



Children's/Student Ministry Policies & Procedures

Approved by Constitution & Bylaws, Policies & Procedures Team
September 29, 2025



Dear Staff Member or Volunteer,

At Gilliam Springs, we take our responsibility to care for minors very seriously. These guidelines are intended to facilitate a safe and nurturing environment in which students and children can grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ.

This handbook provides a general overview of procedures and guidelines for Gilliam Springs staff members and volunteers. Our policies are intended to create a safe environment for minors. The following procedures have been adopted and will be strictly enforced.

After you have carefully read this policy manual, please sign and return the agreement form located on the last page.

Sincerely,

Staff & Leadership of Gilliam Springs Baptist Church

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Overview

Because we love children and students and desire to protect them, Gilliam Springs requires all staff members and volunteers working with children or students (and other vulnerable populations) to complete **FOUR SAFETY STEPS** before ministry work or volunteer placements begin.

STEP ONE: Sexual Abuse Awareness Training

Gilliam Springs Policies and Procedures require that staff members and volunteers avoid abusive behavior of any kind. Staff members and volunteers are required to report any policy violations to a supervisor or a member of the Gilliam Springs Safety Team.

Staff members and volunteers must have a basic understanding of the characteristics of sexual abusers and their behaviors in 'grooming' a minor for sexual abuse. Grooming is the process used by an abuser to select a minor, win the minor's trust (and the trust of the minor's parent or 'gatekeeper'), manipulate the minor into sexual activity and keep the minor from disclosing the abuse.

To equip Gilliam Springs staff members and volunteers with information necessary to recognize abuser characteristics and grooming behavior, Gilliam Springs requires all staff members and volunteers to complete MinistrySafe's Sexual Abuse Awareness Training every two (2) years.

STEP TWO: Screening Process

Staff members and volunteers are required to complete the Gilliam Springs Screening Process, which includes:

- Employment Application (staff members only)
- Background Check Release
- Personal Interview
- Reference Checks

*A volunteer must attend Gilliam Springs for six (6) months before being eligible to serve in positions providing access to children, students, or vulnerable populations.

STEP THREE: Policies & Procedures

Staff members and volunteers are required to review the policies contained in this manual and sign the last page, indicating that he or she has read and understood the material and agrees to comply with policy requirements.

STEP FOUR: Background Check

Gilliam Springs requires that all staff members and volunteers working or volunteering in children or student activities or programming who are over the age of 18 undergo a Background Check. Depending upon position, differing levels or intensity of Background Check may be required. Individuals who have committed sexually-oriented or sex-related crimes are not permitted to serve in any area providing services to children or students. In addition, certain other past criminal acts *may* preclude an applicant from serving minors. Background checks are renewed every three (3) years.

Individual screening records are securely maintained in the church office for a minimum of seven (7) years.

Safety Team

PURPOSE

Recognizing the importance of providing and maintaining a safe environment for children, Gilliam Springs will appoint and maintain a Safety Team, which will meet once each quarter.

The purpose of the Safety Team is to enable Gilliam Springs Children's & Student Ministries to carry out appropriate ministry activities while safeguarding program participants against emotional, physical, or sexual abuse.

COMPOSITION

The Safety Team will be comprised of the following members:

- the Pastor
- the Executive Pastor
- the Director of Children & Family Ministries
- the Student Minister
- the Chairman of Deacons

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Safety Team will be charged with the following duties:

1. Applying existing Gilliam Springs Policies and Procedures related to safety and risk management issues of minors.
2. Monitoring all Children's & Student Ministries programs for ongoing compliance with safety policies.
3. Making recommendations to the Gilliam Springs Constitution, Bylaws, Policies, & Procedures Team regarding safety issues.

Child/Student Safety Policy

ABUSE TOLERANCE

Gilliam Springs supports and maintains a **zero-tolerance** policy concerning the abuse and/or neglect of minors. It is a violation of Alabama law for any staff member or volunteer to physically, sexually, or emotionally abuse or neglect any child participating in Gilliam Springs programs. It is the responsibility of every staff member and volunteer at Gilliam Springs to act in the best interest of all children in every program.

In the event staff members or volunteers observe any inappropriate behaviors (i.e., policy violations, neglectful supervision, poor role-modeling, etc.) or suspected abuse (physical, emotional, or sexual), it is their responsibility to immediately report their observations to their immediate supervisor or a member of the Safety Team.

