



LIBERTY
LIVE.CHURCH

ABUSE PREVENTION

STUDENT MINISTRY POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Dear Student Volunteer or Staff Member,

Welcome to Liberty's Student Ministry!

At Liberty, we take our responsibility to care for students 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 volunteers and staff members. Our policies are intended to create a safe environment for children, protecting students, you, and the mission of Liberty. The following procedures have been adopted and will be diligently enforced.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Corbett C. Casteen". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Corbett Casteen
Next Gen Pastor

Liberty
Policies & Procedures for
Student Ministry

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Overview of Liberty's Safety System

Because we desire to protect minors involved in our ministry, Liberty requires all staff members and volunteers working with minors (and other vulnerable populations) to complete FIVE SAFETY STEPS before ministry work or volunteer placements begin.

STEP ONE: Screening Process

Staff members and volunteers working or serving with children are required to complete Liberty's Screening Process, which includes:

- an Employment Application (employees only);
- a Volunteer Application (volunteers); and
- references to be checked (employees and volunteers).

STEP TWO: Criminal Background Check

Liberty requires that all staff members and volunteers working or volunteering in Kid/Student's activities undergo a criminal background check. Depending upon the ministry position, differing levels or intensity of criminal background check may be required.

STEP THREE: Policies & Procedures

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

STEP FOUR: Personal Screening Interview

Liberty requires all staff and volunteers to have a Personal Screening Interview. The interviewer will have access to the staff or volunteer's application, references and pertinent background information. A template is provided for the interviewer.

STEP FIVE: Sexual Abuse Awareness Training

Liberty 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 supervisor, Ministry Director or Executive Pastor of Ministries. 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 Liberty staff members and volunteers with information necessary to recognize abuser characteristics and grooming behavior such as gift giving to a child, rule breaking with a child, playful yet inappropriate touch, or arranging time alone with a child through gaining the trust of parents and staff. Liberty requires all staff members and volunteers to complete sexual abuse awareness training.

Student Ministry Safety Policy

ABUSE TOLERANCE

Liberty has a **zero tolerance for abuse** in ministry programs and ministry activities. It is the responsibility of every staff member and volunteer at Liberty to act in the best interest of all minors in every program.

In the event a staff member or volunteer observes any inappropriate behaviors (i.e. policy violations, neglectful supervision, poor role-modeling, etc.) or suspected abuse or neglect (physical, emotional, or sexual) it is that individual's responsibility to immediately report their observations to the Student Pastor, the Next Gen Pastor, or the Executive Pastor of Ministries.

TYPES OF CHILD ABUSE

Generally, child abuse is categorized in four primary forms:

1. Physical abuse
2. Emotional abuse
3. Neglect
4. Sexual abuse

1. Physical abuse: Abuse in which a person deliberately and intentionally causes bodily harm to a child. Examples may include violent battery with a weapon (knife, belt, strap, etc.), burning, shaking, kicking, choking, fracturing bones, and any of a wide variety of non-accidental injuries to a child's body.

Possible Signs of Physical Abuse

- Exhibits severe depression and/or withdrawal
- Hostile and aggressive behavior toward others
- Fearfulness of parents and/or other adults
- Destructive behavior toward self, others, and/or property
- Inexplicable fractures or bruises inappropriate for child's developmental stage
- Burns, facial injuries, pattern of repetitious bruises

2. Emotional abuse: Abuse in which a person exposes a child to spoken and/or unspoken violence or emotional cruelty. Emotional abuse sends a message to the child of worthlessness, badness, and being not only unloved, but undeserving of love and care. Children exposed to emotional abuse may have experienced being locked in a closet, being deprived of any sign of parental affection, being constantly told they are bad or stupid, or being allowed or forced to abuse alcohol or drugs. Emotional abuse is often very difficult to prove and is devastating to the victim.

Possible Signs of Emotional Abuse

- Exhibits severe depression and/or withdrawal
- Exhibits severe lack of self-esteem
- Failure to thrive
- Threatens or attempts suicide
- Speech and/or eating disorders

- Goes to extremes to seek adult approval
- Extreme passive/aggressive behavior patterns

3. Neglect: Abuse in which a person endangers a child's health, safety, or welfare through negligence. Neglect may include withholding food, clothing, medical care, education, and even affection and affirmation of the child's self-worth. This is perhaps the most common form of abuse.

