**Youth Ministry**

**Policy Manual**



Updated: 9/12/18

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**Introduction**

 At Faith Lutheran Church and School, our mission is *Raising Up Families and Followers of Jesus Christ*.

 The purpose of this policy manual is to provide youth, parents, and other adult participants with information about Faith’s youth ministry and what the program expectations are. While this policy manual is not intended to be inclusive of every possible event, scenario, or circumstance that may arise, it is intended to give you a general overview of the ministry. All families will be provided with a current copy of this policy manual at the beginning of each school year and are expected to support and follow these guidelines at all Faith Lutheran Church and School functions. These are not intended as a set of rules but rather as a set of guidelines for living well with one another in Christian community as we seek to provide a safe, caring learning environment for the discipleship and fellowship of the young people entrusted into our care.

**I. Policy Application**

1. Policies stated herein apply to all individuals involved in youth activities. This includes members and guests or friends attending youth meetings, events, or outings, as well as any adults participating in or chaperoning events.

**II. General Behavior**

1. Young people are expected to conduct themselves in a way that sets an example for believers (and unbelievers) through their words and actions (see 1 Timothy 4:12)
	1. Use words that build others up.
	2. Refrain from using offensive language.
	3. Respect and encourage one another.
	4. Controlled substances, even those which are deemed legal by the state of Washington at the age of 18 or 21, should not be consumed at any FLC-sanctioned youth event. This includes, but is not limited to, alcohol, tobacco (including cigarettes, e-cigs, and chew), and marijuana.
2. Behavior that is disruptive, unsafe, or intentionally defiant will result in the immediate release of the participant from an event.

**III. Dress Code**

1. Dress in a modest and appropriate way for all youth activities, as you are a representative of Christ first, and of Faith Lutheran Church. Sometimes, this may mean dressing differently from current societal trends.
2. We expect the parent/guardian to provide guidance to ensure the youth makes good decisions in their dress and appearance while engaged in youth activities and outings.
3. If the primary adult leader of an event feels the dress code is broken, they have permission to ask the adult or youth to change into something more appropriate.

**IV. Media Usage**

1. Use of all electronic devices should be limited during youth activities, meetings, etc.
2. When the leader asks there be no phones, please put them away with the ringer off. If the leader sees it again after the child has been asked to put it away, the device will be taken away and put in ‘phone jail’ until the end of the event.
3. Music, videos, games, etc. used at any youth event should depict messages that are consistent with God’s word and our Christian values.
4. All music used at a youth group event or in the youth room will not contain offensive language, crude language, sexually explicit lyrics, or misuse God’s name.
5. All games, music, and movies will be reviewed by Leader(s) prior to use.
6. Clips from PG‐13, and R rated movies will be previewed by Leader(s) before group viewing.
7. If there is an R rated movie shown at a Faith sponsored event, a permission slip will be distributed and signed by an adult before the minor is allowed to view the film.

**V. Deadlines**

1. Holding youth accountable and giving them deadlines helps encourage responsibility, helping them be better equipped for high school, college and adult life.
	1. Deadlines for registration materials are in place to ensure that materials are received by the leaders in time to register the group for an event and to increase the likelihood that the group will be able to attend, (limited number of participants), receive early registration discounts etc.
	2. While the youth has primary responsibility, parents should ensure that all registration deadlines are met.

**VI. Emergency Information/Permission Slips**

* 1. For safety reasons, permission slips and medical information forms are required before any youth or adult participants in an FLC-sanctioned activity, and no exceptions will be made. Forms will be found online.

**VII. Transportation**

1. This policy sets eligibility requirements for those driving young people to and from events. (Paperwork will be filled out and approved by the youth board before any adult has permission to drive youth)
	1. Drivers must be at least 21 years of age and have a clean driving record.
	2. Vehicles must be in good working condition.
	3. Drivers must follow traffic laws.
	4. Vehicle must be insured.
	5. Everyone must wear a seatbelt.
	6. Passengers are not to hinder the driver’s concentration in any way while the vehicle is in motion.
2. Youth drivers:
	1. We do not allow anyone under the age of 25 to drive youth who are non-family members.
	2. If your child is getting a ride to or from events from someone under 25, please send a not to the primary adult leader.
3. Gas reimbursement
	1. Typically, those volunteering to drive the youth to events are doing so as a gift to the congregation, and therefore are not typically reimbursed for gas/mileage. However, funds are available for this purpose and those desiring reimbursement are encouraged to make a request.

