

# CVC **YOUTH**

## POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Updated January 2022

Dear Student Ministry Volunteer or Staff Member,

Welcome to CVCYouth

At Cuyahoga Valley Church, we take our responsibility to care for students very seriously. These guidelines are intended to facilitate a safe and nurturing environment in which students can grow in relationship with Jesus Christ.

The pages of this handbook provide a general overview of procedures and guidelines for staff members and volunteers serving in Student Ministry to junior high (Collide) and high school (Impact) students. Our policies are intended to create a safe environment for protecting students, you, and the mission of CVC.

After you have carefully read this policy manual, please sign and return the agreement form located on the last page.

Sincerely,

Pastor Joe Valenti  
Cuyahoga Valley Church

# Overview of CVC Youth Safety System

Because we care for students and desire to protect them, Cuyahoga Valley Church requires all staff members and volunteers working with children or students to complete FOUR SAFETY STEPS before ministry work or volunteer placement begins.

## **STEP ONE: Sexual Abuse Awareness Training**

CVC policies and procedures require that staff members and volunteers avoid abusive behavior of any kind. Staff members and volunteers are required to report any policy violations to a supervisor or a member of CVC Leadership. Staff members and volunteers should have a basic understanding of the characteristics of sexual abusers and their behaviors in 'grooming' a student for sexual abuse. Grooming is the process used by an abuser to select a child, win the child's trust (and the trust of the child's parent or 'gatekeeper'), manipulate the child into sexual activity, and keep the child from disclosing the abuse.

To equip CVC staff members and volunteers with information necessary to recognize abuser characteristics and grooming behavior, CVC requires all staff members and volunteers to complete sexual abuse awareness training. This training will be renewed every three years.

## **STEP TWO: Screening Process**

Staff members and volunteers are required to complete the CVC Screening Process, which includes:

- A face-to-face interview
- An employment/volunteer application
- References to be checked.
- A volunteer must attend CVC for six months before being eligible to serve in positions interacting with children or students.

## **STEP THREE: 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 FOUR: Criminal Background Check**

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

# Student Safety Policy

## **ABUSE TOLERANCE**

CVC has zero tolerance for abuse in ministry programs and ministry activities. It is the responsibility of every staff member and volunteer at CVC to act in the best interest of students in every program.

In the event that any staff member or volunteer observes any inappropriate behavior (i.e. policy violations, neglectful supervision, poor role-modeling, etc.) or suspected abuse or neglect (physical, emotional, or sexual) it is that individual's responsibility to immediately report these observations to the current CVCYouth Director of Ministry AND the Next Generation Pastor

As of 1.1.22, this roles are filled by:

Lauren Meyer // CVCYouth Director of Ministry

Joe Valenti // Pastor of Next Generation

## **REPORTING SUSPICIOUS OR INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIORS**

CVC is committed to providing a safe, secure environment for students 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 Child Protective Services, or another appropriate agency.

Because sexual abusers 'groom' children for abuse, it is possible that 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 the current CVCYouth Director of Ministry AND the Next Generation Pastor

## **ENFORCEMENT OF POLICIES**

CVC staff members and volunteers are charged with the diligent enforcement of all CVC policies. Violations of these policies are grounds for immediate dismissal, disciplinary action, or reassignment from CVCYouth positions for both volunteers and staff members. Final decisions related to policy violations will be the responsibility of the CVC Elders.

# **Reporting Abuse or Suspicions of Abuse**

## **REPORTING VIOLATION OF POLICY**

All questions or concerns related to inappropriate, suspicious, or suspected grooming behavior should be directed the current CVCYouth Director of Ministry AND the Next Generation 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 CVCYouth. This suspension will continue during any investigation by law enforcement or Child Protective agencies.

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

Failure to report a policy violation is grounds for termination of an employee. Volunteers who fail to report a policy violation may be restricted from participation in any activities involving children or students at CVC.

## **REPORTING SUSPICIONS OF ABUSE TO LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES**

In addition to reporting suspected abuse internally, CVCYouth reports all abuse and suspicions of abuse to law enforcement and Child Protective Services.

# **CVCYouth Safety Committee**

## **SAFETY COMMITTEE**

Recognizing the importance of providing and maintaining a safe environment for children and students, CVC will appoint and maintain a Safety Committee, which will meet once each semester.

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

The purpose of the Safety Committee is to enable CVCYouth to carry out appropriate ministry activities while safeguarding program participants against emotional, physical or sexual abuse.

## **COMPOSITION**

The Safety Committee will be comprised of the following members:

1. Joe Valenti – Pastor of Next Generation
2. Lauren Meyer – CVCYouth Director of Ministry
3. Duane Myatt – CVC Elder
4. Amy Gustafson – CVCYouth Leader
5. Kellie Zaccardelli – CVCYouth Parent

## **MEETINGS**

The CVC Pastor of Next Generation will chair the meeting of the Safety Committee on a bi-annual basis to discuss risk management practices and updates. The Safety Committee will also meet on an emergency basis upon the recommendation of a member or following the report of any incident or allegation.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Safety Committee will be charged with the following duties:

1. Applying existing CVC policies and procedures related to student safety and risk management issues.
2. Monitoring all CVCYouth programs for ongoing compliance with safety policies.
3. Making recommendations regarding safety issues to the CVC Elders.
4. Assisting CVC staff and elders with responses to emergencies and issues of non-compliance.

