



PROGRAM PARTICIPANT HANDBOOK

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Welcome to The Ranch for Kids!

We are honored that you and your parents have chosen to become a part of our unique program.

This program attempts to educate and assist you by supplying a firm, consistent, loving Christian atmosphere twenty-four hours a day.

During your stay with us, all staff members—including the Director, direct care staff, teachers, support staff, and volunteers—work closely with you, individually and in groups, to provide a safe place where you can grow and develop your potential.

You will live with others from similar backgrounds of abandonment, loss, orphanage experience, traumatic abuse, neglect, and adoption. The staff works with you, teaching you how to live a wholesome life where relationships with others matter. You will then be better prepared to handle family life, school, and peer pressures.

You will live under a balanced philosophy and follow a daily routine based on this philosophy. The “Balanced Life Philosophy” is built on the idea that the whole person must grow in four areas: physical, mental, spiritual, and social; and so you’ll follow a scheduled program including school, work, recreation, and social activities.

The staff appreciates any encouragement your parents give you as you work through the program. Because you need to be focused in the right direction, we’ve prepared this handbook to explain how the program is organized to accomplish our goals.

We hope your stay here will bring growth and future happiness. With all good wishes,

William J. Sutley

Executive Director

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THE RANCH FOR KIDS PROGRAM PARTICIPANT HANDBOOK

I. The “Balanced Life Philosophy”

The “Balanced Life Philosophy” under which The Ranch For Kids Project works teaches that a person must grow in wholeness through four areas:

Physical: This area involves vigorous activities including, basketball, volleyball, soccer, tennis, baseball/softball, swimming, hiking, boating, and dodge ball. In addition, program participants fully participate in daily and weekly work projects at the facility as well as within the community.

Mental: We strongly encourage you to achieve your educational goals while at The Ranch For Kids. Our school program will provide you an academic challenge. You’ll also learn skills through work projects that expand your mental abilities through interactive coursework and work projects.

Spiritual: Our program participants attend church services, youth groups, and discussions such as Bible study. In addition, we regularly meet for group discussions so that you have opportunities to explore important moral and ethical questions and get in touch with your own spirituality. Regular church services are scheduled.

Social: You’ll learn to relate to peers in positive ways while living in a healthy atmosphere, going to school, and participating in various work and social activities. You’ll also learn to relate to authority figures by interacting with teachers, direct care staff, counselors, and other support staff.

II. Realities and Expectations

In addition to the “Balanced Life Philosophy,” you need to understand certain realities of life and certain expectations your parents and society in general have. These realities and expectations also underlie the program at the Ranch For Kids.

Most parenting experts agree that children thrive when parents communicate well, provide appropriate discipline, and teach children to face reality and to live by “house rules,” which are general guidelines that reflect what parents expect from their children. Parents grant children freedoms and choices provided that the children follow the rules. If they do not follow them, consequences occur. Below are several realities that most experts and parents agree are reasonable.

A. Realities

1. Children are not adults, and they are not parents. Children have no authority at all over their parents. Although children may have some choices and some freedoms, those are only the choices and freedoms that their parents give them.
2. Children have a legal right to adequate food, shelter, safety, clothing, health care, and education. Parents are not required to give their children anything else. Certainly they are not required to be generous with material possessions.
3. People acquire necessities and desires through diligent work. These things do not just “fall out of the sky.” Especially you should understand that society will not give you what you want merely because you were at one time a poor, orphaned child.

B. Expectations

In addition to these realities, you should realize that parents have certain reasonable expectations concerning their children. It is important for you to understand and fulfill these expectations. Much of your work in the program will involve learning how to meet them.

1. Children should fulfill reasonable requests and respect decisions made by their parents. Although sometimes parents may explain the reasons for their requests and decisions, they have no obligation to explain or justify them to their children.
2. Children should share cooperatively in daily and weekly household chores assigned by their parents.
3. Children should follow established rules for the family, such as rules about appropriate language usage, common courtesies, and household management.
4. Children should follow parental guidelines regarding school attendance and homework.
5. Children should not hurt or threaten to hurt someone in order to get what they want. Nor should they yell, scream, or otherwise use emotional outbursts to pressure another person to give in to them.
6. Children should accept the consequences of breaking the house rules and not attempt to avoid them by pouting, crying, being rude, doing destructive actions, acting like a victim, or using other manipulative behaviors.
7. Children should consider their parents’ efforts to provide the best for them and express their appreciation for their parents, both in words and actions.

For a more detailed discussion of children’s responsibilities and the ways to meet them, please see “Good Advice from the Father of Several Russian Kids” and “Things To Work on at Ranch for Kids Project” in the Appendix to this Handbook.

III. Policies and Procedures

Living in a community creates specific challenges that demand everyone's attention and respect. All Ranch For Kids policies or rules exist for a purpose, often for your safety and comfort and to facilitate your growth. For this reason it is important to know and follow the policies at all times. If every resident follows the policies, we can live together in safety and harmony.

A. Housing Policies and Procedures

When people live together, it is natural for some disagreements or conflicts to arise. If you're aware of the potential challenges, you will be better prepared to deal with them. We've designed the housing policies and procedures to minimize the conflicts and ensure that you live comfortably with other residents.

