



## Child Safety Policy

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### CHILD ABUSE

RBI Austin **prohibits and does not tolerate** acts or knowledge of child abuse in the workplace or in any organization-related activity. No employee, volunteer, student, or third party, no matter his or her title or position, has the authority to commit or allow abuse. It is the responsibility of every staff member, mentor and volunteer at RBI Austin to act in the best interest of each child in every RBI Austin program. RBI Austin will cooperate with the authorities in the event of any investigation.

The organization provides procedures for employees, volunteers, or other participating adults to recognize signs of abuse and report suspicions or disclosures. In the event that any staff member, mentor or volunteer observes any inappropriate behavior (i.e. policy violations, neglectful supervision, poor role-modeling, etc.) or suspected abuse (physical, emotional, or sexual) it is his or her responsibility to immediately report this information to a coordinator, immediate supervisor, or RBI Austin program director.

Upon completion of investigation conducted by appropriate authorities, disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment or volunteer relationship and criminal prosecution may ensue. Any incidents of abuse reasonably believed to have occurred will be reportable to appropriate law enforcement agencies and regulatory agencies.

Definitions of child abuse as well as physical and behavioral evidence or signs include (but are not limited to) the following:

#### **Physical Abuse:**

“Physical injury that results in substantial harm to the child, or the genuine threat of substantial harm from physical injury to the child, including an injury that is at variance with the history or explanation given [italics added] and excluding an accident or reasonable discipline by a parent or guardian that does not expose the child to a substantial risk of harm. Physical abuse also includes failure to make a reasonable effort to prevent an action by another person that results in physical injury that results in substantial harm to the child.” Signs and symptoms:

- Frequent injuries such as bruises, cuts, black eyes, fractures, lacerations, abrasions or burns that are unexplained and when cause is inadequately explained
- Burns or bruises in an unusual pattern that may indicate the use of an instrument
- Lack of reaction to pain
- Injuries that appear after the child has not been seen for several days

- Injuries on the backs of the hands, buttocks, abdomen, back, or sides of the body
- Frequent complaints of pain without obvious injury
- Aggressive, disruptive and destructive or self-destructive behavior
- Passive, withdrawn, emotionless behavior
- Fear of going home or seeing parents

### **Sexual Abuse**

“Sexual conduct harmful to a child’s mental, emotional, or physical welfare, including conduct that constitutes the offense of indecency with a child, sexual assault, or aggravated sexual assault; failure to make a reasonable effort to prevent sexual conduct harmful to a child; compelling or encouraging the child to engage in sexual conduct [*italics added*]; and causing, permitting, encouraging, engaging in, or allowing the photographing, filming or depicting of the child if the person knew or should have known that the resulting photograph, film, or depiction of the child is obscene or pornographic.” Signs and symptoms:

- Torn, stained or bloody underclothing
- Pain, swelling, itching, bruising or bleeding in genital area
- Difficulty walking or sitting
- Physical signs of sexually transmitted diseases
- Pregnancy in young girls
- Inappropriate sex play or premature understanding of sex
- Sexually suggestive, inappropriate or promiscuous behavior
- Threatened by physical contact/closeness
- Extreme fear of being alone with adults especially if of a particular gender
- Child suddenly refuses to change for gym or to participate in physical activities
- Major change in normal mood or behavior

### **Mental Abuse**

“Inflicting mental or emotional injury to a child, and/or causing or permitting the child to be in a situation in which the child sustains a mental or emotional injury that results in an observable and material impairment in the child’s growth, development, or psychological functioning.” Signs and symptoms:

- Speech Disorders
- Delayed physical development
- Ulcers, asthma, severe allergies
- Substance abuse
- Habit disorder (sucking, rocking, biting)
- Antisocial, destructive
- Sleep disorders
- Passive and aggressive-behavioral extremes
- Delinquent behavior (especially adolescents)
- Developmentally delayed

## **Neglect**

“The leaving of a child in a situation where the child would be exposed to a substantial risk of physical or mental harm, without arranging for necessary care for the child, and the demonstration of an intent not to return by a parent or guardian of the child.” Signs and symptoms:

