

**General Conduct**

Camp staff, leaders and volunteers **will treat** all campers, other leaders, volunteers, and community members affiliated with Camp Gideon with respect regardless of racial/ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity, and will not discriminate based on age, veteran or disability status.

Camp staff, leaders and volunteers **will portray** a positive image of Camp Gideon and its programs including, but not limited to, maintaining an attitude of respect, loyalty, patience, honesty, courtesy, tact, and maturity.

Camp staff, leaders and volunteers **are expected** to uphold professional standards of conduct at all times. This includes, but is not limited to: punctuality, appropriate interactions with campers and with other leaders and volunteers, dress, speech, preparation, and flexibility. Additionally, leaders and volunteers may not use a Camp Gideon event to promote personal gain in any way. Any and all inquisitions for services from participants at an event must be responded to in a manner that promotes Camp Gideon and its programs and should be passed along to respective Program Director.

Staff, leaders and volunteers will not use profanity or discuss adult subject matter in the presence of campers or while conducting camp business.

Staff, leaders and volunteers will adhere to the dress code for camp events. In general, staff, leaders and volunteers are prohibited from wearing articles of clothing containing references to alcohol and tobacco products, illicit drugs, sexual activity and adult conduct, profanity, vampires, images of death, or any form of discrimination. Clothing with degrading or offensive language should not be worn. Clothing should be modest and appropriate for the event or meeting.

**Alcohol, Tobacco, & Other Drug Use**

The nature and philosophy of our camp and its programs require that staff, leaders and volunteers serve as positive, spiritual role models for a healthy Christian lifestyle.

Therefore, staff, leaders and volunteers, regardless of age and camp status, must abstain from tobacco and illicit/illegal drug use at all times. Use of these substances during personal time may result in termination of camp participation. Use of these substances during camp or program events will result in immediately dismissal from the program and termination of all camp participation.

All staff, leaders and volunteers under the age of 21 are prohibited from the use of alcohol. Violation of this policy may result in termination of camp participation. Repeated violations will result in permanent termination.

Staff, leaders and volunteers 21 and older may not consume alcohol during any camp or program events, whether on-duty or not. Violation may result in termination of camp participation.

Staff, leaders and volunteers 21 and older that choose to use alcohol in their personal lives are asked to conduct themselves in a manner that promotes a responsible, low-risk lifestyle. Staff, leaders and volunteers 21 and older are prohibited from wearing clothing or promotional items that associate them with Camp Gideon, its programs, or events while consuming alcohol. Repeated or extreme violations of this responsible consumption policy may result in suspension or termination of all camp participation.

Staff, leaders and volunteers 21 and older are prohibited by law and this policy from providing alcohol to minors, including leaders and volunteers under the age of 21. Violation of this policy will result in immediate termination of all camp participation.

Staff, leaders and volunteers are required to report violations of these policies to the Camp Gideon staff member or event coordinator in charge of the event or program for which the violator is serving.

**Personal Communication Devices**

Personal Communication Devices include cell phones, PDAs, pagers, laptops, notebooks, music players that have internet access, and all other electronic communications devices.

Regardless of whether Camp Gideon owns the device or leaders or volunteers are using their own device for program purposes, conduct on these devices will adhere to professional behavior at all times.

Examples of inappropriate behavior are using it for purposes of harassment, taking unauthorized pictures of campers, staff, other leaders or volunteers, or viewing/downloading material from the internet during program hours that is not a program necessity or in alignment with other camp policies.

Devices are to be turned off or set on “silent” during meetings, events, training sessions, and other direct delivery of programs. Unless specifically asked to do for program purposes, devices should not be active while supervising campers. Depending on the program and director’s preferences, devices may be used during breaks and off-hours if permission is granted.

**Social Networking, Online Communications, & Text Messaging**

In general, Camp Gideon views texting, emailing, instant messaging, social networking sites, personal websites, and blogs positively and respects the right of its staff, leaders and volunteers to use them as a medium of self-expression and communication.

Some readers of such online communications or text messaging may view the leader or volunteer as a representative or spokesperson of Camp Gideon or otherwise develop certain impressions of Camp Gideon and its programs or activities, its campers, staff, leaders and/or volunteers.

In light of this possibility, Camp Gideon requires, as a condition of participating in camp, that individuals observe the following guidelines when referring to Camp Gideon, its programs or activities, its campers, staff, leaders and/or volunteers in an online or text communication.

1. Staff, leaders and volunteers must be respectful in all online and texting communications related to or referencing Camp Gideon, its programs or activities, campers, staff, leaders and/ or volunteers.

2. Staff, leaders and volunteers must not use obscenities, profanity, profane or offensive slang or vulgar language.

3. Staff, leaders and volunteers must not use online or texting communications to disparage Camp Gideon, its programs or activities, campers, staff, leaders and/or volunteers.

