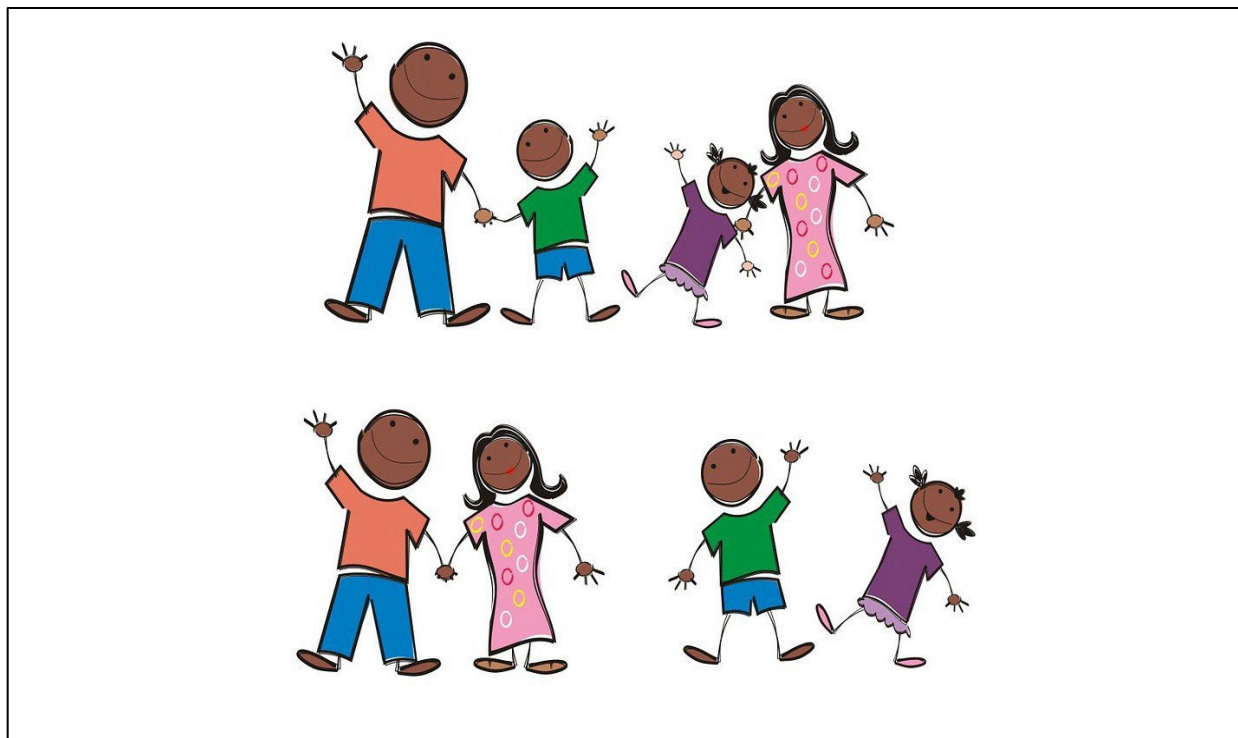


# YOUTH INITIATIVE PARENT/GUARDIAN GUIDEBOOK

Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated

National Program Planning & Development Committee



Risk Management Team  
September 2023

Greetings Youth Initiative Parent/Guardian,

On behalf of the National Program Planning and Development (PP&D) Committee of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., the National Risk Management team would like to offer you a heartfelt **THANK YOU** and appreciation for allowing your child or children to participate in Delta Sigma Theta, Sorority, Inc. (herein referred to as “Delta”) youth programs.

All programs adhere to policies and procedures designed to minimize any harm or injury to youth and any potential risks to Delta as the program sponsor. The policies are outlined in Delta’s Risk Management Manual. We encourage parents and/or guardians to review the information in this Parent/Guardian Guidebook regarding our risk management policies and procedures.

Delta currently sponsors multiple programs designed to promote the development of young girls and boys. These include, but are not limited to, Delta Academy, Delta GEMS, and EMBODI (collectively “youth initiatives”). Delta’s National PP&D Committee supervises the youth initiatives, but they are implemented through local alumnae chapters, sometimes with the participation of collegiate chapters.

**RISK MANAGEMENT** is *“the process of assessing risk and acting in such a manner, or prescribing policies and procedures, so as to minimize loss associated with such risk.”* (Webster’s New World Law Dictionary. 2020 - Wiley Publishing, Hoboken, NJ) It is important because it:

- Protects people, property, income and reputation
- Ensures the safety of youth and volunteers
- Evaluate the allocation of resources
- Focuses on enrichment of youth participants
- Focuses on safety and prevention

Parents/Guardians, again, we say thank you in advance for your support.

