

YFC/USA STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

YFC/USA STAFF, VOLUNTEERS AND BOARD MEMBERS

I. Standards Regarding Sexual Relationships

The Bible teaches that the appropriate place for sexual expression is in the context of a marriage relationship. The biblical description of marriage is one man and one woman in a lifelong commitment. In Matthew 19:4-5, Jesus says, *“Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, ‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’?”*

Repeatedly, God uses the symbolism of His relationship with believers as the picture of marriage. Husbands are exhorted to love their wives as Christ loves the Church and wives are exhorted to honor their husbands as the Church does Christ. With this imagery and the truth of God’s ideal for marriage in mind, any sexual relationship outside the marriage context is described in the Bible as adultery and (as stated in the sixth commandment) is prohibited throughout the Old and New Testaments. Therefore, sexual relationship between individuals not in a marriage relationship is sin. YFC staff, volunteers or board members must not engage in sexual behavior or give the appearance of such a relationship with anyone other than their spouse, to include cohabitating with any sexual or romantic partner other than their spouse.

All staff, volunteers and board members must hold a biblical view of marriage, exhibit a consistent walk with the Lord, and show current evidence of godly character. While the responsibility for building and maintaining a healthy marriage rests with the staff, volunteer or board couple, YFC/USA leadership encourages staff to maintain healthy marriages by utilizing resources such as time off when a marriage is under special stress; marriage conferences on balancing work and family life; and individual counseling and encouragement.

Divorce

YFC/USA places a high priority on healthy marriages and strongly discourages divorce and supports the overriding scriptural “one-flesh” principle. While divorce, in itself, might not eliminate a man or woman from the ministry, it must be remembered that, in the light of Scripture, God’s ideal is that there be no divorce and that husbands and wives stay together until death separates them.

YFC/USA adheres to the Biblical model that divorce is only acceptable in the following instances:

1. Unfaithfulness of a spouse involved in an adulterous or illicit sexual relationship (Matthew 5:32).
2. Desertion by a spouse (1 Corinthians 7:10-15).
3. Spousal violence or abuse breaking the one-flesh principle (1 Corinthians 7:33-34).

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Response to Marital Difficulties

YFC/USA encourages reconciliation, that God may be glorified in the healing of relationships. Staff, volunteers and board members are encouraged to prioritize the health of their marriages, and special consideration will be given to accommodating elective leaves of absence to resolve serious marital difficulties. Once a staff, volunteer or board member, or his/her spouse, becomes involved in legal separation or divorce procedures, the staff, volunteer or board member should notify their director/supervisor and discuss the reasons for the action. There may be a mandatory leave of absence, or a reassignment to a different role, the timing and duration of which will be determined by the supervisor and the Director/Human Resources in conversation with the supervisor and the staff, volunteer or board member. This leave is not intended to be punitive, but designed to provide time to focus on the circumstances for the separation or divorce. This would include whether those circumstances are consistent with Biblical principles, and whether there is potential for healing in the marriage so that divorce can be avoided.

YFC/USA leadership retains the discretion to make assessments about the staff, volunteer or board member's divorce, whether the divorce is consistent with Biblical principles and the ministry principles of YFC/USA, and any impact this divorce will have upon employment or other service with YFC/USA.

Homosexuality/Same Sex Attraction

YFC/USA believes the Bible is clear that God created two genders, distinct and mutually exclusive. Genesis 1:27 tells us, *"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them."* God's created order has given unique identities to men and women for His glory. Gender is determined by God as identified at birth, and each person's gender identity is assigned to them by design, not by subjective interpretation, individual choice or lifestyle inclination.

Scripture uses very strong and direct language to condemn homosexual behavior (Leviticus 18:22, Romans 1:26-27). Therefore, any sexual behavior or sexual relationship between individuals of the same gender is sin. YFC staff, volunteers or board members must not engage in or live in homosexual behavior, nor engage in a transgender lifestyle such as posing, acting or representing oneself as other than one's gender at birth.

