

FSM Parents,

During the summer months of 2024, our church leadership worked to develop the attached Digital Communications Policy for adults working with minors. Our goal was to balance our mission of connecting relationally with youth while ensuring their safety and providing peace of mind for you. This new policy requires guardian consent and allows you to specify which social media platforms you approve Foothills staff/volunteers to communicate with your student on.

Our vision at FSM (Foothills Student Ministry) is:

*To ensure that every student who attends our ministry is known, loved, challenged and cared for. Ultimately, we seek to connect students with Jesus in a lasting way that continues well beyond their adolescent years.*

We believe this vision happens beyond the walls of the church as well as within it. We recognize the world is a dark place and unfortunately demands policies such as this. However, we seek as Jesus did, to enter the darkness with light rather than avoid it altogether. Finally; we see the following as a living document and welcome your input to improve it.

We are happy to answer any questions or concerns you may have in order to facilitate understanding and bring clarity.

Sincerely,

Sam Stuckey  
Interim Student  
Ministry Pastor



## DIGITAL COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES

Foothills Student Ministry (FSM) desires to promote a safe and a healthy environment for digital communication between our Student Ministry Volunteers, Staff and Students who participate in our youth ministry. As a result, FSM has developed the following guidelines:

- FSM volunteers and staff must obtain parent consent for communication with students via text or within any apps and agree to abide by these guidelines
- Avoid private messaging with opposite gender. On the chance a conversation is initiated from a student, include same gendered adult in the response
- Youth Ministry volunteers and staff may not transmit any content that is illicit, unsavory, abusive, pornographic, discriminatory, harassing, or disrespectful when communicating or with minors involved.
- Snapchat and BeReal or apps with vanishing communication are not approved forms of communication at any time
- Volunteers and staff should not initiate friend/follow requests with students
- NEVER delete texts or chats with students
- FSM volunteers and staff do not have permission to share student's personal information with other adults or students. Personal information may include such things as a minor's name, phone number, email address, or photograph.
- Limit interactions with individuals of same gender to 4-6 exchanges or less...aka short interactions. Conversations should be short and check-in related: examples like "how have you been?" "can't wait to see you at youth group" or following up with a prayer request: "I prayed for your test today how did it go?" IF conversations need more than that or have a



serious nature to them, move to an in-person conversation (following our relational guidelines). Group messaging is always preferred.

- Screenshot anything of a concerning nature and send to the Student Ministry Pastor immediately.
- Never send a message or share media that you wouldn't do so publicly. We are ambassadors of Christ (see 2 Corinthians 5:20) and called to represent Him in the digital space as well.
- FSM volunteers and staff on ministry business may never use a mobile phone while driving — even hands free — unless it's an emergency.
- Regularly share these guidelines with students and parents at youth group and via social media channels.
- Do not post content on social media that may compromise the mission of Foothills Student Ministry that is perceived as inappropriate or of undesirable content
- Don't take photos of minors or post content about them on your personal social media accounts.



## DCG PARENT CONSENT FORM

Name of Parent / Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

I, \_\_\_\_\_, give permission for approved & background checked adults (volunteers & church staff) involved with the Foothills Student Ministry (FSM) to communicate with my child(ren) digitally following the digital communication guidelines (attached) using these communication tools for a year:

YES	NO	Communication Tool	YES	NO	Communication Tool
		Church Database no-reply Announcement Texts			Instagram
		Cell Phone Calls			Facebook
		Text Messaging			TikTok
		Email			Video Game Chats (voice/text)

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Statement of Consent:** I understand that photos or videos of my child(ren) and others may be taken during weekly programs / other church events. I consent to the use of my child's photo or likeness by the church in promotional / community-building materials such as website, Facebook and other social media outlets. I understand that my child's / children's identifying information will not be provided unless I give permission at a later time.

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

