

Teacher Handbook

Launch Ministries, Inc.



TEACHER HANDBOOK
LAUNCH MINISTRIES, INC.

Contents

I.	Introduction	3
II.	Launch Ministries, Inc.	3
A.	History.....	3
B.	Vision, Mission, Values	3
C.	Purpose.....	4
D.	Statement of Faith	4
III.	Teachers	5
A.	Becoming a Volunteer Teacher	5
B.	Teaching Duties	6
C.	Professional Standards	6
D.	Curriculum	7
E.	Conduct	8
1.	Generally	8
2.	Alcohol, Drugs, Tobacco.....	8
3.	Relationships with Students	8
4.	Arrests and Criminal Convictions	8
F.	Attendance	8
G.	Emergencies	9
H.	Reporting Accidents & Injuries	9
IV.	Policies.....	9
A.	Launch Ministries’ Activities	9
1.	Generally	9
2.	Extracurricular	9
3.	Off Campus.....	9
4.	Overnight	10
B.	Discrimination	10

C.	Harassment.....	10
D.	Political Activity.....	12
E.	Service of Subpoenas.....	12
F.	College Recruitment Materials.....	12
G.	Advertising.....	13
H.	Fundraising.....	13
I.	Child Protection.....	13
	1. Screening.....	14
	2. One-On-One.....	14
	3. Reporting of Abuse & Neglect.....	14
	4. Reporting Inappropriate Behavior of Employees & Volunteers.....	14

I. Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to teach release time Bible class at a Launch Pad site! We are glad to have you on our team and appreciate your voluntary service. Launch Ministries relies on individuals like you to fulfill its mission, and we want you to know that you are valued.

To help you understand the essence of Launch Ministries and your role in this ministry, we have put together this handbook. This is not a contract and is for informational purposes only. We ask that you take time to read and understand the information, policies, and procedures set forth in this handbook.

May God be glorified through all we do.

Sincerely,

The Executive Board of Directors

II. Launch Ministries, Inc.

A. History

Launch Ministries and the Launch Pad Christian Release Time Program began with a simple prayer. *“God we know that public high school students can be released from school to take a class on religion, (like the LDS students), therefore, would you please raise up someone/something that could provide high school students with this unique opportunity.”* You know what they say, “be careful what you pray for because you might be the answer to that prayer.” Six months after Rock Brown prayed that prayer, God began to birth a vision in his heart for Launch Ministries and The Launch Pad Christian Release Time Program.

What begun with one Launch Pad location, (across the street from Meridian High School in Meridian, Idaho), meeting one period a day for a “Life of Christ” class, has now grown to numerous Launch Pad sites across the state of Idaho and Washington. The vision has multiplied!

In the past 7 years nearly 700 hundred public high school students have taken our Bible classes, over 60 volunteer teachers have taught our courses, and nearly 30 churches have joined us in reaching, equipping, and launching the next generation!

Someone once said that, *“release time is the overlooked open door to reach public high school students.”* Well by God’s grace we are no longer overlooking this open door. And it all started with a simple prayer. To God be the glory!

B. Vision, Mission, Values

VISION: To **guide** students to submit *all of life* to Jesus Christ, **equip** them to impact their public school campus through living out the Gospel and to **launch** them into their God given potential & purpose.

MISSION: Guide - Equip - Launch

- Guide - our mission is to introduce and guide students to submit all of life to the empowering presence and Lordship of Jesus Christ through experiential and community based learning.
- Equip - our mission is to help students embrace biblical convictions in all of life, and to instill a passion for living on mission.
- Launch - our mission is to embed confidence, graciousness and passion in students to live out God's purpose for their life today, and the future.

VALUES: These are the things that are most important to us...

- We value experiential and community based learning.
 - Our goal is to create an environment where teachers and students build a strong sense of community with each other.
 - Our goal is to create an experiential culture that is centered around God's Word and connects with all styles of learning.
- We value 'living sent'
 - Our goal is to help students live out the mission of Jesus by launching them as missionaries to local schools.
 - Our goal is to equip students to initiate spiritual conversations on campus.
- We value impacting the culture of the local school.
 - Our goal is to honor the name of Jesus through our actions, service and the actions and service of our students.
 - Our goal is to build a strong partnership with the local schools serving them as they serve the students in our community.
- We value partnership with local churches
 - Our goal is to enable youth pastors to have more contact with their students and empower them in their calling.
 - Our goal is to provide a means for the local church to work in unity with one another.

