

SILVERTON FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

Youth Leader Policy Guidelines

Six-Month Rule

All youth workers must be members or regular attendees of Silverton First Baptist Church for a minimum of six months before eligible for working in any youth ministry. Helpers in AWANA must be members or regular attendees of a local church that is in agreement with SFBC policies and procedures. A Doctrinal agreement form (DAF) or the AWANA doctrinal agreement form must be on file for any worker who is not a member or regular attendee.

Leaders

A student will always be in the primary care of more than one adult. There should never be only one female leader with one male student or male leader with one female student. Teams of adults (male and female) will supervise activities. Minors may help leaders lead activities under their leadership. A minor may not be used to meet the appropriate level of leaders or counseling teams as described in the guidelines above. This policy is in place to ensure appropriate levels of supervision and protect against unfounded allegations.

Overnight Activities

At least two adults must supervise overnight activities. If the participants are male and female, then male and female leaders must be present. It is never appropriate for a leader to share a bed with a student. There shall be separate sleeping quarters for male and female students along with separate access to bathroom facilities.

Individual Counseling

Team counseling is preferable whenever possible. When team counseling sessions are not possible, notify another leader of the location and with whom you are meeting. Counseling should be done in a public place where a private conversation is possible but not hidden from others to be carefully to avoid seclusion. A female leader should always counsel a female student and a male leader counsel a male student. Make sure to be extra careful in where you meet and who knows you are meeting and never be alone out of sight. A male/female counseling team is appropriate for counseling either gender. Counseling of an individual will never occur behind a closed door.

Long-Term Counseling

Youth leaders should not meet with students more than three times to discuss the same issue. Leaders are not prepared or supported for long-term counseling or formal therapy. It is the leader's duty to refer student to the youth director and pastoral staff so that the appropriate steps can take place to receive professional help.

Informal Contact (Outside Youth Activities)

Informal contact refers to phone calls, letters, or face-to-face contact between leaders and student that is not connected to student or church activities. Leaders must seek parental permission before having informal contact with their child. The leader should clearly let the parents know the nature of the contact and that it is not apart of church activity. Parents are responsible for monitoring this informal contact.

Transportation to and from Meetings

Transportation to and from student meetings is not a part of church or youth activities. Parents are responsible for providing or arranging for this transportation. If a leader is asked to transport a child at the parents request, it should be recognized as informal contact (not apart of church activities), and the guidelines for informal contact should be followed (see paragraph above). A leader should never transport a single student of the opposite sex.

Transportation to Youth or Church Events

The church may provide transportation to special youth and church events. When students are transported as a part of youth and church activities all guidelines will apply following the two-person rule and having all drivers approved by the Church. No student will be allowed to participate in the event without a signed parent release form allowing the student to be transported by the church.

Confidentiality

There are limits to confidentiality when working with students. To protect the students and program, there will be absolutely no student leader confidentiality. This means anything shared with a leader by a student can be shared with the Youth Director, Elders and the leadership team if needed. This means if a student tells you something and asks you not to tell their parents and/or other leaders you must let them know you cannot keep secrets. Leaders must report by law if a student discusses harming themselves or others, committing a crime, or being abused. Questions about such cases or other issues of confidentiality must be discussed promptly with the Youth Director and/or Elders. Any serious issues discussed in confidence should be reviewed with one of the Elders, who will protect the confidentially nature of the discussion.

Gifts

Leaders are generally discouraged from giving or taking personal gifts or money to students. A leader should never be put in a situation where they can take from their students. When giving of personal gifts it is desired that the leader first notify the student's parents and youth director so they are aware of what is going on. Although gifts are good they can often be misinterpreted.

Corporal Punishment

Corporal punishment (hitting or spanking) and other forms of punishment involving physical pain are never appropriate for leaders to carry out on students. This rule holds true even if parents have suggested or given permission. Leaders will use the chain of command if they need help with misbehaving students or discipline techniques.

Open Door Policy

All youth events should be open door. This means that leaders, parents and church members have a right to observe any youth activity.

Dating or Sexual Involvement

No adult youth leader is to date or be romantically or sexually involved with a student. Any adult leader with prior incidents of sexual misconduct with students will not be allowed to serve in any capacity of youth ministry at SFBC. There are no exceptions to this guideline. Any adult leader who was a victim of sexual abuse must notify the Youth Director. This is strictly informational and will not alone disqualify the individual.

Reporting Misconduct

Leaders must report suspected or observed misconduct to a member of the pastoral staff or Elders. Violations of these guidelines or suspect behavior by leaders must also be reported in the same manner.

Supervision and Communication

Leaders must meet on a regular basis with the youth director who will meet with the Elders to discuss any issues regarding these guidelines. Appropriate topics that must be discussed include problems, accountability, policy clarifications, personal feeling or other issues that interfere with youth ministry efforts.

Permission Slips

Permission slips and medical consent forms must be signed for each student prior to their participation in special activities. The leaders must have the medical release forms with them while at any youth activity off the church grounds.

High Adventure Activities

Special precautions must be taken on high adventure activities, such as rock climbing, hiking, overnight camps, rafting or the like. Both physical safety and safety from abuse are at risk in high adventure situations. A high ratio of leaders to students is recommended. High adventure overnights often raises unique circumstances involving individual privacy, sleeping arrangements, bathroom facilities and so on. Adult leaders must be vigilant to avoid suspicious or misinterpreted behavior in these circumstances.

Leaders who Disobey Guidelines

Since these guidelines are put in place to protect the students, leaders who disobey these guidelines may be reassigned or relieved of their duties. This will be at the sole discretion of the Youth Director and Elders.

Leaders must avoid even the appearance of misconduct in order to maintain parental confidence and avoid mistaken allegations. 1 Thessalonians 5:22 "Avoid every kind of evil."

I have read the guidelines above and agree to observe and uphold them faithfully.

Youth Leader:

Youth Director:

Date: _____

Date: _____

Name: _____

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Signature: _____