You are responsible for maintaining your room. Each morning you should make your bed, put your room in order, and complete your cleaning chores before going to breakfast. Keep your dirty clothing in a container, and do your laundry weekly at your assigned time.

For health reasons, no food, drinks, or dishes are allowed in your bedroom. Residents are not allowed to keep cell phones, digital cameras, laptops/notebooks or video games/Gameboys. Only those on Level 2 may have CD players and I-pods, as long as I-pods don't have games or internet connectivity. It's wise to leave expensive electronic equipment and other valuable possessions at home.

Take personal responsibility for maintaining and protecting the common areas and keeping them clean and tidy. Do not waste water or electricity, and do not put paper towels, facial tissues, or other foreign objects in the toilets. The septic/sewer system will degrade only human waste and toilet paper.

Consider your housemates' needs and be considerate of them: avoid loud talk and making loud noises when others need to sleep or rest.

If you use common sense and treat others as you'd like to be treated, the housing arrangements can be very pleasant/congenial.

B. School Policies and Procedures

The Ranch for Kids School admits program participants of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to program participants at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs. The Ranch For Kids uses the curriculum provided by The Ranch For Kids instructors. You will attend our school and attend regularly scheduled classes and educational activities. We employ a full-time certified and licensed school administrator along with other certified staff members who have qualifications in special education, learning disabilities, and teaching English as a second language. Other instructors teach subjects in their specialties.

If your primary language is of other nationalities, you'll have opportunities to increase fluency and understanding in English.

Because we believe that mastery of subject matter is more important than a grade level, we won't assign you to a specific grade level. Instead you'll progress through the different subjects at a pace appropriate for you. You will be placed with a particular group based upon your age, academic proficiency, and ability to work in a classroom environment (behavior).

If you're over the age of 16 and plan to attend Montana Youth Challenge Academy or a similar program, you will prepare to take the test of HiSET. Otherwise you'll work in classes similar to those in jr. and sr. high school.

You will attend school from 9:00 a.m. until 4:30 p.m., or as scheduled, Monday through Thursday with a 30-minute lunch break. School terms run from approximately September 1 through May 31, except for weekends, Thanksgiving and Christmas. We also designate times for homework and special classes. In addition, we have a modified school curriculum over the summer.

Despite the individualized instruction of our program, we expect you to behave as you would in any serious educational setting. You should come to school ready to learn, remain in your desk, pay close attention to your teachers, study quietly, and stay on task. We speak of the "other three R's" of education: we ask you to be Respectful, Responsible, and Ready to Learn. School policies do not permit food, drinks, or gum in the classrooms.

Your teachers will inform you of other specific policies and regulations concerning the school.

C. Work Policies and Procedures

Because work is essential to support yourself and a good work ethic is necessary for success in life, daily work projects are an integral part of the training at The Ranch For Kids. We also believe that idle hands and minds can lead to mischief, and so our aim is to keep you involved in structured, meaningful activities.

Work provides opportunities for learning, a strong healthy body, oxygen for a healthy brain, and the values necessary for a productive adult life. In addition, the sense of accomplishment and satisfaction in a job well done gives you positive self-esteem.

You'll participate in all aspects of daily life, facility maintenance, outdoor projects, gardening, and various other areas of operation. Like all of life's efforts, some of the work is interesting and fun; some is just a necessary part of life. Through the various tasks, you'll also learn teamwork and the importance of each person's contribution to a complex effort.

Because daily work involves outdoor activities that can pose safety risks, it is essential that you use common sense and follow exactly the guidelines laid down by your work project supervisors. Their guidelines are designed for your protection. Foolish, risky behavior, such as horseplay, can have very serious consequences. Therefore these actions are not allowed at the Facility.

D. Facilities Policies and Procedures

Our Rexford Lodge is a busy place. For your protection, you must treat all supplies, with care and respect. You are not allowed on any outdoor machines. Any equipment or supplies that you may need such as snow shovels, shovels, rakes etc. are provided for your use.

You are responsible for doing your part to keep the facilities in good condition and appearance. You must not draw, write, carve on, or otherwise damage walls, furniture, or other Ranch For Kids Project property. If you do such irresponsible actions, you will face disciplinary actions, including payment for the repair or replacement of the damaged objects. Paying the hourly wage for the repairer of damaged property can be very costly.

E. Dress and Grooming Policies

We expect you to dress in clean, neat, appropriate clothing. Revealing apparel such as extremely short shorts, low-cut pants or shirts, and clothing exposing a bare midriff are not appropriate. Your clothing should be kept in good repair, without holes or fraying. You must also wear appropriate footwear; for example, flip-flops, slippers, and sandals are not acceptable for school or work times as they might become safety hazards. To help with housekeeping, you should remove your shoes when entering the living areas.

Pajamas are appropriate only for sleeping. You should not change into pajamas until thirty minutes before bedtime.

You should keep your hair clean and well groomed. Extreme hair arrangements and coloring are not appropriate, and your hair should not cover your eyes. Before sports and work sessions, you should arrange long hair so that it does not become a danger or a distraction.

