



Dear Florida HOSA Staff Member, Advisor, or Chaperone,

Welcome to Florida HOSA!

At Florida HOSA our first priority in anything we do is the health and well-being of our members, volunteers, and staff. With this in mind, we have developed the following manual as an educational tool to facilitate a healthy environment by protecting members, staff, advisors, chaperones, and volunteers to allow the mission of Florida HOSA to carry on.

This handbook provides an outline of best practices for Florida HOSA staff, advisors, and chaperones designed to mitigate the opportunity for sexual or physical abuse and strengthen your understanding of prevention and reporting requirements. They have been adopted by Florida HOSA governance and will be strictly enforced.

We ask that you carefully read this policy manual. Upon completion, please sign and return the acknowledgement located on the last page and keep a copy for your reference. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Sincerely,

***Florida HOSA***



# Florida HOSA POLICIES: ABUSE PREVENTION & REPORTING

## Table of Contents

Safety Assurance Process.....	1
Zero Tolerance Policy .....	2
Reporting Procedures .....	3
Guidelines for Interaction .....	6
Communication Policy.....	7
Safety Committee Contact Sheet .....	8
Acknowledgement & Agreement.....	9



## **SAFETY ASSURANCE PROCESS**

Screening is the careful gathering and review of specific information and is one of the best ways to prevent sexual or physical abuse. As part of our dedication to ensuring a safe environment, all potential staff, advisors, and chaperones are required to complete the following before assuming responsibilities on behalf of Florida HOSA. This applies to any adult working with minors on a regular basis or staff members responsible for hiring, firing, or otherwise part of the reporting process or policy enforcement.

### **Documentation & Interview**

Staff members and chaperones working with members on a regular basis or who are in a decision-making role are required to complete the following steps:

- Complete an Employment Application (employees only)
- Complete a face-to-face, virtual, or telephone interview (employees)
- Provide references to be checked (employees)
- Provide proof of screening by current school, school district, or other entity (advisors and chaperones)

### **Criminal Background Check (employees)**

A criminal background check will be conducted on every person seeking to work on behalf of Florida HOSA. Depending upon position, differing levels or intensity of criminal background check may be required.

### **Sexual Abuse Awareness Training**

Florida HOSA policies and procedures require that all staff members, advisors, and chaperones participate in Abuse Prevention & Reporting Training. This may be directly through Florida HOSA or through another entity, if provided with proof of completion within three years. This training must provide a basic understanding of the characteristics of sexual abusers, signs a child has been or is being abused and what it means to be a mandatory reporter. This training must also include information on “grooming” behaviors. *Child grooming is the process abusers use to befriend and establish a social and emotional connection with a child, or the child’s family, to lower the child’s inhibitions and build trust with the objective of sexual abuse. This may take place online or in person and can be a stranger or someone the child already knows. Grooming happens in six stages: targeting, gaining trust, filling a need, isolation, sexual contact and maintaining the relationship.* School or district screening processes will be acceptable for advisors and chaperones.

### **Review Policies & Procedures**

All staff, advisors, and chaperones are required to read the policies and procedures contained in this manual and sign the Statement of Acknowledgement & Agreement found on the last page. This signature indicates that he or she has read and understands the material and agrees to comply with all policy requirements.



## **ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY**

It is the obligation and responsibility of every Florida HOSA staff member, advisor and chaperone to act in the best interest of members and Florida HOSA. In order to ensure this, Florida HOSA has a ZERO TOLERANCE policy regarding any suspected, alleged, or proven acts of sexual misconduct or other harm to the safety and well-being of all members and other Florida HOSA stakeholders.

Any staff, advisor, or chaperone are required to report any suspected “grooming” behaviors, policy violations, or other suspicious behaviors to an immediate supervisor, Florida HOSA Administration, a member of the Florida HOSA Safety Committee/Crisis Management Team or local authorities. Suspected abuse (physical, sexual, or emotional) of a minor outside of Florida HOSA must also be reported immediately.

