

Youth Ministry Policy Manual

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**The Shepherd's Fellowship
Youth Ministry
Policy Index**

1. Policy on Policies
2. Financial Reporting and Record Keeping:
3. Transportation/Drivers for Youth Events
4. Emergency Information/Permission Forms
5. Adult/Youth Ratio
6. Personal Criteria for Youth Sponsors
7. Behavior Covenants
8. Personal Insurance Coverage
9. Mileage and Gas Reimbursement for Youth Events
10. Selection of Family Group Adult Leaders for Youth Gatherings
11. Responsibilities to Parents and Other Authorities
12. Music, Phone, and Video Usage

Appendix

- A. Blanket Youth Ministry Registration and Emergency Information Form,
- B. Permission Slip
- C. Definition of Roles

TSF Policy #1 Policy on Policies

1. **General Policy** The purpose and use of TSF policies is to govern recurring activities and events.

2. **Background**

- a) The effectiveness of most organizations is enhanced when written policies are in place to govern recurring activities and actions.
- b) Written policies also help keep organizations “on course” as leadership changes over time.
- b) The basic purpose of TSF policies are to guide recurring activities and actions and to keep TSF on a steady course.
- d) Simply stated, it is wise to say, what you do and do what you say.

3. **Policy Specifics**

- a) TSF policies tell how specific activities/actions should be conducted.
- b) Policies are applicable to the TSF and all people involved in TSF sponsored activities.
- c) The Youth Director will maintain the Master TSF Policy file and inform all new TSF members of its existence and use.
- d) All TSF members and all people involved in TSF sponsored activities will comply with the policies and inform the Senior Pastor about changes needed.
- e) Anyone may originate or propose a policy change. New policies or proposed changes will be routed through the Youth Leader for consideration and approval. The support of both the Youth Leader and Senior Pastor are needed to approve a new, or change an existing TSF youth policy.
- f) Questions about the TSF youth policies should be directed to the Primary Youth Leader and/or the Senior Pastor.
- g) While TSF youth policies are meant to be comprehensive, they do not and cannot cover every possible subject or situation which may occur. In the absence of TSF youth policies, youth leaders and youth should use common sense, good judgment, Christian experience and a loving attitude. If in doubt about a course of action, adults and youth should always ask “What would Jesus do in this situation?”

TSF
Policy #2
Financial Reporting and Record Keeping:
Youth Participation in Fundraising and Division of Funds

1. **General Policy** Fundraising events are overseen (but can be delegated) by the Youth Director for youth events.
2. **Background** Fundraising activities must be implemented with guidance and proper organization for success. This policy will help interpret involvement by all those involved.
3. **Policy Specifics**
 - a) Youth Funds are reported to the church treasurer who oversees the church finances.
 - b) Scholarships are available at the discretion of the Primary Youth Leader for those who do not have funds to participate in event (if someone receives a scholarship and then does not attend the event, they will be responsible to repay the scholarship unless if we can obtain a refund from the event or find another youth to use the setup for that event). The Youth Director can make exceptions in the case of emergencies.

TSF
Policy #3
Transportation/Drivers for Events

1. **General Policy** Participants and/or drivers for youth events must have approval by the Primary Youth Leader.
2. **Background** The best way to insure good organization and discipline for youth events is to implement specific driver rules for all youth events that involve activities, travel, etc. outside The Shepherd's Fellowship
3. **Policy Specifics**

Driver Requirements To be eligible to drive for Youth activities, drivers must conform to the following;

- a) a) The driver must have a valid driver's license.
- b) Adult drivers be or over the age of 21
- c) The driver must agree to know and obey all driving guidelines set in this policy.
- d) All drivers must have full coverage car insurance personally.

Driving Guidelines: These rules are for all drivers involved in youth events;

- a) All Traffic laws are to be strictly followed. This includes speed limits.
- b) Drive defensively and as an example to the youth.
- c) Everyone is to have a seat belt on while the vehicle is in motion, even when the law allows otherwise.
- d) Passengers may leave the vehicle only when the engine is turned off or the driver gives verbal permission.
- e) No youth are to leave the vehicle while it is stopped in traffic or at a traffic signal.
- f) Passengers are not to hinder or distract the driver while the vehicle is in motion.

