

1. CAMP PROTECTION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

A pivotal component to setting up a safe and supportive environment is ensuring that the organization has a comprehensive child abuse and mandated reporting policy and procedure, as well as policies and procedures to prevent and handle allegations of harassment and discrimination. This is the baseline for creating a safe environment where campers and staff know the boundaries of behaviors, the expectations of the environment, and when/how to make reports if necessary.

Every camp should have the following policies:

- Child Abuse Prevention and Reporting
- Anti-Harassment
- Anti-Discrimination

These policies should be regularly reviewed by leadership and/or outside experts to ensure compliance with local and national laws. Policies should include information on:

- Local mandated reporting laws
- Definitions of child abuse and neglect, including the types of abuse that are reportable to authorities under local law
- Definitions of harassment, discrimination, and any other necessary terms
- Camp policy for reporting suspicion of abuse or neglect, including:
 - How an allegation or suspicion may come to light
 - Who may be involved (such as a witness, confidant, or alleged offender)
 - What happens with the allegation
 - Where does it get reported internally and externally
- Camp policy for reporting harassment or discrimination
- Process of documentation
- Procedure for reporting any suspected abuse UP to the Camp Director or designee and OUT to the appropriate authorities
- Contact information to make a report both internally and externally
- Any institutional and legal protections for reporting abuse, neglect, harassment, or discrimination
- Any institutional and legal penalties for failure to report abuse, neglect, harassment, or discrimination

Training on these policies and procedures should take place with all staff on an annual basis.

Key questions to keep in mind:

- *Does your policy cover all types of abuse and neglect? What about harassment and discrimination?*
- *Have you provided clear definitions, so everyone is on the same page about what is meant, regardless of language or cultural differences?*
- *Have you addressed what it means to be a mandated reporter and reporting suspicion of abuse?*
- *What is your reporting chain? Who do staff go to with a concern, suspicion, or allegation? Where do you go if your concern is with the Camp Director?*
- *Do you provide staff with the phone numbers to report out to authorities?*
- *Are these policies and procedures easily accessible to campers, families, staff, donors, and community stakeholders?*