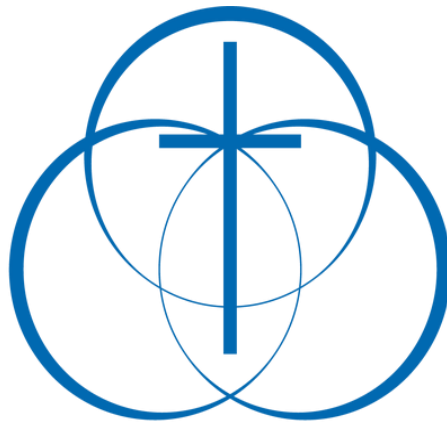




NICHOLASVILLE METHODIST CHURCH

Youth Ministry
Policies and Procedures



Nicholasville Methodist Church
303 West Maple Street
Nicholasville, KY 40356

YOUTH MINISTRY POLICIES

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WELCOME

Dear Staff Member or Volunteer,

Welcome to Nicholasville Methodist Church!

At Nicholasville Methodist Church, we take our responsibility to care for children and youth very seriously. These guidelines are intended to facilitate a safe and nurturing environment in which youth can grow in relationship with Jesus Christ.

The pages of this handbook provide a general overview of procedures and guidelines for volunteers and staff members providing services to youth from 6th through 12th grades at Nicholasville Methodist Church. Our policies are intended to create a safe environment for children and students, protecting students, you, and the mission of Nicholasville Methodist Church.

After you have carefully read these policies, please sign and return the agreement form located on the last page. If you have questions, please contact the Director of Family Ministries.

Thank you for serving, loving and protecting our students.

Sincerely,

Nicholasville Methodist Church Leadership



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OVERVIEW OF THE NICHOLASVILLE METHODIST CHURCH SAFETY SYSTEM

Because we desire to protect students involved in our ministries, all volunteers and staff members must complete the Nicholasville Methodist Church screening process, including a background check. All volunteers must be approved by the family ministry staff in order to serve.

STEP ONE: Sexual Abuse Awareness Training

Nicholasville Methodist Church Policies and Procedures require that staff members and volunteers avoid abusive behavior of any kind. Staff members and volunteers are required to report any policy violations to the Director of Family Ministries, the Lead Pastor, Children's Minister or a member of the Nicholasville Methodist Church Safety Committee.

Staff members and volunteers should have a basic understanding of the characteristics of sexual abusers and their behaviors in 'grooming' a child for sexual abuse. Grooming is the process used by an abuser to select a child, win the child's trust (and the trust of the child's parent or 'gatekeeper'), manipulate the child into sexual activity and keep the child from disclosing the abuse.

To equip Nicholasville Methodist Church staff members and volunteers with information necessary to recognize abuser characteristics and grooming behavior, Nicholasville Methodist Church requires all staff members and volunteers to complete MinistrySafe's Sexual Abuse Awareness Training. This Training will be renewed every two years.

STEP TWO: Screening Process

Staff members and volunteers serving with children and youth are required to complete the Nicholasville Methodist Church Screening Process, which includes:

- Employment Application (employees only);
- Safety Application
- Face-to-Face Interview
- Reference Checks



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*A volunteer must attend Nicholasville Methodist Church for six months before being eligible to serve in positions providing access to children, students or vulnerable populations.

STEP THREE: Policies & Procedures

Staff members and volunteers are required to review the policies contained in this manual and sign the last page, indicating that he or she has read and understood the material and agrees to comply with policy requirements.

STEP FOUR: Criminal Background Check

All staff members and volunteers working with children must undergo a criminal background check. Depending upon the ministry position, differing levels or intensity of criminal background check may be required. Individuals who have committed sexually-oriented or sex-related crimes may not serve in any area providing services to children or minors. In addition, certain other past criminal acts *may* preclude an applicant from serving minors.



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CHILD SAFETY POLICY

Abuse Tolerance

Nicholasville Methodist Church supports and maintains a **zero-tolerance** policy concerning child abuse and neglect. It is a violation of Kentucky law for any staff member or volunteer to physically, sexually, or emotionally abuse or neglect any child participating in Nicholasville Methodist Church programs. It is the responsibility of every staff member and volunteer at Nicholasville Methodist Church to act in the best interest of all children in every program.

