

Information on Working with Minors

The following information is from Protecting the Mission - Policies for Work with Minors - The Salvation Army Western Territory

The Salvation Army Western Territory Code of Ethics for Working with Minors and Vulnerable Adults

Relationships among people are the foundation of Christian ministry and are central to the life of The Salvation Army. Defining healthy and safe relationships is not meant, in any way, to undermine the strength and importance of personal contact or the ministerial role. Rather, it is to assist all who fulfill the many roles that create the Army to demonstrate their love and compassion for children and adults in the most sincere and genuine relationships.

It is with the intention that relationships in ministry be experienced at all times as charitable and without intention to do harm or allow harm to occur, that the following Code of Ethics has been adopted by The Salvation Army. All Salvation Army personnel are asked to carefully consider each standard in the Code and within the Protecting the Mission policies before agreeing to adhere to the standards and continue in service with The Salvation Army.

- Salvation Army personnel will conduct themselves in a manner that is consistent with the discipline and teachings of The Salvation Army within the course of their duties.
- Salvation Army personnel will do their utmost to prevent abuse and neglect among minors and vulnerable adults involved in army activities and services.
- Salvation Army personnel will not physically, sexually, or emotionally abuse or neglect a minor or vulnerable adult.
- Salvation Army personnel will share concerns about inappropriate behavior or policy violations with their supervisor.
- Salvation Army personnel will report any suspected abuse or neglect of a minor or vulnerable adult whether on or off Salvation Army property, whether perpetrated by Army personnel or others, to the governmental authorities.
- Salvation Army personnel understand that The Salvation Army will not tolerate abuse and agree to comply in spirit and in action with this position.

- Salvation Army personnel will accept their personal responsibility to protect minors and vulnerable adults from all forms of abuse.
- Salvation Army personnel will endeavor to be a source of help to families in which abuse and neglect of a child or vulnerable adult has become a problem.

Definitions of Salvation Army Personnel

For the purposes of this policy, the following are included in the definition of Salvation Army personnel:

- Officers of The Salvation Army
- Employees of The Salvation Army corps, administrative offices, programs and other ministries.
- Volunteers, including advisory organizations, with The Salvation Army corps, programs and other ministries.
- Soldiers, adherents, and others associated with the worshipping congregation of The Salvation Army corps, programs and other ministries who assume responsibility for working with minors.
- Cadets and students in Crestmont College.
- A minor is defined as anyone under the age of 18.

Types of abuse

- Physical abuse is non-accidental injury, which is intentionally inflicted upon a minor.
- Sexual abuse is any contact of a sexual nature that occurs between a minor and an adult or nonconsensual contact between minors. This includes any activity that is meant to arouse or gratify the sexual desires of the adult.
- Emotional abuse is mental or emotional injury to a minor that results in an observable and material impairment in the minor's growth, development or psychological functioning.
- Neglect is the failure to provide for a minor's basic needs or the failure to protect a minor from harm.
- Economic Exploitation is the deliberate misplacement, exploitation, or wrongful temporary or permanent use of a minor's belongings or money without the consent of the parent or legal guardian of the minor.

Conduct with Minors

The following guidelines are intended to assist Salvation Army personnel in making decisions about interactions with minors in Salvation Army sponsored and affiliated programs. They are not designed or intended to address interactions within families. For clarification of any guideline or to inquire about behaviors not addressed here, contact the Child/Senior Adult Safety Manager.

General Conduct with Minors

1. Salvation Army personnel are responsible for releasing children in a custodial care relationship only to parents, legal guardians, or other persons designated by parents or legal guardians. In the event that Salvation Army personnel are uncertain of the propriety of releasing a minor, they should locate or contact their immediate supervisor before releasing the child.
2. Salvation Army personnel will report unmanageable or unusual behavior of minors to parents or legal guardians as soon as possible.
3. Salvation Army personnel are prohibited from the use, possession, distribution, or being under the influence of alcohol, tobacco products, or any illegal drugs while working in the presence of minors.
4. Salvation Army personnel may occasionally be in a position to provide transportation for minors. The following guidelines must be strictly observed when Salvation Army personnel are involved in the transportation of minors:
 - a. Ordinarily, minors should never be transported without written permission.
 - b. Minors must be transported directly to their destination. No unauthorized stops are to be made.
 - c. While it may be necessary to provide assistance, Salvation Army personnel will avoid unnecessary and/or inappropriate physical contact with minors while in vehicles.
 - d. Drivers who are assigned to transport minors must be at least 21 years old.
 - e. Transportation logs will be utilized at all times.
 - f. Whenever possible, Salvation Army personnel should endeavor to utilize two adults when transporting.
5. Personnel will respond to children with respect and consideration and treat all children equally, regardless of sex, race, religion, culture or socio-economic status. Personnel will portray a positive role model for youth by

