



Fort Hill Christian Youth Camp

Camp Managers Manual

Spring 2015



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Preface

Every summer thousands of young people in the United States pack their camp clothes and personal items and are off to enjoy a week or more in a Christian Camp program. Impressions are made at camp upon their hearts that last forever. These impressions come primarily from the staff and the Christian fellowship of other campers. Probably the one person who will have the most influence upon their lives will be the group or cabin counselor. This is because she/he is more closely associated with them than anyone else on the staff. They will carry home her/his ideals, her/his mannerisms, and her/his attitudes toward Christianity and the problems of life.

The work of a staff member in a Christian camp should not be taken lightly or turned over to just anyone. It is a most challenging work! The staff members and especially the cabin counselors need some practical ideas about their work that will enable them to make a major contribution to the lives of each camper. To this end, this handbook is heartily commended to everyone who works closely with young people. Counselors can read and reread this material with much benefit.

One of the greatest strengths at Fort Hill Christian Youth Camp has been that of securing counselors who realize the great possibilities of working with young people and who have some specific ideas of how to make a major contribution to their lives. How could she/he give her/ his campers a true love of God unless she/he truly loves God? Or how can she/he inspire young people to dedicate their lives to Christ when she/he is not personally dedicated to Him? Or how can she/he develop a real joy in worshipping God in the hearts of young people if worship to her/him is not a thrilling and joyous experience? It is trusted that this material will fill a real need at Fort Hill and will be of help to others if used in other Christian camps. It is provided to Fort Hill staff and new program managers with the expectation that it will be read and followed.



Introduction

Message from the Board of Trustees

Thank you for your willingness to give a week of your life to work with the youth attending Fort Hill Christian Youth Camp. Nearly 300 staff persons volunteer a week each summer. Without volunteers, it would be impossible for the camp to operate.

You are volunteering out of a desire to help our youth develop mentally, physically, socially and spiritually. You, thus, must lead in both word and deed. Your example in demonstrating how to act will likely have a greater impact on campers than any other experience. Hence, it is imperative that you be a positive role model every hour of every day.

The Board of Trustees meet at least ten times each year to establish policies and conduct the affairs of the camp. The Trustees give careful thought to every decision. Those who staff the camp are expected to work within the framework established by the Board of Trustees. Staff members are accountable to the Manager of the week. The Manager is accountable to the Board of Trustees.

The Board of Trustees is committed not only to camping but to excellence in Christian camping. All staff members are expected to demonstrate excellence in all aspects of their work.

Again, the Trustees thank you for your sacrifice and dedication.

--Board of Trustees--



Hallmarks of Fort Hill Christian Youth Camp

DEVOTION — to excellence in Christian Camping

COMMITMENT — to continuous improvement and greater service

FAITHFULNESS — in teaching and adhering to God's Word

ALLEGIANCE — to Christian virtues

PROFESSIONALISM — in camp operation and fiscal affairs

DILIGENCE — in responsibility demonstrated by each Board member.

Fort Hill Board Members

Bruce Adams

7371 Sterling Springs
Way
Burlington, KY 41005
(859) 391-9624
Badams3755@aol.com

Chris Jones

160 Edinburg Dr.
Springboro, OH 45066
(513) 317-3591
c.jones1229@hotmail.com

Rick Gamp

6860 Ridgeway Ct.
Pickerington, OH 43147
(614) 837-0032
rgamp@aol.com

Wayne McCray

1636 Elkton Place
Cincinnati, OH 45224
(513) 681-4818
waynuele@yahoo.com

Greg Tidwell

2240 Sedgwick
Columbus, OH 43220
(614) 264-1849
gatidwell@aol.com

Mike Grose

846 Ohio Pike
Cincinnati, OH 45245
(513) 752-5835
wmgrose@wcoc-ohio.org

Todd Parsley

9663 Springboro Pike
Miamisburg, OH 45342
(606) 694-5602
parsleytodd@yahoo.com

Brett Triplett

2725 Bridlewood St.
Circleville, OH 43113
(740) 477-7263
triplett10@msn.com

Bill Hopkins

7105 Murnan Rd.
Cold Spring, KY 41075
(513) 315-5837
hopkins_william@yahoo.com

William Phillis

1019 Torrey Hill Dr.
Columbus, OH 43228
(614) 276-9221
wphillis@columbus.rr.com

Gary Wyckoff

110 Birch Park Drive
New London, OH 44851
(614) 276-9221
wphillis@columbus.rr.com



Bible Lesson Themes

2015	The Church
2016	The Plan of Salvation
2017	It's your Choice – Current Ethical Problems
2018	Christian Evidences
2019	Jesus Christ – Son of God
2020	The Bible – God's Word

The Bible lesson themes rotate on a six year cycle.