## **Student Ministry Staff Monitoring Plan**

Monitoring of staff and volunteers will include regular (announced and unannounced) visits in each program to provide supervisors the opportunity to observe staff member and volunteer interactions with students.

- 1.CVC Pastor of Next Generation conducts written evaluations of safety compliance every twelve months for individuals in paid staff positions as a part of their performance review.
- 2.CVC Pastor of Next Generation conducts periodic verbal performance evaluations for volunteers that include items that address participation in risk management training and adherence to risk management procedures.
- 3.CVC Pastor of Next Generation conducts an unscheduled observation of a Student Ministry program at least once each quarter.
- 4.The CVC Board of Elders meets with the CVC Youth Director of Ministry once each year to discuss Student Ministry, including safety training and procedures.

## **BUILDING SAFETY**

The CVCYouth Director of Ministry will be responsible for ensuring that the Student Ministry area is monitored during Sunday classes or programming. This will include unobserved monitoring of staff members, volunteers, and students in LifeGroup breakout rooms.

- No single student will ever be left unattended or unsupervised during Student Ministry programs or meetings.
- Student Ministry staff members or volunteers are prohibited from being alone with an individual student in any room that is not easily observed by others. 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 or volunteers are present or in a public space where the conversation can still remain private.)

- After every programming event, staff members and volunteers must ensure every room and restroom is checked prior to leaving.
- Not to include Collide on Sunday mornings.
- Any two students together in an unseen or less easily viewed area should be redirected to another (more open) area.

## **LIFEGROUP EVENTS**

In order to maintain continuity in safety in all CVCYouth environments - including small gatherings of LifeGroups that may not include CVCYouth staff, the following guidelines should be followed.

- Overnight LifeGroup events are not permitted.
- When LifeGroup events are being hosted at the home of a student, all adults living within the home must submit to a CVC background check.



## **STAFF TO STUDENT RATIO**

CVC is committed to providing adequate supervision in all CVCYouth activities and programs. Accordingly, the following ratios will be observed for CVCYouth activities and programs:

- CVCYouth events should maintain no less than a 1:10 staff/volunteer to student ratio.
- For groups smaller than 50, volunteers may make up the whole of the staff/volunteer team. For groups larger than 50, at least 1 CVC Staff member must be present.
  - If a worker is out of ratio it is his or her responsibility to immediately notify the supervisory staff responsible for the program or event. The responsible supervisory staff member will make diligent effort to immediately bring staff member/volunteer to student ratios into compliance with this policy.

## **DISCIPLINE**

It is the policy of CVC that staff members and volunteers are prohibited from using physical or verbally aggressive discipline for behavior management of children or students. Physical prohibitions include spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, or any other physical force as retaliation or correction or inappropriate behaviors by students. In addition, leaders should refrain from yelling, screaming, and using threatening language.

Leaders should utilize verbal instructions to redirect the student away from the inappropriate behavior. If a student is unruly or fails to comply with verbal redirections or instructions from volunteers, an available pastor or Director of Ministry should be informed immediately.

Conversations with students regarding inappropriate behavior should always include another adult for accountability.

In the event of a fight or physical altercation, staff members will verbally redirect students involved and will try to avoid physical intervention.

Uncontrollable or unusual behavior should be reported immediately to parents and to the CVCYouth Director of Ministry

If students do not respond to redirection from leaders and staff, parents may be contacted, and students asked to leave the venue or event.

## **INTOXICANTS**

Staff and volunteers are prohibited from the use, possession, or being under the influence of alcohol or any illegal drugs while in any church facility while traveling with students, or while working with or supervising students. In addition, staff and volunteers are prohibited from using tobacco or vaping while working with students.

## **NUDITY**

Staff and volunteers of CVCYouth should never be nude or unnecessarily exposed in the presence of students in their care. While at retreats or events, staff members and volunteers should utilize single-stall bathrooms or another acceptable private space to change clothing. It is acceptable for leaders to change clothes in a cabin given that underclothes are not being changed or where they can be covered from exposure.

## **ONE-TO-ONE INTERACTIONS WITH STUDENTS**

CVCYouth recognizes that meeting the emotional needs of students may occasionally require staff members 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 the CVCYouth Director of Ministry.

If a closed-door meeting must occur, the CVCYouth staff member or volunteer must hold the meeting in a room with a window on the door. If this is not possible, inform another staff member **BEFORE** the meeting occurs, the door must remain unlocked, and the second adult must stay in proximity to the conversation.

