



Child Abuse Policy

1.0 Rationale

Child abuse and neglect are unlawful acts. Heat Wave is committed to an environment that is free of child abuse and neglect.

2.0 Policy

Heat Wave expressly prohibits child abuse or neglect of any kind.

Heat Wave will exclude from affiliation with, or dismiss from Heat Wave, any volunteer, staff member, or member who has been the subject of a confirmed incident of child abuse or neglect. Heat Wave, at the discretion of the Executive Director, reserves the right to restrict participation, exclude from affiliation with, or dismiss from Heat Wave any individuals suspected of abuse.

3.0 Definition

The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), amended by the CAPTA Reauthorization Act of 2010, defines child abuse and neglect as, at a minimum:

- Any recent act or failure to act on the part of a parent or caretaker which results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse or exploitation; or
- An act or failure to act which presents an imminent risk of serious harm.

Further, the term sexual abuse includes:

- The employment, use, persuasion, inducement, enticement, or coercion of any child to engage in, or assist any other person to engage in, any sexually explicit conduct or simulation of such conduct for the purpose of producing a visual depiction of such conduct; or
- The rape, and in cases of caretaker or inter-familial relationships, statutory rape, molestation, prostitution, or other form of sexual exploitation of children, or incest with children.

Heat Wave defines a "child" as any person under the age of 18.

4.0 Implementation

Possible child abuse will be reported to either a senior member of the corps admin team, Executive Director, or a Board Member. Reports may be also sent to report@heat-wave.org or submitted anonymously using the Heat Wave Whistleblower form online, per the Whistleblower & Anti Retaliation Policy.

The report will immediately be shared with the Ethics & Compliance Committee to ensure that a prompt review of the circumstances occurs and that appropriate measures are taken to resolve or correct the situation in an expeditious manner.

If a person is determined to have violated this policy, immediate and appropriate action will be taken, up to and including termination of employment or dismissal from the organization. The incident will be reported to law enforcement authorities and/or the Department of Child Services in the jurisdiction where the incident occurred.



Failure to report, supervisory inaction, or retaliation against anyone who has reported a possible or actual violation of this policy will be cause for action up to and including termination of employment or dismissal from Heat Wave.

4.0 Additional Reporting Resources

In Florida, everyone is a mandatory reporter, though some occupations are specified in Florida law as “professionally mandatory reporters”, including school teachers, professional childcare workers, and healthcare/medical personnel. A professionally mandatory reporter of child abuse/neglect is required by Florida Statute to provide their name to the Abuse Hotline Counselor when reporting. A professionally mandatory reporter’s name is entered into the record of the report, but is held confidential.

While in the State of Florida, all cases of known or suspected child abuse, sexual battery, or vulnerable adult abuse, whether occurring during a Heat Wave event or not, will be reported to the Florida Department of Children and Families. Reports can be made through either the DCF statewide hotline (call 1-800-96-ABUSE)(1-800-962-2873) or through the DCF website at <http://reportabuse.dcf.state.fl.us>.

Outside of Florida, the Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline (<https://childhelpline.org> or 1-800-4-A-CHILD (1-800-422-4453)) can be used to help file a report.

The two links below contain additional resources for filing reports in the State of Florida.

Mandatory Reporting of Abuse Checklist - <https://www.flcourts.org/content/download/634439/file/Mandatory-Reporting-of-Abuse-Checklist.pdf>

Reporting Abuse of Children and Vulnerable Adults - <https://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/abuse-hotline/publications/mandatedreporters.pdf>