

# MARKHAM WOODS CHURCH

## UNPLUG RETREAT HANDBOOK

(2021-2022)

### Statement of Mission

The mission of the Markham Woods Pathfinder Club is, through outdoor adventure activities, to develop in the church's young people a lasting respect and love for God, for family, for others, for the church, and for nature .

### Statement of Philosophy

The young people of Markham Woods SDA Church are at a pivotal stage in their lives: They are establishing their own identities, fine-tuning their values and assuming increasing responsibility. To assist in this developmental process, the Markham Woods Church provides active Sabbath School and Christian Education programs. The UNPLUG Retreats offer an additional experience that is both unique and appealing, that is not part of these other ministries, and that for many may not be available anywhere else.

Young people have a natural love of adventure. Thus the UNPLUG Retreats utilize camping and other exciting outdoor activities to teach lessons and develop individual and team skills that will be beneficial throughout life.

### Statement of General Goals

1. Teach spiritual concepts through outdoor adventure activities.
2. Teach young people both individual and team skills.
3. Develop in each young person a sense of self-worth and self-reliance.
4. Create a bond of friendship and respect between young people and adults .
5. Ensure a sense of belonging to the individual unit, to the youth group, to the Markham Woods congregation, and to the Seventh-day Adventist denomination.
6. Inspire a desire to serve others.
7. Promote a love and respect for nature .
8. Instill a sensitivity for the feelings of others.
9. Teach personal responsibility and self-control.
10. Encourage young people to transfer the skills and lessons learned on the retreats to their family, school, church and community.

### Eligibility Criteria

The Markham Woods UNPLUG Retreats are open to young people in grades 6th-12th. Only young people who meet ONE of the following criteria can join a retreat:

- The young person is a member of Markham Woods SDA Church .
- (OR) one legal guardian is a member of Markham Woods SDA Church .
- (OR) the young person and his/her legal guardians are not Seventh-day Adventists.
  - [Any other requests must be addressed with the Youth Pastor, Connor Yonkers]

### Cost

We do not charge anything for UNPLUG Retreats because Markham Woods Church has a "Free for All" philosophy!

## **UNPLUG Discipline Policy**

A Value Based Ministry: **P.A.T.H**

Because an UNPLUG RETREAT is a ministry of the Markham Woods Church, a distinctly Christian organization, there are very specific values we expect our participants to embrace. These values are represented by the acronym **P.A.T.H**: Promote Community, Assure Personal Space, Transmit Respect, Heed Directions.

If a participant is engaging in behavior that violates one of the above values, immediate redirection is needed. This is done through our Steps of Grace Process.

### **Steps of Grace**

Any type of redirection must adhere to the "steps of grace" outlined below:

1. In the event that any of the values are violated, the counselor will issue a clear directive to the offender. If someone who is not the offender's counselor observes the violation, the witness will report to the counselor and explain the violation. The counselor will then give the offender a clear directive.
2. If the values are violated again, the counselor will take the offender to the Segment Leader and explain the values violation. The Segment Leader will issue another clear directive to the offender.
3. If the values are violated for a third time, the counselor will report to the Segment Leader and to the Administrative Staff and explain the values violation. The Administrative Staff will issue a third clear directive to the offender. Along with the directive, a warning will be given to the offender explaining that further violations will result in disciplinary action.
4. If after receiving such an unquestionably clear directive in the presence of Administrative Staff, the offender persists in violating the values, the Administrative Staff will apply one or more of the following disciplinary procedures:
  - Place a call to the offender's parents, and the offender will have to explain, in the presence of the Administrative Staff, the violation that has taken place and what has been asked of him or her. The Administrative Staff will answer any questions the parents may have.
  - Ask the offender to not participate in a scheduled activity.
  - Place a call to the offender's parents and request that the child be picked up (regardless of the distance).

### **The Right to Search**

Throughout the "General Rules of Campout Conduct," campers are informed of items that they are NOT to bring on campouts. We have very valid and well-considered reasons why we don't want the children to have these items. Please explain to your child that we're totally serious about this ban. We mean what we say. And if such items are found, the above "Disciplinary Policy" will apply.

Furthermore, please be aware (and inform your child) that the UNPLUG Staff reserve the right to search all tents, individual bags, and the contents of non-allowed electronic devices such as cameras, music/ video players and mobile phones.

## **General Rules of Campout Conduct**

### **CAMPERS WILL RESPECT ALL UNPLUG STAFF BY...**

1. Quickly carrying out all requests from UNPLUG Staff - without grumbling.
2. Coming immediately when summoned to the general meeting area.
3. Having a teachable spirit and a humble, cooperative attitude.

### **CAMPERS WILL RESPECT OTHER CAMPERS BY...**

4. Not belittling or humiliating others. UNPLUG activities are a "No Put -Down Zone"
5. Not swearing or using crude or obscene language.
6. Avoiding physical contact of any kind, which includes (but is not limited to): hugging, kissing, tickling, holding hands, sitting on laps, carrying others, fighting, wrestling, pushing or tripping.
7. Refraining from water/ food fights-unless by leader direction.