Possible Signs of Neglect

- Failure to thrive
- Pattern of inappropriate dress for climate
- Begs or steals food; chronic hunger
- Depression
- Untreated medical conditions
- Poor hygiene

4. Sexual abuse: Sexual Abuse consist of any tricked, forced, manipulated or coerced sexual activity for the pleasure of the abuser. The abuser may be an adult or more dominant peer. Often, the child is physically and psychologically dependent upon the perpetrator of the abuse. Examples of sexual abuse may include fondling, intercourse, incest and the exploitation of and exposure to child pornography or prostitution.

Possible Signs of Sexual Abuse

- Unusually advanced sexual knowledge and/or behavior for student's age and developmental stage
- Depression – cries often for no apparent reason
- Promiscuous behavior
- Runs away from home and refuses to return
- Difficulty walking or sitting
- Bruised/bleeding in vaginal or anal areas
- Exhibits frequent headaches, stomachaches, extreme fatigue
- Sexually transmitted diseases

In addition to these indicators, students who have been sexually abused at church may exhibit some of the following:

1. Unusual nervousness or anxiety about being left in the classroom.
2. Reluctance to participate in church activities that were previously enthusiastically approached.
3. Comments such as "I don't want to be alone with ____" in reference to a volunteer or teacher.
4. Nightmares including a volunteer or teacher as a frightening character.
5. Unexplained hostility toward a volunteer or teacher.

REPORTING SUSPICIOUS OR INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIORS

Liberty is committed to providing a safe, secure environment for children and their families. 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 another appropriate agency.

Because sexual abusers ‘groom’ children for abuse, it is possible a staff member or volunteer may witness behavior intended to ‘groom’ a child for sexual abuse. Staff members and volunteers are asked to report ‘grooming’ behavior, policy violations, or any suspicious behaviors to the Student Pastor, the Next Gen Pastor, or the Executive Pastor of Ministries.

ENFORCEMENT OF POLICIES

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

Reporting Abuse or Suspicions of Abuse

REPORTING VIOLATION OF POLICY

All questions or concerns related to inappropriate, suspicious, or suspected grooming behavior should be directed to the Student Pastor, the Next Gen Pastor, or the Executive Pastor of Ministries. The Student Pastor or Next Gen Pastor is then responsible to report the abuse to the Executive Pastor of Ministries.

CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLATION

Any person accused of committing a prohibited act or any act considered by Liberty to be harmful to a minor will be immediately suspended from participation in the Student Ministry. This suspension will continue during any investigation by law enforcement or Child Protective Services.

Any person found to have violated this policy may be prohibited from future participation as a staff member or volunteer in all activities and programming involving minors at Liberty. If the person is an employee, such conduct may also result in termination of employment from Liberty.

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 children or students at Liberty.

REPORTING SUSPICIONS OF ABUSE TO LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

Staff members and volunteers at Liberty are required to report suspicions of child abuse or neglect, or any inappropriate behavior to the Student Pastor, the Next Gen Pastor, or the Executive Pastor of Ministries. If the Executive Pastor of Ministries was not the person the report was made to, he should be informed as soon as possible.

Under the Commonwealth of Virginia Statute § 63.2-1509, the following guidelines that can apply to the church are provided.

The following persons who, in their professional or official capacity have reason to suspect that a child is an abused or neglected child, shall report the matter immediately, within 24 hours, to the local department of the county or city wherein the child resided or wherein the abuse or neglect is believed to have occurred or the Department's toll-free child abuse or neglect hotline:

- 1. Any person 18 years of age or older associated with or employed by any public or private organization responsible for the care, custody or control of children;*
- 2. Any person providing full-time or part time child care for pay on a regular basis;*
- 3. Any athletic coach, director of other person 18 years of age or older employed by or volunteering with a private sport organization or team.*
- 4. Administrators or employees 18 years of age or older of public or private day camps, youth center or youth recreation programs.*

The person making a report must identify, if known:

- The name and address of the child,
- The name and address of the person responsible for the care, custody, or welfare of the child, and
- Any other pertinent information concerning the alleged abuse or neglect.

