

# AGWM SAFEGUARDS FOR CHILD SAFETY

All personnel have agreed to and signed a copy of the AGWM Child Safety Code of Conduct. In addition, we recommend the following safeguards in all interactions with children, especially among those whose responsibilities bring them in close or regular contact with children. These are intended to accomplish the following:

- Provide a safe environment for children.
- Ensure adults model safe and healthy interactions with children.
- Protect those interacting with children from invalid reports of inappropriate behavior.

## Primary Safeguards

In any setting where children are present, at least one of these primary safeguards should be implemented and as many as possible should be followed. These safeguards are applicable for in-person and online interactions.

**Visibility.** *Is it possible for others to see me?* When interacting with children, adults position themselves in a place visible to other unrelated adults. This can be accomplished by such things as planning activities in areas where other adults are present, staying within view of the window in the door, or keeping doors open.

**Accountability.** *Do others know where I am or what I am doing? Am I promoting a culture of transparency and accountability?"* One-on-one interactions with a child, physically or online, should only occur in situations where other adults are in the vicinity or when a parent has given permission.

**Power balance.** *Do children feel safe in my presence?* Adults, by virtue of their age, size, strength, and authority, exert control over children. Balancing control enhances child safety. This can be accomplished by avoiding one-on-one situations as much as possible.

## Additional Safeguards

Each of the following safeguards further improves safe interactions.

**Discipline** should be used to teach and correct rather than punish. The following are examples (but do not constitute an exhaustive list) of actions that cause harm to a child and are to be avoided:

- Derogatory name-calling, ridicule, humiliation, shaming, publicly singling out a child for negative treatment or exclusion, yelling at a child, or similar forms of hostile treatment.
- Hitting, slapping, or any behavior that assaults a child.

- Pushing or holding a child against his/her will outside the goal of protecting the child from danger, providing medical care, or keeping the child from harming him/herself or others.
- Favoring certain children to the exclusion of others or excluding children in a derogatory or embarrassing way in the presence of others.

**Touch** should be in response to the needs of the child and not the needs of the adult. Side hugs or loose hugs are generally appropriate. The following actions are examples (but do not constitute an exhaustive list) of actions that cause harm to a child and are to be avoided:

- Touching a child inappropriately.
- Any form of affection that is resisted or unwanted by the child.
- Any behavior that could be interpreted as sexual, including flirtatious or seductive looks.
- Assisting the child with anything of a personal nature that children can do themselves, including dressing and bathing.

**Communications** should be wholesome and above reproach. The following communications, whether verbal, written, online, video, or photographic, are examples (but do not constitute an exhaustive list) of actions that cause harm to a child and are to be avoided:

- Shaming, belittling, humiliating, name-calling, or using harsh language that may frighten, threaten, or humiliate a child.
- Language to infer favoritism or any secret communication with a child.
- Discriminatory remarks about the child, the child's family, and/or the child's place of origin.
- Inappropriate comments that relate to physique or body development.
- Sexually suggestive, manipulative, or exploitative comments, photos, images, or videos.

### **Acknowledgment**

Before commencing service with AGWM and every clearance/term renewal thereafter, all AGWM personnel must read and agree to abide by the AGWM Safeguards for Child Safety and Code of Conduct for Child Safety as well as sign the following acknowledgment:

- I have completed AGWM's safeguarding training according to the recommendations in the AGWM Child Safety Policy.
  - I have read, understood, and shall abide by the AGWM Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct.
  - I have not engaged in abusive actions toward a child, whether sexual, physical, emotional, exploitative, or neglectful.
  - I have never had a safeguarding concern, complaint, or allegation made about me.
- OR

If I ever had a safeguarding concern raised, regardless of the outcome, I have notified the AGWM Child Safety Lead.

- I have never been the subject of an investigation by statutory authorities.
- I understand AGWM takes safeguarding concerns seriously, that harm toward a child in any form will not be tolerated; and that AGWM shall cooperate with statutory authorities in the investigation of any report of abuse.
- I undertake to report any suspicion, concern, or disclosure of any child being at risk of harm within 24 hours to the Child Abuse Helpline at +1 417-212-5976.
- I shall fully and truthfully cooperate in any response if concerns are raised.

**I have read this acknowledgment form and voluntarily signed it.**

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_