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# Wilmington Area Rebuilding Ministry, Inc.

## Youth Protection Policy

Adopted  
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## Purpose

The purpose of the Wilmington Area Rebuilding Ministry (WARM) Youth Protection Policy is to provide volunteers, employees, and parents, with information and procedures to create a safe environment for everyone participating in WARM activities.

The WARM Youth Protection Policy sets minimum standards recommended for all WARM activities. Adults working in WARM activities must be knowledgeable of the standards set by the WARM Youth Protection Policy, as well as those set by the organization hosting their team.

## Scope

This policy applies to all adult volunteers who supervise youth under 18 years of age during WARM activities.

## Definitions

- **Adult** – Anyone aged 18 or older
- **Youth** – Anyone 14 years of age and over, but less than 18. In order to participate on a WARM rebuild, persons must be age 14 or older. An exception can be made in the case of a 13 year old graduate of middle school (rising high school freshman).
- **Child** – Anyone under the age of 14. Children are not allowed to participate in WARM rebuilds unless a special event is being held, such as Family Day of Hope. Children on a WARM rebuild must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian at all times.
- **Local Volunteers** are adult volunteers, selected by WARM, that live in or around New Hanover County, Brunswick County, or Pender County and participate in WARM activities. All local volunteers must be age 21 or over and pass a criminal background check to supervise youth on a WARM rebuild site.
- **Chaperones** are adult volunteers, selected by their work team, that oversee a team of youth (often from out of town) during WARM activities. All chaperones must be age 21 or over and pass a criminal background check conducted by their work team. All work teams must have a youth to chaperone ratio of no greater than 6:1 and enough chaperones to provide 2 per WARM rebuild site when broken into teams of about 8.

## Selection of Volunteers

Prior to supervising youth in a WARM activity, adult local volunteers are required to submit an application, complete a background screening check, and complete WARM's Youth Protection Training.



It is the responsibility of individual mission team leaders to select, screen, and train all chaperones that they bring to the WARM worksite with their team. Criteria must be as strict as or stricter than those listed here.

### Application

Local volunteers supervising youth are required to submit a Volunteer Bio form prior to involvement with a WARM activity.

### Screening

Local volunteers supervising youth are required to complete a background screening check prior to involvement with a WARM activity involving youth and at least every 36 months thereafter.

### Training

Local volunteers supervising youth are required to complete WARM's Youth Protection Training prior to involvement with a WARM activity and at least every 36 months thereafter.

## Mandatory Reporting of Suspected Child Abuse

All persons involved in WARM activities must report to local authorities any suspicion of child abuse or neglect, as required by North Carolina law (General Statute 7B-301, Duty to Report). WARM staff and volunteers potentially are in a position to see living conditions that could be classified as abuse or neglect of children living in the home.

WARM personnel who have cause to suspect maltreatment as defined below must report it immediately. It is not the job of WARM personnel to further investigate or to determine if actual maltreatment has occurred.

### When to Report Child Abuse or Neglect

For the purposes of this document, staff and volunteers should use the following indicators of abuse and/or neglect. This list is not comprehensive. For legal definitions, please refer to North Carolina General Statute 7B-101. WARM staff and volunteers should use sound judgment and report cases of environments that appear to be injurious to the child's welfare.

- Power or water has been disconnected.
- Extreme hoarding.
- Chronic uncleanness.
- Feces (human or animal) on floors, walls, etc.
- Rat or bug infestation.
- No food in the refrigerator.
- Child lacks appropriate supervision or care for child's age.
- Child is at substantial risk of physical or emotional harm.



- Child is at home during school hours on a regular basis.

### Steps to Reporting Child Abuse

1. Ensure that the child is safe.
2. If child is in immediate danger, call 911 immediately.
3. Notify the WARM Executive Director or Board President.
4. Call the local Department of Social Services in the county of residence. It is important that the person who witnessed the situation is the one to call. Calls to the Department of Social Services are confidential; the caller will not be identified.

### Youth and Children Residing in the Home

Any youth resident who is assisting with the home rebuild must follow the same safety guidelines as the youth volunteers. Any child resident must remain a safe distance away from the area where volunteers are working - at least 10 feet away if outside the home, or in a different room if inside the home. A parent or guardian over the age of 21 shall be home at all times and is fully responsible for any resident under the age of 18. Those under 18 who are not volunteers or residents should not be on the property at any time during the rebuild.

It is not the intent of this policy to isolate children, only to keep them safe. Volunteer interaction with child residents is encouraged provided it is visible by others and a safe distance away from tools and areas where volunteers are working.

### Behavior and Supervision

WARM has adopted the following policies when working with youth during WARM activities.

- **Adult Supervision.** The youth to chaperone ratio must be no less than **6:1**.
- **Minimum two-deep leadership required.** Two chaperones, age 21 or older, are required for all WARM activities involving youth and on each rebuild where youth are volunteering.
- **One-on-one contact between adults and youth prohibited.** No one-on-one contact between adults and youth, with the exception of an emergency. If an adult leader needs to have a personal discussion with a youth, the discussion is to be conducted in view of other adults and youths.
- **Inappropriate use of cameras or phones prohibited.** It is inappropriate to use any device capable of recording or transmitting visual images in restrooms or other areas where privacy is expected by participants.
- **No hazing.** Physical hazing and initiations are prohibited and may not be included as part of any WARM activity.



