

Safe Place & Ethical Policies

WHAT ARE SAFE PLACE & ETHICAL POLICIES?

In a world highly affected by sin, it is of utmost importance that the programs, especially youth ministries and children's ministries, are safe places. When we speak of a place being a *safe* place, we mean that it is safe both physically and emotionally. Each person that comes into our program has a story. Some of these stories we may be familiar with; others we might not. Regardless of the history of a person, they should find our programs to be places that are safe- places where they don't have to worry about being harmed physically or emotionally in spite of past experiences.

When one considers our safe place & ethical policies, they might initially respond by thinking they are too rigid or formal. Please recognize that these policies do not exist to make our programs unnecessarily inflexible- an effort to cater to our politically correct culture. Rather, safe place & ethical policies raise the bar high enough so that not only do they prevent program volunteers and staff from ever *actually* harming a person, but they also prevent anyone from ever *perceiving* that a staff member or volunteer hurt a person even if the staff or volunteer is innocent. In other words, safe place policies, by causing all of us to be extra careful in the way we act, protect those in our programs from harm as well as staff members and volunteers from false accusations and false perception. Ultimately, as we seek to serve individuals while protecting their safety and our testimony, we bring glory to Christ.

From Scripture, we understand that the enemy works to hurt the Church through both temptation and accusation. Safe place policies help us to follow the Scriptural command to not be unaware of the enemy's schemes. By carefully monitoring our behavior, we guard against the temptation to harm another as well as the propensity of the enemy to falsely accuse followers of Jesus Christ publically. These policies are meant to protect the movement God has breathed by His Spirit in our time.

The safe place & ethical policies in this manual come from many different sources. Some come from churches that also implement similar policies, such as Allegheny Alliance Church in Pittsburgh and Four Mile. Others come from the National Office of the Christian and Missionary Alliance as recommendations for safe place policies for churches. Still others come from organizations familiar with working with children and youth such as The Pittsburgh Project, The Urban Impact Foundation, and Family Guidance. All of the policies in the manual have been tested, tried, and well thought out.

WHO DO THESE POLICIES APPLY TO?

The safe place & ethical policies in this document apply to all those serving in official capacities at any official program of The Center.

An "official capacity" includes all staff and volunteer positions at The Center. A person is serving "officially" in a program or outreach for adults if the designated program authority has approved the person serving in a position of the program. A person is serving "officially" in a program for children or youth only if they have completed the necessary applications and background checks and have subsequently been approved by the designated authority in a position in the program.

A program is "official" if it has been approved by the directors of The Center.

Therefore, these policies apply to the following (but are not limited to the following) when they are serving in their official capacities:

- All staff members of The Center
- All youth program volunteers of The Center
- All interns of The Center
- All those in volunteer leadership positions of The Center
- All volunteers in adult ministry of The Center
- All those participating in outreach programs of The Center

It is suggested that the following safe place & ethical policies generally guide the behavior of the above individuals even when they are not serving in their official capacities since they provide a framework for interaction with others. However, the bulk of this document only truly applies to official programs.

If these policies do apply to you, you will be asked to read over them. You will then sign a statement saying that you have read and understand the policies. It may be possible that only certain sections of this document apply to you.

LIFESTYLE STANDARDS

It is assumed that individuals serving in volunteer or staff positions maintain a level of lifestyle behavior that reflects Jesus Christ. Generally, all volunteers and staff should display the fruit of the Spirit in their day to day lives.

Serving in an official capacity, whether as a volunteer or a staff person, means that you will be seen by others in the community as a Christian leader. Furthermore, even when you are not serving in your official capacity, people will see your behavior as reflective of the organization you serve with.

Therefore, it is generally expected that volunteers and staff will maintain the following general lifestyle standards:

- They will abstain from illegal drugs and use alcohol only in moderation.
- They will refrain from illegal activities
- They will abstain from sexual misconduct according to the orthodox Christian ethics
- They will not participate in abuse of child or vulnerable adult
- They will not participate in fraud, theft, or similar deceptive activities
- They will dress appropriately and modestly

If a volunteer or staff member does not abide by these lifestyle standards, it may result in disciplinary action by leadership of The Center and may result in termination of an individual's staff or volunteer position.

BEHAVIORAL STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

The following applies to staff and volunteer conduct during official programs. It is assumed that individuals serving in volunteer or staff positions maintain a level of lifestyle behavior that reflects Jesus Christ.

