

**ACCC**

**Youth Ministry Policy**

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# Youth Volunteer Manual

## **Purpose**

The primary purpose of this policy is to maintain a safe environment for those youth participating in Atlanta Chinese Christian Church's youth programs.

## **Open Program**

All aspects of ACCC's youth programs are open to observation by parents and congregational leaders at any time.

## **Church Involvement**

Anyone who is interested in helping out with youth ministry must first join ACCC for a minimum of 6 months prior to serving and provide 3 referrals.

## **What is Expected of a Counselor**

1. Demonstrate passion for Christ and shows personal growth
2. Maturity in team work
3. Willing to commit to serve even if it means sacrifice
4. Good role model
5. Servant's attitude
6. Baptized (if not, need to do it ASAP)
7. Responsible at home as well as in school academics
8. Counselors are highly encouraged to take part in an annual training seminar (seminar to be announced by Youth Director)

## **Counselor Approval Process**

The responsibility of finding and recommending a counselor does not solely rest on the Youth Ministry Committee (YMC). Parents, congregation members, or candidates themselves can also recommend potential counselors to the YMC for further consideration. The potential candidates will meet with the Youth Director for an interview and will also be required to fill out the ACCC Youth Ministry Counselor Application Form (Appendix A) at that time. After the interview process, the potential counselors will be asked to submit to a background check. The YMC will meet to give final approval to the potential counselor's involvement.

Please note that previous offenses (criminal or otherwise) do not immediately exclude one from service. As Christians, we are all about second chances, as the Lord has given us a second chance. If, during the course of the interview or in reviewing the application form, it is discovered that there have been some previous criminal charges or other offenses, these will be taken into consideration and discussed in YMC, but the information will be kept in utmost confidentiality.

## **History of Sexual Misconduct**

Any adult who has been convicted of sexual misconduct or abuse may not participate in any capacity in ACCC's youth programs.

## **Two-deep Leadership**

At least two counselors must be present at each youth program activity from its beginning until all participants have been released to a parent or another approved person. If a youth program is

occurring simultaneously in separate areas, two counselors must be present in each area where youth are present.

### **One-on-One Interaction**

When a planned one-on-one meeting between an counselor and a youth takes place in the church building, the meeting must be in a room with an unobstructed window or an open door. A second counselor must be in the same area of the church, although not necessarily in the same room. Planned individual contact off church property may only occur in public places and with the prior consent of the minor and parent or guardian.

### **Respect of Privacy**

Counselors need to respect the privacy of youth in situations such as use of restrooms, changing into swimming suits, or taking showers on overnight outings, and intrude only insofar as health and safety require. Counselors also need to protect their own privacy in similar situations.

### **Separate Accommodations**

A minimum of counselors must be present at an overnight youth activity. If youth participants are both male and female, the counselors must be male and female. Males and females will sleep in separate areas. Counselors will not occupy the same bed as a youth, unless they are the youth's parent or guardian.

### **Transportation**

When the church provides transportation to a youth program activity, the following requirements apply:

1. The driver must be a counselor or a driver approved by the youth director.
2. The driver must have a valid driver's license.
3. The driver must have proof of insurance that meets the State requirements.
4. The driver must not have had a driver's license revoked or suspended within the last five years for any reason.
5. The number of passengers in a vehicle may not exceed the number of working passenger seat restraints.
6. The driver and all passengers must wear seat restraints at all times.
7. A parent or guardian must sign a permission form.
8. A counselor should avoid being alone in a car with a minor.

### **Constructive Discipline**

Discipline used in church activities should be constructive and should reflect the accepting and loving environment that Christ intended for us to have with each other. Corporal punishment is never permitted.

### **No Sexual Behavior**

No sexual contact is permitted at youth program activities. Other behavior that does not involve physical contact, such as suggestive or sexual comments, displaying sexual materials, or exposing sexual body parts, is also prohibited.

### **Abstinence from Alcohol and Drugs**

Counselors will abstain from drinking alcohol in the presence of youths and will lead an exemplary life in the area of drug related issues.

**Gifts**

Counselors shall not give personal gifts or money to an individual youth without first notifying the parents or another counselor. Gifts to entire classes or groups are acceptable.

**Reporting of Violations of These Rules**

Any suspected violations of this policy should be reported to the youth ministry staff or pastoral staff immediately. Suspected child abuse or neglect shall be reported.

**Congregational Awareness and Review**

A copy of this policy will be available on the ACCC website and/or in the church office at all times.

**Effective Date**

This policy shall become effective on November 13, 2010  
APPROVED by the Joint Board of Elders and Deacons on  
This 13th day of November, 2010

# Youth Conduct Manual

## **Youth Group Vision Statement:**

The vision of ACCC Youth Ministry can be summarized in one phrase: "Love God and Love Others". This vision is based on the greatest commandments found in Matt 22:37-39. Everything else we do/are is an outflow of these two commandments.