## Dr. Sybil Knight-Burney

Dr. Sybil Knight-Burney, Ed.D  
Chair, National Risk Management Sub-Committee

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**RISK MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE MEMBERS:**

**CENTRAL REGION:**  
Billie F. Coachman  
DeJeanette R. Williams

**EASTERN REGION:**  
Robin G. DeShields  
Sybil Knight-Burney, Chair

**MIDWEST REGION:**  
Carol E. Ware  
Adrianna Williamson

**SOUTH ATLANTIC REGION:**  
Norva L. McGee  
Vonzella E. Vincent

**SOUTHERN REGION:**  
Mary Carmen Williams

**SOUTHWEST REGION:**  
Alnita Foote

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### **Dr. Betty Shabazz Delta Academy**

This program addresses the needs of young women ages 11-14 in grades 6-8. The program provides an opportunity for local chapters to enrich and enhance the education that our young teens receive in public schools across the nation. Specifically, we augment their scholarship in math, science, and technology, and their opportunities to provide service in the form of leadership through service learning defined as the cultivation and maintenance of relationships.



### **Dr. Jeanne L. Noble Delta GEMS**

**Growing and Empowering Myself Successfully (GEMS)**, was a natural outgrowth and expansion for the continuation of the highly successful Dr. Betty Shabazz Delta Academy. The Dr. Jeanne L. Noble Delta GEMS was created in 2004 under the leadership of Dr. Louise A. Rice, 23rd National President, to empower the dreams of African American at-risk adolescent girls aged 14/15-18 and in grades 9-12). Delta GEMS provides the framework to actualize those dreams through the performance of specific tasks that develop a “CAN DO” attitude.

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### EMBODI

The Empowering Males to Build Opportunities for Developing Independence (EMBODI) program and manual is designed to refocus the efforts of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated with the support and action of other major organizations on the plight of African American males ages 11-18 and in grades 6-12. EMBODI was created as a signature program under the leadership of Cynthia M. A. Butler-McIntyre, 24th National President. Both informal and empirical data suggests that most African American males continue to be in crisis and are not reaching their fullest potential educationally, socially, and emotionally. EMBODI is designed to address these issues through dialogue and recommendations for change and action. EMBODI addresses issues related to STEM education, culture, self- efficacy, leadership, physical and mental health, healthy lifestyle choices, character, ethics, relationships, college readiness, fiscal management, civic engagement, and service learning.

Delta chapters may sponsor additional youth activities. Some examples include Debutante Cotillion, Jabberwock, Beautillion, SAT Prep and Tutoring Programs. These youth programs may vary by region, state and/or chapter but are all governed by Delta's youth policies and guidelines.

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### COMMUNICATION

We maintain a strong belief in the value of positive and open communication. You may receive information regarding important dates and information pertaining to our programs. Therefore, it is important that you provide us with your contact information.

### PROGRAM CALENDAR

The Youth Program Coordinator shall provide parents/guardians a description of the respective youth program initiative and the expectations for the youth and the parents/guardians. For most chapters, the program calendar will be reviewed at the parent/guardian orientation.

### RISK MANAGEMENT OVERVIEW

#### DEFINITION OF RISK MANAGEMENT

Risk management is the process of assessing risk and acting in such a manner, or prescribing policies and procedures, so as to minimize loss associated with such risk. Our goal is to ensure that parents/guardians understand how risk management plays a part in our youth programs and to maintain compliance with our policies and guidelines during all youth activities.

#### WHY DO WE NEED RISK MANAGEMENT?

Risk Management is important because it:

- Protects the people, property, income and reputation of Delta Sigma Theta
- Ensures the safety of all participants in our youth programs
- Proactively evaluates allocation of resources
- Allows us to focus on the enrichment of our youth participants
- Focuses on prevention

Youth programs face challenges to ensure that young people and volunteers are in a safe environment. It is important that Delta's risk management strategies are implemented in order to ensure that a positive learning environment is achieved, and that Delta's youth programs offer youth and volunteers an opportunity to engage in sound programs that are emotionally and physically safe.

Parents/Guardians of all youth are informed at orientation about Delta's risk management policies and that at no time should the youth be allowed to solicit funds without being accompanied by an adult. Parents of participants can use crowd funding accounts to raise funds from family and friends in support of their child's participation in cotillions and beautillions, but they must be reviewed by the Chapter President prior to launch.

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## Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated

### RISK MANAGEMENT ROLES

#### Chapter President

- The chapter president is ultimately accountable for ensuring all national risk management policies, procedures and guidelines are followed and that all volunteers for chapter's youth initiatives/programs have successfully completed the risk management application and screening process.

