

Alliance Church Student Ministry

Policy and Procedure Manual

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Contents

Section 1 – Ministry Information 3
Philosophy of Student Ministry 3
Mission – Vision - Core Values 4
Section 2 – Parent/Guardian Information 5
Definitions..... 5
Communication 5
Events 7
Official vs. Non-Official Events..... 7
Official Student Ministry Sponsored Events 7
Non-official events..... 7
Videos, Movies & Music 8
Costs 8
Financial Aid Policies..... 8
Counseling 8
Student Ministry Activity Conduct Expectations 8
Serious Discipline..... 9
Injury & First Aid 9
Section 3 – Student Ministry Leader Information 10
General 10
Transportation of Students..... 10
Overnight Events 11
Exceptional Situations to Ministry Guidelines 11
Screening of “Approved” Workers 12
Training/Continuing Education..... 12
Care of Documents 12
Youth Protection Policies..... 13
Worker Acknowledgement Form 15
Parent/Guardian Communication Consent Form..... 16
Youth Consent to Communication’s Policy..... 17

Section 1 – Ministry Information

Philosophy of Student Ministry

Foundation

1. God's Word
2. Equipping not entertainment
3. Partnering with parents

Know, Grow, Go

Know: Know God and His Word

Practically:

- Sunday Morning: Biblical Education
- Youth Group: Topical/Equipping focused

Grow: Grow in knowledge of God and His Word in community with others

Practically:

- Small Groups: Deeper study questions, accountability, and prayer
- Mentor relationships with small group leaders

Go: Go with the Gospel to school campuses, the community and the continents

Practically:

- Serving in the Church/Student ministry
- Opportunities to lead produces ownership: We desire our students to be active participants and not passive spectators
- Facilitating a “on mission” culture.
- Campuses:
 - Evangelism in school campuses
- Community:
 - Looking for ways to serve and share the Gospel in the community
- Continent:
 - Mission trip in country (ex: Philadelphia, New York City) and in another country (ex: Canada, Dominican Republic)

Mission – Vision - Core Values

Mission

The mission of the Alliance Church Student Ministry is to know Christ and make Him known.

Vision

The vision of the Alliance Church Student Ministry is for every student to

- **Know:** Know God and His Word
- **Grow:** Grow in knowledge of God and His Word in community with others
- **Go:** Go with the Gospel to school campuses, the community and the continents

Core Values

Invest

1. Time – spending quality time with our students
2. Love – loving our students unconditionally, cheerfully, and faithfully in Christ honoring ways.
3. Prayer – faithfully pray for our students and their families.
4. Mentoring – consistently mentor by having faith conversations and truth in love conversations.

Instruct

1. Teaching – teaching our students God’s Word as well as the core doctrines of the Christian faith.
2. Equipping – equipping our students to grow spiritually

Inspire

1. Modeling – Modeling for our students what it looks like to follow Jesus and doing so in a way that points to Christ’s strength in us despite our weaknesses.
2. Challenging – Challenging students to take faith filled risks with us.

Ignite

1. Mobilizing – Regularly teaching, challenging and offering opportunities to know Christ grow in our relationship with Him and go with the Gospel.
2. Launching – Confident that our students have a solid foundation to stand on, once they have graduated from ACSM.

Section 2 – Parent/Guardian Information

Definitions

Student Ministry Director

The Student Ministry Director is responsible for overseeing the Alliance Church Student Ministry. The Student Ministry Director reports to the Senior Pastor.

Student Ministry/Youth Worker

Student Ministry/Youth Workers are “Approved” workers (see screening of “Approved” workers section for more details) who help with organized student ministry events. The workers have direct responsibility over students during the organized student ministry events and report to the Student Ministry Director.

Student Ministry/Youth Helper

Student Ministry/Youth Helpers are “Approved” workers (see screening of “Approved” workers section for more details) who assist workers during ministry events. The helpers do not have direct responsibility over students during the organized events. The helpers report to the workers and Student Ministry Director.

Youth Leadership Team (YLT)

The YLT is comprised of select workers and parents to provide governance, guidance and input to student ministry activities and parents. The YLT is lead by the Student Ministry Director.

Youth/Student

The Alliance Church Student Ministry ministers to all 6-12 grade students. Youth and student are used interchangeably in this document.

