



- Know Agenda Foundation -

Public Service Management: Fiscal Sponsorship | Program Incubation | Grant & Donor Facilitation

Professional Conduct Between Adults and Youth Policy

Purpose

Know Agenda Foundation (KAF) prohibits and does not tolerate sexual abuse or misconduct in the workplace or during any organization-related activity. KAF provides procedures for staff, board members, consultants, fiscal sponsorship staff, volunteers and any other victims of sexual abuse or misconduct to report such acts. Those reasonably suspected or believed to have elicited inappropriate behavior towards a youth or child, or committed sexual abuse or misconduct, will be appropriately disciplined, up to and including termination of employment, as well as criminally prosecuted. No staff, board member, consultant, fiscal sponsorship staff, or volunteer, regardless of their title or position - has the authority to commit or allow sexual abuse or misconduct.

Definitions and Examples

Definitions of stated parties that could have direct, ongoing and consistent contact with youth or minors due to the specific organizational programming in which they are engaged, and definitions of youth and minor are set below:

- Staff, Contractors, Volunteers, Fiscal Sponsorship Staff – any individual (whether full time or part time) that is employed by Know Agenda Foundation, is a contractor with Know Agenda Foundation, is a volunteer for Know Agenda Foundation or for a Know Agenda Foundation Fiscal Sponsored Project, or any staff of a Know Agenda Foundation Fiscal Sponsored Project;
- Youth or Minor - individuals 17 years of age or younger

The following definitions or examples of sexual abuse, misconduct or harassment of youth and minors, may apply to any and/or all of the following persons – staff, contractors, fiscal sponsorship staff, and volunteers.

Unprofessional and inappropriate conduct between an adult and a youth or minor, sexual abuse of a minor, and/or misconduct may include, but is not limited to:

- Child Sexual Abuse – any sexual activity, involvement, or attempt of sexual contact with a person who is a minor (under 18 years old) where consent is not or cannot be given.
- Physical Assaults – including violence, rape, sexual battery, abuse, molestation or any attempt to commit such acts.
- Intentional Physical Conduct that is Sexual in Nature – examples include: touching, pinching, patting, brushing, massaging someone's neck or shoulders, and/or pulling against another's body or clothes.
- Display of Materials of a Pornographic or Sexually Explicit Nature - such as porn, sexually explicit images, posters, calendars, or objects.

- *Sexually Explicit Verbal and Behavioral Messaging* – including sexual activities, advances, comments, innuendoes, bullying, jokes, gestures, electronic communications or messages (e.g. email, text, social media, virtual, voicemail), exploitation, exposure, leering, stalking or invasion of sexual privacy.
- *Sexually Hostile Environment* - characterized as comments or conduct that unreasonably interferes with an individual’s work or volunteer performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, physically unsafe, emotionally unsafe, or offensive environment.
- *Direct or Implied Threats* – characterized that submission to sexual advances by an adult will be a condition of a youth’s or child’s participation with the organization or program, or meant to induce any benefit to the child or youth.

For violations related to harassment, please also refer to the *Harassment Prevention and Protection Policy* for additional guidance. For violations related to the elderly or dependent persons, please also refer to the *Elderly or Dependent Adult Reporting Policy* for additional guidance.

Criminal Background Check

Criminal background checks will be conducted for all potential staff, contractors, volunteers, and fiscal sponsorship staff when their primary aspect of their professional role or program will be to engage with youth and minors. Background checks will comply with applicable regulations governing programs; when Fiscal Sponsorship organizations programming is primarily to engage with youth and minors, Fiscal Sponsorships will incur the cost of the criminal background checks of staff and volunteers. Potential staff, contractors, volunteers and fiscal sponsorship staff will not be considered for positions when background checks demonstrate evidence of convictions for an offense involving children and/or for offenses involving violence, dishonesty, illegal substances, indecency and any conduct contrary to the mission of Know Agenda Foundation. Failure to disclose a criminal conviction on the application form may also terminate an individual’s application.

