



Code of Conduct

Covenant House International and our affiliated sites are thrilled you have decided to join our team. Whether it is as a staff member or volunteer, we are happy to have you. Your time and dedication to our mission enhances the youth's well-being and their capacity and opportunity to change and address their own needs.

The relationship between Covenant House staff/ volunteers and our clients is an important vehicle for change. Your work is key to the helping and healing process for many of our young adults.

We designed this Code of Conduct to help staff and volunteers understand our agency values and standards that guide employees and volunteers' conduct.

We ask that all staff and volunteers read the Code of Conduct and sign the acknowledge form prior to starting with Covenant House. The Code of Conduct supplements the Child Protection manual and further on-the-job training.

- Our employees and volunteers must act honestly and responsibly and promote the values of Covenant House.
- Our employees and volunteers will exhibit the highest ethical best practices and personal integrity.
- Our employees and volunteers will provide a professional work environment that is free from physical, psychological, written, or verbal intimidation or harassment.
- Our employees and volunteers will not physically, sexually, or emotionally abuse or neglect a minor.
- Our employees and volunteers will share concerns about suspicious or inappropriate behavior with their supervisor or administrator.
- Our employees and volunteers will report any suspected abuse or neglect of a minor to the state authorities.
- Our employees and volunteers will accept their personal responsibility to protect minors from all forms of abuse.

Code of Conduct with Minors

The following guidelines are intended to assist employees and volunteers in making decisions about interactions with minors. For clarification of any guideline, or to inquire about behaviors not addressed here, contact your supervisor.

At Covenant House, we treat our minors with dignity and respect. We are committed to creating an environment for minors that is safe, nurturing, empowering, and that promotes growth and success.

No form of abuse will be tolerated, and confirmed abuse will result in immediate dismissal from our organization. Covenant House will fully cooperate with authorities if allegations of abuse are made that require investigation.

The Conduct with Minors outlines specific expectations of the employees and volunteers as we strive to accomplish our mission together.

1. Minors will be treated with respect at all times.
2. Minors will be treated fairly regardless of race, sex, age, or religion.
3. Employees and volunteers will adhere to uniform best practices of displaying affection as outlined by our organization.
4. Employees and volunteers will avoid affection with minors that cannot be observed by others.
5. Employees and volunteers will adhere to uniform best practices of appropriate and inappropriate verbal interactions as outlined by our organization.
6. Employees and volunteers will not stare at or comment on minor's bodies.
7. Employees and volunteers will not date or become romantically involved with minors.
8. Employees and volunteers will not use or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs in the presence of minors.
9. Employees and volunteers will not have sexually oriented materials, including printed or online pornography, on our organization's property.
10. Employees and volunteers will not have secrets with minors and will only give gifts with prior permission.
11. Employees and volunteers will comply with our organization's policies regarding interactions with minors outside of our programs.
12. Employees and volunteers will not engage in inappropriate electronic communication with minors.
13. Employees and volunteers are prohibited from working one-on-one with minors in a private setting. Employees and volunteers will use common areas when working with individual minors.
14. Employees and volunteers will not abuse minors in anyway including (but not limited to) the following:
 - *Physical abuse*: hitting, spanking, shaking, slapping, unnecessary restraints
 - *Verbal abuse*: degrading, threatening, cursing
 - *Sexual abuse*: inappropriate touch, exposing oneself, sexually oriented conversations
 - *Mental abuse*: shaming, humiliation, cruelty *Neglect*: withholding food, water, shelter

15. Our organization will not tolerate the mistreatment or abuse of one minor by another minor. In addition, our organization will not tolerate any behavior that is classified under the definition of bullying, and to the extent that such actions are disruptive, we will take steps needed to eliminate such behavior.
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17. Bullying is aggressive behavior that is intentional, is repeated over time, and involves an imbalance of power or strength. Bullying can take on various forms, including:
- a) *Physical bullying* – when one person engages in physical force against another person, such as by hitting, punching, pushing, kicking, pinching, or restraining another.
 - b) *Verbal bullying* – when someone uses their words to hurt another, such as by belittling or calling another hurtful names.
 - c) *Nonverbal or relational bullying* – when one person manipulates a relationship or desired relationship to harm another person. This includes social exclusion, friendship manipulation, or gossip. This type of bullying also includes intimidating another person by using gestures.
 - d) *Cyberbullying* – the intentional and overt act of aggression toward another person by way of any technological tool, such as email, instant messages, text messages, digital pictures or images, or website postings (including blogs).
Cyberbullying can involve:
 - i. Sending mean, vulgar, or threatening messages or images;
 - ii. Posting sensitive, private information about another person;
 - iii. Pretending to be someone else in order to make that person look bad; and
 - iv. Intentionally excluding someone from an online group.
 - v. Hazing – an activity expected of someone joining or participating in a group that humiliates, degrades, abuses, or endangers that person regardless of that person’s willingness to participate.
 - vi. Sexualized bullying – when bullying involves behaviors that are sexual in nature. Examples of sexualized bullying behaviors include sexting, bullying that involves exposures of private body parts, and verbal bullying involving sexualized language or innuendos.
- Anyone who sees an act of bullying, and who then encourages it, is engaging in bullying. This policy applies to all minors, employees and volunteers.
18. Employees and volunteers will report concerns or complaints about other employees and volunteers, other adults, or minors to a supervisor.
19. Employees and volunteers will report allegations or incidents of abuse to the proper state authority. Please refer to the specific guidelines of your state regarding mandated reporting.
20. Employees and volunteers may not have engaged in or been accused or convicted of child abuse, indecency with a child, or injury to a minor.