

# CHILD & YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY

*Updated: January, 9 2018 by Mark Roslund & Kirsten Kroeker in agreement with the Elders*

This Child & Youth Protection Policy has been designed to provide the greatest safety possible for the children that are served by Riverwood Church Community.

We recognize that we are a reflection of God's love to those in our care and we take our responsibility to them seriously. We view ourselves as partners with parents, seeking to provide quality care and instruction in our ministry to the whole family. All our guidelines are designed to protect and promote growth in God for each child and adult involved.

## 1. SECURITY

All volunteers must wear the appropriate identification whenever serving at Uprising.

When adult visitors wish to visit they must have consent from the ministry lead and follow the visitor check-in procedure. Do not trust students into the care of anyone other than an approved Uprising leader.

All programs run by Riverwood will have a check-in and check-out process:

- Every youth & leader must check in before being admitted to the program.
- Parents are not to enter the general Uprising space when dropping off or picking up their child unless requested to do so and receive a visitor tag. Parents should wait in the designated area while a leader gets their child.
- If parents wish to visit our program they must follow the procedure of any visitor.

## 2. SUPERVISION GUIDELINES

### Supervision:

- Supervision must be maintained before and after the program until all students have left.

### Visibility:

- Rooms should have windows with clear lines of visibility in place or the door open.
- Lights should remain on at all times. Lights may be dimmed only if a video is being played.
- Keep the door of the room you are meeting in open if it does not have clear lines of sight through the window or doesn't have windows. Anyone who walks by must be able to see into the room
- Avoid being alone with 1 student in a room. If you are alone with 1 or 2 students join another group or make sure you are in a place that has 100% visibility.

## 3. PROPER DISPLAYS OF AFFECTION

Recognizing that youth need appropriate displays of affection that reflect pure, genuine and positive displays of God's love, appropriate touch with children will be age and developmentally appropriate.

### **Appropriate Touch:**

- Put your arm around the shoulder of a child/youth when comforting or quieting is needed.
- Pat a child/youth on the hand, shoulder or back to affirm him or her.
- High-five, fist-bump and quick side-hugs

*Note: All touch must be done in view of others.*

### **Inappropriate Touch:**

- Do not kiss a child or coax a child to kiss you.
- Do not engage in extended hugging and tickling or wrestling.
- Do not hold their face when talking to or disciplining a child/youth.
- Do not touch a child/youth in any area that would be covered by a bathing suit.
- Do not carry older children/youth and do not allow them to sit on your lap.
- Avoid prolonged physical contact with any child/youth.

## **4. WASHROOM PROCEDURES**

Never enter the washroom of the opposite sex under any circumstances

## **5. ILLNESS**

- We have a well-student policy. If a child is sick, they should not be accepted into the program. If they get sick, or are discovered to be sick, during the program we will call their parents/guardian to pick them up.
- Ministry personnel are not to give or apply any medication. If a child needs medicating (even Advil), we must get permission from their parents. Extreme cases such as where an EpiPen or puffer is needed is exempt.
- We ask you not to volunteer if you are sick.

## **6. MINOR ACCIDENTS**

- A First Aid kit is available in the Uprising cupboard and custodial closet.
- The names and contact information of individuals who have been certified and trained in First Aid is posted in the Uprising cupboard.
- Report any hazardous situations to the leadership immediately and correct if safe and/or possible.
- Incident reports must be filled out for minor injuries (rule of thumb: if a bruise might form or a bandaid was given out, fill out the form).

## **7. MAJOR INCIDENTS**

Do not move students, unless they can stand up and walk on their own. If they can move on their own, lead them out of the activity area. Ministry personnel as well as 1-2 witnesses must remain with injured child.

If injury is severe and time is of the essence:

- Call 911 and request ambulance
- Call parents and make them aware of situation
- If decision is made to transport youth to the hospital, and parents are not on-site, ministry personnel should accompany injured youth to the hospital

## 8. IN CASE OF FIRE OR OTHER EMERGENCY

- Line up students by the door and take a head count.
- Close doors as you leave.
- Know your exit route and quietly/calmly lead students out by proper exits.
- Proceed to the large rock in the parking lot, away from the building.
- Once you're clear of the building, take a head count and attendance.
- Return to the building only after the "All Clear" has been sounded.
- If we are not allowed to return to the building, parents may pick up their children/youth from the designated location. Have students check-out prior to leaving.

