



TOUCHED. TRANSFORMED. SENT.

STUDENT MINISTRY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES HANDBOOK

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INTRODUCTION

WELCOME

Welcome to One Life Christian Church!

At One Life Christian Church, we take our responsibility to care for children and youth seriously. These guidelines are designed to create a safe and nurturing environment where students can grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ.

This handbook provides an overview of procedures and guidelines for volunteers and staff members working with youth in grades 6 through 12 at One Life Christian Church. Our policies are crafted to ensure the safety and well-being of every student while safeguarding our volunteers, staff, and the mission of One Life Christian Church.

We ask that you carefully review these policies and procedures. Once completed, please sign and return the agreement form on the last page of this handbook. If you have any questions or need further clarification, do not hesitate to contact your ministry director.

Thank you for your commitment to serving, loving, and protecting our students. Your dedication to this ministry makes a meaningful difference in their lives and the Kingdom of God.

Sincerely,

One Life Christian Church Senior Leadership

ONE LIFE CHRISTIAN CHURCH STUDENT SAFETY SYSTEM

At One Life Christian Church, we are committed to protecting the students involved in our ministries. To ensure their safety, all volunteers and staff **must** complete the One Life Christian Church screening process, including a comprehensive background check.

Additionally, all volunteers must receive approval from the student ministry staff before being permitted to serve. This process helps us maintain a safe and secure environment for everyone involved.

STEP ONE: SEXUAL ABUSE AWARENESS TRAINING

All staff members and volunteers must have a foundational understanding of the characteristics of sexual abusers and the behaviors they use to “groom” a child for sexual abuse. Grooming is a deliberate process used by an abuser to:

1. Select a child,
2. Build trust with the child and the child’s parent or caregiver (the “gatekeeper”),
3. Manipulate the child into inappropriate and harmful activity, and
4. Prevent the child from disclosing the abuse.

To help you recognize the signs of grooming and the characteristics of potential abusers, One Life Christian Church requires all staff members and volunteers serving children and youth to complete Sexual Abuse Awareness Training. This training can be completed in person or online and must be renewed every two years to ensure you remain equipped with the most current information and tools.

STEP TWO: SCREENING PROCESS

All staff members and volunteers serving children and youth must complete the One Life Christian Church Screening Process. This process includes the following steps:

- Employment Application (for employees only)
- Safety Application
- Face-to-Face Interview
- Reference Checks

Additionally, volunteers must regularly attend One Life Christian Church services for at least six months before becoming eligible to serve in roles that provide ministry services to children. This ensures that volunteers are familiar with the church’s mission, values, and community before engaging in student ministry.

STEP THREE: POLICIES and PROCEDURES

All volunteers and staff members are required to review these policies thoroughly. After reading, please sign the agreement form on the final page to confirm that you have read, understood, and agree to comply with the policy requirements.

STEP FOUR: CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK

All staff members and volunteers serving children and youth **must** undergo a criminal background check. The level and scope of the background check may vary depending on the ministry's position.

Individuals with a history of sexually oriented or sex-related crimes are strictly prohibited from serving in any capacity involving children or minors. Other criminal offenses may also disqualify an applicant from serving in roles involving minors, depending on the nature of the offense. This policy ensures the safety and well-being of all participants in our ministry programs.

CHILD PROTECTION

One Life Christian Church upholds a **zero-tolerance** policy for child abuse and neglect. It is strictly prohibited, and a violation of New York State law, for any volunteer or staff member to engage in physical, sexual, or emotional abuse or to neglect any child participating in One Life Christian Church programs. Our commitment is to ensure the safety and well-being of every child entrusted to our care.

ENFORCEMENT OF POLICIES

One Life Christian Church Student Ministries upholds the highest standards to protect volunteers and students. All individuals working with children or students are subject to the supervision and evaluation of ministry staff and must adhere to these policies and guidelines.

Staff members and volunteers in supervisory roles are responsible for diligently enforcing all policies to ensure a safe and compliant ministry environment.

The One Life Christian Church staff reserves the right to dismiss any volunteer who fails to comply with these policies and guidelines, prioritizing the safety and well-being of the students in our care.

CONSEQUENCES OF POLICY VIOLATION

One Life Christian Church is committed to the safety and protection of its students. Therefore, strict consequences will be enforced for violations of this policy:

1. Immediate Suspension:

- Any individual accused of committing a harmful act to a student will be immediately suspended from participating in youth ministry.
 - This suspension will remain in effect throughout any investigation conducted by law enforcement, child protective agencies, or the Church.
2. Prohibition from Future Participation:
 - Any individual found to have violated this policy may be permanently prohibited from participating in all activities and programs involving minors.
 - For employees, such conduct may result in immediate termination of employment.
 3. Failure to Report Violations:
 - Employees who fail to report a policy violation will face termination.
 - Volunteers who fail to report a violation may be restricted from participating in future activities involving minors at One Life Christian Church.
 4. Reporting and Escalation:
 - Staff members and volunteer leaders must immediately report any inappropriate actions or violations of this policy to their supervisor.
 - Supervisors must consult with church leadership and legal counsel, if necessary, to address the situation appropriately.

One Life Christian Church ensures all students' protection and maintains its ministry's integrity by enforcing these consequences.

CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFETY

REPORTING ABUSE OR SUSPICIONS OF ABUSE

REPORTING SUSPICIOUS OR INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIORS

One Life Christian Church is unwavering in its commitment to protecting students from all forms of abuse. The Church enforces a Zero-Tolerance Policy, which strictly prohibits any act of sexual, emotional, or physical abuse. This policy mandates that all employees and volunteer leaders working with students must immediately report any occurrence or suspected occurrence of child abuse to a staff member.