Needless to say, you should bathe regularly and follow good personal hygiene practices.

Program participants on Level 2 are allowed minimal jewelry. You may not wear any jewelry that requires piercing of the body. Boys may not wear earrings. Girls on Level 2 may wear subtle make-up.

If you have further questions about dress and grooming, the direct care staff can help you understand what is appropriate and what is not.

F. Personal Behavior Policies

You are responsible for your behavior and its consequences. If you choose to behave in a positive way and follow the guidelines for harmonious community living, you'll earn rewards. If you choose to behave in a negative way and not follow the guidelines, you'll experience the unpleasant consequences of your actions, including the loss of privileges (see Section III about Discipline). No handbook can explain every aspect of acceptable and unacceptable behaviors. You must inform yourself of the guidelines and then use common sense to behave toward others as you would have them behave toward you. If you are uncertain about any kind of behavior, you can always ask a staff member for clarification.

Remember your attitudes, choices, and behaviors are all up to you!

G. Respect Policies

Every person at the Ranch For Kids Project is worthy of respect and consideration, and all residents are responsible for treating others with dignity.

The most important trait in maintaining this mutual respect is absolute honesty. For this reason, the residents and staff of The Ranch For Kids should not lie, cheat, or steal; nor should they tolerate those actions in others. Because dishonesty always destroys trust and eventually damages relationships, it has no place in the lives of mature people.

Likewise, The Ranch For Kids residents must respect each other's property and privacy. Never touch anyone else's property without permission. The Ranch For Kids policy forbids lending and borrowing of personal items, including money and clothing. To avoid disagreements and conflicts, it's wise for you to put your name on all your clothing and other possessions.

Similarly, do not use any Ranch For Kids Project property without permission. Also, respect other people's physical space and privacy. Do not go into another person's bedroom. Please respect the Direct Care Manager's off duty time. Do not disturb them during these times except in case of a genuine emergency.

Likewise you should respect others' personal space. Hitting, poking, pinching, shoving, wrestling, horseplay, and other such physical activities are not appropriate. Because of the nature of this facility, romantic relationships between residents are not allowed. This policy means that you may not hold hands, pass notes, or become involved in any other kind of affectionate actions. You may not engage in any kind of sexual behavior, including masturbation. Such behavior will result in serious disciplinary measures, notification of your parents, and (depending on your age) possible criminal prosecution.

You may not share a bed or shower with another person. Nor should you be alone in a one-on-one encounter with anyone, including staff members.

Respecting others also means you should not use any offensive language such as cursing, foul words, sexual innuendo, or using God's name in vain.

H. Communication Policies and Procedures

Good communication is essential for good relationships. Communication with your family helps you to resolve issues and mend relationships. At the Ranch For Kids, we expect you to be open and honest in your communication at all times: we expect “the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.”

If you have a concern or problem, please share it immediately with one of the staff members so that it can be addressed.

Although communication with parents, relatives, and friends is also important, we must follow some guidelines in order that your time here will be helpful and productive. We ask your parents to refrain from calling or writing you during the important adjustment period after your arrival, usually about one month.

We have a designated phone line, (406)-297-7592. This is the number your parents can use to call you. For boys the phone call days are Tuesdays and Thursdays and for girls phone call days are Wednesdays and Fridays. The best time to reach you is late afternoon/evening. To allow fair use of telephones, please limit your calls to 15 minutes, once per week.

You may make outgoing calls only with the permission and supervision of the staff. You may make such calls only to individuals approved by your parents.

Your parents may write to you at the Ranch For Kids post office box:

P. O. Box 116,
Rexford, MT 59930

If they send you packages or Federal Express documents, they should send them to the following physical address:

144 Gateway Ave.,
Rexford, MT 59917

We ask your parents to refrain from sending you numerous packages, except for birthdays and holidays. Some residents never get gifts, phone calls, or letters from their families. Others need to be sensitive to their situations.

In the interest of open and honest communication, we have your parents’ permission to monitor your mail and phone calls. We have found that such openness helps coordinate the efforts of parents and staff.

I. Banned Substances Policies and Procedures

Ranch For Kids policy forbids the use of alcohol, all forms of tobacco, and all illegal substances. This prohibition is absolute and applies to use both on and off the Facility. To insure compliance with this ban, the staff will inspect all of your in-coming and out-going luggage.

J. Miscellaneous Policies and Procedures

No handbook can cover every aspect of life at The Ranch For Kids. For this reason, you'll learn many details about expectations from your instructors and supervisors. Also, watch for posted signs and notices to give you additional information or guidelines for life at the Ranch for Kids. Remember that the purpose of the regulations is to help you develop and practice responsible behaviors so that you become successful adults who can live and work comfortably in society. Our goal is assist you as you become the healthy, productive, happy person God created you to be.

IV. Discipline

Discipline is not just a "nice" word for punishment. Its root meaning is "to teach." At The Ranch For Kids, we believe that discipline must be a teaching tool that is consistent, purposeful, fair, and appropriate, depending on your individual needs. We use no disciplinary measures that are physically or emotionally damaging or demeaning to any person, nor do we use harsh, cruel, or unnecessary punishment. Discipline is based on a careful assessment of the circumstances of each case, including the seriousness of the behavior, your age, and the frequency of the misconduct.