ENFORCEMENT OF POLICIES

Gilliam Springs staff members and volunteers who supervise other staff members or volunteers are charged with the diligent enforcement of all Gilliam Springs policies. Anyone working with children or students at Gilliam Springs is subject to the supervision and evaluation of the ministry staff members and must follow these guidelines. Violations of these policies are grounds for immediate dismissal, disciplinary action, or reassignment from a position in Children's or Student Ministries – for both staff members and volunteers. Final decisions related to policy violations will be the responsibility of the Safety Team.

Reporting Abuse or Suspicions of Abuse

REPORTING SUSPICIOUS OR INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIORS

Gilliam Springs is committed to providing a safe, secure environment for minors and their families. To this end, any report of inappropriate behaviors or suspicions of abuse will be taken seriously and will be reported, in accordance with this policy and state law, to the Marshall County Department of Human Resources or local law enforcement.

An element of the safe environment referenced above includes the fostering of a culture of reporting relevant information to a supervisor or the Safety Team. Because sexual abusers 'groom' minors for abuse, it is possible a staff member or volunteer may witness behavior intended to 'groom' a minor for sexual abuse. Staff members and volunteers are asked to report suspected grooming behavior, any suspected policy violations, or any suspicious behaviors to a supervisor or a member of the Safety Team.

During this process, all effort shall be made to maintain the public anonymity of all parties involved to the extent possible.

REPORTING VIOLATION OF POLICY

In order to maintain a safe environment for our minors, Gilliam Springs staff members and volunteers must be aware of their individual responsibility to report any questionable circumstance, observation, act, omission, or situation that is a violation of these policies. All questions or concerns related to inappropriate, suspicious, or suspected grooming behavior must be directed to an immediate Supervisor in the Ministry area or a member of the Safety Team.

CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLATION

Any person accused of committing a prohibited act or any act considered by the church to be harmful to a child will be immediately suspended from participation in Gilliam Springs Children's or Student Ministries. This suspension will continue during any investigation by law enforcement, Child Protective agencies or Gilliam Springs.

Any person found to have committed a prohibited act shall be precluded from future participation as a staff member or volunteer in all activities and programming that involves children, students, or vulnerable populations at Gilliam Springs. If the person is a staff member or employee, such conduct may also result in termination of employment from Gilliam Springs.

Failure to report a prohibited act to the designated person is a violation of this policy and grounds for termination (employee) or removal (volunteer). Volunteers who fail to report a prohibited act may be restricted from participation in any activities involving children, students, or vulnerable populations at Gilliam Springs.

Staff members and volunteers must discuss immediately with their supervisor any inappropriate action or breaking of this policy. The supervisor will then seek counsel from the Safety Team and an attorney, if needed.

INTERACTION WITH THE NEWS MEDIA

Should a reporting event require contact with the news media, the Safety Team will designate an official spokesperson for Gilliam Springs Baptist Church. Other individuals must not speak to the media on behalf of the church.

MINISTRYSAFE

Gilliam Springs has contracted with MinistrySafe to provide training resources, screening resources, and advice regarding next steps in the case of a reportable event. The Safety Team will utilize the resources of MinistrySafe to assist in making decisions regarding a plan of action (documentation, potential legal action, insurance claims, etc.).

REPORTING ALLEGATIONS OR SUSPICIONS OF ABUSE

We report all suspected or alleged abuse or neglect of children to the Marshall County Department of Human Resources (DHR) or local law enforcement:

Marshall County DHR

(256) 582-7100 (M-F 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.)

(256) 582-2034 (after hours emergency)

Because many adults are unfamiliar with Alabama reporting requirements and may be fearful of the process, Gilliam Springs utilizes a ‘tandem or dual report’ model, where permitted. A ‘dual report’ occurs when a Gilliam Springs supervisor reports the suspicion or allegation *together* with the individual who saw, heard or received information causing him or her to suspect abuse or neglect.

THIS PRACTICE IS NOT REQUIRED OR INTENDED TO INHIBIT ANY STAFF MEMBER OR VOLUNTEER FROM REPORTING TO LAW ENFORCEMENT OR DHR *DIRECTLY*. Instead, it is meant to facilitate reporting, protect children and support individuals who may not feel able or willing to report alone.

NO PERMISSION IS NEEDED from Gilliam Springs before reporting to law enforcement personnel or DHR. In addition, a report may be made without involving or informing Gilliam Springs personnel.

While not required by state law, please report all suspicions of child abuse or suspected neglect (or any inappropriate or ‘grooming’ behaviors of a colleague or coworker) to an immediate supervisor or a member of the Gilliam Springs Safety Team. This request is intended to assist the church in properly protecting children involved in Gilliam Springs programs.

When in doubt, report.