**TSF
Policy #4
Emergency Information/Permission Slips for Events**

1. **General Policy** Activity permission and medical information forms are required for events outside of The Shepherd's Fellowship grounds.

2. **Background** The best way to insure good organization and discipline for youth events is to implement specific rules and have complete emergency/medical information for all youth events that involve activities, travel, etc. outside The Shepherd's Fellowship grounds.

3. **Policy Specifics**

Permission Forms Permission forms will be divided into three (2) categories as follows;

1. "Blanket Form" - Emergency Medical Information, to be filled out annually.
2. "Event Form" - Includes name, activity date(s), emergency contact phone numbers for the dates of the event, approval for driving and/or riding with youth drivers, and verification of EMI form on file with TSF.

Guidelines

- a) Youth must have a signed Medical Information/Permission (Blanket form) slip to participate in any activity outside the church grounds.
- b) Youth without a Medical Information/Permission slip may have parent give verbal approval and provide the needed information to the TSF in last minute circumstances.
- c) The Youth Director will provide the necessary forms required for all activities. See attached copies .

**TSF
Policy #5
Adult Youth Ratio at Youth Events**

1. **General Policy** A minimum of two (2) adults should be present at every special youth event (One adult is ok for youth meetings if more than 2 youth are in the same room at all times and no more than 5 teens are attending)

2. **Background** Safety and prudent youth oversight suggests a minimum number of adults should supervise all youth events.

3. **Policy Specifics**

- a) Every effort will be made to have both male and female sponsors for activities, overnight events or outings involving male and female youth.
- b) For safety's sake, events where large numbers of youth are anticipated, an adult to youth ratio should be no less than 1 to 9.
- c) An adult is defined as any trusted adult at the discretion of the Primary Youth Leader and/or Senior Pastor member or parent over age 21.

**TSF
Policy #6
Personal Criteria for Youth Sponsors**

1. **General Policy** Youth sponsors must meet certain personal criteria before they will be allowed to participate in youth activities.
2. **Background** Unfortunately, youth activities may attract people whose intent may be to hurt rather than help youth. This policy will help interpret possible involvement by those who may hurt our youth.
3. **Policy Specifics**
 - a) No adult should be in charge of youth activities unless they have been an active participant of The Shepherd's Fellowship for at least 6 months and at the discretion of the Youth Director.
 - b) No one may work with the youth who is known to have a current substance abuse problem, a recent police record for violent criminal activity (within last 3 yr.), or mental, emotional, or spiritual health problems which might effect judgment and reliability.
 - c) The Shepherd's Fellowship may conduct a background check on new adult sponsors and chaperones.

Parents as Youth Sponsors/Chaperones

1. Parents of youth may be a part of the Youth Ministry. However, the youth shall be consulted regarding any involvement on the part of the parent in the activity(s) that also involve the student of that parent.
2. Parents are encouraged to participate and follow the agenda for the event. Parents will be treated as Youth Leaders accountable to the Primary Youth Leader in charge instead as a parent. Any Suggestion and/or comments by parents should be directed to the Primary Youth Leader for review.

Youth Sponsors/Chaperones/DYFM Relations with Parents

Those involved should remember to use common sense, good judgment, Christian experience and a loving attitude. If in doubt about a situation/action, ask "What would Jesus do in this situation?"

**TSF
Policy #7
Behavior Covenants**

1. **General Policy** Behavior covenants will have to be signed by all youth participating in out-of-town and/or overnight events.
2. **Background** The best way to insure good behavior for out-of-town and overnight events is to prepare a behavior covenant in advance and enforce it during the event. This policy will help interpret the contents of a covenant and those bound by the covenant.
3. **Policy Specifics**
 - a) A covenant is a contract which stipulates behavior expectations and consequences for youth, parents, and adult sponsors.
 - b) A Behavior Covenant should emphasize the positive while being realistic about the potential for problems.
 - c) Anytime youth attend an out-of-town or overnight event, a behavioral covenant should be developed and signed by the youth, parents and sponsors who participate.

