

Royal Servants Participant Protection Policy

Statement of Commitment

Reign Ministries is committed to developing youth and youth leaders to have Great Commandment hearts and live Great Commission lifestyles. To achieve this vision, we recognize our responsibility to nurture and safeguard all individuals – adults and youth – entrusted to our care.

Participant Protection Policy Statement

Reign Ministries is dedicated to ensuring the safety, welfare, and protection of all participants. This encompasses the spiritual, physical, emotional, and mental health of all those involved in our programs.

- Reign Ministries will not tolerate any form of abuse.
 - The term “abuse” encompasses a range of behaviors, including but not limited to sexual, physical, emotional, verbal, neglect, and spiritual abuse.
- Therefore, it is the responsibility of our staff to cultivate a safe, secure, and nurturing environment for all participants. This environment will be grounded in Biblical principles and dedicated to ensuring the well-being of every individual. We are committed to preventing and promptly addressing any form of abuse.

Definitions of Abuse

Sexual Abuse: Sexual abuse is nonconsensual sexual contact of any kind. This includes all forms of inappropriate touch as detailed in the Participant Protection Policy. It also includes, but is not limited to, non-contact behavior such as sexual communication, voyeurism, exposure to pornography or other sexually explicit material, exhibitionism, or any other activity intended to abuse, degrade, arouse, or gratify sexual desires. Sexual activity between minors can also be defined as abusive if a significant disparity in age, development, or size exists, or if coercion is used.

Physical Abuse: Physical abuse is the intentional, deliberate, or reckless use of physical force that may result in bodily injury or physical pain. It may or may not cause pain or leave marks. It does not include accidental physical injuries.

Emotional Abuse: Emotional abuse is a pattern of behavior or verbal communication intended to intimidate, humiliate, shame, ridicule, threaten, frighten, harass, coerce, blame, manipulate, or otherwise cause emotional pain or distress. Emotional abuse can also be referred to as verbal and mental abuse.

Spiritual Abuse: Spiritual abuse is defined as when a person in a position of power establishes control and authority by using Scripture, doctrine, or their “leadership role” as weapons, administered under the guise of religion. Spiritual abuse may include the misuse of religion for selfish, secular, or ideological ends.

Neglect: Neglect is the deliberate and continued failure to provide the basic necessities of life, such as food, clothing, shelter, hygiene, medical attention, or adequate supervision, to the extent that the individual's health, safety, and/or development is, or is likely to be, jeopardized.

Financial Misuse: This is the illegal or improper use of the funds, assets, or property of an individual. It includes but is not limited to transferring, exchanging, or spending funds without authorization or permission, forging an individual's signature, misusing or stealing money or possessions, and coercing or deceiving an individual into signing any document.

To ensure the fulfillment of Reign Ministries' Participant Protection Policy, the organization has implemented the following policies and procedures.¹

Screening Procedures

The following screening procedures describe the requirements for each position within the organization.

Reign Ministries Staff and Royal Servants Associates

1. **Written Application:** Prior to consideration, all candidates seeking a staff position will complete and return an application, no exceptions. The Mobilization Director in charge of hiring will carefully review the applications, ensuring that each candidate is an appropriate match for the position.
2. **Background Checks:** Reign Ministries Staff and Associates will receive a criminal background check as part of the application process and every other year through a state law enforcement agency or a reputable provider of those services.
3. **Reference Checks:** The Mobilization Director will gather six to eight references for Reign Ministries Staff, checking at least two to three, to confirm the candidate's information on the initial staff application. At least five references will be gathered for Royal Servants Associates, with one to two being checked. Applicants must sign a release allowing the Mobilization Director or designated staff to interview anyone who may have valuable information about the applicant's qualifications, even individuals not listed on the application.
4. **Interviews:** A personal interview is required for all applicants prior to being hired or permitted to serve with Reign Ministries. The interview will be conducted by no less than two qualified Reign Ministries Staff. Information gathered from reference and background checks may be used as the basis for questions and discussion points during the interview with the applicant.
5. **Agreements:** All candidates will be required to review and agree to this Participant Protection Policy and the applicable Reign Ministries Standards of Conduct.
6. **Social Media Searches:** Research may be conducted for additional background information.
7. **Training:** Before being assigned to the position of Trip Leader, they will go through a process of training on best practices with Royal Servants and will be evaluated and approved by the Director of Royal Servants.

