



Youth Ministry Leader/Volunteer Code of Conduct (Adopted 5/2007)

As an adult leader/volunteer in the Youth Ministry of First Baptist Bristol, I understand and agree to the following:

- I understand that my role as a youth ministry leader/volunteer is very important to the success of this youth ministry, and I pledge to keep the needs of the ministry and the students in focus at all times.
- I will love, encourage and mentor all students without regard to race, ethnicity, socio-economic standing, gender, age, political beliefs or spiritual health.
- I will follow and enforce the letter and the spirit of the **Youth Ministry Code of Conduct**.
- I will conduct myself in a professional and Christian manner at all times.
- I will faithfully represent and practice the commitments of the **Church Covenant**.
- I will exercise discipline according to the **Youth Ministry Discipline Policy**.
- I will maintain appropriate interaction with youth participants and other adult participants. Positive examples include: one-armed side hugs, handshakes, high fives, verbal praise, arms around shoulders, holding hands during prayer. All leaders must avoid kissing, inappropriate touching, verbal sarcasm, tickling, wrestling or piggyback rides with minors, any form of unwanted affection, and compliments that relate to a student's body.
- I understand that physical, sexual, or romantic relationships between a youth ministry leader/volunteer and a student are unethical and prohibited.
- I will follow a "two deep" strategy* for ministry with students making sure at least two adults are present at all youth ministry activities and situations. If extreme circumstances require me to be alone with students, I will make sure that the youth minister or other youth ministry leaders know the situation. One-on-one counseling will take place in an open environment such as a quiet spot in the youth center. When one-on-one counseling must be done in an office, other adult workers should be notified as to the starting time of the session and the projected conclusion. The door should be left slightly open. If one-on-one counseling is required apart from these settings, the counseling should take place in a public setting such as a busy restaurant and other youth ministry leaders should be notified.
- I will handle matters of confidentiality in a responsible manner, and I understand that if a student reveals something that will place that student or anyone else in harm's way I must report to the youth minister (or the pastor or other church leader if the youth minister is not available) and the appropriate authorities.
- I am aware that I have limitations as a lay counselor and will make appropriate referrals for students who may need professional counseling.
- I will support the rights and roles of parents while ministering to the needs and concerns of the students and the parents.
- I will work collaboratively with the youth minister, Youth Ministry Council, other youth leaders, and the pastor.
- I understand that as a part of this ministry I am accountable first to God and then to this church and the youth ministry. The line of authority within the ministry goes in the following progression: the youth minister, the Youth Ministry Council, the pastor and/or personnel committee, and finally the deacon leadership.
- I will submit to an initial and periodic background checks and affirm that I have never been involved in a violent crime or sex crime.

I agree to abide by this code of conduct.

(Leader/Volunteer Signature)

(Date)

*Currently, the church does allow adult leaders to pick up or take home youth in personal vehicles without another adult, but we are working to make the "two deep" strategy work in this arena as well. Whenever possible, pick up and return of students should be done in the church van/bus with at least two adult leaders present. When transportation must be done by one adult leader, every effort should be made to avoid situations where the adult leader is alone with a member of the opposite sex. The lone adult leader should also avoid making unnecessary stops or impromptu gatherings or field trips where only one adult leader is present. The church also currently allows adult leaders to room with students on trips and retreats. When this rooming situation is necessary, there should be at least two students rooming with an adult of the same sex. Some situations require that students room with a married couple. In those situations, caution should be exercised to provide appropriate privacy to students and leaders.