In no way is any provision in this policy meant to discourage any staff member or volunteer from *personally* reporting a suspicion of abuse or neglect to the appropriate law enforcement agencies, but it is important that the Student Pastor, the Next Gen Pastor, or the Executive Pastor of Ministries know in order to ensure a safe environment in the Student Ministry as well as confirm the appropriate report is made to law enforcement agencies or Child Protective Services.

Staff members and volunteers are to verbally report an incident to the supervisory staff mentioned above as soon as possible after the incident. After receiving a report from a staff member or volunteer, the Student Pastor, the Next Gen Pastor, or the Executive Pastor of Ministries will speak with the person or volunteer to whom the child spoke in order to get detailed information about the entire conversation. If the incident occurred at church or church sponsored activity, the Executive

Pastor of Ministries will enlist the help of the Abuse Response Team. The Abuse Response Team will consist of 3-5 members who are trained to respond to reports of abuse.

If appropriate, the Student Pastor, the Next Gen Pastor, or the Executive Pastor of Ministries will inform the appropriate law enforcement agencies or Child Protective Services.

RESPONSE TO REPORT OF ABUSE

When a report of abuse or neglect occurs, Liberty Leadership will take necessary and appropriate action to ensure a safe environment for the person(s) at risk.

Liberty's Abuse Prevention Team

ABUSE PREVENTION TEAM

Recognizing the importance of providing and maintaining a safe environment for minors Liberty will appoint and maintain an Abuse Prevention Team, which will meet at least twice a year.

MISSION STATEMENT

The purpose of the Prevention Team is to enable Liberty Kids and Student Ministries to carry out appropriate ministry activities while safeguarding program participants against emotional, physical or sexual abuse.

COMPOSITION

The Abuse Prevention Team will be comprised of the following members:

1. Executive Pastor of Ministries,
2. Next Gen Pastor,
3. Recreation Director, and
4. Other team members as desired.

MEETINGS

The Executive Pastor of Ministries will chair the meeting of the Abuse Prevention Team at least twice a year to discuss risk management practices and updates. The Abuse Prevention Team will also meet on an emergency basis upon the recommendation of a member or following the report of any incident or allegation.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Abuse Prevention Team will be charged with the following duties:

1. Applying existing Liberty policies and procedures related to Kids and Student's safety and risk management issues.
2. Monitoring all Kids and Student Ministry programs for ongoing compliance with safety policies.
3. Making recommendations to Liberty's Executive Team regarding safety issues.

Kids and Student Ministry Staff Monitoring Plan

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

1. Local Ministry Supervisors conduct an unscheduled observation at least once each month for programs that occur weekly.
2. Central Ministry Supervisors will be responsible for their ministry to conduct an annual abuse prevention training set by the Abuse Prevention Team.
3. Local Campus Pastors and/or Central Ministry Supervisors conducts an unscheduled observation of a Kids and Student Ministry program at least once each quarter.
4. The Executive Pastor of Ministries meets with the Abuse Prevention Team at least twice a year to discuss Kids and Student Ministry, including safety training and procedures

Building Safety

The Student Pastor will be responsible for ensuring that the student areas are monitored during groups or programming. Students are not allowed to wander inside or outside the building without appropriate supervision at any time.

No student will ever be left unattended during Student Ministry programs or meetings. Student Ministry staff members or volunteers are prohibited from being alone with an individual student in any room or building. In the event a staff member or volunteer finds himself/herself alone with an individual student, that staff member or volunteer will take the student to a room or building occupied by others, or to a location easily observed by others. (Example: if a student desires additional conversation or counsel with a staff member or volunteer after regular programming has concluded, move to an adjoining room where other staff members or volunteers are present, or into a public space.)

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

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

Staff to Student Ratio

Liberty is committed to providing adequate supervision in all Student Ministry activities and programs. Accordingly, strive to observe the following ratios for Student Ministry activities and programs:

- For groups up to and including 29 students, there will be at least 2 adult staff members or volunteers supervising.
- For on-campus groups larger than 30 students, there will be at least 3 adult staff members or volunteers supervising.
- For off-campus and short-term groups hosted in a school, there will be 2 adult staff members or volunteers present. This will include not only a Liberty staff member or volunteer, but also a school staff member or volunteer such as a teacher, sponsor or church.
- For off-campus and short-term groups hosted in a home, 2 adult staff members or volunteers will be present. This will include host home adults who have gone through Liberty's on-boarding process even if they aren't leading the group.
- For off-campus and short-term groups meeting in a public location with others present such as a restaurant or coffee shop, only 1 staff member or volunteer must be present.
- For off-campus and short-term groups when there is a cancellation resulting in only one student present, the staff member or volunteer will ask the parent/guardian to be present and supervise to prevent a one-on-one scenario.
- Staff members or volunteers must never be alone with or transport an individual student by themselves.

