



RYM CHURCH SAFETY AGREEMENT

ARTICLE I: DEFINITIONS

“Abuse”	Any action that intentionally or recklessly harms or injures, or that can be reasonably expected to result in harm or injury to another person and can include physical, psychological, or mental injury
“Child/Children”	Anyone under the age of 18, who is, thus, under the care and supervision of an adult
“Church”	Any Church(es) or Adult Leader(s) that is participating in an RYM-sanctioned ministry offering and is responsible for persons under the age of 18
“Exigent Circumstance”	Any demanding or pressing circumstance which either could not have been or has not been fully planned for or anticipated
“Prohibited Act”	Any physical, sexual, verbal, or emotional act by an adult to a child which is deemed or suspected to be abusive in nature.
“RYM”	The Reformed Youth Movement, Inc., d/b/a Reformed Youth Ministries
“SCR Committee”	A standing subcommittee of RYM’s Board comprised of a minimum of two at-large board members (one of whom will be elected to and serve as the Committee Chair), the RYM Executive Director, and a Member of RYM’s full-time staff team.

ARTICLE II: PURPOSE

RYM takes our responsibility to care for children who attend an RYM-sanctioned event seriously. In its normal course of operations and ministry activities, RYM invites and hosts Churches at Conferences and Training events. When children are present at such events, RYM expects Churches to comply with its Safety Policy which itself seeks to create and facilitate safe and nurturing environments in which children can grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ without fear of abuse.

As such, the purpose of this agreement is as follows:

1. Provide a general overview of guidelines for RYM as well as for your Church
2. Establish realms of responsibility and liability

If, and only if, a Church agrees to the terms of this agreement, that Church is allowed participation at the desired RYM-sanctioned event.

ARTICLE III: COVENANTS BY CHURCH

A Church who wishes to participate in RYM-sanctioned events such as Conferences and Training events must agree to all of the terms, conditions and expectations set forth in this Safety Agreement to be able to participate. If a Church is not willing to agree to and abide by all RYM’s safety policies and requirements as set forth in this document, then it should not apply to participate or should immediately discontinue the process to attend a future event. If a Church does agree and then violates these Safety policies at an event, then the Church agrees and acknowledges that RYM may require it (and all attendees from the Church) to immediately leave the

event and to take reasonable steps of mitigation (regardless of the expense to the Church) for injury or damage resulting from the Church's failure to comply with the terms and conditions of this Agreement.

ARTICLE IV: PARTICIPATING IN RYM-SANCTIONED EVENTS

RYM invites and hosts Churches to participate in its sanctioned events with children under Churches' supervision. The publishing of this Agreement is RYM's acknowledgement that it will make every effort to create a safe and welcoming environment for children in accordance with its Safety Policy and Safety Handbook and Procedures Manual. Notwithstanding RYM's hosting of a sanctioned event, a Church that participates acknowledges that it maintains full responsibility for the safety and well-being of the child or children that it brings to the RYM-sanctioned event and therefore assumes all liability for each child who attends with the Church.

ARTICLE V: PREPARING FOR RYM-SANCTIONED EVENTS

Before any adult belonging to a participating Church can take part in an RYM-Sanctioned event where a child or children are in attendance, he or she is required to do the following:

1. **Complete Sexual Abuse Awareness Training** - We require that Churches be equipped with information necessary to properly safeguard children from abuse, as well as to recognize abuser characteristics and grooming behavior. ***RYM REQUIRES all Churches to have their adult participants to complete a SEXUAL ABUSE AWARENESS TRAINING*** (such as Ministry Safe, Darkness to Light, etc.). Before a Church's adult participant is able to complete registration for an RYM-sanctioned event where a child or children are in attendance, he or she must upload proof of completion of such a course. In order to be accepted as sufficient by RYM, this training must have been completed within 2 years of when you begin to be engaged with children at an RYM-sanctioned event.
2. **Criminal Background Check**
RYM requires that all Church adult participants who will be engaged with or in the presence of children at an RYM-sanctioned event undergo a criminal background check. Depending upon circumstances, differing levels or intensity of background check may be required.
3. **Vetting of Child Participants**
RYM requires that all Churches who will be engaged with or in the presence of children at an RYM-sanctioned event vet its child participants to determine if any of them are known to have exhibited abusive behavior toward another child in the past, and which the Church has reason to believe might continue in the future. If there is knowledge of such a child, the Church must contact the Executive Director of RYM to discuss this child's prospective attendance at an RYM-sanctioned event before they are allowed to attend.
4. **Preparing Child Participants**
Before attending an RYM-sanctioned event with children, a Church and its adult participants must share these rules with them, communicate and emphasize the expectation that these rules must be followed while at an RYM-sanctioned event.
 - a. We expect that child participants will treat others at RYM in the same manner in which he or she wishes to be treated. We will not tolerate abuse, bullying, fighting or other such activity at any of our conferences.
 - b. No boys are allowed in girls' rooms, and no girls are allowed in boys' rooms for any reason.
 - c. RYM has a zero-tolerance policy for illegal substances or inappropriate materials (including, but not limited to pornography of any form, inappropriate videos or photos). You may not be in possession of any weapons, drugs, alcohol, illicit or inappropriate content, at any time during your week at RYM.
 - d. Attendance at all scheduled meetings is required.

