**Communities In Schools of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ County**

**Mandatory Reporter of Child Abuse and Neglect Policy**

***Approved******by Board of Directors (\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_) date***

Communities In Schools of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ County seeks to provide a safe and secure environment for all children receiving our supports and interventions. By implementing the following practices, our goal is to prevent the children served by CIS of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ County from incidents of misconduct and to protect them if there is a suspicion that such incidents have taken place. In the state of North Carolina, according to mandatory reporting requirements, every individual is responsible for reporting any suspected child abuse and it is illegal to not report child abuse. This state law overrules the policy of any employer or institution.

**This policy is based on the following principles:**

* The welfare of the child is paramount;
* All children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin religious beliefs and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse, neglect, dependency, and exploitation;
* All suspicions and allegations of abuse, neglect, dependency, and exploitation will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately;
* All CIS staff and volunteers have a responsibility to report concerns immediately to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ County Department of Social Services. NC General Statute 7B-301 states that any person who has cause to suspect that any juvenile is abused, neglected or dependent should report the case to the local Department of Social Services. According to the statute the report may be made orally, by telephone or in writing.

**We will aim to safeguard children by:**

* Adopting youth protection guidelines through procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers.
* Sharing information about youth protection and good practice with children, parents and care-givers, staff and volunteers.
* Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through training, supervision and support.
* Reviewing policy and practice regularly.

**Definitions of Child Maltreatment:**

***Physical Abuse* –** North Carolina law defines physical child abuse as inflecting, or permitting to be inflected, or creating a substantial risk of injury, other than by accident. The law does not specifically define injury, in order to prohibit as many forms of physical abuse as possible

***Emotional Abuse* –** Emotional abuse may not be as obvious as some other forms of abuse, but it is just as serious and just as illegal. North Carolina makes it a crime to create or allow to be created serious emotional damage to a juvenile. Some evidence of this type of abuse is seen in the child’s severe anxiety, depression, withdrawal or aggressive behavior towards him or herself or others.

***Sexual Abuse* –** Sexual abuse can come in many forms. North Carolina’s child abuse law specifically mentions rape, unlawful sale, surrender, or purchase of a minor, incest, preparation of obscene photographs, disseminating obscene material to the juvenile, sexual exploitation of the juvenile, promoting prostitution, and taking “indecent liberties” with the juvenile.

***Neglect*** – A neglected child is one who:

* does no receive proper care, supervision, or discipline from his or her parent, guardian, custodian or caretaker;
* has been abandoned;
* is not provided necessary medical or remedial care;
* lives in an environment injurious to his or her welfare; or
* has been placed for care or adoption in violation of the law.

***Dependency* –** Child has no parent, guardian, or custodian responsible for his or her care; parent, guardian, or custodian is unable to provide for care or supervision and there is no alternative childcare arrangement.

**Communities In Schools of ­­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ County will address Mandatory Reporting requirements through:**

* Recruitment, screening, and training of staff and volunteers,
* Supervision of activities,
* Responding immediately to information regarding abuse, neglect, dependency, and exploitation including allegations made against staff and volunteers.

**Recruiting and Screening:**

In recruiting and assigning staff and volunteers, CIS of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ County will:

* Require all applicants to apply in writing and their application will cover their personal details, previous and current work/volunteering experience along with signed authorization for CIS to conduct a background check.
* Require a pre-employment/pre-service criminal background check and search of the National Sex Offender Registry.
* Require two non-familial references and CIS of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ County will check those references.
* Conduct a personal interview.

**Training:**

* Require all staff and volunteers who provide direct services to children to attend a training that includes review of Code of Conduct outlining acceptable and unacceptable behavior when interacting with a child and provides details on legal responsibilities for reporting suspected child abuse.
* Option #1 (Affiliate selects one)
  + Training for CIS staff is required and will be provided by a qualified professional from the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ County Department of Social Services.
  + Required training for volunteers will be provided by CIS staff who have been trained through Department of Social Services.
* Option #2 (Affiliate selects one)
  + Staff and volunteers participate in “Recognizing and Responding to Suspicions of Child Maltreatment” at Prevent Child Abuse North Carolina website (preventchildabusenc.org)
* All CIS staff, volunteers and partners will receive a copy of the CIS of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ County Mandatory Reporter of Child Abuse and Neglect Policy, and Code of Conduct which includes suggestions on how to respond to a child making an allegation of abuse, neglect or dependency.
* Require all staff, volunteers and partners who provide direct services to children on behalf of CIS to agree to and sign this Mandatory Reporter of Child Abuse and Neglect Policy as well as the Code of Conduct and CIS will maintain a copies of signed acknowledgements in CIS files.

**Supervision:**

To protect children from abuse, neglect, dependency, and exploitation and to protect our staff and volunteers from false accusations, CIS of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_County will:

* Obtain written consent from a parent or guardian for every child receiving CIS services.
* Create situations where adults (staff and/or volunteers) are not alone with a child. In one adult-one child situations, in all cases the interaction should be observable and interruptible.
* As staff and volunteers supervise children, they should space themselves in a way that other adults can see them.
* Staff and volunteers should never leave a child unsupervised.
* All staff and volunteers will report any unusual events to the CIS of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Student Support Specialist or the CIS Program Director/Executive Director.
* All CIS of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ staff and volunteers are prohibited from any after-hours or off-site relations with youth without prior approval of the organization or of the parent.

**Reporting:**

All CIS staff and volunteers will report any suspected child abuse without delay to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ County Department of Social Services:

* Monday – Friday, 8 am – 5 pm – Call \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and ask for Child Protective Services Intake to report.
* After hours and on weekends – Call 911 and ask to report child abuse. On-call Child Protective Services Intake personnel will be notified and will call back for report.
* It is important that CIS of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ County staff and volunteers understand that it is not their responsibility to “conduct an investigation.” It is the responsibility of the Department of Social Services to conduct investigations of suspected child abuse/neglect.
* Anyone making such reports to the Department of Social Services must be sensitive to the need for confidentiality in the handling of this information.

**Statement of Receipt and Acknowledgement:**

I have read the Communities In Schools of\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ County Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse and Neglect Policy. I understand the policy and agree to abide by it in its entirety.

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Print Name

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Signature Date

CIS staff and volunteers will read and keep for reference pages 1-3 of this policy. This page should be signed, returned and maintained on file with Communities In Schools.