VOLUNTEER CODE OF CONDUCT

Diversion referrals, which come from the States Attorney’s Office, vary greatly from case to case. Given this, mandating rules governing the appropriateness of every potential action to be performed by volunteers is very difficult. The following fundamental ethical principles, however, should always guide the volunteer in the performance of their responsibilities. As a further guide, examples of specific volunteer behaviors/situations follow most of these principles.

Volunteers should always seek advice from the Program Coordinator if questions arise concerning these guidelines, accompanying examples, and/or the ethical appropriateness of any action.

- RESPECT, FAIRNESS, COURTESY
  Volunteers should treat all individuals attending a Board hearing with respect, courtesy, fairness, and good faith without discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, color, creed, religion, national origin, cultural heritage, sex, age, sexual orientation, gender identification, social economic status, education or disability.

  For example: Volunteers should recognize that all parties involved in Diversion are involved in a stressful situation. The volunteer should strive to not exacerbate the situation (it’s not an interrogation) during the interview.

  Volunteers (should always strive for objectivity) should withhold judgement about the youth/parents until after the interview. It is the role of the volunteer to participate in interviewing the youth/parents, to discuss the case with other Board members, and only then to join other Board members in forming an opinion.

  Volunteers should not make derogatory comments (such as “What a liar”). either to and/or about the youth/parents at any time. Walls are thin!

  Volunteers should remain calm and objective even if the youth/parents become emotional.

  Volunteers should demonstrate sensitivity in language, including the use of off-handed comments (such as, “I know what kind of boys baby-sit”; “We know what teenage girls are like”, etc....which is not appropriate),

  Volunteers should not use examples while speaking during the Diversion hearing that use racial, ethnic, religious, or gender stereotypes, or that label a person by association with a specific group of people (such as: "You go to church, you must be a good person. Why did you do this?"). Instead describe the specific behaviors or situations, as brought up by the youth (such as: "You’ve told us a lot about church and how important it is to you, what would they say if they knew about this?").
• ROLE RESPONSIBILITIES
Volunteers should perform their responsibilities in accordance with training and consultation provided by the Program Coordinator.

For example: Volunteers should **never give legal advice**. Volunteers shall **not** provide counseling or direct services to youth or their families (such as attempting an intervention with an alcoholic youth or making a phone call to a shelter for an apparently homeless youth). However, the volunteer may recommend resources to the youth/parents if the referral does not present a conflict of interest for the volunteer. See: "CONFLICT OF INTEREST".

Volunteers shall **never** promise a youth or their parents that a certain outcome will occur if the youth's case is referred back to the States Attorney's Office.

Volunteers shall **not** initiate contact with a youth or their parents following the Board meeting. If contact occurs accidentally, you should not initiate conversation or make any comments about the youth being involved with the Diversion Program. If they choose to speak with you, respond at the same level of conversation and do not discuss any case specifics, regardless of what they may bring up.

Volunteers should **not** reveal specific personal information about themselves during the CAB process. However, to establish rapport during the meeting, as a volunteer, you may make general statements that indicate understanding and/or empathy (such as: "I was a teenager once", "I had problems, too" or "I have three teenagers myself so I can understand some of your concerns.").

• COMPETENCE
We ask that volunteers strive to become and remain proficient in the performance of their role. Volunteers should take the initiative in utilizing available resources and staff consultation as well as seeking learning opportunities.

For example: Volunteers are expected to attend all regularly scheduled meetings and trainings.

Volunteers should have the ability to perform all aspects of a CAB including opening and closing the meeting, knowing the youth's two options and conducting the interview.

Volunteers should ask for clarification of unfamiliar terminology used by the youth/parents and/or other Board members. Failure to clarify terminology may hinder the volunteer's understanding of the term resulting in an inaccurate assessment or procedural problem.

Volunteers should listen to and accept feedback offered by other Board members and Diversion staff.
Volunteers are encouraged to keep abreast of changes in laws, policies, and/or procedures affecting the Diversion program. This information is disseminated through Diversion staff at CAB meetings and through ongoing trainings and special emails.

In order to help maintain Board membership we appreciate any assistance with the recruiting of additional volunteers.

Volunteers should help ensure the cohesiveness and efficiency of the CAB by knowing other CAB members as well as Diversion staff.

• **PROGRAM INTEGRITY**
  Volunteers **cannot** represent their personal views or opinions as those of the CAB Diversion Program. Furthermore, the volunteer **cannot** refer to, or use their participation in the program, to enhance the credibility of the volunteer's personal views in any other court proceeding.

  For example: Volunteer **may not** mention their position as a Board member in an attempt to influence the court when giving an affidavit for a relative or a friend.

• **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**
  Volunteers may not be related to any party or respective attorney involved in a CAB hearing. The volunteer should not be employed in a position or with an agency that might result in a conflict of interest or give rise to the appearance of conflict. The volunteer cannot use their volunteer position to seek or accept gifts or special privilege for either themselves or others.

  Volunteers should not use their volunteer position in order to solicit business with anyone.

  Volunteers may consider withdrawing from the Board or offer to withdraw when there is a conflict of interest or they know the youth and/or the youth's family members.

  Volunteers should **immediately** advise the Diversion staff if they know the youth or their parents.

  Volunteers **shall immediately** inform the other Board members and the Diversion staff if the volunteer is a relative or acquaintance of the victim. The volunteer shall remove themselves from the CAB.

  Volunteers are not to engage in any business transaction with the youth or their parents during the CAB (even if for mutual gain) to prevent possible bias or the appearance of bias.
CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

Each volunteer for the Juvenile Diversion Program must adhere to the following guidelines with respect to maintaining confidentiality and respecting the privacy of others in all matters relating to CAB. The guidelines are set out below. These guidelines, however, cannot cover every possible situation that may arise. Any questions and/or concerns a Board member has regarding confidentiality or the application of this policy should be discussed with the Diversion staff. These will be resolved on a case-by-case basis.

• CASE DISCUSSION

Volunteers shall maintain strict confidentiality as to the cases in which the volunteer is involved. Each volunteer, upon acceptance into the program, shall sign a statement of commitment to this effect.

Volunteers shall not, mention the names of any individuals involved in the case or provide facts, which may identify the case or parties involved.

Volunteers shall never discuss an assigned case for purely conversational purposes, even in general terms, with anyone.

Volunteers shall hand in to Diversion staff any notes taken during the CAB at the conclusion of the meeting.

• MEDIA COMMUNICATION

We do not expect volunteers to deal with the media. However, in the case that you are contacted directly by the media requesting information, interviews, and/or facts relating to a specific individual, case, volunteer, or proceeding and/or inquiries concerning a program policy, decision, or action relating to such, please refer them to the Diversion Program Director. Volunteers should never contact the media in order to attract attention to a case.

Volunteers should never discuss a specific case with the media. A CAB member remains free to discuss with the media opinions regarding the Diversion program, so long as such discussions do not relate to a specific case nor provide readily identifiable case-specific information.

For more information, or to sign up, please contact Leanne Williams at leanne.williams@scouting.org or at 605-323-0748