



Volunteer Handbook

Policies & Procedures





Dear Grace Youth Leader,

We're so glad you're here—we've been praying for you! Here at Grace Ann Arbor, we are able to reach out to some awesome students through the power of Christ working in dedicated men and women such as yourself. Our Youth Group leadership depends on energetic, welcoming adults who have a heart for Jesus and a passion for walking along side our students as they go through life. With a focus on "Relational Ministry," our Youth Ministry goal for you as a leader is to both build relationships with our students and to model growing in Christ as an adult. This happens over time with intentional engagement, regular Youth Group participation, and lots of prayer. We are asking you as a youth leader to join us for the long haul, for as long as you're able- relationships are not built over night, and neither is a healthy and growing Youth Ministry. On a staff level, we are committed to supporting you, our leaders, as you grow in your faith, experience, disciplines, leadership, and passion for youth.

So what do you say? Are you ready to get going? As Jesus said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few." (Matt 9:37). Let's jump in together and start building relationships with some great kids. Oh, also, can you be at the Lock-in next weekend...? Just kidding! For now.

In Christ,

Heather Wing
Director of Youth
Grace Ann Arbor

Grace Youth Values

Safety

We are committed to providing a safe environment at Grace Youth for our students to grow and thrive. We have been given the stewardship, by parents and by God, of the most vulnerable and valuable asset in God's kingdom. We are committed to doing everything possible to ensure Grace Youth is a safe place for students. For this reason, we obtain applications and background checks on every volunteer, provide volunteer training, and maintain a safe and secure facility.

Truth

We believe students need a scriptural foundation so when the Holy Spirit begins to move in their hearts, they will be prepared to make a decision to surrender their lives and follow Jesus. The message of Jesus Christ is presented to students in relevant, age-specific ways. We are dedicated to showing students how the principles of God's word can be applied to their daily lives and involving them in God's Kingdom work from an early age.

Fun

Learning about Jesus is fun! God created all of us with creative imaginations, a variety of learning styles, and a desire to have fun. We want to present the truth of God's Word through methods which are consistent with how students are created to think and learn.

Discipleship

We believe there is no greater calling than to love and shepherd the next generation of Jesus followers. Our volunteers are here to create an environment where students will be accepted and loved as they ask questions and grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ.

Grace Youth Definitions

- **Youth/Student:** ages 11 – 18 years AND is still enrolled in Jr. or Sr. High School
- **Adult:** 18 years or older AND has finished High School
- **Youth Leader:**
 - Completed a volunteer application
 - Background check completed
 - Attended volunteer training
 - Regular attendee at Grace Ann Arbor, may or may not be a church member

Youth Leader Requirements

1. **Read the Volunteer Guidelines and Procedures Handbook**
2. **Fill out a volunteer application, background check authorization, and Youth Leadership Covenant.**

All adults involved in the Youth Ministry must complete an application, with references, and a Youth Leadership Covenant. All applicants will give permission for a background check. In addition, a background check must be completed for pastoral staff and other employees. The Youth Ministry Staff will screen the application, including references and background checks. The application form will be held as confidential and will be stored in a locked file. Any information indicating that a candidate poses a threat to others or has any prior history of physical or sexual abuse directed against another person will result in the immediate removal of the individual candidate from consideration for a ministry or volunteer position. Public databases will be utilized to screen for a history of abuse and suspected abuse.

3. **Complete any necessary training**

All Youth Ministry Staff and Volunteers at Grace Ann Arbor will receive appropriate orientation and training for their role (including the recognition, prevention and reporting of suspected child abuse). All volunteers and employees should review the Policies & Procedures Handbook annually.

Cellphones in the Classroom

Cellphones are permitted in the classroom, but they should be put on silent and not taken out while students are in the room unless instructed by the Youth Director for an activity or demonstration. Otherwise, cellphones are only allowed to be used in the case of an emergency.

Social Media Policy & Phone Contract

Grace Ann Arbor and Grace Youth use social media such as Facebook and Instagram to promote our events, share photos of past Youth Group events, and to keep our staff, students, youth leaders, and parents connected throughout the school year. Parents/ guardians who do not want their student's image used on the Grace Ann Arbor web page and social media accounts, or their student having connections with other leaders or staff on social media need to complete the Social Media/Phone Opt-Out form (see page 16).

Grace staff and youth leadership strive for positive relational ministry with our students. Staff and leadership may use parents' or students' cell phone numbers to stay connected, arrange mentoring meetings, attend students' sporting events, etc. Parents/guardians who do not want their students to have cell phone contact with Grace staff or leadership need to complete the Social Media/Phone Opt-Out form (see page 16).

Sunday Expectations

4:40 PM	Youth Leaders arrive and prepare for Youth Group
5:00 PM	Youth Group begins with social time and/or games
5:30 PM	Lesson for the evening is presented
6:00 PM	Break out discussion and prayer
6:30 PM	Students are dismissed

Service Expectations:

- Arrive 20 minutes before scheduled start of Youth Group.
- Clean and straighten the room after Youth Group is over.
- Report and concerns or ideas for improvement to the Youth Director.