**VIII. Communication**

1. Youth Leaders have a tremendous responsibility when working with young people. Parents are encouraged to share any information that may help the leaders better understand and mentor their child. Events such as death, divorce, problems in school, etc. are very stressful to youth and this information can ensure that the youth leadership is “there” for them during that time. All shared information will be kept strictly confidential, with the exception of those items considered “mandatory reporting” under the laws of Washington state.
2. For all youth events, parents will be provided emergency contact numbers to reach any of the Youth Leaders.
3. There is a Facebook group‐ “Faith Lutheran Youth Group (FLY)”. Youth and parents are encouraged to join this private group. Events are listed here as well as pictures from various events. Youth are also able to start various discussions (appropriate). Youth (13+) who have parental permission are encouraged to create a Facebook profile so they can participate.
	1. The primary adult leader has the right to delete any material they find inappropriate or outdated
	2. 3 months after graduation, the youth and their parents will be deleted from the Facebook group. If someone is not a current youth group member, a parent, or a youth board member, they are not considered part of youth group any longer.
	3. The primary adult leader will approve or disapprove anyone who asks to join the Facebook group. Adults allowed to view the Facebook group must have a direct contact with a youth involved in youth group or the youth team.
	4. Do not share pictures from the Facebook group to your own personal page unless you have been given permission from the primary adult leader.
4. Please ensure the Youth Leaders have current cell phone and email contact information to help us more accurately and efficiently communicate with you.

**IX. Youth Leader and Volunteer Personal Criteria**

1. Youth Leaders must meet certain personal criteria before they are allowed to work with the young people. This policy is to help protect the young people of our church. (Paperwork will be filled out and approved by the youth board before left in charge of the youth without the DCE or Pastor; Appendix 5)
2. Youth Leaders must be members of Faith Lutheran Church.
3. Volunteers must be at least 25 years of age.
	* 1. Unless approved by youth team
4. A background check will be conducted.
5. Social media cannot contain any photos of illegal or inappropriate material.
6. Must regularly attend worship at Faith Lutheran Church.

**X. Adult-Youth Ratio**

1. Appropriate supervision is important to ensure youth safety at events.
	1. Every effort will be made to have a minimum of 2 adults be present at every youth event.
	2. Every effort will be made to have at least one male and one female adult at every activity.
	3. For larger events, a 1 adult to every 6 youth ratio will be followed.
	4. There will always be an odd number to avoid ‘coupling’ off.
2. In some cases, it may be necessary to limit the number of adult chaperones who participate, whether due to cost, event restrictions, etc. In those cases, the following guidelines will be followed:
	1. Interested adults should:
		1. let the youth board chair know of their interest as soon as possible
		2. complete an informal interview with the youth board and a small handful of youth participants
	2. If an appropriate match for the event is made, priority will be given to (not necessarily in order):
		1. members of the youth board and/or active youth leaders and chaperones
		2. parents of active youth
		3. church members at large
3. If a youth and adult are one on one, the meeting must take place in a public place. If the meeting is done in a location such as an office or the youth room and there are no other youth present, the adult is required to take the following precautions:
	1. Keep the door open and the blinds open
	2. If a youth wants to talk privately, and asks that the door be closed, the adult must let another adult know they will be speaking with the youth privately for a specified amount of time. They will let that adult know when the meeting is concluded.
4. Under no circumstance is an adult allowed to engage in inappropriate behavior with a minor.
	1. Examples of inappropriate behavior: lengthy embraces, kisses of any kind, holding minors over two year of age on lap, touching bottoms, chests, or genital areas, showing affection in isolated areas, sleeping in a bed with a minor, touching knees or legs of minors, wrestling, piggyback rides, massages, or any form of unwanted affection.
	2. Examples of appropriate behavior: side hugs, pats on the shoulder or back, high-fives, verbal praise, holding hands while walking with small children, holding hands during prayer.
5. Adult chaperones are allowed to communicate with youth outside of youth group with the permission of the parent or guardian. The conversations should be limited to sharing information about upcoming youth events. All conversations should be kept visible for verification. If there is any suspicion that an adult leader is communicating inappropriately with a minor, they will be asked to show the parents, pastor and youth team the conversation immediately and without warning. (for example: Don’t use snapchat or any similar apps that erase the conversation between others).

