



STUDENT MINISTRY STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

1. PURPOSE

Everything we do as part of our student ministry is a part of the vision of NorthStar Church! We want to see students know God while having fun in a safe, comfortable, trusted, and learning environment. We want them to Know the life-giving God, Grow in authentic relationship with the savior, Experience the transforming power of the holy spirit and Unite the next generation to purpose! We help kids experience God on their level!

NorthStar Students is based on Psalm 133:1 ***“Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!”*** (ESV). It is our goal at NorthStar Students to help build a generation of young people starting at birth who are confident in the word of God and grounded in their understanding of who God is.

Safety is our PRIORITY! It is the responsibility of every NorthStar Students team member to keep the children entrusted to us safe. This document outlines key elements of our safety policy. This policy helps us raise the bar for safety in our ministry.

2. MINISTRY VALUES

The core values for our student ministry program are to have Fun, Love God, Love People, and Do Your Best.

A. Community

When students come, they should feel welcome. Family and community are at the core of our church and our youth ministry. We do our best to create a safe and inviting place for all students. A place where students can be heard and feel connected to others.

B. Discipleship

When you think of discipleship, always go back to the phrase “give a man a fish and he will eat for a day but teach a man how to fish and he will eat forever.” NorthStar is not just about giving the students answers. It is about teaching them how to find the answers for themselves. That is why discipleship is key. Getting students connected with leaders is of the utmost importance.

C. Fun

We want NorthStar to be a place where students have fun. Something that students look forward to every week. No one wants to come back to a place where they were bored, so we will ensure that we are keeping the students’ attention and leaving them wanting more.

D. Creativity

We understand that the world is different for young people now. There are a lot of different things trying to gain their attention. To connect to students, we must be creative. We must be risk-takers and we are willing to try anything short of sin to connect them to Jesus.

E. Servants

We are called to be servants of the Lord Jesus Christ, so we must serve. Not only our community, but our church. NorthStar Students should look for ways to serve the people of our church. Whether that's mowing someone's lawn or helping them move. Servanthood is a quality we will emphasize.

F. Growth

We want to help facilitate growth both spiritually and mentally. The church is called to walk alongside people just as Christ did, to help cultivate growth. That means when we see specific gifts and abilities in students, we will call them out and help them grow those gifts. We want to partner with students to be all that they are called to be.

G. Partner With Parents

Leaders and Pastors spend limited time with students. It is important to partner with parents, honoring their decisions and ensuring the best for the students. We must be able to give parents a clear explanation of our events so we can win them. When we win the parents, we win the students.

H. Allow the Holy Spirit to Move

We can plan as much as we want, when the Holy Spirit moves, we will surrender our ideas and plans and let Him take control. This may not happen at every service, but we will not interfere with what God wants to do when it does.

I. Based in Truth

Every message will have a purpose. Some topics may be tough for students to handle or understand because of personal beliefs, but we will not let feelings and worldly culture dictate truth. We will explain Biblical truths with love and grace, but they will never fall subject to culture.

3. TEAM ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

NorthStar Ministries is responsible for creating a safe place for kids to have fun and build (develop) their faith. The NorthStar Kids team cares for kids ages 6 weeks through 11 years of age.

A. Family Pastor or Director– Develops leaders, cares for and pastors the team, ensures the central strategy is successfully implemented, and ensures the overall growth of the team.

B. Coordinator– Implements the campus expression of the central play for their designated team, responsible for the overall care of the team which they oversee (Infant/Toddler, Preschool/Elementary, Family Connections).

- C. **Team Lead**– Facilitates the play on Sunday, ensures all team members are in place, ensures that the team has everything they need to be successful.
- D. **Team Member**– Executes the play on Sunday and cares for the kids.