Any report of inappropriate behavior or suspicion of abuse or neglect will be taken seriously and promptly reported to the appropriate authorities, including Child Protective Services (CPS) or law enforcement, by this policy and state law.

Sexual abusers often engage in "grooming" behaviors to gain access to children. If a staff member or volunteer observes behavior that may be part of a grooming process, witnesses a policy violation, or notices any suspicious actions, they must report this to their immediate supervisor. Prompt reporting allows the church to take necessary steps

to safeguard children in its programs.

REPORTING ALLEGATIONS OR SUSPICIONS OF ABUSE TO LAW ENFORCEMENT

One Life Christian Church ensures that all suspicions or allegations of abuse or neglect are reported to the appropriate authorities. Reports can be made to the **Nassau CPS Emergency Response Hotline** at:

1-800-342-3720

Because many individuals may feel uncertain or hesitant about reporting suspected abuse, One Life Christian Church follows a "**dual reporting**" model where permitted. This process involves a church supervisor working alongside the individual who witnessed or received information about suspected abuse to report the matter jointly.

Important Notes on Reporting:

- This practice is not required and is not intended to prevent anyone from reporting abuse or neglect directly to CPS or law enforcement.
- Staff members and volunteers are encouraged to report directly to CPS or law enforcement if they feel capable and comfortable doing so.

No Permission Required:

- No One Life Christian Church permission is needed to file a report with law enforcement or the Child Abuse Hotline.
- Reports may also be made without involving or notifying church personnel.

Church Notification:

While state law does not require it, the Church asks that all suspicions of child abuse, neglect, or inappropriate behaviors (including grooming behaviors) be reported to an immediate supervisor or a member of the One Life Christian Church Safety Committee. This additional step enables the Church to proactively protect the children in its programs.

By working together, we can ensure a safe and secure environment for every child at One Life Christian Church.

When in doubt, report.

CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

To build trust and provide a safe environment for students, One Life Christian Church staff members and volunteers must respect the confidentiality of personal or sensitive information shared by students. These guidelines outline the expectations for

maintaining confidentiality while addressing situations where exceptions apply, such as mandatory reporting.

General Guidelines for Confidentiality

- Treat all personal or sensitive information students share with respect and discretion.
- Information disclosed by students regarding struggles with family, mental health, faith, or other personal matters should not be shared with others unless it is necessary for their well-being or required by church policies or law.
- Use good judgment when deciding to involve others and always prioritize the student's best interests.

Exceptions to Confidentiality

While confidentiality is essential, there are situations where it cannot be maintained. These include, but are not limited to:

Mandatory Reporting Situations:

- If a student discloses information about:
 - Abuse or neglect.
 - A threat of harm to themselves (e.g., suicidal thoughts or self-harm).
 - A threat of harm to others.
- In such cases:
 - Immediately inform a Ministry Leader or Supervisor, who will then escalate to the Elder Leadership who would contact the Parents (if the abuse is not parent-inflicted) to ensure proper reporting procedures are followed.
 - Follow state laws regarding mandatory reporting and notify the appropriate authorities (e.g., Child Protective Services, law enforcement).

Involving Parents or Guardians

- For non-mandatory reporting situations (e.g., struggles with faith, family, or mental health), consider involving the student's parents or guardians if it is in the student's best interest.
- Before sharing information with parents:

- Seek the student's permission, if appropriate.
- Approach the conversation with sensitivity and support.

Communication with Ministry Supervisors

- If unsure whether to maintain confidentiality or escalate a situation, discuss the matter with a Ministry Supervisor.
- Ministry Supervisors can provide guidance on how to address the situation while respecting the student's privacy and meeting legal or ethical obligations.

Handling Disclosures from Students

- **Listen carefully and nonjudgmentally** when a student shares sensitive information.
- Reassure the student that their concerns are being taken seriously and that you will act in their best interest.
- **Avoid making promises** about keeping the information completely confidential, especially in cases where reporting may be necessary. Instead, explain that you will need to involve others if it is for their safety or well-being.

Confidentiality in Group Settings

- When discussing personal or sensitive topics in group settings, remind participants of the importance of respecting each other's privacy and not sharing what is discussed outside the group.
- Monitor group discussions to ensure no one feels pressured to disclose more than they are comfortable sharing.

By following these guidelines, One Life Christian Church ensures a balance between respecting students' privacy and meeting legal and ethical responsibilities to protect their safety and well-being.

SUPERVISION AND CONDUCT EXPECTATIONS

BUILDING SAFETY

Each ministry supervisor is responsible for ensuring the ministry program area is properly monitored during youth programming. Under no circumstances should a

student be left unattended in a ministry area during regular programming, classes, or activities.

Additionally, all students must remain easily observable during programming, classes, or activities to maintain a safe and secure environment.

SUPERVISION

To ensure the safety and well-being of all students, the following supervision guidelines must be adhered to:

1. Authorized Personnel Only:

- Only screened ministry volunteers, church staff members, and students are permitted in areas where ministry to students occurs.
- Any unauthorized adult should be asked for identification and immediately escorted out. If concerns or questions arise, notify a ministry supervisor or security team member immediately.

