does not allow minors to be alone with one adult volunteer at a CISCC site location or at any CISCC sponsored activity. 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 except during a lockdown or as required by school policy.

CISCC does not authorize any contact between Volunteers/Mentors and children outside of CISCC site locations or CISCC sponsored activities.

RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS OF CHILD ABUSE

For purposes of this policy, “child abuse” is any action (or lack of action) which endangers or harms a child’s physical, psychological or emotional health and development. Child abuse occurs in different ways and includes the following:

Physical abuse – any physical injury to a child which is not accidental, such as beating, shaking, burns, and biting.

Emotional abuse – emotional injury when the child is not nurtured or provided with love and security, such as an environment of constant criticism, belittling and persistent teasing.

Sexual abuse – any sexual activity between a child and an adult or between a child and another child at least four years older than the victim, including activities such as fondling, exhibitionism, intercourse, incest, and pornography.

Neglect – depriving a child of their essential needs, such as adequate food, water, shelter, and medical care.

The definitions of abused, neglected or dependent juveniles, as defined by N.C.G.S. 7B-101 are included at the end of this document.

Volunteers/Mentors may have the opportunity to become aware of abuse and/or neglect of the children that are participating in CISCC programs. In the event that a Volunteer/Mentor becomes aware of suspected abuse or neglect of a child that is participating in the CISCC program, this suspicion should be reported immediately to the Site Director or the Director of CISCC for further action including jointly reporting the suspicion to authorities as may be mandated by state law. N.C.G.S. 7B-301, regarding mandatory reporting, states in part: “Any person or institution who has cause to suspect that any juvenile is abused, neglected, or dependent, as defined by G.S. 7B-101, or has died as the result of maltreatment, shall report the case of that juvenile to the director of the department of social services in the county where the juvenile resides or is found.” The complete text of N.C.G.S. 7B-301 is included at the end of this document.

In the event that an incident of abuse or neglect is alleged or suspected to have occurred at a CISCC site or during a CISCC sponsored program or activity, the following procedure shall be followed by CISCC:

1. If abuse or neglect is alleged or suspected to have occurred at a school, the principal of the school or other appropriate school official will be notified, and the school system shall be responsible for notifying the parent or guardian of the child. If abuse or neglect is alleged or suspected to have occurred at a CISCC site that is not at a school, the parent or guardian of the child will be notified by CISCC. If abuse or neglect is alleged or suspected to have occurred at the child's home or if a parent or guardian is alleged or suspected to be the perpetrator of such abuse or neglect, then any notification shall be left to the Department of Social Services and/or any other appropriate authorities.

2. If a Volunteer/Mentor is alleged or suspected to be the perpetrator of the abuse or misconduct, such Volunteer/Mentor will immediately be placed on leave from volunteering with the CISCC program pending an investigation.

3. CISCC will comply with all applicable North Carolina laws regarding the mandatory reporting of abuse, as the law then exists. The current North Carolina statute is N.C.G.S. 7B-301 (a copy of which is included at the end of this policy).

4. CISCC will fully cooperate with any investigation of the incident by state or local authorities. In the event there is no investigation of the incident by state or local authorities, a team will be formed by CISCC to investigate the circumstances of the incident. The team should act only in consultation with our insurance company and/or attorney.

5. Any person who is not found innocent of the alleged abuse or misconduct will be removed from their CISCC position with children or youth.

6. CISCC's insurer will be notified, and CISCC will complete and file an incident report with the insurer.

7. The CISCC Executive Director, in coordination with the Caldwell County Schools Public Information Officer, will be CISCC spokesperson to the media concerning incidents of abuse or neglect, unless he or she is alleged to be involved. All Volunteers/Mentors and employees of CISCC should refrain from speaking to the media.

§ 7B-301. Duty to report abuse, neglect, dependency, or death due to maltreatment.

Any person or institution who has cause to suspect that any juvenile is abused, neglected, or dependent, as defined by G.S. 7B-101, or has died as the result of maltreatment, shall report the case of that juvenile to the director of the department of social services in the county where the juvenile resides or is found. The report may be made orally, by telephone, or in writing. The report shall include information as is known to the person making it including the name and address of the juvenile; the name and address of the juvenile's parent, guardian, or caretaker; the age of the juvenile; the names and ages of other juveniles in the home; the present whereabouts of the juvenile if not at the home address; the nature and extent of any injury or condition resulting from abuse, neglect, or dependency; and any other information which the person making the report believes might be helpful in establishing the need for protective services or court intervention. If the report is made orally or by telephone, the person making the report shall give the person's name, address, and telephone number. Refusal of the person making the report to give a name shall not preclude the department's assessment of the alleged abuse, neglect, dependency, or death as a result of maltreatment.

