

Staff and Volunteer Manual



Updated January 2021

COVID-19 Modifications for the 2020-2021 Camp Year

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic and the current uncertainty about the timing and scaled availability of a COVID-19 vaccine, AAUW National is requiring that all Tech Trek camps must be fully virtual in 2021. This means that all camp activities and events for Tech Trek camps held in 2021 must be held via conference software, and cannot include in-person, on-site activities or events. This is an unfortunate but necessary precaution to ensure the safety of campers and their families, our Tech Trek staff and volunteers, as well as the countless additional campus employees who assist with the camps each summer.

With virtual camps, some of the policies and procedures set forth below will not apply in the same way that they have in prior years. The policies and procedures below reflect these modifications for the 2020-2021 camp year.

I. Purpose

Ensuring the safety of AAUW National Tech Trek Program campers is the most important responsibility of camp staff. The best way to prevent abuse of campers is conducting thorough staff background checks that are performed before each camp, staff interviews and basic training. Both on and off-site staff and volunteers are responsible for ensuring the safety of Tech Trek campers.

The following set of policies endeavor to protect camp attendees as well as staff during the preparation and execution of all AAUW National Tech Trek Programs.

All volunteers must review and act in accordance with the “Tech Trek Policies and Procedures” and “Diversity and Inclusion” regulations and complete training in anti-bullying and sexual assault.

II. AAUW National Tech Trek Program Education and Training Requirements

Camp Directors

ACA compiled Virtual Safety and Privacy Resources at <https://www.acacamps.org/resource-library/coronavirus/virtual-program/safety-privacy-resources-other-organizations>.

Camp directors must ensure that camps are following best practices with virtual events.

Read this page from the American Camp Association about sexual abuse awareness and prevention: <https://www.acacamps.org/resource-library/articles/child-sexual-abuse-liability-issues-revisited>.

All 50 states require that professionals who work with children report reasonable suspicions of child abuse. Some states require that anyone with suspicions report it. Information about each state's requirements is available at the Child Welfare Information Gateway, www.childwelfare.gov. **It is mandatory that camp directors be aware of the requirements in their state.**

More resources:

- <http://www.acacamps.org/child-health-safety/child-abuse>

- <http://www.nsvrc.org/projects/child-sexual-assault-prevention/preventing-child-sexual-abuse-resources>
- <https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/preventing/prevention-programs/sexualabuse/>

Camp Staff

Sexual Abuse training

All Tech Trek staff (including camp directors) must verify that they have taken the following pre-approved sexual abuse awareness training before the first day of the camp at which they volunteer.

This is a five-step training from the award-winning nonprofit organization Darkness to Light, whose mission is to stop child sexual abuse. This basic training will give Tech Trek camp staff information about abuse, how to identify it and how to report it so it does not happen again.

<https://www.d2l.org/education/5-steps/>

Anti-bullying training

All Tech Trek staff (including camp directors) must verify that they have reviewed the anti-bullying toolkit on the American Camp Association website:

<https://www.acacamps.org/staff-professionals/core-competencies/youth-adult-growth-development/bully-prevention>

All camp staff and volunteers must sign the conduct agreement form indicating that they have completed these trainings.

III. Monitoring and Supervision

1. Tech Trek staff over the age of 21 must be in every virtual session, including each breakout room.
2. Tech Trek staff and volunteers are prohibited from being alone (1:1) with a camper in any virtual session, including breakout rooms.

IV. AAUW National Tech Trek Program Code of Conduct for the Protection of Tech Trek Campers and Applicants

The following guidelines are intended to assist Tech Trek staff and volunteers in monitoring and supervising behaviors and interactions with campers to identify and stop those that may be inherently harmful, that are the type used by child molesters to groom children, youth and their parents, or that may create the conditions where abuse can occur more easily. They are not designed or intended to address interactions within families. When exceptions to these guidelines must be made, they should be reported to the Tech Trek camp director as soon as possible.

1. All Tech Trek staff and volunteers must agree to comply with the AAUW National Tech Trek Program Guidelines for Appropriate Affection (see below).

2. Tech Trek staff and volunteers are prohibited from the use, possession, distribution, or being under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, or the misuse of legal drugs while participating in or assisting with Tech Trek.
3. Tech Trek staff and volunteers will respond to campers and each other with respect, consideration and equal treatment, regardless of sex, race, religion, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, gender identification, culture or socio-economic status, or any other category prohibited by applicable federal, state and/or local law.
4. Tech Trek staff and volunteers will portray a positive role model for campers by maintaining an attitude of respect, patience, and maturity.
5. Tech Trek staff and volunteers will avoid even the appearance of favoritism toward campers or applicants.
6. Tech Trek staff and volunteers are prohibited from dating or becoming romantically involved with campers or applicants.
7. Tech Trek staff and volunteers are prohibited from having sexual contact with campers, applicants or each other.
8. Tech Trek staff and volunteers are prohibited from possessing or displaying any sexually oriented materials (magazines, cards, videos, films, clothing etc.) while on camera during any virtual session.
9. Tech Trek staff and volunteers are prohibited from discussing their own sexual activities, including dreams and fantasies, or discussing their use of sexually oriented or explicit materials such as pornography, videos or materials on or from the Internet, with campers, applicants or other staff.
10. Tech Trek staff are prohibited from using harsh language or degrading punishment for behavior management.
11. Tech Trek staff are prohibited from participating in or allowing others to conduct any bullying or hazing activities related to Tech Trek.