Communication

Texting, e-mailing, and other forms of electronic communication have become common today, especially among students. Texting, social media and electronic communication can be a vital part of youth ministry work, but their improper use can produce serious consequences.

The Alliance Church Student Ministry desires to promote safety and to create a healthy environment for the use of electronic communication between its youth workers and students who participate in youth ministry activities. As a result, ACSM has developed the following guidelines:

- E-mail is our primary communication vehicle. We have an extensive mailing list of addresses and we regularly send out information updates to parents/guardians, students and/or sponsors. If you don't have e-mail, please talk with the Student Ministries Director about other ways to communicate. We also utilize vehicles of communication such as the “Alliance Church Student Ministry” Facebook page, Instagram, texting, paper flyers as well as announcements in the church bulletin.
- Employees or volunteer will not maintain ongoing private communication with students of the opposite sex. Pastoral counseling may be permitted with the presence of another approved youth worker and/or parent/guardian. Employees and volunteer youth leaders who want to communicate with students using text messaging, e-mail, social media or other forms of electronic media must first sign a consent form with

parents/guardians and the employees/volunteer youth leaders requesting communications.

- Recognizing the Biblical authority and responsibility of parents/guardians, if an employee or volunteer chooses to utilize any social networking site to communicate with students associated with ACSM, Parents of students will be aware of and how:
 - All information, images, or videos shared electronically through public ministry or private communications channels are not considered confidential.
 - When possible, communication will be sent to entire groups, on their wall or in public areas – not in private messages – this includes images.
 - When ongoing communication are private (ie: Emails, FB Messages, Texting, etc.) – Who they are with and their frequency will be disclosed to the parent and leadership.
 - Consistency with all students on all platforms is of the utmost importance.
- Ministry youth leaders may not transmit any content that is illicit, unsavory, abusive, pornographic, discriminatory, harassing, or disrespectful when communicating with each other or with students involved in ministry activities. Such violations will be grounds for suspension/removal from this ministry. The ministry’s pastoral leadership will notify parents/guardians immediately of any violation.
- Except in an emergency, employees or volunteer youth leaders may not transmit any personal information pertaining to a student without the youth ministry participant and his/her parents/guardians completed consent forms. This applies to group texting, group e-mail, or any other public method of electronic communication. Personal information may include such things as a student’s name, phone number, e-mail address, or photograph.
- All ACSM policies, including harassment, and confidentiality policies, apply to the use of social media. The Student Ministry Director and/or YLT to manage and monitor official social media pages will appoint social media representatives. These individuals are responsible for regularly posting information on the ministry’s behalf and for regularly monitoring and responding to posts on these pages. Employees and volunteers interested in representing ACSM on social media must first sign a consent form.
- Social media representatives should refrain from posting photos of individuals – or identifying the individuals – on the ministry’s official social media pages without their prior completed consent form. Social media representatives are responsible for disabling the “tagging” of individuals in photos posted on the ministry’s page. If the photo includes location information, this information is to be removed as well.
- Social media representatives will respect copyright and fair use laws, making sure that they have permission or authority to use content before posting it. Simply giving credit to the author will not protect the ministry from a possible copyright infringement claim.
- When communicating with youth via social media, employees or volunteers will follow the ministry’s youth communication policy. Employees or volunteers will refrain from posting photos or other information from official ACSM activities/events on official ACSM sites.

- Employees or volunteers are personally responsible for the content they publish online, including content they publish through their own social media pages. As an employee or volunteer of ACSM, remember that your online posts have the potential to affect the ministry, even those you make on a personal level.
- Employees or volunteer youth leaders will discourage students from using mobile devices during ministry programs except in an emergency, to contact a parent/guardian, or to place calls specifically approved by an employee or volunteer youth leader.
- Employees or volunteer youth leaders who become aware of possible child abuse through electronic media must immediately report such abuse through PA ChildLine as required by law.
- Mobile devices can cause distractions if used while driving. For safety reasons, employees or volunteer youth leaders driving on ministry business are to avoid mobile device use—even hands-free—when transporting students, driving in heavy traffic, during hazardous weather conditions, and/or when it violates local law.
- Employees or volunteer youth leaders are never to send or read text messages while driving.
- Questions or concerns about the ACSM ministry can be directed to the Student Ministry Director at church at 717.367.2995.

