



Standards & Expectations

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INTRODUCTION

One of the primary goals of our Student Ministry is to promote and maintain an atmosphere of love and acceptance for all students. Our Volunteer Staff is a team of servant leaders dedicated to affirmation and encouragement rather than criticism and condemnation. All of our leaders believe that an atmosphere of Christ-like, unconditional love and affirmation is more conducive to growth and positive life change than an atmosphere of constant criticism.

Keeping this in mind, our staff also recognizes the need for a healthy set of parameters. Even Christ himself established a set of guidelines for his followers as he encouraged them to strive to become perfect as the heavenly Father is perfect (Matt. 5:48). Those guidelines were given not to rob them of their joy, but to give them protection, blessing and an abundant life (John 10:10).

We also recognize the closeness and similarity of the terms “discipline” and “disciple.” Becoming fully committed disciples of Christ requires us to be disciplined. Our staff believes that the right to discipline is earned through building trustworthy relationships with students. This is the motivation of our staff in drafting and enforcing the following set of guidelines for staff and students alike, for the students will not be held to a higher standard than the staff, but vice versa. “...From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked” (Luke 12:48b). The following guidelines have been developed so that we may more effectively fulfill the purposes of the Great Commission and the Great Commandment within our Student Ministry.

I. GENERAL STANDARDS & EXPECTATIONS

The ultimate goal of our student ministry is to lead students to passionately live for Jesus Christ and spread His fame everywhere they go. In order to accomplish that goal, we engage in an ongoing process of loving others and each other as we pursue Christ and strive to become the people He has called us to be. With that goal and process in mind, we have to make every effort to help students connect with Christ, His Word, and other people in excellent, innovative, and relevant ways.

In order to create that kind of environment and allow every student the opportunity to get the most out of any event, program, activity, or trip, there have to be certain standards and expectations that everyone must agree to live by. All of the standards and expectations contained in this document exist for the good of everyone who participates in our ministry - students as well as adult volunteers and parents. They are also a real-world reflection of Christlike character found in God’s Word. Thank you for playing your part in helping us accomplish God’s purpose for our ministry as we strive to make an eternal impact in the lives of students!

A. RESPECT TOWARD OTHERS

When Jesus was asked what the greatest commandment was, He said two things: #1 is to love God. #2 is to love people! That means we have to do all we can respect others and show them God’s love. Here are a couple basic ways we need to be living that out at ministry events, activities, programs, and trips:

1. **Don’t make fun of others.** Remember the Golden Rule and treat people the way you want to be treated.
2. **Don’t intentionally exclude anyone.** Instead, seek to encourage others to get involved and help them get plugged in with the group.
3. **Never use profanity or foul, vulgar, crude, or distasteful language.** Inappropriate language is never acceptable. Students using this kind of language may be asked to leave an event, program or activity or sent home from a trip and parents will be contacted.

B. RESPECT TOWARD LEADERS

Students who choose to participate in church or ministry activities, events, trips and programs must agree to respectfully follow the instructions of leaders and staff members. It is vital to the safety and morale of all participants as well as the integrity of the event, activity, or trip for students to display a healthy respect toward leaders and follow instructions. Our desire is to build an atmosphere of mutual respect between students and adult leaders. Flagrant disrespect toward adult leaders will result in appropriate corrective action or in extreme circumstances, a student may be dismissed from an activity, program, or event, or sent home early from a trip at his or her parents’ expense. Please remember that the adults on a trip are taking personal time away from work and their families to invest in the lives of students and make the trip possible, therefore they deserve respect.

C. CONDUCT IN WORSHIP & BIBLE STUDIES

Worship and Bible Study are key elements of any Biblically-based ministry. Anyone who comes to church deserves the opportunity to connect with God and His Truth in an environment where that is possible without distraction. Our staff assumes responsibility for creating and maintaining that kind of environment.

We expect and encourage students to actively participate in Bible Study and Worship. Students who make Worship or Bible Study difficult or impossible for others will possibly need to be moved to an alternative study location. Generally, this will mean spending the remainder of the time with the Minister to Students, Student Ministry Intern, or a volunteer staff member. Asking a student to leave a service or Bible Study will always be the last resort when warnings and other methods have failed. In most cases, leaders should inform parents when a student has been asked to leave due to behavioral issues. In most cases, a student who has been dismissed from a group will be welcome at the next service or event. Leaders are strongly encouraged to attempt to discover what is motivating a student to be disruptive. Our staff will seek to meet those needs when possible.

