

Fellowship of Christian Athletes

Youth Protection Goals and Expectations

As part of our purpose, we seek to provide every youth, participant, and staff person with a safe, fulfilling experience. We expect all staff to promote a positive, nurturing environment for our youth and other participants, and to closely follow all FCA youth protection guidelines and directives.

Guidelines for FCA Representatives

I. Behavior Policy

1. FCA expects all paid staff and volunteers, in every aspect of their involvement with FCA activities and programs, to exhibit exemplary language and conduct, consistent with FCA's ministry purpose, Sexual Purity Policy, and moral and theological beliefs.
2. FCA prohibits staff members and volunteers from:
 - a. Engaging in any dating, romantic or sexual activity or relationship with the young people and adults who participate in our programs;
 - b. Using sexually explicit language or jokes, or possessing or viewing lewd or pornographic materials in the presence of participants or others;
 - c. Engaging in any sexual relations or activities that constitute sexual offenses as defined by federal or state law; or
 - d. Using language or behavior that involves violence or is derogatory, threatening, abusive or harassing;
3. In addition, FCA expects staff member and volunteers involved in our programs to be attentive to the physical and emotional abilities and needs of participants, and to avoid situations that could cause participants to suffer an accident or injury.
4. Any FCA representative who is found by FCA to have violated this Behavior Policy, or FCA's Sexual Purity Policy, or any of the guidelines below, may be immediately terminated, or subjected to disciplinary action, all in the discretion of FCA.

II. Prevention Guidelines: Barriers to Abuse

1. **Team Leadership** — Whenever feasible a youth will not be in the primary care or supervision of only one adult. Teams of leaders will supervise activities. Where possible, experienced adult workers should be included with adults who are newcomers to youth work.
2. **Athletic Activities** — The excitement, emotions and stress of athletic activities can give rise to inappropriate language and physical contact. FCA Representatives must refrain from jokes, remarks, exclamations and physical touch that could be perceived as negative or suggestive. Also be aware of the physical needs of the athlete, such as fatigue, the need for fluids, treatment of an injury, and weather conditions (such as electrical storms or extreme heat).
3. **Individual Counseling** — Counseling with youth should be in the nature of spiritual counseling. Coaching and mentoring on ordinary problems and challenges of growing up is also acceptable. Counseling should not involve therapy or advice concerning mental or emotional illness, suicidal thoughts, drug abuse, or pregnancy. Generally parents should be advised of these more serious problems. In some instances, the youth should be referred to a professional (see procedures below under Long-Term Counseling). Team counseling is preferable whenever possible. When team counseling sessions are not feasible, notify your program leader in advance of the location and with whom you are meeting. Counseling must always be done in a public place (lobby, courtyard, snack shop, etc.) where private conversations are possible but occur in full view of others. Guard carefully to avoid seclusion. Be especially careful to have female adults counsel female youths and males counsel males. A male/female team is generally appropriate for counseling either gender.
4. **Long-term Counseling** — FCA representatives (especially at Camp) should avoid entering into long-term individual counseling relationships with participants. Generally, you should not meet with a youth for counseling more than three times. FCA representatives should report all counseling contacts to their program leader. Adult leaders are generally not prepared or supported for long-term counseling or formal therapy. Instead, refer youth who have a need for long-term counseling to professionals in the community. Before making a referral, always consult with your program leader about the need for referral and how to make the referral. It is usually appropriate to notify, and make the referral through a parent/guardian.
5. **Informal Contact (Independent of FCA Activities)** — Informal contact refers to phone calls, cards, face-to-face contact, or other communication between an FCA representative and a youth that is not connected to "official" FCA activities. FCA recognizes that informal contact between FCA representatives and youth frequently occurs and can be very beneficial for Christian and social reasons. For example, staff may hire teens as baby-sitters for their own children, or staff may see kids during social events with the child's family. This interaction is usually legitimate and beneficial. However, staff should seek permission of parents, and report plans for such contact to the FCA program leader before having informal contact with the child. The staff member should clearly let the parent know the nature of the contact and that it is not part of an FCA activity. Parents are responsible for monitoring this informal contact. In follow-up to an FCA activity or event, FCA representatives should only send post cards, not letters. Follow-up emails must be sent from an FCA computer, not a home computer.
6. **Be Aware of "Fantasy Relationships"** — Refrain from spending an inordinate amount of time with any one participant that could lead the participant to misread your interest in him or her or become too strongly tied to you. Be aware of how you express your concern for the student. When you express love, be sure students know you mean Christian love.
7. **Youth Supervising Youth** — Minors may help adults lead youth activities only under the direct leadership of a screened and trained adult. Minors must also be screened and trained (as appropriate for their age). Minors generally should not be permitted to help lead youth activities unless 16 or over. Minors in leadership roles should not be left alone and unsupervised with youth participants.
8. **Overnight Activities** — At least two adults will supervise overnight activities. If the participants are male and female, then male and female chaperons must be present. It is never appropriate for an adult chaperon who is not a family member to share a bed with a youth. Males and females attending events must not share the same sleeping quarters and should have separate access to bathroom facilities. Younger minors should be provided sleeping and changing facilities separate from older minors. Experienced adult workers should be included with adults who are newcomers to youth work.
9. **Transportation** — FCA may from time to time provide transportation as an official part of an activity. When children or youth are transported as a part of an activity, follow the "two adult rule" whenever possible. Avoid situations where one adult is alone with one youth. In addition, never allow a child to be left alone in a vehicle. All other guidelines also apply.
10. **Confidentiality** — Youth workers must report to a program leader if a minor discusses harming himself or others, committing a crime, or being abused. There are limits to confidentiality when working with youth. Where necessary, explain clearly to youth that there are some circumstances where you are required to "tell" what the youth discloses. Questions about such cases or other issues of confidentiality must be discussed promptly with the program leader. While you should generally maintain the confidentiality of personal information provided to you by participants, at the same time you should never promise complete confidentiality. If a child confides to you that he has been sexually or physically abused by a family member or another, you may have a legal obligation to report this to the authorities. In addition, if the child tells you that he has committed or plans to commit a crime, or plans to harm himself, you may need to report this to the authorities as well.
11. **Gifts** — Youth workers should not give personal gifts or money to youth. Gifts can be easily misinterpreted. With the advance approval of the program leader, small gifts given to groups of young people can be allowed, such as graduation presents or awards for participation.
12. **Physical Contact** — In athletic activities, physical contact between players and between coaches and players, is often a necessary part of practice and the game. Certain kinds of physical touch however, are inappropriate. While "high-fives," side-hugs, and pats on the shoulder are