4. Staff, leaders and volunteers must not use online or texting communications to harass, bully, or intimidate campers or other staff, leaders or volunteers. Behaviors that constitute harassment and bullying include, but are not limited to, comments that are derogatory with respect to race, ethnicity, religion, gender, age, or disability status; sexually suggestive, humiliating or demeaning comments; and threats to stalk, haze, or physically injure a camper, staff, leader or other volunteer.

5. Staff, leaders and volunteers must not use online or texting communications to discuss engaging in conduct that is prohibited by Camp Gideon or program policies, including but not limited to, the use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs, sexual behavior, sexual harassment and bullying.

6. Staff, leaders and volunteers are prohibited from posting pictures of campers or other staff, leaders and volunteers on a website without obtaining written permission. Likewise, staff, leaders and volunteers may not “tag” campers or other staff, leaders or volunteers in pictures posted on other websites.

7. Staff, leaders and volunteers are prohibited from creating or maintaining social networking pages, websites, blogs, or “groups” in the name of or referencing Camp Gideon, its programs or activities. Likewise, the use of the Camp Gideon copyrighted name or logo is not allowed without written permission.

If requested by the Program Director, staff, leaders and volunteers must provide that person with access to any websites maintained or controlled by the staff, leader or volunteer in question, including personal websites, blogs, and social networking sites. Access may include being asked to “Friend” the camp or Program Director on a site to ensure regular monitoring.

**Gossiping (Slander) Policy**

Gossip is an activity that can drain, distract, and down-shift meaningful experiences and relationships. We have all participated in gossip, yet most of us say that we don’t like it. In order to create a safer and more positive environment during Camp Gideon programs and events, we are making a commitment to change our behavior and atmosphere to be gossip-free.

Gossip is:

• About a person who is not present

• Negative or personal (confidential) information about a person or organization

• Often critical and derogatory

• Unsubstantiated information about organizational policies or decisions

• A verb, which means it’s something you DO. This also means that it is something you choose NOT to do and choose to STOP.

In order to create a safer, more spiritually-grounded environment, our staff, leaders and volunteers commit to:

1. Not speak or insinuate another person’s name when that person is not present unless it is to compliment or reference that person’s work.

2. Refuse to participate when another person mentions someone who is not present in a negative light.

3. Choose not to respond to a negative email or other kind of virtual message to pass on private or derogatory information about any staff or participant.

4. Not speak about Camp Gideon or its staff, leaders or volunteers in a negative light to other staff, leaders, volunteers, campers, or professionally related individuals.

Additionally, our staff, leaders and volunteers commit to intervene if they witness staff or participants choosing to gossip:

1. Staff, leaders and volunteers will look for an opportunity to intervene appropriately. Decide if the situation warrants an immediate action or if a conversation can be conducted in private. If a conversation is going to happen, initiate it as soon after the incident as possible.

2. Staff, leaders and volunteers will have a conversation with the staff, leader, volunteer or camper who is gossiping.

3. If the conversation doesn’t work or if it was a difficult situation, leaders and volunteers will discuss the experience with a staff member or the Programs Director.

**Modeling Positive Peer Interactions**

The way in which staff, leaders and volunteers interact with each other will be observed and imitated by campers and youth leaders. Positive staff, leaders and volunteers interactions are essential in creating an environment and atmosphere for youth and children to feel spiritually, emotionally, and physically safe, secure, and happy.

**The importance of modeling positive behavior:**

• When youth and children see staff, leaders and volunteers speak to each other respectfully and supportively, and see them resolve differences fairly, youth and children, in turn, will begin to use these strategies to communicate and resolve conflicts with their peers.

• Staff, leaders and volunteers must be emotionally available, sensitive and responsive to other staff, leaders, volunteers and campers, modeling levels of love, security and support

• Modeling positive peer interactions will be enhanced when we maintain an awareness of verbal and body language

• Negative and inappropriate interactions will also be picked up by youth and children

• Unresolved and poorly managed conflict between staff, leaders and volunteers can cause stress and affect overall morale

• Issues with communication or conflict can result in misunderstanding about the program, operations, poor supervision, and disagreements between staff, leaders and volunteers —having a potential negative effect directly or indirectly on the youth and/or children.

**Behaviors to model when working together:**

• Sensitive, courteous, and patient with each other

• Demonstrate respect and trust for each other

• Use calm and friendly voices

• Actively work together by pooling ideas and resolving differences of opinions and conflicts

• Support one another in his/her work

• Communicate clearly and effectively

• Welcome and support all new people; model how to develop effective and inclusive relationships

• Openly reflect and improve interactions and relationships with each other, youth and children; discuss issues together allowing for self-reflection or improvements in teamwork

• Guide youth and children in developing positive attitudes towards the different backgrounds and abilities of others

**Personal Relationships**

Acknowledging that supportive and developmentally appropriate relationships are important to the positive and healthy development of youth and children, Camp Gideon and its programs encourage, promote, and in some cases facilitate friendships and mentor: mentee/discipleship relationships between youth and adults, campers and leaders.