Articles of Faith

1. We believe unequivocally in the authority of the Holy Scriptures in all matters pertaining to faith, doctrine, and practice. (2 Timothy 3:16,17)
2. We believe that there is only one true God and this God is one in essence and three in person, namely, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. (Ephesians 4:4-6)
3. We believe that God the Father created and continues to uphold the Universe by and through His Son. (Gen. 1:1; Mal. 2:10; John 1:3; Acts 17:24; Heb. 1:2; Col. 1:16,17)
4. We believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the Savior of mankind, and the sole mediator between God and man. (Matt. 3:16,17; 1 Tim. 2:5; Heb. 9:15; 1 John 4:14)
5. We believe that the Holy Spirit has revealed the will of God to mankind through the Bible, that this revelation is complete and hence that revelation through signs, wonder, prophecies, and other miraculous gifts has ceased. (John 5:36; 14:26; 20:28,29; Acts 1:15-26; 2:1-4; 6:5-8; 8:14-19; 19:5,6; Rom. 1:11; 1 Cor. 13:8-10; Gal. 1:8,9; 2 Tim. 1:6; 2 Pet. 1:19-21; 1 John 5:6-13; Jude 3; Rev. 22:18,19)
6. We believe in the complete deity and humanity of Christ Incarnate (Col. 2:8,9; Phil 2:5-11), His virgin birth (Matt. 1:23), His sinless life (2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Pet. 2:22; Heb. 4:15), His miracles (Acts 2:22), His vicarious and propitiatory sacrifice (Rom. 3:23-26; 2 Cor. 5:14,15), His bodily resurrection (1 Cor. 15:20; 42-45), His ascension to the right hand of the Father (Mark 16:19; Acts 7:55; 1 Pet. 3:22), His present rule as Head of the Church (Eph. 5:23; Col. 1:18), and His personal return in power and glory on the final day (Matt. 16:27; Acts 1:10,11; 1 Thess. 4:16,17)
7. We believe Jesus' resurrection to be the focal point of all history, and the principal reality in the lives of all believers (Acts 2:24; Rom. 6:4; 1 Cor. 15:3,4, 12-19, 56,57; 1 Pet. 1:3)
8. We believe that salvation is open to all people who avail themselves of God's grace through an obedient faith in Christ (Eph. 2:8; James 2:14-26; 1 John 2:3-6). Obedient faith must include belief in God and His word (Mark 16:16; Acts 16:31; Rom. 1:16, 10:17; 1 Cor. 1:21), repentance from sin (2 Cor. 7:10), baptism in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 2:38), and a life of growing consecration and dedication. (Gal. 5:16-26; Eph. 4:11-16; 1 Pet. 2:1-3; 2 Pet. 1:5-11, 3:18)
9. We believe that Christian baptism is the full immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. (Matt. 28:18-20)



