



Fountain of Life Student Ministries

Policies & Procedures Handbook

Early Childhood, Grade-Level, Middle School, High School

*"Train up a child in the way he should go:
and when he is old, he will not depart from it."*

Proverbs 22:6

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1. Welcome & Purpose

Welcome to Fountain of Life Student Ministries. This handbook exists to provide clarity, protection, and shared expectations for all staff members and volunteers who serve children and students at Fountain of Life Covenant Church.

When families entrust their children to us, they are placing profound trust in the church. Our responsibility is not only to teach and disciple, but also to create environments that are **physically safe, emotionally healthy, spiritually nurturing, and ethically sound.**

Working with children and students is a privilege, not a right. Serving in these ministries requires ongoing trustworthiness, humility, and accountability. Compliance with the policies in this handbook is a condition of serving in student ministries at Fountain of Life.

This handbook applies to **all staff members and volunteers** who work with minors (ages 1–18) across all Fountain of Life Student Ministries.

2. Our Why

Mission Statement: To train up students in the Way they should go, so when they get old, they will not depart from it, and if they do wander, they will know where to get back on path.

Fountain of Life believes that every student is created in the image of God and is deeply loved by Him. We minister to youth because **youth aren't the future of the church. They ARE the church!** And we hope to plant the seed of God's word and way in the hearts and minds of children, that when they get older they will have a root of faith to grow in and return to as God leads them.

We understand student ministry as a **partnership with parents and caregivers**, not a replacement for them. Parents remain the primary disciplers of their children; the church comes alongside to support, reinforce, and walk with families in faith formation. As the often-quoted African proverb shares, "it takes a village to raise a child."

As a Black-led multicultural congregation, we commit to humility, curiosity, and bridge-building across racial, cultural, socioeconomic, generational, and gender differences. Safety, dignity, and belonging are essential expressions of the Gospel.

When Fountain of Life started in 1977, Pastor Gee was just an early teenager in his mom's living room. It was children who were the core of the church, and it was youth who God would speak to and reveal himself to from the beginning of our church's history. We want to continue to embody a posture of emphasizing our young people today, knowing that the same Spirit that spoke to the children back then is speaking to our youth today.

3. Volunteer Expectations

All who serve in Student Ministries are called to embody three shared commitments.

3.1 Deposit and Water Seeds of Faith *(Matthew 28:16-20 - The Great Commission | Matthew 13:31-32 - Parable of the Mustard Seed | 1 Corinthians 3:6 - Paul Planted, Apollos Watered, God Gave the Increase)*

Volunteers are disciple-makers who participate in God's ongoing work of formation, not replacements for parents or caregivers. We recognize that we have **limited time** with students—often only two to three hours per week—and are therefore called to faithfulness, not completeness in our contributions to their faith journeys.

Depositing and watering seeds of faith means:

- Modeling a growing relationship with Christ
- Engaging students in meaningful, normal faith conversations
- Naming God's presence and activity in everyday life
- Encouraging curiosity, questions, and thoughtful engagement with scripture

This posture intentionally takes pressure and responsibility off volunteers to be everything for every student. Parents and caregivers remain the primary disciplers. However, we are not merely daycare providers, nor do we just run fun programming. We are called to minister to children by pointing them to Jesus and encouraging them to grow in their faith. Therefore, student ministries partners with parents by planting, watering, and trusting God for growth. This allows us to have **impact**.

Volunteers do not manipulate, pressure, or spiritually control students. Faith formation happens through trust, presence, consistency, and humility.

3.2 Be a Good Teammate *(Matthew 7:15-20 - Good and Bad Fruit | Galatians 5:13-26 - Fruit of the Spirit | John 13:34-35 - Love One Another)*

Student ministry is shared work. Volunteers are expected to:

- Communicate clearly and promptly with ministry leadership
- Arrive prepared, on time, and ready to engage
 - Please arrive a half-hour before students could be arriving for your ministry.
 - If you are going to be late or absent, please clearly communicate with your team leader as soon as you are aware.
- Work within defined authority and ministry scope
- Steward the space with care
- Address conflict directly and respectfully
- Embrace accountability, correction, and feedback

Parents and caregivers are essential teammates. Volunteers partner with parents through clear communication, shared concern for safety and growth, and mutual respect. We do not overfunction for parents or bypass them, nor do we treat them as obstacles to ministry.

As a multicultural ministry, volunteers are expected to engage with openness, curiosity, non-defensiveness, and grace.

3.3 Be a Safe Person (*John 10:1-16 - The Good Shepherd | Luke 18:15-17 - Jesus and the Children | Biblical Garden Themes Gen. 1-2 and Rev. 21-22*)

Safety is foundational to discipleship. Volunteers commit to:

- Prioritizing physical, emotional, and spiritual safety (for yourself and others)
 - Please do not come in to serve if you are sick . If you start feeling ill the day before, contact your Director.
- Maintaining appropriate boundaries at all times
- Respecting confidentiality while understanding its limits
- Being attentive to power dynamics
- Acting as bridge-builders, especially for students on the margins
- Adhering to our FOL Student Ministries Volunteer Code of Conduct (see appendix)

Volunteers must report concerns that place a student at risk, including abuse, self-harm, suicidal ideation, or boundary violations (See Section 5.2).

4. Joining the Team

To become a member of our volunteer team, these are the steps you will take.

4.1 Application

All student ministry volunteers begin by completing an application.

4.1.a Three-Month Rule

Volunteers must attend the church for at least 3 months before being able to volunteer with Student Ministries.

4.2 Ministry Safe Training & Background Check

After filling out and turning in your application, we will send you a link from MinistrySafe to fill out to get your background check done, as well as a separate link to complete Sexual Abuse Awareness Training.

4.3 Policies and Procedures Review & Medical Release

After this, we will want you to take a look at our policies and procedures, so you know what to expect, and agree to what we ask of you as a volunteer. We also need a medical release form completed.