Recognizing that close personal, particularly sexual, relationships with youth may be against the law, exploitative, or result in preferential treatment, Camp Gideon and its programs also discourage and in some cases prohibit such relationships between youth and adults.

**For the purpose of the policies outlined below,**

**•** Camper refers to any child attending camp 12 years of age or younger. If the child has a mental or emotional disability, his/her mental or emotional age will be taken into account

• Youth Leader refers to any leader under the age of 18.

• Youth Volunteer refers to any Camp Gideon volunteer under the age of 18.

• Adult Staff or Volunteer refers to Camp Gideon Senior Staff and any volunteer 18 years of age or older.

The following policies outline permitted and prohibited types of relationships between children, youth and adults. When permitted, all contact between staff, leaders and volunteers and campers outside of camp-sponsored programs and events is on the behalf of the individual staff member, leader and/or volunteer and not as a representative of Camp Gideon or its programs. Staff, leaders and volunteers are prohibited from using Camp Gideon or its programs’ names as grounds or justification for out-of-program contact with campers. Staff, leaders and volunteers are strongly encouraged to maintain the rule of three when engaging in out-of-program contact with campers to preserve their personal integrity and the integrity of Camp Gideon.

It is the obligation of all staff, leaders and volunteers to report to the Program Director any problems with or suspicions of inappropriate or prohibited contact or relationships, including suspicions or feelings or coercion or harassment by child, youth or adult.

**YOUTH LEADERS OR VOLUNTEERS**

Youth Leaders and/ or Youth Volunteers are permitted to engage in friendships during and outside of camp programs, events, and activities. Such relationships must not violate any policies outlined by Camp Gideon. Observation of these policies must occur at all times, including, but not limited to, phone calls, text messages, letters, online communications, and in-person visitation.

Youth Leaders and/or Youth Volunteers are permitted to engage in dating relationships during and outside of camp programs, events, and activities. Such relationships must not violate any policies outlined by Camp Gideon. Observation of these policies must occur at all times, including, but not limited to, phone calls, text messages, letters, online communications, and in-person visitation. Dating relationships should not interfere with the performance of assigned duties, the atmosphere of programs and events, or the general purposes and philosophy of the camp. Public displays of affection during programs, events, and activities are strictly prohibited.

**ADULT STAFF OR ADULT VOLUNTEER: YOUTH LEADER OR YOUTH VOLUNTEER**

Adult Staff or Adult Volunteers are permitted to engage in friendships and mentor: mentee/discipleship relationships with Youth leaders or Youth volunteers during and outside of camp programs, events, and activities. Such relationships must not violate any policies outlined by Camp Gideon. Observation of these policies must occur at all times, including, but not limited to, phone calls, text messages, letters, online communications, and in-person visitation.

YOUTH LEADER OR YOUTH VOLUNTEER: CAMPER

Youth Leaders or Youth Volunteers are permitted to engage in friendships and mentor: mentee/ discipleship relationships with campers during and outside of camp programs, events, and activities. Such relationships must not violate any policies outlined by Camp Gideon. Observation of these policies must occur at all times, including, but not limited to, phone calls, text messages, letters, online communications, and in-person visitation.

Youth Leaders and Youth volunteers are prohibited from engaging in dating relationships with campers.

ADULT STAFF, LEADER AND/OR VOLUNTEER: ADULT STAFF, LEADER AND/OR VOLUNTEER

Adult Staff, Leader and/or Volunteers are permitted to engage in friendships and mentor: mentee/discipleship relationships with other Adult Staff, Leaders and/or Volunteers during and outside of camp programs, events, and activities. Such relationships must not violate any policies outlined by Camp Gideon. Observation of these policies must occur at all times, including, but not limited to, phone calls, text messages, letters, online communications, and in-person visitation.

Adult Staff, Leaders and/or Volunteers are permitted to engage in dating relationships with other Adult Staff, Leaders and/or Volunteers during and outside of camp programs, events, and activities. If they occur, dating relationships must not violate any policies outlined by Camp Gideon. Observation of these policies must occur at all times, including, but not limited to, phone calls, text messages, letters, online communications, and in-person visitation. Dating relationships should not interfere with the performance of assigned duties, the atmosphere of programs and events, or the general purposes and philosophy of camp. Public displays of affection during programs, events, and activities are strictly prohibited.

**Supervision**

Staff and leaders will never leave a camper unsupervised. Staff, leaders and volunteers will never be alone with a camper and must observe the rule of three whenever feasible—at least one other person must be present if a staff, leader or volunteer is with a camper.

