

# FSM LEADER BOUNDARIES AND SAFETY POLICIES

## CONFIDENTIALITY BOUNDARIES

- There is a tension between maintaining relational trust with a student and protecting them.
- Understand that you are partnering with the parents in helping their student mature.
- NEVER agree to keep something in confidence. Always communicate with students before they share with you that you WILL share with others if that is the best way to love and help them. The most likely person we would share information with would be their parents.

## RELATIONAL BOUNDARIES

- Leaders should never be alone with students of the opposite sex.
- Leaders should keep appropriate communication boundaries within relationships with students; yet still remain transparent to the student.
  - Students are not accountability partners.
  - Students should not get dragged into a leader's personal issues.
  - Students should not learn of the intimate details of leaders sex life, marriage, etc.
- Sleepovers:
  - Every sleepover should involve at least 2 students and at least 2 leaders.
  - Parent permission is required for sleepovers.
- Leaders are not allowed to date students.
- Leaders need to keep appropriate emotional and time time boundaries with students.
  - Leaders are not replacement family members. We partner with parents.
  - Texting between leaders and students of the opposite sex should be kept at a minimum and be informational in nature only.
- If you feel anything inappropriate has occurred, or if you feel uneasy because of a certain situation, call a **staff member**.
- Leaders should always seek to be above reproach in discipleship relationships. Meet in public places and communicate clearly with parents about your location and time.
- Social media is very public in nature, giving everyone access to see what takes place. Leaders of the opposite sex should be wise about who they follow and the frequency of the interaction or communication between them and a student.

## SPECIFIC HEALTH AND SAFETY ISSUES

### RISK BEHAVIOR

Not everyone will have to deal with suicide, abuse or homosexuality in their cell group, but everyone, at some point or another, will have to deal with some form of risk behavior with a student(s).

#### Possible involvements:

- Drugs
- Alcohol
- Tobacco

- Sex
- Reckless activities
- Eating disorders

#### Cell Leader Response

1. Use the relationship you have obtained to approach the student.
2. Give wisdom that you have to the student.
3. Offer to hold the person accountable.
4. Get a staff person involved if problems persist.
5. Team effort to solve the problem (staff, cell leader, parents)  
\*Pray for wisdom to determine how much to involve the parents.

## SUICIDE

The majority of the time, you will learn about a student who is considering suicide from another student (note, text or a direct conversation with the student)

#### Warning Signs

1. Threatening, talking or joking about suicide.
2. Expressions of intense guilt or hopelessness.
3. A sudden, major loss of humiliation
4. **A previous suicide attempt.** This is considered the most significant predictor of a future suicide.
5. **A family history of suicide.** Teenagers who kill themselves are five time more likely than their peers to have history of a family member who has committed suicide.

#### Cell Leader Response

1. Call a **staff member** immediately! We want to get involved on the consultation level.
2. Staff member and/or cell leader **will** talk with the student.
3. Staff member and/or cell leader **will** tell their parents, if they choose not to.
4. We **will** get them help.

*We want to maintain the trusting relationship that has already been established with the student, but not neglect the stewardship responsibilities we have been given by their parents. Proper communication between the cell leader and/or staff member to the student needs to be made, informing the student that we will get their parents involved.*

***\*\*We never want a student to commit suicide and tell a parent we knew it, but withheld the information!***

## HOMOSEXUALITY OR SAME SEX ATTRACTION

We believe that homosexuality is a sin. 1 Corinthians 6:9 lists homosexuality as a sin. Though it is a sin, 1 Corinthians goes on to say that Jesus Christ came to forgive and grant freedom and hope to those who struggle with homosexuality or same sex attraction.

#### Cell Leader Involvement

1. Get a staff member involved in the process.
2. Seek Biblical counseling in a 2 on 1 setting. (*find the balance between addressing the sin and communication the love that God still possesses for the person*).
3. Seek to address the real need behind the feelings.

## PHYSICAL OR EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Physical or mental injury, sexual abuse or exploitation, negligent treatment, or maltreatment of a child under the age of eighteen, *by a parent, other adult or a peer.*

### Possible Signs

- The student has bruises from a potential abusive situation.
- The student seems unduly fearful of certain people or family members.
- The student appears undernourished or not taken care of.
- The student is withdrawn and depressed or overactive and aggressive.
- The parents are rigid, highly demanding of the children and inclined to punish harshly.

### Cell Leader Response

1. Obtain as much information in the moment from the student while avoiding an interrogation approach (the Child Abuse Hotline requires full names, date of birth and address of child).
2. Call a **staff member** upon leaving the student.
3. Share all known information about the situation to a staff member who will then make a follow up call to their appropriate team leader to assess the information.
4. Together we will take appropriate actions

## LIABILITY

- Accidents **do** happen.
- 2 things you need to know:
  1. You cannot secure medical treatment that is non-life threatening without a signed medical release form from a parent of a student who is under the age of 18. If you travel outside the reach of their parents, make sure that you have a signed medical release from FSM. You can get this from the student ministry office or online.
  2. The church has supplemental insurance to cover accidents that happen within the realm of our ministry – should it occur, contact a **staff member immediately.**

## DRIVING

- Obey traffic laws.
- Be sure everyone riding in your car is wearing a seatbelt.