## **ENFORCEMENT OF POLICIES**

Florida HOSA staff members, advisors, and chaperones who supervise other employees or chaperones are charged with the diligent enforcement of all Florida HOSA policies. Violations of these policies are grounds for immediate dismissal from the Florida HOSA activity or other disciplinary action, for all staff, advisors, and chaperones.

## **CONSEQUENCES OF PROHIBITED OR HARMFUL ACT**

Any person accused of committing a prohibited act, or any act considered to be harmful to a child, will be immediately placed on leave and prohibited from participating with Florida HOSA. This suspension will continue through any investigation by law enforcement or other agencies.

Any person found to have committed an illicit act or convicted of any crime will be prohibited from any future participation in all Florida HOSA activities, events, administration or subsidiaries. Such conduct of any paid staff member, employee, or independent contractor will result in the immediate termination of employment from Florida HOSA.

Failure to report a prohibited act to one of the individuals identified above is also in violation of this policy and will be considered grounds for termination of a staff member, or dismissal of an advisor or chaperone from Florida HOSA activities.



## **REPORTING PROCEDURES**

In order to best protect members and maintain the safest environment for Florida HOSA, always report all suspicions or allegations of abuse, regardless of state law.

### **REPORTING SUSPICIOUS OR INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIORS TO Florida HOSA**

When the necessity of reporting occurs, the protection of members must take priority. All incidents should be reported immediately to Florida HOSA management and an incident report will be filed and retained for reference. All questions or concerns related to inappropriate, suspicious, or suspected grooming behavior should also be directed to Florida HOSA staff or a member of the Florida HOSA Safety Committee/Crisis Management Team.

Any report of suspicious behaviors or allegations of abuse will be taken seriously by management and will be reported in adherence with state law to the Florida HOSA Safety Committee/Crisis Management Team, the Police Department, Child Protective Services, or other appropriate agency.

### **REPORTING SUSPICIONS OF ABUSE TO Florida HOSA ADMINISTRATION**

Staff members, advisors, and chaperones are required to verbally report an incident to a supervisory staff member as soon as possible after the alleged incident. After receiving a report from a staff member, advisor, or chaperone, the supervisor/administrator will notify a Florida HOSA Administrator as soon as reasonably possible.

If appropriate, Florida HOSA Administrator or a member of the Florida HOSA Safety Committee/Crisis Management Team will inform the local or Florida authorities in one of the following manners:

#### **Option 1.**

A staff member, advisor, or chaperone *may* report to a Florida HOSA Administrator or supervisor and allow supervisory personnel to make the appropriate report to law enforcement agencies.

#### **Option 2.**

A staff member, advisor or chaperone must report to the appropriate local or Florida authorities. After filing a report, the staff member, advisor, or chaperone must notify Florida HOSA Administrator or supervisor.

#### **Option 3.**

A staff member, advisor, or chaperone will immediately notify Florida HOSA Administrator or supervisor. Together with the Florida HOSA Administrator or supervisor, the staff member, advisor, or chaperone will make a report to the appropriate local or Florida authorities.

*In no way does any provision in this policy discourage any staff member, advisor, or chaperone from reporting a suspicion of abuse or neglect to the appropriate local or Florida authorities.*



## **REPORTING SUSPICIONS OF ABUSE TO LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES**

Florida law requires that any person having cause to believe that a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been or may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect must make a report to an appropriate law enforcement agency.

## **STATE SPECIFIC MANDATORY REPORTING LAW**

State laws vary concerning mandatory reporters and mandatory reporting requirements. Please read the following Florida State Law for specific requirements.

### **Professionals Required to Report Citation: Ann. Stat. § 39.201**

The following persons are mandated reporters:

Physicians, osteopaths, medical examiners, chiropractors, nurses, or hospital personnel. Other health or mental health professionals.

Practitioners who rely solely on spiritual means for healing.

Teachers or other school officials or personnel.

Social workers, daycare center workers, or other professional child care, foster care, residential, or institutional workers.