usually acceptable, full-hugs, patting the buttocks, and back rubs or massages are not acceptable. Do not allow “piling on” or “dog piles” after a game or practice. Roughhousing and horseplay also should be discouraged, because they can lead to injury.

13. **Corporal Punishment** — Corporal punishment (hitting or spanking) and other forms of punishment involving physical pain are never appropriate. This rule holds true even if parents have suggested or given permission for corporal punishment. Youth workers must consult their supervisors or program leader if they need help with discipline techniques.

14. **Open Door Policy** — All FCA events are “open door.” This means that staff and parents have a right to observe any activity. FCA does not practice secret activities, initiations, or rituals.

15. **Dating or Sexual Involvement** — No adult youth worker is to date a youth or be romantically or sexually involved with a youth.

16. **Appearance of Misconduct** — Staff must avoid even the appearance of misconduct. This is necessary in order to maintain parental confidence and avoid mistaken allegations. Appropriate physical contact (see #12 above) in group settings is okay and can be a positive dynamic. However, be cautious of any touching actions that can be misleading to individuals receiving the touch or those observing.

17. **Unsupervised Areas** — Make unsupervised or isolated areas off-limits to youth. Youth should not be allowed to return to cabins or sleeping areas except in groups or with supervision. Develop a plan among leaders for periodic monitoring and checking of unsupervised areas.

18. **Youth Conversation** — Youth should be instructed that sexual talk and gestures are not tolerated. Youth who make sexual remarks to other youth should be reprimanded, and such language should be reported to the program leader.

19. **Supervision and Communication** — Youth workers should consult with the youth program leader to discuss any issues regarding these guidelines. Appropriate topics that must be discussed include problems, accountability, policy clarification, personal feelings, or other issues that may affect youth worker efforts.

20. **Feedback from Youth and Parents** — A leader designated to receive complaints from youth should be identified at every Camp. All youth should be made aware of this individual and of his or her availability to listen to problems or complaints. All parents should be provided the name and contact information for this leader. Parents should also be provided an 800-number for complaints and questions. All youth and parents adult/coach participants should be provided a comment form following camp or an event, on which they can identify problems or concerns. Please promptly forward copies of all forms received to the Camp Office at FCA National Support Center, and please flag all forms that include complaints or that raise safety issues.

21. **Focus on these spiritual guidelines while working with young people:**

1 Thessalonians 2:11,12 — For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory.

1 Thessalonians 5:22 — Avoid every kind of evil.

Philippians 4:8 — Finally brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is admirable - if anything is excellent or praiseworthy - think about such things.

James 3:8-10 —...but no man can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God's likeness. Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be.

22. **Drugs/Alcohol/Tobacco Use Policy** — It is expected that FCA Staff/Volunteers will not use alcohol, drugs, or tobacco (chewing or smoking) while supervising an FCA event.

III. Reporting Procedures

1. If an FCA representative observes or suspects that any other representative has engaged in conduct that violates the Behavior Policy or any other FCA policy or guideline, the FCA Representative must report this IMMEDIATELY to his/her FCA program leader. If the FCA program leader is observed, or suspected of, engaging in misconduct, this must be reported directly to the Executive Vice President at the FCA National Support Center. If an FCA representative or program leader becomes aware that child abuse has occurred, the matter should be reported immediately to one of the designated FCA contacts for reporting abuse situations as provided in the Youth Protection Standards of Conduct.

2. FCA program leaders who receive reports of misconduct are expected to IMMEDIATELY report any information they have received to the Executive Vice President at the National Support Center, and to coordinate the local response with the National Support Center.

3. Representatives and program leaders should refrain from investigating the situation, contacting the person alleged to have engaged in misconduct, or discussing the details with any person other than National Support Center Personnel designated above until the matter can be discussed with National Support Center Personnel.

4. If there is a likelihood of injury to the victim or others, the authorities and/or emergency personnel may have to be contacted before the matter can be discussed with the National Support Center. In addition, it may be necessary to place the representative accused of misconduct on suspension or administrative leave, or terminate employment, and to instruct the representative to cease contact with the victim and others.

5. Failure to report suspected or observed misconduct promptly may result in immediate dismissal from employment or volunteer assignments with FCA, or disciplinary action, all in the discretion of FCA.

I have read the guidelines above. I agree to observe them faithfully. I understand that if I fail to follow these guidelines, I may be reassigned or relieved from all duties at the discretion of FCA.

Printed Name

Signature

Camp

Date

Position