

SOLID ROCK BAPTIST CHURCH

VBC Youth Safety Manual

Fall 2025

This handout includes the philosophy, policies, and procedures of the Youth Ministries of the Solid Rock Baptist Church (ages three through seventeen/senior in high school). Children shall be defined as ages three through twelve / sixth grade and teenagers as thirteen / seventh grade through seventeen / senior in high school. This handout is in place to help Solid Rock Baptist Church provide a caring, safe, and secure environment for youth in all phases of church life, and to help Solid Rock Baptist Church reduce its legal risk and liability exposure.

And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me. But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea. Woe unto the world because of offences! For it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!

Matthew 18:5-7

Our goal in response to these Biblical mandates is to maintain a safe, secure, and loving place where children may grow: a place where caregivers, teachers, and leaders (both paid and volunteer) minister appropriately to their needs.

The rules and guidelines included in this handout are to be obeyed by all youth workers. A youth worker is any officially designated preacher, teacher, helper, or worker who works with children. The following items are not options; they are rules. They are not negotiable. They are to be followed at all times.

General Policies and Procedures

Behavior Towards Youth

- You are not to act as the youth's "friend" in a youth's friendship manner. You are his/her "leader." You must always maintain your proper respect and authority status and act accordingly. This does not mean that you cannot act "friendly", but it does mean that you are to act at all times with the respect and dignity which is befitting to your position of ministry.
- Do everything you can to keep the parents informed about and involved in their youth's activities at church. Remember that the youth are the responsibility of their parents. You cannot assume the responsibilities of the parents; even if the parents are not treating their youth as well as you feel they should.

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Contact with Youth

- The “Two-Worker Rule” is mandatory. This means that whenever there are young people in the church’s care, there must always be at least two workers present in any closed-door environment. When a church sponsored youth activity has both male and female participants, both male and female workers must also be present. It is recommended to have two adult workers present, but an adult and a responsible senior high teenage worker is acceptable.
- Use discretion at all times.
- Never touch any young person in an inappropriate manner. It is acceptable to touch youth if:
 - A young child needs assistance getting on of / off of the bus
 - You have to separate young people who are fighting
 - To shake hands
 - Ladies may hug young children
 - Male workers should avoid touching children other than to shake hands. If it is found necessary to touch a child, always remember that the touching will be viewed by authorities in a very suspicious and/or critical manner.
- Children should not be kissed by youth workers.
- Avoid wrestling or roughhousing with youth.
- Never threaten anyone with bodily harm, even in jest.
- Workers should not have youth at their homes unless approved by a member of the ministry or pastoral leadership.
- Avoid assisting a non-nursery (ages birth to two year olds), older-age child who has wet or soiled his/her clothes. Endeavor to instruct him/her on how to clean himself/herself without your direct assistance, (as frustrating as that may be). You may hand him/her what he or she needs, but do not directly clean or wash the non-nursery, older-aged child. Extra clothes are available in the school office to help with such problems.
- Avoid helping a young person with their zipper or skirt.
- School age children are not permitted to sit on a worker’s lap. While this may be necessary with very small children, ministry workers should understand the increased risk these actions represent and act with discretion.
- Youth workers are to make sure no youth is locked in the building after any planned church activities and that all youth have been taken home.

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Transportation of Youth

- Never be alone in any vehicle with a youth. The “Two-Worker Rule” is mandatory. When both genders are present, we recommend workers of both gender be present.
- All church outgoings and activities, as well as the transportation to and from those activities, must be approved by a member of the pastoral staff or ministry director. After approval is obtained, each participant who is a minor must provide a consent and release form which is to be signed by parents or legal guardians.

- The designated leader of the event must know each person designated to provide transportation to or from church.
- Transportation for church-related activities will be done by authorized church personnel only. If an adult other than authorized church personnel is asked to drive, they make themselves personally liable as well as the church.
- If and when multiple vehicles are used, they are to stay together as a group, following the directions of the church's authorized coordinator.

The driver of a personal vehicle must:

- Be at least 18 years old
- Have a valid state driver's license, qualified for the vehicle being operated
- Have no record of convictions for the past five years for drunken driving, driving under the influence, driving with a suspended or revoked license or reckless endangerment
- Have proof of insurance
- Never be alone in a vehicle with a youth

The driver of a church owned vehicle must:

- Follow all guidelines for driving a personal vehicle
- Be approved by pastoral / ministry leadership.

