

# **Safe Place Policy**

Trinity Youth Conference

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## I. Scope and Purpose of the Policy

### Theological Basis

#### *Psalm 27.4-5*

*One thing I ask from the LORD, this only do I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze on the beauty of the LORD and seek him in his temple. For in the day of trouble he will keep me safe in his dwelling; he will hide me in the shelter of his sacred tent and set me high upon a rock.*

At Trinity Youth Conference (TYC), we take very seriously our moral and legal responsibility to provide a safe sanctuary for the youth and young adults who attend our conference and support for the adults who work with them. This policy is an expression of our faith, of who we are as an organization and who we feel called to be as a conference for youth and young adults.

TYC commits to provide a safe environment and affirms the rights of children, youth, and adults to be protected from inappropriate treatment whether through neglect, discrimination, harassment, or emotional, physical, spiritual, or sexual abuse.

No policy can be crafted to cover every possible circumstance. It is expected that the Planning Team (both youth and adults) and the Adult Volunteer Staff will apply the guidelines and requirements contained within this policy sensitively and sensibly.

### Purpose

This policy is intended to:

- Protect youth attending this conference from neglect, emotional, physical, spiritual, and sexual abuse.
- Educate Planning Team youth and Adult Staff on ways to prevent abuse and avoid situations which might result in allegations
- Protect both campers and staff who are over the age of 18 from unwarranted allegations of child abuse.

### Statement of Inclusivity

TYC actively supports as a part of its mission the full inclusion of all teenagers who have completed ninth grade and college aged students. We believe that the body of Christ is fully complete when we are inclusive of and invitational toward people of all races, genders, sexual orientations, ethnicities, socioeconomic statuses, backgrounds, and abilities. The Planning Team of TYC (both youth and adults) is committed to making every effort to ensure that all people are not only included but also welcomed. Some of our policy will include broad statements to guide this inclusivity; some of our policy is left intentionally open in order to preserve the right of the Planning Team to make safe and healthy decisions on a case by case basis.

### Statement Against Harassment and Bullying

TYC defines harassment as “a course of action which annoys, threatens, intimidates, alarms, or puts a person in fear of their safety. Harassment is unwanted, unwelcomed, and uninvited behavior that demeans, threatens, or offends the victim and results in a hostile environment for the victim” (US Legal, 2016). TYC does not condone harassment that occurs between adults, between adults and campers, and between campers and one another. The Director, Assistant Director, and Planning Team adults will assess allegations of harassment and bullying and will determine a suitable course of action for addressing them.

### Statement Against Discrimination

At TYC, discrimination against youth or adults for reasons of gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, ability, age, or other reasons not listed is not tolerated. The Director, Assistant Director, and Planning Team adults will assess instances of discrimination to determine the appropriate course of action. On a systemic level, every effort will be made to accommodate, include, welcome, and invite all persons into the TYC community. We also accept that our efforts to include are sometimes challenged by our limitations within Camp Living Waters property, and the Planning Team will continue to do everything in its creative power to ensure the safety of all people in the conference.

## Applicability

This policy applies to persons including TYC Adult Volunteer Staff, TYC Planning Team Youth, and TYC Planning Team adults participating in the conference for that particular year. These include the week of TYC occurring at Camp Living Waters, the annual Planning Team Retreat, and any other official TYC reunions that occur throughout the year.

The TYC Planning Team expects that Camp Living Waters will follow their procedures for ensuring that their staff are properly vetted for working with and being around children.

## Responsibility for Implementation of the Policy

- Responsibility for implementation and compliance will reside with the Chair of TYC Planning Team and with TYC Planning Team Adults
- Perceived conflicts or ambiguities in interpretation and application of this policy will be resolved by TYC Planning Team Adults. The policy will be reviewed at least every two years. Any changes made will be communicated to the Planning Team Youth and Adult Staff in writing through usual communications.