In the event staff members or volunteers observe any inappropriate behaviors (i.e., policy violations, neglectful supervision, poor role-modeling, etc.) or suspected abuse (physical, emotional, or sexual), it is their responsibility to immediately report their observations to the Director of Family Ministries, the Children's Minister or Lead Pastor.

Enforcement of Policies

Nicholasville Methodist Church's Family Ministries maintains the highest standard in order to protect both the volunteers and students in our ministry. Anyone working with children or students at Nicholasville Methodist Church is subject to the supervision and evaluation of the ministry staff and must follow these guidelines. Staff members and volunteers in supervisory positions must diligently enforce all policies.

Nicholasville Methodist Church staff reserves the right to dismiss volunteers who fail to follow the policies and guidelines.

Nicholasville Methodist Church staff members and volunteers who supervise other staff members or volunteers are charged with the diligent enforcement of all Nicholasville Methodist Church policies. Anyone working with children or students at Nicholasville Methodist Church is subject to the supervision and evaluation of the ministry staff members and must follow these guidelines. Violations of these policies are grounds for immediate dismissal, disciplinary action, or reassignment from a position in Children's Ministries – for both staff members and volunteers. Final decisions related to policy violations will be the responsibility of Lead Pastor, Director of Family Ministries, and the Church Council.



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Consequences of Violation

Any person accused of committing any act considered by the church to be harmful to a student will be immediately suspended from participation in ministry to youth. This suspension will continue during any investigation by law enforcement, Child Protective agencies or the Church.

Any person found to have violated this policy may be prohibited from *future* participation in all activities and programming involving minors. If the person is an employee, such conduct may result in termination of employment.

Failure to report a policy violation is grounds for termination of an employee. Volunteers who fail to report a policy violation may be restricted from participation in any future activities involving minors at Nicholasville Methodist Church.

Staff members and volunteer leaders should discuss immediately with their supervisor any inappropriate action or breaking of this policy and will seek counsel from the church leadership and attorney, if needed.



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REPORTING ABUSE OR SUSPICIONS OF ABUSE

Reporting Suspicious or Inappropriate Behaviors

Nicholasville Methodist Church is committed to protecting the students in this ministry from any form of abuse. Nicholasville Methodist Church has a Zero-Tolerance Policy that prohibits any act of sexual, emotional or physical abuse. This zero-tolerance policy requires all Nicholasville Methodist Church employees and volunteer leaders (those who work directly with students) to immediately report any occurrence (or suspected occurrence) of child abuse to a member of our staff. To this end, any report of inappropriate behaviors or suspicions of abuse or neglect will be taken seriously and will be reported, in accordance with this policy and state law, to Child Protective Services or criminal law enforcement.

If an incident or concern regarding a student in our youth ministry who is 18, and thus no longer a minor, occurs, please share with the Director of Family Ministries or the Lead Pastor. While laws regarding reporting such incidents are different, these concerns are nonetheless relevant. While a student is a part of the Nicholasville Methodist Church Youth Ministry, they are to be considered a student, and not an adult leader, and all policies are to be applied as such.

Because sexual abusers 'groom' children for abuse, it is possible that a staff member or volunteer may witness behavior intended to groom a child for sexual abuse. Please report 'grooming' behavior, policy violations, or any suspicious behaviors to an immediate supervisor, such that the church may take appropriate action to safeguard children in the program.

Reporting Violation of Policy

In order to maintain a safe environment for our children, Nicholasville Methodist Church staff members and volunteers must be aware of their individual responsibility to report any questionable circumstance, observation, act, omission, or situation that is a violation of these policies. All questions or concerns related to inappropriate, suspicious, or suspected grooming behavior should be directed to the Director of Family Ministries or the Lead Pastor.

