

Mandatory Reporting of Abuse and Neglect Policy (3.6)

(Good Days Adolescent Special Needs Center, LLC – Fort Myers, FL)

Good Days Adolescent Special Needs Center (GDC) is committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of all students. All staff, volunteers, and contractors are legally and ethically obligated to report any suspected or known incidents of abuse, neglect, or exploitation involving a minor or vulnerable adult. This policy outlines the mandatory reporting requirements in accordance with Florida law and the procedures GDC personnel must follow.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish clear guidelines for identifying and reporting suspected cases of abuse, neglect, or exploitation of students enrolled at GDC. The policy ensures compliance with Florida Statutes, including Chapter 39.201, which mandates reporting by all individuals who know or suspect child abuse or neglect.

Scope

This policy applies to all GDC employees, contractors, volunteers, and any individual providing services or having regular contact with students. Failure to comply with mandatory reporting obligations may result in disciplinary action and legal consequences.

Definitions

- **Abuse** – Any willful act or threatened act that results in physical, mental, or sexual injury or harm to a child or vulnerable person.
- **Neglect** – The failure of a caregiver to provide supervision, food, clothing, shelter, or medical care necessary for the child's well-being.
- **Exploitation** – The improper use of a vulnerable person's resources for another's profit or advantage.
- **Mandatory Reporter** – Any person who knows or suspects that a child is abused, abandoned, or neglected, and is required by law to report such information.

Reporting Requirements

All GDC personnel are mandated reporters under Florida law. Reporting suspected abuse or neglect is not optional. Any employee or volunteer who suspects, witnesses, or receives information suggesting abuse or neglect must make an immediate report to the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF).

Reports may be made by:

- **Telephone:** Florida Abuse Hotline – 1-800-96-ABUSE (1-800-962-2873)
- **Online:** <https://reportabuse.dcf.state.fl.us>
- **Fax:** 1-800-914-0004 (using the DCF fax reporting form)

Procedures

1. **Immediate Action:** Any staff member who suspects or witnesses abuse or neglect must immediately ensure the student's safety and contact the DCF Abuse Hotline.
2. **Internal Notification:** After filing the report, the staff member must notify the Center Director or designee that a report was made (without sharing confidential details unless necessary for safety).
3. **Documentation:** The reporting staff member must complete an internal incident report documenting the date, time, and nature of the report, which will be maintained confidentially.
4. **Non-Retaliation:** No employee or volunteer shall be retaliated against for filing a good-faith report of suspected abuse or neglect.

Confidentiality

All reports and related information are confidential and will be handled in accordance with Florida Statutes. Only individuals directly involved in the reporting, investigation, or care of the student shall have access to related information. Staff must not conduct their own investigation or disclose details of the case to unauthorized individuals.

Training

All GDC staff and volunteers will receive mandatory training during orientation and annually thereafter regarding the identification and reporting of abuse and neglect. Training will include recognizing signs of abuse, understanding reporting responsibilities, and completing required documentation.

Enforcement

Failure to comply with this policy or to make a required report may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination, and may carry legal penalties under Florida law.

Approved: December 2025

Next Review: December 2026