



Welcome to Georgia Career and Technical Instruction!

At Georgia CTI our first priority in anything we do is the safety, health and wellbeing of our students and adults. With this in mind, we have developed the following handbook as an educational tool to facilitate a safe and healthy environment by protecting all affiliated with Georgia CTI CTSO programming and allow the mission of Georgia CTI to carry on.

This handbook is designed to mitigate the opportunity for sexual or physical abuse and strengthen your understanding of prevention and reporting requirements. These policies have been adopted by Georgia CTI Board of Directors in advisement by our insurance company and will be strictly enforced.

For this document, the following definitions and titles will be used:

- School staff: Those employed by a school system and engaged in Georgia CTI CTSO activities as a school system employee. School staff are required to follow all school system policies and procedures, as well as those of Georgia CTI. If there are any conflicting policies, the CTI Adviser will discuss those with the CTI Executive Director prior to an event. The school system staff may serve in the role of CTI Advisers or Chaperone.
- Volunteers: Those recruited by Georgia CTI and acting as a volunteer. This role does not chaperone students, but may serve as a judge, speaker, or CTI event assistant.
- CTI Staff: Employees or Contractors of Georgia CTI providing a specific function for the organization and/or activity.
- Students: Current students who are participating in Georgia CTI CTSO programming.

We ask that you carefully read this policy manual. Upon completion, please sign and return the acknowledgement located on the last page and keep a copy for your reference. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Sincerely,

Georgia CTI Board of Directors

SECTION 1: ABUSE PREVENTION AND REPORTING POLICIES

SAFETY ASSURANCE PROCESS

Screening is the careful gathering and review of specific information and is one of the best ways to prevent sexual or physical abuse. As part of our dedication to ensuring a safe environment, all affiliated persons with Georgia CTI CTSO programming are required to complete the following screening before assuming responsibilities on behalf of Georgia CTI. This applies to any adult working with minors on a supervisory basis.

Documentation & Interview

School Staff: School staff must be employees of a school system that ensures they have completed a criminal background investigation. School staff must be in good standing with their school system at the time of an activity. They must also report any arrest to the school after the background investigation has occurred. School staff will read and acknowledge the following policies and procedures:

- Abuse Prevention and Reporting Policies
- Adult Behavior Agreement.
- Complete the Georgia CTI Risk Management online training. <https://tinyurl.com/CTIrisk>

Volunteers: Volunteers with Georgia CTI CTSO programming will read and acknowledge the following policies and procedures.

- Georgia CTI CTSO Volunteer Agreement.

CTI Staff: Prior to working, CTI Staff will read and acknowledge the following policies and procedures:

- Complete a face-to-face, virtual or telephone interview.
- Pass a criminal background investigation. Depending upon position, differing levels or intensity of criminal background check may be required.
- Abuse Prevention and Reporting Policies
- Adult Behavior Agreement.

Sexual Abuse Awareness Training

Georgia CTI policies and procedures encourage all school staff and CTI staff participate in Abuse Prevention & Reporting Training. This may be directly through Georgia CTI or through another entity. This training provides a basic understanding of the characteristics of sexual abusers, signs a child has been or is being abused and what it means to be a mandatory reporter. This training may also include information on “grooming” behaviors. *Child grooming is the process abusers use to befriend and establish a social and emotional connection with a child, or the child’s family, to lower the child’s inhibitions and build trust with the objective of sexual abuse. This may take place online or in person and can be a stranger or someone the child already knows. Grooming happens in six stages: targeting, gaining trust, filling a need, isolation, sexual contact and maintaining the relationship.*

ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY

It is the obligation and responsibility of every Georgia CTI staff member, school staff, and volunteer to act in the best interest of members and Georgia CTI. In order to ensure this, Georgia CTI has a ZERO TOLERANCE policy regarding any suspected, alleged or proven acts of sexual misconduct or other harm to the safety and well-being of all members and other Georgia CTI stakeholders.

All school staff, CTI staff, or volunteer are required to report any suspected “grooming” behaviors, policy violations or other suspicious behaviors to an immediate supervisor, Georgia CTI Executive Director, a member of the Georgia CTI Safety Committee/Crisis Management Team or local authorities. Suspected abuse (physical, sexual or emotional) of a minor outside of the Georgia CTI activity must also be reported immediately following the reporting procedures.

