### Relationships Between Children/Youth and Adults

*Relationships among people are at the foundation of Christian ministry and as such are central to the life of the church. Defining healthy and safe relationships through policies and codes of conduct is not meant, in any way, to undermine the strength and importance of personal interaction in our ministries. Rather, it is to assist in more clearly defining behaviors and practices, the church to more fully demonstrate its love and compassion for children and youth in sincere and genuine relationships.*

**All relationships between a child/youth and a staff person must be kept appropriate at all times.**

Relationships in ministry should, ideally, always be experienced as caring and without intention to do harm or allow harm to occur.

**Church Staff are prohibited from**

* dating or becoming romantically involved with a child or youth.
* having sexual contact (touching or exposure of the breast, buttocks or genitalia)
  + with a child or youth
  + with another adult on church property
* possessing any sexually oriented materials (magazines, cards, videos, films, clothing etc.)
  + on church property
  + in the presence of children or youth
  + except as expressly permitted as part of a pre-authorized educational program.
* using the Internet to view or download any sexually oriented materials on church property or in the presence of children or youth.
* discussing their own sexual activities
  + including dreams and fantasies
  + discussing their use of sexually oriented or explicit materials such as pornography, videos or materials on or from the Internet, with children or youth.

**Intimate relationships between a staff person and child/youth are inappropriate and must never occur.**

* Suspected intimate relationships must be reported to the Program Director. (this isn’t to accuse the adult of abuse, but rather to stop appearances, speculation and escalation)

**Relationships between a staff person and a child/youth shall be kept public**

* **“Secrets” between a staff person and a child/youth is never appropriate**
* **Private communication is not allowed.** 
  + This includes texting, messaging, or chatting.
  + If this does occur, you must tell the Program Director and/or parents as soon as possible

**Program Staff agree to not physically, sexually or emotionally abuse or neglect a child or youth** and agree to do their best to prevent abuse and neglect among children and youth.

**All Program Staff acknowledge their obligation and responsibility to protect children and youth** and agree to report known or suspected abuse of children or youth to appropriate church leaders and state authorities in accordance with this policy.

#### Crushes

Inevitably, young people form crushes on adult mentors and teachers. It’s important to treat these seriously. Never tease a child/youth or adult about a relationship or crush. Relationships and crushes are never an appropriate topic of conversation. Adults’ personal business should never be discussed in front of children/youth. Of course, child/adult relationships are forbidden.

**Child/youth Crushes on Adults**

* Treat these cases seriously.
* Do not tease the child/youth or the Adult.
* All staff, including the object of affection, should act professionally. Your behavior will help the Adult in question to interact with the child/youth appropriately.
* Do not encourage either party.
* If it becomes a problem, the cabin Adult of the same sex should talk with the child/youth.
* Crushes on Adults are not an appropriate topic of conversation
* Of course, child/youth/staff relationships are never OK.