

Catherine Creek Community Center
Operated by Friends of The Historic Union Community Hall
Youth Protection Policy

Purpose

The Friends of The Historic Union Community Hall, operating the Catherine Creek Community Center, understand the importance of protecting youth in the community and in our programs and therefore wish to provide a safe and secure environment.

Definitions

Staff – all employees, full and part-time, and program volunteers that have any contact with youth or access to facilities

Youth – individuals 17 years of age or younger

Screening

All Catherine Creek Community Center volunteers *and* staff working with youth will be screened in accordance with this policy. Screening will include at least the following:

Written Application

The application form will be maintained in a personnel file at the Catherine Creek Community Center administrative office.

Personal Interview

A personal interview will be conducted with the applicant by the Board of Directors to discuss the position and the applicant's talents, qualifications and abilities. Multiple and/or group interviews may be conducted as appropriate.

Reference Checks

All applicants must provide at least three (3) references.

Criminal Background Check

Criminal background checks will be conducted for volunteers and staff working directly with children.

Training and Education

All staff will receive an orientation that includes:

- Review of policies related to safety, prevention and reporting of child abuse and emergency procedures
- Training in recognizing signs of suspected child abuse
- Staff training and orientations will be updated and refreshed each year

Supervision

Supervision of youth, programs, facilities and staff will be designed to protect youth and staff at all times.

Practices to ensure a safe and caring environment will include:

- Staff and Volunteer members will have an ID badge that will be worn at all times
- Management staff will make unannounced visits
- A minimum of two staff should be assigned to each program.
- Staff members will never be alone with an individual youth where they are not observable by others.

All storage, maintenance and utility area doors will be secured when not in use.

- All sites of operation will have access to a telephone on location during operating hours.
- Facilities will be well lighted indoors and out.
- Guests, service and contractors will sign-in to all facilities.
- Staff will never release youth to anyone other than the authorized parent(s), guardian(s), or an individual authorized by parents in writing or verified by phone. Sign-in and sign-out will be in place for all youth programs.
- Staff will utilize constructive methods for maintaining group control and managing youth behavior.
- Staff will not disrobe a child other than outer garments without the presence of another staff member.

Contact with Youth

It is understood that caring quality staff will develop positive relationships with youth while involved in programs at The Catherine Creek Community Center.

- Staff will appear and behave in a manner consistent with the mission and values of The Friends of The Historic Union Community Hall at all times while on or off duty; including electronic, written and verbal communications.

Communications

Volunteers and staff at the Catherine Creek Community Center will promote positive values and youth protection strategies in its programs, facilities, with parents and in the community.

- Parents will receive regular written information about the program's content and schedules; feedback regarding their child's participation in the program including behavior and general health; and an introduction to the program staff.
- Parents will be allowed to observe programs at any time as appropriate
- Parents and the community will be made aware of youth protection efforts through regular written and/or electronic communication.

Reporting Requirements

For purposes of this policy, "child abuse" is any action (or lack of action) that endangers or harms a child's physical, psychological or emotional health and development.

Staff at the Catherine Creek Community Center is recognized as mandated reporters and will report known or suspected child abuse immediately or as soon as practically possible. Volunteers and Staff will follow current regulations and guidelines for the reporting of abuse.

Staff will follow an internal chain of command for the reporting of abuse and may report directly to local authorities if their supervisor does not handle any report immediately.

If an incident of abuse or neglect is alleged to have occurred at or during events at Catherine Creek community Center programs or activities, the following procedure shall be followed:

- The parent or guardian of the child will be notified
- The appropriate authorities will be notified; consistent with local, state and/or federal regulations
- The alleged perpetrator of the abuse or misconduct will immediately be placed on leave from the Catherine Creek Community Center pending an investigation

- The insurance company will be notified, and an incident report will be completed
- Staff and volunteers at the Catherine Creek Community Center will cooperate with any investigation of the incident by state or local authorities. In the event there is no investigation of the incident by state or local authorities, a management team will be formed to investigate the circumstances of the incident. The team should act only in consultation with our insurance company and/or attorney.
- Any person who is not found innocent of the alleged abuse or misconduct will be removed from their position at the Catherine Creek Community Center.

Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed and updated as needed by theThe Friends of The Historic Union Community Hall Board of Directors or its designee on an annual basis.