Grace Lutheran Church
Youth Ministry Policy Manual

*Effective: 2011-2012 School Year*
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I. Policy Explanation
1. The purpose of this policy manual is to provide youth and parents with information about the program and what is expected of them and their leaders. Many questions are answered in the following pages. All youth and parents are expected to review the policies and sign the form stating they are understood. (attached)
2. Policy Specifics
   a. Policies apply to all individuals involved in youth activities. This includes guests or friends attending youth meetings, events or outings.
   b. Policy manual will be provided to each family with youth in the 6th-12th grade.

II. General Behavior
Young people are expected to conduct themselves in a way that would be pleasing to God.
   A. They are to refrain from using offensive language.
   B. Youth are expected to refrain from using all illegal substances.
   C. They are to build others up instead of tear them down (gossip).
   D. They are to show respect for people and ideas.

III. Dress Code
This policy is to ensure that all youth dress in a modest and appropriate way for all youth activities.
   A. We expect the parent/guardian to provide guidance to ensure the youth makes good decisions in their dress and appearance while engaged in youth activities and outings.

IV. Media Usage
   A. Music, videos, games, etc. used at any youth event should depict messages that are consistent with God’s word and our Christian values.
   B. All music used at a youth group event or in the youth room will not contain offensive language, crude language, sexually explicit lyrics, or misuse God’s name.
   C. Use of all electronic devices should cease during youth activities, meetings, etc.
   D. All games, music, and movies will be reviewed by Leader(s) prior to use.

Devotional materials
   A. Clips from PG-13, and R rated movies will be previewed by Leader(s) before group viewing.
   B. Songs will follow the same guidelines as stated in Media Usage – section 4.

Approved Movie list
   A. An approved movie list will be maintained which youth can use to pick from during “movie night” events.
B. In order to make the list the movie must have a G or PG rating. (for middle school) High School youth may view PG-13 content if deemed appropriate and constructive by the youth leadership team.

V. Deadlines
Holding youth accountable and giving them deadlines helps encourage responsibility, helping them be better equipped for high school, college and adult life.
   A. Deadlines for registration materials are in place to ensure that materials are received by the leaders in time to register the group for an event and to increase the likelihood that the group will be able to attend, (limited number of participants) receive hotel preferences, receive early registration discounts etc.
   B. While the youth has primary responsibility, parents should ensure that all registration deadlines are met.

VI. Emergency Information/Permission Slips
   A. Permission slips and medical information forms are required and no exceptions will be made.
   B. Blanket Form: Health Information/Medical Treatment Permission and Release Form filled out annually. (Attached)
   C. Event Form: Assumption of Risk and Release of Liability Form must be filled out for each event a youth is attending. (Sample Attached)
   D. Some events require separate forms. (Beach Retreat, National Gatherings, etc.) These separate forms are required to attend these specific events.
   E. Youth Driver/Rider Form: states if your child is allowed to drive to local events, if they are allowed to have passengers and if so who, and states if your child is allowed to ride with student drivers and if so which ones. (Attached)
   F. Picture/Video Release Form: This form gives permission for your child’s image to be used in various ways.

VII. Transportation
This policy sets eligibility requirements for those driving young people to and from events.
   A. Drivers must be at least 21 years of age and have a clean driving record.
   B. Vehicles must be in good working condition.
   C. Drivers should follow traffic laws.
   D. Vehicle must be insured.
   E. Everyone must wear a seatbelt.
   F. Passengers are not to hinder the driver’s concentration in any way while the vehicle is in motion.
Youth drivers:
A. Must have Youth Driver/Rider Form on file.
B. Parental permission must state who they may/may not have as a passenger and the number of passengers they are allowed to transport.
C. May only drive for local events.

Youth riding with youth drivers:
A. Must have written parental permission stating which youth driver their child is allowed/not allowed to ride with.

Gas reimbursement
A. Historically, those volunteering to drive the youth to events are doing so as a gift to the congregation, and therefore are not typically reimbursed for gas/mileage. However funds are available for this purpose and those desiring reimbursement are encouraged to do so.

VIII. Leader Information
Youth Leaders have a tremendous responsibility when working with young people. Parents are encouraged to share any information that may help the leaders better understand and mentor their child. Events such as death, divorce, problems in school, etc are very stressful to young adults and this information can ensure that the youth leadership is “there” for them during that time. All shared information will be kept strictly confidential.