ENFORCEMENT OF POLICIES

Georgia CTI staff members, school staff, and volunteers who supervise other staff or volunteers are charged with the diligent enforcement of all Georgia CTI policies. Violations of these policies are grounds for immediate dismissal or other disciplinary action, for all staff and volunteers.

CONSEQUENCES OF PROHIBITED OR HARMFUL ACT

Any person accused of committing a prohibited act, or any act considered to be harmful to a child, will be immediately placed on leave and prohibited from participating with Georgia CTI. This suspension will continue through any investigation by law enforcement or other agencies.

Any person found to have committed an illicit act or convicted of any crime will be prohibited from any future participation in all Georgia CTI activities, events, administration or subsidiaries. Such conduct of any paid staff member, employee or independent contractor will result in the immediate termination of employment from Georgia CTI.

Failure to report a prohibited act to one of the individuals identified above is also in violation of this policy and will be considered grounds for termination of a staff member or dismissal of a volunteer.

REPORTING PROCEDURES

In order to best protect members and maintain the safest environment for Georgia CTI, always report all suspicions or allegations of abuse.

REPORTING SUSPICIOUS OR INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIORS WHILE PARTICIPATING IN GEORGIA CTI ACTIVITY/EVENT

When the necessity of reporting occurs, the protection of members must take priority. All incidents should be reported immediately to the Georgia CTI Executive Director and an incident report will be filed and retained for reference. All questions or concerns related to inappropriate, suspicious, or suspected grooming behavior should also be directed to Georgia CTI staff or a member of the Georgia CTI Safety Committee/Crisis Management Team.

Any report of suspicious behaviors or allegations of abuse will be taken seriously by management and will be reported in adherence with state law to the Georgia CTI Safety Committee/Crisis Management Team, the Police Department, Child Protective Services, or other appropriate agency.

REPORTING SUSPICIONS OF ABUSE TO GEORGIA CTI

School Staff members, CTI Staff, and volunteers are required to verbally report an incident to a supervisory staff member as soon as possible after the alleged incident. After receiving a report from a staff member or volunteer, the supervisor/administrator will notify the Georgia CTI Executive Director as soon as possible. The school staff member may also report directly to the Georgia CTI Executive Director.

As appropriate, Georgia CTI Executive Director or a member of the Georgia CTI Safety Committee/Crisis Management Team will assist the staff member who was involved, informed, or witnessed in reporting to the local or Georgia authorities, Department of Human Services, and the school system.

In no way does any provision in this policy discourage any staff member or volunteer from reporting a suspicion of abuse or neglect directly to the appropriate local or Georgia authorities.

REPORTING SUSPICIONS OF ABUSE TO LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

Georgia law requires that any person having cause to believe that 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 an appropriate law enforcement agency. Mandatory Reporters must also report suspected neglect or abuse to the Georgia Department of Human Services by calling 1-855-GACHILD (422-4453).

While in an informal learning environment, youth may allege abuse that occurs elsewhere and not at the Georgia CTI event. This suspected abuse must also be reported to law enforcement and the Georgia Department of Human Services. A report should be made to the local school system following school system protocol.

STATE SPECIFIC MANDATORY REPORTING LAW

Professionals Required to Report Citation: Ann. Code §§ 19-7-5; 16-12-100

The following persons are required to report:

- Physicians, physician assistants, residents, interns, hospital and medical personnel, podiatrists, dentists, or nurses
- Teachers, school administrators, school counselors, visiting teachers, school social workers, or school psychologists
- Psychologists, counselors, social workers, or marriage and family therapists
- Child welfare agency personnel (as that agency is defined by § 49-5-12) or child-counseling personnel
- Child service organization personnel (includes any organization--whether public, private, for-profit, not-for-profit, or voluntary--that provides care, treatment, education, training, supervision, coaching, counseling, recreational programs, or shelter to children)
- Law enforcement personnel
- Reproductive health-care facility or pregnancy resource center personnel and volunteers
- Persons who process or produce visual or printed matter

The term 'school' means any public or private prekindergarten, elementary school, secondary school, technical school, vocational school, college, university, or institution of postsecondary education.

Reporting by Other Persons

Citation: Ann. Code § 19-7-5

Any other person who has reasonable cause to believe that a child has been abused may report.

