



Kindred Place
peace begins here

Child Protection Policy

Kindred Place seeks to provide a safe and secure environment for the children who participate in our services. The goal of this policy is to protect the children from harm and provide a clear path of response for staff and volunteers in the event of suspected abuse or neglect.

All staff, interns, and volunteers working with children (anyone under age 18) are required to complete the screening and selection process as defined by this policy.

General

- All children under age 16 must be accompanied by an adult while at Kindred Place.
- Interactions between children and adults should always be out in the open, observable, and interruptible.
- Staff and interns are periodically trained on best practices for specific appropriate and inappropriate interactions.
- If any questionable interactions are witnessed between a staff and a child, these must be reported to the Clinical Director, who will notify the parents, and in consultation with Kindred Place Leadership Team determine appropriate action with respect to the staff involved.

Staff and Volunteer Selection

- **Acceptability:** Persons who have been convicted of, placed on probation for, received pretrial diversion for, pleaded guilty or no contest for, or are currently charged with prohibited offense shall not be hired and accepted as volunteers to work with any child or adolescent. Prohibited offense includes any crime against a child or any offense involving sexual conduct, physical abuse, violence or threatened violence, or such other felony or crime involving moral turpitude as determined by the executive director.
- **Written Application:** All persons seeking to work with children must complete and sign a written application in a form to be supplied by us. The applications will request basic information from the applicant and will inquire into previous experience with children, references, as well as disclosure of any previous criminal convictions. The application form will be maintained at Kindred Place.
- **Background Checks:** The following are required: Report of criminal background history and a fingerprint-based federal criminal history
- **Personal Interview:** Upon completion of the application, a face-to-face interview may be scheduled with the applicant to discuss his/her suitability for the position.

Training

Staff and interns will complete both job-specific and annual training activities appropriate to their assigned duties with children.

Caring for children in a healthy way often involves statements of praise and encouragement, handshakes and high-fives, and sometimes hugs if initiated by the child. However, these interactions should never be at the exclusion of other children or in isolation. Staff, interns, and volunteers who interact with children in program settings will be trained on best practices for using reward and encouragement.

Two Adult Policy

To provide adequate supervision and accountability, there will be at minimum, two approved staff or volunteers present during program activities (exceptions, for when therapists are having one-on-one counseling sessions with a child). For group sessions, a minimum of two adults are present at all times at Kindred Place when children are receiving services.

Open Door Policy

All interactions with children should be visible and interruptible. Therapy doors should remain open unless there is a window in the door or a side window beside it. Doors should never be locked while persons are inside the room.

Restroom Policy

Parents are strongly encouraged to have their children visit the bathroom prior to each session. For restroom visits during clinical sessions, children will be accompanied to the restroom by a staff member.

Staff will:

1. Escort child to the restroom, informing another staff member that s/he is doing so.
2. Check the bathroom first to make sure that it is empty, and then allow the child inside.
3. Remain outside the bathroom door and escort the child back to the assigned room.

If a child requires assistance, a female staff member may assist the child, making sure that another adult is outside the restroom.

Injuries

In the event that a child is injured while receiving services, **staff will:**

1. Provide First Aid for minor injuries, scrapes, and bruises, and will notify the child's parent or guardian of the injury at the time the child is picked up after session.
2. Contact parent and/or guardian immediately and call 911 if warranted for injuries requiring medical treatment beyond basic First Aid.
3. Complete a written incident report document the event and steps taken.

Medical

1. A First Aid kit must be available and maintained.
2. Information on dietary restrictions and allergies must be indicated on family registration forms.

Firearms

Other than for law enforcement and security staff, firearms are prohibited on Kindred Place property.

Photo Sharing

There are no photos or videos of children's faces taken during session activities, unless written consent is given by both parents/guardians.

Mandatory Reporting Policy

Everyone in Tennessee is a mandated reporter under state law. Any person with reasonable cause to believe a child is being abused or neglected must, under the law, immediately report to the Tennessee Department of Children's Services or to local law enforcement. The reporter can remain anonymous.

Child Abuse and Neglect are defined in Tennessee as:

- *Physical abuse*: non-accidental trauma or physical injury of a child, or failure to protect a child from harm.
- *Neglect*: Failure to provide for a child's physical survival needs to the extent that there is harm, or risk of harm, to the child's health or safety.
- *Sexual abuse*: When a child is involved in intentional sexual acts that produce sexual arousal and/or gratification for the perpetrator or sexual behaviors/situations in which there is a sexual component.
- *Psychological harm*: A repeated pattern of caregiver behavior or extreme incident(s) that convey to the children that they are worthless, flawed, unloved, unwanted, endangered. May include both abusive acts against a child and failure to act.

All staff, interns, and volunteers at Kindred Place, including board members, receive written information about mandatory reporting. All staff, interns, and volunteers who interact with children in any capacity at Kindred Place receive annual training to recognize child abuse and know how to report it. New staff and volunteers who have never received mandated reporter training will be required to take this training before being assigned to work with children.

Staff will:

1. Report any suspected abuse or neglect, including suspected sexual abuse, immediately to the Tennessee Child Abuse Hotline at 1-877-237-0004.
2. Report the incident to the Clinical Director.

In the event that an incident of abuse is alleged to have occurred at Kindred Place or during our sponsored programs or activities, the following procedure shall be followed:

1. The parent or guardian of the child will be notified.
2. The staff member or intern alleged to be the perpetrator of the abuse or misconduct will immediately be placed on leave from working with children pending an investigation and instructed to remain away from the premises during the investigation.
3. Staff and Kindred Place will comply with the Tennessee requirement regarding mandatory reporting of abuse. Reports of abuse will be made to the Tennessee Child Abuse Hotline at 1-877-237-0004. Kindred Place will fully cooperate with the investigation of the incident by the appropriate authorities.

4. Kindred Place will complete an incident report and maintain any documents received relating to the incident and/or allegations. These documents will also be shared with law enforcement for the purpose of their independent investigation.
5. Kindred Place will have one spokesperson to the media concerning incidents of abuse, which shall not be the person that was alleged to be involved. Leadership at Kindred Place will seek the advice of legal counsel before responding to media inquiries or releasing information to the whole staff. All other representatives of Kindred Place should refrain from speaking to the media.
6. The alleged perpetrator will be dismissed from working with children and adolescents at the discretion of the executive director.

Disclosure of Policy

The Kindred Place Child Protection Policy shall be available online on the Kindred Place website.

Revision of Policy

This policy will be regularly reviewed and can be modified. Any such modification shall be noted on the Kindred Place website.