|  |
| --- |
| INSERT COMPANY LOGO |

## Abuse Prevention Policy Template –

## DISCLAIMER: THIS IS A TEMPLATE ONLY AND NOT TO BE USED “AS IS”. ALL ORGANIZATIONS SHOULD CUSTOMIZE THEIR ABUSE PREVENTION POLICY TO THEIR ORGANIZATION’S EXPOSURES AND HAVE THEIR LEGAL COUNCIL REVIEW. ADDITIONALLY, THIS TEMPLATE IS NOT INCLUSIVE OF OTHER POLICIES SUCH AS A SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY OR CRISIS RESPONSE POLICY THAT POLICYHOLDERS SHOULD ALSO HAVE.

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines and procedures to prevent and address abuse within **[Organization Name].** This policy aims to protect all participants, employees, and stakeholders from any form of abuse, including physical, emotional, and sexual abuse.

Our organization has a zero-tolerance policy towards abuse by any staff, volunteers, or participants (including family and family friends) occurring both on our premises and off. This means that any form of inappropriate behavior will not be tolerated, and appropriate actions will be taken against offenders.

Furthermore, we prohibit interactions outside of regularly scheduled program activities. This includes, but is not limited to the following activities:

* Transporting participants to and from other locations
* Engaging with participants on non-approved platforms such as social media, text messaging, or through video game platforms
* Childcare or babysitting
* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Staff & Volunteer Screening**

Signed applications and background check consent will be included in new hire paperwork. Applicants may be rejected or terminated based on unacceptable background check results.

All employed staff and volunteers will be subject to county and state level background checks and a name search on the national sex offender registry. Additionally, state and national level fingerprint checks will be conducted for staff and volunteers with high-level access to participants.

Parent/Guardian consent will be collected for background checks on staff and volunteers under the age of 18.

Personal interviews will be conducted with all potential candidates.

Personal references and employment history will be verified for all potential candidates.

Background Check Frequency:

* All staff and volunteers prior to hire
* Every **[ 1 ]** year(s)
* National sex offender registry checks will be run every **[ 1 ]** day(s)

**Training and Education**

All employees and volunteers will receive **[annual]** training on abuse prevention, identification, and reporting procedures. Additional training may be required as needed.

Training will include recognizing signs of abuse, understanding the impact of abuse, and knowing how to respond appropriately.

Participants and parents will also receive educational materials on codes of conduct and reporting abuse.

**Definition of Appropriate and Inappropriate Behavior**

All staff, volunteers, and participants are expected to exhibit appropriate behavior at all times while participating in the programs and services of [Name of Organization]. The following guidelines are designed to provide safe and enjoyable activities for all participants.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Appropriate Behavior** | **Inappropriate Behavior** |
| * Pats on the shoulder or back
* Handshakes and High-fives
* Verbal praise or positive reinforcement
* Touching hands, shoulders and arms
* Side hugs
* Holding hands (when escorting children across the street)
* Sending and replying to emails and text messages from youth ONLY when copying in a supervisor and/or the youth’s guardian.
* Communicating through organizational group pages
* Having conversations with participants in a public place where you are in full view of others or with office door open and other staff aware of any meeting with a participant
* Remain visible while waiting outside of the restroom area when escorting participants away from the program
* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
 | * Wrestling
* Tickling
* Piggyback
* Lap sitting
* Full frontal hugs
* Kisses
* Showing affection in isolated areas
* Any type of massage
* Touching bottom, chest, or genital areas
* Any unwanted form of affection
* Being alone with a participant in secluded areas including vehicles
* 1-on-1 interactions with participants outside of program parameters
* Compliments related to physique or body
* Name-calling
* Cursing
* Shaming or belittling
* Inappropriate jokes
* Derogatory remarks
* Private messages with youth
* Posting pictures of participants on social media
* Posting inappropriate comments on pictures
* “Friending” participants on social networking sites
* Physical, verbal, or emotional bullying
* Cyberbullying
* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
 |

**Monitoring and Supervision**

**[Name of Organization]** Will monitor and supervise all programs and premises. Trained staff will monitor areas throughout our facilities by way of periodic tours of the premises including off-premises activities. All [office/classroom] doors are equipped with windows. [Security Cameras] are placed throughout the facility in public areas and on [buses]. Security camera footage will be stored and retained for a period of [90] days.