If a worker is 'out of ratio' it is his or her responsibility to immediately notify the program supervisor or Student Pastor who will make diligent efforts to find substitute workers to immediately bring staff member/volunteer to student ratios into compliance with Church policy.

Discipline

It is our policy that Liberty staff members and volunteers are prohibited from using physical discipline in any manner for behavioral management of students. **No form of physical discipline is acceptable.** This prohibition includes spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, or any other physical force as retaliation or correction for inappropriate behaviors by students. If a student is unruly or fails to comply with verbal warnings or instructions from staff/volunteers, 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. In the event of a fight or physical altercation, staff members will verbally redirect students involved and will try to avoid physical intervention. Uncontrollable or unusual behavior should be reported immediately to parents and the Student Pastor. In employing this procedure, staff members and volunteers should observe the following guidelines:

HOW TO APPROACH RULE BREAKERS

- Never yell at or grab a student, no matter what.
- Approach the offenders with grace but firmness. Give a clear impression that you're glad they are there but that behavior is not acceptable.
- We operate with the 3-Strike method. This allows grace, room for misunderstanding, and opportunity to self-correct.
 - Strike 1 – first offense – simply asked to stop.
 - Strike 2 – second offense – asked to stop and consequence clearly stated if not complied with.
 - Strike 3 – third offense – take another adult with you and consequences enforced
- Enforcement should be “as observed” rather than policed.

We have security personnel watching for the major offenses, so there is no need to patrol the room looking for offenders. If you observe rule-breaking as you serve, follow the 3 Strikes method. We want to create an environment that is safe, comfortable, and free of distraction for every student, while at the same time not become a place students feel hovered over or badgered.

Intoxicants

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

Medication

A staff member or volunteer may not administer medication while serving in Student Ministry. Exceptions will be made as it relates to an EpiPen since the medication has to be administered in emergency situations. Parents/guardians must provide written instructions to church staff regarding method and timing of the administration of an EpiPen.

Nudity

Staff members and volunteers serving in Liberty's Student Ministry should never be nude in the presence of students 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, overnight retreat, or baptisms, etc.), the staff member or volunteer leading the event will submit a plan to the Student Pastor concerning arrangements for showering or changing clothes.

One-to-One Interactions with Students

Liberty recognizes that meeting the emotional needs of students 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 students.

Individual Meetings

Staff members and volunteers should conduct one-to-one meetings with an individual student at a time when others are present and where interactions can be easily observed, unless prior approval is obtained from the Next Gen Pastor. One on one meeting should only be conducted by volunteers that are the same gender as the student.

If a closed-door meeting is requested, the student staff member must inform another staff member BEFORE the meeting occurs, and the door remains open with occupants in sight and hearing distance.

Transportation

Volunteers may from time to time be in a position to provide transportation for students. Staff members should not provide transportation to students without permission of their supervisor. 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. Volunteers should avoid physical contact with students while in vehicles.
3. No cell phones may be utilized by the driver while driving Liberty vans, or vehicles owned or rented by Liberty, unless in an emergency.
4. No drivers under age 21 may drive Church-owned or rented vehicles.

Parental Contact

Parents whose student is participating in Liberty's Student Ministry activities and programs will be contacted if their child becomes severely ill, injured, or has a severe disciplinary problem while participating in Student Ministry programs.

Parental & Potential Volunteer Involvement

Parents and guardians have an open invitation to observe, with supervision, all programs and activities in which their child or student is involved. If a parent, guardian, or potential volunteer

wants to observe kids or student ministry, a staff member must accompany them the entire time they are in the kids or student area. In doing so, staff members should document the first and last name of the person observing, date, and time. However, parents who desire to participate in or have continuous, ongoing contact with their student's program will be required to complete Liberty's volunteer application and screening process.