Upon receipt of any report of sexual abuse of the juvenile in a child care facility, the director shall notify the State Bureau of Investigation within 24 hours or on the next workday. If sexual abuse in a child care facility is not alleged in the initial report, but during the course of the assessment there is reason to suspect that sexual abuse has occurred, the director shall immediately notify the State Bureau of Investigation. Upon notification that sexual abuse may have occurred in a child care facility, the State Bureau of Investigation may form a task force to investigate the report. (1979, c. 815, s. 1; 1991 (Reg. Sess., 1992), c. 923, s. 2; 1993, c. 516, s. 4; 1997-506, s. 32; 1998-202, s. 6; 1999-456, s. 60; 2005-55, s. 3.)

§ 7B-309. Immunity of persons reporting and cooperating in an assessment.

Anyone who makes a report pursuant to this Article, cooperates with the county department of social services in a protective services assessment, testifies in any judicial proceeding resulting from a protective services report or assessment, or otherwise participates in the program authorized by this Article, is immune from any civil or criminal liability that might otherwise be incurred or imposed for that action provided that the person was acting in good faith. In any proceeding involving liability, good faith is presumed. (1979, c. 815, s. 1; 1981, s.469, s. 8; 1993, c. 516, s. 9; 1998-202, s. 6; 1999-456, s. 60; 2005-55, s. 9.)

§ 7B-101. Definitions.

As used in this Subchapter, unless the context clearly requires otherwise, the following words have the listed meanings:

- (1) Abused juveniles. – Any juvenile less than 18 years of age whose parent, guardian, custodian, or caretaker:
 - a. Inflicts or allows to be inflicted upon the juvenile a serious physical injury by other than accidental means;
 - b. Creates or allows to be created a substantial risk of serious physical injury to the juvenile by other than accidental means;
 - c. Uses or allows to be used upon the juvenile cruel or grossly inappropriate procedures or cruel or grossly inappropriate devices to modify behavior;
 - d. Commits, permits, or encourages the commission of a violation of the following laws by, with, or upon the juvenile: first-degree rape, as provided in

G.S. 14-27.2; rape of a child by an adult offender, as provided in G.S. 14-27.2A; second degree rape as provided in G.S. 14-27.3; first-degree sexual offense, as provided in G.S. 14-27.4; sexual offense with a child by an adult offender, as provided in G.S. 14-27.4A; second degree sexual offense, as provided in G.S. 14-27.5; sexual act by a custodian, as provided in G.S. 14-27.7; crime against nature, as provided in G.S. 14-177; incest, as provided in G.S. 14-178; preparation of obscene photographs, slides, or motion pictures of the juvenile, as provided in G.S. 14-190.5; employing or permitting the juvenile to assist in a violation of the obscenity laws as provided in G.S. 14-190.6; dissemination of obscene material to the juvenile as provided in G.S. 14-190.7 and G.S. 14-190.8; displaying or disseminating material harmful to the juvenile as provided in G.S. 14-190.14 and G.S. 14-190.15; first and second degree sexual exploitation of the juvenile as provided in G.S. 14-190.16 and G.S. 14-190.17; promoting the prostitution of the juvenile as provided in G.S. 14-190.18; and taking indecent liberties with the juvenile, as provided in G.S. 14-202.1;

- e. Creates or allows to be created serious emotional damage to the juvenile; serious emotional damage is evidenced by a juvenile's severe anxiety, depression, withdrawal, or aggressive behavior toward himself or others; or
- f. Encourages, directs, or approves of delinquent acts involving moral turpitude committed by the juvenile.

(9) Dependent juvenile. – A juvenile in need of assistance or placement because the juvenile has no parent, guardian, or custodian responsible for the juvenile's care or supervision or whose parent, guardian, or custodian is unable to provide for the care or supervision and lacks an appropriate alternative child care arrangement.

(15) Neglected juvenile. – A juvenile who does not receive proper care, supervision, or discipline from the juvenile's parent, guardian, custodian, or caretaker; or who has been abandoned; or who is not provided necessary medical care; or who is not provided necessary remedial care; or who lives in an environment injurious to the juvenile's welfare; or who has been placed for care or adoption in violation of law. In determining whether a juvenile is a neglected juvenile, it is relevant whether that juvenile lives in a home where another juvenile has died as a result of suspected abuse or neglect or lives in a home where another juvenile has been subjected to abuse or neglect by an adult who regularly lives in the home.