

# Youth Safety at Restoration Anglican Church

We are grateful to God for the privilege of welcoming and including youth into the life and ministry of Restoration Anglican Church. Providing care and Biblical instruction to children is a holy calling, and our church community is committed to doing all that it can to ensure a safe, positive, and rewarding experience for youth participating in church activities. The joy of ministry to children includes the responsibility of protecting them from harm. Protecting the children in our care, the reputation of the adults who serve those children, and the ministry of our church as a whole requires some specific precautions and processes. The policies and procedures included in this brochure are reflected in all Children and Youth Ministry activities. All other programs serving youth at the church must be in compliance with these guidelines.

## Personnel Precautions

All adults who work regularly with youth must complete the *Restoration Children's and Youth Ministry Small Group Leader Information* form or comparable job application, and the *Permission for Background Check* form. These forms authorize background checks necessary to ensure the adults serving minors have nothing in their personal history or experience that would preclude them from working with minors.

All church employees must complete annually Restoration's *Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse* training course and undergo a background check.

All volunteers working with minors must be authorized by the Youth Ministry Director. They are expected to have attended Restoration for at least six months prior to serving, unless otherwise approved by the rector.

Every year volunteers must complete Restoration's Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse training course and undergo an annual background check.

## Environmental Precautions

The following are policies to be observed and followed when volunteer leaders are interacting with middle or high school students:

- Meetings should take place during the daytime and late-night meetings should be avoided whenever possible.
- Youth leaders should avoid giving gifts to individual children without the prior knowledge of the parents. Modest gifts on a group basis or small contest prizes awarded openly are fine (the problem is that gift giving can be a form of buying loyalty).
- Follow all guidelines given by parent(s) or guardians.
- Parents are always welcome in a meeting or program. No activity is closed or private.

For group activities -

- Two adult leaders must be present when interacting with one or more teens.
- An adult should never be alone in an isolated area with a single youth. If an adult needs to talk one-on-one with a minor, it should be done in an open area, such as a hallway.

For mentoring youth -

- When meeting students offsite from the church, always meet in a public place.
- No meeting with youth may be held behind closed doors, unless the door has a window through which you can see into the room.
- Notify parents and obtain approval from one parent or guardian when meeting one-on-one with a student.

## Youth Safety Procedures

The following procedures are required for safely interacting with youth both for activities at our church, and any meeting with a volunteer leader offsite.

## The "Three Person" Transportation Rule

When transporting youth to and from activities, every effort should be made to have a third person in the vehicle. Avoid having one young person and one adult of opposite genders in the car alone. If you make any unplanned extra stops, notify parents if possible.

## Open Door Counseling and Prayer

During a ministry counseling or prayer session between a leader and student, keep the door of the room open for the entire session. Ideally, the session will be conducted at a public place or at a time when others are nearby.

When praying with a student, avoid inappropriate physical touching, and always ask permission before touching appropriately (e.g., laying on hands).

## Disclosure

As a youth leader, friend, and mentor to students, one's focus should always concentrate on leading young people to grow in their relationship with Christ. Law breaking is something we clearly teach as wrong but if we do not want to focus on the law and miss the point of the relationship.

At the same time, you must not promise confidentiality where illegal or potentially harmful information is disclosed. Please refer all such incidents to the Youth Ministry Director.

## Affection

Youth leaders should not ask youth for hugs or any physical affection, but should receive it joyfully when it is given. Adults can feel free to give a high-five, pat a back, or put an arm around a youth's shoulder.

Inappropriate displays of affection include the following: full frontal hugs, kissing, touching bottoms, chests, or genital areas, showing affection in isolated areas of a building, touching knees or legs, male/female wrestling, piggyback rides, any type of massage

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given by a leader to a student or student to a leader, and any form of affection that is unwanted by the student or leader.

## Appropriate Verbal Interaction

Verbal interactions between the youth leader and youth should involve positive reinforcement, appropriate jokes, and praise and encouragement as often as possible. When giving compliments, the focus should be on a child's character and abilities.

## Inappropriate Verbal Interaction:

Youth leaders should refrain from the following methods of talking with students:

- Name calling and cursing.
- Adults having sexually oriented conversations with opposite sex teens.
- Involving youths in the personal problems or issues of youth leaders or paid staff.
- Giving compliments that relate to physique or body development.
- Crude, inappropriate, or sexualized jokes.
- Comments intended to shame, humiliate, degrade, or belittle a student.

## Discipline

The best method for handling discipline is prevention. Adults should treat youth kindly and respectfully. They should not hit or spank in any way or verbally denigrate youth. However, a student's misbehavior should not be ignored. If a youth's actions are "out of control" the parent should be called immediately. Parents should be regularly informed of behavior problems and any actions taken by the youth leader to correct behavior.

## Accident or Injury

When caring for a youth's injury, illness, or bathroom accident, exam gloves should be used. It is helpful for the adult to talk through with a youth what is being done, and why, as they are being cleaned or bandaged. The incident should be reported to the parent and the Youth Ministry Director.

## Addressing Problems

If a volunteer youth leader gets into a situation which could be misinterpreted, it should be reported to the Youth Ministry Director immediately. Any observation of misconduct by a volunteer or member of the staff should be reported to the Youth Ministry Director or one of the clergy immediately. No allegation or complaint will be ignored.

I have read and will comply with these policies. I have not been arrested or convicted of a crime involving sexual abuse or misconduct. I have not resigned from or been terminated from any position because of sexual, physical, or mental abuse or misconduct, as defined in this policy. I give Restoration Anglican Church permission to conduct a background check, including a criminal record search.

Please print your full

name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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