



PRESCOTT CLASSICAL ACADEMY

CHILD PROTECTION GUIDE

Introduction

Prescott Classical Academy has in place procedures to help ensure the safety of all children and adults participating in our organization. The guidelines in this guide address specifically those procedures which are designed to prevent physical abuse; emotional abuse; and sexual abuse, molestation, and misconduct and the procedures for reporting such incidents.

Terms

Prescott Classical Academy may be referred to in this guide as PCA or the co-op. Staff refers to all paid and unpaid adults who work or otherwise interact directly with children in the co-op on a regular basis. Regular basis is defined as an adult who participates in the co-op day 3 or more meeting days in a co-op year (i.e. school year). The board refers to the PCA Board of Directors.

Declaration

It is the express policy of PCA that staff shall not engage in any abusive behavior; physical, emotional, or sexual in nature. Staff shall not engage in sexually oriented activity, including sexual conversations with children, nor allow such conduct to exist among the children themselves. Staff shall not develop sexual relationships with children or family members of children during and following services provided to such children and their families by the co-op. Staff shall not engage in nonerotic activities for which the true intended result is sexual arousal or gratification.

Violation Procedure

Any person associated with the co-op who violates the policy stated in the declaration above will be discharged, reported to the proper authorities and prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. Physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, molestation and misconduct are crimes. Any adult participating (volunteer or paid staff) in PCA who fails to report such activity will be discharged and where possible, prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

Definition

Child abuse is the mistreatment of a child under the age of 18 by a parent, caretaker, someone living in their home or someone who works with or around children. The mistreatment must cause injury or put the child at risk of physical injury. PCA supports and maintains an environment that is free of child abuse and neglect. Child abuse and neglect include physical or mental injury, sexual abuse, negligent treatment, or maltreatment. PCA will neither condone or tolerate:

- Infliction of bodily harm or injury upon any child or physically abusive behavior
- Physical neglect of a child, including failure to provide adequate safety measures or care at any PCA event
- Emotional mistreatment of a child—including verbal abuse

Arizona revised the law regarding abuse back in 2003. With this change, they made some of the verbiage more specific to lessen the possibility of wrong interpretation. To read further, refer to Arizona A.R.S. 13-3620.

Preconditions for Sexual Abuse

There are four preconditions which allow incidents of sexual abuse and molestation to take place.

1. There must be an individual with the inclination to sexually abuse children.
2. The individual must overcome his or her internal inhibitions.
3. The individual must overcome external barriers in place to protect children.
4. The individual must overcome the child's resistance to being abused (Boy Scouts of America).

Protection Rules

Two Adult Rule

General: Staff should not be alone with other people's children. Each class is staffed with one tutor and there must be one other parent/adult present. If an adult must be absent from the co-op or leave the classroom, two adults must remain in the classroom with children at all times. If a child must be accompanied out of the room, two adults must accompany him or her.

Special Circumstances: If a situation arises where only one adult is present with other people's children, activities should take place in an open door, well-lit, easily accessible setting. In this case, the one adult should remain in the presence of several children.

Private Conversations: If a private conversation is necessary with another person's child, where possible, the child's parent should also be present. If the parent is not present, the conversation should take place in an open-door, well-lit, easily accessible setting and kept to a minimum.

Closed Door Procedure: A private, closed door consultation with one adult and another person's child should not take place at the co-op. If such a closed door consultation is necessary, the parent must be present during the consultation.

Children Leaving the Classroom / Bathroom Use: If a child 3 years old or younger needs to leave the classroom (bathroom or other), two adults will accompany him or her or the parent will be called. In the case of bathroom use monitored by adults other than the child's parent, the adults will wait in the outer doorway of the bathroom, oriented to allow for the child's privacy, while the child uses the facilities. Whether children 4 and 5 years old may leave the classroom for bathroom use independently will be based on the child's individual level of independence. It is best to send young children with clothing they can manage independently in the bathroom. For any child who requires assistance in the bathroom, the parent will be called to assist the child. The parent will also be called for diaper changes. Older children may tend to such matters unaccompanied and return directly to their classrooms.

Nursery Group Bathroom Use: Children attending the nursery will have group hand washing and bathroom breaks. The girls' bathroom will be used for these breaks for both boys and girls because the size and layout of the space allows for necessary monitoring by adults in the hand washing area while privacy is maintained in the toilet stall area. If closing the main door to the bathroom becomes necessary in order to keep young children in the bathroom during the break (not running in the halls unattended), the door may be closed as necessary and only with two or more adults in the bathroom hand washing area, in view of each other. If a nursery child needs to use the bathroom at a time other than during the group break, the regular "2 adults waiting in the doorway" procedure should be followed or the parent called to attend the child.

