



MINISTRYSAFE

East Ohio District
Church of the Nazarene
DISTRICT POLICY:
PREVENTING ABUSE
AND NEGLECT



Dear Staff Member or Volunteer,

Welcome to the East Ohio District: (EOD)

At the EOD, we take our responsibility to care for event ministries participants very seriously. These guidelines are intended to facilitate an excellent event experience for all those who spend time at EOD events.

The pages of this handbook provide a general overview of procedures and guidelines for EOD staff members and volunteers designed to prevent sexual abuse, physical abuse and neglect of participants. Our policies are intended to create a safe environment for all participants, protecting each participant, you, and the mission of the EOD. The following procedures have been adopted and will be strictly enforced.

After you have carefully read this policy manual, please sign and return the agreement form located on the last page.

Sincerely,

***District Advisory Board
East Ohio District
Church of the Nazarene***

East Ohio District Policy: Preventing Abuse and Neglect

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Overview of the EOD Ministry Safety System

Because we care for and desire to protect event participants, EOD requires all staff members and volunteers to complete **4 SAFETY STEPS** before placement.

STEP ONE: Sexual Abuse Awareness Training

EOD policies and procedures require that staff members and volunteers avoid abusive or neglectful behavior of any kind. Staff members and volunteers are required to report any policy violations to the event director or a member of the EOD Safety Committee. Staff members and volunteers should have a basic understanding of the characteristics of sexual abusers, as well as “grooming behaviors” used by abusers to select and prepare a victim/participant for sexual abuse. Grooming is the process used by an abuser to select a child, win the child’s trust (and the trust of the child’s care-giver or ‘gatekeeper’), manipulate the child into sexual activity and keep the child from disclosing the abuse.

To equip EOD staff members and volunteers with information necessary to recognize abuser characteristics and grooming behavior, EOD requires all staff members and volunteers to complete Ministry Safe sexual abuse awareness training (live, or online at www.MinistrySafe.com or www.AbusePreventionSystems.com). This training will be renewed every two years.

STEP TWO: Screening Process

Staff members and volunteers are required to complete the EOD screening process, which requires a staff member or volunteer to:

- complete an Employment Application (Staff only)
- complete the Safety Application, including a signed release (Staff and volunteers)
- complete a face-to-face or telephone interview (Staff and volunteers)
- provide references to be checked (Staff and volunteers)

STEP THREE: Review Policies & Procedures

Staff members and volunteers are required to review the policies contained in this manual and sign the last page, indicating that he or she has read and understood the material, and agrees to comply with policy requirements.

STEP FOUR: Criminal Background Check

EOD requires that all staff members and volunteers undergo a criminal background check. Depending upon position, differing levels or intensity of criminal background check may be required.

Note:

- a. Staff or volunteer already registered with NazSafe, who have taken Ministry Safe online training, at a local church, may register their certificate with the EO District Office.*
- b. Minors under the age of 18 must fulfill all the requirements of the EOD Safety Policy excluding the background check. We do require that all minors under the age of 18 have a signed letter of consent from their parent or guardian stating that they are eligible to participate and work as a volunteer.*
- c. These are meant to be minimum standards. A local church policy may be used to meet the above minimum standards. It is the responsibility of the event coordinators from the local church and EOD to review the policy and ensure compliance.*

EOD Safety Policy

ABUSE TOLERANCE

EOD has a **zero tolerance for abuse**. It is the responsibility of every EOD Event staff member and volunteer to act in the best interest of each participant in every program.

In the event any staff member or volunteer observes any inappropriate behaviors (i.e. policy violations, neglectful supervision, poor role-modeling, etc.) or suspected abuse (physical, emotional, or sexual) it is the personal responsibility of each such staff member or volunteer to immediately report their observations to an immediate event director or a member of the EOD Safety Committee.

REPORTING SUSPICIOUS OR INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIORS

EOD is committed to providing a safe, secure environment for all participants. To this end, any report of inappropriate behaviors or suspicions of abuse will be taken seriously and will be reported, in accordance with this policy and state law, to the EOD Safety Committee and the Police Department, Child Protective Services, or other appropriate agency.

EOD intends to create and foster a culture of communication, reporting safety concerns or policy violations. Because sexual abusers ‘groom’ children and vulnerable adults for abuse, it is possible a staff member or volunteer may witness behavior intended to ‘groom’ a child or vulnerable adult for sexual abuse. Staff members and volunteers are asked to report possible ‘grooming’ behaviors, any policy violations, or any suspicious behaviors to a ministries leader or a member of the EOD Safety Committee.