Children's/Student Ministry Staff Monitoring Plan

BUILDING SAFETY

Every ministry supervisor is responsible for ensuring that the ministry program area is monitored during programming serving children or students. This includes unobserved monitoring of staff members, volunteers, and children or students. No child or student will *ever* be left unattended in a ministry area or on a playground during regular programming, classes or activities.

SUPERVISION

Only parents/guardians (dropping off children), screened ministry volunteers, church staff members, and children or students are allowed in areas where ministry to children or students is occurring. All other adults shall be asked for identification and immediately escorted out of the area. If questions or concerns arise related to any person in the area, a ministry supervisor or security team member shall be notified immediately.

Two trained, screened, unrelated adults shall supervise children at all times.

Gilliam Springs practices the *Two Adult Rule*, which requires a reasonable number of unrelated adult leaders (with a minimum of two) to be maintained when supervising minors. A married couple or two family members comprise *one adult* for purposes of compliance with the *Two Adult Rule*.

Avoid being alone with an individual minor in any room or during any ministry program. If one supervising adult must leave a group of children or students, another staff member or volunteer must be notified so that the *Two Adult Rule* can be followed.

If two individuals serving in a room are related, a third unrelated, screened volunteer or staff member must also be present.

If an unusual circumstance occurs and you find yourself alone with a single child or student, take him/her to a room or building occupied by others, or to a location easily observed by others. (Example: if a child or student is the last in a class to be picked up by a parent, move to an adjoining room where other staff members or volunteers are present.)

If you need to talk with a child or student alone, do it in the hallway or a highly visible area, or have another leader with you.

Avoid distractions that would impact your ability to effectively supervise children or students and maintain situational awareness (i.e., use of cell phones, wearing headphones, etc).

After every ministry event, ensure that every room, area and restroom is checked prior to leaving.

Children

PLAYGROUNDS

The playground is only for the use of children through kindergarten. On the playground, remember to circulate, watching children during play periods, giving particular attention to areas not easily seen from all viewpoints. (Example: under slides, in corners, behind structures.)

Any two children together in an unseen or less easily viewed area shall be redirected to another (more open) area of the playground.

WORKER-TO-CHILD RATIOS FOR CHILDREN

Gilliam Springs is committed to providing appropriate supervision in all Children's Ministry programs. Accordingly, the following worker-to-child minimum ratios will be observed:

Program	Workers	Children
Nursery	2	8
Preschool, 2 & 3 years old	2	12
Preschool, 4 & 5 years old	2	18
Elementary	2	20
VBS	2	20

If a worker is *out of ratio* it is his or her responsibility to immediately notify the program supervisor or the Director of Children and Family Ministries. Supervisors will make diligent efforts to find substitute workers to immediately bring worker-to-children ratios into compliance with Gilliam Springs policy.

CHECK-IN

Upon check-in, each child will receive a name tag. Parents or guardians of preschoolers will be given a claim tag. Staff or volunteers may request to see a parent or guardian's claim tag before releasing a child at pick-up. K-5 children will only be released by staff or volunteers to a parent or designated family member.

If a claim tag is lost, send the parent or guardian to the CDC desk, where proper identification must be shown to a staff member before the child is released. (Have the child stay in the classroom; the parent/guardian may pick up the child once cleared.)

RELEASE OF CHILDREN

Any time a child has been entrusted to Gilliam Springs staff members or volunteers, the church incurs responsibility for the safety and well-being of the child. Staff members and volunteers must act to ensure the appropriate supervision and safety of children in their charge.

Children’s Ministry staff members or volunteers are responsible for releasing children in their care only to parents, legal guardians, or other persons designated by parents or legal guardians at the close of services or activities.

It is presumed that a person who drops off a child or student has authority to pick up the child.

In the event staff members or volunteers are uncertain of the propriety of releasing a child, they shall immediately locate or contact their immediate supervisor or the Director of Children and Family Ministries *before* releasing the child.

Students

WORKER-TO-CHILD RATIOS FOR STUDENTS

Gilliam Springs is committed to providing appropriate supervision in all Student Ministry programs. Accordingly, the following worker-to-student **minimum ratios** will be observed:

Students	Workers
1 - 29	at least 2 staff members or volunteers (Two Adult Rule)
30+	at least 3 staff members or volunteers

If a worker is ‘out of ratio’ it is his or her responsibility to immediately notify the program supervisor or the Student Minister. Supervisors will make diligent efforts to find substitute workers to immediately bring ratios into compliance with Gilliam Springs policy.

Communicating with Families

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Parents are invited to observe all programs and activities in which their child or student is involved from outside the ministry space. However, parents who desire to participate in or have continuous, ongoing contact with their student’s or child’s programs at Gilliam Springs will be required to complete the Gilliam Springs volunteer application and screening process.

