

FCC Students' Ministry Policy & Procedures



rev. July 2025

Dear Volunteer or Staff Member,

At Faith Community Church, we take our responsibility to protect children very seriously. This handbook is designed to help create a safe, welcoming environment where children can grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ.

Inside, you'll find our policies and procedures for Children's Ministry. These guidelines exist to protect the children in our care—and to protect you and our church's mission as well. Please read carefully, and return the signed agreement form at the back.

With gratitude,

The Elders of Faith Community Church

FAITH COMMUNITY CHURCH POLICIES & PROCEDURES FOR STUDENT'S MINISTRIES

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OVERVIEW OF THE FCC SAFETY SYSTEM

Because we care deeply about protecting students and vulnerable individuals, Faith Community Church requires all staff and volunteers working with minors to complete the following four safety steps before beginning ministry service.

STEP ONE: Screening Process

All staff and volunteers must complete our FCC Screening Process, which includes:

- An Employment or Volunteer Application
- A face-to-face interview
- Reference checks
- A criminal background check (see Step 3)

In addition, volunteers **must be involved with Faith Community Church for at least six months**, or complete an approved relationship-building process (such as supervised ministry service, reference checks, and staff interaction), before serving in any role involving contact with minors.

STEP TWO: Review Policies & Procedures

Staff and volunteers must read this manual and sign the acknowledgment form at the end to confirm they understand and agree to follow all safety policies.

STEP THREE: Criminal Background Check

All ministry workers serving with children or students must undergo a background check. The level of screening may vary depending on the position, but no one may serve without a current background clearance on file.

STEP FOUR: Sign the FCC Code of Conduct

Every staff member and volunteer must read and sign the Faith Community Church Code of Conduct, which outlines expectations for safe, Christ-honoring behavior in all ministry settings.

STUDENT SAFETY POLICY

Zero Tolerance for Abuse

Faith Community Church has a zero-tolerance policy for abuse in any ministry program or activity. Every staff member and volunteer is responsible to protect the well-being of students and act in their best interest at all times.

If you observe inappropriate behavior—such as policy violations, neglectful supervision, poor role modeling, or anything that raises concern—or if you suspect any form of abuse (physical, emotional, sexual), you must report it immediately to the Student Ministry Director, a Pastor, or an Elder.

REPORTING SUSPICIOUS OR INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR

FCC is committed to providing a safe, secure environment for students and their families. That includes building a culture of early and consistent reporting.

If you witness or suspect:

- Inappropriate behavior
- “Grooming” behavior (actions that may be a precursor to abuse)
- Any violation of this policy

You must report it promptly to the Student Ministry Director, a Pastor, or an Elder.

If the behavior meets the criteria for suspected child abuse under Pennsylvania law, **you are legally required** to report it directly to ChildLine (1-800-932-0313 or www.compass.state.pa.us/CWIS) in addition to informing church leadership.

All concerns will be taken seriously and reported to the appropriate authorities as required.

Enforcement of Safety Policies

Supervisors—whether staff or volunteers—are responsible to actively enforce all FCC safety policies. Any violation may result in:

- Immediate removal from student ministry
- Disciplinary action or reassignment
- Termination of employment or volunteer service

Final decisions regarding safety policy violations will be made by the Senior Pastor in consultation with the Board of Elders.

Reporting Abuse or Suspicions of Abuse

Reporting Policy Violations or Concerning Behavior

All FCC staff and volunteers share the responsibility of maintaining a safe environment for students.

If you see or hear about:

- A policy violation
- Suspicious behavior
- Inappropriate or grooming behavior

You must report it immediately to the Student Ministry Director, a Pastor, or an Elder.

Even if you're unsure what you saw, **speak up**. Protecting students means erring on the side of caution.

Consequences For Policy Violation

If someone is accused of behavior that violates this policy or is potentially harmful to a student:

They will be immediately suspended from Student Ministries during any investigation by the church or authorities.

If confirmed, they will be permanently removed from serving with minors or vulnerable individuals at FCC.

Employees may also face termination.

Anyone who fails to report suspected abuse or a serious policy violation may be removed from service or terminated.

Mandated Reporting to ChildLine (PA Law)

Under Pennsylvania law (23 Pa. C.S. § 6311), all staff and volunteers who have direct contact with minors are mandated reporters.

If you suspect abuse or neglect, you are legally required to report it directly to:

- ChildLine: 1-800-932-0313
- Or submit a report at: www.compass.state.pa.us/CWIS

You must also notify the Student Ministry Director, a Pastor, or an Elder, but this does not replace your legal duty to report directly to ChildLine.

Reporting to Insurance Carrier

If any allegation involves a staff member or volunteer, Faith Community Church will file a report with our insurance carrier, even if the claim is unproven. This allows the insurer to assist with investigation, response, and legal protection.

Response to Reports

Once a report is received:

- The Senior Pastor or an Elder will follow up with the person who received the initial disclosure to gather accurate details.
- The Safety Committee will take appropriate internal action.
- When required, the Senior Pastor or Chairman of the Elder Board will file a report with ChildLine and cooperate with any law enforcement investigation.