C. Purpose

Our purpose is to provide Bible based released time courses to high school students as a way of equipping the next generation to love God and others with a whole heart.

D. Statement of Faith

Our essential nonnegotiable beliefs are as follows:

1. The Bible, the Old and New Testaments, is uniquely God-inspired and completely truthful and trustworthy. It is the supreme and final authority in all matters of faith and life, and accurate in all that it affirms. (II Timothy 3:16-17, II Peter 1:19-21)
2. There is one God, Creator of all things, Who alone is to be worshiped. God is infinite, perfect and eternally self-existent as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. (Gen. 1:1; 1 Cor. 8:6; Deut. 6:4; Isaiah 43:10-11; Matt. 18:19; John 17:3, 20-22; Eph. 4:5; 1 Thes. 4:8)

3. The Father is holy, almighty, loving, the source of all goodness and truth, and it is He who determined to gather a people for Himself. (James 1:17, 18; John 17:11; 1 Pet. 2:9-10)
4. Jesus Christ was born of the virgin Mary, lived a sinless life, died on the cross, was bodily raised from the dead on the third day, and is coming again according to the Scriptures. (Matthew 1:18; John 1:1-3; I Corinthians 15:3, 4; Hebrews 1:3, Hebrews 9:24; I John 5:20)
5. The Holy Spirit draws sinners to Christ. The Holy Spirit, Who every believer receives upon becoming a Christ-follower, guides, empowers, and convicts of sin. (John 14:17; John 14:26; John 16:7-11; Acts 2:38; 1 Cor. 1:22)
6. We are created in God's image, but are alienated from God because of sin and now live in a sin-damaged world. Through Jesus' sacrifice on the cross for our sins, God restores His relationship with all who follow Him. (Rom. 3:23; Rom. 6:23; Heb. 9:14, 22; Ephesians 2:8-9; Luke 9:23; Matt. 4:19)
7. When Christ returns, the dead will be raised bodily, believers to eternal life with the Lord and unbelievers to final judgment. (1 Cor. 15:12-13; John 5:28-29)
8. We believe in the unity and common priesthood of all true believers, who together form one universal Church, the Body of which Christ is the Head. (1 Pet. 2:9-10; Col. 1:24; 1 Cor. 12:12-20)

Essential theological beliefs are those core beliefs that deal with God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit), the Bible, and Salvation, and these issues are clearly taught in Scripture.

Non-Essential beliefs are those matters that are either not taught as clearly as the essential beliefs, or that are not specifically addressed at all in the Bible. These beliefs are important in our Christian lives but are not necessary for salvation. As Christ-Followers we can “agree to disagree” on these issues, and they should not affect our unity.

III. Teachers

A. Becoming a Volunteer Teacher

Area Directors are responsible for securing and overseeing volunteer teachers for each Launch Pad site in his/her region.

A person is not recognized as a volunteer teacher and may not serve as a volunteer teacher for Launch Ministries until all of the following criteria are satisfied:

1. The Area Director interviews the person, checks the person's character reference, and offers that person an opportunity to serve as a volunteer teacher at a designated Launch Pad site.
2. The person fills out and signs the following documents:
 - an acknowledgement that he/she has read, believes in, and agrees to support

- the Statement of Faith and Mission Statement;
 - an agreement committing to serve a volunteer teacher for a designated period of time; and
 - a form giving Launch Ministries authorization to have an independent third-party run a criminal background check.
3. The person supplies a confidential character reference from a pastor or clergy.
 4. The person successfully passes a criminal background check.

Area Directors are responsible for obtaining signed agreements and ensuring that background checks are done. All documents are to be kept on file at Launch Ministries' corporate office.

Area Directors may terminate a volunteer's association with Launch Ministries at any time and for any reason.