Events

- ACSM will provide a variety of activities throughout the year including weekly youth group, retreats, small groups, service projects, mission trips and fun events.
- Certain events, such as mission’s trips, may require prerequisites to attend.
- Parents/Guardians are responsible for coordinating the transportation of their students to and from Student Ministry activities and events.

Official vs. Non-Official Events

We expect parents/students will have many “hang outs” throughout the year that are not official Student Ministry events. These events will be initiated by students or parents/guardians and the Student Ministry will not be responsible, liable or in charge of the occurrences of these events. If the Student Ministry decides to promote such an event it will be clearly noted in the communication.

Official Student Ministry Sponsored Events

- ACSM Events will be communicated as such by an official e-mail or publication from the Student Ministry Director and/or Lead Worker and/or mentioned in our church bulletin, Facebook or websites.
- Will be supervised by student ministry workers (or parents/guardians who are approved workers).
- Will comply with all the expectations outlined in the ACSM Policy and Procedure Manual.

Non-official events

- Could possibly be promoted at youth group verbally or by flyers that get handed out.
- Require parents/guardians to investigate to ensure their supervision expectations are met.
- The church and/or ACSM assumes NO responsibility or liability for such events, even if a worker or the Student Ministry Director attends all or part of it.
- Feel free to contact the YLT or the Student Ministry Director if you want opinions about the suitability of any particular unofficial event.

Videos, Movies & Music

We sometimes utilize videos, movies and music in our youth group events. Rather than using them as mere mindless entertainment, we emphasize the importance of discernment about our media choices. These forms of media can be great opportunities for discussions of truth. We will do our best to show appropriate content as a way to first honor Christ, and then parents/guardians, and where sin is depicted; we will ensure that it is put in its proper context in accordance with the truth of Scripture. If you have any questions or concerns about media choices, please contact the Student Ministry Director.

Costs

We will announce/communicate any costs associated with ACSM events/activities. If cost of any event/activity is an issue for you or your student, please contact the Student Ministry Director (We do not want cost to stop a student from attending an event/retreat/mission trip). See *Financial Aid section*.

Financial Aid Policies

In cases where a lack of finances would keep a student from participating in an event, please contact the Student Ministry Director to discuss options.

**By "struggling financially" we refer to those with legitimate financial needs. For example a student who uses his money for extravagant possessions (i-pods, computer games, etc.) should not expect to be subsidized by the church.*

Counseling

Bear in mind, ACSM workers are not professional counselors.

- The Student Ministry Director is available to give counsel and guidance as needed
- When needed, the Student Ministry Director will refer students and parents to the appropriate professionals and specialists.

ACSM workers are Mandated Reporters and are required to report immediately to ChildLine if:

- There is a reasonable cause to suspect child abuse.

When contacted, ChildLine will take the appropriate course of action, including the consulting of authorities and/or parents or pursuing professional counseling options. After reporting to ChildLine the Mandated Reporter will notify the Student Ministry Director of the report. The Student Ministry Director is available to give counsel and guidance on any issues or concerns that arise. We will use the utmost discretion as to who to involve in various issues. We desire to build trust with our students, but also keep parents involved and informed.

Student Ministry Activity Conduct Expectations

The following expectations reflect our ministry values. They are not necessarily matters of right and wrong, but are primarily an expression of the kind of atmosphere that we find helps our ministry to thrive.

Decision Making

Student Ministry Workers decisions are to be obeyed at all times. If questions or concerns arise, the Student Ministry Director, YLT, and/or student ministry point person will make final decisions.

Respect

Every worker and student has the right to be treated respectfully at all times.

Safety

For safety reasons, students must always remain within the agreed vicinity of a worker, generally in groups of 2-3. Leaders must always know how to reach students in case of an emergency. Students should be where they are supposed to be when asked, so the group is not waiting for a student. Also, do not give out personal contact information when meeting strangers; always refer to the Alliance Church.

PDA

We do not allow PDA (public displays of affection) between the opposite sex at student ministry events. Our trips are not a date; it is a group experience, where we treat each other equally as brothers and sisters in Christ. This means couples may not hold hands, cuddle, lay on one another, isolate themselves, etc.

Sleep

Stay out of sleeping areas of opposite sex. Bedtime is firm: no staying up past or getting up before the times designated by the leaders or organizational authorities.

