

Marietta First United Methodist Church Youth Ministry Covenant Code of Conduct

The Youth Ministry of Marietta First United Methodist Church (“MFUMC”) desires to foster an environment that helps students connect to God, their community, and their true selves. We also are determined to ensure the physical well-being of students, volunteers, and adult leaders. Our hope is that the atmosphere which we create will help our youth to become the people whom God and we hope they will be.

This Covenant Code of Conduct (“Code”) will be used by Youth Ministry leaders as a basis of accountability for all participating youth and adults. In general, it is expected that all Youth who participate in the church Youth programs will respect the rights and property of others and conduct themselves in a safe and orderly manner. It is important that parents and youth discuss and understand this Code. Youth are reminded that all negative behavior has a detrimental effect on others in the Youth program and also affects the reputation of the church and its programs.

“Youth” are defined as those in grades 6 through 12. Graduated seniors or those over 18 years of age at the beginning of the following school year will move on to college and young adult ministries.

Both youth and their parents/guardians will need to sign below. This Code shall be signed prior to participation in any youth events. Youth Ministry events throughout the year will include regular church activities, meetings, retreats; and special trips and events.

Parent volunteers, designated ministry assistants and staff, and youth leaders may attend all youth events.

Parents are informed of youth activities, trip itineraries, special activities, and projects through email notification, youth news information and other forms of communication. Information will be as specific as possible regarding time of departure and arrival, routes, method of travel, phone numbers, and number of drivers.

Respect Toward Leaders:

Youth agree to follow the instructions of adult volunteers and Youth Ministry Staff and will be respectful to them. Any student who is insubordinate or disrespectful to any adult leader or who violates generally accepted rules of good citizenship and behavior will be referred to the Youth Leader for formal discipline.

Trip Policies:

Off-site trips are a big responsibility for the Youth Ministry and the church. As a result, obeying and respecting trip leaders and adult volunteers is essential if the Youth Group is to function safely and effectively in an environment which fosters their growth as young men and women. As detailed further in this Code, any incidents reflecting a breakdown in this area may result in the Youth being sent home at the parents’ expense. Parents or guardians agree to support the leaders’ decisions about sending a student home, knowing that only those present on the trip can know all the circumstances involved. In the event this situation arises, the parents or legal guardian will come pick the student up or pay for commercial transportation home as soon as possible.

Property Damage:

Any participant who damages or destroys property willfully will be responsible for the cost of repair/replacement and any clean up required.

Inappropriate Language:

No participant is to utilize language which is crude, offensive, insulting, profane or irreverent. This shall also include abusive language directed at another individual such as name-calling or bullying.

Smoking/Drinking/Illegal Drugs:

No alcohol or tobacco in any form is ever permitted on youth trips, by youth or adults. Parents will be notified immediately if a youth is found to be in possession of alcohol or of any illegal or controlled substance. This is a zero tolerance policy and Youth will be sent home immediately at the expense of their parents/guardians.

Violent Behavior:

Violent behavior and/or possession of any type of weapon will not be tolerated. Any act of striking, hitting, kicking, or attacking another individual will be cause for immediate removal from the group and a parent/guardian will be required to pick up the offending youth. Repeated offenses will result in the Youth not being permitted to participate in youth activities until the parents and Youth have received have received counseling from the Minister and/or a professional Youth Counselor. Reinstatement must be approved by the Youth Council. Any adult who displays any act of violent behavior will no longer be permitted to participate in youth activities.

Dress Code:

Parents should make sure that their student is dressed appropriately and brings appropriate clothing on trips. Parents should recognize that dress which may be appropriate for other activities may not be appropriate for church-related programs. Adult leaders and chaperones have permission to suggest a change of dress at any time they feel the need to do so. Our motto - "Keep it classy". Students and leaders will adhere to any dress code rules or policies of camps and Mission organizations we partner with and attend.

Displays of Affection:

Youth should refrain from excessive displays of affection such as kissing, prolonged embracing, and other contact inappropriate to a church environment. Genuine respect for each other in word, thought, and deed is always encouraged.

Transportation:

Generally, driving to off-site events will be provided by designated youth leaders or adult volunteers. Only church approved drivers are permitted to drive the van, the bus, or their own personal vehicles to transport youth. The number of youth, leaders, and chaperones per vehicle will not exceed the number of safety belts available. All persons driving or being driven to/from a youth event must use seat belts at all times.

If youth need to drive their own vehicle to an event off-site, the parents must notify the Youth Director in advance. In this case, parents are responsible for the youth's transportation to and from youth functions. Parents are responsible for their child if transported in a vehicle other than those provided by the church. The church, its leaders, staff, or members cannot be responsible or held liable for the safety and quality of either the vehicle or the driver, nor can they be assured that there is insurance on the vehicle. Youth members are not allowed to drive non-related youth or youth who did not arrive in the youth-driven vehicle.

Emergency Medical Release Forms :

Emergency release forms and medical information (including information with regard to required prescription medication) will be supplied by the parents to MFUMC Youth Ministry at the beginning of the school year. Any changes should be provided to the Youth director prior to participation in any event. A separate permission slip will be required for each off-site activity. Emergency information will be kept for adult volunteers, leaders and chaperones as well.

Site Rules :

“Safe Sanctuary” policies shall apply and extend to activities beyond the walls of the church for any youth events. It is understood that any rule or guideline that is not mentioned here but is required by a camp or retreat where our youth are present will also apply to our students.

Buddy System :

The buddy system should be implemented in all situations. For their personal safety, Youth should not be anywhere by themselves.

Housing :

Male youth are not permitted in female youth rooms, hallways, wings or cabins nor are female youth permitted in male rooms, hallways, wings or cabins. Discipline, curfew, clean-up and or other housing guidelines will be established for each event and are to be respected by all participants and will be enforced by the adult leaders and Youth Ministry.

Formal Discipline Policy

Actions that warrant immediate removal:

The use of alcohol, drugs, tobacco, vapes or pornographic material, violence and/or sexual misconduct will result in immediate removal from the group or activity. The MFUMC Youth Director or trip leader will notify parents/guardians to arrange for the student's return home.

Procedure for Inappropriate Behavior:

Students are expected to follow the Covenant Code of Conduct as set forth above. In the event of an incident or situation in which the Youth has exhibited inappropriate behavior, the consequence of such action will be as follows:

1. First Occurrence: Formal Warning

Adult Leader/Chaperone will notify the trip/youth director of the situation. The trip director/youth director will offer a serious verbal warning to the Youth, discussing the inappropriateness of the behavior.

2. Second Occurrence: Formal Notification

Trip/youth director will notify the parents and/or guardian of the seriousness of the situation with a reminder of the potential consequences of said action.

3. Third Occurrence: Dismissal from event or program

The trip/youth director will send the youth home according to the policies stated above.

I have read, discussed, and understand the Marietta First United Methodist Church Youth Ministry Covenant Code of Conduct. By signing this form, along with my parent/guardian, I agree to follow each of these rules. I understand that such policies help to ensure the physical and spiritual safety of all who participate in the Youth Ministry programs of the church.

Youth Signature _____ Date _____

Parent Signature _____ Date _____