4.4 Interview

All student ministry volunteers will have an interview with 1 or 2 student ministry leaders. It's not a big deal; we just want to get to know you, and give you a chance to ask questions!

4.5 Hands-On-Training

After the screening process, we will pair you with a seasoned children's ministry volunteer for on-the-job training in the area of ministry you choose. You won't be thrown in alone! Let us know if you have any questions along the way.

5. FOL Child & Student Safety System

(Rooted in MinistrySafe Best Practices)

Fountain of Life maintains a zero-tolerance policy for abuse or neglect of children and students. All safety policies are rooted in MinistrySafe best practices and are designed to protect students, families, volunteers, and the church.

5.1 Zero-Tolerance Abuse Policy

Any form of physical, sexual, emotional abuse or neglect is strictly prohibited. All staff members and volunteers are responsible for acting in the best interest of every child and student. **Working with children and students is a privilege, not a right.** Any behavior that compromises safety or trust may result in immediate removal from ministry.

5.2 Four Safety Commitments

Before serving, and while continuing to serve, all volunteers must comply with the following:

1. **Training** – Completion of MinistrySafe Sexual Abuse Awareness Training (renewed every five years) + other team trainings and/or meetings as they arise.
2. **Screening** – Application, references, and eligibility requirements
3. **Policy Compliance** – Review and adherence to this handbook and policies
4. **Background Checks** – As required for role and access level

These commitments exist to deter abuse, equip volunteers, and create clear barriers to unsafe access.

5.3 First Aid & Bloodborne Pathogen Safety

Occasionally, minor injuries such as nosebleeds, scratches, or small cuts may occur during ministry activities. Volunteers should respond calmly and prioritize the safety and dignity of the student while minimizing exposure to blood or bodily fluids.

General First Aid Response

When a minor injury occurs:

1. Stay calm and reassure the student.
2. Notify another ministry leader so that two adults remain aware of the situation.
3. Provide basic first aid as appropriate.
4. Inform the student's parent or caregiver as soon as reasonably possible.
5. Inform ministry leadership if the injury required first aid beyond minor care.

If an injury appears serious, involves significant bleeding, or may require medical attention, escalate immediately to your supervisor for the day.

Blood and Bodily Fluid Precautions

Blood and certain bodily fluids can carry pathogens that may transmit infection. Volunteers should take the following precautions when responding to situations involving blood.

Volunteers should never come into direct contact with blood or bodily fluids without protective barriers.

When blood is present (for example: nosebleeds, cuts, scrapes, or other injuries):

- Disposable **gloves must be worn** before assisting the student
- Encourage the student, when possible, to apply pressure to their own wound
- Use clean tissues, gauze, or bandages to control bleeding
- Dispose of used materials in a sealed bag or designated waste container
- Remove gloves carefully and dispose of them immediately after use
- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water after gloves are removed

If gloves are not immediately available, another ministry leader should retrieve them before assistance is provided whenever possible.

Maintain the student's privacy and dignity while providing care, and ensure another screened adult is aware of the situation.

Basic first aid supplies (including disposable gloves) should be available in designated areas of each room, and volunteers should familiarize themselves with their location before ministry activities begin.

5.4 Allergies, Medical Conditions, Medication, Sickness, and Cleanliness

Some students may have allergies or medical conditions that require special attention during ministry activities. **Parents or caregivers are responsible for providing accurate medical information during student registration, including any severe allergies, medical conditions, or required medications.**

Volunteers should review relevant medical information when it is provided by ministry leadership and be aware of students who may require special attention.

Medication should generally be administered by parents or caregivers whenever possible. If medication must be used during ministry activities, the following guidelines apply:

- Parents must provide **written permission and instructions** in advance
- Medication should remain with the student or ministry leadership as directed
- Volunteers should notify ministry leadership before assisting with any medication-related situation
- Volunteers should **not administer medication** unless specific permission and instructions have been provided by parents and ministry leadership

Students with known conditions may carry emergency medications such as **EpiPens or inhalers**. When possible, students who are trained to use their medication should self-administer while an adult supervises.

If a student reports symptoms of a serious allergic reaction (such as swelling, difficulty breathing, hives, or dizziness):

1. Notify ministry leadership immediately
2. Follow any medical instructions provided by the parent or registration form
3. Contact the student's parent or caregiver as soon as possible
4. If symptoms appear severe or life-threatening, **call emergency services immediately**

5.5 Sickness and Cleanliness

Washing Hands

One of the best ways to prevent the passing of germs is by washing hands. Model for students the importance of washing hands, and make sure to have volunteers and students wash hands before and after eating/handling food and using the restroom.

Illness

Kids who show signs of illness are not allowed to be in any Student Ministries environment. If an illness is discovered after a child has been dropped off to a classroom, get a gatekeeper or ministry leader to go notify the parents so that they may be picked up.

Children who are experiencing these symptoms will be asked to stay with their parents during service:

- Fever of 100 degrees or greater
 - Vomiting
 - Diarrhea
 - Chills
 - Sore throat
 - Any illness for which a doctor has prescribed antibiotics (must be on the antibiotics for 24 hours prior to returning to the classroom)
 - Excessive runny nose or bad cough
 - Rash of unknown origin or contagious
 - Pink eye
 - Lice
 - Any other communicable or contagious disease, sickness, or condition
-

6. Mandatory Reporting (Wisconsin) & Incident Reports

6.1 Mandatory Reporting in Wisconsin

Wisconsin law designates **specific professions** as mandatory reporters of suspected child abuse or neglect. In the context of the church, this generally applies to **pastoral clergy**.

Other volunteers, ministry directors, and paid staff who are not clergy are **not automatically designated as mandatory reporters under Wisconsin statute** solely by virtue of serving in a church ministry.

