

Frontier Girls Child Abuse Prevention Policy

Child abuse can take many forms, and includes physical, sexual, and emotional abuse. Frontier Girls seeks to provide a safe, healthy environment for its members through education and screening of its Leaders and volunteers to prevent these abuses. All Frontier Girls Leaders and volunteers are required to comply with state, local, and federal laws regarding the reporting of any child abuse suspicions or allegations.

The best way to prevent child abuse is for children to be aware of possible risks and suspicious behavior. Parents are encouraged to discuss with their children how to protect themselves from abuse as well as what to do if it happens. Suggested guidelines are as follows:

- Be alert of other's behavior
- Don't believe strangers
- Avoid being alone with anyone who wants to touch you in a sexual way
- Don't be overly trusting.
- Avoid dangerous situations including playing alone in deserted or public areas
- Do not open doors or answer phones when at home alone.
- Dress modestly and appropriately at all times.
- Report any behavior by an adult that makes you feel uncomfortable
- Discuss problem encounters with parents, guardians, or Frontier Girls Leaders.
- Do not obey an abuser unless physically threatened. Try to turn away, say "no", and scream if necessary. Tell the abuser you will tell someone if they touch you.
- If you are abused, seek help as soon as possible. Do not feel guilty, it is not your fault.

Most child abuse begins with inappropriate behavior. If you see any of the following behaviors exhibited by Frontier Girls Leaders, volunteers, or members it should be immediately reported to the Charter Organization as well as to the Frontier Girls National Office.

Inappropriate and Prohibited behavior includes:

- Telling sexual jokes or stories
- "making eyes at" or giving seductive looks to a child or teen
- Discussions of one's sex life or relationships
- Sitting too close or lying next to a child or teen
- Finding ways to be alone with a child or teen
- Confiding in a child or teen about personal issues
- Giving inappropriate gifts to a child or teen
- Unnecessary touching
- Engaging in suggestive or sexually explicit discussions
- Wearing suggestive or provocative clothing
- Contacting a child outside of duties with Frontier Girls
- Touching a child or teen on the breast, buttocks, or genitalia
- Any activity that is, or that could possibly be interpreted as, sexual in nature.
- Kissing, sensual massages, or sexual gestures
- Showing pornographic videos, sexually explicit magazines or pictures (including websites.)
- Showing videos of questionable sexual content without parental consent.
- Bullying, including verbal and emotional harassment, as well as Cyber bullying (bullying via the internet, email, text messaging, etc.)

The following guidelines should be followed whenever a Frontier Girls Leader or volunteer interacts physically with a child or teen.

Touching Children/Teens:

- Touching should be in response to the need of the child and not the need of the adult

- Touching should be with the child's permission - resistance from the child should be respected.
- Touching should avoid breasts, buttocks, and groin.
- Touching should be open and not secretive.
- Touching or other physical contact should be governed by the age and development stage of the child. For example, sitting in an adults lap may be appropriate for a 5 year old, but less so for a 10 year old, unless the adult is the child's parent.

Frontier Girls has policies in place to prevent child abuse and improve the environment in which conduct our program. The key elements include:

Leader/Volunteer Selection: prevents individuals with a history of abuse from joining our adult membership or volunteering through effective screening of applicants. All volunteers must be interviewed by the Troop Leader and Charter Representative. Adult volunteers must submit a completed adult volunteer application, three character references and a background check. References must be contacted and verified by the Troop Leader.

Two Deep Leadership: No less than two registered adult Leaders or one Leader and one registered adult volunteer are required at all meetings, activities, trips and events. The Troop is responsible for ensuring sufficient leadership is provided for all activities.

Background Checks: All adult Leaders and Volunteers must submit to a criminal background check. Meetings and activities may not take place at any residence where a convicted sex offender or child abuser is living.