V. AAUW National Tech Trek Program Guidelines for Appropriate Affection

AAUW is committed to creating and promoting a positive, nurturing environment that protect campers from abuse, and Tech Trek staff from misunderstandings. When creating safe boundaries for campers, it is important to establish what types of affection are appropriate and inappropriate, otherwise that decision is left to each individual. Stating which behaviors are appropriate and inappropriate allows Tech Trek staff to feel comfortable showing positive affection, and yet identify individuals who are not maintaining safe boundaries. These guidelines are based, in large part, on avoiding behaviors known to be used by child molesters to groom children and their parents for future abuse. The following guidelines are to be carefully followed by all Tech Trek staff and volunteers.

1. Affection and positive reinforcement are part of Tech Trek. There are many ways to demonstrate affection while maintaining positive and safe boundaries with children.

Some positive and appropriate forms of affection in a virtual environment involve verbal praise.

2. The following forms of affection are considered inappropriate:

- Comments or compliments (spoken, written, or electronic) that relate to physique or body development; (Examples: "You sure are developing," or "You look really hot in those jeans.")
- Giving gifts or money to individual children;

VI. Types of Abuse

There are many types of child abuse, but the following are some of the most common: (From the U.S. Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families)

1. Physical abuse is non-accidental injury, which is intentionally inflicted upon a child.
2. Sexual abuse perpetrated by an adult is any contact or activity of a sexual nature that occurs between a child and an adult. This includes any activity, which is meant to arouse or gratify the sexual desires of the adult or child.
3. Sexual abuse perpetrated by another child is any contact or activity of a sexual nature that occurs between a child and another child when there is no consent, when consent is not possible, or when one child has power over the other child. This includes any activity that is meant to arouse or gratify the sexual desires of any children attending the camp.
4. Emotional abuse is mental or emotional injury to a child that results in an observable and material impairment in the child's growth, development or psychological functioning.
5. Neglect is the failure to provide for the basic needs of a child or the failure to protect a child from harm.

Economic exploitation is the deliberate misplacement, exploitation, or wrongful temporary or permanent use of belongings or money of a child.

VII. Reporting Inappropriate Behaviors, Policy Violations or Abuse of Campers or Applicants

1. When Tech Trek staff or volunteers observe any inappropriate behaviors, behaviors that are inconsistent with the AAUW National Tech Trek Guidelines for Appropriate Affection, abuse, or other behaviors which may violate any provision of these policies for protection of Tech Trek campers or applicants, they must immediately report their observations to the Tech Trek camp director or national AAUW staff and where appropriate or required by law, to local law enforcement.

Examples of inappropriate behaviors or policy violations include seeking private time, swearing or making suggestive comments, and the other inappropriate forms of affection listed above.

2. Such inappropriate behaviors, possible policy violations or abuse should be reported in one of the following ways:
 - a. A telephone call or meeting with the camp director

- b. A telephone call or meeting with AAUW national staff (Lesley Perry, perry1@aauw.org or 202.785.7613)
 - c. Submit a Notice of Concern (located in SharePoint), signed or unsigned, to the camp director or national staff.
3. All reports of inappropriate behavior, policy violations, or abuse will be taken seriously.
4. Where appropriate or required by law, the camp director will notify local law enforcement. AAUW and Tech Trek staff will cooperate with any investigation by local law enforcement to the fullest extent.

VIII. Camp Rules

The below rules apply to campers, staff and volunteers as appropriate.

1. Use of tobacco, alcohol, or illegal substances will not be tolerated.
2. Possession of firearms or other weapons will not be tolerated.
3. Observe the camp schedule, including meal times and other activities.
- 4.
5. Cooperate with teachers and group leaders at all times.
6. Participate in all classes and activities.
7. Be polite and respectful to everyone.
8. Use cell phones and computers for camp activities only.

Privacy

Personnel should take every precaution to protect campers from inappropriate or unpermitted use of their name, personal information or photographic image in social media.

Photographs or videos may be taken during Tech Trek educational or recreational activities. This may be done as a group or individual photo during camp or as part of a media story and may appear on a Tech Trek website or Facebook page, news stories or reports on the camp. No camper will ever be identified by her full name.

Dress Code

Campers represent their families, their schools and their communities while at Tech Trek. Middle school dress codes are a good rule of thumb. If a girl is wearing any of the below she should be asked to change into something more appropriate.

Not allowed:

- Bare midriffs or sheer tops
- Clothing with profanity or offensive slogans or messages
- Alteration of the official Tech Trek T-shirt

Strategies for Camper Communication

Staff should work to ameliorate and improve camper behavior if it is a minor infraction through a basic reminder of the rules. The next step after that might be something similar to revoking the privilege to attend a non-class activity.

Camper behavior that will not be tolerated:

- Behavior that is unsafe to themselves or others
- Camper repeatedly violates the camp rules
- Camper presents difficulties beyond the scope of camp staff
- Camper participates in bullying, verbally or physically abusing others

If the above behavior is exhibited, the best practice is a “three strikes you’re out” rule.

- Strike one: Camper is given a verbal warning
- Strike two: Camper’s parents are called
- Strike three: Camper will not be permitted in the virtual event.

Any final discipline decision is at the discretion of the Camp Director(s), up to, and including, removal from camp.

Behavioral issues are to be tracked, recorded and stored by camp personnel.

ACA resources:

<https://www.acacamps.org/resource-library/camping-magazine/under-influence-respect-responsibility-conduct-camp-counselors>

<https://www.acacamps.org/news-publications/blogs/counselors-corner/how-handle-difficult-camper-behavior>