In general, interactions with campers should be interruptible and observable. If a situation arises where a staff member, leader or volunteer must be alone with a camper, that interaction should take place in a setting that is open and observable by other staff or volunteers or, if a closed-door meeting is necessary, observable through a window.

Staff, leaders and volunteers must respect the privacy of campers in situations such as changing clothes, going to the bathroom and taking showers, and intrude only to the extent that health and safety require. Staff, leaders and volunteers must protect their own privacy in similar situations.

**Abuse and Neglect**

Staff, leaders and volunteers are required by law to report any suspicions relating to a camper or fellow leader being at risk of serious harm or danger, including self-inflicted harm such as suicide.

**Signs of Abuse/Neglect**

• Physical signs of abuse/neglect include camper being frequently hungry, dressed inadequately for the weather, or having bruises and/or other marks of physical violence

• Physical signs of sexual abuse are not common, but physical problems associated with anxiety, such as chronic stomach pain or headaches, may occur

• Emotional or behavioral signs are more common and may include “too-perfect” behavior, withdrawal and depression, and unexplained anger and rebellion

• Nightmares and bed-wetting in children who have previously outgrown it could occur

• Cruelty to animals and fire-setting may be additional signs of sexual abuse

• Children/youth who have been sexually abused may harm themselves physically, make degrading remarks about themselves, or experience falling grades

• Sexual behavior and language that are not age-appropriate can be red-flags

• Use of alcohol or drugs at a premature age can be a warning

• Finally, be aware that in some children and youth there are no signs whatsoever

**Prohibited Acts**

The following acts are prohibited by this policy and will not be tolerated or accepted during any camp activity, event, or program. Any observations or personal knowledge of such violations must be immediately reported to the Program Director or other designated member of the Camp Gideon staff after the safety of the child or youth involved has been assured.

• Any display or demonstration of sexual activity, abuse, insinuation of abuse, or evidence of abusive conduct towards a child or youth;

• Sexual advances or sexual activity of any kind between any adult and a child or youth; or between a youth and a child

• Infliction or physically abusive behavior or bodily injury to a child or youth;

• Physical neglect of a child or youth including failure to provide adequate supervision in relation to activities of the camp;

• Causing mental or emotional injury to a child or youth;

• Possessing obscene or pornographic materials at any function of the camp;

**Violation Reporting Policy**

In order to maintain an environment free of destructive acts toward children and youth, staff, leaders and volunteers must be aware of their individual responsibility to report any questionable circumstance, observation, act, omission, or situation thought to be in violation of this policy.

All questions or concerns of any suspected abusive behavior or harassment, at the hand of a staff member, leader volunteer, camper, or outside party, should be directed to the Program Director or other designated member of the Camp Gideon staff.

Anyone who should witness such an occurrence should consider the following recommendations as to how such a situation should be handled to ensure the security of the child or youth and to protect against physical, emotional, or psychological injury, to all persons involved:

• Personally secure the safety of the child or youth;

• Report the incident immediately to the Program Director or other designated member of the Camp Gideon staff and document the report;

• Do not leave the child or youth alone to report the incident;

• Do not personally confront the alleged or accused violator of this policy; and

• The Program Director or Camp Director will be solely responsible for all communications on behalf of the program or camp.

In the event that a child or youth reports abusive conduct while engaged in a camp-sponsored activity or involving the staff, leaders or volunteers, regardless of where the conduct occurred, the person initially contacted by the child or youth should contact the Program Director or other designated member of Camp Gideon staff. Record verbatim the specific words first spoken by the child or youth and the conduct and demeanor observed concerning the incident.

**Consequences of Violation**

Any person accused of committing a Prohibited Act, whether a staff member, employee, leader, volunteer, or camper will immediately be suspended from participation in all camp activities and programs of the camp. Such suspension shall continue during any investigation by the camp, law enforcement, or child protection agencies.

Any person found to have committed a Prohibited Act shall be prohibited from future participation in all camp activities and programs of the camp. If the person is a staff member or employee, such conduct may also result in termination of employment.

As required by Georgia law, all reports of abuse of children and youth will be forwarded in a timely manner to the appropriate child protection and law enforcement authorities. Such reporting must be accomplished in addition to complying with this child protection policy.

Failure to report a Prohibited Act to the Program Director or a Camp Gideon staff member in a timely manner shall be considered a procedural violation of this policy and shall be grounds for termination of a leader, staff member, or employee and suspension and dismissal from participation in all camp activities and programs of the camp. Any person required to report suspected abuse who knowingly and willfully fails to do so shall be guilty of a misdemeanor in the state of Georgia.

I have read, understand and agree to abide by the policies and procedures of Camp Gideon.

PRINTED NAME

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SIGNATURE DATE