Steps to Report Abuse

Guidelines from Safe Sanctuaries

1. Take All Allegations Seriously

2. Care for Victim
   If victim needs immediate medical attention, obtain appropriate medical assistance.

3. Attend to Alleged Perpetrator
   If the alleged perpetrator is on site and danger is perceived, alert local police authorities.

4. Activate Chain of Notification
   Staff Person
   The staff person or volunteer will immediately report the incident to the person in charge of the ministry.

   Person in Charge of Ministry
   Upon receiving this information, the person in charge will immediately contact the Senior Pastor.
   If the senior pastor is the alleged perpetrator, the church council leader will be notified in the senior pastor’s place.

   Senior Pastor
   The senior pastor (or church council leader) will immediately report allegations to the District Superintendent of the district in which the church resides, the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the victim, and then the alleged perpetrator.

   District Superintendent
   The district superintendent will immediately report the situation to the Assistant to the Bishop and Communications Director at the West Ohio Conference office, as outlined in the Crisis Communications Guidelines for the West Ohio Conference.

   Parent(s)/Guardian(s)
   Notify the parent(s) of the victim.
   Take necessary steps to assure the safety and well being of the victim until the parent(s)/guardian(s) arrive.
   If one or both of the parent(s)/guardian(s) is the alleged perpetrator(s), follow the advice of the authorities concerning notification.

   Alleged Perpetrator
   Advise the alleged there has been an allegation of abuse. Inform alleged that he/she is removed from further ministry involvement until the incident and/or any legal/civil charges have been resolved.
   Do not share any details related to the incident.

5. Make the Report
   Contact Child Protective Services or Adult Protective Services
   Phone
   When reporting by phone, it is advisable to have an objective witness who can verify the report was made (6 by whom).

6. Document
   The person in charge when the alleged abuse was observed or disclosed prepares the Report of Suspected Incident of Child Abuse.
   Keep a written report of the steps taken by the church in response to the reported abuse.
   The report should be brief and contain only factual information relevant to the situation.
   It should be written in ink or typed to prevent it from being changed.
   Maintain all documents in a secure location.

7. Provide Care & Healing
   • Support the victim and the victim’s family
   • Extend pastoral resources
   • Provide a supportive atmosphere to those affected so healing can occur

* The senior pastor in cooperation with the District Superintendent and West Ohio Conference Crisis Communication team will designate a spokesperson for media requests.