

AIS Youth Protection Guidelines

AIS Youth Protection Policy Guidelines

General

These AIS Youth Protection Policy Guidelines are designed to help protect our youth in a proactive manner against verbal and sexual abuse (hereinafter “abuse”). These guidelines are primarily for the protection of youth members. However, they also protect our volunteer Youth Advisors from false accusations of abuse.

AIS Youth Advisors must be able to identify abuse when they see it, know their responsibilities to report suspected abuse, and provide a quality of leadership that will ensure that no youth becomes the victim of abuse through willful act while participating in the AIS Youth Program.

Applicability

These guidelines apply to youth activities carried on within the context of the AIS Youth Program at the National level. Regions and the affiliates are encouraged to adopt same or similar guidelines tailored to apply to youth activities carried on at Regional and Affiliate (Club) levels.

The National Youth Chair is responsible for implementing these policies at National events and for coordinating with the Regional Youth Chairs and affiliate Youth Advisors for the adoption and implementation of same-or-similar guidelines at the Regional and Affiliate levels.

Definition of Abuse

Abuse is defined as verbal and sexual abuse, sexual harassment, and inappropriate sexual verbalization. Youth is defined by the AIS is any person under the age of 19 years.

Preventive Actions to Protect Youth

The AIS Youth Program requires adult volunteers and Youth Advisors to provide good supervision, maintain safe surroundings, and observe time-tested precautions to ensure a safe and secure environment that eliminates and prevents opportunities for abuse.

Touching Youth.

Adults and youth leaders need to be mindful that an affectionate (“harmless”) gesture toward a youth could be construed as inappropriate by the youth or by the youth’s parent.

Complimenting Youth.

A supportive comment or words of encouragement serve as positive reinforcement from an adult or youth leader for a youth’s accomplishments, appearance, or good behavior. The words should not be too personal in nature. Compliments about the youth’s accomplishments and good behavior are safer than those comments related to appearance.

Gifting Youth.

Should an adult member or Youth Advisor wish to give a reward or token gift to a youth, it should be something that is given to other youth in the same circumstances. Otherwise, the youth or their parent could misconstrue the gesture.

Photos of Youth Members

AIS policy prohibits the posting on the Internet of photos of youth identified in any way, such as by name, region, or club affiliation. The publication of photos of youth, identified or not, is permitted in AIS and related publications whose distribution is limited primarily to AIS members.

E-Mail Iris Exchanges

AIS policy requires the control of access to AIS-sponsored iris information exchanges on the Internet among youth by the issuance of passwords.

Leadership: A Minimum of Two Adults

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Two appointed adult volunteers are required for all programs, events, and activities. The adult in charge of the event shall be an appointed Youth Advisor as established by the AIS National Youth Chair or Regional Youth Chair.

In general, no one-on-one interactions should occur in private. This includes between youth and adults or among youth. If personal discussions are needed, the discussions should be conducted in an area that is in unobstructed view of other adults and youth.

When transporting youth, if two adults cannot be present in the vehicle, the alternative minimum required is one adult and two or more youth members. An adult should not be alone with a youth without advance written parental consent.

Supervision of Youth

The AIS youth member is the responsibility of the AIS volunteer Youth Advisor in charge of the meeting or event until a parent/guardian or responsible adult designated by the parent/guardian arrives.

Sleeping Facilities

There shall be separate sleeping facilities for each gender. Only adults of the same gender as the youth may supervise youth in the sleeping and restroom areas of an event.

No single youth is permitted to sleep in the room of an adult other than his/her own parent or guardian.

Restrooms

Separate shower and bathroom facilities shall be provided for mixed-gender groups. When separate facilities are not available, separate times for male and female use shall be scheduled and posted.

Respect for an Individual's Privacy

Adult leaders shall respect the privacy of youth members in situations such as changing clothes, and intrude only to the extent that health and safety require. Adults shall protect their own privacy in similar situations.

Youth Leader Training and Supervision

Youth Advisors will be instructed by the Regional Youth Chair as to what constitutes appropriate interaction during AIS events and activities. Adults should monitor adherence to these guidelines by teen leaders.

Reporting Suspected Sexual Abuse

The primary reason for reporting sexual abuse is to protect the youth from further abuse. In addition to protecting the youth, reporting abuse can also provide help for the suspected abuser.

Who Must Report

AIS Youth Advisors shall assume the primary responsibility for reporting abuse as may arise within the Youth Program.