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Communication with Youth

- All communication with youth should be kept in a professional setting (social media, texting, etc.). Avoid personal communication with the opposite gender.
- No worker should ever be alone with a youth or lead a youth into a private place. All workers must follow the "Two-Worker Rule".
- Do everything possible to keep the parents informed about and involved in their youth's activities.
- Youth workers are not to go into a youth's home while the parents or legal guardians are not home.
- The church does not tolerate assault, threats, harassment, or abuse against church or school personnel or youth. Verbal or written threats, racial, ethnic, or cultural harassment, physical and/or sexual harassment, or abuse perpetrated by any one in the ministry, whether intentional or unintentional, is condemned as unacceptable. The church supports efforts designed to protect the welfare of staff and youth. In dealing with matters of alleged assault, threats, harassment or abuse, the dignity and rights of all are preserved and respected.

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Correction of Youth

Non Violent Actions Requiring Correction

All youth workers will follow these steps:

- If a youth is behaving inappropriately and/or is not responding to reasonable demands, the youth worker will tell the youth specifically what he/she is doing that is not acceptable and state what the expected behavior is, e.g., "We do not throw the blocks. We use blocks for building."
- If this measure is not effective, the youth will be guided to another activity.
- If inappropriate behavior continues, the youth may be separated away from other youth.
- If the youth's disruptive behavior continues, the youth may be left under the supervision of the Sunday school superintendent, bus director or "Office" representative.
- If isolating the child within the setting or removal of the child from the setting becomes necessary, the situation will be recorded on an Incident Report Form and discussed with the youth's parents or guardian as soon as possible by the ministry director or leader.
- Avoid embarrassing young people in front of their peers. The objective is to have as few people involved in the correction process. Don't talk about kids to other workers in different settings or with peers present.
- No corporal (physical) discipline or verbal abuse, e.g., ridicule, are to be used at any time.
- Never lose your temper with a youth.
- Never vent personal frustrations or anger on a youth.
- Never leave youth unattended for any reason.
- Never imprison a youth.
- Never threaten a youth.
- The youth worker should always maintain leadership and control of their environment.
 - Establish your expectations.
 - Keep your expectations simple and few.
 - Review your expectations often.
- Behavior requiring corrective action by a youth worker:
 - Getting out of seat without permission
 - Disobeying instructions
 - Talking without permission
 - Refusal to participate in class activities
- Behavior requiring removal from classroom:
 - Flagrant disrespect of authority
 - Destruction of church property
 - Violating classmates' person or property
 - Fighting
 - Spitting
 - Cursing of any kind

Reacting to Violence (threatening, aggressive, harmful behavior)

- When youth are behaving in a violent manner, the youth worker shall take the appropriate disciplinary action.
- The youth worker should separate the violent student and respond with the least amount of physical contact as possible.
- Any violent behavior is to be reported to the ministry director and recorded by all youth workers involved on an Incident Report Form providing a description of the violent incident.
- The parents of the youth must be involved in any action plan for remediation and will be notified by the ministry leader.
- The decision to report to the police will be made by the pastoral staff. For children, police may take reports of incidents of violent behavior committed. For teenagers, a violent action that may be considered criminal shall be reported to the police. Students who are 18 years of age or over are considered adults, and the procedures of the state Criminal Code will be followed if these persons are charged and/or tried for criminal activities.

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Medical Treatment of Youth

- All youth workers must report incidents of injury to the ministry leader by filling out an Incident Report Form documenting details of the injury, medical help given, and any follow up procedures.

Treating Minor Injuries

- Any minor injury medical supplies (ie: bandaids) can be located in the school office.
- Youth workers must wear disposable gloves when treating any medical injury.

Treating Injuries Involving Body Fluids:

- In order to effectively and safely decontaminate sites that have been in contact with bodily fluid, procedure should be followed to ensure reduction of the chance of spreading any infectious agents, thus eliminating health risks.
- All youth workers should dispose of all soiled cleaning supplies and disinfect any reusable equipment used.

Procedures for Spills on Hard floors

- Isolate the area around the spill site, remove any people or children from contaminated site or affected child—i.e., isolate a child with a nosebleed from surrounding children.