4. SELECTION OF TEAM MEMBERS

We want every person that has a heart to serve the church to have a place to serve. With that being said, there is a process to becoming a leader in our ministry. Being a leader carries weight. Without going through the proper channels, some people may not be able to handle that. Here are the steps that all volunteers (except those already serving as team members) must go through before they begin serving in our ministry:

Onboarding Steps

- Complete the Growth Track
- Have a Next Steps Conversation
- Complete the background check process. *(all individuals working with our children, present and future, must have an acceptable background)*
- Volunteers will be contacted via phone or email about the various areas to serve
- Shadow Students, observe a student group, or serve in the lobby on Sundays
- After shadowing, the volunteer will have a more in-depth onboarding process they choose to serve on the student team
- Receive Standard Operating Procedures in which the team member must adhere to
- Add Volunteer to the Planning Center and tag them with their team

The Director, Coordinator and Team Lead must be filled with individuals who are over the age of 21 and must exhibit a mature personal and Christian attitude. Selection of these roles will be approved by the Family Pastor and Lead Pastor

5. CLASSROOM RATIOS

To provide guidance and instruction on managing classroom ratios during a Sunday Service in NorthStar Kids.

Safety is our PRIORITY in NorthStar Kids. Ratios are designed to protect the families we serve and our volunteers. We are also committed to making room for first time guests. Therefore, our policy is also designed to make room for one more family to Know God.

The ratios shown in the table below represent the adult to child ratio. Teen volunteers support at half the capacity of an adult. For example, if the ratio for a room is 1:6 (1 adult: 6 kids), the student ratio for a student volunteer would be (1 student: 3 kids). In a classroom with 1 adult and 1 student, the max number of children for the classroom is 9. The Director has the authority to lower the ratio for a student volunteer based on individual capacity. The ratio for a student should never be raised above half of the adult ratio. Teen volunteers should not be left alone with children unsupervised.

Classroom Age Range Adult to Child Ratio

Infant	6 Weeks -18 Months	1 Adult: 2 Children Ratio
Toddler	19 Months – 48 Months (1.5 years old - 4 years)	1 Adult: 6 Children Ratio
Preschool	4 – 6 Years	1 Adult: 10 Children Ratio
Elementary	6 - 12 Years	1 Adult: 15 Children Ratio
Youth	12 – 18 Years	1 Adult: 15 Children Ratio

6. LOBBY CONNECTOR

The goal of the lobby connector is to welcome families and get them connected to our student ministries. We strive to create a welcoming environment for parents from the moment they step into the hallway/lobby area. Our family greeters will be warm, inviting, always ready to greet and connect with new and returning families.

Student Team members should be serving at least two Sunday services a month as a lobby connector to establish the student ministries’ presence on Sundays and to provide information to students and parents.

7. CHECK-IN & CHECK-OUT

Safety is our PRIORITY at NorthStar. The check-in and check-out process is designed to protect the families we serve and our volunteers. When children are safe and protected, we create an environment for them and their guardian to KNOW GOD.

A. Check-In

When a child under 12 years of age arrives at the classroom a volunteer will greet the child by name and with a smile. The volunteer will have a clipboard with a sign-in sheet attached. The volunteer will add the child’s name, parents name/guardian, and allergies to the sign-in sheet. If the child does have an allergy, the teacher should highlight the child’s name on the sign-in sheet attached to the clipboard. A numbered tag corresponding to the sign-in sheet number will be issued to the parent or guardian.

B. Check-out

When the parent comes to retrieve their child, they must hand the volunteer their parent tag. The teacher will compare the parent number to the number on the sign in sheet. Once the number has been confirmed, the child is provided to the parent and is no longer under the care of NorthStar.

8. SUPERVISION

The student ministry staff and volunteers are responsible for the supervision of students during ministry activities, including observing the environment and equipment for unsafe situations, removing students from potentially dangerous conditions, and reporting problems immediately. Ministry staff should ensure that anyone who has not been screened and approved for ministry service does not have unsupervised access to students. Supervision of students will be guided by the two-adult rule described in the next section.