The entire staff of The Ranch For Kids constantly strives to help you learn to make "right" choices. Making choices will always lead you either to positive or negative consequences because consequences are the results of the behaviors you choose. You are in control of your choices and hence the consequences of those choices.

A. The "Levels" System Overview

The Ranch For Kids uses a system based on supporting good choices and discouraging bad choices. We endeavor to make it easy to make the right choices and make it difficult to make wrong choices. Wise choices earn privileges; poor choices result in loss of privileges.

Getting "strikes" or demerits on the Level System is the main form of discipline. Rewards for making good choices include not only privileges here but also off-campus

outings such as field-trips, visits to Glacier National Park, camping, cultural events, shopping, athletic events, etc. Discipline for earning “strikes” involves the restriction of or removal of privileges.

Program participants work through several training levels. With each level come added privileges and responsibilities as you demonstrate the ability to handle them.

The system consists of four different levels ranging from 000 (Triple Zero), the lowest level, through 2, the highest tier. Below is a brief description of each level.

Level 2

Upon arriving at Ranch for Kids Project, you will begin at Level 2, which means that you are expected to behave in an acceptable manner and so have all normal privileges. As long as you choose to behave in accordance with the policies of the program, you will remain on Level 2. If you make poor behavioral choices, you’ll earn “strikes” and become demoted to lower levels.

Level 1

If your behavior demotes you to Level 1, you will lose all the privileges you enjoyed on Level 2. You must remain on Level 1 a minimum of one week. (A total of three “strikes” in one week automatically brings a Level 1 placement for at least a week.) More serious offenses might require additional weeks on Level 1.

Level 0

An assignment to Level 0 brings further restrictions. You will be assigned this level for consistent lack of effort to try and be on level 2 or behavior that is destructive to yourself, to others, or to property. Those on Level 0 have no privileges. They may speak only to staff members in private conversations.

Level 00

This level is assigned for only the most extremely unacceptable behavior when all other avenues of reaching the program participant have failed. This level will be assigned for serious offenses such as leaving campus without permission, running away, unruly or violent behavior; those assigned to this level are isolated from their peers and allowed communication only with an adult. Program participant on this level has “quiet time,” sitting on a chair in an area designated by the direct care staff.

Level Meetings

On an assigned day of the week, the program participants and staff attend mandatory Level Meetings in which the staff considers each participant’s behavior and progress for the week and assigns levels.

B. Physical Restraint

Because of the importance of your physical safety and personal worth, The Ranch For Kids staff makes every effort to avoid physical confrontation with you. Instead they use crisis intervention techniques which de-escalate the situation and use physical restraint only as a last resort, a safety response. They WILL restrain you if you (1) are endangering yourself; (2) are endangering the staff or other program participants; furthermore we MAY restrain you if you (3) are destroying property or attempting to do so; (4) are running away. If staff members are forced to use physical restraint, they will treat you with dignity and respect.

C. Quiet Time Seclusion

Seclusion is a powerful tool which, when used properly, can protect you from counter-productive behaviors. We believe seclusion gives you space and quiet time to reflect upon the issues that have brought you to act out in harmful ways. Some of the serious events that might lead to seclusion are running away, violence, destruction of property, and inappropriate sexual conduct.

Seclusion is used only for 1-3 hours during evenings while we intensively counsel you. If you are sitting away from other program participants, you always can contact an adult who is close by. Also, keep in mind that you will be monitored during seclusion by video surveillance. The necessities of everyday life—food, water, warmth, etc.—are never denied you.

If your behavior forces us to impose restraint or seclusion, the staff may write an incident report about the situation and notify your parents.

D. Self-Discipline

Your ultimate goal is to achieve self-discipline, the mature stage when you consistently make the right behavior choices without being forced or supervised. Self-discipline is the mark of successful, mature adults.

Two of the ways that we assist you in achieving your self-discipline are counseling and therapy.

Most of our counseling, however, is less formal. In addition to the weekly Level Meetings, you may have small group discussions to cover a variety of subjects; or for more personal matters, you may have individualized spontaneous counseling sessions with staff members. Some of our best talks happen while we're chatting out on the trail, garden, kitchen, or living room. When the need arises, we talk.

E. Conclusion

Remember that you've come to The Ranch For Kids to become a more successful person. Your growth—physical, mental, spiritual, and social—depends in large measure on following a structured, consistent, and disciplined program. The staff members here became involved in this project because they are deeply-committed, caring, loving human beings. Yet they know that often “tough love” is the only way to help young people. All of them hope you will use your experiences here to develop responsible behaviors that will serve you well all your life.

APPENDIX

RANCH FOR KIDS LODGE DAILY SCHEDULE

DAILY SCHEDULE

6:45-8:00 a.m.

School Days During the School Year

Wake-up Activities

8:00-8:25 a.m.

Breakfast

9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

School

4:00-5:45 p.m.

Cleaning Chores / Home Room Activities
(Level Meetings on Wednesdays, typically 5:30-9:30 p.m.)

