

# Nazarene Safe

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## Bethany First Church Of the Nazarene YOUTH MINISTRIES

### POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL

Dear Youth Ministries Volunteer or Staff Member,

Welcome to Bethany First Church of the Nazarene!

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

The pages of this handbook provide a general overview of procedures and guidelines for BFC staff members and volunteers. Our policies are intended to create a safe environment for youth, protecting youth, you, and the mission of BFC. The following procedures have been adopted and will be strictly enforced.

After you have carefully read this policy manual, please sign and return the agreement form located on the last page.

Grace and peace,

*Dr. Chris Pollock, Executive Pastor of Age-Group Ministries*

# Bethany First Church of the Nazarene

## Safety Policies & Procedures for Youth Ministries

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## **Overview of the Bethany First Church of the Nazarene Safety System**

Because we love youth and desire to protect them, BFC requires all staff members and volunteers working with children or youth (and other vulnerable populations) to complete **4 SAFETY STEPS** before ministry work or volunteer placement begins.

### **STEP ONE: Sexual Abuse Awareness Training**

BFC 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 a Ministry Director, Youth Pastor, Safe Kids Director, or Executive Pastor. Staff members and volunteers should have a basic understanding of the characteristics of sexual abusers and their behaviors in 'grooming' a youth 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 BFC staff members and volunteers with information necessary to recognize abuser characteristics and grooming behavior, Bethany First Church of the Nazarene requires all staff members and volunteers to complete sexual abuse awareness training. This training will be renewed every two years.

### **STEP TWO: Screening Process**

Staff members and volunteers are required to complete the BFC Screening Process, which requires a staff member or volunteer to:

- complete an Employment Application (employees only)
- complete the Safety Application (employees and volunteers)
- complete an interview (employees and volunteers)
- provide references to be checked (employees and volunteers)

\*a volunteer must attend BFC for six months before being eligible to serve in positions providing access to children, youth, 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**

BFC requires that all staff members and volunteers working or volunteering in children's or youth activities or programming undergo a criminal background check. Depending upon position, differing levels or intensity of background check may be required.

## Youth Safety Policy

### **ABUSE TOLERANCE**

Bethany First Church of the Nazarene has a **zero tolerance for abuse** in ministry programs and ministry activities. It is the responsibility of every staff and volunteer at BFC to act in the best interest of youth in every program.

In the event that staff 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 personal responsibility to immediately report their observations to their Ministry Director, the Youth Pastor, Safe Kids Director, or the Executive Pastor.

### **REPORTING SUSPICIOUS OR INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIORS**

BFC is committed to providing a safe, secure environment for youth and their families. To this end, any report of inappropriate behaviors or suspicions of abuse will be taken seriously and will be reported, in accordance with this policy and state law, to the BFC Safety Committee Chair and the Police Department, Oklahoma Department of Human Services, or other appropriate agency.

An element of the safe environment referenced above includes the fostering of a culture of reporting relevant information to a Ministry Director or a member of the BFC Safety Committee. Because sexual abusers 'groom' children for abuse, it is possible a staff member or volunteer may witness behavior intended to 'groom' a youth for sexual abuse. Staff members and volunteers are asked to report 'grooming' behavior, any policy violations, or any suspicious behaviors to a Ministry Director or a member of the BFC Safety Committee.

### **ENFORCEMENT OF POLICIES**

BFC staff members and volunteers who supervise other staff or volunteers are charged with the diligent enforcement of all BFC church policies. Violations of these policies are grounds for immediate dismissal, disciplinary action, or reassignment from Youth Ministry positions for both volunteers and staff members. Final decisions related to policy violations will be the responsibility of the Executive Pastor, the Senior Pastor, and the Church Board.

## Reporting Abuse or Suspicions of Abuse

### **REPORTING VIOLATION OF POLICY**

In order to maintain a safe environment for youth, Bethany First Church of the Nazarene 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 a Ministry Director, the Youth Pastor, the Safe Kids Director, or the Executive Pastor.

### **CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLATION**

Any person accused of committing a prohibited act or any act considered by the church to be harmful to a child will be immediately suspended from participation in Youth Ministries. This suspension will continue during any investigation by law enforcement or Oklahoma Department of Human Services.

