



Child Protection Program

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A. Introduction

A.1 Statement of Commitment to Child Protection

At Forest Home, we are fully dedicated to prioritizing the safety and well-being of every child entrusted to our care. We recognize the profound responsibility we hold in providing a safe environment where children can thrive, learn, and create lasting memories. At Forest Home, every child is valued, cherished, and safeguarded. We work to promote a culture of transparency, accountability, and open communication, regarding all aspects of child safety and we are steadfast in our dedication to their protection and welfare.

A.2 Overview of the child protection program

This child protection program is a comprehensive guide to all that Forest Home does to help keep children safe. It will be implemented as a training manual for onboarding and recurring child protection training for all staff. It will serve as a reference tool, readily accessible to all employees, providing guidance and clarity as situations arise. Lastly, it will function as an accountability tool. Annual self-audits will be performed to ensure that we are enacting all policies and procedures within the program. Through ongoing monitoring, evaluation, and refinement, we will continuously strengthen our child protection program, reaffirming our dedication to the safety and welfare of all youth at Forest Home.

A.3 External Communication with Parents and Guardians

Forest Home will communicate this Child Protection Program with parents of campers via the following methods:

- Links to this document will be available on the Forest Home website
- This document will be included in pre-arrival emails to all parents/guardians of minor aged campers

A.4 Child Protection Definitions

Abuse Response Protocol – A system of rules and procedures to be implemented when a report of abuse is made by a participant concerning an organization or non-organization related incident.

Advanced Screening Techniques – The technique of utilizing identified perpetrator patterns and characteristics to detect red flag indicators during the hiring process.

Child – A person under the age of 18 years.

Clean Sweep – An inspection of facilities for the detection, identification, and removal of concealed recording devices in the prevention of illegal recording.

Non-Private Area – An area on property where visual access is mandatory.

Offense – An unlawful human act, which is accompanied by a blameworthy state of mind, and which is punishable by law.

Private areas – An area on property where visual access is controlled and/or prohibited. (Shower houses, dressing rooms, tents, and toilet areas).

Sexual Abuse – ANY act which results in the exploitation of a child, whether with their consent or not, for the purposes of sexual or erotic gratification. (E.g. looking at inappropriate pictures together, talking about sexual things and/or body parts, physically touching).

B. Operational Support

B.1 Child Abuse Hotline

Forest Home will post the National Child Abuse Hotline (1-800-4-A-Child) in plain site within the business offices of each department.

B.2 Annual Review of CPP

Forest Home will conduct a yearly review of all state child abuse and neglect laws and maintain a current copy in the Human Resource office.

This copy of state laws should include:

- Definition of Child Abuse
- Understanding of Confidentiality Requirements
- Immunity for reporting
- Mandatory reporting
- Penalties for failure to report

B.3 Document Retention

Our organization will archive the following documents for the corresponding minimum time frame:

- | | |
|---|--------------------|
| • Youth Registration forms | Indefinite |
| • Youth Health forms | Until leaving camp |
| • Youth Waiver forms | Indefinite |
| • Youth Incident Reports involving abuse | Indefinite |
| • Staff applications related to allegations of abuse | Indefinite |
| • Staff disciplinary reports related to abuse allegations | Indefinite |
| • All Insurance Policies | Indefinite |

C. Hiring Practices

Forest Home will utilize a thorough application process and advanced screening techniques to qualify all applicants before hiring.

C.1 Application Requirements

Our application form shall require and assess the following general information for all positions:

- a. Form requirements:
 - Full legal name
 - Current physical address (no P.O. Box)
 - Home address (if different than current address)
- b. HR personnel are required to verify the following information for all employees before their first shift.
 - Verify identity of applicant
 - Verify residential addresses
 - Verify U.S. citizenship via I-9 form

C.2 Work and Volunteer History

Our application form shall require and assess the following work and volunteer history information for all positions for the three years prior to application:

- a. Form requirements:
 - Name and address of organization
 - Name, phone, and email address of supervisor
 - Nature of work/position
 - Duration of employment
 - Reason for leaving
- b. HR personnel or hiring managers are required to take the following actions when necessary:
 - Follow-up on inaccurate, incomplete information or gaps in employment or volunteer history
 - Follow-up if work history is centered on a certain age and gender of children
 - Follow-up with unstable work history (short duration/abrupt departure/multiple states)
 - Follow-up when the answer is vague or does not answer the question asked

