

WESTSIDE FAITH CENTER CHILD & YOUTH CODE OF CONDUCT MANUAL

Westside Faith Center is committed to protection and releasing in our children and youth the calling God has placed on their lives. We look to 1 Thessalonians 5:23 as a guide: "...may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete..."(NASB). We have been charged by God with the responsibility of protecting each child's and youth's spirit, soul, and body: we will do everything possible to fulfill that charge.

We are committed to creating a safe and nurturing environment that fosters spiritual, emotional, and physical health for all children and youth who participate in our ministries. We are also committed to protecting volunteers from unwarranted accusations. To that end, all volunteers who work with our children and youth must abide by the following Foursquare "Child and Youth Protection Code of Conduct."

Volunteers of Westside Faith Center will:

1. Treat children with respect and fairness at all times, regardless of the child's or youth's race, sex, age, or religion.
2. Respond with Christian love and understanding in all situations.
3. Act as a positive role model for children and youth by maintaining an attitude of respect, loyalty, patience, courtesy, and maturity.
4. Dress appropriately and avoid wearing provocative and/or revealing clothing.
5. Engage in appropriate displays of affection.
6. Refrain from inappropriate physical interactions.
7. Refrain from using inappropriate corrective measures.
8. Refrain from swearing or telling off-colored jokes.
9. Avoid involving children and youth in personal problems or issues.
10. Refrain from having secrets with children and youth.
11. Not abuse alcohol or drugs.
12. Refrain from discussing sexual encounters in the presence of children and youth.
13. Not have or view sexually explicit materials, including any type of pornography.
14. Refrain from staring at or commenting on a child's or youth's body.
15. Refrain from perpetrating any kind of abuse upon any child or youth; this includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 - Physical abuse:* hitting, shaking, slapping, unnecessary restraint
 - Verbal abuse:* degrading, threatening, cursing
 - Sexual abuse:* inappropriate touching, exposing oneself, sexually-oriented conversations
 - Emotional abuse:* shaming, humiliating, cruelty
 - Neglect:* withholding or denying food, water, clothing, shelter, medical care, freedom of movement, or failure to protect
16. Immediately report concerns or complaints about a volunteer, child, or youth to the Ministry Leader of the program and to a member of the ministerial staff.

APPROPRIATE AND INAPPROPRIATE PHYSICAL INTERACTIONS

Appropriate Physical Interactions:

- Pats on the back, arm, or shoulder
- Side hugs
- Shoulder to shoulder, "temple" or "A-frame" hugs
- Handshakes
- "High fives" and hand slapping
- Touching hand face, shoulder, or arm
- Arms around shoulders
- Holding hands (with young children)
- Soothing infants
- Sitting beside a child/youth
- Sitting with a small child on adult's legs

Inappropriate Physical Interactions:

- Full frontal hugs
- Kisses on the mouth
- Kisses of any kind that are unwanted by the child/youth
- Touching of chests or anywhere below the waist
- Showing affection in isolated locations such as closets, remote hallways, staff-only areas, or other private rooms
- Volunteer sleeping in bed with a child or youth
- Wrestling with children/youth
- Piggyback rides
- Tickling
- Allowing a child or youth to cling to the leg of a volunteer
- Massage given by child/youth to a volunteer
- Massage given by a volunteer to a child or youth
- Any form of affection that is unwanted by the child, youth or the volunteer
- Any physical activity that is, or could be perceived by another to be, sexually stimulating to the adult or child/youth

APPROPRIATE AND INAPPROPRIATE VERBAL INTERACTIONS

Appropriate Verbal Interactions:

- Positively reinforcing children/youth
- Telling clean, positive, light hearted jokes
- Encouraging children/youth
- Praising children/youth

Inappropriate Verbal Interactions:

- Calling children or youth names
- Discussing sexual encounters or in any way involving children or youth in personal problems or issues of volunteers
- Telling secrets
- Cursing
- Telling off-color or sexually oriented jokes
- Complimenting a child or youth on his or her physique or body development
- Shaming
- Belittling
- Making derogatory remarks, including but not limited to derogatory remarks about the child/youth, the child/youth's family, or ethnic background
- Using harsh language that may frighten, threaten, or humiliate children/youth

APPROPRIATE AND INAPPROPRIATE CORRECTIVE MEASURES

It is important that Team Leaders and volunteers make sure that each child/youth clearly understands behavior expectations. It is essential that program managers ensure that each volunteer understands appropriate and inappropriate corrective measures and that children/youth may never be punished because of bladder or bowel "accidents" nor because of vomiting or other manifestations of illness.

