

SAFE-ENVIRONMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Adopted: April, 2015

DEFINITIONS

(For the purposes of this statement only)

1. Sexual Abuse means an unlawful form of sexual misconduct

Sexual abuse of a minor includes sexual molestation or sexual exploitation of a minor and other behavior by which an adult uses a minor as an object of sexual gratification. Sexual abuse has been defined by different civil authorities in various ways. This policy adopts the definition provided in Texas civil law. The transgressions in question relate to obligations arising from divine commands regarding human sexual interaction as conveyed to us by the sixth commandment of the Decalogue. Thus, the norm to be considered in assessing an allegation of sexual abuse of a minor is whether conduct, communication, or interaction with a minor qualifies as a violation of the sixth commandment.

- 2. Minor:. While some states and jurisdictions may have lower ages of maturity, the definition of a Minor for the purpose of Joel 2:25 is any person who has not reached his/her 18th birthday
- 3. Volunteer: Any person engaged in or involved in a ministry activity, and who is entrusted with the care and supervision of minors.

REQUIREMENTS

The Board of Directors of Joel 2:25 International, Inc. ("Joel 2:25") shall:

- 1. Implement the Safe Environment Program following the guidelines and procedures found in this document.
 - a. Screening Procedures for all volunteers who will have contact with minors
 - b. Training Procedures for all volunteers affiliated with the program
 - c. Ensure the Code of Conduct (below) is carefully followed for every Joel 2:25 event, video-conference, or online forum.
- 2. Maintain a response team to provide support for all parties if an incident should occur.

SCREENING PROCEDURES FOR VOLUNTEERS

The following screening procedures are to be used with ALL Joel 2:25 volunteers who work with minors. All collected information is to be treated as confidential.

1. Screening form. All volunteers must complete the screening form. Volunteers should have attended Joel 2:25 meetings for six months in order to become well known by the other leaders.

- 2. **Reference Check.** Complete a reference check from the three references provided by the volunteer candidate. Maintain a written record of each reference check using the Joel 2:25 Volunteer Reference Interview Form
- 3. Interview. Interview each new applicant using Joel 2:25 Volunteer Interview Form.
- 4. Criminal Background Check. Conduct a criminal background check on all volunteers who work with minors. All criminal background checks must be updated every two (2) years.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Information obtained through the Screening Form, Employment Application, Reference Information, Interviews, Criminal Background Check, etc. will be kept confidential. Access to this information is restricted to those who have a "need to know". These mstaffaterials should not be destroyed, but must be archived.

TRAINING PROCEDURES

- 1. All volunteers must complete the initial Safe Environment Training.
- 2. All volunteers must complete an annual update of the Safe Environment Program Training with either Joel 2:25 or another recognized entity with an equivalent or greater protocol (Ex: Diocese of Dallas)
- 3. Regular and ongoing training for other safety issues may also be required.
- 4. Each new volunteer will be provided with a copy of the Joel 2:25 Safe Environment Code of Conduct.
- 5. Each volunteer is required to read and sign the Joel 2:25 Participant Agreement as well as the Joel 2:25 Agreement for Teen Ministry Volunteers.

VOLUNTEER CODE OF CONDUCT

Preamble

In order to maintain the highest level of accountability, there must be a clear and unambiguous blueprint of appropriate and inappropriate behavior. The intent of this Code of Conduct is to provide a set of normative standards of conduct for all volunteers engaged in ministerial situations in Joel 2:25 International, Inc. (collectively "Volunteer work"). While this Code is not exhaustive in the variety of situations specifically mentioned, it is to be understood that the standards set out herein are to be considered normative for every Joel 2:25 related setting.

Responsibility

Responsibility for adherence to the Code of Conduct rests with the individual. Any Volunteers who violate the Code will be subject to appropriate remedial action by the competent authority in each case. Corrective action may take various forms depending on the specific nature and circumstance of the offense, including but not limited to, an oral or written citation or even removal from Volunteer work, termination of employment or of one's volunteer efforts.

Standards for Volunteers

- 1. Personal and Professional Interactions
 - a. All Volunteers must maintain a presence of mind about their proper role in the circumstance in which they find themselves.
 - b. Volunteers must always protect the interests and rights of those who are most vulnerable, especially minors.
 - c. Explicit sexual interactions by volunteers or even sexually suggestive interactions with persons who are served or with whom one works are never appropriate.
 - d. Volunteers must protect the confidentiality and privacy rights of others at all times.

Conduct Required While Volunteering for Joel 2:25

- 2. Volunteers shall:
 - a. Conduct relationships with others free of deception, manipulation, exploitation, or intimidation.
 - b. Seek to provide an environment that is free from all forms of abuse and promotes respect, self-control, and personal safety.
 - c. Make no false accusations against another or reveal the faults and failings of another to those who have no right to know.
 - d. Volunteers are to refrain from sexually offensive humor and conversation in connection with their Volunteer work.
 - e. In addition to these rules, Volunteers shall abide by all applicable professional codes of conduct, ethical norms.