Men Attending to Bathroom Needs: Because the girls' bathroom is used for group bathroom and hand washing breaks for both nursery boys and girls, men are asked not to attend to this duty in order to avoid the presence of adult men in the girls' bathroom which is inappropriate. (If a man needs to attend to his own young daughter's bathroom needs, she should accompany him to the boys' bathroom.)

Adult Bathroom Use: When no separate adult bathroom is available, bathrooms become designated as "adult only" when an adult needs to use the bathroom themselves. The adult is to call out into the bathroom something to the effect of, "Knock, knock; anyone here?" If a child is present, the adult is to wait outside in the hall until all children have left. Upon determining that no child is present, the adult is to close the outer bathroom door. The door shall have a stop sign attached which is a reminder to children that a closed bathroom door means that an adult is using the bathroom for "privacy" and that the child must wait outside in the hall for his or her turn. When the adult leaves the bathroom, the door should be propped back open and it is now available again for children.

Adult Taking His or Her Own Child to the Bathroom: An adult in this situation should follow the "adult bathroom use" procedure in order to avoid inadvertently being present in the bathroom alone with other people's children while attending to his or her own child.

Physical Contact Rules

Nursery children: Children from 6 weeks old through 4 years old may be cared for in the nursery and associated tot classes (2 years to 4 years).

Diapering and toileting: All diaper changes and assisted toileting must be attended to by the parent (or in the case where a parent has made a private arrangement for another adult to supervise his or her child in his or

her absence from the co-op, the designated adult must attend to diapering and toileting). If a child is able to manage his own toileting, the above "bathroom use" procedure will be used.

Other Physical Contact: Physical contact with children in this age range is a normal, healthy, necessary element of child care. Sexual contact with children's genitals, including through clothing is forbidden. Patting children on the buttocks is forbidden.

However, nursery workers and tot class staff may interact with these children in non-sexual, nurturing ways such as hugging, comforting, carrying and rocking children. As with all classrooms, there should always be two or more adults present in the nursery and tot classes.

Older Children: Children from 4 years old and older who are not cared for in the nursery:

Toileting: See "bathroom use" above.

Other physical contact: Staff should generally avoid touching other people's children in this age range, particularly initiating contact. Patting children on the genitals or buttocks or touching breasts is forbidden. If a child hugs a staff member, he or she should divert the contact so it becomes shoulder-to-shoulder rather than pelvis-to-pelvis.

Procedure for Documentation and Reporting

Child Abuse Reporting Law:

- Applies to all staff, volunteers, board members and parents
- "Reasonable belief" of suspected child abuse, not absolute certainty
- The law expands the definition of who is a "mandatory reporter" to include both volunteers and staff as well as parents
- Requires reporting to your local police jurisdiction along with Child Protective Services (CPS) including name, address, age and nature of injuries or reasons to suspect child abuse
- Reporters are immune from liability for reporting suspicions that prove to be false

The Process to Report Red Flag Issues:

- If you hear about or observe something that leads you to believe that a child may have been abused, you **MUST** by law, immediately report it to a PCA board member.
- When there is a reasonable cause to suspect abuse, PCA board members are **REQUIRED** to file a report with the local police jurisdiction (928-777-1900) and the Arizona Department of Child Safety (ADCS) (1-800-767-2445).
- PCA board members are also required to complete a detailed incident report and will determine what type of support and care the child and family need and will act accordingly.

Board Communication to Staff: The board will communicate to appropriate staff the existence of the reported incident and steps being taken in response.

Communication to the Press: No board member or co-op member other than the president of the board should speak to the press or general public regarding the reported incident. The board with the guidance of legal council will determine what, if anything, the president will state to the press or general public.

Board and Co-op Member Responses to Accused Staff Member: During an investigation and/or in the case where criminal charges are filed, the following procedures should be followed:

- Board members and co-op members should not have unauthorized contact with the accused person regarding the incident.
- The only contact regarding the incident should be in cooperation with ADCS and as advised by legal counsel.
- In the case where an accused person contacts a board member or co-op member regarding the incident outside of official, monitored ADCS proceedings, the board member or co-op member should state clearly that he or she cannot discuss the situation until the proceedings are concluded. Then terminate the contact by saying good-bye and walking away or hanging up the phone. Email or other electronic contact regarding the incident should not be acknowledged.

Anyone contacted thus inappropriately should document the incident and report it to the board president immediately in person or by phone (not email). The documentation should be filed with the board.