- d) Covenants may also be used for lock-ins as deemed appropriate.
- e) The most severe consequence for a major behavioral problem is; sending the young person(s) home at their parent's expense. This final action must be implemented by the Youth Director or the primary youth leader in charge.
- f) Those youth who are not willing to sign the covenant may not participate in the planned event.

Expectation of Youth Youth are a part of the ministry of their own choosing. They are expected to:

- 1. Comply with the rules that have been set by the Youth Leader.
- 2. Cooperate with the Staff/Youth Sponsors and their requests.
- 3. Treat everyone with respect.

TSF Policy #8 Personal Insurance Coverage
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- 1. **General Policy** Participants in major youth activities must have health/accident insurance.
- 2. **Background** The Shepherd's Fellowship will not provide health/accident insurance for youth participants in major activities, nor will it pay any expenses related to illness or injury which may occur during the activities (outside of liability covered under our insurance policy)
- 3. **Policy Specifics**
 - a) It is expected that families of youth will carry a primary health or accident insurance policy on them for servant events, out-of-town youth gatherings, other long distance events, or high risk events (paintball, ski trips, etc.).
 - b) Youth without coverage will be able to participate at their own risk as waived on the permission slip and stated here.

TSF Policy #9 Mileage/ Gas Reimbursement for Youth Events
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At this point, The Shepherd's Fellowship does not reimburse for gas for youth events. If someone is a qualified driver and wishes to help with the youth in the area of driving but does not have the funds, the Youth Director can make a decision to help financially for gas costs out of the youth fund.

TSF Policy #10 Policy on Responsibilities of Leaders to Parents and other Authorities
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1. **General Policy:** Professional and volunteer leaders in youth and children's ministry shall help youth to honor their parents and other authorities and model this respect in ministry.

2. **Background**
Those who work with youth and serve as advocates for them must be careful to build bridges rather than walls between youth and parents or other authorities. Those who work with students may sometimes feel as if they are "parenting" them or that they themselves are "one of the kids" but neither is true. A careful balance must be maintained.

3. **Policy Guidelines to Follow in Helping Youth Honor Parental and Other Authority**
 - a.) **Leaders need to model** the honoring of parents and other authorities in their words and actions. They should also use their own authority in positive ways.
 - b.) **Leaders are responsible** for students safety, welfare, and behavior during activities in "semi-parental" ways. They should be aware of developing situations: attitude changes, unhealthy romances, frequent discipline problems, spiritual searching etc. and seek to encourage youth in personal discipline and healthy Christian living.
 - c.) **Leaders should actively listen to young people who need to vent their feelings.** However, they should not only avoid taking sides but seek ways to build bridges of understanding. Parents aren't above criticism but a leaders negative comment's don't help. Taking the parent's side may make you lose credibility with youth.
 - d.) **Confidentiality is important in the student/ youth leader relationship** except in cases where a student is in peril. Students should know in advance about how much they may confide in a leader. They should know the leader will listen with love and try to provide wise advice. They should also know that if they have a secret their parents need to know about, the leader will urge them to go to their parents and offer personal support in that process. They should also know that a leader may go to their parents or other authorities if the issue involves their personal safety or legally obligated to.
 - e.) **Leaders should be aware of when it is appropriate to seek outside help.** Serious situations such as incest, date rape, drug abuse, abortion, suicide threats, etc. require skilled assistance. If it is inappropriate to approach parents, leaders should see the pastor for guidance to get expert help immediately.
 - f.) **Leaders should understand their appropriate role in young people's lives.** Leaders are often a step ahead of youth on life's trail and can often serve as "guides" to help young people navigate life's path. A leader's God-given tasks are teaching, listening, understanding, loving, pointing out life's pitfalls, and encouraging students to succeed.

TSF Policy #11 Policy on Music, Phone and Video Usage
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1. Music

All music at any youth event should be Christian in nature unless approved by the Primary Youth Leader for lesson purposes. At times, there may be a question as to rather or not something is a Christian song. In these cases, the Primary Youth Leader makes the final call.

If a youth has a personal music device and it is found they are in violation of this policy, they will get one warning. After that, the youth leader may confiscate the device for an hour. On a third offense, the youth leader may confiscate the device for the duration of the event and give it to the Primary Youth Leader.