C.3 Reference check requirements and process

Our application process shall require and assess at least 2 references (Personal and Professional) for all positions:

- a. Required reference information
 - Name, address, phone and email address of the 2 following persons:
 - Professional reference (current or former supervisor)
 - Personal reference (pastor, friend, teacher, coach)
- b. Hiring managers are required to contact both references via phone and ask the following questions:
 - How long have you known this applicant
 - What is your relationship to this applicant
 - Would you be comfortable placing your children in the care of this applicant
 - Have you ever known the applicant to use harsh or abusive discipline with a child
 - Do you feel this applicant has the ability to follow rules and guidelines
- c. Hiring managers are required to abide by the following:
 - Follow-up if reference information is incomplete or inaccurate

- Follow-up if you are unable to contact any of the references
- Follow-up to any negative response from prepared questions

C.4 Criminal history disclosure statements

Our application process shall require and assess the following criminal history disclosure statements for all paid positions:

- a. Required questions
 - Have you ever been convicted of a crime or municipal ordinance violation in any federal, state, or municipal court?
 - Have you ever pled guilty, been found guilty, and entered a Plea Nolo Contendere or an Alford plea of guilty for any offense involving a minor child?
 - Have you ever been placed on probation, received a Suspended Execution of Sentence or Suspended Imposition of Sentence for any offense involving a minor child?"
 - Have you ever been placed on any local, state, or federal registry for sex offenders?
 - Have you ever been sued in a civil court of law where the allegations in the suit involved illegal, inappropriate, or sexual conduct or contact with a minor child?
 - Have you ever been disciplined or dismissed from any volunteer/employment position for any reason or following allegations of sexual misconduct, physical and/or verbal aggression, or other inappropriate behavior or conduct?
 - Do you have any disciplinary action or investigation pending by an employer, or organization, professional association, or licensing body, for violence, sexual misconduct, or other misconduct involving children?
 - Have you ever sought out or intentionally viewed child pornography?

- b. Any "yes" answers to the previous questions will immediately disqualify the applicant from employment.

C.5 Criminal background thresholds

Forest Home will abide by the following policy regarding applicants with criminal records:

- Any applicant with a history of child abuse or any violent convictions within the past five years will not be considered for employment.
- All other historical criminal acts will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Factors considered may include the nature and severity of the offense, the time elapsed since the conviction, rehabilitation efforts, and the relevance of the offense to the position applied for.
- The final decision regarding the suitability of candidates with a criminal history will be made by the executive team and HR department, ensuring fairness and compliance with applicable laws and regulations.
- Applicants may be given the opportunity to provide context and mitigating circumstances regarding their criminal history during the application process.

C.6 Employee background checks

Forest Home shall require, in compliance with California state law, that all applicants complete all livescan background check before their start date:

- a. Process:
- HR personnel will verify the completion of this task by all new employees before their start date.

C.7 Employee signature verification documents

Our application process shall require signature verification of the following for all positions:

- a. Forms
- Statement of Faith
 - **Statement of compliance to company policies and procedures**
- b. HR personnel are required to follow up with applicants if any of the following occurs:
- Follow up if anything has been crossed out
 - Make sure there have been no editorial notes above signature line
 - Make sure they signed the right name

C.8 Child protection commitment statement

Forest Home shall require a signed “CPP Commitment Statement” from all applicants as part of our pre-hire requirements that includes the following questions:

- a. Form requirements:
- I have never abused children
 - I will abide by all child protection policies
 - I acknowledge “zero tolerance” policy for child abuse
 - I will attend training events
 - I will not show inappropriate pictures or videos, use inappropriate sexual or vulgar language, touch children inappropriately, or participate in sexual horseplay with children
 - I commit to report inappropriate behavior
 - I understand reporting (by law) is kept confidential and will in no way harm my position with this organization
 - I understand the organization is bound by law to report allegations of sexual abuse to authorities
 - A reference to “Hope for the Heart” {1-800-488-HOPE (4673)} for those struggling with inappropriate attraction to minors shall be located below the signature line

[See “CPP Commitment Statement” in sharepoint]

- b. A refusal to sign will immediately disqualify the applicant.