Media Inquiries

- **All media inquiries related to the incident will be handled solely by the Pastor or a person the Elders designate. Staff and volunteers must not speak to the media or post publicly on behalf of the church.**

Faith Community Church Safety Committee

MISSION

Faith Community Church is committed to maintaining a safe, Christ-centered environment for all students. To support this commitment, the church will appoint and maintain a Safety Committee that meets regularly to oversee the protection of minors involved in Student Ministries.

The mission of the Safety Committee is to enable ministry to flourish while safeguarding all students from emotional, physical, or sexual abuse.

Committee Composition

The Safety Committee will be made up of the following leaders:

1. Senior Pastor
2. Associate Pastors
3. Chairman of the Elders
4. Student Ministry Director
5. Youth Director

Meetings

The Safety Committee will meet quarterly to:

- Review risk management practices

- Evaluate compliance with safety policies
- Discuss updates to laws, insurance guidance, or procedures

Emergency meetings may be called by any member in the event of a safety concern or following any incident or allegation involving students.

The Senior Pastor will chair all meetings.

Key Responsibilities

The Safety Committee is responsible for:

1. Enforcing all existing FCC policies related to student safety and risk management
2. Monitoring Student Ministries programs for ongoing compliance
3. Recommending safety improvements to the Board of Elders
4. Coordinating response efforts in the event of a report or allegation
5. Reviewing incident reports and ensuring proper documentation and follow-up

STUDENT'S MINISTRIES STAFF MONITORING PLAN

Faith Community Church is committed to regular oversight of all Student Ministry programs. Staff and volunteer interactions with students will be observed through both scheduled and unannounced visits, giving supervisors the opportunity to ensure ongoing compliance with all safety standards.

Monitoring Schedule:

1. The Senior Pastor meets monthly with the Student Ministry Director to review ministry health and safety practices.
2. The Elder Board meets annually with the Student Ministry Director to review student safety training, policies, and procedures.
3. The Student Ministry Director conducts unscheduled drop-in observations of regularly occurring programs and events.

BUILDING SAFETY

The Youth Director is responsible for monitoring the Youth Ministry Building during all classes and events.

- This includes visual checks of all rooms where students, staff, and volunteers are present.
- No student should ever be left unattended at any time during ministry programming.
- One-on-one situations are prohibited. If a staff member or volunteer finds themselves alone with a student, they must move to a visible, shared, or supervised space (e.g., an adjoining room where others are present or an open area within view).

Example: If a student wants private conversation after a program ends, move to a location where others are nearby and aware.

- If two students are alone in an unsupervised or hidden space, they should be redirected immediately to a more visible and open area.

STAFF- TO-STUDENT RATIO

Faith Community Church is committed to maintaining appropriate supervision ratios in all Student Ministry settings.

Minimum Supervision Standards:

- 1 staff or volunteer per up to 10 students
- 2 staff or volunteers for 11–29 students
- 3 staff or volunteers for 30 or more students

If a staff member or volunteer notices that their group falls below these minimum ratios, they must immediately notify the Youth Director or the Student Ministry Team Leader.

The Youth Director or Team Leader will make every effort to bring supervision into compliance as quickly as possible.

DISCIPLINE

Faith Community Church strictly prohibits any form of physical discipline in student ministry settings.

Staff and volunteers may not use physical force to manage student behavior. This includes (but is not limited to):

- Spanking
- Slapping
- Pinching
- Hitting
- Grabbing
- Any physical retaliation or correction

If a student is disruptive or uncooperative:

- Give clear verbal instructions or redirection.
- If behavior continues, the student may be asked to leave (as long as it is safe to do so), or the student's parent/guardian should be contacted for pickup.
- In the case of a physical altercation or fight, staff and volunteers should verbally redirect students and avoid physical involvement whenever possible.

Any serious or uncontrollable behavior must be reported immediately to the Youth Director and the student's parent/guardian.

INTOXICANTS

Staff and volunteers may not use, possess, or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs:

- While on FCC property
- While supervising or transporting students
- While participating in any student ministry event or trip

This includes all retreats, off-site activities, or church-sponsored gatherings.

NUDITY

Staff and volunteers must never be nude or undressed in the presence of students.

- If a clothing change is necessary (e.g. after a pool party, during an overnight retreat), it must occur in private areas away from students.

Modesty and discretion must be maintained at all times.

ONE-TO-ONE INTERACTIONS WITH STUDENTS

Faith Community Church prohibits unobserved, one-on-one interactions between students and staff or volunteers during any Student Ministry program or event.

Whenever possible, another screened adult should be present.

Individual Meetings

If a one-on-one conversation with a student is necessary:

- It must take place in a visible, public location where others are present and interactions can be easily observed.
- Private meetings behind closed doors are strongly discouraged. If one must occur:
 - The door must remain unlocked,
 - Another staff member must be informed in advance,
 - And it should occur only with prior approval from the Youth Director.

These measures are in place to protect both the student and the adult.