#### Chapter Risk Management Coordinator

- The Chapter President appoints the chapter's Risk Management Coordinator. The duties of the coordinator are to conduct all Risk Management Training, i.e., Chapter Orientation and Volunteer Training, Parent/Guardian, and Youth Participant training. She is responsible for updating and maintaining records associated with Risk Management and reporting as needed or requested to the Chapter President, Regional Risk Management Coordinator, and or Regional Director. Most importantly, she should assist all Youth Initiates Coordinators to ensure programs comply with the Risk Management policies and procedures.

#### Youth Program Coordinator

- The Youth Program Coordinator is responsible for coordinating and leading the youth activities and volunteers. She should know the policies of the National Program Planning & Development Youth Guidebooks and Guidelines. She should work closely with the Risk Management Coordinator to be sure all activities remain within the boundaries of the Risk Management policies and procedures. It is crucial to ensure that activities are without deviations to avoid unwanted consequences.

### VOLUNTEERS

Delta has implemented risk management policies for all volunteers participating in our youth initiative activities. All volunteers must undergo background screening and volunteer training before they will be allowed to participate as a volunteer in Delta's youth programs. The only exception is for one-time volunteers. This includes speakers, vendors or presenters who are NOT sorors of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. who participate in a single activity inclusive of all youth initiatives during the program year.

#### Who is a Volunteer?

- In Delta Sigma Theta, any individual participating in Delta's youth initiatives is defined as a volunteer. This applies to members of Delta Sigma Theta and non-members (i.e. Deltas and non-Deltas).

#### What are the requirements for becoming a Volunteer?

- Volunteers must be 18 years of age or older
- Volunteers must complete the application process
- Volunteers must undergo and pass a criminal background check
- Volunteers must complete risk management training on an annual basis
- Volunteers must sign and abide by the youth initiative code of ethics
- Volunteers must learn to recognize signs and symptoms of child abuse/neglect
- Volunteers must abide by Delta's mandatory reporting policy
- Volunteers must meet the time requirements and job duties as directed by the local chapter

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### RISK MANAGEMENT POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

Delta has implemented risk management policies and guidelines for all individuals who are involved in our youth programs. Following is a summary of relevant policies affecting our programs.

#### ACCIDENT PROCEDURES

In case of an accident, we will first attempt to notify the parents/guardians or the emergency contacts if the parent/guardian cannot be reached. Extreme emergencies may dictate other procedures deemed in the child's best interests, including dialing 9-1-1 or administering first aid, where necessary. Whenever a child is injured, regardless of the severity of the injury, an incident form and applicable witness statements are completed and maintained.

When it is necessary to take a youth to the hospital emergency room, volunteers should always take the Medical and Emergency Contact Information Form with them. The information will be valuable to medical care providers, and the packet includes documentation of the volunteer's authority to seek medical assistance for the youth.

#### ALLERGIES, ILLNESSES, SPECIAL NEEDS

Information relating to allergies, illnesses, and special needs must be communicated to the chapter in the Medical and Emergency Contact Information form that will be provided to you. We are happy to work with you to ensure your child is safe in our care.

#### MEDICATIONS

Delta, its local Chapter, members, or other volunteers will not dispense medication to youth in Delta's programs. As appropriate, parents/guardians may permit their child to administer the medicine to themselves, if medicine will be necessary during the youth program activity. Parents/guardians will be allowed to stay or return to administer any required medications to a youth participant. Background screening, specifically for this situation, will not be required. If parents/guardians (or a designee that's not a Delta volunteer as explained in the Risk Management Manual) cannot be present at each youth activity or if there are concerns that the youth will not be able to self-medicate, you will need to assess their child's medical situation and decide whether your child should participate in Delta's youth programs.

#### BEHAVIOR

All youth are expected to behave in a manner that is acceptable to our standards and must sign the Youth Code of Conduct. If a youth behaves in an unacceptable manner, the youth is redirected, shadowed, or removed from the activity for a brief period.

Unacceptable behavior is defined as that which is to the group as a whole during structure and activity time, behavior which may be harmful, or behavior compromising the safety of the group or individuals. Physically or verbally hurting (bullying) other youth and/or volunteers is unacceptable.

In the event that a youth continues to be disruptive, harms others, or put themselves at risk, the chapter has the right to dismiss youth from the program. Parents will be notified of such behaviors as they occur so we can work cooperatively on strategies and solutions.

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### **DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP PROCEDURES**

All youth must be picked up *and* signed out from the activity or program. In addition, all youth must be signed out by a parent, legal guardian or someone who is on the authorized pick-up list. A component of the sign-in / sign-out procedure requires a Parent/Guardian of a youth participant to identify the individual(s) authorized to pick-up the youth from the program (Youth Pick-up Authorization (Appendix B4)). Before a youth is released from a program, the identity of the person picking up the youth should be confirmed and verification made that the person is included on the list of authorized individuals who may pick up the youth participant.