Parents are responsible for their children until the time the activity is scheduled to begin and after the activity's scheduled ending time. Activity leaders are responsible for publicizing activity times. When students arrive at any church ministry or program, they are expected to remain in that program until the program ends and supervision is transferred back to parents. Students may not leave the program early without parental permission communicated to student ministry staff and/or volunteers. A student's failure to follow this policy will be considered unacceptable behavior, and discipline policies will be enforced (see separate section on student discipline).

Student Ministry leaders are not responsible for students who do not show up at a ministry activity, even if a parent believes they are at the activity. Parents are welcome to ask student ministry staff about the attendance of their child at ministry activities, including one-on-one mentoring meetings. Providing attendance information to parents is not considered a breach of confidentiality.

Under no circumstance should a child be permitted to leave the classroom without adult supervision. Children checked in to student ministries are not permitted to leave the classroom to get water, get a snack, or use the bathroom without adult supervision. **WHY:** not everyone in the hall is background checked. Our commitment to parents is that anyone interacting with their child while under the care of NorthStar Ministries will be background checked. Watching a child from across the lobby does not count as supervision.

9. THE TWO-ADULT RULE

The two-adult rule states that there must always be two non-related adults present when supervising one or more students. This rule is designed for the safety of adults as well as minors and is required across all ministry areas with few exceptions (see guidelines for these cases below). Compliance with the two-adult rule includes the following:

A. The Rule

- There must always be two adults present when supervising one or more students.

- The adults must not be related family members (a married couple would be considered “related”)
- The adults should be in sight of each other at all times.

B. Exceptions to the Two-Adult Rule

The purpose of the two-adult rule is to ensure the actions of any one leader are known to at least one other leader and to support leaders in ministry. Guidelines for exceptions to the two-adult rule follow this intent—that even when only one leader is present, the actions of that leader are known and visible to others. This is accomplished by the adult choosing to be in visible and public locations, and by communication with other ministry staff.

C. The Two-Adult Rule in Student Groups

Our ministry uses breakout rooms for student group times. There may be times when a room will only accommodate one student group at a time. When this occurs, windows should be unobstructed (curtains or blinds open) AND the door left open. The student group leader should place him/herself in visible sight of the hallway/entrance so that they may be seen from outside the room. An adult leader should periodically walk by the breakout rooms to ensure these policies are in effect.

D. One-on-One Mentoring Meetings

One-on-one meetings between students and screened leaders are an important part of ministries with junior and senior high students. The following guidelines must be followed:

E. Visible Location

Meetings should take place in a visible area in a public place (e.g., coffee shop, restaurant, visible park area). Adult leaders should never meet with a student in a private home unless the student’s parent or another screened adult is in the home and can view the adult and student at any time. The location should be within a couple miles of the church or the student’s home or school (i.e., advisors should not be planning one-on-one meetings at the beach or other destinations outside the local community)

F. Driving Students

Adult leaders may drive students to and from meetings if they inform their supervisor of this arrangement in advance (see below) and they adhere to the guidelines listed in “Driving Students” under “Off-Campus Activities.”

G. Students in Junior High

Parent permission must be obtained for any one-on-one meeting with students in junior high. Leaders need parental permission each time they meet with students regarding when and where the meeting will take place and how students will get to and from the meeting.

H. Students in Senior High

At the beginning of each school year and when students enter the program mid-year, parents will be informed that leaders may occasionally meet with students one-on-one. Parents will be asked to provide their signature to indicate they have been informed of this and other

policies and procedures. If the Student Ministry has signed permission, the parent does not need to be notified of specific meetings; however, the student director must be notified (see below). If the ministry area does not have signed parent permission, then parent permission must be obtained for any specific meeting between the leader and student.

