Carlingford Baptist Church

Youth Group Use of Media and Communication policy

**Text Messages and other forms of private messaging -** Private messages including text messages, Facebook chat and other similar messaging platforms will be used for strictly surface level communication only (e.g. organising dates, times and driving arrangements). In general, these messages will be on behalf of the youth leadership team, and so where possible, will be written in the plural (e.g. “Will you be coming this week? We would all love to see you.”).

**Facebook Page & Instagram –** Most Youth information, including the Youth Program for the term, updates about weekly activities and special events, will be available to the closed ‘Awaken Youth’ Facebook and Instagram groups. All persons wishing to join these groups must be approved by the Youth Pastor/Coordinator, as it is only available to those involved in Carlingford Youth Group and their parents. The Facebook group’s web address is <https://www.facebook.com/groups/awakenyth/> and the Instagram profile name is @awaken\_yth (https://www.instagram.com/awaken\_yth/).

Should anyone wish to be added to either group, please send the Youth Pastor an email (dan@carlingford-baptist.org).
A member of the church eldership (currently Craig Kayes) will be a member of both pages.

**Photographs & Video** - At various events we may take photos or videos which will be used during youth events, for church displays and leaflets, and on the website. All such photos will go through our media coordinator and not be used for any other purpose. Leaders are not permitted to take photos of youth on their personal phones. Parents/guardians will be given the opportunity to opt-out of having photos or videos taken of their child.

**Phone calls –** Short phone conversations will be used for:

* Surface level communication – see text messages
* As a means to close off any messaging conversation that has gone beyond surface level
* To briefly check up on youth when a face to face conversation is impractical

Where possible parents will be made aware of the call – home phones will be called in preference to a mobile.

Long conversations will be avoided over the phone, and will be held had face to face in the appropriate setting.

Any variance from this policy will only be done so with direct permission from the pastoral team and the parents involved.

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Talking About Sexual Issues Policy

**Our role isn’t:** We aren’t sexual educators and it is the role of the parents to educate on sex, not youth leaders. NOTE: New legislation (2012) makes it really clear that repeated discussions about intimate topics with individual children may be seen as a pattern of sexual grooming.

**Our role is:** To explain what it is that the Bible says about sex

**Before speaking on the topic of sex:**

1. Get parental permission (informing them of what will be said)
2. Always have at least two leaders in the conversation.
3. If a conversation about sex arises unplanned or there is a disclosure, keep the conversation short and inform the Youth Coordinator and/or Pastor as soon as is reasonable. The Coordinator/Pastor should inform the parents of what was said - a verbatim can be done if seen as necessary

**When speaking on the topic of sex, focus on:**

1. The identity we have as the adopted children of God.
2. Jesus’ command for us to love others, viewing them as those loved by God
3. The way we should act in alignment with who we are (those loved by God), which will frequently require us to be counter-cultural (to not be shaped by peers, our ‘drives’, or our culture, but to be shaped by being ‘other-centred’).
4. Sex is part of life: the framework for sex is marriage (Gen 1 and 2 – intimacy, commitment & procreation).
5. Consent not coercion: we can tell children what the current law says.
6. The role conscience plays: God has placed a moral radar within us for being relational.
7. We are not the judges of others: we are not called to judge or condemn but to love.

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Youth Group Physical Contact Policy

* Where?
	+ All contact must be in appropriate areas – the sides of the upper body (e.g. shoulder or arm)
	+ All hugs should be side hugs, not frontal
* How and why?
	+ All contact must be for appropriate duration (no prolonged contact)
	+ Physical contact must be for appropriate reasons, such as in greeting, as encouragement and to reassure. “Rumbling” should never be initiated by a leader
* Our response when youth-initiated?
	+ To prevent inappropriate, youth-initiated contact before it happens if possible
	+ If caught unawares, end the contact as soon as reasonably possible
	+ If fitting, explain withdrawal in reference to this physical contact policy
	+ Leaders should respond to “rumbling” in a way that de-escalates the situation.
* Our response when contact is needed to ensure safety?
	+ De-escalation strategies are always preferable to physical contact to maintain order or restrain students.
	+ Restraint should only be used in an emergency – when it is necessary to prevent the individual or those around them from being harmed or injured (e.g. holding someone back from running onto pennant hills road)
	+ The level of intervention must be in proportion to the circumstances of the incident or behaviour or the consequences it is intended to prevent.
	+ Any physical intervention must be the minimum needed to achieve the desired result.
	+ Physical contact or restraint must not be used to provoke, punish or humiliate a student or inflict pain.
* How do we handle first aid?
	+ Ask permission first – if permission is denied, call parents and/or the ambulance depending on the seriousness
	+ Refer to the list of first aid trained youth leaders next to the first aid kit, whenever possible, only someone with a current first aid certificate is to administer aid
	+ If treatment required is beyond your level of competency, call an ambulance (call parents first if the situation allows).

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Youth Group Discipline Policy

Why?

All disciplinary actions must be with the intent of helping the person in question grow, and ensuring their safety and the safety of others.

How?

**If,** property or the health of others are at risk of harm, then immediate disciplinary action of an appropriate level should be taken to remove the risk

**Otherwise**, all disciplinary steps should be taken in private, with two leaders present.

What?

Any disciplinary steps must be within legal parameters – any form of discipline that could be considered abuse is inappropriate. No physical discipline is allowed.

What about suspensions and/or bans?
Before a youth is told not to return on subsequent weeks the youth coordinator must be notified.
For this to be appropriate, the youth in question must be continually putting property or others at risk of harm. They must have been spoken to and given the chance to stop.

The length of suspension and what is required before being allowed back will be decided by the coordinator and explained to the youth. Parents must also be notified. This process is to be done out of love for both the youth and those around them, to grow and develop them wherever possible, but with safety as a first priority.