

NATIONAL POLICY STATEMENT ON SEXUAL ABUSE OF CHILDREN

The ministry of The Salvation Army is motivated by the love of God. Its mission is to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ and to meet human needs in His name. Since The Salvation Army is a movement so motivated by love and committed to alleviating human suffering, no greater harm to the Army and those served by it can be imagined than that resulting from the sexual abuse of children, whether perpetrated by its members, volunteers, employees, local officers, auxiliary officer personnel or its commissioned and ordained officers.

Sexual abuse of children is most often the result of a pathological condition known as pedophilia. It is generally felt there is no guaranteed cure of pedophilia, even though the perpetrator may have claimed to have experienced a spiritual rebirth and have undergone extensive treatment. The Salvation Army believes that no human person is so diseased or depraved that when touched by the grace and power of Christ, he or she is beyond the possibility of redemption and healing. "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation." Nonetheless, the Army recognizes the intractable nature of pedophilia and the dire threat that perpetrators represent to the children in our care, not to mention the impact their actions may have on the reputation of the Army itself or the extent to which these behaviors may render the organization legally liable.

The Salvation Army understands that the sexual abuse of children, directed at the most vulnerable members of our community, is not limited to any one group. An offender may be of any social or income class, a member of any religious or occupational group, or any gender or sexual orientation, married or single.

It is, therefore, the considered policy of The Salvation Army in the United States of America that it will not knowingly expose children in any of its programs to any individual where there is any reasonable suspicion of pedophilia in his or her past.

The Salvation Army administration will respond promptly to all charges of sexual abuse of children by the following process:

- * thoroughly investigate all charges of sexual abuse of children,
- * where there is a reasonable suspicion of sexual abuse of children, remove the individual charged from his duties,
- * comply with all laws regarding the reporting of such charges,
- * cooperate with any governmental investigation of such charges,
- * reach out to the children and their families, with compassion for their spiritual and emotional well-being, and

- * with due regard for the privacy of the individuals, deal as openly as possible with members of the community about the charges.

In implementation of its policy to protect the children in its care from sexual abuse, the Commissioners' Conference has adopted the following specific policies:

- * For purposes of this policy statement, the words, "child" and "children" mean individuals below the age of 18 years.

Territorial Registries. There will be established in the office of the Secretary for Personnel of each of the territories a Registry containing the names of individuals who in the past have been associated with The Salvation Army in any capacity who have been convicted, or against whom complaints of sexual abuse of children have been made where there is reasonable suspicion of such abuse. The Registries will also contain the names of individuals who have applied for positions with The Salvation Army who have been rejected on the basis of convictions or complaints of sexual abuse of children where there is reasonable suspicion of such abuse. The names of any Salvation Army officers, auxiliary captains, employees, local officers or volunteers who have been convicted or against whom complaints of sexual abuse of children have been made where there is reasonable suspicion of such abuse must be listed in the Registry. Names of all individuals who have been terminated because an allegation of abuse of children has been lodged against them, and the investigation discloses a reasonable suspicion of such abuse, will also be listed in the Registry. Names of any candidates for officership or of applicants for employment, local officership or volunteer status who will be involved with children will be cleared in advance with the Registry. Because of the mobility of individuals that have been or will be associated with The Salvation Army, the Territorial Secretaries for Personnel will share with each other information in their respective Registries. Where a name is included in the Registry, the Secretary for Personnel will recommend rejection of the application without explanation.

Officers, Auxiliary Captains, Candidates, Employees, Local Officers and Volunteers.

- (a) Every applicant for a position involving direct exposure to children in a Salvation Army program will be cleared in writing with the Territorial Registry.
- (b) Based upon disclosure by the applicant of any prior employment or volunteer work with children, the applicant's references will be carefully checked to determine whether there are any suggestions of sexual abuse of children.
- (c) To the extent possible, searches will be conducted of State social service or public welfare department registries of child abuse and criminal history records, not only in the State in which the officer, auxiliary captain, candidate, employee, local officer or volunteer is to be assigned, but also in other States in which he has resided the previous ten years.

