

# **WASHINGTON STATE GRANGE YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY**

**(effective immediately)**

**POLICY:** The Washington State Grange (WSG) is herewith establishing a policy to effectively eliminate opportunities for abuse within the Youth and Junior Grange (JG) programs. This policy will focus on placing barriers to abuse within these programs.

The quality of our youth and junior programs and the safety of these young members are directly linked to the high-quality youth and junior leadership we have in place. Leaders should always remember that leading these programs is a privilege, not a right. We as leaders within the WSG need to recruit and train the best possible leaders we can on the state level.

WSG needs to conduct a background check on individuals who will have a supervisory or any other leadership role within these programs. While there is no fool-proof screening process that will identify a possible child abuser, we need to learn as much as possible about a potential leader through an application process. This will, at a minimum, reduce the risk of accepting a child abuser. Some simple questions about why they want to be a Youth or JG leader and what discipline techniques they would utilize should be included on the application.

It is also important that current Youth and Junior Grange leaders realize the importance of conducting these background checks, even on present leaders. These checks will serve as a form of protection to our leaders from false accusations.

**PROCEDURES:** The following are procedures that will be followed by all Junior and Youth Granges within the WSG. If these are not followed, it could be cause for the Charter of said youth or Junior Grange to be suspended.

## Background Checks

1. Background checks will be completed annually.
2. All current members of the WSG Youth and Junior Committees will have a background check performed within three months. This applies even if the individual has had a background check performed for their present or previous position.
3. All future WSG Youth and Junior committee members will have a background check performed prior to being appointed to the committee. This applies even if the individual has had a background check performed for their present or previous position.
4. All JG and youth program leaders for all Granges in the State of Washington shall be Grange members and will have a background check performed. This will include all JG Camp board members and staff 18 years of age and older. If this is not followed, it could be cause for the Charter of said youth or junior Grange to be suspended.

5. Elected State Grange Officers must complete the Washington State Patrol Background Check within 30 days of their election.
6. JG Camp Counselors, under 18 years of age, must complete the Washington State Patrol Background Check at least two weeks prior to attending camp.
7. All approved JG leaders will be 18 years of age or older.
8. The Junior Grange Leader/Youth Fairs Program Leader/Camp Director will submit a list of names to the State Grange Office of all individuals who are required to complete a background check. This list will be used to monitor who has or has not completed the annual check.
9. Actions to be taken on all background check forms returned from the agency performing the check:
  - a. The forms will be maintained on file by the Master/President of the Washington State Grange, or other properly designated person, in a well-marked, secure file.
  - b. If a background check reveals a possible area of concern, the State Master/President shall send appropriate notification to the individual.
  - c. The individual in question will then have an opportunity to remove their name (in writing) from consideration or explain (in writing) the basis of the finding of the background check.
  - d. Explanations received (paragraph 6.c) will be reviewed by the Master/President of the WSG possibly in conjunction with the Executive Committee and Legal Counsel of the same, to determine any or all actions to be taken by the WSG on the explanation. The Master/President of the WSG will provide the results of this review in writing to the individual. Failure to receive a positive review will result in immediate termination of consideration, with the individual in question notified of the same in writing.
10. Junior and Youth Events (WSG function)
  - a. Any Individual who will have a supervisory or leadership position will have a background check conducted if a member of the State Committee is not physically present 100% of the time.
  - b. At each event, there will be a minimum of two individuals present, with at least one of them having a completed background check.
11. Junior and Youth Events (non-WSG function)
  - a. All Junior Granges in this state will have a minimum of two individuals present, with at least one having a completed background check.
12. Payment for Background Checks
  - a. With the approval of the State Master/President and through the adopted budget of the WSG, all background checks will be paid for by the WSG.

### 13. Abuse Prevention Standards

- a. Two Deep Leadership: A minimum of two approved adult leaders or one registered leader and a parent or legal guardian of a participant, are required on all trips and outings.
- b. No One-on-One Contact: One-on-One contact between adults and junior/youth members is not permitted. In situations that require personal counseling, the meeting is to be conducted in view of other adults and youth/juniors.
- c. Respect of Privacy: Adult leaders must respect the privacy of junior/youth members in situations such as changing clothes and taking showers and intrude ONLY to the extent that health and safety require. Adults must protect their own privacy in similar situations.
- d. Separate Accommodations for Camp: Separate sleeping, shower and toilet facilities are optimal for males and females. If separate shower and toilet facilities are not accessible, then separate times for use shall be prominently posted.
- e. Accommodations for Other Events: There are occasions when adults and youth will be sharing hotel rooms for various reasons. The adult shall have a completed background check. The parents/guardians of the youth member will be required to sign a written permission form allowing the sharing of a hotel room between their child and a non-family member adult.
- f. Appropriate Attire: Proper clothing for activities is required. For example, skinny-dipping is never appropriate as part of a Grange event.

### 14. Other Prevention Standards (Camping Programs)

- a. Closed Camp: except for emergencies, campers are not permitted to leave camp, except for camp approved events. By no means is an individual counselor (under 18 years of age) to leave camp with an individual camper. A parent can, however, pick up a child and later return them to the camp, provided the camp leader is aware of this situation in advance.
- b. Camp Security: ALL VISITORS (including parents/guardians) are required to check in at pre-designated locations.
- c. Releasing Campers: Campers who are minors will only be released to their parent or guardian or someone authorized by them, as indicated in writing.

### 15. Reporting

- a. It is important that any reported case of abuse, whether they occurred at camp or not, be reported to the proper authorities. It will be the responsibility of the WSG Junior and Youth Committees or other person in charge of the activity to determine whether the action was inappropriate behavior or abuse.
- b. Law enforcement shall be notified immediately of any criminal activity.