



# EL BUEN PASTOR

## LATINO COMMUNITY SERVICES

### **El Buen Pastor Latino Community Services Child Abuse Prevention Policy**

#### **Overview**

El Buen Pastor Latino Community Services (EBPLCS) is committed to providing a safe environment for children. We take seriously our responsibility to provide such an environment for our programs involving children.

The Internal Affairs Committee of the Board of Directors has oversight for this policy, with administration by the Executive Director. All staff persons, both paid and volunteer are responsible for the execution of their programs in compliance with this policy.

#### **Policy**

We do not condone sexual or physical abuse of children and desire to conduct all programs of EBPLCS in such a manner as to prevent the opportunity for abuse. This policy will protect the children in our care and also protect all staff and volunteers from false allegations of abuse and shield EBPLCS from legal liability.

For the purposes of this policy, sexual abuse includes any contact or interaction in-person or digitally between a child and another person in which there is unwelcome and inappropriate sexually-oriented behavior, materials, comments, advances, touches, requests or demands, any physical contact of a sexual nature, and/or threats of a sexual nature. Physical abuse includes any actual or threatened hitting, shaking, spanking, or any other type of inappropriate physical contact. Sexual and physical abuses are collectively referred to as “abuse.”

For the purposes of this policy, children include all persons who are 17 years old or younger. Adults are those who are 18 years old or older. This policy covers all program staff and volunteers who work with children and identifies minimum standards.

During the time period that EBPLCS is engaged in a formal partnership with the Winston-Salem Forsyth County Schools (WS/FCS), including but not limited to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center grant, all staff and volunteers who serve with the after school and/or summer tutoring programs are subject to WS/FCS’s background check policy and procedures, which will supplant the EBPLCS background check requirement. As it applies to adults volunteering or working with EBPLCS, those procedures are the background check procedures for WS/FCS volunteers for each academic year during which EBPLCS is engaged in a formal partnership with the Winston Salem Forsyth County Schools (WS/FCS).

#### **Requirements**

The following are required under this policy:

1. All covered persons will receive a copy of this policy.
2. All covered persons are required to complete a screening form provided by EBPLCS.
3. A background check will be performed for all covered persons by a commercial provider.
4. The screening form will be maintained in a secure manner.
5. A covered person must be approved for service by the Executive Director prior to participation.
6. Individuals for whom the background check reveals conviction for abuse are not to be allowed to serve at EBPLCS. Individuals for whom the background check reveals charges of

abuse, but not conviction, will be evaluated further by the Executive Director and the Internal Affairs Committee of the Board of Directors.

7. Any allegations of abuse will be addressed immediately using the approved Reporting and Response Procedure.
8. Each program for which this policy is applicable will include the policy in its training sessions.

### **Guidelines**

The following guidelines under this policy are to be observed and followed as closely as possible. In seeking to comply with these guidelines, we recognize that absolute compliance, while an appropriate objective, is not always practical based on the unique situation for any given program activity.

Covered persons must recognize that they are in a position of authority in relation to those under their care, particularly serving as leaders in programs. Accordingly, covered persons must be aware of the natural “acquiescence” by children to behavior or acts that could lead to actual or perceived abuse.

1. Adults should observe the “two person rule” so that they are not alone with children. The two person rule should refer to two unrelated persons. When that is not possible, related adults should be sensitive that this is a higher risk situation and should act prudently (e.g., keep classroom doors open, avoid one-on-one situations with children).
2. One-on-one settings with a child are highly discouraged. Exceptions may be made if such a setting is an integral part of the program activity. When unusual circumstances result in an adult and a child being alone together, classroom and office doors should remain open. Preferably the adult and child would relocate to an open, public space.
3. Bathroom doors should be partially open when adults are assisting with bathroom and diaper changing duties.
4. When volunteers younger than 18 years old are involved, they must be supervised by an adult (over 18) at all times.
5. The EBPLCS staff should circulate among adults and children during activities.
6. We should seek to be gender sensitive by utilizing adults of the same sex as the participants for segregated activities. For mixed groups of participants, we should seek to have adults of both sexes involved.
7. Care must be taken in email, social media, and cell phone communications to avoid any appearance of inappropriate “emotional engagement” or abuse.
8. In terms of contact via social media, which may include but is not limited to Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, blogs, online discussion boards, and the like, both staff and volunteers should adhere to the guidelines outlined in the Social Media Policy.
9. Children leaving a supervised activity should go in a group of at least two people, and should be monitored for their expected return.
10. These procedures should be followed before, during, and after program events.
11. Volunteers may not visit children in their homes or meet with children outside the EBP grounds without the permission of the Executive Director, Director of Operations, or Pastor of El Buen Pastor Church.

### **Reporting and Response Procedures**

In executing the following procedures, all allegations of potential abuse will be taken seriously. Our guiding principles are to protect children from potential abuse and to respond with

appropriate and timely action to address any potential situations of abuse. In doing so, we recognize that no policy is fool proof; judgment and discretion will be required by those involved.

If an allegation of abuse is observed, online or in person, or received by a staff member or volunteer:

1. Whoever receives the allegation should report the allegation to the Executive Director. A written summary should be prepared related to the allegation, including the following:
  - a. date the allegation was received
  - b. date and location of the alleged abuse
  - c. potential witnesses (those in attendance)
  - d. the child's name
  - e. the name of the alleged perpetrator
  - f. a description of the alleged abuse
2. The alleged perpetrator should be treated with dignity and respect. However, they should be suspended from participation immediately.
3. The Executive Director should consider the following:
  - a. interview the person reporting the allegation
  - b. contact the child's parents
  - c. interview the child
  - d. contact the police
  - e. contact the Department of Social Services
  - f. inform the Chair of the Internal Affairs Committee
4. Media inquiries should be directed to the Executive Director. The Chair of the Internal Affairs Committee will be advised of any media inquiries.