Three-person rule: At no time should an employee or volunteer be alone with one child. Be sure there are always two staff in the program. In situations where a child needs to be escorted away from the main programming, a three-person rule should be observed, whereby two adults accompany one child. Adults should remain visible while waiting outside of the restroom area when escorting participants away from the program

In medical emergency situations, staff and volunteers should document and immediately report incidents to supervisors and the child’s guardian.

Open-door policy: Participants should feel safe to report concerns or seek help when needed. When meeting with participants in an office or classroom setting, the door to the office should remain open during sessions, another staff member should be aware that a meeting session is taking place. Parents/guardians should be made aware of meetings with participants when appropriate.

**Reporting Suspected Abuse**

All employees, volunteers, and participants are required to report any suspected abuse to human resources and/or a designated abuse prevention officer or anonymous reporting system immediately.

[Name of Organization] encourages participants to report any form of suspected abuse or bullying through the following designated method:

* Anonymous reporting application that allows participants to safely report to a designated member of our staff without fear of retribution.

The state of **[STATE NAME]** considers staff that meet these requirements Mandatory Reporters:

* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Mandatory Reporters are required to report an allegation or suspicions of abuse or mistreatment of a youth to authorities. If abuse or mistreatment is suspected or known and not reported, those involved could be legally reprimanded. **[Other specific state requirements for Mandatory Reporters include].**

**Investigation and Cooperation**

All reports of suspicious or inappropriate behavior will be taken seriously. In accordance with local, state and federal laws, **[Organization Name Here]** shall cooperate with all law enforcement officials, without delay, to the fullest extent when responding to any allegation of inappropriate behavior occurring both on our premises and off. Internal investigations will be conducted by trained personnel to ensure fairness and confidentiality.

**Disciplinary Actions**

Any employee and volunteer found to have committed abuse will face disciplinary actions, up to and including termination of employment or position.

Participants who engage in abusive behavior will be subject to appropriate consequences, which may include removal from the program.

**Record Retention**

**[Name of Organization]** Will retain screening information, background checks, signed copies of policies, incidents, and disciplinary actions indefinitely.

**Definitions**

* Abuse: Any action or inaction that causes physical, emotional or sexual harm, or neglect. This includes intentional infliction of injury, inappropriate sexual contact, mental or emotional injury leading to developmental or psychological impairment, and failure to provide for basic needs or protect from harm.
* Bullying: Aggressive behavior that is intentional. Bullying can take various forms including:
	+ Physical force against another, including but not limited to hitting, pushing, kicking, pinching or restraining.
	+ Verbally assaulting another, including but not limited to gossiping, cursing, belittling, and name calling
	+ Manipulation, threats, intimidation, and exclusion
	+ Cyberbullying through aggressive actions taken over technical methods like email, direct message, text, and social media comments

Regular updates and reminders about the policy will be provided to ensure ongoing awareness and compliance.

We are 100% committed to the safety of everyone as a core value in support of our organizational mission and purpose. We recognize that we cannot fulfill our organizational mission without maintaining a safe environment and culture. Because of this, we will hold this core value as top priority in all operational areas/divisions of the organization.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the CEO/President

**Agreement to Follow the Abuse Prevention Policy**

[Name of organization] has set forth acceptable and unacceptable standards and rules in [Name of Abuse Prevention Policy and Procedures]. As an employee, volunteer, or participant, I agree to always consent to these standards and rules. Failure to cooperate fully may be grounds for termination.

Employee, Volunteer, or Participant Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Employee, Volunteer, or Participant Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Agreement to Cooperate with Investigations**

[Name of organization] cooperates fully with authorities to investigate all cases of alleged abuse. As an employee or volunteer, I agree to fully cooperate in any external investigation by outside authorities and/or internal investigation conducted by the organization or person(s) given investigative authority by the organization. Failure to cooperate fully may be grounds for termination.

Employee or Volunteer Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Employee or Volunteer Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_