



Adopted

March 2, 2010

Effingham County United Methodist Campground

YOUTH AND CHILDREN'S MINISTRY DISCIPLINE POLICY

While trying to create fun, relevant, and exciting activities for the students, we must also create a safe environment where students can grow and exercise their faith. Therefore, we have created policies to deal with problems in the following areas. These policies are not meant to curb the enjoyment or creativity of students or workers but are provided to let everyone know what behavior is expected. We expect everyone to learn, remember, and abide by the policies, but we do not anticipate having to use the disciplinary actions outlined (though we are prepared to do so). We have found that when students know what is expected of them, we have very few problems and are able to create the warm and nurturing environment described above.

1. Disruptions during meetings, study time, prayer time, and worship.

We are able to have a good time, joke, and have fun in our meetings. Some students, however, occasionally take it too far and disrupt our meetings, causing other students to be distracted from the Bible teaching. In these cases, we follow these progressive disciplinary steps:

- Disruptive students will be separated from their friends. Our workers are to move the disruptive students to another seat, away from their friends.
- After being separated on any given week, if the student continues with the negative behavior, the student will be asked to leave the meeting and an adult worker will phone the parents/guardians to pick up the student early.
- If, when the student returns the next time, he or she continues the disruptive pattern, the student will be given a cooling off period away from the youth ministry activities for two weeks.
- If the student causes further disruption from the cooling off period, they will be suspended indefinitely from any future campground youth activities.

2. Students who are under the influence of or in possession of illegal drugs or alcohol or students possessing weapons or tobacco.

- If a student comes to any youth ministry class or activity and is a) noticeably under the influence of drugs or alcohol or b) has possession of illegal drugs, alcohol, or weapons, we will immediately report the incident to the student's parents, send the student home, and enforce a suspension from youth activities at the campground for up to 1 year. Such incidents will be reported to the Board of Trustees governing body (officers). If recommended by the governing body and/or require by law, the police and/or other authorities will also be contacted.
- If a student uses or possesses tobacco products, the tobacco will be taken away and destroyed. The student's parents will also be notified. A second offense will lead to early dismissal from the encampment.

3. Leaving the supervisory presence of the youth ministry staff

Sometimes students try to leave the supervisory presence of adult workers so they can avoid group activities, talk on the cell phone, smoke, or leave the premises. We cannot allow this behavior because parents trust us to be responsible custodians of their children, and we can't be responsible when students have left our presence.

- Therefore, students are not permitted to leave the campground unsupervised or without permission. Those who leave without permission will face the following progression of disciplinary steps:
 - First offense - Contact student's parents.
 - Second offense - Dismissed from encampment.

4. Divisiveness and arguing

Arguing and contention is typical with teenagers and a certain amount is tolerated. We do not tolerate arguing and contention that begins to affect the overall unity and mission of the group. Even small pockets of division can have major effects on the group, destroying the collective witness of the Body of Christ. When disruptive division or arguing occurs, both parties will be asked to meet with youth ministry staff to mediate the conflict. Students who will not own up to their roles in the conflicts and attempt to exist peaceably with the other students will face the same disciplinary steps as 3 above.

5. Physical Bullying, Hazing, Fighting, and Excessive Pranks

Would you send your child to a meeting knowing there's a good chance he or she will get assaulted? Not likely. Parents need to know they are leaving their child in a safe environment. Examples of bullying or hazing behavior include tying someone to a chair, saran wrapping them to a bed, or requiring them to perform a deed that they would not normally perform. Students who engage in these types of behaviors will face the same disciplinary steps as 3 above.

6. Physical Displays of Affection, Sexual Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct

- We do not permit tickling, wrestling, piggyback rides, or inappropriate touching (touching anywhere that a bathing suit would normally cover). In addition, physical

displays of affection such as kissing, full body hugs, sitting on laps, or lying or sleeping next to each other (pertains to opposite sex) or being isolated and alone with another student is not allowed.

- Students who engage in this behavior will be counseled by ministry staff.
- On the second offense, the parents will be notified.
- More offenses will result in dismissal from the encampment.
- Students who engage in sexual harassment or sexual misconduct will be counseled by the ministry staff, their parents will be notified, and the students will be sent home. The governing body of the Trustees will be contacted. Depending on the severity, they may be suspended indefinitely from any other future Campground activities. If recommended by the governing body and/or required by law, the police and/or other authorities will also be contacted.

7. Inappropriate Clothing

Students are not permitted to wear clothing that is sexually suggestive or spiritually degrading. T-shirts or other clothing with evil, vulgar, or inappropriate content will not be permitted. In addition, there should be: no midriffs, no low-cut tops, no spaghetti straps (tanks tops must be at least two fingers wide), no see-through clothing, and no sagging pants (no boxers or underwear showing). Dress shorts or jean shorts must have at least 4 inch inseam, and athletic shorts must be properly fitting with an inseam of at least 2.5 inches (not rolled up). Ladies are required to wear modest one-piece bathing suits or tankinis. Guys – no Speedos. No hats or other headgear is to be worn under the tabernacle or other worship service activity.

- Those deemed to be wearing inappropriate clothing by the ministry staff will be given large, over-sized t-shirt to wear over their clothes.
- Those wearing swim suits deemed to be inappropriate by the ministry staff will be required to wear a dark oversized t-shirt over the swim wear.
- If inappropriate bathing suits are brought on trips, they will be confiscated and the student will not be allowed to swim.
- The parents of repeat offenders will be notified. If the inappropriate dress continues, further disciplinary actions including suspension may take place.

8. Use of Electronic Devices

Electronic devices tend to cause disruptions in meetings, quarrels between students, or isolation of individuals. Therefore, the use of cell phones, iPods, camera, or other personal electronic or entertainment device is prohibited during activities and service.

- During special designated times, the ministry staff may allow the use of these devices. The ministry staff does not take any responsibility for the safe return of these items.
- Devices used during undesignated times will be confiscated until the end of encampment. Emergency numbers will be provided to parents/guardians if they need to contact their child.

9. Teen drives

Teen drivers are not allowed to carry other teen passengers to a youth ministry meeting, activity, or trip without prior written consent from a parent or guardian. Sibling passengers are at the discretion of the parents and do not require written permission. Teen drives are not allowed to drive along with or behind a group on youth trips. There is zero tolerance for problems in this area.

10. Return after Suspension

Students wishing to return to ministry activities after a cooling off period or suspension will be asked to meet with ministry staff before returning so that appropriate behavior expectations may be reviewed.