

Revels, Inc

Youth Protection Policy

Purpose:

Revels, Inc. understands the importance of protecting minors in the community and is committed to child protection in our programs. Therefore, Revels will endeavor to provide a safe and secure environment for all its activities and various workplaces.

The Board of Directors of Revels Inc. has adopted this policy on May 24, 2016 in order to provide policies and practices that may protect minors from incidents of misconduct or inappropriate behavior and also to protect employees; volunteers; and contracted artistic, educational, and management personnel.

I. Definitions

Minor: the term "Minor" refers to any person under the age of 18 who participates in Revels programs and activities

Responsible Adult: the term "Responsible Adult" refers to any individual, age 18 or older, paid or unpaid, who participates in a Revels program and whose position involves supervision of a minor or a group of minors.

II. Background Checks and Training

All Responsible Adults will be screened with a Massachusetts Criminal Background Check (CORI) and may also be subject to a national criminal sex offender search. No one may be a Responsible Adult with Revels if their CORI report or National Criminal Sex Offender Search contains a criminal conviction for an offense involving children.

All Responsible Adults are required to participate in a training program. The program will cover policies regarding interactions with Minors, background screening requirements, examples of appropriate and inappropriate behavior with Minors, behavioral signs that a Minor may be a victim of abuse or neglect, reporting requirements and procedures for suspicion that a Minor may be a victim of abuse or neglect.

Additional Adults who have interaction with Minors or may have potential interaction with Minors may be subject to a Massachusetts Criminal Background Check (CORI) and may also be subject to a National Criminal Sex Offender Search.

III. Guidelines for Interacting with Minors

These Guidelines aim to promote a safe environment when Responsible Adults interact with Minors.

Be Mindful of Boundaries: When interacting with Minors, Responsible Adults should be aware of the vulnerability of Minors and themselves in such interactions, and be particularly aware of the importance of maintaining appropriate physical, emotional, and sexual boundaries in such interactions. Members of the Revels community must not engage in any covert or overt sexual behaviors with Minors, including seductive speech, gestures, depictions or physical contact that exploits, abuses or harasses.

Physical Contact: Physical contact with Minors can be misconstrued both by the recipient and by those who observe it, and should occur only when nonsexual and otherwise appropriate, and never in private. Responsible Adults must, before touching another person, especially a Minor, be aware of how physical touch with Minors can be perceived or received, and show prudent discretion in determining whether physical contact would be an appropriate expression of greeting, care, concern, instruction or celebration.

Acceptable forms of physical contact with a Minor include high fives, handshakes, fist bumps, pats on the back or shoulder and side hugs. Types of physical contact to be avoided include tickling, rough-housing, wrestling, piggyback rides, any type of massage, and any form of unwanted affection.

Although at times limit-setting with Minors may be necessary for safety reasons, Responsible Adults are prohibited at all times from physically disciplining a Minor. Similarly, speech, gestures or other behaviors that are bullying, demeaning, belittling, hurtful, meant to embarrass or make gratuitous reference to the Minor's physical development or appearance are never appropriate.

One-on-one Interactions: One-on-one interactions (other than in passing) with a Minor should be avoided.

Reporting Abuse: Responsible Adults must act when there is evidence of, or there is reasonable cause to suspect, that Minors are being abused in any way, whether in a Revels program or elsewhere. Suspected, observed or self-disclosed abuse or neglect must be reported to the appropriate Revels and civil authorities as described in this policy.

Drug and Alcohol Use; Other Prohibited Items: When interacting with Minors, the possession and/or use of illegal drugs and the use of tobacco products or alcohol is prohibited. Responsible Adults are prohibited from providing a Minor with alcohol, drugs, tobacco products, inappropriate videos, pornography or other such items.

Gifts: Responsible Adults should not accept gifts from or give gifts to Minors without the knowledge of their parents or guardians.

Communicating with Minors: Communication with Minors (except for parental volunteers/their children) is only allowed for the purpose of conducting Revels business or otherwise furthering the program-related objectives. For the protection of all concerned, the key safety concept that will be applied to such communications is transparency. The following steps will reduce the risk of private or otherwise inappropriate communication:

- Communication that is outside the role of the professional or volunteer relationship is prohibited.
- Staff, and volunteers who use any form of electronic communications, including social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) and text messaging to communicate with Minors, may only do so for activities involving Revels business and, to the extent possible, using a Revels address or site. Before any online communications are sent, the program must first inform the Minor's parent or guardian which adults may communicate through the use of such electronic tools. The preferred approach is to include the parent/guardian or another Revels affiliated adult in electronic communications with a Minor. If private communication best serves the Minor's needs, a copy of the exchange should be retained.
- Never photograph, film, or otherwise record a Minor without the prior written consent of the Minor's parent or guardian.

