



# COUNSELOR TRAINING MANUAL

How to be a fun, caring, and safe camp counselor

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## **Welcome!**

We take our responsibility to care for campers very seriously. The Counselor Training Manual contains policies and procedures specifically created for adults authorized to interact with minors in a camp setting, and is designed to prevent abuse and promote a safe camp experience. The policies herein are intended to protect campers, camp staff, and the mission of Messiah University.

## **You Are an Authorized Adult**

As a camp counselor, child supervisor, coach, chaperone, faculty, staff, volunteer, graduate and undergraduate student, intern, employee of a temporary employment agency, or independent contractor/consultant you are an authorized adult. This means that you are age 18 and older, paid or unpaid, who interacts with, supervises, chaperones, or otherwise oversees minors in program activities, recreational, and/or residential facilities. The following policies apply to you if the above description applies to you. In these roles where minors are under our supervision, it is critical that we are aware of our duties and responsibilities so that our campers can stay safe while under our care.

## **You Are a Mandatory Reporter**

As an employee who comes into contact with minors, you have a specific and special mandate by law to report to Childline when you know of or suspect that a child is being abused or neglected in some way. This is a government mandate designed to protect children, and it applies to all adults authorized to interact with minors. This mandate applies no matter how you become aware of the abuse or neglect; it still applies if someone other than the child being abused gives you reason to suspect neglect or abuse of the child.

Because this is mandatory, should you willfully fail to immediately contact Childline after becoming aware of an incident or suspicion of abuse or neglect, you will be subject to conviction of a misdemeanor wherein the first offense could result in a \$2,500 fine and/or a year in jail, and the second offense could result in up to a \$5,000 fine and/or two years in jail. More importantly though, your silence could lead to the further neglect and abuse of a child in desperate need of help, and as such, you should immediately report any suspicions.

## **Background Checks**

## **Training and Resources**



- Attempts to hide injuries
- Difficulty sitting or walking
- Reluctance to go home
- Depression or self-mutilation
- Fear of parent or caregiver
- Fear of adults

Sexual abuse is the exploitation of a child for the sexual gratification of an adult or older child. Sexual 13.3 (d)67 (lw 7.08

- Pushing boundaries and breaking the rules
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- Never express or require physical affection or touching in any form from a child who shows or expresses discomfort with physical touch.

Camp counselors are responsible for protecting campers under their supervision from inappropriate or unwanted touch by other adults and campers. Any inappropriate behavior or suspected abuse by any staff member, volunteer, or camper must be reported immediately.

### **Verbal Interactions**

## **Taking Roll**

Headcounts are an important part of being responsible for minors to ensure that all campers in your care are present and accounted for. Roll calls are to be administered whenever you are leaving an area and there is potential to become separated from a minor. This includes moving from one building to another, moving from one outdoor area to another, going to or leaving meals, arriving or departing from dorms/sleeping facilities, and entering and exiting vehicles. This will make certain that you realize that a minor is missing in a timely fashion and provide a frame of reference for when he or she could have gone missing, and thus focus the search in such an event.

## **Unstructured Time**

Not every moment of the day can be scheduled for you and your campers. There will inevitably be times when you will need to think of something to occupy time. These cases can be both the most rewarding times and the most difficult times simultaneously. It is important to remember that unstructured time is not unsupervised time, and this means that it will often fall hl omrewrer( )y.(o)-6.7 (m)n(f)-3.3 (-5.9 (



- Unexplained bruises or scratches
- Sudden loss of friends or exclusion by the group
- Loss or theft of personal items

In all cases, the key is to be a positive role model and to create an environment of close, yet appropriate, connectedness between campers and counselors. If campers feel comfortable with their counselors, they are more apt to come forward to voice concerns or problems.

### **Being a Positive Role Model**

As a counselor, you can create an emotionally safe and inclusive camp by building positive relationships with your campers. Role models have the largest impact on these relationships. The key factors that determine a role model's effectiveness are proximity, similarity, authority, and likeability.

As a role model, campers will take cues about their behavior by mimicking your actions and by learning which behaviors are good and acceptable. This gives you a lot of power to shape campers' actions and attitudes. By following the same rules that the campers follow, you will reinforce those behaviors in your campers.

### **Children Leaving Camp**

When a child is leaving camp to go home, it is important to know who the minor should be leaving with and to make sure that the child leaves only with a trusted parent, guardian, or someone designated by the parent or guardian as responsible for retrieving the child. Always be sure to ask for photo identification when an adult is picking up a child, and check the name against the camp's records of who should be trusted to leave with the child. If there are any questions or uncertainties about the authenticity of the individual, contact the Department of Safety immediately. It is also important that you pay close attention to the child's reaction to who is picking him or her up; if this person is not who the child is expecting, or if the child is fearful in any way, always double check to make sure no mistakes are being made. It is better to risk offending a parent than to accidentally deliver a child into a dangerous situation.

### **Policy Review**

These policies will be reviewed annually by Human Resources & Compliance to ensure compliance with state and federal law.

## Appendix A: Messiah University Summer Camp Code of Conduct

# CAMP CODE OF CONDUCT

It is our goal to do as much as possible to ensure that the Messiah University camp experience is safe and fun. In order to ensure that this is the case for every camper in attendance, each camper is expected to abide by the following rules:

- Follow the camp schedule (including “lights out”) and report on time for all sessions.
- Dress appropriately during both scheduled time and free time.
- Use of profanity or inappropriate language (verbal or written) will not be tolerated.
- Use or possession of tobacco, alcohol, e-cigarettes/vaping items, illegal drugs, or any type of weapon is strictly prohibited.
- Possession and/or distribution of indecent literature or images are not permitted.
- Damaging or stealing University or other people’s personal property is not allowed. Rooms are inspected prior to check in and immediately following check out. The cost of repairing any damages to the room and or furniture will be billed to the camper.
- **Harassment, bullying, or intimidation of other campers or staff is prohibited.** Hazing is forbidden.
- You have rights and should never:
  - Be asked to be alone with or by another camper or staff member. This includes private quarters, restrooms, vehicles, etc. There should always be two authorized adults present within an observable and interruptible distance.
  - Be asked to touch or be touched by another camper or staff member in a way that

# Appendix B: Safety & Compliance for Summer Camps & Conferences

MESSIAH UNIVERSITY		SAFETY & COMPLIANCE FOR	
SUMMER CAMPS & CONFERENCES			
WHAT SHOULD I DO IF...	ACTION TO TAKE		
<p>Employee be sent to the area to complete the proper cleanup &amp; decontamination. If</p> <p>or other potentially infectious material</p>	<p>Call OSHA at 1-800-368-5888 or your local OSHA office for assistance. (773) 399-6005.</p>	<p>Call OSHA at 1-800-368-5888 or your local OSHA office for assistance. (773) 399-6005.</p>	<p>Call OSHA at 1-800-368-5888 or your local OSHA office for assistance. (773) 399-6005.</p>
<p>an injury to a camp/conference participant (not an employee)</p>	<p>the staff immediately, then call the University Safety Dept. (773) 399-6005.</p>	<p>the program director, if it is an emergency response?</p>	<p>the program director, if it is an emergency response?</p>
<p>that requires medical treatment?</p>	<p>that requires medical treatment?</p>	<p>the program director, if it is an emergency response?</p>	<p>the program director, if it is an emergency response?</p>