- Inadequate nutrition that can include stealing or begging for food
- Lack of personal cleanliness
- Torn and/or dirty clothes
- Unattended to medical needs
- A child unattended to for long periods of time or consistent lack of supervision
- Frequent absence or tardiness from school
- Regularly displays fatigue or listlessness or falls asleep in class
- Extreme loneliness and need for affection

## **Reporting Suspicious or Inappropriate Behaviors**

RBI Austin is committed to providing a safe, secure environment for children and their families. To this end, any report of inappropriate behaviors or suspicions of abuse will be taken seriously and will be reported, in accordance with this policy and state law, to the RBI Austin Executive Director, the Police Department, Child Protective Services, or other appropriate agency.

RBI Austin supports and encourages a culture of communication related to abuse or suspected abuse of children. If you see or suspect inappropriate interaction with or between children, it is your responsibility to report the inappropriate interaction to a coordinator, immediate supervisor or program director. This includes partial or inconclusive information concerning behavior, which may or may not be blameless.

Because sexual abusers ‘groom’ children for abuse, it is possible a staff member, mentor or volunteer may witness behavior intended to ‘groom’ a child for sexual abuse. Staff member, mentors and volunteers are asked to report ‘grooming’ behavior, any policy violations, or any suspicious behaviors to a coordinator, immediate supervisor or program director.

## **Reporting Violation of Policy**

In order to maintain a safe environment for our children, RBI Austin staff members, mentors and volunteers must be aware of their individual responsibility to report any questionable circumstance, observation, act, omission, or situation that is a violation of these policies. All questions or concerns related to abuse should be directed to an immediate supervisor, coordinator, or the Executive Director.

## **Consequences of Violation**

Any person accused of committing a prohibited act or any act considered by RBI Austin leadership to be harmful to a child will be immediately suspended from all interaction with that child and RBI

Austin activities. This suspension will continue during any investigation by law enforcement or child protective agencies. Any person found to have committed a prohibited act may be prohibited from future participation as a staff member, mentor or volunteer in all activities and programming that involves children or students at RBI Austin. If such an individual is an employee, such conduct may also result in termination of employment from RBI Austin.

Failure to report a prohibited act as designated in this policy is a violation of this policy and grounds for termination of employment of any employee. Mentors or volunteers who fail to report a prohibited act may be restricted from participation in activities involving children or students at RBI Austin.

### **Reporting Suspicions of Abuse to Law Enforcement Agencies**

Staff members, mentors and volunteers at RBI Austin are required to report suspicions of child abuse or neglect, or any inappropriate behavior of a colleague or co-worker, to their immediate supervisor, coordinator or program director. Texas state law requires that any person having cause to believe a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been or may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect must make a report to the appropriate law enforcement agency. A staff member, mentor or volunteer **may** report to an immediate supervisor, coordinator or program director and allow supervisory personnel to make the appropriate report to law enforcement agencies. Staff members, mentors and volunteers are required to report an incident to supervisory staff as soon as possible after the incident. After receiving a report from a staff member, mentor or volunteer, the Program Director will speak with the person to whom the child spoke in order to get detailed information about the conversation. The Executive Director will be notified as soon as reasonably possible.

### **Response to Report of Abuse**

Any report of inappropriate behaviors or suspicions of abuse will be taken seriously, and will be reported in accordance with this policy to the Executive Director. If appropriate, the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services or Child Protective Services will be notified.

The State of Texas requires all adults to make a report of suspected abuse to Child Protective Services within 48 hours by one of these:

- Calling 1-800-252-5400
- Reporting online at [http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Contact Us/report\\_abuse.asp](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Contact Us/report_abuse.asp)
- Or to law enforcement by calling 911 or the local police department.
- Failure to report suspected abuse is a crime. Investigation of the alleged abuse will remain with law enforcement and CPS professionals and should not be undertaken by the individual or organization.
- If anyone is aware of or suspects that any type of abuse happened or may be taking place, they are to report it immediately to a RBI Austin staff member via phone or email.