Protection Rule Violation (Not Incident of Abuse): If a staff member becomes aware (either through a child reporting or through direct observation) of an adult who appears to inadvertently fail to follow a protection rule, yet has not perpetrated an incident of abuse, molestation, or misconduct, the staff member should verbally remind the adult of the appropriate rule. If the adult continues to violate the rule, the staff member must verbally report the incident(s) to a board member.

- The board member will document a report of an incident of failure to follow a protection rule. The board member will document persons involved, the time of the incident, and the board member recording the incident.
- The board member will immediately report and file the documentation with the co-op board president.
- The board president will contact the adult who has violated a protection rule by phone or in person (not by email) before the next co-op meeting day or event and discuss the matter, clarifying the rule. The president will document this conversation.
- If an adult is cited for rule violation a second time (over the course of their participation in the co-op), the board will meet with the individual before the next co-op meeting day or event to determine the cause of the violation. The board will determine whether dismissal from the co-op is appropriate at that time.
- If an adult is cited for rule violation a third time (over the course of their participation in the co-op), the board will meet with the individual before the next co-op meeting day or event to inform him or her of the report and the individual will be immediately dismissed from the co-op. Such dismissal will be documented by the board.
- In the case of rule violation and/or dismissal only (no actual report of abuse, molestation or misconduct), no report to authorities will be made by the board.

Screening-Background Checks

Adult staff: Because each parent is considered a volunteer while working directly with other people's children, our host facility requires that each volunteer has a formal background check. For the safety of our children and our community, each parent is required to have a formal background check. This is also becoming more and more common among all volunteer organizations who work with children. Written permission will be obtained from each volunteer, staff person and board member before a background check is conducted (included in the registration form). The information obtained in the background check will be kept in a secure Google Drive folder and strictly confidential, accessible only to board members assigned to conduct the screening process.

Youth Volunteers (Age 12-17): Any youth volunteering or being paid as a youth assistant in classes with younger children will have an interview by a board member to determine that the youth understands the definitions, concepts, and procedures explained in this guide as well as the youth's willingness to follow the procedures. A record will be kept that the interview was conducted.

Monitoring

Board members will monitor coop activities, staff (including other board members), and the facility regularly as follows:

- Classroom doors will usually remain open unless they have glass windows. However, they may be closed for short periods when necessary for noise control and only if two or more adults are present.
- The main door of the boys' and girls' restroom will remain ajar, positioned to allow for children to enter and leave but to obscure view of urinals and/or bathroom stalls. For circumstances where bathroom doors may be closed while children are present, see "bathroom use" above.
- Closed bathroom doors, while appropriate under the circumstances described under "bathroom use," are subject to random checks. Random checks will be made on activities to "see how things are going." These checks should be viewed as safety checks for all adults and children as well as opportunities for general support.

Adult Child Ratios

PCA will comply with the following State of Arizona Licensing Standards for Daycare Centers guidelines for adult/child ratios: (In most cases, our ratios will be even better.)

Age Range Ratios For Center Based Care for Arizona State

Infants (1:5)

1 year (1:6)

2 years (1:8)

3 years (1:13)

4 years (1:15)

Schoolage (1:20)

Mixed age group ratio for youngest child in group

Symptoms in Children

Sexual Abuse: The following are general behavior changes that may occur in children who have been sexually abused. These changes may also occur when there is physical or emotional abuse, or during stressful life circumstances, such as divorce or the death of a loved one:

- physical complaints
- fear and dislike of certain people or places
- sleep disturbances
- Headaches
- school problems
- withdrawal from family, friends, or usual activities
- excessive bathing or poor hygiene
- return to younger, more babyish behavior
- Depression
- Anxiety
- discipline problems
- running away
- eating disorders
- passive or overly pleasing behavior
- delinquent acts
- low self-esteem
- self-destructive behavior
- hostility or aggression
- drug or alcohol problems
- sexual activity or pregnancy at an early age
- suicide attempts

Additional symptoms for children who have been abused more frequently:

- copying adult sexual behavior
- persistent sexual play with other children, themselves, toys or pets
- displaying sexual knowledge, through language or behavior, that is beyond what is normal for their age

- unexplained swelling, bleeding or irritation of the mouth, genital or anal area, urinary infections, sexually transmitted diseases
- hints, indirect comments, or statements about abuse (The Sexual Assault Crisis Center)

Physical Abuse

- visible marks of maltreatment such as cuts, bruises, welts, or well-defined burns
- reluctance to go to location of abuse

Emotional Abuse

- Apathy
- Depression
- Hostility

Teaching Children

It is the responsibility of parents to teach their children at a developmentally appropriate level how to recognize and report to a trusted adult (such as the parent or other adult) physical; emotional; or sexual abuse, molestation, or misconduct.

