

# **CHILD AND YOUTH SAFETY POLICY (EXAMPLE)**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The youth ministries of \_\_\_\_\_ intend to provide youth with opportunities for personal spiritual growth and development and to offer experiences which minister to mind, body, and spirit.

Child abuse is a problem in our society that affects children and youth of all ethnic and economic backgrounds. The following contains information designed to protect and care for youth who are involved in \_\_\_\_\_ and to enable volunteers and staff working with youth to prevent the harming of youth during the course of \_\_\_\_\_ events.

The intent of this policy is to reduce the risk of child abuse occurring within \_\_\_\_\_ and also to ensure appropriate intervention and reporting if abuse does occur. The intent of this policy is also to enable volunteers and staff working with youth to provide appropriate care in situations when prior abuse to a youth is suspected or disclosed during the course of a regional youth event.

### **I. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS**

- A. Staff Member:** Any person serving \_\_\_\_\_ in an official paid capacity.
- B. Volunteer Program Leaders:** Persons giving unpaid leadership in any of the \_\_\_\_\_ ministries and services.
- C. Child or Youth:** A person under 18 years of age.
- D. The Revised Code of Washington defines abuse and neglect as injury, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, negligent treatment or maltreatment of a child by any person under circumstances which indicate that the child's health, welfare, and safety are harmed. Some general definitions of abuse include:**

**Child Neglect** is the omission of the child's basic needs (physical, environmental, emotional, and nutritional) that are necessary for a child's physical and emotional well-being.

**Emotional Abuse** involves verbal or nonverbal violence toward a child. Often this kind of abuse gives the child the message that they are "not good" and never will be.

**Physical Abuse** involves physical violence toward a child. Such maltreatment may be due to excessive corporal punishment. It could also occur in situations such as initiations or hazing.

**Sexual Abuse** or sexual molestation involves any sexual act between a child and an adult or a young child and a significantly older child. Such acts may range from fondling to sexual intercourse. It also includes sexual behavior that does not include touching, such as sexually suggestive comments, obscene phone calls, exhibitionism, displaying pornographic materials, and allowing children to witness sexual activity. The child is powerless and not in a position to responsibly consent to sexual interactions.

## II. SCREENING PROCEDURES FOR VOLUNTEERS

### A. SUMMER CAMP PROGRAMS

1. All volunteers must complete a written application before they are accepted into the \_\_\_\_\_. As part of the application, two written references are required. One must be from the applicant's pastor or, in the case of clergy, a clergy colleague.
2. References will be reviewed, evaluated and used to determine the selection of camp workers. The selection process will be conducted under the guidance of the Camp Directors and Regional Staff.
3. These written references are renewed every year.
4. All records will be handled in confidence and maintained by \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Each volunteer must undergo a criminal background check. Any person found to have been convicted of a sex crime or a crime against person as defined in the Washington Criminal Code or in any criminal code from any sister state or Federal Government, will be denied the opportunity to serve in the camp program. Persons charged but not convicted of such offenses will be investigated in greater detail and re-evaluated.
6. Each summer, camp volunteers must attend a training session where the Child Safety Policy will be discussed, as will rules of conduct between volunteers and youth.

### B. PROCEDURES FOR VOLUNTEERS RELATED TO THE \_\_\_\_\_

1. All prospective adult leaders must apply to the \_\_\_\_ directly. Copies of applications will be kept on file at the \_\_\_\_\_.
2. All \_\_\_\_\_ adult and youth leaders and appropriate event staff are required to attend a training meeting each year during which the \_\_\_\_\_ Child Safety Policy will be explained.
3. All \_\_\_\_\_ meetings must involve at least three people, preferably two adults and one or more youth.
4. Advance parent-to-adult permission must be given if a youth or non-adult is driving any child(ren)/youth to or from an activity.
5. Notification from parents for another person to pick up a child from the church/event location must be presented to an adult leader prior to releasing the child(ren).
6. The person given permission to pick up a child from a church activity must present identification to an adult leader prior to taking child(ren) from church/event location premises.
7. Anyone not following the rules stated must be reported to the \_\_\_\_\_ Adult Leaders or \_\_\_\_\_ Staff Person.

### **III. GUIDELINES FOR VOLUNTEER/STAFF BEHAVIOR IN YOUTH MINISTRY PROGRAMS**

The following guidelines serve the dual purpose of protecting the youth participants as well as providing volunteers/staff protection from unfounded allegations of abuse.

