

# Code of Conduct for Volunteers and Paid Staff

## Working with Children

Bay City Players

### A. Definitions:

1. A *minor* is defined as anyone under the age of 18.
2. An *adult volunteer* at the Bay City Players is defined as a person aged 18 or older.
3. Physical abuse is non-accidental injury that is intentionally inflicted upon a child. These need not be serious injuries.
4. Sexual abuse is any contact of a sexual nature that occurs between a minor and an adult. This includes any activity that is meant to arouse or gratify the sexual desires of an adult (an adult is defined in this case as anyone 18 or older).
5. Verbal abuse is defined as any language whose intent is to demean, humiliate, threaten or punish a child/youth.

### B. General Guidelines

The following code of conduct is intended to be a guideline for people who volunteer to work with children at the Bay City Players, or paid staff of said organization. Children's programs at the Players are intended to be teaching/learning situations. They may, on occasion, include travel and/or overnight stays to out of town workshops or competitions.

Players' volunteers working with minors and their parents/guardians shall receive a copy of this code of conduct and sign an acknowledgement of receipt.

Parents or legal guardians are encouraged to participate in programs that involve their children by:

- a. volunteering to work in that program
- b. observing rehearsals
- c. dropping in on programs from time to time

Youth programs should have a minimum of two (2) adult volunteers on site at all times. No programs should be run with only one adult in attendance.

These guidelines also pertain to shows on the adult theater calendar that have children cast in them.

For the purposes of these guidelines:

1. Players' activities with minors are to be conducted with the explicit knowledge and written receipt of code and participation of parents or legal guardians

2. Players' volunteers will release minors in their care only to parents, legal guardians, or other persons designated in writing by parents/guardians, at the close of rehearsals, performances or other activity.
3. Players' volunteers shall remain with minors at the end of any Players' sponsored event until a responsible adult, guardian, or parent retrieves the youth. Minors are not to be left unattended or unsupervised. It is strongly recommended that two adults be present with minors at all times.
4. Players' volunteers or paid staff are prohibited from the use, possession, or being under the influence of alcohol or any illegal drugs while working with minors or in their company. No adult shall provide alcohol or illegal drugs to minors, nor shall any adult provide a minor with a legal substance for use to obtain intoxicating effects.
5. Players' volunteers or paid staff will not administer medication (including over the counter medications) without written permission from a parent or legal guardian.
6. Transportation for minors involved in Players productions is not a service that is provided by volunteers or paid staff. Parents are expected to arrange for transportation for their children to and from rehearsals, performances and other events. Players' volunteers shall not transport minors in their personal vehicles.

However, car pooling may occur when minors are involved in out of town events In these situations:

- a. Parental consent, in writing, is required if a minor is to be transported by anyone who is not related to them.
  - b. Whenever possible, two adults should be present when transporting minors
  - c. Minors are to be transported directly to their destination. No unauthorized side trips or stops are to be made (this does not include stops for gas, meals, or restroom breaks when going to out of town events).
  - d. Volunteers who transport must have a valid driver's license and valid current vehicle insurance.
7. Volunteers and paid staff are to speak to minors in a respectful manner and are prohibited from speaking in a way that is demeaning or abusive. All are to refrain from using inappropriate language/humor in the presence of minors. This includes, but is not limited to, swearing, racial, sexist, ethnic comments or jokes, or comments regarding physical body.

8. Volunteers and paid staff are prohibited from engaging in any sexually oriented conversations with minors
9. Volunteers and paid staff are never to be nude (or in any state of undress) in the presence of minors.
  - a. Dressing rooms for minors shall be separate from those of adults.
  - b. Dressing rooms or times for the use of the dressing rooms may also be designated for age groupings. For example, young children at one time, middle school age children at another and high school age at another time.
  - c. Dressing rooms shall be segregated by gender
  - d. Two adult volunteers (of the same gender as the children) should supervise dressing rooms for all minors.
  - e. If possible, and when feasible, small children should dress at home.
10. Volunteers and paid staff are prohibited from possessing sexually oriented materials (magazines, cards, videos, books, film, clothing, music, cd's, dvd's, etc.), or accessing similar materials on the Internet, in the presence of minors or on Players' property.
11. Volunteers or paid staff are not to sleep in the same beds, sleeping bags or other restricted space with minors who are not related to them.
12. Any volunteer with a known criminal history of abusing children (physically or sexually) shall not volunteer in programs for youth/children. Any such volunteer shall not enter on to school property or any child care facility as a volunteer or representative of the Bay City Players.

