

Hope Heals

Child Safety Policies

PART 1: Introduction:

Hope Heals Camp is a week-long retreat and year-round community offering Rest, Resources and Relationships to families experiencing disabilities since 2017. Hope Heals has been building a space of belonging and belovedness alongside our community of over 4,000 Hope Heals Camp participants.

As part of our mission of creating a space of belonging, it is expected that all staff and adults' interactions with minors be appropriate and foster a safe and respectful environment. This expectation requires all staff and adults to adhere to the boundary guidelines set forth below and requires all staff and adults to report boundary crossing or abusive behavior immediately.

We have endeavored to make this Policy comprehensive and address the situations you may encounter. If situations arise that are not covered by these guidelines, please speak to **Alex Wolf, Camp Director**. It is essential that everyone involved with Hope Heals understand the policies and how to respond if they feel the policies are not being properly followed or implemented.

All adults must have a criminal background and sex offender registry check completed prior to their stay or visit at Hope Heals.

PART 2: Definitions:

- **Minor** is defined as a person under the age of 18.
- **Camper** is defined as a minor or an individual participating in a Hope Heals program who has a cognitive, intellectual, or physical disability.
- **Adults:** The Term “Adults” in this document includes both staff and adults as defined below.
 - **Staff** is defined as any employee.
 - **Adult** is defined as any staff, volunteer, or individual 19 years of age or older.
- **Grooming** is defined as an act whereby an individual engages in repeated boundary crossing behavior for the purpose of engaging in sexual conduct with them.
- **Bullying** is defined as a pattern of physical, verbal, psychological or electronic communication behavior that is intended to cause fear, distress, or harm to a Minor or minor.

- **Hazing** is defined as any activity expected of someone joining or participating in a group that humiliates, degrades, abuses, or endangers them, regardless of a person's willingness to participate.
- **Physical Abuse** is defined as any non-accidental physical force or injury that is inflicted on a Minor or minor and has a substantial risk of causing or does cause bodily injury or emotional harm.
- **Harassment** is defined as unwelcome or unwanted speech or actions of another that are so severe or pervasive, or targeted at particular people that it hinders the Minor/minor's ability to participate in the program or significantly harms their well-being, substantially interferes with their rights, or intimidates them because of their identity.
 - Harassment can be verbal, physical and/or electronic.
- **Discrimination** is defined as an adverse action against a Minor because of their protected status.
- **Sexual Harassment** is defined as unwanted or unwelcome behavior of a sexual nature, or which is directed at a Minor because of their sex, gender or identity which can include both verbal and nonverbal occurrences that take place in person or through electronic communication.
- **Sexual Assault/Sexual Abuse** is defined as sexual contact or behavior that occurs without the consent of the victim. This may include a range of behaviors including groping or unwanted touching, kissing, or forcing someone to perform sex acts.
 - **Sexual Abuse** is also defined as any occurrence where an adult engages a minor in any sexual activity (including any conduct or contact).

Part 3: Mandatory Reporting and Reporting to Law Enforcement:

Hope Heals takes any and all allegations of any form of abuse seriously and adheres to all mandated reporting requirements in both Georgia and Alabama.

It is the policy of Hope Heals that any allegation of any criminal activity or abuse alleged to have been committed against a Minor while a part of a camp or program be immediately reported to law enforcement or Child Protective Services. If an allegation is made against a staff member or adult on premises, Hope Heals reserves the right to suspend or terminate their participation in any program on site, irrespective of any law enforcement decision to pursue charges.

All Staff and adults, have an additional duty to immediately inform Alex Wolf, Camp Director, of any suspicions of abuse or assault committed by anyone against a Minor.

PART 4: Misconduct Between Minors:

Minors on site are expected to adhere to a standard of behavior that fosters healthy and safe peer to peer interactions. Every Minor has the right to feel respected and safe, and be in an environment free of abuse, sexual harassment, harassment, discrimination, hazing and bullying. This is paramount to the Hope Heals mission.