Physical Contact

Liberty is committed to protecting students in its care. To this end, Liberty has implemented a 'physical contact policy' that promotes a positive, nurturing environment for our Student Ministry programs. The following guidelines are to be carefully followed by anyone working in Student Ministry programs:

1. Side hugs, pats on the back and other forms of appropriate physical affection between staff members or volunteers and student are important for a 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 an immediate supervisor, the Student Pastor or the Executive Pastor of Ministries.
3. Physical contact should be for the benefit of the student, 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 students or Student Ministry staff members and volunteers. It is much less likely that touch will be inappropriate or misinterpreted 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 Student 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. Student staff and volunteers are responsible for protecting students under their supervision from inappropriate or unwanted touch by others.
8. Any inappropriate behavior or suspected abuse must be reported immediately to an immediate supervisor, the Student Pastor or the Executive Pastor of Ministries.

Misconduct

BULLYING

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at any Liberty activity and will not be tolerated. Bullying is counterproductive and can be devastating to the victim. Liberty is committed to providing a safe, caring and friendly environment for all participants. If bullying does occur, incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. Any child/student who is aware of bullying behavior is expected to tell the Student Pastor or Campus Pastor.

Objectives of Liberty's Bullying Policy and Action Plan:

1. To clearly communicate that Liberty will not tolerate bullying in any form.
2. To define bullying and give staff members and volunteers a suitable understanding of those behaviors that constitute 'bullying'.
3. To make it known to staff members and volunteers that a policy and protocol exist should bullying issues arise.
4. To clearly communicate how to report bullying behavior.
5. To communicate to staff members and volunteers that Liberty takes bullying seriously and will immediately investigate and address all reports of bullying.

Bullying is defined by Stopbullying.gov as unwanted, aggressive behavior among students that involves a real or perceived power imbalance by seeking to harm, intimidate or coerce another individual. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Both kids who are bullied and who bully others may have serious, lasting problems.

In order to be considered bullying, the behavior must be aggressive and include:

- **An Imbalance of Power:** Kids who bully use their power—such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity—to control or harm others. Power imbalances can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same people.
- **Repetition:** Bullying behaviors happen more than once or have the potential to happen more than once.

Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumors, attacking someone physically or verbally, and excluding someone from a group on purpose.

Types of Bullying

There are three types of bullying:

1. **Verbal bullying** is saying or writing mean things. Examples may include teasing, name-calling, inappropriate sexual comments, taunting and/or threatening to cause harm.
2. **Social bullying**, sometimes referred to as relational bullying, involves hurting someone's reputation or relationships. Examples may include leaving someone out on purpose, telling other children not to be friends with someone, spreading rumors about someone, embarrassing someone in public.

3. **Physical bullying** involves hurting a person's body or possessions. Examples may include hitting/kicking/pinching, spitting, tripping/pushing, taking or breaking someone's things, making mean or rude hand gestures.

HARASSMENT

Harassment is the repeated pattern of physical and/or non-physical behaviors that:

1. Are intended to cause fear, humiliation or annoyance;
2. Offend or degrade;
3. Create a hostile environment;
4. Reflect discriminatory bias in an attempt to establish dominance, superiority or power over an individual student or group based on gender, race, ethnicity, culture, religion or mental or physical disability; or
5. Any act or conduct described as harassment under federal or state law.

Examples of harassment prohibited in Liberty activities include, without limitation:

Physical offenses. Behaviors that include

1. Hitting, pushing, punching, beating, biting, striking, kicking, choking or slapping a student;
2. Throwing at or hitting a student with objects.

Non-physical offenses. Behaviors that include

1. Making negative or disparaging comments about a student's disability, religion, skin color, or ethnic traits;
2. Displaying offensive materials, gestures, or symbols.

HAZING

Hazing is defined as coercing, requiring, forcing or willfully tolerating any humiliating, unwelcome or dangerous activity that serves as a condition for

1. a child/student joining a group;
2. a child/student being socially accepted by a group's members; or
3. any act or conduct described as hazing under federal or state law.

Hazing does not include group or team activities that are meant to establish normative team behaviors or promote team cohesion.