Contact Information
The current Youth leaders are volunteers and have other work and family responsibilities. Please do not expect replies to phone calls and emails etc. the same day. Leaders will do their best to reply to all messages in a timely manner.

Middle School Leader Contact:      Kristy Austin  kristyaustin@comporium.net  ph.803-329-2863
High School Leader Contact:      Ginny and Dustin Jordan  ginny.jordan@hotmail.com
                                  Ph. 803-517-3926 or 704-807-2508

There is also a Facebook group- “GYM Lutheran” youth and parents may request to join. Events are listed here as well as pictures from various events. Youth are also able to start various discussions (appropriate). Youth who have parental permission are encouraged to create a Facebook profile so they can participate.

IX. Adult Volunteer Personal Criteria
Volunteers must meet certain personal criteria before they are allowed to work with the young people. This policy is to help protect the young people of our church.
A. Volunteers must be at least 21 years of age.
B. A background check may be conducted.
X. Adult Youth Ratio
Appropriate supervision is important to ensure youth safety at events.
   A. Every effort will be made to have a minimum of 2 adults be present at every youth event.
   B. Every effort will be made to have a male and female adult at every activity.
      a. Exception is the “Boys/Girls” Night Out
   C. For larger events a 1 adult to every 6 youth ratio will be followed.
   D. An adult is a Grace member or parent over the age of 21.

XII. Youth Trips/Gatherings
Youth trips require a commitment of time and money. Youth and adults are expected to take these commitments seriously. Trips serve to creatively expand on the groundwork and team building that happens in Sunday School, Servant activities, and other regular youth events. Examples of some regularly scheduled trips and the requirements/expectations are as follows:

Beach Retreat (Middle and High School):
   A. Held each Aug/Sept. at the Coastal Retreat Center in Isle of Palms, SC
   B. Requires an out of pocket event fee
   C. Regular attendance in Sunday School and all other Youth meetings and activities
   D. Room Assignments - Every effort will be made to place youth with desired roommates, but this may not always be possible.

National Youth Gathering (High School):
   A. Held in July every three years in various locations.
   B. Requires an out of pocket event fee.
   C. A behavior covenant will be created by those attending.
   D. Regular attendance in Sunday School and all other Youth meetings and activities
   E. Participate in all Pre-Gathering group building sessions and Bible studies.
   F. Complete all registration materials and turn them in on time.
   G. Participate in a minimum of 80% of fundraising activities.
   H. Room Assignments - Every effort will be made to place youth with desired roommates, but this may not always be possible.

XIII. Finances & Youth Budget
Some youth events are more costly than others. Every effort will be made to help young people attend the events they choose to be a part of regardless of their personal financial situation.
   A. There are budgeted funds available to serve as “scholarships” in the event a youth is unable to attend any event due to their financial situation.
   B. Youth Leaders should be made aware of this need as early in the registration process as possible.
   C. All use of “scholarship” funds is anonymous and confidential.
Policy Notification
I have read the Grace Lutheran Church Youth Ministry Policy Manual in its entirety, and understand the policies it contains.

Youth Name (Printed) ____________________________________________

___________________________________  _________________________
Parent/Guardian Signature                     Date

___________________________________  _________________________
Youth Signature                             Date
Grace Youth Ministry - Picture Release Form
Please check all that apply.

____________________________________________
Youth’s name

My child’s photograph may be used:

_____ on the internet (church website, youth website, and Facebook group “GYM Lutheran”)
_____ with first name only  _____ first and last name  _____ no name

_____ for publication in newspapers and magazines.
_____ with first name only  _____ first and last name  _____ no name

_____ for displays at Grace Lutheran Church on bulletin boards, posters, slide shows etc.
_____ with first name only  _____ first and last name  _____ no name

My child’s video image may be used:

______ for presentations at Grace Lutheran Church
_____ with first name only  _____ first and last name  _____ no name

______ on the church website, youth website and Facebook group “Grace Youth”
_____ with first name only  _____ first and last name  _____ no name

_________________________________________  ____________________________
Parent signature  Date
Grace Youth Ministry - Health Information and Release

Youth Participant Name: ________________________________________________

Address: __________________________________________________________

City, State, Zip: ____________________________________________________

Best Phone to Reach youth: __________________________________________

E-mail (youth): _____________________________________________________ On Facebook? (Y/N)________

