

# POLICY FOR THE PROTECTION OF YOUTH

Town of Woodbridge personnel agree to comply with the policies for general conduct with youth as defined in this *Policy for the Protection of Youth*. Violation of this policy could result in termination and possible criminal prosecution.

The responsibility for this policy resides with each Town of Woodbridge Department Head if those departments regularly deal with youth.

## Safeguards for Youth

### A. Screening and Selection

1. Any and all Town personnel who regularly work with or around youth must be screened and selected using all the following:
  - a. standard application completed by the applicant that includes an authorization for the release of information to conduct background checks.
  - b. Criminal records check in Connecticut. The Town reserves the right to conduct additional background checks.
  - c. National sexual offender registry check.
  - d. Individual interview with the applicant.
  - e. Reference checks of persons outside the organization who know the applicant, preferably who know how the applicant works with youth.
  - f. Driving or Motor Vehicle records check if the person may be transporting youth.
  - g. Obtain and maintain a valid photo identification of the applicant.
2. State criminal records checks and national sexual offender registry checks must be conducted annually for seasonal Town of Woodbridge personnel, aged 18 or older, who regularly work with or around youth. For potential employees age 17 or younger, a local background check should be conducted. For year-round personnel, the check should be conducted every three years, or more frequently at the department head's discretion. Each department is responsible for conducting these background checks on its employees.
3. Outside vendors that regularly work directly with youth will be asked to provide their company policy concerning conduct with youth. The Town of Woodbridge reserves the right to audit or verify that the company policy is followed. Sole proprietor vendors or vendors without these policies will be treated as employees for the purpose of background checks.
4. To the extent possible, no employee should be permitted to supervise an immediate family member when working with or around youth. For the purpose of this policy, immediate family member is defined as spouse, partner, child, parent, sister, brother, similar in-law relationship, stepchild, stepparent, stepsibling, grandparent, or co-habitant.

## Education and Training Requirements

Employees for the Town of Woodbridge who have regular contact with youth must receive training about these policies and procedures from their supervisor as part of their orientation and on a regular basis during employment at the discretion of the Town.

### **Monitoring and Supervision of Programs**

Supervisory personnel and others should monitor and supervise, to the best of their ability, the behavior of adults and youth so that inappropriate behaviors and interactions can be detected and stopped.

1. Town of Woodbridge personnel should refrain from and actively avoid being alone with a youth or multiple youth where other adults cannot easily observe them.
2. Town of Woodbridge personnel over the age of 21 must be present to directly supervise Woodbridge personnel under the age of 18 and be physically present during all activities.
3. Each program must develop age-appropriate procedures to ensure the safety of youth using restroom and showers or bath areas.
4. When supervising or assisting private activities such as dressing, showering or diapering infants, Woodbridge personnel must remain in an area observable by other adults or work in pairs.

### **General Conduct for the Protection of Youth**

The following guidelines are intended to assist Woodbridge personnel in monitoring and supervising behaviors and interactions with youth to identify and stop those that may be harmful to youth. When exceptions to these guidelines must be made, they should be reported to the supervisor of the appropriate department head.

1. All Woodbridge personnel who work with youth must agree to comply with the Town of Woodbridge Guidelines for Appropriate Affection.
2. Parents or guardians must complete written permission forms before Town of Woodbridge personnel transport youth for a Town of Woodbridge or sponsored / affiliated activity or for any purpose on more than an occasional basis. It is the responsibility of the department head to verify that all permission forms are recorded for each participating youth.
3. Woodbridge personnel must respond to youth with respect, consideration and equal treatment, regardless of sex, race, religion, sexual orientation, culture or socio-economic status. All Woodbridge personnel shall portray positive role models for youth by maintaining an attitude of respect, patience, and maturity. They are to avoid as much as possible any appearance of favoritism.
4. When possible, one-to-one conversations with youth must be done in an open or public or other place where private conversations are possible, but occur in full view of others.
5. Woodbridge personnel must not possess any graphic or sexually oriented materials (magazines, cards, videos, film, clothing, etc.) on Town property or in the presence of youth while engaging in a Town activity or Town sponsored / affiliated activity.

6. Woodbridge personnel must not use the Internet to view or download any graphic or sexually oriented materials on Town property or in the presence of youth.
7. Woodbridge personnel must not discuss sexual activities or explicit materials with youth.
8. Woodbridge personnel must not dress, undress, bathe, or shower in the presence of youth.
9. Woodbridge personnel must not use harsh language or degrading punishments. Personnel must not deprive children of a bathroom break, snack or water.
10. Woodbridge personnel must not participate in or allow others to conduct any hazing activities relating to youth activities.

