

**DAKOTAS CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
BOARD OF CAMP AND RETREAT MINISTRIES
CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT POLICY STATEMENT**

I. Introduction

The purpose of this child abuse and neglect policy statement is to provide a philosophy of practice and set procedures that will govern the prevention, identification and reporting of child abuse and neglect in Dakotas Conference camp programs.

Under North Dakota law, an abused child is an individual under the age of 18 years who is suffering from serious physical harm or traumatic abuse caused by other than accidental means by a person responsible for the child's welfare, or is suffering from or was subjected to any act involving that individual in violation of §§ 12.1-20-01 through 12.1-20-08 which are the sex offenses for the state of North Dakota.

"Deprived child" means a child who:

1. Is without proper parental care or control, subsistence, education as required by law, or other care or control necessary for the child's physical, mental, or emotional health, or morals, and the deprivation is not due primarily to the lack of financial means of the child's parents, guardian, or other custodian;
2. Has been placed for care or adoption in violation of law;
3. Has been abandoned by the child's parents, guardian, or other custodian;
4. Is without proper parental care, control, or education as required by law, or other care and control necessary for the child's well-being because of the physical, mental, emotional, or other illness or disability of the child's parent or parents, and that such lack of care is not due to a willful act of commission or act of omission by the child's parents, and care is requested by a parent;
5. Is in need of treatment and whose parents, guardian, or other custodian have refused to participate in treatment as ordered by the juvenile court;
6. Was subject to prenatal exposure to chronic or severe use of alcohol or any controlled substance as defined in chapter 19-03.1 in a manner not lawfully prescribed by a practitioner; or
7. Is present in an environment subjecting the child to exposure to a controlled substance, chemical substance, or drug paraphernalia as prohibited by section 19-03.1-22.2.

Under North Dakota law, a neglected child is a deprived child which is defined as follows: A child who is:

1. Without proper parental care or control, subsistence, education as required by law or other care or control necessary for the child's physical, mental, or emotional health, or morals, and the deprivation is not due primarily to the lack of financial means of the child's parents, guardian, or other custodian;
2. Has been placed for care or adoption in violation of law;
3. Has been abandoned by the child's parents, guardian, or other custodian;
4. Is without proper parental care, control or education as required by law, or other care and control necessary for the child's well being because of the physical, mental, emotional, or other illness or disability of the child's parent or parents, and that such lack of care is not due to a willful act of commission

- 49 or act of omission by the child's parents, and care is requested by a parent;
50 or
51 5. Is in need of treatment and whose parents, guardian, or other custodian
52 have refused to participate in treatment as ordered by a juvenile court.
53

54 By South Dakota statute 26-8A-2, Abused or neglected child defined. In this
55 chapter and chapter 26-7, a: the term abused or neglected child, means a child:

- 56 1. Whose parent, guardian, or custodian has abandoned him/her or has
57 subjected him/her to mistreatment or abuse;
- 58 2. Who lacks proper parental care through the actions or omissions of the
59 parent, guardian, or custodian;
- 60 3. Whose environment is injurious to his welfare;
- 61 4. Whose parent, guardian, or custodian fails or refuses to provide proper or
62 necessary subsistence, supervision, education, medical care or any other
63 care necessary for his health, guidance, or well being; or
- 64 5. Who is homeless, without proper care, or not domiciled with his parent,
65 guardian, or custodian through no fault of his parent, guardian or custodian.
- 66 6. Who is threatened with substantial harm.
- 67 7. Who has sustained emotional harm or mental injury as indicated by an injury
68 to his intellectual or psychological capacity evidenced by an observable and
69 substantial impairment in his ability to function within his normal range of
70 performance and behavior, with due regard to his culture.
- 71 8. Who is subject to sexual abuse, sexual molestation or sexual exploitation by
72 his parent, guardian, custodian or any other person responsible for his care.
- 73 9. Who was subject to prenatal exposure to abusive use of alcohol or any
74 controlled drug or substance not lawfully prescribed by a practitioner as
75 authorized by chapter 22-42 and 34-20B.
- 76 10. Whose parent, guardian, or custodian knowingly exposes the child to an
77 environment that is being used for the manufacture, use, or distribution of
78 methamphetamines or any other unlawfully manufactured controlled drug or
79 substance.
80

81 **II. Philosophy Statement**

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83 The Dakotas Conference Board of Camp and Retreat Ministries recognizes the
84 problem of child abuse and neglect. The Board is aware the problem does not
85 confine itself to any one special economic or religious group. Since the child abuse
86 and neglect usually occurs in the privacy of the home, the extent and scope of this
87 problem is unknown. Our commitment is to encourage our paid staff and
88 volunteers to watch for signs of neglect or abuse and report those instances to the
89 Camp Dean(s), Site Director and Executive Director of Camping.
90

