The Texas Family Code Chapter 261 prohibits the abuse and neglect of minors (persons under the age of 18). Abuse can be physical, emotional, or sexual. Because minors are the primary participants in summer programs, the Texas Department of State Health Services specifies standards that organizers of summer camps must enforce. Programs held on the grounds of state universities are not regulated by the Texas Department of State Health Services, but are required by law to regulate themselves and to enforce standards equivalent to those required by the Department of State Health Services. Foremost among these is that Staff must submit to an annual criminal background/sexual offender check and also participate in training designed to prevent child abuse and neglect in the program.

Programs Directors are expected to provide training to their employees and volunteers that covers the elements in this document. If such training is impossible, then Staff must receive a copy of this document, read it, understand it, and keep a copy of it for their reference.

The language in this document is deliberately direct, so that Staff knows specifically the types of behaviors that they MUST avoid so that they do not place themselves in legal jeopardy. Failure to follow these guidelines may result in an employee or volunteer being barred from service in the camp. Persons who participate in child abuse or neglect will immediately be reported to Law Enforcement for appropriate prosecution.

Mandatory Behavioral Standards:

1. Any verbal or nonverbal sexual behavior with any minor is forbidden.
2. Being nude in front of minors is forbidden.
3. Dating or going out with any minor is forbidden.
4. Never speak graphically about sexual activities, including your own, and do not encourage or allow others to do so.
5. Never show pornographic materials to participants or staff.
6. Use discretion regarding physical contact with Camp Participants and Camp Staff. Any overt display of affection should be made in a public setting in front of other group members and should respect the wishes of the other person. Never show affection when no one else is around.
7. Never invite or host minors in your home or any other home unless another adult is present and you have permission of the minor’s parents.
8. Never meet in bedrooms or in dorm rooms without others present.
9. Never sleep in bed with minors.
10. Never stare while others are dressing.
11. Never comment on others’ bodies.
12. Never take pictures while others are dressing or showering.
13. Never requiring minors to keep “secrets” about relationships or prohibited actions.
15. Never allow minors to become sexual with one another during program activities.
16. Sexual gestures or overtures a minor makes to a staff member should be reported to the Program Director immediately so that discussion can be held with the minor.
17. Never share personal information about others with a minor.
18. Do not share personal information about yourself or seek help with personal problems from a minor.
19. Never show special favoritism toward a minor or give the minor special gifts.
20. Fantasizing or daydreaming about a certain minor is a warning sign. When a staff member experiences romantic or sexual attraction for a minor, the staff member is required to discuss the situation with the director, so that contact between the minor and the adult can be discontinued for the safety of both the minor and the adult.
21. One-to-one counseling with a minor should always occur in a public place—never alone in a car or a private place.
22. Avoid driving alone with a minor at all times.
23. If riding or driving alone with a minor cannot be avoided, special care should be taken:
   a. Do not sit close to one another in the car.
   b. Do not come into physical contact with each other.
   c. Do not stop the car to talk.
   d. If you must stop, turn on the inside light of the car.
   e. Avoid physical contact (hugs and kisses) when saying goodbye.
   f. Be aware of the time you depart and arrive. Mark those times in your diary or record.
24. “Buddy systems” should be used by staff whenever possible, but especially when minors are involved. Two adults should oversee activities of minors at all times.
25. Never swear or use foul or abusive language in the presence of minors.
26. Never use your role to degrade, ridicule, shame, belittle, humiliate, or threaten another person.
27. Never give minors tobacco, alcohol or unauthorized drugs.
28. Never spank, shake, slap or physically punish minors.
29. Never use, possess or be under the influence of alcohol at any time while working or volunteering in the program activities.
30. Never use, possess or be under the influence of illegal drugs at any time.
31. All suspicions of child or sexual abuse must be reported as required by state law to the director and/or local law enforcement. Any knowledge or suspicion of any staff member having an inappropriate relationship with a minor must be reported promptly to the director.
32. Standards for communication or conduct of relationships with minors apply to electronic media including internet access, email, chat rooms, phone conversations, photos and pictures.

**Appropriate Displays of Affection:**
- Asking permission before touching
- Side hugs
- Brief shoulder to shoulder hugs
- Pats on the shoulder or back
- Handshakes
- “High-fives” and hand slapping
- Verbal praise
- Touching hands, faces, shoulders and arms
- Arms around shoulders
- Holding hands when a minor is upset
- Holding hands while walking with small children
- Sitting close to small children
- Kneeling or bending down for hugs with a small child

**Inappropriate Displays of Affection:**
- Any form of unwanted affection
- Full frontal hugs or “bear hugs”
- Touching bottoms, chests or genital areas
- Lying down or sleeping beside others
- Massages
- Patting others on the thigh, knee or leg
- Tickling or wrestling
- Touching or hugging from behind
- Games involving inappropriate touching
- Kisses on the mouth
- Showing affection in isolated areas such as bedrooms, closets, restricted areas or other private rooms
- Compliments that relate to physique or body development