B. Teaching Duties

- Provide classroom instruction and leadership on assigned teaching days utilizing curriculum provided by Launch Ministries, Inc. and as agreed upon by its designated development team and the Executive Board of Directors.
- Supplement assigned curriculum with material such as video clips or object lessons that support the overall theme of the day's lesson.
- Manage the classroom in a manner that promotes a productive learning environment and eases the transition between Christian release time classes and regular classes.
- Maintain regular communications with designated teaching team via email and personal contact.
- Report to your assigned teaching team, teacher coach, and your Area Director each day that you provide classroom instruction. Send the report via e-mail and address the following:
 - Students – Provide a general feel for the attitude of the students, identify the needs of specific individuals and the class as a whole, and note any attendance issues.
 - Lesson – Provide an overview of the material covered in the class and identify any added non-curriculum material that was used.
 - Facilities – Provide an overall status of the facility and associated material used to hold the class.
- Participate in teaching team meetings once a month, meet with teacher coach following classroom observations 1-2 times per semester, and participate in a teaching team planning session once each semester.
- Attend teacher training sessions at the beginning of each semester.

C. Professional Standards

Launch Ministries strongly supports the Code of Ethics of the Idaho Teaching Profession that has been adopted by the Professional Standards Commission and the Idaho State Board of Education. The Code of Ethics of the Idaho Teaching Profession is a legally binding statement of

conduct. Launch Ministries' employees and volunteers are expected to adhere to the principles stated in this document.

The full manual of the Code of Ethics for Idaho Professional Educators can be found on the Idaho State Department of Education's website. This Code of Ethics was revised by the Professional Standards Commission and approved by both the State Board of Education and the Idaho legislature. (IDAPA 08.02.02.076)

The Idaho Code of Ethics consists of Ten (10) Principles. Below is a summary of those principles:

- **Principle I:** A professional educator abides by all federal, state, and local laws and statutes.
- **Principle II:** A professional educator maintains a professional relationship with all students, both inside and outside the classroom.
- **Principle III:** A professional educator refrains from the abuse of alcohol or drugs during the course of professional practice.
- **Principle IV:** A professional educator exemplifies honesty and integrity in the course of professional practice.
- **Principle V:** A professional educator entrusted with public funds and property honors that trust with a high level of honesty, accuracy, and responsibility.
- **Principle VI:** A professional educator maintains integrity with students, colleagues, parents, patrons, or business personnel when accepting gifts, gratuities, favors, and additional compensation.
- **Principle VII:** A professional educator complies with state and federal laws and local school board policies relating to the confidentiality of student and employee records, unless disclosure is required or permitted by law.
- **Principle VIII:** A professional educator fulfills all terms and obligations detailed in the contract with the local board of education or education agency for the duration of the contract.
- **Principle IX:** A professional educator reports breaches of the Code of Ethics for Idaho Professional Educators, and submits reports as required by Idaho Code.
- **Principle X:** A professional educator demonstrates conduct that follows generally recognized professional principles with the right to exercise academic freedom.

D. Curriculum

Launch Ministries' teachers will teach executive board approved curriculum. The curriculum for the upcoming school year will be reviewed annually by the executive board and approved by the end of May. The Executive Board shall retain the discretion on what may be incorporated into

the curriculum. Any departure from the board approved curriculum needs to be approved by the Executive Director.

Launch Ministries' teachers shall not purchase or use any sponsored educational materials that contain promotional information about a product, service, company, or industry that is inappropriate to the lesson being taught in the content of the curriculum.

E. Conduct

1. Generally

Teachers are the face of Launch Ministries and are expected to be role models for students in their faith and walks with God. They should treat all individuals with Christ-like love and respect and should act in accordance with Launch Ministries' Vision, Mission, and Values and the policies set forth in this handbook.

2. Alcohol, Drugs, Tobacco

Teachers are prohibited from using, possessing, distributing, dispensing, or being under the influence of alcohol and illegal drugs while on any Launch Pad site or participating in any Launch Ministries' activity. Additionally, employees and volunteers are expected to refrain from using tobacco in the presence of students, at any Launch Ministry sponsored activity, and on school grounds and Launch Pad sites.

