

Updated September 3, 2020

Hey GPC Student Ministries parents,

We know clear communication is more important than ever, and we want you to be able to make informed decisions about your family's participation in our activities this year. Below, you will find our health guidelines for fall youth events. Please keep in mind that they are subject to change, and most likely will change over the course of the school year.

Our goal, as always, is to provide meaningful opportunities for students to connect and grow in their faith while maintaining a high level of safety. This goal, along with Minnesota law, necessitates that we take protective measures in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, even with the best precautions, group activities involve a certain amount of risk. It is your responsibility to know these risks and make sure your children understand both our guidelines and your expectations before allowing them to participate in our student ministries.

Here are the steps we're taking to ensure a safe environment at youth group and other events this fall:

- **Social Distancing**
 - Social distancing will be strongly encouraged at all events. All students and leaders will be expected to be considerate of others' personal space; however, a strict six-foot rule may not always be possible and is not enforceable by staff and volunteers. It is ultimately up to you as parents to communicate your family's social distancing expectations to your students.
- **Face Coverings**
 - In light of Executive Order 20-81, students and leaders will be required to wear qualifying face coverings at all times while indoors, with the following exceptions:
 - While speaking/performing (i.e., teaching, praying, leading worship)
 - While participating in sports or other vigorous physical activities
 - While eating or drinking (provided that social distance is maintained)
 - If a legitimate medical, mental health, developmental, or behavioral condition makes wearing a face covering unsafe or difficult to tolerate
 - For more information about face covering requirements, please see <https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/facecover.html>. If your student qualifies for an exemption, contact Pastor Christian before attending any events.
- **Singing, Speaking & Performing**
 - Non-masked speakers and performers (see above) will maintain a distance of at least 6 feet from other speakers/performers and 10 feet from the audience at all times.
 - Worship is a crucial element of our student ministries. However, congregational singing has been shown to increase the risk of COVID-19 transmission. While music may be used as part of youth group meetings, students will be encouraged to reflect on the lyrics rather than sing along. Special worship-centered events may be offered for those comfortable with congregational singing.
- **Registration & Screening**
 - Students must register for all events (including youth group) in advance on a first-come, first-served basis. The number of participants (including staff/volunteers) may be limited to fit the space available. Students who were unable to attend an event due to group size limits will have the first opportunity to sign up for future events.
 - As part of the registration process, students and parents will respond to mandatory screening questions. Staff and volunteers will also be screened. No one who has been knowingly exposed to COVID-19 in the last 14 days or is currently showing signs of

illness will be allowed to participate.

- If a student, leader, or immediate family member displays COVID-like symptoms or receives positive test results after having contact with other student ministry participants, he or she is expected to immediately notify Pastor Christian, who will then notify the other participants of possible exposure. The identity of the person reporting symptoms or a positive test will be kept confidential.
- **Hygiene & Food Service**
 - Proper hygiene (e.g., covering coughs/sneezes, handwashing, not picking one's nose, etc.) will be encouraged and expected of all students and leaders.
 - Any food and beverages will be either pre-packaged or served by staff/volunteers wearing gloves and masks. Sharing food and drinks will be strongly discouraged. Parents will be notified if food is to be served as part of an event.
 - Hand sanitizer will be available and restrooms will be accessible for all on-site events. Students are encouraged to bring their own hand sanitizer for off-site events.
 - Equipment sharing will be avoided whenever possible. If equipment and supplies are shared, items will be sanitized between uses whenever possible.
- **Facility Use & Transportation**
 - High-touch areas/objects will be thoroughly sanitized before and after each event.
 - To the extent possible, youth group activities will take place in spaces that allow for effective social distancing and/or proper air circulation.
 - Youth group game time will take place outdoors (weather permitting) or in the gym. The Loft may be used as a supplemental space with the doors left open.
 - Youth group teaching and social time will take place outdoors (weather permitting) or in the cafe/fellowship hall.
 - Small groups will take place in available spaces of sufficient size to accommodate social distancing between members of the group.
 - Transportation will be offered for some off-site events on a first-come, first-served basis. Any vehicles used will run at half their usual passenger capacity with windows cracked. Additional students will need to arrange their own transportation.
- **Respecting Others**
 - Should your family choose not to participate in any event(s) for health-related reasons, or to participate while taking additional precautions, my team and I will fully respect your decision, and we will expect the same of our students.

I recognize that these guidelines may seem overly cautious to some, and many of us will be inconvenienced in some way. However, this is a chance for all us to practice unity and humility, putting the needs of others ahead of our own, for the sake of helping our students know, love, and follow Jesus. Please join me in praying for a safe and fruitful season of ministry this year, and don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions.

Partnering with you,

Christian Brands
Pastor of Student Ministries