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# Clear Creek Community Church Student Ministry Safety Policies and Procedures

At Clear Creek Community Church, we take our calling and responsibility to care for kids and students very seriously. Our guidelines, set below, could be summarized in two words: **overly cautious**. We know “our adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour,” (1 Peter 5:8 ESV). There has been an increasing number of tragedies that have shocked the Christian community, and it is our desire to set in place policies to keep students, families, volunteers, and staff safe. We want to be sure that our policies and procedures not only set up a framework where inappropriate behavior is difficult to happen, but also where any appearance of impropriety is avoided. It's important that we strive to live above reproach.

We understand that building relationships with students is foundational to the student ministry of CCCC. Defining healthy and safe relationships through policies is not meant, in any way, to undermine the importance of personal interaction in our ministry. Rather, it is intended to clearly define behaviors and practices that allow the staff and volunteers to demonstrate its love and compassion for students in healthy ways. The following policies are intended to facilitate a safe and nurturing environment for students to explore faith, grow together, and make a difference.

Sincerely,

CCCC Students Staff

## **Definitions:**

**Student Ministry Staff Member** – *Student Director, Student Ministry Associate, Student Ministry Assistant, Student Ministry Intern*

**Student Volunteer** – *Student Ministry Group Guides, Student Ministry Navigators, Student Ministry Navigator In Training, Student Ministry First Impressions, Student Ministry Office Support, Student Ministry Event Team Volunteers*

**Event** – *A student gathering that includes but is not limited to camp and retreats, ONE events, The MIX, organized social gatherings, organized outreach gatherings*



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## QUALIFICATIONS TO SERVE

All Student Ministry volunteers will complete the application process before they can serve in Student Ministry. Volunteers must be attending CCCC for at least six months and need to complete an application, submit three references (only one can be a family member and Navigators must have a reference from their Navigator or Group Guide), complete a background check, be interviewed by a Student Director or volunteer, and be added to a security screening software check-in list. All volunteers will be checked through a security screening software weekly and background checks and applications will be renewed every three years or as required by a camp.

Student Navigators are also required to be in a small group and a CCCC member. If a Navigator steps out of small group for any reason, they must immediately inform their campus Student Director.

If a volunteer does not serve for over six months, they will need to redo the application process.

## VIOLATIONS OF POLICIES

Any staff, volunteer, parent, or church member who witnesses a violation is expected to report that violation to their campus Student Director, Family Ministry Director (Lance Lawson), or Executive Pastor (Mark Carden). When any bystander sees problematic behavior, the behavior should be named, the correct policy rules explained, and the individual redirected toward safer behavior.

## ONE-TO-ONE INTERACTIONS

CCCC recognizes that meeting the emotional needs of students may occasionally require staff members and volunteers to minister to them on an individual basis. Remember that **the moment you start believing that you are above temptation is the moment you are the most vulnerable**. A mere accusation could cause serious damage.

Staff and volunteers are to observe these guidelines when interacting with students:

- Staff and volunteers must never be alone with a student in a private location (isolated, non-visible area). The Rule of Three must be followed when not in a public setting. There should always be at least three people (two students and one leader = good; two leaders and one student = best) in any given area.
- One-to-one meetings should be conducted with an individual student when others are present and where interactions can be easily observed (in public).



- One-to-one meetings with members of the opposite sex are not allowed. Steer those members of the opposite sex who are seeking one-to-one help to an appropriate volunteer of the same gender.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

The following guidelines should be observed when Student Ministry staff and volunteers are involved in the transportation of students:

- We do annual Motor Vehicle Record checks on all student ministry staff members, student ministry group guides, student ministry navigators and any camp staff that is designated to drive students.
- Students should be transported directly to their parent authorized destination.
- The Rule of Three should be observed when transporting students. There must be two students in the car with one Student Ministry volunteer or staff member, or two Student Ministry volunteers or staff members and one student. No one may ever transport a student one-on-one unless it's been discussed with the Student Director and there is written permission (via text or email) from the student's parent(s).
- Staff members and volunteers should not have physical contact with students while in a vehicle.
- Devices may only be utilized for hands free by the driver while driving students.
- All traffic laws must be obeyed. All students must remain in their seat belts. Reckless driving (swerving, hitting brakes hard, racing over speed bumps or through parking lots, etc.) is never allowed.
- Students are not allowed to drive a vehicle belonging to a staff member or volunteer.

## **PARENTAL CONTACT & PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT**

Parents who leave a student in the care of Student Ministry during church services or events, will be contacted if their child becomes ill, injured, or has a severe disciplinary problem while participating in Student Ministry programs.

Parents have an open invitation to observe programs and activities in which their student is involved. Parents who choose to visit Student Ministry programs and activities will be accompanied by a Student Ministry volunteer for the duration of their visit and must wear a security screening software badge.

Parents who desire to participate in or have continuous, ongoing contact with Student Ministry programs will be required to complete the CCCC volunteer application and screening process.



