



Excerpts from the Christie Lake Kids Volunteer Manual

1.0 General Rules for All CLK Participants

In summer camp, STAR and LIT programs, all children and youth are made privy to the following participation guidelines, and understand that failure to comply with these may result in dismissal. It is only fair, then, to expect that staff and volunteers follow the same general rules.

- Respect yourself, each other, staff, volunteers, program supplies, and the property in which programs occur;
- Have fun and be kind to others;
- Try something new and develop your skills;
- Participate in the activities;
- Help with clean-up after programs;
- Violence of any kind is NOT allowed and you will be asked to leave programs immediately if you do not comply;
- Bullying is NOT allowed and you will be asked to leave programs immediately if you do not comply; and
- Listen to instructions and follow the rules.

2.0 Tips and Techniques for the new STAR or LIT Volunteer

Each volunteer at CLK can play an important role in making inner city programs run smoothly and be a beneficial experience for participants. Here are a few pointers from past and current volunteers, if you find yourself asking “What can I do?”, regardless of your designated role:

- Welcome participants as they arrive to program and introduce yourself! It is very important to make our participants feel welcome and to know who you are;
- If a participant leaves a program, tell a staff member and follow him/her;
- Offer to clean up, set up and/or organize program space and/or materials;
- Role model appropriate social skills, attitude and/or manners;
- Be in charge of transition games (these are small activities that keep bored kids engaged and prevents instances of ‘acting out’);
- Work one-on-one with a participant who requires extra support;
- Have a conversation, or check-in with individuals: Ask them how their day was/is, if they have plans for the evening or the weekend, and so on; and
- Don’t be afraid to act like a kid. Participate, and above all, HAVE FUN!

2.1 Language and Communication

Our use of language is perhaps one of the most important things to consider when working with young people, and when we use deliberate communication with our participants, we demonstrate genuine caring for them and convey our purpose in contributing positively to their well-being.

Here are some tips to remember:

- Body language and tone of voice account for 70% of effective communication, and directly affect the listener’s ability to hear and understand what is being said. Get down to the child’s level (take a knee, for example), smile, use appropriate eye contact and turn towards whomever you are speaking and/or listening to.
- Move your feet first and your mouth second; if you need to get a participant’s attention, walk over to them rather than yell across the room.
- Fair does not mean equal – different participants require extra help with comprehension of, and participation in, different activities.
- Focus on and praise good behaviour and/or strengths in learning.
- Use “I” messages instead of “You” messages. For example, try using the statement “When I see you make a mess, it makes me think you don’t respect this space”, instead of blatantly reprimanding a child by saying “You are disrespectful”.
- Use praise. It is important to acknowledge good behaviour and good participation when it occurs. When using praise, be specific and genuine. Participants should know what they are doing well and how they are doing it.
- Often, it is more meaningful to praise the effort instead of the result. Instead of saying “You scored a goal!”, you can say, “You really skated hard to make that shot go in, way to go!” or “You were so persistent and your effort paid off!”.

Another example: "Nice drawing!" can become more inclusive; "Wow, you worked really hard on that drawing!" or, "You did a great job focusing and staying in your seat, and look what you accomplished!". This is especially important to do for children and youth who are not used to being praised. Start small and be concrete.

Try to avoid:

- Blaming and shaming – “You always make a mess.”, or “Why can’t you just be quiet like everyone else?”
- Yelling or raising your voice unnecessarily.
- Calling participants names; “You’re acting like a baby.”
- Threats or bribes

3.0 Personal Safety/ Working in High Risk Neighbourhoods

We have a long-standing presence in all of our communities and CLK is well-respected and welcomed in these neighbourhoods. That said, some of the areas in which we work have higher rates of crime and thus pose a higher risk to those who work and live in them. It is important to remember that you are entering someone’s personal space and that you need to conduct yourself with respect and humility. You also need to be safe and aware of this space at all times.

Please follow these tips, to ensure your own personal safety:

- Wear highly visible clothing and walk with confidence;
- Say hello to people, strangers and families. A simple greeting can change the perspective of those around you, about you. Saying hello or giving a nod of the head can increase your respect in the neighbourhood and make you a friend instead of an adversary or a victim;
- Make sure people know you are with Christie Lake Kids (always wear your volunteer shirt!); and
- Avoid being alone and if you have a cell phone, bring it with you and have it on you, in case of an emergency.

3.1 Protecting Yourself

Please remember that we are working with vulnerable populations and personal boundaries must be clear and distinct.

- Avoid being alone with our participants. Doing so can put yourself and the participant at risk of allegedly inappropriate or misconstrued conduct between adults and children.
- Parents often ask us to walk kids home after program. If you feel comfortable doing so, go with another volunteer. Always walk in well-lit areas, do not take short cuts, walk them to their door and make sure they can get inside, and then always check-in with a staff member upon your return.

