



## St. Vladimir's Camp

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# Policies and Procedures

## Regarding Sexual Misconduct at St. Vladimir's Camp & N.J.S.S.T.

These *Policies and Procedures* are in addition to the O.C.A. of North America's *Policies and Procedures Regarding Sexual Misconduct* adopted June 3, 1999.

### INTRODUCTION

St. Vladimir's Camp has as its Mission to "present to young people a living experience of the Holy Orthodox Faith, in their relationship with God and other campers in an uncluttered environment." At St. Vladimir's Camp we are concerned with what campers take home with them. We are also concerned with how they grow physically, emotionally and spiritually. We are concerned with their growth in human relations and how they interact with one another.

As a spiritual retreat and learning center for youths and adults within the O.C.A. & F.O.C.A. the Camp, the Heritage and Learning Center and all other activities at St. Vladimir's Camp & N.J.S.S.T. adhere to Orthodox Christian virtues. Among these virtues are the affirmation and acknowledgement that each person is a child of God and a Temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19) created in the image and likeness of God (Gen. 1:26). It is to affirm that each person is our neighbor (Luke 10:25 et seq.) and that we are to treat each person as we wish to be treated (Matt. 7:12), i.e., with kindness, respect, patience and agape love. Christ instructed us to love one another as He loved us (John 15:12-13), giving His life for our sakes. Accordingly, any behavior that exhibits Christian virtue is expected. Conduct which is contrary to Christ's teachings is a sin and unacceptable.

It is essential that all priests, leaders, workers, counselors, volunteers, CITs and others involved at St. Vladimir's Camp & the N.J.S.S.T. understand the overwhelming public concern regarding abuse and sexual conduct issues. Violations can quickly lead to the involvement of law enforcement officials and can quickly destroy the reputation and work of the Camp. This written policy statement is designed for clarification of the issues among all staff members, volunteer or paid, counselors or CITs, clergy or laity. Admittedly it is conservative. The impressions that campers (who come from a variety of backgrounds) take home with them and pass along to their parents or friends, or parents gain when visiting St. Vladimir's Camp & the N.J.S.S.T., help determine whether campers will return or recommend the camp to others. These same impressions or perceptions affect the reputation of St. Vladimir's Camp & the N.J.S.S.T.. A reputation of having an outstanding camping program can take years to gain and a single inappropriate experience to lose. Members of St. Vladimir's Camp & the N.J.S.S.T. community, including campers and staff must not be uncomfortable with their own impressions and reactions to the sexual behavior of others.

We cannot be too careful in the area of sexual abuse. Even the appearance of inappropriate conduct or the filing of a false allegation can cause irreparable damage to the reputation of the accused staff member and St. Vladimir's Camp. Therefore, all staff members must be very cautious in order to avoid doing anything that could be interpreted as sexual abuse or sexually inappropriate conduct.

As a result these procedures are to be read broadly and expansively to protect the interest of the children, campers, counselors, CITs and other staff, both volunteer and paid, clergy and laity. Conduct proscribed here is not all-inclusive. Staff must avoid even the appearance of impropriety.

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There are certain behaviors that must be mentioned that are prohibited for St. Vladimir's Camp & the N.J.S.S.T. employees and volunteers during their stay at St. Vladimir's Camp & the N.J.S.S.T.. These include engaging in any physical touching of any kind including but not limited to kissing, petting, caressing, or any other contact or conduct intended for sexual gratification with any other person related in any way to the camp, including but not limited to campers, counselors, CITs, on site priest, employees or volunteers.

Sexual misconduct also includes verbal misconduct. Vulgar, obscene, suggestive or profane talk or behavior is strictly forbidden. Such conduct includes narrative accounts of sexual activities, sexual innuendoes, comments about one's body or that of another person, discussions of sexual activities or experiences, or obscene jokes.

