

# MTW Code of Conduct for Child Safety

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## Background

The most effective way to reduce abuse of children is to be vigilant. By being vigilant in following the Code of Conduct we will help protect children from abuse.

All staff and volunteers who have roles with children are expected to interact with children in a mature, capable, safe, caring, responsible manner, with a high level of accountability. All adult staff and volunteers are responsible for giving and accepting feedback from others in order to maintain our high level of professionalism.

This Code of Conduct includes, but is not limited to the following expectations of staff, missionaries and volunteers.

## Code of Conduct

1. I will not commit abuse upon any child or willingly allow any harm or abuse to occur to a child.
2. I understand I have a responsibility to report any and all suspicions of child abuse or harm.
3. I understand that all one-adult-to-one-child situations are to be avoided whenever possible, and I will strive to avoid such situations with children other than my own. When unavoidable, I will take steps to eliminate isolation and unnecessary risk.
4. I will not participate in activities or ongoing communication with any child without the knowledge and consent of his or her parents.
5. I will not use language or behavior towards children that is inappropriate, harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, demeaning or culturally inappropriate.
6. I will not invite any unaccompanied children into my home without the knowledge and consent of their parents, and the presence of another adult.
7. I will act with caution and discretion when posting photos online that include children, taking into consideration clothing, parental consent and who has access to the photo.
8. I understand that corporal punishment of any child other than my own is forbidden.
9. I am responsible for my visitors and am aware that if they engage in any ministry they must follow the procedures and policies applicable to volunteers.
10. I understand that if any accusation of child abuse is made against me or a family member, we may be required to cease contact with the alleged victim and or other children until an appropriate assessment is made.

11. I agree to fully cooperate with any child safety assessment by Mission to the World.
12. I understand that a report may be made to law enforcement and child protection agencies locally and in the United States.
13. I will remain open to learn and to be instructed as to appropriate ways of complying with this code of conduct.
14. I agree to comply with MTW's code of conduct as written.

## **Reporting of Abuse**

When anyone has reason to suspect or has knowledge of child abuse within the scope of MTW's work and ministry, he or she must report it immediately to one of the following in the MTW office: Brian Deringer, David White or Krista Gibson in Member Care and Development, Bill Goodman, Chief Operating Officer, or Mark Gazaway, the Personnel Director. We ask that the initial report be made either in-person, via telephone conversation, or electronic mail, without taking any other action or doing any preliminary investigation.

## **Definition of Terms**

All staff, missionaries and volunteers are to understand the definition of abuse prior to their service with MTW.

### **Definition of Terms**

Child abuse is the ill treatment of a child under the age of 18 by a parent, caretaker, someone living in their home, or anyone who works with or around children in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust, or power. Abuse of a child is any action (or lack of action) that causes injury or endangers or impairs a child's physical, mental, or emotional health and development. Child abuse can be physical, sexual, or emotional. Neglect happens when a parent or responsible caretaker fails to provide adequate supervision, food, clothing, shelter or other basics for a child. Child abuse occurs in different ways. All forms of abuse and neglect are harmful to the child.

The legal definition of abuse refers to actions against individuals under the age of 18. Should both the victim and the alleged offender be under the age of 18, factors considered in evaluating whether abuse has occurred include the following: differences in responsibility, trust, power, development, awareness and understanding, coercion, and threats, whether implied or verbal. Typically sexual abuse between individuals under the age of 18 is defined as any sexual behavior that occurs without consent or understanding by one party, without equality, or as a result of coercion. In addition, the

following actions may involve abuse of one child to another and should be prohibited: bullying, hazing, derogatory name-calling, ridicule or humiliation, or singling out a child for negative treatment or exclusion.

MTW recognizes that we work in a number of different cultural contexts, and that differing cultural mindsets may impact the reporting and investigation of an incident.. This will be handled in the investigative stage by insuring that cultural issues are addressed from the outset. Cultural representation during the investigative interview process is one example.