Institutional Responsibility to Report

Citation: Ann. Code § 19-7-5

If a person is required to report child abuse because that person attends to a child as part of the person's duties as an employee of or volunteer at a hospital, school, social agency, or similar facility, that person shall notify the person in charge of the facility, or the designated delegate thereof, the person so notified shall report or cause a report to be made in accordance with this section. An employee or volunteer who makes a report to the person designated shall be deemed to have fully complied with this subsection. Under no circumstances shall any person in charge of such hospital, school, agency, or facility--or the designated delegate thereof--to whom such notification has been made exercise any control, restraint, or

modification--or make other changes to--the information provided by the reporter, although each of the aforementioned persons may be consulted prior to the making of a report and may provide any additional, relevant, and necessary information when making the report.

Standards for Making a Report

Citation: Ann. Code §§ 19-7-5; 16-12-100

A report is required when either of the following apply:

- A reporter has reasonable cause to believe that child abuse has occurred.
- A person who processes or produces visual or printed matter has reasonable cause to believe that the visual or printed matter submitted for processing or producing depicts a minor engaged in sexually explicit conduct.

Privileged Communications

Citation: Ann. Code § 19-7-5(g)

A mandated reporter must report regardless of whether the reasonable cause to believe that abuse has occurred or is occurring is based in whole or in part upon any communication to that person that is otherwise made privileged or confidential by law. However, a member of the clergy shall not be required to report child abuse reported solely within the context of confession or other similar communication required to be kept confidential under church doctrine or practice. When a clergy member receives information about child abuse from any other source, the clergy member shall comply with the reporting requirements of this section, even though the clergy member may have also received a report of child abuse from the confession of the perpetrator.

Inclusion of Reporter's Name in Report

Not addressed in statutes reviewed.

Disclosure of Reporter Identity

Citation: Ann. Code § 49-5-41

Any release of records shall protect the identity of any person reporting child abuse.

Administrators should periodically check state reporting requirements for modification of reporting requirements.

PROTOCOL FOR VICTIM RESPONSE

The protection of members is always the priority of Georgia CTI. This is especially true if their safety and well-being may have been compromised. After an incident has been reported, Georgia CTI will cooperate with any investigations and facilitate the assistance of any alleged victims, in partnership with local and state authorities, school districts, etc.

IMPORTANT REMINDERS:

- Reports are based on suspicions and observations in good faith. The adult's role is to listen, and then stick to the facts that they observed or were told when they report.
- Adults are not investigators. It is your role to attempt to collect proof or ask questions before reporting. Do not ask probing or leading questions.
- When reporting, have on hand the student's information, age, specific information about what the child disclosed, the child's current location, and any other pertinent information.
- By reporting, adults are not necessarily making an accusation; they are merely reporting facts for trained professionals to evaluate and investigate further.
- By respecting the student's need for confidentiality, adults will only involve those who need to know. They will report to the authorities and their supervisors based on Georgia law and policies.

GUIDELINES FOR INTERACTION

Interaction and engagement with members is a key element of Georgia CTI's mission. Appropriate and welcome interactions are necessary for the development and maintenance of a safe environment.

GUIDELINES FOR PHYSICAL TOUCH

All staff members and volunteers should exercise good judgment when using physical touch as a means of communication.

1. Short, congratulatory or greeting hugs.
2. Arm around the shoulder, "side hug".
3. A brief, assuring pat on or shoulder.
4. High fives, fist bumps or handshakes.
5. A few NEVERS:
 - a. Never touch kids in anger or disgust.
 - b. Never touch kids in any sexually connotative manner.
 - c. No staff member will ever (day or night) be on or in a child's bed.
 - d. Never touch a child's private parts.
 - e. Never tickle a child.
 - f. Never ignore a request not to be touched.
 - g. Never express or require physical affection or touching in any form.

If a question ever arises, consult a member of the Safety Committee/Crisis Management Team or the Georgia CTI Executive Director.

SECTION 2: MEMBER SUPERVISION GUIDELINES

Whenever possible, a team approach should be used for interacting with and supervising members. Georgia CTI staff members, school staff, and volunteers are prohibited from being alone with an individual member, unless unavoidable. If one-on-one situations arise or are necessary, they should be conducted in an easily observable space with knowledge of another adult. If any two members are together in a hidden or obscured area, they should be redirected to an easily observable space whenever possible. All doors must remain open if possible and always unlocked during one-on-one interactions.