2. Two Adult Rule:

- Two trained and screened adults must supervise students at all times.
- Avoid being alone with a single student during any ministry program or activity. If one supervising adult needs to leave, another volunteer or staff member must be notified to ensure compliance with the Two Adult Rule.
- If the two supervising individuals are related, a third, unrelated volunteer or staff member must be present.

3. Handling Unusual Circumstances:

- If you unexpectedly find yourself alone with a student, move to a room or area where others are present or to a highly visible location.
- Example: If a student is the last to be picked up, relocate to an adjacent room where other staff members or volunteers are present.

4. Private Conversations:

- If you need to speak with a student privately, do so in a visible area, such as a hallway or another location where others can easily observe. Alternatively, have another leader present during the conversation.

5. Post-Event Checks:

- After each ministry event, thoroughly check every room, area, and restroom to ensure all students have left and no one remains unsupervised.

6. Avoid Distractions:

- Maintain situational awareness and avoid distractions impairing your ability to supervise effectively (e.g., using cell phones or headphones).

SECURITY

To maintain a secure environment, ensure every room, area, and restroom is checked following each ministry program or event. This is essential to confirm that no students remain in the building and that all areas are safely cleared.

By following these guidelines, One Life Christian Church ensures a safe, secure, and nurturing environment for all students in its care.

STAFF MEMBER / VOLUNTEER TO STUDENT RATIO

One Life Christian Church is dedicated to ensuring appropriate supervision in all ministry programs. The following minimum worker-to-student ratios will be maintained at all times:

- 1–20 students: At least **two** staff members or volunteers (adhering to the Two Adult Rule)
- 21–35 students: At least **three** staff members or volunteers
- 35+ students: At least **four** staff members or volunteers

To promote safety and accountability, One Life Christian Church follows the Two Adult Rule, which requires a minimum of two adult leaders to be present when supervising students. A married couple or two family members count as one adult under this rule. This ensures that an appropriate number of unrelated adults are present to provide proper oversight and accountability.

These ratios and guidelines are designed to foster a safe and nurturing environment for all students while protecting the integrity of the ministry.

INTERACTION WITH STUDENTS

COMMUNICATING WITH FAMILIES

Parental Observation:

Parents are always welcome to observe any program or activity their student is involved in. However, parents who wish to actively participate in or have ongoing, continuous contact with their student's program must complete the One Life Christian Church volunteer application and screening process to ensure the safety and integrity of our programs.

Parental Contact:

Parents will be promptly notified if their student becomes ill, is injured, or faces a significant disciplinary issue while participating in ministry programs.

This approach fosters transparency and open communication between the church and families while prioritizing the safety and well-being of all students.

OUT-OF-PROGRAM CONTACT WITH STUDENTS

One Life Christian Church's safety standards are designed to protect students and foster healthy relationships. These standards must also be upheld in interactions with students outside ministry programs. The following policies apply to all out-of-program interactions with students:

Guidelines for Out-of-Program Contact:

- **Never be alone** with a minor in an unobserved context or location. Always ensure interactions occur in open, observable environments.
- Limit connections by gender: Do not initiate or maintain contact with students of the opposite gender.
- Any **dating** or **sexual relationship** of any kind with a minor is **strictly prohibited and will result in volunteer's removal from service**.
- **Overnight interactions:**
 - **Never** spend the night at a student's home or invite a student to spend the night at your home.
 - Avoid spending the night with any student in an "away" location (e.g., vacations, trips, etc.).

By adhering to these policies, staff and volunteers help maintain appropriate boundaries and ensure the continued safety and integrity of One Life Christian Church's ministry relationships.

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

All electronic communication with students must maintain the highest standards of integrity and reflect healthy boundaries.

Guidelines for Electronic Communication:

- Ensure all communication is above reproach and consistent with the values and mission of the ministry.
- The content of any electronic communication (e.g., text messages, emails, social media interactions) should be appropriate and transparent. It should be something you would feel comfortable sharing with a student ministry leader or a parent.

TEXTING

Texting between ministry leaders and students is permitted only under the following guidelines to maintain healthy boundaries and ensure appropriateness:

Group Texting Preferred:

- Texts should generally be sent in group format whenever possible.
- While students may reply individually, ministry leaders should make an effort to text in groups and encourage group replies. A 3rd party is encouraged, in texts.
- When possible, use a ministry-provided device or account to send and receive texts.

Timing and Content:

- Use prudent judgment regarding the timing and content of texts.
- Texting should not occur before **7:00 AM** or after **10:00 PM** unless part of a scheduled ministry activity.
- **Prohibited Content:**
 - **Do not share photos or videos of a sexual or suggestive nature.**
 - Avoid discussing any sexual topics via text.
 - Do not post or comment on inappropriate or off-color content. When in doubt, treat a post as inappropriate.

Gender-Specific Communication:

- **Texting or social media communication with a student of the opposite gender is not permitted under any circumstances.**

COMMUNICATION APPLICATIONS

To ensure transparency, accountability, and the protection of both students and ministry leaders, the following guidelines govern the use of communication applications within One Life Christian Church Student Ministry:

Permitted Use of Ministry Accounts:

- Ministry accounts (e.g., Instagram, Facebook Messenger) may be used for group and individual messaging, provided the following conditions are met:
 - At least one additional ministry leader must have credentials to access the account.
 - This additional leader must regularly review messaging, comments, and posts for accountability.

Prohibited Use of Personal Accounts:

- Ministry leaders may **not** use personal accounts to direct message students.
- All group and direct messaging to or from students must:

- Originate from a **ministry account** and not a personal account.
- Be above reproach and available for supervisory access.