MTW confines its policy and procedures to protection from the following kinds of maltreatment of children: child sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse, and neglect.

## **I. Sexual abuse**

Sexual abuse is the involvement of a child in sexual activity that he or she does not fully comprehend, is unable to give informed consent to, or for which the child is not developmentally prepared and cannot give consent, or that violates the laws or social taboos of society.

It is activity between a child and an adult or another child who by age or development is in a relationship of responsibility, trust, or power. This may include but is not limited to:

**A. Verbal:** Remarks which include sexual threats, innuendoes, suggestive comments about a person's body or appearance, solicitation, inappropriate sexual talking, obscene phone calls, obscene or inappropriate sexual talking via the Internet, inappropriately affectionate comments, or any verbal expression with intent to arouse or stimulate; in summary, any obscene communication.

**B. Visual:** Indecent exposure, showing or taking of suggestive pictures or peeping. Visual sexual abuse also includes *\*voyeurism*, *\*exhibitionism*, showing of pornographic material, of genitals, or the showing of any sexual activity or simulated sexual activity such as masturbation or intercourse.

*\*Voyeur(ism) – obtaining sexual gratification from seeing sex organs and sexual acts; one who habitually seeks sexual stimulation by visual means*

*\*Exhibitionism – a perversion marked by a tendency to indecent exposure*

**C. Physical touching:** Fondling, sexual touching, masturbation in front of or to the victim, rubbing, holding, and kissing for the purpose of sexual gratification. Further examples include oral, genital, anal, and breast stimulation; penetration by penis, fingers, or any other body part or object, of mouth, anus, or vagina;

physical contact with a person's clothed or unclothed genitals, pubic area, buttocks, or in the case of a female, breast.

## **II. Physical abuse**

Physical abuse may be defined as any pattern of behavior over time that results in a non-accidental physical injury. Inflicted physical injury most often represents unreasonably severe corporal punishment or unjustified punishment. The parent or caretaker may not have intended to hurt the child; rather, the injury may have resulted from over discipline or physical punishment. Physical abuse may also include, for example, slapping, punching, beating, kicking, biting, shaking, burning, holding under water, pulling hair, or holding against one's will. Depending on the circumstances, this may also include excessive spanking done in anger.

## **III. Emotional abuse**

Emotional abuse is defined by a pattern of behavior over time. It includes acts of omission and acts of commission.

Acts of omission: Emotional abuse includes the failure to provide a developmentally appropriate and supportive environment, including the availability of a primary attachment figure, so that the child can develop a stable and full range of emotional and social competencies commensurate with her or his personal potentials and in the context of the society in which the child dwells.

Acts of commission: There may also be acts toward a child that cause or have a high probability of causing harm to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral, or social development. These acts must be reasonably within the control of the parent or person in relationship of responsibility, trust or power. Such acts include restriction of movement, patterns of belittling, denigrating, scapegoating, threatening, scaring, humiliating, screaming, blaming, sarcasm, discriminating, ridiculing, or other non-physical forms of hostile or rejecting treatment.

Although spiritual abuse is a concern, there does not seem to be a generally understood definition of child spiritual abuse that fits our setting, consequently it will be understood to fall under the category of emotional abuse.

## **IV. Neglect**

Neglect is the failure over time to provide for the development of a child in all spheres: health, education, emotional development, nutrition, shelter, and safe living conditions, in the context of resources reasonably available to the family or caretakers, and causes or has a high probability of causing harm to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual,

moral, or social development. This includes the failure to properly supervise and protect children from harm as much as is feasible.

**V. Age factors**

The legal definition of child abuse refers to actions against individuals under the age of 18. Should both the victim and the alleged offender be under the age of 18, factors considered in evaluating whether abuse has occurred include the following: differences of four years in age; differences in responsibility, trust, power, development, awareness, and understanding; and coercion and threats, whether implied or verbal. Typically, abuse between individuals under the age of 18 is defined as any sexual behavior that occurs without consent or understanding by one party, without equality, or as a result of coercion.