Parents who leave a child or student in the care of Gilliam Springs staff members and volunteers during church services or activities will be contacted if their child becomes ill, injured, or has a severe disciplinary problem while participating in ministry programs.

Disciplinary Policies

DISCIPLINE

Children

It is Gilliam Springs' policy that staff members and volunteers are prohibited from using physical discipline in any manner for behavioral management of children. **No form of physical discipline is acceptable.** This prohibition includes spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, or any other physical force as retaliation or correction for inappropriate behaviors by children. When a child is misbehaving, follow these steps:

1. Go to the child and calmly ask him or her to stop the behavior. (Most children respond immediately and correct the behavior.) Give a warning and remind the child of class expectations and redirect to a positive behavior. Do this individually, when possible. Try not to single out a specific child in a large group setting.
**When working with younger children, some physical redirection may be necessary: for example, removing a toy from the hands of a child who is hitting another.*
2. If the child repeats the action, guide him or her to a quiet place – separate from the other children – for a short but designated period of time. Stay within sight of others and avoid being alone (or unseen) with the child.
3. Provide the child with a simple, understandable reason for the separation, and a clear explanation of your expectations. (“Georgia, you didn’t stop hitting Cole when I asked you to, so it was necessary for me to separate you from the group.”)
4. After a third time, refer to a staff member. A staff member may inform a parent or guardian, who may be asked to become involved in redirecting misbehavior.

Uncontrollable or unusual behavior must be reported to the ministry supervisor.

NEVER...

- **Yell at a child.**
- **Grab a child.**
- **Threaten a child. Always follow through with your word.**
- **Hit a child.**
- **Confront a parent in front of others.**
- **Openly humiliate a child in front of the class.**

Students

It is Gilliam Springs' policy that staff members and volunteers are prohibited from using physical discipline in any manner for behavioral management of students. **No form of physical discipline is acceptable.** This prohibition includes the use of any physical force as retaliation or correction for inappropriate behaviors.

Uncontrollable or unusual behavior must be reported immediately to parents and a Student Ministry staff member. Any behavior problems will be handled in the following sequence:

1. The student will be asked to correct the behavior.
2. A staff member will talk with the student to discuss the problem behavior.
3. Parents will be notified of discipline or behavior problems.
4. The student will not be allowed to attend a ministry event. (This is a final measure, but not desired.)

NEVER...

- **Yell at a student.**
- **Grab a student.**
- **Threaten a student. Always follow through with your word.**
- **Hit a student.**
- **Confront a parent in front of others.**
- **Openly humiliate a student in front of their peers.**

If a student is unruly or fails to comply with verbal warnings or instructions, that student will be asked to leave (if not endangered by doing so) or the student's parent will be contacted to pick up the student. Any damage to property will be reported to parents, who will be responsible for repairs, including damage incurred at off-campus ministry events.

In the event of a fight or physical altercation, verbally redirect those involved and avoid physical intervention unless necessary for the safety of *other* students. In these instances, staff members and volunteers are allowed to restrain a student with appropriate physical force, as needed.

BULLYING

Verbal, physical or emotional bullying is not acceptable in Gilliam Springs ministry programs. At the first sign of bullying in any form, act decisively, and inform your ministry supervisor. There is no *harmless put-down* where bullying is concerned.

1. *First Offense*: Issue a warning to the child or student and a general reminder to the group that this kind of interaction is wrong. Try not to embarrass or chastise.
2. *Second Offense*: Pull the offending child(ren) or student(s) from the group (in a seen or supervised location) and discuss the inappropriate interaction or behavior. Set clear

parameters and behavioral goals. Let the child or student know that the next step is communication with a pastor and the child/student's parents. Notify an immediate supervisor of ANY signs of bullying or verbal abuse.

- a. Privately, but with another adult present, confirm that the student/child who was the target of the bullying behaviors is not in danger of continued harassment and is physically and emotionally stable. **DO NOT SINGLE A CHILD/STUDENT OUT IN FRONT OF THE GROUP**—be discreet.
3. *Third Offense:* Send the child/student to a pastor or ministry supervisor for a phone call (or communication onsite) with his or her parent(s) and possible removal from the activity or event.

Restroom Policies

CHILDREN

DO NOT USE OR OCCUPY a restroom in use by children. Adults shall use a restroom separate and apart from restrooms used by children during weekend services or when there are children present. No volunteer OF ANY AGE shall enter or occupy a restroom while children are using it. When no child is present, adults (and young volunteers) are allowed in a restroom (one at a time) so long as there is another adult at the doorway keeping any child from entering. Only adult females shall change diapers and must do so on diaper changer stations within plain view of other volunteers.