The use of legal or prescribed drugs is permitted only if it does not impair an employee's and volunteer's ability to perform his/her obligations for Launch Ministries in an effective and safe manner.

If a teacher suspects that a student is under the influence of a controlled substance, the teacher will immediately notify the Area or Executive Director, the student, the student's school, and the student's parents.

3. Relationships with Students

Teachers are prohibited from dating students, from engaging in sexual activity with students, and from engaging in activity that could be perceived as sexual. Teachers shall maintain professionalism and treat students with respect.

4. Arrests and Criminal Convictions

Teachers must report arrests and criminal convictions to their Area Director within five days of the event. The report must be in writing and contain the exact charge or conviction, the date of the event, and the county where the event occurred.

F. Attendance

Launch Ministries expects teachers to be prompt and faithful in attendance.

If a teacher is sick or has an emergency that prevents him or her from teaching a class, the teacher should contact the lead teacher as soon as possible to find a substitute. If the lead teacher is unavailable, then effort should be made to contact the Area Director.

G. Emergencies

In cases of emergency, teachers should contact parents and the lead teacher or Area Director.

H. Reporting Accidents & Injuries

Teachers should promptly notify the Area or Executive Director of *any* accident or injury occurring on a Launch Pad site.

IV. Policies

A. Launch Ministries' Activities

1. Generally

Launch Ministries' activities—including but not limited to classroom instruction, student projects, events, fundraisers, meetings—shall be in accordance with the mission, vision, values and policies of Launch Ministries, Inc.

No activity will be permitted that:

- Promotes the use of illicit drugs, alcohol, tobacco, or firearms
- Promotes hostility, disorder, or violence
- Attacks or demeans any ethnic, racial, or religious group
- Is libelous
- Promotes or opposes any political candidate or ballot proposition
- Inhibits the efficient functioning of any school

2. Extracurricular

Teachers may organize non-mandatory extracurricular projects and events but must obtain prior approval from the area director. Teachers may not require students to participate in these projects or events.

3. Off Campus

Teachers may not take students off school premises and Launch Pad sites during school hours.

4. Overnight

Launch Ministries will not approve overnight trips and activities.

B. Discrimination

Launch Ministries prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, and age.

C. Harassment

Employees and volunteers should strive to maintain healthy and positive learning and working environments where all individuals are treated with dignity and respect. Launch Ministries expects that employees and volunteers will have interactions with each other and all other persons that are free from harassment.

DEFINITIONS OF HARASSMENT

1. *Sexual harassment* constitutes discrimination and is illegal under federal, state and local laws. For the purposes of this policy, sexual harassment is defined, as in the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission Guidelines, as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when, for example: (a) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment; (b) submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual; or (c) such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment.

Sexual harassment may include a range of subtle and not so subtle behaviors and may involve individuals of the same or different gender. Depending on the circumstances, these behaviors may include, but are not limited to: unwanted sexual advances or requests for sexual favors; sexual jokes and innuendo; verbal abuse of a sexual nature; commentary about an individual's body, sexual prowess or sexual deficiencies; leering, whistling or touching; insulting or obscene comments or gestures; display in the workplace of sexually suggestive objects or pictures; and other physical, verbal or visual conduct of a sexual nature.

2. *Harassment on the basis of any other protected characteristic* also is strictly prohibited. Under this policy, harassment is verbal, written or physical conduct that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual because of his/her race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, age, disability, marital status, citizenship, or any other characteristic protected by law or that of his/her relatives, friends or associates, and that: (i) has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment; (ii) has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance; or (iii) otherwise adversely affects an individual's employment opportunities.

Harassing conduct includes, but is not limited to epithets, slurs or negative stereotyping; threatening, intimidating or hostile acts; denigrating jokes; and written or graphic material that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or group that is placed on walls or elsewhere on a Launch Pad premises or communicated by email, phone (including voice messages), text messages, social networking sites, etc.