Security

In order to keep Grace Youth a safe and secure environment for parents and students, the following security measures are constantly in effect:

1. No adult is allowed to work in an environment without a completed application and background check.
2. Every classroom should follow the following rules regarding staffing:
 - Two-adult rule – In a room with students are present, there must be:
 - One Adult Youth Leader present, **door (or top of half-doors) must remain open**
 - Two Adult (non-related) Youth Leaders present, **door may remain open or closed**

Transportation

If Youth Leaders are transporting students in a vehicle, there must either be two or more students, or the student must be the same sex as the youth leader.

Evacuation of the Building

Should the building need to be evacuated, all Youth Ministry staff and volunteers will follow the exit signs and lead all students to exit at the closest possible door. They will congregate at either the Grace Kids playground behind the rear parking lot or the grassy area on the opposite side of the front parking lot. All students must wait for their parents to arrive before leaving the premises.

Tornado Warning

In the event of a tornado warning during Youth Group, all Youth Ministry staff, volunteers, and students will move into the Lower Elementary classroom and stay along the designated tornado wall until the warning is lifted. Parents should remain in the sanctuary until the warning is lifted.

General Wellness Guidelines

To ensure the health of all students and volunteers, we ask that sick students do not attend Youth Group. The Committee on Control of Infectious Diseases of the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends a child/youth should not leave home when any of the following symptoms exist:

1. Fever (over 100.4 degrees) within the last 24 hours
2. Vomiting or diarrhea within the last 24 hours
3. Any symptom of childhood diseases such as scarlet fever, German measles, mumps, chicken pox or whooping cough
4. Common cold, including **colored** runny nose
5. Sore throat
6. Croup
7. Any unexplained rash
8. Any skin infection – boils, ringworm or impetigo
9. Untreated pink eye or other eye infection
10. Any communicable disease
11. Lice, including the presence of eggs or nits

Medication

Grace Youth staff and volunteers WILL NOT administer any medication except in life threatening situations when there is not enough time for a parent to come to the room and give it.

In a situation where a student has a potentially life-threatening condition and medication may need to be given such as an EpiPen, a Medication Authorization Form should be completed and signed by the parent outlining the symptoms present when medication is needed and how it is to be dispensed (see page 26). The form is to be given directly to the Youth Director by the parent so the Director can read the directions and ask for clarification, if necessary. The signed form is then posted in the classroom for future reference.

Accidents/Health Conditions

If you encounter a life-threatening situation (loss of consciousness, significant blood loss, difficulty breathing), **immediately call 911** from a cell phone and give them the following information:

- Type of injury or health condition
- Information about the injured person: age, gender, etc.

Minor accidents (bumps, bites, bruises, scrapes, etc.) can be handled in the room. Band-Aids are kept in each room's first aid kit; ice packs can be found in the kitchen. Always contact the parent in these situations to make them aware of the minor accident.

The person who witnessed the accident needs to fill out an Incident Report and turn it into the Youth Director before leaving for the day. Be honest with the parents about the situation that occurred; reassure them of our desire to provide the best care possible. Recognize that parents may be upset but do not let that deter you from being honest with them. Do not offer medical advice to parents. Simply offer your apology or concern.

Youth with Special Needs

Students with special needs are to be a part of the whole, not separated from the group. The student is to be included in all activities.

Any student who needs assistance in being able to fully participate within Grace Youth or for the protection of them or others needs someone to oversee their care. The student will be matched with a volunteer to work one-on-one within Grace Youth to give them the best experience possible for learning about God's love.

The goal is for all students to actively participate in Youth Group without special assistance. If you see a student in Youth Group who may require assistance, let the Youth Director know what you have observed. The Director will find the best way for this student to thrive in Youth Group.

When Youth Require Discipline or Guidance

1. Use a firm but gentle voice to address the behavior.
2. Remove the student from the activity.
3. Focus your remarks on the behavior **you want to see**.
4. Do not use words or a tone of voice that shame or frighten.
5. Do not use sarcasm or scream.
6. Never make remarks that put down the individual as a person or make negative references about appearance, race, or gender.
7. Never use corporal punishment of any kind.
8. If the student will not listen, then notify the Youth Director who will address the situation with the parents.
9. Use touch in affirming ways.
 - Appropriate examples: high fives, pat on the back or shoulders, etc.
 - Inappropriate examples: demanding/expecting hugs, slapping on the buttocks, kissing, etc.

Reporting Potential Abuse

1. Report your suspicions of abuse/neglect to the Youth Director.
2. Report any suspicions that a student reports to you about potential abuse to the staff.
3. Report any inappropriate behavior of a fellow volunteer to the staff.
4. Do not wait or second-guess your observations.

How are you involved in personal Christian growth?

List any gifts, callings, education or other factors that have prepared you for youth work.