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

Failure to report a prohibited act to the designated person is a violation of this policy and grounds for termination of employment of a staff member or employee. Volunteers who fail to report a prohibited act may be restricted from participation in any activities involving children, youth, or vulnerable populations at BFC.

### **REPORTING SUSPICIONS OF ABUSE TO LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES**

Staff members and volunteers at Bethany First Church of the Nazarene are required to report suspicions of child abuse or neglect, or any inappropriate behavior of a colleague or co-worker, to the Ministry Director, the Youth Pastor, the Safe Kids Director, or the Executive Pastor.

Oklahoma law requires that any person having cause to believe that a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been or may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect must make a report to the appropriate law enforcement agency. A staff member or volunteer *may* report to the Ministry Director, the Youth Pastor, Safe Kids Director, or the Executive Pastor, and allow supervisory personnel to make the appropriate report to law enforcement agencies.

Staff members and volunteers are required to verbally report an incident to supervisory staff as soon as possible after the incident. After receiving a report from a staff member or volunteer in Youth Ministries, the Youth Pastor or Executive Pastor will speak with the person or volunteer to whom the student spoke in order to get detailed information about the entire conversation. The Executive Pastor will be notified as soon as reasonably possible.

If appropriate, the Youth Pastor or the Executive Pastor will inform the Oklahoma Department of Human Services. The statewide child abuse hotline is 1-800-522-3511. The Oklahoma County child abuse hotline is 405-713-6800.

**RESPONSE TO REPORT OF ABUSE**

The BFC Safety Committee will take appropriate action on behalf of the church when a report of abuse occurs.

## **Bethany First Church of the Nazarene Church Safety Committee**

### **SAFETY COMMITTEE**

Recognizing the importance of providing and maintaining a safe environment for youth, Bethany First Church of the Nazarene will appoint and maintain a Safety Committee, which will meet once each quarter.

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

The purpose of the Safety Committee is to enable the BFC Youth Ministry 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:

1. Executive Pastor
2. Business Administrator
3. Children's Pastor
4. Youth Ministries Pastor(s)
5. Safe Kids Director

### **MEETINGS**

The Safe Kids Director will chair the meeting of the Safety Committee on a quarterly basis to discuss risk management practices and updates. The Safety Committee will also meet on an emergency basis upon the recommendation of a member or following the report of any incident or allegation.

### **RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Safety Committee will be charged with the following duties:

1. Applying existing BFC policies and procedures related to youth safety and risk management issues.
2. Monitoring all Youth Ministries programs for ongoing compliance with safety policies.
3. Making recommendations to the BFC Church Board regarding safety issues.

## Youth Ministry Staff Monitoring Plan

Monitoring of staff and volunteers will include regular (announced and unannounced) visits in each program to provide supervisors the opportunity to observe staff member and volunteer interactions with students.

1. **Each ministry director** conducts an unscheduled observation at least once each week for programs that occur weekly.
2. **The Youth Pastor** conducts written performance evaluations every twelve months for individuals in paid staff positions.
3. **The Youth Pastor** and/or **Ministry Director** conducts periodic verbal performance evaluations that include items that address participation in risk management training and adherence to risk management procedures.
4. **The Executive Pastor of Age-Group Ministries** conducts an unscheduled observation of a Youth Ministries program at least once each quarter.
5. **The Executive Pastor of Age-Group Ministries** meets with the Youth Pastor(s) once monthly to discuss Youth Ministry.
6. **The Youth Pastor** conducts an unscheduled observation at least once each month for programs that occur weekly.

## **BUILDING SAFETY**

The Youth Pastor will be responsible for ensuring that the BFC Youth Ministry Building is monitored during Sunday classes or programming. This will include unobserved monitoring of staff members, volunteers, and youth in student classrooms.

No youth will ever be left unattended or unsupervised during youth ministry programming or meetings. In the event a staff member or volunteer finds himself/herself alone with a single student, that staff member or volunteer will take the youth to a room or building occupied by others, or to a location easily observed by others.

After every programming event, staff members and volunteers must ensure every room and restroom is checked prior to leaving.