However, **any person in Wisconsin may report** suspected child abuse or neglect when they have reasonable cause to believe it has occurred.

At Fountain of Life, the following distinction is important:

- **Legal requirement:** Pastoral clergy are required to report as mandated by Wisconsin law.
- **Church policy encouragement:** All staff members and volunteers serving with children or students are encouraged by Fountain of Life policy to report suspected abuse, neglect, or grooming behavior to your ministry supervisor. Contact a staff

member immediately if you suspect a child is the victim of abuse or neglect. Do not attempt to gather information from the child or speak with the parents about your concerns. Do not talk with other volunteer team members about your concerns.

6.2 Abuse Definitions

Defining Abuse

- Sexual abuse is any occurrence in which an adult engages in sexual activity with a minor. It could be contact behavior (touching) or non-contact behavior (pictures, spying, exposure, or conversation).
- Physical abuse is any contact intended to cause physical pain or injury to a child. The law does permit parents to use corporal punishment, but the discipline has to be reasonable.
- Neglect is the failure to provide a child with basic necessities, such as food, clothing, shelter, hygiene, medical attention, or supervision. Neglect can also include exposure to harmful substances or situations.

Signs of abuse

Contact a staff member immediately if you see signs of abuse, such as:

- Depression, sudden changes in behavior, paranoia, fear of their caregivers or others, aggressive behavior, anxiety, accidents in their underwear, imitating or talking about sexual behaviors, wounds or pain, unexplained bruises, untreated illnesses.

6.3 Incident Reporting at Fountain of Life

Concerns should be reported immediately (**filling out an [incident report](#)**) when they involve:

- Suspected abuse or neglect
- Boundary violations or grooming behaviors
- Situations placing a student in danger
- An accident or injury takes place

Reporting and Support Roles

Incident reports can be found on the FOL Shared Drive, as well as in the FOL Office and Student Ministries Office. If you need help finding one, please connect with your Director. The following leaders may assist in facilitating reporting, documentation, caring for those involved,, and ensuring proper next steps:

- Director of Early Childhood Ministry
- Director of Grade-Level Ministry
- Director of Middle School Ministry
- Director of High School Ministry

Primary oversight and coordination of all Directors:

- Director of Student Ministries

Final oversight and approval:

- Senior and Executive Pastors
-

7. Boundaries & Conduct (All Ages)

Healthy ministry requires clear boundaries. These policies apply to **all staff members and volunteers**, regardless of age group served.

Working with children and students is a privilege, not a right. Boundaries protect students, families, volunteers, and the integrity of the ministry.

7.1 The Two-Adult Rule

At all times, a minimum of two screened adults must be present when supervising children or students.

- A married couple or two family members count as **one adult** for purposes of this rule
- If two adults serving together are related, a third unrelated adult must be present
- If one adult must step away, another screened adult must be notified immediately

If an unusual circumstance results in one adult being alone with a student(s), move immediately to a **visible, observable location**.

7.2 Bathroom and Diaper Policies

While different age groups will have different needs, these are general student ministry policies:

- **FOL volunteers and staff do NOT change diapers.** If a child needs a diaper change, their parent must be paged or another volunteer must go get the parent to change

them. Parents should be reminded to take their child to the restroom before signing them in, or be encouraged to wear pull-ups if needed while in our care.

- **No adult or volunteer should use or enter a bathroom in which students are present.** Before a bathroom is used by a child, it should be checked to confirm no adult is in the bathroom.
- If you must go into the restroom to check on an individual student, seek out another worker to accompany you. If another worker is not available, go to the exterior restroom door, knock, and ask if the student needs assistance. Do not enter the restroom.
- If a child requires immediate assistance, leave the exterior restroom door open when entering the restroom area and try to verbally assist the child in completing his or her toileting activities, while the child remains behind the door of the restroom stall. Any assistance with the straightening or fastening of garments should be done in the presence of another staff member or volunteer, and should explicitly be telling the student what they are doing (example: "I'm helping you zip up your pants right now").

If an unusual circumstance results in one adult being alone with a student, move immediately to a **visible, observable location**.

7.3 Visibility & One-to-One Interactions

- Avoid isolated or private settings
 - Conversations requiring privacy should occur in open, observable spaces
 - Doors should remain open when possible, or have a see-through window
 - Never meet alone behind closed doors
 - Redirection or discipline must occur within sight of others
 - Bathroom assistance follows specific restroom policies
 - Conversations may occur individually but only in visible spaces
-

7.4 Physical Contact

Showing care, warmth, and affection is a natural part of ministry and working with kids. However, it is imperative that any and all physical contact is within the bounds of appropriate physical contact. Here are some guidelines for showing appropriate physical affection to kids while maintaining integrity.

Appropriate physical contact is limited, observable, consensual, and never secretive.

Physical contact must involve clear consent or permission from the student. Consent should never be assumed or forced, and students must always be free to decline physical contact without consequence.

Permitted examples may include:

- High-fives, handshakes, fist bumps
- Brief side-hugs
- Brief shoulder contact
- Holding a child may be allowed for those under 2, but should not be done after that age.
- If a child wants to sit in your lap, scoot over and let them sit next to you.

Prohibited contact includes:

- Lengthy, full frontal hugs
- Kisses
- Lap-sitting
- Holding children over 2
- Tickling
- Piggy-back rides
- Touching of private areas (over or under clothing)
- Any contact that could be sexualized, coerced, or misinterpreted
- Any form of unwanted affection

7.5 Verbal Conduct, Discipline, & Behavioral Guidance

Volunteers must speak to students with dignity and respect. Remember to always speak words of encouragement, kindness, and love, even in difficult situations or disciplinary situations.