Consequences of Violation

Any person accused of committing a prohibited act or any act considered by the church to be harmful to a student will be immediately suspended from participation in Nicholasville Methodist Church Family Ministries. This suspension will continue during



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any investigation by law enforcement, Child Protective agencies or Nicholasville Methodist Church.

Any person found to have committed a prohibited act should be precluded from future participation as a staff member or volunteer in all activities and programming that involves children, students or vulnerable populations at Nicholasville Methodist Church. If the person is a staff member or employee, such conduct may also result in termination of employment from Nicholasville Methodist Church.

Failure to report a prohibited act to the designated person is a violation of this policy and grounds for termination (employee) or removal (volunteer). Volunteers who fail to report a prohibited act may be restricted from participation in any activities involving children, students or vulnerable populations at Nicholasville Methodist Church.

Staff members and volunteers should discuss immediately with their supervisor any inappropriate action or breaking of this policy and will seek counsel from the church leadership and attorney, if needed.

Reporting Allegations or Suspicions of Abuse to Law Enforcement

We report all suspected or alleged abuse or neglect of children to the Jessamine County CPS Emergency Response Hotline:

877-597-2331

Because many adults are unfamiliar with Kentucky reporting requirements and may be fearful of the process, Nicholasville Methodist Church utilizes a 'tandem or dual report' model, where permitted. A 'dual report' occurs when a Nicholasville Methodist Church supervisor reports the suspicion or allegation *together* with the individual who saw, heard or received information causing him or her to suspect abuse or neglect.

THIS PRACTICE IS NOT REQUIRED, OR INTENDED TO INHIBIT ANY STAFF MEMBER OR VOLUNTEER FROM REPORTING TO LAW ENFORCEMENT OR CPS *DIRECTLY*. Instead, it is meant to facilitate reporting, protect children and support individuals who may not feel able or willing to report alone.

NO PERMISSION IS NEEDED from Nicholasville Methodist Church before reporting to law enforcement personnel or the Child Abuse Hotline. In addition, a report may be made without involving or informing Nicholasville Methodist Church personnel.



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While not required by state law, please report all suspicions of child abuse or neglect (or any inappropriate or 'grooming' behaviors of a colleague or coworker) to the Lead Pastor, Director of Family Ministries, or a member of the Nicholasville Methodist Church Safety Committee. This request is intended to assist the church in properly protecting children involved in Nicholasville Methodist Church programs.

When in doubt, report.



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FAMILY MINISTRY SAFETY COMMITTEE

Recognizing the importance of providing and maintaining a safe environment for children, Nicholasville Methodist Church will appoint and maintain a Safety Committee, which will meet once each quarter.

The purpose of the Safety Committee is to enable Nicholasville Methodist Church Children's Ministries to carry out appropriate Ministry activities while safeguarding program participants against emotional, physical or sexual abuse.

Composition

The Safety Committee will be comprised of the following members:

- The Lead Pastor
- The Children's Minister
- The Director of Family Ministries (Chair)
- Pastor of MDS
- Parent Representative
- Church Council Representative
- Children's Leader Representative
- Youth Leader Representative

Responsibilities

The Safety Committee will be charged with the following duties:

1. Applying existing Nicholasville Methodist Church Policies and Procedures related to children's safety and risk management issues.
2. Monitoring all Children's Ministries programs for ongoing compliance with safety policies.
3. Making recommendations to the Church Council regarding safety issues.



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YOUTH MINISTRIES STAFF MONITORING PLAN

Building Safety

Every ministry supervisor is responsible for ensuring that the ministry program area is monitored during youth programming. No student will ever be left unattended in a ministry area during regular programming, class or activity. All students should be easily observable during regular programming, class or activity.

Supervision

Only screened ministry volunteers, church staff members, and students are allowed in areas where ministry to students is occurring. All other adults should be asked for identification and immediately escorted out of the area. If questions or concerns arise related to any person in the area, Director of Family Ministry or security team member should be notified immediately.

Two trained, screened adults should supervise students at all times.

Avoid being alone with an individual student in any room or during any ministry program. If one supervising adult must leave a group of students, another volunteer or employee must be notified so that the *Two Adult Rule* can be followed.