D. Security and Environmental Practices

D.1 Private Area Policies

Forest Home will ensure that private areas are equipped with the following:

- Shades on cabin doors and/or windows
- Curtains or dividers with 12-inch minimum floor visibility for showers in shared bathroom spaces
- Curtains or dividers with 12-inch minimum floor visibility for toilets in shared bathroom spaces

D.2 Non-Private Area policies

Forest Home will apply the following guidelines to “non-private” (offices, meeting rooms, event buildings, kitchens, etc.) areas:

- All are equipped with windows
- Secured by signage or locked at night lockdown

D.3 Clean Sweep (technical surveillance countermeasures)

Forest Home shall conduct Clean Sweep inspections of all private areas to search for video and audio recording devices.

- Clean Sweep inspections shall be performed bi-annually, once as a scheduled event and once as completely undisclosed.
- The inspection will be performed by at least two people
- The inspection shall not be performed by a Program Manager or Director

(See "Clean Sweep Procedures" in sharepoint)

D.4 Visitors, Trespassers and Suspicious Persons

Forest Home will identify intruders (code 10's) and regulate their access to property, facilities, and minors:

(See "Trespassers and suspicious persons (code 10)" in sharepoint)

D4.1 All visitors and volunteers

While guests are on site, Forest Home requires the following for all **volunteers, visitors, and overnight guests that are not associated with a program or guest conference event:**

- They must verify their identity and undergo a check on the state sex offender registry using our "raptor visitor management system" first thing after arrival.
- If approved, they must wear their temporary nametag at all times while on campus.
- They must sign our digital release of liability form.

(See "Visitor and volunteer procedures" in sharepoint)

(See "Overnight Visitor Policy" in sharepoint)

D4.2 Employee acquaintance visitors

In addition to the former policies, Forest Home requires the following for all visitors that are friends or family of staff members:

- The employee must receive approval from their direct report prior to the visitation date.
- The staff member must not be working during the time of visitation and must remain with their visitors for the duration of their time on campus.

D4.3 Early pick-up of youth campers

Forest Home will take the following actions for parents attempting to pick up their child early from camp:

- They must verify their identity and undergo a check on the state sex offender registry using our “raptor visitor management system” first thing after arrival.
- They will be escorted to the appropriate camp center by Forest Home staff
- The program manager and church leader will be present with the child when the parent arrives to ensure the child is comfortable leaving with the adult.

[See “Early Youth Camper Pick-up Procedures” in sharepoint]

D.5 Independent contractors and service providers

Forest Home will require contractors and service providers to read and sign a statement of understanding that covers the following safety policies:

- background check requirements
- Identification process
- Dress code
- Code of conduct
- Refraining from all interactions with youth campers
- Boundry limitations
- Bathroom access
- Vehicular speed limitations

E. Child Protection Policies

E.1 Camper to Counselor Ratio

The camper to counselor ratio shall not exceed 11:1.

E.2 CCA and Childcare Policies

E2.1 CCA code of conduct

Forest Home will enforce the following code of conduct policies for child care assistants (CCA's) and train all CCA's on them. As CCA's are minor aged campers that provide care for minor aged campers, the policies below are in place to protect both the CCA themselves, as well as the minor camper that they are assigned to.

- CCA's will not bathe any children.
- CCA's will change diapers as needed.
- CCA's will change clothes within reason and with the permission and instruction of the parents/guardians of the children they are watching.
- CCA's will assist children with using the restroom with reason and with the permission and instruction of the parents/guardians of the children they are watching.
- No CCA is allowed to be alone with adult males.
- CCA's must be walked back to Chipmunk Corner to check out from babysitting.
- CCA's are welcome to share their contact information with Family Campers if they choose to do so.
- Any CCA that is 18 years old or older must be paired with another CCA that is 18 years old or older. No CCA 18 years old or older is allowed to be alone with a minor child.

- If a CCA is uncomfortable with any request made by a family camper, they are instructed to report this to their CCA counselor.

E2.2 Childcare facility policies and procedures

Forest Home will implement the following policies for Chipmunk Corner, our childcare facility, and it's CCA staff workers.

