



## Sexual Abuse Prevention Policy

**Introduction:** CISV USA is committed to providing a safe environment for all children. We recognize the importance of preventing sexual abuse and have adopted this Sexual Abuse Prevention Policy to demonstrate our absolute and unwavering commitment to ensuring that our programs offer a safe and nurturing environment for all participants.

**Purpose:** The purpose of this policy is to establish preventative measures designed to protect children from sexual abuse and to specify the actions to be taken in the event of a suspicion or allegation of sexual abuse of a child.

**Standard of Conduct:** All staff members, leaders, participants, employees and volunteers involved in CISV USA programs must comply with this policy. Any actions contrary to this policy will result in disciplinary measures up to and including termination of participation in CISV USA programs.

### General Definitions:

“Child” or “Children” means any person (or persons) under the age of 18. Although Junior Counselors are considered part of the leadership team at a CISV Village, they are Children for purposes of this policy and are also included within the definition of “CISV Volunteers” below.

“Adult” means any person 18 or older.

“CISV Volunteers” means staff members at CISV programs (including Junior Counselors and other youth leaders), leaders of CISV delegations, JB leaders, chaperones, Adult chapter volunteers whose responsibilities involve contact with Children (such as persons volunteering at a Village), and Adults residing in households in which a homestay will occur (either Interchange or short-term homestays).

“Covered Persons” means all CISV Volunteers and all employees of CISV USA.

“Sexual Abuse” means any sexual activity or contact with a Child in situations in which consent has not or cannot be given. This includes sexual contact accomplished by force or threat of force, regardless of the age of the participants, and all sexual contact between an Adult and a Child. Sexual Abuse does not require actual physical contact, but may consist only of inappropriate comments, viewing of inappropriate materials or voyeurism.

### A. Screening of Covered Persons

1. Each Covered Person will complete a background questionnaire to verify that there are no convictions or pending civil, criminal or other complaints against him/her relating to Sexual Abuse, and that he or she has never resigned or been terminated from a

position for reasons related to Sexual Abuse. The background questionnaire must be completed each year.

2. Each CISV Chapter shall perform a background check on each Adult CISV Volunteer in the chapter. CISV USA shall perform a background check on each employee at the time of hiring and each Adult CISV Volunteer who is a national member of CISV USA. All background checks shall be updated every two years.

3. Each Adult shall cooperate as reasonably requested in connection with such background check, including signing any release form(s) necessary to authorize the background checks and providing his/her social security number, driver's license number and/or a valid form of identification. Such background check may also include the submission of fingerprints.

4. No person who has been convicted of a crime involving Sexual Abuse shall be permitted to serve as an employee or CISV Volunteer. Questions concerning matters reported by Covered Persons on a background questionnaire or appearing on background checks will be referred to the Risk Manager of CISV USA.

## **B. Training**

1. Training concerning the prevention of Sexual Abuse shall be included in all Leadership Training weekends.

2. Training concerning the prevention of Sexual Abuse shall also be included in the training of leaders, junior counselors and staff members at each international program hosted by CISV USA. A staff member who has received sexual abuse prevention training at a US Leadership Training shall be responsible for providing this training as early as possible in the program (for example, during the staff/leader meetings prior to the start of a Village).

3. Prior to participating in a CISV USA program, and thereafter not less than once each year, all other CISV Volunteers and visiting interchange leaders shall be provided a copy of this policy and sign an acknowledgement that she or he has received, reviewed and agrees to abide by this policy. Each chapter shall be responsible for complying with this requirement for all CISV Volunteers serving at its programs.

4. Prior to participating in a CISV USA program, and thereafter not less than once each year, all CISV Volunteers at programs hosted by CISV USA shall be provided with a copy of this policy and sign an acknowledgement that she or he has received, reviewed and agrees to abide by this policy.

## **C. Actions Constituting Sexual Abuse**

1. Because of the wide variety of activities and types of interaction among individuals in CISV, plus the added dimension of different cultural norms among participants, it is not possible to provide a detailed list of inappropriate behaviors. Many CISV activities involve physical contact, and hugging and other displays of affection are common in CISV programs. When interacting with a Child, a CISV Volunteer or employee should consider the age and sex of the Child, whether the Child appears uncomfortable with the interaction, whether others are present, whether the interaction is typical of CISV activities, and other relevant factors.

2. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the following actions constitute Sexual Abuse and are prohibited:

- Intimate, romantic or sexual contact between an Adult and a Child
- Comments or jokes of a sexual nature made by an Adult to a Child
- An Adult showing pornography to a Child
- Sexual contact or activity accomplished through the use of force or threats

3. Sexual contact or other sexual activity between an older Child and a younger Child may constitute Sexual Abuse if there is a significant disparity in age, development, or sizes, rendering the younger Child incapable of giving informed consent.

#### **D. Reporting Procedures**

1. Any CISV Volunteer or employee who observes Sexual Abuse must take all reasonable steps to ensure that the safety of the victim is secured, and then report the incident in accordance with Paragraph 2.