Modesty

These are the modesty guidelines for everyone (guys and girls) at student ministry events/activities. Clothes with inappropriate messages or images are not permitted. When in doubt, don't wear it. Short shirts or skirts, low tops, low cut suits, or bikini's (with mid-driff showing), etc., are not appropriate.

Miscellaneous

Our focus will be on building relationships and on creating a spiritually uplifting atmosphere. Therefore, there will be no gambling, profanity. Also, no body alterations be done on our events/activities (piercings, tattoos, etc.).

Serious Discipline

The following will likely result in a call home to the parent/guardian to discuss how best discipline:

- Sexual activity.
- Wandering off by yourself or as a couple.
- Tobacco, drug or alcohol use.
- Blatant or repeated disrespect and/or disobedience to workers.

Injury & First Aid

- We can administer ONLY Band-Aids and ice packs without parent's permission.
- It is the responsibility of the parent/legal guardian to notify student ministry workers of any pressing medical information.
- If a student participant is injured while under our supervision, the worker in charge will immediately notify the Student Ministry Director. The Student Ministry Director will be responsible for notifying the student's parents. All injuries must be reported no matter how insignificant or minor they may seem. The approved worker in charge may need to complete an Injury Report if requested by the Student Ministry Director.

Section 3 – Student Ministry Leader Information

General

Adult approved workers involved in ACSM activities must assume the full burden for setting and maintaining clear and appropriate physical and emotional boundaries in all student ministry relationships.

- **Never one on one with opposite sex** – Never be alone in a private setting one on one with a student. In order to have one on one interaction with a student, it must be in a public, observable place, such as a coffee shop, Church lobby or youth room that is observable by other students/adults. Where application of this rule is not possible or practical (e.g. emergencies) a “roaming adult” should be utilized. Official ACSM events or activities that cannot meet requirements of the two-adult rule will be cancelled.
- **Proportional Adult Coverage/Supervision** – The Student Ministry Director will ensure that proper adult approve worker coverage/supervision is met. If proper coverage/supervision is not met than Student Ministry Director may need to cancel an event/activity.

Transportation of Students

General

During official ACSM event or activities, all students must ride in vehicles driven by approved workers. To be qualified to drive the following must be met:

- Be an approved student ministry worker.
- Be at least 21 years old.
- Have a valid driver’s license, qualified for the vehicle being operated.
- Have no record of convictions for the past five (5) years for DUI, driving with a suspended or revoked driver’s license or reckless endangerment.
- Have proof of insurance.
- Ensure vehicles are not filled beyond capacity for their use, that seat belts are always secured and that occupants behave.
- Must understand emergency contact procedures (contacting Student Ministry Director and Parents/Legal Guardian) and have a way to contact the person in charge (e.g. mobile phone).
- Have completed waivers/permission from parents/legal guardians for each student riding in vehicle.

Use of Private Vehicles

- ***Only*** approved workers and student ministry leadership will drive during student ministry events/activities. Our insurance company requires drivers for official student ministry functions to be 21 years of age or older with a good driving history.
- Licensed High school students are not permitted to drive or transport other students ***during*** an official student ministry activity.
- Approved workers may transport student of the same sex alone, only, with the permission of the parent/guardian.

Transportation between the Church and Home

- Approved workers will not give rides ***alone*** to students of the opposite sex.
- An approved worker of the same sex as the student is allowed to drive alone with that student, ***but only*** after obtaining the advance knowledge and permission of the parent/guardian.
- It is the responsibility of the parent/legal guardian to ensure transportation between church and home.
- Students may ride to student ministry events/activities with other students, ***but*** this is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to monitor. Students may ride home from student ministry events/activities with other students, ***but only*** with the permission by all parents/legal guardians involved and is discouraged.

Overnight Events

- Adult approved workers must always respect the privacy of students and each other. Likewise students must respect the privacy of adult approved workers and each other.
- When the youth group includes both males and females, and stays overnight, both male and female adults must be present. (This also applies to “all-nighters” or any overnight stay at the Church).
- Only ACSM and associated congregational groups, students and adult approved workers participating in the trip are allowed to stay in the same accommodations/rooms.
- Sleeping areas should be segregated between males and females. Every sleeping unit (hotel room, dorm room, cabin, tent, etc.) should have either two adults of the same sex as the student, or no adults assigned to it. In certain cases when only one adult is available, the sleeping unit must have at least two students of the same sex as the adult. Adult approved workers are not allowed to share a bed with a student unless it is their own child. Beds may be shared by student of the same sex. If separate bathroom facilities are not available, times for male and female and students/adults use should be scheduled and posted prominently.
- Every effort should be made to provide separate sleeping quarters for students/volunteers of the opposite sex. Assuming extenuating circumstances, when one room (ie: gymnasium, church sanctuary, etc.) is used for sleeping, students and adult approved workers of the opposite sex will sleep an appropriate distance apart as determined by the adult worker in charge.
- No student should be allowed to leave the premises without authorized and appropriate adult approved worker supervision.
- Curfews must be established and adhered to by all participants.

