The Stratford Ecological Center (hereafter referred to as “Stratford”) operates on a principle that respects the integrity and rights of each individual and all living things. Moreover, to its mission core, “dedicated to the education of children and adults in understanding the relationships between living things and their environment”, Stratford operates to maintain the safety and well-being of the thousands of children that visit Stratford annually.

1) Since the inception of Stratford, the trustees and their staff have conducted sexual predator and criminal background checks as needed on a case by case basis for employees and volunteers that work primarily with children. Stratford has also since its inception run background checks on all interns and education staff that have primary responsibility working with and educating children. These checks were done by staff for staff, interns and volunteers with their consent.

2) Long-standing education program protocol, established by Stratford’s founding and successive education staff, has been to instruct staff and volunteers that they should not be present with a child without another adult present. In early years when there were fewer and smaller groups of children and Stratford’s attendance numbers were low, it was easier to follow the Protocol. Most groups either had a teacher, a second guide shadowing or assisting primary guides and/or numerous parent chaperones attending Stratford’s programs with their children. However, there were times when circumstances made this protocol impractical, including medical emergencies and other extenuating or uncontrollable circumstances. Also, an exception developed for interns, staff or guides that had background checks and were vetted through an application process that included interviews, references and review of previous work experience.

3) Because of the significant increase in attendance, requiring a greater number of volunteers, who are leading a greater number of groups that don’t always have an additional adult present in those groups, the Stratford Ecological Center adopted and is implementing the following additional procedures to supplement the existing protocols that will continue to be followed to the greatest extent possible.
4) The following additional procedures and protocols are adopted to enhance Stratford’s existing background check process:

   a) At the time of a person’s initial application for a volunteer position, such person will be notified that at any time the person may be required to provide a set of impressions of their fingerprints and a criminal record check may be conducted. The applicant will be required to sign a Notice and Consent Form, copy of which is attached, which acknowledges notification of this requirement and grants consent to Stratford Ecological Center to conduct a criminal background check with the Bureau of Criminal Identification and Federal Bureau of Investigation, as well as a check of the sexual predator data base, records of the Bureau of Motor Vehicles, county records and other sources of information on the applicant’s character, general reputation, personal characteristics and mode of living.

   b) All persons currently serving in a volunteer position will be notified that at any time the person may be required to provide a set of impressions of their fingerprints and a criminal record check may be conducted. They will also be required to sign a Notice and Consent Form, copy of which is attached, which acknowledges notification of this requirement and grants consent to Stratford Ecological Center to conduct a criminal background check with the Bureau of Criminal Identification and Federal Bureau of Investigation, as well as a check of the sexual predator data base, records of the Bureau of Motor Vehicles, county records and other sources of information on the applicant’s character, general reputation, personal characteristics and mode of living.

   c) All applicants for employment and current employees of Stratford will be notified that at any time the person may be required to provide a set of impressions of their fingerprints and a criminal record check may be conducted. They will also be required to sign a Notice and Consent Form, copy of which is attached, which acknowledges notification of this requirement and grants consent to Stratford Ecological Center to conduct a criminal background check with the Bureau of Criminal Identification and Federal Bureau of Investigation, as well as a check of the sexual predator data base, records of the Bureau of Motor Vehicles, county records and other sources of information on the applicant’s character, general reputation, personal characteristics and mode of living.

   d) Criminal background checks will be required of all applicants for employment. Criminal background checks will also be required for all current employees who have not previously had a background check. The requirement of a background check for other applicants, volunteers and employees shall be at the discretion of the Executive Director. The Executive Director may at any time in his/her discretion conduct an additional background check or checks for any volunteer or employee who has had a background check.

   e) Applicants for positions as education volunteers and guides will be requested to provide three personal or professional references or endorsements and will be requested to authorize Stratford to contact the references/endorsements provided.
f) No person who has been convicted of or pleaded guilty to any of the offenses described in division (a)(1) of Section 109.572 of the Ohio Revised Code, shall serve as a volunteer or employee at Stratford.

g) Stratford reserves the right to deny an application for a volunteer position or to terminate a volunteer’s position for any reason that it considers proper, provided however, Stratford shall not discriminate against any person for any reason prohibited by law.

h) Stratford reserves the right to deny an application for employment or to terminate employment for any reason that it considers proper which is not prohibited by law, provided however, Stratford shall not discriminate against any person for any reason prohibited by law.

i) If Stratford receives any information from a criminal background check or any other information which it considers as reason for denying an application for a volunteer position or employment or continued service as a volunteer or employee, the person adversely affected will be notified. They will also be notified of the source of the information and of their right to contact the consumer reporting agency to dispute the information in the manner provided by Consumer Credit Reform Act.

j) Information obtained by Stratford from a criminal background check or other source will not be provided to any other organization.

k) Notice and consent forms signed by applicants and volunteers and information obtained from criminal background checks and other sources will be retained by Stratford in written or digital format until the Board authorizes their disposal.

l) Applicants for volunteer positions and employment shall be provided with a copy of this Policy.

m) Stratford will assume all costs associated with conducting background checks and will not pass this cost onto the volunteer or employee.

n) This Policy shall be subject to change by Stratford’s Board of Trustees.
I have read and understood the Stratford Ecological Center Background Check Policy and have received notice that I may be required to provide a set of impressions of my fingerprints and a criminal record check may be conducted as well as a check of the sexual predator database, records of the Bureau of Motor Vehicles, county records and other sources of information on my character, general reputation, personal characteristics, and mode of living.

