

# **WALKER BAPTIST CHURCH STUDENT MINISTRY DISCIPLINE GUIDELINES**

The student ministry of Walker Baptist Church is well known for its positive attitude and demeanor towards young people. Adults invited to serve as leaders tend to affirm and encourage rather than criticize and condemn. Leaders believe an atmosphere of Christ-like, unconditional love and affirmation provides more motivation to grow and change than will an atmosphere of bombastic criticism.

Even so, leaders recognize that for any group to function properly healthy parameters are important. Youth who have grown up in the Church need structure and guidance. This is doubly true for the increasing number of students who have no upbringing in the Faith. Many teens in our community struggle with serious issues. When they become involved in our church, they bring those problems and issues with them. The leaders at WBC believe that there is no better place for youth to meet those challenges or even make mistakes than here at church where they have loving, forgiving adults to help them. Because parents, ministers, and adult leaders are partners in the rearing of youth, it is important for all three groups to approach discipline and guidance at church functions from the same perspective. The following guidelines have been developed as a guide to those who touch the lives of youth.

## **1. YOUTH LEADERS**

Adult youth leaders are chosen either by the church nominating committee, as in the case of teachers, and by the youth minister and the youth leadership team. Youth leaders must be 18 years of age or older, out of high school, and be an active member of WBC. Youth leaders must be of good moral character and have a good reputation in the community. Youth leaders must be reliable and responsible, always setting a good example of Christ-like attitude and virtue. Compassion and love for youth is required.

## **2. WORSHIP AND CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR**

(a) Times of teaching and worship are of primary importance in church life. Students who come to church in order to learn and grow spiritually deserve to study and worship in an atmosphere where that is possible without hindrance. Leaders have a responsibility to maintain this atmosphere.

(b) Youth who make learning or worship impossible for those around them will be moved to an alternate location. Generally this will mean spending time with the youth minister or other youth leader. Before dismissing a youth from an activity, class, or service, leaders have the responsibility to tell the youth that his or her behavior warrants dismissal, thus giving them a warning. Youth who choose to continue disruptive behavior after the warning will be dismissed from the gathering. In most cases leaders should inform parents when a dismissal has taken place. This is especially true for Junior High students. Youth who have been dismissed from a meeting will be welcome at the next meeting in most cases. At the same time, leaders need to try to discover what is motivating a student to misbehave. The Student Ministry Family should seek to meet those needs if possible.

## **3. RESPECT TOWARD LEADERS**

Youth who choose to participate in WBC Student activities agree to follow the instructions of the WBC Leaders. Obeying those instructions and exhibiting respect toward leaders is a condition for remaining at an activity.

## **4. STUDENT TRIP POLICIES**

(a) The church assumes heavy responsibilities when taking students on trips in or out of town. For the Student Group to function well on trips, obeying and respecting sponsors and leaders is essential. A serious breakdown in this area must result in the offending youth returning home to parents. Trip costs and fees will not be

refunded in most cases. When ever possible, a leader will provide transportation home for the offending student(s). If this is not logistically possible, then the parents of the youth will pay for commercial transportation home. Parents agree to support Student Leaders decisions about sending a youth home, knowing that only those persons present on the trip can know all the variables involved.

(b)On all trips being sent home will be the result of student actions in which they knowingly break the rules established by the group leaders. The offending actions include, but are not limited too, breaking the set curfew, pranks, body piercing or permanent tattooing, possessing alcohol, drugs, pornography, or tobacco products, leaving the group, intimate petting, stealing, fighting, assault, or possession of a dangerous weapons, etc. Any other serious failure to follow trip guidelines will result in a student being sent home.

## **5. WEAPONS POLICY**

The physical safety of students is a top priority; therefore, no youth may possess a gun, large folding knife, sheath knife, martial arts items, or any other weapon at any youth activity. This may exclude tools and sports equipment (archery, paintball, etc) if the event warrants.

## **6. PHYSICAL DISCIPLINE**

(a)Parents have not assigned to church leaders the right to physically discipline students; therefore, leaders may only make forceful physical contact with a student in order to protect them or to prevent a greater harm, such as during a fight or an attempt to harm one's self. With rare exceptions, no other physical restraint is appropriate.

