



Child Abuse Prevention Policy

Introduction

Joelton Elementary Extended Care (JEEC) is committed to providing quality care that enriches the lives of students and their families. We want everyone to have the best experience possible. To ensure this, we have guidelines and expectations in place that are aimed at making sure everyone has a positive and safe experience. JEEC will maintain zero tolerance toward child abuse. JEEC has a role as an institution that is two-fold: we will protect children from any staff or program affiliate whose conduct may be inappropriate; and we will observe children who attend that may appear to have been abused or neglected by other adults (either at home or in another location) and reporting them to the appropriate authorities. Additionally, JEEC is concerned about protecting itself, as an institution, from unwarranted and unfounded allegations of abuse.

Defining Child Abuse (Per DHS):

- Physical Abuse - Physical abuse occurs when a child suffers a non-accidental injury.

Physical Indicators	Behavioral Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Unexplained bruises and welts on face, lips, mouth, torso, back, buttocks, or thighs ➤ Bruises and welts in various stages of healing (indicating several incidents over a span of time) or clustered or in patterns (which is less likely if the injuries are accidental) ➤ Bite marks ➤ Unexplained fractures or dislocations of bones ➤ Unexplained burns or burns in the shape of an object ➤ Bald patches on the scalp ➤ Frequent "accidents" that seem illogical for the child's age and developmental level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Extreme vigilance or watchfulness ❖ Fear of parents or caregivers ❖ Fear of leaving the child care facility/fear of going home ❖ Poor social interactions ❖ Bullying smaller children ❖ Acting out inappropriately with dolls or stuffed animals ❖ Poor self-concept/low self-esteem

- Neglect - Neglect occurs when a parent or caretaker allows a child to suffer when it could be prevented, or fails to provide the essentials for physical, social, and emotional development.

Physical Indicators	Behavioral Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Underweight, poor growth patterns, failure to thrive ➤ Poor hygiene ➤ Inappropriate dress ➤ Consistent hunger in the morning ➤ Evidence of no or poor supervision ➤ Untreated physical problems or medical or dental needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Begging, stealing, or hoarding food in pockets or cubbies ❖ Arriving very early or staying very late at the school or childcare facility ❖ Constant tiredness and fatigue or falling asleep in class ❖ Seeking attention inappropriately ❖ Assuming adult responsibilities or concerns, like finding a place to spend the night, shopping for food, or caring for siblings ❖ Reporting that they are left alone frequently



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- **Sexual Abuse** - Sexual abuse occurs when an adult or older child exploits a child for sexual gratification. Sexual abuse includes fondling, sodomy, child prostitution, incest, and involving a child in pornographic activities.

Physical Indicators	Behavioral Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Difficulty in walking or sitting ❖ Torn, stained, or bloody underclothing ❖ Pain, swelling, or itching in genital area ❖ Pain upon urination ❖ Bruises, bleeding, or lacerations in external genitalia ❖ Sexually transmitted disease 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Excessive masturbation ❖ Sexual knowledge beyond what is age appropriate ❖ Aggressive acting out ❖ Sleeping and eating disorders ❖ Poor peer relationships ❖ Unexplained aggression or fear

- **Commercial Sexual Exploitation** - Commercial sexual exploitation of children (also known as domestic minor sex trafficking) is sexual abuse/prostitution of a child by an adult involving payment in cash, food, shelter, or other forms of value to the child or third person. Sexual exploitation involves treatment of the child as a sexual and commercial object for activities such as prostitution, adult entertainment, pornography and other forms of transactional sex where a child engages in sexual activities.