ENFORCEMENT OF POLICIES

EOD staff members and volunteers who supervise other employees or volunteers are charged with the diligent enforcement of all EOD policies. Violations of these policies are grounds for immediate dismissal, disciplinary action, or reassignment for both volunteers and staff members.

Reporting Abuse or Suspicions of Abuse

REPORTING VIOLATION OF POLICY

In order to maintain a safe environment for participants, EOD staff members and volunteers must be aware of each individual's responsibility to report any questionable circumstance, observation, act, omission, or situation that is a violation of these policies. All questions or concerns related to inappropriate, suspicious, or suspected grooming behavior should be directed to an immediate event director, or a member of the EOD Safety Committee.

CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLATION

Any person accused of committing a prohibited act, or any act considered to be harmful to a child, will be immediately suspended from participation at EOD. This suspension will continue during any investigation by law enforcement or child protective agencies.

Any person found to have committed a prohibited act will be removed from future participation as a staff member or volunteer in all activities and programming that involve youth, children, or vulnerable adults at EOD activities. If the person is a staff member or employee, such conduct may also result in termination of employment from EOD.

Failure to report a prohibited act to one of the individuals identified above is a violation of this policy and grounds for termination of a staff member or dismissal of a volunteer.

REPORTING SUSPICIONS OF ABUSE TO LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

Staff members and volunteers at EOD are required to report suspicions of child abuse or neglect, or any inappropriate behavior of a colleague or co-worker, to the immediate event director of the area, or a member of the EOD Safety Committee.

Ohio law requires that any person having cause to believe that a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been or may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect must make a report to an appropriate law enforcement agency. A staff member or volunteer will report to an immediate event director or a member of the EOD Safety Committee allowing one of these individuals to make the appropriate report to law enforcement agencies.

Staff members and volunteers are required to verbally report an incident to a supervisory staff member as soon as possible after the incident. After receiving a report from a staff member or volunteer, the event director will speak with the person or volunteer to whom the ministry participant spoke in order to get detailed information about the entire conversation. An EOD event director will then contact the EO District Office as soon as reasonably possible.

If appropriate, an EOD director or a member of the EOD Safety Committee will inform the Ohio Department of Family Services or Child Protective Services.

EOD Safety Committee

SAFETY COMMITTEE & MEETINGS

Recognizing the importance of providing and maintaining a safe environment for children, youth and vulnerable adults, EOD will appoint and maintain a safety committee, which will meet twice a year. The EOD Safety Committee will meet to discuss what, if any, changes are necessary to EOD policies or programming to ensure the ministry participants' safety. All recommended revisions are to be submitted to the EOD District Advisory Board for approval.

MISSION STATEMENT

The purpose of the Safety Committee is to enable EOD to carry out appropriate ministry participant activities while safeguarding participants against emotional, physical or sexual abuse.

COMPOSITION

The Safety Committee will be comprised of the following members:

1. District Superintendent(s)
2. District SDMI Chairperson
3. District Children's Ministry Director
4. District Children's Camping Director
5. District N.Y.I President
6. District N.M.I. President

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Safety Committee will be charged with the following duties:

1. Applying existing EOD policies and procedures related to participants' safety and risk management issues.
2. Monitoring all EOD programs for ongoing compliance with safety policies.
3. Making recommendations regarding safety issues to the EOD Administration and/or Canaan Acres Christian Camp, or other facilities that are used or rented by EOD.

Staff Member and Volunteer Monitoring

Monitoring of staff members and volunteers will include regular (announced and unannounced) visits during the program to provide supervisors the opportunity to observe staff member and volunteer interactions with participants. Each immediate event director, or a designee, will provide a written report to the applicable auxiliary. In the case of the event not being sponsored by an auxiliary (i.e. District Assembly), the report will be given to the District Safety Committee.

Staff Members & Volunteers

MODESTY

Your choice of clothing makes a statement. We require modest dress with attention to hemlines, necklines and waistlines. Event directors will be responsible for handing out a modesty policy per event at their final discretion.

Public Displays of Affection

Inappropriate public displays of affection are not permitted under any circumstances. We expect professional behavior at all times.

MODELING BEHAVIOR

What we do in moderation, participants will do in excess. Ministry participants will look to you to set the boundaries they will test. This is a dilemma with which every staff member or volunteer will wrestle. The way you dress, what you say, how you respond to the smallest circumstance – our campers are watching. If you communicate that it is OK to move an inch, they *will* go a mile. Please read and understand the guidelines below regarding appropriate “touch and talk”, and follow them closely.

