

# **Brentwood Baptist Student Ministry COVID-19 Small Group (Off-Campus) Guidelines and Responsibilities**

We find ourselves in unprecedented times. The COVID-19 pandemic poses a great challenge to the continuity of community in our church and specifically, the student ministry. How do you continue to provide strong and consistent Christian community through group environments and still adhere to the physical restrictions recommended by public health officials? How can you still benefit from being together even though it's best to remain physically apart? This season of uncertainty and these questions are difficult to navigate right now.

First and most importantly, the health and safety of Brentwood Baptist Church students and leaders is top priority. At the same time, this unique season also poses great opportunities to engage students with the gospel in biblical community through non-traditional and creative ways. Despite the restrictions and challenges around us, our mission remains the same:

*To engage the whole person with the whole gospel of Jesus Christ, anywhere, anytime and with anybody.*

No matter the method or model of groups, our mission remains. In our groups, we want students to GROW in their faith, be CARED for by others, and to be EQUIPPED to be disciples who multiply disciples.

Below are health and safety best practices for small group gatherings, which comply with the current guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Tennessee Department of Health and have been approved by the leadership of Brentwood Baptist Church.

Each leader/volunteer that offers an off-campus small group gathering as well as students who attend these groups are strongly encouraged to follow these health and safety guidelines. Brentwood Baptist Church and its campuses are not responsible for the enforcement of these guidelines. By leading and/or attending an off-campus small group gathering, every leader and student guest voluntarily assume all risks including exposure to COVID-19.

## **SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW GROUPS CAN/SHOULD MEET**

1. **In-person groups in a host home:** the traditional way to meet as a group but with suggested changes to ensure safety and health for all. See below.
2. **In-person groups at an outdoor location:** you may choose to meet at a local park, the driveway, large common spaces, yards or church parking lot.
3. **Online groups:** virtual groups through Zoom, Microsoft Teams, or another video conferencing service.

## **SUGGESTED GUIDELINES FOR IN-PERSON GROUPS**

### **Outdoor Gatherings are Safer Than Indoor Gatherings**

If possible, we would strongly recommend that your groups meet outdoors if you choose to meet in person. This might mean meeting in backyards, or driveways, or local parks. It might also mean that everyone brings a lawn chair, and that meeting days or meeting times may need to be flexible considering the weather. Volunteer leaders and adults are responsible for providing an off-campus gathering location and should be communicated and/or coordinated with your campus leadership.

### **Social Distancing is Still Required**

In each CDC recommended phase of reopening, there are mandates maintaining at least six feet of distance from anyone who is not in your household.

### **15 Person Maximum for Off-Campus Groups**

Each off-campus small group gathering must be limited to 15 total guests (adult leaders and students).

### **A Background Check for All Adults Present is Required**

Every adult present at the small group gathering location must be background checked by Brentwood Baptist Church.

### **Please Comply with CDC Sanitation and Cleanliness Protocols**

Every volunteer leader and guest are strongly encouraged to follow Sanitation and Cleanliness Protocol in compliance with the CDC and local health authorities. This includes cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces at the gathering location, and scheduling times to clean and disinfect shared spaces at the gathering location before, during, and after the meeting.

### **Have a Plan for Restrooms**

If the meeting is at your home – even outside – please decide in advance whether to make your bathroom(s) available to those in attendance. If so, please also make a plan for cleaning after each use in accordance with CDC Guidelines. If not, please plan to communicate to your group whether bathrooms will be accessible at your meeting and be respectful of the length of the group.

### **Provide Hand Sanitizer**

Each gathering location must have sanitizing stations such as a wash station with soap and/or hand sanitizer available for all participants. Brentwood Baptist Church will provide hand sanitizer for all groups.

### **All Guests Must Self-Screen Prior to Arrival**

Volunteer leaders are responsible to ensure all guests self-screen prior to arrival. Below are the CDC- approved self-screening questions. If the answer is “yes” to any one of them, then the right thing to do is remain at home:

1. Have you been in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the past 14 days?
2. Are you experiencing a cough, shortness of breath or sore throat?
3. Have you had a fever in the last 48 hours?
4. Have you had new loss of taste or smell?
5. Have you had vomiting or diarrhea in the last 24 hours?

### **Masks are Still Encouraged and Permissible**

In light of varying individual responses and comfort levels of risk associated with reopening, many people have made personal decisions on when (and when not) to wear a mask. Be gracious and respectful in exercising your views and compassion here.

### **Be Smart About Offering Food**

As much as we love being good hosts and offering food and drinks, it’s best that people bring their own food/drinks/snacks rather than setting out items for people to share (people sharing utensils and congregating around food areas pose a risk of infection). Individually wrapped items are a much safer option if you are wanting to provide food.

### **Mandatory Off-Campus Group Leader Training**

All volunteer leaders who choose to lead off-campus small group gatherings must attend a training with the student ministry office from Brentwood Baptist Church to go over the health and safety guidelines.

### **Notification Procedures**

If/when a volunteer adult is notified that a person at one of these gatherings has contracted COVID-19, they must immediately notify the student ministry office at Brentwood Baptist Church. The student ministry office will then notify those who attended that gathering and give suggestions for next steps (self-quarantine, get tested).

### **Be familiar with the CDC’s Recommendations for Reducing Risk of COVID-19 Transmission in the Home**

You can find that information here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html>