### **PARENT/GUARDIAN PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS**

Parents or guardians who participate, visit, and/or observe youth initiative activities that require their interaction with other youth may be requested to complete Delta's criminal background check screening process.

Parent/Guardian participation, visitation and observation during youth initiative activities is encouraged. Parents/Guardians of participants in Cotillion, Jabberwock and similar programs have multiple interactions with youth. You may be required to attend multiple rehearsal sessions, luncheons, teas, or other planned events of offsite activities.

This results in interaction with youth other than your child. The interaction ranges from limited and public to inadvertently private. Therefore, Delta requires parents/guardians of youth in these programs to complete our full background screening and volunteer training. Parents/Guardians of participants in these programs will receive a Volunteer Application packet to complete the screening process. Until the background screening process is complete, your interaction will be limited, however your child can start the program.

For Delta Academy, Delta GEMS and EMBODI, the background check is only required if you will have multiple interactions with the program participants. Parents/guardians who drop off & pick up their child, remain on site, but will sit in their car or a designated waiting area in the program space, background screening is not required.

### **TRANSPORTATION**

Parents are responsible for transporting their child to program activities and events. However, if the parent allows another to transport their child, the parent must execute, as applicable: A Waiver and Permission to Transport Youth and/or A Parent Waiver and Permission for Teenage Driver to Transport Youth. These forms will be provided by the chapter.

### **SUPERVISION**

We do not allow one-to-one, isolated contact between adults and youth, e.g. tutoring, training classes, etc.



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### **PHOTOGRAPHY**

Chapters are required to have the executed Photograph, Media and Video Authorization Release form prior to photographing or videotaping youth and prior to using any photographs and/or videos for chapter-related activities.

When a photograph or video of any youth is used in any printed medium, online or in materials that will be printed online, no identifying information about the youth shall be included (e.g., the youth's full name, school, church and/or city of residence).

It is a violation of Delta's risk management policy for volunteers to post photographs or videos of youth on their personal social media when the youth participant is not their child.

### **OUT OF PROGRAM ACTIVITIES AND CONTACT WITH PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS**

There shall be no unsanctioned contact between volunteers and youth participants outside of Delta's youth initiative activities without the express written permission of the parent/guardian, or unless the parent/guardian is present.

### **FUNDRAISING**

Youth participants in our national youth enrichment programs, e.g. Delta Academy, Delta GEMS and EMBODI, are not allowed to participate in fundraising activities to support their programs or other chapter programs.

Chapters who sponsor fundraising activities such as Jabberwocks, Cotillions or similar events are allowed to participate in fundraising activities.

Further, in order to protect the youth participating in Delta's fundraising events, we strongly advise that youths participating in our programs should not be allowed to solicit funds without being accompanied by you or a supervising adult.

Parents of participants in programs where fundraising is permitted may use crowd funding sites or accounts to raise funds in support of their child's participation, but the crowd funding site must be reviewed by the Chapter President or a designee prior to being launched.

### **ALCOHOL USE POLICY**

No member or their guests shall consume alcoholic beverages while in the presence of minors who are attending or participating in any Delta youth initiative program, i.e. Delta Academy, Delta GEMS, EMBODI or any other Delta-sponsored youth program. This policy also applies to volunteers and parents participating in any Delta youth initiative program.

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### TRANSGENDER MEMBER POLICY

#### **Youth Initiatives and Gender-Specific Scholarships**

Delta will consider for youth initiatives and gender-specific scholarships any female or male, any individual who self-identifies as female or male, regardless of her/his assigned sex at birth, or her/his expression, or the perceived expression of her/his gender for female or male youth initiatives and female or male gender-specific scholarships.

#### **Youth Initiative Volunteers**

Volunteers for youth initiatives who are not members of Delta, should be cisgender individuals only (defined as relating to, or being a person, whose gender identity corresponds with the sex the person had or was identified as having at birth).

#### **Virtual Meetings & Publicity**

Delta has guidelines for chapters to use virtual platforms in conducting youth initiative activities. Chapters must adhere to mandatory requirements for printing or publishing personal identification information regarding any youth.

### PARENT/GUARDIAN FORMS

We require parents and/or guardians to complete certain forms for youth to participate in our youth programs. The forms have been approved by Delta, for use by all chapters. The forms will be provided to you and must be returned to the chapter before your child will be allowed to participate in any youth program. All parent and youth forms are retained as part of the chapter's records.

**The National Risk Management Team of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated would like to thank you for your support of our youth programs. We appreciate your participation and adherence to our Risk Management policies and guidelines.**

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### YOUTH INITIATIVE PROGRAM CONTACTS

*Note: The local chapter should insert the names and contact information for the following:*

#### **Chapter President**

Insert contact name and number

#### **Chapter Risk Management Coordinator**

Insert contact name and number

#### **Chapter Youth Program Coordinator**

Insert contact name and number