6:00-7:00 p.m.

Dinner

7:00-9:00 p.m.

Homework or Recreation

8:30-9:00 p.m.

Evening Free Time

9:00-10:00 p.m.

Quiet Time; Prepare for Bedtime

10:00 p.m.

Lights Out and in Bed

Fridays During School Year

7:00-8:00 a.m.

Wake-up Activities

8:00-9:00 a.m.

Breakfast

9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

Work Activities

1:00-2:00 p.m.

Lunch

2:00-6:00 p.m.

Work Activities (with break at 4:00)

6:00-7:00 p.m.

Dinner

7:00-10:00 p.m.

Evening Free Time

10:00 p.m.

Lights Out and in Bed

Saturdays and Summer Days

7:30-8:00 a.m.	Wake-up Activities
8:00-8:45 a.m.	Breakfast
9:00-11:00 a.m.	Chores / Cleaning
11:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.	Work Activities
2:00-3:00 p.m.	Lunch
3:00-6:00 p.m.	Chores / Work Activities or Recreation
7:00-7:30 p.m.	Dinner
7:30-10:00 p.m.	Free Time, Sports, Video Nights
10:00-10:30 p.m.	Quiet Time; Prepare for Bedtime
10:30 p.m.	Lights Out and in Bed

Sundays

8:00-8:45 a.m.	Wake-up Activities
8:45-9:15 a.m.	Breakfast
9:15-9:30 a.m.	Prepare for Church
9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.	Church & Other Activities
1:00-1:30 p.m.	Lunch
1:30-6:00 p.m.	Free Time or Recreation
6:00-7:00 p.m.	Dinner
7:00-9:00 p.m.	Free Time or Recreation
9:00-10:00 p.m.	Quiet Time; Prepare for Bedtime
10:00 p.m.	Lights Out and in Bed

Holiday schedules will be created by the staff and announced.

Timeline for Growth

Learning and changing are challenging processes. As a result, they're often accompanied by discomfort and frustration, sometimes quite severe. Expect to be uncomfortable and frustrated as these are normal feelings when a person is learning and changing. It may be helpful to think of them as "growing pains." As you come to the Ranch For Kids Project, you may have a range of emotions. Typically, these are the feelings you may encounter as you progress through the program:

First Month: You may feel homesick, angry, and rejected. Especially, you may feel very angry at your parents for sending you here and uncertain about the future. Some program participants may rebel at first, while others may conform to the program right away. The first month is definitely a time of testing and adjustment for you. We encourage you to talk to the staff about your feelings.

Six Months: During this period, inner problems really begin to surface. You may consistently stay on a certain level or continue to have problems with maintaining a positive attitude and acceptable behavior. Usually the staff members know by this time if you're going to succeed in the program. Many times you'll begin to gain a real appreciation of your family life and family members.

First Year: During this period you'll make a definite choice: you'll both recognize your root problems and begin to work on them, or you'll allow your old ways to continue to dominate your behavior. This period can be a time of real cleansing for you and your parents. You may allow deeply-hidden truths to come to the surface. You may begin to trust authority figures in a greater way. If you reject changing and revert to your old ways, this period can be a time of running and major rebellious choices. Attachment-disordered children may have special difficulties. This is the time where you can begin to develop a stronger relationship with home and family. You'll have more opportunities for visits and your parents may visit the program. These visits allow you to make the transition back into the home environment as well as seek a positive peer group. It's the goal of The Ranch for Kids staff and your parents to place you back in your home as soon as you've completed the level system.

After leaving our Rexford Lodge program, some participants go directly into a job training program. If this is your intention, we'll teach you the skills necessary to live in such a structured adult environment. If your parents' goal for you is to find a replacement family, our staff will prepare you for this major transition.

The Plan for You: Your parents will ultimately make the plan that they think is best for you. The Ranch For Kids does not make that decision. All we can do is report to them about your progress in our program. We do not "choose" new families for children or tell parents whether they should take their children home or not. They'll make these decisions after your team has evaluated the situation.

Crisis Management

Below are five serious situations which require serious responses. For each situation you can see exactly what the situation is, who will be involved, and what the specific consequences will be.

Runaway

Persons Notified: Direct Care Manager, Director of the Program, Police, and Parents

Procedures: We will report the runaways, file an official runaway report with the police, and notify your parents. If we see you “walk away,” we will go after you and bring you back to the Facility. It is very unsafe for you to run away from the property. Our forests are full of dangerous animals—bears (both black and grizzly), mountain lions, wolves, and others. In addition, our weather is unpredictable and sometimes severe: if you find yourself unprepared outdoors, without proper warmth and food, you could easily die from exposure. Getting lost in the forest would be a very scary event. Finding you in millions of acres of national forest could be a daunting task, and very dangerous for you and the rescuers. (A full-scale manhunt with tracking dogs might be necessary.) When returned to the facility, you will be placed on Level 00.