Nursery Children

Because nursery children may require assistance with their restroom activities, all staff members and volunteers will observe the following policies:

Diapering

- Only female nursery workers or the child's parent or legal guardian will undertake the diapering of children of either sex.
- Changing of diapers shall be done in plain sight of other nursery workers.
- Children will never be left unattended on changing tables.
- Any special instructions given by parents leaving children in nursery will be recorded on the registration cards ("Seth Adams has a medicine in the bag for rash.")
- Children shall be re-diapered and re-clothed immediately upon the completion of changing their soiled diaper.
- **Children must be changed on changing stations only.**

Toilet Training

- No child will be forced to toilet train.
- Only female nursery workers or the child's parent or legal guardian will participate in toilet training efforts with children of either sex.
- When children are taken into restrooms, the door will be left partially open.
- Parents will be consulted on each child's progress in the toilet training process before leaving the child with staff members or volunteers. Any special instructions given by parents leaving children in the nursery will be recorded on the registration card ("Georgia can use the toilet, but she needs to be reminded – ask her if she needs to go").
- Children shall be assisted in straightening their clothing before returning to the room with other children.
- 'Accidents' shall be handled by reassuring the child and completing the changing of diapers or underwear and clothing. Extra clothing and diapers are available from Gilliam Springs in the children's area if the parent has not furnished a clothing change.

Grades 1-5

Children in grades 1-5 will be allowed to use 'children only' restrooms. A designated volunteer will maintain visibility at restroom entrances (monitoring hall, door propped slightly ajar, periodic verbal checks) to prevent isolation without compromising privacy inside stalls.

If you must go into the restroom to check on an individual child, seek out another worker to accompany you. If another worker is not available, go to the exterior restroom door, knock, and ask if the child needs assistance. Do not enter the restroom.

If a child requires immediate assistance, leave the exterior restroom door open when entering the restroom area and try to verbally assist the child in completing his or her toileting activities, while the child remains behind the door of the restroom stall. Any assistance with the straightening or fastening of garments shall be done in the presence of another staff member or volunteer.

If restroom use is required:

- Only one child in the restroom at a time in a single toilet facility.
- Only female workers will assist children in the restroom, unless a parent is assisting their own child.
- When a worker is assisting a child, the door must not be locked and must remain ajar. In general, children must receive the minimum amount of assistance needed based upon their individual capabilities. Encourage children to do all they can for themselves.
- Be aware if a child repeatedly asks to use the restroom and stays there for unusual periods of time. Report this behavior to a supervisor if it occurs.
- A single staff member or volunteer must never take a lone child to the restroom.

Disabilities

Parents will offer instruction to staff members or volunteers to change the diapers of individuals with disabilities. After the age of 4, parents or legal guardians will change the diapers of all individuals with disabilities. If individuals with disabilities require assistance using the restroom, a volunteer may assist them in the restroom.

STUDENTS

Be aware if a student repeatedly leaves to use the restroom and stays there for unusual periods of time. Report this behavior to a supervisor. In public contexts, send students to use the restroom in groups of at least three, when possible.

Verbal Interactions with Children & Students

Verbal interactions between staff members or volunteers and children/students should be positive and uplifting. Gilliam Springs staff members and volunteers should strive to keep verbal interactions encouraging, constructive, and mindful of their mission to aid parents in the spiritual growth and development of children and students.

To this end, staff members and volunteers shall not talk to children/students in a way that is or could be construed by any reasonable observer as harsh, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating. In addition, staff members and volunteers are expected to refrain from swearing in the presence of children/students.

One-to-One Interactions with Children

Staff members and volunteers must never conduct one-to-one, unobserved meetings or interaction with children while participating in Gilliam Springs Children's Ministry programs. Another adult who has completed the Gilliam Springs application and screening process must always be present.

One-To-One Interactions with Students

Meeting the emotional or spiritual needs of students may occasionally involve interaction on an individual basis. Please observe the following guidelines when interacting with minors:

The Two Adult Rule shall be diligently followed during ministry programs. Do not interact *alone* with an individual student in any room or building. In the event you find yourself alone with a single student, move to a room or area occupied by others, or to a location easily observed by others.

One-to-one meetings with an individual student must occur at a time when others are present and where interactions can be easily observed. *Example:* If a student desires additional conversation after regular programming has concluded, move to an adjoining room where other staff members or volunteers are present, or into a public space.

Never hold a one-to-one meeting with a student who is the opposite gender.

