



Dear Camp Staff Member or Volunteer,

Welcome to Northwest District Youth Camp!

At Northwest District Youth Camp (NWDYC,) we take our responsibility to care for campers very seriously. These guidelines are intended to facilitate an excellent camp experience for all those who spend time at NWDYC.

The pages of this handbook provide a general overview of procedures and guidelines for NWDYC staff members and volunteers designed to prevent sexual abuse, physical abuse and neglect of campers. Our policies are intended to create a safe environment for campers, protecting campers, you, and the mission of NWDYC. The following procedures have been adopted and will be strictly enforced.

After you have carefully read this policy manual, please sign and return the agreement form located on the last page.

Sincerely,

NWDYC Administration

Camper Safety Policy

ABUSE TOLERANCE

NWDYC has a **zero tolerance for abuse**. It is the responsibility of every NWDYC staff member and volunteer to act in the best interest of campers in every program.

In the event any staff member or volunteer observes any inappropriate behaviors (i.e. policy violations, neglectful supervision, poor role-modeling, etc.) or suspected abuse (physical, emotional, or sexual) it is the personal responsibility of each such staff member or volunteer to immediately report their observations to an immediate supervisor, NWDYC Administration, or a member of the NWDYC Safety Committee.

REPORTING SUSPICIOUS OR INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIORS

NWDYC is committed to providing a safe, secure environment for children. To this end, any report of inappropriate behaviors or suspicions of abuse will be taken seriously and will be reported, in accordance with this policy and state law, to the NWDYC Safety Committee and the Police Department, Child Protective Services, or other appropriate agency.

NWDYC intends to create and foster a culture of communication, reporting safety concerns or policy violations. Because sexual abusers ‘groom’ children for abuse, it is possible a staff member or volunteer may witness behavior intended to ‘groom’ a child for sexual abuse. Staff members and volunteers are asked to report possible ‘grooming’ behaviors, any policy violations, or any suspicious behaviors to a supervisor or a member of the NWDYC Safety Committee.

ENFORCEMENT OF POLICIES

NWDYC staff members and volunteers who supervise other employees or volunteers are charged with the diligent enforcement of all NWDYC policies. Violations of these policies are grounds for immediate dismissal, disciplinary action, or reassignment for both volunteers and staff members.

Reporting Abuse or Suspicions of Abuse

REPORTING VIOLATION OF POLICY

In order to maintain a safe environment for campers, NWDYC staff members and volunteers must be aware of each individual’s responsibility to report any questionable circumstance, observation, act, omission, or situation that is a violation of these policies. All questions or concerns related to inappropriate, suspicious, or suspected grooming behavior should be directed to an immediate supervisor, a NWDYC Camp Administrator, or a member of the NWDYC Safety Committee.

CONSEQUENCES OF PROHIBITED OR HARMFUL ACT

Any person accused of committing a prohibited act, or any act considered to be harmful to a child, will be immediately suspended from participation at NWDYC. This suspension will continue during any investigation by law enforcement or Child Protective agencies.

Any person found to have committed a prohibited act will be removed from future participation as a staff member or volunteer in all activities and programming that involve campers at NWDYC. If the person is a staff member or employee, such conduct may also result in termination of employment from NWDYC.

Failure to report a prohibited act to one of the individuals identified above is a violation of this policy and grounds for termination of a staff member or dismissal of a volunteer.

REPORTING SUSPICIONS OF ABUSE TO LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

Staff members and volunteers at NWDYC are required to report suspicions of child abuse or neglect, or any inappropriate behavior of a colleague or co-worker, to the immediate supervisor of the area, a NWDYC Camp Administrator, or a member of the NWDYC Safety Committee.

State law requires that any person having cause to believe that a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been or may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect must make a report to an appropriate law enforcement agency.

Staff members and volunteers are required to verbally report an incident to a supervisory staff member as soon as possible after the incident. After receiving a report from a staff member or volunteer, the supervisor/administrator will speak with the person or volunteer to whom the camper spoke in order to get detailed information about the entire conversation. A NWDYC Camp Administrator will be notified as soon as reasonably possible.

If appropriate, a NWDYC Administrator or a Youth Pastor will inform the appropriate authorities.

Camp Culture – Staff Members & Volunteers

MODESTY

Your choice of clothing makes a statement. While serving at NWDYC, we ask that our female staff members and volunteers help us create an atmosphere of modesty by wearing one-piece bathing suits, covering swimwear with t-shirts and shorts while not participating in water activities. We ask our male staff members to show similar respect to women by wearing t-shirts when not participating in water activities, and to avoid Speedo-style swimsuits. We also ask that both genders avoid shorts that are too short, shirts that are too revealing. Youth pastors and camp staff may ask you to change if we feel your clothes are not modest enough.