### **Anti-retaliation**

The State Law of Texas and RBI Austin prohibit retaliation made against any employee, volunteer, board member, or student who reports a good faith complaint of abuse or who participates in any related investigation. Intentionally reporting false accusations of child abuse is illegal and can have serious consequences for those who are wrongly accused. RBI Austin prohibits making false and/or malicious allegations of child abuse, as well as deliberately providing false information during an investigation. Anyone who violates this rule is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

### **Investigation and Follow-up**

RBI Austin will take all allegations of child abuse seriously and will act promptly to ensure the child is safe and appropriate authorities are involved to investigate suspicions or disclosures. RBI Austin will cooperate fully with any investigation conducted by law enforcement or other regulatory agencies. RBI Austin will make every reasonable effort to keep matters involved in allegations of abuse as confidential as possible while still allowing for a prompt and thorough investigation.

## **GENERAL CHILD SAFETY GUIDELINES**

### **Bathroom Supervision and Assistance Guideline**

Staff members, mentors and volunteers should avoid taking children to the restroom. Elementary students may be accompanied to the restroom for supervision and assistance when needed. (However, the student should receive the minimum amount of assistance needed based upon their individual capabilities.)

If a staff member, mentor or volunteer must go to the restroom to check up on an individual child they should:

1. Seek out another person to accompany them.
2. If another person is not available to accompany them they should go to the exterior bathroom door, knock, and ask if the child needs assistance.
3. If the child requires assistance, the adult should leave the exterior bathroom door open when entering the bathroom area and try to verbally assist the child in completing their activities while the child remains behind the door of the bathroom stall.
4. Any assistance with the straightening or fastening of garments should only be done in the presence of another staff member, mentor or volunteer.

### **Gift Giving**

Staff members, mentors, and volunteers are allowed to give two small gifts (under \$25) on the child's birthday and at Christmas. All such gifts will be reported by email (type of gift and cost thereof) to the appropriate Mentor Coordinator or supervisor of the program. Any other special occasions or special accomplishments should receive group acknowledgement and rewarded with group recognition. Any requests for variance from this policy must be addressed in writing to the Program Director or Executive Director.

## **Money**

Within the first 6 months of a mentorship, the mentor should not spend money on the mentee (unless it is a gift as stated above), nor should there be tutoring within the first 3 months. We want you to have a solid foundation with your mentee that does not lead to a transactional relationship. Also, do not give money to a family for any reason. If a family requests money, please inform an RBI staff person and we can discuss the need with the family.

## **Intoxicants**

Staff members, mentors and volunteers are prohibited from the use, possession, or being under the influence of alcohol or any illegal drug while in the facility, during a RBI Austin activity, or while working with children of RBI Austin. Staff members, mentors and volunteers are prohibited from providing alcohol or illegal drugs to children or students.

## **Tobacco**

RBI Austin requires staff members, mentors and volunteers to refrain from the use or possession of tobacco products while in the presence of children and students or their parents. RBI Austin staff members, mentors and volunteers are prohibited from providing tobacco products to children or students.

## **Nudity**

Staff members, mentors and volunteers at RBI Austin should never be nude in the presence of children in their care.

## **Sexually Oriented Materials**

RBI Austin staff members, mentors and volunteers are prohibited from accessing, possessing, or displaying any sexually oriented materials (magazines, cards, videos, films, etc.) in the presence of RBI Austin children or to have such materials on organization property and equipment. If any such materials are deemed necessary for purity instruction or discussion, the Executive Director must approve them in advance.

## **ONE-TO-ONE INTERACTIONS WITH CHILDREN AND STUDENTS**

RBI Austin recognizes that meeting the spiritual and emotional needs of children may occasionally require that staff members, mentors and volunteers interact with children on an individual basis. Adults should observe the following guidelines when interacting with RBI Austin children:

## Individual Meetings

Staff members, mentors and volunteers should conduct one-to-one meetings with an individual child at a time when others are present and where interactions can be easily observed. There will be no one-to-one meetings between a staff member, mentor or volunteer and a child behind closed doors. If a circumstance arises where a private one-to-one meeting does occur, the staff member, mentor or volunteer will notify the appropriate Program Director immediately before or after the meeting.