2. Phone

Most of the youth events are phone free events. Youth are asked to place their phone in the “phone bucket” that holds phones for that time. If a youth needs to make a phone call, they simply just have to ask the youth leader if it is ok, the youth leader will retrieve the phone, and then the phone is put back after the call.

3. Video

We use a decent amount of video resources in our youth programming. While many videos are designed for ministry, we do also use secular movies in our programming and for entertainment. Sometimes this is a clip that is “ministry friendly” but we also use full length at times.

Any movie that is rated G or rated PG, we will show that video without prior knowledge to parents of the youth.

Any movie that is rated PG-13 or (in a rare situation) rated R, we will let the parents know in advance as well as make available a write up on the film from pluggedin.com which details out what pros and cons are in a movie from a Biblical standpoint so parents can decide if they wish for their youth to participate.

The Shepherd's Fellowship - Youth Ministry Registration Form

The forms are kept on file for all youth. And should be updated yearly. Even if you think you will only attend one or two events, please help us provide this important safety information. Non-members should complete before participating in an off site event.

Full Name of Youth _____ Grade _____ Age _____

Mother's Name _____ Daytime phone _____ Home _____

Father's Name _____ Daytime phone _____ Home _____

(Emergency Contact other than above)

Name _____ Daytime phone _____ Home _____

Mailing address _____ Non Custodial Parent Name and Address (If applicable):

Students' Birth Date _____ City, State _____

Home Church _____ City, State _____

Blanket permission and release for TSF

My child may participate in TSF youth sponsored by TSF under the guidelines and policies of the Youth Ministry

Parent Signature _____ Date _____

Emergency Information

Health Care Provider _____ Member Number _____

Physician of Choice _____ Phone _____

Hospital of Choice _____ Phone _____

Dentist of Choice _____ Phone _____

Special Health Conditions, Learning Disabilities, or Medications _____

If you and the physician of choice on this card cannot be reached in an emergency, and if in the judgment of the adult in charge of this event immediate medical attention is indicated, do you authorize sending your child (properly accompanied) to an available hospital or physician? yes _____ no _____

Parent Signature _____ Date _____



2011 General Permission Form/ Emergency Information

Student Information		
Last Name:	First Name:	
Grade:	Age	Gender: M F
Phone:	Email:	
Address:	City	
Postal Code:	Province	

Parent / Guardian Information	
Name(s):	Email:
Home Phone:	Other Phone:

Medical Information	
Health Card #:	Health Card Expiry Date:
Medical Conditions or Allergies: <small>(Please make special note of food allergies)</small>	Medication(s) Currently Being Taken: <small>(Please note medication names and times taken)</small>

Permission Form

Student	
I promise to abide by all rules and plans set forth by the leaders of The Shepherds Fellowship during the course of all events in 2010 that I attend. I understand that a signed individual event form must be returned for each event.	
I have turned 18/will turn 18 during 2010	Date turn(ed) 18:
Signature:	Date:

Parent	
I / we are the legal guardians of the student named above and hereby give my / our permission for the named student to participate in youth group events during 2010 with the leaders of The Shepherd's Fellowship Church. I understand that in the event of an emergency that the leaders of The Shepherds Fellowship will do everything in their power to contact me personally, but that in the event that they are unable to do so, I / we give my / our permission for the leaders to seek necessary medical attention for the student named above.	
Signature:	Date:

Definition of Roles

Youth Director - This role oversees the youth programming, vision and operations as a whole. This role reports to the Senior Pastor who in turns reports to the elders.

Like any Ministry Support Role, when there is no one in the Youth Director role, the Senior Pastor will fill this role until someone else is raised up into this role.

Primary Youth Leader (s) - This role is the person or team who is taking the lead during the youth group meeting or special youth event. They report to the Youth Director.

Assistant Youth Leader (s) - This role is the person or people who are assisting the Primary Youth Leader (s) and are mentors and friends to the youth.

Volunteers - While we strive for consistency in the youth meetings of adult leaders (to provide a safe and trusting environment for our teens), there are opportunities for additional volunteers for certain special events. Those in these roles are under the authority of the primary leader over that event and need to be approved by the Youth Director.