By accepting a staff or volunteer position at The Center, you have a responsibility to other staff, other volunteers, those you serve, and the larger organization you serve with to adhere to certain rules of behavior and conduct. The purpose of these rules is not to restrict your rights, but rather to be certain that you understand what conduct is expected and necessary.

Generally speaking, we expect each person to act in a mature, responsible, and loving way at all times. However, to avoid any possible confusion, some of the obvious unacceptable activities are noted below. Your avoidance of these activities will be to your benefit as well as to the benefit of The Center. If you have any questions concerning volunteer or staff rule, or any of the unacceptable activities listed, please see The Center directors for explanation.

Please understand that we do not anticipate any of our staff or volunteers will engage in the behaviors listed below. By the time you have become a staff member or volunteer, we have already familiarized ourselves with the quality of your character and your heart to serve. However, in an effort to be forthright, we need to let you know of certain actions that are highly detrimental to the mission and purpose of our ministries. Occurrences of any of the following violations, because of their seriousness, may result in immediate termination of a volunteer or staff position without warning:

- Willful violation of any rule; a deliberate action that is extreme in nature and is obviously detrimental to the mission The Center
- Negligence or any careless action which endangers the life or safety of another person
- Being intoxicated or under the influence of controlled substance drugs while serving in official capacity; use or possession or sale of controlled substances in any quantity
- Unauthorized possession of dangerous or illegal firearms, weapons or explosives on or in The Center property or while serving with The Center
- Engaging in criminal conduct or acts of violence, or making threats of violence towards anyone on The Center premises or when representing The Center
- Fighting or provoking a fight on or in The Center property or when representing The Center
- Threatening, intimidating, or coercing other volunteers or staff members on or off organization premises, at any time, for any purpose
- Willfully or with gross negligence causing the destruction or damage of The Center property, or the property of other volunteers or staff, or that of anyone else associated with The Center
- Theft of The Center property or the property of fellow staff members or volunteers
- Dishonesty; alteration of The Center records or documents
- Breach of confidentiality of personal information
- Malicious gossip and/or spreading rumors; engaging in behavior designed to create discord and lack of harmony; interfering with another volunteer or staff member working in ministry
- Immoral conduct or indecency
- Crude jokes, racial slurs or jokes, sexual innuendos, and obscene remarks
- Using organization to access inappropriate material or pornography

APPROPRIATE PHYSICAL TOUCH

Physical touch is an important element in the communication of love and care. When working with adults, staff and volunteers should abide by the following guidelines:

Appropriate touch for adults: The following guidelines are recommended as pure, genuine, and positive displays of God's love: sideways, one-armed hugs, putting your arm around the shoulder of another, patting a person's hand, back or shoulder.

Inappropriate touch for adults: The following types of touch must be avoided when working with adults who are not immediate family: kissing, full-frontal hug, tickling, touching in any area that would be covered by a bathing suit

Appropriate physical touch is an essential part of the nurturing process that should be characteristic of our ministry with students. Volunteers and staff need to be aware of and sensitive to the special and differing needs and preferences of each individual child. Physical contact should be age and developmentally appropriate.

Appropriate touch for students: The following guidelines are recommended as pure, genuine, and positive displays of God's love: sideways, one-armed hugs, putting your arm around the shoulders of a student, holding a child's hand while listening or speaking to him/her or when walking to an activity, putting your arm around the shoulder of a child when comforting or quieting is needed, patting a child's hand, head, shoulder, or back when encouraging

Inappropriate touch for students: The following types of touch must be avoided: kissing, full-frontal hugs, tickling, touching anywhere a bathing suit would cover, carrying an older child or sitting him/her on your lap

WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH

The following policies apply to all children's and youth programs at The Center. In the following policies, the words "children" and "youth" apply to all program participants beneath the age of 18.