Exceptional Situations to Ministry Guidelines

- Only under the rarest and most unusual circumstances should an adult approved worker be alone in a room, or other accommodation with a student. This might include a case where a student is ill or in a bona fide medical emergency. In this case, the adult approved worker should make every effort to enlist the help of another student or another adult approved worker to be present and assist. Note: however, the welfare of the student takes precedence and whatever action is necessary and appropriate must be taken.
- If there is a unique need for an adult approved worker to talk with a student in private, the adult approved worker should choose a quiet place that is in plain, public view. Examples of this may include open areas around the church (courtyards or hotel lobbies if on a trip), short walks down a sidewalk, a restaurant or other location where people are present in the area.

- Adult approved workers need to acknowledge that there is potential for sexual abuse and/or harassment by outside parties and must take reasonable and appropriate steps to ensure the safety and well-being of all students.

Screening of “Approved” Workers

- Each “*approved*” worker is required to complete an application process which includes the following:
 - Student Ministry application/questionnaire
 - PA DHS Child Abuse Clearance
 - PA State Police Criminal Background Check
 - FBI Criminal Background Check (required only if you have not lived in PA the last 10 years)
 - PA Residency/Disqualification from Service Acknowledgement Form
 - Child/Youth Workers Safety Class
 - Worker’s Acknowledgement Form
 - Approval by The Alliance Church Governing Board
- Each approved worker must acknowledge and agree with The Alliance Church’s Statement of Faith (What We Believe), Vision and Mission Statement.
- The Student Ministry Director may approve student helpers, who are approved Alliance Church workers, to volunteer under the supervision of adult student ministry workers.

Training/Continuing Education

- Workers will make an effort to attend most leader team meeting/training sessions throughout the year.
- Each approved worker is strongly encouraged to complete a Red Cross approved CPR course and maintain certification while serving.

Care of Documents

All information will be treated in a confidential manner, except as required by legal reporting requirements or legal process. Documents will be kept in storage available only to those charged in this policy with the responsibilities requiring direct access to information within their purview. This secure storage will house all Screening Forms, Applications, Volunteer Acknowledgement Forms and any other sensitive information related to youth protection.

Filing Requirements

The following documents will be collected each September and maintained in the church office for the period of one (1) year (September-August):

- Worker Acknowledgment Form (Appendix A)
- Parental/Guardian Communication Consent (Appendix B)
- Youth Consent to Communication Policy (Appendix C)
- Medical Release Forms
- Power of Attorney Forms and any other form

The following documents will be collected before each off-site youth event and maintained in the church office for no less than thirty (30) days from event up to one (1) year:

- Parental Waivers & Releases

Youth Protection Policies

Application

This policy is applicable to all individuals having direct contact with the student of ACSM, including, but not limited to, pastors, staff, teachers, volunteers, chaperones, and drivers.

Inappropriate Displays of Affection

- Any form of sexual contact or contact perceived as stimulating
- Intimate kissing
- Initiating full frontal hugs or “bear hugs”
- Massages
- Lying down or sleeping beside students
- Tickling
- Touching or hugging from behind
- Showing affection in isolated/inappropriate areas such as bedrooms, closets, restricted or private rooms.
- Comments that relate to physique or body development
- Patting on the thigh or other inappropriate touch
- Inappropriate or lengthy embraces

Appropriate Displays of Affection

Use of appropriate physical contact in a public setting to show support, encouragement and healthy affection toward students who are receptive to this form of emotional expression is acceptable. However, adult approved workers must exercise good judgment and never force any physical contact on any student. Examples of appropriate displays of affection may include:

- Holding hands during prayers or when a person is upset
- Side-hugs
- Holding hands while walking with small children
- Hand-shakes
- High-fives, hand slaps and fist bumps
- Verbal praise
- Arms around shoulders
- Pats on the shoulder/back

Appropriate Discipline

Student ministry workers will employ only appropriate discipline that seeks to correct while encouraging, and building up. (Speaking truth in love)

- If student behavior is unresponsive to discipline the parent or guardian will be contacted.
- Harsh, cruel or unusual treatment under the guise of discipline is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

Overarching Principle - "Mandated Reporters must report suspected child abuse".

