PROCEDURE TITLE	Child Protection Procedure	**DOCUMENT ID**	PROG DEV-0201.03
OWNER	Senior Vice President of Emerging and Prevention Services	**CREATION**	02.24.2021
STANDARDS AND REGULATIONS	**COA:** **Admin Code:** **Statute:**	**RENEWAL DATE**	2.2028
RELATED OMC POLICIES / PROCEDURES	Child Protection Policy, Mandatory Abuse and Neglect Reporting Policy/Procedure, Client Incident Reporting Policy/Procedure, Safe Operation of Vehicles Policy, Volunteer Eligibility Procedure, Employee Hiring and Rehiring Procedure, Photography Guidelines Procedure	**LATEST VERSION APPROVAL**	11.2025 – Chief Operating Officer
APPLICABLE TO	1 – All Staff All Volunteers	**EXPERT REVIEW**	02.2021 - Nelson Mullins

PURPOSE

This procedure describes the process by which One More Child ensures the safety of children in compliance with the Child Protection Policy.

DEFINITIONS

Child Protection: prevention and response to violence, exploitation, neglect, and abuse of children in all contexts.

Physical Abuse: includes inflicting physical injury upon a child such as burning, hitting, punching, shaking, kicking, beating, or otherwise harming a child.

Emotional/Social Abuse: may include threatening or terrorizing a child, using extreme and/or nonstandard or morally questionable forms of punishment, such as confinement in a closet or a dark room, or tying a child to a chair. Other forms of emotional abuse may include ignoring, belittling, rejecting, using derogatory terms, excessive blaming, or excessive isolating. Emotional neglect may include a lack of love, emotional support or attention, or excessive inconsistency.

Sexual Abuse: Sexual activity with a child which includes, but is not limited to:

- **Verbal (**e.g., sexual threats, solicitation, innuendos, sexually explicit language)
- **Visual (**e.g., indecent exposure, taking or showing suggestive pictures or pornographic materials, exhibitionism, or voyeurism, children watching sexual activities)
- **Physical:** (e.g., physical contact or penetration with clothed or unclothed genitals, pubic area, buttocks, or female breast; rubbing or kissing for the purpose of sexual gratification; self-touching in the presence of a victim; or causing a child to perform any of these acts)
- **Child-on-Child:** Should both the alleged victim and perpetrator be under the age of eighteen, conduct may be considered abuse depending on factors such as the state's age of consent or age-gap legislation. If one individual is under the age of eighteen and one is near the age of eighteen, state laws may also dictate whether certain behavior is considered abuse.

Child Abandonment: when the parent's identity or whereabouts are unknown, the child has been left by the parent in circumstances in which the child suffers serious harm, or the parent has failed to maintain contact with the child or to provide reasonable support for a specified period.

Child Neglect: persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, which is likely to result in serious impairment of a child's healthy physical, spiritual, moral, and mental development.

Grooming: The criminal activity of befriending and establishing an emotional connection with a vulnerable person, typically a minor (and sometimes the person's/child's family), to lower their inhibitions with the objective of committing sexual abuse (e.g., discussing their personal life in detail, giving gifts with the intention of flattery, sharing secrets, inordinate amounts of attention, finding excuses to isolate themselves with the victim, or initiating touching such as hugs, tickling, or massages).

Level 2 Volunteers: Volunteers requiring a higher level of screening per One More Child's Volunteer Eligibility Procedure. This may be due to reasons such as state licensing requirements for the area where they volunteer or their level of contact with children.

PROCEDURE

One More Child (OMC) serves vulnerable children and struggling families. It is OMC's responsibility to safeguard children by maintaining a policy and procedure of reporting and preparing those associated with OMC to safely interact with children through its policies and procedures.

Prevention

All staff and Level 2 Volunteers must review OMC's Child Protection Policy/Procedure and Mandatory Abuse and Neglect Reporting Policy/Procedure and acknowledge their commitment to comply. All individual volunteers (Level 1 and Level 2) are required to acknowledge OMC's child protection philosophy on their volunteer application**.**

Background Screenings

OMC conducts background screenings on all board members, staff, and applicable volunteers per OMC's Employee Hiring and Rehiring Procedure. OMC will never knowingly permit child abuse offenders, pedophiles, or those with related offenses to work with children or have access to children's records.

Education

OMC is committed to providing education on the dangers, prevention, and response to child abuse.

Board Member Training

OMC will train board members on child protection topics, including mandatory reporting and trauma informed care.

