



Safer Sanctuaries Training Handout

This handout equips staff and volunteers to:

- Understand child protection principles
- Recognize signs of abuse, neglect, and grooming
- Respond appropriately to concerns
- Follow clear reporting procedures
- Promote a safe and respectful culture

Why Child Protection Matters

- Children deserve safety, dignity, and care
- Staff and Volunteers are often the first to notice concerns
- Legal and ethical responsibilities apply to everyone
- A safe environment builds trust with families and the community

Types of Abuse & Warning Signs

Type	Possible Indicators
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Physical	Bruises, burns, fearfulness, flinching
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Emotional	Withdrawal, low self-esteem, excessive crying
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Sexual	Inappropriate knowledge, secrecy, physical signs
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Neglect	Poor hygiene, malnutrition, unattended medical needs
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Grooming	Excessive attention, gift-giving, secret communication
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Understanding Grooming

Grooming is a manipulative process used by abusers to gain a child's trust and gradually violate boundaries. It often includes:

- Giving gifts or special privileges
- Isolating the child from others
- Creating secrets ("Don't tell anyone")
- Flattering or making the child feel "chosen"
- Testing boundaries with touch or personal questions

Red Flags for Grooming Behavior:

- An adult consistently seeks one-on-one time with a child
- Excessive texting, messaging, or social media contact
- Attempts to bypass rules or supervision
- Child becomes unusually attached or secretive

Volunteer Code of Conduct

Always:

- ✓ Maintain appropriate boundaries
- ✓ Interact in open, observable spaces
- ✓ Remember the rule of 3
- ✓ Report concerns immediately

Never:

- ✗ Be alone with a child behind closed doors
- ✗ Use physical discipline
- ✗ Share personal contact info or social media
- ✗ Give gifts or favors without guardian approval

Reporting Procedures

- **Who to report to:** Beth Posey, Family Ministries Director; Pastor Amy Beth Coleman, Lead Pastor, Pastor Jan Phillips, Associate Pastor
- **How to report:** Verbally and in writing; include date, time, and details
- **When to report:** Immediately upon suspicion or disclosure
- **Legal obligations:** Volunteers and staff are mandated reporters under state law

Responding to a Disclosure

Do:

- ✓ Stay calm and listen
- ✓ Reassure the child they did the right thing
- ✓ Record exact words used

Don't:

- ✗ Promise confidentiality
- ✗ Ask leading questions
- ✗ Confront the alleged abuser

✓ Commitment & Accountability

- Sign the **Safer Sanctuaries Policy Agreement** to confirm understanding of these policies
- Participating in **refresher training**
- Help foster a **culture of safety and openness**

For questions or to report a concern, contact:

Name: Beth Posey, Director, Family Ministries

Phone: 703-892-4112

Email: family@calmeth.org

Thank you for your vigilance and care. Protecting children is a shared responsibility—and your role matters.