### *Additional Guidelines for One-on-One Interactions*

- When meeting one-on-one with a child, always do so in a public place where you are in full view of others.
- Avoid physical affection that can be misinterpreted. Limit affection to pats on the shoulder, high-fives, and handshakes.
- If meeting in a room or office, leave the door open or move to an area that can be easily observed by others passing by.
- Inform other adults that you are alone with a child and ask them to randomly drop in.
- Document and immediately report any unusual incidents, including disclosures of abuse or maltreatment, behavior problems and how they were handled, injuries, or any interactions that might be misinterpreted.
- **Appropriate Outside Contact**
  - Taking groups of children on an outing
  - Attending sporting activities with groups of children
  - Attending functions at a child's home, with parents present
- **Inappropriate Outside Contact**
  - Taking one child on an outing without the parents' written permission
  - Visiting one child in the child's home, without a parent present
  - Entertaining one child in the home of a program employee or volunteer
  - A lone child spending the night with a program employee or volunteer

## Transportation

Staff members, mentors and volunteers may from time to time be in a position to provide transportation for RBI Austin children. The following guidelines should be observed when adults are involved in the transportation of RBI Austin children:

1. Children should never be transported without parental permission.
2. Whenever possible, the mentor or volunteer should not travel alone with a child. Should that be the case, children should be transported directly to their destination. No unauthorized stops should be made.
3. Staff members, mentors and volunteers should avoid physical contact with children while in vehicles.
4. No cell phones may be used by the driver in a moving vehicle while transporting children.
5. No drivers under age 21 may provide transportation for children.
6. Children should not use a vehicle belonging to a staff member, mentor or volunteer.

## **Parental Contact**

Parents of children in RBI Austin programs or activities will be contacted if their child becomes ill, seriously injured, or has a severe disciplinary problem while participating in RBI Austin activities.

## **Parental Involvement**

Parents are encouraged to be a part of any and all services and programs in which their children are involved at RBI Austin. A parent accompanied by a child to any RBI Austin program or activity is responsible for their child's safety.

## **Parent Volunteers**

A parent who desires to participate in such a way as to have ongoing contact with children at RBI Austin, other than his/her own will be considered a RBI Austin volunteer. All volunteers will be required to complete RBI Austin's Volunteer Application and screening process.

## **Physical Contact**

RBI Austin is committed to protecting the children in our care. RBI Austin has implemented a physical contact policy that will promote a positive, nurturing environment while protecting our children. Physical contact in any form should not give even the appearance of wrongdoing. The personal behavior of RBI Austin staff members, mentors or volunteers must foster trust at all times – personal conduct must be above reproach. The following guidelines are to be carefully followed by all working in RBI Austin programs:

1. Hugging, pats on the back, high-fives and other forms of appropriate physical affection between staff members, mentors or volunteers and students are important for child development, and are generally suitable in RBI Austin programs.
2. Physical affection should be appropriate to the child's age. Inappropriate touching and inappropriate displays of affection are forbidden. Any inappropriate touching and inappropriate displays of affection should be immediately reported to an immediate supervisor, coordinator or Executive Director.
3. Physical contact and affection should only be given when in the presence of other children or RBI Austin staff members, mentors, and volunteers. It is much less likely that touches will be inappropriate or misinterpreted as such when more than two individuals are present, and the touch is open to observation.
4. Do not force any physical contact, touch or affection upon a reluctant child. A child's preference not to be touched must be respected.