DATING

Public displays of affection between dating couples are not permitted under any circumstances. We expect professional behavior at all times.

MODELING BEHAVIOR

What we do in moderation, campers will do in excess. Campers will look to you to set the boundaries they will test. This is a dilemma with which every staff member or volunteer will wrestle. The way you dress, what you say, how you respond to the smallest circumstance – our campers are watching. If you communicate that it is OK to move an inch, they *will* go a

mile. Please read and understand the guidelines below regarding appropriate “touch and talk”, and follow them closely.

The following rules are to be followed at all times:

- **No Verbal Abuse**
- **Never touch a child in an aggressive manner**
- **Absolutely No Profanity**
- **No Displays of Public Nudity at Any Time**
- **No Mooning, De-Pantsing, Wedgies or Swirlies**
- **No Descriptive Stories Regarding Drinking or Sexual Behaviors**
- **No Urinating outside of restroom facilities at Any Time By Anyone**
- **No Sleeping or Napping With Campers for Any Reason**
- **Never Compare a Camper’s Body With Another Camper or Staff/Volunteer**
- **No Racial Put-Downs or Racial Jokes**
- **No Tickling Campers**
- **No Wrestling**

APPROPRIATE PHYSICAL TOUCH

All staff members and volunteers should exercise good judgment when expressing one’s self through physical touch. Appropriate physical touch may include the following:

1. An arm around the shoulder (side hug)
2. Short, congratulatory or greeting hugs
3. A few NEVERS:
 - a. We don’t touch kids in anger or disgust.
 - b. We don’t touch kids in any sexually connotative manner.
 - c. No staff member will ever (day or night) be on or in a child’s bed.
 - d. Never touch a child’s private parts (to remove ticks or for any other reason).
 - e. Never tickle a child; this can be misconstrued as sexual contact.
 - f. Never ignore a camper’s request not to be touched.
 - g. Never express or require physical affection or touching in any form from a child who shows or expresses discomfort with physical touch.

If a question ever arises, consult a Program Supervisor or the NWDYC Administrator.

Any infraction of the above policy involving even the slightest form of sexual connotation will result in immediate dismissal from the camp with no chance of rehire.

Camp Culture – Campers

BULLYING

Verbal, physical or emotional bullying will not be tolerated.

The majority of camper-on-camper verbal, physical and emotional harassment occurs at night when the lights are out and you are in bed. In order to avoid this we ask that you maintain a presence in the camper cabin area at all times until everyone is asleep.

It should be made clear from the first minute of every session that verbal, physical or emotional harassment of any kind will not be tolerated. At the first sign of verbal or other attacks, act decisively. There is no “harmless putdown” when dealing with kids.

- a. First instance comes with a warning to the camper and a general reminder to the group that this kind of interaction is inappropriate. Make sure not to embarrass or chastise them.
- b. Second instance requires that you pull the offending camper(s) from the group and discuss the inappropriateness of bullying behavior. Set some clear parameters and behavioral goals for them to achieve. However, let them know that the next step is a visit to the NWDYC Camp Administrator. Notify the NWDYC Camp Administrator of ANY signs of bullying or verbal abuse.
- c. Make sure that any camper who is the brunt of bullying attacks is handling the situation well. Have a private dialogue with him or her to assess the situation. **DO NOT SINGLE CAMPERS OUT IN FRONT OF THE GROUP!** Be discreet and protect their dignity.
- d. Third instance results in a trip to the NWDYC Camp Administrator and a phone call to the parents.

RESPECTING CAMPER PRIVACY

Make sure campers understand the importance of respecting each other’s privacy. A camper’s bed is his/her home and the camper’s cabin trunk/suitcase is off-limits to anyone but the camper. In addition, shower time is a very private time. During showers, only those who are taking showers should be in the bathroom or shower stall.

DISCIPLINE

It is the policy of NWDYC that staff members and volunteers are prohibited from using physical discipline in any way for behavior management of campers. **No form of physical discipline is acceptable.** This prohibition includes spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, or any other physical force as retaliation or correction for inappropriate behaviors by campers. If a camper is unruly or fails to comply with verbal warnings or instructions from a staff member/volunteer, the NWDYC Camp Administrator will contact the camper’s parent. If the behavior persists, the camper’s parent will be contacted to pick up the camper. In the event of a fight or physical altercation, a staff member or volunteer will verbally redirect campers involved, trying to avoid physical intervention. Uncontrollable or unusual behavior should be reported immediately to a Program Supervisor and/or the NWDYC Camp Administrator.

