

Cottage Cove Employment Policy Concerning Age and Accountability

Volunteers ~ Work Study ~ Part Time ~ Full Time Employees



Everyone

This policy impacts all persons working and/or serving at Cottage Cove, whether paid or unpaid. While unpaid individuals are not technically employees, dependent upon their participation level, some or all aspects of our employment policy are still relevant and applicable.

It is a prerequisite, apart from a few specified exceptions, that all individuals serving at Cottage Cove are independent persons, each required to be acting as adults in regards to employer and employee relations and/or supervisor and volunteer relations. Specifically:

- Cottage Cove administration, staff, and designated supervisors shall have full communications directly with each individual apart from external, or parental, contact or intervention. This will include the ability to directly set schedules and work times, consent to job responsibilities, provide verbal or written testimony as to personal or observed actions, and to participate in all necessary aspects of dispute resolution.
- As Cottage Cove is operating in Tennessee, it is assumed (per Tennessee Law) that all individuals age 18 or greater, having graduated high school, are automatically considered an adult in this regards.
- All persons younger than 18, or not having completed high school, shall have signed parental consent authorizing them to work and interact at Cottage Cove in this manner, or...
- All persons younger than 18, or not having completed high school, shall be present and serving at Cottage Cove only in the direct presence and control of their parent, legal guardian, or group leader (wherein permitted in following clauses).
- Persons declared emancipated by law and granted legal status of majority will be considered adults (i.e. 18 or older).

All persons working at Cottage Cove do so knowing and accepting that Cottage Cove operates as an employment-at-will organization, meaning that Cottage Cove may hire, dismiss, suspend or discipline any employee at any time and for any reason or for no reason at all (whether paid or unpaid). Notwithstanding, Cottage Cove's policies concerning whistleblowers and non-discrimination still apply.

All persons serving at Cottage Cove agree to act in accordance with Christian principles, including in regards to any legal disputes. In specific, each employee (paid or unpaid) waves their right to sue Cottage Cove, its employees (paid or unpaid), its supporters and its clients, in any court of law and agrees to utilize Christian arbitration as a final recourse in dispute resolution, during or following their employment at Cottage Cove.

References or recommendations may be given to former or current employees (paid or unpaid), on behalf of Cottage Cove, only by authorization of the Executive Director. Once authorized, specific references may be made only by any direct supervisor, the program director, or the Executive Director. Written references will be on Cottage Cove letterhead. All persons serving at Cottage Cove have expressly consented to allow Cottage

Cove to respond – verbally or in writing – to requests for references to potential or current employers, schools, or other charities and organizations upon request. Cottage Cove and the one receiving the reference are under no obligation to disclose its contents or substance to the individual being referenced.

All volunteer, work study, intern, or staff applications must be signed and filed by each prospective individual (paid or unpaid). All individuals serving at Cottage Cove have consented to submit to a background and/or reference check, either directly or through a third party as contracted by Cottage Cove. Falsifying data on any application is grounds for immediate dismissal, upon discovery, regardless of any extent of time which has transpired.

Volunteers ~ Work Study Staff

Volunteers and Work Study Employees are subject to the following exceptions and clarifications:

Work Study Employees, though paid by a third party, are in all other regards employees of Cottage Cove and subject to all Cottage Cove policies concerning employees. Notwithstanding, Cottage Cove has agreed to the employment conditions set by the fiscal employer and will work with that entity in regards to their requirements.

No regular volunteer shall be younger than 15. Exceptions must be made only by the Executive Director and will only be made wherein there is specific extraordinary reason, such as advanced academic promotion (i.e. wherein the teen has had early promotion to a higher grade). First time or one time volunteers, as well as those not interacting with our clients may be exempted from requirements for a volunteer application as determined by the Executive Director.

Volunteers coming as a group (e.g. church youth groups) may include non-adults, ages 12 and higher, especially for DTI (Discipleship Training Institute) or organized service projects, with appropriate levels of adult supervision.

- DTI participants shall have appropriate forms completed for that program, complete with parental signatures for all individuals not meeting automatic grounds of adult consent.
- Apart from DTI, it is implicit that all non-adult members of any group participating by organizational involvement (e.g. church, school) are here under parental consent to the organizing group and are responsible to that group and its leadership.

Children under the age of 12 shall not normally be allowed to volunteer at Cottage Cove, unless specific exception is granted by the Executive Director. This will typically be for something outside of normal program and the children will always be in direct supervision of their parent or group leader. Any child accompany their parent while they serving at Cottage Cove (whether staff or volunteer) – only by specific permission – must remain in the direct care and responsibility of their parent or – having been granted permission – join into regular program, with the parent accepting all the rules and regulations normally governing it.

Any volunteer or work study student may be dismissed and/or barred from service at Cottage Cove at the sole discretion of the ministry. Failure to uphold policies and/or actions that are deemed detrimental to the ministry of Cottage Cove are always in view.

Part Time ~ Full Time Staff

Per Tennessee Law (CHILD LABOR ACT Title 50-5-101 – 115)

- All persons younger than 18, or not having completed high school, prior to employment must provide Cottage Cove with a copy one of the following documents as proof of age; birth certificate, driver license, state issued ID, or a copy of their passport.
- No minor under the age of 14 is eligible for any regular employment.
- When school is in session: Minors, ages 14 and 15, may not...
 - o Work more than 3 hours per day
 - o Work more than 18 hours per week
 - o Work later than 7 pm.
- When school is not in session: Minors, ages 14 and 15, may not...
 - o Work more than 8 hours per day
 - o Work more than 40 hours per week
 - o Work later than 9 pm.
- When school is in session: Minors, ages 16 and 17, may not...
 - o Be required to work during school hours
 - o Work later than midnight on nights prior to school days (i.e. Sunday – Thursday). This would normally be 10 p.m. but the parental consent enabling the minor to act as an adult in regards to employment is an explicit waiver of this earlier limitation, should the minor agree to such hours.

All employment or decisions pertaining to employment at or for Cottage Cove are at the discretion of the Executive Director or designates, unless the by-laws of the ministry designate such authority to the Board of Directors (especially in the absence of the Executive Director).

- Clauses in the Cottage Cove by-laws and code of conduct have direct bearing on eligibility for, and continuation of, ministry employment. Policy violations or actions detrimental to the ministry of Cottage Cove may result in immediate suspension and/or dismissal.
- Additional separate policies concerning military service and pregnancy are also applicable.
- Cottage Cove may increase or reduce hours and/or eliminate or alter any position solely as needs of the ministry dictate.
- As an organization solely dependent on the generosity of donors, Cottage Cove may eliminate any position, or restructure job functions, solely on grounds of our perception of financial expediency.
- Any employee may be suspended, with or without pay, during any investigation into policy violations, or as discipline in regards to situations not serious enough warrant dismissal.