- Always let another staff member know where you are going, and when you'll be back.
- Positive physical interaction between staff, volunteers and kids is important to creating meaningful relationships. Kids will often hug you without asking (it's a natural expression of love and friendship), but please be sure that you ask a child if it is okay for you to give a hug, a high-five or a pat on the back.
- Do NOT "friend" participants on Facebook and do NOT "follow" participants on Instagram, Snapchat, Tumblr, Twitter or other social media platforms. Further, you are not allowed to have contact with any clients or families outside of program time, including telephone or text messaging conversations. If you need to be in touch, you can do so through CLK staff or through a common volunteer forum. This is another way for us to protect ourselves from becoming overly involved in the lives of our clients and reduces the risk of inappropriate conduct.

4.0 Personal Conduct

To promote and ensure the safety of all persons involved in Christie Lake Kids programs, all affiliates of CLK including employees, volunteers and students shall respect and adhere to the following guidelines:

- To never be left alone with a group or individual participants before, during or after programs;
- To be at all times within earshot and visible distance of a staff member;
- To act as a positive role model for children, youth, volunteers, instructors, staff and co-workers;
- To never contact program participants outside of program hours;
- To work in a manner that preserves confidentiality and encourages risk management;
- To respect and value the diversity of communities and individuals;
- To respect and abide by the Christie Lake Kids Policy and Procedure;
- To provide consent for Christie Lake Kids to run (via the police) a criminal record check as well as the appropriate identification; and
- To return to a CLK staff a completed and current criminal record check (valid for one year) before attending any programs, events or other volunteering with CLK.

4.1 Conflict of Interest

Take care to avoid any real, potential or perceived conflict of interest with respect to your volunteer responsibilities. It is essential that you disclose any and all real or perceived conflict of interest to your direct Supervisor. Do not use the influence of your role for any purpose other than carrying out your volunteer position responsibilities. When involved in a decision or action which you may have a personal or professional interest in the outcome, disclose and describe the interest to your supervisor prior to any discussion or action on the issue.

4.2 Dress Code

While attending a volunteer shift with Christie Lake Kids, you become a direct representative of CLK. While volunteering, we expect you to dress respectfully and tastefully; CLK is a child and youth based agency working in high risk communities and/or a camp setting, so dress accordingly.

Do not wear:

- Sleeveless or strapless shirts;
- Revealing clothing (i.e. short skirts, short shorts, low-cut shirts);
- Clothing that promotes alcohol, drugs or other inappropriate messaging;
- Pajamas; or
- Stained or dirty clothing.

A volunteer should ALWAYS be wearing:

- The volunteer t-shirt provided by CLK;
- Jeans, cotton pants, yoga pants, or shorts (knee length or longer);
- A hoodie or sweater, if needed; and/or
- Appropriate foot wear (no sandals or open-toed shoes).

Inappropriate wardrobe choices are ground for dismissal from the volunteer team.

5.0 Confidentiality

CLK works with a vulnerable population, so protecting the information and safety of our participants is incredibly important. You will likely be privy to confidential information about our participants and their families, so it is vital that you understand and uphold our high standards of protecting their privacy. You must treat all information as confidential and refrain from discussing anything that you may hear and/or experience as a direct result of interactions with our participants. You will never use the names or any other identifying information when speaking about the children we serve, or their families, outside of CLK programming.

Upholding confidentiality extends during all program time, and also any time after you have finished volunteering with CLK (after your shift, or after your time with us). You may not approach participants and/or use their information without the knowledge or consent of CLK and the participant. When/if you see a CLK participant in a setting that is outside of our programs or not directly related to any CLK activities, it is up to the participant to acknowledge you and initiate contact. We do not allow gossip or sharing secrets between participants and the staff who interact with them regularly. Do not repeat or share someone's personal information or story, unless the young person is at

risk of harming someone or him/herself. If you suspect such, speak to the Program Supervisor immediately.

Contact with parents/caregivers is likely to occur while you are in program and/or in the neighbourhood. They may ask how their child behaved in programs or what skill we worked on. In general, you are free to answer their questions or direct them to your Program Supervisor or Primary Instructor, but remember to use discretion when talking about behaviour with parents; any specific behavioural challenges will be addressed by CLK staff exclusively. As well, you may not speak to a parent/ caregiver about a child unrelated to the family.

In general, information sharing is done by CLK staff only. It is rare that a volunteer would act as a representative of CLK and have to be in contact with another community group or agency on behalf of our participants. Attendance sheets, participant files and case notes are protected property and are not to be provided to *anyone* without the proper written documentation (subpoena, warrant, signed consent, legal documentation request). These documents will only be provided by a CLK staff member.