Physical Indicators	Behavioral Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Inappropriate clothing/dressing "older" ❖ Little to no eye contact ❖ Weight loss ❖ Unexplained bruises or other injuries ❖ Scars from past injuries ❖ Tattoos of names, nicknames, or gang affiliations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Inappropriate dress ❖ Poor personal hygiene ❖ Possession of large amounts of money ❖ Angry, aggressive, clinically depressed, suicidal and/or tearful ❖ Diagnosed with sexually transmitted disease or diseases ❖ Older boyfriend or male friend or relative ❖ Older female friend ❖ Withdrawn, uncommunicative

- **Emotional Maltreatment** - Emotional maltreatment occurs when a parent or caregiver creates a negative emotional atmosphere for the child and attacks the child's emotional development and sense of self-worth. These attacks include excessive, aggressive or unreasonable demands that a child cannot meet. Constant criticizing, belittling, insulting, rejecting and teasing are some of the forms these verbal attacks can take.

Physical Indicators	Behavioral Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Speech disorders ❖ Lags in physical development ❖ Failure to thrive ❖ Hyperactive or disruptive behavior 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Habit disorders, such as compulsive rocking, sucking, or biting self ❖ Conduct and learning disorders ❖ Obsessive-compulsive disorders such as excessive hand washing ❖ Developmental lags ❖ Lack of self-help skills ❖ Negative statements about self ❖ Cruelty toward others



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Interactions and Relationships with Children:

Although warmth and affection are important feelings for staff to communicate toward the students participating in JEEC programming, it is essential that the actions are not offensive, in violation of, or having the appearance of violating current laws associated with child abuse.

1. Staff are expected to be attentive to all signs and symptoms associated with child abuse and to report them to DCS as soon as they are observed.
2. Staff are to be alert to the physical and emotional state of all children in attendance and document any signs of injury or suspected child abuse within the ProCare software under "observations."
3. At no time should a staff member be alone with a single child outside of the view of cameras.
4. Staff are prohibited from socializing with program participants under the age of 18 unless those participants are members of their families or a pre-existing relationship existed which is known to the parents of the students.
5. Staff will not discipline children by use of physical punishment or by failing to provide the necessities of care such as food and shelter. In addition, punishment that relates to sports activities (i.e., pushups, sit-ups, laps, etc.) in excess of normal physical conditioning shall not be used as punishment. (See student disciplinary policy.)
6. Staff will not use abusive language, mimic, or tease children in a way that insults or embarrasses them.
7. Child abuse prevention trainings are made available to staff online and are required to be taken periodically in accordance with the licensing requirements outlined by DHS.

Reporting Procedures:

All staff must be sensitive to the need for confidentiality in the handling of information and should, therefore, avoid discussing any incident with any program participants or outside individuals. If a staff member suspects abuse, (s)he shall immediately report their suspicion to the Tennessee DCS Child Abuse Hotline (1-877-237-0004).

If there is an accusation that abuse has occurred within the JEEC, the staff/volunteer to whom the incident was reported will immediately confirm the facts from the reporter and observe the condition of the child, making sure the child is not presently being harmed. S/he will then notify the director on site. The director will confirm the details of the accusation and will make a report to the DCS abuse hotline listed above and will call the non-emergency police number to file a police report before the end of that day. This is in accordance with the DHS licensing regulations. The director will also notice the JEEC licensing consultant.

In the event that the reported incident involves a staff member or volunteer, the director will immediately suspend the person, with pay, pending investigation. Regardless of where, or under what circumstances the alleged incident takes place, it will be considered job related. The continued tenure/participation of any staff/volunteer will depend on the outcome of the investigation.

The parents or legal guardian of the child(ren) involved in any incident will be communicated to only by the executive director or his/her designee. If a parent or legal guardian is the alleged abuser, the parent/legal guardian will not be made aware of any reporting. Otherwise, they will be notified the same day.

Staff and Volunteer Screening:

We will follow all DHS licensing requirements including background checks, required training, checking references, and training. This includes all staff participating in child abuse prevention upon hire and annually.

Additional Information:

Parents are invited and encouraged to visit the program any time. Additionally, staff will not release children to anyone other than the authorized individuals listed in the ProCare software and will require a signature for every drop off and pick up.