



Hey Parents and Guardians,

We are excited that your student is interested in joining us for our upcoming event! We value these events for their highly relational environments and the opportunities they provide for us to engage with and get to know students on a deeper level.

This policy has been written for guidance and clarification specifically in regards to student ministry trips and retreats. Our goal for these events is to have students encounter Jesus and grow in their faith in a safe and secure environment. We want all of our students to be able to participate in these events, but please keep in mind that the opportunity to attend trips and retreats is a privilege. Most middle and high school students are able to handle the privilege and responsibility of attending a trip or retreat, but some may not be ready.

Our trips and retreats often have lots of freedom and there are times where a youth leader may not physically be with a student, or group of students. Overnight accommodations often don't allow adults to be in rooms of students (unless it's cabin style, like a camp). For the safety of our students and leaders, we are only able to take students that we (and parents) are confident can handle the freedom and responsibility required for our trips and retreats.

We have an amazing team of leaders who have completed our child safety process, as well as background and reference checks. They are actively involved in our student ministry and care about our students. However, as volunteers they are not all equipped to handle some of the complex issues facing students today.

Please take the time to read the policy below in its entirety before registering your student for any trips or retreats. If you have questions or concerns about this policy, or your student, please contact the Pastor of Student Ministry or Director of Middle School Ministry. We'd be glad to talk about this policy, how it relates to your student in regards to these events, and how we can walk alongside you in discipling them and pointing them to Jesus.

Pastor Greg Schanil – Pastor of Student Ministry
Sarah Erickson – Director of Middle School Ministry

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ALEXANDRIA COVENANT STUDENT MINISTRY POLICY FOR TRIPS AND RETREATS

Registration:

All students attending Alexandria Covenant events must be registered by their legal name and sex at birth. In some cases, a “nickname” may also be entered in addition to their legal name on our registration forms.

Public Display of Affection:

We expect our students (and our leaders) to limit public displays of affection at our youth ministry gatherings and events. PDA is a distraction from the ministry we are there to participate in and is not appropriate for these settings.

Bathroom Facilities:

At church and other events, all students will need to use the bathrooms that correspond with their sex at birth (or a family bathroom when available.)

Special Needs Students:

Special needs may include cognitive, social, emotional, psychological and/or physical needs of varying degrees.

On one end of the scale, if your student cannot function on their own, without consistent adult supervision, we are not trained or equipped to take them on trips and retreats with us. If they are able to function in a Youth Group setting (with a para or with you as support), we’d love to have them participate in these events with the expectation that you provide someone to fill that support role. This support person would need to complete our child safety process prior to participating in gatherings or events.

On the other end of the scale, your student might be highly functioning and would fit well in a trip or retreat setting. We’d love to have them join us! Talk with us about how we can help them succeed.

If you’re unsure if an event would work for your student, please reach out. There may be things we’ve seen, or you have seen, that would keep your student from participating or require thoughtful accommodations to help them be successful. These conversations and decisions would need to be centered around the responsibility and/or safety of students.

Behavioral Issues:

If your student won’t listen to instructions or is defiant toward authority/leaders, this would pose a safety issue for your student, our leaders, and our group. Let’s talk about these concerns before signing them up. Most retreats have “send home” policies that automatically send home students that break rules or laws (at the parent’s expense). As a Student Ministry, we have the same policy for students that won’t listen to leaders and/or break rules or laws.

Medical Issues:

We need to be aware of any medical issues and medications your student will be on during our trips. While we want to be aware, we do expect students to be responsible for taking their own medication while away from home. Our leaders are not equipped or trained to monitor medications for students. If your student cannot navigate their own medication, it would be unsafe to send them on a trip or retreat.



Dietary Needs:

Some of our trips, retreats, and events are better able to accommodate dietary restrictions than others. Please reach out so we can work together on a plan for your student.

LGBTQ+ Students:

We love all of our students and recognize the wide array of stories and situations represented by the LGBTQ+ terminology. While each student and situation is unique, we need to have some groundwork laid on how we handle doing life together, especially in regards to overnight retreats. We know that some of our students are questioning and exploring their sexual orientation. This does not automatically exclude these students from our trips and retreats but we would ask that you reach out to us for further conversation before registering them. Despite needing to make these clarifications and set some firm boundaries, we are committed to being compassionate in our care for students, regardless of how they may identify.

- **Housing:** All trip and retreat housing is sex at birth specific. All students will be housed and registered by their sex at birth and legal name. Students will not be housed in the same room with their girlfriend/boyfriend.
- **Exception:** Transgender students are welcome to all our youth ministry events, except those with overnight housing. If a student is in the process of transitioning (binding, puberty blockers, testosterone, surgery, etc.), we will not be able to provide housing, since our housing is sex at birth specific. We are also not able to accommodate requests for separate or individual housing for students.

Again, we are excited that your student is interested in joining us for our upcoming event! If you have questions or concerns about this policy, or your student, please contact the Pastor of Student Ministry or Director of Middle School Ministry. We'd be glad to talk about this policy, how it relates to your student in regards to these events, and how we can walk alongside you in discipling them and pointing them to Jesus.

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