General Policies to Maintain a Safe Environment

- Demonstrate respect for EVERYONE in the program: children, parents/guardians, staff, etc.
- Never tease the children or youth in ways that may be misunderstood
- Do not hit or strike a child or youth
- Do not wrestle or roughhouse excessively with children or youth
- Do not give children or youth money or presents. Please talk to your directors if you want to "treat" the kids
- Please be very careful of your words and actions around the students. Children learn what you live
- Always be alert when you are responsible for children. You should know the children's whereabouts at all times
- You should never wear a walkman or iPod at the time you are responsible for children
- Be especially careful with children when crossing the streets. One staff member or volunteer should act as the crossing guard, while another escorts the children across
- You should refrain from taking personal phone calls or texting while you are responsible for children or youth

- You must never be alone with a child or youth for any reason, especially in a room without others in plain view. The only exception to this rule is for those volunteers who are approved to provide individual counsel by the directors- and then they must not be alone in the building or behind closed doors.
- It is inappropriate for staff members or volunteers to contact children or youth via phone, email, texting, or any other medium without knowledge of a parent or guardian of the youth or child. It is especially inappropriate for this type of communication to take place between a volunteer or staff member and a child or youth of the opposite sex
- Staff members and volunteers must show discretion in the way they interact with children and youth of the opposite sex- especially when working with teenage youth. Staff members and volunteers should never appear to be flirting with or building a deep relationship with youth of the opposite sex. If it seems that a youth is attracted to a volunteer or staff member, the directors will instruct staff members and volunteers on how to still make the youth feel comfortable in the program while protecting the staff and volunteers. Typically, it would be critical that this type of student is never alone in person or alone in conversation with a staff member or volunteer. In this type of situation, a director may take extra measures to protect all involved. Staff and volunteers will be informed of these extra measures and expected to comply with them.
- Most parents/guardians of children and youth have signed an agreement saying that staff and volunteers are allowed to take photographs or videos of their children and that these materials may be used in official publications of the organization. However, some parents will choose not to give this permission or to limit this permission in some way. If this is the case, your directors will notify you, and you must follow the wishes of the parents/guardians. You should never take pictures, video of youth or children during a program without the knowledge of your directors. Pictures/videos of children or youth taken at program functions may only be displayed in official publications, including the official website of the organization. You may not post these pictures or videos on any other website, including your own personal social networking website (Facebook, MySpace, etc.).

Registration Forms for Programs

- No child or youth is permitted to participate in any children's or youth program unless they have a completed registration form. These forms will be kept on file, and copies will be made readily available at all program functions. It is the responsibility of program supervisors to inform other staff and volunteers of locations of these copies in case an emergency occurs.

During Children's and Youth Programs

- Children and youth should never be left unattended or unsupervised
- Always know the whereabouts of all the children under your supervision. You should always know how many children are under your care. Count, count, count all the time!
- Under absolutely no circumstances should unauthorized persons be present at the program site. If such a person will not remove themselves from site property, please promptly call 911 and move the children into a safe place away from danger.

Dismissal From Programs

- On the child's registration form, parents have indicated certain adults that may pick him/her up. On your master participant list, it should indicate who the authorized individuals for pick-up are. Your children should not be released to anyone except for the people listed on your master sheet. This means you will need to ask for ID from adults you do not know. Have that adult sign your check-out sheet for the child. If somebody besides one of those adults comes and wants to pick up a child, get the director to approve dismissal before the child leaves with the adult. Such an adult must sign a dismissal form, and the director who gave permission must initial next to the signature.
- A child is never allowed to dismiss himself/herself during program hours without permission from a parent or guardian.

Day Trips & Outings

- You will receive special information and guidelines that must be followed carefully for each individual trip or event. Please pay special attention.
- Under no circumstances is a child allowed to attend a trip or activity not on site without bringing a permission slip completed by a parent or guardian
- Please do everything possible to make trips and activities safe, fun, and enjoyable for all involved. Be on special alert for the safety of the children. Do not allow persons in public places who are not staff or volunteers to give children or youth in your care money, food, presents. Do not allow such individuals to photograph or video tape children or youth in your care. Do not allow such individuals to engage in conversations with children or youth in your care without your direct participation in the conversation.

Restroom Use

- Two volunteers or staff members should escort a group of children to the rest room. If that is not possible, do the best you can.
- Volunteers and staff should never assist children in the rest room unless accompanied by another volunteer or staff. For instance, you should never help a small child zip up their pants unless another volunteer or staff member is with you.
- If just one child needs to go to the rest room, volunteers and staff must be very careful to know where the child is and how long he/she is taking. If the child seems to be taking longer than necessary, the volunteer or staff member can call the child's name and encourage him/her to hurry up
- Volunteers and staff should never be alone with a child in an unsupervised rest room and never go into a cubicle with a child and shut the door
- As much as possible, staff and volunteers should encourage small children to tend to themselves while in the restroom. Children should be encouraged to zip up their pants, get dressed, use toilet, etc. on their own. Only in rare circumstances should a staff member or volunteer help with any of these things, and a second staff or volunteer must be present. Furthermore, an incident report will be required for such an instance. Such help from volunteers and staff, when absolutely necessary, should only be given to very small children. It is always inappropriate to assist older children or youth with such activities.