- **"Mandated reporters..."**

Anybody whose official responsibility includes the care of children in a paid or volunteer capacity.

- **"report"**

How do I report?

1. Call the Childline: 800-932-0313 *immediately*, THEN
2. *Immediately thereafter* inform your supervisor (who shall facilitate the church's cooperation of face criminal charges), THEN
3. Submit a written report with 24 hours (using the CY47A form).

Note:

This must be submitted by the person reporting the suspected abuse, NOT his or her supervisor.

Additional notes:

The mandated reporter may NOT talk with a supervisor before making the immediate oral report, even to discuss the propriety of the report.

The identity of the mandated reporter will be kept confidential, except in limited circumstances. That stated, at no point will the reporter's identity be revealed to the child/family/perpetrator.

Appendix A

Worker Acknowledgement Form

The ACSM Policy & Procedures Manual contains important information about The Alliance Church. I understand that I should consult the Student Ministry Director if I have any questions that are not answered in this manual. I also acknowledge that revisions to this manual may occur at any time. My signature below acknowledges that I have received and read this entire manual. My signature also indicates that I agree to serve faithfully and to comply with and adhere to the policies and procedures outlined in this manual.

Worker's Signature

Date

Worker's Printed Name

Student Ministry Director's Signature

Date

Appendix B

Parent/Guardian Communication Consent Form

Name of minor: (please print full name) _____
Address: _____
Phone: [Mobile] (____) _____ [Other] (____) _____
Email Address: _____

I have read the Youth Ministry Communication Policy and agree to its terms.

I understand that the ministry does not allow youth leaders to transmit or receive any electronic content that is illicit, unsavory, abusive, pornographic, discriminatory, harassing, or disrespectful.

I also understand that the ministry cannot guarantee that all students participating in youth activities will abide by the policy's terms. However, we realize that the ministry and its workers will seek to enforce the policy's terms to the best of its ability.

Employees or volunteers of the Alliance Church Student Ministry have our permission to do the following: (Check all that apply)

_____ Communicate directly with my son/daughter, either by email or other Electronic communication.

_____ Share our son or daughter's name, telephone number, and e-mail address with others involved in the youth ministry activity.

_____ Share photos and other information about our son or daughter on the Alliance Church of Elizabethtown's website and other electronic media channels controlled by the ministry.

Parent/Guardian: _____ Date: _____

Appendix C

Youth Consent to Communication's Policy

Name of Student: (please print full name) _____
Address: _____
Phone: [Mobile] (____) _____ [Other] (____) _____
Email Address: _____

The Alliance Church of Elizabethtown youth ministry is committed to creating a safe ministry environment. This includes promoting a healthy environment for texting and other electronic communication between youth workers and students who participate in youth activities. As a result, the ministry has developed the following guidelines:

- Mobile devices are not to be used during ministry youth activities except in an emergency, to contact a parent or guardian, or to place calls specifically approved by a leader.
- The ministry's communication policy bars youth workers from sharing personal information about any minor through group e-mails, social media, or other public electronic media without youth ministry participants and their parents or guardians signing consent forms, except in an emergency. Personal information may include such things as names, phone numbers, e-mail addresses, and photographs.
- When communicating with youth workers, other people involved in youth ministry activities, or posting content to websites that the ministry owns or controls (such as its Facebook page), several conditions apply:
 1. You are not to make comments or share images that are sexually suggestive, disrespectful, or insensitive. Harassment and bullying are strictly forbidden.
 2. You must obtain permission from an authorized youth ministry leader before posting photos or personal information about others involved in ministry activities on any website or social media site the ministry controls.
 3. All information, images, or videos shared electronically through public ministry communication channels are not considered confidential.
 4. Those who violate this policy may lose electronic communication privileges within the ministry or be removed from the youth ministry program. Parents will be notified immediately of any violation.

I understand and agree to the terms of this policy.

Name of Student: _____

Signature of Student: _____ Date: _____