



THE CHARLESTON MIRACLE LEAGUE

INTEGRATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES, & GUIDELINES
FOR CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE PREVENTION
AND GENERAL CHILD SAFETY AND PROTECTION
Adapted from *Darkness to Light* Sample Guidelines (D2L.org)

Adult Volunteer and Parent contact with Minor Volunteers, Players, and Minor Parents:

The Charleston Miracle League (CML) asks that adult volunteers and parents refrain from interactions with any minor outside of the confines of our complex OR after an official CML event (*i.e.*, bowling date or Riverdogs game), unless a previous relationship prior to CML involvement exists. This includes all forms of communication, including face-to-face visits, phone calls, text messages, Facebook friending, following on Twitter, etc. Should this directive not be followed and the minor or parent(s) of a minor lodge a complaint to the CML regarding an adult volunteer or parent, the CML may exclude the adult (and adult's player child if appropriate) from participating with the CML.

Supervision:

In order to protect the CML employees, volunteers, and children--children must always be within sight and sound of a staff member. As employees supervise children, they should space themselves in a way that other staff members can see them. At no time may a staff person be alone with a single child where they cannot be observed and/or interrupted by others. Volunteers must never be alone with children or supervise children without an employee present at all times.

“Rule of Three”:

Employees shall know the whereabouts of children in their care at all times utilizing face counts or head counts, attendance, roster lists and the “rule of three” while maintaining at least minimum ratios. The “rule of three” specifies that there should always be at least three people present - *i.e.* one employee and two or more children, or two employees and one child (A volunteer may be included in the “rule of three” when it includes an employee with a child). Three or more unsupervised children do NOT meet the “rule of three” criteria.

One-to-One/Being alone with children

Policy:

In order to protect CML employees and children, at no time may a staff person be alone with a single child where they cannot be observed and/or interrupted by others. All children must be supervised by a CML staff member at all times. This includes trips to the bathroom, locker rooms and changing areas (see below). At no time should one staff member have direct care of a single child. If a staff member finds him or herself alone with a child, s/he should promptly move to a location where she/he can be observed by other CML staff members.

Procedures:

The CML will design and structure its programs to reduce the potential for a staff member to be in a one-on-one situation. Individual programs will be managed accordingly.

- CML staff members must not allow children to enter closets or storage areas to retrieve equipment.
- Volunteers must never be alone with children or supervise children without the presence of a staff member. As employees supervise children, they should space themselves in a way that other staff members can see them.
- Children should always be within sight and sound of a staff member.
- The “rule of three” requires the presence of at least three people at all times. This may include one employee and two children or two employees and one child (A volunteer may be included in the “rule of three” when it includes an employee with a child).

Bathroom/Restroom/Locker Room Supervision (at minimum):

Policy:

No child, regardless of age, should ever use a restroom/locker room alone. Employees should assess restroom and locker room areas for safety before a child enters, and monitor the area while children are using these spaces. The procedures allow privacy for the children and protection for the employees (not being alone with a child).

The CML expects parents to handle bathroom duties for their children. In the unusual instance that a parent is not available to assist, the following procedures will be applicable.

Procedures:

- If employees are assisting younger children, doors to the facility must remain open.
- Frequent and irregular safety sweeps in locker areas (approximately twice per hour) should take place.
- All unused rooms, closets, and sections of the facility should be locked and sweeps performed to ensure safety and security.
- The “rule of three” requires there to be at least three people present – i.e., one employee/volunteer and two or more children, or two volunteers and one child. Three or more children unsupervised do NOT meet the “rule of three” criteria (A volunteer may be included in the “rule of three” when it includes an employee with a child).

- Staff will ensure the restroom is unoccupied before allowing children to use the facilities. If the restroom is occupied the staff will maintain presence in the restroom the entire time children are inside.
- Staff will strive to always take children to the bathroom in groups.
- Staff will send the children into the bathroom in small groups, with no more children than the number of stalls or urinals.
- Staff members can and are encouraged to be inside the facilities so that they can be easily seen by the children and so that they are able to immediately stop any inappropriate activity.
- If assisting young children in the toilet stalls, the door to the stall must remain open.
- For single stall bathrooms, CML employees will be positioned outside of the bathroom to make sure no one else enters the restroom.
- At minimum, when multiple children are in the bathroom or locker room, CML staff members will be standing in the doorway so they can have at least auditory supervision of the children. This policy allows privacy for the children and protection for the staff (not being alone with a child).
 - Employees should stand outside of the door, with the door ajar, so they can hear what's going on.
 - Youths must be aware that the staff member is standing right outside, within earshot.