VERBAL INTERACTIONS

Verbal interactions between staff members or volunteers and campers should be positive and uplifting. NWDYC employees and volunteers should strive to keep verbal interactions encouraging and constructive.

To this end, staff members and volunteers should not talk to campers in a way that is or could be construed by any reasonable observer as harsh, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating. In addition, employees and volunteers are expected to refrain from swearing or using profanity in the presence of campers.

Supervision of Campers

STAFF MEMBER/VOLUNTEER TO CAMPER RATIO

NWDYC is committed to providing adequate employer member and volunteer supervision in all camp activities and programs. Accordingly, the following ratios will be observed for camp activities and programs:

For groups up to and including 10 campers, there will be at least 1 staff member or volunteer supervising. For groups ranging 11 to 29 campers, there will be at least 2 staff members or volunteers supervising. For groups larger than 30 campers, there will be at least 3 staff members or volunteers supervising. This ratio may change depending on the activity (i.e. swimming, archery etc.).

If a worker is out of ratio it is his or her responsibility to immediately notify the responsible Program Supervisor. The Program Supervisor or the NWDYC Administrator will make diligent efforts to immediately bring staff member/volunteer to camper ratios into compliance with this policy.

OFF-LIMIT AREAS

All NWDYC staff members and volunteers will be responsible for ensuring that their campers are not in areas deemed off-limits.

MONITORING HIGH-RISK AREAS

The purpose of this section is to become aware of *high risk* areas at camp, and methods to effectively lower that risk. Any areas on camp property where campers are not directly supervised is a high risk area. In these areas, campers can more easily bully and abuse (verbally, physically, and even sexually) each other. It is the responsibility of all staff members and volunteers to be aware of the potential for bullying and abuse, and to monitor camp locations where campers can be alone.

For activities involving large numbers of campers, staff members and volunteers will be assigned to monitor high risk areas for the duration of the activity. Monitoring of high risk areas will be built in to the programming and planning for these events.

High-Risk Areas include:

- all bathrooms on camp property
- night activities
- water activities
- changing areas (during day and night)

UNOBSERVED ONE-ON-ONE INTERACTION WITH CAMPERS

No camper will ever be left unattended or unsupervised during camp ministry programming or activities. NWDYC staff members and volunteers are prohibited from being alone with an individual camper in any room or building. In the event a staff member or volunteer finds himself/herself alone with a single camper, that staff member or volunteer will take the camper to a room or building occupied by others, or to a location easily observed by others.

(Example: If a camper desires conversation or counsel with a staff member or volunteer after regular programming has concluded, the staff member or volunteer to relocate the discussion to a place where other staff members are present, or which is easily observed.)

After every programming event, staff members and volunteers must ensure every room and restroom is checked prior to leaving to ensure that there is no camper left unsupervised.

Any two campers together in an unseen or less easily viewed area should be redirected to another (more open) area.

APPROPRIATE ONE-TO-ONE INTERACTIONS WITH CAMPERS

NWDYC recognizes that meeting the emotional needs of campers may occasionally require staff member and volunteers to meet with them on an individual basis. Staff Members and volunteers should observe the following guidelines when interacting with campers.

Staff members and volunteers should conduct one-to-one meetings with an individual camper at a time when others are present and where interactions can be easily observed, unless prior approval is obtained from the NWDYC Administrator.

In the event a closed-door meeting must occur, the staff member must inform another staff member and ensure the door remains unlocked.

Rules for Camper Safety

PHYSICAL CONTACT

NWDYC is committed to protecting campers in its care. To this end, NWDYC has implemented a 'physical contact policy' which promotes a positive, nurturing environment for our camp programs. The following guidelines are to be carefully followed by anyone working or volunteering at NWDYC:

1. Hugging, pats on the back and other forms of appropriate physical affection between staff members or volunteers and campers are important for camper's development and are generally suitable in the camp setting.
2. Inappropriate touching and inappropriate displays of affection are forbidden. Any inappropriate physical contact, touching or displays of affection should be immediately reported to an immediate supervisor, a NWDYC Camp Administrator, or a member of the NWDYC Safety Committee.
3. Physical contact should be for the benefit of the camper, never based upon the emotional needs of a staff member or volunteer.
4. Physical contact and affection should be given only in observable places or when in the presence of other campers or staff members or volunteers. It is much less likely that touch will be inappropriate or interpreted as such when physical contact is open to observation.
5. Staff members and volunteers are responsible for protecting campers under their supervision from inappropriate or unwanted touch by other adults and campers.

