



Youth Shield Principles



For the safety and wellbeing of both our youth and adult participants, the following YOUTH SHIELD Principles and Policies are to be observed at all times:

All adult leaders or mentors for youth attending Institute events for more than 72+ hours must have a background check and be trained in Youth Shield Principles.

Two-deep adult leadership is to be observed during all Institute activities. Two adult leaders or mentors must be present at all times. One of these leaders must be female if female youth are in attendance.

Digital communication will follow the two-deep principle as well. Any digital communications between youth and adult leaders and mentors will have at least two adult leaders copied on all messages.

No one-on-one contact is allowed between youth and adults. Any necessary one-on-one meetings must be conducted such that others are aware of the meeting and can see it taking place.

There shall be separate accommodations for male and female adults. Adult spouses may share tents.

There shall be separate accommodations for male and female youth. Additionally, youth sharing tents should differ in age by no more than two years.

Separate restroom and bathing facilities will be established for male youth, female youth, male adults, and female adults. If separate facilities can not be established, then separate spaces or times should be established and posted for the use of the facilities.

The “Pard” system shall be used at all times. Youth may not go anywhere without another youth, or “Pard”, to go with them. “Pards” should be no more than 2 years of age apart if possible, and no youth is to be forced into a “Pard” assignment. “Pards” shall also be of the same sex; if this is not possible, then another “Pard” should be assigned to accompany two youth of the opposite sex.

Both adult and youth participants shall respect each other’s privacy, such as in changing, bathing, and restroom facilities. Adults may only enter youth facilities for a health or safety reason.

There shall be no inappropriate use of digital devices. Only adult leaders should have digital devices during events as a means of emergency communication. All other participants should not have any digital devices in order to preserve historical immersion

and authenticity. However, any inappropriate use of digital devices, such as taking photographs or video in private area, is strictly prohibited.

No secret organizations shall be formed by any Institute participants.

Appropriate attire is required at all times.

Adults leaders and mentors shall monitor and guide leadership by youth leaders and ensure that all Youth Shield principles and policies are followed.

Discipline within the Institute is based upon mutual respect, with the goal of empowering youth, creating strong leaders, and representing a well-disciplined volunteer regiment in the Civil War. To this end, discipline should be constructive and reflect the values of the Institute. Discipline begins with the praise and encouragement of good character qualities. Additionally, all leaders in the Institute shall practice “servant leadership” towards all participants. In the unlikely event that misbehavior requires correction, the Institute permits only the following corrective activities:

- Assignment of extra camp duties, such as kitchen or clean-up duties.
- Assignment of extra cleaning of uniforms or equipment.
- Confinement to quarters or the “guard house/tent” (akin to a “time-out”).
- Instruction to march a beat for 5-10 minutes (similar to running exercises in athletics).
- Removal from activity participation.

Physical violence, sexual activity, emotional abuse, spiritual abuse, unauthorized weapons, hazing, discrimination, harassment, initiation rites, bullying (verbal, physical, or cyber), theft, verbal insults, drugs & alcohol, and pornography are all strictly prohibited. Accusations against participants regarding any of these offenses shall be immediately investigated and presented before an Institute court-martial, and may result in membership being revoked.

Public displays of affection, including holding hands, frontal embraces, and kissing are prohibited for both safety and historical authenticity reasons.

All sexual activity is prohibited. Inappropriate consensual conduct amongst youth should normally result in immediate removal from the program activity and parental notification. Nonconsensual activity must be reported to law enforcement immediately. All incidents of inappropriate activity involving sexual matters shall be investigated and reported to the program activity leader and the Institute Commandant, including consensual activity. Inappropriate activity may result in revocation of membership.