If a closed-door meeting must occur, it shall occur on church property, with a second adult present. The door must remain unlocked, and any window treatments *open*.

Any ongoing meetings with students (such as counseling, one-to-one discipleship, etc.) must be discussed with a Student Ministry staff member and shall comply with the Two Adult Rule OR occur in a public, easily observed location.

Staff members and adult volunteers shall not date (or have *any* sort of romantic interaction with) students in the Student Ministry. A sexual relationship with a student is never acceptable.

Sexually Oriented Conversations

Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from engaging in any sexually oriented conversations with children or students and are not permitted to discuss any inappropriate or explicit information about their own personal relationships, dating or sexual activities with any child or student in the program.

However, it is expected that discussions and lessons in the context of organized Student Ministry may occasionally address issues related to purity, dating, sex, and human sexuality. These lessons will convey the church's views on these topics to the students.

Students may have questions/struggles in this area and desire to confide in a trusted adult leader for guidance. Proceed with great caution, teaching with sensitivity and from a biblical perspective.

- Avoid discussing anything of a sexual nature with students of the opposite gender.
- If a student's questions or comments on a sexual matter become too detailed or explicit in a group setting, the leader will use discretion and set up another time to meet with this student. For any follow-up meeting: inform a Student Ministry staff member *first*, comply with the Two Adult Rule OR meet in a public, easily observed location.
- When in doubt as to whether a conversation could be interpreted as a "sexually oriented conversation," treat the conversation as such and follow this policy. When possible, clarify the question/topic with a Student Ministry staff member.

Electronic Communication

All communication with children or students must be above reproach and indicative of healthy boundaries. As with any communication, the content of any electronic communication shall be readily available to share with ministry leadership or a parent.

TEXTING

Texting between staff members or volunteers and children is not permissible.

Texting between staff members/volunteers and students is permissible only as outlined below.

In general, texts shall occur in 'group' form, whenever possible. Though students may reply individually, make every effort to text in group form and encourage replies to the group. When possible, staff members are encouraged to send and receive texts using a ministry-provided device or account.

Prudent judgment must be used in the timing and content of texts. **Do not text before 7:00 am or after 10:00 pm** unless the texting occurs as part of a programmed ministry activity.

Avoid discussion of ANY sexual topic via texts.

It is not permissible to text photos or videos to a student. Likewise, it is not permissible to request photos or videos from a student.

No one-to-one texting communication is permitted with a student of the opposite gender.

COMMUNICATION APPLICATIONS

Children

It is permissible for the ministry to use applications that have messaging features – using a Children’s Ministry account. At least one other staff member must have credentials to access the application and regularly document a review of the messaging, comments, and postings.

It is not permissible for staff members to use ministry or personal accounts to direct message children.

Students

It is permissible for the Student Ministry to use applications that have messaging features – using a Student Ministry account. At least one other staff member must have credentials to access the application and regularly document a review of the messaging, comments, and postings.

It is not permissible for staff members to use personal accounts to direct message students. All group and direct messaging to/from students must be above reproach, available for supervisory access and originate from the Student Ministry account – not a personal account.

In the event a student direct messages a staff member’s personal account, the staff member will transfer the thread to the Student Ministry account if a reply is necessary. All students will be counseled to direct communication to the Student Ministry account.

Staff members and volunteers shall avoid discussion of ANY sexual topic via social media.

It is not permissible for staff members or volunteers to send photos or videos to a student, or to request photos or videos from a student.

Staff members and volunteers shall not comment or reply to a student’s post that is inappropriate or questionable.

All interactions must be above reproach and reflect the integrity and values of Gilliam Springs Student Ministry.

Staff members and volunteers shall not post inappropriate or off-color content, or comment on inappropriate or off-color posts. When in doubt, treat a post as inappropriate.

No one-to-one social media communication is permitted with a student of the opposite gender.

The use of Snapchat (or other similar applications designed for communication to disappear) with students is not permitted.

Applications that allow anonymous messaging are not permissible.

‘HOOK-UP’ APPLICATIONS

Though the use of dating applications is commonplace and acceptable, staff members and volunteers are prohibited from participating in applications intended to facilitate sexual encounters.

PERSONAL SOCIAL MEDIA

Staff members and volunteers must maintain a high moral standard in social media presence. Inappropriate social media content may be a basis for suspension from participation in the Children's Ministry or Student Ministry at Gilliam Springs. Please be cautious about the content of the posts on your personal social media. Please ensure that photos or videos posted on social media reflect Gilliam Springs ministry guidelines related to alcohol, tobacco and modesty (dress, posture, and content).