Georgia CTI is committed to providing adequate supervision for all activities, events and programs. Accordingly, a ratio of one school staff member for every ten members is required for all Georgia CTI activities. A school staff member of the same gender must be available for students. If a male adult is traveling with or otherwise supervising female members, it is recommended that he partner with a female adult. Likewise, if a female adult is traveling with or otherwise supervising male students, she should partner with a male adult. If at any time a supervised group is out of compliance, it is the responsibility of the school staff member to ensure their school system is aware of and approved the arrangement.

All leaders working with students through Georgia CTI are required to complete the annual Risk Management video training and test prior to attending state activities. <https://tinyurl.com/CTIrisk>

These ratios and guidelines will be implemented whenever reasonably possible and may change according to the activity.

COMMUNICATION POLICY

The Georgia CTI safety standards established to protect and ensure healthy relationships during Georgia CTI should be followed at all times when interacting with a current or former member, including activities, communication and contact occurring outside of Georgia CTI. These policies apply to all current and former school staff, CTI staff, or volunteers and their interactions with current or former members.

GUIDELINES FOR COMMUNICATION WITHIN GEORGIA CTI

1. Parents of all members must approve or have access to all interactions with students, including but not limited to: email, social network interactions, phone calls and personal visits. Another adult should be copied on all interaction with students.
2. Any online communications, friend-requests, or other contact through social networking sites, should be done in public or group settings. Private or one-on-one chats, friend groups, etc. are prohibited.
3. Dating relationships of any kind between school staff members, advisors or volunteers and a current or former member are strictly prohibited.
4. All school system policies must be followed in regard to communication and relationships with students and families.

Section 3: Adult Forms:

Annually adults participating are required to complete forms for Georgia CTI in addition to any school forms required. All forms are in this document with one acknowledgement to be signed and returned. The online Risk Management Training has a required test to be completed, and the results are recorded automatically. There is not a form to complete. <https://tinyurl.com/CTIrisk> The forms to be signed below are:

1. Abuse Prevention and Reporting Policies – This document acknowledges that adults have read, understand and agree to the reporting policies included.
2. Adult Behavior Agreement – This document outlines expected behavior for all adults working with youth at Georgia CTI programs.

ADULTS - PLEASE SIGN THE LAST PAGE ACKNOWLEDGING AND AGREEING TO THE FOLLOWING POLICES

Abuse Prevention and Reporting Policies Acknowledgement

I have received and read a copy of Georgia CTI's Abuse Prevention and Reporting Policies. I understand the responsibility I am taking on and the seriousness of the topics discussed within the manual. I agree to follow and abide by these guidelines as part of my service at Georgia CTI.

I understand that this manual may be modified at any time. Guidelines may be amended, revised or eliminated at the discretion of Georgia CTI. I understand that it is my responsibility to review this manual periodically or when an update has been distributed.

I further acknowledge and understand that the materials and guidelines contained in this handbook in no way express or imply a contractual employment relationship between myself and Georgia CTI. If I am acting as a volunteer, I acknowledge and agree that I will receive no compensation for hours that I work. I understand that my service or employment is voluntary and Georgia CTI or myself may choose to end this relationship at any time.

I hereby acknowledge my understanding and acceptance of Georgia CTI Abuse Prevention and Reporting Policies.

ADULT BEHAVIOR AGREEMENT FOR GEORGIA STATE CTI ACTIVITIES

As an adult leader for students from the participating school, I agree to adhere to the guidelines listed for myself and students. I am aware that I am responsible for the students that I bring to state CTI Activities but also serve as an adult leader for all students at the activity. Therefore, I agree to:

- Always being aware of my student's whereabouts while at the activity, and students are aware of my whereabouts if I am not with them. Students need to be knowledgeable of their adult leader's name that they are responsible to and how to contact them at all times. If I am called away from my students for any reason, including leaving the premises, I must have an adult leader identified to fill my role. My local administration will be aware of my whereabouts at all times.
- Checking to see if my students are in their assigned rooms at curfew. This includes calling

roll for all students that I am an adult leader for in a facility where multiple schools are housed together.

- Sitting with my students during all General Sessions and make sure they are on their best behavior.
- Making sure my contestants (for competition events) have the necessary materials, and they are in their assigned contest areas on time.
- Fulfilling all of my assigned duties, including any committees of which I am a member.
- Making sure that my students as well as myself adhere to the dress code at all times, and school appropriate clothes are worn at all times.