Any two youths together in an unseen or less easily viewed area should be redirected to another (more open) area.

## **STAFF TO YOUTH RATIO**

BFC is committed to providing adequate staff and volunteer supervision in all Youth Ministry activities and programs. Accordingly, the following ratios will be observed for Youth Ministry activities and programs:

For groups up to and including 10 youths, there will be at least 1 staff member or volunteer supervising. For groups ranging 11 to 29 students, there will be at least 2 staff members or volunteers supervising. For groups larger than 30 students, there will be at least 3 staff members or volunteers supervising.

If a worker is out of ratio it is his or her responsibility to immediately notify the responsible Youth Ministry Pastor or the Ministry Director. The responsible Youth Ministry Pastor or the Ministry Director will make diligent efforts to immediately bring staff member/volunteer to youth ratios into compliance with this policy.

## **DISCIPLINE**

It is the policy of BFC that staff members and volunteers are prohibited from using physical discipline in any way for behavior management of children or youth. **No form of physical discipline is acceptable.** This prohibition includes spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, or any other physical force as retaliation or correction or inappropriate behaviors by youths. If a youth is unruly or fails to comply with verbal warnings or instructions from staff/volunteers, that youth will be asked to leave (if not endangered by doing so) or the student's parent will be contacted to pick up the youth. In the event of a fight or physical altercation, staff/volunteer will first verbally redirect the youths involved and will try to avoid physical intervention unless necessary. Uncontrollable or unusual behavior should be reported immediately to parents and the Youth Pastor.

## **INTOXICANTS**

Staff and volunteers are prohibited from the use, possession, or being under the influence of alcohol or any illegal drugs while in any BFC facility, while traveling with youths, or while working with or supervising youth.

## **NUDITY**

Staff and volunteers in Bethany First Church of the Nazarene's youth ministry should avoid being nude in the presence of youths in their care. In the event there is a situation 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/volunteer will work diligently to find an alternative arrangement for showering or changing clothes.

## **ONE-TO-ONE INTERACTIONS WITH YOUTH**

BFC recognizes that meeting the needs of youth may occasionally require staff member and volunteers to minister to them on an individual basis. Staff Members and volunteers should observe the following guidelines when interacting with youth.

### **Individual Meetings**

Staff members and volunteers should conduct one-to-one meetings with an individual youth at a time when others are present and where interactions can be easily observed unless prior approval is obtained from a parent.

In the event a closed-door meeting must occur, the staff member must inform another staff member and ensure the door remains unlocked.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

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

1. Students should be transported directly to their destination. Unauthorized stops to a non-public place should be avoided. Staff members and volunteers should avoid transportation circumstances that leave only one student in transport.
2. Staff members and volunteers should avoid physical contact with youth while in vehicles.
3. No cell phones may be utilized by the driver while driving BFC vans, or vehicles owned or rented by BFC, unless in an emergency.
4. No drivers under age 25 may drive BFC owned or rented vehicles.

## **PARENTAL CONTACT**

Parents who leave a youth in the care of Bethany First Church of the Nazarene staff members and volunteers during church services or activities will be contacted if their child becomes ill, injured, or has a severe disciplinary problem while participating in Youth Ministry programs.

## **PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT**

Parents are encouraged to visit any and all services and programs in which their youth is involved at BFC. 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 Youth Ministry programs will be required to complete the BFC volunteer application and screening process.

## **PHYSICAL CONTACT**

BFC is committed to protecting youth in its care. To this end, BFC has implemented a 'physical contact policy' which promotes a positive, nurturing environment for our Youth Ministry programs. The following guidelines are to be carefully followed by anyone working in the youth program:

1. Hugging, pats on the back, and other forms of appropriate physical affection between staff members or volunteers and students are important for student's development and are generally suitable in the church setting.
2. Inappropriate touching and inappropriate displays of affection are forbidden. Any inappropriate physical contact, touching, or displays of affection should be immediately reported to a Ministry Director, the Youth Pastor or the Executive Pastor.
3. Physical contact should be for the benefit of the youth, and never be based upon the emotional needs of a staff member or volunteer.
4. Physical contact and affection should be given only in observable places or when in the presence of other youth or staff members and volunteers. It is much less likely that touch will be inappropriate or misinterpreted as such when physical contact is open to observation.
5. Physical contact in any form should not give even the appearance of wrongdoing. The personal behavior of staff or volunteers in the Youth Ministry must foster trust at all times. Personal conduct must be above reproach.
6. Do not force any physical contact, touch, or affection upon a reluctant student. A student's preference not to be touched must be respected.
7. Youth staff and volunteers are responsible for protecting youths under their supervision from inappropriate or unwanted touch by others.