10. We believe the church is Christ's body of baptized believers on earth (Acts 2:41-47).
11. We believe the Lord's Supper is the commemoration of Christ's death until He comes. We believe the Lord's Supper should be observed every first day of the week and only on the first day of the week (being Sunday on our present calendar), and should be preceded by solemn self-examination (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 10:16,17, 11:23-29)
12. We believe that baptism and the Lord's Supper should be observed and administered until the return of the Lord Jesus Christ (Matt. 28:18-20; 1 Cor. 11:26)
13. We believe that psalms, hymns and spiritual songs should be sung without the accompaniment of mechanical instruments as His people gather for worship. (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16)
14. We believe that all elders, deacons, preachers, teachers and worship leaders should meet the qualifications outlined in Scripture as they fill their respective roles. (Acts 14:23; Eph. 4:11-16; 1 Tim. 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9)
15. We believe that men and women have uniquely different but equally important roles to play in the church economy. (1 Tim. 2:11,12; Titus 2:1-6)
16. We believe that all people will be resurrected to receive either eternal reward in heaven or eternal punishment in hell. (Matt. 25:31-46; John 5:28,29; Rev. 20:12-15, 21:7,8)
17. We believe that all followers of Christ should endeavor to demonstrate moral purity and exemplary behavior in every facet of their lives in accordance with the Scriptures. (Gal. 5:16-26; Heb. 5:12; 1 Pet. 2:1,2; 2 Pet. 1:5-11; 1 John 1:5-2:5)
18. We believe in the unity of believers in Jesus Christ, with spiritual equality across national, ethnic, sex, age and class differences. (Acts 10:34,35; Rom. 2:11,12; Gal. 3:26-29; Eph. 6:5-9; 1 Tim. 4:12, 5:1,21; James 2:1-9)
19. We believe that marriage is exclusively between one man and one woman. (Matt. 19:4-6)
20. We believe that any sexual activity outside the marriage relationship is immoral (i.e. fornication or adultery) according to the Scripture. (1 Cor. 6:9; 2 Cor. 12:21; Eph. 5:5; Col. 3:5; 1 Thess. 4:3; 1 Tim. 1:10; Jude 7)



Guidelines for Managers

Your cooperation in following the following guidelines is greatly appreciated. If we all work together and enforce these guidelines, the camp season will run smoothly and be a much more pleasant experience for all.

General

1. The Manager's week runs from noon Saturday to noon the next Saturday. Please try to arrive as early as possible. Keep in mind that the manager you are relieving is tired after his week of duties so you need to relieve him on time.
2. Be sure to have an orientation meeting with your staff on the first day to inform them of all aspects of the camp. Be sure to impress on all staff members to never strike a camper. Campers who are impossible to be managed should be sent home.
3. Keep all campers and staff members on the camp grounds at all times. The road is always off limits to campers.
4. Remember that the driveway speed is 5 mph. Enforce the speed limit. Remember there are almost always small children running around the campus.
5. All telephone calls must be either collect or with a calling card.
6. The manager must know where staff members and campers are at all times. No one is to leave the camp grounds without the permission and knowledge of the manager.
7. Please enforce fees for pre-campers. Only campers under three (3) years of age are free.
8. Don't forget to have a list of campers ready to use on Saturday when checking out each camper to their parent or person designated to pick them up. This is very important for both safety and liability reasons.
9. Be sure to prepare a written Manager's Report for the Board of Trustees. Please include the activities of the week, any conflicts, incidents, and/or accidents with the measures taken for each situation. Give this report to the camp secretary before leaving the camp ground and make sure it is distributed to each board member.



Grounds

1. Check the cabins when you arrive for your week and at the end of the week when you leave. Each bed should have one mattress. Mattresses should not be moved from one cabin to another or outside.
2. Shaving cream and water fights are not to be permitted. Shaving cream damages the finish on the cabins and is expensive to repair.

Miscellaneous

1. There has been a problem with the emptying of fire extinguishers and the destruction of smoke detectors. This destruction seems to be occurring on Saturdays. To resolve this problem, we are asking that on Saturday morning the cabins be cleaned, smoke detectors and fire extinguishers checked, and then locked.
2. All lost and found items should be left on the porch at the back of the kitchen. Towels will be washed and put with the kitchen towels. If anyone inquires about missing items, they can be found there.
3. Illegal drugs, alcohol, and tobacco in any form are not permitted on camp grounds. All camper prescription medications must be turned into the nurse upon arrival.
4. Coed swimming is not permitted by any persons at the camp, including staff members. A lifeguard must be on duty when anyone is in the swimming pool.



Care and Discipline of Children

General

Discipline is more correctly understood as teaching rather than punishment for wrongdoing. Consequences for behavior are but one teaching tool, and they are not an end to themselves. The goal of discipline is to teach acceptable and righteous standards of conduct, and our ultimate goal, of course, is that our students will internalize these standards.

Given this broad definition of discipline, other tools of discipline include rewarding desired behavior, role modeling, or even a lack of response to undesired behavior. The acceptable standard of behavior is that which is defined by the Bible. In general, God through His word teaches us to respect Him (Matt. 22: 37), respect others (Matt. 22: 38), respect authority (Rom. 13:2), and to respect ourselves (II Cor. 6: 16) that it might go well with us (Deut. 4: 40).