Private activities:

Putting on bathing suits, taking showers, toileting & diapering are all examples of private activities that must be supervised using the “Rule of Three.” When this is not feasible, employees /volunteers should be positioned so that they are visible to others.

Physical Contact:

Policy:

Employees will respect children's rights to not be touched in ways that make them feel uncomfortable, and their right to say no. Employees should not place themselves in a situation where someone may misjudge their actions. The CML does not allow its employees to use corporal punishment to discipline or control children or vulnerable people.

Procedure:

Other than diapering and assisting with toileting accidents, children are not to be touched on areas of their bodies that would be covered by a bathing suit. In addition, the following guidelines are important to follow:

- Avoid frontal to frontal contact.
- Always have your hands visible as much as possible.
- Refrain from kissing or showing intimate displays of affection (High fives are great!).

- Employees should not hold children over the age of 2 years & 9 months on their lap, but should get down to the child's eye level when comforting them.
- Tickling, horseplay, and roughhousing are not allowed.
- No spanking, slapping, whipping, hitting, pushing, grabbing, kicking, punching, or use of any other physical force for any reason. Reasonable restraint may be used temporarily to prevent injury (ex: it is okay to grab a kid to prevent him from getting run over by a car).

Hugging and touching of children

Policy:

Appropriate physical contact is important in the emotional development of all children, and children at different developmental levels will need differing degrees of physical contact. Staff will respect children's rights to not be touched in ways that make them feel uncomfortable, and will respect their right to say no. Employees should not place themselves in a situation where someone may misjudge their actions.

Procedures:

- CML staff members should not perform frontal hugs of children - Hugs should be from the side.
- Staff members should get down to the child's eye level when comforting a child.
- CML employees must not touch children on any location of a child's body that would be covered by a bathing suit (diapering is the only exception to this rule).
- Staff members should not pick-up school-aged children (to reduce potential for both abuse allegations and physical injury).
- School-aged children should not be allowed to sit on the lap of any adult (except parent/legal guardian).
- CML staff members should always have their hands visible as much as possible when interacting with children.
- Employees must refrain from kissing or showing intimate displays of affection.
- Tickling, horseplay, and roughhousing are not allowed.
- Employees should not place themselves in a situation where someone may misjudge their actions

Outside Contact:

Policy:

Staff and volunteers must refrain from interacting with children under 18 years of age that are participants in programs of the CML outside of the program's activities. This includes babysitting, sleepovers, inviting children to your home, or visiting children at their home. The only exception to this policy is if there is a *pre-existing* relationship between a staff member and the child's family, and a parent invites the employee to participate in an activity or event.

Procedures:

If a staff member has a pre-existing relationship (e.g., for babysitting), both parties will be required to sign a form acknowledging the family's pre-existing relationship with the staff member, relieving the CML of any responsibility for the actions of that staff member with regard to his or her interactions with the child outside of work with the CML. Employees may not have contact, beyond incidental, with children they meet through CML programs outside of their work with the CML. This includes but is not limited to:

- Extra practices, coaching, tutoring, or counseling
- Transportation in a private vehicle
- Private special events such as movies, or sporting events, or any other similar activities
- Visits to any residence or private place

Dating:

- Employees 18 years and older may not date staff or children under the age of 18.

Social Networking, Electronic Communication, & Other Contact:**Policy:**

CML employees must NOT contact anyone who is under the age of 18 that they meet through their interactions with the CML through social media, text message, email, telephone, written message, blogs, chat rooms, or any other personal manner.

Electronic or other personal communication made between a CML employee and a child is NEVER allowed, *even if a parent and supervisor give consent*. Any communication that is required must be made directly through the parent or legal guardian of a child. Under no circumstances should an employee encourage private communication or visitation between the employee and a child.

Procedure:

- CML employees must NOT be in communication with CML youth programs participants through means of electronic or social media;
- CML employees must NOT take, send, or receive photos, videos, audios, text messages, or engage in communication with children via cell phones, handheld devices, computers, etc.;
- Employees who are associated with the CML's youth programs, or who regularly interact with children, with the exception of official CML sites, must not post pictures or content on the internet (through social media or otherwise) that could be visible to a child with whom the employee interacts. Anything that is visible to the public is visible to a child, and anything inappropriate should be removed;

- Supervisors may monitor employee’s online activities (i.e., perform unscheduled ‘spot checks’ on social networking pages) and reinforce this policy with all staff members and volunteers.