Never permitted:

- Yelling or threats
- Shaming or humiliation
- Sarcasm meant to demean
- Physical punishment of any kind

Discipline exists to restore safety and support growth, not to punish. Discipline should always be done in a positive, patient, and grace-filled way. When behavior becomes disruptive, and discipline is necessary to keep a safe and effective environment for everyone, here are three possible courses of action to take:

1. Redirect

- Address the behavior **calmly** and **directly**. **Get on the student's level** and look them in the eye. **Give a verbal warning**, explaining why the behavior is not acceptable. **Give a suggestion** for the right way to act or behave, and help them do it.

2. Refer

- If you are struggling with a student's behavior to a point where you need help, refer to another volunteer or student ministry director to help you with the situation.

3. Remove (if possible)

- Occasionally and depending on the student, it may be necessary to remove them from the situation or activity so they can calm down and prepare to rejoin when ready.
- If the student is simply unable to stay in the classroom for the day due to being unable to maintain a safe environment for all, contact parents to have them pick up their child for the day. Removal is meant to be protective, not punitive.

7.6 Volunteer Phone Policy

Volunteers should not be conducting personal business on their phones while serving. Phones are permitted to be used when they are helping to handle logistics, gauging the progress of the worship service, or when they are being used to further the activities and programs occurring in student ministries. Make the students your primary focus.

8. Technology & Digital Communication with Students

Digital communication must always be transparent, appropriate, and accountable. These guidelines exist to protect students, volunteers, and families.

- Church platforms should be used whenever possible (example: Planning Center)
- Group messaging is preferred over one-to-one communication
- Parents may be included on communication threads when appropriate

One-to-one text messaging is permitted for High School students only when explicit parental permission has been granted through the student registration form. **HOWEVER**, this messaging should be primarily for scheduling or keeping students updated on ministry happenings. **NOT** for casual or in-depth conversations.

One-to-one messaging is not permitted for children, middle school students, or students without documented parental permission.

Additional expectations:

- Communication should occur between 9:00am and 9:00pm
- Messages must not be deleted
- Any conversation that becomes emotionally heavy or pastoral should move to approved, in-person settings with parental awareness

If any communication raises concern, discomfort, or uncertainty, notify ministry leadership immediately.

9. Identification & Appearance

9.1 Identification & Lanyards

All approved volunteers and staff working in student spaces must wear **lanyards** identifying them as authorized ministry leaders.

Lanyards:

- Must be worn during all ministry activities on a Sunday morning
- Clearly identify who is a designated "safe person"
- Increase visibility and shared accountability

Adults without lanyards in student spaces should be politely redirected to ministry leadership. NOTE: The exception to this rule is nursing mothers and/or a support person for the nursing mother who may be in the infant/nursing room. These individuals, however, must check in with gatekeepers first, and must stay in their designated area.

Students are encouraged to seek help from adults wearing lanyards.

9.2 Appearance / Clothing

Please make sure your clothing is appropriate for the age-specific area in which you are serving.

10. Meetings, Commitment, Ongoing Eligibility, and Leaving a Volunteer Role

10.1 Attendance

Your attendance, punctuality, and involvement are crucial to the success of this ministry. Consistency of team members serving is very important for you as a volunteer as well as for the children you serve.

If you are scheduled to serve, **please arrive no later than 30 minutes prior** to your service time to check in and prepare to welcome kids. Additionally, our goal is for all student ministry volunteers to attend the pre-service prayer meeting. If you are unable to attend your scheduled service, please give your ministry leader advance notice. *In the event of a last-minute emergency, please call or text your leader and let them know you are unable to fulfill your commitment. Then make arrangements with another volunteer to cover your spot.*

10.2 Ongoing Eligibility

Training, screening, and policy compliance are addressed in the **Four Safety Commitments** outlined in Section 5.2.

Continued service in student ministries requires:

- Ongoing alignment with these commitments
- Willingness to receive correction and oversight
- Faithful participation in required trainings and reviews
- Clear and consistent communication

Failure to comply with policies may result in suspension or removal from ministry. **Working with children and students is a privilege, not a right.** Continued service depends on ongoing trustworthiness and alignment with these standards.

10.3 Volunteer Meetings and Gatherings

FOL Directors will attempt to coordinate trainings, team meetings, and gatherings for volunteers in our ministries. Attendance at these gatherings is encouraged, and you are responsible to make sure you get information from trainings and meetings which you are unable to attend. Please communicate with your Director if you are unable to attend meetings or trainings.

10.4 Length of Volunteer Commitment

Our desire is for each volunteer to commit to serving throughout the course of an academic year (September through July), and confirming with your Director in June if you plan to step down for the following academic year. Certainly, there are folks who will be onboard in the middle of the year. We will still ask you to commit through the rest of that academic year, and then share with us whether to expect you back for the following year in June.

10.5 Stepping Down from Volunteering

We understand that there are circumstances which may lead you to step down from ministry (even in the midst of the academic year).. Aside from emergency circumstances, we ask that you give a minimum of one month's notice, and a preference of at least 3 months notice before you choose to step down from your role. This allows time for Directors to make scheduling changes.

11. Registration, Check-Ins / Attendance, and Parents

11.1 Registration Forms

To keep our students safe and to ensure we have proper permissions, all students in our care must be registered. This includes filling out our Medical, Technology, and Transportation Release Forms. Please ensure all students in attendance have registered.

11.2 Check-Ins / Attendance

All student ministries must ensure attendance is taken. Children's Ministries must also ensure students have been properly signed in and signed out. **Children are to only be released to the person who checked them in, or to a designated person who has been given permission to check them out** (a younger sibling, a relative, etc.). A designated person must be explicitly stated on their registration form, or indicated and written down day of, however, by the individual checking them in.

11.3 Drop-off / Pickup Notes

When parents drop off their kids, they are entrusting us to protect and care for their kids. A smile and a positive greeting will help reassure parents that their kids are in good hands.

