



3 February 2020

Dear Leader Community,

Subject: Post Camp Celebrations, Edmund Rice Values and Duty of Care

I am aware that this year, as in previous years, strong bonds have been formed on each camp between the leaders. Powerful collectives were once again created that provided amazing experiences for the kids in our care. Without exception the camp groups have generated wonderful holidays for the children, as well as much appreciated respite for the parents and carers of those children. For this I and the Board of ERCKWA are sincerely grateful and I do hope that your camp experiences were equally rewarding.

While on camp and forming your teams, it is easy to forget the diversity and potential vulnerability that exists within the camp leader groups, given that your primary focus understandably centres on the children. As an organisation we have an equal duty of care for both the kids and leaders and in fact anyone involved as a volunteer or paid staff member. It is important to remember that we have historically had and still do have leaders on camp who are not yet 18 years of age.

We are all responsible for enacting the Edmund Rice Values we live by and the duty of care we are bound by (to ourselves and to each other), and this responsibility continues even after we say our farewells on camp. You are all trained in and aware of the policies and procedures that govern our operations. It is my expectation that all Eddie Ricers act in accordance with these values and guidelines at all times and most certainly at any time we are gathering formally or informally as a group before, during or after camps.

In particular, I need to impress on you the importance of respecting the underage members of our leader community, their challenges and concerns, and the role their parents/guardians play in consenting to their involvement with us. As with any on-camp involvement, it must be understood that parental consent should also be sought for any external event. Even an unofficial social gathering must respect the underage contingent in any camp group, including the underage leaders' requirement to seek parental consent to attend.

With the power of social media comes greater responsibility of reflection. We need to be much more aware of what is being sent, who it is going to and the appropriateness of the content. This extends to any communication between an adult and someone who is underage, whether on a one-to-one basis or a group setting.

With particular reference to after camp gatherings and parties (but essentially with any interaction), can I please insist that you all consider the above and act accordingly?



I do not wish to dampen the high spirits that led to so many magical moments on camps for both kids and leaders. However, we need to continue to scrutinise what we do in what is a high risk space and, in doing so, ensure we look after our leaders, especially when they are underage.

If you have any questions or concerns at all then please contact me.

Kind regards,
Kevin

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "K. Knapp".

Kevin Knapp

Chief Executive Officer

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