## **Mission to the World**

### **Child Protection Policy**

Child abuse (sexual, physical, and emotional) or neglect is not tolerated by Mission to the World (MTW). Anyone who is determined to have committed, been convicted of, or confessed to child abuse or sustained an unrepentant neglect is not eligible for service and, if serving, will have their relationship with MTW terminated.

1. In order to prevent child abuse, MTW addresses child safety through appropriate screening.
2. Anyone who is known or determined to have committed abuse of a child under the age of 18 or of a mentally or emotionally handicapped person at any time during his/her adult life is not eligible for service either as a missionary or a volunteer and, if already serving, will have his/her relationship with MTW terminated immediately, with no later opportunity to serve as a missionary or a volunteer, accompany a missionary for an assignment, or be on MTW properties. MTW will not knowingly allow anyone who has been convicted of child abuse to participate in any ministry, either as a missionary, staff or volunteer.
3. Anyone who committed child abuse or neglect before the age of 18 will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, taking into account such factors as age, seriousness of the offense, acknowledgement of responsibility, and effective treatment.
4. Any missionary whose dependent children have been determined to have committed child abuse or neglect will be asked to follow through with the action plan put in place to resolve the causes and effects of the abuse, taking into account such factors as age, age difference between offender and victim(s), seriousness of the offense(s), acknowledgement of responsibility, and effective treatment. Failure to do so will lead to termination of the missionary's relationship with MTW. Reapplication would be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and involve effective treatment and other factors listed above.
5. The MTW Child Protection Policy will be utilized in determining appropriate administrative actions for anyone accused of or found to have committed child abuse or neglect.
6. If MTW is asked for a reference, MTW will generally disclose the reasons for termination when the termination involves abuse. Further, if MTW becomes aware that a former missionary or volunteer of MTW becomes employed by another organization where the individual has access to children, MTW will normally make that organization aware of the reasons for MTW's termination of employment of the individual.
7. If a person is found guilty, they will not be allowed to voluntarily resign. In cases where corroborating evidence shows that a person previously employed by MTW committed child abuse while in the employ of MTW, their personnel file will reflect such and they will be considered ineligible for re-hire.

8. When ministry includes working with children, MTW will allow missionaries to serve under another agency only if that agency has a child protection policy conforming to the Best Practice Standards of the Child Safety Protection Network.
9. Every MTW team, regardless of the location (within the U.S. or foreign) must investigate the child protection laws of their jurisdiction.
10. Failure to follow the Child Protection Policy or the Code of Conduct will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.
11. No portion of this policy can be amended by any individual, nor can any individual grant permission to deviate from the policy, except where mandated by local laws. Any change to this policy must be granted by CMTW.

# MTW Code of Conduct Acknowledgement Form

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I acknowledge that I have received, read, understand and agree to the MTW Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct, and have familiarized myself with the procedures for reporting suspected abuse. In addition, it is my responsibility to read and comply with any future updates on this policy, the Code of Conduct or changes in how suspected cases of abuse are to be reported.

I understand the definitions of Child Abuse set forth in this policy and the procedures for reporting reasonable suspicion of and/or allegations of misconduct.

I confirm that I have not been accused of (to the best of my knowledge), been investigated for, or prosecuted for instances involving any form of abuse or inappropriate behavior with a child.

I agree not to engage in any such behaviors.

I further agree that as an individual who has engendered trust from a child I will not tolerate physical, emotional or sexual child abuse or neglect.

I agree to immediately report any reasonable suspicion of or disclosure of inappropriate behavior between adults and minors to the appropriate leadership immediately and cooperate in helping assist the youth of our community to remain safe.

I also agree to work with the parents of children involved in inappropriate sexual behavior to report to the appropriate leadership immediately and cooperate in helping assist the children of our community to remain safe.

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Name

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Date

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Position

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Field or Office Department