## II. Screening and Eligibility

Below is a list of required screenings for all TYC Planning Team and Adult Staff members for any conference in a given year:

Category	Criminal Background Check	Reference Check	Training
Adult Staff (in state for more than 10 years)	Criminal Background Check, Child Abuse Clearance, and signed affidavit	Prior to nomination at Planning Team Retreat	Prior to camper arrival
Adult Staff (less than 10 years PA resident)	FBI Clearance	Prior to nomination at Planning Team Retreat	Prior to camper arrival
Adult Staff (out of state)	Clearances required at current position	Prior to nomination at Planning Team Retreat	Prior to camper arrival
Planning Team Youth	If over 18, FBI Clearance or local background check	During application process	Prior to camper arrival

- Adult Staff and Planning Team youth must submit copies of clearances to Friends of TYC prior to TYC that year. Clearances must be less than 5 years old.
- When adults are nominated at the Planning Team Retreat, a reference check may be made to ascertain the appropriateness of the individual for the community and to determine if any allegations or convictions of abuse exist for this individual. Members of Planning Team may act as references for the nominee during the retreat.
- It is not required that Planning Team Youth members are over the age of 18. However, being selected to serve as Planning Team affords Planning Team Youth, regardless of age, a level of power and privilege over other campers. This power and privilege means that TYC requires them to have training, reference checks, and support in navigating this new role.
- When youth at the conference apply to be on Planning Team, Planning Team Adults will contact references to determine if any allegations or convictions of abuse exist for this individual.
- All Planning Team Youth and Adult Staff will be trained in this Safe Place Policy and will receive guidelines for their behavior and reporting of abuse prior to the beginning of the Conference. This will happen on an annual basis.
- All individuals who transport students to and from Shawnee during the week or for any other reasons (reasons listed in Transportation on p. 6 and following) must show a copy of their Driver's License at the beginning of the week.
- TYC reserves the right to decline or rescind any offer to serve as a staff person should these screenings and reference checks indicate any information deemed inappropriate by the TYC Planning Team.
- Adult Staff and Planning Team Youth must submit clearances and attend training on an annual basis, even if they have served consecutive years.

## Training

- All Adult Staff, Planning Team Youth, and Planning Team Adults are required to attend a training session at the beginning of their service and each year they serve as leaders at TYC.
- Training will be conducted in person by a member of the Planning Team Adults using a prepared presentation based on the outline below.
  - The theological and legal need for the Safe Place Policy
  - Definition of child abuse
  - What constitutes inappropriate treatment/inappropriate conduct
  - Policies governing working with youth, including the One-on-One Policy and the Open Door policy
  - Appropriate conduct for supervising and chaperoning youth
  - Procedures for reporting allegations and/or concerns regarding child and youth protection issues and how TYC will respond
  - Behavioral guidelines for Adult Staff and Planning Team Youth

### **III. Behavioral Guidelines**

#### **Two-Adult Policy and Open Door Policy**

It is the goal of TYC to have at least two adults present during all activities during TYC (including workshops, HT's, free time, meals, and camp activities). Adult Staff and Planning Team Youth are expected to avoid, to the greatest extent possible, any situation in which they would be alone and out of sight of others with a single youth.

The following guidelines should be implemented:

- Doors to classrooms or side rooms should be left open (doors with unobstructed windows may be closed).
- A staff member who is not assigned to a workshop (i.e. Director, Assistant Director, Chaplain, Photographer, Nurse) will be available to walk around the campus and assist should Adult Staff need an additional adult for any reason.
- If a youth needs to see the Nurse,
  - Another adult or another camper should be present
  - If the Nurse needs to administer care in the nurse's office with privacy, an adult will stand outside the door.
- When driving youth, only one adult is required in each vehicle as long as there is more than one youth, unless the driver is the parent or legal guardian of the youth.
- In situations where it is necessary for an adult to be alone with a youth, the individual should notify another adult before and after the period during which he/she is alone with the youth.