Volunteers must never post images of minors within their ministry context on personal social media without the expressed permission of a parent/guardian.

Out-of-Program Contact with Students

Because interactions with students who are not accompanied by a parent are likely in our community context, we require that Gilliam Springs safety standards established to protect students and ensure healthy relationships shall be respected *outside* ministry programs as well. In addition to ministry safety standards, the following policies shall be respected in all interactions with students occurring *outside* ministry programs.

- Never be alone with a minor in an unobserved context or location.
- Limit connections with students by gender. Do not initiate or maintain contact with students of the opposite gender.
- Any dating or sexual relationship of any kind with a minor is strictly prohibited.
- **Never** spend the night at a student's home or invite a student to spend the night at your home.
- Do not spend the night in an 'away' location with any student (vacation, etc.).

Physical Contact

Gilliam Springs is committed to protecting students and children in its care. Appropriate touch is needed and encouraged, but it is vital that staff members and volunteers do not blur or cross the lines. To this end, Gilliam Springs has implemented this policy which promotes a positive, nurturing environment for our Children's Ministry and Student Ministry while protecting children and students. The following guidelines are to be carefully followed by anyone working in Children's Ministry or Student Ministry programs:

- Physical contact in any form must be above reproach, for the benefit of the child/student, and never based upon the emotional needs of a staff member or volunteer.
- Physical contact in any form must not give even the appearance of wrongdoing. The personal behavior of staff members or volunteers must foster trust at all times.
- **For children:**
 - Appropriate physical affection between staff members or volunteers and children is important for children's development and is generally suitable in the church setting.

- **For students:**

- Pat a hand, shoulder or back in an encouraging manner.
- Side hugs: in public view and kept brief. When hugging someone of the opposite gender, hugs shall be limited to side hugs.
- Look for opportunities to give plenty of “high fives” and “fist bumps”, unless this makes a student feel uncomfortable.
- Shake hands or briefly put an arm around the student’s shoulder.

AVOID the following interactions:

- Never touch a child/student in sensitive areas (breasts, buttocks, genitals) even if he or she has been injured in one of these areas. Never allow casual contact in these areas, under or over clothing.
- No sitting on laps.
- No handholding, unless part of a worship/prayer service or a group game.
- Never touch in anger or disgust.
- Never touch in a manner that could be construed as sexually suggestive.
- Avoid touching between the navel and the knees.
- Never carry a child/student piggy-back, or on your shoulders.
- Never place hands beneath clothing to play, rub, or comfort.
- Never tickle, participate in ‘horseplay,’ or wrestle.
- Never kiss a student or give (or receive) a massage.

Do not force physical contact, touch or affection on a reluctant child/student. A child/student’s preference not to be touched must be respected.

Physical affection must occur only in observable locations or when in the presence of other staff members and volunteers. It is much less likely that touch will be inappropriate or misinterpreted when physical contact is open to observation.

Staff members and volunteers are responsible for protecting children and students under their supervision from inappropriate or unwanted touch by others, including other children/students.

Inappropriate touch and inappropriate displays of affection are forbidden. Any inappropriate physical contact, touch, or display of affection must be immediately reported to an immediate supervisor or a member of the Safety Team.

Any inappropriate behavior or suspected abuse by a staff member or volunteer must be reported immediately to an immediate supervisor or a member of the Safety Team.

Personal Conduct

Tobacco Use

Gilliam Springs requires staff members and volunteers to abstain from the use or possession of tobacco products in church facilities, while in the presence of children or their parents, or during Gilliam Springs activities or programs, whether on campus or away. Gilliam Springs is a tobacco-free facility.

Intoxicants

Staff members and volunteers are prohibited from the use, possession, or being under the influence of alcohol or any illegal drugs while in any Gilliam Springs facility, while traveling with children, or while working with or supervising children during any Gilliam Springs program or activity.

Sexually Oriented Material

Staff members and volunteers in the Children's Ministry and Student Ministry at Gilliam Springs are prohibited from possessing any sexually oriented materials (magazines, cards, images, videos, etc.) on church property or in the presence of children or students.

Nudity

Staff members and volunteers in Gilliam Springs Children's & Student Ministries must never be nude in the presence of children or students. In the event there is a situation that may call for or contemplate the possibility of nudity (i.e., changing clothes during a pool party, weekend or overnight retreat, etc.), a staff member/volunteer will submit a plan to the Director of Children and Family Ministries or Student Minister concerning arrangements for showering or changing clothes.

