

Policies and Procedures for CYRE Program: YOUTH ADVISORS of Middle and High School Youth

(The term “parent” is used for the responsible party)



Requirements and Background / Reference Checks:

- All Youth Advisors are volunteers and must be approved by the Director of Religious Education for Children and Youth (DRECY).
- All Youth Advisors must be UJCC members and at least 25 years old.
- All Youth Advisors are screened by a computerized criminal background check. The DRECY has the option of checking references.
- The only other adults allowed in the “classroom” with the youth are approved special guests / facilitators. These adults do not need to be church members, nor are they subject to a background check. However, they are not to be left alone with the youth, except in the case of emergency.
- The term “Youth Advisor”, as used here, does not include “Con or other non-curricular Single Activity” Adult Chaperones, such as Mt Con Advisors, Boston Trip chaperones, camping trip leaders, etc. It does include Sunday morning classroom Advisors, special programming Adult Facilitators, like Coming of Age staff and OWL leaders, and any non-Sunday Youth Group Leaders. However, please note that ALL adults who are involved in overnight supervision must be approved by the DRECY and screened with a background check. (see “Policies and Procedures for Overnights”)

Training Requirements of Youth Advisors:

- All Youth Advisors are strongly encouraged to attend an annual orientation with the DRECY, which includes a strong grounding in safety policies and procedures. Updates and reminders are emailed periodically.

In Case of Illness or Tardiness:

- If, on Sunday morning, an Advisor is running late or cannot teach as scheduled, s/he should call the RE office and try to reach the DRECY or RE Assistant. If neither is available, an email and/or voice message is required.

Two Person Rule:

- Two Adults must be in the room with the youth at all times – except in special situations, in which the individual advisor and youth must be in plain sight or hearing distance of another adult. Should only one adult be available for class, the door must remain open at all times and there must be at least two youth in attendance.

Behavior Management:

- A class covenant will be developed by the youth and Youth Advisors on the first day of class or during the High School Fall Retreat. It will be referenced each week for about a month, with all youth and Youth Advisors signing it during that period of time. After that, it will only be referenced when violations take place, as youth are called to honor their promises.
- Minor infractions will be dealt with by the Youth Advisors, with appropriate communication to the youth. Should a youth continue to break the covenant and behave inappropriately, the Youth Advisors may do one or both of the following: 1) take the youth outside, away from the group, to discuss the behavior; 2) If the behavior continues, escort the youth to the RE office. Parents will be notified by the DRECY if the latter happens.

Emergency Evacuation Procedure:

- Youth Advisors are provided with procedures to follow in the event of an emergency evacuation or a fire drill (annual requirement). Maps are posted around the CYRE wing, alerting parents to the location of their children’s outside rendezvous points.
- Youth will exit quietly and be marked off on the Youth Advisor’s attendance sheet before entering the playground rendezvous location.

Illness / Accident:

- Youth Advisors are to be informed of the location of the nearest two first aid kits. In case of anything serious, the parent/guardian should be contacted.
- Neither Youth Advisors nor the youth themselves can administer any medications without written permission from parents. This includes topical and oral medications..

Personal Electronic Devices:

- Cell phones, i-phones, i-pods and other personal electronic devices may be brought to the classroom for use before or after class. However, they are not to be used during class and, if they are, will be confiscated by the Youth Advisors. No warnings needed. This policy will be stated at the beginning of the year and should be included in the class covenant. Devices will be returned at the end of class.
- Personal electronic devices may or may not be allowed on retreats and other overnight events. This will be stated in the permission form along with violation consequences. Parent support of this rule is critical - and expected.

Supervision:

- Middle and high school youth must be supervised during RE hours. Before or after class time, they must have a responsible adult on site. This can be a Youth Advisor or other approved adult.

Suspected Abuse:

- All volunteers and church staff are mandated reporters and are to report any suspicions to the DRECY.

Transportation:

- A youth may never be alone in a vehicle with an adult unless approved in writing by the youth's parent (as in the Coming of Age agreement). While two drivers are not necessary in vehicles, they are recommended for 15-passenger vans.
- An adult approved by CYRE staff for supervision must remain at the UCC until all youth have been picked up from an event.
- Youth may drive other youth only with the explicit approval of the DRECY or adult event coordinator. In addition, all parents of youth in the car must give their verbal or written approval, as must the parent of the driver.

Overnights and Off-Site Trips:

- There is a separate sheet of policies and procedures for trips, including transportation rules.