In addition to school staff policies, all adults are expected to:

- Work cooperatively with others in a courteous, respectful manner demonstrating behaviors appropriate for a positive role model.
- Represent their schools and Georgia CTI with pride and dignity, behave appropriately, exhibit good sportsmanship, and demonstrate reasonable conflict management skills.
- Respect, adhere, and enforce the Georgia CTI Code of Conduct as well as other rules, policies and guidelines including state laws and regulations.
- Respect the privacy of all individuals in situations such as toileting, showering and changing clothes. When it is necessary to supervise minors, at least two leaders should be present and only to the extent that the health and/or safety requires.
- Do not touch minors in a manner that a reasonable person could interpret as inappropriate. Always avoid touching areas that are normally covered by swimsuits. When hugging is appropriate, hug from the side over the shoulders, not from the front.
- Recognize that physical punishment is not an appropriate form of discipline and will not be allowed. Physical punishment includes physical actions that may not be expected of an individual during the program and are assigned to a young person as a consequence for misbehavior.
- Recognize that verbal abuse, physical abuse, or committing criminal acts may be grounds for reporting to local school administration. Abusive behavior towards youth or other adults including failure to provide adequate health and safety measures, inadequate care or supervision, emotional mistreatment of members, or verbal or physical abuse will not be tolerated.
- Under Georgia law, report any mistreatment of youth to the proper authorities. All adult leaders are considered mandatory reporters for purposes of the Policy and must report incidents involving sexual or physical abuse or neglect of a minor immediately.
- Comply with equal opportunity and anti-discrimination laws and policies.
- Treat animals humanely and encourage youth and adults to provide appropriate and ethical care.
- Strive for a minimum of two adults at any activity involving youth. Adults, in most cases, should not be left alone with a single child unless the adult is the parent/guardian of that child.
- To be housed in overnight settings in separate sleeping areas from children when possible. When this is not possible, parent/guardians should be furnished a letter explaining the situation and informing the parent/guardian that his/her child will be housed with an adult in the same room.
- Substance Use Prohibited - Do not use, possess or be under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, or any prescription medication that impairs your ability to perform your duties during the activity.
 - Do not condone others' use of alcohol or illegal drugs during the activity.
 - Smoking and tobacco use is prohibited in front of youth and at many facilities.
 - Operate machinery, vehicles, and other equipment in a safe and responsible manner.
- Recognize the following behaviors are inappropriate and will not be tolerated for the

duration of the student conference:

- o consumption of alcohol, illegal drugs, and controlled substances
- o theft, pilfering, or fraud
- o use of tobacco products and e-cigarettes
- o sexual advances or activities involving youth
- o willful damaging of property
- o permitting passengers to ride in motor vehicles without seatbelts
- o permitting youth or adults to ride in the back of trucks
- o behaviors that are illegal under law.

Any violation of the Adult Behavior Agreement will be reported to the local district administration. For any violation that is illegal in the state of Georgia, law enforcement will be notified.

Adults agree:

- To release the CTI, its representatives, agents, servants and employees from liability for any injury to above named person at any time while attending the CTI Activity, including travel to and from the conference, excepting only such injury or damage resulting from willful acts of such representatives, agents, servants, and employees.
- Voluntarily authorize the CTI Advisers, Executive Director, assistants and/or designees to administer and/or obtain routine or emergency medical treatment for the above-named person as deemed necessary in medical judgment.
- To indemnify and hold harmless the CTI Advisers and/or assistants and designees for any and all claims, demands, actions, rights of action, or judgments by or on behalf of the above-named person arising from or on account of said procedures or treatment rendered in good faith and according to accepted medical standards.
- Authorize any physician member of the Department of Emergency Medicine of an accredited hospital or any member of the medical staff of an accredited hospital to render medical treatment, which in his/her judgment is deemed necessary in the care of the above-named person (child or student) while attending the CTI Activity, including time traveling to and from the conference.
- Permit CTI to use video footage and photographs of my child for publicity that might include but is not limited to: website, social media, PowerPoint presentations, promotional videos, flyers or news publications.

My signature below indicates that I am accepting the role as the adult leader and verifies that I will abide by the terms of the agreement.

**SIGNATURE and ACKNOWLEDGEMENT PAGE: TO BE RETURNED TO
CTI ADVISERS ONCE A FISCAL YEAR (July 1-June 30)**

My signature below indicates that I agree to the Georgia CTI policies as presented to me in this document.

- Abuse Prevention and Reporting Procedures
- Adult Behavior Guidelines

Georgia CTI Chaperone's Printed Name

Georgia CTI Chaperone's Signature

Date _____