D. CLOTHING STANDARDS

The way we dress is an important part of our Christian witness. We want to reflect Christ in every aspect of our lives - remembering that we are representatives of Christ, Wired Student Ministries, and FBC Cary and we must dress accordingly. Inappropriate dress causes others to feel uncomfortable and often takes the focus off of Christ and His Word and focuses attention on what students are wearing or not wearing. We feel that these guidelines are fair and appropriate for ministry activities, programs, trips and events. Students who participate must adhere to these standards in order to promote spiritual growth and reduce distractions. Clothing should always be modest and not distract from anyone's ability to focus on what is going on at any given time. A good standard is "when in doubt...don't."

Students should not wear revealing, immodest, or "extreme" clothing with distasteful designs or messages. Clothing that contains sexual references or material, profanity, and alcohol or drug logos or references, should never be worn or purchased while on a church-sponsored trip. Our Ministry Staff reserves the right to confiscate such items and call parents if necessary.

1. **WORSHIP** - Most clothes that are acceptable for school are also acceptable for student worship, activities, trips, programs, and events. **SHORTS, SKIRTS, & DRESSES** should not come any shorter than the fingertips with arms relaxed at the sides. **TOPS** should be modest in that they should not reveal the midriff when the arms are raised and should not be too tight, too loose, or have a low-cut or revealing neck-line. Spaghetti straps and tank tops are not acceptable for worship. Guys should wear sleeved shirts. **Appropriate undergarments** should be worn accordingly - under other garments and should not be visible. **When taking an active role in leading worship...** guys should wear pants and girls should wear pants, modest skirts, or dresses. *"Reach for the sky, touch your toes. If anything shows, it goes."*
2. **WATER ACTIVITIES** - There will be several occasions when we will have student ministry events or activities that involve swimming or getting wet. For these activities **only modest one-piece swimsuits or "tankinis" are acceptable for the girls.** "Tankinis" must be modest and the top and bottom should meet at the waist with arms relaxed at the sides. **Two-piece swimsuits, bikinis, and immodest one-piece swimsuits or immodest "tankinis" should not be worn.** If girls do not have a modest one-piece swimsuit or "tankini", a dark colored shirt must be worn at all times. Guys must wear shorts-style swimsuits - no speedo-style swimsuits allowed. Any student not adhering to these standards will be asked to change or wear a dark colored t-shirt over their swimsuit. Chaperones and Ministry Staff reserve the right to ask any student to change or put on a dark colored t-shirt if they deem a swimsuit inappropriate or immodest.
3. **RECREATION** - For recreational activities, modest shorts and shirts are ok. Short shorts are not appropriate at any time.

Chaperones have the right to ask any student to change if they choose not to adhere to these standards and may not be allowed to participate until the problem is resolved.

E. PHYSICAL AFFECTION (PDA - PUBLIC/PRIVATE DISPLAYS OF AFFECTION)

Interest in showing physical affection toward the opposite sex is considered a normal and healthy part of maturing teenage relationships. We also believe that appropriateness should dictate the extent of

affection shown at Student Ministry activities. Our ministry strives to provide an environment that is conducive to the development of integrity relationships between males and females. **The following guidelines are in place for four reasons:** **1.** We want to take appropriate precautions to prevent anything improper from taking place on a church sponsored trip as well as remove any temptation that may arise; **2.** We want to protect the reputations of everyone involved by taking away any question or doubt that may exist as to what may be going on; **3.** we want to provide a comfortable environment for all trip participants; **4. We want to keep the focus on Christ and not what might or might not be going on physically between guys and girls.**

1. Holding hands and casual hugs are almost always appropriate. Any other type of physical affection is not permitted.
2. Kissing or "making out" in trip vehicles and on church outings is not appropriate and will result in an immediate trip home.
3. Guys and girls may not sit together on buses or vans (in the same seat or row unless separated by an aisle).
4. "Cuddling" will not be permitted at any time. Furthermore, it is never appropriate for males and females to be under the same blanket, jacket, or coat at any time.
5. As with all other students, couples must stay in designated and supervised areas at all times. No student or couple should leave the rest of the group for any reason at any time.

Leaders reserve the right to amend or add guidelines concerning physical affection based on specific situations, environments, and behaviors for the four reasons stated above. Couples who choose not to follow these standards will be given a warning and may be asked to leave an event, activity, or program or sent home from a trip and parents will be contacted.