Why Children Don't Report: Often children do not tell anyone about sexual abuse because they:

- are too young to put what has happened into words.
- were threatened or bribed by the abuser to keep the abuse a secret.
- feel confused by the attention and feelings accompanying the abuse.
- are afraid no one will believe them.
- blame themselves or believe the abuse is punishment for being "bad."
- feel too ashamed or embarrassed to tell.
- worry about getting into trouble or getting a loved one into trouble.

Silence enables abuse to continue. Silence protects offenders and hurts children who are being abused. All abuse, including sexual abuse, is an extremely difficult and damaging experience. Today there are many resources to help victims and their families. Children no longer need to suffer in silence.

Protection of Children from Sexual Abuse: As concerned parents, we want to protect children from sexual abuse, but we can't always be there to do that. We can, however, teach children about sexual abuse in order to increase their awareness and coping skills. Without frightening children, we can provide them with appropriate safety information and support at every stage of their development.

We can provide personal safety information to children in a matter-of-fact way, with other routine safety discussions about fire, water, health, etc. Although even the best educated child cannot always figure out sexual abuse, children who are well prepared will be more likely to tell you if abuse has occurred. This is a child's defense. In order to protect children teach them:

- to feel good about themselves and know they are loved, valued, and deserve to be safe.
- the difference between safe and unsafe touches.
- the proper names for all body parts, so they will be able to communicate clearly.
- that safety rules apply to all adults, not just strangers.
- that their bodies belong to them and nobody has the right to touch them or hurt them.
- that they can say "no" to requests that make them feel uncomfortable- even from a close relative or family friend.
- to report to you if any adult asks them to keep a secret (explain the difference between a surprise, like a birthday gift, and a secret).
- that some adults have problems.
- that they can rely on you to believe and protect them if they talk to you about abuse.
- that they are not bad or to blame for sexual abuse.
- to tell a trusted adult about abuse even if they are afraid of what may happen.

DO: ● Keep calm. It is important to remember that you are not angry with the child, but at what happened. Children can mistakenly interpret anger or disgust as directed towards them.

- Speak to the child in a public place that is out of earshot from others.
- Believe the child. In most circumstances children do not lie about abuse.
- Write down facts and words as the child states them. In regards to physical abuse, you are ONLY allowed to ask 4 questions: Who, What, When and Where.
- In a sexual abuse report, only information you have been given should be documented. DO NOT
- pry, investigate or ask further questions. This is for law enforcement to handle.
- Give positive messages such as, "I know you couldn't help it," or "I'm proud of you for telling."
- Explain to the child that he or she is not to blame for what happened.
- Listen to and answer the child's questions honestly.
- Respect the child's privacy. Be careful not to discuss the abuse in front of people who do not need to know what happened.
- Be responsible. Report the incident to a PCA board member and the Arizona Department of Child Safety. They can help protect the child's safety and provide resources for further help.
- Arrange a medical exam. It can reassure you that there has been no permanent damage and may verify important evidence.
- Get help. Get competent professional counseling, even if it's only for a short time.
- If a child is in imminent danger call 911.

DO NOT:

- Panic or overreact when the child talks about the experience. Children need help and support to make it through this difficult time.
- Pressure the child to talk or avoid talking about the abuse. Allow the child to talk at his or her own

pace. Forcing information can be harmful.

- Silence the child. This will not help her or him to forget.
- Confront the offender in the child's presence. The stress may be harmful. This is a job for the authorities.
- Blame the child. SEXUAL ABUSE IS NEVER THE CHILD'S FAULT!!! (The Sexual Assault Crisis Center)
- Ask questions such as:
 - "Why didn't you stop him/her?" Avoid "why" questions that expect the child to take responsibility for being abused.
 - "Are you telling me the truth?" "Are you making this up?" Don't try to investigate. Just listen.
 - "Let me know if this happens again." Act quickly! A child may not be brave enough to speak up twice and could be seriously hurt during the next instance of abuse.

Tips for Talking with Children:

- Be mindful of your body language. Come down to the child's level. Give them space and don't lean in too close while they are talking.
- Be aware of your facial expressions. Even if you are shocked or surprised by what you are hearing, try to maintain a calm expression.
- Never put words in a child's mouth. Leading questions can hinder investigation. For example: If a child says, "My dad hurt me." Don't reply, "Did he touch you in a private place?" Instead ask, "How did he hurt you?"
- Minimize questioning. Limit the number of times a child is questioned. Leave the interview process to a trained professional investigator.