Driving & Transportation Policies

- If you operate your own vehicle in performing your program responsibilities, you must maintain a valid driver's license and insurance. You will be considered completely responsible for any accidents, fines, or traffic violations incurred.
- Whenever you are driving a vehicle during program hours, you should always make every attempt to drive as safe as possible, obeying all applicable traffic laws including the speed limit
- You should only ever provide transportation for a child or youth with the knowledge of the directors. Children and youth must have special permission from the parents/guardians for staff or volunteers to provide them with transportation
- If you are transporting children and youth, you should do so is EVERY child has a seat belt. Small children should not be permitted to sit in the front seat of a vehicle. You and a child should never be alone in a vehicle
- You should never allow a youth to operate your vehicle if they do not have a valid learner's permit or license
- Even if a youth has a valid learner's permit or license, you should typically not allow them to operate your vehicle or use any vehicle to transport other program participants during program hours. In rare, program-related instances, a youth may have special permission to operate a vehicle with a staff member/volunteer/or other program participants. However, this is only true if it has been approved by a parent or guardian of the youth and the directors. This special permission will need to be documented and kept on file.
- Please be conscious that even the way you drive in front of the kids and the community reflects your relationship with Jesus Christ

Disciplining Children and Youth in Love

Occasionally, a child or youth will display behavior that needs corrected. As a staff member or volunteer, it is important that you maintain the good behavior of program participants to ensure the safety of all those participating in the program. You should discipline with gentle firmness while showing love to all program participants.

Some important overarching guidelines:

- Always show the child RESPECT
- Always value the child's frustrations, concerns and sense of justice
- Always discipline out of what is best for the child- never because you are annoyed or frustrated
- Always seek forgiveness and restoration between children
- Always extend forgiveness to the child
- PRAY

Preventing behavior problems:

"An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." How much better for children when things go well and episodes of misbehavior and punishment are avoided! Consider the following ideas to make The Center a "good place to be":

- **Develop an atmosphere of love and acceptance.** Each child who enters your area needs to feel loved and wanted. Children long to feel that someone cares about them and that they are people of value and worth. Sitting down and listening attentively to what a child has to tell, or kindly but firmly redirecting a child's out-of-bounds activity, are but two of many ways to demonstrate your love and care in ways a child can understand.

- **Provide meaningful activities.** Children need to be actively involved in interesting things to do—not just required to listen or observe for the entire session. Children often misbehave simply because they are bored when there is nothing new or challenging to engage their minds.
- **Set realistic standards that can be enforced.** Be realistic and consistent in what you expect children to do or how you expect them to act. For example, recognize that a child's ability to sit still is limited. So provide physical activities and changes of pace in the schedule that allow children to release pent-up energies. Children also need the security of knowing you are consistent in the way you maintain a standard of behavior.
- **Recognize accomplishments and good behavior.** “I really appreciate how you...” is just one way to affirm your students. Encourage all children, not only those who are often behavior problems, but also those who have already achieved a high degree of self-control. When children know they will receive attention for positive behavior, their display of disruptive behavior often diminishes.

Correcting Behavior Problems:

There are occasions when corrective measures are necessary. In dealing with a behavior challenge, we can do one of two things—ignore it or respond to it. There are times when ignoring the problem will be the best solution. Many children would prefer our negative attention to no attention. Often we are guilty of making an issue of matters that would be better left alone. When we cannot ignore misbehavior, here are five helpful steps to follow in correcting the situation:

- **Deal with the problem individually.** Avoid embarrassing the child in front of friends. When possible, talk to him or her alone.
- **Have the child tell you what he or she did.** Don't ask why the child behaved in that way. A “why” question merely invites the child to attempt to justify the offense. Perhaps you will want to tell what you saw and then ask, “Is that what happened?” Or, if you did not see the offense, you may try asking the child to describe to you what happened. In this type of scenario, you will probably need to talk to a couple of different people in order to put the entire picture together. Deal only with the current situation. Do not bring up past offenses.
- **Be sure the child understands why the behavior is not acceptable.** Either ask the child to tell why the action is a problem, or offer a clear explanation of the reason you intervened. Phrase your explanation so the child can recognize the problem as his or her own, and that it results in a loss to the individual and the group.
- **Redirect the child in positive behavior.** Focus on good behavior. For example, ask, “Can you think of a better thing you could have done?” or “What can you do about it now?” Then help the child implement positive changes. As the child makes these changes, give honest and sincere encouragement to reward acceptable behavior.
- **Let the child experience the consequences of behavior.** Attempt to tie a child's actions to natural consequences. When materials are misused in the classroom, we can remove the materials from the child or we can remove the child from the materials. Let the child choose whether to correct the behavior voluntarily or to lose a privilege/receive some other response appropriate to the offense.

Your positive, loving approach to the needs of students is one of the most important factors in making your program a good place to be. Guiding a child to learn self-control and to demonstrate obedience to parents and teachers is a first step to the ultimate goal of helping the child learn obedience to the Lord. Pray for understanding, wisdom, and patience. Be a loving, caring person, no matter what the behavior may be. In this way you will be instrumental in training children in the way they should go, so that when they are old they will not turn from it (Proverbs 22:6).

Seven Strategies you can use for success in ministry to minors:

- **Respect & expect.** This means that you accept and value each child. You have positive expectations for each child.
- **Meet kid's needs.** Be sure they know the rules and consequences
- **Walk your talk.** Mean what you say and say what you mean
- **Provide choices whenever possible**
- **Give each child focused attention.** Use eye contact and appropriate physical contact
- **Give kids their wings.** Our role as staff and volunteers change from complete authority figure to guide to mentor to brother or sister in Christ
- **Take joy.** Take joy when you know that each child in your program felt your love and approval and when you've met the emotional needs of a hurting child. Take joy, knowing that you've helped the children in your ministry learn to know, love, and follow Jesus

Common Sense Discipline Do's

- Do review the rules frequently
- Do use a time-out chair if necessary
- Do create a loving atmosphere where your kids feel accepted
- Do memorize the names of your students and use them frequently
- Do remember that you're disciplining children through discipline
- Do train children to be quiet when someone else has permission to speak
- Do rove the room
- Do confiscate little "treasures" that become a distraction
- Do use silent clues and signals to help active kids stay on task
- Do use attention-getting signals
- Do give children ample warning when it's time to move on to the next activity
- Do find something to praise in each child
- Do be realistic in your expectations of your students and yourself
- Do work at finding special connections with challenging students
- Do vary your teaching and activities to meet the needs of each kind of learner (visual, auditory, tactual, kinesthetic)
- Do pick your battles wisely
- Do immediately deal with teasing & bullying
- Do communicate behavioral rules and expectations to parents
- Do find ways to creatively discipline and apply consequences
- Do teach to the children's strengths so they feel success, the greatest motivator of all
- Do rely on God through prayer

Common Sense Discipline Don'ts

- Don't use threats you can't or won't carry out
- Don't ever yell or scream at children
- Don't be late to your ministry responsibilities
- Don't come unprepared
- Don't interrupt activities for unrelated problems that can wait
- Don't handle severe problems alone- get your ministry leader
- Don't give too many directions at once
- Don't overwhelm kids with too many choices
- Don't ask "why" the child did it when a child acts out. Ask what lead up to the actions.
- Don't shame or blame a child
- Don't label kids

MINISTRY WITH ADULTS

The following guidelines are meant to keep relationships with adults healthy.

Showing discretion with the Opposite Sex

- Remember to abide by all appropriate touch policies
- If an individual is married, they should show discretion and wisdom in the way they interact with persons of the opposite sex other than their spouse. Be sure to serve others in ways that are healthy, comfortable, and wholesome for all involved.
- Individuals who are single should interact with each other in appropriate ways that are biblically healthy
- If an individual is married, they should avoid being alone in a vehicle or alone in a closed room with a person of the opposite sex. If they are alone in a room with a person of the opposite sex, it should be a room that has the door open or a window in the door so others can easily see inside.