The following rules are to be followed at all times:

- **No verbal abuse**
- **Never touch a person in an aggressive manner**
- **Absolutely no profanity**
- **No displays of public nudity at any time**
- **No mooning, de-pantsing, wedgies or swirlies**
- **No descriptive stories regarding drinking or sexual behaviors**
- **No public urinating at any time by anyone**
- **No sleeping or napping with participants for any reason**
- **Never compare a ministry participant’s body with another participant or staff/volunteer**
- **No racial put-downs or racial jokes**
- **No tickling ministry participant**

- **No wrestling**

APPROPRIATE PHYSICAL TOUCH

All staff members and volunteers should exercise good judgment when expressing one's self through physical touch. Appropriate physical touch may include the following:

1. An arm around the shoulder (side hug)
2. Short, congratulatory or greeting hugs
3. A brief, assuring pat on the head or shoulder, but **NOT** to those persons who feel that such touch is offensive to have their heads patted or hair fluffed
4. A few **NEVERS**:
 - a. We don't touch a person in anger or disgust.
 - b. We don't touch people in any sexually connotative manner.
 - c. No staff member will ever (day or night) be on or in a participant's bed.
 - d. Never touch participant's private parts (not even for health reason).
 - e. Never tickle a participant; this can be misconstrued as sexual contact.
 - f. Never ignore a ministry participant's request not to be touched.
 - g. Never express or require physical affection or touching in any form from a ministry participant who shows or expresses discomfort with physical touch.

If a question ever arises, consult a ministry program director or the EOD Safety Committee. In the event of an accusation of an infraction of these guidelines does occur, the Safety Committee will conduct an investigation to research the complaint.

Any infraction of the above policy involving even the slightest form of sexual connotation will result in immediate dismissal from the ministry event.

Ministry Participants

BULLYING

Verbal, physical or emotional bullying will not be tolerated.

Ministry staff should maintain a presence with participants at all times until everyone is asleep.

From the first minute of every session verbal, physical or emotional harassment of any kind will not be tolerated. At the first sign of verbal or other attacks, act decisively. There are no “harmless putdowns”.

- a. First instance comes with a warning to the participant and a general reminder to the group that this kind of interaction is inappropriate. Make sure not to embarrass or chastise them.
- b. Second instance requires that you pull the offending participant(s) from the group and discuss the inappropriateness of bullying behavior. Set some clear parameters and behavioral goals for them to achieve. However, let them know that the next step is a visit to the EOD Event Director. Notify the EOD Event Director of ANY signs of bullying or verbal abuse.
- c. Make sure that any ministry participant who is the brunt of bullying attacks is handling the situation well. Have a private dialogue with him or her to assess the situation. **DO NOT SINGLE PARTICIPANT OUT IN FRONT OF THE GROUP!** Be discreet and protect their dignity.
- d. Third instance results in a trip to the EOD Event Director and a phone call to the parents, with the possibility of removal of the participant from the event at the discretion of the Director.

RESPECTING MINISTRY PARTICIPANTS' PRIVACY

Make sure participants understand the importance of respecting each other's privacy. A ministry participant's bed is his/her home and the participant's trunk/suitcase is off-limits to anyone but the ministry participant. In addition, shower time is a very private time. During showers, only those who are taking showers should be in the bathroom or shower stall.

DISCIPLINE

It is the policy of EOD that staff members and volunteers are prohibited from using physical discipline in any way for behavior management of participant. **No form of physical discipline is acceptable.** This prohibition includes spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, or any other physical force as retaliation or correction for inappropriate behaviors by participants. If a ministries participant is unruly or fails to comply with verbal warnings or instructions from a staff member/volunteer, the EOD Event Director will contact the participant's parent or caregiver. If the behavior persists, the participant's parent or caregiver will be contacted to pick up the participant. In the event of a fight or physical altercation, a staff member or volunteer will verbally redirect participants involved, trying to avoid physical intervention. Uncontrollable or unusual behavior should be reported immediately to the EOD Event Director.

VERBAL INTERACTIONS

Verbal interactions between staff members or volunteers and participants should be positive and uplifting. EOD staff and volunteers should strive to keep verbal interactions encouraging and constructive.

To this end, staff members and volunteers should not talk to ministry participants in a way that is or could be construed by any reasonable observer as harsh, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating. In addition, employees and volunteers are expected to refrain from swearing or using profanity.