8. Any inappropriate behavior or suspected abuse by staff or volunteers must be reported immediately to a Ministry Director, the Youth Pastor, or the Executive Pastor.

## **SEXUALLY ORIENTED CONVERSATIONS**

Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from engaging in any inappropriate sexually oriented conversations with youth including explicit information about their own personal relationships, dating, or sexual activities. It is expected that from time to time youth ministry discussions and lessons may address issues related to purity, dating, sex and human sexuality. These lessons will convey to the youth the church's views on these topics.

## **SEXUALLY ORIENTED MATERIALS**

Staff members and volunteers of BFC's Youth Ministry are prohibited from possessing any sexually oriented materials (including magazines, cards, images, videos, films, phones, electronics, etc.) on church property or in the presence of youth on church property or in the presence of youth.

## **SLEEPING ARRANGEMENTS**

It is anticipated that certain Youth Ministry activities may occasionally require that overnight sleeping arrangements be made for youth and staff/volunteers (i.e., lock-ins, mission trips, ski trips, etc.). In the event an activity requires sleeping arrangements, staff members and volunteers will strictly observe the following rules:

1. The 2-adult rule must be followed. The 2 adult leaders present must have previously completed BFC's application and screening process.
2. Appropriately modest sleeping attire must be worn.
3. In the event of a sleepover on campus that involves both boys and girls, sleeping areas for males and females will be separate, properly supervised by leaders of the same gender.
4. Adults will monitor students but will not have key access to their rooms.
5. Leaders should check with parents and use good judgment regarding PG movies. No R-rated movies are permitted.

## **TOBACCO**

Bethany First Church of the Nazarene requires staff and volunteers to abstain from the use or possession of tobacco products in the facility, and while in the presence of students or their parents. BFC is a tobacco-free facility.

## **VERBAL INTERACTIONS**

Verbal interactions between staff members or volunteers and youth should be positive and uplifting. BFC staff and volunteers should strive to keep verbal interactions encouraging, constructive, and be ever mindful of their mission of aiding parents in the spiritual growth and development of their children.

To this end, staff members and volunteers should not talk to youth in a way that is or could be construed by any reasonable observer as threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory,

demeaning, or humiliating. In addition, staff and volunteers are expected to refrain from swearing in the presence of youth.

**Policies and Procedures**  
**Statement of Acknowledgment and Agreement**

I have received and read a copy of Bethany First Church of the Nazarene's Youth Ministry Policies and Procedures Manual and understand the importance of the matters set forth within the manual. I agree to follow and abide by these guidelines during my service at BFC.

Further, I understand that the manual may be modified at any time, and that any guidelines may be amended, revised, or eliminated at any time by BFC.

I also acknowledge that I have reviewed and agree to fulfill the duties listed in my ministry position description. While, ideally, I will serve in this ministry for the full term specified in the position description, I understand that my service is voluntary and that I can choose to end this relationship at any time (if possible, by providing two weeks' notice to my Ministry Director).

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

Finally, I understand that it is my responsibility to review new guidelines that are created and distributed as well as manual guidelines that are changed or deleted.

I hereby acknowledge receipt of the BFC Youth Ministries Policies and Procedures Manual.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Staff Member or Volunteer's name (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Staff Member or Volunteer's signature

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

[This page to remain attached to the Bethany First Church of the Nazarene Safety Policies]

**Policies and Procedures**  
**Statement of Acknowledgment and Agreement**

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\_\_\_\_\_  
Staff Member or Volunteer's name (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Staff Member or Volunteer's signature

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

[This page to be signed, detached and delivered to the BFC Business Administrator]