(b)Students found in violation of minor rules of conduct on trips may be assigned "punish work" by the Minister of Students or youth leaders as a constructive correction if the parents are in agreement. This will be fair and appropriate.

## **7. EXPRESSIONS OF PHYSICAL AFFECTION**

(a)Interest in showing affection toward the opposite sex is considered a normal and healthy part of maturing youth relationships. Our youth ministry also believes that appropriateness should always dictate the extent of affection shown at student activities. Holding hands and light hugs are almost always appropriate. Kissing on the lips, prolonged hugs, body contact (arms around the waist, etc.) are not considered appropriate for any church occasion. Couples should postpone all other types of physical affection until they are not part of a church activity.

(b) "Making out" in trip vehicles and on church outings is not appropriate and receives the same response as any other broken guideline. Christ-like behavior should always be considered when contemplating the appropriate nature of physical affection by any youth at any time, at church or not. The WBC Student Ministry encourages parents to discuss the appropriateness of physical affection with their students to establish behavioral guidelines that reflect their Christianity.

## **8. LOCATION OF STUDENTS AT FUNCTIONS**

(a)Church youth leaders can only be responsible for students who are actually in an area designated for a student activity. Parents have no way of knowing whether students are where they should be and, consequently, whether leader supervision is being provided unless students are in the designated activity areas; therefore, it is the policy of WBC that all youth on church property must be in the actual area where the announced activity is taking place unless given specific permission by the adult leaders of the activity.

**(b)Church leaders can only provide supervision for 15 minutes after the end of a student activity at church. Parents are encouraged to provide timely transportation home after these events.**

## **9. TRANSPORTATION**

(a)The church provides adult driven vehicles for every activity away from the church. For all trips out of town, adult driven transportation is the only option for students. Church leaders will always announce when it is possible for students to drive to a local even. Student driven vehicles transporting additional, non-driving minor students may not leave the church campus going to an off campus event for any reason other than an absolute emergency. Special permission must always be given by the Minister of Students. Parents have the responsibility to clarify with their youth whether youth driven vehicles are an option.

(b)Church leaders cannot be responsible for the safety of student driven cars and cannot guarantee the quality of driving of those vehicles. Also, students are not allowed to leave the designated youth event with another student unless permission is given by the parents and arrangements have been made with the Minister of Students. Church leaders cannot be responsible for students who leave activities in student driven cars without permission from church leaders.

## **10. VANDALISM**

WBC requests that parents insure that their youth pay for any vandalism or willful damage to property.

## **11. DRESS CODE**

(a)Students and parents should be aware that a Christ-like witness can be tarnished or ruined by clothing that a student wears. Students should be mindful of the fact that they are representatives of Christ and our church in their behavior and dress. Inappropriate clothing includes short skirts, short shorts, see-thru apparel, offensive or distasteful slogans or logos, low cut blouses, etc. Most types of shorts are not appropriate for Sunday worship times, but are very acceptable for other student activities as long as they are of a tasteful length.

(b)Students wearing inappropriate clothing to church or student events may be asked to go home and change to more appropriate clothes based upon the severity of the violation and the extenuating circumstances involved. WBC Student Ministry has a history of tolerance in light of reaching unchurched students, but members of the group will be expected to adhere to the group's expectations in the area of dress.

(C)Swim wear is often needed for group outings during the warm months of the year. Boys are asked to wear shirts at all times that they are not swimming or similar activities. No "Speedo" or thong style suits. Girls are asked to wear modest bathing suits that are one piece, or wear a shirt over the suit to conserve modesty.

## **12. UNAUTHORIZED ACTIVITIES**

(a)Unauthorized activities are not allowed on the church campus. Recreational activities must be cleared through the Youth Committee, Minister of Students, or the Pastor. Bicycles, roller skating, skate boarding, and other activities are not permitted for safety reasons without proper authorization and supervision.

(b)Students are encouraged to report any unusual or suspicious activities noticed around the church campus. In light of recent incidents at churches and schools, this helps the staff and youth leaders to ensure the safety and positive atmosphere of our student ministry.

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These policies are provided as a proactive way to ensure clear communication among members of the Student Ministry family. For many years Walker Baptist Church has provided a positive, loving, and affirming atmosphere for students and their families. Thankfully students and leaders enjoy a mutual respect that results in very few discipline issues. We hope to keep it that way.