When possible, it is **BEST** practice to ask the student if they would feel comfortable with another leader being involved in the conversation.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

Staff members and volunteers may, from time to time, maybe in a position to provide transportation for students. The following guidelines should be strictly observed when volunteers 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 when possible.
  - a. All transportation of students should be parent-approved.
  - b. Text message, email, or written permission are appropriate forms of parental permission.
2. CVCYouth staff or volunteers may never transport a member of the opposite sex alone.
3. Staff members and volunteers should avoid physical contact with students while in vehicles.
4. No cell phones may be utilized by the driver while transporting students to or from a CVCyouth event.
5. No drivers under the age of 25 may drive Church-owned or rented vehicles.

## **PARENTAL CONTACT**

Parents whose student is participating in CVCYouth activities and programs will be contacted if their child becomes severely ill, injured, or has a severe disciplinary problem while participating in CVCYouth programs or events.

## **PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT**

Parents have an open invitation to observe all programs and activities in which their student is involved. However, parents who desire to participate in or have continuous, ongoing contact with CVCYouth programs will be required to complete CVC's volunteer application and screening process.

## **SEXUALLY ORIENTED CONVERSATIONS**

Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from engaging in any sexually explicit 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 ministry discussions and lessons may address issues related to purity, dating, sex, and human sexuality. These lessons will occur in group settings and will convey the church's views on these topics.

Any conversations that involve sexual activity should be reported to the CVCYouth Director of Ministry.

## **SEXUALLY ORIENTED MATERIALS**

Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from possessing (or transmitting to any student) any sexually oriented materials (magazines, cards, images, videos, pictures, films, etc.) to students or in the presence of students, including those in electronic form.

## **PHYSICAL CONTACT**

CVC is committed to protecting students in its care. To this end, CVC has implemented a 'physical contact policy' that promotes a positive, nurturing environment for our Student Ministry programs. The following guidelines are to be carefully followed by anyone working in CVCYouth:

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.
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 CVCYouth 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. CVCYouth 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 must be reported immediately to the current CVCYouth Director of Ministry AND the Next Generation Pastor

## **SLEEPING ARRANGEMENTS**

It is anticipated that certain Student Ministry activities may occasionally require that overnight sleeping arrangements be made for students and staff members and volunteers. In the event an activity requires sleeping arrangements, staff members and volunteers will strictly observe the following rules:

1. The 2-adult rule must be followed; an individual student should not be assigned to a room with a staff member or volunteer.
2. All adult leaders/chaperones must have previously completed the Church's screening and training process.
3. All overnight sleeping arrangements will be assigned prior to the event by the CVCYouth Director of Ministry. These arrangements must be followed explicitly.
4. As long as any students are awake, one trip leader must be awake and monitoring students to ensure safe behavior.
5. Appropriately modest sleeping attire must always be worn; both tops and bottoms.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA**

CVCYouth staff or volunteers can communicate with students through sites like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. All posts, messages, texts, or media of any kind shared among CVCYouth staff and volunteers and students must be professional in nature and for the purpose of communicating information about CVCYouth or for encouragement in spiritual growth.

The use of Snapchat (and similar apps) with students is not permitted.

## **EMAIL AND SIMILAR ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS**

CVCYouth staff and volunteers may use email to communicate if the student is 15 years old or with permission from a parent. All email content between staff or volunteers and students must be professional in nature and for the purpose of communicating information about CVCYouth activities. Where possible, the student's parent should be copied on e-mail communications. Email communication between CVCYouth staff or volunteers and students is allowed during the hours of 7 am and 10 pm.

## **TEXTING AND SIMILAR ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS**

Texting is allowed between CVCYouth staff or volunteers and students if the student is 15 years old or with permission from a parent. All texts between staff or volunteers and students must be professional and for the purpose of communicating information about CVCYouth . No texting is allowed between staff or volunteers and students before 7 am or after 10 pm, unless there is a specific CVCYouth activity that requires text communication.

# Policies and Procedures

## Statement of Acknowledgment and Agreement

I have received and read a copy of CVCYouth's 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 CVC.

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 CVC.

I also acknowledge that I have reviewed and agree to fulfill the duties listed in the Manual. While, ideally, I will serve in this ministry for the agreed term, I understand that I may choose to end this relationship at any time.

I further acknowledge and understand that the materials and guidelines contained in this manual in no way express or imply a contractual employment relationship between CVC and me. If I am applying as a volunteer, I acknowledge and agree that I will receive no compensation for hours 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 CVCYouth's policies and procedures manual.

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Staff Member or Volunteer's name (please print)

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Staff Member or Volunteer's signature

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

## Policies and Procedures Statement of Acknowledgment and Agreement

I have received and read a copy of CVCYouth's 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 CVC.

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 CVC.

I also acknowledge that I have reviewed and agree to fulfill the duties listed in the Manual. While, ideally, I will serve in this ministry for the agreed term, I understand that I may choose to end this relationship at any time. If possible, I will provide two weeks' notice to my supervisor.

I further acknowledge and understand that the materials and guidelines contained in this manual in no way express or imply a contractual employment relationship between CVC and me. If I am applying as a volunteer, I acknowledge and agree that I will receive no compensation for hours 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 CVCYouth's policies and procedures manual.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Staff Member or Volunteer's name (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Staff Member or Volunteer's signature

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

[This page is to be signed, detached and delivered to Administrator.]