- e. Wristbands must be worn at all times. This is how we identify a child participant as part of the RYM group and this is his or her meal ticket.
- f. Please make certain your children are respectful with their personal technology – for example, turn off their phones when in elective classes and large group services at night.
- g. If applicable to the conference, youth will be allowed to go on the beach at night but only within the RYM boundaries and if an adult is present to supervise. No one is allowed in the ocean at night - no exceptions.
- h. If applicable to the conference, at any pool or beach, the lifeguards are in charge. Children must follow their rules at all times for safety.
- i. Anyone who damages the property (including but not limited to the room where you stay) will be held responsible for the cost of such damage.
- j. Jogging at an RYM conference is allowed, but children must not jog alone; make sure he or she brings a friend along. Make sure your children ask an adult with your group for permission and notify him or her when you leave and return.
- k. Any infraction of the conference rules can result in disciplinary action, which may include reporting legal issues to authorities, or the child being sent home at your parents' expense.

ARTICLE VI: GENERAL SAFETY POLICY AND BEST PRACTICES

Adult participants from Churches are required to be in compliance with the following policies and practices.

Building Safety

- Absent exigent circumstances, children should not be left unattended or unsupervised in a building during an RYM-Sanctioned event.
- Absent exigent circumstances, adults should not be alone with an individual child in any room or building. If you find yourself alone in a room, you should either remove yourself from that room or building, invite another person to occupy that room or building with you and the child, or escort the child from that room or building to a location easily observed by others.
 - (Example: If a child desires additional conversation or counsel with an adult after regular programming has concluded, move to an adjoining room where others are present)
- If an adult is observed to be alone with a child in a room or building, you should stay present and ask the adult to move into a space that is occupied by others if remaining indoors, or to an outdoor location where their presence is more easily observed by others.
- Any two children together in an unseen or less easily viewed area who are engaging in suspicious behavior should be redirected to another (more open) area.
- At the conclusion of programming events each day, RYM - through its Employees and Volunteers - must ensure all public (non-accommodative) rooms and restrooms are checked and found unoccupied, and then locked prior to concluding the day's work. Please make every effort to assist them in this work.

Adult to Student Ratio

RYM is committed to ensuring adequate adult supervision at all RYM-sanctioned events when children are present. Accordingly, absent exigent circumstances, the following ratios will be maintained with Churches:

- There will be at least 1 adult supervising up to 10 children of each gender.
 - Example: a group of 20 children of 8 boys and 12 girls should have at least 1 male adult and 2 female adults.
- If this ratio is unable to be maintained for a group due to an exigent circumstance, it is the responsibility of the Church to notify a member of the RYM Staff. RYM Staff will seek to help in this situation while the group leader works to find a more permanent solution to bring their group ratio into compliance.

Discipline

RYM prohibits Churches from using physical discipline in any way for behavior management of children. ***NO FORM OF PHYSICAL DISCIPLINE, HARASSMENT, OR RETRIBUTION IS ACCEPTABLE; WHETHER DIRECTLY ENGAGED OR INDIRECTLY ALLOWED.*** This prohibition includes but is not limited to spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, or any other physical force as retaliation or correction of inappropriate

behaviors by children. If a child is unruly or fails to comply with verbal warnings or instructions from an adult, that child will be asked to leave (if not endangered by doing so) or the child's parent will be contacted to pick up the child, at the expense of the Church or Parent.

Fighting

In the event of a fight or physical altercation, you must verbally redirect children involved and to try to avoid any physical intervention. If needed to prevent further hurt or abuse of a child (even if at the hands of another child), adults are allowed to intervene in the altercation in such capacity as to restrain ongoing detrimental behavior. All such occurrences of fighting should be reported to an RYM Staff Member.

Intoxicants

Churches are prohibited from the use, possession, or being under the influence of alcohol or any illegal drugs while traveling with children or while working with or supervising children.