#### **Housing and Sleeping Arrangements**

- All Adult Staff will be housed in a designated area; all campers will be housed in their designated areas. Adults should never enter the sleeping areas of campers without permission; campers should never enter the sleeping areas of adults without permission.
- Each cabin will have an assigned Planning Team Youth who serves as the Cabin Coordinator. The Cabin Coordinator is responsible for the whereabouts and care of the individuals sleeping in their cabin. The Cabin Coordinator should report all incidents to the Area Coordinator. In the case that the Cabin Coordinator is not 18, a camper over the age of 18 will be assigned to that cabin as a backup.
- Each cabin area (two) will have a designated Area Coordinator. The Area Coordinator is a member of Planning Team Youth and is responsible for the oversight of Cabin Coordinators and for the safety of the area. Area Coordinators will receive a Walkie Talkie in the evenings. Area Coordinators must confirm the presence of all campers in their cabin areas at Lights Out to the Director and Assistant Director. Area Coordinators should report all incidents to the Director and/or Assistant Director.
- At registration, students will indicate their gender. If the student indicates male or female, they will be automatically assigned to the sleeping area that corresponds with their gender. If students openly identify as transgender, non-binary, gender fluid, gender queer, or any other gender than "male" or "female," the camper should provide information to the Director and the Planning Team Adults so that an appropriate and safe determination can be made for their housing.
- The number of youth sharing a cabin shall not exceed the number of beds or cots provided.

## Transportation

- The only instances when transportation of youth by adult staff is necessary are:
  - Transportation from Camp Living Waters to Shawnee for one afternoon during the week.
  - Transportation to a doctor, pharmacy, or hospital in the case of an emergency medical issue.
- Adult drivers will be between the ages of 25 and 65. Special permission may be given by the Director and/or the Planning Team Adults on a case by case basis for those under 25 but not younger than 21, and for those over 65.
- Adult staff responsible for transporting youth to/from Shawnee must show their license at the beginning of camp

## Behavioral Guidelines Planning Team Youth and Adult Staff

Leadership at TYC demands high standards of moral integrity and personal responsibility. Therefore, all Adult Staff and Planning Team Youth are expected to observe the following guidelines.

All TYC Adult Staff, Planning Team Youth, and Planning Team adults:

- Will not verbally, emotionally, physically, spiritually, or sexually abuse youth, or discipline youth by use of physical punishment, or by failing to provide the necessities of care. Will use physical restraint only in situations necessary to protect the youth, other youth, or staff from harm.
- Are expected to observe the Two-Adult Policy and the Open Door Policy in their interaction with youth at all times, except in emergency situations, and exercise sound judgment in providing a safe environment at all times.
- Will respect the rights of youth not to be touched in ways that make them feel uncomfortable, and their right to say no. Adults will discourage youth from touching others in an inappropriate or unwanted manner.
- Should be alert to the physical and emotional state of youth who come as campers to TYC. Any signs of injury or possible child abuse must be reported to the Director and to appropriate authorities.
- Will not use, possess, or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs, or be impaired by legally prescribed drugs during the conference. Will not smoke or use tobacco in front of campers.
- When transporting campers to/from Shawnee, will refrain from texting or using cell phones while driving.
- Will not i) use offensive, inappropriate language, jokes, or any kind of harassment in the presence of campers; ii) share inappropriate details of their personal life; or iii) ask youth to share inappropriate details through any form of communication: written, verbal, or electronic. Adult Staff may not have any romantic or sexual relations with campers.
- Will report to the Director, Assistant Director, and/or Planning Team Adults any situations where risk of inappropriate treatment exists or the policy is not being followed.

## IV. Reporting and Responding to Allegations of Suspected Child Abuse

### When to Report:

Adult Staff and Planning Team Youth should report when the following conditions are met:

- If a camper discloses that abuse is occurring, even if it is only one event.
  - If the incident has already been reported and the youth is no longer in danger, a report is not needed.
  - If the camper is over the age of 18 and youth is no longer in danger, a report may or may not be needed.
  - If a report was made previously, and the abuse is still ongoing, a report should be made.
- If the camper shows clear signs of abuse.
  - The Director or Assistant Director may work with the Adult Staff or Planning Team Youth to determine if the signs are clear enough to warrant a report
- If the Adult Staff or Planning Team Youth observe abuse occurring by another Adult Staff member or Planning Team Youth over the age of 18.