### C. Physical Contact

1. Touching should be age appropriate and in context to the situation (sometimes physical touch/guidance occurs in teaching people how to move on stage). Touch should be based upon the need of the production and not on the needs of the adult. There is no physical contact when alone with a minor. If a minor initiates physical contact, an appropriate, limited response is proper.
2. Do not engage in the physical discipline of a minor.
3. Physical contact with minors can be misconstrued by both minors and other adults, and should occur only under appropriate public circumstances. Touch should be appropriate, public, and non-sexual.
4. Types of physical contact to be avoided includes (but is not limited to): tickling, rough-housing and/or wrestling, piggyback rides, any type of

massage, back scratching, any form of unwanted affection and remarks that refer to physique or body development.

#### D. Reporting

1. All volunteers or paid staff are required to report violations of these standards to the President of the Bay City Players Board of Directors. The President shall then take the report to the Executive Committee of the Board.

All volunteers or paid staff who are mandated reporters under Michigan law must report to the Family Independence Agency (FIA) and/or State Police any situation in which they have reasonable cause to believe or suspect that a minor is being neglected or physically or sexually abused.

2. Violation of any of these standards may result in:
  - a. prohibiting an offending volunteer from volunteering in programs or activities at the Bay City Players
  - b. closing down an offending program, or replacing the people who lead that program.

The Code of Conduct for Volunteers working with Children is to be given to all Bay City Players volunteers who work with youth, and paid staff and parents/guardians of minors involved in programs. A signed acknowledgement of receipt must be received from the parents/guardian before their child can participate in programs.

May 6, 2004

**Parent/Guardian Acknowledgement of Receipt**  
**of**  
**Code of Conduct for Volunteers and Paid Staff Working with Children**  
**Bay City Players**

I am the parent and/or legal guardian of: \_\_\_\_\_.  
Name of child or children

By signing this form I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Bay City Players' Code of Conduct for Volunteers and Paid Staff Working with Children.\*

I understand that I will be governed by these standards if I volunteer to work in my child's (or children's) show.

I understand that I report any violations of these standards to the President of the Board of the Bay City Players.

Signature of Parent or Legal Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\*signed acknowledgement of receipt is required before children (anyone under the age of 18) can participate

## **Sexual Harassment**

Bay City Players affirms that the harassment of any volunteer with regard to sex, race, national origin, religion, handicap, sexual orientation or other reasons violates the philosophy and goals inherent in Human Rights.

Sexual harassment will not be tolerated and any volunteer who experiences this should bring their complaint to either their director or committee chairperson. Sexual harassing behavior includes but is not limited to: repeated offensive or unwelcome sexual flirtations, advances, propositions, continued or repeated verbal abuse of a sexual nature, graphic verbal commentaries about an individual's body, sexually degrading words used to describe an individual, obscene jokes, or graphic material displayed.

April 30, 2004

## **Screening Policy**

1. At a minimum, Bay City Players will screen volunteers and staff regularly involved with children and youth as a result of their involvement with the organization as a whole.
2. Bay City Players at its discretion will screen other volunteers and staff based upon their role in the organization.
3. A Volunteer Information form will be completed prior to the volunteer working on more than one occasion with any specific production or activity.
4. Committee chairs or their designee will assure forms are distributed and collected according to policy.
5. Completed forms will be submitted to the First Vice President of the board.
6. The First Vice President will screen for criminal convictions.
7. Persons found to have conviction(s) and/or to have pled guilty to crimes involving harm to other will not be allowed to continue as a volunteer.
8. Other criminal convictions will be evaluated in relation to the role the volunteer or staff member fulfills. For example, those involved with handling money on behalf of the organization may not have conviction for crimes of theft. The Executive Committee of the board will conduct this evaluation.

**Volunteer's Acknowledgement of Receipt**  
of  
**Code of Conduct for Volunteers and Paid Staff Working with Children**  
**Bay City Players**

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I understand that I will be governed by these standards if I volunteer to work in any child's (or children's) show.

I understand that I report any violations of these standards to the President of the Board of the Bay City Players.

Signature of Volunteer: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_