Counseling

From time to time, opportunity exists to minister to people through counseling. These times present great opportunity for Christian ministry, healing, and growth in Christ. To make these times as healthy as possible, please abide by the following:

- It is best if counseling is done with a person of the same gender.
- Counseling often requires one-to-one interaction. However, whenever possible, this should take place in a building where others are present and in a room that others have the ability to see into.

Working with Vulnerable Adults

It is especially critical that caution be taken when ministering to vulnerable adults. As much as possible, the safe place policies that apply to children and youth in this document should also apply to vulnerable adults. Special caution and care must be shown to these individuals. As much as possible, staff members and volunteers should avoid being alone with these individuals. A vulnerable adult includes the following:

- An individual who is unconscious or unable to respond
- An individual who is developmentally delayed either mentally or emotionally
- An individual who has recently undergone significant trauma or abuse

Working with Parents/Guardians

We must realize that our job is to serve families, as well as individuals. Therefore, it is imperative that we strive to form meaningful relationships with parents/guardians of the children whom we will serve. The following guidelines should be kept in mind when serving parents:

- When you see a parent or guardian, greet them and try to get to know them. Take every opportunity to form relationships with the families of the children we serve
- Under ABSOLUTELY NO CIRCUMSTANCES should a volunteer or staff member be disrespectful to a parent. Even if a parent has mistreated you, you should respond with the love of Christ

and never retaliate. If you have been mistreated by a parent, please notify the directors so the issue can be handled correctly

- Never speak negatively about a parent in front of a child or group of children
- Seek opportunities to gain the trust of parents. Remember, they are trusting us a great deal to allow us to serve their children

Child Abuse Reporting Policies

Under the Child Protective Services Act of 1975, the following people must report child abuse:

“Any persons who, in the course of their employment, occupation, or practice of their profession come into contact with children shall report or cause a report to be made...when they have reasons to believe, on the basis of their medical, professional or other training and experience, that a child coming before them in their profession of official capacity is an abused child.”

The Child Protective Services Act provides legal protection for those involved in the reporting process:

Immunity: “Any person, hospital, institution, school, facility, or agency participating in good faith in the making of a report or testifying in any proceeding arising out of any instance of suspected child abuse, shall have immunity from any liability, civil or criminal. The good faith of any person required to report cases of child abuse pursuant to Section 2/3/170 shall be presumed.”

Procedure:

1. Any volunteer or staff member working with The Center should **immediately** report any suspected child abuse to one of the designated authorities (Cory or Jen Miller)
2. Appropriate staff and volunteers will meet to discuss the issue in hand and gather all obtained information
3. One of the designated authorities will immediately report the suspected child abuse to the Department of Public Welfare's toll-free Child Line at **1-800-932-0313** (oral reports must be followed by written reports within 48 hours according to legislation)
4. Appropriate forms must be filled out and signed by all appropriate staff and volunteers.

Indications of Child Abuse:

Physical Abuse Indicators:

- **unexplained bruised and welts:** on face, lips, mouth, torso, back, thighs, buttocks; in various stages of healing, clustered, forming regular patterns; reflecting shape of article used to inflict (electric cord, belt buckle), on several different surfaces, regularly appear after absence, weekend of vacation
- **unexplained burns:** cigar, cigarette burns, especially on soles, palms, back or buttocks; immersion burns (sock-like, glove-like doughnut shaped on buttocks or genitalia), patterned like electric burner, iron, etc; rope burns on arms, legs, neck, torso
- **unexplained fractures:** to skull, nose, facial structure, in various stages of healing, multiple or spiral fractures
- **unexplained lacerations or abrasions:** to mouth, lips, gums, eyes, to external genitalia
- **behavioral indicators:** wary of adult contact, apprehension when other children cry, behavior extremes from aggressiveness to withdrawal, frightened of parents, afraid to go home, reports injury by parents, bullying, scapegoating

Physical Neglect Indicators:

- **Physical indicators:** consistent hunger, poor hygiene, inappropriate dress; consistent lack of supervision, especially in dangerous activities or for long periods; constant fatigue or listlessness; unattended physical problems or medical needs; abandonment
- **Behavior Indicators:** begging, stealing food; extended stays at school or ministry; constantly falling asleep in class or program; alcohol or drug abuse; delinquency

Sexual Abuse Indicators:

