

LIVING WATERS

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

amended policy approved June 2009

Recognizing the serious spiritual, societal, and physical dangers of child abuse this camp is committed to protect the children placed in our care. This obligation stems from Biblical, moral and legal foundations. The seriousness of these dangers compels Living Waters to immediately take the following necessary steps to protect the children placed in our care.

Definition of Child abuse in Maine

22 M.R.S.A. §4002 (1). - "Abuse or neglect' means a threat to a child's health or welfare by physical, mental or emotional injury or impairment, sexual abuse or exploitation, deprivation of essential needs or lack of protection from these ... by a person responsible for the child."

Examples of sexual abuse are: rape, incest, sodomy, lewd or lascivious behavior which includes wrong types of speech or touching. In order to protect the child from abuse and our workers from false accusations, the following steps must be taken in regards to children placed within the care of Living Waters Camp:

Steps to Prevent Child Abuse

1. All volunteers (hereinafter to be understood to be those who come in contact with minors), paid staff and board/committee members must be screened prior to serving.
2. All workers (hereinafter to refer to both paid staff and volunteers) must read, understand and sign a statement agreeing to follow the policies and procedures concerning child protection and reporting as outlined in this document, as well as a statement that he or she is not using and will not use pornography (soft or hard).
3. All minors who are placed in our care shall not be left unsupervised when at all practicable during the time period they are in our care.
4. At least two workers must be present at any camp activity or ministry setting where children are present.
5. Even when ministry to children is not taking place, an additional adult or minor must be present when two workers are together and one worker is a minor.
6. All rooms used by workers when a minor is present must be accessible (no locked doors) and with open visibility (a window in the door or the door left wide open).
7. All suspicious or inappropriate behavior between a worker and a minor must be reported to supervisory staff and investigated immediately.

8. All workers must agree on a yearly basis to provide all information necessary to conduct a Criminal Background Check and a sex offender registry search and sign the necessary releases.

* If anyone has been convicted of a crime against children, then he or she will not be allowed to work at Living Waters. No exemptions will be granted.

* If anyone has been convicted of any sexual crime of any type, then he or she will not be allowed to work at Living Waters. No exemptions will be granted.

* If anyone has been convicted of any felony, then he or she will only be allowed to work at Living Waters if approved by the Board of Directors.

Reporting Suspected Child Abuse

There are a class of individuals who are mandatory reporters of suspected Child Abuse in Maine. Living Waters workers are included in the list of those who are mandatory reporters.

22 M.R.S.A. §4011-A. - 1. Required report to department. The following adult persons shall immediately report or cause a report to be made to the department (DHHS) when the person knows or has reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been or is likely to be abused or neglected or that a suspicious child death has occurred:

Whenever a person is required to report in a capacity as a member of the staff of a medical or public or private institution, agency or facility, that person immediately shall notify either the person in charge of the institution, agency or facility or a designated agent who then shall cause a report to be made. The staff also may make a report directly to the department.

A. When acting in a professional capacity: ...

(14) A children's summer camp administrator or counselor; ...

(21) Child care personnel; ...

(27) A clergy member acquiring the information as a result of clerical professional work except for information received during confidential communications; ...

B. Any person who has assumed full, intermittent or occasional responsibility for the care or custody of the child, regardless of whether the person receives compensation; and

C. Any person affiliated with a church or religious institution who serves in an

administrative capacity or has otherwise assumed a position of trust or responsibility to the members of that church or religious institution, while acting in that capacity, regardless of whether the person receives compensation.

2. *Required report to district attorney. When, while acting in a professional capacity, any person required to report under this section knows or has reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been abused or neglected by a person not responsible for the child or that a suspicious child death has been caused by a person not responsible for the child, the person immediately shall report or cause a report to be made to the appropriate district attorney's office.*

Any Living Waters worker who has reasonable suspicion that a minor is being abused or any minor who works for Living Waters who has been himself or herself abused by a Living Waters worker **shall** immediately notify his or her immediate supervisor or if unavailable the general director of Living Waters. Any supervisor shall report the suspected abuse to the general director of Living Waters. If the suspected abuse is coming from that immediate supervisor, then it **shall** be reported immediately to the general director. If the suspected abuse is coming from the general director, then it **shall** be reported immediately to a member of the Board of Directors.

Any person suspected of child abuse will, upon request, voluntarily relinquish or be removed from duties which involve direct contact with minors or any other steps deemed necessary to ensure the safety of the children in the care of Living Waters until the matter is completely resolved.

As a mandatory reporter of child abuse in Maine Living Waters workers must also report reasonable suspicions of child abuse perpetrated by family members or others. All suspicions of child abuse are to be reported without undue delay to a member of the program director staff, who will without undue delay notify the general director of Living Waters. The following steps should be taken to obtain necessary information for the report: Listen to the child without pressuring him or her, Ask open-ended questions, Let the child know it was right to come talk to you, Don't overreact to what you are being told, and as soon as you are able write down the conversation using as many exact words of the child as possible. The general director or someone he may appoint shall report to the Department of Health and Human Services for the State of Maine as soon as practicable all cases when the alleged perpetrator is a family member or someone who has responsibility for the child when child abuse is known to have occurred or has reasonable cause to suspect has occurred. In cases where the alleged perpetrator is not a family member or someone who has responsibility for the child, then the report shall be made as well to the District Attorney's office.