Law enforcement officers or judges.

### **Reporting by Other Persons Citation: Ann. Stat. § 39.201**

Any person who knows or has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is abused, abandoned, or neglected by a parent, legal custodian, caregiver, or other person responsible for the child's welfare or that a child is in need of supervision and care and has no parent, legal custodian, or responsible adult relative immediately known and available to provide supervision and care shall report such knowledge or suspicion to the department.

Any person who knows or who has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is abused by an adult other than a parent, legal custodian, caregiver, or other person responsible for the child's welfare shall report such knowledge or suspicion to the department.

Any person who knows or has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is the victim of childhood sexual abuse or the victim of a known or suspected juvenile sexual offender shall report such knowledge or suspicion to the department.

### **Institutional Responsibility to Report Citation: Ann. Stat. § 39.201**

Nothing in this chapter or in the contracting with community-based care providers for foster care and related services as specified in § 409.1671 shall be construed to remove or reduce the duty and responsibility of any person, including any employee of the community-based care provider, to report a suspected or actual case of child abuse, abandonment, or neglect or the sexual abuse of a child to the central abuse hotline.



**Standards for Making a Report Citation: Ann. Stat. § 39.201**

A report is required when either of the following apply:

A person knows or has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is abused, abandoned, or neglected.

A person knows that a child is in need of supervision and care and has no parent, legal custodian, or responsible adult relative immediately known and available to provide supervision and care.

**Privileged Communications Citation: Ann. Stat. § 39.204**

Only attorney-client and clergy-penitent privileges are permitted.

**Inclusion of Reporter's Name in Report Citation: Ann. Stat. § 39.201**

Professionals who are mandated reporters are required to provide their names to hotline staff.

**Disclosure of Reporter Identity Citation: Ann. Stat. §§ 39.201; 39.202**

The names of reporters shall be entered into the record of the report but shall be held confidential. The name of the reporter may not be released to any person other than employees of the Department of Children and Family Services responsible for child protective services, the central abuse hotline, law enforcement, the child protection team, or the appropriate State attorney, without the written consent of the person reporting.

This does not prohibit the serving of a subpoena to a person reporting child abuse, abandonment, or neglect when deemed necessary by the court, the State attorney, or the department, provided the fact that such person made the report is not disclosed.

*Administrators should periodically check state reporting requirements for modification of reporting requirements.*

**PROTOCOL FOR VICTIM RESPONSE**

The protection of members is always the priority of Florida HOSA. This is especially true if their safety and well-being may have been compromised. After an incident has been reported, Florida HOSA will cooperate with any investigations and facilitate the assistance of any alleged victims, in partnership with local and state authorities, school districts, etc. All efforts will be made to provide appropriate counseling or other wellness tools.



## **GUIDELINES FOR INTERACTION**

Interaction and engagement with members is a key element of Florida HOSA's mission. Appropriate and welcome interactions are necessary for the development and maintenance of a safe environment.

### **GUIDELINES FOR PHYSICAL TOUCH**

All staff members, advisors, chaperones, and volunteers should exercise good judgment when using physical touch as a means of communication.

1. Short, congratulatory or greeting hugs.
2. Arm around the shoulder, "side hug".
3. A brief, assuring pat on shoulder.
4. High fives, fist bumps or handshakes.
5. A few NEVERS:
  - a. Never touch kids in anger or disgust.
  - b. Never touch kids in any sexually connotative manner.
  - c. No staff member will ever (day or night) be on or in a child's bed.
  - d. Never touch a child's private parts.
  - e. Never tickle a child.
  - f. Never ignore a request not to be touched.
  - g. Never express or require physical affection or touching in any form.

*If a question ever arises, consult a member of the Safety Committee/Crisis Management Team or the Florida HOSA Administrator.*

### **MEMBER SUPERVISION GUIDELINES**

Whenever possible, a team approach should be used for interacting with and supervising members. Florida HOSA staff members, advisors, chaperones, and volunteers are prohibited from being alone with an individual member, unless unavoidable. If one-on-one situations arise or are necessary, they should be conducted in an easily observable space with knowledge of another adult. If any two members are together in a hidden or obscured area, they should be redirected to an easily observable space whenever possible. All doors must remain unlocked during one-on-one interactions.

