

# **PHYSICAL OR MENTAL ABUSE, SEXUAL ABUSE, SEXUAL MISCONDUCT, AND SEXUAL MOLESTATION PREVENTION POLICY**

The Open Door Church of Suffolk does not permit actual or threatened acts of physical or mental abuse, sexual abuse, sexual misconduct or sexual molestation (“Prohibited Contact”) to occur in the workplace or at any activity sponsored by or related to your employment. In order to make this “zero-tolerance” policy clear to all employees, volunteers and staff members, we have adopted mandatory procedures that all employees, volunteers, family members, board members, individuals and victims must follow when they reasonably suspect, learn of, or witness Prohibited Conduct.

Abuse, misconduct or molestation means each, every and all actual, threatened or alleged acts of physical or mental abuse, sexual abuse, sexual misconduct, or sexual molestation performed by one person, or by two or more persons acting together.

## **Bullying**

Our organization will not tolerate the mistreatment or abuse of one consumer by another consumer. In addition, our organization will not tolerate any behavior that is classified under the definition of bullying, and to the extent that such actions are disruptive, we will take steps needed to eliminate such behavior.

Bullying is aggressive behavior that is intentional, is repeated over time, and involves an imbalance of power or strength. Bullying can take on various forms, including:

- a. Physical bullying-when one person engages in physical force against another person, such as by hitting, punching, pushing, kicking, pinching or restraining another.
- b. Verbal bullying-when someone uses their words to hurt another, such as by belittling or calling another hurtful names.
- c. Nonverbal or relational bullying-when one person manipulates a relationship or desired relationship to harm another person. This includes social exclusion, friendship manipulation, or gossip. This type of bullying also includes intimidating another person by using gestures.
- d. Cyberbullying-the intentional and overt act of aggression toward another person by way of any technological tool, such as email, instant messages, text messages, digital pictures or images, or website postings (including blogs). Cyberbullying can involve:
  - Sending mean, vulgar or threatening messages or images.
  - Posting sensitive, private information about another person.

- Pretending to be someone else in order to make that person look bad.
- Intentionally excluding someone from an online group.
- Hazing-an activity expected of someone joining or participating in a group that humiliates, degrades, abuses, or endangers that person regardless of that person's willingness to participate.
- Sexualized bullying-when bullying involves behaviors that are sexual in nature. Examples of sexualized bullying behaviors include sexting, bullying that involves exposures of private body parts, and verbal bullying involving sexualized language or innuendos.

Anyone who sees an act of bullying, and who then encourages it, is engaging in bullying. This policy applies to all consumers, staff, and volunteers.

## **Reporting Procedure**

All employees, volunteers, or staff members who learn of, or have a reasonable suspicion of Prohibited Conduct must immediately report it to Pastor Tony Peaks and/or Pastor Kathy Peaks. If the victim is an adult, the abuse, misconduct or neglect will be reported by the designee to the local or state police and/or to Adult Protective Services Agency (APS). If a child is the victim of abuse, misconduct or neglect, the designee will report the matter to the local or state police and/or to Child Abuse Agency. Appropriate family members of the victim will be notified immediately of suspected child abuse, misconduct, or neglect.

## **Investigation & Follow-up**

We take all allegations of Prohibited Conduct seriously. Once reported, we will promptly, thoroughly and impartially investigate the allegations to determine whether there is a reasonable basis to believe that the Prohibited Conduct has occurred and whether the target of the investigation committed the Prohibited Conduct. The investigation may be undertaken by an internal team comprised of fellow employees or we may hire an independent third party. We will fully cooperate with any investigation conducted by law enforcement or regulatory agencies and we may refer the complaint and the result of our investigation to those agencies. We reserve the right to place the target(s) of the investigation on an involuntary leave of absence or reassign that person to responsibilities that do not involve personal contact with individuals or students. To the fullest extent possible, but consistent with our legal obligation to report suspected and/or Prohibited Conduct to appropriate authorities, we will endeavor to keep the identity(ies) of the target(s) and the alleged victim(s) confidential.

If the investigation substantiates the allegations, our policy provides for disciplinary penalties, including but not limited to termination of the target's relationship with our organization.

## **Retaliation Prohibited**

We prohibit retaliation against anyone, including an employee, volunteer, board member, student or individual who in good faith reports Prohibited Conduct. Retaliation against a participant in the investigation is also prohibited. Anyone who retaliates against someone who has made a good faith allegation of Prohibited Conduct, or intentionally provides false information to that effect, will be subject to discipline, up to and including termination.

### **ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF RECEIPT OF PHYSICAL OR MENTAL ABUSE, SEXUAL ABUSE, SEXUAL MISCONDUCT AND SEXUAL MOLESTATION POLICY**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, acknowledge that I have received and read the physical or mental abuse, sexual abuse, sexual misconduct and sexual molestation policy immediately preceding my signature below. I understand, and further agree to be bound by this policy. I understand the possibly consequences should I fail to follow the policy.

**Dated:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

Date(s) of Annual Reviews(s) Employees/volunteer to write date in his/her own handwriting. Add additional sheets if necessary.

- |    |    |    |
|----|----|----|
| 1. | 4. | 7. |
| 2. | 5. | 8. |
| 3. | 6. | 9. |