- Cover the spill with absorbent paper towels, carefully wipe up the spill and place all trash in a disposable bag. Spray the surface with the appropriate cleaner and remove all visible filth.
- Decontaminate the affected surface with disinfectant and leave it visibly wet. Allow to air-dry. If using reusable equipment, disinfect that as well.

Procedures for Spills on Carpeted Areas

- Isolate the area around the spill site, remove any people or children from contaminated site or affected child—i.e., isolate a child with a nosebleed from surrounding children.
- Cover the spill with absorbent paper towels, carefully wipe up the spill and place all trash in a disposable bag. Spray the surface with the appropriate cleaner and remove all visible filth. If a wet/dry vacuum is available, it should be used and disinfected after use.
- Apply a carpet cleaner to the surface and fully cover the area.
- Decontaminate the surface with a carpet-compatible disinfectant and leave it visibly wet.

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Reporting and Records

Records of each of the following must be turned in to the office so they may be kept on file:

- Incident Report Form
 - All matters of general incidents – disruptive behavior, minor injuries
 - All major incidents involving removal from classroom or activity, or major injuries
- Attendance Roster or Sign In
 - Attendance for all events involving youth
- Transportation Permission Form, Baptist Permission Form, Activity Permission Form
 - Permission and Consent Forms – transportation, baptism, etc.
- Decision Cards
 - salvation

These records must be accurate and include the names of each child, each adult worker, and the date of the class and/or activity.

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Open Policy

- Classrooms, childcare rooms, or buses can be visited by the pastoral staff, ministry director, and ministry leaders.

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Gifts

- No youth workers are to give personal gifts to individual youth without the prior knowledge of the parent(s) or responsible leadership. Because gift giving can be a form of buying loyalty or silence, gift giving should be done on a group basis or for special occasions only. Gifts may not be elaborate, but should be modest and appropriate to the occasion.
- Gifts differ from prizes given for a pre-defined contest.

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Salvation of Youth

- All youth workers are to avoid pressuring youth into a salvation decision. If possible, do not pray repeat prayers.
- Youth workers should use a hard copy of the Bible.
- In the event of any decision, fill out a tri-copy decision card (found in the school office). Have youth keep one copy of the card as a reminder, worker keeps one for follow up, bottom copy gets turned into office as record of the decision.
- Youth workers should involve the parent/guardian as much as possible in any salvation process.
- Avoid large group settings. If more workers are needed, please see the school office.
- Deal with all decisions in an appropriate setting (coffee shop) not the back of the classroom or the hallway.

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BUS MINISTRY PERSONNEL

The Bus Driver

General Responsibilities

- The captain is in charge of the bus route.
- The driver is in charge of the vehicle and for following all driving and safety precautions.
- The captain and driver should work in harmony to provide a safe and enjoyable time for all bus riders and workers.
- The bus driver should provide a copy of his CDL license to the bus director to be copied and kept on file.
- The bus driver should ensure that his license and physical have not expired.
- Be aware of and observe all traffic laws.
- Be careful to observe all “pick up” and “drop off” procedures on the bus.
- Be familiar with and observe the “no touch” policies.
- Notify the bus captain of any behavior issues on the bus.

Inspecting the Church Vehicle

- Only the bus driver can complete the pre-trip inspection.
- Fill out a pre-trip Bus Driver's Vehicle Inspection Report each time a church vehicle is driven.
- If the bus driver discovers a problem that would render the bus unsafe to drive, he must call the Bus Director immediately to either solve the problem or assign another vehicle.
- Do not keep any chemicals in the church vehicle– ether, oil, etc.
- Any time the temperature is less than 40 degrees F, the bus needs to warm up for 20 minutes before it can leave the bus parking lot; above 40 degrees F, 5 minutes is required.

Operating the Church Vehicle

- Drivers are never to leave the driver's seat while the bus is running
- Drivers are never to operate the vehicle while talking or texting on a cell phone.
- Drivers must have an outside guide or “spotter” any time the bus is backing up.
- Drivers are responsible to keep the windows clear of any object (paper, snow, etc.), which would obstruct vision (nothing at all is permitted on the windshield).
- Drivers are to ensure that the back door of the bus should be unobstructed at all times.
- Drivers are to check the bus, after unloading riders, for any children left behind.

Parking the Church Vehicle

- Do not leave personal belongings in the vehicle.
- Return the keys to the the bus closet.