Remember to be positive and encouraging when parents return to pick up their kids. Let them know how much we love their kids!

12. Students with Special Needs

We work to the best of our ability and capacity to welcome all kids to participate in our ministry. If a child has special needs, we will attempt to work together with the child's parents/caregivers to come up with a plan to support the child and provide the best care we are able to provide for the child and family. We want to be explicit, however, that due to capacity limitations or a lack of expertise in working with students with special needs, ***we cannot guarantee we are able to accommodate every child with special needs into our ministry.*** If we can provide a safe environment for the student with special needs, the rest of the children, and for the volunteers, we will do so. But this must be assessed in collaboration with parents/caregivers before making a determination.

If a student does have special needs, parents/caregivers must indicate it in their registration and fill out the "Inclusive Student Ministry: Special Needs Form" to give us information that will help us minister to their student. Student Ministries Leadership will then discuss a potential care plan with the parents—customized for each child's needs to provide care, safety, and ministry to the child and family.

If possible, we will provide a one-on-one buddy for kids who need one-on-one support.

We are not able to provide medical support or care to kids beyond basic first aid.

13. Emergency Policies and Procedures

13.1 Missing Child

If a child is missing, immediately alert your ministry leader and safety team and give them a description of the child. The church will go on lockdown. Parents will be alerted, and outside doors will be locked. Keep all the other kids calm, and do not allow parents to pick up kids or leave the building while the student ministry and safety team does a sweep of the rooms and parking lot area. The parents should stay at the Check-In Desk, and the child should be brought to the Check-In Desk when found.

13.2 Active Shooter

This is the Run, Hide, Fight method that is taught in schools.

RUN: Evacuate if possible

- If there is distance between you and the armed person, quickly move yourself and the kids away. If it's safe, run out of the building.
- Take others with you, but do not stay behind if others will not go.
- Call 911 when it is safe to do so. Do not assume that someone else has reported the incident. The information that you are able to provide law enforcement may be critical (that is, number of shooters, physical description and identification, number and type of weapons, and location of the shooter).

HIDE: Hide silently in as safe a place as possible

- If the shooter is nearby and you cannot evacuate safely, hide in an area out of the armed person's view.
- Choose a hiding place with thicker walls and fewer windows, if possible.
- Lock doors and barricade with furniture, if possible. Turn off lights and silence your phone.
- Close windows, shades, and blinds.

FIGHT: Take action to disrupt or incapacitate the shooter

- As a last resort, fight. If you cannot evacuate or hide safely—and only when your life is in imminent danger—take action.
- Attempt to incapacitate or disrupt the actions of the shooter.
- Act with physical aggression toward the shooter. Use items in your area such as fire extinguishers or chairs. Throw items at the shooter if possible.
- Call 911 when it is safe to do so.

Immediately after an incident:

- Wait for local law enforcement officers to assist you out of the building, if inside.

13.3 Severe Weather / Tornado

If there is a tornado warning during Student Ministries Programming, evacuate all students from classrooms and bring all students to the large open seating area in the basement away from windows and doors.

13.4 Fire

Sound the fire alarm immediately and/or call 911 to notify the fire department. Take students to designated safe area (front entryway to the Center for Black Excellence). Remain outside until the building is declared safe. If it is possible to put out the fire using a fire extinguisher, you may do so only after all students have been moved to safety.

14. Acknowledgement & Agreement

All volunteers must affirm their understanding of and commitment to this handbook and its appendices as a condition of serving in Fountain of Life Student Ministries.

By signing the acknowledgement and agreement forms included in the appendices, volunteers affirm that they:

- Have read and understand the policies and procedures in this handbook
- Agree to comply with all safety, conduct, and communication guidelines
- Understand that serving with children and students is a privilege, not a right
- Agree to submit to ongoing training, screening, and accountability

Failure to comply with these policies may result in suspension or removal from ministry.

Appendices

Appendix A: Volunteer Code of Conduct

Deposit and Water Seeds [a Disciple-Maker]

- *Spiritual Integrity*: Demonstrate a commitment to your own spiritual growth and relationship with God. Live out the values and teachings of your faith in your personal life.
- *Teaching and Communication*: Faithfully convey the teachings of Christ while promoting open discussions and critical thinking. Communicate with clarity and respect for diverse perspectives.
- *Training and Growth*: Continuously seek opportunities for personal and professional development. Stay informed about trends and issues relevant to ministry leadership.

Be a Good Teammate

- *Professionalism*: Interact with others in a respectful and professional manner. Maintain appropriate boundaries and avoid any behavior that could be perceived as inappropriate. *Show up faithfully in your commitments and regularly in FOL community spaces.*
- *Accountability*: Be accountable to higher authorities within your ministry. Accept guidance, mentorship, and oversight gracefully, while expressing concerns,

disagreements, and feedback respectfully. Do not initiate or perform a ministry within FOL that is unauthorized and unaccountable to FOL leadership.

- *Conflict Resolution*: Address conflicts and disagreements with patience, humility, and a desire for resolution. Seek guidance from appropriate supervisors when necessary.
- *Embrace Multicultural Community*: Our congregation is a multicultural community, across many demographic lines (race, gender, socioeconomics, ethnicity, age, etc.). Choose to approach relationships with openness, grace, non-defensiveness, and curiosity as we all learn how to operate together healthily as the Body of Christ. Foster an environment of inclusivity and welcome.

