

Guidelines for Youth, Youth Leaders, and Chaperones Regarding Responsibility, Accountability, and Behavior During Youth Events

Purpose: To create a fun, safe environment where those who don't know Jesus can be introduced to Him, and where those who already have a relationship with Him can develop it further.

This Covenant Code of Conduct has been established by the Christian Education Board as a basis for accountability for all participating youth and adults for:

- Meetings
- Retreats
- Lock-ins and other church activities
- Special trips and events

Age: Participants must be in 6th grade through 12th grade. Unless you are a parent, designated ministry assistant, or youth leader, there will be no one that has graduated from high school or over 18 years of age that will be allowed to attend youth meetings or special youth events.

Location of Youth: Church leaders can only be responsible for students who are actually in an area designated for a youth activity. It is our policy that all students on church property must be in the actual area where the announced activity is taking place. Whether at the church or on an outing, we will stay together or be in the designated space for that particular time or activity if we split into groups. If someone separates him or herself from the group, one of the adults will try to locate the youth.

Displays of Affection: All participants shall refrain from inappropriate displays of affection such as kissing, prolonged embracing, or other body contact inappropriate to a church environment. Genuine respect for each other in word, thought, and deed will be encouraged by adult leadership.

Respect Towards Leaders: Students who choose to participate in FBC Greencastle youth activities agree to follow the instructions of the leaders. If a student has a problem following instructions, his or her parents will be notified as soon as possible and appropriate action will be taken.

Property Damage: Any participant who damages or destroys property willfully will be responsible for the cost of repair/replacement or cleaning the mess made.

Smoking/Drinking/Illegal Drugs: Tobacco use by adult leaders is discouraged. During events, adults who use tobacco products should leave their products at home. Youth

will not be permitted to use tobacco products at youth events, even if they have turned 18. Parents will be notified immediately if a youth is found to be in possession of alcohol or an illegal substance, and the youth will need to be picked up by a parent. Any adult who uses or displays alcohol during any youth event or illegal drugs at any time will be dismissed from youth group leadership or functions.

Violent Behavior: Violent behavior and/or possession of any type of weapon will not be tolerated. Any act of striking, hitting, kicking, or attacking another individual will be cause for removal from the group and having a parent/guardian pick up the offending youth. Repeated offenses will result in the youth not being permitted to participate in youth activities until the parents and youth meet with the Pastor, Christian Education Board, and a youth leader who will determine reinstatement. Any adult who displays any act of violent behavior will not be permitted to participate in youth activities.

Inappropriate Language: No participant should use inappropriate language at any church event. This not only includes what is commonly accepted as vulgar language, but also abusive language directed at another individual such as name-calling or other put downs. The first two offenses will result in warnings from the leader(s) in charge of the event. The third offense will result in removal from the group and the parent/guardian being called to pick up the youth. Any subsequent offense will result in the parents/guardians of the youth meeting with the Pastor plus a youth leader to address the problem.

Chaperoning: A reasonable gender balance should exist between male and female leaders for all functions. If it cannot be achieved, the event must be cancelled. If both sexes are present in youth, they must be present in leaders/chaperones. (Exceptions can be made with the approval of the Christian Education Board.)

- General youth activities: 2 adults per 14 youth
- Camping, lock-ins, overnight activities: 1 adult per 5 youth, minimum of 2 adults
- Activities involving transportation: 1 adult per 5 youth, minimum of 2 adults

In situations where one adult and one youth may be traveling together, another adult must be included, except in cases of parental consent.

Transportation: Driving automobiles to youth events will be provided only by designated youth leaders or chaperones following a DMV check. Youth members are not allowed to drive non-related youth or youth who did not arrive in the youth-driven vehicle. If youth need to drive their own vehicle to a youth event off-site, the parents must notify the Pastor or Youth Leader first.

- Only church approved drivers are permitted to drive the van or their own personal vehicles to transport youth.
- With the exception of arrangements made prior to arrival, parents are responsible for the youth's transportation to and from youth functions.
- Parents are responsible for all student driven vehicles.
- Parents are also responsible for their student who has their permission to ride in another person's vehicle.
- The church, its leaders, staff, or members cannot be responsible or held liable for the safety of youth-driven vehicles and cannot guarantee the quality of driving or proper insurance.

The number of youth, leaders, and chaperones per vehicle will NOT exceed the number of safety belts available. All persons driving or being driven to/from a First Baptist Church of Greencastle sponsored youth event MUST use seat belts at all times. Failure to comply will cause the driver to delay movement of the vehicle.

Emergency Medical Release Forms/Permission Slips: Emergency release forms are to be supplied to the youth at the beginning of the year and will serve for all events from August through the following July. Medical information should be supplied as completely appropriate information. Separate permission slips are to be completed for each activity. Emergency information will be kept for adult chaperones as well.