If two individuals serving in a room are related to one another, a third unrelated volunteer or staff member must be present.

If an unusual circumstance occurs and you find yourself alone with a single student, move to a room or building occupied by others, or to a location easily observed by others. (Example: if a middle school student is the last in a class to be picked up by a parent, move to an adjoining room where other staff members or volunteers are present.)

If you need to talk with a student alone, do it in the hallway or a highly visible area, or have another leader with you. After every ministry event, ensure that every room, area and restroom is checked prior to leaving.

Avoid distractions that would impact your ability to effectively supervise students and maintain situational awareness (i.e., use of cell phones, wearing headphones).



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After every ministry programming event, ensure that every room, area and restroom is checked prior to leaving.

Staff Member / Volunteer to Student Ratio

Nicholasville Methodist Church is committed to providing appropriate supervision in all ministry programs. Accordingly, the following worker-to-student **minimum ratios** will be observed:

1 - 10 students	at least 2 staff members or volunteers (2 adult rule)
11 - 29 students	at least 2 staff members or volunteers
30+ students	at least 3 staff members or volunteers

Sample Church practices the “Two Adult Rule” which requires a reasonable number of adult leaders (minimum of two) to be maintained when supervising students. A married couple or two family members would only account for “one” in this “Two Adult Rule”.

Check In/Release of Youth

For regular Youth programming (Sunday Nights, events in the church), youth will check in at a youth check-in station. The printer will be turned off, so they will not receive a name tag, but they must check in each and every week for attendance and safety purposes.

For overnight Youth programming, Youth must check in at an official check-in station to drop off all necessary paperwork, medications, and luggage.

Any time a student has been entrusted to Nicholasville Methodist Church staff members or volunteers, the church incurs responsibility for the safety and well-being of the student. Staff members and volunteers must act to ensure the appropriate supervision and safety of children in their charge.

Youth Ministry staff members or volunteers are responsible for releasing youth in their care only to parents, legal guardians, or other persons designated by parents or legal guardians at the close of services or activities.

It is presumed a person who drops off a child or student has authority to pick up the child.



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If a youth will be leaving programming early, it is expected that they/their parent will clearly communicate to the Director of Family Ministries or another staff member/volunteer (in the event the Director of Family Ministries is not present) of the time that they will be leaving. At that time, Youth Ministry staff or volunteers will walk that student either to waiting parents or a car to ensure that the student has been appropriately released from Nicholasville Methodist Church.

In the event staff members or volunteers are uncertain of the propriety of releasing a child, they should immediately locate or contact the Director of Family Ministries or the Lead Pastor *before* releasing the child.

Parental Involvement

Parents have an open invitation to observe all programs and activities in which their student is involved. However, parents who desire to participate in or have continuous, ongoing contact with their student's program will be required to complete the Nicholasville Methodist Church volunteer application and screening process.

Parents will be contacted if a student becomes ill, injured, or has a severe disciplinary problem while participating in youth ministry programs.



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DISCIPLINARY POLICIES

Discipline

It is Nicholasville Methodist Church's policy that staff members and volunteers are prohibited from using physical discipline in any manner for behavioral management of students. No physical discipline may be used for behavior management of students, including spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, biting or any other physical force as retaliation or correction for inappropriate behaviors.

In the event of a fight or physical altercation, verbally redirect those involved and avoid physical intervention unless necessary for the safety of *other* students. In these instances, staff members and leaders are allowed to restrain a student with appropriate physical force, as needed. Uncontrollable or unusual behavior should be reported immediately to parents and the Director of Family Ministries. Any behavior problems will be handled in the following sequence:

1. The student will be asked to correct the behavior.
2. A staff member will talk with the student to discuss the problem behavior.
3. Parents will be notified of discipline or behavior problems.
4. The student will be suspended from further ministry events, with clearly laid out conditions for restoration back into the ministry. (This is a final measure, but not desired.)

If a student is unruly or fails to comply with verbal warnings or instructions, that student will be asked to leave (if not endangered by doing so) or the student's parent will be contacted to pick up the student. Any damage of property will be reported to parents, who will be responsible for repairs, including damage incurred at off-campus ministry events.