Nudity

Churches are prohibited from being nude, or exposing private parts of one's body, in the presence of children at an RYM-sanctioned event, absent exigent circumstances.

1-on-1 Interactions with Children

RYM recognizes that meeting the emotional needs of children may occasionally require adults to minister to them on an individual basis. In these circumstances, RYM requires that you adhere to the following guidelines:

1. Conduct such meetings with an individual child at a time when others are present and where interactions can be easily observed, in accordance with the guidelines for Building Safety that are given above.
2. In the event a closed-door meeting with a child must occur, another adult must be present.

Parental Involvement/Contact

Parents who have a child in attendance at an RYM-sanctioned event will be contacted if their child becomes seriously ill, injured, or has a severe disciplinary problem while at the event. This parental contact would normally occur through the Church, who has direct oversight and responsibility for the child.

Physical Contact

RYM is committed to protecting children in attendance at an event. To this end, the following guidelines are to be carefully followed by all adult participants from Churches working with children:

1. Hugging, pats on the back, and other forms of appropriate physical affection between adults and children are important for a child's development and are generally suitable in the RYM setting.
2. Inappropriate touching and inappropriate displays of affection are forbidden. Any inappropriate physical contact (including, but not limited to the touching of private body parts, caressing, groping, unwanted touch, lingering hugs) should be immediately reported to an RYM Staff Member, an RYM Board Member (if present), or the RYM Executive Director, who will then contact the RYM SCR Committee.
3. Physical contact should be for the benefit of the child, and never be based upon the emotional needs of an adult.
4. Physical contact and affection should be given only in observable places or when in the presence of other children or adults. It is much less likely that touch will be inappropriate or misinterpreted as such when physical contact is open to observation.
5. Physical contact in any form should not give even the appearance of wrongdoing. The personal behavior of all adults must foster trust at all times. Personal conduct must be above reproach.
6. Do not force any physical contact, touch or affection upon a reluctant child. A child's preference not to be touched must be respected.
7. All adults are responsible for protecting children under their supervision from inappropriate or unwanted touch by others.

8. Any inappropriate behavior or suspected abuse must be reported according to the Reporting Requirements in this Agreement.

Sexually Explicit Conversations

Adults are prohibited from engaging in any sexually explicit conversations with children, whether in a one-to-one or group setting. Further, you are not permitted to disclose any inappropriate or explicit information about your own personal relationships, dating or sexual activities, or related information.

From time to time at an RYM-sanctioned event, a ministry discussion or lesson may address issues related to the Bible's views on issues surrounding dating, sex, human sexuality, and similar topics. Any conversations between an adult and a student on these issues occurring in a 1-on-1 setting should always be between persons of the same gender as well as in compliance with the "1-on-1 Interactions with Children" requirements of this agreement.

Sexually Explicit Materials

Adult and child participants from Churches are prohibited from possessing any sexually explicit printed or online materials (magazines, cards, images, videos, films, etc.) at an RYM-sanctioned event.

Sleeping Arrangements

At RYM-sanctioned events when overnight sleeping arrangements include adults being in the same room as children, the following rules must be observed:

1. Absent exigent circumstances, if any child is awake and particularly if any child is outside of their sleeping room, an adult from the Church also be awake and monitoring children to ensure safe behavior.
2. Appropriate sleeping attire must be worn. Adults may not sleep nude at an RYM-sanctioned event.
3. Adults may not sleep in the same room with children of the opposite gender at any RYM-sanctioned event.
4. Absent exigent circumstances, an adult may not share a bed with a child at an RYM-Sanctioned event.

Tobacco

Adults must abstain from the use or possession of tobacco products or "vaping" devices while in the presence of children or their parents.

Weapons (including Firearms)

Ensuring a safe environment and the prevention of violence is of paramount importance to RYM. Weapons of any kind, whether they be possessed by an adult or child participant in any RYM event pose a potential threat to the safety and security of everyone. Firearms of any type are strictly prohibited at all times for RYM-sanctioned events. Additionally, weapons of any type, including, but not limited to, knives with a 3-inch blade or longer, fighting weapons, nunchucks, daggers, throwing stars, brass knuckles, and stun guns are strictly prohibited.

Any individual found carrying such items will be subject to immediate reporting to law enforcement, dismissal from the RYM event or venue, and confiscation of the firearm or weapon to be held by law enforcement until such remedy or action from the violation of possession can be resolved.

Rare and specific exceptions to this policy must be granted by the Executive Director of RYM to individuals who are licensed to carry such items and are operating within the strict regulations of local, state, and federal law, and are necessary to provide security to the RYM event or activity. Should such an exception be necessary, RYM will make every attempt possible to secure a federal, state, or local law enforcement officer or deputy to provide such security.