TRANSPORTATION

Staff and volunteers may occasionally provide transportation for students. In these cases, the following guidelines must be strictly followed:

1. Transport students directly to their approved destination.

- Avoid unauthorized stops or detours, especially to non-public places.
 - Avoid situations where you are transporting only one student. If unavoidable, notify the Youth Director in advance.
2. No physical contact should occur between staff/volunteers and students while in vehicles.
 3. Drivers must be 21 years or older to operate any vehicle owned or rented by Faith Community Church.

PARENTAL CONTACT

If a student becomes ill, injured, or involved in a serious behavioral issue while participating in Student Ministry programs, a parent or guardian will be contacted as soon as possible.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Parents are welcome and encouraged to visit any Student Ministry program their child attends. They may freely observe any class or activity.

However, parents who wish to participate regularly or have ongoing interaction with students (beyond occasional observation) must complete the Faith Community Church volunteer application and screening process in accordance with our safety policy.

PHYSICAL CONTACT

Faith Community Church is committed to creating a safe, nurturing, and respectful environment for every student. Physical contact must always be appropriate, observable, and child-centered.

Guidelines for Physical Contact:

1. Appropriate gestures such as side hugs, pats on the back, or a high five can communicate encouragement and are generally acceptable.
2. Inappropriate touching or overly affectionate behavior is strictly prohibited. This includes any physical contact that could be misinterpreted or makes a student uncomfortable.
3. Physical contact should always serve the needs of the student, not the emotional needs of the adult.
4. Any physical contact should take place only in open, visible areas—never behind closed doors or out of sight.
5. Avoid any behavior that could appear questionable, even if intentions are innocent. Personal conduct must be above reproach.

6. Respect boundaries. If a student shows reluctance to physical affection, do not force it.
7. Staff and volunteers are responsible for ensuring students are protected from inappropriate or unwanted touch from others.
8. If you witness or suspect any inappropriate physical behavior, report it immediately to your supervisor, the Student Ministry Director, or the Senior Pastor.

SEXUALLY ORIENTED CONVERSATIONS

Staff and volunteers must never engage in sexually explicit conversations with students or share personal details about their own dating, relationships, or sexual experiences.

However, Student Ministry programs may at times address topics such as purity, dating, sex, and human sexuality in the context of biblical teaching. When these subjects arise, staff and volunteers will communicate clearly and appropriately, reflecting the church's doctrinal views and using approved curriculum.

SEXUALLY ORIENTED MATERIALS

Staff and volunteers may not possess or display any sexually explicit materials (magazines, images, videos, websites, etc.) in the presence of students or anywhere on church property—unless it is part of an approved teaching resource used during a Student Ministry lesson.

SLEEPING ARRANGEMENTS

Occasionally, overnight trips or events (e.g. retreats, lock-ins, mission trips) may be part of Student Ministry. When overnight arrangements are made, the following safety guidelines must be observed:

1. The Two-Adult Rule always applies. At least two screened adults must be present and responsible for oversight.
2. Leaders must avoid showing inappropriate media. Only G, PG, or PG-13 movies are allowed. No R-rated content is permitted.
3. Staff, volunteers, and students must wear modest sleepwear appropriate for a shared group setting.
4. For co-ed events, boys and girls must sleep in separate rooms, each supervised by adult leaders of the same gender.

5. Whenever possible, staff or volunteers will sleep in the same room as students, or in a connecting room with the door open.
6. When beds are not provided (e.g. sleeping bags), a “one person per sleeping bag or blanket” policy will be enforced—no sharing of bedding is allowed.

TOBACCO USE

Faith Community Church is a tobacco-free environment. Staff and volunteers must refrain from the use or possession of any tobacco products or vaping devices:

- On church property
- In the presence of students or their families
- During any Faith Community Church event or program

VERBAL INTERACTIONS

Staff and volunteers at Faith Community Church should speak to students in a way that is positive, respectful, and uplifting. Words are powerful, and our goal is to build students up and encourage their spiritual growth.

All verbal interactions should be:

- Encouraging, not discouraging
- Constructive, not critical
- Kind, not harsh

Staff and volunteers must never speak to students in a way that could be seen as:

- Harsh or threatening
- Intimidating or shaming
- Derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating

Swearing or inappropriate language is not permitted in the presence of students.

Everything we say should reflect the heart of Christ and the mission of our church to support parents in raising their children to know and follow Jesus.

Policies and Procedures

Statement of Acknowledgement and Agreement

I acknowledge that I have received and read the Faith Community Church Student Ministry Policies and Procedures. I understand the importance of these guidelines and agree to follow them while serving or working at Faith Community Church.

I understand that these policies may be updated, revised, or amended by the church as needed. I agree to review and follow any new or updated guidelines provided.

I have reviewed the duties related to my ministry position and agree to carry them out to the best of my ability. I understand I may end my employment or volunteer service at any time. If possible, I will give my supervisor at least two weeks' notice.

I understand that these policies do not represent an employment contract. If I am serving as a volunteer, I understand that I will not receive monetary compensation for my time.

By signing below, I confirm that I have received and understand the contents of this manual.

Staff Member or Volunteer's signature

Staff Member or Volunteer's name (please print)

Date

[This page to **remain attached** to the Faith Community Church Policies and Procedures.]

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[This page to be **signed, detached and delivered** to the Faith Community Church Safety Administrator]