

Seigle Avenue Partners Child Protection Policy

TERMS:

- **Child or Youth:** Persons under 18 years of age and considered a minor under the law. This term shall also include legally incompetent persons.
- **Child Abuse:** A non-accidental injury or pattern of injuries to a child
Child Abuse May Include:
 - **Neglect-** Occurs when the adults responsible for the well-being of a child fail to provide for the child. Neglect may include not giving food, clothing, shelter, failure to keep children clean; lack of supervision and withholding medical care
 - **Physical Abuse-**An injury or pattern of injuries that happen to a child that are not accidental. These injuries may include beatings, burns, bruises, bites, welts, strangulation, broken bones or death.
 - **Sexual Abuse-**Sexual abuse is the sexual assault or exploitation of children. Sexual abuse may consist of numerous acts over a long period of time or a single incident. Children can be victimized from infancy through adolescence. Typically, the perpetrator keeps the child from disclosing the abuse through intimidation, threats, and rewards.
 - **Emotional Abuse-**Chronic and persistent acts by an adult that endanger the mental health or emotional development of a child including rejection, ignoring, terrorizing, corrupting, constant criticism, mean remarks, insults and giving little or no love, guidance and support.

SCREENING OF EMPLOYEES AND VOLUNTEERS:

- **For Employees:** Any candidate for employment who has a past conviction of or pending proceeding addressing an allegation of child abuse or neglect cannot be employed by SAP without the express written approval of the Executive Committee. Active substance abuse or a conviction for any of the following will automatically disqualify an individual from employment with children or youth; pedophilic behavior, incest, rape, assaults, indecent exposure, pornography, sodomy or abuse of a minor.
- **For Volunteers:** Any candidate for volunteer service who has a past conviction of or pending proceeding addressing an allegation of child abuse or neglect cannot work with children and youth at SAP without the express written approval of the Executive Committee. Active substance abuse or a conviction for any of the following will automatically disqualify an individual from volunteer service with children and youth; pedophilic behavior, incest, rape, assaults, indecent exposure, pornography, sodomy, abuse of a minor, domestic violence, or weapon offenses.

CODE OF CONDUCT AND SPECIFIC POLICIES:

1. Employees and Volunteers will not verbally, emotionally, physically or sexually abuse children
2. Employees and Volunteers will not discipline children by use of physical punishment or by failing to provide the necessities of care.
3. Employees and Volunteers will provide proper supervision and exercise sound judgment in providing a safe environment at all times.
4. Employees and Volunteers may use physical restraint only in situations necessary to protect the child and others from harm.
5. Employees and Volunteers will avoid situations during programs where they would be alone with a single child and cannot be observed or monitored by others. As adults supervise children, they should space themselves in a way that other adults can see them. This can be through an open door policy or in a room with a glass door.
6. Employees and Volunteers are expected to avoid, to the greatest extent possible, any situation in which they could be alone or out of sight of others, with a single child. This is to protect: a) children against situations in which abuse might occur, and b) adults against false accusations of child abuse.
7. In situations where it is necessary for an adult to be alone with a child, the adult should notify another adult before and after the period during which he/she is alone with the child.
8. Employees and Volunteers will make sure suspicious or unknown individuals are not occupying the restroom before allowing children to use the facilities.
9. Always send children in pairs, and whenever possible, with employees and volunteers. Employees and volunteers will stand in the doorway while children are using the restroom.

10. If Employees and Volunteers are assisting children in the restroom, doors to the facility must remain open.
11. Employees and Volunteers will always use proper supervision when children are using public bathrooms to ensure their safety.
12. Employees and Volunteers will respect the right of children and youth not to be touched in ways that make them feel uncomfortable, and their right to say no. Adults will discourage children from touching others in an inappropriate manner.
13. Employees and Volunteers should be alert to the physical and emotional state of children entering the program. Any signs of injury or possible child abuse must be reported immediately to the on-site program staff in charge.
14. Employees and Volunteers should be aware of the possible implications of and are discouraged from being alone with SAP children outside of agency programs, without the permission of the parents.
15. Employees and Volunteers should release children only to the authorized parent, guardian, or other individual authorized in writing by the parent or guardian.
16. Using, possessing, or being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs, or being impaired by legally prescribed drugs during church working hours or church sponsored programs is prohibited.
17. Profanity, inappropriate language or jokes and any kind of harassment in the presence of children or parents is prohibited.
18. Employees and Volunteers will not share inappropriate details of their personal life or ask children to share inappropriate details through any form of communication: written, verbal or electronic.
19. Employees and Volunteers may not date program participants less than 18 years of age.
20. Employees and Volunteers are required to read, sign and adhere to all policies related to identifying, documenting and reporting child abuse as instructed by a supervisor.
21. Employees and Volunteers are required to report immediately to the on-site program in charge any circumstances that under this policy affect their ability to work with children and youth.