## **General Policies and Procedures**

### *Communication*

Parents/Guardians are encouraged to come and participate in our youth activities at any time.

E-mail is our primary communication vehicle. We regularly send out information updates to parents/guardians, students and/or sponsors. If you don't have e-mail, the best thing is to find someone who regularly checks email and have them give the information to you. If you would like to be placed on the email list, please contact the Youth Director (see Contact List).

Announcements in the Church bulletin will be the secondary form of communication.

Our website ([www.acccyouth.org](http://www.acccyouth.org)) will increasingly be another source for information about our youth ministry. It will contain upcoming schedules and events. Specifics will come in the form of emails.

Questions or concerns can be directed to the Youth Director or Parents Representatives (see contact list).

### *Events*

We will provide a variety of activities throughout the year including weekly youth group times, retreats, service projects and fun events.

### *Official vs. non-official events.*

Many events each year are officially sponsored by our youth group. But others will be generated by students or parents/guardians and may or may not involve supervision or conservative standards of conduct. Therefore it would be good to define when an event is "officially" church-sponsored.

### *Official Youth Group Sponsored Events*

Will be communicated as such by an official e-mail from the Youth Director, Parents Representatives, or a Counselor and/or mentioned in our church bulletin, or websites.

Will be supervised by at least two adult sponsors, at least one of which must be a parent (or approved parents/guardians).

Will comply with all the expectations outlined in this Youth Ministry Policy.

### *Non-official events.*

Will never be promoted to parents via official church publications or e-mail addresses.

May be promoted verbally at youth group.

May be adequately supervised or not supervised at all, depending.

Have no set conduct standards, such as what movies they may be showing.

Require parents/guardians to investigate to ensure their supervision expectations are met.

The church assumes NO responsibility or liability for such events, even if a youth sponsor attends all or part of it.

Please be aware of these distinctions and be sure that your expectations are being met. Unofficial events can be very beneficial and help kids get and stay connected with each other in the summer. But feel free to contact The Youth Director or counselors or other parents/guardians if you want opinions about the suitability of any particular unofficial event.

### *Videos, Movies & Music*

We sometimes utilize videos, movies and music in our youth group events. But rather than using them as mere mindless entertainment, we emphasize the importance of thinking Christianly about our media choices. These forms of media can be great opportunities for discussions of truth. We'll do our best to show appropriate content as a way to honor the standards of parents/guardians, and where sin is depicted, we will ensure that it is put in its proper context in accordance with the truth of Scripture. If you have any questions about media choices, please let us know.

### *Costs*

It will be our goal to keep costs as low as possible for activities. Our events will be characterized by frugality rather than extravagance. No one should ever be prevented from attending because of cost.

## **Financial Aid Policies**

In cases where a lack of finances would keep a student from participating in an event, please talk to the Youth Director about your situation. If your family is struggling financially, scholarship money may be available following the biblical principle of those in the church sharing with those who are in need (Acts 2:45).

## **Offsite Event Policies**

### *Permission Forms*

On any official off-site trip, we require that the youths bring a signed permission form that will be provided for each trip. It is the parents' responsibility to have that permission form in hand when dropping off their youths. Youths without the form will be asked to call their parents to obtain the necessary signature.

### *Attendance*

It's imperative to us not to lose track of anyone on our trips. This section identifies ways to prevent losing students, and what we will do in the unlikely event that someone ever becomes lost.

Any time we transport students we will make a list of the names of everyone aboard with a phone number where parents/guardians can be reached.

If parents/guardians drive their students to and/or from an event, we expect them to personally contact a sponsor to let us know the student is now under our supervision. We also need to be informed when students are being picked up so we know when the student is released from our supervision. Whenever practical, we encourage kids to ride the church van or with counselors/parents—it is much easier for us to keep track of the kids when we all depart and return together.

On occasion, we may announce and implement a late fine for students whose lateness would cause the group to wait.

In the unlikely event that a student does not show up when it is time to depart and the bus needs to leave, we will be to leave a counselor (or suitable adult) behind to wait until we discover where the student is. At that time it will be necessary to call his/her parent/guardian to inform them of the situation and after the student is located, to make arrangements to reconnect the counselor and student with the group.

### *Arrival and Departure Times*

We will promote a departure and an arrival time for most events. We will always strive to return earlier than the stated arrival time, so parents/guardians should be ready to pick kids up by then.

It's important to us not to waste time waiting for kids to be picked up and it's important to parents/guardians not to have to wait around for us to arrive.

In the event that it appears we will be 30 minutes late or more due to an unforeseen event—if possible—we will call ahead and attempt to have a sign posted on the church doors.

Certain local events such as a concert or ball game are uncertain in their ending times. In such cases we will suggest the kids call home when we arrive at church.

