



First Baptist Church of Universal City

GENERAL POLICIES

1. First Baptist Church of Universal City also know as FBCUC is committed to protecting the students in this ministry from any form of abuse. FBCUC has a Zero-Tolerance Policy that prohibits any act of sexual, emotional or physical abuse. This zero-tolerance policy requires all FBCUC employees and volunteer leaders (those who work directly with students) to immediately report any occurrence (or suspected occurrence) of child abuse to a member of our staff.
2. Each staff member/volunteer leader in the Student Ministry is required to undergo a criminal background check. Staff/volunteer leaders are required to read and understand this student safety policy. Additionally, each staff member/volunteer leader in the Student Ministry must execute an acknowledgment form that this entire policy has been read, understood, and will be followed. Student Ministry staff members/volunteer leaders MUST address any concerns and/or issues with questions before executing the acknowledgment and initiating work. Staff/volunteer leaders who fail to adhere to this student protection policy may be asked to step down from their role.
3. In all programs, events and activities, the safety and well-being of students is maintained through healthy relationships and adult supervision. FBCUC practices the “two adult” rule which requires a reasonable number of adult leaders (minimum of two) to be maintained when supervising students (a married couple or two family members would only account for “one” in this “two adult” rule). In general, for every additional 7-10 students, another leader should be involved in supervision beyond the initial two adults. With the exception of limited circumstances (such as Discipleship Groups) pre-approved by a Student Ministry Staff Member, FBCUC will observe the “two adult” rule.
4. Staff members and volunteer leaders should discuss immediately with their supervisor any inappropriate action or breaking of this policy. See “Reporting Protocol” at the end of this document.
5. The Student Ministry of FBCUC will follow the legal guidelines set by the state of Texas and federal laws concerning issues of sexual abuse.

ONE-TO-ONE INTERACTIONS WITH STUDENTS

In general, FBCUC staff and volunteer leaders should never be alone with students of the same or opposite gender. However, we recognize that meeting the emotional needs of students may occasionally require Staff/Volunteer leaders to minister to them on an individual basis. Staff/Volunteer leaders should observe the following guidelines when planning to hold a counseling session or any one-to-one meeting with a student:

1. Staff members and volunteer leaders should conduct one-to-one meetings with an individual student at a time when others are present and where interactions can be easily observed.
2. Never hold a counseling meeting or any other one-on-one meeting with a member of the **opposite gender**. You may discuss this with a Staff member to make alternative plans.
3. Any ongoing meetings with students (such as counseling, one-on-one discipleship, etc.) should be discussed with a Student Ministry Staff Member for approval.
4. Staff/Volunteer leaders are not permitted to date students in the student ministry.

APPROPRIATE / INAPPROPRIATE TOUCH

It is important that all of our staff members and volunteer leaders understand the difference between appropriate/inappropriate touch with students. The reality is that appropriate touch is needed and encouraged, but it is vital that Staff/Volunteer leaders do not blur or cross the lines. In light of this, the following guidelines should be observed:

1. Staff and Volunteer leaders should look for opportunities to give plenty of “high fives” and “fist bumps” with students unless this makes a student feel uncomfortable.
2. As for hugs, this should be done in public view and should be kept brief. When it comes to hugging someone of the opposite gender, hugs should always be limited to side-hugs.
3. No Staff/Volunteer leader is allowed to have a sexual relationship with a student. In addition, there is not to be any touching of a minor on their sensitive areas (breasts, buttocks, genitals) even when a student has been hurt in one of these areas nor even to allow casual contact to these areas over the clothes.
4. Staff/Volunteer leaders are not to sit on the laps of students or allow students to sit on their laps. There is also not to be any holding of hands with students unless it's part of a worship/prayer service or as part of a group game.
5. Staff/Volunteer leaders should be guarded to never be overly rough with students during informal interactions, games, etc. to where students may be unintentionally injured.

ONLINE INTERACTIONS WITH STUDENTS

As many of our students now communicate through phones, social media, and other forms of technology, it is important that our staff/volunteer leaders maintain healthy boundaries with students that are “above reproach.” Specifically, Staff Members and Volunteers should observe the following guidelines when it comes to communicating with students over technology:

1. Staff Members and Volunteer Leaders should also be cautious to avoid ongoing, in-depth message chains with students. These online chats should be used to encourage students and to make connections but not for extended dialogue which may blur the lines between leader and friend for students.
2. Staff Members and Volunteer Leaders should avoid talking about anything of a sexual nature when talking with students over social media/texts/etc. Even over the phone, staff and leaders should proceed with caution.
3. Staff Members and Volunteer Leaders should be cautious about what they post on their personal social media websites if any of their followers/friends are minors. Our personal lives should be a good model for students, so leaders should be cautious with posts.
4. For communicating with students by text, volunteer leaders should never send a private (non-group) text to a student of the opposite gender. Staff members may occasionally text a student of the opposite gender for reasons such as: remind them about an event, rehearsal, meeting, or ongoing ministry tasks (with interns, student leaders, etc.). All staff and volunteer leaders should still be cautious when communicating with students of the same gender and avoid ongoing, in-depth conversations over texts.
5. It is recommended that staff and volunteer leaders not follow/friend students they do not already know and have an established relationship with. Even for students that staff/volunteer leaders do know, it is recommended that they allow students to initiate the friend/follow request.

