

SOP Name/Title:	Child Safeguarding Standard Operating Procedure
Document Location:	Z Drive/Operations/SOP Manual
SOP Originator:	Nashville After Zone Alliance
SOP Reviewer:	Metro Legal
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SOP Addendum # and Date:	

Purpose:	The purpose of this Child Safeguarding SOP is to outline the responsibilities, protocols, and procedures for preventing, identifying, and responding to instances of child abuse, neglect, or harm within the programs funded or supported by the Nashville After Zone Alliance (NAZA) as well as to prevent any behaviors by adults that may lead to a notion of unsafety. This SOP ensures compliance with legal standards, promotes best practices, and fosters a safe and supportive environment for children and youth participating in NAZA-related activities.
Scope:	This SOP applies to all employees, volunteers, contractors, and representatives of NAZA and its partner organizations who work directly or indirectly with children and youth under the age of 18 in NAZA-funded or supported programs.
Definitions:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Child/Youth: Any person under the age of 18. 2. Child Abuse: Any form of physical, emotional, or sexual mistreatment or lack of care that causes harm to a child or youth. 3. Safeguarding: Actions, policies, and practices designed to protect children from harm, including abuse, exploitation, and neglect. 4. Personal Vehicle Use Prohibition: Prohibition against transporting children in personal vehicles unless specifically authorized under defined conditions. 5. One-on-One Interactions: Any interaction where a child or youth is alone with an adult without the presence of others.
Policy Statements:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Commitment to Child Safety and Well-Being: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ NAZA and its partners have a zero-tolerance policy for any form of child abuse, neglect, or exploitation. ○ The safety and well-being of children and youth are paramount and must be prioritized in all decision-making and activities. 2. Staff and Volunteer Screening and Training: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ All staff, volunteers, and contractors must undergo background checks, including criminal record checks and child abuse registry checks, before engaging in any program activities. For activities conducted in Metro Nashville School buildings, compliance with MNPS background check requirements is mandatory.

- a) For all NAZA-funded, affiliated and enhancement partners, it is the responsibility of the program leaders to verify that staff and volunteers working with youth are background checked.
 - b) NAZA staffer recommending an enhancement partner will inform the partner about a requirement to have all staff background checked before they come in contact with youth.
 - c) NAZA-funded site coordinators or program directors must verify that an incoming enhancement partner is background checked.
 - d) For contractors directly hired by NAZA, NAZA team will ensure that they are background checked and sign the child safeguarding policy.
- Mandatory training on child safeguarding, recognizing signs of abuse, and appropriate boundaries must be completed by all staff volunteers before engaging in activities involving children and youth. All NAZA-funded partners are required to take Mandatory Reporting Training offered by MNPS and are strongly recommended to take Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) training offered through NAZA.

3. Code of Conduct:

- Staff, volunteers, and contractors must adhere to the highest standards of professional conduct, treating all children and youth with respect and dignity.
- Personal relationships with children and youth that extend beyond the professional context are strictly prohibited.
- One-on-one interactions must take place in open, observable spaces or in the presence of another adult.

4. Prohibited Activities:

- Driving Children in Personal Vehicles: Staff, volunteers, and contractors are strictly prohibited from transporting children and youth in personal vehicles except when the student is their own child/youth and when the staff member is listed on youth's program application as an authorized pick-up person.
- Personal Communications: Personal communication (e.g., text messaging, social media, or phone calls) between staff/volunteers and children/youth outside of program-related purposes is prohibited. All communications should be documented and transparent and agreed upon by parents/guardians.

5. Reporting and Responding to Concerns:

- All staff, volunteers, and contractors must immediately report any suspected or actual child abuse, neglect, or policy violations to their supervisor or the designated safeguarding officer. Staff should follow their organizational policies of reporting to police and DCS based on the established chain of command. If the program is operating in the school building, they must additionally follow the MNPS mandatory reporting procedure.
- The organizations will follow their internal procedures and MNPS procedures where applicable to document the incident details.
- NAZA partners should follow the reporting mechanism for child safeguarding concerns established by MNPS.

Responsibilities:

1. NAZA Leadership:

- Oversee the implementation of this SOP.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure adequate resources and support for effective safeguarding measures ○ Review and update this SOP annually or as needed. <p>2. NAZA Operations Manager:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Serve as the point of contact for all child safeguarding concerns. ○ Ensure all staff and volunteers are trained and adhere to safeguarding policies and background check requirements. <p>3. Partner Organizations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Maintain their own child safeguarding policies that align with NAZA's standards. ○ Provide regular training to staff and volunteers on child safeguarding and reporting procedures. <p>4. All Staff, Volunteers, and Contractors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Adhere to the Code of Conduct and all safeguarding policies.
Policy Review and Update:	This SOP will be reviewed annually and updated as necessary to ensure it reflects best practices and legal requirements.