

## **Camp Ahava Sexual Abuse and Molestation Policies**

Camp Ahava strives to ensure that our camp is a community of love and care for every person. We ask that you join us in taking steps to provide that all of our campers and staff find among us a safe place. In order to help protect the safety and well being of our children, we ask that you carefully review the following policies, guidelines, and code of conduct regarding abuse. If you have cause to suspect that child abuse or neglect with potential to cause injury to a child occurred or is occurring, you should talk with the appropriate person designated below to see what steps could and should be taken to protect the child and help the family. As used in this policy, the terms “child,” “youth,” or “minor” means a person up to the age of 18. An “adult” is a person aged 18 or older. This policy applies to all interactions of staff and volunteers with any child, youth or minor.

### **CHILD ABUSE POLICIES**

No form of child abuse, whether physical, emotional or sexual, will be permitted or tolerated at Camp. Child abuse is morally and legally wrong. It can come in many forms. Physical abuse can be considered non-accidental injury or pain that is intentionally inflicted upon a child or youth. Emotional abuse can be considered mental or emotional injury to a child or youth that results in an observable and material impairment in the child or youth’s growth, development or psychological or emotional functioning. Anything done to inflict pain while disciplining a student can be considered child abuse. The physical size and strength of staff members necessitates that you use discretion and restraint in all physical contact activities with campers.

We cannot be too careful in the area of sexual abuse. Even the appearance of wrong or a false allegation can cause irreparable damage to the reputation of the accused staff member, volunteer, and/or the camp. Stating which behaviors are appropriate and inappropriate allows camp staff and volunteers to comfortably show positive affection and yet help us to identify individuals who are not maintaining safe boundaries with children or youth.

Child sexual abuse includes, but is not limited to, any contact or interaction between a child and an adult when the child is being used for the sexual stimulation of the adult or third person. Sexual behavior between a child and an adult should be considered forced,

whether or not the child has consented. The behavior may or may not involve touching. Sexual abuse perpetrated by one child or youth against another is any contact or activity of a sexual nature that occurs between a child or youth and another child or youth when there is no consent, when consent is not possible, or when one child or youth has power over the other child or youth, such as where there is a significant age difference between the children, typically three years or more. This includes any activity that is meant to arouse or gratify the sexual desires of any of the children or youth.

The following Guidelines for Appropriate Affection are based, in large part, on avoiding behaviors known to be used by child abusers to groom children or youth and their parents for future abuse. The following guidelines are to be carefully followed by all camp staff and volunteers, regardless of gender, working around or with children.

#### Appropriate Forms of Affection

- Brief hugs
- Pats on the shoulder or back
- Handshakes
- “High-fives” and hand slapping
- Verbal praise
- Touching hands, faces, shoulders & arms
- Arms around shoulders
- Holding hands while walking
- Kneeling or bending down for hugs
- Holding hands sometimes

#### Inappropriate Forms of Affection

- Inappropriate or lengthy embraces
- Kissing
- Touching bottoms, chests or genital areas
- Showing affection in isolated areas such as closets or other private rooms.
- Any form of unwanted contact or affection
- Tickling or full body wrestling
- Lap-sitting (for males)
- Comments (spoken, written, or electronic) that relate to body development
- Snapping bras or giving wedgies
- Private meals with individual children or youth
- Providing gifts or privileges of more than token or small value

### **CHILD ABUSE REPORTING**

Reporting abuse can precipitate severe consequences to a family, so it should never be done casually or thoughtlessly, and certainly not for malicious purposes. At the same time, failing to report abuse can have severe consequences to a child at risk. Therefore, if you have reasonable cause to suspect abuse or neglect with potential to cause injury to a child has occurred, you should talk with an appropriate person, as designated below, to see what steps could and should be taken to protect the child. In addition, you should immediately report violations of these policies, including behaviors that are inconsistent with Camp Ahava’s guidelines for appropriate affection, and code of conduct.

## Procedures for Reporting Child Abuse and Policy Violations

1. Any actions you observe that involve abuse or that are otherwise not acceptable behavior according to Camp Ahava's policies, guidelines, or code of conduct, or any other inappropriate or suspicious behavior, should be reported as soon as possible to the Camp Director. An incident report should be filled out as well. If you have questions about whether abuse has occurred, contact the Camp Director.
2. In the event of a report, the Camp Director will be responsible to direct and/or oversee internal and external action.
3. The Camp Director or an appointee will be the official spokesperson for the camp in any of these matters. All staff members and volunteers must be sensitive to the need for confidentiality in the handling of this information, and therefore, no other staff members or volunteers shall speak to the media, to each other, or to any third party, but only to the Camp Director regarding issues related to matters of abuse, except with respect to mandatory reporting and cooperation with investigations as noted below.