Handling Direct Messages from Students:

- If a student sends a direct message to a ministry leader's personal account:
 - The ministry leader must transfer the conversation to the **ministry account** for a reply, if necessary.
 - The student should be counseled to direct all future communication to the ministry account.

Content Guidelines:

- Avoid discussing **any sexual topic** via social media.
- Do not comment on or reply to a student's inappropriate or questionable post.
- All interactions must be above reproach, reflecting the integrity and values of One Life Christian Church Student Ministry.

Gender-Specific Communication:

- No individual social media or texting communication may occur with a student of the opposite gender.

Prohibited Applications:

The following types of applications are **not permitted** for use with students:

- **Snapchat** and similar apps.
- **Houseparty** and similar apps.
- Any application that allows **anonymous messaging**.

'HOOK-UP' APPLICATIONS

While the use of relationship applications may be commonplace and socially acceptable, **ministry leaders are strictly prohibited** from participating in "Meet & Date" or "Meet & Chat" applications designed to facilitate sexual encounters.

PERSONAL SOCIAL MEDIA

As a ministry leader, you must maintain a high moral standard in your social media presence. Your online conduct should reflect the values of One Life Christian Church and serve as a positive example for students and the community.

Guidelines for Personal Social Media:

- Avoid posting inappropriate content. Any inappropriate posts may serve as grounds for suspension from participation in student ministry.
- Be mindful of your posts' content, tone, and context.
- Ensure that photos or videos shared on your personal accounts align with the church's guidelines regarding:
 - **Alcohol and tobacco use**
 - **Modesty in dress, posture, and content**

Ministry leaders are encouraged to think critically about their social media presence and ensure that it reflects the integrity and mission of One Life Christian Church.

By following these guidelines, ministry leaders ensure that all communication aligns with One Life Christian Church's mission and values and maintains appropriate boundaries to protect students and leaders alike.

STUDENT BEHAVIOR AND DISCIPLINE

DISCIPLINE

Guidelines for Discipline:

Under no circumstances may physical discipline be used to manage students' behavior. This includes, but is not limited to, spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, biting, or any other physical force as a means of retaliation or correction for inappropriate behavior.

Handling Physical Altercations:

In the event of a fight or physical altercation, leaders should verbally redirect those involved and avoid physical intervention unless absolutely necessary to ensure the safety of other students. Staff members and leaders may use appropriate physical restraint to prevent harm when required.

Reporting Behavior Issues:

Uncontrollable or unusual behavior should be reported immediately to parents and a Student Ministry Staff Member.

Discipline Process:

Behavior problems will be addressed using the following steps:

1. The student will be asked to correct their behavior.

2. A staff member will speak privately with the student to discuss the problematic behavior.
3. Parents will be informed of the issue and any disciplinary action.
4. As a final measure, the student may be restricted from attending ministry events. (This is considered a last resort and not the preferred outcome.)

Escalated Discipline:

If a student becomes unruly or fails to comply with verbal warnings or instructions:

- The student may be asked to leave the activity, provided it does not put them at risk.
- Alternatively, the student's parent or guardian will be contacted to pick them up.

Property Damage:

Any property damage caused by a student, whether at the church or during an off-campus ministry event, must be reported to the parents. Parents will be held responsible for covering the cost of repairs.

By adhering to these guidelines, One Life Christian Church ensures a safe, respectful, and constructive environment for all students and leaders.

BULLYING

One Life Christian Church has a zero-tolerance policy for verbal, physical, or emotional bullying in its ministry programs. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable and will be addressed immediately and decisively. There is no such thing as a "harmless put-down" when it comes to bullying.

Guidelines for Addressing Bullying:

1. First Offense:

- Issue a clear warning to the student and provide a general reminder to the group that such behavior is inappropriate.
- Avoid embarrassing or chastising the student.

2. Second Offense:

- Remove the offending student(s) from the group to a supervised location and directly discuss their behavior.
- Clearly explain why the interaction or behavior is unacceptable and set clear expectations for improvement.
- Inform the student that further incidents will result in communication with a

pastor and their parents.

- Notify a ministry supervisor immediately of **any** instances of bullying or verbal abuse.
- Privately check in with the targeted student (with another adult present) to ensure they are not in danger of further harassment and are emotionally and physically stable.
- Be discreet and avoid singling out students in front of the group.

3. Third Offense:

- Refer the offending student to a pastor, who will contact the student's parents.
- Depending on the severity of the situation, the student may be removed from the trip, camp, or event.

By addressing bullying promptly and following these steps, we ensure a safe, respectful, and supportive environment for all students participating in One Life Christian Church programs.

RESTROOM POLICIES

Be vigilant if a student frequently leaves to use the restroom and remains there unusually long. Report such behavior to a supervisor for further attention.

In public settings, students should be sent to the restroom in groups of at least three whenever possible to ensure their safety and accountability.

STAFF AND VOLUNTEER EXPECTATIONS

EMPLOYEE / VOLUNTEER POLICIES

TOBACCO USE

All staff members and volunteers are expected to abstain from using or possessing tobacco products while in church facilities, during ministry activities, or in the presence of students or their parents. This policy applies to both on-campus and off-campus ministry activities. One Life Christian Church is a tobacco-free facility, and adherence to this policy helps maintain a healthy and respectful environment.

INTOXICANTS

Staff members and volunteers are strictly prohibited from using, possessing, or being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs while in any church facility, traveling with students, or participating in activities that involve the supervision of minors. This policy ensures a safe and professional environment for all ministry participants.

