



## Youth Protection Policy

Handbell Musicians of America is implementing this policy for all national, sponsored and endorsed events that involve children under the age of 18. It is recommended by the Stewards of Children program from an organization called Darkness to Light, a national nonprofit that seeks to empower adults to prevent child sexual abuse. Their programs raise awareness and educate adults how to prevent, recognize, and react responsibly to child sexual abuse. Learn more about this organization at [www.D2L.org](http://www.D2L.org).

We highly recommend that Area leaders, event planners, and volunteers or contractors that will be working with youth, take the 2-hour online training course – Stewards of Children. Cost is only \$10 per person. Find the details here: [http://www.d2l.org/site/c.4dlCIJOkGcISE/b.6143709/k.3D5F/Child\\_Sexual\\_Abuse\\_Prevention\\_Training\\_ONLINE.htm](http://www.d2l.org/site/c.4dlCIJOkGcISE/b.6143709/k.3D5F/Child_Sexual_Abuse_Prevention_Training_ONLINE.htm)

## Facts and Statistics about Child Sexual Abuse

80% or more of child sexual abuse incidents happen in isolated, one-on-one situations. Those who abuse children often become friendly with potential victims and their families. They participate in family activities, earn trust, and gain time alone with children. The goal of this Youth Protection Policy is to eliminate or reduce isolated, one-on-one situations between adults and children to decrease the risk of sexual abuse.

Defining Child Sexual Abuse: Any sexual act with a child performed by an adult or an older child. Child sexual abuse could include a number of acts, including but not limited to:

- Sexual touching of any part of the body, clothed or unclothed;
- Penetrative sex, including penetration of the mouth;
- Encouraging a child to engage in sexual activity, including masturbation;
- Intentionally engaging in sexual activity in front of a child;
- Showing children pornography, or using children to create pornography;
- Encouraging a child to engage in prostitution.

Following are some other facts and statistics that will help you understand the threat of child sexual abuse in the U.S. today.

- Based on meta-analysis of 22 separate U.S. studies, 30-40% of girls and 13% of boys experience sexual abuse before the age of 18.
- A national study using information from law enforcement agencies nationwide found 14% of sexual assault victims are ages 0-5, 20% are ages 6-11, and 33% are ages 12-17.
- 66% of molestation victim will not tell until adulthood, if ever.
- 90% of victims are abused by someone they know and trust.
- Male molesters of boys will have an average of 150 victims PRIOR to prosecution
- Male molesters of girls will have an average of 42 victims PRIOR to prosecution
- Sexual molesters “groom” children AND gatekeepers prior to abuse.
- There is NO visual profile for molesters. Most appear helpful, trustworthy, and responsible. Abusers come from all segments of society and include men and women. Many are married, educated, and have families.
- Less than 10% of sexual abusers will EVER encounter the criminal justice system.
- Sexual molesters will seek access to children where protective barriers are low.

## Overview of Behaviors/Situations

<b>Appropriate and Encouraged Interactions</b>	<b>Inappropriate and Prohibited Interactions</b>	<b>Harmful and Prohibited Interactions</b>
Praise, encouragement, and acknowledgement	Isolated, one-on-one interactions	Patting buttocks
Rewards available to all who achieve	Risqué jokes and profanity	Actions or speech that humiliates, threatens, ridicules, degrades or frightens
Asking permission to touch for necessary purposes	Favoritism or gift giving to individual children	Corporal punishment of any kind
Pats on back or shoulder	Frontal hugging	Touch of personal areas – face, mouth, legs, breasts, stomach, genitals
Side hugs	Photographing individual children unless authorized by parent or guardian for the purpose of event publicity and marketing	Intimate, romantic, or sexual conduct
Handshakes and high fives	Contact outside of program activities	Showing pornography or involving youth in pornography
Warmth and kindness	Exchanging personal email or phone numbers	Use of alcohol or controlled substances with or in the presence of youth
Public social media alerts to groups of kids and parents	Private interactions through social media, computer, or handheld devices	

### Definitions:

**Staff & Volunteers** – paid staff, volunteers, committee members, event faculty, event clinicians, national board members, Area board members, contractors, or anyone in a role of responsibility with a national, sponsored, or endorsed event.

**Child/Children** – any person under the age of 18.

### Policies:

1. To protect Handbell Musicians of America, staff, volunteers, contractors, and program participants, at no time during a Handbell Musicians of America national, sponsored or endorsed event may a staff person or volunteer be alone with a single child where the staff person or volunteer cannot be observed by others.
2. Staff and volunteers shall never leave a child unsupervised.
3. Staff and volunteers will make sure a restroom is not occupied before allowing children to use the facilities. Staff will stand in the doorway while children are using the restroom. If staff or volunteers are assisting younger children, doors to the facility must remain open.
4. Staff and volunteers will conduct and supervise private activities (diapering, putting on bathing suits, showering) in pairs. When this is not feasible, staff should be positioned so that they are visible to others

5. Staff shall not abuse children or use corporal punishment of any kind. This includes physical abuse, verbal abuse, sexual abuse, mental abuse, or neglect. Any type of abuse will not be tolerated and is cause for dismissal.
6. Staff and volunteers will respect children’s right to not be touched in ways that make them feel uncomfortable. A child’s right to say “No” is to be encouraged and respected. Other than diapering, children are not to be touched in areas of their bodies that would be covered by a bathing suit.
7. Staff and volunteers will use appropriate touch including pats on the back or shoulder, side hugs, handshakes, and high fives. Staff and volunteers will refrain from full frontal hugging, touching of personal areas, or patting of the buttocks. No child should sit in the lap of adult staff and volunteers.
8. Staff and volunteers will use positive techniques of guidance, including redirections positive reinforcement, and encouragement rather than competition, comparison, and criticism.
9. Staff and volunteers will not give gifts or special favors to individual children, or show preferential treatment to a child or group of children to the exclusion of others.
10. Staff and volunteers may not have one-on-one private online communications or engage one-on-one in other digital activities (games, social media, etc.) with youth event participants. Parents and another staff member or volunteer should be copied in digital and online communication, ensuring no one-on-one contact exists in text, social media, or other forms of online or digital communication.
11. Staff and volunteers will respond to children with respect and consideration and treat all children equally regardless of gender, race, religion, sexual identity, or culture.
12. Staff and volunteers will refrain from intimate displays of affection toward others.
13. Using, possessing, or being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs during working hours is prohibited.
14. Smoking or use of tobacco in the presence of children or parents during working hours is prohibited.
15. Profanity, inappropriate jokes, sharing intimate details of one’s personal life, and any kind of harassment is prohibited.
16. Staff may not be alone with children they meet at Handbell Musicians of America events outside of event activities. This includes babysitting, sleepovers, and inviting children to their home. Any exceptions require a written explanation before the fact and are subject to administrator approval.
17. Staff may not transport children in their own vehicles.
18. Staff may not date event participants under the age of 18.
19. Under no circumstances should staff release children to anyone other than the authorized parent, guardian, or other adult authorized by the parent or guardian (written parent authorization on file with event organizers.)
20. Staff and volunteers are required to report any suspicion of child abuse to the proper authorities and to Handbell Musicians of America executive director as soon as possible after being made aware of an issue.

I, (name) \_\_\_\_\_, have read and understand the policies stated above and agree to follow these policies to the best of my ability.

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