<i>Appropriate Physical Interaction</i>	<i>Inappropriate Physical Interactions</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Side Hugs</li> <li>• Shoulder-to-shoulder or “temple” hugs</li> <li>• Pats on the shoulder or back</li> <li>• Handshakes</li> <li>• High-fives and hand slapping</li> <li>• Verbal praise</li> <li>• Pats on the head when culturally appropriate</li> <li>• Touching hands, shoulders, and arms</li> <li>• Arms around shoulders</li> <li>• Holding hands (with young children in escorting situations)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full-frontal hugs</li> <li>• Kisses</li> <li>• Showing affection in isolate area</li> <li>• Lap sitting</li> <li>• Wrestling</li> <li>• Piggyback rides</li> <li>• Tickling</li> <li>• Allowing a child to cling to an adult’s leg</li> <li>• Any type of massage given by or to a child</li> <li>• Any form of affection that is unwanted by the child or the adults</li> <li>• Compliments relating to physique or body development</li> <li>• Touching bottom, chest, or genital areas</li> </ul>

### **Release of Children**

At the end of any RBI Austin planned group activity, RBI Austin staff members, mentors and volunteers are responsible for releasing children in their care only to parents, legal guardians, or other persons designated by parents or legal guardians.

In the event that a staff member, mentor or volunteer is uncertain of the propriety of releasing a child, he or she should immediately locate or contact the Executive Director, Mentor Coordinator or Program Director before releasing the child.

### **Sexually Oriented Conversations**

Staff members, mentors and volunteers are prohibited from initiating or engaging in any sexually oriented conversations with RBI Austin children. However, it is expected that from time to time staff members may be called upon to address children regarding human sexuality and purity. Staff members, mentors and volunteers are not permitted to discuss any inappropriate or explicit information about their own personal relationships, dating, or sexual activities with any RBI Austin child. This provision includes using cellular phones, text messages, e-mail, instant messaging, social media and online chat rooms for any such conversations.

### **Social Media Policy for RBI Austin Volunteers**

A social networking policy exists to safeguard the children, employees, mentors, volunteers and reputation of RBI Austin, and to provide guidelines to assist in utilizing this vehicle of communication. The absence of, or lack of explicit reference to a **specific** site does not limit the application of this policy. Although it is not preferred, mentors and volunteers may be allowed to “friend” and/or accept friend requests from RBI Austin children. However, you are required to follow these guidelines:

1. When possible, employees and volunteers are required to have “private” profiles so that youths do not have access to the employee and volunteer private information.
2. All interactions should be positive uplifting, encouraging and constructive. (see Verbal Interaction guidelines on the last page)
3. As long as there is parent/guardian consent, mentors and volunteers are allowed to post about a current RBI Austin child on a social media site. (Facebook, Instagram, etc.)
4. RBI Austin prohibits comments that are, or could be construed by any observer as harsh, coercive, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating.
5. RBI Austin prohibits sexually oriented conversations or discussion about sexual activities.
6. RBI Austin prohibits posting inappropriate pictures or inappropriate comments on pictures.
7. If a youth reveals abuse or inappropriate interactions with an adult, the employee or volunteers must report this information to an administrator and the proper reporting agency immediately.
8. All staff members and volunteers must “friend” the RBI Austin Executive Director and respective Program Manager if they intend to utilize social media to contact students.
9. Keep boundaries of times of communication. Examples include: no messaging after 8pm, etc.
10. RBI Austin staff may view any private message sent to any student by any volunteer at any time, at the discretion of RBI Austin staff.

**Other important things to keep in mind are the following:**

- RBI Austin families will also be made aware and be required to follow these guidelines. They will be provided with information about how to respond to inappropriate communication from employees and volunteers.
- RBI Austin expects each employee, mentor and volunteer to maintain an appropriate, positive relationship with parents and caregivers. Should you choose to participate in social networking with parents, please be aware that you are a representative of RBI Austin at all times. Anything you post, including pictures, is a reflection upon RBI.
- Remind other members of your network of your position at RBI Austin and that your profile may be accessed by current or former RBI Austin children, and to monitor their posts to your network accordingly. Conversely, be judicious in your postings to all friends’ sites, and act immediately to remove any material that may be inappropriate from your site, whether posted by you or someone else.
- Because of the nature of our program, you may continue having a relationship with an RBI student even after they turn 18. With that in mind, please be aware that uneven power dynamics, in which adults have authority over former program participants, may continue to shape those relationships. Consider that recent alumni are in some ways similar to current participants due to age, and likely perceive staff members, mentors and volunteers as authority figures.