Be a Safe Person

- *Safety*: Prioritize the safety and well-being of students at all times. Adhere to child protection policies and procedures to prevent any form of harm.
- *Confidentiality*: Respect the confidentiality of personal information shared by students and families. Only share sensitive information when necessary and appropriate.
- *Financial Responsibility*: Handle ministry funds responsibly and transparently, ensuring that they are used for their intended purposes.
- *Personal Conduct*: Maintain a lifestyle that aligns with the moral and ethical standards of your faith. Avoid behaviors that could undermine your credibility as a leader, as well as the use of any illegal substances or drugs. Patterns such as substance abuse, compulsive behavior, deceit or dishonesty, negligence in family responsibilities, negligence in one's own holistic health, sexual impropriety, and abuse of power are unacceptable.
- *Social Media and Online Presence*: Exercise caution when using social media and other online platforms. Maintain a positive and respectful online presence that reflects your role as a ministry leader. Agree to our Social Media and Technology Code of Conduct., topics, or behavior that undermine your role as a trusted, safe leader for students.

I understand that failure to comply with these guidelines may result in suspension or removal from ministry.

Appendix B: Potential Student Misbehavior Explanations and Considerations

All children will misbehave at some point. Possible explanations for misbehavior include:

- *Boredom*: Not everything has to be fun, but if a child is bored it is more difficult for them to pay attention and participate well in the class. FOL kids, like most, prefer activity to listening silently to the teacher for long periods of time.
- *Attention-getting*: Children sometimes act up to get other kids' or *your* attention. This can be a personality trait, but may also be a sign that they aren't receiving the love they need from friends or family.
- *Feeling tired, hungry, or too cold or warm*: If you've ever felt this way while trying to work, you can appreciate why it is equally (if not more) difficult for children to focus if

they are physically uncomfortable. If you suspect this of a given child, just ask him or her.

- *Age and developmental appropriateness:* If the lesson is geared toward students who are older, younger, or simply at a different developmental stage than the student is at, it will be hard for them to participate well. Our current curriculum is very sensitive to age-appropriateness, but in all of the classes there will be kids who operate above or below the average of their age. You can make mid-class adjustments in your teaching to address the learning needs of specific students.
 - *Problems at home:* Children are often more mature than we give them credit for, but they are still children, and when they face adult-sized problems, focusing on your lesson is not going to be easy. Love your students extravagantly. Get to know the adults they come to church with, and their situations when appropriate.
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Appendix C: FOL Statement of Faith

- We believe that there is one God eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- We believe that Jesus Christ is the only Son of the Father, conceived of the Holy Spirit and born to the Virgin Mary; that Jesus was crucified, buried and raised from the dead; that He ascended into Heaven and is today at the right hand of the Father as our intercessor. After Jesus ascended to Heaven, He poured out His Holy Spirit on the believers, enabling them to fulfill His command to preach the Gospel to the entire world, an obligation shared by all believers today.
- We believe in the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit whose presence enables the Christian to live a holy, victorious, power-filled and service-oriented life.
- We believe the Holy Bible is the inspired and infallible written Word of God.
- We believe that God created the world by His Word alone, and for His pleasure. All creation's purpose is to reflect God's glory back to God.
- We believe that the main purpose of life is to glorify God and enjoy God forever. All humans were created in the image of God and are capable of receiving His grace; worthy of hearing His good news, and charged with living lives free from bondage to sin.
- We believe that all people are, by nature, separated from God and responsible for their own sin, but that salvation, redemption, and forgiveness are freely offered to all by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. When a person becomes truly repentant, turns from sin, accepts Jesus Christ as his/her personal Lord and Savior, and trusting Jesus to save, that person is immediately born again and sealed by the Holy Spirit; all his/her sins are forgiven; and that person becomes a child of God, destined to spend eternity with the Lord
- We believe in the healing of the total person (mind, body and spirit), and the continuous outpouring of blessing and grace upon the church.

- We believe in the gifts of the Holy Spirit mentioned in the Bible (1 Corinthians 12-13), and that they are valid for today if exercised within biblical guidelines. We as believers are to desire the best gifts, seeking to exercise them in love for the benefit of the entire Church. We believe that love is more important than the most spectacular gifts. Without this love, the exercise of spiritual gifts is worthless.
 - We believe that Christians are to be baptized with water, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Baptism is an expression of our faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior—that He has freed us from sin and given us new life, both today and in Heaven.
 - We believe that the Lord's Supper commemorates the dying love of Christ, celebrated by all Christians.
 - We believe the Christian Church is created by the Holy Spirit as a gathering of believers associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the Gospel; observing the ordinances of Christ; governed by His laws; and exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His word.
 - We believe that the Church is set apart from the world by the Holy Spirit, and that the sinfulness of Christians over history has not persuaded God to remove His grace and His Spirit from the Church. Neither has God relieved the church of our burden to announce His Kingdom to all creation.
 - We believe that the Church is to pursue justice and peace for all in our communities, with particular concern for the poor, oppressed, prisoner, widow, and orphan. (Micah 6:8; Jeremiah 29:7; Luke 4:18-19)
 - We believe that the power of Christ's death and resurrection calls us to be family with God and each other, built together to become a dwelling as one body in which God lives by His Spirit. God's power is on display as people across racial, gender, socioeconomic, ethnic, and generational differences become one people, united in love, peace, and service together in our differences through Christ. Christ is our peace, destroying the barriers and walls of hostility, to make us a multicultural community. (Ephesians 2:11-22; Galatians 3:28)
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Appendix D: Covenant Point Retreat Policies & Procedures (Middle and High School Overnight Retreats)

This appendix applies whenever Fountain of Life Covenant Church (FOL) takes middle school or high school students to Covenant Point Bible Camp (CPBC). It supplements the rest of this handbook; all FOL child-safety, conduct, reporting, medical, and communication policies remain in effect during travel and throughout the retreat.

Before the Retreat

- **Registration and consent.** Every student must have current FOL registration forms completed, plus all forms required by CPBC. No student may depart with incomplete required forms.