Lastly, discipline must be done in love to be effective. When a child is confronted out of spitefulness or revenge, he will respond like any other, defensive and resistant. When the child senses that his interests are at heart, then we will have an audience.

Specific Guidelines

All children shall at all times be treated with kindness, consistency, and respect. The Camp Manager is authorized by the Board of Directors to dismiss from duty any staff member who fails to follow these.

No child at Fort Hill Christian Youth Camp shall be subjected to:

1. Any type of physical punishment inflicted in any manner upon the body such as spanking, punching, paddling, shaking, biting, or roughly handling a child.
2. Assignment of physically strenuous harsh work or exercises, when used solely as a means of punishment.
3. Requiring or forcing a child to maintain an uncomfortable position, such as squatting or bending, or requiring a child to continuously repeat Physical movements when used solely as a means of punishment.



4. Verbal abuse or derogatory remarks about a child or his family.
5. The deprivation of meals, although scheduled meals may be provided individually.
6. The use or denial of medication as punishment.
7. The denial of sleep.

8. The denial of shelter, clothing, bedding, or restroom facilities

9. Organized social ostracism.

Some of the allowed consequences are:

1. Removal of recreational privileges.
2. Time out in a designated location.
3. Assigning youth to "shadow" a supervising adult.
4. Assigning extra chores including cleaning the shower house, mess hall, assembly hall, or weeding the flower bed, picking up trash, etc.
5. Removal of concession privileges.

Only camp staff are to administer such approved consequences. Children shall not be disciplined by other children

Dismissal

The following non-exhaustive list of behaviors are grounds for a camper's dismissal from camp. The Manager has a right to weigh mitigating factors in each case, but typically the following will result in a camper's discharge:

1. Assaultive behavior.
2. Leaving campgrounds without permission or supervision.
3. Chronic disregard for camp rules and staff authority.
4. Theft.
5. Fornication.
6. Possession or use of drugs or alcohol.



Behavior and Discipline Guidelines

Children's behavior may have many roots. It is not expected that one week at summer camp will cure all behavior problems. As a counselor, understand that children bring their past with them in their behavior. If you can determine the root of the behavioral problem, it will give you clues on how to deal with it.

TWO THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND:

1. Your campers are not mini-adults. Expect them to want to have fun and be active.
2. Expect you campers to test their limits; they still, however, want and need limits.

COMMON REASON FOR SURFACE BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS:

1. A desire for recognition/attention; it may be better to be infamous than unknown.
2. Frustration; unsatisfied needs or desires often cause children to "lash out".
3. Home sickness; being scared and nervous often causes frustration.
4. Illness/exhaustion; no one is at their best when they are sick or tired.
5. Conflict with another camper/staff member; this often causes people to become defensive.
6. Outside conflicts; problems with family, friends, etc. can follow campers to camp.
7. Establish behavior patterns; lessons learned at home won't be forgotten at camp.

SOME WAYS TO PROVIDE STRUCTURE WITHOUT HAVING TO BECOME A DRILL SERGEANT:

1. Establish clear expectations right away.
2. Balance structure with a reasonable amount of freedom.
3. Reinforce and encourage desirable behaviors.

THINGS TO DO ABOUT RULE VIOLATIONS OR REFUSAL TO COOPERATE:

1. Give camper one warning; make it clear that they have done wrong.
2. Give your campers a chance to explain; they may have a good reason.



3. Be consistent and impartial.
4. Stay cool and calm; keep strong emotions in check.
5. Avoid lecturing or embarrassing the camper; discipline in private if possible.
6. Stress that the behavior is the problem, not the camper's personality. Help the camper to identify acceptable alternatives to the problem behavior.
7. Once the disciplinary time is over, accept the camper as part of the group again.
8. Follow the camp behavior-management policies for continuing discipline problems.