Sexual Conduct between Program Participants

Persons Notified: Direct Care Manager, Director of Program, Parents, Police

Procedures: The Ranch For Kids policies do not allow any sexual contact between participants. We do not “date” here, and we discourage all romantic relationships, including hand holding, kissing, note passing, etc. Even though it’s common for teenagers to date, we do not allow dating as it often creates conflict among participants, hurt feelings, and distractions that are not helpful for the participants who are here. Sexual contact between someone over 16 and someone under 16 is considered statutory rape, and the police must be notified. You could be criminally prosecuted. If you remain at the program, you’ll be placed on Level 00.

Theft

Persons Notified: Direct Care Manager, Parents, and Police as warranted

Procedures: If you steal, you’ll immediately be put on Level 0. The police may be notified and charges filed. You’ll make full restitution from your own money or work off the debt.

Substance Abuse

Persons Notified: Direct Care Manager, Director of Program, Parents, and Police as warranted

Procedures: Any use of illegal substances, (such as tobacco, alcohol, or illegal drugs), will place you on Level 00. The police may be notified. You may be dismissed from the program.

Major Destruction of Property

Persons Notified: Direct Care Manager, Director of Program, Parents, and Police as warranted

Procedures: You’ll be required to pay for any destruction of property. The police may be notified and charges filed. You will be placed on Level 0.

Goals for RFK Program Participants

These are behaviors that all participants at The Ranch for Kids should strive to attain.

The successful RFK participants consistently will maintain Level 2 behaviors and additionally:

1. Tell the full truth at all times;
2. Keep all promises and agreements;
3. Through appropriate speech and behavior, set a good example for others;
4. Speak/react with others politely and respectfully;
5. Try to keep others on task and out of trouble;
6. When asked, politely offer advice or opinions;
7. Complete needed tasks/work without argument or complaint;
8. Help others if they need and want assistance;
9. Complete all tasks thoroughly and completely to the best of your ability;
10. Accept additional tasks requested by staff;
11. Do clearly-needed work without being assigned it and reminded to do it;
12. Keep your work space clean during and after work;
13. If requested, assist staff with supervision of kids;
14. Resist peer pressure to join in inappropriate behavior;
15. In case of disagreements, deal directly and appropriately with the other person involved;
16. Responsibly complete all tasks so that the staff doesn't need to monitor you to ensure work was done properly;
17. When given a privilege, not abuse/overuse it.

(Remember: Willingness to take initiative and make yourself available to help create huge strides toward progress.)

Good Advice from the Father of Several Russian Kids

(Note: He wrote this advice as if you were making promises to yourself. Only minor editing changes have been made to his original document.)

FOLLOW THE RULES:

Every place has rules. I will not argue about the rules, no matter how inconvenient I think they are. The better I follow the rules, the more time I will have to do what I want to do. This will make me happier and less angry. I will remember the rules I don't like so I can change them when it is my turn to make the rules.

FOLLOW INSTRUCTIONS/RESPECT AUTHORITY:

I will follow all instructions given to me by anyone in charge of me and accept their decisions without arguing, no matter how unfair I think they are or how angry I feel. I will trust that the decision or instruction is in my best interest, even if I can't see it at the time or understand why. I will not ask why at the time of the decision or instruction because I will probably be angry and disrespectful. If I respect authority (those in charge of my welfare), they will respect me; and later I will get more freedom to make decisions by myself.

CONTROL ANGER:

I know I will get angry about something every day. I will get angry at everyone I know at some time. If I feel myself start to get angry, I will stop talking, stop listening, close my eyes, and take three deep breaths, then listen to the sound of my breath. If I still feel angry, I will not stomp away. I will say, without yelling or raising my voice that I need time by myself. Then, after getting permission, I will calmly walk away without slamming doors, without yelling, or without cursing. I will stay by myself until I am calm. To calm myself, I will think about what made me angry: will it matter to me tomorrow, next week, or next month?

RESPECT OTHERS:

I will respect other people. They are as important as I am, even if I don't like them. I will not call anyone or anything "dumb," "gay," or "stupid." If I see something I want, then I will say "please" and not "gimme." If I don't like something I see or something someone is talking about, I will say something like, "No, thank you" or "You like that? I like 'X.'" I will not say, "That sucks." I will not yell at anyone, curse at anyone, hit anyone, push anyone, or throw anything. I will not make fun of people or tease them unless they are my friends and I know they like the joking. I will say at least one nice thing each day to each person in my life that I see that day. If I respect other people in this way, they will learn to respect me the same way. This respect will make me happier and less angry. When I see people I know, I will look them in the eye, smile, and say, "Hello" and say their names.

RESPECT MYSELF:

I am a smart person. I am a good person. God put me on earth and brought me to America to use my good brain and heart to help other people. I already know that my talents bring other people pleasure. This makes me happy. I will use all the talents and abilities that God gave me to do good, not bad.

I will not do actions that will hurt my body or brain. I will not smoke, use drugs, or encourage others to do so. I will not use alcoholic drinks. I will never drive a car after drinking alcohol. I will never get into a car with a driver who has been drinking. I will not stay in a car if people in the car start drinking.

I will take care of my body and mind by taking any prescription medicine that I am supposed to take, when I am supposed to take it. I will make sure that I get enough to eat, even if my medicine makes me not hungry. I will not smoke cigarettes or dip or chew tobacco.