Meetings:

- No loud, disruptive, or defiant behavior
- If loud, disruptive, or defiant behavior continues after warning the individual(s), said individual(s) will be removed from the meeting and parents will be called to pick up the youth. If the youth drives, parents will be contacted before sending the youth home. Youth group has a specific program which volunteers have spent many hours preparing. It is not the desire of the adult leadership to provide a youth-care hangout, but a quality youth program designed to further a youth's faith growth opportunities.
- Youth will be accounted for at the beginning/end of the meetings. Parents will be notified if youth leave without consent or knowledge of youth leaders.
- Cell phone use, including texting, will ONLY be allowed if permission is granted by the youth leader. Phones should be silent and not used during meetings and events.

Attendance: In order to receive monetary assistance from the youth fund or any other First Baptist Church line item fund for activities, trips, etc. throughout the year, youth will be required to attend 70% of regular meetings/events. Exceptions may be made after discussion with the youth, parent/guardian, Youth Director and Pastor regarding schedule conflicts.

Trip Policies: First Baptist Church assumes a lot of responsibility when taking youth out of town. As a result, obeying and respecting sponsors is essential for the youth group to function well. Students may be sent home at the parents' expense if there is a serious breakdown in this area. If a problem arises, the parents or legal guardian will come pick the student up or pay for commercial transportation home as soon as possible. Parents or guardians agree to support the leaders' decisions about sending a student home, knowing that only those present on the trip can know all the circumstances involved.

- It is understood that any rule or guideline that is not mentioned in our guidelines but is required by a camp or retreat where our youth are present will also apply to our students.
- Boys and girls are not allowed to visit in the same room without an adult chaperone from First Baptist present when staying in a motel, at a camp, or retreat.
- We recommend the buddy system on all trips. Students should not be anywhere by themselves for safety reasons.

Dress Code: Our dress code is with Christian modesty in mind. ("Hands up/Bend over check") Parents are to make sure that their student is dressed appropriately and brings appropriate clothing on trips. Chaperones have permission to suggest a change of dress at any time they feel the need to do so.

Bathing suits

- Girls should wear a one-piece or a tankini. If a girl does not have this type of bathing suit, a tank top or shirt must be worn over the swimsuit.
- Boys should wear modest swim shorts.

General Information:

- Parents are to be kept informed of youth activities, agenda for meetings, special activities, and projects.
- Information provided should be as specific as possible regarding time of departure and arrival, routes, method of travel, phone numbers, and number of drivers.

- Movies used during activities should be rated either G. Any other movies will be prescreened and require a permission slip.
- ANY prescription medication that is required to be taken by a youth participant during a chaperoned event shall be provided to an adult leader/chaperone, accompanied by written instructions as to dosage administration and timing. Parents agree to carefully review this information with their child in advance so as to ensure the youth understands. Youth leaders/chaperones are to use their best efforts to make medication in their possession available to the designated youth at the appropriate time. If the youth refuses to take the medication as directed, the parent/guardian will be notified to provide immediate transportation home for the youth. If students take medication during the school week only, please consider having the youth take that medication during youth events as well to assist leaders/chaperones with youth behavior and attentiveness.

Because we take Youth Ministry seriously at First Baptist Church of Greencastle, and strive to provide the optimal environment and opportunity for you to grow in your spiritual life, we ask that you read these guidelines and understand their content. We ask also that your parents read them and enter into discussion with you as to the nature and reason for guidelines being set forth. After this time with your parents, please sign the lines below in the appropriate places, and return to the Youth Leader or the Pastor at the next youth group meeting. A copy of the signed guidelines will be provided.

We show our love and caring by insisting on a quality ministry where your safety and total well being is consistently at the forefront of our minds and heart! If you have any questions, please contact the Pastor for clarification.

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Return this page to the Pastor or Youth Leader.

I, (full youth name) _____ as a participant in the youth ministry program of First Baptist Church, have read and fully understand the Guidelines, and agree to abide by the words as they are set forth.

Signature of youth participant Date

I/We, (full parent name(s)) _____ as parent(s)/guardian(s) of above named minor participant have read and discussed the Guidelines with my youth and am supportive of its intent and content.

Signature of parent/guardian Date

Signature of parent/guardian Date

Release Form

I forever release First Baptist Church and volunteers from any responsibility in case of injury to my child while participating in this program; and give permission to seek medical attention on their behalf if needed. Furthermore, I hereby give consent that any photograph or likeness of my child in conjunction to their participation in this program may be used by First Baptist Church for publicity or recognition purposes, including but not limited to publication on First Baptist Church's website, posters, or news releases.

Signature of parent/guardian Date