Adult Participants

1. **Registration:** Every adult participant will complete a detailed registration and a Biographical and Beliefs questionnaire (similar to an application) without exception. These registrations are reviewed by two Reign Ministries Staff.
2. **Background checks:** Reign Ministries will conduct a criminal background check through a state law enforcement agency or a reputable provider of those services.
3. **Release forms:** Adult participants will sign off on the applicable Reign Ministries Standards of Conduct, Terms & Conditions, and Medical Permissions Form, and fill out a Health History Form, Vaccination/Vaccination Exemption Form, and a Physical Examination Form to ensure the health and safety of our participants.
4. **Church and/or personal reference checks:** Received as a prerequisite to participation, preferably from someone who has observed them working with minors, if applicable.
5. **Social Media Searches:** Research may be conducted for additional background information.
6. **Personal interview:** Adults who are not known previously to Reign Ministries Staff and who are in a senior leadership role will be interviewed by a qualified Reign Ministries staff member. Adults not in a senior leadership role are not interviewed; however, they go through a week of training prior to direct contact with minor participants.

Volunteers and Overnight Visitors

1. **Registration:** Every volunteer and overnight visitor will complete a basic registration form.
2. **Background checks:** Reign Ministries will conduct a criminal background check on anyone 18 or over, through a state law enforcement agency or a reputable provider of those services.
3. **Release forms:** Volunteers and overnight visitors will sign off on the applicable Reign Ministries Standards of Conduct, Training Camp Terms & Conditions, Medical Permissions Form, and fill out a Training Camp Health History Form to ensure the health and safety of our participants.
4. **Social Media Searches:** Research may be conducted for additional background information.

¹ Contact Reign Ministries (royalservants@reignministries.org) to access the full version of the Participant Protection Policy.

5. Personal interview: Anyone who visits or volunteers is either a known person to Reign Ministries Staff or will undergo a personal interview with qualified Reign Ministries Staff.

Minor Participants

1. Registration Process: Every participant will complete a detailed registration and a Biographical & Beliefs Questionnaire (similar to an application) without exception. These registrations are reviewed by two Reign Ministries staff members and their leadership team.
2. Release Forms: Guardians of minors are required to fill out and sign a Medical Permissions Form, a Health History Form, a Vaccination/Vaccination Exemption Form, and a Physical Examination Form in order for us to ensure their health and safety. Also required to participate is a completed and notarized Terms & Conditions Form.
3. Social Media Searches: Research may be conducted for additional background information.

Supervision

The following is an overview of Reign Ministries' supervision guidelines. Trip Leaders are trained to use a Participant Safety Evaluation Guide to make decisions about participant safety. More detailed supervision guidelines can be found in the full version of the Participant Protection Policy. Note: Any adult who is a member of a team or a part of our program has been screened.

Best: Two Adult Rule - Two screened adults (unrelated when possible) are present at activities and in buildings, vehicles, or other enclosed areas.

Better: Rule of Threes - Three individuals will be present, with at least one being a screened adult, for activities, conversations, and interactions.

Acceptable: Rule of Threes - At least three individuals will be present, for activities, travel, or out in public.

Acceptable - Meeting one-on-one between Trip Leadership and a minor or those of differing levels of leadership should only happen if privacy is required to discuss personal or disciplinary issues. In this situation, another member of leadership should be aware the meeting is happening and the meeting should be in a location that is easily observable and interruptible. Additional precautionary measures are described in the full policy.

Housing Specific Considerations

Sleeping arrangements can be a point of concern on extended mission trips like Royal Servants. We follow a similar guideline as described above, of best, better, and acceptable. Opposite genders will sleep in different or partitioned rooms, and the trip leadership will sleep separately from students and summer staff.

Regarding showering, the trip leadership will ensure privacy for participants. Opposite genders will use separate facilities whenever possible; otherwise, they will shower at alternate times. Students and Summer Staff will shower separately from the trip leadership.

Significant Conversations

A significant conversation includes but is not limited to any conversation regarding mental health concerns and/or a pattern of concerning behaviors regarding a participant's health, any conversation around concerning behavior regarding breaking policy and guidelines, particularly if it becomes a pattern, or anytime someone discloses abuse, or there is a suspicion of abuse.

