

# SAFE SANCTUARY POLICY © U.M. ARMY TEXAS CONFERENCE

## INTRODUCTION

OUR CALLING AND OUR MANDATE IS TO ENSURE SAFE SANCTUARY FOR GOD'S PEOPLE

Throughout the gospels, Jesus provides teachings on providing a peaceable kingdom for all of God's people, including our most precious gifts, our children and youth (Matthew 5:9, Luke 18:15-17). The peaceable kingdom begins with sanctuary.

U.M. ARMY - Texas Conference recognizes the need to have a formal, written policy with procedures in place (1) to help prevent the opportunity for the occurrence and/or the appearance of abuse of children and youth and (2) to help protect workers from false accusations and/or suspicions.

The following policy and procedures are not based on a lack of trust in workers, but are intended to protect our youth, workers, volunteers and the program. Careful and confidential documentation is essential to show compliance with policies, to verify information as needed, and to have an accurate record in the case of an incident.

## YOUNG ADULTS AND LEADERS

- Young adult is someone 18-20 years of age with a high school diploma or equivalent, who is supervised by a leader.
- Leader is someone who is twenty-one (21) years of age or older.

## SUPERVISION

- We shall observe the "2 Leader Rule" whenever possible. Color Group Leaders, Color Group Assistant Leaders and Base Camp Staff will regularly rotate by work sites to provide 2-deep leadership.
- At no time should an adult and a student be alone. This includes but is not limited to being alone inside a client's home, being alone in a car and being alone at base camp.
- There should always be 2 adults or a minimum of one adult and one young adult present inside the shower facilities. If this cannot be met, adults should not enter the shower area until another adult arrives.
- Any one-to-one mentoring or consulting shall be conducted in sight of another leader.
- One leader can be in contact with multiple youth so long as they are in line of sight of other leaders.
- Recognizing that there is safety in numbers, youth will be instructed to use the "buddy system"

## SLEEPING ACCOMMODATIONS

- A minimum of (1) leader and (1) young adult present in every sleeping room.
- If 2-deep leadership cannot be met in EVERY room, Camp Directors should arrange sleeping quarters so that adults can be posted in the hallways or common areas.

## DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE

- Verbal Abuse– Any verbal act that humiliates, degrades or threatens any child or youth.
- Physical Abuse ∅ Any act of omission or an act that endangers a person's physical or mental health. In the case of child or youth physical abuse, this definition includes any intentional physical injury caused by the individual's caretaker. Physical abuse may result from punishment that is overly punitive or inappropriate to the individual's age or condition. In addition, physical abuse may result from purposeful acts that pose serious danger to physical health of a child or youth.
- Sexual Abuse ∅ Child or youth sexual abuse is the sexual exploitation or use of same for satisfaction of sexual drives. This includes, but is not limited to: 1) incest, 2) rape, 3) prostitution, 4) romantic involvement with any participant, 5) any sexual intercourse, or sexual conduct with or fondling of an individual enrolled at a U.M. ARMY ∅ Texas Conference camp, 6) sexualized behavior that communicates sexual interest and/or content. Examples are not limited to: displaying sexually suggestive visual materials, making sexual comments or innuendo about one's own or another person's body, touching another person's body, hair or clothing, touching or rubbing oneself in the presence of another person, kissing, and sexual intercourse. (#6 taken from Resolution #30 Book of Resolutions 2000).

### SCREENING FOR LEADERS AND YOUNG ADULTS

Careful screening is one way to prevent the abuse of youth. Screening calls for a careful gathering and review of information in search of those who can provide safe and caring supervision in a safe environment.

- Prior to acceptance as a leader or assistant leader, each local church will be responsible for interviewing, conducting a background check on, and having their Senior Pastor sign off for each adult and young adult.
- Churches that do not routinely do background checks as part of their own risk reduction policy must arrange for background checks to be conducted through the U.M. ARMY ∅ Texas Conference office.
- If the applicant is found to have been involved in any activity in which the applicant abused or exploited children or youth, the applicant will not be approved. Any conviction of a crime against children or youth shall disqualify any applicant.

Persons having a Criminal History of any of the following types of offenses shall not be allowed to serve:

- Child abuse, whether physical, emotional, sexual, or neglectful
- Violent offenses, including murder, rape, assault, domestic violence, etc
- Persons having a Criminal History of DUI or DWI conviction within the five (5) years immediately prior to application shall not be allowed to act as a driver.
- Persons having a Criminal History of a drug related conviction within the five (5) years immediately prior to application shall not be allowed to participate in the event.

### TRAINING

The U.M. ARMY – Texas Conference shall, through its Camp and Program Director Trainings, Volunteer Development Conference, satellite training sessions and Sunday night camp orientation shall develop and implement training and orientation procedures for all persons in leadership who work with youth at camps. Training shall include but is not limited to appropriate discipline, appropriate physical and emotional boundaries, leader misconduct, and this policy.

### REPORTING OF INCIDENTS

- Address any needs the child or youth may have, medical or otherwise.

- The Camp Director should be in constant contact with the Executive Director – Texas Conference or the designated member of the Board of Directors.
- The person suspected of abuse (respondent) shall, for the safety and well being of the children or youth, be removed with dignity from further contact with the children and youth until an appropriate investigation has taken place. The matter shall remain confidential. If the Camp Director is the respondent, then the report should be made to the Program Director.
- Following the report of an incident, the Camp Director shall document the report, and then speak with the alleged victim, being careful to use open-ended questions.
- Report to the parent(s) and/or legal guardians(s).
- All such conversations shall be documented. Careful and confidential documentation is essential. The documentation should be provided on the Incident Report provided to camp leadership that includes the following:
  - The name of the leader observing or receiving the disclosure of abuse, including the date, time and place and any action taken by this person.
  - The alleged victim's name, age, and date of birth.
  - Any statement made by the alleged victim.
  - Name of the respondent, the date, time and place of any conversation or any statement made by the respondent.
  - Any action taken, i.e. suspension of the respondent.
  - If necessary, after direction from the Texas Conference office, record the date and time of call to the appropriate agency, name of worker spoken to, content of that conversation and case number assigned.
  - Date and time of any other contacts made regarding this incident.
- It shall be the goal to provide supportive care to both the victim and the respondent and to restore such persons to wholeness. The Executive Director & Texas Conference will be responsible for contacting the Senior Pastor(s) of the victim as well as the respondent in an effort to promote healing.

### MEDIA RESPONSE

The Executive Director – Texas Conference shall be informed of all investigations or allegations of abuse. If investigations or allegations of abuse should come to the attention of the media, a response shall come from the Executive Director – Texas Conference. **Do not give out any information, simply state that all inquiries will be answered by our Conference office.**