IV. Supervision

Supervision of Minors involved with Revels' activities is designed to protect Minors, volunteers, and employees at all times. Practices to maintain a safe environment include the following:

1. Management will make unannounced visits to every program involving Minors.
2. Responsible Adults will never release Minors to anyone who is not the authorized parent, guardian, or an individual authorized by a parent or guardian in writing or verified by telephone.

3. Responsible Adults must respect the privacy of Minors in situations such as changing costumes. Separate dressing room areas must be available for adults and Minors.
4. Responsible Adults will use positive methods for maintaining and managing Minors group control and behavior. Corporal punishment is never permitted.
5. All sites of activities will have access to a telephone during hours of operation.

V. Reporting Abuse or Neglect

This Policy sets out Revels' expectations about reporting suspected abuse or neglect of Minors and other inappropriate activity involving Minors. It applies to all Responsible Adults. The policy contains these sections:

- Who must report.
- What must be reported.
- What information should be included in a report.
- When should a report be made.
- How to make a report.
- What happens after a report is made.

Who must report

Responsible Adults are required by this policy to report immediately any instances of suspected abuse or neglect of a Minor, including self-disclosed abuse or neglect, as well as situations involving inappropriate activity with a Minor.

What must be reported

Suspected abuse or neglect: Responsible Adults must report any situation where you have reasonable cause to believe that a child is suffering physically or emotionally from abuse or neglect, whether the abuse or neglect has taken place on-site or off-site, and whether it involves a Revels affiliated individual or not. Child abuse is the deliberate emotional, physical or sexual injury of a child by an adult or another child. Neglect is harm caused by withholding life's necessities: food, clothing, shelter, medical care, and education.

Inappropriate activity: Responsible Adults must also report any instance where you observe or believe there may be inappropriate treatment of a Minor, while the Minor is on site with Revels involving a Revels affiliated individual whether on or off-site. Examples of inappropriate activity would include violations of the Guidelines for Interacting with Minors (use of tobacco products, drugs or alcohol where children are present; physical boundary violations like tickling, rough-housing, wrestling, massage, or any form of unwanted affection; and speech, gestures, or other behaviors that are demeaning, belittling, hurtful, meant to embarrass, or make reference to the Minor's physical development or appearance).

What information should be included in a report

When a Responsible Adult reports suspected abuse or neglect, or other inappropriate activity involving Minors, they should be prepared to provide as much of the following information as possible. Do not delay making the report in order to gather all of this information. Partial reports are encouraged.

- The names and addresses of the child and the Minor's parents or other person responsible for the Minor's care, if known.

- The Minor's age and sex.
- The nature and extent of the Minor's injuries, abuse, maltreatment, or neglect, including any evidence of prior injuries, abuse, maltreatment, or neglect.
- The circumstances under which the person reporting first became aware of the Minor's injuries, abuse, maltreatment, or neglect.
- Whatever action, if any, was taken to treat, shelter, or otherwise assist the child.
- The name of the person or persons making the report.
- Any other information that the person reporting believes might be helpful in establishing the cause of the injuries.
- The identity of the person or persons responsible for the neglect or injuries if suspected or known.
- Other information (if known): whether the child seems afraid to go home, names and ages of siblings, if they have similar injuries or signs of abuse, maltreatment or neglect.

When should a report be made

This Policy requires an immediate oral report to be made when the reporter has "*reasonable cause to believe*" that a child is being or has been abused in some way. The benefit of the doubt is given to the child. Waiting for conclusive proof may put a child at further risk. Oral reports must be followed by the filing of a written report within 48 hours. Direct disclosures warrant an immediate call to the Executive Director or the designated on-site Manager. If the situation is an emergency (for example, the child does not want to go home) the Production Manager or the designated on-site Manager may, upon consultation with the Executive Director, contact the local police for assistance.

How to make a report

Responsible Adults will report suspected or known abuse or neglect first to the Production Manager or the designated on-site Manager, and the Executive Director.

What happens after a report is made

The Executive Director, in consultation with Senior Leadership, will assess the information and determine whether the matter should be reported to the Department of Children and Families and/or local authorities. If the situation does not constitute child abuse or neglect, but could be considered behavior that is inappropriate with or around Minors (see Guidelines for Interacting with Minors), Revels will notify the reporter of that decision.

Revels will not retaliate or discriminate against any person who, in good faith, submits a report of child abuse or neglect.