Policy for the Protection of Youth

It shall be the policy and covenant of Michigan DECA to do everything in our power to prevent physical, emotional, or sexual abuse against children, youth, and adults who patronize Michigan DECA or activities sponsored by Michigan DECA. We are covenanted to be aware of our legal responsibilities to comply with those responsibilities and go beyond those responsibilities when necessary to act justly in the best interest of those who have been abused or those most vulnerable to abuse.

Michigan DECA will require all Advisors to certify that their school has screened them and have received sexual abuse training from their school and that all chaperones assisting with any Michigan DECA conference or activity are aware of Michigan DECA's and their school's sexual abuse policies. Advisors will annually attest that they follow these procedures by submitting their completed Advisor Code of Ethics each fall.

Scope
This policy and its provisions shall apply to all staff, Advisors, and Chaperones who have direct or indirect contact with children and/or youth patronizing Michigan DECA or activities sponsored by Michigan DECA.

Ethics Policy
All Staff, Advisors, and Chaperones of Michigan DECA shall not engage in sexual abuse, sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, physical abuse, physical neglect, lack of supervision, or emotional, educational, and/or moral-legal maltreatment of children and youth.

Implementation
Professionals, employees, and volunteers shall be provided with a copy of this policy and receive any training required from local school districts to assist in understanding and implementing this policy.

This policy applies to:

1. **Chapter Advisor** (someone that teaches marketing, management, finance, hospitality, or entrepreneurship) must sign an Advisor Code of Conduct each year, certifying that their school has conducted a background check, that they have received their school's sexual abuse training, and have shared Michigan DECA's Policy for the Protection of Youth with chaperones and parents attending the conference.
2. **Chaperones or Alumni** (Non-teachers or volunteers) must have received a copy of Michigan DECA's Policy for the Protection of Youth. Each school district will decide if these individuals require additional training or screening.
3. **Parents and family members** registering for a conference through a school must have received a copy of Michigan DECA's Policy for the Protection of Youth. Each school district will decide if these individuals require additional training or screening.
4. Individuals serving only as **Competitive Event Judges** do not have to receive a copy of Michigan DECA's Policy for the Protection of Youth because Advisors supervise them during competition, and their time/contact with students is limited.

Making a Complaint
People who know of possible violations of this policy by management and employees should report to appropriate supervisors and administrators. The Administration will act in the investigation, reporting, due process, and take action to seek justice.

Screening for Volunteers and Staff
Each participating school shall conduct screening to prevent the abuse of children and youth. Screening calls for carefully gathering and reviewing information in search of persons who can provide safe contact in a safe environment.

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Training
Each participating school shall develop and implement training procedures for all employees who have direct or indirect contact with children and youth as part of their duties, activities, and events. After January 1, 2027, no person shall have direct or indirect contact with children until they have reviewed this policy.

Supervision
Supervision and enforcement of policy and procedures regarding all staff, advisors, and chaperones who have direct or indirect contact with children, youth should be communicated within Michigan DECA's policies and procedures.

Reporting of Incidents
All incidents should be immediately reported to Michigan DECA's State Director, and an incident report should be filed. Michigan DECA will retain all incident reports for reference. When reporting is necessary, the protection of children and youth must be paramount.

Definitions

1. An **Advisor** is the classroom teacher who manages their school's DECA activities. More than one person from a school can serve as an advisor.
2. A **Chaperone** is an individual that assists with the supervision of students at conferences. This person may or may not be a school employee. If you are submitting them as a DECA member, you should use the Professional Member category.
3. **Sexual abuse** is unwanted physical conduct of a sexual nature, sexual contact, or sexualized behavior and may include, for example, touching, fondling, other physical contact, and sexual relations with a child/youth/adult with developmental disabilities sexual abuse is defined as the sexual exploitation or use of same for the satisfaction of sexual drives.
4. **Sexual Harassment** is any unwanted sexual advance or demand, either verbal or physical, that the recipient reasonably perceives as demeaning, intimidating, or coercive. Sexual harassment must be understood as exploiting a power relationship rather than an exclusively sexual issue. Sexual harassment includes but is not limited to creating a hostile or abusive working environment resulting from discrimination based on gender.
5. **Sexual Misconduct** is a chargeable offense.
6. **Physical Abuse** is any act of omission or an act that endangers a person's physical or mental health. This definition includes any non-accidental physical injury. Physical abuse may result from overly punitive or inappropriate punishment to the individual's age or condition. In addition, physical abuse may result from purposeful acts that harm a child's or youth's physical health.
7. **Physical Neglect** is when an individual in charge does not take adequate precautions (given a child's, youth, or vulnerable person's particular emotional developmental needs) to ensure his or her safety in and out of the residence.
8. **Lack of Supervision** is when the individual in charge does not take adequate precautions (given a child's, youth, or vulnerable person's particular emotional developmental needs) to ensure his or her safety in and out of the residence.
9. **Emotional Maltreatment** is the persistent or extreme thwarting of a child's, youth, or vulnerable person's basic emotional needs (such as the need to feel safe and accepted)
10. **Educational Maltreatment** is when the individual in charge fails to ensure that a child, youth, or vulnerable person receives adequate education
11. **Moral/Legal Maltreatment** is when the individual in charge exposes or involves a child, youth, or vulnerable person in illegal or other activities that may foster delinquency or anti-social behavior.

Procedures for Reporting, Investigating, and Resolving Violations of Policy

1. Report immediately upon receipt of an allegation of a policy violation to the Michigan DECA State Director. The State Director will facilitate reporting to law enforcement agencies according to State and Federal reporting guidelines and appropriate supervisors.
2. The Conference Management Team shall assist in investigating the complaint and the process to use to work through the complaint. This may include assistance with legal and public relations issues and interviews necessary to investigate the complaint.
3. The person against whom an allegation has been confirmed will immediately be suspended from participating at the conference.
4. If a minor is involved, that person's parent(s)/guardian(s) shall be notified of the alleged policy violation by a person designated by the Conference Management Team.
5. The person or persons who first report the alleged policy violation will be asked to document their knowledge of this incident(s) and provide that documentation to the Conference Management Team.
6. The Conference Management Team will determine who needs to be interviewed to determine the nature of the alleged violation and its impact. All conversations shall be documented, including (but not exclusive of) the date, time, place, and names of the people involved. In addition, the substance of the conversation shall be documented, with the person interviewed asked to review notes for accuracy and to sign such notes. In addition, all contacts made, and actions taken by the Conference Management Team are to be documented.
7. If a formal complaint is made, the Conference Management Team shall provide the respondent with a copy of the complaint.
8. Those making the allegations ("Plaintiff"), the parent(s)/guardian(s) of any minor involved, the Respondent, and any persons who supervise such persons shall be notified of any result of the investigation and final decision of the Michigan DECA documentation shall be retained in a confidential, personal file.
9. The Conference Management Team will determine when and with whom information needs to be shared. If investigations or allegations of abuse should come to the media's attention, a response shall come from a spokesperson.
10. It shall be the goals of Michigan DECA to provide supportive care to both the Plaintiff and the Respondent and to restore such persons to wholeness. Supportive care can include the procedures of the criminal justice system and appropriate counseling referrals.
11. If the Plaintiff should desire to appeal the decision of the Michigan DECA, The Conference Management Teams' legal counsel will be consulted.