



PROTECTED PERSONS BEHAVIORAL AND REPORTING POLICY 2023-2024

Purpose:

It is the purpose of this policy of Assistance League of Antelope Valley to provide a safe and secure environment for children, persons with intellectual disabilities, and elderly persons who participate in activities sponsored by Assistance League. This policy is intended to formalize Assistance League's commitment to the avoidance of abuse to such Protected Persons.

Scope:

This policy shall apply to all current and future Assistance League employees, Members and/or volunteers, including all Advisory Council Members.

Definitions:

For the purpose of this policy the following definitions shall apply:

1. "Abuse" shall be defined as verbal, physical, emotional, or sexual abuse and/or exploitation and neglect of a Protected Person, which thus includes child abuse, abuse of persons with intellectual disabilities, and elder abuse.
2. "Adult" shall be defined as any individual at least eighteen (18) years of age.
3. "Advisory Council Member" shall be defined as any individual invited by the Board to serve on an annual basis.
4. "Child," "children" and/or "minor" shall be defined as any individual under the age of eighteen (18) years of age, including Minor Member Volunteers.
5. "Community Volunteer" shall be defined as any individual, other than a Member Volunteer or Advisory Council Member, performing services for Assistance League without compensation.
6. "Elderly Persons" shall be defined as any individual sixty-five (65) years of age and older.
7. "Employee" shall be defined as any individual performing services for Assistance League for compensation, including independent contractors and employees.
8. "Member Volunteer" shall be defined as any individual who is listed on the official rolls of chapter members maintained annually by National Assistance League.
9. "Minor Member Volunteers" shall be defined as any individual under the age of eighteen (18) years of age; and listed on the official rolls of chapter members maintained annually by National Assistance League. Minor Member Volunteers are sometimes referred to as "Assisteens[®]."
10. "Protected Person(s)" shall refer to children, persons with intellectual disabilities, and elderly persons.

Eligibility for Service

No individual is suitable to serve as an employee, Member, or volunteer with Assistance League of Antelope Valley who has been convicted of a felony; or a misdemeanor involving sexual misconduct or moral turpitude; unless granted an exemption pursuant to the **National Assistance League Name-based Search Policy**.

No Community Volunteer shall be allowed to be in the presence of a Protected Person unless under the direct supervision of a Member Volunteer or Employee.

Specific Acts and Omissions in Violation of this Policy:

The following acts or omissions are violations of this Policy and will not be tolerated or accepted during any activity or program and are to be immediately reported after the safety of the Protected Person has been assured.

1. Any direct observations or evidence of sexual advances and/or sexual activity in the presence of or in association with a Protected Person.
2. Any display or demonstration of sexual advances and/or sexual activity, abuse, insinuation of abuse, or evidence of abusive conduct towards a Protected Person.
3. Sexual advances and/or sexual activity of any kind between any person and a Protected Person.
4. Infliction of physically abusive behavior or bodily injury to a Protected Person.
5. Physical neglect of a Protected Person including failure to provide adequate supervision.
6. Mental or emotional injury to a Protected Person.
7. The presence and/or possession of obscene or pornographic materials.
8. The possession of and/or being under the influence of any illegal or illicit drugs.
9. The consumption of and/or being under the influence of illegal or illicit drugs, marijuana, or alcohol while leading a function with a Protected Person or Minor Volunteer Member.

Adult Behavior:

1. For Protected Persons *not including* elderly persons:
 - a. No adult employed by or volunteering for Assistance League shall be left alone with a Protected Person. This will require a reasonable ratio of adults to Protected Persons be maintained in each situation involving the supervision of Protected Persons. For elderly persons, see 2a below.
 - b. In guidance and/or advisory sessions, written parental or guardian permission shall be obtained prior to a meeting privately with a Protected Person. If written permission is granted two adults shall be present during the guidance and/or advisory session. Prior written permission may be granted by parents to cover a specific time period (i.e., a chapter year). For elderly persons, see 2b below.

2. For elderly persons:
 - a. One-on-one Interactions between Assistance League employees and/or volunteers and elderly persons that fall within the scope of Assistance League sponsored activities are permitted.
 - b. In guidance and/or advisory sessions, including those involving financial advice or financial matters, two adults shall be present during the guidance and/or advisory session in addition to the elderly person.
3. For Assisteens events, or any event involving Minor Member Volunteers, and conferences a one (1) to ten (10) ratio of Adult to Assisteens shall also be maintained. In the event of an Assisteens overnight event at least one adult of each gender shall be present if male and female Assisteens are participating.

Abuse Reporting:

1. Upon the first suspicion of an instance of abuse of a Protected Person, the Board shall be notified and take the following steps immediately:
 - a. Do not treat the suspicion as frivolous.
 - b. Commence the investigation immediately and conclude it as soon as possible.
 - c. Maintain confidentiality of the investigation as much as possible. Emphasize confidentiality of the victim and any accused.
 - d. Determine what legal requirements exist regarding reporting of abuse and make required reports to local law enforcement and/or child protective services. Even if there is no legal obligation to report, consider the specifics of the accusation and determine if a report should be made.
 - e. Cooperate fully with law enforcement officials.
 - f. Suspend any accused from the performance of duties involving Protected Persons until the investigation has been completed.
 - g. Inform the victim and the victim's family of the steps that are being taken and continue to keep them advised of the status of the investigations. If abuse of a Protected Person is confirmed, ask the victim and the victim's family what action they would like to take in the matter, and fully cooperate to address their requests while ensuring that the request is legally appropriate and prudent.
 - h. Inform the President of National Assistance League that an investigation is in progress.
2. In instances where abuse of a Protected Person is confirmed, Assistance League shall immediately dismiss the individual if an employee. If the individual is a Member, they shall be barred from any further service with Assistance League. Assistance League will also notify the President of National Assistance League of the confirmed abuse.

3. In instances where the evidence is inconclusive, Assistance League will determine what action, if any, shall be taken depending on the strength of the evidence available. The accused shall be given the right to a hearing by the Board which shall issue a ruling, in writing, setting forth the findings and orders with regard to future service, and limitations on such service. The ruling of the Board shall be deemed final. Assistance League will notify the President of National Assistance League of the Board's determination.
4. Assistance League shall immediately contact its insurance company to report the occurrence and may contact its attorney.
5. All Assistance League employees and volunteers are instructed to read and abide by this policy. They are required to notify the President in the event of observation of, or allegations of, abuse of a Protected Person.
6. Fully comply with the federal, state and local statutes regarding the reporting of abuse of Protected Persons.

Any person having cause to believe that a Protected Person's physical or mental health or welfare has been or may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect shall report the person's belief in accordance with this procedure.