- maintaining an attitude of respect, loyalty, patience, courtesy, tact and maturity.
6. Salvation Army personnel are prohibited from speaking to minors in a way that is or could be construed by any observer as harsh, coercive, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating. Personnel are expected to refrain from swearing in the presence of minors.
 7. One-to-one counseling with minors will be done in a public place where private conversations are possible but occur in full view of others.
 8. Salvation Army personnel are cautioned against initiating sexually oriented conversations with minors. Personnel in a mentoring or counseling relationship may respond to sexually oriented questions or comments from minors, but will do so in a manner consistent with Christian values and the position statements of The Salvation Army. Salvation Army personnel are not permitted to discuss their own sexual activities with minors.
 9. No Salvation Army personnel is to date a minor or become romantically or sexually involved with a minor. Personnel will maintain appropriate boundaries when in positions of power with program participants.
 10. Salvation Army personnel will refrain from intimate displays of affection towards others in the presence of minors, parents, and other personnel.
 11. Money or gifts will not be given to children or youth, unless within the context of a group gift, given to all participants in celebration of special events or recognition.
 12. Salvation Army personnel will never be nude or inappropriately dressed in the presence of minors in their care. Personnel must be well groomed and appropriately dressed at all times. Changing and showering facilities for adults should be separate from facilities for minors. In circumstances where facilities are shared different schedules will be made.
 13. Salvation Army personnel are prohibited from possessing any sexually oriented or explicit printed materials (magazines, cards, videos, films, clothing etc.) on Salvation Army property or in the presence of minors.
 14. Salvation Army personnel are prohibited from viewing or downloading any sexually oriented or morally inappropriate internet materials on Salvation Army property, with Salvation Army equipment or in the presence of minors.
 15. Salvation Army personnel are prohibited from sleeping in the same beds, sleeping bags or small tents with minors unless the adult is an immediate family member of the minor.
 16. Private living areas (ie. bedrooms) of Salvation Army personnel are not to be used for Salvation Army programs or by program participants.
 17. Any contact between Salvation Army personnel and minors which takes place outside the context of scheduled activities or job description (phone calls, letters or face-to-face conversations) and is unrelated to Salvation Army program, will be permitted only with the express approval of the child's parents. Parents must be advised of the nature of the contact, and that such is not part of Salvation Army activity.

Physical Contact with Minors

The Salvation Army has implemented a physical contact policy that will promote a positive, nurturing environment while protecting children and Salvation Army personnel from misunderstandings. The following guidelines are to be carefully followed by all Salvation Army personnel working with minors.

Appropriate Contact

Appropriate affection between Salvation Army personnel and minors is important for a child's development and a positive part of ministry. The following forms of affection are regarded as appropriate examples for most Salvation Army sponsored and affiliated programs:

- Side hugs.
- Shoulder to shoulder or "A" frame hugs.
- Pats on the shoulder or back.
- Handshakes.
- "High-fives" and hand slapping.
- Verbal praise.
- Touching hands, faces, shoulders and arms of minors.
- Arms around shoulders.
- Holding hands while walking with small children.
- Sitting beside small children.
- Kneeling or bending down for hugs with small children.
- Holding hands during prayer.
- Kisses on the cheek.
- Pats on the head when culturally appropriate. (For example, this gesture should typically be avoided in some Asian communities).

Inappropriate Contact

Some forms of physical affection have been used by adults to initiate inappropriate contact with minors. In order to maintain the safest possible environment for minors, the following are examples of affection that are not to be used in Salvation Army sponsored and affiliated programs:

- Full body hugs or lengthy embraces.
- Kisses on the mouth.

- Holding minors over two years old on the lap.
- Touching bottoms, chests or genital areas.
- Showing affection in isolated areas of the program such as bedrooms, closets, staff only areas or other private rooms.
- Sleeping in bed with a child.
- Touching knees or legs of minors.
- Wrestling with minors.
- Tickling minors.
- Piggyback rides.
- Any type of massage given by minor to adult.
- Any type of massage given by adult to minor.
- Any form of unwanted affection.
- Compliments that relate to physique or body development (e.g. "You are really developing.. .")

Behavior Management Procedures

1. Salvation Army personnel are prohibited from using physical punishment in any way for behavior management of minors. 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 minors.
2. Salvation Army personnel are prohibited from using the following techniques for behavior management:
 - a. Isolation, except as needed for the child to gain self-control, and then only under the supervision of an adult, and no longer than 30 minutes.
 - b. Withholding food or water.
 - c. Corporal or other physical punishment.
 - d. Degrading punishment.
 - e. Work or chore assignments as punishment, unrelated to a natural or logical consequence.
 - f. Group punishment for one child's behavior.
 - g. Excessive exercise.
 - h. Withholding access to physical, mail or telephone contact with parents or guardians.
 - i. Withholding medications for punishment.
 - j. Using medication for punishment.
 - k. Prohibiting necessary sleep.
 - l. Withholding access to necessary bathing or clean clothing.
 - m. Mechanical restraint such as rope or tape to restrict movement.

- n. Physical restraint. Exceptions to this policy may be made by individuals who have documented certification in proper physical restraint and who document all use of this technique.
- 3. Salvation Army personnel must use positive techniques of guidance, including redirection, positive reinforcement and encouragement rather than inappropriate competition, comparison and criticism.
- 4. Salvation Army personnel will have age appropriate expectations and set-up guidelines and environments that minimize the need for discipline.