

## STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE FOR DISCLOSURE OF ABUSE

### Fairview Baptist Church

The purpose of this document is to help the pastors, ministry residents, and additional church staff of Fairview Baptist Church, Apex, North Carolina take appropriate steps when abuse has been disclosed.

### POLICY

All counseling pastors, ministry residents, and additional church staff will take abuse seriously by offering compassion and exercising appropriate response to disclosed abuse. If abuse is communicated, follow the outlined procedures below.

### DEFINITIONS, TYPES, AND LEGAL INFORMATION

- **Physical:** Any type of physical violence that is non-accidental. Hitting, burning, grabbing, kicking, restraining, etc. Any injury that results in impairment.
- **Neglect:** A failure to meet basic needs: food, water, shelter, protection.
- **Sexual:** Both physical and non-physical. This includes molestation, rape, any sexual act against another person's will or without consent. Non-physical includes gestures, coarse jesting or suggestions, looks, inappropriate sexual comments. Sexual exploitation.
- **Verbal/Emotional:** Aggressive and attacking language, communicating threats to a person or someone close to them, belittling, berating, name calling, etc. Any damage to the emotional well-being of a person and causes significant changes in behavior, cognition or emotions.
- **Spiritual:** Using faith, spirituality, or God as a means of control and manipulation. Intending to cause great guilt, shame, or submission by means of faith, spirituality, or God.

\*\*For specific guidelines see N.C. General Statutes 14-318.6

### MANDATED REPORTING

In the state of North Carolina, everyone is a mandated reporter. Pastor/parishioner privilege is no longer applicable in mandated reporting laws. Therefore, clergy are not granted exemption when abuse has been disclosed to them.

Mandated Reporting applies to:

- Minors (under 18) by a parent, guardian, custodian or caretaker. NC G.S. 7B-301
- Disabled or elder adults by their caretaker. NC G.S. 108A-2

### STANDARD OF KNOWLEDGE

This includes any reasonable cause or suspicion of abuse to minors, dependents, and elderly. According to NC G.S. 14-318.6 this includes anyone "who knows or should have reasonably known."

\*\*You DO NOT need proof! If another reasonable person of sound mind can come to the same conclusion report.

## PROCEDURES

*\*\*If a disclosure has been made, or you have reasonable suspicion of abuse, contact Amber Henderson immediately. If she cannot be reached, contact the senior pastor of Fairview Baptist Church. If he is also unavailable, proceed to the following actions.*

*\*\*You are mandated to report abuse, neglect, dependency, or death due to maltreatment.*

1. If a person has disclosed abuse to you, OR you have reasonable suspicion abuse is taking place, you are mandated to report. See the following for how to file a report.
  - a. A report is made to the Department of Social Services (DSS) in the county in which the abuse took place. Ask for the child protective services intake worker. If it is after hours, call 911 and ask for the social worker on call.
  - b. A report can be made in person, over the phone, or in writing. You can report anonymously (however, this could impede any investigation). Information given, regarding your identity is confidential unless DSS is mandated in a court of law to disclose that information.
  - c. Your report should include
    - i. Name and address of parent/caregiver of victim
    - ii. Name and age of victim
    - iii. Current whereabouts of victim
    - iv. Nature and extent of abuse and any other pertinent information
2. Inform the senior pastor of Fairview Baptist Church and Amber Henderson immediately.
3. Document all information as quickly as possible while the information is still fresh.
4. Keep this information confidential after the appropriate people have been notified. Please understand, this is a crucial moment in the life of the victim. Please do not re-victimize them by speaking openly and freely about the darkest period in their life. Respect this moment.
5. Care for yourself. Disclosure of abuse can be difficult to process for anyone. If you find you need to speak with someone to process your part in reporting see Amber Henderson. If she is not the right fit for you she can give you a referral for someone who can help.

## OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- Reporting needs to be done by (but is not limited to) the person who has direct knowledge or suspicion. If a person comes to you who has a reasonable suspicion or has direct knowledge, encourage them to report. If they refuse to report, then make the report yourself. It may be helpful to let them know that, according to NC G.S. 7B-301b, it is a Class 1 misdemeanor if a person or institution “knowingly or wantonly fails to report” the abuse of a minor.
- If a person who is over the age of 18 discloses abuse, it is their duty to report. For example: a woman discloses her husband is beating her. It is her duty to report. You may report this abuse, but it may not be taken as seriously. However, if there are minor children, disabled, or

elderly in the home, you may report under mandated reporting laws to protect the vulnerable in the home.

- If a person who is 18 or over discloses abuse chooses not to report and you feel the abuser is a threat to others, call CPS.