



Old North Church Student Ministries

Policies and Procedures Manual

Dear Student Ministries Volunteer or Staff Member,

We are excited that you are joining our team!

At Old North Church, we strive to provide a fun and exciting place for middle school and high school students to come and grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ and fellowship with one another. In doing this, it is also our hope to provide an environment that is safe and non-threatening for our students and volunteers. The following guidelines are intended to fulfill that purpose.

The content of this manual will provide you, the volunteer, with a general overview of the policies and procedures enforced within our Student Ministries Department. Please note that these procedures are of extreme importance to our staff and leadership team and will be enforced.

After carefully reading this policy manual, please sign and return the *Volunteer Agreement Form* (final page of this document) to the church office or a Student Ministries staff member. You are a valued member of our team and we look forward to serving alongside you as we seek to reach our students for Christ!

God Bless,

Ryan Farr
Director of Middle School and Sports Ministries
rfarr@oldnorthchurch.org

-and-

Shawn Sprouse
Student and Family Pastor
ssprouse@oldnorthchurch.org

Overview of the Old North Church Volunteer Application Process

In order to ensure the safe and secure environment for our students, Old North Church requires that all volunteers working with students complete a **3-STEP APPLICATION PROCESS** before ministry work or volunteer placement begins.

STEP ONE: Screening Process

Staff members and volunteers are required to complete the Old North Church Screening Process, which requires a staff member or volunteer to:

- complete a Volunteer Application
- complete a face-to-face interview

STEP TWO: Policies & Procedures

Staff members and volunteers are required to review the policies contained in this manual and sign the last page indicating that he or she has read and understood the material, and agrees to comply with policy requirements.

STEP THREE: Criminal Background Check

Old North Church requires that all staff members and volunteers working or volunteering in children's or student activities or programming undergo a criminal background check. Depending upon position, differing levels or intensity of background check may be required.

Student Safety Policy

ABUSE TOLERANCE

Old North Church has a **zero tolerance for abuse** in ministry programs and ministry activities. It is the responsibility of every staff and volunteer at Old North Church to act in the best interest of students in every program.

In the event that staff or volunteers observe any inappropriate behaviors (i.e. policy violations, neglectful supervision, poor role-modeling, etc.) or suspected abuse (physical, emotional, or sexual) it is their personal responsibility to immediately report their observations to the Director of Middle School, Student and Family Pastor, or the Senior Pastor.

REPORTING SUSPICIOUS OR INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIORS

Old North Church is committed to providing a safe, secure environment for children and their families. To this end, any report of inappropriate behaviors or suspicions of abuse will be taken seriously and will be reported, in accordance with this policy and state law, to the Police Department, Child Protective Services, or other appropriate agency.

An element of the safe environment referenced above includes the fostering of a culture of reporting relevant information to a ministry supervisor. Because sexual abusers 'groom' children for abuse, it is possible a staff member or volunteer may witness behavior intended to 'groom' a student for sexual abuse. Staff members and volunteers are asked to report 'grooming' behavior, any policy violations, or any suspicious behaviors to a ministry supervisor.

ENFORCEMENT OF POLICIES

Old North Church staff members and volunteers who supervise other staff or volunteers are charged with the diligent enforcement of all Old North Church policies. Violations of these policies are grounds for immediate dismissal, disciplinary action, or reassignment from Student Ministry positions for both volunteers and staff members. Final decisions related to policy violations will be the responsibility of the Senior Pastor and the Board of Elders.

Reporting Abuse or Suspicions of Abuse

REPORTING VIOLATION OF POLICY

In order to maintain a safe environment for students, Old North Church staff members and volunteers must be aware of their individual responsibility to report any questionable circumstance, observation, act, omission, or situation that is a violation of these policies. All questions or concerns related to inappropriate, suspicious, or suspected grooming behavior should be directed to an immediate supervisor in the ministry area, the Director of Middle School, the Student and Family Pastor, or the Senior Pastor.

CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLATION

Any person accused of committing a prohibited act or any act considered by the church to be harmful to a child will be immediately suspended from participation in Student Ministries. This suspension will continue during any investigation by law enforcement or Child Protective agencies.

Any person found to have committed a prohibited act should be prohibited from future participation as a staff member or volunteer in all activities and programming that involves children, students or vulnerable populations at Old North Church. If the person is a staff member or employee, such conduct may also result in termination of employment from Old North Church.

Failure to report a prohibited act to the designated person is a violation of this policy and grounds for termination of employment of a staff member or employee. Volunteers who fail to report a prohibited act may be restricted from participation in any activities involving children, students or vulnerable populations at Old North Church.

REPORTING SUSPICIONS OF ABUSE TO LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

Staff members and volunteers at Old North Church are required to report suspicions of child abuse or neglect, or any inappropriate behavior of a colleague or co-worker, to the immediate supervisor of the area, the Youth Pastor, or the Senior Pastor.