TELL THE TRUTH:

If I lie sometimes, then people will not believe me when I tell the truth. If I always tell the truth, then people will believe me. Even if everything I do say is true, but I have not said everything I know and I know the person I'm talking with believes something other than the full truth, then I have lied. If I always tell the truth and the whole truth, people will respect me; and they will likely also tell me the whole truth. Then I will be happier and less angry.

If I want to go somewhere or do something, I will ask the persons in charge of me and tell them the whole truth—where or what it is, who is driving, who is going, why I want to go, and other important information. I will accept their decision without arguing. If I do these things, I will have fewer problems and arguments with people.

BE THANKFUL:

I will be thankful for my entire life. Each part of it has taught me something and made me the person I am, even if I don't understand why. I will be thankful for all the people in my life who love me and care about me. I will remember that those people in charge of me want me to be safe, successful, and happy. They also want me to have fun. I will tell all the important people in my life how important they are to me each time I see them or at least once a day if I see them every day. When someone does something nice for me or says something nice to me, I will immediately say, "Thanks" or "Thank you."

FINISH SCHOOL:

I will work hard to finish school and do as well as I can. I will pay attention in classes, not disrupt class, and do my homework. I understand that I will not be able to get a good job or one I like if I do not finish school. If I finish school and have good grades, I will have more and better choices of good jobs that I will do. This will make me happier for the rest of my life.

Statistics indicate that there are three things which will help ensure a successful life and that you will not live in poverty:

1. Finish high school.
2. Do not get married before you are 22 years old.
3. Do not have children before you are married.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF RANCH FOR KIDS PARTICIPANTS

The United States Declaration of Independence states that all citizens have the rights to “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” Rights were very important to the people who founded this country. As young people you also have these basic rights as well as the responsibilities or obligations that come from having them. This document provides an overview of these rights in addition to the responsibilities you owe to yourself, your family, your school program, and the larger society in which you live.

Your education and growth in maturity should increasingly develop your sense of responsibility so that you can properly enjoy the rights which you and all other citizens have.

RIGHTS

1. The Necessities of Life

This category includes the right to sufficient nourishing food, sleep, adequate shelter, and necessary medical care. It does not include the right to entertainment, numerous material possessions, or luxuries. In other words, you have the rights to what you need but not to whatever you desire.

2. Safety

This right includes freedom from physical harm as well as all other forms of abuse. It includes the right to be treated with the dignity and respect appropriate to every human being.

3. Protection/Representation

This right means that if you believe you are being illegally mistreated by others, you have easy access to those entrusted with protecting you such as parents, teachers, social workers, or even attorneys.

4. Nondiscrimination

This right means that you may not be discriminated against because of your race, gender, disabilities, religious affiliations, or sexual orientation. It attempts to ensure your fair treatment or a “level playing field.”

5. Basic Education

Because a free society depends on educated citizens, our country guarantees you the right to free public education through high school. This right does not extend to a free college education. At many programs, including the academic program at The Ranch For Kids, this right includes the privilege of participating in co-curricular activities that can supplement and enhance your formal education.

6. Privacy / Confidentiality

You have the right to keep private information confidential. This idea means that such records as school and medical files are available only to those with a legitimate “need to know,” such as your teachers and medical providers. Of course, until you reach adulthood, this “need to know” status also applies to your parents and/or guardians.

7. Feelings

Although somewhat different from your human and civil rights, this right asserts that no one can tell you that your feelings are “wrong.” What you feel is genuine to you. Although others may argue that your emotions are not justified, they can’t prevent your feelings. Your feelings are real to you.

8. Compensation

If you have been unfairly deprived of a possession, you have the right to seek redress. In others words, if a person steals or damages something you own, he/she should return it to you, replace it, or provide you with the money to replace it.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Rights must always be balanced with responsibilities. By carrying out our responsibilities, we keep our rights secure. The mature person knows that it's unreasonable to expect to enjoy rights if he or she is not willing to assume the responsibilities which protect them. Like everyone else, you have the responsibilities to:

1. Take Care of Yourself

You have a responsibility to take care of yourself physically. This responsibility means that you should eat nutritious food, get adequate rest, avoid harmful substances, and take all required medications. You also have the responsibility to maintain good personal hygiene: to keep yourself, your clothing, and your personal living space clean.

2. Develop Your Skills and Abilities

All people have special God-given talents and gifts. It is their responsibility to develop those special abilities and use them to benefit themselves and those around them. Diligent efforts in school are an excellent way to develop your skills. Fortunately, well-developed abilities often bring well-paying jobs.

3. Honor Your Parents

It's important to honor your parents as they provide you with life's physical necessities as well as love, support, and encouragement. Although it's common for young people to disagree with their parents, they still have the responsibility to do what their parents request and to treat them with respect. Remember that the Sixth Commandment requires us to give honor to our parents.

4. Treat Others Respectfully

Just as you have the right to be treated respectfully, so you have the obligation to treat others with respect. Usually others treat us as we treat them: if we desire respect from others, we must show them consistent respect as well. It is good to follow the Platinum Rule: treat others as they would like to be treated.