The following procedures will be followed in the event of an incident or allegation of abuse, if an incident of abuse is reported to an adult, or if any signs of injury or possible child abuse are noticed:

- **Assure Safety and Security:** The Director and/or Assistant Director will assure the safety and security of the camper, which may include removing the youth from a location before any other action is initiated, including confronting anyone.
- **Report the Incident:** In the state of Pennsylvania, all Adult Staff and all Planning Team Youth over the age of 18 are considered *mandated reporters*. The person who suspects, witnesses, or receives a report of inappropriate treatment of a youth will report the incident immediately to the Director or Assistant Director. If the Director or Assistant Director are suspected of inappropriate behavior, adults will report to a member of the Planning Team Adults. That individual must also report to Child and Youth Services and/or the local police.
  - If the youth who disclosed the abuse is willing to be a part of the process, including them in the call to these agencies can be helpful.
  - The Director or Assistant Director will assist the person who is making the report.
  - The report should be as detailed as possible, including dates, names, specific injuries, among other significant details.
  - Within 24 hours, the person who made the report will prepare a written report with all known details and facts and will provide that report to the Planning Team Adults.
- **Document the Report:** The Director or designated adult will document all steps taken in the course of handling and reporting the incident.
- **Notify an Attorney:** The Director or Planning Team Chair may contact an attorney to seek legal advice, which should be documented in writing.
- **Notify the Parents/Guardians:** The Director or designated adult will notify the parent(s) or legal guardian of the alleged victim, unless the allegations are made against the parents or guardians or disclosure would compromise the safety of the victim.
- **Allow Civil Authority to Investigate:** The investigation of the alleged inappropriate treatment will be conducted by Child and Youth Services or other appropriate public authorities. TYC is not responsible for making further inquiries or investigations.
- **Report to Insurance Company:** If needed, the Planning Team Chair will make a report to the liability insurer of TYC and to the board of Friends of TYC.