### **Guidelines for Appropriate Affection**

The Town of Woodbridge personnel are committed to creating and promoting a positive, nurturing environment for all youth that protect youth from abuse and our Town employees from misunderstandings. When creating safe boundaries for youth, it is important to establish what types of affection are appropriate and inappropriate; otherwise that decision is left to each individual. Guidelines for display of affection are as follows:

- Do not initiate physical contact with a child. If the child initiates physical contact refrain from hugging the child face on, and as an alternative use the side hug or high-five instead or gentle tap on the head or shoulder. Do not wrap your arms around the child.
- When teaching swim lessons and/or when physical contact with the child is necessary, only come into contact with the child's hands, head, shoulders, back or legs.
- Do not physically restrain the child or pick up a child unless the child is a danger to themselves or others.
- Do not single out children for preferential treatment. There should be no favorites. If you buy a gift for one child you must buy enough for every child.
- Do not use physical punishment. Do not hit, pinch or thump a child's body; do not use an object to hit a child.
- Do not touch a child in an intimate area of the body.
- Do not have a child sit on your lap.
- Do not allow a child to hang on your body. Since children do these things by nature, we expect the employee to verbally ask the child to stop.

- Do not allow a child to sit or stand in the “V” of your legs while you are sitting. If a child moves into the employee’s V area, the employee must guide the child to the outer side of their legs.
- If you observe or a child tells you that he or she has been abused physically, emotionally, mentally or sexually you must immediately report it to your supervisor. Do not hesitate and DO NOT discuss the situation with your co-workers. As a childcare provider you are mandated by law to report any form of child abuse whether it is obvious or just a possibility.

This list is considered minimum and does not constitute exemptions of other forms of what could be considered abuse. Town of Woodbridge employees should use their discretion in determining whether or not observed interaction should be considered inappropriate and should not feel discouraged to report any observed behavior they feel is or could be considered inappropriate.

### **Responding to Problems**

#### **A. Reporting Inappropriate Behaviors or Policy Violations with Youth**

1. When Town of Woodbridge personnel observe any inappropriate behaviors, behaviors that are inconsistent with the *Guidelines for Appropriate Affection*, or which may violate any provision of the *Policy for the Protection of Youth*, they must immediately report their observations to their supervisor.
2. Such inappropriate behaviors or possible violations that relate to interactions with youth must be reported in one of the following ways:
  - a. A telephone call or meeting with the immediate supervisor of the person and a submitted *Notice of Concern*, signed or unsigned to the Administrative Officer.
  - b. A telephone call or meeting with the Administrative Officer and a submitted *Notice of Concern*, signed or unsigned to the Administrative Officer.
  - c. Submit a *Notice of Concern*, signed or unsigned, to the Administrative Officer
  - d. All reports of inappropriate behavior or policy violations with youth must be taken seriously and may be investigated.

#### **B. Reporting Suspected Abuse of Youth**

1. All Town personnel are required by this policy to report known or suspected abuse or neglect of youth to their supervisor, who may be obligated to report the issue to the Woodbridge Police Department and/or State Department of Children and Families Child Abuse and Neglect Careline at 1-800-842-2288. Failure to report suspected abuse of youth could be a crime.
2. In addition to reporting to the state authorities, Town of Woodbridge personnel must report any suspected or known abuse of youth that has been caused by Woodbridge Personnel directly to the Administrative Officer or representative so that immediate and proper steps may be taken to ensure the safety of alleged victims.

**Notice/Report of Concern**

Individual(s) of Concern: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Occurrence: \_\_\_\_\_

Time of Occurrence: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Concern:

- Inappropriate behavior with a youth
- Policy violation with a youth
- Possible risk of abuse
- Other concern: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Describe the situation: What happened, where (location) it happened, when it happened, who was involved, who was present, who was notified? If reported to the state and/or police, what was their recommendation about investigation? (Attach additional sheets if necessary and mark **confidential**)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Has this situation ever occurred previously? (Attach additional sheets if needed)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What action was taken? How was this situation handled, who was involved, who was questioned? (Attach additional sheets if needed)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Notice/Report of Concern – continued**

What is the follow-up plan? Does anyone else need to be notified? Will the situation need monitoring? Would you like someone to call you to discuss this situation? (Attach additional sheets if needed).

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Submitted by: (Please print): \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Location & Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Received and reviewed by: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

Upon completion of this form, please submit to Tony Genovese, Director of Administration.

**ACTION ON NOTICE OF CONCERN**

In the event an employee is a suspect in a sexual abuse policy violation, the department head must immediately remove the employee from the environment involving youths.

The employee may be reassigned if possible to an area that does not allow the individual to be in any contact with youth.

If no position is available for the employee, the employee may be placed on Administrative Leave with pay.

In the event an employee is proven guilty of the violation, the employee may be immediately terminated and reimburse the Town the monies that was paid to him/her during the investigation period, provided the employee was on paid Administrative Leave.

Any accumulated benefits due this employee for his/her years of service i.e., accumulated sick leave, vacation time, should be at the discretion of the Selectman and other Town officials.

**Acknowledgement**

**I acknowledge that I have received, read and understood the Town of Woodbridge's "Code of Conduct for Protection of Youth."**

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

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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