Transportation & Vehicle procedures

Policy: Employees may not transport children in their own vehicles. Should a child/children need transportation, a CML vehicle and authorized driver may provide the transportation with supervisor approval and adherence to the “rule of three” policy. Should an emergency occur and personal transportation is necessary, a third person is required to ride along in the vehicle. In addition, other restrictions/procedures may apply.

Procedures:

- Staff/volunteers may not transport CML youth programs participants in their own vehicles. Should an emergency occur and personal transportation is necessary, a second person is required to ride along in the vehicle.
- All buses/vans must have at least one monitor with a minimum age of 18.
- There is a minimum requirement of two staff members on all buses (excluding driver)
- Whenever possible, monitors should also be present on vans and teen trips, positioned as detailed below
- Transportation guidelines/positioning of staff:
 - Staff will spread themselves out in the vehicle and maintain their focus on the children while transportation is occurring.
 - If the children are of multiple age groups, they should be seated by age group with older children positioned to the rear of the vehicle
 - Boys and girls should not occupy the same seat; children with known relational/behavioral challenges should not be placed together
 - If larger capacity buses are used, staff should monitor behavior by walking through the aisle on a frequent, irregular basis

Additional expectations with children:

- State or mandated supervision guidelines will be followed. Employees should be at least age 16 to supervise a group of children.
- Profanity, inappropriate jokes, sarcasm, gossiping or sharing intimate details of one’s personal life, any type of harassment in the presence of children/staff/volunteers is strictly prohibited.
- Tickling, horseplay or roughhousing are not allowed.

Parental visits

Policy: The CML communicates with families about the CML's policies & procedures, as well as its commitment to the safety of their children.

Procedure: Families/parents are made aware that they are encouraged to visit unannounced and observe any program their child participates in, and they may express concerns to staff members in charge or a Program Director.

Parental Resources:

Staff members are encouraged to try to identify stressed parents and offer support referrals for help.

CONFIDENTIALITY:

CML employees must report suspected abuse and violations of this policy's "Best Practices" to their "deputy designated officer" or "key worker," who is typically the supervisor or manager. The deputy designated officer then reports the incident to the current President and Vice President. After reporting, CML employees should not discuss allegations of abuse with anyone else. CML employees with access to such information should only discuss these incidents with those who oversee the implementation of the CML's Child Protection Policy.

The CML reserves the right to disclose information relating to a violation of this policy in any situation where the CML determines that a disclosure is in the victim's best interests, or otherwise serves to deter future abuse. This may include (but is not limited to) referring an incident to the Department of Social Services, disclosing information to the medical care providers of a victim, disclosure to the parents or guardians of a victim, disclosure to police or other law enforcement authorities, or participation by the CML in any civil or criminal action arising from abuse that becomes known to the CML.

DISCIPLINARY ACTION AND OTHER ACTIONS:

Reminder: Your employment is "at-will," and you or the CML may terminate your employment for any reason or for no reason, with or without notice, at any time.

Violations of the Policy will result in a disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination. Suspected abuse will result in an internal investigation, and may result in temporary suspension or termination. Confirmed abuse will result in immediate termination, and may result in civil or criminal action. Generally, a violation of the CML's "Best Practices" guidelines

contained in this policy will result in remedial training. However, the CML will consider an employee's entire work record and any other pertinent information in taking disciplinary action.

Furthermore, the CML reserves the right to take any disciplinary action it deems appropriate in response to alleged violations of this policy, and nothing in this or any other section of this policy should be construed to limit the CML's authority.

CONFIDENTIAL EMPOWERMENT PROCEDURES

CML employees must report suspected abuse and violations of this policy's "Best Practices" to their supervisor or manager. The supervisor or manager then reports the incident to the Director of Human Resources, both of whom will begin an immediate joint investigation process.

All disclosures of information made by CML employees to the CML in furtherance of this policy will be kept in strict confidence as much as practicable. As stated in the Confidentiality section above, the CML will discreetly disclose information to DSS, law enforcement, or others as is needed to protect a victim. However, the CML will not purposefully disclose the name of the employee who reported such abuse, except if required by law.