Examples of hazing prohibited in Liberty activities include, without limitation:

1. Requiring, forcing or otherwise requiring a student to consume alcohol or illegal drugs;
2. Tying, taping or otherwise physically restraining a student;
3. Sexual simulations or sexual acts of any nature;
4. Sleep deprivation, otherwise unnecessary schedule disruption or the withholding of water and/or food;
5. Social actions (e.g. grossly inappropriate or provocative clothing) or public displays (e.g. public nudity) that are illegal or meant to draw ridicule;

6. Beating, paddling or other forms of physical assault.

Activities that fit the definition of hazing are considered to be hazing regardless of a student's willingness to cooperate or participate.

PRANKING

Pranking or playing a practical joke on another person can lead to injury, inappropriate behavior, or acts of retaliation that can be detrimental to minors.

Activities that fit the definition of pranking are not allowed, regardless of a student's willingness to cooperate or participate.

WILLFULLY TOLERATING MISCONDUCT

It is a violation of this Code of Conduct if a staff members or volunteer knows of misconduct but takes no action to intervene on behalf of the student(s). All forms of misconduct should be reported to the Student Pastor or Campus Pastor.

PEER-TO-PEER SEXUAL ABUSE

Approximately 1/3 of all reported sexual abuse occurs at the hands of other children or minors. Staff members and volunteers have an obligation to report peer-to-peer sexual abuse in accord with state mandatory reporting requirements. Whether sexual interaction between students constitutes 'sexual abuse' depends on the existence of an aggressor and whether there is an imbalance of power between the parties (e.g., an age difference between the students, disparity in size or the existence of a physical or intellectual disability). **If you have concern that an interaction between a student may constitute sexual abuse, report the interaction to appropriate law enforcement authorities and the Student Pastor or Campus Pastor.**

Peer-to peer sexual abuse risk is highest:

1. Any location that is less easily seen; or
2. Any time students are unclothed or changing clothes, for any reason.

Due to this risk, staff members and volunteers will be aware of locations and facilities that are less easily seen or supervised. These locations and facilities vary per ministry and activity and can include restrooms and changing areas. These areas will be supervised regularly by staff members and volunteers, where possible and appropriate.

Electronic Communications & Social Media

All electronic communications between a staff member or volunteer and a student must be professional in nature and for the purpose of communicating information about program activities.

As with any communication, the content of any electronic communication should be readily available to share with the student's family. At the request of a parent or guardian, any email, electronic text, social media or similar communication will copy or include the student's parents or guardians.

FACEBOOK, MYSPACE, BLOGS AND SIMILAR SITES

Staff members or volunteers can communicate with students through sites like Facebook, but all communication needs to be in group form and public (no private communication). If a Facebook page is used, all staff members and parents must be included. All posts, messages, texts, or media of any kind shared among students or between staff member/volunteer and student must be professional in nature and for the purpose of communicating information about ministry activities or for ministry-oriented motivational purposes.

TWITTER, INSTANT MESSAGING AND SIMILAR MEDIA

All communication is to be public in nature. Staff members/Volunteers and students may “follow” each other. Staff members/Volunteers cannot “re-tweet” a student’s inappropriate message posts. Staff members and volunteers are not permitted to “direct message” students through Twitter (or similar media). Staff members and volunteers are not permitted to post inappropriate off-color content or comment on inappropriate off-color posts. If there is doubt, treat the content as inappropriate.

EMAIL AND SIMILAR ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

Staff members may use email to communicate with the student but a parent or another staff member should be copied on all email communication with students. All email content between staff members/volunteers and a student must be professional in nature and for the purpose of communicating information about program activities. Where possible, the student’s parent should be copied on e-mail communications. Email communication between staff members/volunteers and student is allowed during the hours of 7 a.m. and 10 p.m.

TEXTING AND SIMILAR ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

Below are policies that relate to texting:

1. Texting is allowed between a staff member/volunteer and a student if the student is at least 14 years of age.
2. Staff members/volunteers should have written permission from a parent or guardian to text a student – “Dear parent, is it ok if I occasionally reach out to your student via text to let them know I’m praying for them, to remind them of events, and encourage them?”
3. Texting, especially one-on-one should be professional, have a point and be as brief as possible. Texting is not to be used for small talk. Appropriate messaging would include:
 - Information or reminders about church programs or events
 - Quick words of encouragement such as “I prayed for you today,” “here is a verse I read this morning...”, or good luck with your test/game/performance today.”
 - Midweek follow-up such as “We missed you this Sunday” or “How are you applying a point from a lesson.”
 - Exchanging information for items such as extracurricular and group activities.
4. Staff member/volunteers are encouraged to use group text when possible—including another student, volunteer, a parent, or another staff member.
5. No texting the opposite gender one on one is allowed.
6. No texting is allowed between a staff member/volunteer and a student before 7 a.m. or after 10 p.m., unless there is a specific ministry activity that requires a text communication.