NUDITY

Under no circumstances should staff members or volunteers be nude in the presence of students during ministry programs. When nudity may be anticipated (e.g., changing clothes during a pool party, retreat, or overnight event), the staff member or volunteer leading the event must submit a plan to the ministry supervisor outlining arrangements for showering or changing clothes to maintain privacy and appropriateness.

PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Staff members and volunteers should wear modest, comfortable attire while serving. First impressions matter and dressing appropriately reflects professionalism and respect for the students and families you serve. Please adhere to the following guidelines:

- Avoid revealing swimsuits.
- Refrain from wearing thin-strapped or low-cut shirts.
- Avoid clothing that shows midriff or has low necklines.
- Avoid wearing short dresses, skirts, or shorts.
- Choose clothing that is not overly form-fitting or revealing.

By following these policies, staff members and volunteers help foster a safe, professional, and respectful environment that reflects One Life Christian Church's mission and values.

GUIDELINES FOR INTERACTING WITH MINORS ONE-TO-ONE INTERACTIONS WITH STUDENTS

Meeting the emotional and spiritual needs of students may occasionally require individual interaction. To ensure the safety and integrity of these interactions, the following guidelines must be observed:

1. **The Two Adult Rule:**
 - Always follow the Two Adult Rule during ministry programs. Avoid being alone with an individual student in any room or building.
2. **If Alone with a Student:**
 - If you find yourself alone with a student, move to a room or area occupied by others or to a location easily observed by others.
3. **One-to-One Meetings:**
 - One-to-one meetings with an individual student should occur only when others are present, and interactions can be easily observed.
 - **Example:** If a student requests additional conversation after regular programming, move to an adjoining room where other staff members or

volunteers are present or to a public space.

4. Closed-Door Meetings:

- If a closed-door meeting is necessary, it must occur on church property with a second adult present. The door must remain unlocked, and any window covering or treatments must remain open to ensure visibility.

5. Gender-Specific Interactions:

- Avoid holding one-on-one meetings with students of the opposite gender.

6. Ongoing Meetings:

- Any ongoing meetings with students (such as counseling or one-to-one discipleship) must be discussed with a Student Ministry Staff Member. These meetings should comply with the Two Adult Rule or occur in a public, easily observed location.

7. Romantic Interactions Prohibited:

- Staff members and adult volunteer leaders are strictly prohibited from dating or engaging in any form of romantic interaction with students in the student ministry.

By adhering to these guidelines, staff members and volunteers can create a safe and supportive environment that fosters trust while maintaining appropriate boundaries.

SEXUALLY ORIENTED CONVERSATIONS

Staff members and volunteers are strictly prohibited from engaging in any sexually oriented conversations with students. Additionally, they are not permitted to discuss inappropriate or explicit details about their personal relationships, dating experiences, or sexual activities with any student in the program.

However, it is acknowledged that discussions and lessons in student ministry may occasionally address topics such as purity, dating, sex, and human sexuality. These lessons must align with and communicate the church's biblical perspective.

Guidelines for Sensitive Topics:

- Students may seek guidance from trusted adult leaders on questions or struggles related to these topics. In these instances, proceed cautiously, teaching sensitively and always from a biblical perspective.

Key Practices:

1. Gender-Specific Conversations:

- Avoid discussing topics of a sexual nature with students of the opposite gender.

2. Handling Explicit Questions in Group Settings:

- If a student's questions or comments on sexual matters become overly detailed or explicit during a group setting, use discretion to redirect the discussion and arrange a follow-up meeting.
- Before any follow-up meeting:
 - Inform a Student Ministry Staff Member.
 - Comply with the Two Adult Rule **OR** ensure the meeting occurs in a public, easily observable location.

3. When in Doubt:

- If there is any uncertainty about whether a conversation could be interpreted as "sexually oriented," err on the side of caution and treat it as such, adhering to this policy.
- When possible, consult with a Student Ministry Staff Member to clarify the topic or question.

By following these guidelines, staff members and volunteers can address sensitive topics responsibly, maintain appropriate boundaries, and support students' spiritual growth.

SEXUALLY ORIENTED MATERIALS

The possession, display, or sharing of sexually oriented materials (including images or videos) is strictly prohibited on church property or in the presence of students participating in any ministry program.

PHYSICAL INTERACTION / APPROPRIATE DISPLAYS OF AFFECTIONS

Physical touch can be an essential and positive way to show care and encouragement to students, but staff members and volunteer leaders must maintain clear boundaries. The following guidelines should be observed to ensure physical interactions are appropriate and above reproach:

Guidelines for Appropriate Physical Interaction:

- Physical contact should always be **above reproach**, solely for the benefit of the student, and never based on your own emotional needs.
- Maintain behavior that fosters **trust** at all times.
- Appropriate physical interactions may include:
 - Patting a hand, shoulder, or back in an encouraging manner.
 - Side hugs: Hugs should be brief, in public view, and limited to side hugs,

especially when interacting with the opposite gender.

- High fives and fist bumps are great alternatives, provided the student is comfortable with them.
- Handshakes or briefly placing an arm around a student's shoulder as a friendly gesture.

Interactions to Avoid:

- Sexual relationships with students are strictly prohibited.
- Never touch a student in sensitive areas (breasts, buttocks, or genitals), even if an injury has occurred in those areas. Casual contact in these areas, over or under clothing, is also prohibited.
- **Avoid** the following:
 - Sitting a student on your lap.
 - Handholding, except during worship/prayer services or group games.
 - Touching a student out of anger or disgust.
 - Touching in a way that could be misconstrued as sexually suggestive.
 - Physical contact between the navel and the knees.
 - Carrying a student piggyback or on your shoulders.
 - Kissing a student or giving/receiving a massage.
 - Placing hands beneath a student's clothing for any reason, including comfort or play.
 - Tickling, participating in horseplay, or wrestling with students.