For long-distance trips where the return time may vary depending on road conditions, and we will have the kids call home to inform parents of arrival time.

### *Safety*

Students will generally be required to stay in groups of three or more in all public places (amusement parks, water parks, campgrounds, etc.) They must also be in the vicinity of a counselor while in their group of three (i.e. in the same building, park or section of a street.)

We will particularly keep close tabs on Middle School students. Depending on the setting, older students will be given more latitude.

During events, face-to-face attendance taking will be taken often to verify everyone's presence. Parents/Guardians will be notified if students have removed themselves from our activity.

## **Transportation Policies**

### *Church Vehicles*

It's important to us that we take good care of the vehicle with which God has blessed us. When using church vehicle, the group leader is responsible for complying with the following passenger conduct guidelines. We will place as many middle school students as possible into the church vans prior to placing them into the cars of counselors.

1. There will always be two sponsors (or approved adults) on the vehicle.
2. No hands, arms, legs or trash will be put out of windows or roof hatch.
3. No standing in front of the first row of seats (state law).
4. Emergency exits (rear, side, roof) should generally not be used by passengers as an alternative method of entry or exit when there is no emergency.
5. No screaming or excessive noise. The driver will determine a suitable volume level—other counselors are to help enforce these expectations.
6. No open beverage containers will be allowed unless they are in someone's hand. (i.e. no open pop cans sitting on the floor, seat cushions or seat backs)
7. Only a sponsor or bus driver may supervise the operation of the radio.
8. When vehicles are parked, no one should climb onto or sit on the exterior of vehicles, including the roof and hood.
9. Passengers must not deface the interior of the vehicle. This includes seats, flooring, windows and equipment.
10. When riding in the church van, all youth in any seat shall wear seat belts.

### *Private Vehicles*

In situations where cars are needed, it will be necessary that sponsors and other responsible adults drive. Drivers for official youth functions should be Counselors or parents.

High school students will not be encouraged to drive during an activity unless they have permission from their parent/guardian and the youth director. Additionally, anyone who wishes to ride with a driver that is not a counselor or a parent at a church-sponsored event must receive verified permission from both his/her parent/guardian and the parent/guardian of the driver.

### *Rides Between Church and Home*

To remain above reproach, we discourage counselors giving rides alone to members of the opposite sex. In the event that this policy would be a senseless inconvenience, such rides may be given, but only with the advance knowledge and permission of the parent/guardian.

If parents depend on counselors to provide rides for their youths, then it comes with the expressed understanding that the counselors have the parents' permission and that ACCC is not held liable for anything that may happen on the ride home.

Students can ride to church or home from church with other students, but this is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to monitor. We cannot be responsible for students before they arrive at a youth activity or after they leave.

## **Youth Group Conduct Expectations**

The following rules reflect our ministry values and for the most part apply during youth group and for off-site events.

**Decision Making.** All counselors have the authority to make decisions and are to be obeyed at all times. If questions or concerns arise, the youth director will make final decisions.

**Respect.** Every team member has the right to be treated respectfully at all times.

**Safety.** For safety reasons, you must always remain in the vicinity of a counselor, usually in groups of 2-3. We must always know how to reach you in case of an emergency. Be where you are supposed to be when asked so the group is not waiting for you. Also, do not give out your address, phone number or email to individuals you meet.

**PDA.** To avoid awkwardness, cliquiness and distracting from the purpose of our trip, we do not allow PDA (public displays of affection) between couples. Our trip is not a date; it is a group experience, where we treat each other equally as brothers and sisters. This means couples may not hold hands, cuddle, lay on one another, isolate themselves, etc. This applies to all youth events (Youth Group, Sunday School), and not just on off-site events or mission trips.

**Sleep.** Stay out of sleeping areas of opposite sex. Bedtime is firm: no staying up past or getting up before the times designated by the youth director or counselor.

**Courtesy.** Our focus will be on building relationships and on creating a spiritually uplifting atmosphere. Therefore, there will be no gambling, profanity, electronic devices (mp3s, electronic games, etc), or immodest attire. Also, we ask that no major body alterations be done without parental permission (piercings, tattoos, etc).

**Modesty.** These are the modesty guidelines for everyone (guys and girls). This dress code is encouraged during weekly youth group meetings and required during extended-duration events like trips and retreats.

**Tops:** Must be wholesome; nothing that are offensive or with gang-related symbols. T-shirts with sleeves only: no tank tops, muscle shirts, halter-tops, tube tops, bare midriffs, etc.

**Bottoms:** Shorts must extend down as far as your fingertips when your arms are extended straight down.

**Swimsuits:** Make sure they're modest, no torso revealing, cleavage showing or bikini-style suits.

**Pajamas:** Same "tops" and "bottom" rules apply when in the presence of the opposite sex.

### **Church-wear on trips:**

Guys: non-jean pants and collared shirt.