Florida HOSA is committed to providing adequate supervision for all activities, events and programs. Accordingly, a ratio of one staff member, advisor or chaperone for every fifteen members is required for all Florida HOSA activities. A school district may have a lower ratio which the local advisor and/or chaperone should follow. A staff member, advisor, or chaperone of the same gender must be available for students. If a male adult is traveling with or otherwise supervising female members, it is recommended that he partner with a female adult. Likewise, if a female adult is traveling with or otherwise supervising male students, she should partner with a male adult. If at any time a supervised group is out of compliance it is the responsibility of the staff member, advisor, or chaperone to immediately notify the appropriate staff or Florida HOSA Administrator, who will make diligent efforts to immediately bring adult to member ratios into compliance with this policy.

*These ratios and guidelines will be implemented whenever reasonably possible and may change according to the activity.*





## **COMMUNICATION POLICY**

The Florida HOSA safety standards established to protect and ensure healthy relationships within Florida HOSA should be followed at all times when interacting with a current or former member, including activities, communication, and contact occurring outside of Florida HOSA. These policies apply to all current and former staff, advisors, or chaperones and their interactions with current or former members.

### **SUGGESTIONS FOR COMMUNICATION**

1. Parents of all members must approve or have access to all interactions with students, including, but not limited to: email, social network interactions, phone calls and personal visits.
2. Any online communications, friend-requests, or other contact through social networking sites, should be done in public or group settings. Private or one-on-one chats, friend groups, etc. are prohibited.
3. Dating relationships of any kind between staff members, advisors, or chaperones and a current or former member are strictly prohibited.
4. Current or former staff, advisors, or chaperones should never allow a member to spend the night at their homes for any reason.
5. Current or former staff, advisors, or chaperones should never spend the night at a MEMBER'S home for any reason.
6. If a member shares information that puts themselves or anyone else in danger, or they disclose abuse of any kind, Florida HOSA Administrator, Safety Committee/Crisis Management Team, or local or Florida state authorities must be notified immediately.



## Florida HOSA SAFETY COMMITTEE CONTACT SHEET

Name	Title	Phone	Email
Sandralyn Rezac	Contact	(386) 462-4672	srezac@flhosa.org
Jacquelyn Moreau	Contact	(386) 462-4672	jmoreau@flhosa.org
Mandy Memolo	Contact	(386) 462-4672	mmemolo@flhosa.org
Jim Van Allan	Contact	(772) 398-9990	JAllan@keiseruniversity.edu
Dorothy Yost	Contact	(863) 494-1469	Dorothy.Yost@desotoschools.com



**Policies and Procedures**  
**Statement of Acknowledgment and Agreement**

I have received and read a copy of Florida HOSA’s Manual for Prevention & Reporting of Abuse & Neglect. I understand the responsibility I am taking on and the seriousness of the topics discussed within the manual. I agree to follow and abide by these guidelines as part of my service at Florida HOSA.

I understand that this manual may be modified at any time. Guidelines may be amended, revised, or eliminated at the discretion of the Florida HOSA. I understand that it is my responsibility to review this manual periodically or when an update has been distributed.

I further acknowledge and understand that the materials and guidelines contained in this handbook in no way express or imply a contractual employment relationship between myself and Florida HOSA. If I am acting as a chaperone, I acknowledge and agree that I will receive no compensation for hours that I work. I understand that my service is voluntary and Florida HOSA or myself may choose to end this relationship at any time.

I hereby acknowledge my understanding and acceptance of Florida HOSA’s Manual for Prevention and Reporting of Abuse and Neglect.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Staff Member, Advisor, or Chaperone’s Name (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Staff Member, Advisor, or Chaperone’s Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

---

*For Internal Use Only*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Received By

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date