I. Inform Director of Meeting

Before meeting with a student, the following information should be provided by the leader to the director (or designee):

- Name of student
- Date and time of meeting
- Location
- Whether the student will be driven by the adult leader
- Names of any other youth or adults who will be attending
- For students in junior high, how parental permission was obtained

J. Unplanned Situation with Only One Adult

Occasionally, leaders will find themselves without another adult present due to unforeseen circumstances. The following procedures should be followed.

Immediately Inform Supervisor - the adult leader should immediately inform his/her supervisor or the supervisor's designee (by cell phone or text message) about the situation, including information about where they are and who is present. The supervisor or designee will advise the adult leader about what to do (e.g., cancel the activity, proceed with the activity, notify parents). The adult leader should also immediately contact the supervisor or designee if a second adult leader arrives or when the students have been released from the activity to their parents.

Visible Location—Any time there is only one adult present, the group must be in a visible public location with an unobstructed window or open door if indoors.

Multiple Students Present—A leader should not be alone with one student (except in prearranged mentoring meetings described above). If multiple students are present (e.g., 3 or more), this is acceptable in some cases, although the supervisor should still be consulted about how to proceed. If a leader finds him/herself alone with a student for a ministry activity, the activity should be canceled, and the parent notified.

10. RESTROOM USE

Our goal is that children would use the bathroom unassisted or have their diapering needs attended to in the nursery or toddler room with a second adult present. Under no circumstances should a dream team member be alone in a bathroom stall with a child. Bathroom runs should be completed with 2 witnesses for accountability. There should be two adults or teen volunteers 16 years of age or older. When diapering a child, a second adult must be present. If there is not a second adult in

the room, call for a team lead or another leader to assist. Male volunteers are not permitted to change diapers.

When participating in on-campus activities, junior and senior high students may use the restrooms without an escort, as long as they inform an adult leader where they are going. That leader should watch to ensure they return.

11. HEALTH CONCERNS/ SICKNESS/ ILLNESS POLICY

In order to keep all of our students as well as volunteers healthy physically there are some guidelines we must follow. In certain cases, some symptoms may warrant a student to stay home, those symptoms include, but are not limited to: diarrhea; vomiting; jaundice (yellowing of the skin and/or eyes); sore throat and/or fever; infected cuts or wounds; lesions containing pus on the hand, wrist, an exposed body part (such as boils and infected wounds, however small); flu or flu-like symptoms; any contagious illnesses; or if rest is recommended by a doctor.

Should a child exhibit any of the above symptoms, the parents or guardian shall be notified immediately and asked to remove the child from the group setting.

12. ENVIRONMENTS

We strive to create SAFE and FUN environment for kids to encounter God on their level. Each environment is tailored to help kids encounter Christ in a way that is developmentally appropriate for them.

A. Infant (6 weeks – 18 months)

Our primary focus in the infant setting is care and prayer. When parents drop their child off to an infant setting, the leader should greet the family with a smile and add any pertinent information to the sign in sheet.

The leader should collect the child's eating schedule and diapering needs.

During the service, volunteers should pray the monthly verse over the child and engage with them in play.

Volunteers should ensure that all the child's belongings stay together, ensuring that an infant only eats food and drinks milk provided to them.

When the parents pick the child up, the volunteer should inform the family when their child was fed and changed. Every infant under the care of NorthStar should receive a diaper change.

B. Toddlers (19 months – 48 months (1.5 years old - 4 years old))

In our toddlers setting, we ensure children feel comfortable engaging in play and hear a Bible story about Jesus. When parents drop their child off to an infant setting, the leader should find out if the child has any allergies or has any diapering needs. In the toddler setting, we

do not feed children or provide snacks. During the service, volunteers should allow children to engage in play for the first 20 minutes of service. Following free play, children will engage in worship. Following worship, children will watch the Bible story for the day. Children will be given the option to color. Following the coloring sheet, the setting will return to free play.

While in free play, the setting volunteers can begin to change the diapers of children who require a diaper change.