TIME-TESTED STRATEGIES:

1. Be the kind of person you want your campers to become — obey the rules yourself.
2. Know as many campers as possible by name. Know something about them. Build relationships.
3. Be friendly. Always show interest in what individual campers are doing and their progress.
4. Praise good qualities and actions.
5. Be sure that a sense of humor is extremely valuable. Use it frequently.
6. Maintain your poise at all times. Don't let the campers "get to you".
7. Never take misbehavior personally. It is a choice the camper is making.
8. Always remember that every child has needs; his behavior will give you clues as to what those needs are.
9. Keep in mind that misbehavior is seldom willful. Try to find the cause.
10. Try to see the camper's side of the situation. Discuss it with them until you understand.
11. Distract, distract, distract! One of the best methods to control behavior is to keep them busy!
12. Show your disapproval of behavior through your speech, facial expression, and action.
13. Being close when you note a potential problem can keep it from actually occurring.
14. Enlist other leaders (peers or staff) to provide role models.
15. Allow natural consequences to occur if the results are NOT too severe.
16. Withholding privileges or taking away something a camper likes is usually effective.



17. Sending a child to “time out” allows time to cool down and think about behavior change.
18. Have a group meeting to discuss and resolve generalized problems.
19. Remain with your campers during meals and free time.
20. Avoid getting campers over-tired, keyed-up, or tense.
21. Be willing to admit when you’re wrong and ask for forgiveness.

Sometimes it is best to simply ignore behaviors, rather than reward or punish, which may actually provide attention to encourage the behavior. Ignoring behaviors usually works best for campers who seek attention by clowning around.

Sometimes, giving the child attention or affection, which has been lacking, may solve the problem.. Giving the child some form of responsibility or encouraging a special interest or talent may result in improved behavior. Often the activity, if it is at his/her own physical, emotional, and intellectual level, is enough to correct the situation.

The Bully or Show off

To deal with these children, you first need the child’s confidence in you as a leader. To do this, you should not be dominating, overly critical, or too demanding on the child’s performance. To maintain this child’s confidence, praise good behavior—instead of only criticizing bad behavior. Discuss with the child the rights of others and courtesies due them. Let him/ her know others will be more accepting if this behavior is turned more positive. Demonstrate compromise in your actions for the child to learn. In group activity make a special effort to place this child in competition with others of equal or greater strength and ability. Essentially, the bully or show off requires understanding and patience combined with placement of the child in groups that lend to his/her development or leadership traits in honest competition with other children.

Fighting

Serious fighting often evolves from what starts out as just “fooling around”. Keep a close eye on such horseplay to keep it from getting out of hand. When a fight breaks out, separate the combatants AT ONCE. Let your voice show calm, mature authority. Attempt to give them time to cool down. Watch facial expressions to indicate less tension. Disallow any angry verbal exchanges, and physically remove combatants to a “safe distance” from each other if necessary.

Fights that involve serious contact (hitting, kicking, biting, and punching) require both combatants to visit the nurse, who will check for bruising and internal injuries. An accident report should be completed.



Once combatants have regained composure, try one of more of the following:

1. Calmly discuss the situation separately with each individual. Emphasize resolving the problem, not placing blame. Aim for a mutual “shake hands and make up” plan.
2. Hold a face-to-face hearing where each participant describes his/her version without interruption from the other. Attempt to help each see the other side, then reconcile difference, make up, and forgive.
3. Allow the individuals to discuss the situation between them privately IF you are sure the anger has dissipated. You can help mediate if they wish.
4. Invoke a logical consequence if clear provocation can be established or if this is a repeat offense. (See the Camp Behavior Management Policy)

STEALING

Prevent stealing by establishing an atmosphere of trust within all members of the group. Discuss openly the need to respect each other’s property. Establish group rules as campers feel a need to protect individual’s property and define sanctions for rule infractions. Always discourage campers from leaving valuables out in the open unnecessarily. If stealing still occurs:

1. Give the offender opportunity to return the article anonymously, without punishment.
2. Be sure that you may need to play detective if the item is not returned and the offender is still not identified. Be cautious in seeking group cooperation in order to avoid the offender being ostracized.
3. If you have evidence to identify an offender, deal with the camper privately. Give him/her a chance to make restitution and make a plan together to avoid repeat behaviors.
4. If evidence is lacking as the offender’s identity, try handing out sheets of paper to each member of the group. Have them write either “I did not take it”, or “I did take it and I’m sorry” and sign their name. Give them the opportunity to secretly place the papers in your custody. Deal with the offender privately at a later time.
5. If the problem persists, follow camp procedures and inform camp director.