PROHIBITION

Launch Ministries recognizes that harassment is prohibited by law in the workplace, and it further recognizes that regardless of where it takes place, harassment does not reflect a Christian attitude or commitment. Accordingly, Launch Ministries prohibits its employees and volunteers from engaging in harassing conduct.

Employees and volunteers shall not use the authority of their positions to subject any other employee, volunteer, or student to harassment or to coerce, encourage or force another into a romantic relationship.

By adopting this anti-harassment policy, Launch Ministries does not give individuals any right or cause of action beyond what is provided for by law.

REPORTING A COMPLAINT

Individuals who believe they are being harassed should firmly and promptly notify the offender that his or her behavior is unwelcome. When direct communication with the alleged harasser is not feasible or effective, the following steps should be followed:

1. The individual should report the complaint to the Area Director or Executive Director.
2. If the Director successfully resolves the complaint in an informal manner, a confidential written report will be made and kept on file at Launch Ministries' headquarters.
3. If the Director is unable to resolve the complaint, the complaint will be referred to the Executive Director or the Board of Directors.

An employee may, at any time, file a sexual discrimination or harassment claim with the Idaho Human Rights Commission and/or the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC).

PROTECTION AGAINST RETALIATION

Launch Ministries will not retaliate in any way against an individual who makes a report of harassment, in good faith, nor will it permit retaliation by any employee or volunteer. Any person found to have retaliated against another individual for reporting an incident of harassment, in good faith, may be subject to the same disciplinary action provided for harassment offenders. Individuals who are not complainants but who assist individuals who believe they have been subjected to harassment or who assist or participate in a harassment investigation are also protected from retaliation.

INVESTIGATION OF HARASSMENT COMPLAINT

Any allegation of harassment, including sexual harassment, will be promptly investigated by Area and Executive Director in a confidential manner to protect the privacy of all individuals in-

volved. Complaints not resolved at the immediate supervisory/ administrative level will be addressed by the Executive Board of Directors.

Confidentiality will be maintained throughout the investigatory process to the extent practical and appropriate under the circumstances. Launch Ministries will keep and maintain a written record including, but not limited to, witness statements, investigative reports, and correspondence from the date any allegation of harassment is reported to district personnel. The information in the written record will also include the action taken by the Launch Ministries in response to each allegation. The record will be kept in the Launch Ministries' administrative office and will not, at any time, be purged.

If the findings of the investigation determine that harassment has occurred and that suspension, probation or dismissal is warranted, the Executive Board of Directors will be informed of the findings in executive session, and the record will be maintained in Launch Ministries' administrative office.

DISCIPLINARY ACTION

When it is brought to their attention, administrators and supervisors must take affirmative steps to stop harassment by employees and volunteers, including, warning, discipline and recommending possible probation or dismissal.

If the investigation finds that an employee or volunteer has harassed another employee, a volunteer, or a student, disciplinary actions may include probation, suspension and/or dismissal.

D. Political Activity

To maintain its status as a 501(3)(c) organization, Launch Ministries does not participate in political campaigns, to support or oppose, a candidate for elective public office. Additionally, Launch Ministries does not contribute any of its funds to any candidate's political campaign.

If employees and volunteers wish to participate in political campaigns, they must do so as private citizens. They must not purport to act on behalf of Launch Ministries when participating in political campaigns. Additionally, they must not use any of Launch Ministries' assets or resources for political campaigns.

To avoid any appearance of impropriety, Launch Ministries may ask employees and volunteers to step down from working for Launch Ministries while participating in political campaign activity.

E. Service of Subpoenas

Service of Process for third parties will not be allowed on Launch Pad property.

F. College Recruitment Materials

All post-high school institutions who wish to distribute information and recruitment materials shall obtain permission from the Executive or Area Director.

G. Advertising

Advertising within Launch Ministries is permitted if it relates to the Launch Ministries' curriculum and is approved by the Executive or Area Director. No corporate relationship shall be permitted which requires students to advertise a product, service, company, or industry.