Always remember, correction is not punishment. Rather it is an opportunity to teach a child/youth a better way to behave while stopping inappropriate behavior. Make an effort to praise good behavior a child displays.

The volunteer must remain calm at all times when correcting a child/youth. When correction is necessary, the following guidelines apply:

Appropriate Correction Options

- Talking with the child/youth about what behavior would have been more appropriate. Explain natural consequences to inappropriate behavior.
- Assign a period of time away from the other children/youth. If the offense is repeated, place the child away from the group in a way that avoids public humiliation for approximately one minute per year of age, not to exceed five minutes.
- Calling for assistance in the case of persistent misbehavior, e.g., the Team Leader, counselors, an/or pastors. The person called for assistance may contact the child/youth's parent/guardian or sit with the child/youth until the misbehavior subsides or for the duration of the Westside Church activity.
- Intervention to protect a child from harm or risk or being harmed.

Inappropriate Corrective Options

- Employing corporal punishment: includes shaking, hitting, spanking, slapping, shoving
- Threatening to use corporal punishment
- Engaging in name calling, shaming, degrading or derogatory remarks, ostracism
- Biting, pinching, hair-and/or ear pulling
- Withholding food/water, or medical care
- Using physical or mechanical restraints
- Isolating a child/youth in a small, confined, and and/or dark place
- Imposing physical exercise as a punishment

MAJOR SIGNS OF ABUSE AND NEGLECT

The following are the major signs of physical and sexual abuse, emotional damage, and neglect. The presence of one of these signs, or even several in combination, may not indicate that abuse has occurred. They may indicate accidents or medical conditions, emotional illness or other problems exist. If a number of these signs occur together or if they reoccur frequently, child/youth abuse and neglect may be suspected.

Signs of Neglect

- Poor hygiene, bad odor
- Inappropriate dress for weather
- Left alone, unsupervised for long periods
- Failure to thrive, malnutrition
- Untreated medical condition
- Constant hunger, begging or stealing food
- Extreme willingness to please
- Frequent absence from school
- Arriving early and/or staying late at school or play areas or other people's homes

Signs of Emotional Damage

- Low self-esteem
- Self-denigration
- Severe depression
- Aggression
- Withdrawal
- Severe anxiety
- Failure to learn

Signs of Physical Abuse

- Bruises; welts on face, neck, chest, back
- Injuries in the shape of object (belt, cord)
- Unexplained burns on palms, soles of feet, back
- Fractures that are inconsistent with the account of how injury occurred
- Untreated medical condition
- Extremes in behavior: very aggressive to withdrawn and shy
- Fear of going home
- Fear of parents and/or other adults

Signs of Sexual Abuse

- Pain, swelling, or itching in the genital area
- Bruises, bleeding, discharge in genital area
- Difficulty walking or sitting, frequent urination, pain
- Stained or bloody underclothing
- Venereal disease
- Refusal to take part in gym or other exercises
- Poor peer relationships
- Age-inappropriate interest in sex
- Drastic change in school achievement
- Running away or delinquency

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Volunteer Agreement

As an applicant for a volunteer position with access to children and youth at Westside Faith Center and its ministries, I (print name) _____ have read, understand, and agree to abide by the "Child and Youth Protection Code of Conduct" of Westside Faith Center. I further agree to abide by all policies, procedures and rules of Westside Faith Center regarding children and youth, and as otherwise deemed applicable to me. I further understand that any violation of this code of conduct may result in my immediate and potentially permanent dismissal.

I declare that I will not abuse (physically, verbally, sexually, or emotionally) or neglect any child, youth, or adult and that I have never been convicted of abuse of, indecency with, or injury to a child, youth, or adult.

Printed Name

Signature

Date