

**SEASIDE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**  
**YOUTH MINISTRIES**  
*Youth Ministry Policy and Guidelines*

*September 2011*

**For Youth & Parents**

*Affection*

Our youth ministry believes that interest in showing physical affection toward the opposite sex is considered a normal and healthy part of maturing youth age relationships. Our adult leadership is instructed to notify couples when their behavior is inappropriate or compromising. Our youth ministry also believes that appropriateness should dictate the extent of affection shown at youth activities

*The following is always considered inappropriate:*

1. Cuddling in any form. Excessive PDA (Public Display of Affection)
2. Compromising situations
3. Making out

*Authority*

Youth who choose to participate at Seaside United Methodist Church agree to follow the instructions of leaders and these guidelines. Parents also agree to support these guidelines for the safety and morale of our youth ministry. Youth must follow these guidelines and exhibit respect toward adult leaders to remain at any youth ministry activity.

*Discipline*

**Sending a Youth Home**

On all trips, retreats or activities at the church youth will be immediately sent home for:

1. Possessing alcohol, illegal drugs, guns, knives, pornography, tobacco products, or causing danger to themselves or the group
2. Leaving the group without permission
3. Sexual promiscuity

**If and when a youth is sent home, the parents will be responsible for the transportation.**

## **Three Strike System**

On all other offenses, youth will be sent home after the following procedures have been met:

1. A warning has been issued
2. A one on one talk with the youth by an adult leader
3. A conference with adult leadership will occur and a public apology to the youth ministry.

## **Dismissal**

At any church activity, the following procedures will be followed for dismissing a youth from a group activity:

1. You will be given a warning that their behavior warrants a dismissal
2. Youth who continue to be disruptive will be dismissed from the meeting and parents will be called and informed of the situation.

A pattern of dismissals will be followed up by a parent/youth/minister conference.

Parents have not assigned to church leaders the right to physically discipline youth. Therefore, leaders only make physical contact with a youth in order to prevent greater harm, such as during a fight or an attempt to harm one's self, with rare exception, no other physical restraint is appropriate.

## ***Dress***

Youth should dress for every church activity to show modesty and deference toward godliness. Therefore, the following guidelines will be followed:

1. No pajamas or night clothes in public areas at any group meeting
2. Underwear, such as boxers, are to be worn as underwear only, not as shorts
3. Youth will be expected to change inappropriate clothing without argument
4. Shoes and shirts must be worn at all meetings
5. No t-shirts that promote drugs, alcohol, or vulgarity
6. We expect parents to help us maintain dress guidelines that represent modesty and godliness

## **Girls**

1. No short-shorts at any time
2. No shirts that are immodest or show your belly or breasts

**Bathing suits** must fit appropriately and fully cover the youth's top and bottom. Two pieces are acceptable under the following conditions:

1. No string tops or bottoms
2. No "triangle" tops
3. Top must have straps (i.e. no tube tops)
4. No thongs
5. No French cut bikinis

If questions persist, please have your suit checked before departure for any youth sponsored outing. It is always wise to pack a one piece in case suit is found inappropriate. If suit is found inappropriate, we will give you a t-shirt to wear over the suit.

## ***Free Time***

At retreats etc. youth will be allowed to spend their free time only when:

1. They are in groups of no less than 3.
2. They let an adult know where they are going and receive permission
3. Youth will be required to check back with an adult at specified times

## ***Hotels***

At times, our youth ministry will stay in hotels/motels. We must realize that we represent Christ everywhere we go. We should show respect for property and the rights of other people staying in the hotel/motel.

1. Members of the opposite sex are not permitted in your room at any time
2. We reserve the right to put adult chaperones in any room or on any floor that we see fit in order to ensure all youth are in a safe environment
3. No long distance phone calls unless you have a calling card or call collect
4. If anything in the room is broken and no one claims guilt, the entire room will pay for it.
5. No one can leave their room passed the assigned curfew.