Verbal Interactions

Verbal interactions between adults and children should be positive and up-lifting. You should strive to keep

verbal interactions encouraging, constructive, and be ever mindful of RYM's mission of serving the church in the spiritual growth and development of children.

To this end, you should not talk to children in a way that is or could be construed by any reasonable observer as harsh, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating. In addition, you are expected to refrain from swearing in the presence of children.

ARTICLE VII: REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

It is the responsibility of every adult to act in the best interest of children at all times and places. Any report of inappropriate behaviors or suspected abuse will be taken seriously and shall be reported, in accordance with the RYM Safety Policy and State laws. In the event that you observe any inappropriate behaviors (i.e. Agreement violations, negligent supervision, poor role-modeling, etc.) or suspected abuse (physical, emotional, or sexual), you are required to do the following:

1. If you witness abuse occurring, you should do anything within your power to stop the abuse from continuing and secure the safety of the child.
2. If abuse is occurring or has occurred, you must contact law enforcement and/or child protective services as quickly as possible, in accordance with local mandatory reporting requirements.

Most states' laws, including the laws of Florida, Colorado, Maryland, California, and Texas require that any person having cause to believe that a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been or may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect must report the abuse or neglect to the appropriate law enforcement agency. Please consult applicable state legal requirements for particular reporting requirements.

3. You must also immediately report abuse to an RYM Staff Member, an RYM Board Member (if present), or the RYM Executive Director, who may also make the appropriate report to law enforcement agencies.
4. If the observed situation is not obviously abusive in nature, but is still suspicious, you must immediately report your observation to an RYM Staff Member, an RYM Board Member (if present), or the RYM Executive Director.
5. If you witness suspected grooming behavior, you must report it according to the requirements in #4, directly above.
6. Failure to report abuse or suspected abuse according to the above is a violation of the RYM Safety Policy. Churches and/or Individuals who fail to timely report abuse or suspected abuse may be restricted from participation in any activities involving children or vulnerable populations at RYM in the future.

ARTICLE VIII: CONSEQUENCES

Any violations of these policies by a Church or any of its adult participants may be grounds for immediate dismissal from the event at the expense of the Church. Final decisions related to policy violations will be the responsibility of the RYM SCR Committee, or if an immediate decision is necessary, the Executive Director may make a final decision.

Any person found to have committed a prohibited act is prohibited from future participation in any RYM-sanctioned event that involves children or vulnerable populations.

ARTICLE IX: INDEMNIFICATION

In the event RYM (including any of its employees, agents, directors or affiliates) is made a party to any threatened, pending or completed actions, suits or proceedings, whether civil, criminal, administrative or investigative, because of the Church's acts, omissions or violations of this Agreement by the Church, then the Church shall indemnify and hold harmless RYM against all such expenses (including attorney's fees), judgments, fines and amounts paid in settlement as actually and reasonably incurred by RYM. In the event that RYM is made a party to an action, complaint, suit or proceeding, the Church will engage competent legal counsel to defend RYM, and RYM agrees to use that legal counsel unless RYM believes counsel has a conflict of interest or is not qualified or competent for the representation. If the latter, RYM may engage separate counsel at the Church's expense. Further, while RYM is expected at all times to use its best efforts, diligence and prudence to faithfully discharge its duties to the Church and its participants, RYM shall not be liable to the Church for acts or omissions made in good faith in which RYM has not exhibited gross negligence or willful misconduct.

ARTICLE X: RYM FULFILLMENT OF AGREEMENT

RYM agrees to do the following:

- Create and foster safe and nurturing environments to which Churches will bring children to come and participate in its events.
- Abide by and make policy decisions according to its Board-approved **Safety Policy**
- Require its Employees, Contractors, and Volunteers to abide by the regulations in the **Safety Handbook and Procedures Manual**

A copy of each of **these documents** will be made available upon request.

Certification and Acknowledgment of Agreement (this signature section may be embedded into an online registration portal):

On behalf of _____(CHURCH), I _____ (Adult Participant) acknowledge and agree to all the terms and conditions of This Agreement and will abide by them.

CHURCH

BY: _____
(Printed Name)

TITLE: _____

SIGNATURE: _____

DATE _____

On behalf of RYM, I _____ (RYM Staff Member) acknowledge and agree to all the terms and conditions of This Agreement and will abide by them.

BY: _____
(Printed Name)

TITLE: _____

SIGNATURE: _____

DATE _____