In the event that there is an accusation of child abuse, the camp will take prompt and immediate action as follows:

- All allegations will be taken seriously and camp staff will take appropriate action in accordance with state laws, insurance requirements, and based upon advice of legal counsel. This includes full cooperation by camp staff with any internal investigation and with an investigation by the authorities with the understanding that failure to do so may be grounds for termination.
- At the first report of reasonable cause to believe that a child-abuse incident or neglect with potential to cause injury to a child has occurred, the staff member or volunteer receiving the report will notify the Camp Director. The Camp Director will assist the staff member in filling out an incident report.
- The Camp Director will either make a report to appropriate authorities, or coordinate and/or support other staff in making a report, in accordance with relevant state or local child abuse reporting requirements and will cooperate with any legal authority involved to the fullest extent appropriate.
- In the event the reported incident(s) involves a staff member or volunteer at camp, the Camp Director will take personnel or remedial action which he/she determines necessary, which can include, but is not limited to, immediate suspension and/or termination. As determined appropriate by the Camp Director, the parents or legal guardian of the child(ren) involved in the alleged incident, as well as camp staff with a need to know, will be notified in accordance with the directions, if any, of the relevant state or local agency.

## **CODE OF CONDUCT FOR SEXUAL ABUSE & MOLESTATION PREVENTION OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH**

- Staff member or volunteer agrees that his or her first responsibility is the health, safety and welfare of the campers.
- Staff member or volunteer will not physically, emotionally, or sexually abuse a child or youth.
- Staff member or volunteer will do their best to prevent abuse of and neglect with potential to cause injury to children and youth involved in camp activities and services.
- Staff member or volunteer agrees that they have not engaged in and have not been accused or convicted of child abuse, a violent crime, indecency with a child, injury to a child, any other offense against a child, or sexual misconduct of any kind.
- Staff member or volunteer agrees that in the event they become aware of or observe any abuse or other inappropriate behaviors or possible policy violations with children or youth, such behaviors or violations will be immediately reported by the staff member or volunteer to the Camp Director.
- Staff member or volunteer is prohibited from using physical punishment in any way for behavior management of children and youth. No form of physical discipline is acceptable. This prohibition includes spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, or any other physical force. Physical force may only be used to stop a behavior that may cause immediate harm to the individual or to a child, youth or others. (ie:running into street with oncoming traffic)
- Staff member or volunteer is prohibited from participating in or allowing others to conduct any hazing activities relating to children's or youth camp activities.
- Staff member or volunteer agrees to avoid being alone with a child or youth where other adults cannot easily observe them unless it is an emergency or unavoidable circumstance. In the event of an emergency or unavoidable circumstance, staff member or volunteer shall notify a Camp Staff member of the situation immediately prior to or directly following the emergency or circumstance.
- Staff member or volunteer agrees that one-to-one conversations with children or youth will be done in an open or public or other place where private conversations are possible but occur in full view of others.
- Staff member or volunteer agrees that when supervising or assisting private activities such as dressing or showering, the staff member or volunteer will remain observable by others or work in pairs.
- Staff member or volunteer will not ask youths to keep any secrets.
- Staff member or volunteer agrees to dress and undress in a modest way in the presence of children or youth.
- Staff member or volunteer will dress conservatively and avoid wearing provocative or revealing attire.
- Staff member or volunteer will not engage in inappropriate electronic communication with a child or youth or other behavior contrary to Camp Ahava policies.
- Staff member or volunteer will adhere to the guidelines of appropriate affection as outlined in Camp Ahava's child abuse policies.

- Staff member or volunteer agrees to abide by the established ratios for adults and children, which includes the “Rule of 3” (meaning at least three individuals must be present in private areas—either two campers and one staff member or two staff members and one camper). Compliance with the established ratio is required at all times including camp activities that occur off camp premises unless there is an emergency or an unavoidable circumstance. In the event that an emergency or an unavoidable circumstance occurs, the staff member or volunteer shall notify a Camp Ahava Staff member of the situation immediately prior to or directly following the emergency or circumstance.
- Staff member or volunteer is prohibited from dating or becoming romantically involved with a child or youth.
- Staff member or volunteer is prohibited from having sexual contact with a child or youth.
- Staff member or volunteer is prohibited from possessing any sexually oriented materials (magazines, cards, videos, films, clothing, etc.) on camp property or in the presence of children or youth.
- Staff member or volunteer is prohibited from discussing their own sexual activities, including dreams and fantasies, or discussing their use of sexually oriented or explicit materials such as pornography, videos or materials on or from the Internet, with children or youth.
- Staff member or volunteer is prohibited from using the Internet to view or download any sexually oriented materials on camp property or in the presence of children or youth.
- Camp Ahava’s Code of Conduct and policies (staff and camper) extend into cyberspace while in employment or volunteering and apply in all contexts, media and forms of communication. For example, no staff members or volunteers shall engage in private forms of social media communication with campers including, but not limited to, private Facebook messaging, direct messaging on Instagram and Twitter, or any other form of communication on Snapchat or the like.

**All employees and volunteers must read and sign this Agreement to Comply with Child Abuse Policies and Code of Conduct.**

*By signing my name below, I agree to comply with the above Child Abuse Policies and Code of Conduct. I understand that these may be changed, withdrawn, added to or interpreted at any time at the camp’s sole discretion and without prior notice to me.*

*By signing my name below, I acknowledge my obligation and responsibility to protect children and youth and agree to report known or suspected abuse of children or youth to appropriate camp leaders in accordance with the Child Abuse Policies and Code of Conduct. I also agree that if an investigation of a report is required, I will cooperate fully with camp personnel and/or other authorities and understand that failure to do so may be grounds for termination. I understand that the camp will not tolerate any abuse of children and youth and I agree to comply in spirit and in action with this position.*

*By signing my name below, I affirm I have read and understand the Child Abuse Policies, Code of Conduct, and the other above provisions.*

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_