Ohio law requires that any person having cause to believe that a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been or may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect must make a report to the appropriate law enforcement agency. A staff member or volunteer *may* report to immediate supervisor, the Director of Middle School, the Student and Family Pastor, or the Senior Pastor and allow supervisory personnel to make the appropriate report to law enforcement agencies.

Staff members and volunteers are required to verbally report an incident to supervisory staff as soon as possible after the incident. After receiving a report from a staff member or volunteer in Youth Ministries, the Director of Middle School, the Student and Family Pastor, or Senior Pastor will speak with the person or volunteer to whom the student spoke in order to get detailed information about the entire conversation. The Senior Pastor will be notified as soon as reasonably possible.

Student Ministry Policies and Procedures

BUILDING SAFETY

The Director of Middle School and Family and Student Pastor are responsible for ensuring that the Youth Ministry Rooms are monitored during Sunday classes or programming. This will include unobserved monitoring of staff members, volunteers and students in student classrooms.

No student will ever be left unattended or unsupervised during youth ministry programming or meetings. Youth Ministry staff members or volunteers are prohibited from being alone with an individual student in any room or building. In the event a staff member or volunteer finds himself/herself alone with a single student, that staff member or volunteer will take the student to a room or building occupied by others, or to a location easily observed by others. (Example: If a student desires additional conversation or counsel with a staff member or volunteer after regular programming has concluded, move to an adjoining room where other staff members are present.)

After every programming event, staff members and volunteers must ensure every room and restroom is checked prior to leaving.

Any two students together in an unseen or less easily viewed area should be redirected to another (more open) area.

DISCIPLINE

It is the policy of Old North Church that staff members and volunteers are prohibited from using physical discipline in any way for behavior management of children or students. **No form of physical discipline is acceptable.** This prohibition includes spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, or any other physical force as retaliation or correction or inappropriate behaviors by students. If a student is unruly or fails to comply with verbal warnings or instructions from staff/volunteers, that student will be asked to leave (if not endangered by doing so) or the student's parent will be contacted to pick up the student. In the event of a fight or physical altercation, staff/volunteer will verbally redirect students involved and will try to avoid physical intervention. Uncontrollable or unusual behavior should be reported immediately to parents and the ministry supervisor.

INTOXICANTS

Staff and volunteers are prohibited from the use, possession, or being under the influence of alcohol or any illegal drugs while in any Old North Church facility, while traveling with students, or while working with or supervising students.

NUDITY

Staff and volunteers in Old North Church Student Ministries should never be nude in the presence of students in their care. In the event there is a situation that may call for or contemplate the possibility of nudity (i.e. changing clothes during a pool party, weekend or overnight retreat, etc.), staff member/volunteer will submit a plan to the Youth Pastor concerning arrangements for showering or changing clothes.

ONE-TO-ONE INTERACTIONS WITH STUDENTS

Old North Church recognizes that meeting the emotional needs of students may occasionally require staff member and volunteers to minister to them on an individual basis. Staff Members and volunteers should observe the following guidelines when interacting with students.

Individual Meetings

Staff members and volunteers should conduct one-to-one meetings with an individual student at a time when others are present and where interactions can be easily observed unless prior approval is obtained from either the Director of Middle School or the Family and Student Pastor.

In the event a closed-door meeting must occur, the student staff member must inform another staff member and ensure the door remains unlocked.

Staff members and volunteers should conduct one-to-one meetings with an individual student at a time when others are present and where interactions can be easily observed.

TRANSPORTATION

Staff members and volunteers may from time to time be in a position to provide transportation for students. The following guidelines should be strictly observed when workers are involved in the transportation of students:

1. Students should be transported directly to their destination. Unauthorized stops to a non-public place should be avoided. Staff members and volunteers should avoid transportation circumstances that leave only one student in transport.
2. Staff members and volunteers should avoid physical contact with students while in vehicles.
3. No cell phones may be utilized by the driver while driving the Old North Church bus, or vehicles owned or rented by Old North Church, unless in an emergency.
4. No drivers under age 21 may drive Old North Church owned or rented vehicles.

PARENTAL CONTACT

Parents who leave a student in the care of Old North Church staff members and volunteers during church services or activities will be contacted if their child becomes ill, injured, or has a severe disciplinary problem while participating in Youth Ministry programs.