There are additional behaviors, while not necessarily intended for sexual gratification, that are inappropriate due to the appearance of possible impropriety. These include interactions between staff members and other staff members (counselors and/or CITs) and/or campers such as: massages, hand holding, sitting on laps or full body hugs.

Some general guidelines for counselor behaviors with campers, CITs, and other counselors include:

- Never touch anyone against the person's will (verbally or non-verbally expressed) unless it is to prevent an accident.
- Appropriate touching, that takes into account the touched one's comfort level, may include pats on the back, a touch on the shoulder, hugs of welcome, hello, goodbye, thanks, congratulations (however not full body or excessively long hugs), hand shakes, high fives, arms around shoulders. Appropriate touching can become inappropriate such as excessive tickling, wrestling with or teasing a camper.
- Inappropriate touching is any physical contact that violates the touched person's comfort level. It is touch that is given or forced on another person for the primary satisfaction of the actor, not the one touched. Touching of the genitals, buttocks or any touching for sexual gratification is always inappropriate and cannot be consensual.
- It is inappropriate to share information about your personal sexuality or sex life or to inquire about another person's.
- It is inappropriate to show favoritism or to encourage crushes or romantic fantasies that campers may have about you.
- It is inappropriate to purposefully expose one's body to another (i.e. "flashing" or "mooning") and good judgment should be exercised when you are changing or bathing. Likewise, the privacy of campers should be respected during the times when they are changing clothes, showering, etc.
- It is inappropriate to share a bed or sleeping bag with a camper.

It is inappropriate to show signs of affection to other staff in front of the campers. Behavior of the staff should be circumspect around campers so that at no time do they associate any two staff members as a couple. Any and all behavior in a camp setting must allow for perceptions and concerns of others.

## REPORTING OF ALLEGED MISCONDUCT

All staff must be concerned for the safety and protection of the campers and others at St. Vladimir's Camp & the N.J.S.S.T. As a result, it is required of all staff that they report any apparent violations or other improprieties even if it involves another staff member. Failure to report an incident or complaint that is made known to a staff member can result in discharge.

If a child confides in a staff member about another camper or staff member, the staff member shall discuss the disclosure personally with the Camp Director, or if that is not possible with the Camp Nurse, Assistant Camp Director, Executive Director of St. Vladimir's Camp & the N.J.S.S.T. or an official representative of the Diocese.

The staff member should refrain from investigating the complaint independently or from discussing it with other staff.

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Any violations of the above guidelines and procedures must be reported at once to the Camp Director, who will consult with the Diocese Headquarters. If for any reason one feels unable to report the violation to the Director, the violation may be reported directly to the Overseeing Bishop at the Diocese Headquarters. All violations will be investigated for both the protection of the child and for the protection of the one alleged to have committed the violation.

The Camp Director, in consultation with the Diocese, will contact the appropriate authorities in accordance with relevant state and local law and the parents. Investigations of violations will follow the procedures set forth in the Diocese's *Policies and Procedures* June 3, 1999.

In the event the reported incident involves child or sexual abuse by a staff member, paid or volunteer, the Camp Director will, without exception suspend the person from the camp. The parents or legal guardian of the child (ren) involved will be promptly notified in accordance with the directions of the relevant state or local agency.

In the event the reported incident involves an alleged violation of the guidelines less than that of abuse, the Camp Director will consult with the Diocese to determine whether the person should be suspended pending the complete investigation.

Whether the incident or alleged offense must occur within the camp session takes place on or off camp property, it will be considered camp related.

Reinstatement of the staff person will occur only after all allegations have cleared to the satisfaction of the investigative committee and the Metropolitan Primate. All camp staff and volunteers must be sensitive to the need for confidentiality in the handling of this information and should only discuss the incident with the Camp Director and the investigative committee.

All , counselors, CITs and volunteers, lay and clergy must read and sign this policy.

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

PRINT NAME \_\_\_\_\_

\*Please do not detach- return all pages.