

## Policy & Procedure

The purpose of this document is to provide a snapshot and easy to remember policy and procedure principles to follow. It is easy to remember by the acronym MARS. While these principles are meant to be comprehensive, they do not and cannot cover every possible subject or situation which may occur. In the absence of a specific principle pertaining to a unique event Venture Students volunteers should use common sense, good judgment, and a loving attitude. The principles are expectations for serving within the Student Ministry at Venture Christian Church. Venture Christian Church is responsible for the safety of every student within its care. The choices and decisions we make must reflect that responsibility.

- MORAL: Moral pursuit so that in all things God can be glorified.
- ATTENDANCE: Attendance because it's imperative not to leave anyone behind.
- RESPECT: Respect yourself, others and nature/environment.
- SAFETY: Safety encompasses care, security, protection, well-being, danger, shelter, etc.

### Confidentiality & Mandated Reporting:

- Venture Student leaders understand that when a student confides in them that they are doing so in confidence. Unfortunately, not all conversations can remain confidential. Venture Student leaders who have "reason to believe" or evidence that a student is sexually active, is threatening to hurt him/herself (suicide, cutting, etc.), or reveals a personal crisis/endangerment (pregnancy, drug abuse additions, criminal activity, etc.) are required to report it to the Student Minister. Because we are dealing with minors, we will use the utmost discretion as to who to involve in various issues. We desire to build trust with students, but not to the extent of keeping parents excluded from their child's life. We must also be aware that there are times when protecting confidences and remaining quiet about a teenager's problem steals from the parents their appointed role. We dare not take this liberty. To be sure, we have a sacred responsibility to maintain strictest confidence when students share with us their secrets, but certain kinds of information must be shared with parents or we hinder their ability to carry out their God-ordained responsibilities. Confidentiality must be broken in order to report the above mentioned.
- If in a group setting, stop students if they are beginning to share personal or family information that may or may not be confidential. Request a conversation with the student after group time is over. You are responsible to protect the confidentiality of that student and their family even if they don't understand what they are sharing is confidential.

- Venture Students has zero tolerance for abuse/neglect/bullying/hurting themselves or hurting others. It is the responsibility of every Venture Student leader to act in the best interest of students. Venture Student Youth Coaches who have “reason to believe” or evidence that a student is being abused or neglected is mandated by law to make a report to the Indiana Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline (800) 800-5556. If you are calling regarding an emergency situation or if you believe the student is in imminent danger, please dial 911 immediately. Venture Students understands that appropriate government agencies must respond and investigate reports of abuse/neglect of a student to the Indiana Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS). Venture Students will at all times fully cooperate with such governmental agencies, and in no way attempt to interfere in or obstruct such agencies or their investigations. This duty to report is not limited to events or activities at Venture Students or under our supervision. A failure to report can be considered a criminal offense and potentially subject to civil liability.

### Negligence and the Law

Negligence is “an unintentional breach of a legal duty causing damage reasonably foreseeable without which breach the damage would not have occurred.” In lay terms it means that when young people are under VCC supervision, you have the responsibility to make decisions about safety and to avoid danger that any reasonable person would do. If a person is injured because a leader did not exhibit those safeguards, the leader is negligent and responsible. You don’t have to be a lawyer to have basic understanding of negligence and the standards by which a leader will be accountable for “reasonable action.”

### Reporting Violations

- The Primary option would be a face to face conversation.
- If face-to-face conversation isn’t feasible a phone call, text, or email would work.
- If a response is not received within a reasonable amount of time then contact Venture Students Associate, Executive Pastor and/or elder.

### Phones (for students)

We strongly encourage students to leave phones at home for our trips because it provides the opportunity to disconnect from social media and the digital world. This gives students a week of strategic focus on what truly matters most, their relationship with God and growing their spiritual walk with Him.

If a student would feel more comfortable attending our trip with the ability to contact home, leaders or participate in the camps' digital programming - we completely understand that. The following phone guidelines are to be followed by all students while on the trip:

- **We want you to be present**
  - Limit your phone use for: meals, free time and transportation.

- We expect you to not use your phone during Main Sessions and Small Groups
  - Unless directed to use them during programming purposes
- If it becomes overused or abused (i.e. you are not as present as you could be) then a Youth Coach, after 2 warning conversations, can take your phone away. *If a phone is taken away, you can ask a Youth Coach to use their phone to contact home if need be.*
- **Photos: We would love for you to take photos of our trips!**
  - Again that we are trusting you to abide by M.A.R.S. with phone usage
- **Bus: We want you to be present with others around you, interact and have fun.**

### Concluding Remarks...

Venture Students leaders are charged with diligent enforcement of all Venture Students policies and procedures. Violations are grounds for immediate dismissal from Venture Students leadership which may include the immediate exclusion from future programs/events at the discretion of the Student Director under the advisement of their supervisor and elder representative(s). Final decisions related to policy violations will be the responsibility of the Student Director, their supervisor and/or elder team. If the Student Director is not available, the report should be immediately communicated to the Student Director's Executive Pastor and/or elder.