Supervision of Ministry Participants

STAFF MEMBER/VOLUNTEER TO MINISTRY PARTICIPANT RATIO

EOD directors are committed to providing adequate employer member and volunteer supervision in all ministry event activities and programs. Accordingly, the following ratios will be observed for ministry activities and programs:

For groups up to and including 8 participants, there will be at least 1 staff member or volunteer supervising. For groups ranging 10 to 20 participants, there will be at least 2 staff members or volunteers. For groups larger than 21 participants, there will be at least 3 staff members or volunteers supervising. This ratio may change depending on the activity.

If a worker is out of ratio it is his/her responsibility to immediately notify the responsible event director. The event director will make diligent efforts to immediately bring staff member/volunteer to participant ratios into compliance with this policy.

OFF-LIMIT AREAS

All EOD staff members and volunteers will be responsible for ensuring that their participants are not in areas deemed off-limits.

MONITORING HIGH-RISK AREAS

The purpose of this section is to become aware of *high-risk* areas at ministry events, and methods to effectively lower that risk. Any area on event property where participants are not directly supervised is a high-risk area. In these areas, participants can more easily bully and abuse (verbally, physically, and even sexually) each other. It is the responsibility of all staff members and volunteers to be aware of the potential for bullying and abuse, and to monitor event locations where participants can be alone.

For activities involving large numbers of participants, staff members and volunteers will be assigned to monitor high-risk areas for the duration of the activity. Monitoring of high-risk areas will be built into the programming and planning of these events.

High-Risk Areas include:

- All bathrooms on event property
- Night activities
- Water activities - changing areas (during day and night)

UNOBSERVED ONE-ON-ONE INTERACTION WITH MINISTRY PARTICIPANTS

No participants will ever be left unattended or unsupervised during event ministry programming or activities. EOD staff members and volunteers are prohibited from being alone with individual participants in any room or building. In the event a staff member or volunteer finds himself/herself alone with a single participant, that staff member or volunteer will take the participant to a room or building occupied by others, or to a location easily observed by others. (Example: If a participant desires conversation or counsel with a staff member or volunteer after regular programming has concluded, the staff member or volunteer will relocate the discussion to a place where other staff members are present, or which is easily observed.)

After every programming event, staff members and volunteers must ensure every room and restroom is checked prior to leaving to ensure that there are no participants left unsupervised.

Any two participants together in an unseen or less easily viewed area should be redirected to another (more open) area.

APPROPRIATE ONE-TO-ONE INTERACTIONS WITH PARTICIPANTS

EOD recognizes that meeting the emotional needs of the participants may occasionally require staff members and volunteers to counsel them on a one-to-one basis. Staff members and volunteers should observe the following guidelines when interacting with participants.

Staff members and volunteers should conduct one-to-one meetings with an individual participant at a time when others are present and where interactions can be easily observed.

In the event a closed-door meeting must occur, the staff member must inform another staff member and ensure the door has a window and remains unlocked.

Rules for Participant Safety

PHYSICAL CONTACT

EOD is committed to protecting participants in its care. To this end, EOD has implemented a physical contact policy that promotes a positive, nurturing environment for our events. The following rules are to be carefully followed by anyone working or volunteering at EOD events:

1. Hugging, pats on the back and other forms of appropriate physical affection between staff members or volunteers and participants are important for participants' development and are generally suitable in the event setting.
2. Inappropriate touching and inappropriate displays of affection are forbidden. Any inappropriate physical contact, touching or displays of affection should be immediately reported to the Event Director, or a member of the EOD Safety Committee.
3. Physical contact should be for the benefit of the participants, never based upon the emotional needs of a staff member or volunteer.
4. Physical contact and affection should be given only in observable places or when in the presence of other participants or staff members or volunteers. It is much less likely that touch will be inappropriate or interpreted as such when physical contact is open to observation.
5. Staff members and volunteers are responsible for protecting participants under their supervision from inappropriate or unwanted touch by other adults and participants.
6. Any inappropriate behavior or suspected abuse by any staff member, volunteer or participant must be reported immediately to an immediate supervisor, the Event Director or a member of the EOD Safety Committee.

TRANSPORTATION

Staff members and volunteers may from time to time be in a position to provide transportation for participants. The following guidelines should be strictly observed when workers are involved in the transportation of participants of any EOD or events:

1. Participants should be transported directly to their destination. Unauthorized stops in a non-public place should be avoided. Staff members and volunteers should avoid transportation circumstances that leave only one participant in transport. The presence of at least two staff members or volunteers is encouraged.
2. Staff members and volunteers should avoid physical contact with participants while in vehicles.
3. The use of cell phones while driving vehicles (owned or rented) for transportation of participants during an EOD event is prohibited, unless in an emergency. In other non-emergency circumstances, staff members and volunteers are encouraged to stop the vehicle before using a cell phone.
4. Absolutely NO TEXTING is allowed by the driver of a moving vehicle.
5. No drivers under age 21 may drive vehicles used for participant transportation during an EOD event.