6. Please be respectful of others in the hotel that are not with our group and be quiet after 11:00 p.m.

### ***Medial Attention***

A medial release form is to be completed for every youth going on any church related trip. This release must be signed by a parent, notarized and returned before a youth will be permitted to attend. The release form needs to be updated annually or if your insurance changes. In case of serious medical emergencies, parents will be called immediately.

A permission slip is to be completed for every youth going on any church related activity. This release must be signed by a parent and returned for every new activity.

### ***Meetings***

Youth and other members who come to church activities deserve to learn and worship in an atmosphere that is possible without hindrance. Leaders have a responsibility to maintain that atmosphere.

Youth are expected to:

1. Be in the designated class or activity area/room/site on time & ready to participate
2. Be engaged in service activities such as Country Fair, mission projects, country fair, leadership roles, etc.)

### ***Money***

1. It is the policy of our youth ministry that all money will be collected in a sealed envelope, marked appropriately with information stating who the money is for and for what activity.
2. Money should be given to one of the youth leaders.
3. Checks can be made out to Seaside United Methodist Church or SUMC. The event name should be written on the bottom left side of the check.
4. When traveling to youth activities, the youth needs to be responsible for their own money. Adult leaders **will not** be responsible for taking care of anyone's money.

### ***Retreats & Road Trips***

For the youth ministry to function well out of the city on a road trip or retreat, observing and respecting adult leadership is essential. By allowing a youth to go on a trip, parents agree to allow adult leadership to make the final decision about discipline.

On all trips and retreats the following guidelines will be followed:

1. Treat every person with respect, kindness and courtesy.
2. We reserve the right to put a chaperone in your room, in order to ensure all youth are in a safe environment.
3. We reserve the right to maintain modest dress standards.
4. Do not enter the cabin or room of the opposite sex without an adult
5. Always be on time for meetings
6. Do not break curfew; curfew means you must remain inside your room or cabin until a chaperone gives you permission to leave
7. No horseplay, fighting, name calling, aggressive behavior, or bad language
8. If you break it, you pay for it
9. No whining
10. Obey any camp, retreat, hotel, or facility rules not stated here

### ***Transportation***

Part of doing youth ministry is transporting youth.

1. Our church will always try to provide a 12 passenger van for retreats.
  - a. A background check and DMV check will be performed on all drivers. Individuals may not be allowed to drive vans due to poor driving record.
  - b. Any driver with a DUI on their driving record within the last 7 years will not be permitted to drive any youth. There are NO EXCEPTIONS to this rule.
  - c. Any potential driver should submit a copy of their Driver's License.
  - d. No one under the age of 25 will be permitted to drive the van at any time.
2. If we need to rent a bus, a fee may be required to help pay for expenses.
3. For all trips/events adult-driven transportation is the only option for a youth
4. Adults should drive responsibly (no horseplay in vehicles). We reserve the right to ask an individual not to drive youth during youth outings.

**Church leaders cannot:**

1. Be responsible for the safety of youth-driven cars
2. Guarantee the quality of driving of youth-driven cars
3. Maintain who rides with who in youth-driven cars
4. Be responsible for youth who leave in youth-driven cars

***FOR VOLUNTEERS & LEADERS***

**Activity & Relationship Guidelines**

The following applies to all adults who want to be a leader in our youth ministry.

