



FRIENDS FOREVER INTERNATIONAL

Program Development

Youth Protection Policy

Friends Forever International has adopted the following policies for the safety and well-being of its members. While these policies are primarily for the protection youth members, they also serve to protect adult leaders.

“The Rule of 3”

At no point should a Friends Forever youth be alone with any (1) other youth, or adult, be they Friends Forever youth, local youth, adult staff, adult leader, volunteer, or community member or any other individual. All activities involving one or more Friends Forever youth should take place in groups of at least (3) people. This policy extends into cyberspace. Another adult leader should be copied on any electronic communication between adult Friends Forever Staff member and youth member. Friends Forever Facebook groups for each group will be established as a way for youth and adult community members to keep in touch in a public space.

“The Rule of 2”

Most Friends Forever activities will involve all three leaders, but at least two Friends Forever registered/”cleared” adults must be present at any activity. Registered/”cleared” adults include US Site Managers, Friends Forever staff members, and specific volunteers. In order to be designated as registered/”cleared” adults must submit to a criminal background check to be reviewed by Friends Forever staff.

“Never one-on-one”

One-on-one contact between adults and youth members prohibited. In any situation requiring a personal meeting, the meeting is to be conducted in view of other adults and youths.

“Keep it separate”

Separate accommodations for adults and youth required. No youth is permitted to sleep in the same room or tent as an adult. In every situation possible, all youth participants of the same gender will share a single sleeping area (room/tent). Separate bathrooms for youth and adults, males and females, and/or single stall bathrooms with locking doors, are strongly encouraged. When separate facilities are not available, separate shower times for males and females, adults and youth, should be observed and posted.

“Privacy respected”

Adult leaders must respect the privacy of youth members in situations such as changing clothes and taking showers, and intrude only in the case that safety requires them to do so. Adults must protect their own privacy in similar situations. Inappropriate use of cameras, imaging, or digital devices prohibited. Cameras or recording devices are not permitted in bathrooms, shower facilities, changing rooms, or bedrooms. In the case of a multi-purpose room (i.e., a meeting room that also serves as a bedroom) specific times should be designated when the room is or is not a private space.

“Constructive discipline”

Discipline used in Friends Forever should be constructive and reflect Friends Forever’s values. Discipline should be aimed at providing a safe and productive experience for the group as a whole.

“Appropriate attire”

Proper clothing for activities is required. For example, skinny-dipping or revealing bathing suits are not appropriate in for Friends Forever Activities. Youth and Staff are required to adhere to the Friends Forever dress code during Friends Forever Activities and during the Life Raft trip. Any clothes worn outside of the gender separated, youth and adult separated sleeping quarters, including pajamas or house cloths, must also adhere to the Friends Forever dress code.



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Reporting on Youth Protection Policy

Friends Forever International conducts a criminal background checks on all U.S. leaders, volunteer hosts, and staff. Any staff member or volunteer who will or may be charged with driving FFI youth must submit to a Motor Vehicle Records background check. Refusal to submit to either background check when a role requires it will exclude the individual from that role. Background checks will be reviewed by FFI staff and individuals whose role with the organization will be limited accordingly.

Violations of any of Friends Forever's Youth Protection policies must immediately be reported to Friends Forever Staff or Board Members.

Youth Protection Reporting Procedures

There are two types of Youth Protection–related reporting procedures all Friends Forever Staff must follow:

When you witness or suspect any child has been abused or neglected—See "Mandatory Report of Child Abuse" below.

When you witness a violation of the Friends Forever's Youth Protection policies—See "Reporting Violations of Friends Forever's Youth Protection Policies" below.

Mandatory Report of Abuse

All persons involved in Friends Forever shall report to local authorities any good-faith suspicion or belief that any child is or has been physically or sexually abused, physically or emotionally neglected, exposed to any form of violence or threat, exposed to any form of sexual exploitation, including the possession, manufacture, or distribution of child pornography, online solicitation, enticement, or showing of obscene material. You may not abdicate this reporting responsibility to any other person.

Steps to Reporting Abuse

Ensure the young person is in a safe environment.

In cases of medical emergencies, call 911 immediately.

Notify the Headquarters Staff.

File an Incident Report Form.

Reporting Violations of Friends Forever's Youth Protection Policies

If you think any of the Friends Forever's Youth Protection policies have been violated, including those described within Barriers to Abuse, you must notify your Friends Forever Headquarters Staff so appropriate action can be taken for the safety of our youth.