- CCA camper to staff member ratio shall not exceed 11:1.
- CCA to Family Camp child ratio shall not exceed 1:3. This ratio is reduced based on various factors such as child age, child needs, and CCA age and comfortability.
- All Family Camp children 10 and under must be checked in to a staff member by a parent/guardian. Upon check in and check out, the parent/guardian must sign for the child. Parents of children 11-17 years old are given the option to give their children self-check in and out if desired.
- Any incidents involving children will be shared with parents at the end of their time with staff, unless the issue warrants a timelier response.
- When in the care of CCA staff, only children 2 and under will be helped with using the restroom, diaper changes, and clothing changes. This type of care will only be provided with open doors and with other staff members and campers present.

E.3 Post-camp communication with minors policy

- You cant contact a camper without permission from a parent
- If a camper contacts you, respond by saying the following, "Thanks, before responding I need permission from your parents, can you have them contact me so i know that they are aware and give their consent."
- Consent from a parent needs to be written and retained by staff member (letter, email, text, DM, etc.)
- Posting comments on public social media accounts is allowed. Must get consent from parents before sending friend request on private account.
- Use wisdom in all communication. Should be appropriate, above reproach, with good intentions, etc.
- If a camper says or send anything inappropriate, inform hiring manager immediately.

E.4 Photo/video sharing policy

Staff may post any photo or video to their personal social media accounts that fit one or more of the following criteria:

- The photo or video doesn't include any minors and does not disrespect Forest Home Values.
- The photo or video is only of your family or personal guests of yours

- The photo was taken from an official Forest Home source (Instagram, Facebook, Website, Vimeo or SmugMug).

Any photos or videos that do not meet one of these criteria shall not be posted.
Employees should never take pictures of campers with their personal cameras

E.5 Youth camper transportation policy

Minor campers are not to be transported in vehicles by employees except in the following situations:

- By all staff during medical emergencies if the transportation of the victim is immediately necessary.
- By the First Aid team whenever they determine that the transportation of a minor is necessary.
- During natural disasters or an EAP event in which camp needs to be evacuated.

(See "Evacuation Plan: Off-site Disaster" in sharepoint)

In all of the former approved situations, the following is also required:

- There must be at least two staff members present in the vehicle with the minor camper at all times, except in medical emergencies in which two staff members are not available.

E.6 Church counselor screening policies

E6.1 Counselor background checks

Forest Home shall require churches to perform a state mandated background check on all church counselors that will be supervising minors during an event.

E6.2 Counselor terms, conditions and compliance document

Forest Home shall require all church counselors to sign a terms, conditions and compliance document that includes the following:

F. Training and Orientation

Forest Home will provide the following training related to child safety and abuse prevention.

F.1 Child Abuse Prevention training

Forest Home shall provide Child Abuse Awareness Training to all positions that will include:

- Definition of child abuse
- Recognizing grooming behavior
- Signs and indicators of a person who has been abused
- Mandated reporters
- How to report suspected abuse
- Protection zones
- How we train minor campers
- How to report incidents

F.2 Staff Code of Conduct

Forest Home will provide code of conduct training to all positions that will include:

- 3 T's (Touch, Talk, Territory)
- Modesty
- One on One's
- Consequences of breaking policies

(See "staff code of conduct training" in sharepoint)

F.3 Minor Camper Safety Orientation

Forest Home will provide the following safety training for all program youth campers on the first night of each program event:

- 4 R's (respect, resist, report, refresh)
- Three ways to report (Tell a counselor, tell FH staff, First Aid anonymous comments box)
- How to contact first aid

(See "Youth camper safety orientation" in sharepoint)

F.4 Counselor Code of Conduct and Safety Orientation

Forest Home will provide the following code of conduct and safety training for all church counselors on the first night of each program event.