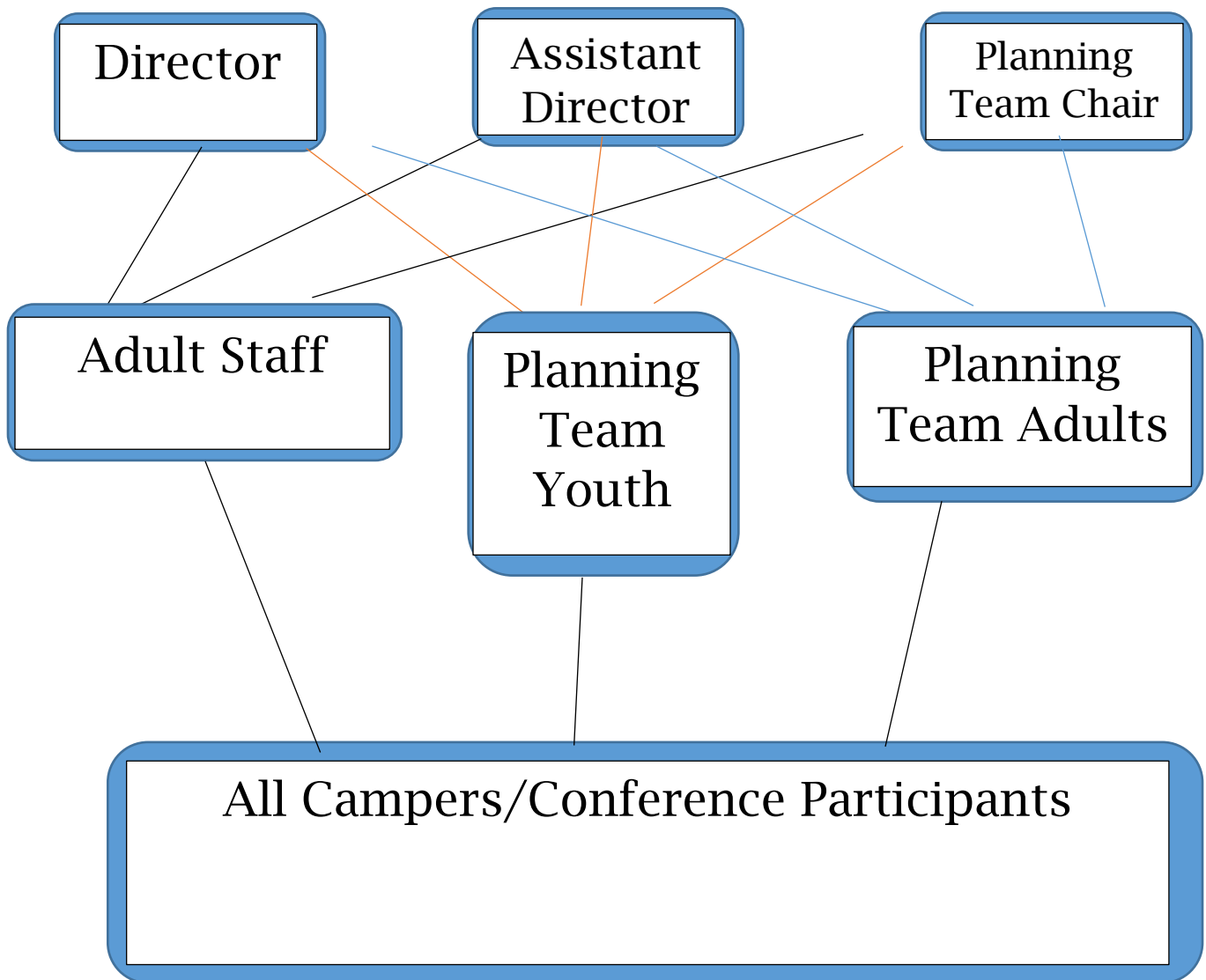
### Best Practices during Investigation

- **Media Contact:** The Director or one designated adult will be the sole spokesperson for the conference regarding media and other public inquiries.
- **Confidentiality:** All persons involved in the reporting or investigation of alleged inappropriate treatment will cooperate with the governing bodies of TYC and with civil authorities, but will not discuss the matter with anyone else.
- **Respect for and Treatment of Person Accused:** Any person accused of inappropriate treatment must be treated with dignity and support. All reports will be taken seriously, but will not be judged prematurely. If the person accused of inappropriate treatment is an Adult Staff member or a Planning Team Youth over the age of 18, the Director will relieve the person accused of inappropriate treatment of further responsibilities until the appropriate public investigating authorities complete the investigation and determine whether or not the information obtained through the investigation substantiates the allegations.

### Additional Comments

- **Allegations Regarding a Pastor or Church Worker:** Any allegations against a Pastor or Church Worker involving inappropriate treatment will be promptly reported to their church or presbytery or ecclesial body of supervision for action in accordance with its own policies and procedures.
- **Sexual Offenders:** At no time is a Sexual Offender to be invited or assigned as an Adult Staff or Planning Team Youth for TYC. At no time is a Sexual Offender to congregate with youth. At no time is a Sexual Offender allowed in areas where TYC youth gather during the conference, during the planning retreat, or during official reunions.

V. Reporting Tree





## Appendix A: Glossary

**Adult Staff:** Adults who have been selected and invited to participate in TYC for a given year. Staff positions include but are not limited to: Worship Leader, Music Leader, Nurse, Director, Assistant Director, Chaplain, Photographer, Morning Watch Leader, and Workshop Leaders.

**Camper:** Youth who attend TYC. They may be within the ages of 15 and 22.

**Child Abuse:** A non-accidental injury or pattern of physical or mental injuries to a child or youth. 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, or shelter; failure to keep children clean; lack of supervision; and withholding medical care.
- **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, bullying, constant criticism, mean remarks, insults, and giving little or no love, guidance, and support.
- **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.
- **Spiritual Abuse:** Takes place when leaders to whom people look for guidance and spiritual nurture use their positions of authority to manipulate, control, and dominate.
- **Sexual Abuse:** The sexual assault or exploitation of children. Sexual abuse can include rape, sexual battery, sexual offense, indecent liberties, promoting or participating in prostitution of a minor, sexual exploitation of a minor, disseminating pornography to children, kidnapping or abduction. 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.