Advertising is an oral, written or graphic statement made by the producer, manufacturer, or seller of products, equipment, or services which calls for the public's attention to arouse a desire to buy, use, or patronize the product, equipment, or services. This includes the visible promotion of product logos for other than identification purposes. Brand names, trademarks, logos or tags for product or service identification purposes are not considered advertising.

H. Fundraising

All fundraisers associated with Launch Ministries must meet the following criteria:

- Fundraisers must have the approval of the Executive or Area Director.
- Fundraising efforts connected with Launch Ministries need to target a specified goal or purpose.
 - May be for the purpose of raising money for specific Launch Pads or for Launch Ministries.
 - May be for the purpose of raising money for the poor and needy.
 - May NOT be for the purpose of raising support for individual student endeavors, e.g., mission trips.
- Student initiated fundraising projects for the poor and needy should be encouraged but must not interfere with class time and must have the approval of the Executive or Area Director.
- Individuals and organizations may raise funds to support any Launch Pad or Launch Ministries with permission of the Executive or Area Director.
- Agents and solicitors are prohibited from promoting their wares or soliciting sales through Launch Pads except by permission of the Executive or Area Director.
- Students will not be allowed to take part in door-to-door fundraising campaigns.
- Sales fundraisers shall only promote high quality, reasonably priced items.
- Fundraising activities on a lottery basis shall only be permitted with compliance to Idaho Lottery Code Title 67, Chapter 74.
- Fundraising kick-off events and activities should have a minimal effect on instructional time.
- Fundraising companies must have a refund/replacement policy.
- It shall be the responsibility of Executive or Area Director to work with staff and volunteers to control whether and how funds are spent on a fundraiser.

I. Child Protection

We live at a time when child sexual abuse is a serious problem in our society. It is not found "out there somewhere", but it is found in our communities, in our schools, our churches, our or-

ganizations and our families. Child sexual abuse is a crisis of awesome magnitude that leaves a child with a sense of being betrayed by those they trust.

Launch Ministries is fully committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all children who enter into our presence and participate in our programs. It is with this focus that we present the following policy guidelines.

1. Screening

All teachers must go through a screening process that includes:

1. Background Check
2. Character Reference Check
3. Personal Interview

Launch Ministries reserves the right to make an educated judgment to accept or refuse those who apply for a position working with students. Additionally, Launch Ministries maintains the right to dismiss or otherwise end its relationship with teachers for inappropriate behavior with students.

2. One-On-One

It is unacceptable for Launch Ministries' employees and volunteers to be one-on-one with students. An employee or volunteer who finds himself/herself alone with a student must immediately move to a public place such as outside the classroom.

3. Reporting of Abuse & Neglect

According to Idaho Code 16-1619, *any person*, including Launch Ministries' employees and volunteers, having reason to believe that a child under the age of eighteen (18) years has been abused, abandoned or neglected or who observes the child being subjected to conditions or circumstances which would reasonably result in abuse, abandonment or neglect shall report or cause to be reported within twenty-four (24) hours such conditions or circumstances to the proper law enforcement agency or to the Department of Health and Welfare.

Reporting abuse can precipitate severe consequences upon a family. It should never be done casually or thoughtlessly and certainly not for malicious purposes. Failing to report abuse can also have severe consequences to a child at risk. If you have reason to suspect abuse of a student, document your suspicion in writing immediately. Record the date, time, event and the name of the abused student. Immediately consult with the Area or Executive Director. The Director will then interview the student to determine the next appropriate step. Should the Director file the report on behalf of the student, the law provides that the Director and the informant are immune to civil or criminal liability, provided the report was made in good faith and without malicious purpose. At all times the welfare of the student will take precedence.

4. Reporting Inappropriate Behavior of Employees & Volunteers

If any person observes or has reason to believe an employee or volunteer has acted in a manner that gives rise to a reasonable suspicion of improper involvement, sexual conduct or mis-

conduct with or harassment of a student or another employee/volunteer, that person should immediately report his/her observation or reasonable belief to the Area or Executive Director. The Area and Executive Director, or a person designated by the Executive Board of Directors, will investigate the matter by interviewing the informant, other witnesses, and the suspected individual and will prepare a written report to give to the Executive Board of Directors.