Physical Appearance

Please dress in modest, comfortable attire. Please do not wear thin-strapped shirts or low-cut shirts while serving. First impressions are important; please take this into consideration while serving. Please:

- No revealing swimsuits
- No revealing/form-fitting clothes
- No shirts with low necklines or that show midriff
- No short dresses, skirts or shorts

Medication

Do not administer medication of any kind to any child or student while serving in ministry programs, including 'over the counter' drugs. For certain trips or activities (i.e., mission trips, camps, etc.), Gilliam Springs will bring a medical professional who will dispense appropriate medications consistent with signed parent permission forms.

Transportation

Staff members and volunteers may, from time to time, be in a position to provide transportation for minors. The following guidelines shall be strictly observed when workers are involved in the transportation of minors:

- Minors must be transported directly to their destination. Unauthorized stops to a non-public place must be avoided.
- Staff members and volunteers must avoid transportation circumstances that leave only one minor in transport.
- Staff members and volunteers shall avoid physical contact with minors while in vehicles.
- Absent an emergency, **cell phones shall not be used by drivers** while transporting minors (other than navigation applications for directions). In an emergency, stop the vehicle to use the cell phone, unless a stop cannot safely occur. Texting or other cell phone use is strictly prohibited while driving.
- No drivers under age 25 shall drive Gilliam Springs owned or rented vehicles.
- In transportation, the TWO ADULT RULE must be followed.
- Never be alone in a vehicle with a minor of the opposite sex.
- Never instruct a student to drive other students to a ministry event.
- Transport only the number of minors for whom you have seatbelts.
- Seatbelts must be worn at all times while in the vehicle.
- No one shall be double-buckled.
- Use extra caution when driving minors in your care.

Planning Group Events

When planning a group event outside of regular programming, volunteer leaders shall keep parents and staff members informed of details and abide by Gilliam Springs policies. Some events may require a release form.

OVERNIGHT EVENTS

Some Children's Ministry and Student Ministry activities/events require overnight sleeping arrangements for students/children, staff members and volunteers (i.e., camp, mission trips, etc.). Each programmed overnight must be approved by a ministry supervisor and receive permission from parents. No overnights are allowed on Gilliam Springs property unless part of a ministry-sponsored event.

For each overnight event, Children's Ministry or Student Ministry staff members must create an event-specific safety plan that will supplement this policy document to provide specific protection steps unique to the event (activity, travel, location, other groups present). The document must describe

plans for gender-separated sleeping arrangements, conformity to the “two adult rule,” and plans to confirm headcounts at curfews. The plan must be submitted to the Safety Team for approval early enough to allow the team to have appropriate time to review it.

As stated in the section titled Out-of-Program Contact with Students, no overnight between any church staff member or volunteer and an *unrelated* minor is permitted in any context. If pre-existing family relationships exist wherein overnights may occur between ‘family friends,’ these relationships must be communicated to a ministry supervisor.

Statement of Acknowledgement and Agreement (Individual Copy)

I have received and read a copy of Gilliam Springs' Children's/Student Ministry Policies and Procedures and understand the importance of the material in the manual. I agree to abide by these guidelines while serving or working at Gilliam Springs.

I understand the manual may be modified, and that any guideline may be amended, revised, or eliminated by Gilliam Springs.

I have reviewed the duties listed in my ministry position description, and I agree to fulfill these duties. I understand I may choose to end my employment or voluntary service at Gilliam Springs at any time (if possible, I will provide two weeks' notice to my supervisor).

I acknowledge and understand that the materials and guidelines contained in this manual in no way express or imply a contractual employment relationship between Gilliam Springs and me. If applying as a volunteer, I acknowledge and agree that I will receive no monetary compensation for hours worked.

I understand it is my responsibility to review new guidelines which may be created and distributed.

I acknowledge receipt of the Gilliam Springs Children's/Student Ministry Policies and Procedures manual.

Staff member or volunteer name (please print)

Staff member or volunteer signature

Date

*This page is to remain attached to your copy of
Gilliam Springs Children's/Student Ministry Policies and Procedures.*

Statement of Acknowledgement and Agreement (Church Copy)

I have received and read a copy of Gilliam Springs' Children's/Student Ministry Policies and Procedures and understand the importance of the material in the manual. I agree to abide by these guidelines while serving or working at Gilliam Springs.

I understand the manual may be modified, and that any guideline may be amended, revised, or eliminated by Gilliam Springs.

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I understand it is my responsibility to review new guidelines which may be created and distributed.

I acknowledge receipt of the Gilliam Springs Children's/Student Ministry Policies and Procedures manual.

Staff member or volunteer name (please print)

Staff member or volunteer signature

Date

This page is to be signed, detached, and delivered to the Ministry Supervisor.

STAFF USE ONLY

Date of Interview: _____