Social Security Number: _____________________________________________

Birth Date: ________________________________ Sex: ______________________

Parent/Guardian

Name(s): __________________________________________________________

Home Phone: _______________________________________________________

Cell Phone: _________________________________________________________

Work Phone: _________________________________________________________

Email: _____________________________________________________________

Other Emergency Contact

Name: _____________________________ Relationship: ______________________

Home Phone: _______________________________________________________

Cell Phone: _________________________________________________________

Health History

Physician’s Name: ___________________________ Physician’s Phone: __________

Dentist’s Name: ______________________________ Dentist’s Phone: __________
Allergies: ____________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________________________

Dietary Restrictions: __________________________________________________________________

Operations/Serious Injuries: _____________________________________________________________________

Other Important Information (i.e. asthma, etc): _______________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________________________

Health Insurance Information

Carrier Name: ____________________________________________________________________________

Carrier Address: __________________________________________________________________________

Carrier Phone Number: _____________________________________________________________________

Policy Number: __________________________________________________________________________

Policy Holder’s Name: ______________________________________________________________________

Policy Holder’s Social Security Number: ________________________________________________________

*PLEASE ATTACH A COPY OF YOUR INSURANCE CARD TO THIS FORM*

Medical Release and Authorization for Treatment

The undersigned, as parent/legal guardian of the youth participant, authorizes Grace Youth Ministry and its delegated leaders to consent to any medical/hospital care deemed necessary. I consent to the release of this health history form to the emergency room, hospital, or doctor’s office providing care. Grace Youth Ministry will endeavor, but is not required, to communicate with me prior to treatment. The undersigned releases Grace Youth Ministry and its designated leaders and directors from any liability and claims arising from any consent given in good faith in connections with diagnosis or treatment. The undersigned certifies that he/she has full authority to sign this Release and Authorization. The completed form may be photocopied for trips away from Grace Lutheran Church.

Signature: ___________________________________________ Date: __________________

Name (print): ____________________________________________________________________________
Grace Lutheran Church Youth Ministry
Assumptions of Risk and Release of Liability Form
(Read this document very carefully and please sign below.)

Participant's Name:____________________________________________

Event: ______________________  Date:_____________________________

The undersigned has been made aware that during participation in any Grace Youth Ministry sponsored event that certain dangers and exposure to physical injuries will be present. I understand that participation may require physical exertion and I am willing to assume the risks involved in this activity. In consideration of and as a conditions of the right to participate in such an activity, arranged by Grace Youth Ministry, the undersigned does hereby assume all risks incident to such activity and does hereby release and discharge Grace Lutheran Church, as well as the youth leader(s), any pastor, teacher, volunteers, and any other person or organization whose acts or to whom Grace Youth Ministry might be liable, from any and all liabilities, actions, causes of action, debts, claims demands of whatsoever kind and nature which may arise out of or in conjunction with such an activity or participant in any activities incident thereto.

I have carefully read this Assumption of Risk and Release of Liability Form and fully understand its contents. I voluntarily sign it and realize that it will bind my heirs, personal representatives and me.

Participant's Signature: ____________________________________________

Date: __________________________

Parent/Guardian's
Signature: __________________________________________________________

Date: __________________________

Phone Number: _____________________________________________________

Alternate Phone Number: ____________________________________________
Grace Youth Ministry - Youth Driver/Rider Form
Form valid for one year from date signed at bottom. Must be signed and dated to be valid.

Youth Name: ________________________________

Yes / No I give permission for my child to drive for local Grace sponsored Youth events

Yes / No My child is allowed to have passengers.  
If yes, my child is allowed to have ______ (number) passengers.

My child is allowed to transport the following teens: (Additional names on back)
________________________________________  ________________________________________
________________________________________  ________________________________________

My child is not allowed to transport the following teens: (Additional names on back)
________________________________________  ________________________________________
________________________________________  ________________________________________

Yes / No My child is allowed to ride with a youth driver. 
If yes, my child is allowed to ride with the following youth drivers: (Add names on back)
________________________________________  ________________________________________
________________________________________  ________________________________________

My child is NOT allowed to ride with the following youth drivers: (Add names on back)
________________________________________  ________________________________________
________________________________________  ________________________________________

I understand that by signing this form that I have given or denied my child from driving for youth events and/or riding with a youth driver for youth events.

Date: _________________________________

Parent/Guardian's
Signature: _________________________________