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## **PHYSICAL CONTACT**

When creating safe boundaries for students, it is important to establish what types of affection are appropriate and inappropriate, otherwise that decision is left to each individual. Stating which behaviors are appropriate and inappropriate allows CCCC Student Ministry staff and volunteers to comfortably show positive affection in ministry and identify individuals who are not maintaining safe boundaries with children or youth. These guidelines are based on the avoidance of behaviors known to be used by child molesters to groom children or youth and their parents for future abuse. The following guidelines are to be carefully followed by all CCCC Student Ministry staff and volunteers.

### ***APPROPRIATE TOUCH***

- Handshakes and high-fives
- Arm around the shoulders
- Pats on the shoulder or back
- Side hugs

### ***INAPPROPRIATE TOUCH***

- Back rubs, massages of any kind, etc.
- Touching of legs, bottoms, or private parts
- Touching a child in anger, disgust, or frustration
- Full-frontal hugs with the opposite sex
- Sexual, lengthy embraces
- Girls and boys walking hand-in-hand
- Lap-sitting
- Kissing
- Wrestling (cabin, pool, etc.)
- Tickling
- Any unwanted affection or attention

The following guidelines are to be carefully followed by all Student Ministry staff and volunteers:

- Inappropriate touching and inappropriate displays of affection are forbidden. Any inappropriate physical contact, suspected abuse, touching, or displays of affection by a student ministry staff or volunteer should be immediately reported to a Student Director, Family Ministry Director, or the Executive Pastor.
- Physical contact should be for the benefit of the student and never based upon the emotional needs of a Student Ministry staff member or volunteer.
- Physical contact and affection should be given only in observable places or when other students or Student Ministry staff members or volunteers are present. It is much less



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likely that touch will be inappropriate or misinterpreted as such when physical contact is open to observation.

- Any unwanted contact is forced contact. Do not force any physical contact, touch, or affection upon a reluctant student. A student's preference not to be touched must be respected. Best practice is to ask the student first.
- Student Ministry staff and volunteers are responsible for protecting students under their supervision from inappropriate or unwanted touch by others.

## **COMMUNICATION**

All Student Ministry staff members and volunteers need to be mindful that the way they communicate with students is very important. Inappropriate communication can easily be seen as grooming a child for abuse. The words and content we share with students can hold a lot of power and can greatly affect our relationship with students and their parents. Even the perception of inappropriate communication can be very damaging.

When communicating with students remember that students are not your peers, and your communication should reflect that. While we share our lives with students it is not appropriate to share information or to speak to students in the way you would another adult.

- Interactions between students and Student Ministry staff members and volunteers should be appropriate, positive, uplifting, encouraging, and constructive.
- When communicating with students, Student Ministry staff members and volunteers should be mindful of their mission to aid parents in the spiritual growth and development of their children. Therefore, Student Ministry staff members and volunteers should avoid speaking negatively, belittling, or shaming the parents of the students they serve. Our goal is always reconciliation between a parent and a student.
- Language and shared content should never come across as being harsh, threatening, intimidating, derogatory, or humiliating. Strong sarcasm should be avoided as it is often demeaning and easily construed as negative talk by others.
- Other inappropriate talk would include compliments or comments related to someone's body, name-calling, discussing sexual encounters, cursing, telling off-color jokes, inappropriate or mean-spirited memes and gifs, etc.
- Consider how your words and shared content will be perceived.
- One-on-one communication with students must be with the same gender.
- As a Student Ministry volunteer or staff member, you are responsible for your communication to students and the way students communicate with each other in your presence, both in person and in digital communication.



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## **WRITTEN COMMUNICATION (TEXT, MESSAGING, EMAIL, LETTERS, ETC.)**

- Parents will be informed via email that their child will be added to a group message. Group texting is preferred and most Navigator-to-student communication will be done via the group message.
- Navigators will reach out to parents before any individual messaging. They will communicate with parents their role and intentions.
- Written communication should be with students of the same gender.
- We will respect all parent wishes regarding written communication. Parents can opt out of written communication.
- Be considerate. All phone calls and messages must be during appropriate hours. Navigators should consider if the student is in school at that time and not text students late at night.
- If a student is texting one-on-one in an emergency (example: making an outcry) please inform the campus Student Director immediately.
- Private messaging boards that do not keep an archive of sent and received messages (ex. Snapchat) are not permitted as a form of student-to-Student Ministry staff member and volunteer communication.
- All letters must be done in a transparent way. Postcards are a great option so the parents can see what is being sent to their child.
- Written communication must follow all prior guidelines about communicating with students.

## **EXTRA ATTENTION AND GIFTS**

Often students that need extra attention are also the children who are most vulnerable to abuse. Secret gifts and attention are not allowed. All previous policies apply to students needing extra care.

Student Ministry staff members and volunteers should be aware of the perception of favoritism that excludes other students. Student Directors and/or Group Guides should be informed of situations when a volunteer is spending extra time with, or giving gifts to, a student.