6. Any inappropriate behavior or suspected abuse by any staff member, volunteer or camper must be reported immediately to an immediate supervisor, the NWDYC Administrator or a member of a NWDYC Camp Administrator, or a member of the NWDYC Safety Committee.

TRANSPORTATION

Staff members and volunteers may from time to time be in a position to provide transportation for campers. The following guidelines should be strictly observed when workers are involved in the transportation of campers:

1. Campers should be transported directly to their destination. Unauthorized stops in a non-public place should be avoided. Staff members and volunteers should avoid transportation circumstances that leave only one camper in transport. The presence of at least two staff members or volunteers is encouraged.
2. Staff members and volunteers should avoid physical contact with campers while in vehicles.

SLEEPING ARRANGEMENTS

Staff members and volunteers will strictly observe the following rules:

1. At least one staff member or volunteer is required to be in the sleeping area with campers at all times. Notwithstanding the appearance that all campers are sleeping, the staff member or volunteer will not leave the cabin or sleeping area.
2. Appropriately modest sleeping attire must be worn to bed.
3. During bed checks, staff members and volunteers should never physically touch a camper.
4. Campers will not share a bed, bunk or sleeping bag with another camper or staff member/volunteer. Each staff member, volunteer, and camper will use single sleeping bags or blankets. In these instances a “one-person-to-one bag or blanket” rule will be observed.

SEXUALLY ORIENTED CONVERSATIONS

Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from engaging in any sexually oriented conversations with campers and are not permitted to discuss any inappropriate or explicit information about their own personal relationships, dating or sexual activities with any camper in the program. If it is necessary to address issues related to purity, dating, sex and human sexuality, clear such discussions with a Program Supervisor.

SEXUALLY ORIENTED MATERIALS

Staff members and volunteers at NWDYC are prohibited from possessing any sexually oriented materials or images (magazines, cards, phone pics, videos, etc.) at NWDYC or in the presence of campers.

NUDITY

Staff members and volunteers at NWDYC should never be nude in the presence of campers in their care.

TOBACCO

NWDYC requires staff members and volunteers to abstain from the use or possession of tobacco products while on NWDYC property, and while in the presence of campers or their family members. NWDYC is a tobacco-free facility.

INTOXICANTS

Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from the use, possession, or being under the influence of alcohol or any illegal drug while in any NWDYC facility, while traveling with campers, or while working with or supervising campers.

Camper Contact Policy for Current and Former Staff

COMMUNICATIONS WITH CAMPERS OUTSIDE OF CAMP

The NWDYC safety standards established to protect campers and insure healthy relationships during camp should be respected outside of camp as well. In addition to camp safety standards, the following policies should be respected in all interactions with campers occurring outside of camp.

- Parents of all campers must approve any and all interactions with students, including but not limited to: email, social network interactions, phone calls, personal visits. No interaction should ever take place without the knowledge and approval of the camper's parents or guardian.
- If a camper requests to be a “friend” on Facebook or similar social networking sites, permission from parents should be granted before accepting these offers.
- Current or former staff members should never be alone with a camper in an unobserved context or location. This is a policy which takes on even more importance outside of camp.
- Current or former staff members should limit connections by gender. Current or former male staff members should not initiate or maintain contact with female campers. Current or former female staff members should not initiate or maintain contact with male campers. Dating relationships of any kind between staff members or volunteers and a camper are strictly prohibited.
- If a family invites a current or former staff member to visit, these visits should never involve spending the night at the camper’s home.
- Current or former staff members should never have campers spend the night at their homes for any reason.
- Just like in camp, if a camper shares information that puts them or anyone else in danger, the parents of that child should be notified immediately. When in doubt, err on the side of caution, and contact the NWDYC Camp Administrator for counsel.

Policies and Procedures
Statement of Acknowledgment and Agreement

I have received and read a copy of NWDYC’s policies and procedures manual for preventing abuse and neglect, and understand the importance of the matters set forth within the manual. I agree to follow and abide by these guidelines during my service at NWDYC.

Further, I understand that the manual may be modified at any time, and that any guidelines may be amended, revised, or eliminated at any time by NWDYC.

I further acknowledge and understand that the materials and guidelines contained in this handbook in no way express or imply a contractual employment relationship between NWDYC and me. If I am applying as a volunteer, I acknowledge and agree that I will receive no compensation for hours that I have worked.

Finally, I understand that it is my responsibility to review new guidelines that are created and distributed as well as manual guidelines that are changed or deleted.

I hereby acknowledge receipt of the NWDYC policies and procedures manual for preventing abuse and neglect.

Staff Member or Volunteer’s name (please print)

Staff Member or Volunteer’s signature

Date: _____

Mail OR Email this form to:

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