Employee and Volunteer Training

OMC will provide education on child protection to staff and volunteers in compliance with our Human Resources and Volunteer procedures. Information will include topics such as general child protection guidelines, client confidentiality, mandatory reporting, and trauma informed care.

Education for Children of Qualified Programs

Children who receive OMC services should be educated on a developmentally appropriate level about child abuse, how to protect themselves, and how to respond if abuse occurs. Training resources may include topics such as "Good Touch and Bad Touch" and internet safety. OMC adult clients should be provided with resources to educate themselves and their children on these topics.

Regulations and Expectations for Preventing Abuse

OMC seeks to provide a safe environment and ample supervision of children by implementing rules and regulations to prevent abuse such as procedures specific to photographs and videos of children, social media postings, and global sponsorship guidelines to name a few.

Reporting

Confidentiality

In all investigations of child abuse or neglect allegations, it is essential that a high level of confidentiality be maintained in relation to the information in one's possession, without jeopardizing the investigation or the welfare of the children involved. Subsequent information generated throughout the investigation must only be shared on a need-to-know basis. Records of each report filed at OMC will be entered into OMC's client database and kept in a safe, secure, and locked area.

Receiving a Report from a Child

All board members, staff, and volunteers are mandatory reporters of child abuse in compliance with the Mandatory Abuse and Neglect Reporting Policy/Procedure, and must treat any suspected abuse seriously. All suspected abuse must be reported by staff

and volunteers to their supervisor who will ensure the Child Protection Incident Reporting Policy/Procedure is followed. Any adult who withholds information or covers up any kind of abuse may be considered an accomplice, and action may be taken against them, up to and including dismissal and criminal charges.

The focus is always safeguarding and protecting the child. If the child shares information about or talks spontaneously about an alleged incident, an OMC representative will:

- Give the child time and attention.
- Listen carefully to the child.
- NOT directly question the child for further details about the incident.
- Treat the child seriously and respectfully.
- Allow the child to give a spontaneous account (do not try to stop the child from speaking)
- Make an accurate record of the account, taking note of the time, place, and people present, as well as what was said.
- Avoid promising the child confidentiality as it may be necessary to involve others.

Observing a reportable incident

If a representative of OMC observes an incident of abuse or neglect, they must first ensure the safety and best interest of the child. Once safety has been maintained, they are required to report the incident, following the Mandatory Abuse and Neglect Reporting Procedure and Client Incident Reporting Policy/Procedure.

Response

Report all incidences of observed or suspected abuse or neglect by complying with the Mandatory Abuse and Neglect Reporting Procedure.

OMC is committed to ensuring those who have been abused and victimized are provided with the necessary, trauma-informed services to facilitate healing and restoration. This is accomplished through OMC's direct care services and referrals to additional appropriate resources they need for their journey towards healing.

Appropriate Interactions – Staff

- OMC staff will make every effort to limit situations that require a 1:1 staff-to-client ratio. While this may not always be feasible—particularly in clinical or counseling contexts—services must be delivered in a group setting whenever possible.
- An "open door policy" will take precedence for those meetings that do require 1:1 staff to client interactions. The use of an office with glass windows or doors, or a public place, is highly encouraged.
    - Staff and/or applicable supervisors must have knowledge of these meetings, times, and locations prior to the occurrence.
- Transportation of clients within an OMC program may only occur on a limited basis as required by contract or obligation. Staff must comply with OMC policies and procedures or other programmatic-specific transportation procedures at all times.
- Physical interaction must be limited (e.g., pats on the head, "high fives," side hugs) and only with permission from the child.
- Staff will utilize trauma-informed practices and trust-based relationship tools to maintain client confidence and rapport – such as using words of encouragement, affirming positive behaviors, and redirecting negative behaviors. In an emergent behavioral situation, the staff should make use of appropriate de-escalation tactics in accordance with their programmatic procedures and training.

Appropriate interactions – Volunteers

- OMC staff will make every effort to limit situations that require a 1:1 volunteer-to-minor-client ratio. This must never occur if the volunteer is not a Level 2 screened volunteer in compliance with the Volunteer Eligibility Procedure.
- Physical interaction must be limited (e.g., pats on the head, "high fives," side hugs) and only with permission from the child.
- Volunteers should refrain from administering discipline, punishments, or critical language to a child or youth. If there is an emergent circumstance that ought to be addressed, it should be discussed with the staff supervisor.

- The use of any electronic media communication is prohibited interaction with a child. All communication must be directed through the parent or guardian.