Respecting Student Boundaries:

- Never force physical contact, touch, or affection on a student who is reluctant or uncomfortable.
- A student's preference not to be touched must always be respected.
- Physical interactions and displays of affection should occur only in observable locations or in the presence of others. Open environments minimize the likelihood of misunderstandings or misinterpretations.

By maintaining these boundaries, staff members and volunteer leaders can build trust, provide encouragement, and ensure a safe and respectful environment for all students.

VERBAL INTERACTION

Verbal interaction with students should always be positive, encouraging, and constructive, reflecting One Life Christian Church's mission to support parents in their children's spiritual growth and development.

Guidelines for Verbal Interaction:

- Ensure that all communication is uplifting and promotes a student's spiritual, emotional, and personal growth.
- Avoid any language or tone that could be interpreted as:
 - Harsh
 - Threatening
 - Intimidating
 - Shaming
 - Derogatory
 - Demeaning
 - Humiliating
- Refrain from using profanity or inappropriate language in the presence of students.

Setting for Verbal Interaction:

- Whenever possible, verbal interactions should occur in locations where others can easily observe and hear what is happening.
- At no time should an adult and a student have private conversations behind a closed door or in an area that is out of view from others.

By maintaining a respectful and transparent verbal communication standard, staff members and volunteers can foster an environment that is safe and conducive to students' spiritual development.

VOLUNTEER DISCIPLINARY POLICY

The following guidelines outline the process for addressing violations of the Student Ministry Handbook by staff members or volunteers to maintain the integrity of One Life Christian Church and ensure the safety and well-being of all students, staff, and volunteers.

General Principles

- **Zero Tolerance for Abuse:** One Life maintains a strict zero-tolerance policy for abuse. If a report of abuse is made against any staff member or volunteer at any

time, the individual will be immediately suspended from service pending the completion of a full investigation.

- Disciplinary actions will be taken to align with the mission and values of One Life Christian Church.
- The goal of the disciplinary process is to address violations constructively while ensuring the safety of students and the ministry.
- Depending on the severity of the violation, disciplinary actions may range from verbal warnings to immediate removal from ministry roles.

Process for Addressing Violations

Step 1: Verbal Warning

- For minor or first-time violations, the Ministry Supervisor will meet with the staff member or volunteer to:
 - Clearly explain the nature of the violation and its impact on the ministry.
 - Discuss the expectations outlined in the handbook and how they were unmet.
 - Provide guidance on how to correct the behavior moving forward.
- A verbal warning will be documented, including:
 - The date and details of the meeting.
 - Any corrective actions agreed upon.

Step 2: Written Warning

- For repeated violations or more serious infractions, the Ministry Supervisor will issue a **written warning** that includes:
 - A description of the violation(s).
 - The steps needed to address and correct the behavior.
 - A clear explanation of potential consequences for failing to improve or for further violations.
- The staff member or volunteer will be asked to sign the written warning to acknowledge receipt.
 - Refusal to sign will be documented, and the document will still be added to their file. Additionally, it will result in immediate removal from the ministry.

Step 3: Suspension or Removal from Ministry Roles

- For severe violations or repeated failure to adhere to the policies, the staff member or volunteer may be:
 - **Suspended temporarily** from ministry activities while an investigation or review takes place.
 - **Permanently removed** from their role if the violation poses a risk to students or other volunteers or undermines the ministry's values and mission.
- The decision to suspend or remove a volunteer will involve consultation with the Ministry Supervisor and Church Leadership.

Grounds for Immediate Removal

Some violations may result in immediate suspension or removal from ministry roles, including but not limited to:

- Violations of confidentiality policies.
- Actions that compromise the safety or well-being of students or the ministry.

By adhering to this Volunteer Disciplinary Policy, One Life Christian Church ensures that all staff members and volunteers are held accountable while maintaining a safe and respectful environment for students and the ministry.

EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

PLANNING EVENTS FOR GROUPS

When planning group events outside of regular programming, volunteer leaders must ensure clear communication with parents and staff members. Event details, including time, location, and activities, should be shared beforehand. All events must comply with One Life Christian Church policies, and some events may require signed release forms from parents or guardians.

OVERNIGHT EVENTS

Overnight activities and events, such as camps or mission trips, require additional planning and precautions to ensure the safety and well-being of all participants. The following policies apply to overnight events:

- **Approval and Permission:**
 - All overnight events must be pre-approved by a ministry supervisor.
 - Parental permission must be obtained for each participating student.

- Overnights are prohibited on One Life Christian Church property unless part of a ministry-sponsored event.
- **No Unsupervised Overnights:**
 - Overnight stays between a church staff member or volunteer and an unrelated minor are strictly prohibited in any context.
 - For pre-existing family relationships where overnights may occur (e.g., family friends), these relationships must be disclosed to a ministry supervisor in advance.
- **Event-Specific Child Safety Plan:**
 - For each overnight event, Student Ministry staff must create a **child safety plan** tailored to the event's specific details, such as activities, travel, location, and any other groups present. This plan will supplement existing policy guidelines to address unique risks and ensure child protection.