- (d) Each applicant for employment or for volunteer work for any position involving the supervision or custody of children (under 18 years of age) or for any position in which the applicant is in any way involved with children, will complete the *Statement of Applicant for Work With Children* approved by the Commissioners' Conference (see attached forms). Any such applicant who fails to complete the statement or who refuses to make the representations contained in the statement, will be rejected.
- (e) Where a charge of sexual abuse of children has been made against an officer, auxiliary captain, employee, local officer or volunteer, he or she will be immediately suspended, the charge will be carefully investigated by Salvation Army administration which may include interviews with the child or children involved, their parents, the child's physician, as well as the individual charged, and, if the investigation discloses a reasonable suspicion of such abuse, whether or not there was a police investigation or a criminal conviction, the individual will be terminated. To the extent possible, full confidentiality of the investigation and the disposition of the charge will be maintained.
- (f) All Corps have a variety of programs for children and The Salvation Army operates many other programs for children, including day care centers, community centers and summer camps. No candidate will be accepted, no officer or auxiliary captain will be allowed to continue and no employee, local officer or volunteer will continue to serve The Salvation Army where there is any reasonable suspicion of sexual abuse of children.

Reporting of Sexual Abuse of Children. Wherever, after investigation of a charge of sexual abuse of children, such abuse has been admitted by the individual charged or has been confirmed by a credible witness, in any event when required by the law of the particular State or municipality or by any regulation of a regulatory agency having jurisdiction, with notification to Divisional Headquarters, the charge will be reported to the law enforcement agency and, if required, the appropriate social service agency.

Prevention Education. Each of the territories will strengthen educational programs relating to the sexual abuse of children, with seminars to be attended by individuals responsible for supervising programs for children, the education program to include detailed explanations of the policies set forth in this policy statement.

Treatment of Victims of Sexual Abuse. Although children who are the victims of child abuse while in the care of The Salvation Army will frequently require professional counseling not available within The Salvation Army, The Salvation Army will make every effort to extend to the victims and their families its compassion and its commitment to their spiritual and emotional well-being. However, there have been cases in which, after thorough investigation, there is serious doubt that any child abuse occurred. In such instances, even if there are no criminal proceedings, there might well be civil actions brought against The Salvation Army that The Salvation Army will be prepared to defend.

The Salvation Army is determined to protect the children in its care, in all of its many programs. Our officers are required to take all reasonable steps to avoid the sexual abuse of children and to institute such preventive measures, in addition to the procedures outlined in this policy statement, to protect the children in their care. By taking such steps, the officers will help alleviate these ills of mankind and will extend the Kingdom of God.

NOTE: Immediately after the National Policy Statement on Sexual Abuse, please find the following forms for working with children.

- 1) Statement of Salvation Army Officer Relating To Work With Children
(Revised February 2003 CC p. 95);



StatementofSalvationArmyOfficerRelatingToWorkWithChildren-2-03CC.pdf

- 2) Statement of Cadet For Work With Children
(Revised February 2003 CC p. 95);



StatementofCadetforWorkWithChildren-2-03CC.pdf

- 3) Statement of Candidate For Officership For Work With Children
(Revised February 2003 CC p. 95);



StatementofCandidateforOfficershipforWorkWithChildren-2-03CC.pdf

- 4) Statement of Volunteers (Salvationists and Non-Salvationists) For Work With Children
(Revised February 2003 CC p. 95);



StatementofVolunteers(SalvationistsandNon-Salvationists)forWorkWithChildren-2-03CC.pdf

- 5) Statement of Applicant for Employment Involving Work With Children
(Revised March 2004 CC - Approved in Correspondence)



StatementofApplicantforEmploymentInvolvingWorkWithChildren-3-04CC.pdf

For further information, please refer to the Safe from Harm Resources Background Check Policy database. [Notes Link](#)

**TO BE PLACED IN POLICY AND
PROCEDURE BOOK UNDER "C"**

Lt. Colonel Barry C. Swanson
CHIEF SECRETARY

06/29/2005

Approved by Commissioners' Conference
February 2000

Revised by Commissioners' Conference
February 2002, February 2004, February 2005