



Anglican Diocese of Edmonton Summer Camps

Camp Come Alive † Base Camp † Camp Explore! † North Canoe Voyageurs

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR STAFF

(Paid or volunteer/adult or youth)

Philosophy of Camping

The Camp Committee of the Anglican Diocese of Edmonton has agreed on the following statements as fundamental to our understanding of Christian Camping:

1. All Diocesan Summer Camps are Anglican Camps and we seek to embrace the Christian faith as received by this church.
2. Creation is holy; protect and respect it.
3. Camping should provide an educational experience in the broadest sense. Such an experience involves:
 - a. Faith experience and spiritual growth
 - b. Community experience
 - c. Skill learning
 - d. Communication and cooperative experience
4. Camping should be fun. Campers should have a good experience.
5. We affirm the worth of every individual. Camping should affirm participants and hold something for all campers. A caring environment is critical.
6. All activities should be directed toward campers (camper - not staff – centered program).
7. Each person – campers and staff – is responsible for his or her own actions within the camp community.
8. We believe in shared responsibility for the work of the camp.
9. There should be an opportunity for the creative expression of campers and staff, as well as room for individual exploration.
10. Safety first in all things.
11. Good camping can be low-cost and low-frill with a sense of stewardship of God's creation, and human energy and wealth.
12. It is important that parents have an opportunity to see and share some of the experiences of their children.

MISSION STATEMENT

The purpose of the Anglican Diocese of Edmonton Summer Camps is to invite and assist the campers and staff to grow in Christian discipleship by means of an experience of Christian community within a safe camping environment.

This **Code of Conduct** is expected of all adults and youth who are paid or volunteer with the Anglican Diocese of Edmonton Summer Camp Programs, recognizing that at all times they are expected to act responsibly and exercise a "Duty of Care" to the youth members.

Staff for the Summer Camps:

- * Respect the rights and dignity of themselves and others.
- * Demonstrate a high degree of individual responsibility, recognizing that at all times their words and actions are an example of a Christian life.
- * Act at all times in accordance with Anglican Diocese Summer Camp Programs, Alberta Camping Association, and the Canadian Recreational Canoe Association guidelines, thereby setting a suitable example for all.
- * Do not use the Camp to promote their own beliefs, behaviors or practices where these are not compatible with the above mentioned guidelines.
- * Act with consideration and good judgement in all interpersonal relationships, both inside and outside the camping programs.
- * Respect everyone's right to personal privacy at all times. Take special care when sleeping, changing clothes, and bathing are associated with any camp activity.
- * Avoid unaccompanied and unobserved activities with youth or adult members wherever possible. Remember, "in earshot and in vision".
- * Avoid potentially compromising situations by ensuring, where reasonably possible, that at least two adults are in attendance while supervising and/or accompanying youth members.
- * Realize that bullying, physical, verbal or cultural abuse, sexual harassment, neglect or any other type of abuse, is unacceptable conduct by any member of the camp.

DUTY OF CARE

Position Statement

The primary responsibility of staff in the Camping Committee is the welfare and development of the campers. The single most important function of the Volunteer Recruitment and Development process of the Anglican Diocese Summer Camps is to ensure that only suitable staff is recruited.

Our Anglican Camps requires us to provide an environment in which children and young people feel valued and secure; and can grow as individuals while developing a sense of self worth, personal integrity and increasing competence through the acquisition of skills and achievements.

Any adult behaviour, which is not supportive of this developmental process, is inappropriate and requires appropriate intervention/action.

We have a duty of care to keep youth members safe and protect them from physical and emotional harm. In adventurous activities, this duty is exercised through sensible risk management. In our general program activities, this duty is exercised through a respectful, caring, empathetic and friendly relationship with young people. In the recruitment and selection of adult and youth leaders, their personal standards, character and ability to develop this relationship is much more important than any technical skills or experience.

1. Encouraging Positive Behaviour (Discipline)

Occasionally, there may be a necessity for appropriate disciplinary action. The Camping Program encourages positive reinforcement to correct inappropriate behaviour.

The following examples are inappropriate discipline methods:

- * physical blows or force
- * confinement
- * emotional/humiliation/name-calling
- * any other form of abuse

Alternatives to punishment:

If we allow someone to experience the consequences of their actions, there is potential for an honest and real learning situation to occur. Discipline can be maintained through both natural and logical consequences.

Natural consequences represent the pressure of reality without interference. Disrespecting others, for example, will ordinarily invite similar treatment. But it isn't always appropriate to let natural consequences take their course.