Name/address of church of which you are a member:

List (name and location) other churches you have attended regularly during the past five years:

List all previous church work involving youth. List each church's name and address, type of work, and dates. Churches may be contacted as references.

List all previous non-church work involving youth. List each organization's name and address, type of work, dates. Organizations may be contacted as references.

Have you ever been fired from a childcare position? ____ Yes ____ No
(If yes, please explain.) _____

Have you ever been convicted of or pleaded guilty to a crime? ____ Yes ____ No
(If yes, please explain.) _____

PERSONAL REFERENCES (Non-relatives, employers, supervisors, church workers)

Name of Community Group Leader(s) _____

Email Address _____

Phone (_____) _____

Name _____ Relationship _____

Email Address _____

Phone (_____) _____

The information contained in the application is correct to the best of my knowledge. I authorize the listed references to give you any information (including opinions) they have regarding my character and fitness for your work. I waive any right I may have to inspect any information provided about me by any person identified in this application. In consideration of the receipt and evaluation of this application by Grace Ann Arbor, I hereby release any individual, church, youth organization, charity, employer, reference, or any other person or organization, including record custodians, both collectively and individually, from any and all liability for damages of whatever kind or nature which may at any time result to me, my heirs, or family, on account compliance or any attempts to comply, with this authorization.

I hereby acknowledge that I have received, read, and understand Grace Ann Arbor's Policies & Procedures Handbook, that I am fully in agreement with it, that I will comply with it, and that I, to the best of my ability and with the Lord's help, will seek to assist the church in its efforts to prevent abuse to the youth involved in its programs.

I further state that **I have carefully read the foregoing release and know the contents thereof and I sign this release as my own free act.** This is a legally binding agreement, which I have read and understand.

Applicant's Signature _____ Date _____



Grace Ann Arbor Youth Leadership Covenant

After learning about the Grace Ann Arbor Youth Ministry program and reading about the commitment involved with being on this team, I have spent time in prayer, and discussed with my family the commitment involved as a volunteer Youth Leader.

I choose to commit to the following:

- I acknowledge the Lordship of Jesus Christ in my life and have a personal relationship with him.
- I am committed toward growing and maturing in my relationship with God through quiet times, active attendance at Grace Ann Arbor, and involvement in accountable relationships.
- I am committed to choices and lifestyle that are both godly and above reproach, knowing that my lifestyle is a model for students.
- I am making a commitment to the youth ministry for at least the full school year.
- I will attend the 3 main youth leadership meetings during the school year (Sept, Jan, April).
- I will attend most youth group meetings each month during the school year on Sundays from 5-6:30pm, and will arrive for the leaders' meeting at 4:40pm.
- If I am unable to attend a youth group meeting or event, I will text, email, or call the Youth Director in advance.
- I understand the guidelines regarding interacting safely with students, and will follow them.

Youth Leader Signature

Date

Grace Youth Incident Report

General Information

Youth's Name: _____ Parents' Names: _____

Supervising Adults: _____

Information on Incident

Date: _____ Time: _____ Location: _____

Parents Notified by: _____ Time: _____

Describe the incident:

Describe the extent of the injury:

Describe the first aid and course of treatment:

Signature of person completing report: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Youth Director: _____ Date: _____



Youth Group Permission Slip

I hereby certify I am the parent/legal guardian of _____ (name of youth), and I give him/her permission to participate in all activities and events with the Grace Ann Arbor Church youth group both on and off-site of Grace Ann Arbor Church. I give permission for his/her photograph to be taken at any such events to be used for publicity purposes unless otherwise indicated on the Social Media/Phone Opt Out Form.

I authorize any treatment by an accredited hospital and/or physician deemed necessary for the subject of the release in the case of an emergency. I agree not to hold Grace Ann Arbor Church, its leaders, employees, and volunteer staff liable for damages, losses, or injuries incurred by the subject of this form sustained as a result of or during any such events or activities, including transportation to and from the event or activity.

Parent/Legal Guardian Signature: _____

Parent/Legal Guardian Printed Name: _____

Date: _____

Youth's Date of Birth: _____

Insurance Company & Policy Number: _____

Important medical information/allergies: _____

Medication(s) you may be providing to church staff for treatment: _____

Emergency phone numbers of parents: _____

Medical Authorization Form

Youth's Full Name: _____

Parent's Full Name: _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Child is allergic to: _____

Instructions:

I authorize a Grace Kids staff member or adult volunteer to administer medication in case of emergency as described above. I understand that Grace Kids staff and volunteers are not medical professionals.

Parents Signature _____ Date _____



**Grace Ann Arbor Youth
Social Media / Phone Opt-Out**

I am the parent/legal guardian of (please print the names of all youth) _____,
and I hereby request my child(ren) (check all that apply):

- NOT have their image used in any Grace Ann Arbor publication or Grace Ann Arbor social media account.

- NOT have contact with Grace Ann Arbor staff or leadership over phone calls or text.

Signature: _____

Printed Name: _____

Date: _____