

Ridgecrest Summer Camps' Child Protection Plan

updated March 2026

We follow best practices for keeping campers safe and utilize a multi-layered approach built on policies, training, accountability and awareness from both staff and families.

I.

Leadership Qualifications

Full-time Camp Directors provide years of experience, both onsite at our camps and in formal training by industry-trusted third-party experts.



II.

Summer Staff Recruiting & Hiring Process

From recruitment to onboarding, we carefully screen our staff to ensure every camper is in the care of responsible, trustworthy adults.



III.

Training → Culture

We start creating a culture of child protection before staff arrive and build on it during pre-camp training and throughout the summer.



IV.

Policies and Safeguards

When campers are onsite, we adhere to standards and policies to help protect campers and staff from dangerous or compromising situations.



V.

The Role of Parents and Guardians

Keeping campers safe is a partnership between Camp staff and you, the parent/guardian. How can you best prepare your child for Camp?



Ridgecrest Ministries' Board of Directors oversees the policies and procedures for camper safety. Our Board includes independent Directors and former and current Camp parents. Our leadership team has direct lines of communication to the Board so that every team member – including our CEO - can be held accountable to this Child Protection Plan.

I. Leadership Qualifications

Full-time Camp Directors provide years of experience, both onsite at our camps and in formal training by industry-trusted third-party experts.



**200
Years**

Our team of full-time Directors at Ridgecrest Summer Camps have a combined nearly 200 summers of experience at Camp. We shape our Child Protection Plan by their firsthand experience leading campers and staff, specifically at our unique setting in North Carolina. Our leaders do not rely only on their experience, but also recertify in child protection every two years.

Every adult serving on our property who interacts with campers in the summer completes MinistrySafe's Sexual Abuse Prevention training before campers arrive and recertifies every 2 years. Our directors have gone much deeper, completing a 15+ hour MinistrySafe Institutes Course to further their understanding and be best equipped to identify and prevent inappropriate behavior.



In addition to being accredited by the American Camp Association, our full-time Directors are all certified accreditation visitors, going to other camps each summer to help in their accreditation process and ensuring their camps follow industry best practices for safety.

Our full-time Directors are active members and involved in ongoing training in the Christian Camp and Conference Association, the North Carolina Youth Camp Association, and the American Camp Association.



II. Summer Staff Recruiting & Hiring Process

From recruitment to onboarding, we carefully screen our staff to ensure every camper is in the care of responsible, trustworthy adults.



Identify

The first step in the process is identifying the right college-aged guys and girls. We start with former campers who meet our standards and understand the positive impact we seek to have on campers. We incentivize them (and former staff) to recruit friends who share these gospel values. Roughly 80-90% of our summer staff have some connection with Ridgecrest or Crestridge before stepping foot on property. We look for staff who have a genuine love for Jesus, are actively growing in their faith, and who want to be role models and pour into young people.

Next, all potential staff complete a thorough screening process. They submit their application and at least 3 references whom our team contacts for feedback. Our leadership team interviews each new applicant a minimum of 2 times. We run background checks and check all names against the National Sex Offender Registry. In addition to phone interviews, our team travels around the Southeast from September - April to meet and interact with new and potential staff in-person.

Screen

Connect

The job of identifying staff who will be a good fit within our culture is a shared obligation among our team. A minimum of 6 members of our team, including all full-time directors, interact with an incoming staffer before they arrive on site. From phone interviews, to college campus visits, to web-based group calls, to regular email touch points, we see value and wisdom in a team of people speaking into hiring decisions.

III. Training → Culture

We start creating a culture of child protection before staff arrive and build on it during pre-camp training and throughout the summer.



Why?

Why is training so important? We want to create a culture where any suspicious or harmful behavior is identified and addressed as quickly as possible. Our training accomplishes two purposes. **1.** It promotes camper safety by creating a safety net of a culture where everyone bears the responsibility to eliminate harm. **2.** It communicates to any potential abuser or anyone with ill intent that we take this very seriously and monitor our staff closely. Research shows that predators seek institutions where the guard is low. We want to intentionally communicate in a way that would intimidate and deter anyone with any such intentions.