C. Preschool (Ages 4 – 6 years old)

Our primary focus in the preschool setting is allowing kids to engage in play, while connecting with the story of Jesus.

When parents drop their child off to a preschool setting, the leader should find out if the child has any allergies or anything else that requires special attention. In the preschool setting, we do not feed children or provide snacks.

During the service, volunteers should allow children to engage in play for the first 20 minutes of service. Following free play, children will engage in worship. Following worship, children will watch the Bible Lesson for the day. Following the lesson, children will engage in activities to reinforce the lesson. Following the lesson, the setting will return to free play.

D. Elementary (Ages 6 - 12 years old)

Our primary focus in the elementary setting is instructing kids about Jesus while allowing them to build community with their peers. When parents drop their child off to an elementary space, the leader should find out if the child has any allergies or anything else that requires special attention. In the elementary setting, we do not feed children or provide snacks. During the service, volunteers should allow children to engage in play for the first 20 minutes of service. Following free play, children will engage in worship. Following worship, children will watch the Bible Lesson for the day. Following the Bible lesson, children will be given the option to color. Following the lesson, children will connect with their peers in small groups. These groups are meant to deepen their understanding of the lesson while they also build relationships with their peers. Following small Group time, children will complete activities to reinforce the lesson. Following the activities, children can return to replay. We start with fun and end with fun.

E. Youth (Ages 12-18 years old)

Our primary focus in the Youth setting is to enhance the learning and understanding about Jesus while allowing them to build community with their peers as they prepare for adulthood. The Youth Group will not meet on Sunday morning in order that the youth can participate and help serve in the morning worship. The youth group will meet at a scheduled time that is agreeable with the participants and leaders. Group activities will be provided which helps to create a mature Christian attitude and stewardship.

13. PHYSICAL CONTACT

Our church is committed to protecting children in its care. To this end, our church has implemented a 'physical contact policy' which promotes a positive, nurturing environment for our Student Ministry programs. The following guidelines are to be carefully followed by anyone working in the student programs:

- A. Side hugs, pats on the back and other forms of appropriate physical affection between staff members or volunteers and children are important for the child's development and are generally suitable in the church setting.
- B. Inappropriate touching and inappropriate displays of affection are forbidden. Any inappropriate physical contact, touching or displays of affection should be immediately reported to an immediate supervisor, the Family Pastor / Director or the Pastor.
- C. Physical contact should be for the benefit of the child, and never be based upon the emotional needs of a staff member or volunteer.
- D. Physical contact and affection should be given only in observable places or when in the presence of other children or youth staff members and volunteers. It is much less likely that touch will be inappropriate or misinterpreted as such when physical contact is open to observation.
- E. Physical contact in any form should not give even the appearance of wrongdoing. The personal behavior of staff or volunteers in the Student Ministry must foster trust at all times. Personal conduct must be above reproach.
- F. Do not force any physical contact, touch or affection upon a reluctant child. A child's preference not to be touched must be respected.
- G. Youth staff and volunteers are responsible for protecting youth under their supervision from inappropriate or unwanted touch by others.
- H. Any inappropriate behavior or suspected abuse by staff or volunteers must be reported immediately to an immediate supervisor, the Youth Pastor /Director or the Pastor.

We love the kids that we get to serve. If we want to show them God's love through physical touch, we have an obligation to do that in a meaningful way.

Try This: High fives, Thumbs up, First bumps, Side hugs

Avoid this: Snuggling, Cuddling, Tackling, Kissing, Holding hands

14. ENGAGING WITH PARENTS

When parents leave service, they often leave feeling refreshed. When they come from service to pick up their kid, we want to be sensitive to where their head and heart might be. When a parent picks a child up, do not lead with “Johnny was really difficult in class today.”

If you need to address a specific behavior with a parent, a team lead, coordinator, or Director should have that conversation. You may be present in the conversation, but our leaders are specifically trained to appropriately have conversations with parents.

