



Thank you for volunteering to be an adult supporter for Teens Encounter Christ, we couldn't continue this ministry without people like you!

Because TEC is built on developing strong, faith-based relationships, we encourage you to connect with the teens and maintain those friendships and support networks even after the weekend ends.

However, to protect both the teens and yourself from engaging in or being perceived as having any inappropriate relationships, please practice the following boundaries and procedures:

### **God Works Through Us and Our Relationships**

While the mission of TEC is to build leaders in their churches, often the teens, and even adults who are drawn to the relational and healing aspects of this ministry have experienced some very difficult circumstances prior to becoming involved.

As a result, we need to be aware that any one of the people we encounter and interact with on the weekend may have experienced some type of trauma that makes them vulnerable. We never want to say or behave in a way that causes any of the people on a weekend to feel uncomfortable or scared.

### **The Responsibilities of Adults at TEC**

To ensure that the weekends and the Weekenders have the best possible experience, we ask that the Adults always keep the following 4 things in the forefront of their minds:

1. Supervision and Safety
2. Boundaries
3. Reporting
4. Support

## 1. Safety and Supervision

TEC is designed to be teen-led. Our primary responsibility as adults is to provide supervision and support to ensure that expectations are being followed and everyone is safe. Teens are still learning and growing and can make poor decisions, especially when around their peers:

- Don't put teens at risk by allowing them to be in any locked or out of the way places in the church in pairs or small groups (even if they are the same sex).
- Be aware of changes in teens that may indicate that they are struggling emotionally or physically.
- Be alert to signs of chemical use, especially vaping or other easy to hide items that they could abuse on the weekend.
- Stop any physical horseplay that could result in injury (or damage to property).

## 2. Boundaries

In order to protect ourselves, the TEC Organization, and most importantly the teens themselves, we must also be sure we are setting appropriate boundaries with the teens we interact with. This includes:

- Physical Boundaries
- Sexual Boundaries
- Personal Boundaries
- Electronic Boundaries

### Physical Boundaries

Hugs should never be forced upon another person. Any person not wanting to engage in a hug should not feel pressured to do so but, can either hold out a hand for a handshake or hold up a hand to indicate that they prefer a non-physical sharing of the love of God.

ALWAYS be conscious of the risks of being alone with a teen. Consider leaving doors open, or having another person join you if you are doing a task or driving in a vehicle to run an errand. This should be your policy regardless of the sex of the teen and important to remember if you spend time with any of the teens outside of the weekend.

## Adult Volunteer Expectations

### Sexual Boundaries

There should NEVER be any sexual contact between ANY adults and teens. Also, be conscious of any behavior that may appear to others as sexually provocative or inappropriate:

- Unwelcome behavior or **words** directed at an individual because of gender, sexual preference or sexual identity.
- Be aware of your **clothing**. Choose modest pieces that are not too revealing.
- Be aware of your **posture** and **proximity** to others. Avoid even casual touching as it can make others uncomfortable, including both the teen being touched and others observing the interaction.

### Personal Boundaries

Many Weekenders and Team often share very personal information. All information and stories shared should be considered confidential and not discussed outside of the weekend without the express permission of the persons involved.

It is appropriate to share stories of struggles and events that have strengthened your faith. However, be aware of not sharing unnecessary, inappropriate **details** related to drug/alcohol abuse, sexual activity, or other events with young people.

Be friendly, but always remember that you are an adult and they are not. You should be someone they look up to.

### Electronic Boundaries

A lawyer will recommend writing all electronic communications as if they were going to be read in court. We want you to make sure you write all of your electronic exchanges with teens (and everyone) so that if they are read in your church you are not embarrassed!

This includes but is not limited to:

- Texts
- E-mails
- Social Media Posts

### **3. Reporting**

Some occupations (teachers, doctors, pharmacists, counselors, etc) are mandatory reporters. This means that if the individual feels that a youth may be in danger they must report this to the authorities.

This applies specifically if a child reports anything of concern regarding a primary care provider, including a parent, guardian, or other adults in their home. As a community we need to act upon these reports in an effort to keep people safe.

If a report needs to be made, it must be made to the teen's home county. They can be made to a sheriff's office or social worker, and can be made anonymously.

If you are a mandatory reporter and you feel that something is disclosed during discussions that must be reported, talk with the spiritual directors. The SDs will work with the reporter to determine if a report needs to be filed.

TEC asks that you report ANY information shared with you that indicates a student is in harm's way. This includes:

- Thoughts of suicide or self-harm
- Chemical use or abuse
- Sexual/physical abuse by another adult or teen
- Threats to hurt another

If you hear something of concern, make sure you report it to an AC or SD immediately.

#### 4. Support

“Love one another as I have loved you.” - John 15:12

While our mission is to support teens in the development of our faith, we also want to support one another as we are all God’s Children.

Treat one another with the love, kindness, and patience they deserve, especially when you need to give them redirection or feedback that may be difficult for them to hear.

Also, know that we couldn’t do this ministry without you, let us know if you have any questions or need additional training or prayers.

Thank you!

Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_

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