Girls: modest dress, or skirt or non-jean pants and blouse.

### **Discipline:**

The reason for discipline is to ensure that the youths who are in our care are loved, even if it means being loved through discipline. Proverbs 10:17 says, "He who heeds discipline shows the way to life, but whoever ignores correction leads others astray." Hebrews 12:11 also says, "No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it." Discipline must be required for the following and will likely result in a call home to your parent/guardian to discuss how best to send you home:

Sexual activity

Wandering off by yourself/skipping out of class or Youth Group after being placed in the Youth Ministry's care.

Tobacco, drug or alcohol use

Blatant or repeated disrespect and/or disobedience to sponsors

If any of these behaviors are observed, take the following steps:

#### ***Steps of Communication and Action***

1. If any of the aforementioned activities requiring discipline is observed (Sexual activity, wandering off by yourself/skipping out of class or Youth Group after being placed in the Youth Ministry's care, tobacco, drug or alcohol use, and/or blatant or repeated disrespect and/or disobedience to sponsors), please report directly to the Youth Ministry staff (Youth Director, Student Ministry Deacon, or Parents Reps). In the event that the Youth Ministry staff cannot be reached, please contact the Pastoral staff. Please also fill out an **incident form** and give it to a YMC member.
2. Once the incident has been reported, the Youth Director will follow the principle of discipline found in Matthew 18:15-17. The Youth Director will approach the youth and address the issue first and foremost. The Youth Director will then also inform the parents of the misconduct. With the Pastoral Staff, the YMC will discuss how to handle the situation (which may vary depending on the situation). Appropriate actions will be taken, with the consent and understanding of the parents of the youth(s).
3. Even though we are dealing with a sin, a misconduct, there is still forgiveness and grace to be found in Christ when a brother or sister comes back to the Lord. In order to ensure the confidentiality of the situation, and to ensure that the youths and their parents are still treated with love and respect, we ask that parents who know about a situation be patient. It may take some time for the Youth Ministry staff and Pastoral staff to come up with the appropriate course of action, but rest assured that the situation is being handled. If a parent wishes to know what is being done, please ask the Youth Ministry staff directly and in private.
4. Any necessary news/updates will be given during Parents meetings/fellowship.

# Appendix A

## ACCC Youth Ministry Counselor Application Form

Thank you for your interest in working with the youth of ACCC. Your involvement is vital to a successful youth ministry. This form will help us to get to know you better so that we can give our youth the best possible experience in their faith journey. We hope and pray that God will lead and guide us in our ministry together.

### Personal Information

Name

Address

Home Phone

Work Phone

E-mail

Occupation

Employer

Hobbies/

Interests

Birth Date

How long have you been an active member of ACCC?

\_\_\_\_\_

Please list the States that you have lived in since you were 18 years old.

\_\_\_\_\_

Do you have any training that would assist you in your ministry with our youth?

CPR training

First aid training

Other

\_\_\_\_\_

Volunteer Experience

Please describe any previous volunteer experience, especially in regards to youth ministry.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Criminal Charges/Convictions

Have you ever been charged with, or convicted of child abuse, neglect, or a crime involving actual or attempted molestation of a minor?

Yes

No

Have you ever been charged with or convicted of any other crime?

Yes

No

If you answer yes to either question, you will need to need to provide a form describing those convictions or charges.

Transportation Information

Do you have a vehicle you would be willing to use to transport youth to a program activity?

Yes

No

If yes, how many seats with passenger restraints do this vehicle have? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have a valid driver's license?

Yes

No

Has your driver's license been revoked or suspended within the last 5 years for any reason?

Yes

No

Do you have proof of insurance that meets the State of Georgia's requirements?

Yes

No

If you answered yes to this question, please attach a copy.

Background Check

Would you be willing to submit to a background check?

Yes

No

Please provide three people from ACCC to act as a referral.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Applicant's Statement

I hereby acknowledge that the information provided by me on this Youth Ministry Counselor Application is true and correct to the best of my knowledge. I have been provided with a copy of the Atlanta Chinese Christian Church's Youth Ministry Policy, and I agree to abide by that Policy.

\_\_\_\_\_

(Signature)

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please attach a copy of your driver's license and social security card to this application.

# Appendix B Incident Form

(Please check office for additional incident forms)

Name:

Date:

Who was involved in the incident?

Describe the incident:

Who was contacted about the incident?

(For YMC only)

What steps are being taken

# Youth Ministry Contact Information

**Youth Director:**

Job Wong

**Student Ministry Deacon:**

Joey Low

**Parents Representatives:**

Alan Lin

Michael Ma

Bin-Sing Tang

**Counselors:**

Jonathan Chen

Eric Hsieh

Derek Lee

Cindy Shao

Daisy Yao

Mary Luo