PHYSICAL CONTACT

Old North Church is committed to protecting students in its care. To this end, Old North Church has implemented a 'physical contact policy' which promotes a positive, nurturing environment for our Youth Ministry programs. The following guidelines are to be carefully followed by anyone working in the student program:

1. Hugging, pats on the back and other forms of appropriate physical affection between staff members or volunteers and students are important for student's development and are generally suitable in the church setting.
2. Inappropriate touching and inappropriate displays of affection are forbidden. Any inappropriate physical contact, touching or displays of affection should be immediately reported to an immediate supervisor, the Youth Pastor or the Senior Pastor.
3. Physical contact should be for the benefit of the student, and never be based upon the emotional needs of a staff member or volunteer.
4. Physical contact and affection should be given only in observable places or when in the presence of other students or student staff members and volunteers. It is much less likely that touch will be inappropriate or misinterpreted as such when physical contact is open to observation.
5. Physical contact in any form should not give even the appearance of wrongdoing. The personal behavior of staff or volunteers in the Student Ministry must foster trust at all times. Personal conduct must be above reproach.
6. Do not force any physical contact, touch or affection upon a reluctant student. A student's preference not to be touched must be respected.
7. Student Ministries staff and volunteers are responsible for protecting students under their supervision from inappropriate or unwanted touch by others.
8. Any inappropriate behavior or suspected abuse by staff or volunteers must be reported immediately to an immediate supervisor, the Youth Pastor or the Senior Pastor.

SEXUALLY ORIENTED CONVERSATIONS

Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from engaging in any sexually oriented conversations with students and are not permitted to discuss any inappropriate or explicit information about their own personal relationships, dating or sexual activities with any student in the program. However, it is expected that from time to time student's ministry discussions and lessons may address issues related to purity, dating, sex and human sexuality. These lessons will convey to the students the church's views on these topics.

SEXUALLY ORIENTED MATERIALS

Staff members and volunteers of Old North Church Student Ministries are prohibited from possessing any sexually oriented printed materials (magazines, cards, images, videos, films, etc.) on church property or in the presence of students.

SLEEPING ARRANGEMENTS

It is anticipated that certain Student Ministry activities may occasionally require that overnight sleeping arrangements be made for students and staff/volunteers (i.e. lock-ins, mission trips, members and ski trips, etc.). In the event an activity requires sleeping arrangements, staff volunteers will strictly observe the following rules:

1. The 2-adult rule must be followed. The 2 adult leaders present must have previously completed the Old North Church application and screening processes.
2. Overnight sleeping arrangements must be submitted in writing to and approved by the Director of Middle School and/or the Family and Student Pastor prior to the activity.
3. As long as any youth are awake, one of the leaders must also be awake and monitoring students to ensure safe behavior.
4. Leaders should check with parents and use good judgment regarding PG or PG-13 movies. No R-rated movies are permitted.
5. Appropriately modest sleeping attire must be worn.
6. In the event of a sleep over on campus that involves both boys and girls, boys and girls must sleep in separate rooms, properly supervised by student leaders of the same gender.
7. Staff and volunteers will monitor sleeping students by periodically conducting visual bed checks to ensure that sleeping students remain in designated sleeping places. During bed checks, staff and volunteers should never physically touch a student.
8. Whenever possible, at least one staff or volunteer will sleep in the same room as students or in an adjoining room with the door between the rooms kept open.

9. In the event that overnight arrangements do not include standard beds, each staff, volunteer, and student will use single sleeping bags or blankets. In these instances a “one-person-to-one bag or blanket” rule will be observed.

TOBACCO

Old North Church requires staff and volunteers to abstain from the use or possession of tobacco products in the facility, and while in the presence of students or their parents. Old North Church is a tobacco-free facility.

VERBAL INTERACTIONS

Verbal interactions between staff members or volunteers and students should be positive and uplifting. Old North Church staff and volunteers should strive to keep verbal interactions encouraging, constructive, and be ever mindful of their mission of aiding parents in the spiritual growth and development of their children.

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

Policies and Procedures
Statement of Acknowledgment and Agreement

I have received and read a copy of the Old North Church Student Ministry Policies and Procedures Manual and understand the importance of the matters set forth within the manual. I agree to follow and abide by these guidelines during my service at Old North Church.

Further, I understand that the manual may be modified at any time, and that any guidelines may be amended, revised, or eliminated at any time by Old North Church.

I also acknowledge that I have reviewed and agree to fulfill the duties listed in my ministry position description. While, ideally, I will serve in this ministry for the full term specified in the position description, I understand that my service is volunteer and that I can choose to end this relationship at any time (if possible, by providing two weeks' notice to my supervisor).

I further acknowledge and understand that the materials and guidelines contained in this handbook in no way express or imply a contractual employment relationship between Old North Church and me. If I am applying as a volunteer, I acknowledge and agree that I will receive no compensation for hours that I have worked.

Finally, I understand that it is my responsibility to review new guidelines that are created and distributed as well as manual guidelines that are changed or deleted. I hereby acknowledge receipt of the volunteer policies and procedures manual.

Staff Member or Volunteer's name (please print)

Staff Member or Volunteer's signature

Date: _____