

Staff Procedures For Handling Suspected Incidents of Abuse and Neglect

North Carolina law requires that all incidents of suspected abuse or neglect be reported to the Department of Social Services. The following procedures are to be followed whenever there are suspected incidents of child abuse and neglect involving Youth Focus staff.

- Upon becoming aware of such a potential incident it is incumbent upon that the staff member to immediately inform their supervisor or program director of those concerns.
- Upon being presented with a credible report the program director will call the Protective Services Unit of the Guilford County Department of Social Services and make the report concerning suspected child abuse or neglect. The program director will also inform the Youth Focus Executive Director of the suspicious concerning child abuse or neglect. If the program director does not feel that there is enough evidence to warrant a report (i.e. they do not suspect abuse or neglect) the staff member themselves may make the report to DSS if they continue to suspect abuse. Regardless of who makes the report steps 3-11 outlined below should be followed if a report to DSS has been made.
- Notify the child's parents or guardian of the allegations (within 24 hours).
- For residential programs, within 48-hours of the initial report of abuse having been made to DSS, the program director will call and inform appropriate representatives of the NC State Department of Human Resources, Division of Social Services or Division of Facility Services regarding the allegations.
- The program director will coordinate an internal review of the suspected incident with that of the Guilford County Department of Social Services ensuring that the internal review in no way hampers or undercuts the investigation by the Department of Social Services.
- During the course of the Social Services investigation, the employee who has been accused of an alleged incident may be placed on a leave of absence. This leave may be with or without pay based on the Executive Director's prerogative and investigate data provided by DSS. The decision to put the employee on a leave of absence will be made by the Executive Director based on the facts available at the time of the alleged incident.
- All Youth Focus staff will cooperate fully and completely with the investigating representative of the Department of Social Services or any other investigate body looking into the matter.
- A written report concerning the alleged incident, action taken, and end results of any review of the matter will be presented by the Program Director and submitted to the Youth Focus Executive Director and the NC State Department of Human Resources, Division of Social Services or Division of Facility Services.

- The child who has reported the allegation will be separated from the staff involved until the investigation is completed. If a child subsequently makes another allegation then other non-Youth Focus programs will be sought for the child's treatment based upon the recommendations of the Program Director.
- It is recommended that an employee who has been accused of sexual misconduct receive additional supervision from the clinical staff of Youth Focus.
- If a second allegation is made against any employee then that employee will meet with the Personnel Committee of the Board of Directors of Youth Focus, Inc.

Policy Statement

Good faith efforts are to be made by the staff to maintain same sex coverage in all residential facilities at all times. It is understood that on occasion a situation will occur when this policy cannot be followed. If a situation occurs where a staff member is left with one-on-one opposite sex coverage the staff member will call Youth Focus office or worker on-call immediately to notify the employee that they are alone with a youth of the opposite sex or the staff may call at any time if they are uncomfortable in any situations.