I hereby authorize Stratford Ecological Center to conduct criminal record checks with the Bureau of Criminal Identification and Federal Bureau of Investigation as well as checks of the sexual predator database, records of the Bureau of Motor Vehicles, county records and other sources of information on my character, general reputation, personal characteristics, and mode of living and to use such information in considering my suitability for service as a volunteer or employee. I authorize Stratford to contact persons whom I have provided as references or endorsements.

I understand that my right to serve or continue as a volunteer or employee of Stratford Ecological Center may be contingent upon the result of the background check that I have authorized.

Print Name                        Signature                        Date

(If under 18 years of age):

Parent/Guardian Print Name        Parent/Guardian Signature        Date
OFFENSES DESCRIBED IN DIVISION (a)(1) OF 109.572

(a) A violation of section 2903.01, 2903.02, 2903.03, 2903.04, 2903.11, 2903.12, 2903.13, 2903.16, 2903.21, 2903.34, 2905.01, 2905.02, 2905.05, 2907.02, 2907.03, 2907.04, 2907.05, 2907.06, 2907.07, 2907.08, 2907.09, 2907.21, 2907.22, 2907.23, 2907.25, 2907.31, 2907.32, 2907.321, 2907.322, 2907.323, 2911.01, 2911.02, 2911.11, 2911.12, 2919.12, 2919.22, 2919.24, 2919.25, 2923.12, 2923.13, 2923.161, 2925.02, 2925.03, 2925.04, 2925.05, 2925.06, or 3716.11 of the Revised Code, felonious sexual penetration in violation of former section 2907.12 of the Revised Code, a violation of section 2905.04 of the Revised Code as it existed prior to July 1, 1996, a violation of section 2919.23 of the Revised Code that would have been a violation of section 2905.04 of the Revised Code as it existed prior to July 1, 1996, had the violation been committed prior to that date, or a violation of section 2925.11 of the Revised Code that is not a minor drug possession offense;

(b) A violation of an existing or former law of this state, any other state, or the United States that is substantially equivalent to any of the offenses listed in division (A)(1)(a) of this section.

2903.01 Aggravated Murder
2903.02 Murder
2903.03 Voluntary Manslaughter
2903.04 Involuntary Manslaughter
2903.11 Felonious Assault
2903.12 Aggravated Assault
2903.13 Assault
2903.16 Failing to Provide for Functionally Impaired Person
2903.21 Aggravated Menacing
2903.34 Offenses against Residents or Patients of Care Facilities
2905.01 Kidnapping
2905.02 Abduction
2905.05 Criminal Child Enticement
2907.02 Rape
2907.03 Sexual Battery
2907.04 Unlawful Sexual Conduct with Minor
2907.05 Gross Sexual Imposition
2907.06 Sexual Imposition
2907.07 Importuning
2907.08 Voyeurism
2907.09 Public Indecency
2907.21 Compelling Prostitution
2907.22 Promoting Prostitution
2907.23 Procuring
2907.25 Prostitution after Positive HIV Test
2907.31 Disseminating Matters Harmful to Juveniles
2907.32 Pandering Obscenity
2907.321 Pandering Obscenity Involving a Minor
2907.322 Pandering Sexually Oriented Matter
2907.323 Illegal Use of a Minor in Nudity Oriented Material or Performance
2911.01 Aggravated Robbery
2911.02 Robbery
2911.11 Aggravated Burglary
2911.12 Burglary
2919.12 Unlawful Abortion
2919.22 Endangering Children
2919.24 Contributing to the Unruliness or Delinquency of a Minor
2919.25 Domestic Violence
2923.12 Carrying Concealed Weapons
2923.13 Having Weapon While Under Disability
2923.161 Improperly Discharging a Firearm at or into a School or House
2925.02 Corrupting Another with Drugs
2925.03 Trafficking, Aggravated Trafficking in Drugs
2925.04 Illegal Manufacture of Drugs, Illegal Cultivation of Marijuana, Methamphetamine
2925.05 Funding, Aggravated Funding of Drug or Marijuana Trafficking
2925.06 Illegal Administration or Distribution of Anabolic Steroids
3716.11 Placing Harmful or Hazardous Objects in Food or Confection