

MORNING STAR COMMUNITY CHURCH

STUDENT MINISTRIES VOLUNTEER TRAINING

Suspected Abuse Reporting

As a volunteer in our Student Ministries, **you are required by Morning Star to report any suspected abuse to the Student Ministries staff leader and/or pastor.** You also may be a mandatory reporter as required by the State of Oregon by virtue of your profession. If so, you must also follow the guidelines set forth in ORS 419B.005 – 419B.050.

The following guidelines are set to protect the children entrusted to our care:

What is mandatory reporting?

It is the official reporting of any type of suspected abuse of a child/disabled/elderly person or of a person with whom you have had contact who may have abused a child. **As an organization, we are required to report to DHS or law enforcement.** Failure to report is a violation of the law and carries penalties.

What is a “child”?

A “child” is defined as a person, married or unmarried, under the age of 18. “Child” also includes an 18-, 19-, or 20-year-old who lives in a child-caring agency (CCA) or receives care or services from a private agency or private organization licensed by DHS (Department of Human Services).

Who is a mandatory reporter under Oregon law in Morning Star’s Student Ministries?

Morning Star Student Ministries staff leaders and pastors.

What is child abuse?

Oregon law defines abuse as:

- Physical abuse
- Abandonment and mental injury
- Sexual abuse or exploitation
- Neglect
- Threatened harm
- Buying or selling a child

What to do if you suspect abuse of some kind.

- Report immediately to a Morning Star **Student Ministries staff leader or pastor.**
- Along with the staff leader/pastor, you must complete an incident report.
- The staff leader and/or pastor will take the appropriate next steps. They may ask you further questions as they follow up or file a report with DHS or law enforcement.

If you’re not sure of the type of abuse, or even if there is abuse, report the suspected abuse to a Student Ministries staff leader or pastor anyway. In some cases, especially for small children, you may be the only person outside their family who sees them. The information you have is vital. All

you need to do is report a reasonable suspicion of abuse to a Student Ministries staff leader and/or pastor, not prove that it happened.

Telling a friend or another volunteer is NOT reporting the incident—you must contact a Student Ministries staff leader and/or pastor.

Staff Members

If you believe you have witnessed inappropriate behavior by a Morning Star staff member or volunteer, report it immediately and confidentially to our **senior pastor, executive pastor, or human resources director**.

If you observe questionable behavior while off-site (i.e., camp, retreat, etc.), report it immediately and confidentially to your Student Ministries lead.

Sometimes people exhibit behavior that makes you uncomfortable. Please report any concerns, suspicions, or nagging questions to our executive pastor or human resources director.

What if a child tells you he/she is being abused?

- Let the child know they are not responsible for the abuse. Don't look shocked and don't talk about blaming anyone.
- Tell them you will get in touch with people who can help them, and let them know they will need to talk to them.
- Then immediately tell a Student Ministries staff leader and/or pastor.

Don't force the student to tell more than they are ready to reveal. This is a very difficult time for the student and they need your understanding, support, and patience.

Privacy

For the protection of the student, confidentiality is essential and only the leadership staff and pastors, along with law enforcement or DHS, need to be involved. It is not appropriate for you to discuss a student's personal information with anyone else. Speaking with the parent/guardian/caregiver is at the discretion of the staff leader and/or pastor.