

Troy and Vermont Conference Camping Child Abuse Prevention - Policy and Procedures

COVENANT HILLS CHRISTIAN CAMP

The camping program of the Troy Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church and the Vermont Conference of the United Church of Christ recognize the immense problem of abuse among children and is dedicated to the prevention and/or recognition of such, especially for the children who are under our care and supervision while attending camp sessions. As a result of this attempt on our part to protect our campers, the following policies will be observed.

1. All summer camp staff members (employed & volunteer) will be acquainted with the subject of child abuse and will abide by any guidelines set forth.
2. All employed staff will be interviewed concerning any past history of child abuse and all references will be methodically checked.
3. All volunteer staff members, employed staff members and any other personnel working with our campers, will sign a statement indicating that they have no past record of abusing a child.
4. All staff members are responsible for and legally mandated to report cases of suspected child abuse.
5. Any reports of suspected child abuse will be made **ONLY** to the Camp Executive Director. If the Camp Executive Director is unavailable, the Health Supervisor will be the alternate.
6. In case of an incident **ONLY** the Camp Executive Director, or whoever he/she may designate, will speak to the necessary person(s) concerning the incident. Under no circumstances should the suspected incident be discussed with campers, fellow staff members, the news media, or anyone other than the proper authorities.
7. Since much of the value of our camping program is due to the caring atmosphere between staff and campers, we still understand the need for appropriate physical gestures of support and love (hug, pat on the back, etc.). **BE AWARE!** Use your best judgment on when and where this entirely appropriate action should be used. Remember, **ALL** sexual behavior, both verbal and non-verbal, is entirely inappropriate.
8. When with a camper, stay in a public area in view of others. (ie., not in their cabin alone or alone on a walk.) Make use of the buddy system. Do not let yourself get into a position which can be misinterpreted.
9. Use common sense when dealing with our campers. We want you and our campers to have fun, meaningful experiences at camp. Because of our commitment to our campers, we will take any and every action necessary to protect them. Anyone accused of abuse will

be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law, if such accusation proves to be true. Each situation will receive a fair hearing.

10. Absolutely no physical punishment is allowed. Verbal abuse is more difficult to detect, but it is not allowed either.

11. LISTEN to the campers. They will not usually lie about child abuse.

12. If an incident is reported, the Camp Executive Director will immediately begin a preliminary investigation. If the charges are to have any legitimacy, the proper authorities will be called. Then, depending on the circumstances, the parents of the child may be notified.

The above may sound harsh. However, in the light of the magnitude of the problem and the weight of our corporate responsibility, we must recognize these matters as very serious. We appreciate your understanding and cooperation.

I have read the above procedures and rules concerning child sexual abuse, and I agree to abide by and follow all stated rules and procedures, as long as I am a staff member, (paid or volunteer) of the Troy Annual Conference Camping Program.

Signed:

Date:

Please respond to the following question, and sign.

"Have you had any criminal convictions for child abuse or sex related crimes?"(Yes or No)

Signed:

Date:

This signed statement will be kept on file at Covenant Hills Christian Camp.

Please return this form to the Executive Director of the camp with which you will be associated.

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After June 23

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