

- **CROSSWORD GAUTENG**
- **YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY**

- **YOUTH PROTECTION**

- Youths are entitled to be safe and protected. They have the right to be respected, listened to, and their particular needs addressed in all Camp activities, whether as part of a group or as an individual.
- Teaching/ leading where youths are involved requires absolute trustworthiness.
- Camp Leaders have a responsibility for the safety and welfare of youths participating in all Camp activities.
- When they are teaching or leading an activity involving youths at Camp, Leaders have the responsibility for the safety and welfare of youths in their care.
- Camp Leaders have authority over youths because of their position, because of their greater age, maturity, physical size and life experience. Abuse arises from the misuse of authority or power. Any form of youth abuse is always wrong.
- Due to the inherent imbalance of power, youths are incapable of giving valid consent to abuse.

- **STANDARDS FOR CAMP LEADERS**

As a Camp Leader you are to ensure that:

- You have completed the necessary application and truthfully completed the Code of Ethics
- proper systems for the safety and welfare of youths participating in Camp activities are implemented and maintained;
- all applicable requirements of the civil authorities, CESA authority and the Camp Directorship are complied with; and
- all Camp Leaders for whom you have responsibility and who work with youths comply with all civil and Trust screening and selection requirements;
- If you are exercising a teaching or any other Trust activity involving youths at Camp you are to take reasonable steps to ensure the safety and welfare of the youths in your care.
- You are not to abuse youths.
- When engaged in any Camp activities you are not to administer corporal punishment to youths in your care.
- You are not to make any prohibited material available to youths.

- If you know or reasonably suspect that a youth is at risk of harm from youth abuse from any source, you are to report this to the Camp Director and appropriate civil authorities.
- You are to adhere to the Code of Ethics signed upon application at all times.

- **RECOGNISING THE CHARACTERISTICS AND EFFECTS OF YOUTH ABUSE**

- You need to be aware of the signs, symptoms and characteristics of youth abuse and its impact on youths.
- **Characteristics and effects of youth abuse**
- Abuse of a youth can be categorised as emotional, physical, sexual, or spiritual. It can also arise from neglect, bullying or harassment.
- The signs and symptoms can include:
 - **emotional abuse** — low self-esteem, apathy, an over readiness to relate to anyone even strangers, unduly aggressive behaviour, withdrawn behaviour;
 - **physical abuse** — bruises, bites, burns and scalds, fractures;
 - **sexual abuse** — a level of sexual knowledge or desire for either contact or distance inappropriate to the youth's age, self-harm, social isolation, and a sudden onset of soiling, wetting or other behavioural changes;
 - **spiritual abuse** — low self-esteem, high levels of anxiety and fear, excessive deference to a staff member and isolation from former friends and family members;
 - **neglect** — failure of a youth to grow within the normally accepted pattern, failure of a parent or guardian to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical care and supervision;
 - **bullying or harassment** — low self-esteem, loss of trust in others, apathy, an over readiness to relate to anyone even strangers, unduly aggressive behaviour, withdrawn behaviour.
- Abuse of a youth is often preceded by grooming.
- The sexual abuse of a youth commonly has the following characteristics:
 - it usually starts with something minor and gradually builds up to more involved behaviours through a process of grooming;

- it is secretive and generally known only to the abuser and victim making it extremely difficult to detect;
- it is perpetrated by someone known to the youth and/or held in a position of trust by the youth or their parents or guardians; and
- it is rarely a self-contained or one-off incident but rather part of an ongoing relationship that is corrupting and distorting.
- The abuse of a youth commonly causes psychological and spiritual harm and is likely to lead to the impairment of their social, emotional, cognitive, spiritual and intellectual development and/or disturbed behaviour.
- The effects of youth abuse extend well beyond the abuser and their primary victims. The families of the victim and abusers as well as their communities can also experience a high degree of distress when revelations of abuse emerge.
- Often they can deny the disclosure and so reject the victim rather than face reality. Once the reality is confronted, the community will commonly experience profound shock, guilt about failing to protect the primary victim, deep hurt and disillusionment.

- **ENSURING THE SAFETY OF YOUTHS**

- At every gathering where youths are present there must be at least two adults present.
- Youths are deemed to be under the care of the CWG once they have been sent via arranged transport or left at Camp by their parent/s/ guardians.
- Two Camp Leaders will be assigned to all dormitories where youths are lodged for Camp. The two leaders are responsible for the campers assigned to them for the duration of Camp. The Camp Director has oversight responsibility for all Camp Leaders and Campers for the duration of Camp.
- Leaders should not be in the dorms alone when youths are changing for swimming / sporting activities.
- Camp Leaders must ensure that there is no visiting or hanging out by the opposite sex in any of the dorm rooms.
- Doors should always be left open when Camp Leader is dealing alone with a youth.

- While youths should be able to confide in Camp Leaders inappropriate dependence by the youth on a Camp Leader must be avoided.
- Camp Leaders are responsible to ensure that there is no inappropriate behaviour between boys and girls in public or in isolation.
- Camp Leaders are to encourage youth to remain in their groups and not on their own.

○ **PHYSICAL CONTACT**

- It is important that, at all times, no action should be taken which might be misunderstood by the youth or another adult.
- It is important to stress that all activities involving the youth be done where anyone else may observe what is taking place.
- Avoid unnecessary physical contact with the youth
- Avoid any activity which may appear to be sexually provocative or stimulating. This might include horseplay which is open to being misunderstood. Never make sexually suggestive or provocative remarks about or to a youth.
- Be careful of games that may become unnecessarily rough or physical (if in doubt, don't play them).
- If it is necessary to have physical contact with a youth (e.g. to move them to a dorm, administer first aid etc.) as far as possible make sure there is another adult present.
- As far as possible, Camp Leaders should not be alone with a youth in private, in isolation or in secret.
- Do not force a youth to participate in any activity that may make them feel uncomfortable. This may include games, sports or swimming.

○ **Transporting Youths**

- Avoid transporting a youth alone in a car, unless the parent/s/guardian/s give their permission. This is particularly the case when it is a youth of the opposite sex.
- If you are transporting youths from Camp, the Camp Director, parents and the Child Protection Officers must be notified.
- If a youth has to be taken to hospital or doctor (e.g. he/she becomes ill) contact the parent/s concerned to inform them of the reason.

- It is the driver's responsibility to make sure that the vehicle concerned is roadworthy and safe. He/she must insist that everyone in the vehicle is wearing a seatbelt.
- Suspicion/allegations of abuse
- If you suspect that a youth is being abused, do not ignore the problem but attempt to investigate your suspicions thoroughly. The Camp Director should be consulted immediately.
- If a youth claims to have been abused do not ignore the allegations. Try to investigate the matter fully, with the aid of another Camp Leader and report the matter to the Camp Director immediately.
- **Discipline**
- When disciplining youths, ensure that
 - the Camp Director is notified immediately, and a report is written in the incident book.
 - the form of discipline is not corporal punishment or otherwise abusive;
 - physical restraint is only used to protect youths from harm or to avoid an accident;
 - when physical restraint is used, a record is kept that identifies the restraint used, the Camp Leader and youth involved and any witnesses, and sets out the incident's circumstances; and
- the youth's parents or guardians are informed of the circumstances of the incident and discipline.
- Administer discipline in accordance to the CWG Code of Conduct.

We should remember that not all youths are Christians and will not necessarily see the importance of loving Jesus and loving one another as brothers and sisters in Christ.

If there is a situation where you need to address an issue that arises regarding dress, behaviour, conversation and language please consult the Camp Director before you address any parties