**Director and Assistant Director:** The Director and Assistant Director are the primary adult staff who manage TYC in a given year. The individual is asked to serve for two years: first as Assistant Director and then as Director.

**Friends of TYC:** The 501(c)3 nonprofit organization which governs TYC in terms of finances and insurance.

**HT's:** Heads Together Groups or HT's are small groups which meet on a daily basis at TYC. They are led by Planning Team Youth, and at least one adult staff member is present.

**Inappropriate Treatment/Inappropriate Conduct:** any act or action that could be considered Child Abuse, whether it is illegal or not.

**Planning Team Adults:** The team of up to 6 adults who serve to guide and support the Planning Team Youth in their planning of TYC in any given year.

**Planning Team Chair:** One of the Planning Team Adults assigned to be the point person for Planning Team. This individual organizes and coordinates both Planning Team Youth and Adults. They also serve as the liaison to Friends of Trinity Youth Conference.

**Planning Team Youth:** The team of 10-12 campers who are selected through an application process to be a part of the team. They are responsible for the planning and implementing of all parts of TYC in a given year, including inviting adults, planning themes, governing cabins and cabin areas, and leading HT's.

**Sexual Offender:** Any person convicted of a crime involving sex including rape, sexual battery, sexual offense, indecent liberties, promoting or participating in prostitution of a minor, sexual exploitation of a minor, disseminating pornography to children, kidnapping, or abduction; and anyone listed on a Sex Offender Registry.

**Training:** Training shall be conducted using a prepared presentation and accompanying documentation prior to the start of TYC on an annual basis for both Adult Staff and Planning Team Youth.

**Workshop:** Classes or small groups led by Adult Staff and attended by campers.

**Youth:** Campers under the age of 18.

Appendix B: Covenant

Trinity Youth Conference 2019

Come and See

July 21-27, 2019

Covenant

1. Participation begins at check-in on Sunday, July 21, 2019 and ends with the conclusion of the closing circle on Saturday, July 27, 2019. All staff members and campers will participate in the scheduled activities each day beginning with breakfast. Everyone is expected to stay in the dining area after meals until tables are cleaned and announcements are made.
2. All campers and staff members are expected to remain in the approved areas of the camp at all times from check-in on Sunday through closing on Saturday. Anyone who must leave the conference for any reason must get permission from the Director Sam Arnold Phone 412-370-2525.
3. Parents and friends are more than welcome to visit on Sunday afternoon from 2:00-3:30 PM during check-in time. They are not allowed to visit Living Waters at any other time during the week.
4. According to Living Waters' policy, if any Trinity Youth Conference participant is found with illegal drugs or alcohol, the entire group will be asked to leave. **Please do not jeopardize TYC.**
5. **At TYC we respect the privacy of all campers and staff. Campers and staff will not enter the living areas, cabins, or bunk spaces where they are not assigned to stay.**
6. Intentional harm to others or to their belongings will not be tolerated under any circumstances. Intentional harm includes physical, emotional, spiritual, and sexual abuse, harassment, discrimination, and any other action that threatens the physical or emotional safety of any campers or staff. Instead, we shall endeavor to settle our differences in a Christian manner (Galatians 6:1), amicably, and with meditation.
7. The health, well-being, and safety of every participant and the TYC community are of utmost importance. If the health, well-being, or safety of a participant or the community is in jeopardy at any time because of a participant's presence at TYC, the Director, in his/her sole discretion, may send the participant home.
8. At night, we are required to be in our cabins by 11:30 PM for check-in and devotions. Following check-in and/or devotions we are to remain in our cabin areas. Lights-out is at 12:00 AM (midnight). On Friday night the curfew is: cabin areas at 2:30 AM, lights-out at 3:00 AM.
9. Our closing on Saturday morning will not begin until all living areas have been cleaned, inspected, and approved. Participants cannot be picked up until 12:00 PM (Noon) on Saturday. Parents should plan to arrive by 11:30 AM to pick up their son(s)/daughter(s), however we insist that no one cross the bridge until TYC has officially closed (11:45 AM).
10. Use of cell phones, tablets, or any other electronic communication devices is not permitted from check-in on Sunday through closing on Saturday. Cell Phones, tablets, and other electronic devices having wireless or cellular capabilities must be surrendered at registration and will be returned at closing on Saturday. If you need to make a call during the week, please see the Director, Sam Arnold.
11. We are guests of Living Waters and shall leave camp in a better condition than when we arrived.
12. TYC actively supports as a part of its mission the full inclusion of all teenagers having completed ninth grade and college aged students. We believe that the body of Christ is fully complete when we are inclusive of and invitational toward people of all races, genders, sexual orientations, ethnicities, socioeconomic statuses, backgrounds, and abilities.
13. Students are not permitted to bring weapons of any kind (whether fake or real, including pocket knives) onto Camp Living Waters property.