91 The Board of Camp and Retreat Ministries will strive to serve as a model of support
92 to abused and neglected children. Every effort will be made to maintain a close
93 working relationship with the local Department of Social Services/Child Protection
94 Services in reporting abused and neglected children. The Department of Social
95 Services/Child Protection Services will be recognized as the key organization in the
96 community child protective system.
97

98 The purpose of this child abuse and neglect policy is threefold:

- 1. To aid in the prevention and elimination of child abuse and neglect;
- 2. To safeguard individuals participating in the camping ministry, from sexual abuse and neglect.
- 3. To encourage camp leaders to properly handle suspected cases of child abuse.

III. Procedures for Reporting Suspected Abuse and Neglect

All paid staff and volunteers of Dakotas Conference camp programs are encouraged to watch for signs of child abuse and neglect. However, the designated employees responsible to implement any reporting procedures are the Site Director and the Executive Director.

The following procedures are to be used:

- 1. The child abuse and neglect policy adopted by the Board will be made available to parents and pastors upon request. All staff and volunteers should be given a copy to read. A copy of this policy and procedure statement will be filed at each camp site and at the Dakotas Conference Office.
- 2. If behavioral or physical observations create the knowledge or reasonable suspicion of abuse or neglect:
 - a. Shepherds or Counselors will contact the Camp Dean. The Camp Dean will contact the Site Director. A written report will be completed by the individual(s) suspecting the abuse/neglect and the camp dean(s).
 - b. The Site Director will contact the Executive Director and report the observation. If for any reason there is concern about contacting one of the individuals designated in III-2 one of their supervisors shall be contacted.
 - c. Upon receipt of the written report the Executive Director may contact the Department of Social Services/Child Protection Services/Department of Human Services; they will decide appropriate action to be taken in relation to the camper.
 - d. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) of the child/youth allegedly abused will be contacted by the Executive Director unless the parent(s)/guardian(s) is/are the suspected abuser/perpetrator. Camp employees and volunteers SHALL NOT contact the child's family or any other persons to determine the cause of the suspected abuse or neglect. It is NOT the responsibility of camp personnel to prove that the child has been abused or neglected, or to determine whether the child is in need of protection.
- 3. In the event that a Dakotas Conference employee or volunteer staff person is suspected of an act of abuse or neglect, the same lines of reporting through

150 Camp Dean, Site Director and Executive Director will occur. The Camp
151 Dean, Site Director and Executive Director will determine appropriate action
152 to be taken in the camp setting. For the good of the camper, contact
153 between suspected abuser and the camper(s) will be minimized or
154 eliminated and every necessary action will be taken to protect the camper
155 involved. This may include dismissing a staff person/volunteer or removing
156 that person from the situation. Confidentiality and respect for all parties will
157 be maintained. The parent(s) or guardian(s) of the camper involved will be
158 contacted by the Executive Director.

159
160 4. If there is a specific reason to do so, the pastor and district superintendent
161 related to the camper and/or the suspected abuser may be contacted by the
162 Executive Director.

163
164 5. Records related to suspected child abuse or neglect will be kept in
165 confidential files at the office of the Executive Director.

1 APPENDIX A

2 The Dakotas United Methodist Conference
3 Board of Camp and Retreat Ministries
4 CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT POLICY STATEMENT

5
6 ABUSE AND NEGLECT POLICY ACKNOWLEDGEMENT
7

8 I, _____ acknowledge that I have received the Board of Camp and
9 Retreat Ministries Child Abuse and Neglect Policy Statement and that I have read its contents.
10 I will contact the Site Director or Executive Director of Camping if I have any questions.
11

12 I further acknowledge that if behavior or physical observations create the knowledge or
13 reasonable suspicion of abuse or neglect I will contact the Camp Dean. The Camp Dean will
14 contact the Site Director. I will work with the camp dean to complete a written report.
15

16 The written report will be forwarded to the Executive Director of Camping who may then
17 contact the Department of Social Services/Child Protection Services. **If for any reason there**
18 **is concern about contacting one of the individuals listed above one of their supervisors**
19 **shall be contacted.**
20

21 I acknowledge that confidentiality and respect for all parties will be maintained.
22

23
24 _____
25 Paid Staff/Volunteer Staff Signature

26
27 _____
28 Address

29
30 _____
31 City, State, Zip Code

32
33 _____
34 Phone number

35
36 _____
37 Date