Pornography

Sexual immorality such as the use of pornography is condemned in scripture (Matt. 5:27-28). As servants furthering the gospel and providing spiritual leadership, we must live lives that are holy and consider the interests of others above our own. In so doing, we should refrain from immoral behaviors including printed or internet and other forms of pornography.

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II. Standards Regarding Substance Use/Abuse and Addictions

Addiction is a tragic but prevalent reality in our society and therefore must be addressed in particular by a ministry that works directly with young people. We are a ministry of restoration and transformation into the likeness of Christ. The outreach of YFC/USA is often to those who are struggling with or directly impacted by *addictions of all kinds*. While we desire to be redemptive of all staff, volunteers or board members who struggle with *addictions of any kind*, we maintain a primary commitment to high standards and expectations of anyone involved with our mission and pray for restoration for those who cycle back into addictions. Leaders with a history of addiction must be in recovery.

Use of alcohol or tobacco should not take place in the presence of students, and any use is expected to always be in moderation, and with sensitivity to others who may have addictions (Romans 14:21).

III. Financial Responsibilities

YFC/USA expects our staff, volunteers or board members to manage all finances of the organization and their personal finances with upmost integrity. As stated in 2 Corinthians 8:20-21, *"We take this course so that no one should blame us about this generous gift that is being administered by us, for we aim at what is honorable not only in the Lord's sight but also in the sight of man."* Financial misconduct includes, but is not limited to, mismanagement of donations and other ministry funds, embezzlement, theft, misuse or abuse of YFC/USA property or assets, identity theft, and misuse of financial and personal data. Such misuse of YFC/USA assets will not be tolerated.

IV. Behavioral Appropriateness

Our goal is to strive to maintain a culture of employees, volunteers and boards who live a life free from intimidation, threats, or violent acts. This includes, but is not limited to, intimidating, threatening or hostile behaviors, physical abuse, vandalism, or any other act, which, in management's opinion, is inappropriate. In addition, insensitive or offensive comments regarding violent events and/or behavior are not tolerated. Except in cases of emergency, employees are expected to contact Human Resources if they believe there is a serious threat to the safety and health of themselves or others.

CONCLUSION

YFC/USA leadership retains the discretion to make assessments about the staff, volunteer or board member's sin and their ability to continue in this ministry. While we desire to be redemptive toward those who struggle with sin of any kind, we maintain a primary commitment to biblical standards and expectations of anyone involved with our mission. We pray for restoration for those dealing with sin but are uncompromising in our commitment to protect young people providing for them appropriate supervision and ministry role models.

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YFC/USA expects every staff, volunteer and board member to be consistent with these standards in their lifestyle and in their teaching, and to use YFC/USA's reporting processes* whenever they have a good faith belief that these Standards of Conduct are not being followed. The areas of concern listed in this document are not an exhaustive list, Youth for Christ desires that involved staff, volunteers and board members live a life above reproach using good and appropriate judgment in all matters. Policies within local YFC Chapters should not be in conflict with the standards contained in "Living the Life of a Leader". Issues of a more serious nature are expected to be communicated to YFC/USA for counsel and guidance. We desire to be transparent and systematic in addressing these issues. Any concerns, questions, or requests for assistance by YFC Chapters to the National Service Center are encouraged and welcomed.

The Christian faith is clearly a welcoming respite for wanderers who fall short of God's glory, but for those involved in ministry, particularly ministry with young people, we are held to a higher standard. Being a part of the ministry of YFC/USA is not a "right", it is a calling and privilege that must be affirmed by those placed in positions of authority within YFC/USA. Individuals who are truly called to the YFC/USA ministry will gladly strive to serve Christ with lives marked by holiness and godliness in lifestyle.

***Reporting**

When these standards of conduct are not being followed, staff, board members and volunteers should directly contact their local YFC leadership (James 5:19-20, Matthew 18:15-17). In some cases it may be appropriate to contact the YFC/USA Human Resources Department at (303) 843-9000. You are also encouraged to use the anonymous reporting process provided by YFC/USA by calling 1-866-607-SAFE.