

Dealing with Allegations of Physical or Sexual Abuse

The following policy will be in effect to deal with any suspected or reported cases of physical or sexual abuse involving an agent of Word of Life Lutheran School:

1. All allegations should be reported to the principal at once and will be listened to fully and evangelically.
2. The principal will document the charges and the details of the charges so that they may be used as an affidavit in subsequent internal or external investigations;
3. Whenever possible, the principal will have the complainant sign this affidavit as a true documentation of the allegations;
4. The principal will then contact any named individuals or any individuals who might reasonably have knowledge of the incident to obtain similar statements of knowledge;
5. The principal will then contact the accused, inform them of the allegations, ask if they would care to respond to them in any way - at this time, the principal will remind the person that they are under no obligation to respond and may wish to speak with legal council before making any statements.
6. The principal will report all allegations to the proper Synodical authorities.
7. The principal will chronicle any information received from the accused and inform them that they will be placed on procedural suspension - with pay if applicable - which will preclude them from contact with the children, but will allow an investigation to continue;
8. The principal will then contact the chairman of the Board of Control, the pastor, an elder and the chairman of the congregation to inform them of the charges and to determine the following:
 - a) Whether legal council should be contacted for the congregation, agent or child;
 - b) Whether current information is sufficient to deem automatic reporting of the allegations as required by law;
 - c) Whether a committee should be established to give hearing to the complaints and investigate more fully the accusations.
9. The following may then be contacted:
 - a) The proper state and local authorities;
 - b) The school's insurance;
 - c) Appropriate Synodical officials;
 - (1) Legal council;
 - e) Members of the president's special committee to deal with allegations.
10. The principal will at this time hand over control of the internal investigation to chairman of the board of control's special committee and serve as a witness before them as they attempt to establish additional facts and details.
11. The special committee's job will be to:
 - a) cooperate fully with all state and local officials;
 - b) conduct an internal fact finding investigation to determine if any policies of the school were violated.
 - c) to mediate the dispute as it effects conflict between members of the congregation and the directives of scripture;
 - d) to prepare a report.
12. The committee's report will consist of the following:
 - a) the facts as they have come to understand them;
 - b) areas in which they are unable to determine fact;
 - c) whether or not policies of the church or school have been violated;
 - d) whether additional policies can or should be implemented to correct administrative weaknesses or to further protect the rights of students and agents of the school;
 - e) recommendations as to the status of the agent in regard to service of the school.

13. The committee's recommendation can consist of the following:
 - a) refusal to act on changing the status of the procedural suspension until that time when state and local investigations have been completed;
 - b) recommendation to terminate the agent as an employee or as a volunteer who would have contact with the children;
 - c) punitive suspension - with or without pay - for violation of policy;
 - d) complete reinstatement.
14. The committee's report will be submitted to the church council after review by competent legal council.
15. At no time will the principal or the committee serve as a judge to impede independent civil or criminal investigations, nor will any person be compelled to give testimony without their consent or without the ability to be advised by council.