MEDICATION

- Staff members and volunteers are **not permitted** to administer any medication to students during ministry programs, including over-the-counter drugs.
- For trips or activities requiring medication (e.g., mission trips, retreats), a **medical professional** will accompany the group to dispense medications as needed. This will only occur following signed parental permission forms and other relevant policies.

PHOTOGRAPHY AND MEDIA POLICY

General Guidelines for Photography and Video Recording

- Photos or videos (personal and church devices) should only be taken for **approved purposes** (e.g., church publications, social media, promotional materials).
- The content of any photos or videos must align with the values and mission of One Life Christian Church and avoid inappropriate, suggestive, or unsafe representations.

Handling Privacy Requests

- Respect any **requests for privacy** from parents or guardians who do not wish for their child to be photographed or recorded.
- For children with privacy restrictions:

- Ensure all staff, volunteers, Ministry Leaders, and the Creative Director know the restrictions to avoid accidental inclusion.
 - Do not include them in group photos or videos.
- Maintain a list of students with privacy restrictions and share it with the event or program leader for easy reference.

Storage and Sharing of Media

- Photos and videos should only be stored on **church-approved devices or platforms**.
- Avoid storing or sharing media files on personal devices unless explicitly authorized by the Ministry Supervisor.
- Only authorized staff members may post photos or videos on church social media accounts or websites.

Prohibited Practices

- At no point should staff and volunteers post pictures or videos of children on any social media platform.
- Do not take photos or videos of students in sensitive or private situations (e.g., during changing, in restrooms, costume changing special event).
- Avoid tagging or identifying students by name in public-facing materials or social media.

Monitoring and Accountability

- The Ministry Supervisor will oversee photography and media use to ensure compliance with this policy.
- Any violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action, including dismissal from ministry roles.

By adhering to these guidelines, One Life Christian Church ensures the respectful use of media while safeguarding all students and their families' privacy and security.

TRANSPORTATION

Staff members and volunteers may occasionally provide transportation for students. To ensure safety and maintain appropriate boundaries, the following guidelines must be strictly observed:

General Guidelines:

- Transport students directly to their destination. **Unauthorized stops** in non-public places must be avoided.
- Avoid transportation situations resulting in only one student in the vehicle.
- Follow the **Two Adult Rule** or **Rule of Three** whenever transporting students.
- Never be alone in a vehicle with a student of the opposite sex.
- **Do not instruct students** to drive other students to ministry events.

Behavior in Vehicles:

- Avoid **physical contact** with students while in the vehicle.
- All passengers, including the driver, must always wear seatbelts.
- Do not exceed the number of passengers you have seatbelts, and no one should be **double buckled**.

Driver Requirements:

- Drivers must be 25 years old to operate One Life Christian Church-owned or rented vehicles.
- Use extra caution when driving students, following all traffic laws and safety measures.

Cell Phone Use:

- **Do not use cell phones** while driving unless for navigation purposes.
- In an emergency, stop the vehicle safely before using a phone. **Texting or other phone use while driving is strictly prohibited.**

TRANSPORTATION RELEASE FORMS

To ensure the safety and legal compliance of all trips and transportation provided by the church, the following guidelines outline the requirements for parental release forms:

Requirement for Release Forms

- All trips or events requiring church-provided transportation must include a **signed parental release form** for each participating student.
- Students cannot attend the trip or use church-provided transportation without a signed form.

Information to Include in the Release Form

The parental release form must include the following details:

1. Permission to Travel:

- A statement granting permission for the student to travel to and from the event with church-provided transportation.

2. Trip Details:

- Date(s) of the trip or event.
- Destination(s) and event location(s).
- Mode(s) of transportation (e.g., bus, van, car).

3. Emergency Contact Information:

- Primary and secondary contact numbers for parents or guardians.
- Information about the student's medical needs, including allergies, medications, or special instructions.

4. Liability Waiver:

- A statement releasing One Life Christian Church, its staff, and volunteers from liability for incidents that may occur during transportation or the event.
- Acknowledgment that all reasonable precautions will be taken to ensure the safety of students.

5. Medical Release Authorization:

- Consent for church staff to seek emergency medical treatment for the student if necessary.

6. Parent/Guardian Signature and Date:

- A clear space for the parent or guardian's signature and the date of signing.

Retention and Accessibility of Forms

- All signed forms must be collected and securely stored before the trip.
- A copy of each form should be readily accessible to the trip leader or designated staff member during the event.

By adhering to these transportation guidelines, staff members and volunteers ensure a safe and respectful environment for all students while maintaining the integrity of One Life Christian Church ministry programs.

EMERGENCY AND CRISIS RESPONSE

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

To ensure the safety and well-being of all students, staff, and volunteers, these emergency procedure guidelines provide a clear framework for responding to various emergencies.

MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

Immediate Actions:

- Assess the situation calmly and provide **basic first aid** if trained; it is safe to do so.
- Do not move an injured student unless their location poses additional danger (e.g., fire, flooding).
- Retrieve and use supplies from the **First Aid Kit**.

Notify Emergency Contacts:

- Call **911** immediately about severe injuries or life-threatening conditions.
- Notify the student's **parent/guardian** using the emergency contact information on file as soon as possible.

Incident Reporting:

- Document the emergency, including:
 - The student's name.
 - Details of the incident and actions taken.
 - Emergency services contacted, if applicable.

- Submit the report to the **Ministry Supervisor** within 24 hours.

EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

Ensure Access to Contact Information:

- Maintain a current and accessible list of all students' emergency contacts.
- Ensure this information is available to the Ministry Supervisor and program leaders during every event.

