

## **Church Offers Statement on Help Line and Abuse**

### **Church responds to recent Associated Press article about the Church's abuse help line**

The abuse of a child or any other individual is inexcusable. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints believes this, teaches this, and dedicates tremendous resources and efforts to prevent, report and address abuse. Our hearts break for these children and all victims of abuse.

The nature and the purpose of the Church's help line was seriously mischaracterized in a recent Associated Press article. The help line is instrumental in ensuring that all legal requirements for reporting are met. It provides a place for local leaders, who serve voluntarily, to receive direction from experts to determine who should make a report and whether they (local leaders) should play a role in that reporting. When a leader calls the help line, the conversation is about how to stop the abuse, care for the victim and ensure compliance with reporting obligations, even in cases when the law provides clergy-penitent privilege or restricts what can be shared from private ecclesiastical conversations.

The help line is just one of many safeguards put in place by the Church. Any member serving in a role with children or youth is required to complete a training every few years about how to watch for, report and address abuse. Leaders and members are offered resources on how to prevent, address and report abuse of any kind. Church teachings and handbooks are clear and unequivocal about the evils of abuse. Members who violate those teachings are disciplined by the Church and may lose their privileges or membership. These are just a few examples.



The story presented in the AP article is oversimplified and incomplete and is a serious misrepresentation of the Church and its efforts. We will continue to teach and follow Jesus Christ's admonition to care for one another, especially in our efforts related to abuse.

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