Logical consequences involve an intervention by someone else. So, disrespecting someone carries a consequence like removal from a program activity. The disadvantage, of course, is that this can deteriorate into another form of punishment imposed externally. Logical consequences should be negotiated as much as possible beforehand by everyone involved. Thus, an agreement is reached as to the consequences of foul language or put-downs (Code of Conduct). Because everyone is part of the agreement, everyone is also responsible for seeing that it works. By adults and youth taking responsibility together, logical consequences become an alternative to punishment.

2. Physical Contact

When dealing with youth, there is acceptable touching and unacceptable touching. A handshake is generally acceptable; a hug is sometimes acceptable; and an embrace is usually unacceptable. Touching which gives offence or causes any unease is not acceptable. Permission to hug someone should be sought before actually hugging the person.

3. Relationships

The Camp Program affirms a duty to its youth members for their welfare and development. Staff accepts a responsibility to the Camp Program to care for youth members and deliver the program. Camp staff benefits from the camping program, training and experience it brings. However the camp staff are deliverers of the program. It is the youth members who are entitled to the benefits and protection of a safe, quality camping program. The correct relationship between a staff and a youth member is that of the staff being an instructor, guide, dispassionate friend and protector. It is a position of integrity, trust and maturity.

4. Language

The Camping Program ethic requires that we do not use vulgar or inappropriate language at any time. Language should be acceptable to the reasonable onlooker and appropriate to the development of good citizenship.

5. Discrimination

The Anglican camps teach and proclaim the Christian faith while welcoming people to the camps regardless of gender, race, culture, religious belief, sexual orientation or economic circumstances. Youth members are strongly influenced by the behaviour of adults. We need to be sensitive to the traditions and beliefs of all people and to avoid words or actions which "put down" anybody. Special care should be given when telling of jokes or riddles to any group members.

6. Harassment

Harassment breaks down the positive and protective environment we seek to develop, and, at its worst, is emotionally harmful. It is contrary to our objective of individual growth and development. Some examples are ongoing teasing, disparagement, belittling or excluding individuals.

Sexual harassment is any verbal or physical behaviour of a sexual nature that is unwelcome and offensive.

7. Privacy

The individual's right to privacy must be recognized and taken into consideration in such matters as sleeping places, sanitary facilities, individual and group equipment.

Adult members should, where possible, have sleeping accommodations separate from youth members, unless discipline, safety or available facilities dictate otherwise.

8. Alcohol Policy

No staff member who has a duty of care toward any youth shall consume alcohol or any other mood altering substance during any a camping program which involves youth members or within a time frame which would affect their ability to carry out their duty of care toward youth members.

9. Smoking

It is inappropriate for any member to smoke in front of youth at any camping activity.

10. General Conduct

Staff should:

- * Help to establish safe and open communication in each program of the Group.
- * Have an "open door" policy. Declare all meetings open to parents or staff.
- * Treat all children, and others, with respect and dignity befitting their age.
- * Be conscious of others' "personal space".
- * Encourage participation by all, while being sensitive to each child's individual capacity.
- * Be a Christian role model for children. Be friendly, courteous and kind.

Staff should not:

- * Show favoritism for particular youth members.
- * Invite youth member(s) alone to their home or other private accommodation.
- * Have private talks with individual youth members away from the presence of other staff and campers. [Private talks should be in sight but out of hearing of observers.]
- * Carry one youth member alone in your vehicle.
- * Go on a hike or other activity with one youth member alone.
- * Demonstrate first aid on a youth member.
- * Assist youth members with personal hygiene or dressing except where health or disability requires it and then only in the presence of staff.

* Take part inappropriately in body contact games.

* Let children involve you in excessive attention-seeking behaviour that is overtly physical or sexual in nature. Be particularly careful with the very needy child. Re-direct the behaviour to "healthy" activities and provide caring attention before it is asked for.

11. General Duty

Every staff responsibility goes beyond the confines of his or her specific appointment to their own youth. The staff is expected to intervene when they identify breaches of any part of this Duty of Care document.

There are three primary areas of responsibility: to the parents, to the young people and to yourself.

11a. Responsibility to Parents

At the simplest level, parents have a right to know everything that their daughter or son is going to be involved in. Of course, they have the right to say no if they feel any activity is inappropriate. Parents are also your greatest allies, and you should keep them as well informed as possible. Parents will sometimes defer to you, but only if you have convinced them that you merit their confidence, and have earned their trust and respect.