REPORTING AND RESPONDING TO CHILD ABUSE ALLEGATIONS:

- Every Employee and Volunteer is required to report any situation which presents a suspicion that child abuse may have occurred. Such report shall be made to the program staff in charge or designee immediately and in no case more than 24 hours after such occurrence.
- Any report of child abuse made by a child about their care by a parent guardian, youth, adult or staff employee or volunteer, despite how unlikely such report may seem, must be relayed to the program staff in charge or designee immediately and in no case more than 24 hours after such occurrence.
- The program staff in charge shall as required by law report the situation to the Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services or other local authorities for investigation.
- Every allegation shall be taken seriously. Adequate care, respect and confidentiality shall be offered to alleged victims and perpetrators until the allegation is substantiated or cleared.
- The Executive Director or designee will immediately contact the SAP attorney, Board President and liability insurance carrier.
- Written documentation relating to the matter shall be kept in a confidential file.
- An individual accused of child abuse may be placed on leave from his/her responsibilities at the discretion of the Executive Director or Personnel Committee. For employees, this may be with or without pay.
- To protect the child or youth from further possible abuse or harassment, SAP will prohibit the accused individual access to the alleged victim.
- In the event of an unsubstantiated allegation, the Executive Director or designee will make a determination as to whether the individual will be allowed to return to work as an employee or volunteer at the agency. They will consider the individual's likely effectiveness in working with children/youth following an allegation and investigation of child abuse. An employee or volunteer has the right to appeal the decision to the Personnel Committee.
- Employees and Volunteers are expected to cooperate fully with the investigation authorities, such as the Child Protective United of the Department of Social Services, with guidance from the attorney.
- Employees and Volunteers will refer any inquiries regarding the situation to the Executive Director or the Personnel or Executive Committee.
- Employees and Volunteers are expected to avoid denial, minimization, or blame during the period of investigation of the allegation.

Seigle Avenue Partners - Applicant's Statement

The information contained in this application is correct and complete to the best of my knowledge. I authorize any references, churches, or other organizations listed in this application to give you any information they may have (including employer's opinions) regarding my character and fitness for working with children or youth and I hereby release all such references, churches, or other organizations from liability for damages of whatever kind or nature that may result from furnishing such evaluations to you. I waive any right I may have to inspect any information provided about me by any person or organization identified by me in the application.

Should my application be accepted, I agree to refrain from inappropriate conduct in the performance of my services on behalf of the organization. I understand that any violation of this Code of Conduct or misrepresentation of information that I have provided may result in termination of employment or volunteer service with children/youth.

I have not been convicted of a child or youth sexual or physical abuse or neglect crime. I am not currently involved in any allegation of abuse or neglect of a child or youth.

I authorize that a Criminal Records Check may be conducted on me and that any information which pertains to any record of convictions contained in police files or any file maintained on me, whether federal, state or local, be released to the organization. In so authorizing, I release any law enforcement agencies, Seigle Avenue Partners or those individuals receiving the results of the check from any and all liability resulting from such disclosure.

I acknowledge that I have read the Seigle Avenue Partners Child Protection Policy and have received copies for my personal use.

I further state that I HAVE CAREFULLY READ THE FORGOING RELEASE AND KNOW THE CONTENTS THEREOF AND I SIGN THIS RELEASE AS MY OWN FREE ACT IN EXCHANGE FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO SERVE AS A SEIGLE AVENUE PARTNERS VOLUNTEER OR EMPLOYEE. This is a legally binding agreement, which I have read and understand. I understand that the personal information will be held confidential by the professional agency staff.

Applicant's Signature _____ Date _____

Applicant's Checklist (For Office Use Only)

Reference Checks: _____

Comments: _____

Determination: _____ Start Date _____

NOTE: CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION ONLY – OFFICE USE ONLY!

Social Security Number _____ Birth Date _____

Driver's License Number _____ State _____

Have you ever been convicted of or pled guilty or nodo contendere (no contest) to traffic violation(s) in the last five years? _____ If yes, please describe all convictions for the past five years and any conviction resulting in the suspension of your license, whether or not within the past five years.

Do you have any medical training or are you CPR certified? _____

Is there any health related reason that would keep you from effectively working with or cause any potential harm to children? _____ If yes, please explain.

Personal References: (Former employers or other organizations at which you volunteered. Reference must have known you at least one year.)

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Length of time know by reference _____

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Relationship _____

The questions listed below are necessary in order to help ensure a safe and secure environment for our children and for the protection of our volunteer and/or paid staff. All information is held strictly confidential. Please answer these questions. If you have any concerns regarding the questions, please consult with the Executive Director:

	Yes	No
Have you been convicted for the possession or sale of drugs?	_____	_____
Have you been hospitalized or treated for alcohol or substance abuse?	_____	_____
Have you been convicted of a criminal offense excluding minor traffic violations?	_____	_____
Have you been arrested or convicted for any sex offense of any kind?	_____	_____
Have you been arrested of or convicted of any domestic violence, assault or weapons related offense?	_____	_____
Have you ever been denied participation in supervising youth activities in any organization?	_____	_____

Please explain any yes answer.