1. Do not exceed proper limits in showing affection to members of the opposite sex: Do not be alone with the opposite sex for any reason (including driving). No dating or romantic involvement of any kind with anyone that has not graduated from high school, or 18 years old or younger.
2. Maintain a ratio of 1 same gendered adult to 7 middle school youth and 1 same gendered adult to 10 high school youth.
3. Never be alone with youth of the opposite sex. Avoid situations which could be interpreted as compromising.
4. Do not listen to or allow discussion of negative gossip about youth or leaders. Protect the reputation of every youth and leader. If there is a conflict, problem or criticism, the only right way to handle it is for the upset person to discuss it with the person they have an issue. Support verbally every aspect of youth ministry and never talk critically to anyone.
5. Keep confident the secrets youth share with you. Do not discuss them with other leaders or youth. If their life is in danger or they are about to make a decision that will affect their health or life, notify our pastors and their parents immediately.
6. Do not attend, rent or watch “R” rated movies with youth. Use discretion when choosing a movie to watch and abide by the rating system. PG-13 is only for youth over 13 or with parent’s permission.
7. Use proper discretion when spending personal time with youth.

8. You represent Seaside United Methodist Church and our youth ministry. As a youth leader you are accountable to church leaders for your behavior around youth. More importantly, you are accountable to God.
9. The following is always taught as Biblically wrong to our youth: sexual promiscuity in any manner, alcohol, drugs, breaking the law, disobeying you parents, pornography, insolence to any authority, and violence in any form.
10. Always affirm the authority and respect toward parents. Never take sides on parenting issues.
11. **We reserve the right to dismiss any chaperone or leader who fails to maintain the standards we set.**

### *Chaperone Policies*

The following applies to all adults who want to be a chaperone on any trip/activity:

#### **Qualification**

1. A chaperone is a person 25 years of age or older who can legally drive a van under the church insurance. You must be 21 years old to drive any youth in your car on any church related activity.
2. All chaperones will stay in separate rooms than youth, unless safety is compromised. All youth will have an adult they will be responsible for checking in with.
3. Chaperones are required to assist in small groups, Bible studies, and facilitate youth involvement.
4. Help maintain and uphold all of the guidelines.
5. **We reserve the right to dismiss any chaperone or leader who fails to maintain the standards we set.**

#### *Responsibilities*

1. Drive a van when needed. On trips all leaders should have clearance to drive the van in case of emergency, (i.e. a driver is unable to drive due to illness etc.).
2. Check on assigned youth and maintain curfew. Curfew means all youth must be in their room until the sun comes up (unless prior permission is granted).
3. Maintain discipline as an adult leader and not as a parent.

4. Help keep youth on schedule by setting the example.
5. Help by serving as a small group, Bible study or devotional leader.
6. Give counsel to youth about Christian growth and behavior.
7. Attend all group meetings unless you are serving elsewhere.
8. Never threaten youth with punishment.
9. All decisions are made for the whole group and not just one person.
10. Meet every youth in our group and be friendly with everyone.

### ***Fees***

Fun trips are trips that are recreational in nature such as skiing, amusement parks, water parks, rafting, concerts, and the like. You are required to pay your own admission and all related expenses (food, games etc.); unless youth funds are available to pay a portion for each youth in attendance. You must attend youth meetings and events on a regular basis to receive this privilege.

We may ask adult leaders to pay a reduced amount of the total cost.

### **Deposits & Payments**

Deposits may or may not be refundable, depending on the event refund policy. Whenever possible, funds will be returned if there is cancellation of an event/activity. When making final payment, be sure to subtract the deposit from the total amount of the event/activity.

### **Pre-event/activity Information**

All information you need to know will be found in the church bulletin, newsletter, inserts, emails, and mail-outs. We will try to have a parent/chaperone meeting (if necessary) to communicate on event/activity details. If you have questions or any special concerns please let us know as soon as possible.

### ***General event/activity guidelines***

1. Youth events/activities should not be combined with any personal events/activities.

2. All youth events/activities should be planned in advance at scheduled monthly youth leaders meetings or at a “special” meeting at a designated date and time. All prior approvals must be secured before an event/activity can take place.
3. At least 72 hour notification must be given to parents regarding youth activities.
4. All leaders are to be informed of all plans and changes to plans.
5. When traveling with youth, all leaders must have a copy of release forms and all contact information.
6. Parents are asked to volunteer as chaperones and provide “Snack Suppers” whenever possible.