No One-to-One Contact: Frontier Girls does not allow one-to-one contact between adults and youth members. If private conversation is required, the child/teen and adult may move out of earshot of others, but not out of sight. Any meeting or discussion on private matters or sensitive issues, must be conducted in view of other adults and /or members.

Separate Accommodations for Adults and Children: When participating in overnight activities, youth members and adults, other than a parent or guardian, are not permitted to sleep in the same room/tent. An exception can be made if adults and youth members sleep as a group with a minimum of two registered volunteers present.

Use of Restrooms: All youth members should be completely potty trained. If restroom assistance is needed, only parents or guardians may assist a child in the restroom. When participating in overnight activities, use of separate restrooms and shower facilities are encouraged for youth members and adults. If this is not possible, arrange a time schedule for use of facilities for youth members and adult members or arrange for two-deep leadership to be maintained in restroom and shower facilities.

No Secret Organizations: Frontier Girls does not permit secret organizations. All programs and activities are open to observation by parents and adult members at any time. Physical hazing and initiations are prohibited.

Appropriate Attire: Proper, modest attire by all volunteers and members for all activities is required.

Constructive discipline: Discipline used in Frontier Girls should be constructive, positive, and reflect our values. Corporal punishment is not permitted.

Outside Contact: Parents should understand that selecting a person to be a Frontier Girls Leader or Volunteer does not qualify that person to be a child's best friend, babysitter in the home, or for other roles outside of Frontier Girls.

Procedures In the Event of Suspected Abuse

In the event an act of child abuse is witnessed, reported, or suspected the following procedures are to be followed:

- Remove youth member from immediate danger and provide medical attention if needed.
- In the event child abuse is witnessed, promptly remove and report offenders to the local social services department and/or police immediately in accordance with state, local, and federal laws and regulations. (Refer to your county website for reporting abuse in your area.)
- If the suspected abuser is NOT the parent/guardian, notification should be made to Parents/Guardians and designated Frontier Girls officials as soon as possible advising them of situation and action taken.
- Leaders, having reason to believe a youth member(s) has suffered abuse, should report or cause reports to be made to the local social services department and police as soon as possible. The report should include: name of the child; basis for the suspicion or report; the date; what specifically is thought to have occurred; the name of the suspected perpetrator; the date and time the report was made with child protective services, and with whom the report was filed; name and telephone number of case worker; if applicable; actions taken by Frontier Girls and the Charter Organization to protect the child. Upon notice to the social services and police, immediately notify Frontier Girls officials advising them of the situation and action taken.
- Fill out an incident report and submit it to the Frontier Girls National Office.

Suggested Resources for Preventing Child Abuse

Videos:

Break the Silence: Kids Against Child Abuse, *AIMS Multimedia* - 30 minutes

Parenting and Child Safety, *For Kis Sake, Inc.* - 55 minutes

Shadows to Light: A Guide to Child Abuse Reporting, *California Attorney General* - 22 minutes

A Time to Tell, *Boy Scouts of America* - 32 minutes

Books:

Child Abuse: Educator's Responsibilities, *By the California Attorney General's Office* - 38 pages

Child Abuse Wound Identification, *By Mead and Westgate* - 36 pages

For Their Sake: Recognizing, Responding to and Reporting Child Abuse, *By Becca Cowan Johnson and For Kids Sake, Inc.*, - 204 pages

For Their Sake Handbook: A staff training handbook about child abuse awareness, *By Becca Cowan Johnson* - 35 pages

Investigating Child Abuse, *By Mead and Westgate* - 194 pages

Screening Volunteers to Prevent Child Sexual Abuse: A Three-Step Action Guide, *By the National Assembly's National Collaboration for Youth* - 8 pages

Staff Screening Tool Kit: Building a Strong Foundation Through Careful Staffing - 2nd Edition by *John C Patterson* - 135 pages

Child Abuse Prevention Primer for Your Organization, *By John Patterson with Charles Tremper and Pam Rypkema* - 88 pages