Youth Protection Statement Considerations

Few issues associated with the operations of a youth-serving organization are as critical as youth protection. Organizations have the responsibility to ensure that all children in their care are both properly nurtured and safe. Child abuse causes harm to individuals, staff and the organization when it occurs. Sound risk management programs include procedures to prevent child abuse, protect youth in our care, protect staff from false accusations and educate families. Organizations can also serve the greater good by bringing, youth, families and the community in efforts to prevent abuse.

Safe-Wise Consulting has developed the CAP (Child Abuse Prevention) Strong program to assist organizations in managing the risks associated with child abuse. A key strategy in preventing abuse is to open lines for regular communication between the organization, youth, families and the community. The following consideration can be implemented to help communicate the organizations practices and expectations for protecting youth. These points can be included in regular communication vehicles such as brochures, parent manuals, signage, Websites and newsletters.

Policy – Your organization should have a Youth Protection Policy in place that has been adopted by the Board of Directors. The policy will outline the practices your organization will implement to protect youth. This policy should be readily available and regularly communicated to staff, youth, parents and the community. Key points include:

- Staff (employed and volunteer) is rigorously screened before working in programs to ensure they are suited for working with youth

- Staff is trained to identify and prevent child abuse as well as report any suspected abuse of youth

- Staff training includes information on the prevention of bullying and proper Internet behavior

- The [organization name] follows a practice of supervising all programs with at least two staff members present. Youth are never alone with staff where they cannot be viewed by other staff. Youth are never left unsupervised.

- Parents are welcome to visit programs at any time

- Staff has agreed to not interact (one-on-one) with youth outside of the [organization name]; this includes babysitting, transportation and phone, electronic or Internet communication

- Staff follows the [organization name]'s Code of Conduct (include)

- Staff responds to children with respect and treats all children equally regardless of sex, race, religion, culture, economic status, or disability.

Awareness – Child abuse continues to exist and knows no community, ethnic or socio-economic bounds. Your organization should help protect youth by communicating information that raises the awareness of child abuse and how to prevent abuse and how to respond to suspected abuse. Key points include:

- Signs of physical, emotional, sexual abuse and neglect
- Ways to prevent Bullying
- Safe Internet use guidelines
- Where and how to report abuse
- Indentifying lines of communication and leaders at your organization to resource about abuse and youth protection issues
- Encouraging families to discuss youth protection topics in age-appropriate ways
- Teaching children how to prevent abuse in age-appropriate ways

More information and resources on youth protection are available at the

Safe-Wise Consulting Online Resource Library