- **Support information.** Parents/caregivers must disclose any allergies, dietary needs, medications, medical conditions, mobility or accessibility needs, and behavioral, developmental, or emotional supports that may affect safe participation. FOL will collaborate with the family and CPBC on a reasonable care plan within available staff capacity.
- **Trip briefing.** Students, parents/caregivers, and chaperones will receive current travel details, packing guidance, communication procedures, behavior expectations, and emergency contact information. Questions and accommodation requests should be raised before departure.
- **Chaperone eligibility.** Adults must satisfy FOL screening, background-check, training, handbook-review, and ongoing-eligibility requirements before supervising students on the trip.

Supervision, Accountability, and Lodging

- **Visibility.** Adults avoid isolated one-to-one situations. Individual conversations occur in visible, observable locations. Cabin or room checks are conducted by two screened adults whenever possible; leaders knock and announce themselves before entering.
- **Sleeping, changing, and bathing.** Adults and students never share a bed. Lodging assignments must protect privacy and follow FOL and CPBC guidance. Leaders do not watch students change, shower, or use the restroom, and leaders must follow the handbook's bathroom-assistance rules. Any necessary exception is handled for immediate safety, kept observable, and reported to the Trip Leader.
- **After lights-out.** Students stay in their assigned lodging area except for an emergency or with leader permission.

Transportation

- Only FOL-approved, appropriately licensed, rested, and capable adults may drive. Student drivers may not transport retreat participants as part of the trip.
- Every occupant uses an individual seat belt correctly for the entire trip. Vehicles may not exceed their rated capacity, and luggage is secured without obstructing exits or overloading the vehicle.
- Drivers obey traffic laws, adjust for weather and road conditions, do not use handheld phones, and stop when fatigue or conditions make continued travel unsafe. Another adult handles navigation and student needs whenever possible.
- The Trip Leader maintains vehicle rosters and the planned route. No participant changes vehicles or rides with an unapproved driver without authorization.

Health, Medication, and Illness

- **Medication check-in.** Prescription and over-the-counter medications must arrive in the original labeled container with written parent/caregiver instructions and be given to the designated medication leader at check-in, unless an approved plan permits a

student to carry a rescue inhaler, epinephrine auto-injector, or other emergency medication.

- **Storage and administration.** Medication is stored securely and accessed only by the student or an authorized adult under the written plan and applicable CPBC procedures. Medication is never shared.
- **Emergency medication.** Chaperones assigned to a student with a serious allergy or medical condition must know the student's emergency plan and where emergency medication is located. For severe or life-threatening symptoms, call 911, follow the plan, notify CPBC staff and the Trip Leader, and contact the parent/caregiver.
- **Illness and injury.** Students and leaders should not attend while ill under the handbook's sickness policy. During the retreat, promptly report symptoms or injury. The student will be separated from the group when appropriate if illness arises and a plan will be formulated between leaders, the student, CPBC staff, and the parents if necessary.

Student Conduct and Participation

Students are expected to help create a Christ-centered community marked by safety, dignity, belonging, and a positive, flexible posture.

- Respect FOL leaders, CPBC staff, other church groups, and one another; use speech and behavior that are welcoming, encouraging, and free of bullying, harassment, hazing, discrimination, threats, or sexualized conduct.
- Participate in worship, teaching, small group discussions, meals, and assigned group activities. Students may decline an optional or challenge activity and should tell a leader when they feel unsafe or need support.
- Follow leader instructions, activity rules, quiet hours, curfew, buddy expectations, lodging assignments, and restricted-area boundaries.
- Care for shared spaces and equipment, clean up after yourself, and leave cabins, vehicles, and activity areas better than you found them. Damage caused intentionally or recklessly may be charged to the family.
- Maintain appropriate clothing and boundaries. Public or private romantic/sexual behavior, pranks that threaten safety or dignity, fighting, stealing, and leaving the group without permission are prohibited.

Phones, Electronics, and Prohibited Items

- Student phones and personal electronic devices should remain at home. Any device brought must be disclosed and checked in with the Trip Leader at departure for secure storage. A medical or accessibility exception requires advance approval.
- The Trip Leader establishes scheduled parent/caregiver communication and trip updates. Students may contact home through a leader; leaders may also initiate contact whenever health, safety, behavior, or pastoral care requires it.

- Students may not bring weapons or knives, alcohol, cannabis, tobacco or nicotine products, vaping devices, illegal drugs, fireworks, pornography, or other items prohibited by FOL or CPBC. Personal sports equipment and valuable items require advance approval. FOL is not responsible for lost or damaged valuables.

Activities and Environmental Safety

- Students participate only in CPBC-approved activities under the supervision and safety instructions assigned by CPBC and FOL. Required protective equipment must be used.
- Leaders consider weather, cold exposure, hydration, ability, medical information, and student readiness. Students must immediately report injury, illness, lost equipment, unsafe conditions, or concern about another participant.
- Polar plunge, sauna, waterfront, ropes/challenge, or other higher-risk activities are optional and subject to current permission requirements, CPBC staffing, conditions, and the Trip Leader's judgment. No leader may pressure a student to participate.

Chaperone Role During the Retreat

- **Deposit and water seeds of faith.** Model Christ-like character, engage students in natural faith conversations, participate fully, and respond maturely when plans change.
 - **Be a good teammate.** Arrive prepared and on time, know your assignment, communicate promptly, maintain a curious and non-defensive posture, support other leaders, and bring concerns directly to the Trip Leader.
 - **Be a safe person.** Know the students assigned to you, remain attentive rather than absorbed in your phone, respect privacy and confidentiality, maintain boundaries, welcome students on the margins, and immediately report safety, abuse, self-harm, or boundary concerns.
 - Do not make unauthorized promises, change safety procedures, transport students separately, administer unapproved medication, or communicate a serious incident to the wider group or social media. The Trip Leader coordinates official parent and church communication.
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Appendix E: Waiver, Release, and the Assumption of Risk