The best way to start achieving this trust is to talk with each parent. The initial visit with parents when a youth first joins your camp (for example: confirmation letters and camp information or parents dropping off their children for camp) is critical for future relationships. This visit takes time, effort and commitment, but it is well worth it. Discuss with the parents what the camping program is about, its Mission and Principles, program, and special events. Allow them to question you. It is better to deal with issues and concerns that the parents may have in a relaxed setting, rather than later in a "crisis" situation.

All activities are done so with parent/guardian's written permission (waiver forms).

11b. Responsibility to Children

By knowing each individual young person (medical forms and speaking with parents), you'll be in a better position to anticipate how the youth may react in various situations. In physical activities, you may get fears and concerns being expressed which are easy to understand, but you may also get displays of bravado covering up real fears. In intellectual activities, you may get questions if a person does not understand, but you may also get disruptive behaviour as a way of saying the same thing.

CHILD ABUSE

As a staff leader caring for other people's children, you may become concerned about suspected child abuse. An abused or neglected child is a child who is harmed, or threatened with physical or mental harm, or from who is withheld the necessities of life. There are several forms of abuse: physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect. In most Canadian jurisdictions, there is a legal duty to report if a child has been or is at risk of being physically or emotionally harmed (including sexually molested) by a person having charge of the child. There is also a duty to report if a child less than 12 years of age has seriously injured another person or caused serious damage to another person's property and is either not appropriately supervised or is not getting the treatment that the child requires.

If a child you know becomes a victim of abuse, your first reaction can be very important in helping him/her through the ordeal. The following guidelines may help you to deal sensitively and competently with the situation in which a child discloses that she/he is being abused:

- * Stay calm. Don't panic or overreact to the information the child tells you. Listen compassionately, and take what the child is saying seriously.
- * Don't criticize the child or tell the child they misunderstood what happened.
- * Do respect the child's privacy and take them to a place where you can talk without interruptions or distractions, staying within view of another staff or the group.
- * Take the time to listen to what the child has to say. Tell them you appreciate being told about the incident and that you will help to make sure that it won't happen again.
- * Explain that you will need to tell the proper authorities what you've been told.
- * No judgement statement should be made about the person whom the allegation is made.
- * The child should not be questioned unless what he or she is saying is unclear. Avoid leading questions. Open, non-specific questions should be used such as, "Can you explain to me what you meant by that?"
- * You should show real concern, but NOT alarm or anger, when receiving information from a child about possible sexual abuse.
- * If a child you know has been sexually abused, do not blame yourself or the child. People who victimize children are not easy to identify. They come from all walks of life. Often they have a position of status - they go to church, hold regular jobs, and is active in the community. Child molesters are sometimes very skilled at controlling children through giving excessive attention, gifts, and money. Child molesters use their skills on parents and other adults too, disguising their abusive behaviour behind friendship and care for the children.

* A detailed account of any discussion regarding alleged or suspected abuse should be written as soon as possible after it has taken place, concerning who, what, when, where, how, but not WHY.

* Follow the Camps guidelines.

11c. Responsibility to Yourself

It is important to know your own limits and abilities. If you are leading an activity with any potential risks, always make sure that you are working well within your own capabilities. If you are working on the edge of your own skills, you are endangering the young people in your charge. Seek out and obtain skills and knowledge to enable you to perform your designated role.

12. Guidelines

* Do not rely on your good name to protect you.

* Do not, for one moment, believe "it can never happen to me."

* While respecting the need for privacy and confidentiality, try never to be completely alone with a young person. When it is appropriate to work one to one, make sure that others are within earshot and within vision.

* Never touch a young person in a way that could be misconstrued.

* Never make suggestive or inappropriate remarks.

* If you suspect a young person is developing a "crush" on you, discuss it with other Leaders and, if appropriate, the parents.

* If you notice any of your colleagues are at risk from their behaviour or a young person's crush, discuss it with them.

* Co-ed leadership in co-ed program situations is highly desirable.

* The presence of an Adult Leader is a requirement for any activity that involves campers.

I understand that all food, including personal snack food is to be stored only in the kitchen. I commit myself to being a positive member of Summer Camp Staff, and I promise to honor the values, rules and responsibilities listed above. These are all important values in my own life and I will seek to demonstrate in my actions.

I have read the position description describing my duties, responsibilities, and I accept them. I accept the rules listed above, and I understand my failure to uphold them will result in my dismissal from the Summer Camp Staff.

(Signature)

(Date)

(Witness)

(Date)