SLEEPING ARRANGEMENTS

Where the EOD provides housing, staff members and volunteers will strictly observe the following rules:

1. At least one staff member or volunteer is required to be in the sleeping area with participants at all times. Notwithstanding the appearance that all participants are sleeping, the staff member or volunteer will not leave the sleeping area. Should the staff member or volunteer be called away, another staff member or volunteer should be notified to monitor the sleeping area.
2. Appropriately modest sleeping attire must be worn to bed.
3. During bed checks, staff members and volunteers should never physically touch a participant.
4. Participation in a General Church event (i.e., Nazarene Youth Congress), the General Church Housing Policy shall be applied and followed.

SEXUALLY ORIENTED CONVERSATIONS

Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from engaging in any inappropriate or explicit conversations about their own personal relationships, dating or sexual activities with any participants in the program. If it is necessary to address issues related to purity, dating, sex and human sexuality, such conversations should be cleared and/or reviewed with the Event Director. Each event director is asked to make parents or guardians aware of such topics on the event registration forms.

SEXUALLY ORIENTED MATERIALS

Staff members, volunteers and participants at EOD events are prohibited from possessing any sexually oriented materials or images (magazines, cards, phone pictures, videos, etc.).

NUDITY

Staff members and volunteers at EOD events should never be nude in the presence of participants in their care. When a volunteer or staff needs to change or shower they will make arrangements with another volunteer or staff member to oversee the participants in their care.

TOBACCO

EOD events require staff members and volunteers to abstain from the use or possession of tobacco products while on EOD event property, and while in the presence of participants or their family members. EOD events are tobacco-free.

INTOXICANTS

Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from the use, possession, or being under the influence of alcohol or any illegal drug while in any EOD event facility, while traveling with participants, or while working with or supervising participants.

COUNSELOR LOUNGE

At no time should a participant be invited into or be allowed inside the counselor lounge. The use of the counselor lounge is a privilege, for staff members and volunteers only.

OVERNIGHT CURFEW

Specific curfews for each over night event will be at the discretion of the event director. All staff members and volunteers are expected to cooperate in the security process. Repeated disregard of curfew will be considered a safety risk, and may result in removal.

Ministry Participant Contact **with Current and Former Staff Members and Volunteers**

COMMUNICATIONS WITH PARTICIPANTS OUTSIDE OF MINISTRY EVENT

The EOD safety standards established to protect participants and insure healthy relationships during events should be respected outside of ministry events as well. In addition to ministry events safety standards, the following policies should be respected in all interactions with participants occurring outside of events.

- Current or former staff members and volunteers should not initiate contact with participants outside of a ministry event without parental/caregiver knowledge.
- Current or former staff members and volunteers should never be alone with participants in an unobserved context or location.
- Dating relationships of any kind between staff members or volunteers and event participants are strictly prohibited.

Any staff member or volunteer who violates any of these provisions will be prohibited from serving as a future staff member or volunteer at EOD events.

EOD – Special Needs and Vulnerable Adult Policy Addendum
All EOD policies listed previously in this manual apply to special needs minors and vulnerable adults as well. A few additional guidelines also apply to ministry involving these individuals. They are outlined below.

BATHROOM SUPERVISION AND ASSISTANCE GUIDELINE

Diapering and/or bathroom assistance of special needs minors or vulnerable adults shall be the responsibility of the caregiver or guardian. If the caregiver or guardian is unavailable, assistance may be given by EOD staff or volunteers only if there is more than one staff member or volunteer to provide this assistance

ACCESSIBILITY TO FACILITIES AND HELP WITH ENTERING/EXITING FACILITIES

In the event of a lack of handicapped accessibility at a district sponsored event, decisions regarding a special needs or vulnerable adult participant's access to the facility will fall to the discretion of the immediate care giver/guardian.

Policies and Procedures
Statement of Acknowledgment and Agreement

I have received and read a copy of EOD events policies and procedures manual for preventing abuse and neglect, and understand the importance of the matters set forth within the manual. I agree to follow and abide by these policies and procedures. Further, I understand that the policies and procedures may be modified at any time. Finally, I understand that it is my responsibility to review new policies and procedures.

Staff Member or Volunteer's name (please print)

Staff Member or Volunteer's signature

Date: _____

[This page to remain attached to the EOD events policies]

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Statement of Acknowledgment and Agreement

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[This page to be signed detached and delivered to _____]