"But among you **there must not be even a hint** of sexual immorality, or of **any kind of impurity**, or of greed, because **these are improper for God's holy people**". *Ephesians 5:3*

F. LOCATION OF STUDENTS

Church leaders can only be responsible for students who are actually in an area designated for a student ministry activity or event. Parents have no way of knowing whether students are where they should be and, consequently, whether leader supervision is being provided. Therefore, it is the policy of our student ministry that all students on church property must be in the actual area where the planned activity or event is taking place. The only options available to students are to be in the designated class or activity area, join their parents (if on site), or leave the church property. Students who come to an activity or event by means of their own transportation and leave before the end of the activity or event are not permitted to take any other unrelated students with them without written parental permission.

Ministry and Volunteer Staff will stay after events, trips, and activities until the last student is picked up. However, **parents are strongly encouraged to arrange to pick up their student(s) within 15 minutes of the designated ending or arrival time.**

G. WEAPONS

The physical safety of the student, leaders, and staff is one of our top priorities. Therefore, no student may possess a gun, knife, martial arts item, or any other weapon at any student ministry activity at the church or away. **The possession of a dangerous weapon will result in an immediate call to 911 and full cooperation with the authorities that respond.** In the meantime, the leader/staff member in charge will coordinate a plan with other leaders to best protect the safety of the youth present. Actual confrontation with a teenager with a gun will be left to the proper authorities. The parents of the involved student(s) will be contacted as soon as possible.

H. GENERAL POLICIES

Assault, alcohol, illegal drugs, weapons as described above, pornography and tobacco products are not permitted at *any* student ministry activities. The breaking of this policy, including any other serious failure to follow student ministry guidelines, may result in the student not being permitted to participate in the next major youth trip and/or event.

I. VANDALISM

Any student who vandalizes, willfully destroys, or defaces personal, public, or church property will be solely responsible for the cost of such damages.

J. IN-TOWN TRANSPORTATION

The church provides leader or staff-driven vehicles for most activities away from the church. Whenever transportation is provided students are strongly encouraged to leave personal vehicles at the church. Licensed drivers may drive personal vehicles to activities in town, provided they have parental permission.

Student ministry Staff cannot be responsible for the safety of student-driven vehicles and cannot guarantee the quality of driving. Also, church leaders and staff cannot be responsible for students who leave activities or events in student-driven vehicles. The timely return of students to church can only be guaranteed for those who choose church-provided transportation.

K. PHYSICAL DISCIPLINE

It is never acceptable or appropriate for Ministry Staff, including volunteers and chaperones, to use any form of physical discipline at any time or for any reason. Therefore, leaders only make physical contact with a teenager in order to prevent a greater harm, such as during a fight or an attempt to harm themselves. With extremely rare exceptions, no physical restraint or discipline is appropriate at any time.

II. OFF-CAMPUS, ACTIVITIES, EVENTS & TRIPS

Our church assumes heavy responsibility when taking students off campus or out of town. In order to accomplish our purpose and maintain the safety of all participants when off campus, it is essential for students to respect staff members and follow instructions. When the safety and/or well-being of other students and/or staff members is being threatened by a lack of respect or willingness to follow instructions, the Ministry Staff reserves the right to contact parents and send the student home at the expense of his or her parents if necessary. In such cases, it is the parent's responsibility to arrange transportation for their student. Parents are asked to support the decision of the Minister to Students to send a student home, understanding that only those present on the trip can know all the variables involved. Our Ministry Staff will work with students and parents in these extreme circumstances to bring about a positive resolution upon return from the activity, event, or trip.

Being sent home is the possible result of the following: flagrant disregard for schedule, body piercing or permanent tattooing, possessing alcohol, pornography, drugs, or tobacco products, leaving the group, inappropriate displays of affection, stealing, assault, possession of pornography or a dangerous weapon, as well as any other serious failure to follow trip guidelines or instructions that threatens the safety of participants or the integrity of the event, activity, or trip.

A. GENERAL TRIP GUIDELINES

1. **Follow the schedule** - Students are encouraged to be where they are supposed to be on time.
2. **No Purple!** Guys are not allowed in girls' rooms and girls are not allowed in guys' rooms; This includes "hanging out" in doorways and going into designated "girls only" or "guys only" areas.
3. **Respect others:** that includes other students (and their stuff) and especially our Adult Volunteers!
4. **Don't bring stuff you aren't supposed to bring.** (A "Things to Bring/Not to Bring" list will be given out prior to every trip. See next section.) Any such items will likely be confiscated for the duration of the trip.
5. **No Pranks!** (See guideline #3.)