5. Tell the Truth

Because lies almost always destroy relationships, it is essential for a responsible person to tell the truth at all times. The importance of honesty is stressed in law courts, where witnesses are required to tell "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth." No society which tolerates lies can last long. For these reasons it is every person's obligation to be forthright and open. Most people consider truth-telling to be the most important trait an individual can have.

6. Communicate Your Needs and Appreciation

Our ability to communicate effectively is crucial, for without communication we won't get our needs met. On the other hand, we have an obligation to communicate to others our gratitude for the positive actions they do. We can't expect others to read our minds. Instead we must express clearly and effectively both our needs and our appreciation. This responsibility means that you need to ask questions if you don't understand what someone has said or written.

7. Follow the Rules

For small groups and whole societies to function effectively, each individual must follow the rules. Whether a person breaks a minor rule such as leaving a mess in the cafeteria or breaks a law such as robbing a bank, he or she is showing disrespect for accepted behavior and ultimately disrespect for others who are hurt by the rule-breaker. The mature person follows the laws and regulations so that groups can function smoothly.

8. Accept the Consequences of Your Actions

Only you are responsible for your attitudes, choices, and behaviors. No one else chooses your actions and reactions. If you blame others for a choice you make or attempt to redirect the focus of your wrongdoing away from yourself, you are being dishonest. You do not acknowledge the truth of the situation—that you are accountable for your choice. Such attempts to shift responsibility destroy relationships. As a mature person, you must accept the consequences of your actions.

9. Fulfill Your Obligations

Responsible people honor their commitments: they do what they've agreed to do; they pay their debts; they complete their school assignments; they carry out their expected work duties. If people don't honor their obligations, usually others will have to "pick up the slack" and so become inconvenienced. Knowing how unfair it is, the responsible person will not put others in this difficult situation.

10. Prepare for Good Citizenship

Ultimately the success of a free society depends on having good citizens who can process information, think clearly, and so vote intelligently. For this reason responsible people prepare themselves to become effective citizens. As future voters, you have the responsibility to train yourself to be the best citizen you can be.

WHAT PARENTS EXPECT OF THEIR CHILDREN

Through numerous conversations with parents of Ranch for Kids participant, we have noticed that most share similar expectations concerning their children. Eight common traits emerged. Parents tell us they want their children to:

1. Understand that adults, because of their extensive life experiences and maturity, see the world differently than children do.
2. Accept that parents have authority over children and therefore expect obedience.
3. Appreciate the unique nature of the individual family and its privileges.
4. Value family relationships more than superficial friendships and material possessions.
5. Consider all people worthy of respect and show that respect in all their behaviors.
6. Develop an internal sense of right and wrong and behave with integrity in all interactions.
7. Understand the importance of a good education and take school very seriously.
8. Take responsibility for their actions rather than blaming other people or circumstances.

SOME IDEAS TO HELP YOU ACHIEVE THESE EXPECTATIONS

We all can benefit by thinking deeply about our lives and our relationships with others. Here are some mental activities that you may enjoy and that may help you grow in maturity and compassion.

1. Try honestly to see the world from your parents' point of view so that you can understand their decisions and the reasons for their actions.
2. Count your blessings: each day think about how your life has been made better through the care and concern of your family members and others who love you.
3. Carefully consider the consequences of your decisions and actions so that you can realistically decide if they are best for you in the long run.
4. Resist the temptations to act in an immature or selfish way based on the emotions of the moment.
5. Discipline yourself to "do the right thing" (tell the truth, do your assignments, treat others with respect) even when it's difficult to do so.
6. Imagine that everyone in the world behaves exactly as you do, and then ask yourself if that's the kind of world you'd want to live in.
7. Consider the ways your acts of consideration and kindness can make others happy and make the world a better place.
8. Picture yourself as you would like to be in ten years and make a list of the specific ways you can bring about those goals.

Things to Work On At the Program

- 1) Respect parental authority and recognize that parents must make the decisions about a child (education, placement, where to live.)
- 2) Recognize that running away or threats of running away are not acceptable and there is no need to engage in this behavior.
- 3) Come to appreciate parents and their love and to appreciate the opportunity you have to make a successful life for yourself by making good decisions.
- 4) Recognize the dangers of using the internet, sending pictures over the internet, conversing with strangers and setting up accounts on MySpace, Face Book or other such sites.
- 5) Recognize there is value in telling the truth and being honest with parents, friends/peers, and everyone.
- 6) Recognize that within a family there are rules and responsibilities that each member must follow if the family is to function in healthy and effective ways.
- 7) We hope and pray that your lives will be changed at the Ranch for Kids Project and you achieve your potential.

We would like our child to learn to....

1. Take responsibility for his/ her actions, not blaming others or circumstances
2. Treat all people with respect, speaking and behaving appropriately toward everyone
3. Take school seriously and understand the critical nature of education
4. Respect authority of parents and other adults in charge and do what he or she is told
5. Develop honesty, integrity, and a solid internal sense of right and wrong
6. Value family relationships over material "stuff" and superficial friendships.
7. Understand the difference between the choices of children and adults
8. Appreciate the priorities, privileges, and unique nature of our chosen family