Bullying

Verbal, physical or emotional bullying is not acceptable in Nicholasville Methodist Church ministry programs. At the first sign of bullying in any form, act decisively, and inform your ministry supervisor. There is no "harmless put-down" where bullying is concerned.

1. *First Offense*: Issue a warning to the student and a general reminder to the group that this kind of interaction is inappropriate. Try not to embarrass or chastise.
2. *Second Offense*: Pull the offending student(s) from the group (in a seen or supervised location) and discuss the inappropriate interaction or behavior. Set



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clear parameters and behavioral goals. Let the student know that the next step is communication with the Director of Family Ministries and the student's parents.

Notify an immediate supervisor of ANY signs of bullying or verbal abuse.

- a. Privately, but with another adult present, confirm that a student who was the target of the bullying behaviors is not in danger of continued harassment and is physically and emotionally stable.

DO NOT SINGLE A STUDENT OUT IN FRONT OF THE GROUP: be discreet.

3. *Third Offense:* Send the student to the Director of Family Ministries for a phone call to his or her parents and possible removal from the trip, camp or event.



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EMPLOYEE / VOLUNTEER POLICIES

Tobacco Use

Please abstain from the use or possession of tobacco products in church facilities, while in the presence of students or their parents, or during Nicholasville Methodist Church ministry activities or programs, whether on campus or away. Nicholasville Methodist Church is a tobacco-free facility.

Intoxicants

Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from the use, possession, or being under the influence of alcohol or any legal/illegal drug while in any church facility, while traveling with students, or while working with or supervising minors during any Nicholasville Methodist Church program or activity.

Nudity

Never be nude in the presence of students in ministry programs. In the event a situation arises that may call for or contemplate the possibility of nudity (i.e. changing clothes during a pool party, weekend or overnight retreat, etc.), the staff member or volunteer leading the event will submit a plan to the Director of Family Ministries concerning arrangements for showering or changing clothes.

Restroom Policies

Be aware if a student repeatedly leaves to use the restroom and stays there for unusual periods of time. Report this behavior to a supervisor. In public contexts, send students to use the restroom in groups of at least three, when possible.

Abstain from being in the restroom while students are in those facilities, particularly when students are showering or changing.

Physical Appearance

Please dress in modest, comfortable attire. While Student Ministry spaces are generally active and nonformal, be sure to dress appropriate to the space. First impressions are important; please take this into consideration when you are serving.

- No revealing swimsuits
- No revealing / form-fitting clothes
- No shirts with low necklines or that show midriff



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- No short dresses, skirts or shorts
- No clothes with words or symbols that are not appropriate to a church setting
- If in doubt, choose something else to wear

One-to-One Interactions with Students

Meeting the emotional or spiritual needs of students may occasionally involve interaction on an individual basis. Please observe the following guidelines when interacting with minors:

The Two Adult Rule should be diligently followed during ministry programs: do not interact *alone* with an individual student in any room or building.

In the event you find yourself alone with a single student, move to a room or area occupied by others, or to a location easily observed by others.

One-to-one meetings with an individual student must occur at a time when others are present and where interactions can be easily observed. *Example:* If a student desires additional conversation after regular programming has concluded, move to an adjoining room where other staff members or volunteers are present, or into a public space.

If a closed-door meeting must occur, it should occur on church property, with a second adult present, and with the knowledge of the Director of Family Ministries or the Lead Pastor. The door must remain unlocked, and any window treatments *open*.

Never hold a one-to-one meeting with a student who is the opposite gender. If you would like to meet with a female student, either do so with a group of students or another adult leader of the same gender of that student.

Any ongoing meetings with students (such as counseling, one-to-one discipleship, etc.) should be discussed with the Director of Student Ministries, and should comply with the Two Adult Rule OR occur in a public, easily observed location.

Staff members and adult volunteer leaders may not date (or have *any* sort of romantic interaction with) students in the student ministry. Violation of this policy will result in immediate dismissal from the team or termination of employment.

