



# Samaritan Fellowship

## **Student Ministry Policy**

**2019**

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# I. Introduction to Samaritan Fellowship Student Ministry

Samaritan Fellowship is a Christ centered, come as you are type of ministry. We embrace the fact that everyone is broken by inherited nature (sin), and that everyone is in need of God's redemptive love and salvation through His Son Jesus Christ. With that: we work to create an environment of God's love and acceptance; we assist others in understanding God's Word (Bible) through teaching and service; and we encourage and empower individuals to spread the gospel through a Christ-like lifestyle.

Our mission: Assist others in, *"learning to live and love like Jesus."*

Our vision: To see others glorify God through their transformed lives thus impacting the world.

Deuteronomy 6 gives us the task of loving God with our whole being and passing biblical teaching onto the children. The Samaritan Fellowship Student Ministry (SFSM) aims to equip both the students and families to live like Jesus and serve Him to the best of our ability.

## II. Volunteers

To protect our students, all volunteers must fill out a Volunteer Screening Form and submit to a background check before being allowed to volunteer with the SFSM. Additionally, there are guidelines that our volunteers must abide by to not only protect our students, but themselves as well.

1. Staff and Volunteers should not be alone with a student:
  - In areas where others are not present or is not visible by others.
  - Traveling in a vehicle (specifically a student of the opposite sex, but preferably not at all).
  - On an outing.
2. Staff and Volunteers should keep appropriate communication boundaries within their relationships with students, yet still be transparent with them.
  - NEVER agree to keep something in confidence. Always communicate with students before they share with you that you WILL share with others if that is the best way to love and help them. The most likely person we would share information with would be their parents.
3. Staff and Volunteers should keep appropriate emotional relationships with students.
  - If you feel anything inappropriate has occurred, or if you feel uneasy because of a certain situation, contact a staff member.
  - Leaders should always seek to be above reproach in discipleship relationships. Meet in public places and communicate clearly with parents about your location and time.
4. Staff and Volunteers must be above reproach when it comes to physical touch:
  - Side hugs, handshakes, and touching the shoulder are the best practices.
  - Be careful not to over react to a student's hug or touch so as to not send a negative message- use your best judgement.

5. Staff and Volunteers are to complete an Incident/Injury Report for severe inappropriate behaviors, any medical injuries needing intervention, or any incidents that the staff or volunteers deem necessary for documentation.

6. Staff and Volunteers are not allowed to date students.

7. Staff and Volunteers are to report any suspected abuse of a child or student to the Youth Pastor, Directional Leader, Care Pastor, and/or Elders.

- Possible Signs
  - The student has bruises from a potential abusive situation.
  - The student seems unduly fearful of certain people or family members.
  - The student appears undernourished or not taken care of.
  - The student is withdrawn and depressed or overactive and aggressive.
  - The parents are rigid, highly demanding of the children and inclined to punish harshly.
- Volunteer Response
  - 1. Obtain as much information in the moment from the student while avoiding an interrogation approach (the Child Abuse Hotline requires full names, date of birth and address of child).
  - 2. Call a staff member upon leaving the student.
  - 3. Share all known information about the situation to a staff member who will then make a follow up call to the staff team to assess the information.
  - 4. Together we will take appropriate actions

**\*\*As a youth volunteer you are a “mandated reporter” of child abuse. If you suspect anything call the Child Abuse Hotline 1-800-482-5964\*\***

8. Staff and Volunteers should be aware of risk behaviors and respond with love.

### ◆ **Suicide**

- *Warning Signs*
  - 1. Threatening, talking or joking about suicide.
  - 2. Expressions of intense guilt or hopelessness.
  - 3. A sudden, major loss of humiliation
  - 4. A previous suicide attempt. This is considered the most significant predictor of a future suicide.
  - 5. A family history of suicide. Teenagers who kill themselves are five time more likely than their peers to have history of a family member who has committed suicide.
- *Volunteer Response*
  - 1. Call a staff member immediately! We want to get involved on the consultation level.
  - 2. Staff member and/or volunteer will talk with the student.
  - 3. Staff member and/or volunteer will tell their parents, if they choose not to.
  - 4. We will get them help.

**\*\*We never want a student to commit suicide and tell a parent we knew it, but withheld the information!**

### ◆ **Risky Behaviors:**

- Drugs
- Alcohol
- Tobacco
- Sex
- Reckless activities
- Eating disorders
  
- Volunteer Response:
  1. Use the relationship you have obtained to approach the student.
  2. Give wisdom that you have to the student.
  3. Offer to hold the person accountable.
  4. Get a staff person involved if problems persist.
  5. Team effort to solve the problem (staff, volunteer, parents)

9. Staff and Volunteers must notify Pastors or Directional Leader when they take students offsite. A parent or guardian is required to sign a waiver for any specific special outing.