15. SNACKS

Due to allergy restrictions, outside snacks are not allowed to be consumed in toddlers, preschool and elementary. Parents may pack a snack for their nursery aged child, but the snack must be nut free. If NorthStar Kids provides a snack to your child, it must be nut free.

If a child is hungry and requests a snack, the parent must be contacted to consent to the snack being provided. On certain occasions, NorthStar will have a snack or food activity incorporated into the lesson. When this is the case, we will provide an ingredient list to the parent at check in. NorthStar may provide candy as an incentive. Children will be celebrated with candy but advised to eat the candy at home. If a staff child needs to eat a snack, the snack must be consumed outside the classroom since snacks are not provided to every child.

16. STUDENT LEADERS IN TRAINING

We encourage senior high school students to serve as leaders for students in younger grades. They are energetic, fun, and eager. Though they are mature and helpful, they are still under the age of 18 and require adult supervision and leadership.

A youth leader may count as an adult under the Two-Adult Rule if a non-related adult who is at least 18 and out of high school is also present. It is preferable for the second adult to be a more experienced person who can mentor the youth leader. Two youth leaders serving without any other adults' present would not satisfy the two-adult rule. Youth serving as leaders for younger students will participate in youth leadership training regarding the protection of children.

Student Volunteers are permitted and encouraged to:

- Lead worship
- Assist with signing kids in the classroom
- Lead aspects of games and lessons
- Show kids how to games and with toys

Student Volunteers are not permitted to:

- Be alone with kids in the classroom

- Take children to the bathroom alone
- Provide a report to parents on a child's behavior
- Walk a child to get water or food

A leader may not date a student under any circumstances, with one exception: If a high school student is a student leader, the student may date another high school student. A high school leader of junior high activities may not date a junior high student. When the leader becomes a non-high school student (through graduation or other means) either the dating relationship is to be put on hold, or the leader shall step down from the leadership role until such time that both members of the couple are no longer high school students.

17. CHILD DEDICATIONS

The purpose of Child Dedications is to invite families to raise their kids in a Godly community. The objective of Child Dedications is to get parents connected to marriage and family groups where they can connect with other families and discover what it means to raise their child in accordance with God's word. Additionally, there is an evangelistic component to the child dedication ceremony; families having their child dedicated will invite their unchurched family to church to participate in the ceremony. It is our hope that while they attend the Sunday experience prior to the ceremony, their lives will be radically transformed by Christ.

NorthStar Church conducts child dedications twice a year, once in the spring and once in the fall. Child Dedications should take place following the last experience held at church. The Child Dedication ceremony will be hosted by the Lead Pastor.

18. BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

Our goal is to ensure that kids have fun while building their relationship with God. In order to have a safe and fun environment, boundaries must be established and enforced to ensure that every child gets the opportunity to have fun.

Our goal with managing behavior in the classroom isn't about punishments or rules. Rather it's about teaching/guiding children towards Godly character and doing what's best so every child has an opportunity to hear the message of Christ.

It is the responsibility of the room leader to remove any distractions from the classroom which prevent kids from having fun and learning about Christ. The room leader should also address any behavioral distraction that is unsafe.

Managing Behavior:

REDIRECT- Give a warning, explaining why the behavior does not align with our NorthStar Kids Values. Provide an alternative activity or behavior.

REMOVE- If the child does not follow directions when you give them a redirection, it may be necessary to remove them from the situation or activity so they can calm down and prepare to

rejoin the service. The room leader should call the NorthStar Kids team lead to the classroom in order to remove the child.

RELATE- Use this opportunity to connect with the child on their level to understand if there is something going on in the child's life that could be causing the disruptive behavior. How can we best serve this child?

RE-ENGAGE- When the child is ready, reintroduce them to their environment. If the behavior does not improve, engage the parent.

REINFORCE- Celebrate what you want to replicate.