I (we) acknowledge that my (and/or my child's participation) in Student Ministries/Fountain of Life activities is voluntary and may require traveling or physical exertion. Such activities may include, but are not limited to: outing, athletic games, physical labor, construction projects, local excursions and meetings, cookouts, basketball, rollerblading, games in the park, soccer, broomball, ice skating, volleyball, softball, baseball, camping, hiking, biking, concerts, Bible Studies, golfing, miniature golf, hayrides, various games and whirlyball, and other physically demanding or hazardous activities. I (we) acknowledge that my (and/or my

child's) participation in a Student Ministries/Fountain of Life activity presents risks that I and/or my child may suffer including, but not limited to, damage to personal property, financial damage, emotional injury, illness, bodily injury, or death. I (we) hereby assume those risks. *(Note: if you desire to limit you (and/or your child's) participation in any event, please submit your wishes in writing to the director of the corresponding ministry prior to the event).* And, in consideration of myself (and/or my child's) being allowed to participate in Student Ministries / Fountain of Life activities, I (we) agree and take the following actions for me (and/or my child):

I (we) waive, release, and discharge Fountain of Life and its Student Ministries, its pastors, directors, officers, members, employees, volunteers, representatives, subcontractors, and agents from any and all claims for: (A) Financial losses, including (but not limited to) insurance deductibles and medical expenses, that I pay for myself or that I/we as parents or guardians must pay as a result of injury or illness arising out of activities sponsored by Student Ministries/Fountain of Life; (B) Damage, destruction, loss or theft of personal belongings of myself (and/or the minor participant or parents of the same); and (C) Any claims or liabilities that I for myself or I (we) may assert as parents for loss of consortium, death or personal injury, which arise out of or relate to my (and/or my child's) participation in Student Ministries/Fountain of Life's activities; and, to the extent allowable by law, all similar or identical claims that myself (and/or my child) may assert. Notwithstanding any of the foregoing, Student Ministries/Fountain of Life is not released from any claims or liabilities that are caused solely by Student Ministries/Fountain of Life.

I (we) agree not to sue any of the persons or entities mentioned above for any of the claims or liabilities that I have waived, released, or discharged herein.

I (we) indemnify and hold harmless the person or entities mentioned above from any claims made or liabilities assessed against them as a result of my (and/or my child's) actions.

I (we) agree to indemnify and hold harmless the person or entities mentioned above for any claims or liabilities assessed against them as a result of any inaccuracy on this form, or the insufficiency of my legal capacity or authority to act for and on behalf of myself (and/or the minor in the execution of the waiver, release, and assumption of risk, medical treatment authorization, or permission slip and acknowledgment of expectations.

Appendix F: Medical Treatment Authorization

I (and/or my child) is attending and participating in activities with Student Ministries/Fountain of Life, which will take place on and off the church campus, and which are discussed previously in this form. If during such an activity, I, (and/or my spouse, my child's parent(s), and/or my child's alternate emergency contact are unable to consent at the time, due to incapacity, injury, illness, or absence), I hereby authorize the director of

Student Ministries at Fountain of Life, and the designated leaders or volunteers who will be supervising activities at the activity to consent to medical care or dental care, or both, for myself (and/or my child). The authority granted by this authorization includes the authority to consent to any x-ray examination, anesthetic, medical, or surgical diagnosis or treatment, and hospital care under the general or special supervision and upon the advice of, or to be rendered by, a physician and surgeon. This authority also extends to any x-ray examination, anesthetic, dental or surgical diagnosis, or treatment and hospital care by a dentist.

I give this authorization in advance of any special diagnosis, treatment, or hospital care being required, but is given to provide authority and power on the part of the supervisor and his/her authorized designee to exercise his/her best judgment regarding what is advisable for myself (and/or my child) upon advice of such physician, dentist, and surgeon.

I certify that I have adequate health insurance or resources to cover the costs of treatment in case of any such injury or illness. I certify that within the past year myself (and/or my child) has had a physical examination and that I (and/or my child) am/is physically able to participate in all Student Ministries/Fountain of Life activities (and will indicate in writing if not).

I give my permission to the staff to use the information provided in this form in connection with my (and/or my child's) participation in Student Ministries/Fountain of Life and to disclose it to any health care provider, hospital, or other health care facility in connection with the provision of medical care to my child.

I give my permission to the staff to render emergency first aid to myself (and/or my child) (including, but not limited to, "Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation" or the "Heimlich Maneuver") if necessary.

Appendix G: Volunteer Commitment Agreement and Signature of Release, Acknowledgment, and Authorization of Participation

As a volunteer serving in Fountain of Life Student Ministries and by signing this form, I confirm that I have received either a physical or an electronic copy of the Fountain of Life Student Ministries Handbook, and I agree to comply with all the policies, procedures, and expectations outlined therein, as well as in the following appendices. I understand that working with children and students is a privilege, not a right. I agree to participate in required trainings, screenings, and reviews. I understand that failure to comply with these expectations may result in removal from ministry. I agree to the permissions, waivers, release, and assumption of risk (as stated in Appendix E) and medical treatment authorization (as stated in Appendix F) as written in the current academic year's handbook.

Volunteer Name (Printed): _____

Volunteer Signature: _____ Date: _____

Ministry Leader Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix H: Signature of Release, Acknowledgment, and Authorization for Student Participation

By signing this form, I confirm that I have received either a physical or an electronic copy of the Fountain of Life Student Ministries Handbook, and I agree to all the policies, procedures, expectations, permissions, waivers, release, and assumption of risk (as stated in Appendix E) medical treatment authorization (as stated in Appendix F) as written in the current academic year's handbook. By signing, I also confirm that I have completed the Fountain of Life electronic form for the current ministry year.

Parent/caregiver signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent/caregiver name (printed): _____

Parent/caregiver signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent/caregiver name (printed): _____

Student signature: _____ Date: _____

Student name(s) (printed): _____