## **III. Tobacco, Alcohol, Drugs, and Weapons**

If a student comes to church or any SFSM activity...

A.) Is noticeably under the influence of drugs or alcohol...

1. The student will be isolated from other students and will be supervised by two or more adults for their own protection.
2. Parents/guardians will be notified and may be asked to pick up their child.
3. If needed/required the authorities will be notified.

B.) Is intending to sell/has possession of illegal drugs or alcohol...

1. The student will be isolated from other students and will be supervised by two or more adults.
2. The authorities will be notified.
3. Parents/guardians will then be notified.

C.) Possesses a large knife or weapon deemed inappropriate for church or SFSM activities, will be confiscated during the duration of church or SFSM activity by the youth pastor. Once church or the activity is completed, knives will be returned. Small pocket knives not included.

D.) Possesses a gun...

1. Leaders will not confront the individual, but will immediately contact the authorities.
2. Parents/guardians will be notified.

E.) Is in possession of tobacco products, and is under the age of 18...

1. The tobacco product will be taken away and kept by a leader.

2. The parents/guardians will be notified and will be allowed to come retrieve the tobacco product.

## **IV. Speech**

James 3 warns believers that our speech is capable of great harm, similar to that of a fire or of poison. We should strive to build one another up instead of trying to tear someone down. If a student repeatedly uses harmful speech to bully or hurt another student, they will be confronted by the leader(s), then their parents/guardians will be notified. This includes the use of curse words and foul language.

## **V. Bullying, Fighting, and Violence**

Students who are found bullying, fighting, or physically hurting another student will be confronted by the leaders and may be asked to leave church/church function. The youth pastor will notify the parents/guardians to set up a meeting to discuss the incident. The authorities may be contacted in severe cases.

## **VI. Sexual Harassment and Sexual Abuse**

We will have NO TOLERANCE for any sexual harassment or sexual abuse. Students who engage in any sexual harassment or sexual misconduct will be confronted and counseled by the church leader(s). In addition, depending on the severity of the situation...

- The parents/guardians will be notified and may be asked to retrieve their student from church or SFSM event.
- The Directional Leader will be notified.
- If necessary or required by law, the authorities will be notified.

## **VII. PDA**

Dating and relationships are common in the lives of students and it is important to establish reasonable boundaries. One of our goals is to help build healthy relationships within the student ministry. Therefore, the staff and volunteers will address PDA on a case-by-case basis. Addressing PDA is more difficult than outright forbidding it, but it allows for opportunities of teaching and growth in the lives of our students.

## **VIII. Clothing**

Staff and volunteers reserve the right to ask a student to go home and change or if applicable put on a t-shirt provided by a leader. If a student does not want to adjust their attire they will be asked to leave the church or SFSM activity.

Examples: low cut shirts, short shorts, exposure of underwear, etc.

## **IX. Discipline**

SFSM works on a three strike rule within a one year time period, unless otherwise stated. If the expectations stated in this handbook are not met the following will apply (depending on the situation.)

- Strike One
  - A verbal warning will be given to the student and documented in their file.
  - Their parents/guardians will be notified.
- Strike Two
  - A meeting will be held with the student and the student's parents/guardians.
  - A written warning will be completed with youth pastor and the student's parents/guardians.
- Strike Three
  - The student will be removed from church and SFSM.
  - An opportunity to return will be based on the severity of situation.

## **X. Supervision**

Students have been entrusted to the staff and leaders by their parents/guardians and therefore must be supervised by a SFSM leader. Students are not allowed to leave the church or SFSM activity without notifying the youth pastor or adult leaders first.

If a student(s) leaves without notifying the youth pastor or adult leaders, even if they return afterwards, their parents/guardians will be notified immediately.

If a student(s) returns before the end of church or SFSM activity, disciplinary actions will be taken by church leaders.

Disclaimer: If the student(s) leave while at a SFSM event away from the church, then the authorities will be notified.

## **XI. Transportation/Events**

Students are not allowed to transport other students to or from SFSM activities or events (from church) unless permission from parents/guardians of all students involved is given.

Volunteers are not allowed to transport non-family related students off-site without notifying the youth pastor or other staff members ahead of time.

For all trips and events parents/guardians will be required to complete and sign a waiver and medical release form before their student will be allowed to be transported. For students who regularly attend, the medical release form will be kept on file.

## **XII. Incident Reporting**

All major items listed in the document are subject to an incident report that will be kept on file.

### **XIII. We Like to Communicate**

Notifications will be sent out frequently with information on upcoming events/activities, reminders for ongoing activities, and any other updates on the youth.

### **XIV. Contact Information**

If you need to reach the youth pastor for any reason you may call the church office at (479)986-8378 or on my cell at (479)422-4264. Or you can send an email to [njones@samhf.org](mailto:njones@samhf.org).