

Youth Ministry Code of Conduct for Adult Volunteers

This Code of Conduct is written to protect both the youth participating in FPC activities, as well as you, a volunteer leader, from situations where your integrity or actions might be questioned.

Section I

Those at the greatest risk for abuse in ministry are undoubtedly teenagers. This is because youth ministry more easily allows for the possibility of one-to-one unsupervised contact, both in person and in electronic communications. During your participation with the FPC youth ministry, you must:

1. Never abuse young people or cultivate relationships to initiate or cloak abuse of young people
2. Never become romantically involved with any young person participating in the youth ministry.
3. Never be alone with a young person away from the presence of other adults
4. Never have young people to your home or visit young people in their home when no other adult is present, except with the permission of a parent or guardian.
5. Never touch a young person in a manner which is inappropriate given their age, gender or cultural background.
6. Never physically discipline a young person.
7. Never make drugs, alcohol, tobacco products or vapes available to a young person.
8. Never develop inappropriate special relationships with particular young people that could be seen as involving favoritism or any form of special treatment.
9. Never engage in any contact with a young person that is secretive (whether physical or through electronic media or in any other way).

Please initial here to acknowledge you have read and understand Section I _____

Section II

Social Media has changed how many interact with each other. It's how many connect and communicate with people. It has become an integral part of daily life for many. Social media can be an effective tool for youth ministry in promoting the ministry and connecting with students. It can also be dangerous when abused or used without discretion or awareness of consequences.

While volunteering/working with the youth ministry of FPC please abide by the following guidelines for social media usage.

1. Know that you are being watched. Anyone in a leadership position which includes volunteers, is always under some spotlight. Students, parents and other leaders and congregation members are watching you, and your online life says a lot about who you are.
2. When posting something, carefully consider what you are posting. Is what you are posting potentially offensive, inappropriate, abusive or compromising. Be careful of the pictures you post, the group(s) you are affiliate with and the language you use.

3. Be aware of what you are tagged in. As well as think about the pictures and comments you “like”.
4. One on one messages involving young people using any platform (including phone calls) must be professional in nature. Any messages regarding personal material must be shared with another staff member. At no time is one-on-one video chatting with young people permissible. Should a young person initiate a personal correspondence, the youth staff and the parents or guardians of the young person should be immediately notified before a response is sent. An appropriate response may only be sent with permission from youth staff and the parents/guardians.
5. Unlike verbal communication, any form of online written communication has a form of permanence. There should be no expectation of privacy. Never delete communications as this offers transparency in case a complaint or question occurs.
6. Care should be taken to maintain professionalism and appropriate boundaries in all communications.
7. Always avoid any communication that might be construed as having inappropriate sexual or romantic overtones or innuendos. DO NOT reply to any such email from a minor. Instead, make a copy of such inappropriate communication and notify the youth staff or Pastor immediately.
8. Use group chats for effective, transparent communications. This allows many to be involved and eliminates appearances of secrecy. If there is any inappropriate material or dialogue sent in a group chat, the youth staff should be notified immediately.

Those who volunteer/work in ministry settings must take great care to be consistent in representing the worth of their character online. Clear communication and respect for boundaries is needed at all levels of contact. Emails, social media, texting and blog posts or comments are all public forums from which a permanent record can be obtained. As a representative of the church, you should be diligent in avoiding situations which might be the source of scandal for yourself and others.

Please initial here to acknowledge you have read and understand Section II _____

A breach of this Code of Conduct may raise issues regarding your ability to continue as a youth ministry volunteer. You are also responsible to report to the youth staff or Pastor if you observe another leader acting in a way that may be contrary to this Code of Conduct.

Code of Conduct Agreement

I have read the First Presbyterian Church Youth Ministry Code of Conduct in its entirety. I will support and uphold the conditions and guidelines contained in the Code of Conduct. I am aware that my actions and my decisions affect not only myself but others. I understand that poor actions or choices on my part regarding the youth ministry will affect my ability to continue as a volunteer, and I accept the appropriate and logical consequences of my actions.

Adult volunteer printed name: _____

Adult volunteer signature: _____

Youth Director: _____

Date: _____