3. Conduct Required when working with Minors

All volunteers will observe the following for dealing with minors:

- a. Do not provide minors with alcoholic beverage, tobacco, drugs or anything that is prohibited by law.
- b. Touching should be age appropriate and based on the need of the minor and not on the need of the adult. Avoid physical contact when alone with a minor. If a minor initiates physical contact, an appropriate, limited response is proper.
- c. Do not be alone with a minor in a residence, sleeping facility, locker room, rest room, dressing facility, or other closed room or isolated area that is inappropriate to a ministry relationship.
- d. Do not take an overnight trip alone with a minor who is not a member of your immediate family.
- e. Do not sleep in the same hotel room with a minor. If adult supervisors stay in a dorm room or other sleeping room with a group of minors, the two supervisors must sleep in their own beds using a roll away or cot if necessary.
- f. Topics, vocabulary, recordings, films, games or the use of computer software or any other form or personal interaction or entertainment that could not be used in the presence of parents should not be employed with minors. Acquisition, possession or distribution of pornographic material is never appropriate.
- g. If you recognize inappropriate personal or physical attraction developing between yourself and a minor, maintain clear professional boundaries between yourself and the minor or refer the minor to another adult supervisor.
- h. If you observe anyone (adult or minor) abusing a minor, take appropriate steps to immediately intervene and to provide a safe environment for the minor. Report the misconduct.

DISQUALIFYING OFFENSES

No person may serve as a volunteer in Joel 2:25 if he or she has ever been convicted of any disqualifying offense, been on probation or received deferred adjudication for any disqualifying offense, or has presently pending any criminal charges for any disqualifying offense until a determination of guilt or innocence is made, including any person who is presently on deferred adjudication.

Disqualifying offenses are:

1. A felony or misdemeanor classified as an offense against the person or family or involves an offense against the person or family.

Examples: Offenses against a person include, but are not limited to assault, sexual assault, and abandoning or endangering a child. Offenses against the family include, but are not limited to interference with child custody, enticing a child, and harboring a runaway child.

- 2. A felony or misdemeanor classified as an offense against public order, safety, or decency. Examples: Offenses against public order or decency include, but are not limited to prostitution, obscenity, sexual performance by a child, and possession or promotion of child pornography.
- 3. A felony violation of any law intended to control the possession or distribution of any substance included as a controlled substance in the Texas Controlled Substance Act.
- 4. A felony or misdemeanor classified as an offense against property, to the extent that those offenses are related to threats or risk of harm or violence.
- 5. Examples: Offenses against property include robbery, burglary of a habitation, and arson. Other offenses, such as theft by check, or fraud would not ordinarily be considered Disqualifying Offenses.
- 6. A felony Computer Crime of online solicitation of a minor

The foregoing lists of offences describe categories from the Texas Penal Code. The categories of offenses may be slightly different in other states. In summary, any offense which in the discretion of Joel 2:25 would impact health and safety would be a disqualifying offense.



Agreements for Teen Ministry Volunteers

Please read the Volunteer Code of Conduct and sign below to acknowledge your aggrement to strictly abide by this code as a volunteer leader for Joel 2:25 programs involving youth and teens.

1.	I have reviewed the "Disqualifying Offenses" listed in the Safe-Environment Policy and I certify
	that I have never been convicted of any disqualifying offense, been on probation nor received deferred adjudication for any disqualifying offense; nor are there any presently pending
	crimincal charges against me for any disqualifying offense Initial
2.	I have read the Volunteer Code of Conduct and I commit to abide by this code in all of my
	interactions with minors as a ministry volunteerInitial
3.	I commit that in my capacity as a volunteer for Joel 2:25, I will avoid being alone with a minor in
	any residence, sleeping facility, locker room, rest room, dressing facility, or other closed room or
	isolated area that is inappropriate to a ministry relationship Initial
4.	I acknowledge that any topics, vocabulary, recordings, films, games or the use of computer
	software or any other form or personal interaction or entertainment that could not be used in
	the presence of parents should not be employed with minors. Acquisition, possession or
	distribution of pornographic material is never appropriate Initial
5.	I commit to maintain clear professional boundaries between myself and any minors.
	Initial
6.	I commit that I will not exchange personal contact information with any minor and will conduct
	all communication between myself and a minor in the presence of other approved volunteers.
	Initial
7.	If I observe anyone (adult or minor) abusing a minor, I will take appropriate steps to
	immediately intervene and to provide a safe environment for the minor. I will report the
	misconduct to law enforcement immediately Initial
My sig	nature demonstrates my understanding of the foregoing points. By signing below, I accept the
terms	of this agreement.
Signat	ure: Date:
Printe	d Name
	tate /Country
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