B. THINGS TO BRING/NOT TO BRING

Before any trip that requires us to be gone overnight, a detailed list of "Things to bring/not to bring" will be supplied to all trip participants and parents.

On an overnight trip, **students will generally need to bring the following:** Bible, pen and notebook; personal articles such as toothbrush, shampoo, etc.; a **limited** amount of spending money (based on the duration and nature of the trip); appropriate clothing (see clothing standards).

Some things **students will generally need to leave behind on an overnight trip include the following:** fireworks, lighters, weapons; alcohol, tobacco, and non-prescription drugs; portable electronics including iPods, mp3 players, video players, laptop computers, gaming devices, etc.; water guns, water balloons, shaving cream (except for personal use), secular music, books, and magazines; inappropriate clothing (see Clothing Standards); etc.

CELL PHONES should only be used to contact parents or in case of emergency. During worship and Bible study sessions phones should be turned off and placed out of sight. Cell phones should never be visible or used for any reason during worship services or Bible studies. Texting, making calls to anyone other than parents, or any other use of cell phones that might cause distractions will not be allowed. **Volunteers reserve the right to confiscate cell phones in the event that they are misused or become a distraction.**

C. TRIP TRANSPORTATION

The following guidelines are important to insure the safety of all participants for any ministry trip or event that requires extended driving time.

1. Please have courtesy for your driver and help them in any way possible. The person riding in the front passenger seat needs to take the lead in helping the driver in any way they can. **Please listen to, obey, and respect your driver – your life depends on it!**
2. Listen carefully to driver and adult instructions – (e.g. departure times, rules, rest stops, etc.)
3. **Drivers:**
 - a. We will communicate via walkie talkies and/or cell phones while on the road.
 - b. We will be driving caravan-style – all vehicles should **stay together** as much as possible.
 - c. There must be a complete count of each person in the vehicle (including drivers and adults) before departing each stop during the trip.
 - d. Be sure to **keep the vehicle behind you in sight at all times.** We only go as fast as the last vehicle in the caravan.
 - e. In case of emergency, flash our high beams at a van in front of you. Please pull over when safe immediately to the right.
 - f. No one may get out of the vehicle unless the driver says it is safe to do so.
 - g. In case of emergency or if a vehicle gets lost or separated from the caravan, the driver should stay in one location and contact another driver.

D. HAZING

Many youth groups have a “tradition” of an initiation ceremony/ritual for the younger students in the group which takes the form of physical and/or mental abuse carried out by the older members of the group. It usually begins as innocent and fun until students begin to get carried away and a civil war ensues where students get hurt both physically and emotionally. More often than not, the younger student feels threatened and is paranoid to the point that their focus is on what might happen to them rather than what God wants to tell them, teach them, or deal with them about. The same goes for the older students who are preoccupied with what they are planning to do to the student when they get the chance. This kind of activity is not in line with the purpose of our Student Ministry, nor any event, retreat, activity, or trip. For this reason, hazing of any kind will not be allowed and those who engage in this kind of activity will be sent home immediately.

E. ENFORCEMENT OF THE STANDARDS & GUIDELINES

Before going on any Student Ministry trip or retreat, students and parents must sign the Trip/Retreat Covenant stating that they have read and agree to abide by these guidelines. Furthermore, anyone who participates in a Student Ministry event, program, or activity is also subject to these guidelines. In order for these guidelines to work, they must be carefully followed and enforced so that everyone participating in our ministry can focus on Christ and have fun at the same time (including the chaperones!).

When a guideline or rule is broken, the following procedure will be followed:

Step 1: The student will be given a warning. (More severe infractions may be cause for fewer or no warnings and may warrant an immediate call or even trip home.)

Step 2: The student’s parents will be contacted if they are uncooperative, disrespectful, or break the same guideline or rule repeatedly.

Step 3: Arrangements will be made for the student to go home at the expense of their parents if the problem persists further.

III. MINISTRY & VOLUNTEER STAFF GUIDELINES

Our Student Ministry strives to provide a positive, loving and affirming atmosphere for students. These standards and expectations are provided as a proactive way to insure clear communication among members of the student ministry staff, leaders, students, and parents. Please discuss any issues or questions concerning these guidelines with the Minister to Students.

