

Silver Birch Ranch

Child Protection Practices

SBR stands on four core pillars: 1) **Effectiveness** at our mission “To Know Christ and To Make Him Known;” 2) **Safety** for all guests and staff physically, emotionally, and spiritually; 3) **Affordable** and open to all regardless of ability to pay; and 4) **Fun** for all so as to maximize opportunity for effectiveness. SBR takes a number of steps to ensure the proper screening and training of our staff members.

There are three Pre-employment Screening documents (application, Voluntary Disclosure form, and Staff & Worker Covenant) that applicants must complete prior to employment. These are an opt-out step for potential predators and a screening tool for SBR.

- Application – includes personal and professional references that are contacted prior to employment
- Voluntary Disclosure – statement of past criminal or sexual misconduct
- Staff & Worker Covenant – defines what it means to be a “safe place” in a Christ-centered camp setting, while giving staff members guidelines for appropriate conduct (physically, emotionally, and spiritually)

SBR performs a Background Investigation on all staff and volunteer applicants. There are two checks done on each individual:

- 1) Reference Check – both employment reference, as well as character references are contacted
- 2) Criminal Background Check – a 3rd party vendor provides checks on all applicant (FBI, state, county and local records; sex offender registries and the DOJ National Sex Offender Public Registry; and child abuse registries)

After employment, SBR has set up a system of policies and training to ensure all staff members and aware of appropriate conduct

- 1) Policy Manual
 - a. Conduct and Rules – general policy towards a safe and effective camp
 - b. Social Media – guidelines, privacy, and camper interaction
 - c. Staff/Camper Contact – standards for interacting with campers during and after camp
 - d. Child Abuse Prevention Guidelines – discipline and contact rules for staff
 - e. Sexual Abuse Prevention – contact and privacy (“Rule of 3”)
 - f. Bullying and Harassment – by staff and other campers – rules and enforcement
- 2) Counselors receive additional training in the identification and prevention of child abuse, sexual abuse, and bullying
- 3) Reporting – Counselor Director, Executive Director and Administrative team will investigate any perceived or actual misconduct and take the appropriate steps including contacting local law enforcement.

To ensure a safe environment, SBR has implemented a number of security procedures as well

- Staff are trained to be aware of the camp grounds and the interactions of campers and other staff members, and to report any unusual observations to the Camp Director
- Visitors (non-camper or staff) and Vendors are restricted from accessing camp property. They must sign in and be accompanied by an authorized staff member.