- 3 T's (Touch, Talk, Territory)
- Modesty
- How to contact first aid and what to do in emergencies
- First Aid and CPR training

(See "Counselor safety orientation" in sharepoint)

F.5 Maintenance employee Code of Conduct

Forest Home will provide code of conduct training to maintenance workers that is specific to buildings and grounds and accommodations workers:

- Guidelines for providing maintenance on youth cabins during program events

(See "Maintenance guidelines" in sharepoint)

F.6 Hiring Training and Advanced Screening Techniques

Forest Home will provide training for all hiring managers in *advanced screening techniques*:

- a. Application Review
 - General applicant information
 - Work/volunteer history
 - Reference checks
 - Required documents

(See "Hiring Managers CPP Training" in sharepoint)

F.7 Child Protection Policies Training

Forest Home will train the appropriate employees on the following child protection policies that are relevant to each position:

- Camper to counselor ratios
- CCA code of conduct
- Childcare facility policies
- Post camp communication with minors
- Photo/video sharing policy
- Camper transportation policies
- How to report misconduct

G. Reporting and Response

G.1 Methods of Reporting

Forest Home shall provide campers with three methods of reporting for suspicions or actions of abuse, violations of the code of conduct, hazards and anything else that makes them feel uncomfortable.

1. Tell a counselor or Church Leader
2. Tell a FH staff member.
3. Write a note and put it in the Anonymous Comment Box at the First Aid station.

G.2 Abuse Reporting Agent

Forest Home will designate an “Abuse Reporting Agent” who shall:

- Not be a Program Manager or Program Director
- Oversee the filing of all abuse reports made to reporting agencies.

Forest Home’s abuse reporting agent is the Senior Director of Programs. If this person cannot be contacted during an abuse report, staff should contact one of the following:

- The Camp President
- The Director of Safety

G.3 Reporting Procedures for Suspected Abuse

Forest Home will initiate the *Abuse Response Protocol* for NON-ORGANIZATION RELATED child abuse allegations which includes:

- Responding to minor
- Verifying data
- A Determination of Reportability
- Communication with parents and guardians
- Report to Authorities
- Abuse report form

(See “Abuse Conversation Guidelines” in sharepoint)

(See “Procedure for Reporting Abuse” in sharepoint)

(See “Abuse Report Form” in sharepoint)

(See “Peer to Peer Abuse Response” in sharepoint)

G.4 Organization Related Abuse Allegations

Our organization will initiate the *Abuse Response Protocol* for ORGANIZATION RELATED child abuse allegations which include:

- Responding to:
 - Minors
 - Alleged Abuser
- Verifying Data (who, what, when, where, etc.)
- A Determination of Reportability
- Communication with parents and guardians
- Report to Authorities
- Initiate Crisis Response plan

(See "Abuse Conversation Guidelines" in sharepoint)

(See "Staff to Minor Abuse Response" in sharepoint)

(See "Procedure for Reporting Abuse" in sharepoint)

(See "Abuse Report Form" in sharepoint)

G.5 Crisis Response Plan

Our organization will follow a Crisis Response Plan for ORGANIZATION RELATED reportable allegations which includes:

G5.1 Convening of the organization's Crisis Response Team which includes:

- Advocacy Member (Internal team member)
 - Managing relationship with victims and families

- Executive Member (Internal team member)
 - Coordinates all internal and external efforts of the team

- Project Manager (Internal team member)
 - Works alongside the Executive Member to organize, track and report all information

- Media Spokesperson (Internal team member)
 - Works close with Public Relations Consultant

- Civil Attorney (External team member)
 - Review proposed actions and content to protect defense in the event of litigation

- Public Relations Consultant (External team member)
 - Develop all media content
 - Prepare spokesperson for media contact

- Criminal Attorney (External team member)
 - Educates on the criminal process
 - Promotes understanding of investigation
 - Advises on likely strategies that may play out in court

(See "Sample Communications Plan" and "Media Do's & Don'ts" in sharepoint)

G5.2 Litigation Protocol

Forest Home will follow our written litigation protocol to:

- Seize all Forest Home provided computer and phone
- Attempt to seize phone
- Secure offices
- Retrieve and store hard copy documents

(See “Hard Copy Retrieval” in sharepoint)

G5.3 Communication of organization related abuse Protocol

- Develop a Public Relations Committee from the Crisis Response Team members to include:
 - Public Relations consultant – to develop all media content and prepare our organization’s media spokesperson for public contacts
 - Civil Attorney – consult concerning facts of case
 - Executive leadership – gives final say on all communication content
- Develop a communication protocol for employees and families (Guests and Church Partners of Forest Home) to inform them prior to public release through:
 - Phone
 - Emails
- Continually monitor public sentiment through various social media outlets

(See “Crisis Response Script” in sharepoint)