Reign Ministries is not a counseling ministry. In instances where ongoing counseling is needed, individuals will be encouraged to see a qualified professional counselor, and, in the case of minors, in coordination with parents.

- In any situation where a participant discloses instances of abuse, protocols will be triggered in adherence with the "Mandatory Reporting" section of this policy.

- For issues that are not immediate and deemed unreportable by the relevant authorities, we may discuss these matters with parents at the end of the program to facilitate ongoing care and support.
- If a minor under our care is identified as a victim of abuse or if issues arise that could jeopardize their health or safety, we will promptly notify the parents to ensure their informed participation in the care of their participant.
- We recognize that some situations may exceed our capacity to provide adequate care for, and/or support of, a participant, and they may need to be sent home before the end of the program. If the participant is a minor, we will be in discussion with their parents throughout the process.
- If there are concerns regarding a participant's safety upon their return home, discussions will be initiated by Trip Leadership before the program's conclusion to ensure adequate protective measures are in place.

Mandatory Reporting

All Reign Ministries Staff, including those at Training Camp or stationed overseas, as well as Associates, Senior Staff, and Health Supervisors, are classified as "Mandated Reporters." As such, they are required to adhere strictly to mandatory reporting guidelines and must promptly report any reasonable suspicion of abuse to the appropriate local authorities. Detailed reporting instructions can be found in the General Guidelines for Reporting Decision Tree.

In the event of a disclosed abuse case, we will ensure that the circle of individuals involved remains as small as possible to protect the privacy and dignity of all parties. Documentation of all pertinent information relating to the disclosure will be completed. The Suspected Abuse Reporting Tool must be filled out in order to collect all relevant and related information. Additionally, all individuals involved in the disclosure and reporting process are required to fill out a Significant Conversations Form.

Discipline

Our responsibility is to create a safe, supportive, and Christ-honoring environment on all of our mission trips. We will approach all forms of discipline with patience, gentleness, forgiveness, and respect. The ultimate goal is not punishment, but correction, restoration, learning, and guidance towards positive behavior. When done effectively, discipline can help individuals recognize their mistakes, take responsibility for their actions, and make amends. We believe this approach fosters a sense of accountability and respect within the team, ultimately leading to a stronger and more cohesive group dynamic.

- Disciplinary issues will be addressed by the Trip Leader or other designated Senior Staff. Consequences may include, but are not limited to, verbal discussion, loss of privileges, participation in Bible studies, or additional responsibilities assigned to the participant.
- Physical contact will not be used for the disciplining of participants by anyone within our program at anytime. The physical restraint of others will be employed sparingly and only when it is reasonably necessary to prevent an individual from physically harming themselves or others.
- We care deeply for all of the individuals in our program, but the needs and safety of the team come first. Therefore, if a person's behavior repeatedly disrupts a team, if they disregard trip guidelines, their issues pose a risk to other participants, or if they are in direct rebellion against leadership, the Trip Leader may choose to send an individual home. In the event, the Trip Leader will consult with the Director of Royal Servants for counsel, and the parents of minors will be notified.
- If a participant is being sent home due to emotional or physical harm to themselves or others, or if they are adversely affecting the overall team dynamic, they may be separated from the group until their departure. During this time, they will not be left alone; the trip leadership will ensure they are safe, secure, and well- cared for until they leave.

Injuries or Illness

The Two-Adult Rule or the Rule of Three, as outlined in the “Supervision” section of this policy, applies in all situations.

All Reign Ministries Staff members on a Royal Servants team and the Senior Staff in charge of medical will be trained in basic first aid/CPR procedures, including procedures for safely responding to potential exposure to blood, saliva, and other bodily fluids. Other Leadership Team members may be trained in basic first aid and medical emergency procedures.

- The Trip Leader will work with the Senior Staff in charge of medical to initiate the necessary steps to ensure that an ill or injured person receives proper medical attention, monitoring, and follow-up.
- For minor injuries and illnesses, a member of the Leadership Team will administer the appropriate treatment and first aid. When possible, members of the Leadership Team will review the participant’s medical information in conjunction with administering first aid. Injuries and illnesses are reported to the Senior Staff in charge of medical and recorded in the Treatment History Log. The Trip Leader reviews and signs off on all medical documentation weekly.