Behavior Management Policy

Fort Hill Christian Youth Camp advocates a positive guidance and discipline policy with an emphasis on positive reinforcement, redirection, prevention and the development of self-discipline. Remind campers that camp rules are established for safety and to ensure that we have a common standard of behavior. As staff members, we need to show the campers that we see the need for following the rules ourselves. Please do not contradict the established guidelines.

Discipline is more correctly understood as teaching rather than punishment for wrongdoing. Consequence for behavior are but one teaching tool and they are not an end to themselves. The goal of discipline is to teach acceptable and righteous standards of conduct and our ultimate goal, of course, is that our students will internalize these standards.

Given this broad definition of discipline other tools of discipline include rewarding desired behavior, role modeling, or even a lack of response to undesired behavior. The acceptable standard of behavior is that which is defined by the Bible. In general, God through His word teaches us to respect Him (Matt. 22:37), respect others (Matt. 22:38), respect authority (Rom. 13:20) and to respect ourselves (2 Cor. 6:16) that it might go well with us. (Deut. 4:40)

Lastly, discipline must be done in love to be effective. When a child is confronted out of spitefulness or revenge, he will respond like any other, defensive and resistant. When the child senses that his interests are at heart, then we will have an audience.

Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting

I. Physical Child Abuse and Neglect

- A. Physical abuse of a child is intentional treatment of a child by a staff person that causes injury. Neglect is a deliberate dereliction of responsibility causing harm to a child.
- B. Anyone having knowledge of neglect or abuse is to inform the camp manager who then is to follow the reporting protocol in Section III of this policy. An informant may make a report to the Highland County Children Services Board directly.
- C. Should the camp manager or other person make a report to HCCSB, HCCSB will investigate the report within 24 hours. The camp manager will remove the affected staff member(s) from duty until HCCSB conducts an initial investigation. The staff member who is the subject of a report of abuse or neglect may remain on the campgrounds but will have no involvement with the youth or youths involved in the allegation. If HCCSB substantiates or finds evidence that indicates the allegation is true, the camp manager will discharge the staff



member from his duties and require that the staff member leave the premises. Furthermore, HCCSB may pursue prosecution of the staff member.

- D. The camp manager will as soon as possible notify the parents of any child who is the subject of a report of abuse and neglect and shall advise the parents of the essential facts of the report.

II Child Sexual Abuse

- A. Sexual abuse is defined as any type of sexual exploitation involving a child or adolescent even if the victim is nonresistant. Sexual activities are considered exploitive in the following situations:
- a. Any sexual activity involving a minor and an adult.
 - b. Any sexual activity in which a perpetrator uses force or other coercion even if the perpetrator and victim are both minors.
 - c. Any sexual activity between minors when there is a four year or more age difference between the participants.
- B. Sexual activity includes both touching and non-touching behaviors;
- a. Touching:
 - i. Fondling
 - ii. Oral, genital, and anal penetration
 - iii. Intercourse
 - iv. Rape with or without penetration
 - b. 2. Non-touching:
 - i. Exhibitionism
 - ii. Comments and behaviors that are sexually provocative.
 - iii. Viewing youth disrobed for sexual gratification
 - iv. Exposing youth to pornography
- C. Sexual Abuse is a criminal offense. Anyone having knowledge of sexual abuse as defined in this policy must report the allegation to the camp manager who is then to follow the protocol listed in Section III of this policy. Anyone having knowledge of sexual abuse may also contact the HCCSB directly. The HCCSB will investigate reports within 24 hours. At that point, the camp manager will remove the alleged perpetrator, whether the perpetrator is a staff member or camper, from the camp program. If HCCSB substantiates the allegation or finds evidence that indicates that the allegation is true, the camp manager will discharge the staff member or camper and require his departure from the camp. The staff member or camper may then also face criminal prosecution by HCCSB.



- D. The camp manager will as soon as possible notify the parents of any child who is the subject of a report of sexual abuse and shall advise the parents of the essential facts of the report.

III. Reporting Protocol

- A. Once the manager receives a report of abuse or neglect, he has the right to interview the reporter, alleged victim and perpetrator, and witnesses to ascertain the nature and extent of the allegation to determine if abuse or neglect is in fact at issue. Guidelines for interviewing are:
 - a. Interview those involved confidentially and separately preferably with a witness present, but also advise that a report may be made to HCCSB.
 - b. Ask non-leading questions which imply anticipated answers. Examples of non-leading questions are: "Tell me what happened", or "Can you tell me who did it?"
 - c. Only establish basic information.
 - d. Respond calmly and matter-of-factly.
- B. The manager is to document the content of all interviews. He is to also obtain written statements describing the facts of the allegation if age appropriate from those involved if possible.
- C. The manager is to then contact the camp board President or Vice-President for consultation to review the facts and to determine the appropriateness of making a report to HCCSB.