### **Lock-Down:**

In case of lock-down, you will be instructed by the team leader, staff member or security team to stay put. Doors will remain closed, and locked if possible. No one is allowed to enter or exit (no bathroom breaks, parent pick-ups, etc.) until the all-clear is given by your team leader/staff member or security team.

## 9. DISCIPLINE AND BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

All discipline and classroom management will be conducted in a loving and caring environment.

### **3 R's of discipline:**

- **Remind:** Explain to the student why the behavior is unacceptable and instruct them in how to do it correctly.
- **Remove:** Remove the student from the activity but do not leave them unattended.
- **Return:** if inappropriate behavior still continues, let the ministry staff know to call their parent.

### **Expulsion/Suspension:**

Our youth ministry is committed to creating a safe and enjoyable environment for students. Under certain circumstances we may suspend or in certain cases ban youth from attending our programs.

Youth who do not abide by the rules and boundaries may either be permanently banned or given a period of suspension before they are allowed to come back. In any case, the ministry lead will determine the best course of action so it's important that you, the youth leader, report all incidents.

You are responsible to fill out an incident report for any of the following situations and report it to the ministry lead for further investigation:

- Acts of violence
- Carrying weapons
- Carrying/selling drugs
- Bullying
- Sexual activity
- Gangs/gang activity
- Theft
- Deliberate damage to church property or personal property
- Blatant disregard to other students or leaders
- Any behaviour that is contrary and/or disruptive to our culture

## 10. OFF-HOURS OR ONE-ON-ONE MINISTRY

One-on-one meetings, or small group gatherings outside of programming hours, must be done in public settings and only under the following conditions:

- Ministry leader pre-approves one-on-one mentoring
- Ministry leader is informed of time and place prior to meeting
- Parental permission is granted (written or verbal)
- Meetings are conducted in public and cannot go later than 9:00pm on school nights
- Same-gender pairings
- For group events, more than one adult is present
- Ministry personnel working with youth may not, under any circumstances, pursue a dating relationship with a student while in a position of trust or authority over that student.
- Avoid being alone in a house or behind closed doors with one child/youth
- Do not take students to dark or solitary places
- Do not visit a students when they are home alone

In relation to alcohol consumption we ask you to use your wisdom and remember that as a youth leader, you're an ambassador for Christ and the Church at every moment. Here are additional guidelines as a youth leader:

- Youth ministry personnel must not drink in the presence of or with any youth who participates in our youth program
- Do not consume alcohol at any church related event or activity

## 11. TRANSPORTATION

Ideally, Riverwood does not provide transportation for students to/from events. When transportation is necessary, use the following guidelines:

- Drivers must abide by traffic laws. Reckless or unsafe driving will not be tolerated.
- Parents need to drop-off and pick up student if at all possible
- Any ministry personnel drivers must complete the following prior to the event:
- Pre-approval by ministry lead
- Leader must have their full license

- Number of occupants in vehicle does not exceed number of seat belts.
- Youth Ministry personnel should never be alone with a student of the opposite gender.
- Arrange to drop-off/pick-up 2 youth at the same place so you are not alone with 1 youth in the vehicle when possible
- Never carry a child/youth on the back of a motorcycle.

## 12. CARE

There are things that you are capable of dealing with but there are also things that you need to let the ministry lead know about.

### Leaders can pastorally care for:

- Mild school issues
- Friendships
- Boy/girl problems
- Homework
- Time Management
- Relationship with God
- Mild family issues
- Mild sexual challenges - Mild pornography, masturbation

### These situations must be reported to the ministry lead:

- Substance abuse
- Bullying at school
- Severe family issues - Divorce care, separation, death
- Abuse - sexual, physical, verbal, emotional
- Eating disorders
- Severe sexual challenges - severe sexual or pornography addiction, homosexuality
- Mental disorders - Anxiety, depression
- Life threatening situations - violence, mental health, suicide, self harm

## 13. SOCIAL MEDIA

Ministry personnel are permitted to interact with students via social media platforms when done so with discernment and wisdom. Here are a few guidelines for engaging with minors online:

- Save all of your messages with students and do not delete conversations that you have had with them online
- Never discuss anything inappropriate (sexual, violent, etc.)
- Avoid sending pictures to students
- Avoid prolonged interactions/conversations online (especially with members of the opposite sex) and do not send any messages past 10:00pm unless absolutely necessary.