- Recognize that there is no such thing as complete privacy on a social networking site. Take care in anything you post online. Keep your privacy settings at appropriate levels to protect yourself.

### **Social Media Policy for RBI Austin Families**

A social networking policy exists to safeguard the children, employees, mentors, volunteers and reputation of RBI Austin, and to provide guidelines to assist in utilizing this vehicle of communication. The absence of, or lack of explicit reference to a **specific** site does not limit the application of this policy. Although it is not preferred, mentors and volunteers may be allowed to “friend” and/or accept friend requests from RBI Austin children. However, staff, mentors, and volunteers are required to follow these guidelines:

1. When possible, employees and volunteers are required to have “private” profiles so that youths do not have access to the employee and volunteer private information.
2. All interactions should be positive, uplifting, encouraging and constructive.
3. As long as there is parent/guardian consent, mentors and volunteers are allowed to post about a current RBI Austin child on a social media site. (Facebook, Instagram, etc.)
4. RBI Austin prohibits comments that are, or could be construed by any observer as harsh, coercive, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating.
5. RBI Austin prohibits sexually oriented conversations or discussion about sexual activities.
6. RBI Austin prohibits posting inappropriate pictures or inappropriate comments on pictures.
7. If a youth reveals abuse or inappropriate interactions with an adult, the employee or volunteers must report this information to an administrator and the proper reporting agency immediately.
8. All staff members and volunteers must “friend” the RBI Austin Executive Director and respective Program Manager if they intend to utilize social media to contact students.
9. Keep strict boundaries of times of communication. Examples include: no messaging/posts after 8pm, etc.
10. RBI Austin staff may view any private message sent to any student by any volunteer at any time, at the discretion of RBI Austin staff.

### **Other important things to keep in mind are the following:**

- *As an RBI Austin family, we ask that you please let staff know of any inappropriate communication between your child and an RBI staff member or volunteer.*
- RBI Austin expects each employee, mentor and volunteer to maintain an appropriate, positive relationship with parents and caregivers. Should they choose to participate in social networking with parents, they are aware that you are a representative of RBI Austin at all times.
- RBI staff and volunteers will remind other members of their network of their position at RBI Austin and that their profile may be accessed by current or former RBI Austin children, and to monitor their posts to their network accordingly. Conversely, they will be judicious in their

postings to all friends' sites, and act immediately to remove any material that may be inappropriate from their site, whether posted by them or someone else.

- Because of the nature of our program, volunteers and staff may continue having a relationship with an RBI student even after they turn 18. With that in mind, they are aware that uneven power dynamics, in which adults have authority over former program participants, may continue to shape those relationships. Staff and volunteers will consider that recent alumnae are in some ways similar to current participants due to age, and likely perceive staff members, mentors and volunteers as authority figures.
- RBI staff, volunteers, and families must recognize that there is no such thing as complete privacy on a social networking site. Take care in anything you post online. Keep your privacy settings at appropriate levels to protect yourself.

### **Sleeping Arrangements**

It is anticipated that certain RBI Austin activities may occasionally require that overnight sleeping arrangements be made for children and staff members or volunteers. No mentor or volunteer should have a child with him or her overnight, in any context. In the event that an approved activity requires sleeping arrangements, staff members and volunteers will strictly observe the following rules; the Executive Director must approve any exceptions to the policies below, in advance:

1. In camp or retreat context, staff members and volunteers will monitor sleeping children periodically conducting visual bed checks to ensure that sleeping children remain in designated sleeping areas.
2. Only children of the same sex will be permitted to sleep in the same room.
3. At times, a staff member or volunteer will sleep in the same room as students or in an adjoining room. However, staff members or faculty are prohibited from sleeping in a 1:1 ratio setting with children for any reason, unless the staff member or volunteer is an immediate family member of the child.
4. In the event that overnight arrangements do not include standard beds, each staff member, volunteer, and child will use single sleeping bags or blankets. In these instances a "one-person-to-one-bag or blanket" rule will be observed.
5. Staff members, volunteers, and students will be required to wear appropriate clothing while sleeping.