All participants must read and sign this covenant, acknowledging their understanding that failure to adhere to it and/or behavior which is a detriment to the safety and well-being of the TYC community, as determined by the adult members of the TYC Planning Team, shall result in their immediate removal from the conference. Participants must further acknowledge that, if expelled from the conference, they will be asked to leave Living Waters immediately and that transportation and any related costs shall be their responsibility. \* Parents must co-sign for participants under the age of 18. \*\* Where applicable

By signing, I agree to abide by the TYC Covenant

Signature:\* \_\_\_\_\_ Co-Signature:\*\* \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name: \_ \_\_\_\_\_ Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix C: Adult Staff and Planning Team Youth Agreement**

**TYC 2019**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Last First Middle

Role at TYC 2019: \_\_\_\_\_

In accordance with the Safe Place Policy of and in respect toward Trinity Youth Conference, I agree to follow the Safe Place Policy and the behavioral guidelines listed below and to refrain from inappropriate conduct during my service to TYC. I join the covenant of adults who are working to make TYC a physically, emotionally, and spiritually safe place for all of God’s children.

**Behavioral Guidelines Planning Team Youth and Adult Staff**

Leadership at TYC demands high standards of moral integrity and personal responsibility. Therefore, all Adult Staff and Planning Team Youth are expected to observe the following guidelines.

All TYC Adult Staff, Planning Team Youth, and Planning Team adults:

- Will not verbally, emotionally, physically, spiritually, or sexually abuse youth, or discipline youth by use of physical punishment, or by failing to provide the necessities of care. Will use physical restraint only in situations necessary to protect the youth, other youth, or staff from harm.
- Are expected to observe the Two-Adult Policy and the Open Door Policy in their interaction with youth at all times, except in emergency situations, and exercise sound judgment in providing a safe environment at all times.
- Will respect the rights of youth not to be touched in ways that make them feel uncomfortable, and their right to say no. Adults will discourage youth from touching others in an inappropriate or unwanted manner.
- Should be alert to the physical and emotional state of youth who come as campers to TYC. Any signs of injury or possible child abuse must be reported to the Director and to appropriate authorities.
- Will not use, possess, or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs, or be impaired by legally prescribed drugs during the conference. Will not smoke or use tobacco in front of campers.
- When transporting campers to/from Shawnee, will refrain from texting or using cell phones while driving.
- Will not i) use offensive, inappropriate language, jokes, or any kind of harassment in the presence of campers; ii) share inappropriate details of their personal life; or iii) ask youth to share inappropriate details through any form of communication: written, verbal, or electronic. Adult Staff may not have any romantic or sexual relations with campers under the age of 18.
- Will report to the Director, Assistant Director, and/or Planning Team Adults any situations where risk of inappropriate treatment exists or the policy is not being followed.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature Date

## Works Cited

*US Legal*. (2016). Retrieved from Harassment Law and Legal Definition: <https://definitions.uslegal.com/h/harassment/>

***Safe Place Policy for the protection of children, youth and adults***. Unity Presbyterian Church, Fort Mill, SC. Updated November 2018.