The camp Manager has the right to forego interviewing those involved and the right to forego consulting with the board of trustees prior to making the report to HCCSB



Disaster / Emergency Plan

A crisis can happen anytime in a camp setting. Whether it be a flood, fire, earthquake, vehicle accident, lost child, escaped convict, the plague, a communicable disease (i.e. measles or hepatis), or the ultimate crisis at camp, a death of a camper or staff member. A potential crisis is part of what we take on when we run camps. There are some things you can do to make a difference in how a crisis at camp is handled.

Risk Management

Risk Management simply means doing everything we can so that a crisis does not occur. CRISIS MANAGEMENT is actually managing a crisis in spite of risk management. The better the risk management, the easier the crisis management will be. Meeting all ACA standards in some cases will prevent a crisis and, at the very least, will make the call to the parents and authorities an easier task. Crisis management is what normally happens when we fail to plan, for example, everything is a crisis! What we are really looking at is managing the crisis not crisis management.

Staff Training

Starting with staff training, if you think of anything that could go wrong, you should have a system or a plan to address those situations. Staff should know what to do at the time of an incident or accident and who to contact and how. They should practice during staff training. Everyone, including your support staff (office, nurses, bam, cooks, etc.). A crisis drill similar to a fire drill should be scheduled before the campers arrive.

Staff should be trained in CPR, First aid and Group Management, as well as all safety guidelines. This should be documented in your staff manual and signed off by everyone who has participated in this part of staff training. Make sure everyone is trained and signed off.

First Priorities

1. Tend to the victim(s). Clear the area. Get everyone out of the area that is not necessary to the care of the victim.
2. Don't forget about the rest of the group.
3. Take care of the rest of the camp community, including yourself.
4. Notify parents. If dealing with the death of a camper or staff, it is important to have another person in the home such as another camp parent, family friend,



neighbor, local sheriff or police. When the call is made, it is to your benefit to have another person of authority such as a doctor, ranger, or sheriff, on the line with you. It may be easier for these individuals to give correct details if a child is lost or has died. They are not as emotionally involved as you are. It is critical that the parents receive the word before the media or camp community if possible.

The Plan

1. 1 Get your key people together and make a plan. Who will be the spokesperson for the camp? Who will notify whom? Who will write the letter that goes out? Who will take care of the parents? How will telephone calls be handled in and out. etc.
2. As a group develop a simple, to the point, factual statement. The statement should be short and to the point. Do not try to defend or justify. Do not embellish.
3. Designate the camp spokesperson other than the camp director. This person will primarily take call from the media. Have a written release that is factual, to the point.

Communication and Notification

1. **Notify staff.** It's important to have mental health workers come in and work with your staff so that they are trained and capable of working with the children. Victim advocate groups are helpful as well. (These groups often work out of hospitals and are trained volunteers.) In some cases, they will set up the mental health professionals for you and help with your crisis plan. If possible, tell all of your staff without the camper community's knowledge. It is critical that the staff understand that they are not authorized to discuss the incident. They should be instructed to refer all questions to the designated spokesperson for the camp.
2. **Notify campers.** The camp director(s) should tell the campers if possible. Smaller group sizes under 50 work best for children. In other words, don't gather them all in the dining room to tell them if you have a camper group larger than 50. Have counseling staff and mental health professionals present. Campers need to feel comfortable and secure as quickly as possible. Campers need to know you are still in charge. and they are in good hands.
3. **Notify parents.** Have a typed statement to read for whomever is calling. Call the ones who had children who were closely involved, either in the cabin group or on the program group. A letter to the rest of the camp parents is sufficient. The letter needs to be factual, to the point, and reassuring that their campers are in good hands. Expect a few calls, encourage parents to leave their children at camp to work through their emotions with the rest of the group. It is important for children to have the closure of the group working together.



