

CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION POLICY

Introduction

Employees and volunteers (“responsible persons”) in Westminster School activities function as representatives of the School and as such are held to different standards than when acting as parents or adults in their own homes or families. Responsible persons are encouraged to remember they will be both providing supervision and modeling behavior for the children in their care. They should endeavor to see that the example they set is consistent with the philosophy and mission of the School. These rules and guidelines should be followed by all responsible persons at all events, thereby providing appropriate supervision of children. Supervision should be consistent, reasonable, and prudent.

1. Screening Procedures

All faculty and staff as well as volunteers who work with children will be screened.

Any person known to have committed previous acts of misconduct with children is prohibited from working with children through Westminster School’s programs.

All responsible persons who work with children are required to:

1. complete a *Job and Volunteer Applicant Screening Form*;
2. be interviewed by an appropriate supervising administrator;
3. consent to reference and background checks; and
4. be approved by the head of school, division directors, business operations officer or director of development.

The information in this document will be reviewed with all responsible persons who undergo the screening procedures. Approved responsible persons must submit a signed acknowledgment that they have read and will comply with the *Child Abuse Prevention Policy* prior to working with children.

2. Two Adult Rule

No responsible person working with children should place him/herself in the compromising situation of being alone with a single child and out of sight of teachers, advisors, aides, and/or parents.

3. Six Month Rule

No volunteer will be assigned to work with children for overnight activities until he/she has been an active participant in the life of this School for at least six months and has participated in an orientation session.

4. Transporting children

Responsible persons should not transport children for school activities without written permission of each child’s parent or guardian. In accordance with other school policies,

employees should not transport Westminster School students for school activities.

5. Supervision of Overnight Trips

There should be at least two adult male and two adult female chaperones for any school-sponsored overnight event involving children of both sexes. At least one male and one female chaperone should be faculty or staff members at Westminster School, and all chaperones should be approved according to the *Westminster School Child Abuse Prevention Policy*. While the ratio of children to adults will vary with the age of the children, it should be no larger than 6:1.

6. Drug and Alcohol Use

Responsible persons supervising children at events may not use illegal drugs or alcohol of any kind. Any faculty or staff member who appears to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol while working with or supervising children will be immediately sent home pending additional disciplinary action.

7. Bathroom Supervision of Children

Whenever possible, responsible persons who accompany a child to the bathroom or shower room should remain outside while the child is inside. The modesty and privacy of the child should be respected at all times.

8. Discipline Guidelines

Responsible persons shall not discipline any child by spanking, hitting, slapping or any form of physical punishment.

Verbal reprimands shall not include destructive criticism, insults or offensive language.

No responsible person should create a compromising situation by removing a disruptive single child from a group and placing the child out of sight of other teachers, advisors, aides, and/or parents.

9. Other Guidelines for Interactions with Children

Responsible persons should avoid initiating rough housing, playful touching, and physical teasing with children.

Responsible persons should avoid online social relationships with minor children from Westminster School.

10. Reporting Responsibilities and Procedures

Any inappropriate conduct or relationship between a responsible person and a child shall be promptly reported to the division director or head of school. Anyone verbally reporting an incident to a school administrator should be asked to submit a written *Incident Report*. Following receipt of an incident report, an investigation will be conducted, and a *Response Plan* will be implemented for substantial allegations.

All alleged violations of the *Child Abuse Prevention Policy* will be taken seriously. The safety of children is the School's top priority. Responses to allegations will be handled with care and respect for everyone's privacy and confidentiality. The dignity of the accused and the vulnerability of the reporter are also important.

11. Response Plan

The School administration shall determine the appropriate response to substantiated allegations. Responses might include, but are not limited to:

1. Documentation and close supervision of the person named, being certain that all responsible persons understand the need to supervise.
2. Discussion with the person named to help him/her understand and respect appropriate limits of behavior and adherence to school policy and procedures with or without recommendation for intervention.
3. Removal of the person from his/her position pending completion of an investigation.
4. Removal of the person from his/her position, with or without recommendation for outside intervention.