Breakdowns with a Church Vehicle

- Do not continue to operate a vehicle that has problems (do not “limp” a vehicle back to the church).
- Make sure the vehicle is off the road when it is parked.
- Do not leave the hazard lights on when you leave a vehicle.
- Leave the keys in the vehicle.
- Put out warning triangles for the buses.
- Contact the bus director and the church office as soon as possible.

In the event of an accident:

- Call the police. If riders are involved, always file a police report.
- Follow the instructions of police or EMT if they should become involved.
- Notify the bus director immediately.
- Assist the Bus Director in filling out an Incident Report Form.

The Bus Secretary

- The bus secretary assists the bus captain in his responsibility of obtaining complete and accurate records on all bus riders.
- The bus secretary oversees the obtaining of parental permission for all bus riders and parental approval for any activities that take place outside of the normal weekly church services.
- The bus secretary also oversees the transfer of child information to office and Sunday school personnel, including the bus attendance roster and an accurate count.

The Bus Runner

- The bus runner assists the bus captain in bringing the child safely from the house to the church bus and from the church bus back to the house. The bus runner should exercise extreme care and caution.
- When the children are being picked up, it is important to cross the street only in front of the bus (never behind the bus).
- The parents should be notified as accurately as possible as to what time their child will return.
- When exiting the bus, the runner needs to be the first one off the bus, not the children.
- Collect all of the children from that home at the door of the bus, so that everyone can cross the street at the same time.
- Cross the street in front of the bus and not behind. Be sure to wait for the driver to signal before crossing the street.
- Make certain that someone is home before leaving the children there. If no one is there, notify the Bus Director and follow his instructions.
- Leave a good impression with the children regarding their Sunday bus ride.

The Bus Worker

- Attend weekly meetings, special clinics or training sessions, etc.
- Pray for riders and their families, bus captain, and bus driver on a regular basis
- Be on time for bus visitation and for the actual bus route
- Help keep control of the riders.
- Help visit the riders.
- Teach the bus riders to appreciate the bus captain.
- Be familiar with and observe all ministry policies.
- Help keep accurate records of new riders.
- Notify the bus captain of any problems on the bus– discipline, parents, mechanical, etc.
- Notify the bus captain of any changes in schedule– illness, vacation, resignation
- Always help keep the bus clean before and after the route.
- Take part in any special outreach program such as, but not limited to, Spring and Fall Program.

BUS MINISTRY PROCEDURES

Bus Orderliness

- It is the bus captain's responsibility to maintain order on the bus. He must organize his workers to operate a good program on the bus with activity, variety, excitement, and relevant Bible teaching. A well-prepared interesting program will do most of the work to maintain order with the children.
- Children are to remain seated at all times the bus is in motion.
- The windows are only to be lowered half way, and nothing at all is to be sticking out of the windows.
- The aisle on the bus is to be clear at all times.
- Children should not talk while the bus captain or worker is talking
- Proper discipline can and should be maintained on the bus, and workers should never have to yell over the noise of children talking.

Bus Safety

- There is no greater responsibility of the captain and workers than to maintain safety on the bus. Safety is literally a life and death issue.
- The captain needs to be familiar with the vehicle driver's requirements for safety, which includes, but is not limited to, checking, operating, and caring for the bus.
- The captain is responsible that all the safety rules are upheld at all times by all the workers (especially the driver). There are no exceptions to safety rules.
- All riders must have a Transportation Permission Form, signed by a parent or legal guardian on file. For first time riders, children sleeping over a friend's house, etc. a First Time Rider Form signed by the person allowing them to ride that Sunday is acceptable; however, they can not ride again until a completed Transportation Permission Form is on file.

Bus Visitation

- There must always be at least two workers when out on bus visitation. A worker may never visit alone.
- Cautiously talk to children on the streets without permission from their parents first unless you are 17 years of age or younger.
- Bus workers should never go into any child's house when parents are not home.
- Always introduce yourself and your church immediately.
- Always be kind, even if the people are not interested in sending their child on the bus.
- Remember that you are representing the church, and the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Follow up on absentees regularly.
- Make each visit friendly.
- If a parent ever threatens you, please notify one of the pastors or the bus director.
- If you have a problem child on your bus, deal with the problem immediately.
- Always try to get address information on your new riders when you visit them during the week.
- While visiting, you must have a partner with you at all times.
- While visiting when parents are not home, do not carry on a conversation with the child. Tell him you will come back or call him on the phone later.
- Get parents to sign the Bus Rider Permission Form that authorizes their child to ride the bus to church.
- Be consistent in your visitation time on your route.
- Communicate your love for young people by proper spiritual speech and actions
- Make them feel important.
- Find something to discuss that interests them.
- Invite them to church.
- Look for an opportunity to share the Gospel.
- Look for opportunities to pray with them before you leave.
- Look for new riders while visiting your regulars.