### **Supervision**

RBI Austin staff members, mentors and volunteers are expected to provide adequate supervision for children in their care while involved in RBI Austin programs, including mentoring activities. When group activities allow for unsupervised functioning, staff members and volunteers should set clear expectations for children concerning times to meet and "check-in" with staff members or workers in charge of the activity.

## Verbal Interactions

Verbal interactions between staff members, mentors and volunteers and children should be positive and uplifting. Adults should strive to keep verbal interaction encouraging and constructive.

Employees and volunteers are prohibited from speaking to children in a way that is, or could be construed by any observer, as harsh, coercive, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating.

RBI Austin’s policies for appropriate and inappropriate verbal interactions are:

<i>Appropriate Verbal Interactions</i>	<i>Inappropriate Verbal Interactions</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Positive reinforcement</li><li>• Appropriate jokes</li><li>• Encouragement</li><li>• Praise</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Name-calling</li><li>• Discussing sexual encounters or in any way involving children in the personal problems or issues of employees and volunteers</li><li>• Secrets</li><li>• Cursing</li><li>• Off-color or sexual jokes</li><li>• Shaming</li><li>• Belittling</li><li>• Derogatory remarks</li><li>• Harsh language that may frighten, threaten or humiliate children</li></ul>

## Confidentiality

To maintain a trusting relationship, mentors and volunteers need to set realistic expectations for confidentiality at the outset. So when you are talking to your mentee or child:

- Discuss the organization’s confidentiality policy, and if possible, leave a young person friendly version with them.
- Under no circumstances promise to keep secrets.
- Do assure them that your commitment to their privacy and safety – let them know you will not be gossiping about them or sharing the information they tell you with other people unless it threatens their health and wellbeing or somebody else’s safety and wellbeing.
- Do give them details about the sort of information you are required to pass on if it comes to your attention.
- If you do have to break the young person’s confidence, make every attempt to inform them of what and whom you will be telling. In situations where your mentee confides in you about being abused or threatened you should let them know you are going to talk to someone about getting them some help – if you don’t tell them, your decision to tell someone else may feel like another violation.

Some of the information your mentee shares with you may concern you because it reveals behavior or activities that you believe are inappropriate for someone of their age. Perhaps they are smoking, drinking, sexually active, or staying out very late at night – if these are not illegal activities for someone of their age and they do not present an immediate threat to their safety or wellbeing, you need to think very carefully before sharing this information with anyone else. If your mentee has chosen to confide in you, you may be in a better position to help them if you keep their confidence and get them to think about some possible consequences of their choice. [<http://youthmentoring.org.nz/>]

### **Enforcement of Policies**

RBI Austin staff members and volunteers who supervise other staff members or volunteers are charged with the diligent enforcement of all RBI Austin policies. Violations of these policies are grounds for immediate dismissal, disciplinary action, or reassignment from positions for staff members, mentors and volunteers. Final decisions related to policy violations will be the responsibility of the RBI Austin Executive Director.

### **General Policy Statement**

When our organization investigates a complaint of misconduct (such as but not limited to child abuse or sexual harassment), it expects and requires the cooperation of all employees including the complainant, witness, and the accused offender. Our organization may interview these individuals privately and take oral and/or written statements from them. Any employee or volunteer who fails to cooperate with such an investigation or to provide complete and truthful information may be subject to disciplinary action.

**If I am offered and accept placement with the organization, I agree to comply with its published child protection policies and rules. If requested to do so, I will cooperate with any organization investigation of a possible violation of policies and rules by providing complete and truthful information in an oral and/or written statement:**

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Volunteer Printed Name

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Volunteer Signature

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Date

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RBI Staff Member Printed Name

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RBI Staff Member Signature

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Date