If professional medical assistance is required:

- A Detailed Medical Report Form and a Doctor Visit Form will be completed by a member of the Leadership Team.
- A designated member of the Leadership Team will contact the participants’ parent(s), legal guardian(s), or designated emergency contact, as identified on their Health Form, to obtain consent for treatment. This will be done via phone or text before treatment is initiated, provided time permits (in the case of technical difficulties, emails are acceptable). The Trip Leader will possess the final authority to determine whether immediate medical attention is necessary.
- In situations where a participant may need to be sent home due to their injury or illness, Trip Leadership will be in contact with the participants’ parent/s, legal guardian/s, or emergency contact, as listed on their Health Form.

Note: Should an adult participant, a parent or guardian of a minor, decline professional medical treatment or disregard recovery instructions against the recommendations of Reign Ministries Staff or Associate, they will be requested to submit a signed declaration stating and affirming their decision to refuse medical care.

Record Keeping

Detailed medical and financial records are maintained on all Royal Servants’ mission trips. Significant conversations are documented as well.

1. Significant conversations are recorded and kept for record-keeping.
2. Medical incidents are documented and kept for record-keeping. Trip Leaders review and sign off on medical documentation weekly.
3. Records are kept for a minimum of three years per Wisconsin State Code.
4. Detailed records are made of each participant’s funds at check-in; all cash, debit, credit, and gift cards are then collected and sealed in envelopes. Once sealed, the envelope is then signed by the participant across the seal as a security measure. The envelope is returned to the participant at the completion of the trip.

Communication

Reign Ministries Staff, Associates, and designated Senior Staff are permitted to communicate with participants using texting, email, and social media. They are also permitted to photograph or create videos

of participants to post on official ministry social media sites. The designated person(s) must first undergo training and sign a Communication Agreement. The training will outline the recommended practices, limitations, and legal parameters for electronic communication with participants and their families.

Texting, emails, and social media are an important part of Reign Ministries' communications. Reign Ministries desires to promote safe and healthy electronic communication and social media between Reign Ministries Staff, Associates, Senior Staff, volunteers, overnight visitors, and participants in ministry activities. As a result, the organization has developed the following guidelines (a complete version of these guidelines can be found in the full version of the Participant Protection Policy):

1. Volunteers and overnight visitors may not initiate electronic communication with participants. Any photographs/videos of participants or activities at Training Camp that they wish to post must be reviewed by a Media Department representative prior to posting.
2. Except in an emergency, Reign Ministries Staff, Associates, or Senior Staff may not share any personal identifying information, such as a participant's name, phone number, email address, or photograph, for non-Reign Ministries purposes. This applies to group texting, group email, social media, or any other public method of electronic communication.
3. All information, images, or videos shared electronically through official organization communication channels are not considered confidential.
4. Parents and/or participant media consent is detailed on point 7, of the Terms and Conditions form.

Internal Investigation

Reign Ministries considers all allegations of abuse a serious matter. Each situation will be fully assessed by the Director of Royal Servants, Reign Ministries President, and/or board members, with the assistance of legal counsel. Civil authorities will be immediately contacted when there is a suspicion of abuse or an abuse has been determined. Reign Ministries Staff will fully cooperate with a pending law enforcement investigation.

- Reign Ministries Staff who are the subject of an investigation will be removed from their position pending completion of the investigation.
 - Reign Ministries Staff who admit to or are found guilty of abuse will have their employment immediately terminated, consistent with the established employment practices of Reign Ministries.
 - Reign Ministries will permanently remove any person from their duties within the organization if they are found guilty of abuse. Whenever termination of employment is a factor, we will consult with legal counsel.
- Volunteers and participants who are the subjects of an investigation will be removed from their positions pending completion of the investigation.
 - Those who admit to or are found guilty of the abuse will be permanently banned from serving in the ministry in any capacity.

Annual Review

Designated members of Reign Ministries Staff will review this policy and its procedures annually. Consultation with an attorney is required when significant changes are made to the policy.

Upon completion of the review, designated members of Reign Ministries Staff will conduct annual training for all Reign Ministries Staff, Associates, Senior Staff, volunteers, and overnight visitors to familiarize them with existing, changed, and new policies.