Supervision Management and Engagement with Youth

To provide a safe environment for youth, minors, and children, Know Agenda Foundation strives that a minimum of two adult workers supervise or be in attendance with youth minors during organization-related or fiscal sponsorship led activities. The purpose is to avoid one-on-one interactions between adults and minors that are not easily observable by others. If individual meetings with a minor must be held in an office, the office door must be kept open. Only conduct closed door meetings when another adult is put on notice of the meeting and the door remains unlocked.

Supervision:

It is understood that caring quality staff will develop positive relationships with youth and minors while engaged in Know Agenda Foundation or Know Agenda Foundation fiscal sponsorship programs. The following practices will be followed to ensure the protection of both youth and staff outside of KAF programs:

- Staff, contractors, volunteers, and fiscal sponsorship staff will not initiate contact with or accept supervisory responsibility for youth outside of KAF sponsored and fiscal sponsorship programs and activities, including baby-sitting or private instructions. Staff with prior or family relationships to youth may be relieved of this restriction with prior documented Executive approval;
- Staff, contractors, volunteers, and fiscal sponsorship staff will not communicate with youth outside of KAF sponsored programs or fiscal sponsorship programs via written, electronic or other means without express Executive approval;

- Staff, contractors, volunteers, and fiscal sponsorship staff will appear and behave in a manner consistent with the mission and values of Know Agenda Foundation at all times while on or off duty; including electronic, written and verbal communications.

Communications with Parents and Guardians of Youth and Minors:

Know Agenda Foundation promotes positive values and youth protection strategies in its programs, facilities, and with its fiscal sponsorships with parents and in the community.

- Parents will receive regular written information about the programs content and schedules; feedback regarding their child's participation in program including behavior and general health; and an introduction to the program staff;
- Parents will be allowed to observe programs at any time as appropriate;
- Parents and the community will be made aware of the of the youth protection efforts of Know Agenda Foundation and of the respective fiscal sponsorship through regular written and/or electronic communication including: the staff code of conduct, abuse prevention training for staff and youth, how to report suspicious behavior and that staff is not allowed to contact youth outside of programs;
- Both Know Agenda Foundation and fiscal sponsorships will designate a spokesperson to the media and community in the event of any incident concerning abuse or neglect.

**Investigating and Reporting to Law Enforcement or
Appropriate Child or Adult Protective Services**

Know Agenda Foundation will take all allegations of sexual abuse or misconduct seriously and will promptly, thoroughly, and equitably investigate whether misconduct has taken place. The organization may utilize an outside third party to conduct an investigation of misconduct. KAF will cooperate fully with any investigation conducted by law enforcement or other regulatory/protective services agencies. KAF will make every reasonable effort to keep the matters involved in the allegation as confidential as possible while still allowing for a prompt and thorough investigation.

Know Agenda Foundation is committed to following the state and federal legal requirements for reporting allegations or incidents of sexual abuse or misconduct to appropriate law enforcement and child or adult protective services organizations. It is the policy of Know Agenda Foundation not to attempt to investigate or assess the validity or credibility of an allegation of sexual or physical abuse as a condition before reporting the allegation to proper law enforcement authorities or protective services organizations.

In the instance of the reporting of inappropriate and unprofessional conduct between an adult and a youth, KAF will consult with legal counsel to determine state, federal, and other jurisdictional requirements to report suspicions or allegations of inappropriate and unprofessional conduct between adults and youths, or child or adult sexual physical abuse or neglect. The following resource from the United States Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) will be incorporated into any action advised by legal counsel:
www.childwelfare.gov

Anti-Retaliation and False Allegations

Know Agenda Foundation prohibits retaliation made against any staff member, contractor, board member, fiscal sponsorship staff member, or other person who lodges a good faith complaint of unprofessional or inappropriate conduct between an adult and a minor or sexual abuse who participates in any related investigation. Making knowingly false or malicious accusations of sexual abuse or misconduct can have serious consequences for those who are wrongly accused. KAF prohibits making false or malicious sexual misconduct allegations, 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 of employment or membership and criminal prosecution.

Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed and updated as needed by the Know Agenda Foundation Board of Directors or its designee on an annual basis.