

Camp Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Policies *Reprinted with Permission*

STAFF GUIDE

Part of your camp staff responsibility is to be alert to any activities or conditions that could threaten the safety of campers. When any threat to the safety of campers is detected, you must inform the Camp Director as soon as possible.

One of the areas for which camp staff must be on the alert is child abuse. Child abuse affects all segments of our society and may happen wherever children are found. Child abuse is never acceptable, and child abusers are subject to legal consequences. Camp staff members are the eyes and ears of the camp and, as such, have an essential role in preventing abuse in camp as well as in helping children when they have been abused—wherever the abuse occurred.

This guide will help camp staff members fulfill their child protection responsibilities. We believe that its top priority to protect the safety of children. All camp staff members are required to understand our safety and child abuse prevention policies and report any suspected violations as directed by the Camp Director.

Barriers to abuse:

- Keep classroom doors open.
- We require TWO staff members to be present wherever campers are present.
- Don't be alone with a child for any reason (No, it is not OK to take a child into the hallway to discuss a discipline issue). Always speak to children in full view of other staff and campers.
- Refrain from excessive physical contact with children. (See section below).
- Respect children's privacy.
- No sexual banter, profanity, sharing sexual jokes or pornography. No discussions of any sexual nature with campers, with your fellow staff, or with anyone at the camp venue, period.

Physical contact: Physical contact between adults and children should be kept to a minimum. Using common sense, it is acceptable to shake hands, give a child a high five, or touch as necessary when administering first aid/ taking action to prevent an accident. Giving long hugs or massages, wrestling, tickling, or having children sit or bounce on your lap or lean against you are examples of inappropriate contact with a child. Don't do it and if you see a fellow staff member or another adult doing this, report this to the Camp Director immediately.

Cameras and Imaging Devices: Although most campers, leaders, and staff members use cameras and other imaging devices responsibly, it has become very easy to invade the privacy of individuals. It is inappropriate—and may be a violation of the law—to use any device capable of recording or transmitting visual images in restrooms, or other areas where privacy is expected by participants. If you observe any person in camp, adult or child, using recording devices to violate privacy, immediately confiscate the camera or device and turn it over to the Camp Director.

Social Media: Social media, such as text messages, e-mail, and community and personal websites and blogs are all popular forms of communication. However, camp staff members must be careful how they use these and other forms of communication. To work at our camps, your social media profiles must be PRIVATE so no campers can access them. Further, you must not share personal information with campers. You may not ‘friend’ or ‘follow’ a camper or encourage or allow a camper to ‘friend’ or ‘follow’ your social media accounts. You may not show campers your phone or share it with them. Keep your phone on your person at all times during camp.

Socializing: We all have private lives. You must keep your private life private. Do not discuss your private life with campers or ask them questions about their private lives. Do not ask or encourage campers to meet you or join you in activities outside of camp. Do not talk to any camper outside of camp hours unless that camper is with his or her parent.

Recognizing and Reporting Suspected Child Abuse

Definition of Child Abuse: The U.S. Congress has defined child abuse as, “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.”

Camp Staff Conduct:

As a camp staff member, you are a role model for young and impressionable campers. Act appropriately.

Sexual Harassment: Sexual harassment occurs when a member of the camp staff uses verbal or nonverbal communication to create a “hostile environment” by focusing on the sexuality of another person or the person’s gender, and the attention is unwanted or unwelcome and is severe or pervasive enough to affect a person’s work environment.

Examples of sexual harassment include telling sexually explicit stories or showing sexually oriented pictures that cause other staff members’ discomfort.

To address sexual harassment confront the wrongdoer and inform him or her that the behavior is not wanted and ask for the behavior to stop. If that does not end the problem, report specific objectionable behaviors to the Camp Director. Sexual Harassment is grounds for dismissal.

Bullying: Bullying always involves one person or group trying to intimidate a target (victim)—often repeatedly. It might involve a physical act: hitting, kicking, biting, or shoving. It might also involve verbal or emotional abuse: teasing, put-downs, name-calling, hazing, hurtful joking, or intimidation. Bullies also sometimes use racial or sexual slurs or make threatening gestures. Bullying usually takes place out of the sight of adults. As a result, children frequently don’t show how much bullying upsets them and often remain silent. The bully often threatens reprisals for “telling.” The victim also may think adults won’t or can’t help him, or he may feel ashamed for not defending himself.