4. **Notify ACA Hotline, Insurance carrier, Dept. of Social Services, local authorities, and local media.** Anytime there is an accidental death of a person, the coroner is required to report the news to the UPI. Develop a relationship with the coroner when you meet . The coroner may be able to buffer the release as well as hold it for 24 hours. After it is released, if there is not much major news that day, the calls from the medial will start coming in.
5. **Outside calls will come in from the media, parents and camp friends.** It is a good idea to take messages from the media so the spokesperson can prepare before calling back. Parent and friends may be directed to one of the directors if need be. Allow people to help. Alumni may be able to help you with the phones. Try and keep lines open. You want to reassure as many people as possible that you are okay.
6. **Notify colleagues. ACA Section National. WAIC President/Executive office.**

Records

1. Keep an accurate file of everything pertaining to the incident. Camper application, emergency form, accident report, phone messages, news clippings, list of who was on the activity, cabin group, calls to the parents, accounts of where campers were in relation to the victim, where they were, what they saw etc.
2. Get written statements from each staff member that was involved in any way.
3. Go back to the scene, and re-enact with the staff.

Mending

1. Realize that the campers most closely associated with the incident have also been traumatized and will need to talk it through as a group. Take notes or record these sessions. Require everyone be involved and talk. This is good group debriefing and group therapy as well. Enable other campers who may not have been involved in the incident, yet were close to the person, the same opportunity.
2. Have a memorial service for the victim(s). The administrative team can plan this together. Have an outside minister if possible. Have the camp directors speak, and staff who knew the camper well, so they can paint a picture for the campers/staff who did not know the victim. Move from the memorial service into a regular service that delivers hope and the idea of moving on. This gives everyone a time for both grieving, and moving on. Tape the service. You may want to send this to the family and give it to the campers and staff.



3. If at all possible, attend the service the family has as well.
4. Realize that everyone grieves differently. Allow people to be where they are and keep talking. Children live in the present and do not grieve as adults do. Children will be silly, loud, and often hyper. Children need to continue to play, be on activity, wash horses, etc. Having the children sleep together on the lodge floor right after the incident can give them much needed comfort and security. They need to be close together.
5. Be human, be real. If you have a partner in the business with you it is important to be supportive of each other. Check in with each other frequently. Hug.
6. A memorial such as planting a tree will be comforting and therapeutic for the camp community and parents. Children want to do something to memorialize this person's life.

The Family

1. Eliminate all hassles, logistical and financial. Protect their privacy by not giving out their phone number and address until you have their permission. Put a box in the camp office where people can put letters and notes and you can mail them later.
2. Make sure all medical bills are paid for by you and any expenses they may have if they come up to the camp. Return their camp tuition in full and donate to the charity designated by the family.

Closure

1. Write thank you notes to everyone that supported and assisted from ambulance drivers, to mental health workers, to friends who wrote, called, sent food, or flowers.
2. The manner in which you handle the crisis can be either damage control or can create a new crisis for you. Camp has an opportunity to handle the crisis so that everyone involved comes away better equipped to handle the stark realities of life. It is important that you don't lose the confidence of your campers, staff, alumni or parents.



Staff Application

Download the current staff application form from the Fort Hill Christian Youth Camp web site. www.FortHillCamp.org



Camper Survey

Dear Camper:

Thank you for coming to Fort Hill Christian Youth Camp. We hope you enjoyed your stay. Please take a minute to answer a few questions.

Which week did you attend?

Week	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Check→

Please rate the following activities: (If you did not participate, please check N/A)

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	N/A
Archery					
Bible Classes					
Cabin Devotions					
Camp fire					
Climbing wall					
Concession/snacks					
Crafts					
Fort Hill Hike					
GI-Ga					
Giant swing					
Group Activities (games)					
Low Ropes challenge courses					
Meals/food					
Nature Study					
Sports (soccer, basketball, baseball, volleyball)					
Swimming					
Zip Line					

Please answer the following questions:



	Yes	No	N/A
Did the staff greet you at the cabin?			
Was the staff friendly?			
Was the staff helpful?			
Do you think you have grown spiritually?			
Do you think you grew mentally or socially?			
Did you like the camp overall?			
Would you recommend Fort Hill to others?			

(Over)

What would you like to see added at camp? _____

What would you like to see eliminated? _____

What would you like to see improved? _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone No. _____

Email: _____



Staff Evaluation