**XI. Youth Trips/Gatherings**

1. Youth trips require a commitment of time and money. Youth and adults are expected to take these commitments seriously. Trips serve to creatively expand on the groundwork and team building that happens in Sunday School, service projects, and other regular youth events.
2. Trips or gatherings:
	1. Typically require an out of pocket event fee
	2. Assume regular attendance in Sunday School and all other Youth meetings and activities
3. Room Assignments
	1. Separate sleeping arrangements will be made for male and female participants.
	2. Every effort will be made to place youth with desired roommates, but this may not always be possible.
	3. Whenever possible, a Youth Leader or Volunteer will not be assigned a room alone with a youth member. Possible exceptions may include being housed with an immediate family member of the same gender or there being only one youth participant of a given gender. However, under no circumstances will a Youth Leader or Volunteer share a bed with a youth member, unless the youth is an immediate family member.

**XII. Finances**

1. Budget
	1. The Youth Ministry budget is under the direct supervision of the Board of Youth Ministry.
	2. Requests for special funding should be made to the Chair of the Board of Youth Ministry and will be approved by the Youth Team.
2. Fundraising
	1. Faith Youth Ministry Fundraising Policy
		1. Youth connected to Faith Lutheran Church have the opportunity to attend servant events, National Youth Gatherings, District Youth Gatherings and retreats that can add up financially. In order to offset the costs for individuals, we have established fundraisers throughout the year. The following policy is to help youth and their families take responsibility in the raising of funds for events in which they want to participate.
		2. Prices and dates for trips and retreats will be publicized well in advance to give families opportunity to raise funds and make payments.
		3. Every trip (servant event, National Youth Gathering, and retreats) will have a non-refundable deposit, due upon registration.
		4. When a youth registers for the event they will receive an estimate of total cost of the trip and their portion of responsibility. Throughout the preparation for trips, the primary adult leader will give regular updates on youth account balance. The church will not provide spending money for trips.
		5. If youth raise more than their trip costs in a given year, they can move it to another account for the next year, or designate it to someone else’s account. The fiscal year runs from August – July.
		6. The youth team will commit to doing fundraisers that earn at least $5.00 per hour to provide a service to the church or community. If a fundraiser does not meet this criteria, we will evaluate the fundraiser for improvements or for its continued effectiveness.
		7. For each fundraiser a percentage of the profits will be distributed to the youth/family that planned and facilitated the fundraiser as an incentive for parental involvement and leadership.
		8. When an event is designated towards the general youth fund, all profits will go straight to the youth account.
		9. When an event is trip specific, the youth participating will get a percentage of the profit based off the hours they contributed. Only participants going on that trip will get the profit.
		10. When an event is youth account specific – each youth will receive a percentage of the profit based off of the amount of time they contributed.
			1. For example, if the entire event brought in $1000. There were 10 youth that helped. Youth A gave one hour and youth B gave 10 hours. Youth A will get $10 in their account but youth B will get $100 in their account.
		11. If youth are unable to make it to a fundraiser event, they can send in a representative from their family to earn money for their account.
			1. For example: A youth who is going on a trip but can not make the fundraiser can have their brother serve for them. That money would not go to the brother’s account but would go toward the youth not present.
		12. If there are multiple family members serving, they will only get profit for the number of youth participating.
			1. For example: The Simpson family has one child in youth group, but they send 5 people from the family to serve at the rummage sale. Their efforts will only benefit 1 youth. They will not get 5 portions of the proceeds.
		13. When the student graduates from high school, or turns 18, their individual account can be designated to another youth of their choice. If the graduate does not designate their funds to a youth within 6 months of graduation, their money will be transferred to the youth general fund.
		14. Money can be transferred between siblings by the request of the parent or guardian.
			1. For example: The Simpson family has multiple kids in the youth age group. Only Bart is going on a trip to Zimbabewe, but Lisa has a lot of money in her account. That money can be transferred to Bart’s account by the request of their mom, Marge.
		15. Money can be transferred to non-siblings by the request and acceptance of both the family sending and receiving. There will need to be a written form or proof if this is the case.
			1. Tommy Pickels wants to go to Wild Waves, but their family doesn’t have the money and he doesn’t have any money in his account. Chuckie Finster has a lot of money saved up from fundraising efforts in the past. By request of Chuckie’s mom, Milinda, she would like to pay for Tommy to go to Wild Waves with Chuckie’s money, she sends a written request to the primary adult leader. Tommy’s mom, Didi can accept or deny the transfer of money through a written statement.
		16. Fundraisers will be planned in the fall of each school year and will be shared on all advertising platforms in order to give kids equal opportunity to participate.
		17. Each fundraiser will be designated either for general youth fund, youth accounts or for a specific trip (NW District Youth Gathering, Middle School Gathering, NYG).
		18. All Youth Fundraisers are for all youth in 6th-12th grade to participate in and traditionally include:
			1. Rummage sale (specific youth accounts)
			2. Bake sale (general youth fund)
			3. Easter breakfast (Mission Project)
			4. Additional events will be addressed as necessary.
3. Scholarships
	1. Every effort will be made to help young people attend the events they choose to be a part of regardless of their personal financial situation.
	2. There are budgeted funds available to serve as “scholarships” in the event a youth is unable to attend any event due to their financial situation.
	3. Youth Leaders should be made aware of this need as early in the registration process as possible.
	4. All use of “scholarship” funds is anonymous and confidential. Youth may not know the source of the funding, nor should they share whether they received a scholarship or what amount.