1. Volunteer Staff must be a member of FBC Cary and complete a background check form prior to participating in ministry events, activities, & trips.
2. Volunteer Staff must model a growing relationship with Jesus Christ and a hunger for further growth.
3. Volunteer Staff must model before students a love for their church and be actively involved on a weekly basis.
4. Volunteer Staff must model a clear commitment to avoid alcohol, tobacco, pornography, and must exhibit the highest integrity in marriage or dating relationships.
5. Volunteer Staff must be in full support of the “Standards & Expectations” and must be willing to appropriately model and enforce them.
6. Volunteer Staff must understand that students always come first and must therefore be willing to forego attractions and sightseeing when duties require. Furthermore, volunteers are always “on duty” during events, programs, and trips.
7. Volunteer Staff should be prepared and willing to lead small group Bible study sessions, prayer time, and to personally lead students to Jesus Christ when appropriate. Volunteer Staff should also be prepared and willing to counsel with troubled students.
8. Volunteer Staff should evidence a growing relationship with members of the group before the trip, indicated by knowing a growing number of youth by name and seeking to understand their lives and backgrounds.
9. Volunteer Staff must look to the Minister to Students (or designated Trip Leader) as the primary leader on the trip and respond as team players to any requests or instructions that are made, maintaining a positive and Christ-like attitude. (Any disagreements or issues that arise between volunteer staff, chaperones, designated Trip Leader, and/or the Minister to Students should be handled promptly and discreetly and never in front of students. See Matthew 18 for the Biblical model for handling disagreements among believers.)
10. Volunteer Staff and Ministry Staff are not permitted to be alone with an unrelated student of the opposite sex under any circumstances. Volunteer Staff & Ministry Staff must work together to insure that there is never an occasion where an adult is left alone with an unrelated student of the opposite sex (i.e. when waiting for parents after events, activities, programs, and trips). Volunteer Staff and Ministry Staff are not permitted to take any unrelated student of the opposite sex home unless other students, adults, or Volunteer Staff are also present in the vehicle.
11. When clothing issues arise, Volunteers & Ministry Staff should seek to handle the situation discreetly, doing everything possible to avoid embarrassing a student. Female clothing issues should be addressed and handled by female chaperones and male clothing issues should be handled by male chaperones.
12. In the event that the Minister to Students is not able to attend an event, activity, or trip Volunteer Staff are responsible for communicating with the Minister to Students whenever major issues or emergencies arise (such as medical emergencies, transportation emergencies, major discipline issues, etc.)



TRIP & RETREAT COVENANT

I. To be read and signed by the STUDENT attending:

I, _____, **HAVE READ AND UNDERSTAND THE “STANDARDS & EXPECTATIONS” AND I AGREE TO ABIDE BY THEM WHILE ON THIS STUDENT MINISTRY TRIP.** I understand that the purpose of the trip includes providing a positive experience for everyone attending. I understand that to make that possible I must agree to some basic standards as described in the “Standards & Expectations”. I realize that anything I do that goes against the “Standards & Expectations”, causes a distraction, threatens the safety or welfare of other participants, or makes the trip or event a displeasure for others puts me in a position to be disciplined and/or sent home at my parents’ expense.

By signing this covenant I agree to participate and do everything in my power to make this trip positive for myself as well as the other students and adults attending.

Trip/Event: _____

*Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

II. To be read and signed by PARENT(S) or GUARDIAN(S) of student attending:

I/WE, _____, **HAVE READ, UNDERSTAND, AND SUPPORT THE “STANDARDS & EXPECTATIONS” SET FORTH FOR MY STUDENT TO ABIDE BY WHILE ON THIS STUDENT MINISTRY TRIP.** I understand that these standards and their enforcement are vital to the success of any Student Ministry trip. I understand and consent that if my student is causing a distraction for the rest of the group, is threatening the safety of other participants, or is not following the Standards & Expectations, he/she will be disciplined in the most appropriate and graceful way possible. I further understand that if the situation cannot be resolved I will be contacted and my student may be sent home at my expense.

By signing this covenant, I agree to the above statements and pledge my prayer for my student, the other students, the Ministry and Volunteer staff, and the entire trip.

*Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Emergency Contact #: _____ Date: _____

****BOTH Signatures are required in order for the student to be allowed to participate in the listed Student Ministry Trip or retreat.***