### **CAMPERS WILL RESPECT THE CAMPSITE BY...**

8. Not tampering with someone else's tent, which includes (but is not limited to): touching it, throwing something on or in it, and tampering with or removing its contents.
9. Not going into, or spending the night in, any tent other than the one assigned to them .
10. Picking up their own trash and participating in keeping the campsite clean.

### **CAMPERS WILL RESPECT THEIR OWN TENT BY...**

11. Showing respect for, and not tampering with, the property of their tent-mates.
12. Not bringing food into their tent, including food brought from home.
13. Refraining from all horseplay in their tent.

### **CAMPERS WILL RESPECT THE SAFETY RULES BY...**

14. Turning in all needed medications to Youth Administration on the Friday of a campout .
15. Not leaving the campsite. The ONLY exceptions are the following :
  - Accompanied by their OWN COUNSELOR.
  - Receiving permission from their own counselor to leave with another staff member.
16. Not starting or playing with fires, or possessing incendiary devices (matches, lighters or fireworks) .
17. Not swimming or playing in water unless supervised by a staff member.
18. Not possessing the following items on campouts or on the bus: phones , electronic devices, or cutting tools of any kind. These items must be turned into Youth Administration before entering the bus (or upon arriving at the campsite if the camper has alternate transportation) .
19. Not feeding or teasing any animals (wild or domesticated).

PLEASE NOTE: Additional rules relevant to each camping situation may be added .

# Generic Campout Packing List

PLEASE NOTE: Everything (except sleeping bag) must fit Into ONE duffle bag or suitcase!  
We realize the list below is not exhaustive. You may bring extra items as long as it all fits into one bag.

## **Must Bring:**

Sleeping bag (tightly rolled, tied up) Pillow

Extra blanket (cold weather)

\*Optional\*: pad/small air mattress (there may be 3-4 campers in a tent)

Duffle bag or light suitcase for clothes and gear (no hard suitcases or plastic bags full of clothes) Shirts/ shorts/ jeans/ underwear/ socks

2 pairs of comfortable walking shoes (close-toed only) Cap/Hat

Cold weather : Jacket/ sweatshirt/ long underwear/ gloves/ hand warmers

Towel/ washcloth

Personal items: toothbrush / paste/ comb / soap / etc.

## **A Bible**

Flashlight (with good batteries), Insect repellent, Sunscreen, Small poncho

Swimming : bathing suit/ water shoes/ flip-flops Optional : mask and snorkel

## **Do Not Bring:**

Electronic devices of any kind

Incendiary devices (matches, lighters or fireworks) Cutting tools of any kind

Food, candy or beverages

REMEMBER: The UNPLUG Staff reserve the right to search all tents, individual bags, and the contents of non-allowed electronic devices such as cameras, music/video players and mobile phones.

# Parents Attending Retreats

From time to time, parents will like to join their children on an UNPLUG Retreat, and we're delighted to have you. However, we want you to know what's expected. Thus we're providing the following Information, which we would ask you to treat seriously.

1. The North American Division (the governing body of the SDA Church In North America) requires that ALL adults (18+ years) who are involved in any way with our church children must complete the "Shield the Vulnerable " online course and background check. You cannot attend any youth meetings/gatherings, special events or campouts until the church Is informed that you have been cleared.
2. When your child attends a retreat, our UNPLUG staff is totally in charge of your child. Even when you are present. Specifically, this means that if your child asks you if he or she can go for a walk down by the lake or sit in your car, your answer should be, "I can't give you that permission; you'll have to talk to your UNPLUG counselor." Please honor your status as a guest and leave all decision-making and permission-granting to the UNPLUG staff.
3. You may see things that you think could be done better. And you may well be right. Of course, it 's also possible that your idea has been tried and found not to work as well as you envision . Your observations and suggestions are always welcome-but share them with the Youth Pastor/Retreat Director in private, not to the UNPLUG staff or to the campers themselves. Critical comments, even well intended ones, can destroy morale and create dissension if they aren't directed to the right source .
4. If you need to take your child away from camp for a family activity, notify the Youth Pastor/Retreat Director by the Wednesday night before the campout. At the campout, alert the Director before you depart, take only your child, and do not return later with the child. We try to keep track of all camper at all times, but when children are coming and going with their parents, it creates a supervision nightmare that potentially means your child could be left somewhere because we assumed he or she is with you.
5. UNPLUG Retreats are outdoor adventures and we sleep in tents. If you find that too adventuresome, feel free to stay somewhere more comfortable and day-trip to our campsite. If you want to stay in an RV, it must be totally removed from our campsite. No campers are allowed to sleep with you. Overall, it 's easier simply to operate on an egalitarian basis... we 're all "tenting it."
6. Please do not bring non-registered children who are of the youth age [grades 6th-12th] (whether yours or anyone else's) on a campout . It creates major problems when UNPLUG Retreats operate under one set of rules, but non-registered visitors can operate under a different set of rules.
7. Do not bring pets to a campout (not even for the day), even if the park/camp allows it.