Verbal Interaction

Verbal interaction with students should be positive and uplifting. All verbal interaction should be encouraging, constructive, and mindful of our mission of aiding parents in the spiritual growth and development of students.



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To this end, do not talk to students in a way that is or could be construed as harsh, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating. Do not swear in the presence of students. Students are learning appropriate ways to interact with peers and adults, and it's the responsibility of ministry staff and adult volunteers to model appropriate behavior. Furthermore, students are more sensitive than they may present, and are apt to make jokes about others that they would be offended/hurt if they were made about them. Even if a student is sarcastic, they are still a student!

In general, verbal interaction should occur in a location where others may observe what is happening. At no time should a student and adult disappear behind a closed door, or interact in an area which cannot be seen by others.

Sexually Oriented Conversations

Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from engaging in any sexually oriented conversations with students and are not permitted to discuss any inappropriate or explicit information about their own personal relationships, dating or sexual activities with any student in the program.

However, it is expected that from time-to-time student ministry discussions and lessons may address issues related to purity, dating, sex and human sexuality. These lessons will convey to the students the Global Methodist Church's doctrines and views on these topics.

Students may have questions/struggles in this area and desire to confide in a trusted adult leader for guidance. Proceed with great caution, teach with sensitivity and from a biblical perspective.

- In discerning how to discuss sensitive topics, practice wisdom and discernment in understanding what is an appropriate conversation between a student and a staff/volunteer leader, and what needs to be a conversation that student has with their parent.
- When such conversations are planned (Sunday Night, Retreat, etc.), it is to be expected that the Director of Family Ministries will give materials and trainings to equip all ministry staff and adult volunteers to confidently and appropriately lead in these spaces.
- When in doubt as to whether a conversation could be interpreted as a "sexually oriented conversation," treat the conversation as such and follow this policy. When possible, clarify the question/topic with the Director of Family Ministries.
- Avoid discussing anything of a sexual nature with students of the opposite gender.
- If a student's questions or comments on a sexual matter become too detailed or



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explicit in a group setting, the leader should use discretion and set up another time to meet with this student. For any follow up meeting: inform the Director of Family Ministry and gain explicit permission from that student's parent *first*, comply with the Two Adult Rule OR meet in a public, easily observed location.

Sexually Oriented Materials

Sexually oriented materials (images or videos) are prohibited on church property or in the presence of students participating in any ministry program.

Physical Interaction / Appropriate Displays of Affections

Appropriate touch is needed and encouraged, but it is vital that staff members and volunteer leaders do not blur or cross the lines. In light of this, the following guidelines should be observed:

- Physical contact in any form should be above reproach, for the benefit of the student, and never based upon *your* emotional needs.
- Your personal behavior must foster trust at all times.
- Pat a hand, shoulder or back in an encouraging manner, unless this makes a student feel uncomfortable.
- Side hugs: in public view and kept brief. When hugging someone of the opposite gender, hugs should be limited to side-hugs.
- Look for opportunities to give plenty of "high fives" and "fist bumps", unless this makes a student feel uncomfortable.
- Shake hands, or put an arm around the student's shoulder, briefly.

AVOID the following interactions:

- A sexual relationship with a student is never acceptable. Even if a student in the ministry is 18 and no longer a minor, all policies around youth ministry apply until the student graduates from the ministry.
- Never touch a student in sensitive areas (breasts, buttocks, genitals) even if a student has been injured in one of these areas. Never allow casual contact in these areas, under or over clothing.
- No sitting on laps.
- No hand-holding, unless part of a worship/prayer service or a group game.
- Never touch in anger or disgust.
- Never touch in a manner that may be construed as sexually suggestive.
- Avoid touching a student between the navel and the knees.
- Never carry a student piggy-back, or on your shoulders.
- Never kiss a student, or give (or receive) a massage.
- Never place hands beneath a student's clothing to play, rub, or comfort.



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- Never tickle, participate in 'horse-play' or wrestle with a student.

Do not force physical contact, touch, or affection on a reluctant student, except in cases of necessary restraint for the protection of the child or others.