DISCIPLINE

It is the policy of FBCUC that staff members and volunteers are prohibited from using physical discipline in any way for behavior management of 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 unless the student poses a danger to others or himself/herself. In these instances, staff/leaders are allowed to restrain a student with appropriate physical force as needed. Uncontrollable or unusual behavior should be reported immediately to parents and a Student Ministry Staff Member.

TRANSPORTATION

Staff members and volunteers may occasionally be in a position to provide transportation for students. The following guidelines should be strictly observed when leaders 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. There should be two adults in the car when transporting a single student to a destination after parental approval.
2. Staff members and volunteers should avoid physical contact with students while in vehicles.
3. Cell phones should not be used by drivers while transporting minors (other than GPS for directions). An exception arises only with an obvious emergency situation and safe, temporary halting of the vehicle is preferred. Texting or web surfing is strictly prohibited while driving.
4. No drivers under age 25 may drive FBCUC owned or rented vehicles.
5. No high school students may drive other students as part of a FBCUC event.
6. Drivers should only take the number of students that they have seatbelts for in the vehicle. Seatbelts should be worn at all times while in the car. No one should be double-buckled. Extra caution should be used when driving students.
7. Drivers should never be alone in a vehicle with a student or leader of the opposite sex.
8. Drivers must be FBCUC certified to an FBCUC Vehicle.

SEXUALLY ORIENTED CONVERSATIONS

Staff members and volunteer leaders are prohibited 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. In addition, we are aware that students may have questions/struggles

in this area and desire to confide in a trusted adult leader for guidance. In light of that, here are some guidelines to follow:

1. Staff and Volunteer are not to discuss anything of a sexual nature with students of the opposite gender. The only exception to this is up-front large group teaching from God's Word on this subject. Staff and Leaders should proceed with great caution and be sure to teach with sensitivity and from a biblical perspective.
2. It is recommended that when possible, adults have another adult present when talking with students about sensitive issues concerning biblical definitions of sex (such as in a small group setting). Staff and Volunteers are asked to convey to students the biblical views on these topics.
3. If a student's questions or comments on a sexual matter become too detailed or explicit in a group setting, the leader should use discretion and set up another time to meet with this student and another adult leader.
4. For volunteer who set up a time to meet with a student about sexual matters, they are asked to first inform a student ministry staff member.

OVERNIGHT EVENTS

It is anticipated that certain Student Ministry activities/events will require overnight sleeping arrangements to be made for students and Staff/Volunteers (i.e. camp, mission trips, etc.). In the event an activity requires sleeping arrangements, staff members and volunteers will strictly observe the following rules:

1. The two-adult rule must be followed. The two-adult staff/volunteer leaders present must have previously completed the FBCUC Student Ministry application and screening process.
2. An adult of the same gender as students is required on all overnight events or activities.
3. As long as any students are awake, one of the leaders must also be awake and monitoring students, to ensure safe behavior.
4. Appropriately modest sleeping attire must be worn.
5. In the event of a sleepover on campus that involves both guys and girls, guys and girls must sleep in separate rooms, properly supervised by leaders of the same gender.
6. No Staff/Volunteer leader should sleep in the same bed with a student. No Staff/Volunteer leader should be alone behind closed doors at any point.

7. 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.

10. 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.

11. Staff and volunteers in the student ministry should never be nude in the presence of students in their care. If there is a situation where staff and volunteers will be showering or changing clothes when students are nearby, proper precautions should be taken. Any questions or concerns should be discussed with the Student Ministry Staff member.

REPORTING PROTOCOL

1. By law, our church/student ministry is required to report any suspicion of abuse and/or neglect by a leader, staff member, teacher, worker, family member or anyone else.

2. Any volunteer leader who hears about any form of abuse/neglect is required to report this to a staff member as soon as possible. No suspicion or accusation should be treated as frivolous. Staff/Volunteer leaders should remain calm, listen carefully and take detailed, written notes of the incident/accusation. These details should include: name, age, contact information, date of incident, details of what took place, names of any witnesses and any other pertinent details.

3. Volunteer leaders and staff members should never make promises to students that they will “keep it confidential” as we are mandated reporters. When students say, “I have to tell you something but you must first promise not to tell anyone else,” our response should be something to the effect of “if you trust me enough to tell me, then please trust me enough to do what is best.”

4. Once an accusation has been reported to a staff member, that staff member will report this to the Executive Pastor and the Senior Pastor and the law will be followed in reporting any suspicion of abuse/or neglect by a leader, staff member, teacher, worker, family member or any other individual. When appropriate, the parents/guardians will be notified.