Hope Heals does not tolerate any behavior that demeans, degrades or puts the well-being or safety of Minors at any risk.

Examples of conduct that are prohibited by this policy include, but are not limited to:

- **Physical abuse, such as**
 - Hitting, punching, kicking or biting.
 - Any threat or actual use of a weapon against another. Weapons may include but are not limited to knives, guns, wire, rope and any object used to threaten another.
- **Sexual abuse and sexual harassment, such as**
 - Touching, grabbing, pinching, rubbing, or fondling another person's buttocks, breasts, or genital area, whether over or under clothing, without affirmative consent.
 - Rubbing one's genital area up against another person, whether over or under clothing, without affirmative consent.
 - Touching another person with one's genitals without consent.
 - Engaging in sexual behavior with someone too intoxicated to give informed affirmative consent; or
 - Physically or verbally intimidating someone to engage in a sex act or sexual contact, whether done so expressly or implicitly.
 - Coercing, threatening or blackmailing someone into sending nude images or videos.
- **Hazing, such as**
 - Requiring or coercing someone to do any of the following:
 - Drink alcohol, vape or use drugs.
 - Consume any inappropriate or hazardous substances or allow such substance to be smeared on the body.
 - Endure any physical striking, beating, burning, branding or to engage in self-mutilation or to commit such acts upon another.
 - Endure acts of sexual stimulation or sexual abuse/assault
 - Be subjected to abusive and demeaning speech or participate in acts of personal servitude.
 - Engage in indecent exposure.

- Participate in any illegal activity.
 - Participate in physically dangerous activities such as exposing oneself to extreme weather conditions without appropriate protection.
 - Submit to being tied up or abducted.
- **Bullying, such as**
 - Any form of physical, verbal, demonstrative or electronic harassment that one should reasonably expect would demean, threaten or physically or emotionally hurt its victims.
 - Physical harm or threats of physical harm
 - Damaging, hiding, or taking of property
 - Excluding from a group or activity purposely to hurt and/or advocating others to dislike a person.
 - Calling someone offensive or demeaning names
 - Scapegoating, pranks resulting/intending to embarrass.
 - Innuendoes with derogatory implications or making jokes involving offensive stereotypes.
 - Posting online offensive, demeaning, or embarrassing comments or images.
 - Texting, whether individually or as a group, mean, offensive or demeaning comments or images.
 - Creating fake profiles or assuming another's identity in any social media context to create content likely to cause embarrassment or concern spreading mean and hurtful rumors verbally, online or via graffiti.
 - Taunting others about their actual or perceived age; physical development; socio-economic status; sex; gender; sexual orientation; bodily functions; actual or perceived race, color, or national origin.
- **Harassment, such as**
 - When the verbal or nonverbal acts of another are either severe or pervasive, or targeted at specific person that it prevents that Minor from participating in programs.
 - Physical and verbal threats
 - Cyberbullying
 - Physical acts such as pushing, punching, kicking or hitting.
 - Damaging another's property.
 - Calling someone offensive or demeaning names
 - Texting sexual images or jokes and creating fake social media profiles.

If any Adult or Minor observes or suspects that any of the above referenced behavior is taking place, Adults and Minors must immediately report the information to Alex Wolf, Camp Director.

Retaliation for any incident reported will not be tolerated. Hope Heals will take prompt action to assess whether the behavior requires an internal/external investigation or a report directly to law enforcement. If the reported behavior involved any allegations of criminal behavior, including – but not limited to, assault, sexual assault or sexual abuse, **law enforcement MUST be notified.**

For all **non-criminal** allegations of inappropriate or policy violating behavior, Hope Heals will take prompt action to meet with all parties involved, document the incident, determine whether it requires an internal or external fact-finding, institute that fact finding and expeditiously make a determination about safety on site.