EMERGENCY RESOURCES

- **First Aid Kits:** Clearly labeled and located in [list specific areas].
- **Fire Exits:** Ensure all exit points are clearly marked. Post evacuation maps in visible locations.
- **Safe Zones for Severe Weather:** Clearly communicate the designated areas (e.g., hallways, basements).
- **Emergency Phone Numbers:**
 - Emergency Services (Police/Fire/EMS): **911**
 - Non-Emergency Local Police: [Insert number]
 - Ministry Supervisor: [Insert number]

COMMUNICATION PLAN

- Use the church's **emergency notification system** to update parents and staff.
- Designate a single point of contact (e.g., Ministry Supervisor) to communicate with parents and avoid misinformation.

TRAINING AND DRILLS

- Conduct regular training for staff and volunteers on how to handle emergencies.
- Perform scheduled **emergency drills** for fires, tornadoes, and active shooters to ensure preparedness.
- Post emergency procedures and evacuation routes in visible locations.

By following these guidelines, ministry leaders, staff, and volunteers can create a safe and responsive environment during any emergency, ensuring the well-being of all students and participants.

MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS PROTOCOLS

Mental health crises require swift and sensitive responses to protect the well-being of students while involving parents and professionals appropriately. The following guidelines outline steps for responding to situations such as students expressing suicidal thoughts, self-harm, or other mental health concerns:

1. General Response Guidelines

- Stay **calm and supportive** while addressing the student's immediate needs.
- Take all disclosures of suicidal thoughts, self-harm, or mental health struggles seriously.
- Avoid judgmental language and create a safe space for students to express their feelings.

2. Responding to Suicidal Thoughts or Self-Harm

Immediate Steps:

1. **Ensure the Student's Safety:**
 - Do not leave the student alone.
 - Remove any potential means of self-harm if it is safe to do so.
2. **Engage with the Student:**
 - Listen without interruption or judgment.
 - Reassure the student that you care and want to help.
3. **Notify the Ministry Supervisor Immediately:**
 - Share the student's disclosure with the Ministry Supervisor, ensuring privacy while prioritizing the student's safety.

Involving Parents:

- Inform the student's **parent(s) or guardian(s)** of the situation as soon as possible.
- Share what the student disclosed and provide recommendations for professional support.

- If a student fears parental involvement, discuss this with the Ministry Supervisor, who will escalate this appropriately before contacting the parents.

Engaging Professionals:

- If the threat of harm is immediate, call **911** or the local **mental health crisis hotline** to connect the student with professional help.
- Provide parents with emergency mental health contacts, such as:
 - **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:** 988
 - **Crisis Text Line:** Text HOME to 741741
 - [Insert local mental health resources or hotline numbers here]

Follow-Up:

- Maintain communication with parents to ensure the student receives the necessary care.
- Document the incident thoroughly, including the student's disclosure, actions taken, and communications with parents or professionals.

COMMUNICATION AND PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

PARENT COMMUNICATION EXPECTATIONS

Open communication with parents fosters trust, transparency, and collaboration between families and the ministry. The following guidelines outline expectations for maintaining strong parent communication:

Regular Updates

- Provide parents with consistent updates on ministry programming and upcoming events.
- Use multiple communication channels, such as email, newsletters, and social media, to reach all parents effectively.

Event Communication

- Share detailed information about events, including:
 - Time, date, and location.
 - Transportation details, if applicable.
 - Any required permissions or waivers.
- Provide contact information for event leaders so parents can ask questions or raise concerns.

Crisis Communication

- If a crisis arises (e.g., injury, mental health concern, or behavioral issue), parents should be notified immediately, calmly, and clearly.
- Provide details of the situation, actions taken, and next steps to ensure the student's safety and well-being.

Listening to Parents

- Actively listen to parents' questions, concerns, and feedback.
- Create opportunities for parents to share input through surveys, meetings, or informal conversations.

Transparency and Partnership

- Foster a culture of partnership with parents by being transparent about the ministry's mission, policies, and programs.
- Emphasize the shared goal of supporting their children's spiritual and personal development.

By following these guidelines, One Life Christian Church ensures a proactive and compassionate approach to mental health crises while maintaining strong, open communication with parents.

AGREEMENT AND COMPLIANCE

STATEMENT OF ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND AGREEMENT

This page must be signed, detached, and submitted to the Ministry Supervisor.

Staff members and volunteer leaders must read and understand the Student Ministry Policies and Procedures. Additionally, each staff member and volunteer leader must complete and sign this acknowledgment form to confirm that they have read, understood, and agreed to follow these policies. Failure to adhere to these policies may result in the individual being asked to step down from their role.

I acknowledge receiving and reading a copy of the **One Life Christian Church Student Ministry Policies and Procedures Handbook** on the date listed below. I understand the importance of the guidelines and policies outlined in this document and agree to abide by them during my service at One Life Christian Church.

I understand that:

- These policies and procedures may be modified or eliminated at any time by One Life Christian Church.
- While I intend to serve for the agreed-upon term, I may choose to end this relationship at any time, and I will provide two weeks' notice to my supervisor, if possible.
- This handbook does not create a contractual employment relationship. If I volunteer, I understand and agree that I will receive no compensation for my hours worked.
- It is my responsibility to review and comply with any new policies or guidelines created and distributed.

Staff Member or Volunteer's Name (please print)

Staff Member or Volunteer's signature

Date

Thank you for your commitment to maintaining a safe and nurturing environment for One Life Christian Church students.