- **Physical Indicators:** difficulty in walking or sitting; torn, stained or bloody underclothing; pain or itching in genital area; bruises or bleeding in external genitalia, vaginal or anal areas; venereal disease especially in pre-teens; early, unexplained pregnancy; suspicious stains; bladder or urinary tract infections; painful bowel movements or retention of feces
- **Behavioral Indicators:** unwilling to change clothing for participation; withdrawal, fantasy or infantile behavior; bizarre, sophisticated or unusual sexual behavior or knowledge; poor peer relationships; delinquent or run-away; extra layers of clothing, lack of interest in normal physical activities; emotional distress; reports sexual abuse by caretaker; poor hygiene

Forms of Emotional abuse:

- Denying emotional responsiveness, spurning or rejecting, isolating, terrorizing, exploiting/corrupting

Incident Reports

Volunteers and staff will be required to fill out incident reports for the following occurrences on the same day the incident occurred:

- Any complaint by a parent/ guardian or member of the community
- Any injury of a staff member, volunteer or child
- Any serious conflict involving staff, volunteer, or member of the community
- Any incident that should have a filed record for future reference deemed necessary by your ministry leader

Incident reports should be brief and contain the following elements:

- Person writing the report
- Date of incident
- Date of report being written
- A detailed description of incident including names of persons involved and place of incident
- Signature of person writing report plus any other witnesses

Incident reports will be kept on file in a secure location.

Fire Safety for Children & Youth Programs

- Attendance: it will be necessary to account for all persons in the event of a fire. Therefore, volunteers and staff should be aware of which children are present each day and know the location of children at all times.
- Safety: it is imperative that all volunteers remain calm in a fire emergency. The first concern of volunteers should be for themselves. Concern for individuals should take precedence over control of the fire. Calmly notify all other staff and volunteers and then proceed in an orderly fashion to the nearest exit.
- Designated meeting area: keep your students together in the designated meeting area and make sure you have accounted for each person who was present that day. The directors will come around and make sure each child is accounted for. No parent will be allowed to remove their child from the area until attendance has been taken and noted

Failure to Comply/ Special Circumstances

It is expected that all staff members and volunteers of The Center will strictly adhere to the policies set forth in this manual. Failure to do so has the potential to result in termination of your staff or volunteer position with The Center.

If failure to comply on your part is suspected or identified, The Center will follow appropriate discipline guidelines.

This document has attempted to be comprehensive in nature so as to cover and apply to a variety of situations. However, it is unlikely that this document is able to foresee every possible situation and circumstance that may arise in program operation.

Please know that the program directors have the right to instruct you in further precautionary measures or give you special instructions that apply to special circumstances. Those special instructions or measures must be strictly adhered to even if they are not listed in this document. Your director is equipped to protect you and all program participants, and failure to comply with their special instructions in these instances may result in the same consequences.



Understanding of Policy

It is the responsibility of the directors of The Center to inform you if the document entitled "Safe Place & Ethical Policies" applies to you in your staff or volunteer position. If it has been determined that this document does, in fact, apply to you, then you will be required to sign this form agreeing to the following statement (underlined below). You will not be able to serve in your position until this form has been signed and returned to Jen or Cory Miller:

It has been explained to me by a director of The Center that the document "Safe Place & Ethical Policies" applies to me in my staff or volunteer position. I have read the document in its entirety, and if I had questions regarding certain policies in this document I have directed them to a director of The Center. I have received an adequate answer for any questions I may have had. I fully understand the policies in the document.

I understand that these policies apply to me in their entirety and without exception. I also understand that failure to comply with these policies may result in disciplinary action from The Center leading up to and/or including termination of my position. I agree to adhere and abide by these policies in their entirety and without exception. If I cannot abide by any of The Center's safe place & ethical policies, I will immediately notify a director of The Center and resign my position.

If it becomes unclear to me how a policy applies to a certain situation, I will ask a director of The Center and abide by their final decision regarding the application of policy to certain situations. I also understand that, due to special circumstances, a director of The Center may ask me to abide by additional safe place & ethical policies to protect me, other staff and volunteers, and program participants. If this takes place, I will abide by these additional policies. I understand that it is my responsibility to read, know, understand, and abide by all The Center's safe place & ethical policies.

I have read the foregoing statement and my signature signifies my agreement with it. I sign this statement of my own free and voluntary act.

Signature

Date

Printed Name

Position with The Center