

Everything we do is a part of the vital ministry of the youth department Highland Park United Methodist Church. While participating, we will be representing both the Christian faith and HPUMC. As a church youth group, we will conduct ourselves both individually and as a group in ways that are consistent with who we are, what we profess to believe, and who and what we represent.

It is always important that we operate on trust and that everyone clearly understands the guidelines we will operate by and what is expected of each person. The following guidelines give the basic expectations for each of us to follow.

Minimum Expectations

It is expected that everyone will abide by the rules and guidelines in this covenant and those provided by the Highland Park staff and leaders/chaperones. These are held to be the minimal expectations of any participant in any activity.

1. Alcohol, tobacco, inhalants, fireworks, weapons (**including pocket knives**), or illegal drugs of any kind have no place in anything we do. They will not be tolerated.
2. Illegal activity of any kind has no place in anything we do. The law requires that we report any such incident to the police.
3. We will respect the physical property of others (personal items, etc.), **including the vehicles or buses** in which we travel, restaurants where we eat, and facilities where we stay. You mess it up, you clean it up...you break it, you buy it!
4. The **language** we use and our attitude need to reflect the Christian nature of our group and the mind of Jesus Christ. Be positive and reflect who we are as a Christian community in all we say and do! Profanity, abusive language, derogatory comments and put downs have no place in our group or on any activity.
5. Everyone – youth and adults – will be expected to be **present and on time** for all events.
6. We are **never to be off by ourselves** - always observe the “buddy rule.” Make sure that you always have others with you when you are out.
7. **The adult staff and leaders need to know where we are at all times.** One cannot leave the designated area without receiving permission from the adults in charge. Designated areas will be spelled out for every activity, event, retreat, trek, or jaunt.
8. We need to **be in the sleeping facilities by curfew**, which will be on the schedule and/or stated by the leaders.
9. We are **never to get into a vehicle that is not with our group.** We are never to go off with anyone who is not with our group. (Pre-approved adults 25 and over are the only ones authorized to drive our vehicles).
10. We encourage expressions of affection and caring. However, youth activities or retreats are not a date. Even if you are with your “sweety” (or you discover your “sweety” while participating on this trip), expressions of romantic affection need to be appropriate to our trip. (Our ministry is about hoping, not scoping!) Save your “romantic interludes” for back home. Do not put yourself in an embarrassing situation. **No making purple!**
11. Our retreats are “unplugged” (unless otherwise specified). Please leave your cell phones, iPods, and all other electronics at home. Don’t worry – you will survive without them! (**Parents: by signing this covenant, you’re acknowledging possession of these items.**)
12. Have fun, help others to have fun, and get to know others. Be kind and considerate of others. Be flexible and patient with one another!

Violations of the Rules

Violations of our covenant fall into three groups: **minor, moderate, and major**. Minor violations refer to those things which, though they may seem minor, either are inconsistent with who we are as a church youth group, or undermine what we are trying to accomplish. Adults need to immediately address any minor concerns and it will be expected that speaking to the issue will be enough to resolve the issue. It is further expected that there will be no further need to deal with the issue. These types of violations really deal with teaching our team members what is expected. Consequences appropriate to the offense will be decided upon by the appropriate adult.

Minor violations include things like:

- ☹ Use of inappropriate language
- ☹ Being late for an activity, or disregarding the schedule
- ☹ Not participating in group activities
- ☹ Removing oneself from the group
- ☹ Disregarding directions from adults or leaders

Moderate violations refer to those things which require more than a word of instruction or correction. A moderate concern will require sitting down and dealing with the issue and will involve the staff leaders in the issue. Consequences appropriate to the offense will be decided upon by the appropriate adults.

Moderate violations include:

- ☹ Repeated violations of the minor rules
- ☹ Disrespect of any of the adults or leaders during an activity or on the retreat
- ☹ Going off alone – leaving designated area without permission
- ☹ Missing a scheduled event

Major violations refer to those things which not only do not belong on the trip, but which also fundamentally undermine. These violations will result in the person’s **parents being called** and being involved in the decision concerning the consequences (**exception: there is a “zero tolerance” policy for the possession and/or use of alcohol, tobacco, inhalants, illegal drugs, or weapons**). A major violation may result in someone being sent home. Any act that is a violation of state law will be reported to local law enforcement authorities.

Major violations include:

- ☹ The use of alcohol, tobacco, inhalants, illegal drugs, or weapons (zero means zero!)
- ☹ Sneaking out
- ☹ Any illegal activity such as shop lifting or vandalism
- ☹ Physical fighting
- ☹ Sexual activity of any kind

_____ Signature of Participant (Print name below)

_____ Signature of Parent (Print name below)

Youth Mission Statement

To make disciples of Jesus through worship, fellowship, service, and witness.

Youth Benediction

May the Lord bless you and keep you

May the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious unto you

May the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace. *Numbers 6:24-26*