Irrespective of which fact finding is used, Hope Heals reserves the right to take appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including exclusion from the camp site, if any Minor engages in abuse, sexual harassment, harassment, discrimination, hazing or bullying of any other Minor.

PART 5: Boundaries Between Adults and Minors

Hope Heals is committed to ensuring the well-being, safety, and protection of each of the Minors present at Camp. Considering the influence, power and trust inherent in relationships between Adults and Minors it is important to set forth guidelines to help define appropriate behavior and conduct to cultivate a safe, positive, warm and enjoyable environment for all those who spend time here. Hope Heals believes it is important that every adult present on site maintain the highest level of professionalism.

The overarching goal of our Boundary Guidelines is to protect minors on this site. In addition to any legally prohibited behaviors, these boundaries also keep any staff or adults from engaging in behaviors that might have the appearance of impropriety and/or that would be considered inappropriate. This is integral to creating a safe space, given the power imbalance and trust inherent in building a connection with minors, especially ones in vulnerable situations.

All Adults must always remember that they are not a minors' "friend" and should refrain from engaging in peer-like behavior or any behavior that could be perceived as "grooming" behavior, as defined in this policy. The following guidelines define appropriate behavior and the appropriate boundaries between Adults and Minors who are not their children.

1:1 Interaction:

- Adults may never date or engage in a romantic or sexual interaction or relationship with a Minor.
- All one-on-one conversations or interactions must be both observable and interruptible and may not take place behind a closed or locked door, or at a time of day or location where other people are not around.
- Adults must adhere to the rule of three, where there are always three people present in any space they are in with Minors. In any situation, a flexer is always available and should be utilized at any time.

Conversation Boundaries and Favorites:

- Adults may not lavish attention on one or two particular Minors, including, in the giving of gifts, candy, treats or special favors. Adults may not engage in favoritism with any individual or group of Minors.
- Adults may not discuss with a Minor, the Minors' or Adults' sexual or romantic interactions or experiences.
- Adults may not reveal details of their own sexual activities nor expose a Minor to pornography, sexually explicit material or any sexual activity – even if it does not involve touching or contact.
- Adults may not discuss masturbation or sexual activities with a Minor.
- Adults may not discuss or confide in Minors in a non-camp sanctioned conversation, other deeply personal details about their life, such as detailed **nonpublic** information about their physical or mental health, disordered eating, self-harm or suicidal ideations.
- Adults may not speak in an abusive or derogatory manner to a Minor.

Emotional and Behavioral Boundaries:

- Adults may not direct a Minor to keep a secret from or withhold information from a parent or a guardian or any other adult or staff member at camp.
- Adults may not promise a Minor complete confidentiality for any information shared.
- Adults may not engage in coercion or manipulation of a Minor, including bribing them with snacks, gifts or anything else.
- Adults may not provide alcohol or drugs to a Minor, nor discuss or permit Minors to drink or use drugs in their presence, except where medications have been prescribed.
- Adults may not allow a Minor to engage in “hero worship” with an adult.
 - Though developmentally appropriate for Minors to connect to and be mentored by staff, staff must be mindful not to allow a Minor to engage in “hero worship” which can lead to boundary crossing, and an unhealthy connection with adults.
 - Hero worship typically involves an enmeshment between an Adult and Minor, where the Minor may engage in excessive admiration for the Adult, and the Adult allows, encourages and cultivates that dynamic.
 - If there is a Minor whose conversations and engagement with an Adult become intense or enmeshed the Adult should immediately report to Alex Wolf, Camp Director.

Sleeping, Changing and Showering

- Adults may never share a bed or sleeping bag with a Minor.
- Adults may not cuddle or be under the covers or a blanket with any Minor at any time.
- Adults may never be naked or fully undressed in front of a Minor.
- Adults may not sleep naked if Minors are present.
- Adults may not change, undress, or shower in front of, in the same area or at the same time as a Minor.
- Adults may not watch a Minor undress and must always be with another Adult in the bunk or changing area of camp.
- Adults must never help a Minor shower, wipe themselves, or dry themselves**
- Two Adults must always be present in the outer area of any shower room.
- Adults may not be in another Minor’s cabin at night unless on specific camp business.
 - In the event that there is a camp sanctioned medical reason why a Minor and Camper cannot change or bathe themselves, their parent/guardian must be the one to help.
 - In a situation where additional help is needed in the bathroom or with any personal hygiene double coverage of two adults is required.