2. Any CISV Volunteer or employee who has actual knowledge or a reasonable suspicion that Sexual Abuse has occurred or may occur must report such information to at least one of the following people: (i) the Program Director (if applicable), (ii) the President or Risk Manager of the Chapter, or (iii) the Administrative Director of CISV USA. The person making or receiving such report must also report the incident to the Risk Manager of CISV USA.

3. All states have laws concerning the reporting of Sexual Abuse. All actual or suspected incidents of Sexual Abuse shall be reported in accordance with local law. In addition, the parents/guardians of the Child involved should be notified (unless this notification is prohibited by law or is handled by the investigating governmental agency).

4. All CISV Volunteers and employees shall cooperate fully with any investigation of Sexual Abuse by a law enforcement or social services agency.

#### **E. Investigation of an Allegation or Incident of Sexual Abuse**

1. All allegations of Sexual Abuse will be taken seriously and immediately investigated and reported in accordance with this policy.

2. If Sexual Abuse is suspected, the incident will be investigated by the person(s) designated by the Risk Manager of CISV USA. However, this investigation should not delay reporting of the incident to the appropriate authorities, if such reporting is required by law, or interfere with any investigation by the authorities.

3. During an investigation (whether by CISV or by the authorities), the person accused of Sexual Abuse will be relieved temporarily of his or her duties until the investigation is completed.

4. All instances of actual or alleged Sexual Abuse will be handled with due regard for the privacy of the individuals involved. The number of persons involved in investigating and responding shall be minimized to the extent consistent with meeting the requirements of this policy. All interviews and information collected during the investigation should remain confidential except to the extent disclosure is required under applicable law or to implement

this policy.

5. There shall be no retaliation against any individual for reporting in good faith or investigating an incident of Sexual Abuse.

## **F. Disciplinary Measures**

1. In the event of a confirmed or probable incident of Sexual Abuse involving sexual contact between an Adult and a Child, the Adult involved shall be barred from further participation in any program of CISV USA.

2. In the event of a confirmed or probable incident of Sexual Abuse involving sexual contact between two Children, the Child perpetrator shall be barred from further participation in any program of CISV USA.

3. In the event of a confirmed or probable incident of Sexual Abuse that involves inappropriate conduct but not sexual contact, appropriate disciplinary action shall be determined by the "Review Committee" (defined below). Factors to be considered include:

- the nature of the activity;
- the harm to the Child victim;
- the age difference between the perpetrator and the Child;
- whether the incident is part of a pattern of behavior; and
- any other relevant information.

4. The members of the Review Committee for an alleged incident of Sexual Abuse shall be the following persons:

- the President of CISV USA
- the Risk Manager of CISV USA
- the Insurance Liaison of CISV USA
- the Personnel Committee chair (if the incident involves an employee of CISV USA)
- if the incident took place at an international program such as Village or Interchange, the National Chair for such program
- if the incident took place at a national JB event, the Executive Youth Trustee
- the President of the CISV USA chapter involved if the incident took place at a chapter event or program (including an international program) hosted by a chapter
- if the incident involves a member of another NA (either as the alleged perpetrator or the victim), the International Representative

In no event shall any person (i) who is directly involved in the incident in question, (ii) who has close personal ties to a person who is directly involved, or (iii) who is related to a person involved serve on the Review Committee for such incident. The Risk Manager of CISV USA shall be the chair of the Review Committee, and may remove any person who is disqualified under the preceding sentence. If a member of the Review Committee is unable to serve, he or she may appoint a qualified person to serve in his/her place. The Risk Manager of CISV USA may, in his/her discretion, appoint additional persons to the Review Committee.

5. Possible disciplinary actions include:

- a warning;
- additional training;
- counseling concerning appropriate and inappropriate behavior;
- termination of participation in the current program;
- prohibition of further participation in CISV USA programs;
- other disciplinary action tailored to the circumstances.

6. If a person who has committed a confirmed or probable incident of Sexual Abuse is a member of another National Association, the incident and the disciplinary action taken will be reported to the sending NA and to the IO.



**Sexual Abuse Prevention Policy  
Acknowledgement  
2011**

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have read the foregoing CISV USA Sexual Abuse Prevention Policy, understand its contents, and agree to abide by its terms and conditions.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## CISV USA Background Questionnaire 2011

This Background Questionnaire must be completed by all adults (18 and older) who have contact with youth (under age 18) participants in CISV USA programs and by youth who serve in leadership positions at CISV USA programs.

	YES	NO
1. Have you ever been convicted of an offense involving physical or sexual abuse of a child?		
2. Is there a pending civil or criminal case or investigation against you involving an allegation of physical or sexual abuse of a child?		
3. Have you ever been terminated from a job or a volunteer position as a result of an allegation that you physically or sexually abused a child?		
4. Is there any other information about your prior history that would be relevant to your ability to work with youth in CISV USA?		

If you answered "Yes" to any of the questions above, please provide additional information below.

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