*As the guardian of a youth participant, by signing this I am agreeing to the rules and guidelines set for the youth program at Faith Lutheran Church. If I disagree with any of these statements and it will conflict with the rules I set for my child, I will address them with the primary adult leader.*

*We expect the youth who participate in our events to follow these rules and respect them as they are placed, approved by the church counsel, and approved by the adult leaders.*

*-Youth Board of Faith Lutheran Church*

Guardian signature \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Guardian name printed \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Youth signature \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Youth name printed \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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

***Picture/Video Release Form***



Date School Year

|  |
| --- |
| **Picture/Video Release Permission** |
| I hereby give Faith Lutheran Church permission to take photographs of the minor named above or photographs in which the minor may be involved with others for the purpose of promoting Faith Lutheran Church and its Youth Ministry, (i.e. news publications, school or church publications, brochures, and school and church website).**Yes, I do give permission**   **No, I do not give permission**  |

I hereby release and discharge Faith Lutheran Church, from any and all claims arising out of publication of this information or use of any photos.

(Print) First name Last name

**Parent/Guardian’s Signature** Date

Chaperone Application 2018-19

Adult Leader Agreement

Faith Lutheran Church will do everything in their power to keep the kids and youth safe during events. The primary adult leader will work directly under the Pastor and congregational president who will approve the chaperones who apply. If you choose to attend youth events at any time as an adult chaperone and/or driver, please fill out the paperwork provided.

**Chaperone**

As an adult chaperone I agree to:

* Respect the leadership of the primary adult leader of the events I attend.
* Do everything in my power to keep kids safe during a Faith Lutheran Youth Event.
* Actively participate in events, discussions, games, and activities.
* I am willing to serve and help in any way that the primary adult leader asks me to. The events are for the kids, not for the leaders.
* I will not partake in foul language, gossip, or be disrespectful in anyway
* I will dress appropriately
* I will not smoke tobacco or marijuana, consume alcohol, or illegal substances.
* I will lead by example through my thoughts, words, and actions.

**Driving**

By signing this form I am agreeing to the following statements:

* My license is current and up to date
* The vehicle I am driving is running properly
* While driving I will ensure all kids are safe
* I will not use a cell phone while the vehicle is in motion
* I will follow all traffic laws and regulations
* I will only go to the locations that the primary adult leader gives me permission to go to (no stopping for coffee, taking the scenic route, etc.).
* I will be on time. If I’m running behind I will communicate it to the primary adult leader.

**Boundaries**

* I will not be one-on-one with a minor with a closed door or in a vehicle.
* I will not make inappropriate contact with a youth at any time
* I agree to have read and agree to all areas of the current youth policy manual.

By signing this form, I am giving Faith Lutheran Church permission to do a background check to ensure the safety of the kids. If the Pastor and primary adult leader finds that I am not a good fit for the youth program, they have permission to ask me to step away from youth events.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Name Printed \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_