Physical Boundaries

- Adults may not engage in any physical or sexual abuse of any kind.
- Adults may not discipline Minors in any physical manner nor engage in any violent behavior such as (but not limited to) punching, hitting, biting, slapping and kicking.
- Adults may not touch a Minor in any area that is normally covered by a bathing suit.
- Adults may not engage in giving or receiving back rubs or “chills” with Minors.
- Adults may not rub sunblock or suntan lotion on a Minor’s body, unless there is a camp sanctioned reason due to a disability or illness. In that case, please see the below protocol:

- If help is needed the protocol is to be in an observable, public place, then ask the Minor if they are comfortable with help and never put sunscreen on an area that would be covered by a bathing suit.
- Adults may not engage in any hazing or bullying behavior towards a Minor, nor encourage, participate or allow Minors to engage in that behavior.
 - Physical and/or humiliating punishment of any kind is not allowed in camp.
 - Examples may include but are not limited to; forcing a Minor to do pushups, wearing an object or article of clothing to shame or ridicule them, or run intervals because a bunk is not clean.
- Adults may not encourage, condone or engage in any group masturbation in a bunk, and if aware of it – must immediately stop it and report it.
- Adults may not have extended physical contact, such as a lingering touch, with a Minor.
- Adults may not engage in physical behavior that is or could be interpreted as sexual in nature, including, but not limited to frontal hugging in private, kissing, stroking, lap sitting, shoulder sitting, massaging, tickling, rubbing, touching genitals, wrestling, physical horseplay or swatting buttocks with towel or object – even in an athletic context.
- If a Minor engages in repeated and/or prolonged physical contact with an adult, they should clearly and firmly discourage such behavior, and if the Minor persists, immediately report to Alex Wolf, Camp Director.

Transportation

- Adults may never ride alone 1:1 with a Minor in a car or van.

Social Media and Electronic Communications

- Adults must receive written and verbal consent from Minor's guardians to take photographs or recordings of Minors and post to their personal social media accounts.
- Adults may not post personal information about a Minor on their personal social media without the Minor and Minor's guardians written and verbal consent.
- Adults may not text or DM with any Minors during the camp season.

Reporting Obligation for Boundary Crossing Behaviors

- If any Adult becomes aware of, observes or suspects that another Adult has violated this Policy, they **must immediately** report to Alex Wolf, Camp Director.
- To make a report does not require you to be “sure” or “positive” that the policies have been violated, and Hope Heals will not retaliate against anyone who shares a concern on a good faith basis.
- Retaliation against anyone who in good faith reports a suspected violation of these boundary guidelines or who participates in a fact finding is strictly prohibited. Any Adult who engages in retaliation will be subject to termination or expulsion from Hope Heals. Anyone who either observes or becomes aware of retaliatory behavior must report it to Alex Wolf, Camp Director.
- Information that a boundary may have been crossed that comes to the attention of any Adult must be followed up whether you learn of the boundary crossing behavior from a direct complaint made to you or is obtained in any other way, such as overhearing a Minor discuss that behavior. Sometimes the crossing of a boundary is indicative of a serious problem such as grooming, therefore upon receiving a report of boundary crossing behavior, all Camp administrators will immediately follow up by engaging in the following protocol:
 - Informing Alex Wolf, Camp Director
 - Who will document and speak with the relevant individuals.

- Consult with both law enforcement AND outside experts as to the severity of the behavior.
- If any of the behavior indicates even a suspicion of grooming or predatory interaction, law enforcement will be notified, and immediate action will be taken.