

PUMC expects Youth (“youth” = Jr. high, grades 6-8, and Sr. high, grades 9-12) **and Adults to abide by this Code of Conduct:**

Guiding Principles:

Youth Ministries (“YM”) of Plainfield United Methodist Church (“PUMC”) seeks to foster an environment where youth can connect with God, their fellow youth, and their community. Youth are a sacred trust from God and it is imperative that everyone involved with the Youth Program works together to ensure the physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being of youth, volunteers, and adult leaders. It is expected that everyone will work together to cooperate and foster a positive atmosphere for YM. The adults set the tone for Youth Ministry, and it is the goal of the program that the adults will collaborate and work together to create a caring atmosphere of love and mutual respect. In general, it is expected that all participants in YM will respect the rights and property of others and conduct themselves in a safe and orderly manner. It is also expected that youth, adult participants, and parents will refrain from negative behavior, which can hurt others and negatively impact PUMC. In the event of a disagreement, it is expected that there will be caring, open, direct communication between the parties involved. Gossip with uninvolved third parties is not conducive to an open, caring, environment and is not an acceptable means of addressing a conflict. It is important that everyone invested in Youth Ministry read this Code. It is also important for parents and youth discuss and understand this Code.

Respect for Physical Resources: Youth are to respect the space and the things they are using. They are expected to pick up after themselves and ensure all garbage is cleaned up, even if it is someone else’s mess.

Property Damage: Any participant who willfully damages or destroys property will be responsible for the cost of any clean up required, as well as any cost associated with any needed repair or replacement of the damaged property.

Inappropriate Language: No participant is to use language which is crude, offensive, insulting, profane, or irreverent. This includes hateful name-calling, bullying, or obvious disrespect.

Medical Policies: Signed **Emergency Medical Release** forms are required along with relevant medical information for youth, including a copy of the youth’s insurance card. For off-site or overnight events, a **Medication Authorization Form** should be completed. The Youth Director and/or his/her designee will complete a **Medication Log** for each youth when medication is administered. Please see the forms listed in **bold** above for more details.

Accident Reports: Occasionally, a youth may be injured at a YM event. In such a case, an adult who was present at the event will fill out a PUMC Accident Report form and share that information with any staff present and/or the parents of the youth.

Electronic Devices/Cell Phones: Participants will use cell phones and other electronic devices only at appropriate times. Youth may be asked to turn off their devices or turn them in to an adult leader for a specified period of time.

Dress Code: Youth should dress suitably for the weather and the occasion when participating in Youth Ministries activities. Particularly, when attending retreats or mission trips, youth should bring clothing that will meet any safety requirements and allow them to safely perform the work at a mission site. Certain projects or activities may have clothing requirements for safety purposes (such as long pants and close-toed shoes.) Specific clothing requirements based on outside organizations/work sites will be communicated to youth and their families prior to the trip or activity.

Displays of Affection: Youth should refrain from excessive and inappropriate displays of affection such as prolonged kissing, prolonged embracing, or other contact inappropriate in a church environment. Appropriate contact includes: holding hands for prayer, hugging a friend, or comforting someone who is about to cry.

Gender Specific Areas: Males and females are not permitted in the other gender's designated area(s) unless there is a legitimate reason determined by supervising adults.

Smoking/Drinking/Illegal Drugs: No tobacco use or vaping is allowed on PUMC church property or by any youth at any time. Also, illegal or unauthorized substances in any form are not permitted at Youth Ministry activities or on youth trips. Parents will be notified immediately of a violation.

Physical Safety: There is no toleration of violent behavior and/or possession of weapons. Youth will not bring fireworks, lighters, or weapons of any kind to church or to any youth related function. Any act of striking, attacking another individual, or any other unwanted physical contact, will be cause for immediate removal from the group.

Rule of Three: There will be times when the youth are given significant freedom to be on their own within a confined area, (e.g. a day at Six Flags). On these occasions, youth must travel in groups no smaller than three. That way, if a youth is injured, there will be one youth available to go for help while the third youth stays with the one who is injured.

Site Rules: Any rule or guideline not mentioned here, but required by a third party, will also apply to our youth and any other participants while at that location.

Formal Discipline Policy

Procedure for inappropriate behavior: If a participant exhibits inappropriate behavior, the leader-in-charge will determine appropriate discipline at his or her own discretion. Depending on the severity of the infraction, the discipline may result in youth being sent home at the family's expense. In such a case, the Youth Director will notify parents/guardians to arrange for the youth's return home. Such a decision will only be made after consultation among any volunteer leaders involved, the Youth Director, and at least one of the Pastors of PUMC.

Actions that warrant immediate removal: The possession or use of alcohol, tobacco, illegal or unauthorized drugs, and/or pornographic material may result in immediate removal from the group or activity. Violence or sexual misconduct will also be grounds for immediate removal.

Additional Policies From “Safe Sanctuaries” Policy 2006:

Two-Deep Rule: Junior and Senior High students do not require the same level of supervision as younger children due to their increased level of independence. There may be cases where a youth or group of youth will be meeting with one adult. In such a case, an additional adult floater should be present in the same area of the building. In the event that they are meeting in a room with a door, the door should be kept open.

Public Spaces: Groups of youth may meet with only one adult or a pair of related adults if the meeting takes place in a public arena such as a restaurant, store, movie theater, etc. In such cases, the group will meet at the designated public spot and leave from the designated public spot.

Travel Policies: Off-site trips are a big responsibility for YM and PUMC. As a result, obeying and respecting trip leaders and adult volunteers is essential for YM to function safely and effectively. Parents are informed of youth activities, trip itineraries, special activities, and projects through email notification, youth news information, and other forms of communication. Information will be as specific as possible regarding time of departure and arrival, routes, method of travel, and phone numbers.

Transportation: Generally, driving to off-site events will be provided by designated Youth Leaders or other Adult Volunteers. The number of youth, leaders, and chaperones per vehicle will not exceed the number of safety belts available. All persons driving or being driven to/from a youth event must use seat belts at all times. Adherence to the “Transportation of Minors” Policy is required by all participants.

From the “Transportation of Minors” Policy: “Transportation from home to the church building or ministry event and back to home is not church-sponsored transportation; such arrangements are the responsibility of parents and are made solely at parental discretion.”