Procedures for Pick Up

- The bus must come to a complete stop.
- Then, ONLY the bus driver opens the door.
- The runner goes to the house and picks up the children who will be riding for that day.
- Use your time wisely as you walk the children back to the bus.
- Talk to the children.
- Make them feel important.
- Tell them you prayed for them this week, if you did.
- Praise them – bringing a Bible, coming to church, etc.
- Have a bus worker mark each rider's hand with your bus route number.
- Check the rider's name off on your roster as he gets on the bus.
- Seat the rider on the bus.
- The bus driver may then proceed to the next stop.
- No children under the age of three are allowed on the bus. The only exception is if a child comes with a parent or guardian.

- Every bus must have at least one approved female worker, preferably an adult.
- Never pick up a child who is screaming before they get on the bus. They are not allowed on the bus unless they want to get on to the bus.
- No youth is to be brought to church unless you have his/her full name, complete address, and telephone number on the Transportation Permission Form or First Time Rider Form. Do not put the child on the bus if you do not have this important information. The parent must sign the form. If they are a family member staying at a relative's house, a relative may sign the first week, but the parent's signature must be secured on a Transportation Permission Form by the second time they ride the bus.

Procedures on the Bus

- The bus captain should always be in control of his bus riders, workers, and program.
- Every rider must be seated at all times while the bus is in motion.
- Never exceed the capacity of the bus.
- Arms and heads must remain inside the windows at all times.
- A bus program of some kind should be conducted on the bus.
- The aisle must be kept clear at all times.
- Always calm down your program as you get closer to church.
- It would be wise to have smaller children sit toward the front of the bus and the older ones toward the back. All adults must sit in the first three rows of the bus.
- Workers should not yell at the riders.
- All male workers must adhere to the "no touch" rule at all times on the bus.
- If a child needs some type of comfort, only a female bus worker is allowed to give the child this comfort.

Procedures for Drop Off

- All buses should arrive no later than 9:20-9:27am.
- Someone assigned by the bus director will write down the arrival time of each bus
- All buses should pull into the designated spot for that specific bus.
- No one should stand or be let off the bus until the bus comes to a complete stop, the gears are disengaged and the emergency brake is applied.
- A worker needs to exit first and stand at the bottom of the bus stairs to make sure that no young person falls and is injured when exiting the bus.
- All riders third grade and below should be escorted directly to their class.
- Upon arrival, First Time Rider forms, Transportation Permission Forms, Bus Roster and Count should be turned in at the office.

Procedures for Pick Up Upon Dismissal from Church

- Junior Church workers will bring all children second grade and down directly to their bus when church is dismissed.
- No child will leave their class without an adult worker assisting the child to the bus.
- Workers should be careful in escorting young people across the parking lot.
- No riders should be escorted to anywhere outside of the designated loading area.

- Two workers should be present on the bus before any rider boards the bus.
- Once a rider is on the bus, they should not be permitted to get off.
- Each rider must be checked in on the Bus Roster for that day before the bus leaves the church parking lot.

Procedures for Drop Off at Home

- The bus must come to a complete stop, the driver disengages the gears, the hazard lights are turned on, and the emergency brake is applied before the driver opens the door to the bus.
- The bus runner should be the first one off the bus to assist children with exiting down the bus stairs.
- If a street must be crossed, walk in front of the bus with the children.
- The worker should walk the child to the door of the house to make sure the child gets in safely.
- For NO reason are the riders allowed to get off the bus by themselves without an adult worker.
- If there are no parents or guardians in the home, we must contact the appropriate law enforcement agency identified by the Bus Director. Never leave a child in an unattended home!
- If there is an Incident Report, or any noteworthy occurrence, communicate with the parents now.
- Please make sure the bus has been swept out and the windows put up when the route is finished.