Every adult on campus who interacts with campers completes child protection training through our industry-trusted third-party partner, MinistrySafe. This includes summer staff, full-time staff, spouses, medical team, kitchen staff, volunteers, maintenance workers, and housekeepers. Every adult has a responsibility to identify and report any suspicious behavior. MinistrySafe trainings must be up-to-date, so each of these adults, regardless of their camp experience, must complete training every two years. In addition to MinistrySafe, incoming staff complete additional training created and led by our team of Directors and trusted community partners.

Before Arrival

During Summer

All staff arrive nearly two weeks before any campers do. During this time, staff complete thorough training in child protection, reporting responsibilities, and working with campers of different ages and from different backgrounds. We train all staff on policies meant to protect both campers and staff from any situation that could put either party in danger or jeopardy. We continue child protection training throughout the summer, with weekly reminders in staff meetings of the 'Red Flags of Abuse' and 'Red Flags of Peer-to-Peer Abuse.'

IV. Policies & Safeguards

When campers are onsite, we adhere to standards and policies to help protect campers and staff from dangerous or compromising situations.



Policies intended to identify and prevent any type of abuse include, but are not limited to:

A camper and staffer should never be alone, 1-on-1, in any private setting. Of course, we want staff to invest in kids as individuals, but conversations should happen in the open.

“All Up, All Down Rule” - Titles don’t matter when it comes to ensuring policies are being followed. If a counselor or housekeeper observes any staffer - even a director - overlooking a safeguard, we train them to step in for the child’s safety.

We do not allow campers to hang out unsupervised in the cabin during free time.

We have a “No Intimidation” policy. We instruct staff to never use intimidation as a way to lead or motivate campers of any age.

As a filter, we charge staff to consider their words and actions as if you, the parent, were standing right there.

We clearly specify examples of appropriate and inappropriate touch for staff. For example, piggy-back rides are appropriate but campers sitting in laps is not.

Shower-time supervision: All showers are in individual private stalls. At Crestridge, counselors must be present in the cabin during shower time. At Ridgecrest, two staff are present in the bathhouse for shower duty to ensure campers are safe.

Suggestion/“Tell a Director” Boxes: At each camp, during orientation, we explain to campers about a box where they can drop a note directly to a director about any concerns.

We train staff that all adults in the state of North Carolina are required by law to report ANY suspected abuse.

V. The Role of Parents and Guardians

Keeping campers safe is a partnership between Camp staff and you, the parent/guardian. How can you best prepare your child for Camp?



Remind your Child:

Tell Someone: If ANYTHING makes you uncomfortable, tell someone! You can tell your counselor or anyone on staff that you know and trust.

“Tell a Director” Box: If you don’t know who else to tell, write it down and put it in the Suggestion Box, or “Tell a Director Box.” These are centrally located in the middle of camp.

Private body parts are private: Help your child understand the boundaries with private parts and what’s appropriate and not appropriate. As a general rule in Camp, no one should ever touch or call attention to anywhere on your body that is normally covered by a bathing suit.

Make friends your own age: Your child should make friends with other boys or girls their own age. While there is certainly interaction between campers of different ages, we intentionally don’t partner up “Big brothers” or “Big sisters”, preferring campers to spend time primarily with other kids their own age. Research shows that pairing campers of significantly different ages can create uneven power dynamics, so we follow best practice by not doing this.

Play in groups: Socially and for the inclusion of all campers, we prefer they play in groups, as opposed to smaller exclusive groups, but this also helps minimize the opportunity for peer-to-peer abuse among campers.

No one else should be in your bed: While campers may sit on the edge of another camper’s bed for devotions at night or while putting on shoes, other campers shouldn’t be hanging out on your bed, especially when it’s time to go to sleep, and they should never be under your sheets or bedding at all.