A student's preference *not* to be touched must be respected.

Physical contact and affection should be given only in observable places or when in the presence of others. It is much less likely that touch will be misinterpreted when physical contact is open to observation.



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ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

All communication with students must be above reproach and indicative of healthy boundaries. As with any communication, the content of any electronic communication should be readily available to share with the student ministry leader or a parent.

Texting

Texting between ministry leaders and students is permissible only as outlined below.

The majority of texting interactions should occur through the ministry's GroupMe chat. Small Groups/Life Groups will be permitted to have a GroupMe, with clear permission from those student's parents, and at least one other adult in the GroupMe.

If you would like to message an individual student, that must still happen with at least one other adult leader present in the chat **AND** with expressed permission from the student's parents.

If a student messages or replies to a leader individually, redirect to a group form. Inform the Director of Family Ministry of these moments as well so that they are aware, and can help or step in if necessary.

Prudent judgment must be used in the timing and content of texts. **Do not text before 7am or after 10pm** unless the texting occurs as part of a programmed ministry activity. Do not share photos and/or videos of a sexual or suggestive nature.

Avoid discussion of ANY sexual topic via texts. Remain above reproach.

Do not post inappropriate or off-color content, or comment on inappropriate or off-color posts. When in doubt, treat a post as inappropriate.

No social media or texting communication may occur with a student of the opposite gender. If texting a student of the opposite gender, be sure to have an adult leader of the same gender of that student, or a parent of the student, in the group chat

Communication Applications

It is permissible for the ministry to use applications that have messaging features (i.e., Instagram, Facebook Messenger) – a ministry account. At least one other ministry leader must have credentials to access the application and regularly review the messaging, comments and postings.



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It is not permissible for ministry leaders to use personal accounts to direct message, or even friend/follow, students. All group and direct messaging to/from students should be above reproach, available for supervisory access and originate from a ministry account – never a personal account.

Ministry leaders are not allowed to follow, friend, or the like any *unrelated* student on any *personal* social media accounts. Ministry leaders are not allowed to use their personal accounts to message, DM, or the like, any students on social media. If a ministry leader has a preexisting family relationship with the student, these must be communicated with the Director of Family Ministries and the Lead Pastor.

In the event a student direct messages a ministry leader's personal account, the ministry leader will transfer the thread to the ministry account for reply, if necessary. All students will be counseled to direct communication to the ministry account.

Avoid discussion of ANY sexual topic via social media.

Do not comment or reply to a student's post that is inappropriate or questionable. All interaction should be above reproach and reflect the integrity and values of Nicholasville Methodist Church Student Ministry.

No individual social media or texting communication may occur with a student of the opposite gender.

The use of Snapchat (or other similar applications) with students is not permitted.
The use of Houseparty (or other similar applications) with students is not permitted.

Applications that allow anonymous messaging are not permissible.

'Hook-Up' Applications

Though the use of relationship applications are commonplace and acceptable, Ministry leaders are prohibited from participating in Meet & Date or Meet & Chat applications (those applications intended to facilitate sexual encounters).

Personal Social Media

As a ministry leader, maintain a high moral standard in your social media presence. Inappropriate social media content may be a basis for suspension from participation in student ministry at Nicholasville Methodist Church. Please be cautious about the content of the posts on your personal social media. Please ensure that photos or videos posted on social media reflect Nicholasville Methodist Church ministry guidelines related to alcohol, tobacco and modesty (dress, posture and content).



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Transportation

Staff members and volunteers may from time to time be in a position to provide transportation for students. The following guidelines should be strictly observed when ministry workers are involved in the transportation of students:

- Students should be transported directly to their destination. Unauthorized stops to a non-public place must be avoided.
- Avoid transportation circumstances that leave only *one student* in transport.
- Avoid physical contact with students while in vehicles.
- Absent an emergency, **cell phones may not be used by drivers** while transporting minors (other than navigation applications for directions). In an emergency, stop the vehicle to use the cell phone, unless a stop cannot safely occur. Texting or other cell phone use is strictly prohibited while driving.
- No drivers under age 25 may drive Nicholasville Methodist Church owned or rented vehicles.
- In transportation, the TWO ADULT RULE or 'RULE OF 3' must be followed.
- Avoid transporting a single student.
- Never be alone in a vehicle with a student of the opposite sex.
- Never instruct a student to drive other students to a ministry event.
- Transport only the number of students for whom you have seatbelts.
- Seatbelts should be worn at all times while in the vehicle.
- No one should be double-buckled.
- Use extra caution when driving students.
- While music in cars can be a great way to make the ride more enjoyable for students, ensure that music is church appropriate and that the driver is not using their phone while driving to change/adjust music.

Out-of-Program Contact with Students

Nicholasville Methodist Church safety standards established to protect students and ensure healthy relationships should be respected *outside* ministry programs as well. In addition to ministry safety standards, the following policies should be respected in all interactions with students occurring *outside* ministry programs.

- Never be alone with a minor in an unobserved context or location.
- Limit connections by gender. Do not initiate or maintain contact with students of the opposite gender.
- Any dating or sexual relationship of any kind with a minor is strictly prohibited. Even if the student is 18 and no longer a minor, when they are part of our youth ministry, all policies and implications thereof apply with full force.



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- **Never** spend the night at a student's home or invite a student to spend the night at your home.
- Do not spend the night in an 'away' location with any student (vacation, etc.).



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PLANNING EVENTS FOR GROUPS

When planning a group event outside of regular programming, volunteer leaders should keep parents and staff members informed of details and abide by Nicholasville Methodist Church policies. Some events may require a release form.

Overnight Events

Some Student Ministry activities/events require overnight sleeping arrangements for students, staff members and volunteers (i.e. camp, mission trips, etc.). All programmed overnights must be approved by the Director of Family Ministries and receive written permission from parents. No overnights are allowed on Nicholasville Methodist Church property unless part of a ministry-sponsored event. No overnight between any church staff member or volunteer and an *unrelated* minor may occur in any context. If pre-existing family relationships exist wherein overnights may occur between 'family friends', these relationships must be communicated to the Director of Family Ministries and the Lead Pastor.

For each overnight event, Student Ministry staff must create a child safety plan that will supplement this policy document to provide specific child protection steps unique to the event (activity, travel, location, other groups present). This plan must be submitted to and approved by the Director of Family Ministry **before** the event is announced to parents and youth.

Medication

Do not administer medication of any kind to any student while serving in ministry programs, including 'over the counter' drugs. For certain trips or activities (i.e., mission trips, beach/ski retreats), Nicholasville Methodist Church will bring a medical professional that will dispense appropriate medications consistent with other policies and signed parent permission forms.



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POLICIES AND PROCEDURES STATEMENT OF ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND AGREEMENT

This page is to remain attached to the Nicholasville Methodist Church Youth Ministry Policies and Procedures.

Staff members and volunteer leaders are required to read and understand this student safety policy. Additionally, each staff member and volunteer leader must execute an acknowledgment form that this policy has been read, understood, and will be followed. Staff members and volunteer leaders who fail to adhere to this policy may be asked to step down from their role.

I have received and read a copy of Nicholasville Methodist Church Youth Ministry Policies and Procedures on the date listed below, and I understand the importance of the matters set forth herein. I understand and agree to abide by these policies during my service at Nicholasville Methodist Church.

I understand that these policies may be modified or eliminated at any time by Nicholasville Methodist Church.

While, ideally, I will serve in this ministry for the agreed term, I understand that I may choose to end this relationship at any time. If possible, I will provide two weeks' notice to my supervisor.

I further acknowledge and understand that the materials and guidelines contained in this manual in no way express or imply a contractual employment relationship between Nicholasville Methodist Church and me. If I am applying as a volunteer, I acknowledge and agree that I will receive no compensation for hours worked.

Finally, I understand that it is my responsibility to review new guidelines that are created and distributed.

Staff member or volunteer's name (please print)

Staff member or volunteer's signature

Date



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POLICIES AND PROCEDURES STATEMENT OF ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND AGREEMENT

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