

**LOAS I & II CONFERENCES
POLICY AND PROCEDURES ADDRESSING CHILD ABUSE 2017**

Preface: The LOAS Conferences shall maintain an environment in which all children are free from child abuse. All persons associated with the conferences are expected to conduct themselves at all times so as to provide a safe and nurturing atmosphere for children and adolescents. Child abuse is unlawful and will not be tolerated. Any member of the LOAS community who engages in behaviors that are defined as child abuse by state and federal laws will be in violation of this policy. Further, retaliation against an individual for filing a complaint or assisting in the investigation pursuant to this policy is unlawful and will not be tolerated.

1. Child abuse is defined, in the New Hampshire Child Protection Act. [NH RSA 169-C: 3, II and XXVII]:

“‘Abused child’ means any child who has been:

- (a) Sexually abused; or
- (b) Intentionally physically injured; or
- (c) Psychologically injured so that said child exhibits symptoms of emotional problems generally recognized to result from consistent mistreatment or neglect; or
- (d) Physically injured by other than accidental means.”

“ ‘Sexual abuse’ means the following activities under circumstances which indicate that the child’s health or welfare is harmed or threatened with harm: the employment, use, persuasion, inducement, enticement, or coercion of any child to engage in, or having a child assist any other person to engage in, any sexually explicit conduct or any simulation of such conduct for the purpose of producing any visual depiction of such conduct; or the rape, molestation, prostitution, or other form of sexual exploitation of children, or incest with children. With respect to the definition of sexual abuse, the term “child” or “children” means any individual who is under the age of 18 years.”

1.1 NH law defines a child as any person who has not reached his or her eighteenth birthday [Chapter 169-C: 3]

1.2 Under NH law not only professional caregivers of children but also “. . .**any other person having reason to suspect that a child has been abused or neglected shall report the same. . .**” [Chapter 169-C: 29]

1.2.1 Responsibilities: As care providers and the host of care providers for children, the staff, volunteers, and conferees of the LOAS Conferences have a very serious responsibility for the health and well- being of children

1.2.2 Reporting: If any staff member, volunteer or conferee suspects that a child has been or is in danger of being abused while attending a LOAS conference, it is the responsibility of the staff member, volunteer or conferee to immediately report his or her concerns to the Grievance Officer of the Star Island Corporation. The Grievance Officer is the Manager or his designee. This applies if the abuse appears to come from another child or from a parent, guardian or other person responsible for the welfare of the child while on Star Island.

1.2.3 Discipline: No child shall ever be disciplined by the use of any physical method including shaking, spanking and slapping by any LOAS staff member or volunteer. Verbal reprimands shall be calm, yet firm, and shall not include destructive criticism. If a child is disruptive, a parent, guardian or other person responsible for the welfare of the child while on Star Island shall be informed immediately.

2. The Grievance Officer: According to the policy of the Star Island Community, the Manager will annually designate him/herself or appoint a senior staff person of the Star Island Corporation as the Child Abuse Grievance Officer who will be vested with the authority and responsibility of processing all child abuse complaints. In the event the complaint is against the manager who is also the

Grievance Officer, the alternate Grievance Officer will hear the complaint. In the event the complaint is against the Grievance Officer when not the Manager, the complaint will be heard by the Manager.

2.1 The Grievance Officer working with the Youth Coordinator, Current Chairs or their designees will ensure that the matter is investigated through the following process:

2.1.1 The Grievance Officer along with the Youth Coordinator and/or the Current Chairs or their designees will guide the charging party through the process of making an oral report of the child abuse or the Grievance Officer working with the Youth Coordinator and or Current Chairs or their designees will him/herself/themselves make such report to the Bureau of Children, Division for Children, Youth, and Families. Department of Health and Human Services in accordance with NHRSA 169-C: 29 which states "**any...person having reason to suspect that a child has been abused or neglected shall report the same...**" and NHRSA 169-C:30 states "An oral report shall be made immediately by telephone or otherwise, and followed within 48 hours by a report in writing, if so requested, to the bureau."

2.1.2 The Grievance Officer working with the Youth Coordinator and Current Chairs or their designees will take whatever action is necessary to ensure the child's safety and they will guard against subjecting the child to multiple interviews.

2.1.3 Privacy and confidentiality: In the course of taking any action, the greatest degree of privacy and confidentiality possible shall be maintained.

2.2 The Grievance Officer along with the Youth Coordinator and Current Chairs or their designees may gather additional information as deemed necessary to protect the welfare of the child and ensure his or her safety and that of other children and adults. The Grievance Officer along with the Youth Coordinator, Current Chairs or their designees may impose any sanctions deemed appropriate, including expulsion from the conference and/or denial of the right to attend future LOAS Conferences.

3. Protection of the Parties: Retaliation against any person who has filed a complaint of child abuse or cooperated in an investigation regarding a complaint of child abuse is unlawful and will not be tolerated.
4. To be eligible to serve as a Youth Leader a SORI check must be completed.
5. Policy Dissemination: In accordance with the law, this policy shall be given by the Chairs or their designated Youth Coordinator to all Youth Staff when they apply.
6. Every registered family or individual shall receive a letter before the conference explaining that we have a child abuse policy and that copies will be available on Island during the LOAS Conferences to anyone requesting them.
7. Annual Review: This policy shall be reviewed annually at the fall meeting of the Chairs of the LOAS Conferences.
8. The name of the Child Abuse Grievance Officer for the Star Island Corporation can be learned by asking at the front desk on island or by contacting the Star Island Corporation Office at 603-430-6272 or by mail at 30 Middle St., Portsmouth, NH 03801.

LEGAL REFS:

Chapter 169-C, New Hampshire Revised Statutes Annotated.

Adopted: November 4, 2000	Revised November 15, 2003	Revised 2016
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