

Youth & Special Populations Protection Policy

Purpose

Alamance County Government understands the importance of protecting Youth and Special Population citizens in the community and within County offered programs. As such, the County wishes to provide a safe and secure environment while participating within sponsored and offered programs. The County has adopted this policy in order to provide practices that will protect Youth and Special Populations from incidents of misconduct or inappropriate behavior when it relates to County sponsored and offered programming. All adults, volunteers and employees, working with youth under the age of 18 and Special Populations citizens at any County sponsored events are expected to read/understand, agree to, and abide by this policy.

Definition

County employees – All employees, full and part-time, and program volunteers that have any contact with Youth and Special Population citizens or access to facilities that has been approved by the County to work with Youth and Special Population citizens at specific events.

Youth – Individuals under the age of 18

Special Populations – Individuals who are typically disadvantaged in one or more ways including individuals protected by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Volunteers – A person who freely offers to take part in an enterprise or undertakes a task.

Pre-Employment Steps:

All County employees and volunteers working with Youth and Special Population adults will be screened in accordance with this policy.

Application: All potential employees must complete and sign an employment application form in order to be considered for employment. The application will request basic information from the candidate and will inquire into previous experience with children and Special Population adult members, reference and employment information, as well as disclosure of any previous criminal convictions. The application form will be maintained in a personnel file in the County Human Resources Department. Volunteers desiring to volunteer their time with County programming will be asked to complete an electronic volunteer application and the completed application will be maintained by Human Resources.

Personal Interview: A personal interview will be conducted with the applicant to discuss the position and the applicant's skills, qualifications and abilities. Multiple and/or group interviews may be conducted as appropriate based off of the position in which the candidate is applying. Alamance County will utilize an abbreviated process (consisting of, at least, an application, background check, and reference check) for any volunteers working within programs with covered citizens.

Post-offer Employment Steps:

Reference Checks: All County employee applicants and volunteers must provide at least three (3) references. References may be personal or professional and should be presented in written form or by providing phone contact information. All references will be confirmed by management staff and documented in the applicant's personnel file or in the volunteer's record.

Post Offer Criminal Background Check: Criminal background checks will be conducted for all candidates once an offer has been extended and accepted. If the candidate is a volunteer with any of the Youth and Special Population programs, the candidate will also be subject to the same pre-screening process. The background check will include a Federal Criminal Background check, a sex offender registry search, social security trace and motor vehicle record check (as applicable). Background checks will comply with applicable regulations

governing programs. The candidate must complete a Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA) compliant release allowing the County to conduct a background information search.

The County may deny an individual the right to work with Youth and Special Populations based on any of the following:

- Felony convictions within the last fifteen (15) years
- Misdemeanor convictions within the last five (5) years
- Any narcotic drug convictions within the last five (5) years
- Two or more alcohol related convictions within the last five (5) years
- Any child abuse or domestic violence convictions
- Any conviction against the welfare of a juvenile
- Any sex or sexual misconduct convictions
- Aberrant behavior that presents a potential danger to self and others

Failure to disclose a criminal conviction on the application form may also terminate an individual's application.

Training and Education: All employees and volunteers working with Youth under the age of 18 or Special Population participants at any County organized event will receive an orientation that includes:

- Review and receipt of the County Code of Conduct; an original signed copy will be kept in the individual's personnel file.
- Review of policies related to:
 - transportation,
 - medications,
 - use of alcoholic beverages and tobacco,
 - prevention and reporting of child abuse, and
 - emergency procedures

Records of attendance must be taken for all orientation and training sessions.

Supervision

Supervision of Youth and Special Populations, programs, facilities and employees will be designed to protect Youth, Special Population participants, and employees at all times.

Practices to ensure a safe and caring environment will include:

- **Transportation:** County employees transporting Youth or Special Populations in a vehicle should do so with a second adult in the vehicle. If a second adult is not available the "rule of threes" is recommended: at least three people in the car at all times. All transportation decisions should be made in accordance with local laws and County policies. Volunteers aren't authorized to transport Youth or Special Population participants on behalf of the County.
- **Supervision:** Neither County employees nor volunteers should ever be alone with an individual Youth or Special Population participant where they are not observable by others.
- **Medications:** County employees and volunteers are prohibited from administering prescription and nonprescription medications to Youth or Special Population participants at events.
- **Use of Alcoholic Beverages and Tobacco:** Use of alcoholic beverages and tobacco is prohibited at events.
- **Reporting:** If an employee or a volunteer observes troubling behavior involving a Youth or Special Populations participant at an event or becomes aware of a situation that is illegal or potentially unsafe for a young person or Special Population participant at an event, he or she must immediately contact the appropriate personnel at the event as well as provide notification to law enforcement personnel as appropriate. If an employee becomes aware of the troubling behavior after the event, he or she must immediately contact the appropriate personnel at the event as well as provide notification to law enforcement personnel, as appropriate. All local, state, provincial and federal laws regarding reporting of unlawful activity towards Youth and Special Populations must be followed.
- **Personal Information:** All documents bearing personal information of any Youth or Special Populations participant participating in an event, including registration forms, medical information forms, permission to treat forms, etc. should be treated as confidential. Processes that protect this information

must be created, including minimizing the number of people who have access to any such documents. The documents shall be maintained a minimum of three years or longer as may be required by local and state laws and regulations. After the maintenance period has expired, the documents shall be destroyed in a way that maintains confidentiality, such as shredding.

- Emergency and medical procedures: Employees and volunteers will be supplied with local emergency medical responder contact information or will have access to 911 services at each practice or competition.
- Contact with Youth and Special Population Participants: County employees and volunteers will not initiate contact with or accept supervisory responsibility for Youth or Special Population participants outside of County programs and activities, including baby-sitting or private instructions. County employees or volunteers with prior or family relationships to Youth or Special Populations participants may be relieved of this restriction with prior written parental or guardian approval. County employees and volunteers should not communicate with Youth or Special Populations participants outside of programs via written, electronic or other means without written parental or guardian approval.