The use of Snapchat, Instagram (and similar apps) with a student is not permitted.

ELECTRONIC IMAGERY

From time to time, digital photos, videos of practice or competition, and other publicly obtainable images of the student— individually or in groups – may be taken. These photos and/or videos may be used for Liberty videos and/or websites. The use of photos/videos is permissible as long as the students are in public view and such imagery is both appropriate and in the best interest of the student and the ministry. Photo or video imagery must not be contrary to any rules or guidance outlined in this Code of Conduct.

REQUEST TO DISCONTINUE

The parent or guardian of a student may request in writing that their child not be contacted by staff members/volunteers through any electronic communication; that request must be honored. Additionally, a parent or guardian of a student may request in writing that photographs or videography of their child not be posted on programs and/or websites, understanding that group photography or videography may render this impracticable; to the extent this request is practicable, it should be honored.

MISCONDUCT

Social media and electronic communication can be used inappropriately. (e.g., emotional abuse, sexual abuse, bullying, harassment, and hazing). Such communication by staff members/volunteers will not be tolerated.

Electronic communication should not contain or relate to any of the following:

1. Drugs or alcohol use;
2. Sexually oriented conversation, sexually explicit language or sexual activity;
3. An adult's personal life, social activities, relationship or family issues, or personal problems; and
4. Inappropriate or sexually explicit pictures.

Any communication concerning a minor's personal life, social activities, relationships, family issues or personal problems must be transparent, accessible and professional.

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 occur in group settings and will convey the church's views on these topics.

Sexually Oriented Materials

Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from possessing (or transmitting to any student) any sexually oriented materials (magazines, cards, images, videos, films, etc.) on church property or in

the presence of students, including those in electronic form. Staff members and volunteers should check with parents and use good judgement regarding movies and video games.

Sleeping Arrangements

It is anticipated that certain Student Ministry activities may occasionally require that overnight sleeping arrangements be made for students, staff members and 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; a single student should not be alone with a staff member or volunteer.
2. All adult leaders must have previously completed Liberty's screening and training process.
3. Overnight sleeping arrangements must be submitted in writing to and approved by the Student Pastor prior to the activity.
4. As long as any students are awake, one trip leader must be awake and monitoring students to ensure safe behavior.
5. Leaders should check with parents and use good judgment regarding movies and video games. No PG-13 or R-rated movies are permitted.
6. Appropriately modest sleeping attire must be worn; both tops and bottoms.
7. In the event of a sleepover on campus that involves both boys and girls, boys and girls must sleep in separate rooms, properly supervised by student leaders of the same gender.
8. Staff members and volunteers will monitor sleeping students by periodically conducting visual bed checks to ensure that sleeping students remain in designated sleeping places. During bed checks, staff members and volunteers should never physically touch a student.
9. In the event overnight arrangements do not include standard beds, each staff member, volunteer, and student will use single sleeping bags or blankets. In these instances, a "one-person-to-one bag or blanket" rule will be observed.

Tobacco Use And Vaping

Liberty requires staff members and volunteers to abstain from the use or possession of tobacco and vaping products in church facilities, while in the presence of students or their parents, or during Liberty activities or programs. Liberty is a tobacco and vape free facility.

Verbal Interactions

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

To this end, staff members and volunteers should not talk to students in a way that is or could be construed by a reasonable observer as harsh, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating. In addition, staff members and volunteers are expected to refrain from swearing in the presence of students.

Policies and Procedures

Statement of Acknowledgment and Agreement

I have received and read a copy of Liberty's Student 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 Liberty.

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 Liberty.

I also acknowledge that I have reviewed and agree to fulfill the duties listed in the Manual. 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/director.

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 Liberty 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, as well as manual guidelines that are changed or deleted.

By digitally signing, I hereby acknowledge receipt of Liberty's policies and procedures manual.