- A. Volunteers/staff shall not engage in abuse of any kind, including sexual abuse.
- B. Private one-on-one activities between volunteers/staff and youth are not permitted. If individual “counseling” is required, such activity must be done in plain view of other campers or staff.
- C. All persons in leadership positions will exercise deliberate supervision and report observations or suspected physical abuse to the director immediately. Prompt warnings will be issued where appropriate and the situation will be investigated and monitored closely.
- D. The Director or Adult Leader will have the option of dismissing any volunteer immediately for an offense of sufficient gravity. Law enforcement officials will be contacted in any instance of conduct which could be criminally sanctioned.
- E. Volunteer staff training will include a discussion of reporting obligations of observed criminal conduct.

### **IV. REPORTING PROCEDURES FOR SUSPECTED OR DISCLOSED PRIOR ABUSE TO A YOUTH**

Occasionally during the course of regional youth event, a youth may disclose instances of abuse that are occurring or have occurred in that youth’s life. As part of the \_\_\_\_\_ intention to care for youth, such disclosures are taken seriously.

Volunteers and staff will receive training in recognizing signs of abuse, in appropriate responses to disclosed and/or suspected abuse, and in the regional reporting policy for suspected or disclosed abuse. Volunteers and staff are not expected to investigate instances of suspected or disclosed abuse; however, the suspected and disclosed abuse will be reported to Child Protective Services.

When abuse is disclosed or suspected the following procedures will be followed:

- A. Reports of possible and/or disclosed abuse will be reported immediately to the Camp Director or the Adult Leader.
- B. The Camp Director or Adult Leader will follow up to provide care to the youth as appropriate.
- C. A report will be made by the Camp Director or the Adult Leader of the suspected abuse to the Child Protective Services of the Department of Social and Health Services.
- D. The \_\_\_\_\_ and President will be apprised of the report that has been made to CPS.

### **V. REPORTING PROCEDURES FOR EVENTS OCCURRING DURING REGIONALLY SPONSORED EVENTS**

- A. Reports of possible child physical or sexual abuse should be communicated to the Camp Director or Adult Leader immediately.

- B. The Camp Director or Adult Leader is required to report possible incidents of child abuse to a member of the \_\_\_\_\_ Staff within 12 hours of the initial report. The Camp Director or Adult Leader will remove the child and the alleged accused from unsupervised contact pending the Director's/ Adult's investigation.
- C. Upon investigation of the reported incident, a plan of response will be developed within 24 hours, to include a report to CPS or local law enforcement as appropriate.
- D. The Director or Adult Leader will be responsible for preparing a detailed written record of each reported incident, including the reporting procedures used.

## **VI. PLAN OF RESPONSE TO ALLEGATIONS**

- A. All allegations will be taken seriously, with regard for the privacy and confidentiality of all involved. The Camp Director/ Adult Leader will keep a detailed record of allegations of action taken to segregate the parties and investigate the matter.
- B. The Camp Director/ Adult Leader will notify the \_\_\_\_\_ within 12 hours of any allegation.
- C. The \_\_\_\_\_, so notified, will notify the \_\_\_\_\_ Attorney. A spokesperson will be chosen to speak for \_\_\_\_\_. The R insurance carrier will be notified by the \_\_\_\_\_.
- D. The Director/ Adult Leader will contact Children's Services or local law enforcement officials with the guidance of the \_\_\_\_\_ Attorney and in consult with the \_\_\_\_\_.
- E. The Director/ Adult Leader in consult with the \_\_\_\_\_ shall notify the parents of any minors involved in an alleged incident.
- F. The Director/Ryc Adult Leader shall secure the safety of the minor, segregate the alleged accused from the child, and then present the allegations to the named accused as part of the director's investigation.
- G. The Director/ Adult Leader shall treat the accused with dignity, and shall relieve the accused of his or her duties until an investigation is completed.
- H. The Director/ Adult Leader shall require that an attorney be present when any person other than the accused is being questioned by an investigative agency.
- I. The Director, Staff Members, and all other individuals involved on behalf of the \_\_\_\_\_ shall avoid any detailed explanation of events or identification of the parties involved. The \_\_\_\_\_ spokesperson should avoid denial, minimalization, or placing blame on victims or their families. Any public discussion should center upon the policies and precautions taken by the \_\_\_\_\_ in it's camping and youth/young adult programs to insure a safe environment for all participants.