When to Report

A Youth Advisor is required to report abuse if s/he has knowledge of, or observes a youth who s/he knows or reasonably suspects has been the victim of abuse. Therefore, as soon as an adult Youth Advisor has knowledge of, or observes a child who s/he knows or reasonably suspects has been the victim of sexual abuse, that person must make a report to local child protective services or cognizant law enforcement authorities.

No person may impede or inhibit the reporting duties. In addition, no person making such a report shall be subject to any sanction for making the report. Any person who violates the rights of an individual to report may be guilty of an infraction punishable by fine.

Reporting Procedures

The Youth Advisor, or any AIS member who has knowledge of known or suspected abuse, is responsible for reporting the matter to child protective services or other cognizant law enforcement agency.

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The report must be made by telephone immediately, and in writing within 36 hours of receiving the information concerning the incident.

The report must contain as a minimum the following information, as well as any additional information requested by the child protective services:

- Name of person making report.
- Name of the youth.
- Current address or location of the youth.
- Specific facts that have been observed or alleged.

If it is known or reasonably suspected that such abuse was committed by an officer or director of the AIS or of an AIS region, AIS affiliate, or an AIS member at large, the National Youth Chair and RVP shall also be notified. However, no AIS official may impede or inhibit an individual's primary reporting duties directly to the appropriate governmental agency.

Care should be exercised in how the report is made. Only the specific facts that have been observed should be reported. No conclusions as to whether or not "verbal abuse" or "sexual abuse" has occurred should be reported. Additionally, AIS personnel shall not personally investigate allegations of abuse; instead, allegations shall be reported directly to the appropriate governmental agency.

Reports of abuse are confidential. If a concerned party requests information, other than the child protective services or police, the following statement shall suffice:

"I cannot discuss any of the information on a suspected child abuse report, including who made the report. If I discuss any information on a report with you, it may be a crime."

If a suspected child abuse report is suspected to have been made in error, AIS personnel should contact the agency that is investigating the report. All questions should be directed to them.

Immunity

Any person reporting a known or suspected instance of abuse will not incur civil or criminal liability as a result of any report authorized herein, unless it can be proven that a false report was made and the person knew that the report was false or was made with reckless disregard of the truth or falsity of the report.

Training and Awareness of Youth Abuse Reporting Procedures

Training in the duties imposed by these guidelines shall be included by Regional Youth Chairs in training of Youth Advisors and adult members volunteering to participate in the Youth Program.

As a part of this training, the AIS National Youth Chair shall provide to the Regional Youth Chairs a written copy of the guidelines and the form to be used by all participating in the Youth Program acknowledging a commitment to abide by the guidelines.

Any Youth Advisor who has responsibility for an AIS Youth Program shall be provided with copies of this policy and, as a condition of participating sign a statement on a Youth Advisor Acknowledgment Form that s/he has knowledge of, understands, and will abide by the provisions as set out in the policy, and will comply with the reporting provisions. The Regional Youth Chair shall include the Youth Advisor Acknowledgment Form in the Youth Advisor packet, ensure that Youth Advisors sign the form, and retain the signed form in the youth program files.

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Youth Advisor Acknowledgment Form

I, _____, a volunteer in the AIS Youth Program, have read and understand the AIS Youth Protection Policy Guidelines.

In summary, my understanding of the AIS Youth Protection Policy Guidelines is as follows:

- Abuse is defined as verbal and sexual abuse, sexual harassment, and inappropriate sexual verbalization.
- Youth is defined by the AIS is any person under the age of 19 years.
- Adults and youth leaders need to be mindful that an affectionate (“harmless”) gesture toward a youth could be construed as inappropriate by the youth or by the youth’s parent.
- Compliments about the youth’s accomplishments and good behavior are safer than those comments related to appearance.
- There is no place within the scope and work of the organization for adults or youth leaders to engage in sexual touching of a participant or sexual relationships with participants, whether mutually agreed to or not.
- Two appointed adult volunteers are required for all programs, events, and activities.
- If personal discussions are needed, the discussions should be conducted in an area that is in unobstructed view of other adults and youth.
- When transporting youth, if two adults cannot be present in the vehicle, the alternative minimum required is one adult and two or more youth members.
- The AIS youth member is the responsibility of the AIS volunteer in charge of a meeting or event until a parent/guardian or responsible adult designated by the parent/guardian arrives.
- There must be separate sleeping facilities for each gender.
- When separate shower and restroom facilities are not available, separate times for male and female use must be scheduled and posted.
- Adult leaders must respect the privacy of youth members in situations such as changing clothes, and intrude only to the extent that health and safety require. Adults must protect their own privacy in similar situations.
- AIS Youth Advisors assume the primary responsibility for reporting abuse as may arise within the Youth Program.
- It is *required* by AIS that Youth Advisors report sexual abuse to local child protective services or cognizant law enforcement authorities.
- No person may impede or inhibit the reporting duties. In addition, no person making such a report will be subject to any sanction for making the report. Any person who violates the rights of an individual to report may be guilty of an infraction punishable by fine.
- Reports of abuse are confidential. If some concerned party requests information, the inquiry shall be redirected to the agency that is investigating the report.
- Any person reporting a known or suspected instance of abuse shall not incur civil or criminal liability as a result of any report authorized herein, unless it can be proven that a false report was made and the person knew that the report was false or was made with reckless disregard of the truth or falsity of the report.
- Name-identified photos of AIS Youth shall not be posted on the Internet unless the site is password protected. The publication of photos of named youth members in AIS publications whose distribution is limited primarily to AIS members is acceptable.

I hereby agree to be bound by the AIS Youth Protection Policy Guidelines in the performance of my volunteer youth services and will comply with the reporting procedures.

Signature of Volunteer in AIS Youth Program

Date

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AIS Youth Transportation Policy

The National Youth Chair is responsible for implementing AIS Youth Transportation Policy at the National level and coordinating these policies at the Regional and Affiliate (club) levels.

Regional Youth Chairs are responsible for the adoption and implementation of same-or-similar guidelines at the Regional and Affiliate levels.

Regional Youth Chairs and affiliate Youth Advisors are responsible for notifying volunteers that they must comply with vehicular laws and regulations. This can be accomplished through the Youth Advisor packet.

AIS volunteers acting in an official capacity with the AIS must follow state driving regulations and comply with all of the following standards:

- Have a valid state driver's license for vehicles to be driven,
- Have car insurance as required by the state,
- Use a safe, enclosed operating vehicle, and
- Have seat belts for each passenger.
- If two adults cannot be present in the vehicle, the alternative minimum required is one adult and two or more youth members per vehicle.
- An adult should not be alone with a youth other than his/her own child.

Field Trip Transportation

Drivers who are transporting youth on field trips or long distances to official functions are encouraged to carry a first aid kit, medical treatment forms, and emergency accessories.

AIS volunteers shall have current medical treatment forms from parents or guardians before transporting youth in personal or commercial vehicles to AIS activities, including club field trips and regional or national activities. This is not required for routine carpooling of members to and from regular youth meetings and activities.

Youth Drivers

AIS policy does not allow persons under the age of 18 to transport youth members to or from AIS functions.

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American Iris Society
Youth Medical Release Form

This Medical Release Form is authorized for AIS Youth participating in functions and activities for the AIS organization within the time period specified below:

Youth First Name Last Name

AIS Organization Name

_____ to _____
City and State Dates (From / To)

While my child is attending or traveling to or from AIS Youth functions, I HEREBY AUTHORIZE THE ADULT AIS VOLUNTEER LEADER, or in his/her absence, any adult accompanying or assisting him/her, TO CONSENT TO THE FOLLOWING MEDICAL TREATMENT FOR SAID MINOR:

Any x-ray examination, anesthetic, medical or surgical diagnosis or treatment, and hospital care which is deemed advisable by, and is to be rendered under the general or special supervision of any state-licensed physician and/or surgeon.

This authorization shall remain in effect for the time period specified above, unless sooner revoked in writing. I understand that as parent/guardian, I will be responsible for the cost of any service or treatment provided.

Authorization and Consent and Release

I hereby certify that my child is in good health and able to travel to, and participate in all functions of the AIS Youth program.

Signature of Consenting Parent/Guardian Date

() _____ () _____
Emergency Day Phone Emergency Night Phone

Designated Additional Emergency Contacts

First Name Last Name

() _____ () _____
Emergency Day Phone Emergency Night Phone

First Name Last Name

() _____ () _____
Emergency Day Phone Emergency Night Phone

Non-Consent

I do not desire to sign this authorization and understand that this will prohibit my child from receiving any non-life threatening medical attention in the event of an accident or illness.

Signature of Non-Consenting Parent/Guardian Date