

Global Village Project

Youth Protection Policy and Volunteer Guidelines



Introduction and Purpose

The GVP community assigns the highest priority to providing a safe environment for all of its students, staff and volunteers. The Youth Protection Policy is intended to protect our students, the adult volunteers and staff who work with them, and the organization itself.

The Policy establishes guidelines and procedures for:

- Supervision of and interaction with GVP students
- Screening and training of volunteers and staff
- Reporting of and responding to suspicious or inappropriate activity

GVP intends for this policy to be practical and reasonable, relying on the sound judgment and good sense of its staff and volunteers, while at the same time ensuring that necessary safeguards are in place to protect our students.

Scope and Applicability

The Youth Protection Policy applies to all GVP staff and volunteers working with our students. Activities and programs covered by this policy, both on and off school premises, include but are not limited to:

- Classes and classroom activities
- Before- and after-school activities
- School-sponsored field trips and events
- Mentoring activities
- Home visits by staff and volunteers

Code of Conduct

GVP Volunteers:

1. Will provide proper supervision and exercise sound judgment in maintaining a safe environment for GVP students at all times.
2. Will observe the two-adult policy as documented in the Youth Protection Policy except in pre-approved situations or emergencies.
3. Will respect the rights of youth not to be touched in ways that make them feel uncomfortable, and will discourage youth from touching one another in an inappropriate manner.
4. Will be alert to possible signs of abuse to GVP students and immediately report any suspicions to the GVP Head of School or to the Department of Family and Children Services (DFCS) or law enforcement where the child lives (usually DeKalb County). There is no excuse for not reporting any of the aforementioned suspicions.
5. Will not verbally, emotionally, physically or sexually abuse students.
6. Will not discipline GVP students by use of physical or verbal punishment or by failing to provide the necessities of care.
7. Will use physical restraint only when necessary to protect the student or others from harm, and will report circumstances to the student's parent or guardian and to the GVP Head of School.
8. Will release students only to adults authorized by the student's parent or guardian.
9. Will not supervise students in the event that judgment and ability is impaired by illegal drug use, the abuse of alcohol, or the use/misuse of legal or prescription drugs.
10. Will not engage in profanity, inappropriate language or jokes, inappropriate cultural references or any kind of harassment in the presence of students or their parents or guardians.
11. Will not share inappropriate details of their personal life or ask students to share inappropriate or sensitive details through written, verbal or electronic communication.
12. Will not date or in any way become sexually or romantically involved with students.
13. Will not give gifts to students without the knowledge and permission of parents.

Two-Adult Policy

At least two adults should supervise all GVP-sponsored programs and activities involving students, whether on or off school premises. One adult in a program must be at least 21 years of age. The second adult present may be 18 years of age and a high school graduate. In any one-on-one situation outlined in this policy, the adult must be at least 21 years old.

When one-on-one interactions between students and staff or volunteers are necessary, care must be taken to conduct the meeting in an environment that provides visibility by other adults. Another adult must have knowledge of the staff person's or volunteer's whereabouts and with whom they are meeting.

Specific Situations

GVP's preferred policy is that adult drivers to GVP-sponsored or GVP-related events and field trips transport more than one student in a vehicle. If it is necessary for a student to get home after an event and circumstances dictate that a volunteer or staff member take the student home, every effort should be made to contact a parent and inform them of the situation before transporting the student. If the parents cannot be reached, another adult should be made aware of the transportation plans and should be contacted once the student is safely home.

Counseling and Mentoring

Sound discretion should be exercised by adult staff and volunteers in one-on-one counseling or mentoring situations with GVP students. To avoid the appearance of impropriety, such meetings may take place privately but with others nearby and not isolated from view. Examples include meeting in a public place such as a park or coffee shop, meeting with an open or cracked door, or meeting in a room or office with a clear glass window on the door. Under no circumstances should a door be closed and locked when one adult and one student are alone.

Overnight Trips

On overnight trips with students, reasonable boundaries should be in place to respect the privacy of each person. Males and females should sleep in separate rooms. An adult may sleep in a room with two or more students of the same sex. An adult should never share a bed with a student or sleep alone in a room with only one student. Under no circumstances can one adult take one student alone on an overnight outing.

Screening and Education for Volunteers and Staff

Volunteers and staff will be screened and educated as described below. Results of background checks and self-disclosure statements will be kept strictly confidential.

General Volunteers include individuals volunteering in situations where there will be two or more adults present in the company of the students. These volunteers include all those working on the GVP board or committees, and those working with students during school hours on GVP premises. All general volunteers:

- Will fill out forms and complete an interview with the GVP Head of School, Community Engagement Manager, or Mentor Coordinator. During this process, the volunteer will be asked to undergo a background check of

criminal history and may be asked to provide references. Will complete a volunteer orientation that includes youth protection training.

- Parents of high school-age volunteers should provide written permission for the young person to volunteer at GVP and attend the training.
- Will acknowledge in writing that they have reviewed, understand and will comply with the Youth Protection Policy.
- Will undergo a background check and be checked to ensure that he/she is not listed on the sex offender registry. Will undergo a background check every three years during continuous service.

Mentors:

- Will have been general volunteers at GVP or will provide a written letter of reference and recommendation from a general volunteer who has been involved with the program for at least six months.
- Will complete an interview with the Head of School, Community Engagement Manager, or Mentor Program Coordinator who will outline the special responsibilities and precautions necessary in one-on-one interaction with GVP students.
- Will complete a mentor orientation program that includes youth protection training.
- Will undergo all applications processes and procedures described for general volunteers, including a federal background and sex offender registry check.
- Will provide a copy of a valid driver's license and insurance card.

Reporting and Responding

Every employee, volunteer and student at GVP is expected to report any situation that presents a suspicion that child abuse may have occurred. Such a report shall be made within 24 hours to a staff member who will immediately report the incident to the Head of School. If the allegation is against the Head of School, a report should be made to the Chair of the GVP Board of Directors or another senior staff person such as the Operations Manager or Community Engagement Manager.

In the event of an allegation of child abuse, the following procedures shall be followed at GVP:

- Every allegation of abuse shall be taken seriously. Adequate care, respect, and confidentiality shall be offered to alleged victims and perpetrators until the allegation is substantiated or cleared.
- The Head of School should report allegations of child abuse to the police department that has jurisdiction and to DFACS as required or necessary. If the allegation involves a report of abuse by a GVP employee or volunteer, or a report of abuse taking place while on GVP premises, the Head of School will consult with GVP's legal counsel.
- If a report is made, parents will be notified unless parents are the alleged abusers or unless it would pose a risk to the student if parents are informed. Staff members will use their best judgment in revealing the identity of the alleged abuser to parents.

- Written documentation relating to the matter shall be kept in a confidential file. The protection of the student is of primary importance. The Head of School will use his or her best judgment in terminating or suspending accused staff members and in separating the alleged victim from the alleged abuser.
- All staff members and volunteers will refer any inquiries into an ongoing allegation or investigation of abuse to the Head of School.

GLOBAL VILLAGE PROJECT

YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY

Acceptance and Affirmation

I have reviewed, understand, and will comply with the GVP Youth Protection Policy _____ (Initial)

I have never been the subject of a formal complaint to governmental authorities such as the police or the Department of Family and Child Services or been convicted of a crime against children or a violent crime.
_____ (Initial)

Printed Name

Signature

Date