Special occasions or special accomplishments should receive group acknowledgement and can easily be rewarded with group recognition (ex. mention during announcements, have the entire group sing Happy Birthday, bring treats to group, etc.).

## **SEXUALLY ORIENTED CONVERSATIONS**

Student Ministry staff members and volunteers are prohibited from engaging in inappropriate or sexually explicit conversations with students. Do not share with students inappropriate and explicit details about your own personal relationships, dating, or sexual activities.



However, it is expected that from time-to-time Student Ministry discussions and lessons may address issues related to purity, dating, sex, and human sexuality. These lessons will convey to the students the church's views on these topics. If students have impromptu questions about their bodies or sexuality, keep the conversation age-appropriate, offer as few details as possible, and stay on the topic initiated by the student.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA**

Be careful what you are posting on your social media. You are responsible for what is on the internet regarding yourself, even if you are not the one posting the content. Monitor your profiles for inappropriate material.

Inappropriate material includes (list not exhaustive):

- Pictures of you dressed inappropriately.
- Pictures that glamorize the party scene (ex. pictures of you or friends drinking, pictures that call into question your integrity, etc.).
- Messages that involve scandalous talk, glamorization of sin, or involving foul language.
- Divisive political posts.

## **APPROPRIATE ATTIRE**

Student ministry staff and volunteers should remember that students will use what they wear as an example of what is okay for them to wear. You are free in Christ, but as an example, we lay some liberties down for the sake of others. Your clothing, attitude, and actions matter.

- Dress appropriately according to the nature of the event or activity.
- Dress modestly at all times. Modesty means more than just appropriate clothing. It also means appropriate attitude toward others, especially the opposite sex.
- Appropriate staff and volunteer swimwear:
  - Males are permitted to wear board shorts and swim trunks, but are not permitted to wear jammers, spandex briefs, or other similar swimwear (form-fitting).
  - Females are permitted to wear one-piece suits and conservative tankini-type suits that cover midriff, or a dark coverup over two-piece bikinis.

Take great care when discussing a student's clothing with them. It's best to ask another adult before approaching a student. Any clothing conversations need to be from a same gendered adult, preferably from the student's Navigator. When speaking to a student about their inappropriate clothing remember to appeal to their heart and intentions first and do not shame them.



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Staff members and volunteers should never be naked in the presence of students in their care. There will never be an event or situation that may call for the possibility of nudity.

## **INTOXICANTS**

Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from the use, possession, or being under the influence of alcohol, tobacco, e-cigs or vapes while in the presence of students, while traveling with students, while working with or supervising students, or while at any CCCC facility or event.

Student Ministry staff members and volunteers should never use any illegal drugs.

## **SEXUALLY ORIENTED MATERIAL**

Student Ministry staff members and volunteers are prohibited from possessing any sexually oriented printed material (magazines, cards, images, videos, films, etc.) on church property or in the presence of students including a leader or staff member's dwelling and vehicle.

## **MOVIES**

Volunteers should get Student Director permission before viewing any movie with students.

No R-rated movies are permitted. Parental consent must be given for a PG-13 movie to be seen by a student 12-years old or younger.

## **VOLUNTEER PLANNED EVENTS**

All volunteer planned activities must be approved by a Student Director. Do not participate in the activity without first receiving approval.

If you are planning an event in your home, please contact your Student Director before inviting students to go over the requirements. Everyone in the home must be background checked. We would ask that in addition to meeting the adult-to-student ratio you have at least one other volunteer in your home (Student Director, Group Guide, co-leader, etc.).

Any event where students sleep over is highly discouraged. If you want to have any kind of overnight event, please contact your Student Director before talking to students or parents.

If a volunteer or staff member is planning an event for the students, they must have the appropriate amount of supervision to ensure the safety of the students participating. Student



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events will have a 1:10 adult-to-student ratio for High School students and a 1:7 adult-to-student ratio for Junior High students.

Before planning an event in your home, answer these questions and then contact a Student Director for approval.

- *Does the activity have any obvious physical safety risks?*
  - *If so, how can they be minimized to make physical injury a non-issue?*
- *What is the fastest way to get emergency help at the scene in the event of an injury?*
- *Does this activity offer any advantage to someone who means to carry out physical or sexual harm to a student, family member, or leader?*
  - *If so, how can this advantage for a predator be removed?*

## **MEDICATION**

Medication may not be given to a student by a staff member or volunteer except in the case of an emergency.

At Student Ministry programmed events such as camps and retreats, all over the counter and prescription drugs, with the exception of epi-pens and rescue inhalers, will be handled by the medical staff.

- Students are not permitted to self-medicate.
- Volunteers and staff members are not permitted to give medicine to a student.

## **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

**ABUSE** You are required to report all suspected abuse and student abuse outcries. [CLICK HERE](#) for outcry procedures.

**BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT** [CLICK HERE](#) for behavior management resources.

**INCIDENT REPORT** [CLICK HERE](#)