Child Protection Reporting Structure:

Supervisors & Managers

President and Vice President

Role of designated officer and key workers

The CML will appoint a designated officer (CML President) who will have overall responsibility in referring incidents to Social Services. Two deputy designated officers (Vice President and Secretary) will be appointed to assist and to deputize when the designated officer is not available. The designated officer and the deputies will be familiar with protection issues regarding children and vulnerable adults and be based in an area that has regular contact with children and vulnerable adults.

Key workers (board members) will be appointed in those sections that have most contact with children or vulnerable adults. These will act as the point of contact for the section and will be responsible for ensuring our Policy and Procedures are implemented. They will provide an important point of information for staff and feedback information to the designated officer.

The designated officer, deputy designated officers and key worker(s) must attend relevant training prior to assuming responsibilities of these positions. The designated officer and deputies are required to attend additional training and conferences on an ongoing basis. The key workers are required to keep updated regarding ongoing issues through attending ongoing training and meetings. Failure to do this will result in being replaced in this position. The time commitment required for these roles must be recognized prior to a Section appointing a member of staff for the respective role.

Duties of designated officer

1. To record a disclosure of abuse made by a child or vulnerable adult to a member of the council's staff. The alleged abuse could involve either an external person or council staff.
2. To record our staff's suspicions of a child or vulnerable adult being abused.

3. In 1 or 2 above, to seek advice from the relevant agencies and report, if appropriate. If the disclosure or suspicions relate to council staff, to advise and liaise with the relevant Head of Service, if appropriate.

If a member of council staff has concerns about a colleague not fulfilling the council's policy and procedures on the protection of children and vulnerable adults, such concerns are to be taken to the relevant line manager in the first instance. As the matter is examined by the line manager, they may need to involve a designated officer; if it becomes apparent there is a protection issue.

Where the incident relates to a line manager not fulfilling the council's policy and procedures on the protection of children and vulnerable adults, such concerns are to be taken to the next relevant line manager in the first instance.

Possible involvement of a member of council staff must also be notified to the President and to the Vice President of the board of directors.

4. To record all action taken and where appropriate, advise the relevant line management. Detail of information provided will be based on the 'need to know' principle.

5. To ensure all written records in relation to protection issues are securely and confidentially filed.

6. To establish contact with child protection and vulnerable adult teams within the relevant Health and Social Services Trust if:

- allegations of abuse against a child or vulnerable adult have been made against a member of staff, or
- a member of staff has been made aware of alleged abuse against a child or vulnerable adult by an external person.

7. To liaise with the deputy designated officers and key worker(s) to ensure the ongoing implementation and review of our policy and procedures on the protection of children and vulnerable adults.

8. To keep the deputy designated officers and key workers informed of ongoing issues and training.

9. To liaise with the deputy designated officers and key workers through the key worker network.

10. To fulfill any other relevant duties which may become apparent as the role of designated officer develops.

Duties of key workers

1. To act as the point of contact for their section.

2. To keep up to date with relevant child and vulnerable adult protection legislation, good practice and developments.

3. To ensure the ongoing implementation the council's policy and procedures and good practice within their section and across the council when required.

4. To contribute to the review of the our policy and procedures on the protection of children and vulnerable adults

5. To deliver training, as appropriate, within the section and throughout the council.

6. To ensure all written records in relation to protection issues are securely and confidentially filed.

7. To fulfill any other relevant duties which may become apparent as the role of key worker develops.

Key worker network

- A key worker network will be established to meet a minimum of three times per year. The function of this network will be to:
- To liaise with the designated officer to ensure the ongoing implementation and review of our policy and procedures on the protection of children and vulnerable adults.
- To keep up to date with relevant legislation, good practice and developments.
- To liaise with other key workers and the deputy designated officers.
- To review and monitor ongoing awareness training in the protection of children and vulnerable adults.
- To contribute to the development of good practice for working with children and vulnerable adults.

The key worker network will be facilitated by the Play Development Officer (who will also be the designated officer). The role of the Play Development Officer will be to:

- assist in identifying appropriate training programs in conjunction with the deputy designated officers, other key workers and trainers in the council and in other relevant agencies,
- co-ordinate regular meetings, and
- arrange information updates, including speakers to attend the network meetings.

To ensure effective coordination of our policy and procedures, information obtained from representation on relevant forums is to be passed to the designated officer and key worker network.