- **No bullying.** Verbal, physical, and cyber bullying are prohibited.
- **Discipline must be constructive.** Discipline used should be constructive. Physical punishment is not permitted.
- **Appropriate attire for all activities.** Proper clothing for activities is required.
- **Drugs, Alcohol, Tobacco, & Firearms.** Alcohol, tobacco, controlled substances, and firearms must not be used during WARM activities or made available to youth.
- **Social media guidelines.** The policy of two-deep leadership extends into cyberspace. Another adult leader should be copied on any electronic communication between an adult and youth.
- **No Harassment.** Actions, words, jokes, or comments based on an individual's sex, race, ethnicity, age, religion, or any other legally protected characteristic will not be tolerated. WARM encourages volunteers to bring any incidents of sexual harassment to the immediate attention of a WARM leader.

### Youth Camp

In addition to the policies listed above, WARM has adopted the following policies for adults and youth who are staying overnight in a WARM sponsored youth camp (cost of lodging is paid directly to WARM and WARM arranges the lodging with host facility.)

- **Coed Activities.** Appropriate adult leadership must be present for all overnight activities. Coed overnight activities require male and female adult leaders, all of whom must be age 21 or older.
- **Separate accommodations for adults and youth required.** When staying overnight, youth and adults may not share sleeping quarters, with the exception of a parent and child. At no time will common areas (i.e. lounges, living rooms, etc.) be used as sleeping quarters on a group retreat. The only instance where youth and adults will be permitted to share sleeping quarters is in the event of large, community spaces where no doors will be closed. Host facilities are strongly encouraged to have separate shower and restroom facilities for males and females. When separate facilities are not available, separate male and female shower times should be scheduled and posted. Likewise, youth and adults must shower at different times.
- **Privacy of youth respected.** Adult leaders must respect the privacy of youth members in situations such as changing clothes and taking showers at camp, and intrude only to the extent that health and safety require. Adults must protect their own privacy in similar situations.

### Safety and the Worksite

- Implement a buddy system so that each volunteer is never left alone while at a worksite.
- When traveling away from the worksite after the workday, always travel in a group.
- If volunteers under 18 use power tools, they must be under the direct supervision of the adult group leader who is ultimately responsible for the safety of the volunteers.
- No one under 18 may climb up on a roof.



- Everyone should read and follow WARM's Worksite Safety Sheet for complete safety policies

### Responding and Reporting Physical Injuries or Medical Problems

WARM recommends that teams working in WARM activities carry a well-stocked First Aid Kit. If an injury or medical problem occurs, seek appropriate medical attention. WARM requires that all injuries and medical problems be reported to the WARM leader or staff member, who will complete an accident report. If an injury or medical problem occurs while staying overnight at a hosting organization, you may also be required to report the incident to the hosting organization.

WARM's Parental Consent form is required for anyone under 18. The document authorizes required medical treatment and gives chaperones permission to act in place of parents for the duration of the mission trip.

## Travel

### Local Travel to Team Activities

Safe transportation to and from WARM activities is the responsibility of the youth's parent, guardian or chaperone. Youth should only be allowed to leave a WARM activity under adult supervision appropriate for their age and the circumstances as judged by their parent, guardian, chaperone or WARM leader.

### Travel to Activities Away from Home and/or Overnight

When transporting team members to WARM activities requiring an overnight stay away from home, WARM recommends following these additional safety guidelines:

- Obtain written permission for the youth to take the trip from his or her parent or guardian by completing the WARM Parental Consent form. Clearly communicate the destination, trip details, room sharing and sleeping arrangements, and contact information of the adults supervising the team and the place of lodging.
- In the event of a mishap, emergency contact information for each youth's parent or guardian should be readily accessible to the adults supervising the team.
- Provisions for special needs, including accessibility, medical conditions, and allergies should be made in advance of the trip.
- Every driver (transporting youth other than him or herself) should be 21 or older, with a valid driver's license, and drive a registered vehicle, with at least the minimum insurance required by the state in which the vehicle is registered. This also applies to hired drivers and hired vehicles.
- Every passenger should ride in a legal seat, wearing a seat belt at all times. The seat belt requirement may be waived if the vehicle is licensed to carry passengers without seat belts, and the states in which the team will be traveling do not require the use of seat belts.
- Upon arrival at the overnight accommodations, locate emergency exits.



- Be prepared for emergencies. Procedures for emergencies related to weather, fire, lost youth or adults, and site security should be established, including a well-stocked first-aid kit, a list of special medical needs (e.g., inhalers, food allergies), and contact information for each youth's parent or guardian.

### Hosting Organization Requirements and State Regulations

Hosting organizations participating in WARM activities and the state in which they operate may have guidelines and safety requirements governing activities such as those offered by WARM. Adults working in WARM activities are required to comply with the youth protection policies of the organization hosting the team and the requirements of the states or governments in which the team meets or travels. Contact WARM if you need assistance in obtaining this information.